

Anthony Stepniak: 'Woman's Body as Warzone': The Gender Identity of Drusilla

Building on *Buffy* scholarship undertaken by Claire Knowles, Lorna Jowett, Catherine Siemann and Allison McCracken, to name a few, and the cultural theory of Julia Kristeva, I intend to perform a close reading of the character of Drusilla, as she appears in the second season of *Buffy The Vampire Slayer*.

Reading dominant patriarchal culture as operating through a framework of binary oppositions, I aim to approach the character of Drusilla as a response to this. I identify Drusilla as a character where a number of binary oppositions are combined and as a result blurred, due to her backstory, appearance and behaviour. These oppositions relate to, and result in, a complex gender identity for Drusilla. Through a critical analysis of Drusilla's behaviour and mental state, I intend to suggest these as a result of the tension created by her combining and blurring a number of binary oppositions. This tension results in Drusilla's body being a warzone where she struggles, literally and metaphorically, to contain the contradictions inherent in the oppositions she blurs.

I plan on approaching Drusilla's vampire identity, due to its inherent abjection (most obvious through its undead status) as an enabling force for binary oppositions to be blurred and, through its fantastical quality, a symbolisation of the impossibility for such a contradictory (from a patriarchal perspective) gender identity to be constructed.