

The Sexual Politics of Blood:
Theorizing an Ecology of Gendered Animality and Posthuman Possibilities
Through *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

By

Kailey Havelock,
BA Honours English Literature and Creative Writing,
Concordia University, 2016

A Major Research Paper presented to Ryerson University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the English MA Program
in Literatures of Modernity

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2017

© Kailey Havelock 2017

Author's Declaration for Electronic Submission of a Major Research Paper

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this Major Research Paper. This is a true copy of the Major Research Paper, including any required final revisions.

I do not authorize Ryerson University to lend any part of this Major Research Paper to other institutions or individuals, to reproduce my work by photocopying or by other means, or make my work electronically available to the public.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for their financial support of my graduate studies at Ryerson University, without which this project would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my research supervisor Dr. Laura Fisher of Ryerson University for her thoughtful comments and encouragement, as well as my second reader, Dr. Sarah Henstra, for contributions to the completion of this project. And thank you to Dr. Jesse Arseneau of Concordia University, for allowing me to write a seminar paper on *Buffy*, and for the invaluable feedback that enabled this larger project to emerge.

My work is beholden to the contributions of Marika Brown, MA candidate at Carleton University, who is always ready to recall the names of theorists or titles of articles that would otherwise remain on the tip of my tongue. Thanks as well to Jean Mathew, MA candidate at Ryerson University, for always listening as I try to put my ideas into words. And thank you to Rachel Rosenberg, my own Watcher, for introducing me to *Buffy* at just the right time in my life.

The Sexual Politics of Blood:

Theorizing an Ecology of Gendered Animality and Posthuman Possibilities

Through *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

First airing at the turn of the millennium, Joss Whedon's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) held primetime slots on the WB Television Network for the first five seasons and the United Paramount Network for the final two. The show has since sustained a significant following among fans and scholarly audiences through its recent migration to online streaming services like *Netflix*. The considerable media attention garnered by the 20th anniversary of the series premiere demonstrates this continued cultural relevance.¹ Yet the eponymous heroine is—to borrow Buffy's own words—"carbon dated" ("Welcome to the Hellmouth"). She remains an icon of Girl Power, embodying the distinctive aesthetics and politics of 1990s mainstream feminism—an evident counterweight to the patriarchal hegemony of preceding young-adult supernatural dramas.

Buffy Summers just wants "to date, and shop, and hang out, and save the world from unspeakable evil—you know, girly stuff" ("Faith, Hope, & Trick"). In an alternate universe—"the Buffyverse"—that makes literal the cliché "high school is hell,"² the show's surprising heroine is a teenage girl with modern interests, struggles, and fashion sense. Far from the stereotypical "blonde girl who would always get herself killed" (Whedon qt. in Bellafante n. pag.), Buffy possesses the predestined strength and obligation to protect humanity from the demonic threats to which it remains oblivious. For this reason, the dominant critical reception of the show has been that of feminist praise. The show supposedly "[shatters] restrictive female stereotypes [...] to reverse the historically patriarchal paradigm of woman as victim" (Alessio 731). Critics following

¹ See feature articles by CBC, BBC, *The Guardian*, and elsewhere, as well as a print cover story and several-page spread in *Entertainment Weekly* (March 2017).

² Discussed at length in Tracey Little's "High School is Hell: Metaphor Made Literal in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*."

this line of thought³ read the prominence of women who possess conventionally masculine power as a subversion of patriarchal gender roles.⁴ However, in reading *Buffy* as an idol of matriarchy these critics inevitably overlook the inscription of conventional masculinity and femininity onto antagonists, heroes, and victims within the *Buffyverse*.

The series premiere opens with two teenagers breaking into the local high school after hours. The young woman appears vulnerable and timid, wearing a “Catholic schoolgirl look” (“Angel”) that emphasizes her innocence. Her coercive male companion urges her onwards despite her expressed hesitation, which seems to set up a clichéd horror-film scene of female victimization. However, this depiction is suddenly subverted when the woman, later known as Darla, assumes the unexpected and grotesque form of a vampire and attacks her companion. This turn establishes the show’s counterhegemonic representation of women—as being capable of assuming the conventionally masculine roles of predator or hero. And yet, I argue, this inaugural scene also defines a binary between femininity and animality: Darla transforms from doe-eyed and soft-voiced to amber-eyed and fanged.

Despite the wealth of existing scholarship on gender in *Buffy*, the traditionally masculine role of the predatory animal ascribed to non-human antagonists remains undertheorized. *Buffy* scholar Patricia Pender suggests that “The passion the series continues to elicit in both fans and scholars means that its gender analysis can tend to be simply celebratory rather than genuinely critical” (“Introduction” 2). Taking up this call for criticism, I argue against the dominant reception of the show to contend that *Buffy* imposes a conventional gender binary, obscured to prior critics

³ See Leisa Anne Clarke’s “I am Warrior Woman, Hear Me Roar: The Challenge and Reproduction of Heteronormativity in Speculative Television Programs,” Angelica De Vido’s “‘I Want to be a Macho Man’: Examining Rape Culture, Adolescent Female Sexuality, and the Destabilization of Gender Binaries in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*,” Jennifer Pozner’s “Thwack! Pow! Yikes! Not Your Mother’s Heroines,” and Rhonda Wilcox’s “‘Who Died and Made Her the Boss?’: Patterns of Morality in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.”

⁴ In “The Importance of Being the Zeppo: Xander, Gender Identity and Hybridity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*,” Mark Camron argues, “while masculine power does exist, the women continually subvert it” (n.pag.).

by an unconventional scheme of inscription. Concealed beneath gender performances that appear to transgress conventional roles, an ecology of gendered animality reinforces phallogentric tropes of predatory masculinity. Mirroring the conditions of rape culture, the Buffyverse literalizes the patriarchal consumption of women articulated in prominent animal studies theorist Carol J. Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat*. Masculinity and femininity are inconspicuously rewritten as animality and humanity: human victims of demonic cannibalism are feminized by their vulnerability, while predators or heroes are defined as such by their performance of conventionally masculine dominance.

Patriarchal values are concealed within this ecology and reasserted through the guise of feminist resistance; consequently, critics often misread the part-demon, part-human figure of the slayer as an idol of subversive matriarchal power. To the contrary, I argue that the phallogentric sexual violence implied in vampiric consumption is an inherent reassertion of patriarchal power dynamics. However, within this patriarchy, the slayer presents a formerly untheorized potential to resist the oppression of women. A synthesis of scholarship on sexuality, gender, and violence in *Buffy* illuminates new ways of approaching feminist and posthumanist theories on the sexual politics of meat, vampirism, and vegetarianism. I argue that *Buffy* anthropomorphizes the posthuman utopia of hybrid beings conceived of in theorist Donna Haraway's posthumanist-feminist essay, "A Cyborg Manifesto." Descendent of a mystical matrilineage originating in partially demonic power, Buffy the Vampire Slayer possesses characteristics of both humanity and animality. Through this transcendent coexistence of conventionally oppositional species identities, she is able to resist reductive categorization within the ecology of gendered animality and consequently destabilize the very terms of categorization.

