

June 9, 2003

Re: The scholar as vampire or How Academia Killed Buffy the Vampire Slayer

Dear Dr. Lavery:

I am writing to express my extreme disappointment in Slayage. Never before have I seen such brilliant television reduced to such a dry and lifeless state of subject matter. The phrase, "Full of sound and fury and signifying nothing" comes to mind upon reading the academic wasteland that is Slayage and the treatise-cum-doorstop that is Fighting the Forces.

Both the book and Slayage pretend to elevate the medium of television to some higher plane by attaching scholarly significance to the show Buffy the Vampire Slayer. In truth you do exactly the opposite. The problem with academia, Dr. Lavery, is that it only appeals to academics. And the problem with academics is that they don't honestly create anything; they merely analyze, ad nauseam, the creative efforts of others. Much like pulling the wings off of flies, this is hardly a worthwhile use of one's time, let alone the meaningful contribution to society that you would have it be. You take the best, most creative and inspired concepts on television and analyze them to death. Similar to vultures, or perhaps to the vampires you write about, you tear apart and devour vibrancy and creativity until all that is left is the pile of bleached and useless bones you call your work. Must you 'scholars' siphon the life force out of brilliant television by putting it under the microscope of so-called higher learning until it is reduced to yet another unwieldy and arduous thesis? In doing this, you are trying to stake an academic claim to something you were never meant to call your own.

Art, regardless of whether or not its medium is television, is meant for the masses. There's a reason that famous paintings are now housed in public museums rather than in the mansions of the elite: art is proletarian by its very nature. It was never meant to be governed by the narrow little world of academia. Art is the life blood of the people, full of inspiration and meaning, and you are reducing it to mere fodder for graduate seminars in which, no doubt, the word 'paradigm' will be used to the point of madness. You dissect art, suck it dry and dress up its corpse as academic achievement. Your work is appreciated by our limited scholarly population but the idea that it has importance in the real and much larger world outside of university classrooms, is made all the more laughable by the fact that you and those at Slayage take yourselves so very seriously. Fortunately a creative and cultural phenomenon like Buffy the Vampire Slayer cannot truly be defined by scholars, well versed in abstracts and proposals while lacking both passion and originality, nor can it be confined to stuffy lecture halls neither physical nor virtual. In ignoring these facts you have, as Buffy the Vampire Slayer would undoubtedly put it, *so missed the point*.

Sincerely,



Kenian Krye

cc: Dr. Rhonda Wilcox