

## **“Once More, with Feeling”:** Emotional Self-Discipline in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

**Gwynne Kennedy and Jennifer Dworschack-Kinter**

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) still occupies an important place in feminist popular culture, even 20 years after it first aired. Critics and viewers continue to debate whether Buffy is a feminist superhero, and, if so, what kind of feminism/s she embodies.<sup>1</sup> Because of what the Slayer can do, the show suggests that it is imperative for Buffy to learn how to discipline her anger and the pleasure she takes in her power.<sup>2</sup> As the title character and primary superhero, Buffy exhibits the show’s desired mode of anger expression for its female characters and viewers: a tight control of her anger and a suppressed pleasure in her exceptional abilities.<sup>3</sup> Female characters, notably Faith and Willow, who express anger freely and clearly enjoy their power, lose their narrative coherence when they are punished for failing to conform to what the show insists

---

**Gwynne Kennedy** is Associate Professor of English and Women's & Gender Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, where she is currently Chair of WGS. Her teaching interests include early modern English literature, particularly women writers and Milton, contemporary women writers, and the study of emotions, especially anger. She has written on anger in early modern women's writings, gender and the pleasures of revenge in early modern drama, and gender and anger in Shakespeare's plays. This is her first foray into the Buffyverse.

**Jennifer DK (Dworschack-Kinter)** lives, teaches, and writes, in Shorewood, Wisconsin, with one husband, two kids, and two cats. She is a senior lecturer at the University of WI-Milwaukee, and her stories, poems, and reviews have appeared in *Phoebe: A Journal of Feminist Scholarship Theory and Aesthetics*, *Limestone*, *Whetstone*, *The Comstock Review*, *Aoife's Kiss*, *The View From Here*, and *The Cream City Review*, among others. She is the co-founder of FORGE, an organization that promotes inclusion in geek society, and is currently co-creating her first graphic novel. It is complete coincidence that her oldest child's name is Willow.

is appropriate emotion management. Their stories caution viewers about the dangers of undisciplined emotions and reinforce Buffy's superior handling of hers. For us, *BtVS* displays ambivalence and anxiety about the potential power of women's anger and self-appreciation that reveal a deeper concern about powerful women. This attitude toward powerful women necessarily complicates feminist readings of the show.

A significant body of scholarship on anger considers it a legitimate, valuable emotion in certain circumstances, particularly in response to an intentional injury or injustice done to ourselves or others to whom we feel connected or responsible.<sup>4</sup> The righteous anger motivating Buffy's slaying of vampires and demons in defense of Sunnydale fits these conditions. Indeed, the superhero role is traditionally to protect and defend. Gender, however, adds an additional element to anger of behalf of others. As Marilyn Frye explains, women's anger is generally seen as more understandable and potentially acceptable when expressed on behalf of others rather than for themselves, because anger in defense of others conforms more readily to conceptions of women as protectors or nurturers.<sup>5</sup> *BtVS* bears this out. Nearly all of Buffy's anger is expressed on behalf of others and represented positively; when she does express anger solely for herself, that anger is much more likely to be criticized than sanctioned. Buffy's righteous anger is central to her Slayer role, but its destructive possibilities generate anxiety for the show. In *BtVS* women's anger is carefully monitored, managed, and often feared, as if it were a potentially catastrophic force.

The show also exhibits concern about what could happen if female characters fully enjoy their power. Faith and Willow relish theirs—they have fun—and they are punished for it. In the logic of the show, this enjoyment inevitably produces self-deception and arrogance, because they overvalue their abilities, and it is self-destructive. Both characters undergo rehabilitation (in a coven or prison) off-screen, after which they rejoin Buffy's group, having learned to think less of themselves and, in Willow's case, to be cautious and doubtful about her power. Unlike Faith, Buffy routinely denies that slaying gives her pleasure, and, unlike Willow, she downplays her superior strength rather than delights in it. As women, all three characters need to find ways to take pride in their powers—to enjoy being strong—without being

accused of arrogance or vanity—and the show champions Buffy’s solution alone. We suggest that, for Buffy, Faith, and Willow, the connection between their anger and pleasure in their extraordinary strength is self-worth. Elizabeth Spelman argues that when an angry person uses her own criteria to judge someone who has wronged her, she is also taking herself seriously at the same time (266). Anger at an injustice or injury, then, involves a recognition and assertion of self-worth. Those with privilege and an investment in the status quo benefit when Buffy (and female viewers) are discouraged from acknowledging or freely expressing emotions that affirm that they are powerful women.

Despite Buffy’s claim to Kendra, the next Slayer, that her emotions are “total assets” and that “anger gives you fire. A Slayer needs that” (“What’s My Line (Part 2)” 2.10 00:27:53), much of Buffy’s actual staking appears matter-of-fact and routine, especially in the brief scene before the title sequence. She typically appears business-like in dispatching vampires when she has no personal connection to her enemies, or when their slaying is not really part of the plot. In these situations, her righteous anger is implied rather than shown. On the other hand, when viewers know Buffy’s anger is on behalf of specific characters or is important to the plot, viewers generally see an angry Buffy.<sup>6</sup>

We focus here on the ways that *BtVS* manages Buffy’s anger on her own behalf to limit its effects. One tack the show takes is to validate Buffy’s anger on her own behalf primarily when it is also anger on behalf of others. In Season Five, she pulverizes a troll who predicts that Xander and Anya’s love will not last, insisting that “their love will last forever” (“Triangle” 5.11 00:38:46). Buffy is upset about Riley’s leaving town, but expresses it in anger on behalf of Xander and Anya. Buffy shows her anger when fighting Glory, because Glory has called Spike Buffy’s “boyfriend” (“Blood Ties” 5.13 00:40:30). Her anger is acceptable because it is also in defense of Dawn. During her fight with Sunday, the vampire who “touch[ed]” Buffy’s “stuff,” Buffy’s anger is linked to her Slayer role through the parasol that grateful students gave her at the prom for protecting them (“The Freshman” 4.1).

At times, viewers see what seems to be Buffy unreasonably angry on her own behalf, but that anger later proves justified and acceptable.

For instance, in “Ted,” Buffy attacks a vampire so savagely with a trashcan lid that Giles intervenes and tells her to stake him (2.11). Her explanation reveals that she was redirecting her anger at her mother’s new boyfriend, Ted, onto the vampire. Buffy’s anger is later validated, though, when Ted turns out to be a robot who intended to kidnap Buffy’s mother. Buffy’s friends are not sympathetic to her anger at her college roommate, but Buffy’s anger was in fact legitimate, because the roommate is revealed to be a demon who has been stealing parts of Buffy’s soul (“Living Conditions” 4.2).