An Allegorical Ecology

Buffy scholar Patrick Pittis claims, “The rhetoric [of vampire slaying] suggests an opposition exists between what is human and what is ‘Other’ than human; those that are not human, such as vampires and demons, are categorized as ‘monsters’ and it is The Slayer’s duty to vanquish them” (125-6). This conceit provides the basis for the show’s engagement with binary divisions between humanity and animality. Animal studies scholar Kay Anderson argues that the anthropocentric privileging of humanity depends upon the assertion of certain criteria that delineate the boundaries of this social group. These boundaries serve to define humanity “*not* as a species of animality, but rather as a condition operating on a fundamentally different (and higher) plane of existence to that of ‘mere animals’” (3). Such distinctions between humanity and animality create a system of valuation in which the animal is given “less ethical value, less ethical consideration, or less ethical standing” (Calarco 417).

In *Buffy*, vampires are aligned with animality because they fail to comply with the anthropocentric belief that humans transcend the biological economy of meat. Anderson discusses the concept of cannibalism as “that defining moment when certain humans [...] became inhuman. In taking human flesh for ‘meat’, such people were themselves little more than brutes” (13). While cannibalism typically refers to humans consuming human flesh, in the *Buffyverse* this abject act is embodied and contained within the non-human. Vampires are made Other by their defiance of a morally-anthropocentric diet abdicates the consumption of humans. That some vampires are not strictly aligned with the non-human in the *Buffyverse* demonstrates the dehumanizing consequences of defying anthropocentric morality; the “vegetarian vampires” that refuse human blood—most notably *Buffy*’s illicit paramours, Angel and Spike—are depicted as less distinct

from humanity. These characters display “a certain type of moralism, that human animals are not beings that should be killed” (Stanescu 28). Because of this restraint, “Buffy extends [to them] the moral consideration usually reserved for human beings” (Marinucci 63). The treatment of these creatures as human-like without defining them as *human* suggests that morality holds nearly—but never exactly—as much weight as mortality in the distinction between humanity and animality. Morality is privileged as a vital trait in the justification of humanist supremacy, defining the exclusive borders of humanity.

This distinctly anthropocentric construction of the boundaries between animality and humanity demonstrates the inherent performativity of species distinctions.⁵ Anderson argues, “Animality [is] a crucial reference point for constructing sociospatial difference and hierarchy” (4); it extends beyond biological conceptions of the non-human animal, to encompass those groups within the human species that are socially construed as animal-like. In the Buffyverse, vampires’ physiological distinction from humanity precedes their defiance of human morals, fundamentally excluding them from the privileged realm of humanity. Antagonistic characters are literally dehumanized and demonized—and yet this conflation of animality and antagonism is embodied in an anthropocentric form, often visually indistinct from that of humans. This simultaneous resemblance to and distinction from humanity points to the allegorical significance of human-animal distinctions in the Buffyverse.

The binary division between humanity and animality facilitates “the discursive production of social groups [based on race, class, gender, etc.] identified for their base drives, proximity to ‘nature,’ infantility, eroticism, and absence of civilized manners” (Anderson 3). Animality is socially constructed and performed; as such, it is often exploited as a vehicle for categorization,

⁵ See Birke et al (171) for further discussion of the performativity of human-animal relations.

valuation, and allegory among human subjects—much like notions of gender. Animal studies scholar Margo DeMello asserts, “Animals are used to symbolize a whole host of characteristics that we see in ourselves, or want to project onto others, but that may be dangerous or foreign to us. Thus animals can be lustful, deceitful, murderous, or promiscuous” (“Animals in Human Thought” 287). In *Buffy*, moralistic constructions of animality enable an allegorical address of the power dynamics between animal and human, man and woman, or predator and prey. Through the gendering of animality that I discuss in the next section of this paper, demonic predators stand in for the menace of predatory masculinity in our human reality, offering an allegory for the conditions of rape culture.

Carnivorous Predatory Masculinity

In the scene to which I referred at the outset of this essay, Darla’s conventional femininity in the guise of a “Catholic schoolgirl” (“Angel”) is juxtaposed against the predatory masculinity she assumes when she visually transforms into a grotesque vampire. Darla initially performs the stereotypical role of a young woman preyed upon by a masculine predator. As they break into the local high school after hours, she stutters to her escort, “I don’t want to go up there. [...] We’re just going to get in trouble,” to which he replies, “Yeah, you can count on it” (“Welcome to the Hellmouth”). Darla’s high-pitched voice, wide eyes, and expressed sense of endangerment align her with conventional femininity, while the man’s relative sense of safety, authoritative retorts, and promise of trouble align him with conventional masculinity. However, when Darla transforms into a vampire, she subverts the anticipated roles of male predator and female prey.

The show uses predatory power dynamics to enforce a binary of masculinity and femininity that does not clearly adhere to characters’ scripted genders. *Buffy* scholar Marc Camron argues

that “attempts to pin a generic gender role on any of these characters does them a disservice, because, as in reality, what lies beneath the surface is more complicated” (n.pag.). Taking this notion of submerged and complex gender dynamics, I argue that what lies beneath the surface is an ecology of gendered animality wherein masculinity and femininity are ascribed to the predator and prey roles of non-human animals. Through demonic cannibalism, vampires repudiate femininity and humanity; they assume the grotesque appearance of an ostentatious predator in order to assert power over the humans they consume. In *Sex and the Slayer*, Lorna Jowett argues, “Largely because they are not human [...] and are not operating within ‘normal’ human society, the bad girls [in *Buffy*] do not need to adhere to socially produced gender roles” (“Bad Girls” 70). In this construction of consumable femininity and consuming animal, women are presented as the opposite of predatory animals, and women vampires become masculinized through their animality.

Within this ecology of gendered animality, predation is synonymous with masculinity. Vampiric consumption, demonic violence, and assertions of physical dominance distinguish the animalistic masculine predator from the feminized human victim. As is comically expressed in the *Buffy* spinoff show *Angel*, the rhetoric of animal distinction within the Buffyverse depends upon a premise of “Human, vampire. Woman, man...pire” (“Offspring”). On this matter, Jowett insists, “Although vampires, being nonhuman, need not take on socially constructed gender, they usually do: female vampires are generally masculinized, while male vampires are almost always feminized” (“Dead Boys” 144). On this matter, I concede that vampires perform recognizable gender characteristics and such characteristics are most often masculine even when applied to female vampires. However, I dispute the claim that male vampires are “almost always feminized.” The masculine predator distinguishes itself from humanity by constituting the feminized-humanized victim as meat; it is feminized only when it assumes characteristics of humanity.

Considering *Buffy* alongside the contemporary mass-media vampire narratives *True Blood* and *Twilight*, scholar Laura Wright suggests that male vampires who eschew human blood present “a destabilizing cultural affront to both a more mainstream acceptance of violent masculinity (as a video and film staple) and to commercial depictions of appropriate male and female consumption” (46). The feminization of vegetarian vampires demonstrates the conflation of animality and masculinity, defining the roles of the consumer and the consumed. By refusing to consume humans as meat, vampires come nearer to the boundaries of humanity and are thus feminized. In *Buffy*, humanization and feminization are most apparent when the heroine’s vampire love interests, Angel and Spike, repudiate human blood in their pursuits of moral redemption; they are “explicitly shown to be tamed or civilized by good girl Buffy” (Jowett, “Dead Boys” 166). Jowett’s use of the word “tamed” is revealing: they are intrinsically animalistic, but their behavior is domesticated. By adopting human values, they can overcome their predatory animal nature and thereby achieve an anthropocentric, heteronormative romance narrative.

