

Actualizing Abjection: Drusilla, the Whedonverses' Queen of Queerness

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[1] The portrayal of Drusilla by Juliet Landau in season two of Joss Whedon's TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) is an example of a contemporary vampire who blurs binaries and is identifiable as abject. Drusilla, however, is significant not only for conforming to both the abject and gender transgressive conventions of the vampire, but also for taking these qualities to another level and queering Kristeva's theory of the abject in the process by functioning as an "abject subject." This is achieved through both an actualization of abjection and a metafictional self-awareness the character possesses in relation to her own monstrous, vampiric, and thus abject state.

[2] It is important to clarify that in achieving becoming an abject-subject through the character's representation in season two of *Buffy*, Drusilla transgresses the dominant interpretations of her own abjection—namely that she acts as the underside of Buffy and as an embodiment of Angel's dark past. Tamy Burnett supports the identification of Drusilla functioning as a manifestation of Angel's dark past when she describes her as "the most obvious legacy of Angel's evil history" (121). Though convincing, the issue both these readings pose is, as I will go on to explicate, placing Drusilla back into a subject/abject

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binary with either Buffy and/or Angel, when in fact Drusilla functions apart from binaries—she is her own abject subject. It is then through this paradoxical identity that Drusilla is able to wreak havoc upon the symbolic order of season two of *Buffy*.

[3] The vampire, such as Drusilla, is a transgressive and disruptive figure to dominant ideological norms. This is supported by Gina Wisker when she states: “Whether used as the worst kind of terror to be exorcised or, in its contemporary form, as potential social/sexual transgressor to be celebrated, the vampire disrupts polarized systems of thought” (168). This transgressive element to the vampire can be made clear in its identification as a monster, with monsters being regularly utilized as a site to explore transgression, taboo behaviors, and the figure of the marginal. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen supports the monsters’ linkage with the taboo and forbidden and the way this enables them to be explorative sites of transgression when he states: “The same creatures who terrify and interdict can evoke potent escapist fantasies; the linking of monstrosity with the forbidden makes the monster all the more appealing as a temporary egress from constraint” (16-17). A way in which the monstrous figure, including the vampire, can disrupt ideological norms is through challenging the dominant identification system of the culture in which they appear. For the contemporary patriarchal Western world, that system would be a binary oppositional one. David S. Gutterman identifies the binary oppositional system of the West when he states that “binary oppositions is [sic] the governing logic of identity formation in the West” (220). The monster complicates a binary oppositional framework by being identifiable as both sides of a binary such as active/passive, masculine/feminine, and living/dead. Cohen identifies this resistance from the figure of the monster to binary oppositions due to their inherently hybridized bodies: “A mixed category, the monster resists any classification built on hierarchy or a merely binary opposition” (7).

[4] Among the societal norms the monster transgresses are those of gender and sexuality. The vampire is a perfect example of such a monster who blurs gendered and sexual binary oppositions, as Sara Buttsworth identifies: “Vampires are creatures of transgression in

relation to gender and sexuality. ‘Undead’ rather than dead or alive, sexual yet only able to reproduce through death, penetrable and penetrating, the vampire blurs traditional binary oppositions underpinning heterosexual constructions of masculinity and femininity” (186). The ability to both penetrate and be penetrated, as Buttsworth highlights, is one of the distinct ways in which the vampire blurs gender and sexual binaries. This penetration is achieved through their fangs, which function as a phallic symbol due to their inherently penetrative and reproductive abilities. With both the male and the female of the species obtaining this phallic symbol, distinctions between the sexes are blurred. Finally, through being able to penetrate and be penetrated by either the male or females of the species, heteronormative binaries of sexuality are transgressed.

[5] In its resistance to hegemonic orderings of gender and sexuality and its between-living-and-dead (undead) status, the vampire can be identified as what Julia Kristeva theorizes as the abject. Kristeva argues, “The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to *P*” (230). The abject is opposed to “I” (complete self) as it is one half of the subject, according to Kristeva, but it is something which is an integral part of the subject. As Elizabeth Grosz states, it “is both a necessary condition of the subject, and what must be expelled or repressed by the subject in order to attain identity and a place within the symbolic” (88-89). The abject, as well as being an element of the subject, functions as an alter-ego and a hidden realm, as Grosz explains: “Abjection is the underside of the symbolic. It is what the symbolic must reject, cover over and contain” (89). The vampire can be identified in relation to these definitions of the abject due to its unwillingness to conform to the binary oppositional framework of identity construction in Western patriarchal culture, as Wisker details: “The vampire’s transgression of gender boundaries, life/death, day/light behavior ... are elements of its abjection” (168). Unable to gain a place within the symbolic order, the vampire is abject—unidentifiable through binary oppositions, it is a representation of the under-side of the symbolic.

