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A SECOND CHANCE FOR WOMEN:
Sex and Gender in Buffy the Vampire Slayer

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ABSTRACT

Even eight years after the television show ended in 2003, Buffy the vampire slayer and her “Scooby Gang” continue their adventures in novels, two comic book series, and in pop culture. In stark contrast to Dracula’s vampire hunter, the male, scientific Abraham Van Helsing, Buffy, a petite, blonde teenage girl takes up the stake as the modern vampire hunter. She and her “Scoobies” challenge stereotypes and slay villains with magic and typically low-tech weapons. Even though Buffy is a horror television show with supernatural villains, many of the “big bads,” as they are referred to in the show, and situations the Scoobies face characterize problems and social issues young adult sometimes have to face in real life. Unlike some teen vampire and classic vampire tales, such as Bram Stoker’s Dracula, that display passive women and archaic male chivalry, Buffy’s treatment of women and men, human and supernatural, presents modern gender roles and sexuality to accompany the changing culture. In modern horror films, the “Beautiful Blonde” and the “Final Girl” are typical conventions of the genre, and both Dracula and Buffy include women, who could potentially assume these conventions. In Dracula, the two main female characters, Lucy Westenra and Mina Murry, are the Gothic versions of the “Beautiful Blonde” and the “Final Girl,” but the characters from Buffy assume these roles and alter them for the modern audience. In Dracula, the female vampires mainly signify female sexuality, which the men fear. The female vampires in Buffy the Vampire Slayer, however, only demonstrate what the Buffyverse approves of young women doing. The male vampires with souls attempt redemption, which lead them to physical danger. Angel’s and Spike’s sensitivity and role reversals change them into men who deserve the empowered, modern woman like Buffy. Friendship is important in the show because these ties keep Buffy and Willow from “going dark,” but it is also the source of most of their power. While the Crew of Light exclude Mina from their group, all of the members of the Scoobies are critical to the success of the group, and they share their power and want to spread it.

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Introduction

Even eight years after the television show ended in 2003, Buffy the vampire slayer and her “Scooby Gang” continue their adventures in novels, two comic book series, and in pop culture. *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its pro-feminist message is still referenced in many television shows, skit based shows like *Saturday Night Live*, and in YouTube parodies. “Buffy vs. Edward: *Twilight* Remix” is one of the most popular parodies on YouTube in which Edward Cullen “romances” Buffy Summers the way he does Bella Swan in the *Twilight* Saga, although Buffy reacts quite differently than Bella. In this video, Buffy demonstrates that all of Edward’s stalking and overprotective behavior that teenaged “fangirls” adore is actually borderline abusive and scary, and she tells him so and stakes him (McIntosh n.p.). Even in a parody, Buffy the vampire Slayer illustrates how an empowered woman defends herself against antiquated, chauvinist male conduct.

In stark contrast to *Dracula*’s vampire hunter, the male, scientific Abraham Van Helsing, Buffy, a petite, blonde teenage girl takes up the stake as the modern vampire hunter. She and her “Scoobies” challenge stereotypes and slay villains with magic and typically low-tech weapons. Even though *Buffy* is a horror television show with supernatural villains, many of the “big bads,” as they are referred to in the show, and situations the Scoobies face characterize problems and social issues young adult sometimes have to face in real life. Certain characters in *Buffy* have an abusive boyfriend, lose a parent, have sex for the first time, move to a new school, attempt suicide, cope with a breakup, and “come out” as gay or lesbian. Even though *Buffy* addresses serious issues, the writing is so witty and clever that the gravity of these issues does not weigh down the humor and pace of the show. Unlike some teen vampire and classic vampire tales, such as Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, that display passive women and archaic male chivalry, Buffy’s

treatment of women and men, human and supernatural, presents modern gender roles and sexuality to accompany the changing culture.

Chapter 1. The Modern Female Victim

Buffy the Vampire Slayer defies the traditional depiction of women in Stoker's *Dracula*, the quintessential Gothic horror vampire tale. In modern horror films, the "Beautiful Blonde" and the "Final Girl" are typical conventions of the genre, and both *Dracula* and *Buffy* include women, who could potentially assume these conventions. In *Dracula*, the two main female characters, Lucy Westenra and Mina Murry, are the Gothic versions of the "Beautiful Blonde" and the "Final Girl," but the characters from *Buffy* assume these roles and alter them for the modern audience. The creator, Joss Whedon, constructed this show with a feminist agenda saying, "I would love to see a movie in which a blond wanders into a dark alley, takes care of herself and deploys her powers" (Jowett 20). *Buffy Summers* is that blonde, but unlike Lucy, she survives the tale.

The other convention, the Final Girl, is the female character who fights and usually kills the villain at the end of the horror film. According to Jason Middleton, "[The Final Girl] is represented as less conventionally sexually attractive, favoring boyish, 'practical' clothing; she is not sexually promiscuous; she possesses detective-like curiosity; and she has an ambiguously gendered name" (161). Many of these traits are conventionally masculine and serve to make the Final Girl less feminine, which enables her to survive. In *Dracula*, however, Mina acts as the Gothic Final Girl, who gains femininity and loses her power. Surprisingly, Willow not *Buffy* is the Final Girl, who throughout the series gains femininity while not sacrificing power (Middleton 161). *Buffy* gives Lucy and Mina a second chance to fight their own battles against the vampires, while still allowing them to be feminine women.

Buffy vs. Lucy

Dracula's Lucy Westenra is the perfect, young woman; not only is she decently wealthy, she is also a beautiful and proper lady. Three men fall in love with her and do all that they can to cure her of her "ailment," and even Van Helsing falls in love with her in a way. He says she is "a sweet young lady, whom, too, I came to love... [I]f my death can do her good even now, when she is the dead Un-dead, she shall have it freely" (Stoker 321). Lucy is sweet, innocent, and loving, and her "'only crime' is her beauty," according to Milly Williamson, because it is a "'blatant sign' of her sexuality," which leads to her sickness and eventual transformation into a vampire (27). Before she is a vampire, she is beautiful with long blonde hair that lies in "sunny ripples" (Stoker 282). She is a passive character, who is a victim of literary "fan service." On multiple occasions in his journal, Dr. Seward comments on Lucy's heaving breasts, as well as detailed and superfluous descriptions of her appearance (Stoker 252, 254, 276, 282, 324, 328). Although on the surface men see her as a desirable wife, she flirts with the suitors and Van Helsing, which reflects her hidden sexual interests. Lucy has a subconscious sexual curiosity that emerges in her letter to Mina which asks, "Why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble" (Stoker 199)? She likes all of her suitors and does not wish to reject any of them, but society deems it forbidden for a woman to even think in such ways. Although she never gives her opinion of the "New Woman," she embodies the New Woman with her ideas about sexuality (Williamson 11-13). When Lucy becomes ill, her doctors notice the puncture wounds on her neck, which can signify virginal corruption or loss of virginity. Her three suitors and Abraham Van Helsing, whom Milly Williamson refers to as the "Crew of Light," become obsessed with her purity and goodness, doing everything they can to protect her from *Dracula's* pollution; however, all their protective measures seem to no avail. Van Helsing and Arthur compare the frequent blood transfusions with sexual intercourse and marriage, so in

the end Lucy does get to “marry” the three suitors as she has desired. All of these events taint the “pure” and “good” Lucy, and eventually, she dies even though the Crew of Light cause her “corruption.” Prescott and Giorgio say, “Through her excessive emotion and sexual desire, Lucy is positioned outside Victorian normativity and thus draws the vampire to her” (500). When Lucy’s body dies, the vampire within emerges with sexual wantonness and voluptuous features. The modern Lucy, Buffy, is a similar character, but stakes Dracula instead of becoming his victim.

