

**DRINK IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME:  
BLOOD, BODIES AND DIVINE  
ABSENCE IN *TRUE BLOOD***

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Unbelief is still a form of belief, like the undead who, as the living dead, remain dead. (Žižek 2009, 101)

Maybe Jesus was the first vampire. Man, he rose from the dead too, and he told people, 'Hey y'all, drink my blood, it'll give you special powers.' (Jason Stackhouse, 'Shake and Fingerpop', 2.4)

A vial of John Paul's blood, saved by a Rome hospital in case he needed a transfusion, will now be used as a holy relic. (*The New York Times*, 29 April 2011, A6)

The opening credit sequence in HBO's *True Blood* begins under water. Like a creature rising from the primordial depths, or perhaps a dead fish floating to the top, we surface to see dark swamps, run-down liquor stores, crosses and cemeteries, a churchgoer 'slain in the spirit', sexy dancing, threatening snakes, a venus flytrap, a toddler-aged Ku Klux Klan member, civil rights riots, young boys eating juicy red berries, and an outdoor baptism. These images are woven together with quick flashes of naked flesh and with the bluesy, suggestive song 'Bad Things'. The first images set the location: scenes of the swamp, an abandoned car, a dilapidated house on the bayou, small houses lined up in little rows. But the first words of the song, accompanied by barely

visible clips of entangled naked bodies, shift the sequence into a world of sin and salvation, of ecstasy and orgasm, and of blood and decay. There is nothing fantastic or supernatural about any of these images. The only direct reference to vampires in the credits is a sign saying ‘God hates fangs’, which is, of course, a reference to the Westboro Baptist Church and their claim that ‘God hates fags’. But the conflation of sex and religion and of transcendence and death sets up a paradigm through which we can read the human/vampire intersection that the show offers.

### ***True Blood* and/as Religion**

Despite the complex presentation of religion in the opening credits, most actual Christianity, as presented in the episodes of *True Blood*, is one-dimensional and unproblematized. Whether it is the good-versus-evil view of the Fellowship of the Sun, the demon and Christ-haunted alcoholic haze of Lettie Mae, the there-is-a-purpose-for-everything religion of Sookie’s Gran or Sookie’s open-minded God of forgiveness, religious beliefs of the characters are rarely treated with any complexity. Sookie may have objections to Tara’s use of the ‘J word’, but when she is attracted to a vampire and overhears thoughts like ‘What kind of a good Christian girl would even look at a vampire’ (‘Strange Love’, 1.1), she does not pray about it, she does not think through any possible religious or theological consequences and she does not ponder the eternal soul or ontology of the vampire. Instead she merely says, ‘I don’t think Jesus would mind, if somebody was a vampire’. Sookie’s Jesus and her God, while assumed presences, serve to support her preconceived morality rather than form or challenge her worldview.

This does not mean, however, that religion is not a primary and complicated theme at the core of what makes HBO’s *True Blood* fascinating and important. Instead of presenting religious themes through the Church or Christian belief, *True Blood* offers acts of sacramentalism, of ritual and of transcendence through sex, violence, desire and drugs. The true acts of religion, then,

can be found in the very elements of the show that American religious organizations most object to. These 'religious' elements are usually seen as outside normative Christian experience, but the show's opening credit sequence suggests that these opposing elements can be easily conflated. Although mainstream religious institutions rarely acknowledge it, the fear of and desire for sex, death, blood, salvation and immortality are closely and inextricably linked with our religious feelings. Like the vampires in *True Blood*, these desires have accompanied sacred rituals and sacraments for centuries, hidden in the shadows of traditional worship and married to the fears, anxieties and nightmares that continue to make us religious long after the original beliefs and stories have changed.

Religious studies scholar Leonard Primiano writes that *True Blood* 'presents a rich, disturbing, ironical, critical, depressing fantasia on American religion in general – both in its institutional expressional and also in its lived, hybrid, vernacular expressions' (2011, 42). For historian Jon Butler, the story of religion in America is 'so complex and heterogeneous as to baffle observers and adherents alike' (1990, 2). Butler expands and complicates the very definition of American religion by including popular practices of magic, astrology and occultism. By showing how these have always been part of American religion, Butler demonstrates that many seemingly fringe elements of contemporary belief should actually be seen as part of a long and characteristically American tradition. In this tradition, the different presentations and definitions of 'religion' as they appear in *True Blood* open up into a larger discussion of what religion is, where it comes from and how it changes.