[6] An example of a contemporary, abject, binary-blurring, and gender transgressive vampire, as noted, is Drusilla, first introduced in

season two of *Buffy*. When we first encounter Drusilla in the episode “School Hard” (2.3), we are introduced to a childlike, submissive female vampire who spends her time talking to dolls and hosting make-believe tea parties in her white ceremonial-like dress. Don Tresca supports this reading of Drusilla, stating: “Drusilla is also coded very childlike with her baby-doll dresses and her penchant for playing with dolls” (150). The white ceremonial-like dress, which Tresca alludes to, is evocative of gowns stereotypically worn by nineteenth century gothic heroines. Laura Diehl supports the child-like and Victorian gothic heroine elements to Drusilla’s appearance early in season two when she describes her as “a parody of the fetishized child-woman of Victorian iconography and scientific discourse” (5). This rendering of Drusilla is furthered by her fragmented and often incoherent discourse, similar to that of a young child. Such examples of this are the rhymes that Drusilla speaks in such as “Run and catch, run and catch. The Lamb is caught in the blackberry patch” which she says in the episode “Lie To Me” (2.7). The use of the nursery rhyme has the effect of rendering her speech infantile in comparison to other characters who speak without the employment of rhyme.

[7] Drusilla playing with dolls is representative of a child doing the same and playing “make-believe.” She speaks to them and refers to them by name, caught up in her childlike world created from her imagination: “Miss Edith speaks out of turn; she’s a bad example and will have no cake today” (“School Hard,” 2.3, 00:18:52-58). By speaking to “Miss Edith” in this way, Drusilla is treating the doll as an animate object. This behavior is rendered childlike by the maternal instinct Drusilla demonstrates towards the dolls, speaking to them as if children. This is another convention of stereotypical make-believe play of a young child. This expression of maternal instinct, in relation to gender roles, identifies Drusilla here as essentially feminine. This is due to the elements of innocence, submissiveness, and maternal instinct this early representation of her contains, which are all conventional signifiers of femininity in dominant patriarchal ideology. Lorna Jowett identifies the maternal elements of Drusilla’s behavior in line with patriarchal gender norms for femininity when she states: “she [Drusilla] plays the nurturing

mother, a ‘natural’ female role.” (75).

[8] In addition to being both feminine and child-like, Drusilla’s early representation is also abject. This abjection is evident in her aforementioned fragmented speech. Drusilla’s fragmented, and at times incoherent speech, scattered with infantile rhyme, represents the instability that the abject would have in being “the unspoken of a stable speaking position” (Grosz 87). Drusilla’s ability and insistence of talking to dead and inanimate objects is a result of her vampiric identity, which inherently transgresses the living/dead binary. Not only does Drusilla not abide by this binary, she literalizes it, disregarding any understanding of others in *Buffy* who identify as being either one of the fixed positions of living or dead. This is clear after her pet bird dies, which Spike has to tell her continually, as Drusilla continues to converse with it (“Lie to Me” 2.7). Perhaps Drusilla is toying with the oppression the bird is experiencing through being on one side of the living/dead binary opposition.

[9] At the same time as revealing Drusilla’s abjection, both her conversation about the bird and her ability to speak at all in the series queer Kristeva’s theory of the abject. This is achieved in Drusilla being able to speak in the first place, for in being able to do so, Drusilla occupies her own position within the symbolic order of the show. However, any suggestion that this results in Drusilla not being abject but subject is quashed by the inherent abjection in her speech, its fragmented, incoherent style—a literalization of the instability of the abject’s speaking position.¹ In actualizing abjection in this fashion, Drusilla inherently queers it.

[10] Alongside her language, Drusilla reveals her active abjection through her child-woman role as it functions as a personification of the abject. Drusilla’s fragmented speech and weakened state following a mob attack in Prague can be seen as a physical representation of the cultural tension Drusilla suffers in being unable to situate herself within binary oppositions and thus struggle for a place in the symbolic order. All of these components represent a metafictional element to Drusilla, enabling her to have a self-awareness of her own queer abject identity. She is neither dead nor living—not fixed on either side of the binary. In

personifying the tension of abjection literally, and functioning in the symbolic order of the series, she becomes a hybrid who queers Kristeva's theory of abjection by being an abject subject.