Consuming Feminized Prey

In her article on sexuality in *Buffy*, Angie Burns claims, “there is an underlying assumption that for girls and women, sex should not just be sex” (n.pag.). Camron likewise iterates, “They say ‘sex changes everything,’ and this is particularly true in Sunnydale” (n.pag.). Burns and Camron’s readings of *Buffy* address the narrative function of sexual acts as a source of power for masculinized characters and traumatic disempowerment for feminized characters.⁶ However, the assertion of these gender conventions takes on a heightened significance when considering the

⁶ Angel’s violent counterpart Angelus first emerges following Buffy’s first sexual encounter, and Oz transforms into a werewolf and enacts violence against Willow and Tara after discovering their relationship; these narratives illustrate the correlation between an emasculatory loss of power and subsequent animal aggression to reclaim power.

ecology of gendered animality that is concealed within the vampiric violence of the Buffyverse. As *Buffy* scholar Dale Hudson aptly states:

Just as actors mask their identities behind makeup, prosthetics, computer-generated animation, or rubber masks to portray movie monsters, the category of supernatural species figuratively *masks* ways that racism, sexism, and nativism continue to structure social and political life in the United States. (Hudson's emphasis, 662)

Representations of sexual violence are masked by both the fictionality of the television show—conveyed by actors and storylines rather than real life events—and by the use of *vampires* as a conceit through which to address sexuality at a distance. *Buffy* scholar Douglas Kellner suggests that these creatures “can be read as figures of predatory sexuality, which is the traditional form of [a] vampire” (9). This claim takes on a new pertinence in light of my reading of such creatures as animalized representations of transgressed humanity.

In the ecology of gendered animality in the Buffyverse, the demonic predator asserts dominance by objectifying the human victim as meat. In *The Sexual Politics of Meat*, Adams asserts, “People with power have always eaten meat” (36), and as such “[s]exual violence and meat eating, which appear to be discrete forms of violence, find a point of intersection in the absent referent” (22). In the Buffyverse, this absent referent is the feminized body that becomes a source of predatory masculine power when sexually violated or consumed as “meat.” Through non-consensual penetration, vampiric cannibalism reveals an allegorical likeness to human sexual violence; the vampires represent both the figure of the predatory animal preying on human flesh and that of the sexual predator who seeks to metaphorically consume the feminized body—not exclusively the female body—through acts of sexual violence.

While Adams argues that sexual violence and meat-eating both involve the consumption of an objectified subject, *Buffy* conflates the two acts in vampiric cannibalism. The show's depiction of such acts appropriates the rhetoric and body language of mass-media portrayals of human sexual violence. Vampiric violence is coded as an act that is parallel to human sexual violence, through its social staging and discursive implications. In the episode "The Pack," Buffy's friend Xander violently tries to cannibalize her when he is possessed by the spirit of a hyena. She describes this event as him having "tried his hand at felony sexual assault." Sexual assault is a metonym for the cannibalistic consumption of the feminized body; Xander's attempted consumption of Buffy is conflated with predatory masculinity in the form of sexual assault.

In the episode "The Initiative," the formerly antagonistic vampire Spike attempts to bite Buffy's friend Willow in a scene that inundates viewers with double-entendres emphasizing the sexual undercurrents. Spike shoves Willow onto her bed, despite her physical and verbal protests, and climbs on top of her to restrain her, mirroring familiar depictions of sexual violence. However, having unknowingly undergone a procedure that moderates his vampiric behavior, Spike discovers that he is unable to bite Willow—and the scene quickly turns from tension to comedy. Spike's failure to enact demonic violence in this scene is heavily coded as sexual impotence. Rather than responding to his failed bite as an attempted rape, Willow earnestly suggests, "Maybe you're trying too hard. Doesn't this happen to every vampire?" These words invoke the rhetorical conventions of discourses on erectile dysfunction. Willow laments, "I know I'm not the kind of girl vamps like to sink their teeth into," which articulates the parallel between the sexual male gaze and the gaze of the hungry vampire. However, the potential affect of this allegorical attempted rape is undermined by Willow's unprecedentedly sympathetic response, compounded by the hyperbolic pronouncement of sexual implications.

This partially-submerged sexual violence comes to the surface in a sobering scene of literal attempted rape in the penultimate season, in the episode “Seeing Red.” After Buffy ceases her brief sexual affair with Spike, he confronts her when she is weakened by a rough battle and made vulnerable by the thin robe covering her before a bath. When she refuses to consent to his sexual advances, his animality erupts as a means of reasserting masculine predatory dominance through physical violence. Spike pushes her to the floor, climbs on top of her, and tries to remove her robe as she begs him to stop. In this scene, Spike literalizes the sexual violence implied in his previous acts of cannibalistic consumption as a vampire. This scene reveals the threat of sexual violence posed by masculine predators, which the Buffyverse had previously concealed in the conflation of masculinity and animality. As Burns notes, “the attempted rape is not done with his vamp[ire] face, but with his human face” (n.pag.). The scene unveils prior efforts to disassociate sexual violence from human behavior and suggest that such predatory acts are rooted in animality rather than masculinity.

Throughout the show, the coding of masculinity and femininity as animality and humanity conveys issues of human sexual violence and predatory masculinity within a narrative that is removed from an unambiguously human context. However, when Buffy draws on her slayer powers she is able to transcend the predator and prey roles of this ecology of gendered animality; she disrupts the narrative of sexual violence by asserting her distinctive capacity for self-defense. Despite her weakened and vulnerable state, Buffy is ultimately able to gather enough strength to throw Spike off her and, refusing sympathy for his horrified realization of what he has done, she asserts the monstrosity of his actions.

The First (Primal) Slayer

The eponymous heroine herself, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, represents a conflict in the binary between femininity and animality on which the show's patriarchal ecology of gendered animality depends. A slayer holds both characteristics of femininity and animality, and thereby resists easy categorization. When Buffy uses magic to travel back to the origins of her slayer lineage, she is told, "Herein lies your truest strength: the energy of the demon. Its spirit. Its heart" ("Get It Done"). The First Slayer, from which all subsequent slayers are mythically descendant, was created by ancient shamans who transfused one young woman with demonic power, merging two binary oppositions and thereby creating an ambivalent figure.

Denied speech and human physicality, The First Slayer is portrayed as feral; even before she appears on screen, her mystic manifestation is referred to as a "primal [...] animal force" ("Restless"). Appearing in Buffy's friends' dreams in the episode "Restless," The First Slayer is animalized even before she is heard or seen: a house kitten stalks towards the camera in slow motion before the camera cuts to a desolate desert—the site of Buffy's imminent confrontation with The First Slayer—where a blurred apparition appears through the same ethereal music. Throughout the episode, her looming presence is indicated by faceless growls and hisses, fragmented shots of locked hair or piercing eyes, and agitated camera movements. When she returns in "Intervention," she is again foreshadowed by an animal—this time a mountain lion who serves as a spiritual guide to lead Buffy to a vision of her slayer heritage—and her alignment with animality is made explicit. She tells Buffy, "You're afraid that being The Slayer means losing your humanity" ("Intervention"), which articulates Buffy's recurring concern that the hereditary power of The Slayer might align her with animality rather than humanity. This acknowledgment gives credibility to the suggestion that the identity of The Slayer is distinct from humanity.