Buffy likewise redirects anger on her own behalf into slaying and her physical training. In “Checkpoint” (5.12), the real target of Buffy’s anger is not the vampire she is attacking, but the history professor who humiliated her in class in the previous scene. Overwhelmed with responsibility after her mother’s death, Buffy furiously assaults a demon with a copper pipe, as her basement fills with water (“Flooded” 6.4). Buffy suggests that she and the vampire she fights both have unfulfilled desires (“I’ve always wanted piano lessons”) and “unexpressed rage,” but that she releases hers through slaying: “I’ll tell you what, you find yourself a good anger management class and I’ll jam this pokey wood stick through your heart” (“No Place Like Home” 5.5 00:2:05). Training equipment provides a means for Buffy to release strong anger rather than directing it toward others. She aggressively punches her bag after seeing Riley in the vampire den (“Into the Woods” 5.10) and after being refused a loan (“Flooded” 6.4). Buffy destroys her workout machine after coming back from the dead (“When She Was Bad” 2.1) and knocks her punching bag off its chain after Dawn is captured (“The Gift” 5.22). Xander, in a protective puffy suit, is nonetheless hurt by Buffy’s punches as she deals with Spike’s attraction to her (“I Was Made to Love You” 5.15).

Giles plays a major role in teaching Buffy to discipline her anger and to take satisfaction, but not pleasure, in her Slayer power. He supervises her emotional as well as her physical training, reminding her, for example, to “keep a level head,” because “as a Slayer, you don’t have the luxury of being a slave to your passions” (“Enemies” 3.17 00:7:00), when she is unnerved by Angelus’ stalking. Because Giles offers Buffy guidance and correction as her official, and sometimes unofficial,

Watcher, she is rarely without male oversight. Moreover, Buffy affirms Giles's authority over her throughout almost the entire the series. In Season Six, Giles returns to England over Buffy's objections, believing she must stand on her own to understand her strength ("Tabula Rasa" 6.8). When he returns at the season's end, he calls his departure a mistake, but Buffy disagrees, confirming his decision by saying she needed to act like an adult ("Grave" 6.22). However meaningful their relationship, the show reveals anxiety about unchecked or unsupervised Slayer power, because Buffy consistently receives validation and direction from Giles and seldom acts without him. Even in the final episode, when Buffy is in command and Giles' authority is undermined by his lack of skill playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, she still asks his opinion, and he pronounces her plan to share power "bloody brilliant" ("Chosen" 7.22 00:15:30).<sup>7</sup>

Sometimes Buffy corrects herself, demonstrating that she has internalized the importance of strict control of her anger. Her anger when battling Angelus after Jenny's death is both on her own and on Giles' behalf ("Passion" 2.17), as is clear when Buffy punches Giles in the face after he claims it is not her fight. Her later admission that she cannot be a Slayer on her own is an apology for the punch that accepts the need for her to manage her anger and for Giles's oversight. When the sudden appearance of a little sister, Dawn, makes unwelcome changes in her life, Buffy vents her anger to Riley, and then asks, "Did I mention this is a rant? Sense has no place here" ("Real Me" 5.2 00:23:03). Her belief that her anger is excessive and irrational reinforces the importance of the self-control she has momentarily let slide. Unlike her earlier anger that the demands of being the Slayer prevent her from being a "regular girl," Buffy's anger at Dawn is more about having a sister than having to fight vampires and demons, and it is not connected to the show's concerns about her power. When Buffy tells her mother that she is a vampire slayer, her anger remains under control as she explains that it is her "fate," despite her wishes. In this instance, her anger reinforces her resignation to her role.

Buffy rarely loses control of her anger on her own behalf, and the times when she does are exceptions to her usual self-discipline. After discovering Riley in a vampire nest, she returns later to find it empty and

gratuitously sets it on fire (“Into the Woods” 5.10). Buffy next slays the vampires who left the nest and throws a spear into the back of a fleeing vampire who is not a threat. In the next episode, Giles corrects her form several times during their workout, and she “accidentally” punches him instead of his pads (“Triangle” 5.11). Buffy punches Faith in the face outside the Bronze after Faith rightly questions whether Buffy was protecting the potential Slayers when she led them into the Vineyard (“Empty Places” 7.19). These incidents do not do serious damage, however; Buffy’s relationship with Giles remains intact, and Buffy realizes she must reconnect with her friends and potential Slayers to win the last battle. These scenes present Buffy as being momentarily overly emotional rather than as being powerfully or forcefully angry.

*BtVS* reminds viewers periodically that even when Buffy does not show anger or feel pleasure in her Slayer power, these emotions are nonetheless present and being controlled appropriately. For example, when Buffy is in an altered state, she expresses her emotions freely. This proves not only that the emotions exist, but also that they are expressed improperly because she is “not herself.” Affected by tainted beer, Buffy turns into a cave woman and openly shows her anger at being dumped by her boyfriend (“Beer Bad” 5.5). Similarly, Buffy acknowledges enjoying her Slayer role only when she is drunk (“Gotta love it, you know? Makes you feel all powerful and strong. And...kinda sick” (“Life Serial” 6.5 00:37:34) or doesn’t know who she is because of a spell gone wrong (“Tabula Rasa” 6.8) or when a demon compels her to sing and dance her emotions (“Once More, with Feeling” 6.7). It takes magic or alcohol for Buffy to loosen up and freely show her feelings.

Emotional control is one of the main concerns of Season Six, which presents the threatening intensity of Willow’s emotions (particularly her anger and pleasure in her magic) as one pole and Buffy’s disconnection from hers as the other. Buffy’s inability to feel emotion after returning from the dead—she reveals in the musical that she “is just going through the motions”—reminds viewers that Buffy *does* have them the rest of the time (“Once More, with Feeling” 6.7 00:2:02). After failing to make Buffy angry, Willow comments, “since you’re back [Buffy], you’re not big on the whole emotion thing” (“Flooded” 6.4 00:13:53). In “Dead Things” Spike similarly encourages Buffy’s anger as

they fight, “that’s right, put it on me, put it all on me. That’s my girl” (6.13 00:35:30). As a vampire, he is an appropriate target for her anger, and as they battle, viewers see Buffy project onto Spike the self-loathing her inability to feel has produced in her, yelling “you have no soul. You can’t feel anything real” (00:36:08). Both Willow’s dangerous emotionality and Buffy’s emotional numbness are shown to be self-destructive, and the show deliberately positions Buffy’s usual mode of firm anger management as the desirable “middle ground” between these extremes.