[11] Drusilla's actualized abject self's representation in the narrative present of season two of *Buffy* further queers Kristeva's theory of the abject. While abjection is a key convention of the monster, in queering it through her Victorian child-woman role, Drusilla conforms to the convention of the monster in functioning as a site for exploring transgressive identities, behaviors, roles, and subjects. Cohen supports this function of the monster when he details how "Through the body of the monster fantasies of aggression, domination, and inversion are allowed safe expression in a clearly delimited and permanently liminal space" (17). Drusilla is a site through which an alternate version of the abject is explored; however, in being this site, Drusilla gains entry into the symbolic order of the season and is thus not in the safe liminal space to which Cohen refers.

[12] Outside of season two of *Buffy*, the majority of Drusilla's appearances in other seasons of *Buffy* and on *Angel* (1999-2004) are flashbacks. The narrative present/flashback binary is representative of the subject/abject binary. This is evident through flashbacks representing the repressed "abject" element of a character because they depict events which are past and thus in-active—only accessible through memory or magic. The narrative present, therefore, with its chronological relevance and dominance achieved through being the active "present," which all characters, unlike with the flashbacks, are experiencing, functions as the symbolic element of characters in the show. It is for this reason that my article solely focuses on the representation of Drusilla in season two of *Buffy*. Abject Drusilla's representation in the symbolic order of season two queers and challenges the aforementioned convention of Kristeva's theory. In achieving this, Drusilla can be seen to be a paradoxical figure in relation to abjection; she is abject, but she activates and actualizes abjection, giving her the oxymoronic identity of an abject subject. In being this abject subject, Drusilla is able to sinisterly unsettle the symbolic order. She is literally the nightmare who comes true for Buffy, who dreams of

Drusilla killing Angel in “Surprise” (2.13). Diehl supports Drusilla’s place in the symbolic order of the series when she notes “Drusilla is both mad and dead, but she nevertheless rises and wreaks as much vengeance upon the symbolic order as she possibly can” (6). In other words, relating to Drusilla’s Victorian child-woman gender role, she is the Victorian madwoman in the attic who is able to come downstairs in the sitting room for all to see.

[13] Drusilla’s abjection, queer, and binary-blurring status is further evident when we see another side to her that contrasts with the essentially feminine Victorian child-woman. This side is that of a leather-clad, BDSM, loving, sadistic version of Drusilla. This transition from child-woman to leather-clad BDSM siren takes place early on in the series and happens before Drusilla regains her strength. It is important to note this, as otherwise the shift in role of Drusilla on a gendered, sexual, and aesthetic front can enable an interpretation which aligns a child-woman Drusilla/ BDSM Drusilla binary opposition as being interchangeable with a weak Drusilla/strong Drusilla one.

[14] The BDSM Drusilla contradicts the submissive and infantile elements to her child-woman side. These contradictions further demonstrate how Drusilla continually blurs binaries of various kinds, as Jowett supports when she notes the way Drusilla “...violates boundaries between good and evil, Christian and pagan, pure and sexual” (76). This shift in Drusilla’s representation is translated to the audience through her attire; while remaining gothic in style, she leaves behind her Victorian heroine apparel for more vibrantly colored contemporary adult female fashion. This contemporary red leather and black high- heeled aesthetic, which Drusilla adopts for the last part of the season, also pays homage to the BDSM activities in which she participates.

[15] As well as the shift in attire, the BDSM elements to this more sexualized side of Drusilla also contradict the essentially feminine aspect of her child-woman identity. This contradiction results in a shift in gender roles and enables Drusilla to transgress the masculine/feminine binary. This transgression is most obviously achieved through BDSM’s inherent performability of its dominant and submissive roles. By BDSM activities’ engaging with power play and detaching dominant and

submissive roles from any essentialist alignment with a particular biological sex, the gender binary is undermined and queered. This is achieved through a coding in patriarchal Western culture to align femininity with submissiveness and masculinity with dominance. In BDSM relationships, the female is able to occupy the role of the dominant and vice versa. This switch enables a transgression of the reductive masculine/feminine binary's interchangeability with the dominant/submissive one in Western patriarchal culture. BDSM's ability to transgress the masculinity/femininity and gender role binary is defined by Diehl: "Such erotics (BDSM) foreground role-playing and theater, deconstructing ideologies of sexuality such as the heterosexual alignment of gender with sex" (15). BDSM, with its taboo and marginalized status in Western patriarchal culture, is a fitting activity for vampiric monster Drusilla, as the monster is often associated with taboo sexual activity, or, as Cohen states: "The monster embodies those sexual practices that must not be committed" (14). In engaging in BDSM activities, Drusilla conforms to Cohen's sexually transgressive convention of the monster.