In the pilot episode of *Buffy*, “Welcome to the Hellmouth,” Buffy, realizes someone is following her and accidentally walks into a dark alley with no outlet (1.01). Instead of becoming a victim as expected, she performs gymnastics’ moves from a high bar and tackles her stalker, who happens to be Angel, her future boyfriend. Sarah Michelle Gellar, the actress who plays Buffy, is a petite blonde with large green eyes and is (hetero)sexually attractive. Foes and men frequently underestimate Buffy’s abilities because of her wardrobe and physical appearance. Elana Levine believes Buffy looks the way she does in order to embrace “a simultaneously ‘girlie’ and tough style that parodically plays with the culturally coded features of femininity and masculinity, as well as with the longstanding distinction between feminism and femininity” (177). Buffy is not the unshaven radical feminist of the 1970s nor is she the Barbie “Valley girl,” who needs a man to open her car door because her nails are wet. She tries out for the cheerleading squad, cleans her dishes, and battles an evil witch after school (1.03). Buffy’s femininity is a direct contradiction to her strength and fighting abilities, and Levine also states that Buffy’s femininity does not affect her abilities as a slayer or define her (Levine 177-179). Her femininity, or more importantly her costume choice, is the subject many scholars debate.

Buffy and many of the other characters are victims of “fan service” in the show and outside of it. In particular, Buffy wears shirts with plunging necklines, tight leather pants, short

skirts, and high heels frequently in the show. There is even a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* drinking game, in which the players drink every time her bra strap is exposed (Levine 179). Buffy's wardrobe is problematic because she is supposed to be a powerful female character, but she is falling under the "male gaze" (Mulvey 6-14). From a male perspective, Jason Middleton agrees that the show does offer fan service, although it is "strategically constructed to contain these elements and keep them beneath its thematic surface" (145). He also claims that the show provides "dual satisfaction" because teenage girls can identify with Buffy, and males can watch an attractive girl "dust" some vampires in a halter top and skirt (Middleton 155). Although the show displays Buffy's body at times, it is limited. The narrative controls most of the fan service, so shots of Buffy walking down the hall in a short skirt are necessary for the plot but are also controlled by the camera's keeping its distance and not lingering on her body (1.01). Middleton makes a valid point by saying the use of fan service is not as excessive as in other shows, but sometimes her costumes are distracting, such as her short Little Red Riding Hood Halloween costume (4.04). Granted the dress is not low cut and the camera does not linger on her body too much (Middleton 163). Rachel Fudge, however, believes that Buffy's clothes "compromise her feminist potential," which Levine contradicts by saying that her looks do not benefit or detract from her slaying abilities. Unlike the women of *Charlie's Angels*, Wonder Woman, or Foxy Brown, Buffy's looks are not necessary for her achieving success in the workplace or in the cemetery (Levine 169, 180). In fact, in the season two episode "Halloween," a spell turns Buffy into an 18th Century maiden and all the other characters into whatever they were dressed as for Halloween (2.06). She wears this costume to impress Angel, but her hyper-femininity turns her into a completely useless character when everyone needs the Slayer. It is her physical strength and skills that make Buffy an active main character who controls the narrative of the show and does not become the passive prey to the male gaze (Jowett 23, Williamson 85). Whedon

purposefully made Buffy's appearance hyperfeminine to starkly contrast her physical abilities in order to mock social gender expectations. Throughout the seasons, Buffy grows and explores her sexual nature, which is dangerous for a girl in the horror genre to do.

In many horror films, the Beautiful Blonde is openly sexual and "promiscuous," which marks her for the killing. Whedon explains why the Beautiful Blonde dies in horror films saying, "She was fun, she had sex, she was vivacious. But then she would get punished for it" (Jowett 29). Since Lucy in *Dracula* has sexual desires and has metaphorical, premarital sex with her suitors and Van Helsing, she therefore needs to die for her impurity. Buffy has premarital sex with multiple partners and is not punished for it; however, she only has heterosexual sex with men she knows well or is seriously dating. Although *Buffy* is progressive about female roles, some of the ideas about sex, class, and race are a bit provincial. The show does not condone "promiscuous" sex and deviant sex, which will be further examined in later chapters. Concerning heterosexual sex, Jowett says that "Buffy's sexual purity is not essential, and her power is not dependant on retaining it," which contrasts with *Dracula* (61). Lucy has to die because of her lost innocence, while Buffy's sexuality normalizes her as a character. When she first has sex with Angel, he is the character who loses his soul and suffers, while Buffy emerges completely unharmed. Similar to the explanation of her wardrobe, she loses none of her power by being sexually active, and she also does not use her sexuality as a weapon to fight villains. Likewise, the Buffyverse approves of her sex life by rewarding her with romance after Angel leaves the series. Buffy has a "healthy" sexual relationship with Riley for a period, although her physical strength seriously threatens his male ego (Jowett 61-62).

Buffy does, however, have to cope with society's sexist beliefs about shame and blame. When she first enters college, she has a "one night stand" with Parker and blames herself for it. He convinces many girls that he is a sensitive, romantic man, who truly cares about them, but in

fact is only interested in having sex with them (4.03). He convinces Buffy that she is the one seducing him, when in reality he is the one seducing her. (Jowett 122-123) Buffy blames herself and is ashamed that she had sex with a man she was not seriously dating. It is the common double standard in contemporary society, where women who have sex with multiple men are “sluts,” yet men who have sex with many women are “manly” (Jowett 62-66). Even though the show does not blame her for having sex with Parker, it is still something the show does not promote. *Buffy* tells young female fans that having premarital sex while in a serious, heterosexual relationship is nothing to frown upon, although Buffy’s and Spike’s later relationship is unacceptable because of the lack of love and implied violence.

A similar situation occurs in season five when Buffy faces Dracula in “Buffy vs. Dracula,” except this time, she is aware of the seduction (5.01). Dracula tries to connect with Buffy and bring out the darker side of herself. As in the novel, he can turn into a wolf, a bat, and mist. His “dark, penetrating eyes” hypnotize Buffy when he comes into her room while she is sleeping to bite her. He is, however, not like the other vampires in the show, especially since he does not have a “vamp” face and he slowly kills his prey. Dracula is more like Parker because they both make her want to be taken by them with their false intimacy. Buffy avoids telling anyone about Dracula’s first bite because she is “ashamed” of the implied sexual act (5.01). As with Mina and Lucy, Dracula hypnotizes Buffy and drinks from her and has her drink from him. Instead of connecting to him after the blood exchange, Buffy actually breaks the control he has over her and stakes him twice. Giles and Riley run into the room after she slays Dracula, surprised that she did not need their help; Riley more than Giles. They are the modern Crew of Light, since she does not need them to save her. Because of her appearance and sexuality, the men and Dracula doubt Buffy’s ability to defend herself and survive the battle, but like Edward in “Buffy vs. Edward,” Dracula is no match for Buffy.

In *Buffy*, the Beautiful Blonde is allowed to have sex with men and survive until the end of the series. Her femininity marks her as an attractive, sexual woman, but her strength starkly contrasts social gender expectations. She struggles, as many modern women do, in balancing her independence with the conventions of heterosexual romance (Jowett 66). The series ends with her rejecting Angel in the final episode, “Chosen,” by saying:

I'm cookie dough, okay? I'm not done baking yet. I'm not finished becoming... whoever the hell it is I'm going to turn out to be. I've been looking for someone to make me feel whole, and maybe I just need to be whole. I make it through this, and the next thing, and the next... maybe one day I turn around and realize I'm ready. I'm cookies. And then if I want someone to eat me—or, to enjoy warm, delicious cookie-me, then that's fine. That'll be then. When I'm done (7.22).