When Buffy confronts The First Slayer in the dream-verse desert in “Restless,” the concealment of her physical appearance and her lack of speech—signifiers of humanity—align her with animality. *Buffy* scholar Ananya Mukherjea notes:

The First Slayer is differentiated [...] by her hair [...] her minimalistic clothing, and her manner. Of course, and crucially, she is Black and, thus, marked as racially different, a difference bluntly emphasized by her generically ‘tribal’ attire and dreadlocks. (66)

Depictions of The First Slayer are heavily reliant upon troubling associations between Blackness and a colonial mythology of a “primitive” African history. Buffy endorses these conventions of racial animalization in her characteristic quips throughout the battle scene: “You’re really going to have to get over the whole primal power thing. You’re not the source of me. Also, in terms of hair care, you really want to say, what kind of impression am I making in the workplace?” (“Restless”). This line not only distinguishes her from The First Slayer as an ancestor, but also aligns Buffy with conventional, white feminine aesthetics, and thereby with an idealized humanity.

The two slayers are juxtaposed to signify The First Slayer’s animality by defining her against Buffy’s floral sundress-wearing conventional femininity, humanity, and whiteness. The First Slayer walks crouched over, her facial features are made less discernible by face paint, and “Someone has to speak for her” because she lacks the capacity for speech. Her non-verbalism distinguishes her from the social category of humanity and furthermore positions her as more distinct from humanity than demons such as vampires, who use human communicative modes. *Buffy* scholar Rob Cover argues, “[The First Slayer] is the incomprehensible, the incoherent, the unintelligible [...] all body, no mind, no civilization. Her selfhood is collapsed into the capacities and attributes of her body, she expresses nothing but her responsibility to destroy demons and

vampires” (75). Through this collapse of selfhood, The First Slayer provides a crucial foil to Buffy, the relatable heroine. The First Slayer embodies the unrestrained nature of a slayer without the domesticating social forces that situate Buffy within the realm of humanity.

In *Buffy*, animality dominates scenes of violence, while humanity is the state of composure that The Slayer endeavors to restore to the world. Though her conduit, The First Slayer tells Buffy, “I have no speech. No name. I live in the action of death, the blood cry, the penetrating wound. I am destruction. Absolute. Alone.” (“Restless”). Intent on distinguishing herself from the animality of The First Slayer, Buffy insists she is “not alone.” She repeatedly vocalizes the strictures of her mythic inheritance and her distinction from The First Slayer; she is invested in aligning herself with humanity when the alternative is that which meets the other end of her stake. Buffy asserts, “I walk. I talk. I shop, I sneeze. I’m going to be a fireman when the floods roll back. There’s trees in the desert since you moved out. And I don’t sleep on a bed of bones.” She associates The First Slayer’s lack of speech with historical obsolescence and an implicitly primitive way of living in order to distinguish herself from The First Slayer. Distinction from the animal appearance and physicality of The First Slayer is crucial to Buffy’s sense of her humanity; to be animalistic is to be demonic, and such a concept is inconceivable within a world of dualisms in which the slayer protects *innocent humanity* from *predatory non-humans*.

Domesticating Powerful Women

This distinction between The First Slayer as aligned with animality and Buffy as comparatively aligned with humanity suggests the slayer line has become domesticated—and thereby humanized—over generations. The First Slayer and all subsequent slayers, within the ontology of the Buffyverse, are biologically both human and animal; however, The First Slayer is most closely

aligned with animality. Subsequent slayers are assigned a watcher, a paternalistic guardian who instructs the slayer in the fulfillment of human interests (*i.e.* vampire slaying). This training allows these slayers to become more closely affiliated with humanity through their visual appearances and socialization. Animal studies scholar Kari Weil interrogates the societal appropriation of animal signifiers as a means of patriarchal oppression, as “women have been identified with animals and nature in their need to be tamed or controlled by the masculine, rational element” (139). In the Buffyverse, The Council of Watchers—comprised of almost exclusively older, white, British men—enforces kyriarchal authority, effectively domesticating any undesirable attributes in a slayer to ensure her subservience. As watchers train slayers to be compliant, they train them to be conventionally feminine—as is apparent in the visual distinctions between Buffy and The First Slayer. As they are feminized, slayers become more closely aligned with humanity and gain the characteristics that The First Slayer lacks.

In the final season of the series, Buffy uses magic to return to her slayer origins and witness the creation of The First Slayer, in hopes of gaining a better understanding of her powers. When offered the opportunity to recreate this transfusion of demonic energy to obtain greater strength, she asks if doing so will make her “less human” (“Get It Done”). This scene points to the ambivalence of the figure of The Slayer: the source of her power is the energy of a demon, which aligns her with animality, and yet Buffy’s suggestion that receiving more of this power could make her “less human” inherently aligns her with humanity as well. The First Slayer presumably possesses a greater concentration of demonic energy and lacks a domesticating watcher; in contrast, subsequent slayers resist categorization within the binary between humanity and animality, and thereby resists the underlying gender binary.

Buffy embodies a powerful duality that not only transgresses binary distinctions between humanity and animality, but furthermore transgresses the conventions of the matrilineage that precedes her. Throughout the first season of the show, and in lessening frequency in the subsequent seasons, Buffy's watcher, Giles, attempts to domesticate her actions as both an untrained slayer and rebellious teenager by asserting the patriarchal authority vested in him by The Council. However, he gradually comes to recognize her unique strengths as an individual and to tolerate her insubordinate tendencies. After she defeats the first season's major antagonist in her prom dress and declares, "We saved the world. I say we party! I mean, I got all pretty" ("Prophesy Girl"), Giles's only reservation is that he not be obliged to dance. In the following season, he concedes, "The Handbook would be of no use in your case" ("What's My Line? Part 2"), which serves as an acknowledgment of her deviation from conventions of slayer conduct. While Buffy's unconventionality gives the show narrative significance, Giles's acceptance of her character merits further consideration. By considering her as an individual, he recognizes her transgression of conventions as an asset to her work as a slayer, regardless of its insubordinate implications for the patriarchal influence of The Council. Giles grants Buffy the opportunity to cultivate greater strength than the slayers before her, which ultimately enables her to overcome the oppressive authority of The Council when it is most harmful to her.

In the episode "Helpless," Buffy is unknowingly subject to a procedure in which The Council drugs a slayer on her eighteenth birthday to deprive her of her powers, as a supposed test of her abilities. As she is fighting a vampire she suddenly loses her strength, giving him the opportunity to turn the stake against her; in so doing, the male vampire symbolically rectifies the female slayer's transgression of patriarchal values as a strong woman. Throughout the episode, Buffy grapples with her inability to fight vampires without her powers, while also struggling with literal

instances of the sexual aggression implied in demonic violence. After failing to defend one of her friends against harassment from a human teenage boy, Buffy laments to Giles:

“I have no strength. I have no coordination. I throw knives like—”

“—a girl?”

“Like I’m not the slayer.”

Her sudden humanity returns her to a state of distinctly feminine vulnerability. She is unable to defend herself or her friends against masculine sexual predators, even when faced with the quotidian trials of sexual harassment from human men. This episode highlights The Council’s patriarchal motives: they want slayers to defend humanity, but only as servants to the patriarchy—not autonomous agents of morality.