Much American evangelical Christianity seeks to return to an imaginary original church from the time of Christ and his apostles. But, of course, there never was one united Christian Church even at the 'beginning' (whenever we might locate that). For the first 'Jesus followers' it was far from obvious that Jesus was even a divine figure who should be worshipped. The early 'church' was racked with doubt about who they and their gods even were. From second-century Christians to the first Protestants to the

Mormons, every shift in religious belief has been accompanied by both physical and ideological violence. Beneath the surface of *True Blood* there is an underlying subversive structure that reveals what it means when a belief system suddenly changes. More than an exploration of American religion, *True Blood* can be seen as demonstrating the bloody, messy and exciting confusion that always accompanies a major epistemological shift. *True Blood* mirrors the violent and conflicted ways that various Christianities (orthodox and heretical) have negotiated contradictory ideas of body, pain, evil, death, creation and immortality.

### Bad Things

In the DVD commentary, *True Blood* creator Alan Ball claims that the opening credit sequence is supposed to ‘set the world’ for the show by creating a ‘strange mix of religious fervor and getting drunk and ... how they both sort of are two sides of the same coin ... some sort of transcendent experience’. But the sequence depicts more than just alternative forms of human release. It offers a theory of understanding these actions. Although the images are in themselves striking, the impact is mostly in the juxtaposition and imagined connections between images: a woman writhing provocatively in a bedroom is juxtaposed with a rattlesnake that coils and strikes; the face of a young boy in KKK attire cuts to a middle-aged man on a porch; and dirty dancing, religious ecstasy and biological images of birth and decay are woven together throughout the sequence. Abby Opam notes that by the close of these images the

decision is left for the viewer to descend into any of the ‘bad things’ that plague the subjects of the video – you can either hope for some phony spiritual redemption through your preacher, become a member of the Ku Klux Klan, or participate in a subliminal orgy. Either way, we’re all dying; all headed the same way as the fox kit or the dead possum. (Opam 2009)

In some ways, the opening credits offer a primer on how to view the show, teaching us to pay attention not only to the complexity of images but also to juxtapositions and transitions, and to read the space between images, the implied, the unsaid, the contradictory.

While the most obvious themes of the opening are the blurring of sacred and profane and the predatory character of man and nature, when we add the music and the premise of the series it presents an even more complicated message that insists that we make sense of these paratactic images, while continuing to deny us closure. As Opam points out, 'Whenever the animalistic tendencies are greatest, whenever the music reaches a crescendo or vital moment, there is a flash of nude bodies – some reflection of the innermost desires of those who preach religion or sex or violence' (Opam 2009). How do these desires relate to the interaction of humans and vampires? Primiano suggests that the credit sequence implies a question: 'If vampires have enough self-control to resist the lure of human blood, should humans possess sufficient self-control to resist organized religion?' (Primiano 2011, 49). But it can also be seen to say just the opposite – to point at primal urges within humans that are necessarily and inescapably built into their religions, rituals, beliefs and practices.

The opening credits create a slow crescendo through music and images that reaches its peak in a final full-immersion adult baptism scene. In a night-time shot, two men lower a woman into the water; as the song and the credits come to an end, she flails about, seemingly in a type of ecstasy, but just before the shot cuts away it is almost as if she is trying to escape. As the woman splashes her way (blissfully? desperately?) towards us, it is ambiguous whether we are to feel a cathartic release or a sense of suffocation, the credits (and religious ritual) pulling us back under water where the sequence began. The opening credits, like baptism, ask us to ponder the importance of the body to the soul. The body is on the one hand the source of our certainty, the proof that we are real. On the other, it is the cause of our fall, the location of our sinful impulses and violent transgressions.

*True Blood*'s emphasis on the human body forces us to confront our assumption about these issues. Throughout the series we see naked, contorted, dead, bleeding and headless bodies; we see close-ups of flesh that we barely recognize; we hear the amplified sounds of wounds and of piercing and sucking. When vampires are killed they explode into almost impossibly messy and sticky globs of blood and flesh that must be mopped up and wiped off. Unlike *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, where dying vampires disappear into dust or in Stoker's *Dracula* where they smile at the release from damnation, the *True Blood* vampire is physically broken down on a cellular level. What is the power that does this? Is it indeed, as Reverend Steve Newlin says, evidence of the power of God? Or do these gory deaths show just the opposite, emphasizing the physical not the supernatural natures of vampires, life and death?