She does, nevertheless, imply that in a few years she will be ready to have a relationship, most likely with him. Working on herself and growing up is more important than love to her at the moment, which is something young women need to consider. When Buffy faced Dracula in “Buffy vs. Dracula,” she fought back and staked him twice; she refused to become a helpless victim like Lucy and did not need her boyfriend to save her.

Willow vs. Mina

Similar to the Final Girl, Wilhelmina Murry is Dracula's final victim after changing Lucy, causing everyone to work together to save her life. Unlike Lucy, no one ever makes comments about her beauty, so she lacks visible signs of sexuality that made Lucy prey to Dracula. Instead, he is after her to gain access to the men, since Ken Gelder argues that a stronger bond forms between the Crew of Light and Dracula than between them and Mina, the one they trying to protect (Williamson 10). From a different perspective, Dracula wants to

“corrupt” Mina through sexual encounters, which the men fear. This theory seems a bit more likely because earlier in the novel Mina writes about this “New Woman,” who people have been discussing. Even though she seems somewhat curious about the “New Woman” ideas, such as being “allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting” or a woman proposing to a man, she seems to scoff these ideas and find them absurd (Stoker 225). Because of the New Women’s ideas, especially about sexuality, the differences between masculinity and femininity are less definitive. The New Woman is a threat to normalcy, as is Dracula, so the Crew of Light does all in their power to hinder change.

As the antithesis of Lucy, Mina marries Jonathan but shows no signs of sexuality. She acts more as a sister or a mother to the men in her life by consoling them because they can only cry in front of a woman (Stoker 339-340). Quincy Morris even calls her “little girl,” which desexualizes her (Stoker 340). Not only that, she also is intelligent, being a teacher’s assistant and being skilled with the typewriter. Van Helsing says, “Ah, that wonderful Madam Mina! She has a man’s brain—a brain that a man should have were he much gifted—and a woman’s heart (Stoker 343). In this aspect, Mina may be a different sort of New Woman, not in her ideas about sexuality but in her attempt to move into the workplace and the intellectual world. As a teacher’s assistant and the secretary for the Crew of Light, she “has a man’s brain,” which masculinizes her and blurs her gender as the New Woman tries to do. Since she is passive and obedient, she allows the men to keep in the home and private. Her intelligence masculinizes her, which helps her fit the model of the Final Girl and survive.

Like Lucy, the Crew of Light idealizes Mina as the perfect “angel of the house,” which further desexualizes her. She follows their orders and stays in the house because vampire battling “is no place for a woman” (Stoker 360). All her work keeps her in the house. Van Helsing praises her saying, “She is one of God’s women, fashioned by His own hand to show us men and

other women that there is a heaven where we can enter, and that its light can be here on earth. So true, so sweet, so noble..." (Stoker 305). He places Mina on pedestal and gives her unearthly characteristics, since she can never fulfill the expectations he has of her. He describes her as being literally heavenly, which she obviously is not. The men think of her like an asexual child or an angel of the house, and consequently find the sexual threat of Dracula, since he is trying to sexualize her, and the New Woman terrifying. In the end, her perfection and goodness helps the Crew of Light slay Dracula and save her from becoming a vampire. The last chapter describes Mina's future in which she has a son and is happy. Her having a child makes her even more feminine, since she is now a wife and mother. Mina, however, is an obedient, desexualized woman who survives the novel, but her femininity causes her to sacrifice power, which distinguishes her from Willow, the modern Final Girl.

Throughout the series, Willow Rosenberg is probably the character who goes through the most changes. At the beginning of the series, she is the intelligent, asexual, frumpy girl, but as the series progresses, she becomes a powerful, attractive witch, who is stronger than Buffy by far. Like the Final Girl model, Willow at first wears baggy clothes and expresses no real sexual desire, except for her crush on Xander. Her "sexuality is muted by its cuddliness, signified by her choice of pink, of cuddly sweaters and dungarees" (Jowett 56). She is intelligent and a master of computers, which is similar to Mina's skill with the modern typewriter. Willow, however, refuses to limit her power and femininity, as Mina does. Willow's friendship with Buffy indicates her first steps into femininity because now her "best friend" is a girl not Xander, a boy. Her female relationships empower her outside of male influence (Jowett 37). Her budding femininity allows her have relationships, but when she does have long-term, romantic relationships, they are "cuddly" not erotic. Unlike Buffy, Willow is rarely naked or wearing little

clothing on screen; the show only implies that she has sex with Oz and Tara. As she matures, she becomes more powerful and feminine.

Not only does Willow grow in supernatural power but she also grows personally. In the episode "Fear, Itself," she tells Buffy, "I'm not your sidekick anymore" (4.04). Mina has the abilities to become a leader in *Dracula*, but she chooses to be a dutiful woman and take orders from the men. Willow becomes more of a leader, especially when Buffy dies at the end of season five, by taking over the household and organizing Buffy's resurrection. As a woman, she is an independent witch and does not look for male approval, although she gratefully accepts Giles' praise. Even though he gives her advice, he does not act as a mentor for her as he does for Buffy, which makes Willow an independent learner (Jowett 39). She controls her knowledge and her level of power. As she grows more powerful, she becomes more feminine as well.

While Buffy is coded as a hybrid of masculinity and femininity, Willow is solely female, which is why Jowett claims she is the most feminist of all the characters in *Buffy*, especially since she is more powerful than Buffy (59). Being a witch, her power is feminine because it is connected to the earth and her emotions. When the dark side of magic tempts Willow, she becomes more masculine in her perspective. Like many men, according to Jowett, she identifies herself with the role she plays in the group; in the episode "Grave," she says, "I am the magic" (6.22). Her power causes her to become an individualist and look for ways to deal with life through magic instead of through her relationships (Jowett 39). Willow becomes competitive, selfish, and emotionally and physically inaccessible, which Jowett believes are not feminine traits. When she is Dark Willow, her eyes and hair turn black. In the season six finale, Dark Willow kills Warren for shooting Tara by torturing him with a bullet, flaying him, and then burning him. He pleads for her to stop the entire time, while she slowly penetrates him with a bullet, which symbolizes a rape. Her powers are used for personal revenge in which she takes

the masculine position of a rapist (Jowett 40). Willow sees her powers as masculine and violent, so in the seventh season, she tries to find the goodness in her magic. It is also in this season when Willow blatantly displays her sexuality in her erotic relationship with “Slayer” Kennedy. The Buffyverse rewards her efforts to become “good” again by allowing her to have an exciting, new relationship with Kennedy and by fully identifying her as sexual, feminine woman. In the final episode, she connects her powers to “good” magic through her emotions and femininity and becomes Willow the White; a goddess glowing radiantly (Jowett 57-59). Her magic empowers all the potential Slayers, which is a way of spreading her and Buffy’s female power to other girls. This transformation signifies her femininity and her goodness.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer gives equal agency to all of its main characters, as well as different versions of strong female role models. The women who die, physically and emotionally, in *Dracula* have a second chance in *Buffy* to fight back against vampires and suffocating men and to grow as women. In the Buffyverse, Lucy would be ready for Dracula with a stake in her hand and a witty remark about his attempts at seduction, and Mina would disobey the Crew of Light’s orders and fight alongside of the men. Young girls can learn from *Buffy* that expressing sexuality is nothing to be ashamed of, and girls can like dressing up and giggling about boys and still be strong independent women like Buffy and Willow.

Chapter 2. Vampire Women, Real and Metaphorical

The examination of the female vampires in *Dracula* illuminates men's perceptions of women because many of these women do not have personalities or even names. Jowett says, "Like the horror and vampire genres, female vampires are about transgression, the disruption of stability and the boundaries between life and death, human and monster, old and young, and mother and child" (71). In the novel, the female vampires mainly signify female sexuality, which the men fear. The female vampires in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, however, only demonstrate what the Buffyverse approves of young women doing. Vampirism symbolizes different sexual taboos, yet the vampirism in itself is not always literal. Faith's and even Buffy's vampire-like behaviors signifies the dark side within them that they need to slay. These taboos are not necessarily evil, but they are behaviors that the Buffyverse does not endorse.