Like Willow, Faith serves as Buffy’s foil. As Faith herself complains, “Everyone always asks, ‘why can’t you be more like Buffy?’ But did anyone ever ask if you [Buffy] could be more like me?” (“Enemies” 3.17 00:37:20). Faith openly celebrates her Slayer role, as her first episode shows. Joyce immediately notices her difference from Buffy; when Faith says she “loves” slaying, Joyce remarks that “Buffy never talks that way” (“Faith, Hope and Trick” 3.3 00:23:40). As Faith tells Buffy in “Bad Girls,” “slaying is what we’re built for. If you’re not enjoying it, you’re doing something wrong” (3.14 00:11:30). Moreover, the show emphasizes the distinction between the righteous anger that almost always motivates Buffy’s slaying and Faith’s reductive version. Faith explains to Joyce, “when I’m fighting, it’s like the whole world goes away, and I only know one thing, that I’m gonna win and they’re gonna lose. I like that feeling” (“Faith, Hope and Trick” 3.3 00:24:16). For Faith, the larger picture disappears, and slaying is just “I win/you lose.” Her words reveal how deeply Faith’s ego and emotional needs fuel the slaying that gives her pleasure. The show hints at times that rage, rather than anger, may be driving Faith. When Buffy practices at her punching bag, hitting it especially hard, Faith misinterprets Buffy’s anger, saying approvingly, “You’ve really got some quality rage going. Really gives you an edge” (“Homecoming” 3.5 00:9:25). Later in the season, Buffy confirms this possibility when she tells Faith, “I never knew you had such rage in you” (“Enemies” 3.17 00:38:40). Overall, however, Faith’s pleasure in slaying, rather than her anger management, is the show’s primary concern.

Her explanation to Joyce also suggests that Faith is always slaying on her own behalf. She fully relishes the superiority her Slayer role gives

her over others. Whereas Buffy grudgingly accepts the new watcher, Wesley (“It’s the job, what else can we do?”), Faith answers, “Whatever we want. We’re Slayers, girlfriend, the chosen two” (“Bad Girls” 3.14 00:10:40). In the next episode, Faith reiterates their superiority to others: “we are better...that’s right, better. People need us to survive” (“Consequences” 3.15 00:14:15). *BtVS* depicts Faith’s enjoyment of her Slayer role as leading inevitably to arrogance and a misuse of her power. Faith is the Slayer ruled by appetite and sensuality, who combines slaying, sex, and hunger when she asks whether slaying makes Buffy “hungry and horny” too (“Faith, Hope, and Trick” 3.3 00:15:50). But Faith is also fun: she swaggers, dances loosely, talks loudly, exaggerates, flirts, and seduces. The very fullness and openness of her behavior, often impulsive and self-indulgent, present a tempting alternative to Buffy’s more restrained, disciplined personality.

“Bad Girls” (3.14) exposes the dire consequences that can occur from Faith’s misperception of herself and her lack of emotional control. To do this, the episode creates a radical disjunction in Faith’s character, and her story loses its narrative coherence. As the episode’s title suggests, Faith tempts Buffy to enjoy slaying and to relax her self-control and become a “bad girl” like she is. At first, Buffy rejects the idea that slaying is fun, but she relents quickly. After Faith and Buffy defeat several vampires, Faith asks, “Tell me you didn’t get off on this,” and Buffy admits that it “didn’t suck” (00:16:30). She tells Willow and Xander the next day that the fight “was intense. It was just like I let go and became a force. I just didn’t care anymore” (00:18:30). Later, the two Slayers break into a store. Faith steals a crossbow, explaining to Buffy: “the life of a Slayer is very simple: want-take-have.” Buffy steals a knife, echoing “want-take-have” and adds, “I’m getting it” (00:24:30). The ease and speed with which Buffy “gets it” is the point: control over anger and enjoying her abilities requires constant vigilance—any relaxation can open the door to misusing her Slayer power. Buffy’s account of the fight suggests that she is also tempted by Faith’s lack of responsibility. A good Slayer does not “let go” and stop caring.

Faith’s accidental killing of Deputy Mayor Finch later that night reinforces the risks of being a “bad girl” Slayer—arrogant, undisciplined, and relishing her power. Immediately afterwards, Buffy stops following

Faith's lead. Yet a close look at the staking scene shows that Faith has very little time to react, so it is hard to blame her for what happens. Buffy and Faith have been fighting a succession of vampires as they try to reach the warehouse (00:33:00), taking turns shoving and staking them. After Faith shoves and Buffy stakes a vampire, the Deputy Mayor reaches from off-screen to grab Buffy. Buffy shoves him against the wall, and Faith moves in to stake him, repeating the pattern. There are just five seconds between Buffy's shove and her cry, "Faith, no!" but Faith's arm is already swinging. Faith responds with shock, repeating "I didn't know...I didn't know" (00:33:30). In the next episode, Giles admits that murder sometimes happens during slaying, as here, although he focuses on Faith's refusal to admit responsibility ("Consequences" 3.15). At least initially, Faith seems conflicted, more upset than her bravado can hide, but also refuses to admit those feelings or her responsibility.

By the end of the episode, Faith's narrative has been severely disrupted, as she changes from out-of-control to evil, and it concludes with her offer to work for the evil Mayor. She then approves of his plan to kill Willow ("Doppelgangland" 3.16), kills a demon for the Books of Ascension rather than paying for them ("Enemies" 3.17), consents to Buffy's torture ("Enemies" 3.17), and kills a professor for the Mayor without even knowing why ("Graduation Day, Part One" 3.21). Faith is intentionally made evil. In the show's logic, Faith's pride and lack of discipline lead to an indiscriminate use of her strength and power: Faith will fight for anyone, even the evil Mayor. Although the show previously has conveyed some sympathy for Faith, suggesting at several moments that her bravado masks a desire to belong (as when she stops pretending she has plans and accepts Buffy's invitation to spend Christmas in "Amends" 3.10), these avenues are shut down after the accidental killing. Willow participates in this closure when she scornfully discounts Faith's difficult early life: "I know you had a tough life. I know that some people think you had a lotta bad breaks. Well, boo hoo. You had a lot more in your life than some people. I mean you had friends like Buffy. Now you have no one" ("Choices" 3.19 00:28:30).<sup>8</sup>

Although Faith lacks the emotional support (mother, friends, a competent Watcher), economic stability and home life that Buffy has

had, the show nonetheless holds her to the standard of Buffy's emotional self-discipline. In their final scene at the docks, the superiority of Buffy's self-control is again visible. Faith claims that "You [Buffy] need me to toe the line, because you're afraid you'll go over it... You can't handle watching me living my own way, *having a blast*, because it tempts you. You know it could be you" ("Consequences" 3.15 00:39:53, emphasis added). Faith is right: Buffy could act as Faith does, enjoying her Slayer role, but that leads to an exaggerated sense of self-importance and an irresponsible use of a Slayer's strength. After Buffy reacts angrily to Faith's claim by punching her in the mouth, Faith reasserts their similarity ("There's my girl"), but to reassert their difference, Buffy chooses not to respond physically ("No, I'm not going to do this" (00:40:10)).<sup>9</sup>

The sense of superiority and happiness that Faith finds in slaying replace or at least temporarily relieve feelings of loneliness, abandonment, envy, insecurity, and anger from her difficult past. In "This Year's Girl" (4.15), Faith breaks into Joyce's bedroom, threatening her, holding her captive, and angrily insisting that Buffy no longer needs either of them. In the midst of her rant, Faith reveals she feels abandoned and alone: "You think you matter. You think you're a part of something. And you get dumped. It's like the whole world is moving but you're stuck like those animals in the tar pits. It's like you keep sinking a little bit deeper every day and nobody sees" (00:38:50). Faith is later made terribly aware of everything she has never had when she and Buffy magically exchange bodies.