In a discussion at the *Buffy at 20* conference in 2017, one participant suggested The Council’s test may be a means of systematically executing slayers before they become powerful enough to rebel against patriarchal authority. I think this reading merits further consideration. The Council is invested in cultivating slayers to defend humanity, and yet they are equally invested in preventing the development of a slaytriarchy. A slaytriarchy, as I intend this play on words, describes the inherent potentiality of the matrilineage of slayers. Into every generation, a slayer is born; always a young woman, her initiation into this role seemingly occurs at menarche (Owen 25)—an event endowed with considerable significance in the cis-normative patriarchal narrative of female maturation. At this age when women often encounter an onslaught of involuntary sexualization, devaluation, and patriarchal oppression, the slayer gains the power to both defend humanity and defend herself from the men within it. Slayers possess the power to resist patriarchal oppression both in the allegorical form of vampiric predators and the literal form of The Council. If “Helpless” can be interpreted as a means of disposing of slayers before they mature into an autonomous

command of their powers, then the slaytriarchy that The Council seeks to prevent might be considered the ultimate source of feminist liberation.⁷

In later seasons, Buffy comes nearer to a defeat of the human patriarchy through slaytriarchal power by rejecting the authority of The Council and asserting her moral and physiological superiority. In the episode “Checkpoint,” The Council tells Buffy, “The Slayer is the instrument by which we fight [evil],” which objectifies her in an effort to assert patriarchal dominance. Buffy refutes this objectification by asserting her autonomy and authority: as the slayer, she holds the power “to give your jobs, your lives some semblance of meaning.” She reclaims the agency they sought to appropriate. By reminding The Council of their peripheral function in her fight against evil, Buffy demonstrates both her refusal to submit to predatory masculine authority and her moral superiority over The Council. While they are preoccupied with proving their dominance, she is foremost concerned with the protection of humanity; while their jobs are to watch, hers is to slay.

The Gender-Troubling Cyborg-Slayer

In the aforementioned episode in which she returns to the creation of The First Slayer, Buffy confronts the men who created her—shamanic precursors to The Council—and tells them, “You’re just men. [...] You violated that girl, made her kill for you because you’re weak, you’re pathetic” (“Get It Done”). She articulates their predatory affinity to the demons against which they define themselves; she remaps the borders of humanity, to foreground the moralistic criteria for

⁷ This reading consciously resists existing interpretations of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season Eight*, a canonical continuation of the series in comic books, following the finale of the television show. While the comics undoubtedly merit further scholarly consideration, I have elected to exclude them from the scope of this essay. My discussion of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is not intended to provide a complete analysis of the series, but rather an overview of the aspects of the show that elucidate certain features of feminist posthumanist theories, as I will address in greater detail in the sections to follow.

humanness and allow for a transgression of physiological distinctions; and she insists that humanity is a moral category, rather than a matter of species. DeMello asserts, “As the border between human and nonhuman has continued to shift, patrolling that border remains ever more important for those who are invested in the idea that humans are not just separate from animals but that that separation entails superiority” (“Animal-Human Borders” 42). In her refusal to submit to these esteemed patriarchs, Buffy asserts that the borders she patrols are those between good and evil, not human and vampire; just as the cast is populated by vegetarian vampires who fight alongside Buffy, the show occasionally foregoes its allegorical intermediary to present corrupt human characters as a reminder of the tenor that underlies. As the slayer, Buffy must navigate the vast, tempestuous waters of all that defies straightforward categorization.

The slayer is an embodiment of such hybridity. She transcends the binary division between femininity and animality, defying the limitations of either role within the ecology of gendered animality. Cover refers to Buffy’s resistance of binary categorization as “posthuman” (75), arguing that, in Buffy’s character, “gender becomes unintelligible through the representation of immense strength and petite bodily norms [...] the human itself comes into question in the play between the ‘demonic’ nature of her strength and powers and the desire for a clear representation of human normalcy” (73-74). I argue that Buffy defies the gender binary *because* she defies dualist divisions of animality and humanity. She simultaneously displays humanity *and* animality, femininity *and* masculinity, despite their purported mutual exclusivity. In so doing, she delegitimizes these binary categorizations.

Contrary to claims made by Leisa Anne Clark and likeminded critics, Buffy does not stay within the confines of a male fantasy wherein women can be heroes “as long as they are feminine while doing it” (49). As a woman, Buffy refuses to comply with conventional notions of

“feminine” as “victim,” and instead appropriates conventionally masculine predatory power. *Buffy* scholar Irene Karras notes, “Buffy’s stake, which is plunged into a vampire’s heart to kill him, can also be considered a phallic symbol” (n.pag.). Buffy uses the weapon to penetrate vampires, which posits slaying as an act of feminist vengeance against sexual predators. While her appearance is conventionally feminine, she takes control the phallic stake in order to subvert the gendered roles of predator and prey. Through this subversion, Buffy “[destabilizes] the traditional masculinist power of the vampire character in the horror genre, in effect policing those who prey upon the feminized” (Owen 25). She refuses to be meat and instead asserts predatory power over demonic figures of predatory masculinity.

However, Buffy also refuses to be masculinized by her hereditary alignment with predatory animality. Throughout the series, friendship and romantic love motivate Buffy, as she often fights with the assistance of or intention to rescue from demonic threats her friends, family, or lovers. She likewise embraces conventionally feminine aesthetics during her fight against evil, drawing on her fashion sense—rather than animalistic instincts—as a means of identifying vampires. Pointing out a vampire at a local nightclub, she tells Giles: “Look at his jacket. He’s got the sleeves rolled up, and the shirt! Deal with that outfit for a moment. [...] It’s carbon dated! Trust me: only someone living underground for ten years would think that was still the look” (“Welcome to the Hellmouth”).

Throughout the series, she maintains characteristics that are conventionally scripted as feminine, such as vanity, emotionality, and romantic ideation. Her refusal to deny her femininity on account of her animality unexpectedly resists patriarchal regulations of gender, enabling her to “[subvert] the traditional patriarchal discourse that correlates ‘feminine’ concepts of identity to passivity and weakness” (Pittis 24). Instead, she embodies characteristics conventionally

associated with both masculinity and femininity—thereby refuting preconceptions of their falsely conceived mutual exclusivity and literalizing the duality of Haraway's cyborg.

Haraway's conception of the cyborg articulates a posthumanist notion of identity, encompassing "transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities" (14); it symbolizes "deepened dualisms of mind and body, animal and machine, idealism and materialism in the social practices, symbolic formulations, and physical artifacts associated with 'high technology' and scientific culture" (14). The cyborg body is both biological and technological, or living being and machine, seamlessly joining two binary opposites to disassemble the falsely conceived division between them. As a slayer, Buffy embodies this multiplicity in her defiance of preconceptions of humanity and animality. Conventionally, the binary division between human and animal is mapped onto the gender binary as a means of reinforcing constructed and oppressive divisions. In an act of feminist resistance, Buffy offers a counterhegemonic intervention into conventional ideologies that depend upon "dualist thinking" (Weil 139), instead insisting upon the nuance and fluidity of identity.