[16] An example of abject-subject Drusilla's ability to transgress the masculine/feminine role binary through BDSM related activities, as Diehl notes, occurs when, before regaining her strength and still in her Victorian child woman attire, she tortures Angel in a scene in the episode "What's my Line Part 2" (2.10). While being non-consensual and thus not a BDSM scene in theory, in practice, the scene does include many BDSM-related activities, such as bondage and sadomasochistic play, and makes a reality out of Buffy's dream in the episode "Surprise." In this scene with Angel in "What's my Line Part 2", the abject subject Drusilla is a very real threat to Angel in the symbolic order of the season. In the scene, Drusilla is the dominant and thus occupies the "masculine" and active role here, from the position of patriarchy, while Angel, tied up and shackled, occupies the submissive and thus "feminine" role. Drusilla torments Angel with holy water, taking great pleasure in the pain she is inflicting on him as the holy water burns his undead body. Importantly, Drusilla is represented in this scene as being the dominant, while still displaying stereotypically feminine signifiers. In achieving this seemingly

paradoxical feminine state and enabled by the inherent theatricality of BDSM style activities, Drusilla exposes masculine and feminine gender roles as culturally constructed labels rather than essential notions connected to biological sex.

[17] This concept of gender is explored by Judith Butler. Butler theorizes “that what we call gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo” (“Performative Arts,” 402). For Butler, gender is a performative notion that is regulated and implemented by the dominant ideology of any particular society. Furthermore, it is constructed of a series of cultural signifiers that function as ways of enabling identification of a certain gender identity. As well as serving as signifiers of a certain gender identity, approved by the dominant ideology, gender identity itself, Butler explains, is wholly made up of such acts: “[G]ender is in no way a stable identity of locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity tenuously constituted in time—an identity instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (“Performative Arts,” 402). As BDSM relationships and related activities suggest, Butler’s thinking on gender resists any essentialist thought, dissociating gender from biological sex: “There is no ‘proper’ gender, a gender proper to one sex rather than another, which is in some sense that sex’s cultural property. Where the notion of the ‘proper’ operates, it is always and only *improperly* installed as the effect of a compulsory system” (“Imitation,” 127). When this theory is applied to the binary oppositional ideology of the West, the active/masculine and passive/feminine binaries are exposed as the product of patriarchal ideology implemented to sustain their preferred gender “norms.”

[18] With Drusilla, in *Buffy*, BDSM coding becomes the enabling force for Butler’s theory of gender to be explicated: Drusilla is able to be both a “traditionally feminine” child-woman and also a “traditionally masculine” dominant. These seemingly incompatible gender roles are able to be represented in Drusilla due to the fantastical binary-blurring vampiric elements to her character and her queering of abjection. The result of this is a character who is able to personify Butler’s theory of gender revealing masculinity and femininity as culturally constructed

codes that are unrelated to biological sex. In doing this, Drusilla functions as a gender hybrid, a character who can have a wide ranging spectrum of gender identities. It is on this note that the chronological context of Juliet Landau's portrayal is important. In present TV and media, there has been some progression in relation to the understanding of the constructed nature of the masculine/feminine binary, meaning that a character could be able to encompass a variety of gender roles, as Drusilla does, and not have the fantastical elements to their character to serve as an enabling force. However, for the representation of Drusilla twenty years ago on prime time US network television, the fantastical vampiric element of her character was needed to explain and express such a character and her taboo behavior.