There can be no redemption for Faith until she acknowledges killing the Deputy Mayor, accepts her punishment, and realizes that her attitude toward slaying is self-destructive. She must learn to contain and control her emotional extremes and find a place between arrogance and the intense self-loathing she reveals in the church, when Faith-as-Buffy beats up Buffy-as-Faith, shouting at herself, "You're nothing, you disgusting murderous bitch. You're nothing!" ("Who Are You?" 4.16 00:41:38). Faith's rehabilitation happens off-screen, in Angel's show, where she voluntarily serves time in jail. When viewers first see Faith in Season Three, she grabs Buffy's stake before asking, "Can I borrow that?" ("Faith, Hope and Trick" 3.3 00:15:15). In "Dirty Girls" she first

asks to borrow Buffy's stake, "May I?" and then says, "Thanks" (7.18 00:12:36). Faith can rejoin Buffy's circle once she has a less inflated sense of herself and slays for the right reasons.

Nevertheless, Faith's transition from Buffy's temptation and foil to subordinate ally in Season Seven is neither smooth nor complete. The Scooby Gang does not contact her to help with the final defense of Sunnydale (she shows up independently), and Giles and Dawn are not pleased to see her. In explaining who Faith is to the Potentials, Andrew repeats the words "evil" and "dark" multiple times. But there are moments when Faith seems humbled. She admits to Spike that she got "dangerous for a while" ("Dirty Girls" 7.18 00:23:30) and tells Wood that "Other things matter more" than fighting back after Buffy punches her outside the Bronze ("Empty Places" 7.19 00:29:15). When Faith is chosen to replace Buffy, she does, but leads the Potentials into a trap and several of them die ("Touched" 7.20). Faith is not upset when Buffy becomes the leader again, and she can now empathize with Buffy rather than envy her: "Everyone is looking at me to lead, and I've never felt so alone. And that's you [Buffy], every day, isn't it?" ("End of Days" 7.21 00:23:25). During the last battle, Faith understands her place when she hands Buffy a knife and tells her to go first, and Buffy reciprocates by giving the scythe to Faith after she is hurt ("Chosen" 7.22). Yet there is always the danger that potential Slayers will follow Faith's example and not Buffy's strict emotional self-discipline. When Buffy smiles in the final shot, the only other character (though out of focus) that the viewer sees is Faith.

The show establishes a strong connection between Willow's power and her emotions, especially her anger. In "Doppelgangland," Willow explains to Buffy that magic is "all about emotional control," as she uses a spell to float a pencil (3.16 00:1:48). The demon D'Hoffryn, too, recognizes the role of emotions in Willow's magic, telling her that her "anger and pain" are what make her magic powerful ("Something Blue" 4.9 00:35:40). Willow knows this herself when, earlier in the episode, she begins a spell with the words, "from my passion let a web be spun" (00:15:31). Jes Battis calls Willow's magic "visceral and emotional," and Brandy Ryan observes that like Buffy, Willow's "emotions give [her] power" (67). Because Willow's emotions and her

magic are so strongly linked, being in an unfocused emotional state can interfere with Willow's spells. Viewers see a small-scale demonstration when Willow loses control of the twirling pencil, and it flies off and embeds itself into a tree, after Buffy mentions Faith. James South considers this moment an example of "Willow's problems with emotional control" (135). Willow fails to contain her emotions in the way that Buffy does, and, by the end of Season Six, Willow's unleashed rage, revenge, and pain have grown so out of control that they threaten the world.

Faith warns viewers about arrogance and reveling in her strength. But for the show, Willow's may be the more urgent cautionary tale, because her powers as a witch make her more dangerous than the Slayers. Willow is arguably the most subversive female character, because she teaches herself magic and is ambitious to acquire increasingly powerful spells. Slayers are chosen, but Willow chooses magic herself. She has no built-in monitoring system like the Watcher's Council to oversee and police her actions. Giles attempts to act as a sort of unofficial Watcher, but he cannot influence her the way he does Buffy, and she grows increasingly adept and powerful, despite his frequent efforts to discourage her.

Willow's friends take turns registering their worry about Willow and her pursuit of magic. Oz, Willow's first serious romantic partner, responds to her first powerful spell by asking, "Is this a good thing?" ("Becoming (Part Two)" 2.22 00:34:54). In a later episode, he tells Willow that he is afraid she will get hurt through her study of magic. He worries because (as a werewolf), he "knows what it's like to have power" that he can't "control" ("Fear, Itself" 4.4 00:05:30). This is an odd comparison, because Oz's condition is involuntary, and he must be restrained by others, whereas this is not Willow's situation. She is trying to learn how to handle her developing magical abilities. Tara, introduced to viewers in Season Four as a fellow witch with powers of her own, is initially supportive of Willow's pursuit of witchcraft. By late in Season Five, however, Tara has become nervous about Willow's power, and in "Tough Love," she tells Willow, "It's frightening how powerful you're getting. I don't know where you're heading" (5.19 00:17:25). Xander, Anya, and Buffy discuss what they (and the show) consider Willow's

overuse of magic and promise each other to keep an eye on her (“Smashed” 6.9).

When Willow uses her magic on behalf of others, especially to help the Scooby Gang, her power is presented positively. There are many examples. She does numerous protection spells (for Buffy, to keep Dracula and Harmony out of Buffy’s house), early warning spells around the Magic Shop and Buffy’s house, and spells that enable Buffy to stake demons. Willow leaves instructions for Oz and Xander to make a spell, while she and the others go to the Mayor’s office (“Choices” 3.19). There, her magic dissolves a protective shield around the Mayor’s box, and she escapes from a vampire by stabbing him with a pencil (showing the emotional control she lacked earlier). The Gang’s reliance on her magic is clear in “This Year’s Girl” (4.15). Buffy asks Willow to hack into the Initiative’s security mainframe, instructing her, “If you can’t do it on line, use magic” (00:10:20). She casts more powerful spells to restore Angel’s soul (“Some Assembly Required” 2.2), enable her, Dawn, and Buffy to escape from Glory (“Spiral” 5.20), allow Spike to reach Dawn (“The Gift” 5.22), channel the First (“Bring on the Night” 7.10), open the portal for Buffy (“Get It Done” 7.15), and, of course, raise Buffy from the dead (“Bargaining (Part 1)” 6.1) and enable Buffy’s Slayer power to be shared by others (“Chosen” 7.22). Lisa M. Vetere draws her own list “of the power and efficacy of Willow’s spells, both malevolent and benign” and concludes, “her friends’ fear and prohibitions [on Willow’s magic] seem unreasonable, if not irrational” (85).