### The Event of the Vampire

If the final image of the opening credits leaves us vaguely uncomfortable, then the music and lyrics contribute to that feeling. The first line of the song, 'When you came in the air went out', paired with the simultaneous flashes of entangled naked bodies, introduces an element of hidden or repressed sexuality. The line itself seems to refer to human sexual attraction; perhaps we think of Sookie's reaction to Bill walking into Merlotte's. 'The air went out' seems a clear metaphor for a situation that radically changes, whether through overwhelming attraction or a world in which monsters are real. This moment for Sookie is a true 'event' in the philosophical sense, when one's sense of reality is changed and a new truth can be perceived.

The 'event', as philosophers such as Alain Badiou have theorized it, is a moment of rupture in which ontology is changed, a moment that introduces possibilities beyond ordinary calculations. An event, Badiou argues, is 'totally abnormal': *none* of its elements are represented in the 'state of the situation' and something new has entered that belongs to the situation, but

that exists outside it (Badiou 2005). The entrance of the vampire – Bill into the bar, vampires into the realm of reality and *True Blood* into our living rooms – can be seen as a type of event. A new truth is witnessed; the rules of life and death, of history, how we imagine the present and how we construct the past are never the same again. Paradigmatic examples of such events might be the Lisbon earthquake, the French Revolution, Arnold Schoenberg's atonal composition or the entrance of Christ into human history. While most older religions celebrated cycles of life and death, Christianity insists that one specific historical intervention is the turning point in all of human history – Christ rose from the grave, the cycle of life and death reversed and nothing could ever be the same again. This was not, however, the accepted view of even all the early Christians. As early as the second century gnostic Christians were referring to the literal belief in resurrection as a 'faith of fools' (Pagels 1989, 11). The bodily resurrection of Christ seemed to suggest that Christians valued the body and saw it as inseparable from the soul. But, on the other hand, many Christians from the beginning devalued or even claimed disgust for the human body. In the *Gospel of Thomas* Jesus says, 'I am amazed at how this great wealth [the spirit] has made its home in this poverty [the body]' (Saying 29). But if such actions as sex and birth are so disgusting, then where does Christ come from? What is it that we worship on the cross? What happened in Bethlehem or on Golgotha that is worth remembering or re-enacting?

For Slavoj Žižek, the significance of the crucifixion is not that it symbolizes suffering or the resurrection. Instead, the crucifixion is an event in human history where we realized that God is truly dead, that we are now on our own. This moment on the cross demonstrates 'God's weakness' and, as Žižek writes, 'only in Christianity ... does god himself turn momentarily into an atheist' (2009, 96). For Žižek, 'only atheists can truly believe' (2009, 101), which is another way of saying that Christ is only significant in the meaninglessness of his death and that for Christianity to remain meaningful we must continue to *not* believe, we must continue to re-experience the death of the

transcendent God that the moment on the cross demonstrated. *True Blood*, like much of Žižek's philosophy, offers a negation of Christianity that yet remains Christian. Vampires offer a proof of the weakness of God and Jesus, whose supposed immortality, if true, is not unique. After vampires, Christ's intervention in history is rendered less of an event.

Žižek, borrowing from Hegel, characterizes Christ as 'monstrous' and 'inappropriate' in order to emphasize the role of Jesus as Other. The vampire, like Jesus, represents a monstrous and not-quite human figure that alters how humans see themselves. If Jesus was monstrous because he was God in finite flesh, then the vampires in *True Blood*, as humans in infinite flesh, are similarly monstrous. The human, as Badiou points out in *Being and Event*, is a 'being which prefers to represent itself within finitude, whose sign is death' (2005, 149). For finite humans, since the infinite is understood to be beyond understanding, it is associated with the divine. Within this context, both Jesus and vampires represent a new possibility, a theoretical and theological trope and a type of thought experiment that changes the ways humans imagine themselves. In other words, what is happening in *True Blood* resembles the uncertain shifts in thinking among the early Christians. Faced with an impossible theological conundrum, the great church councils of the fourth century ultimately created a greater one, deciding that Christ was both and equally man and God. Badiou labels this contradiction a *limit*; in other words, two opposing terms and concepts are somehow allowed to coexist – a new ontological logic has been created and both God and the world are different after this encounter. For these fourth-century Christians, humans become more like the divine and Gods are more like humans; by the same logic, in *True Blood*, the vampires are more human and the humans more vampiric. They are both changed to the very core of their being; they do not exist as they previously did.

