

Gemma Killen: Blood Kin and Scooby Gangs: Queering Kinship on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

Mr Maclay: We are her blood kin, who the hell are you?

Buffy: We're family.

In her article '*Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Vampires, Postmodernity and Postfeminism*', Owen argued that *BtVS* addressed a number of themes of gender and sexuality including the 'crisis' of changing gender scripts within the 'fragmented heterosexual middle class family unit' (1999). This paper will build on this and other work exploring the figure of the family in *BtVS* (Battis 2005; Stevens 2010; Jarvis & Burr 2005, 2007) through a feminist lens. In particular, the paper will use queer readings of the show in order to examine the ways in which hetero-normative concepts of the family are critiqued and queered throughout *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

Historically, the figure of the vampire has been constructed as harbinger of social and sexual anxiety and has predominantly represented a violent undoing of gender norms and familial and racial autonomy (Gordon & Hollinger 1997). Interestingly, *Buffy's* vampire acts instead as a symbol of traditional kinship and reveals the monstrosity inherent in the patriarchal family unit. Beginning with the character of the Master as the figurehead of the traditional family and moving through to the Potentials as the non-biological offspring of a contemporary and arguably queer family, this paper will explore how normative families are constructed as threatening and violent and the ways in which *BtVS* offers new subversive and feminist imaginings of kinship.