Over the seasons, as Willow becomes an increasingly accomplished witch, her pleasure in her skill is criticized as selfish and arrogant. Like Faith, Willow enjoys her power too much. The change from confidence and pleasure in her growing powers to an arrogant, selfish, and dangerous abuse of them can be seen in Willow’s relationship with Giles. He repeatedly questions her choice to pursue magic, and, although he pushes Buffy to be her best, he tries to hold Willow back. Giles resists her study of magic in the beginning, and Willow is initially very concerned and tries to defuse his opposition. In “Faith, Hope and Trick,” Giles tells her, “these forces are nothing to played around with,” and because she has already done so, she asks, “Are you mad at me?” (3.3 00:11:38). Willow’s attitude toward Giles

shifts as she learns more, and she becomes somewhat less concerned with his reaction. In “Enemies,” when Xander asks Willow which books Giles keeps in his office, she answers airily, “Just magic secrets Giles doesn’t think I’m ready for” (3.17 00:8:15). Giles, in turn, becomes increasingly angry and worried about Willow’s use of magic, and by Season Five, he is chastising her for doing an “incredibly dangerous” spell for her level (“Blood Ties” 5.13 00:42:20). When Willow proudly and excitedly describes her spell that has brought Buffy back from the dead, Giles calls her “a very stupid girl” (“Flooded” 6.4 00:30:12). Furious, Giles also calls her a “rank, arrogant amateur” playing with powerful magic beyond her ability; according to him, she is “lucky” to have pulled it off and not been killed (00:31:40).

For her part, Willow has been expecting praise and approval for her success and is surprised by Giles’ reaction. “I thought you’d be impressed or something,” she replies to being called stupid (00:30:14). Her claim, to have done what no one else could do, is met with Giles’ retort that there are evil others capable of it. Willow defends herself, suggesting that “maybe the word [he] should be looking for is congratulations” (00:31:04). Giles calls the result “luck,” undermining both Willow’s skill and pleasure in her accomplishment, and she finally replies angrily, “I wasn’t lucky. I was amazing” (00:31:33). Willow fights back, displaying pride and confidence in her abilities: “You’re right. Magic is powerful. I’m powerful. So maybe it’s not a good idea to piss me off” (00:32:15). Even so, their exchange ends with Willow offering a truce and compromise: she will think about what he has said, and he should be happy at Buffy’s return. Giles’ hostile reaction pushes Willow to defend her considerable power and pleasure against his charge of her presumptuous use of witchcraft. Viewers can measure the distance between this Willow and the Bad Willow she becomes by the end of the season, when she contemptuously—and arrogantly—addresses Giles by his first name, telling him, “Well, buckle up, Rupert. I’ve gone pro” (“Grave” 6.22 00:02:45).

Willow’s use of magic independent from the group is gradually coded as “selfish,” primarily by Tara, who expresses the show’s position that “witches can’t be allowed to alter the fabric of life for selfish reasons” (“Forever” 5.17 00:14:25). Yet it is not entirely clear what

“selfish reasons” are. In “All the Way,” Tara objects to Willow use of magic to decorate Buffy’s house for an impromptu party celebrating Xander’s and Anya’s engagement (6.6). Tara thinks magic should not be used “when you can do something naturally” (6.6 00:11:20), such as drive to the store for decorations. To her, magic should be used to protect people, “keeping them from being hurt,” and not for trivial things (00:11:36). Willow’s response questions what “naturally” means (“well you can fight monsters naturally, with sticks and stones—don’t recommend it though” (00:11:50)) and why harmless magic is a problem. Why not make Anya happy with decorations? Willow complains that Tara is “always coming down on [her] for magic that couldn’t harm a fly” (00:11:44), but Tara does not elaborate, wishing instead that Willow would think about what she is doing, and the exchange is cut off by Dawn’s appearance in the kitchen. Willow’s questions remain unanswered. The argument preceding their break-up presents Willow’s use of magic as selfish and dangerous, and Tara worries that Willow is overly dependent on magic (“*Tabula Rasa*” 6.8). To her, Willow uses magic unthinkingly (“you don’t even consider the options” (00:07:30)) and that is “not good” for Willow and “not what magic is for” (00:07:55). To Willow’s reply, “I just want to help people” (00:07:50), Tara lays out a progression that ends in selfishness: “Maybe that’s how it started. But you’re helping yourself now. Fixing things to your liking, including me” (00:08:20). Tara’s objections to Willow’s use of magic to affect her memory are certainly legitimate, but we question the blanket “too much magic” or “selfish magic” responses to Willow’s power. Why is it “selfish” to use the tools one has available to make things easy or for harmless fun?

Or is it “selfish” to enjoy her power? By the end of Season Six, the show presents Willow’s pleasure in her magic as a full-blown addiction, and its answer to the question is yes. According to the show’s logic, Willow selfishly indulges her anger by seeking vengeance against Warren. Agnes B. Curry and Josef Velasquez argue that the addiction narrative “renders palatable the idea that to be usable or stable, [Willow’s] feminine witch powers need to be contained or tethered by the more masculine Slayer power, exemplified by both Buffy and Kennedy...this is actually a very traditional and patriarchal constellation”

(153). We would rephrase their position slightly: Willow's trajectory demonstrates the danger of a woman enjoying her power and using it for personal reasons (avenging Tara's death), and it confirms the superiority of Buffy's emotional self-discipline and control of her Slayer strength, which brings satisfaction but not pleasure, and is used to protect Sunnydale.

As with Faith, Willow needs to undergo rehabilitation, and, like Faith, this happens off-screen; viewers only see Faith and Willow return after they have rejected their former sense of themselves and attitudes toward their power. Willow spends a summer in England, with the coven that helped Giles, where she learns to use her magic responsibly. This "magic rehab" dramatically changes Willow. Her self-confidence and pride in her ability to do magic are gone, and she returns to Sunnydale hesitant, scared, and unsure of herself. Having seen where her unchecked power and emotions took her, Willow is reluctant to use magic or return home. Her fear makes her magic go awry, turning her invisible before she reunites with her friends. When they finally can see Willow, she tells Buffy, "guess I have a ways to go before I master my powers." She continues, "It's okay, too, if you don't think I can recover from this magic stuff, because, honestly, I'm not that sure about it either" ("Same Time Same Place" 7.3. 00:40:10). In the next episode, Willow doubts her ability to help stop the Hellmouth opening and is afraid that she could go "all black-eyed baddie" again ("Help" 7.4 00:07:04). She apologizes to Buffy for "letting her down," explaining, "I have so much power but when I try to use it...." ("Bring on the Night" 7.10 32:30). In the next episode, she refuses to discuss magic with Kennedy, and when Kennedy says, "Big Bad Willow... that's something I'd almost like to see." Willow replies shortly, "No, you wouldn't" ("Showtime" 7.11 00:28:57).<sup>10</sup>

Willow's final spell in the show uses the ancient scythe to awaken Slayers around the world. It both proves her power as a witch and shows her proper attitude toward it.<sup>11</sup> She undertakes the spell as part of Buffy's plan (approved by Giles) and shows apprehension rather than pride: "This goes beyond anything I've ever done. It's a total loss of control...I'm not sure I'm stable enough" ("Chosen" 7.22 00:15:50). Willow is grounded by Kennedy, and Buffy encourages her: "I wouldn't

ask if I did not think you could do it” (00:16:20). The spell works perfectly, as viewers know when Willow’s hair turns white instead of black, and she glows. When it is over, a cross-legged Willow says, “That was nifty,” and falls on her side (00:30:20). The spell is far more than “nifty”; Willow’s spell breaks the one-Slayer tradition, turning all the potentials in Sunnydale into full Slayers and extending the call to potential Slayers (and viewers) throughout the world. Willow’s “nifty” diminishes her status as an extremely powerful witch, evoking her teenage, geeky past and conveying surprise rather than pleasure at what she has done. Putting these words in Willow’s mouth ensures that the powerful witch (before her “addiction”) is now sufficiently humble.