When Bill goes to Vampire Queen Sophie-Anne for information on how to fight the maenad ('Frenzy', 2.11), she informs him that they are 'sad, silly things. The world changed centuries ago and they're still waiting for the god who comes'. When Bill asks if he



ever comes, she replies, 'Of course not. Gods never actually show up'. This exchange points to the idea of a transcendent God who, by definition, is separate from earthly things and of a Messiah, who by definition is always coming, but never comes. Of course, a god who never arrives is not quite the same as one who does not exist. When Bill asks how she summons this 'nonexistent god', Sophie-Anne replies that she 'never said he was nonexistent, just he never comes'. Using information given by the queen, Bill and Sam are able to fool the maenad and kill her. Her last words are 'was there no god?' For Primiano, this suggests that 'Like the humans around her, this supernatural creature is faced with the same existential longing for a God that is just not there, is not dependable, does not seem to care' (2011, 51).

A major debate among early Christians was whether God or a god had really come to them here on earth, essentially a question of transcendence versus immanence. Yet a god who becomes flesh risks becoming less magical not more. In *True Blood*, paradoxically, it is the vampire – a previously supernatural fantasy – that forces humans towards a disenchanted world. When Bill says that Holy Water is 'just water' and a crucifix only 'geometry', his comments apply to humans as well as vampires. Early in the episode 'Cold Ground' (1.6), Bill is asked to speak of his experiences as an actual veteran of the civil war. Speaking in a church, Bill represents a form of 'real presence' and of absolute continuity with an imagined past, concepts central to Christianity. Before Bill comes out to speak, Hoyt and his mother attempt to remove a large, brass cross from the altar, fearing (mistakenly) that it will harm Bill. Interestingly here, this cross, which cannot be moved, and Bill both represent a mastery over death and an assumed continuity with a glorious past. Bill reassures the church audience that: 'We vampires are not minions of the devil. We can stand before a cross or a Bible or in a church just as readily as any other creature of God.' While we can see this as an 'example that God is actually not present in the lives of humans' (Primiano 2011, 54), we can also place it within Christian ideology. Like Žižek's reading of the crucifixion as a scene of the end of a god, not the beginning, both Bill and

the cross signify a new world that now exists in the absence of God. Perhaps, the show suggests, while some kind of god is always desired but never present, vampires – like Jesus and early Christianities – represent a break, a chance to rethink our narratives of life and death, beginnings and endings. In other words, humans see in vampires both a Christ-like intervention in ontological categories of being *and* evidence of the absence of their old transcendent God. Like Christ, vampires challenge, subvert and exemplify the contradictions inherent in a divine figure that is somehow transcendent and immanent.

### **Nothing but the Blood: Myths of Power, Origin and Continuity**

At the end of ‘Cold Ground’, Sookie, as a way of healing after the murder of her beloved grandmother, performs three related ritualistic acts; each act resonates with Christian ritual yet is enacted in a world of an absent God. After leaving the funeral, where, overwhelmed with the judgemental thoughts of people, she yelled at everyone to ‘shut the fuck up’, Sookie finds Bill’s grave. This silent moment forces us to fill in the blanks – perhaps like Sookie, doubting the role of death, gods and Christian burials. What was her grandmother’s funeral commemorating if Sookie is dating the man whose grave she now looks at? What do all the crosses around her at this moment represent? Does this grave, like the cross, represent an ending or a beginning? Sookie knows that no body lies beneath that stone – but then Christianity, too, begins with an empty grave. It is not that graves and crosses have lost their meaning, but their meaning is now something different.