Loss of Virginity

To ensure that Lucy is actually dead, Van Helsing and Seward go to the graveyard and describe "a dark-haired woman" they realize is Lucy (Stoker 323). The innocent blonde Lucy is now a dark-haired monster, who drinks the blood of babies; she is not the mother a woman should be. When she sees Arthur, she seductively cries, "Come to me, Arthur. Leave these others and come to me. My arms are hungry for you. Come, and we can rest together. Come, my husband, come" (Stoker 324). He almost submits to her, but Van Helsing breaks the trance. She disgusts the men with her animalistic actions and impurity; they call her "unclean" because she is a "fallen woman."

Later when the Crew of Light go to Lucy's grave to slay her, they see her and say, "...we could see that the lips were crimson with fresh blood, and that the stream had trickled over her chin and stained the purity of her lawn death-robe" (Stoker 324). Not only does Seward focus on

the redness of her lips but on how the dripping blood stains her purity that they all treasure. The dripping blood symbolizes her loss of virginity, which the men find shocking and unbearable. Before they kill her, Seward again mentions her loss of innocence, which they are returning to her. He says, “She seemed like a nightmare of Lucy as she lay there; the pointed teeth, the bloodstained, voluptuous mouth—which it made one shutter to see—the carnal and unspiritual appearance, seeming like a devilish mockery of Lucy’s sweet purity” (Stoker 326). The red lips and the blood signify Lucy’s loss of purity, which the men do not want to acknowledge, even if it is only a symbolic loss of innocence. Her ideas and curiosity about sex would shock the men, who love her, and because of it, she had to die in order to preserve social order.

Williamson goes into great detail how the men’s staking of her Lucy is a threatening act to women. Vampire Lucy personifies female sexuality, in particular the New Woman. Not only is she “unclean,” but she also is a “polyandrist” from the blood transfusions earlier in the novel. In order to punish and purify Lucy for her sexuality, the men “group rape” an “unconscious woman.” After the staking, they decapitate her, which is a way to separate the New Woman’s mind from her body to keep her passive (Williamson 13). They are silencing her body and keeping it inactive, so she does not rebel against the norms (Williamson 18). This act is not only violent but also sexual to the men. When Van Helsing first suggests that he and Dr. Seward need to break into her coffin and decapitate her, Seward shudders at the horrible thought of desecrating her body (Stoker 316). After the Crew of Light sees her licentiousness, they all shudder but in sexual excitement because they know that she is wanton and carnal. Because Seward says he can “perform it with ‘savage delight,’” the act becomes an “erotically-charged corpse mutilation” (Williamson 19). In this case, the men seem to become more monstrous than Lucy is. In *Dracula*, Lucy’s sexuality is threatening to her suitors’ perception of her, and because she subconsciously accepts Dracula’s promise of sexual freedom, the men have to force her into

submission in order to restore her holiness. She is not the Lucy they idolized and idealized, which to them means she could not live.

Sexual Promiscuity and the Vagina Dentata

Lucy is not the only female vampire in *Dracula*, and Dracula's "brides" are the epitome of temptation and corruption. In Dracula's castle, Jonathan encounters Dracula's brides, who are three women he has turned into vampires. Stoker uses these women as an example of another form of female vampire as opposed to the fallen-woman-vampire, although they are still primitive, voluptuous women. Dracula's brides embody unchecked sexual liberation, which also proves dangerous to the social order. Two of them are dark, but the other is a blonde.

Van Helsing finds the three brides asleep and tries to kill them. He easily kills the brunettes because they have a "voluptuous," erotic beauty he easily dismisses, but he struggles to kill the blonde saying, "She was so fair to look on, so radiantly beautiful, so exquisitely voluptuous, that the very instinct of man in me, which calls some of my sex to love and to protect one of hers, made my head whirl with new emotion" (453). She looks innocent compared to the brunette temptresses, and he wants to save her. The blonde vampire is a perverted innocence that is more terrifying to the men because she challenges their assumptions about pure-looking women.

Lucy's hair turns brown because she is tainted, but this vampire has stunning "golden hair" and "sapphire" eyes. The blonde vampire fits the standard of beauty that Western Europe and England idealize, which creates a sense of familiarity. Earlier Jonathan even says, "I seemed somehow to know her face" (181). He may be referring to Lucy, who is also beautiful and blonde, which foreshadows her transformation. Both men find their blatant sexuality threatening but difficult to resist.

The vampires' sucking of blood connotes sexual acts, which is why the female vampire evokes anxieties in the men. Dracula's brides are different from Lucy in that they seem to be sexually experienced women to Jonathan and Van Helsing, and they promise sexual pleasure with their red mouths. When Jonathan meets Dracula's brides, he says, "All three had brilliant teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips...I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (Stoker 181). With their beauty and tantalizing lips, Jonathan desires them and wants them to kiss him and drink his blood, even though he loves Mina and knows the women are dangerous, and he would have given in to the temptation if Dracula had not interrupted the women's seduction. These vampires hold a power over men like Jonathan because of the men's inability to resist the brides' allures. Vampires blur the line between masculine and feminine sexuality since the vampire's mouth is "both an 'inviting orifice' and a 'penetrating bone,'" which implies masculine and feminine characteristics (Williamson 10). Williamson says that vampires' fangs reference the "vagina dentata," which is the mythical vagina with teeth that consumes the penis (12). Men feel anxiety about the female vampires, especially about their mouths and teeth that evoke fears of consumption by the women, physically and sexually. The women have unparalleled sexual wantonness that will kill the man metaphorically and literally when they drink his blood. They are cannibals, which is another taboo that horrifies these men.

Similarly Seward describes Lucy's lips and mouth in great detail; he says, when they stake her, "a hideous, blood-curdling scream came from the open red lips. The body shook and quivered and twisted in wild contortions; the sharp white teeth champed together till the lips were cut, and the mouth was smeared with a crimson foam" (Stoker 328). She dies with an orgasmic scream with a focus on her mouth which has vaginal imagery attached to it. She perilously called to Arthur, who almost succumbed to her, but instead, he stakes her and destroys

the threat of a man-eater. The female vampires in *Dracula* dominate the men with their beauty, which helps them ensnare men and feed. Female vampires are sometimes more terrifying than male vampires. Where males, like Dracula, use violent force to feed off of victims, such as in the bedroom scene with Mina, the female vampire uses her overt sexuality to seduce her victims into willing submission. When in Dracula's castle, Jonathan says he wants the blonde to bite him. Although he knows that something is suspicious about them, he is still attracted to them and welcomes their advances. The female vampire outwardly repulses her victims but still draws them in with her beauty and oozing sexuality; she promises pleasures to her victims and infiltrates their defenses. The peril of the female vampire is even more horrifying to men because she is a moral and physical hazard. In *Buffy*, the threat is more figurative with the character of Faith, who is a sexually promiscuous "bad girl."