While the notion of a cyborg world is potentially apocalyptic, Haraway invokes the cyborg allegorically, to articulate "lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (154). This fantastical creature "can suggest a way out of the maze of dualisms in which we have explained our bodies and our tools to ourselves" (181) by embodying a fusion of multiple identities that are conventionally regarded as mutually exclusive. Cyborgs are simultaneously both living being and machine. As such, they invites the possibility of fusing further binary oppositions, beyond that which falsely distinguishes between human and machine.

The cyborg's multiplicity of identities asserts the potential for a utopic transgression of binaries, thereby dismantling the oppressive power structures upheld by oppositional constructions such as the distinction between men and women. Binary conceptualizations are volatile; they tend to produce oppositions rather than distinctions, implicitly privileging one pole over the other. Binaries tend to reduce nuanced subjects to more easily categorized objects, denying the opportunity to complicate definitions. However, the constructedness of binaries conversely enables their rhizomatic deconstruction, wherein "dismantling the concept of 'animal' not only opens up nearly infinite multitudes of differences among living creatures, but also opens up differences on the other side of the human-animal divide to nearly infinite multitudes of differences among human beings" (Oliver 56).

Buffy's literal cyborg-like characters⁸ have commanded the attention of numerous scholars.⁹ I propose a departure from the approach taken by preceding scholars, to consider *Buffy* rather than *Buffybot*; in other words, I intend to address the slayer herself as a figurative cyborg—a reading that seems perhaps too precise to Haraway's followers, but has remained inexplicably undertheorized.¹⁰ I read *Buffy* not as a cyborg in the technological sense, but as an embodiment of Haraway's hybrid being: a manifestation of posthuman possibilities of resistance. Perhaps "posthuman"¹¹ is the more accurate term, as "the construction of the posthuman does not require

⁸ In order of appearance, these characters are: the Y2K anxiety-inspired computer demon Moloch the Corruptor ("I, Robot... You, Jane"); the Frankenstein-esque Adam, a composite of human, demon, and cybernetic parts (throughout season four); and the android replica of the slayer, known as *Buffybot* (throughout seasons five and six).

⁹ See Megan Pearson's "A Whedon Manifesto: Superhumans, Inhumans, and Humans in the Postmodern Century," Alice Bell's "The Anachronistic Fantastic: Science, Progress, and the Child in 'Post-Nostalgic' Culture," Christina Patsiokas's "The Hyperspatial Self: Henry James and Posthuman Modalities," and Jacolien Volschenk's "Fusions of the Feminine and Technology: Exploring the Cyborg as Subversive Tool for Feminist Reconstructions of Identity."

¹⁰ The notable exception to this lack of scholarship is Yael Sherman's "Tracing the Carnival Spirit in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: Feminist Reworkings of the Grotesque," which draws on Haraway's "A Cyborg Manifesto" to theorize carnivalesque dualisms in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. While our research shares a non-literal reading on cyborgs in *Buffy*, our allegorical interpretations differ significantly. The coexistence of these adjacent readings demonstrates the theoretical potentiality of *Buffy* as a text, as well as Haraway's prolific scholarship.

¹¹ Throughout this essay, I employ the terms "non-human" and "posthuman." While the scholars I cite demonstrate the lack of critical consensus on the matter of linguistic form, the matter of hyphenation is politically fraught. I

the subject to be a literal cyborg” (Hayles 4). Though it is the feminist conception of the cyborg in Haraway’s work that I intend to invoke, setting aside the literal cyborg in favour of its allegorical significance. Haraway’s notion of the cyborg embodies a feminist posthumanist modernity, wherein binary oppositions—man/woman, biology/machine, human/animal—are “disassembled and reassembled” (“Cyborg Manifesto” 33) to allow for the hybridity of Buffy’s identity, as a gender- and species-fluid character. She displays characteristics of both masculinity and femininity while transgressing the boundaries of anthropocentric conceptions of intra-species relations.

Buffy’s deconstruction of gender boundaries is most obviously unsuccessful, as exhibited through the ecology of gendered animality. However, this subversive potentiality is realized, in some capacity, in the figure of the modern slayer. Furthermore, the fluidity of species boundaries rhizomatically extends this non-binary ideology, as notions of both gender and species depend upon “troubling dualisms” (59). The cyborg-slayer suggests a subversive potential, not necessarily in the sense of a liberation from patriarchal values but rather from the binary divide between the subjects onto whom those values are imposed; conventionally masculine traits may still hold greater social capital than conventionally feminine traits, but the attribution of these traits can no longer be so easily presupposed.

(Re)Conceptualizing the Cyborg

As I write this essay following the twentieth anniversary of the *Buffy* series premiere, it seems especially pertinent to consider Haraway’s reflections in an interview published twenty years after “A Cyborg Manifesto.” Her manifesto, initially published in 1984, has amassed a cult following

hyphenate “non-human” to indicate the anthropocentricity of the term, which constructs a hegemony of all others against the exclusive boundaries of humanity. In contrast, I conceive of the “posthuman” as a being born out of the human but not indebted to it. The posthuman is a being of its own, rather than a mere differentiation from the human; as such, I write the term as a singular, unhyphenated word.

much like *Buffy* of 1997, and as such has been similarly subject to an impressive volume of scholarly responses that faithfully engage with the source text in varying degrees. However, Haraway states:

There were also readers who would take the Cyborg Manifesto for its technological analysis, but drop the feminism. [...] It is generally my experience that very few people are taking what I consider all of its parts. [...] But I have also had this really interesting reception from young feminists—a reception which I love. They embrace and use the cyborg of the manifesto to do what they want for their own purposes. (“Cyborgs, Coyotes, and Dogs” 325)

Haraway does not assume extraordinary authorial authority. She does not prohibit readings of her work that defy its integrity, nor does she diminish the legitimacy of readings that differ from those she intended. Instead, she recognizes the multiplicity of her text, like all things, and extends an invitation to readers “to do what they want for their own purposes.” Her text is a hybrid creation—part writer, part reader—and as such the text bears innumerable identities and possible readings. It is with this infinite potentiality that I have sought to engage.

If we have all always been cyborgs, as Haraway claims, then we have also all always been slayers. While the figure of the slayer is indeed fictional, *Buffy*’s character is more of a reality than many of her television contemporaries: she embodies an irreducibility to which audiences can relate. *Buffy* invites a conceptual rather than biological identification with the protagonist. She displays the power of both masculinity and femininity in a manner that is admirable, but not fantastically unattainable. While viewers may not literally fight the forces of evil by kicking ass in heels, such supernatural powers are not the only means of defying the oppressive imposition of binary gender interpellations. Just as the vampires she slays serve as an allegory for patriarchal

predators, her defeat of these antagonists reflects an empowering potentiality in the defiance of binaries off the screen.

Buffy invites viewers to recognize their own affinity as slayers. The heroine resonates with her target demographic of teenage girls not because she is aspirational, but rather because she actualizes a prohibited defiance of binaries. Buffy reflects a duality or multiplicity that viewers see in themselves, as nuanced, stunningly contradictory beings—more so than most mainstream media portrayals allow of teenage girls. I argue that the show also extends such empowering possibilities to the realm of animal studies scholarship; *Buffy* can remind us to read Haraway's cyborg allegorically, rather than literally. The slayer personifies the allegorical cyborg that Haraway proposes: a feminist agent made stronger by her defiance of oppressive binary categorizations. While the slayer is inherently dualistic, Buffy only gains control of either source of her power when she defies patriarchal authority. She ultimately rejects The Council of Watchers and declares her own capability in self-governance; in so doing, she opens up the possibility of an aspirational slaytriarchy. Her strength—and that of us patriarchy-slayers off the screen—originates in an intrinsic defiance of binaries; Buffy is able to find empowerment in this strength only when she refuses to comply with oppressive regulations of her hybridistic identity.