Upon arriving home, Sookie slowly and ritualistically eats the last pie that her grandmother had cooked as a hymn plays softly as background music. The music continues (‘Take me home, Lord, take me home’) and the camera cuts to extreme close-ups of the pie, emphasizing and defamiliarizing its materiality. As Primiano writes, the scene creates a ‘new

religious iconography' and resembles the 'reverence and dignity of the reception of the Eucharist at a funeral' (2011, 52). But, taking our cue from the credit sequence, if we view the show through juxtapositions and gaps, meaning is always plural and unstable. The images of Sookie are complicated by cuts to other characters. We briefly see Sam and Tara in her hotel room, where he says to her that he wants 'something real in my life', we cut back to the empty pie pan and then to Sookie in front of the mirror. The non-verbalized visual comment is that Sookie, too, is acting out of a desire for 'something real' which adds to the resonance of the Eucharist, a ritual that Catholic theology sees as producing the 'Real Presence' of Jesus Christ. Without changing expression, Sookie almost ritualistically lets her hair down and changes into a white dress. She calmly looks out of the window, waiting for the sun to set, and then runs barefoot across a blue-tinted, misty field to her first sexual encounter with Bill. In the final scenes of the episode, she kisses his fangs and then offers her throat for him to bite; 'I want you to,' she says. Sookie here is body and blood – and pecan pie. As he drinks from her, the final shot is an extreme close-up of skin, blood, teeth and tongue – linking the image to the close-up of the pie and presenting both as religious iconography: a Eucharistic replacement that conflates life and death, human and monster, the saved and the damned.

The teaser to the next episode, 'Burning House of Love' (1.7), opens with the same shot that concluded the previous episode: Bill's mouth and fangs and Sookie's skin and blood. The scene then depicts the more traditional sexual penetration as Sookie moans with pleasure. This conflation of bodies, blood, ritual, sex, danger and ecstasy is an echo of the opening credit sequence to which this scene then cuts directly. After the credits, Bill retires alone to his resting place beneath the floor, emphasizing the difference between him and Sookie, between vampire and human. This cuts directly to a shot of Lettie Mae's coffee cup (which she spikes with vodka, another Eucharistic substitute?) and we hear a Christian radio programme playing in the background: 'what *does* it mean to accept Jesus as your personal saviour?' What

does it mean? Has that meaning now changed? In this episode, we see each character searching for and questioning the sense of the 'real' that is at the centre of the Eucharistic performances. The previous episode's re-presentation of the Eucharist has opened the door to rethinking the relationship between life and death and human and divine. Throughout this episode, which continues to play with the perception of good and evil and complexities of reality and appearance, different characters seek forms of fulfilment, transcendence or escape through a force that is simultaneously sexual, physical, ritualistic and dangerous: Lettie Mae seeks money for an exorcism, even offering the banker sex in exchange for a loan; Jason craves V, going first to Lafayette and then to Fangtasia where he meets Amy; Sookie continues to desire sex with Bill. When Jason and Amy take V together, she makes the implicit explicit, saying 'you just know this is what Holy Communion is symbolic of'. What is real in this episode? What forms of power are based in something outside the human imagination? V? Sex? Exorcism? Magic? Bill says to Sookie that 'we're all kept alive by magic ... my magic is just a little different than yours' ('Mine', 1.3). But what is the magic that animates him? Or her?

Within Christian traditions, 'magic' is associated with forms of creation: the world from nothing, blood from wine. Vampires, like humans, are obsessed with the ideas contained in being 'created', in their origins and in the assumed continuity between who they were and who they now are, perhaps even more so because their bodies remain unchangingly fixed to the moment of their becoming vampire. These concerns are central to both Western religion and our monster myths, stories that negotiate similar anxieties about the meaning and roots of creation. Frankenstein created his monster in an attempt to play God and then failed to take responsibility for his creation, but Dracula, a figure of random evil and unknown origin, is ambiguously located in relationship to the divine and the sacred. From Bill Compton to Dracula to Frankenstein's creature to Grendel, questions of creator and parentage are linked to evil and sin. Is the created the same as the creator?

Early Christians debated this same issue in trying to answer the question of where Christ came from. Was he created? How could he be God's 'son' if God had not created him? And yet if he was created, did that make him just as impermanent as a human, just one cross (or staking) away from being returned to nothingness? All 'creatures', Christians had insisted, come into existence 'out of nothing'. God, as having never been 'created', was therefore safe from the fall into nothing. If Christ had a beginning, the proto-orthodox would argue, then he can have an end. The fourth-century heretic Arius claimed that Christ – like man – was also created, that he too came from nothing, forcing thinkers to theorize the act of creation and the concept of nothing and nothingness, a subject that obsesses both vampires and humans in *True Blood*. Embedded in the mention of vampires and heretics is the concept of creators – divine or artistic, it makes no matter – as destructive beasts that echo not only the simultaneously murderous but life-giving vampire, but also the evil creator God of the Gnostic Christian and the monstrosity of a Christ who is both and neither man and god, created and eternal.