Emerging unexpectedly in the third season, Faith, the other Slayer, comes to Sunnydale and befriends Buffy. Instantly Buffy realizes that Faith is uncontrollable and impulsive. The *Watcher's Guide, Volume 2* says, "Faith demonstrates her hunger for food, sensuality and slaying (146). She is like the dark haired, vampire version of Buffy, since she says, "I know Faith isn't exactly on the cover of *Sanity Fair*, but she's had it rough. Different circumstances, that could be me" (3.21). What makes them different is Buffy's family, friends, and middle-class wealth. Jowett says that Faith's lower-class background produces in her a different version of femininity probably connected with sexual promiscuity (85). She shows more cleavage and skin than Buffy and wears deep red, glossy lipstick called "Harlot" (4.16). Unlike the other girls in the show, she does not have sex with long-term boyfriends; instead, she takes a more "masculine" approach and uses them to satisfy her sexual needs and discards them (Jowett 86). She is a man-eater, who takes what she wants from men and then throws them away when they are empty. In "Faith, Hope, and Trick," she says, "Ain't it crazy how slaying just always makes you hungry and

horny?” (3.03). She associates violence and sex, and because she enjoys them, she is “bad.” Unlike Faith, Buffy hates the violence of slaying and suppresses the sexual arousal it causes in her. Slaying is a responsibility for her, while Faith finds it enjoyable and a sign of superiority. According to some theorists, strong women are more dangerous than men because when they become violent, they become uncontrollable, which is what happens to Faith (Jowett 84). Her personality makes her volatile and wild, which is one of the fears associated with powerful women.

Like Faith, Drusilla is also an uncontrollable, promiscuous woman. When Angelus returns, he and Drusilla imply that they are having a sexual affair while Spike is wounded. Angelus flaunts it in front of Spike saying, “I know Dru gives you pity access, but you have to admit it’s so much easier when I do things for her” (2.16). Even *The Watcher’s Guide, Volume 1* blames Drusilla for the love triangle instead of Spike or Angel since she is the one cheating on her boyfriend. Dru needs to have multiple men in order to satiate her sexual desires. Eventually, she leaves Spike in the third season episode “Lover’s Walk” for a chaos demon because Spike is not “demon enough for the likes of her” (3.08). He says that she was flirting with everyone, and he then caught her with the chaos demon. She is an unfaithful woman, who always needs a man in her life, and will cheat on her boyfriend if necessary. She uses men sexually and emotionally and abandons them when she feels they are of no use to her as she did with Spike, and this is what makes her a “man-eater.” Although she is not seductive in the same way as Dracula’s brides and Lucy, Dru can hypnotize people, which makes her mysterious. She uses her abilities on Kendra, one of the other Slayers, to kill her (2.21). This is also a technique she uses to feed on humans. Because Drusilla is a vampire this makes her even more of a threat because she literally consumes men, although she prefers children. Since she is mad and promiscuous, Drusilla is an unruly “man-eater” like Faith and Dracula’s brides, which makes her a threat to patriarchy.

Vampire Lucy, Dracula's brides, and Drusilla are seductive, licentious women, who consume men metaphorically and literally. Faith is similar to them, especially since she is the "dark" version of Buffy, which makes her the Vampire Buffy. All these women are powerful because of their ability to lure men and kill them with their fangs or their insatiable sexual appetites. Unlike Buffy, they use their appearance and sexuality as a weapon to lure and kill men and women. *Buffy* emphasizes the emotional aspect of relationships as the essential element in them. Like Willow's magic, emotions are a feminine trait, which makes these emotionally detached women "masculine" and therefore negative. Buffy could have been Faith, but her deep relationships and emotions keep her feminine and balanced.

Oedipus Complex

Not only does the female vampire personify female sexuality, but she also embodies sexual taboos, such as incest. Using Freudian psychoanalysis, Ernest Jones claims that the female vampire signifies sexual repression derived from the Oedipus complex. *Dracula* displays the humans as chaste and the vampires as perverse and corrupt (Williamson 7-8). When Dracula's brides seduce Jonathan, he becomes a passive man basking in their sexuality. Because Mina is sexless, he finds this taboo so alluring. Williamson says that vampirism is also a distortion of heterosexual marriage, since "the vampires [...] only attack members of the opposite sex" (8). Although vampirism in *Dracula* only produces the anxieties caused by the Oedipus complex, characters in *Buffy* actually enact it.

In season two, the "big bad" of the season is the team of Spike and Drusilla, and when Angel loses his soul, he joins them. She calls them a family because Darla from the first season is Angel's sire. Angel sired Drusilla, but before he turned her into a vampire, killed her family and tortured her to the point of insanity. Years later, she sired Spike. Blood ties this family

together. In “What’s My Line, Part Two,” Drusilla says, “You’ve been a very bad daddy,” as she pours holy water on Angel (2.10). Not only does she get physical revenge on him, but “[t]he suggestion of incest is made; as Dru’s sire, Angel is both her former lover and the ‘father’ of her vampire state. She is thus punishing him for taking away her innocence” (McCracken 124). In “Innocence,” after he loses his soul, she announces, “You’ve come home... We’re family again. We’ll feed, and we’ll play” (2.14). “Play” being a euphemism for sexual acts, she implies that she will be having sex with Spike and Angel, which makes them an odd, incestuous love triangle.

As Spike’s sire, Drusilla sometimes acts motherly to him, especially during the period when he is wounded. In “Passion,” she tries to feed him a puppy and says, “Now open up for Mummy,” while pretending it is an airplane (2.17). When he kills a Slayer, she has motherly pride and boasts about his deed, and she also nurtures him physically and emotionally. Since they are in a sexual relationship and she frequently acts as a mother, their relationship mimics an incestuous one. Although Spike seems to truly love Dru, as much as a demon can, she uses this position to manipulate him, especially when she is weak at the beginning of the season (Jowett 73-76). Similarly, when Darla sires Angel, she slices open her breast and has him drink her blood, which is reminiscent of the scene in *Dracula* when Mina drinks blood from Dracula’s chest (Jowett 73). The act is a perversion of motherhood and the bond between a mother and her nursing child, yet with the blood, the child is receiving eternal life like a mother giving her child life from her milk. Both Dracula and Darla die in their stories, and Angel is the one to stake Darla as a way of punishing her for this behavior (Jowett 74). Another incestuous love triangle exists between Drusilla, Darla, and Angel, which the series alludes to but does not go into in detail. Being Angel’s sire, Darla is in a way Drusilla’s vampiric grandmother, which complicates this relationship even more. Angel has a sexual relationship with his “mother” and his

“daughter” (Jowett 75). As a sire, the female vampires are mothers to these male vampires but are also in the position of a lover.

Because of Drusilla’s deteriorated mental status, she acts frequently like a child, playing with dolls and demanding her needs be fulfilled immediately. Children are also one of Drusilla’s favorite “meals,” which is a perversion of her feminine nature. In “Lie to Me,” the episode begins with Dru walking through a playground in all white and trying to kill a boy, which is reminiscent of Lucy’s “Bloofer Lady” (2.07). In *Dracula* and *Buffy*, female vampires feed off of babies and children, as well as men, which causes anxieties in men because women are supposed to give life to children, not take it from them. Drusilla is an inversion of motherhood in this instance. As a female vampire, Drusilla and Darla are as unsettling as Lucy and Dracula’s brides because they personify the taboos of incest and infanticide.

Lesbianism

Being one of the first primetime shows to air a lesbian kiss on screen, it is surprising that *Buffy* frequently displays lesbianism as something deviant. Female vampires’ power comes from their attractiveness and sexuality, but their violent behavior masculinizes them. Because of this, typically female vampires were usually lesbians in literature, such as in Sheridan LeFanu’s “Carmilla.” Jowett believes that Darla and Drusilla were at the center of their love triangle, in which they excluded Angel just as Drusilla and Angel exclude Spike. If Drusilla were lesbian or bisexual, she personifies another sexual taboo, as well as a woman living outside of the patriarchal structure (72, 79). Drusilla’s sexuality is speculation, though; she still, however, breaks from many social conventions and threatens the norm. Although homosexuality is generally accepted in contemporary society, homosexual acts are still illegal in some states;

people also label sexual acts, such as sodomy and oral sex, as deviant sexual behaviors and “unnatural.”