[19] It is important to mention that Drusilla does not stand alone in her ability to occupy multiple gender roles and embody Butler's theory. Characters who transgress patriarchal notions of masculinity and femininity are not unusual in *Buffy* or across the Whedonverses in general. This is something Elena Levine and Lisa Parks (among many others) comment on when they state that *Buffy* "offers provocative commentaries on matters of gender, sexuality, class, race and age" (2). Alongside Drusilla, another example of such a character is Spike. From his introduction alongside Drusilla in season two of *Buffy*, the audience witnesses a character who shifts from bad-guy vampire intent on killing Buffy to her friend, occasional lover, and long-term admirer. However, it is not in this shift alone that Spike is able to enact multiple gender roles; it is in the emotional pining for Drusilla before, then Buffy and the care we see the character express, exemplified in the final season by his self-sacrifice to the Hellmouth for Buffy. These emotional sides to Spike are particularly noticeable in a character originally introduced as a vampire antagonist with a bad attitude and a stereotypical hyper-masculinity. Much like Drusilla in relation to femininity, Spike's ability to show emotion and expose his vulnerabilities while maintaining his overall masculine aesthetic enables him to blur the masculine/feminine binary, and in doing so, expose the culturally constructed nature of it. Spicer details Spike's transgressive gender identity: "Though Spike initially appears as a strong masculine character, I argue that he crosses the

boundaries of conventional gender identifications, enacting a hybridized identity that is simultaneously coded masculine and feminine” (1). As Spicer notes, much like Drusilla, Spike also functions as a character who transgresses the masculine/feminine binary in the gender-transgressive world of *Buffy*.

[20] Drusilla’s transgressive identity is highlighted perfectly in the scene in which she kills Slayer Kendra in the episode “Becoming Part 1” (2.21). This is achieved in the way the scene brings together Drusilla’s binary blurring, abject subject, and multi-gendered-role self in a devastating fashion for all to see. Alongside explicating these aforementioned traits of Drusilla, Kendra’s death scene also exposes the way, true to form, Drusilla challenges and queers the identity label of vampire itself.

[21] Firstly, in her killing of Kendra, Drusilla does not use hand-to-hand combat; rather, she deploys her ability to mesmerise to place Kendra into a trance. Drusilla’s use of mesmerism exposes her actualized abject state and thus ability to transgress the living/dead binary. This is clear in the way Drusilla enacts the killing as if she is putting Kendra to sleep, signified by the eerily delivered “Night-night” (2.21) and kiss, which Drusilla blows as Kendra falls to the ground, clutching her throat, which Drusilla has just slashed. Drusilla says good night to Kendra as, for her, there are no fixed living or dead positions, so there is no reason for the abject subject that is Drusilla to interpret anything but that she is putting Kendra into a form of sleep.

[22] The idea of Drusilla putting Kendra to sleep gives the scene a disconcerting maternal tone. In true binary-blurring style, Drusilla manages to combine the seemingly incompatible images of mother and child and murderer and victim through a disturbing queering of maternal instinct and behavior. After swaying with Kendra in a trance until Kendra becomes sleepy, as a mother would with her child, Drusilla then mercilessly slashes Kendra’s throat with her fingernails. This conforms to Barbara Creed’s definition of the killing strategy of the female vampire who “Embraces her female victims, using all the power of her seductive wiles to soothe and placate anxieties before striking” (59). Drusilla’s mesmerising of Kendra is the embrace Creed mentions; the

rhythmic slumber-inducing swaying is the way she calms and pacifies Kendra before the slashing of the throat, which is the strike. A combination of her status as the hybridized abject subject who actualizes abjection, and her queering of binaries and identity labels results in Drusilla's queer version of mothering through putting Kendra to sleep in her own way.

[23] This maternal overtone to the killing also demonstrates how Drusilla queers the identity label of vampire within the series. Most evidently, Drusilla's features don't change to full vamp face at any point in the scene, a staple convention when other vampire characters in *Buffy* engage in combat, feed, or attack. Furthermore, Drusilla does not feed from Kendra nor does she sire her; she doesn't even use her fangs, the reproductive organ of the vampire, but just her fingernails to kill Kendra. Creed highlights the usage of fangs to symbolize the animalistic blood thirst for a female vampire killing when she states: "The vampire's animalism is made explicit in her bloodlust and the growth of her two pointed fangs" (61). The fact that Drusilla doesn't use her fangs reveals an alternate intention than to feed: Drusilla wants to put Kendra to sleep, not eat her. Taking into account Drusilla's binary blurring and abject subject status, it makes sense that she would differ in her expression of maternal instinct. In actualizing abjection and entering the symbolic order, it is logical that Drusilla would sire in a different fashion than the rest of her species, and that her method of killing Kendra is this alternate way of siring; hence, she doesn't use her fangs, but her nails to sire Kendra as her child before putting her to sleep.