Whedon’s choices in filming the spell likewise downplay Willow’s power. Viewers do not actually hear or see her cast the spell, and what they do see is a series of short cuts interspersed with the battle scenes. Kennedy, not Willow, prepares what Willow will need for the spell. After Buffy, Faith, and the others start down into the Hellmouth (00:26:40), the camera cuts to Willow and Kennedy who talk briefly about what is about to happen. Willow grabs the scythe from the floor and says, “Brace yourself,” and Kennedy replies, “Come on, Red. Make it happen” (00:26:42). The scene shifts to the cave, where both Buffy and Faith remind viewers that Willow’s spell is essential to their success, and then the vampires attack.<sup>12</sup> Buffy says Willow’s name, and the camera cuts for a few seconds to Willow, head down, looking at the scythe, before returning to Buffy in the cave. Next, Willow looks up and says, “Oh... my... Goddess” as the scythe lights up; viewers see that the spell is working, but they have not seen Willow do anything except pick it up. What follows is the flashback to Buffy’s inspiring speech to the potentials, offering them the chance to become Slayers, during which Buffy calls Willow “more powerful than any of them combined” (00:28:34). Willow does not accept Buffy’s judgment, answering with a hesitant “mmmmm” and an uncertain facial expression. There is another shot of the scythe, before the big battle in the cave begins. After a few minutes Kennedy appears happy at her new Slayer strength, so we know the spell is successful, and she looks at Willow in surprise (00:30:00). Willow now has white flowing hair, is breathing heavily, and is smiling. Kennedy calls her a “goddess”; Willow calls her a “Slayer” and tells her

to take the scythe to Buffy. After Kennedy leaves, Willow looks at herself again, tips sideways and makes her “nifty” remark (00:30:20). We do not see her again until the bus stops at the city limits. The episode spends more time on the battle, as expected, and on the results—the awakening of new Slayers—than on the spell which has made it all possible.

There is a radical discontinuity in Willow’s character, as in Faith’s, which produces a similarly unexpected and extreme break in the narrative. Faith’s descent into evil and Willow’s magic addiction are difficult to reconcile with their previous characterization. James B. South recognizes this rupture in Willow, asking, “How can the apparently strong Willow that emerged by the end of Season Three be the same Willow that becomes addicted to magic, makes a string of bad decisions and ends up unable to deal with her loss?” (137). We agree that “[t]hroughout the first five seasons of the show, Willow is repeatedly seen as the best of the Scooby gang” and that this sharp discontinuity is significant (133). South concludes that the show deliberately presents “a character whose actions are not pitiable or explicable” and who thus “cannot be an Aristotelian hero” (145). We suggest an additional explanation. To us, the show appears willing to sacrifice character and narrative coherence to ensure that Willow is clearly Buffy’s foil, the figure who cautions viewers against expressing anger powerfully and taking pride in their strength and using that strength for what the show considers “selfish” reasons. When Warren kills Tara and critically wounds Buffy, Willow falls off the magic wagon and fully embraces her power on her quest for revenge. She is, as Rack the magic-pushing warlock says, “running on pure fury” (00:13:50), and she is running on full magic. She consumes books of dark magic to fuel herself, saves Buffy’s life at the hospital, and goes after Warren, whom she kills easily (“Villains,” 6.20). Whereas Slayers “don’t have the luxury of being a slave to [their] passions,” as Giles tells Buffy, Willow has, and she does. That makes her extremely dangerous. Driven by grief and desire for revenge against Warren, a raging and out-of-control Willow who sees no reason to discipline her emotions threatens the world with destruction. Willow’s desire to end humanity’s pain is obviously the wrong use of magic meant to protect others. Only Xander’s unconditional love

reaches Willow, who collapses in tears. Willow's emotional state at this point is dramatically antithetical to Buffy's emotional self-discipline, and it underscores Willow's need for friends to help her manage her emotions and her power, because she cannot do it herself.<sup>13</sup>

As with Faith, the show gestures toward a more complicated context for Willow's actions, which it then rejects. Willow's magic has, of course, saved everyone in the Scooby gang, saved the day, saved Buffy, saved the world. While we do not argue that murdering Warren is acceptable, he is also not a positive character. As Brandy Ryan observes, "Whedon makes Tara's killer an unsympathetic misogynist, one whom we are in no way meant to read as anything other than the potential of human evil" (64). Viewers see Warren's attempt to rape Katrina, and viewers see him murder. Xander is the only one to suggest that Warren's evil might justify Willow's actions, "Warren was a cold-blooded killer of women just getting warmed up. If you ask me the bastard had it coming to him," but Buffy, whose views carry more weight, merely replies, "Maybe" ("Two to Go" 6.21 00:03:28). The way he dies—Willow flays him alive—is unnecessarily violent, and its excessive cruelty compels viewers to focus on that rather than the moral complexity of Willow's actions.

The final episode of *BtVS* appears to provide the appreciation of female power that we wish were present in the show all along. Buffy presents her decision to share her Slayer power as an overturning of the Watchers' plan, put into place generations ago. It sets Willow's power as a witch against the mostly male Watcher system. Willow, Buffy states, "is more powerful than all of them combined" (00:28:00). The awakenings of Slayers across the world are filmed as positive, empowering moments. Willow gets "past" anything she's ever done with magic, as she puts it, and finds a place of goodness (as her white hair attests). And her spell works. The Slayers fight back the vampires, with Spike's help. Free of the restraints of having to think of what happens next, the show lets go of its concern about fully emotional, fully powerful women. The show finally gives its viewers the inspirational, unfettered, "girl power!" moment they desire.