One of the strangest lesbian or bisexual vampires in the show is Vampire Willow, who appears in “The Wish” and “Doppelgangland,” but since she is also a sociopathic sadist, the show displays her sexuality as negative (3.09, 3.16). It is even more bizarre when she flirts with “good-girl” Willow. In “Doppelgangland,” Good Willow says about Vamp Willow, “I think I’m kinda gay” (3.16). At this time, it seems like Vamp Willow is an inversion of Good Willow; she wears dark, tight fitting clothes, is openly sexual, is confident, and is powerful. Instead, this is more of a foreshadowing of Dark Willow in season six. Vamp Willow is similar to Faith because she is what Willow could have become under different circumstances.

In season four, Faith awakens from her coma and switches bodies with Buffy. One of the first things she does is takes a bath where she can explore Buffy’s body in an intimate setting. It is almost “a perverse form of love-making” (Jowett 86). During this time, she caresses her arms and legs and stares at her face in the mirror, making different expressions and investigating every inch of this new body. She then encounters Spike and Riley and teases them with S/M speech, not only to sexually stimulate them but to excite Buffy’s body as well (Jowett 86). She then has sex with Riley, but it seems like she really just wants to experience sex with Buffy. When Buffy learns about this, she feels violated because it is almost as if Faith raped Buffy while she was unconscious. It was Buffy’s body that aroused Faith not Riley’s body. Parallel to Vamp Willow’s flirting with Good Willow, Faith’s obsession with Buffy is also an odd narcissistic, sexual fixation. Nevertheless, Faith seems to have sexual feelings for Buffy at some level, which the Buffyverse condemns.

Being a television show that addresses difficult issues, the lesbian vampires’ relationships seem to be a warped idea of romance, while Willow’s two serious lesbian relationships are

portrayed in a positive light. The difference in the relationships is the level of emotional involvement: *Buffy* constantly emphasizes the importance of love and emotional connection. Justine Larbalestier says Drusilla and Darla “are capable of passionate love, but not of the broader emotional register that goes with it” (Williamson 76). This also true of the other female vampires; they feel passion but not the emotional connection. Family and friends keep Buffy from becoming Faith. From the perspective of the Buffyverse, sex without love, or at least deep caring, passion, is nothing anyone should want. These relationships are deviant because they lack the type of mindset *Buffy* is trying to promote.

Sadomasochism

Since the vampires in *Dracula* and *Buffy* associate sex and violence, many of the characters imply or openly practice sadomasochism. In *Dracula*, S/M does not surface much, except for the scenes in which the brides seduce Jonathan and Mina drinks Dracula’s blood. The female vampires have aggressive fangs, and they also dominate Jonathan. He plays the passive, masochistic role, while they take the dominant position on top. “He enjoys a ‘feminine’ passivity and awaits the delicious penetration from a woman whose demonism is figured as the power to penetrate” (Williamson 10). Later, Mina drinks from Dracula’s chest “[w]ith his left hand he held both [her] hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom” (Stoker 381). It replicates forced oral sex, and after he flees, Mina is traumatized and terrified. Mina is not like Lucy, so he has to force himself upon her. Dracula seems to enjoy this. In *Buffy*, the vampires and figurative vampires willingly participate in S/M.

From the opening scene in the first episode when Darla ravishes her victim, it is clear that the vampires in the show are sadists who enjoy terrifying and killing their victims. Many of the

vampires also practice S/M, Drusilla being the first to discuss it in the show. When she tortures Angel in “What’s My Line, Part Two,” she enjoys inflicting pain and taunting him (2.10). Shirtless as always and tied to a bedpost, she dribbles holy water on him as she tells him details about her family members, whom he killed. Angel acts almost as if he enjoys it by the way he breathes heavily and throws back his head in orgasmic agony. In this episode and “Lie to Me,” she and Angel allude to past acts when he used to “tease” and “hurt” her when he was Angelus. Now that he has a soul, he is the masochist, and she is the sadist, who calls him “pet” and “doggy” (2.07, 2.10). Drusilla also cuts Spike’s cheek and licks the blood, which is an erotic moment, especially with the consumption of blood (2.03). Being a vampire and having fluid gender, the vampires easily switch from dominant to submissive.

Vampire Willow is another female vampire who is sadistic. In “The Wish,” the Master allows her to “play with the puppy,” who is actually Angel. Vamp Xander gives her matches, while she straddles Angel on the floor; in a creepy voice, she says, “That’s right, Puppy. Willow’s going to make you bark” (3.09). As he is chained and shirtless, the camera lingers over his chest, which is covered in scars; from the doorway, Xander lights a match and flicks it onto Angel’s chest. She asks Xander if he wants to participate to which he replies, “No thanks, baby. I just want to watch you go,” in a husky voice as he slowly slides his hand up and down a bar on the door (3.09). When she lights the match, the screen goes black, and then Angel screams. Xander’s role as the male observer reflects the homoerotic repositioning of Angel. Both men and women enjoy his body.

The human vampire, Faith, also alludes to practicing S/M, especially in the episode “Who Are You?” when she switches bodies with Buffy. At The Bronze, she sees Spike and decides she wants to tease him because it is something Buffy would never do. She says:

I could have anything... anyone... even you, Spike. I could ride you at a gallop until your legs buckled and your eyes rolled up. I've got muscles you've never even dreamed of. I could *squeeze* you until you popped like warm champagne, and you beg me to hurt you just a little bit more. And you know why I don't? Because it's wrong (4.16).

From there, Faith goes to seduce Riley. She enters dramatically, posing at the door and then straddles him in a chair, kisses him, and bites his lip. He mentions the open door, but she does not care that it is open. Voyeurs do not make her uncomfortable, which classifies her as an exhibitionist. She crawls on the bed as the camera zooms in on her, and she says, "So... how do you want me? [...] What nasty little desire have you been itching to try out? Am I a bad girl? Do you want to hurt me?" However, he tells her that he does not want to "play" with her (4.16). "Playing" lacks the emotional connection that he and most of the Scoobies link with sex, and Faith does not understand this connection. In this instance specifically, the Buffyverse criticizes S/M by insinuating that it is shallow and "meaningless" as Faith says (4.16). When Buffy starts a sexual relationship with Spike, she says the same thing to him.

After Willow brings Buffy back to life, Buffy realizes that Spike can hurt her even though he has the chip in his head. She insists something is wrong with her, especially since she has been feeling depressed and stressed. She and Spike have an intense, violent fight during which they start to have aggressive sex as the house literally crumbles around them. He says, "I love you," which she rejects saying, "You're in love with pain" (6.09). The next morning they wake up covered in wounds, which implies that the sex was very rough. In "Dead Things," Spike says, "The things you do. The way you make it hurt in all the wrong places. I've never been with such an animal" (6.13). Although she denies that she is animalistic, he threatens to show her the bite marks. He then pulls out a pair of handcuffs, but she tells him that she does not trust him enough. Later, Spike and Buffy have sex in the loft at The Bronze, while he makes her look at

her friends. He is in control in this situation, and he confronts her about how she secretly relishes in the excitement and the secrecy of their affair. She likes the danger of being with a soulless vampire and also of being submissive. Like the other vampiric S/M relationships, they switch roles. Buffy has a dream in which she is on top of a handcuffed Spike, which is probably a memory, but when Buffy confesses to Tara, she asks, “Why do I let Spike do those things to me?” (6.13). She tells Tara that she does not love him but that she is just using him so she can “feel,” which makes Buffy seem more like Faith in this aspect. Although Buffy feels guilty about this taboo relationship, Tara and *Buffy* sympathize with her and excuse her actions because of her mother’s death, her stressful life, and her being forced out of heaven. Even *The Watcher’s Guide, Volume 3* says, “Feeling that she came back ‘wrong,’ Buffy goes further into despair and begins to have sex with Spike, continuing to be interested in him solely because he makes her feel something...anything” (Ruditis 113). Being a tad bit biased, even the author, Paul Ruditis, “forgives” Buffy for having a “relationship,” as he puts it in quotes, with Spike (115). Even though the Buffyverse pardons her for this lapse in judgment, it does approve of the relationship. She eventually ends it because she does not love him, then rejects his further advances, and is almost a victim of rape by Spike. Jowett says that “by becoming the ‘victim’ she also retains (regains) her innocence” (65). After this experience she is “Buffy” again; she is who she was before her death. During this period of sexual deviancy, Buffy becomes like Faith; she is Vampire Buffy.