A Stake in the Notion of a Slaytriarchy

Buffy uses fiction to literalize the metaphors commonly used to talk about sexual violence. The show superficially appears to endorse the disassociation of humanity from supposedly inhuman behaviors; however, the allegorical mobility of the supernatural antagonists provides a mass-media vehicle by which to address issues of sexual violence that are typically relegated to the peripheries of public discourse. The show transforms the abstract male sexual predator into a tangible figure

of monstrosity, through both allegorical and explicit representations of sexual violence. And while the vampire slayer and the demons she fights are all defined as creatures outside of the exclusive realm of humanity, they also all wear human faces more often than not. Through this simultaneous animalization and anthropomorphization, *Buffy* keeps the abject human reality at a distance without depriving allegorical representations of their anthropocentric tenor.

Scholarship on *Buffy* often asks whether the show must be read as a subversive argument for female empowerment or as an endorsement of patriarchal hegemony in 1990s Girl Power packaging.¹² However, in considering Haraway's call to dispel with dualisms altogether, this binary of feminist worth must be called into question: "Buffy is 'good' if she transgresses dominant stereotypes, but 'bad' if she is contained in cultural cliché. Yet this binary logic itself works to restrict a range of possible viewing positions and to contain *Buffy*'s political potential" (Pender, "*Buffy* Baffles the Binaries" 14). *Buffy* inherently transgresses the binary distinction conceived between transgression and containment. Indeed, the show is both subversive and cliché, just as Buffy is both human *and* animal, feminine *and* masculine, feminist icon *and* capitalist exploit.

While *Buffy* appears as a counterhegemonic show for its resistance of gender conventions, it implicitly endorses patriarchal values through a complex ecology of gendered animality. By coding masculinity and femininity as animality and humanity, the show implicitly reinforces tropes of predatory masculinity. And yet this conceit facilitates an allegorical address of issues of sexual violence that are often pushed to the peripheries of mainstream discourses—and rigorously censored from young adult media in particular. Within the Buffyverse, masculine aggression and phallocentric violence are the necessary response to this allegorical sexual violence; and yet such aggression and violence is embodied in a young woman who insists that vampire slaying is "girly

¹² See Irene Karras's "The Third Wave's Final Girl: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*" and Kathleen Rowe Karlyn's "Scream, Popular Culture, and Feminism's Third Wave: I'm Not My Mother."

stuff” (“Faith, Hope, & Trick”) if she says so. However, predatory and heroic power are still rooted in traditionally masculine characteristics: demonic cannibalism and the slayer’s vengeance are both symbolic of male sexual violence. Such contradictions prohibit a definitive ruling on the show’s feminist merit. Analyses that insist upon an absolute reading of the show’s feminist worth inevitably fail to recognize its embrace of postmodernity.¹³

In an article in *Bitch*, Rachel Fudge asserts, “The impulse that propels Buffy out on patrols, night after night, foregoing any semblance of ‘normal’ teenage life, is identical to the one that compels us third-wavers to spend endless hours discussing the feminist potentials and pitfalls of primetime television” (n. pag.). Despite the ambivalence of the show’s subversiveness, Buffy is nonetheless a heroine of posthumanist-feminist resistance; she invites the empowerment of viewers who identify with the titular heroine. *Buffy* demonstrates the potential for sublimated hegemonic gender ideologies within a widely-regarded feminist text; and yet it also reveals the potential for women to reclaim partially-feminine power within a patriarchal system, through the embodiment of defiant gender and species dualisms. Buffy penetrates the hearts of vampires with her ostensibly phallic stake, taking back the night from the creatures that haunt it; her humanistic morals inform the implementation of her animalistic power.

Buffy demonstrates the potential for a cyborg-feminist utopia wherein power lies in the defiance of coherent categorization. The subversive television heroine calls into question literalist receptions of Haraway’s manifesto by making tangible the allegorical function of the cyborg. Like the slayer, Haraway’s cyborg “is about the power to survive [...] on the basis of seizing the tools to mark the world that marked them as other” (“Cyborg Manifesto” 55). Both fictitious figures embody an aspirational resistance to patriarchal oppression by reclaiming and reasserting feminist

¹³ See Susan Owen’s “Vampires, Postmodernity, and Postfeminism: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.”

agency, never confined to masculine or feminine traits. *Buffy* is a manifestation of sublimated gendered conventions and posthuman possibilities. The show refuses to be dismissed—much like Buffy herself—on the basis of reductive notions of adolescent girlhood; instead, it seizes these tropes and irreversibly alters the significance of the “blonde girl who would always get herself killed,” opening up the possibility that she “wanders into a dark alley [and] takes care of herself” (Whedon qt. in Bellafante n. pag.).

Works Cited and Referenced

- Adams, Carol J. "The Rape of Animals, the Butchering of Women." *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist Vegetarian Critical Theory*. Bloomsbury, 2017, pp. 19-43.
- Alessio, Dominic. "'Things are Different Now?': A Postcolonial Analysis of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *The European Legacy*, vol. 6, no. 6, 2001, pp. 731-740.
- Anderson, Kay. "'The Beast Within': Race, Humanity, and Animality." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, vol. 18, 2000, pp. 301-320.
- "Angel." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. David Greenwalt, dir. Scott Brazil, WB, 1997.
- Bell, Alice R. "The Anachronistic Fantastic: Science, Progress, and the Child in 'Post-Nostalgic' Culture." *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, SAGE Publications, 2009, pp. 5-22.
- Bellafante, Ginia. "Bewitching Teen Heroines: They're All Over the Dial, Speaking Out, Cracking Wise and Casting Spells." *Time*, vol. 149, no. 18, 1997, n. pag.
- Birke, Lynda, Mette Bryld, and Nina Lykke. "Animal Performances: An Exploration of Intersections Between Feminist Science Studies and Studies of Human/Animal Relationships." *Feminist Theory*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2004, pp. 167-183.
- Buffy at 20*, 1 April 2017, Marquette U, Milwaukee, WI. Conference.
- Burns, Angie. "Passion, Pain and 'bad kissing decisions': Learning about Intimate Relations from *Buffy* Season Six." *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2006, n. pag.
- Burr, Vivien. "Ambiguity and Sexuality in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Sexualities*, vol. 6, no. 3, 2003, pp. 343-360.