When newly created vampire Jessica asks Bill, 'Are you a Christian?', he responds, 'I was'. How should we read his answer? All of the human characters in *True Blood* seem to be Christian in some sense or another, yet Bill has either chosen not to be or he cannot be a Christian any more. Does he realize that Christianity is not 'true' and he can then no longer be a Christian? Or as an immortal does he no longer need to be? If he ceased to be Christian upon rising from the grave, it is in effect his accepting his fallen status – an essentially Christian and Catholic move (if always a problematic one). If he is evil, what is it that is evil about him? How is he made evil? Like most orthodox Christians throughout history, must Bill accept that our evil nature does not depend on effort, thought or action, but that we must yet accept our responsibility for it? Does Bill metaphorically represent what happens when the resurrected Christ continues to believe God has forsaken him?

## Conclusion

My reading of *True Blood* points towards what are perhaps the two most crucial philosophical and intellectual challenges of the twenty-first century: theorizing the surprising persistence of religious faith and defining what it means to be ‘human’ in a rapidly changing world. These are questions that are inextricably related and that conflate the religious and the scientific. As digital, biological, medical and cybernetic technology expands our definitions of ‘human’, how will we define ourselves? How will we define our gods? Our demons? Although these are theological questions, they are also now inextricably tied up with science. One of the final images of the credit sequence – a blood sample – does not suggest violence, religion or sex, but instead seems to be an image taken from science, from a laboratory. In the same vein, it is significant that it is a scientific discovery that finally permits vampires to mainstream, and that it is science that Bill used to differentiate vampires from humans: ‘there are no electrical impulses in my body ... what animates you no longer animates me’ (‘Mine’). As we saw in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and as we will see in the twenty-first century, science is often a major force behind theological change.

Recent innovations in digital, genetic, biotechnological and cybernetic science have led to increased anxieties about the clear boundaries of the human body and have initiated a new sense of uncertainty about our bodily presence. We create online bodiless ‘avatars’, through which we experience much of the world; the concept of gender is no longer fixed, either psychologically or physically; reproduction can occur outside sexual activity; eyes, limbs and organs are replaced with increasing ease; and the ubiquity of portable GPS and Google devices has partially replaced or augmented memory. DNA research that demonstrates that our personal information is not just ‘stored’ in brains but exists in a more living and mutable form in our genes implicitly challenges the ontology of the ‘soul’ itself. The *True Blood* vampire, in all of its philosophical disruption, serves as a metaphor of these posthuman fears. The vampire’s defining act of sucking blood is

simultaneously that of a feeding child, a passionate lover and an act of creation, procreation and murder. Like our relationship to the divine and to the cyborg, we lose track of who created whom and what is normative.

Most traditional definitions of religion – by both those who claim to be religious and those who deny it – portray religion as a force against chaos, as a harmonious ‘light against the darkness’ in the words of the Fellowship of the Sun, or as giving ‘order and meaning’ and providing ‘happiness and emotional security’ in the words of a religious studies scholar (Lippy 1994, 2). However, the nature of Christianity is built around unstable ideas and irresolvable contradictions, and religious thought and events are just as often harbingers of chaos. In some ways *True Blood* presents a model of how this works. Like the intervention of Christ into history, *True Blood* forces us to shift how we think about the borders of the human and the divine, the categories of life and death and the desire for the presence of a God who continues to express only divine absence. While the Jesus that Sookie imagines is the friendly and present Jesus of American religion – the ‘loving, open-minded Christ, who himself knows something about existence after death’ (Primiano 2011, 44) – the figure that really changes her conception of being in the world is Bill. Bill and the idea of vampires change reality and the experience of being for Sookie in ways that can be compared to a religious experience. Within the implied ideology of *True Blood* the vampire is not a negation of Christianity; instead the vampire’s intervention in humanity reveals and participates in the contradictions and aporias that are part of Christianity itself.

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