While the Buffyverse seems to disapprove of S/M, McCracken argues otherwise. She says that “*Buffy* gives girls permission to both fantasize and to enact on non-normative sexual activity, especially variations of penetrating both male and female subjects” (126). The only time the show approves of S/M is during Buffy’s period of experimentation with Spike, and that is because these taboo desires are “fleeting” and “fragile” (McCracken 126). She also mentions the

S/M scene in “Graduation Day: Part One” when Buffy punches Angel repeatedly until he drinks her blood, eliciting an intense orgasm (3.21). This is the only time he drinks her blood, and she allows him to do it because it will save his life. Although McCracken believes that the Buffyverse endorse non-normative sexual activities, the characters who practice S/M are villains, and when Buffy experiments with S/M, the Buffyverse always excuses her actions.

Female vampires in *Dracula* and *Buffy* are women of sexual excess, who are overtly sexual and practice certain taboos. *Buffy* portrays excess of personal traits as something negative, such as Faith’s sexual overindulgence and obsession with power. The women who express an excessive love of violence and sex practice S/M of which the show disapproves. *Buffy* implies that there is lack of love involved in deviant forms of sex, which makes it shallow. Although Buffy and Faith get second chances at love and relationships, the other female vampires do not, which is their punishment for challenging normativity.

Chapter 3. Gender Blurring Vampire Men

Just as female vampires have masculine traits, male vampires have feminine traits. In order for the man to be turned into a vampire, he must first be the victim of a vampire, which places him in a feminine position. Because of this, the male vampire's body is "a site of anxiety and change as well as desire" for female and male viewers, which make them queer characters (Jowett 144-145). The male vampires with souls attempt redemption, which lead them to physical danger. Angel's and Spike's sensitivity and role reversals change them into men who deserve the empowered, modern woman like Buffy.

Angel

As Buffy's adolescent love who eventually earned his own spin-off series, Angel plays an interesting role in the series as a queer character. At first, he seems to fill the gender stereotypes of a heterosexual man. He is tall, muscular, and handsome, as well as brooding and mysterious. He functions, however, mainly as Buffy's love interest-- the maiden of the heroic knight. He acts as the "spectacularized, eroticized body and the traumatized body," which are roles reserved for women (McCracken 120). Being over 200 years older than Buffy, Angel acts a mentor, assisting her in her slaying and her everyday life (Jowett 153). He is also the supporting character, who only acts when she calls upon him. While Buffy drives the narrative and has a private and public life, he only has a private life, which he devotes entirely to her. When Spike and Drusilla capture and torture him in "What's My Line, Part One and Two," Buffy says, "[N]obody messes with my boyfriend!" (2.09, 2.10). Of course she saves him, and of course when she finds him, he is shirtless and wounded (McCracken 120-122). Buffy acts as the heroic knight and saves her boyfriend in distress.

Before Spike, Angel is the most powerful male character on the show, but *Buffy* erodes his hypermasculinity through female teenage sadism. Throughout both series, Angel is beaten, stabbed, burned, staked, shot, skewered, and mentally tortured (McCracken 117). The show takes every opportunity it can to have him shirtless or naked in order to place his body on display for girls' pleasure. By having young women torture shirtless Angel, *Buffy* is privileging female desire and female agency. Young women are the advantaged viewers of the show. McCracken says that "Angel's body is a playground for sadomasochistic fantasies: endlessly penetrable, is simultaneously hard and soft features invite viewers to linger over the erotic possibilities of the passive male" (118). Although McCracken compares Buffy to the Final Girl in her article, the Beautiful Blonde suffers similar ordeals as the Final Girl. The Beautiful Blonde does not survive the film, but she typically suffers and lives in fear for a period in the film. McCracken's idea is that Angel suffers for the pain and fear that Buffy's stereotype would normally suffer (119). While in *Dracula*, Jonathan's male permeability is deviant and weak, Angel's permeability is desirable to women. "*Buffy* repositions the female heroine as active, productive, and impenetrable in relation to the male body that is passive, non-procreative, and highly penetrable" (McCracken 123). Because he does not eat, he is impotent, so his body is at the disposal of the female. Since he is immortal and heals quickly, the woman can enjoy his body eternally; he can also experience multiple climaxes, which is another way in which he is feminine and homoerotic (McCracken 123).

Angel's body serves an odd purpose in *Buffy*, acting as a sort of object of punishment for patriarchy. Just as Drusilla tortures him for what he did to her, many of the women in the show torture and hurt him for all the years he tortured and hurt women. Because of what he did in the past, he seeks redemption and believes that all his pain is punishment that he deserves. A part of him seems to welcome and enjoy it on a masochistic level. McCracken calls him a "Christ-like

martyr figure,” who suffers for the women he terrorized. In a broader sense, if the women in the audience take pleasure in Angel’s torture, he “now bears the burden of centuries of patriarchy” (McCracken 123). Even though Angel has many feminine qualities, he still has a hypermasculine exterior and male desire.

Jowett claims that Angel’s sexual nature is his weakness because of issues it causes him in the show, such as providing him “true” happiness and causing competition with other men. His sexuality though is the source of his hypermasculinity. Although Angel is a sensitive, compassionate vampire with a soul, his sexual nature is sometimes more dangerous than his vampiric nature (Jowett 153-155). The first time he kisses Buffy, his vampire face emerges, which could be “a displaced physical manifestation of male desire” (Jowett 155). When he turns into Angelus, he is a scary hypermasculine vampire, who stalks and abuses women. While Dracula threatens the heteronormativity of Victorian England with his differences and fluid gender, Angelus’ normalcy and masculinity become a threat to the Buffyverse. His vampirism is connected to his sexual desire, so as Angel, he fears his masculinity and the stereotypes that society expects him to fulfill. After Angel leaves the show, there is a void in the narrative, which Spike fills quite well.

Spike

William the Bloody, informally known as Spike, was such a fan favorite that *Buffy* had to write him back into the show. “Spike blurs boundaries between good and bad, “masculine” and “feminine,” hetero- and homosexual, man and monster, comic and tragic, villain and hero” (Jowett 158). Unlike Angel, who reeks of physical masculinity, Spike seems to perform masculinity; he tries to be strong, violent, hypersexual, and rebellious, although it appears to be all talk. He rarely succeeds in any of his plans, and even though he killed two slayers in the past,

he seldom kills humans in the narrative. Spike is self-aware, saying in “*Lover’s Walk*”, “I may be love’s bitch, but at least I’m man enough to admit it” (3.08). He uses contrasting gendered terms, like “bitch” and “man,” to explain his lack of masculinity. Not only do people hurt his feelings easily, but he also notices other people’s emotions, which is typically a feminine trait. Different from Riley, who is hypermasculine, Spike talks about his feelings quite openly to anyone who will listen. In “*Lover’s Walk*,” he tells the story of his breaking up with Drusilla multiple times throughout the episode; one of those times with Buffy’s mother over a cup of hot chocolate and mini marshmallows. In fact, most of Spike’s defining relationships are with women.