The comics, however, are forced to deal with the narrative consequences of multiple Slayers worldwide. The first season is

preoccupied with Buffy's decision to share her power. As a character "Twilight" tells Buffy, "One Slayer was all right. But all these girls... The world can't contain them, and they will suffer for that" (Goddard and Whedon, n.p.). The season's anxiety about numerous, powerful Slayers is visible everywhere. Instead of one "Bad Slayer" in the television series (Faith), the world now faces one Slayer bent on world domination and a pack of Slayers toting guns and robbing banks. Willow has become "Bad Willow" again. There is even a giant, out-of-control goddess who personifies anger and kills indiscriminately. Buffy's decision is considered, reconsidered, and ultimately reversed. The Slayers and Willow voluntarily give up their power, only to seek it again, and then surrender it when Buffy must destroy all magic to stop a Demon invasion. The first season continues the show's discomfort with powerful women, but it is amplified by the number of Slayers without Watchers to police them. The first season's solution is to have the Slayers disempower themselves (rather than use their powers) to save the world. We look forward to a show whose female superhero can be openly and legitimately angry, enjoy her powers, and use them on behalf of herself as well as others without any undercurrents of anxiety or fear about what a strong woman can do.

## Notes

---

<sup>1</sup> There is a rich body of work on feminism and *BtVS*. Patricia Pender has helpfully summarized much of it in the first three chapters of *I'm Buffy and You're History: Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Contemporary Feminism*, two of which revise earlier essays (9-63).

<sup>2</sup> Our title is also the title of episode 7 in Season Six, when Buffy has lost touch with her emotions, merely acting without feeling them. She needs to learn how to feel and show her emotions appropriately again--to act "once more, with feeling."

<sup>3</sup> In the last episode, Buffy invites viewers to share her Slayer power: "I say my power should be our power. From now on, every girl in the world who might be a Slayer will be a Slayer. Every girl who could have the power will have the power. Can stand up. Will stand up. Slayers. Every one of us. Make your choice. Are you ready to be strong?" ("Chosen" 7. 22 00:28:45). Although this seems to be an inspiring moment, Buffy's offer expands the number of Slayers rather than dismantles the system, as Gerry Canavan has observed (see the introduction to this issue). Buffy's decision to share her power carries with it the expectation that those who acquire Slayer power will also discipline the emotions that accompany it as she does, but this does not happen in the comics.

---

Elyce Rae Helford also contends that *BtVS* presents Buffy's anger management style as the norm for all its female viewers, even though, as she demonstrates convincingly, that norm derives from expectations for anger control for white, middle-class girls (21, 22). Unlike Helford, we trace the anger of the three main female characters across the entire series and discuss causes for Buffy's anger other than the burden of her Slayer role, which is Helford's focus.

<sup>4</sup> A number of these writers argue from a feminist perspective and value anger as an essential tool for combatting oppressions and promoting social justice (e.g., Elizabeth Spelman, Marilyn Frye, Sara Ahmed, Sandra Thomas, Harriet Lerner) although not all do (e.g. Robert Solomon, Peter Lyman). Aristotle's view of anger in *Rhetoric* informs some of their arguments, including ours. There, Aristotle addresses anger at those who have intentionally harmed a person or one of "his" friends (1378a-b). In *Nicomachean Ethics*, he approves of anger provided it is directed at the right things and/or people and expressed in the right way (IV.1125b32-1126a8). Because Buffy is trying to save the world, not to change it, we find it difficult to label her anger as clearly feminist. The role of the superhero is not to create a more inclusive society. That said, the series encourages its female audience to see Buffy's anger-fueled violence against Sunnydale's enemies as a feminist display of strength.

<sup>5</sup> "One is within the bounds of concepts of Woman which are more widely shared and more warmly sanctioned when one's passion is in defense of others (especially if the others can plausibly be presented as 'innocent' and as 'children' or 'babies'" (92). We see Buffy angry in defense of children when Adam kills an innocent boy ("Goodbye Iowa" 4.14), when fighting a demon who kills sick children ("Killed by Death" 2.18), and when the demon Ken enslaves children and others ("Anne" 2.1). After two "children" are found dead in "Gingerbread" (3.11), Buffy shows her anger to Giles, and even though that anger proves misplaced, it is still a legitimate response.

<sup>6</sup> There are many instances throughout the show. For example, Buffy defends Angel from Faith ("Lovers Walk" 3.8) and her mother from Faith ("This Year's Girl" 4.15), fights evil Willow in the Magic Shop ("Two to Go" 6.21) and has angry confrontations with Faith throughout Season Three that reinforce Buffy's discipline and Faith's lack of control.

<sup>7</sup> Magoulick discusses Giles's patriarchal role (735-737). Giles is not the only character with an interest in Buffy's control of her anger. Her friends and mother do as well. For example, after Buffy returns to Sunnydale, Xander, Oz, Willow, and Joyce are angry at Buffy for leaving and for not contacting them. They express themselves freely, but when Buffy defends herself in anger, Oz simply silences her ("Dead Man's Party" 3.2).

<sup>8</sup> Helford emphasizes the role of class when comparing Buffy's and Faith's expressions of anger (30-34). Some of the show's depictions of class difference are heavy-handed, as when Faith steals French fries from Buffy's plate and takes food from the serving bowls with her fingers ("Amends" 3.10).

<sup>9</sup> The show is critical of using violence when angry, especially punching. After Willow calls Faith "a selfish, worthless waste" in the Mayor's office, Faith responds by punching Willow in the mouth, knocking her down. Faith comments, "You hurt me, I hurt you. I'm just a little more efficient" ("Earshot" 3.18 00:28:45). Viewers side with Willow (and words) over

---

Faith's non-verbal reaction. Later in the episode, Buffy punches Faith in the face when Faith claims a connection between them ("Give us a kiss"). Although the punch rejects this claim, it is also a moment when Buffy does not control her emotions.

<sup>10</sup> Ironically, some of her friends in the final season become irritated when Willow is reluctant to use magic when they ask. Xander, the least powerful of the group, uses a hammer metaphor to "explain" to Willow how to best use her magic in "Same Time, Same Place" (7.3). When Principal Wood says about Willow, "remind me not to make her crabby," Buffy responds, "It might be better if you did," referring to Willow as a "Wicca who won't" ("Get It Done" 7.15 00:12:48).

<sup>11</sup> Editor's note: See Julie L. Hawk's discussion of the Willow and the scythe, power and gender: "When a Slayer wields the scythe, a phallic and destructive power is the result; when Willow hacks the scythe, she multiplies its power . . ." (113).

<sup>12</sup> Faith tells Buffy, "If Willow's big spell doesn't work it won't matter what you wear" (00:26:54), and Buffy says anxiously, "As long as Willow can work her spell before they ... see us" (00:27:30).

<sup>13</sup> Our reading of Willow's character departs from others that argue she has no stable sense of self or identity. In high school, Willow is a happy nerd, comfortable in her identity. She is indifferent to Cordelia's insults. Willow asserts to Buffy that she is not her "sidekick," because, she is not. She knows she is an essential part of the group. Willow chooses to go to UC Sunnydale, because she has decided what to do with her life. As she tells Buffy, "this isn't about you.... now we're supposed to decide what we want to do with our lives, and I just realized, that's what I want to do. Fighting evil, helping people. I think it's worth doing, and I don't think you do it because you have to. It's a good fight, Buffy, and I want in" ("Choices" 3.19 00:33:30). Later, Willow rejects D'Hoffryn's invitation to become a vengeance demon, stating that she wants to help her friends, not to be a demon ("Something Blue" 4.9). While Buffy is dead, Willow coordinates the group patrols, acting as their leader. We see her acting fairly coherently over the seasons, so that her sudden and extreme addiction to magic in Season Six requires explanation.