[24] The use of her nails rather than her fangs not only represents her queering of the vampire identity label, but also Drusilla's ability to have an identity which contains multiple gender roles, transgressing and exposing the masculine/feminine binary in the process. Compared with the other females in the series, Drusilla does not have to wield a phallic penetrative symbol to gain power. Debra Jackson comments on Buffy's need to wield a phallic symbol as she does not have her own: "In addition to hand-to-hand combat, Buffy demonstrates outstanding facility with a wide variety of weapons. These conventionally masculine instruments are a central feature of her wardrobe" (11). Drusilla does not

use an external phallic symbol as a weapon in her killing of Kendra. On the surface, this can be seemingly explained away through her vampiric identity, which provides her with her own penetrative tool: her fangs. However in killing Kendra, transgressing the identity label of vampire, Drusilla uses her fingernails. Drusilla's fingernails function symbolically much as she does throughout the series, as a transgressive implement to the phallic symbol/phallus binary. Drusilla's fingernails are neither an external weapon she has to adopt to function as a phallic symbol, nor the reproductive and penetrative one her vampire identity enables her to possess. In transgressing both gender and vampire binaries and identities, abject subject Drusilla has her own individual phallic symbol with which to penetrate.

[25] Drusilla's fingernails further represent her transgression and exposing of the culturally constructed masculine/feminine binary in the fact that her long, red, painted nails are a patriarchal cultural signifier of femininity, which she paradoxically then makes penetrative. In achieving this, Drusilla is able to take on the role of penetrator, through using a feminine signifier and without resorting to a phallic symbol or her phallus-like operating fangs. This exposes the constructed nature of the masculine/feminine binary in that a feminine character can penetrate and take on the active, usually coded masculine, role.

[26] Not only are Drusilla's long, painted fingernails a feminine signifier, but they are aptly a transgressive one. This is evident as, while signifying culturally constructed femininity, they are not wholly culturally constructed, but rather harnessed. The nail polish and long shaping of Drusilla's fingernails are constructed and not natural, suitable for representing a concept of the same vein; however, the nails themselves are still a natural and organic part of her body. This enables them to transgress the organic/artificial binary. Furthermore, fingernails' very nature is that of something dangerous but breakable, ferocious but fragile, and thus they can be seen as representative of Drusilla's character in general. In transgressing and hybridizing both the organic/artificial and ferocious/fragile binaries, fingernails are a fitting choice of penetrative tool for abject subject Drusilla.

[27] Finally, the manner of Drusilla's penetrative strike reveals her

abject subject and binary-blurring queer identity. This is achieved as, not only does Drusilla use her own inherently transgressive phallic symbol, but the way she uses it is transgressive. Resisting the stabbing or sinking motion of penetration, such as with the sinking of fangs into a neck, Drusilla slashes Kendra's neck. It is fitting that Drusilla's transgressive choice of penetrative tool has a unique form of undertaking penetration. Ultimately, the scene in which Drusilla kills Kendra functions as one which represents the queer abject subject Drusilla as differing in the manner of killing, doing so with a transgressive phallic symbol, and utilizing it in an equally transgressive way, queering her identity as a vampire and exposing her ability to encompass multiple gender roles in the process.

[28] Overall, Drusilla's queering of Kristeva's theory of the abject, achieved through actualizing abjection and existing as an abject subject in the symbolic order of Season Two of *Buffy*, alongside her embodiment of Judith Butler's theory of gender, undoubtedly leaves her deserving of the title of the Whedonverse's Queen of Queerness. Enabled by her active abjection, Drusilla is one of the contemporary representations of vampires who, as Wisker states, "dismantle patriarchy's reductive binary thought and behavior processes" (168). Drusilla dismantles binaries of abject/subject, masculine/feminine, living/dead, and fragile/ferocious through her multiple roles, which Diehl points out when she comments that "She [Drusilla] is a vampire, a witch, a siren and a mesmerist ... She is a nun and Gothic heroine/victim" (4). In her speech, attire, sexual behaviors and playing out of the various aforementioned roles, Drusilla is revealed as an abject subject in season two of *Buffy*, with her killing of Kendra providing a scene that perfectly highlights all of her queer binary-blurring traits functioning simultaneously.

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Notes

¹ Editor's note: Cf. Alyson R. Buckman's analysis of River in Whedon, Minear, and company's *Firefly*, as a character who "enacts resistance to the Western system of language and logic" (45).