Because his mother is dying of consumption, Spike turns her into a vampire in order to save her, except the demon inside of her ridicules his femininity and his dependence on her, so he kills her. In his relationship with Dru, he pretends to dominate her with his faux rebel act but allows her to manipulate him quite easily. Unlike the other male vampires in the show, he actually seems to love Drusilla to the full extent that he can, yet being a vampire, he cannot truly love her the way he loves Buffy after he regains his soul. In his relationship with Buffy, he acknowledges her power and independence but also her darker side that no one else seems to see. Furthermore, just as Buffy’s treating Spike like a sex toy masculinizes her, his allowing her to use him feminizes him. He also is one of her only foes who does not underestimate her abilities because she is a girl. Wearing a woman’s coat that belonged to the Slayer, Nikki Wood, is a recognition of female power (Jowett 158-163). He respects female empowerment and absorbs feminine traits, which he masks with a parody of masculinity.

Although he loves Buffy, Spike tries to rape her in “*Seeing Red*.” Instead of realizing that he should have not have tried to force her into sex, he blames Buffy for rejecting him and “uses romantic heterosexual love as a ‘defense’ of sexualized violence” (Jowett 132). He loves her so

much that he needs to have her, but his behavior, especially the borderline stalking, suggests that of the “clingy” girlfriend. Underneath his “tough guy” mask is extreme masculine desire, which emerges in this scary, aggressive moment when the mask reveals what he is hiding. Disgusted with himself, Spike goes on a quest to regain his soul in order to be worthy of Buffy (Jowett 163-165). The quest, however, brings him much pain.

As Buffy said, Spike loves pain. Like Angel, he is shirtless or naked as often as possible, especially in season six; he is also tortured, beaten up, or wounded so frequently that he is covered in bruises and cuts for episodes at a time. Spike is not as soft-looking as Angel, but he replaces Angel as the “eye candy” of the show. His role is similar to Angel’s, as Spike is also atoning for his transgressions and trying to win Buffy’s affections, since he is “impotent” because of the chip in his brain. Because Buffy can hurt him and he can hurt her back, he becomes obsessed with her since they can be rough with each other; he loves having women physically abuse him (McCracken 131). Although his role as the sexual object and submissive victim feminizes him, his attempts at “being a man” for Buffy masculinizes him (Jowett 164-165). His love and devotion for Buffy and even the rest of the Scoobies makes him an intriguing and complex character, which may explain why he is a fan favorite.

The situation in *Dracula* in which the men stake Lucy to restore her purity and innocence does not occur in *Buffy*; in fact, the inversion of this occurs. Buffy “acts as a civilizing influence” on three of her lovers (Jowett 64). In the second season finale, Buffy stabs Angel in the chest with a sword in order to save the world. She does this, however, right after his soul is restored, which is punishment for him but also a “reminder” to the audience about the “rewards and risks of loving beyond social boundaries” (McCracken 129). When Angel returns in the next season, he is feral and traumatized, but slowly over course of the sequential episodes she brings back his humanity. She penetrates him to restore his innocence as the Crew of Light does to Lucy. He is

the only character she has to kill and force to change. Under the authority of the patriarchal Initiative, Buffy convinces Riley to leave and become his own person, but he still has misogynistic ideas, which is why their relationship fails. Spike willingly “tames” himself by regaining his soul, or “innocence,” in order to be worthy of Buffy. As a “moral guardian,” Buffy attempts to make her lovers “good guys,” especially since Angel and Spike frequently act like “bad boys” throughout the series (Jowett 64-65).

Conclusions

The sixth season episode, “Normal Again,” adds an interesting twist to the series. Warren, Andrew, and Jonathan use a demon’s powers to make Buffy believe that the entire series is just a figment of her imagination. In actuality, she has been in a mental institution for six years and has created a fantasy in which she is the hero of this magical world. Her doctor discusses some of the complications within the show, such as there being no “big bad” in this season, which the viewer just accepts, but he focuses on them and questions them. He tells her that her illusion is starting to break down, and she’s not as close with her friends, who were once her “intricate latticework to support her primary delusion” (6.17). Maybe this is the “real world,” and Buffy is actually living in a delusion. In the real world, Buffy is just a normal girl with no special abilities, but the Buffyverse gave her a chance to be a strong, feminine hero. She tells Willow that when she first became the Slayer, her parents put her in a mental institution, but they let her out because she stopped talking about vampires and slaying. She convinces herself that maybe she is still there. The doctor also mentions that she had a breakthrough during the summer, but her friends pulled her back, which is similar to what she says to Spike about being in heaven. She says it was white, and she was happy. The hospital is white, and because she has both of her parents again, Buffy is happy in the real world. At the end of the episode after she fights the demon in her illusion, the shot cuts back to the doctor, who says, “I’m sorry. We’ve lost her,” which suggests that maybe the Buffyverse is a delusion (6.17). If the Buffyverse is not real, then what does that say about women in the “real world”? Since Buffy chooses to return to the Buffyverse, maybe the fact that she chose it gives her agency and power. Despite the somewhat depressing message in this episode, the Buffyverse still has lessons to teach young adults.

Young women can be strong and sexual like Buffy and Willow without the fear of punishment from men and society, but most importantly, women with power need emotional bonds. Friendship is important in the show because these ties keep Buffy and Willow from “going dark,” but it is also the source of most of their power. All of the members of the Scoobies are critical to the success of the group, and they share their power and want to spread it (Durand 45). The final episode of the series demonstrates this well (7.22). Instead of Buffy keeping the power of the Slayer to herself, she has Willow cast a spell that “activates” all the possible Slayers, giving all of them the strength and power that Buffy has. The character She gives Buffy the scythe that Willow uses for the spell, which signifies the passing of knowledge and strength to each generation of women. All the Slayers combating The First Evil with Buffy gain her power, and only through group empowerment and fighting together as a unit do they succeed in their goal (Durand 55). This represents a new kind of female empowerment coming from other women (Payne-Mulliken and Renegar 70). Similar to the way vampires “rape” men and women by drinking their blood, the “Shadow Men” gave the first Slayer her power by raping her with demon energy (7.15). The Shadow Men then delegated a male Watcher to monitor the Slayer and to control her. Throughout the show, men use sex to control and dominate women, which Buffy tries to subvert by rejecting the patriarchs.

Buffy refuses to listen to the Shadow Men and the Watchers Counsel, and by doing this, she stops playing by their rules and changes the way power looks. It is not something to keep for oneself; it is something to share (Durand 55). *Buffy* advocates female empowerment and friendship. This is not only for women though; *Buffy* promotes the bond of sisterhood, which Payne-Mulliken and Renegar say “connotes shared interest, unification, and derived strength and is not necessarily gender exclusive” (67). Everyone plays some part in the Scoobies, even if they are just researching or standing watch. Xander seems like a pointless character sometimes,

although he is the heart of the group who unites them all. People with power though need to be mature enough to wield it. Buffy's "cookie dough" speech reminds young women and men about balancing themselves.

Most of *Buffy's* characters have binary natures that they need to balance. Buffy is human but also more than human; a girl and the Slayer; feminine but also masculine. The female vampires have an excess of negative traits, which is what makes them villains and monsters. Because Faith is human, she has the opportunity to become one of the Scoobies, which she does in the final season. The male vampires have a similar problem. They are monsters with souls as well as masculine and feminine characters. In contemporary society, men cannot be the "tough guys" like Riley who want to protect women and expect to be stronger than them. They cannot be all testosterone and aggression but must be more sensitive and fluid like Angel and Spike. Young women and men are cookie dough; they will not find happiness in anyone but themselves. One day they will notice they are fully baked. They are cookies.

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