- Calarco, Matthew. "Being Toward Meat: Anthropocentrism, Indistinction, and Veganism." *Dialectical Anthropology*, vol. 38, 2014, pp. 415-429.
- Camron, Marc. "The Importance of Being the Zeppo: Xander, Gender Identity and Hybridity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3-4, 2007, n. pag.
- "Checkpoint." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Jane Espenson and Douglas Petrie, dir. Nick Marck, WB, 2001.
- Clark, Leisa Anne. "I am Warrior Woman, Hear Me Roar: The Challenge and Reproduction of Heteronormativity in Speculative Television Programs." MA Thesis, U of South Florida, 2008.
- Cover, Rob. "(Re)Cognising the Body: Performativity, Embodiment and Abject Selves in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Aesthetika: International Journal on Culture, Subjectivity, and Aesthetics*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2005, pp. 68-83.
- "Consequences." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Marti Noxon, dir. Michael Gershman, WB, 1999.
- DeMello, Margo. "Animal-Human Borders." *Animals and Society*. Columbia UP, 2012, pp. 32-43.
- DeMello, Margo. "Animals in Human Thought." *Animals and Society*. Columbia UP, 2012, pp. 283-300.
- De Vido, Angelica. "'I Want to be a Macho Man': Examining Rape Culture, Adolescent Female Sexuality, and the Destabilization of Gender Binaries in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Gender Forum: An Internet Journal for Gender Studies*, vol. 60, 2016, pp. 24-42.
- "Faith, Hope, & Trick." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. David Greenwalt, dir. James A. Contner, WB, 1998.

- Fudge, Rachel. "The Buffy Effect: Or, A Tale of Cleavage and Marketing." *Bitch: Feminist Response to Popular Culture*, vol. 10, 1999, n. pag.
- "Get It Done." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Douglas Petrie, dir. Douglas Petrie, UPN, 2003.
- Haraway, Donna J. "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late-Twentieth Century." *Manifestly Haraway*. U of Minnesota P, 2016, pp. 5-90.
- . "Cyborgs, Coyotes, and Dogs: A Kinship of Feminist Figurations; and There Are Always More Things Going on Than You Thought! Methodologies as Thinking Technologies; An Interview with Donna Haraway: Conducted in two parts by Nina Lykke, Randi Markussen, and Finn Olesen." *The Haraway Reader*, Taylor & Francis, 2004, pp. 321-342.
- "Harvest, The." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Joss Whedon, dir. John Kretchmer, WB, 1997.
- Hayles, Katherine. "Toward Embodied Virtuality." *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Information*, U of Chicago P, 1999, pp. 1-24.
- "Helpless." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. David Fury, dir. James A. Contner, WB, 1999.
- Hudson, Dale. "'Of Course There Are Werewolves and Vampires': *True Blood* and the Right to Rights for Other Species." *American Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 3, 2013, pp. 661-687.
- "I, Robot... You, Jane." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Ashley Gable and Thomas A. Swyden, dir. Stephen Posey, WB, 1997.
- "Initiative, The." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. James A. Conter, dir. Douglas Petrie, WB, 2000.
- "Intervention." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Jane Espenson, dir. Michael Gershman, WB, 2001.
- Jowett, Lorna. "Bad Girls." *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan*. Wesleyan UP, 2005, pp. 70-94.
- . "Dead Boys." *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan*. Wesleyan UP, 2005, pp. 144-166.

---. "Girl Power." *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan*. Wesleyan UP, 2005, pp. 18-43.

Karlyn, Kathleen Rowe. "Scream, Popular Culture, and Feminism's Third Wave: I'm Not My Mother." *Genders*, vol. 38, 2003, n. pag.

Karras, Irene. "The Third Wave's Final Girl: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Third Space: A Journal of Feminist Theory and Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2002, n.pag.

Kellner, Douglas. "*Buffy, The Vampire Slayer* as Spectacular Allegory: A Diagnostic Critique." *Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood*, 2nd ed., ed. Shirely R. Steinberg and Joe L. Kincheloe, Westview, 2004, pp. 49-71.

Little, Tracey. "High School is Hell: Metaphor Made Literal in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*, ed. James B. South, Carus, 2003, pp. 282-293.

Marinucci, Mimi. "Feminism and the Ethics of Violence: Why *Buffy* Kicks Ass." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*, ed. James B. South, Carus, 2003, pp. 61-75.

Mukherjea, Ananya. "'It's Like Some Primal, Some Animal Force . . . That Used to Be Us': Animality, Humanity, and Moral Careers in the Buffyverse." *Reading Joss Whedon*, ed. Rhonda V. Wilcox, Tanya R. Cochran, and Cynthea Masson, Syracuse UP, 2014, pp. 53-69.

"Offspring." *Angel*, writ. David Greenwalt, dir. Turi Meyer, WB, 2001.

Oliver, Kelly. "Sexual Difference, Animal Difference: Derrida and Difference 'Worthy of Its Name.'" *Hypatia*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2009, pp. 54-76.

- Owen, A. Susan. "Vampires, Postmodernity, and Postfeminism: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1999, pp. 24-31.
- "Pack, The." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Matt Kiene and Joe Reinkmeyer, dir. Bruce Seth Green, WB, 1997.
- Patsiokas, Christina. "The Hyperspatial Self: Henry James and Posthuman Modalities." MA Thesis, U of Denver, 2012.
- Pearson, Megan Saint Clair. "A Whedon Manifesto: Superhumans, Inhumans, and Humans in the Postmodern Century." MA Thesis, Southern Illinois U, 2014.
- Pender, Patricia. "'I'm Buffy and You're ... History': *Buffy* Baffles the Binaries." *I'm Buffy and You're History*, I. B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 9-20.
- . "Introduction." *I'm Buffy and You're History*, I. B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 2-8.
- Pittis, Patrick. "Staking Out Gender: A Poststructuralist Analysis of Gender Roles and Identity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." MA Thesis, U of Maine, 2013.
- Pozner, Jennifer L. "Thwack! Pow! Yikes! Not Your Mother's Heroines." *Sojourner: The Women's Forum*, vol. 23, no. 2, 1997, pp. 12-13.
- "Prophecy Girl." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Joss Whedon, dir. Joss Whedon, WB, 1997.
- "Restless." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Joss Whedon, dir. Joss Whedon, WB, 2000.
- "Seeing Red." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Steven DeKnight, dir. Michael Gershman, UPN, 2002.
- Sherman, Yael. "Tracing the Carnival Spirit in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: Feminist Reworkings of the Grotesque." *Thirdspace: A Journal of Feminist Theory & Culture*, vol. 3, no. 2, special issue on Representation and Transgressive Sexualities, 2004, n. pag.
<http://journals.sfu.ca/thirdspace/index.php/journal/article/view/sherman/179>

- Stanescu, James. "Toward a Dark Animal Studies: On Vegetarian Vampires, Beautiful Souls, and Becoming Vegan." *Journal for Critical Animal Studies*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2012, pp. 26-50.
- Volschenk, Jacolien. "Fusions of the Feminine and Technology: Exploring the Cyborg as Subversive Tool for Feminist Reconstructions of Identity." MA Thesis, Stellenbosch U, 2009.
- Weil, Kari. "Animal Liberation or Shameless Freedom." *Thinking Animals: Why Animal Studies Now?* Columbia UP, 2012, pp. 131-145.
- "Welcome to the Hellmouth." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Joss Whedon, dir. Charles Martin Smith, WB, 1997.
- "What's My Line? Part 2." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, writ. Marti Noxon, dir. David Semel, WB, 1997.
- Wilcox, Rhonda V. "'Who Died and Made Her the Boss?': Patterns of Morality in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, ed. Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery, Rowman and Littlefield, 2002, pp. 3-17.
- Wright, Laura. "Vegan Vampires: The Politics of Drinking Humans and Animals in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Twilight*, and *True Blood*." *The Vegan Studies Project*, U of Georgia P, 2015, pp. 43-67.