## Works Cited

- Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Routledge, 2000. Print.
- “All the Way.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 6, 2001. Written by Stephen S. DeKnight, directed by David Solomon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Bad Girls.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 14, 1999. Written by Douglas Petrie, directed by Michael Lange. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Battis, Jes. *Blood Relations: Chosen Families in Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Angel*. McFarland, 2005. Print.
- “Becoming (Part Two).” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Second Season on DVD*. Season 2, Episode 22, 1998. Written and directed by Joss Whedon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Blood Ties.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fifth Season on DVD*. Season 5, Episode 13, 2001. Written by Steven S. DeKnight, directed by Michael Gershman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Bring on the Night.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 10, 2002. Written by Marti Noxon and Douglas Petrie, directed by David Grossman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Choices.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 19, 1999. Written by David Fury, directed by James A. Contner. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Chosen.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 22, 2003. Written and directed by Joss Whedon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Consequences.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 14, 1999. Written by Marti Noxon, directed by Michael Gershman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Curry, Agnes B. and James Velasquez. “‘Just a Family Legend’: The Hidden Logic of Buffy’s ‘Chosen Family.’” *Buffy Goes Dark: Essays on the Final Two Seasons of Buffy the Vampire Slayer on Television*, edited by Lynne Y. Edwards, Elizabeth Rambo, and James B. South. McFarland, 2009, pp. 143-166. Print.
- “Dead Things.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 13, 2002. Written by Steven S. DeKnight, directed by James A. Contner. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Dirty Girls.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 18, 2003. Written by Drew Goddard, directed by Michael Gershman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.

- “Doppelgängland.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 16, 1999. Written and directed by Joss Whedon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Earshot.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 18, 1999. Written by Jane Espenson, directed by Regis Kimble. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Empty Places.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 19, 2003. Written by Drew Z. Greenberg, directed by James A. Contner. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “End of Days.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 21, 2003. Written by Douglas Petrie and Jane Espenson, directed by Marita Grabiak. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Enemies.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 17, 1999. Written by Douglas Petrie, directed by David Grossman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Faith, Hope, and Trick.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 3, 1998. Written by David Greenwalt, directed by James A. Contner. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Fear, Itself.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fourth Season on DVD*. Season 4, Episode 4, 1999. Written by David Fury, directed by Tucker Gates. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Flooded.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 4, 2002. Written by Jane Espenson and Douglas Petrie, directed by Petrie. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Forever.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fifth Season on DVD*. Season 5, Episode 17, 2001. Written and directed by Marti Noxon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “The Freshman.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fourth Season on DVD*. Season 4, Episode 1. Written and directed by Joss Whedon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Crossing Press, 1983 Print.
- “Get It Done.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 15, 2003. Written and directed by Doug Petrie. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Gingerbread.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 11, 1999. Written by Thania St. John and Jane Espenson, directed by James Whitmore, Jr. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Goddard, Drew, and Joss Whedon. *Wolves at the Gate*, Series 8, Vol.3. Dark Horse Books, 2008.

- “Grave.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 22, 2002. Written by David Fury, directed by James A. Contner. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- Hawk, Julie L. “Scythe Matters: Performing Object Oriented Ontology on Domestic Space in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.” *At Home in the Whedonverse: Essays on Domestic Place, Space and Life*, edited by Juliette C. Kitchens. McFarland, 2017, pp. 104-21.
- Helford, Elyce Rae. “‘My Emotions Give Me Power’: The Containment of Girls’ Anger in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.” *Fighting the Forces: What’s at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, edited by Rhonda V. Wilcox and David Lavery. Rowman & Littlefield, 2002, pp. 18-34. Print.
- “Help.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 4, 2002. Written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner, directed by Rick Rosenthal. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Homecoming.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Third Season on DVD*. Season 3, Episode 5, 1998. Written and directed by David Greenwalt. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Lerner, Harriet Goldhor. *The Dance of Anger: A Woman’s Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships*. Perennial, 1986. Print.
- “Life Serial.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 5, 2002. Written by David Fury and Jane Espenson, directed by Nick Marck. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- Lyman, Peter. “The Politics of Anger.” *Socialist Review*, vol. 11, no.3, 1981, pp. 55-74.
- Magoulick, Mary “Frustrating Female Heroism: Mixed Messages in *Xena*, *Nikita*, and *Buffy*.” *The Journal of Popular Culture*, vol. 39, no. 5, 2006, pp. 729-755. Web. 3 March 2017.
- “No Place Like Home.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fifth Season on DVD*. Season 5, Episode 5, 2000. Written by Douglas Petrie, directed by David Solomon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Once More, with Feeling.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 7, 2001. Written and directed by Joss Whedon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- Pender, Patricia. *I’m Buffy and You’re History: Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Contemporary Feminism*. I. B. Tauris, 2016. Print.
- “Real Me.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fifth Season on DVD*. Season 5, Episode 2, 2000. Written by David Fury, directed by David Grossman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Ryan, Brandy. “It’s Complicated...Because of Tara’: History, Identity Politics, and the Straight White Male Author.” *Buffy Goes Dark: Essays on the Final Two Seasons of Buffy the Vampire Slayer on Television*, edited by Lynne Y. Edwards, Elizabeth Rambo, and James B. South. McFarland, 2009, pp. 57-74. Print.

- “Same Time, Same Place.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 3, 2002. Written by Jane Espenson, directed by James A. Contner. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Showtime.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 11, 2003. Written by David Fury, directed by Michael Grossman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Smashed.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 9, 2001. Written by Drew Z. Greenberg, directed by Turi Meyer. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- Solomon, Robert C. *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us*. Oxford University Press, 2008. Print.
- “Something Blue.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fourth Season on DVD*. Season 4, Episode 9, 1999. Written by Tracey Forbes, directed by Nick Marck. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- South, James B. “My God, It’s Like a Greek Tragedy’: Willow Rosenberg and Human Irrationality.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale*, edited by South. Open Court Press, 2003, pp. 131-145. Print.
- Spelman, Elizabeth. “Anger and Insubordination.” *Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, edited by Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall. Unwin Hyman, 1989, pp. 263-273. Print.
- “Tabula Rasa.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 8, 2001. Written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner, directed by David Grossman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “This Year’s Girl.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fourth Season on DVD*. Season 4, Episode 15, 2000. Written by Douglas Petrie, directed by Michael Gershman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- Thomas, Sandra. *Use Your Anger: A Woman’s Guide to Empowerment*. Pocket, 1996. Print.
- “Touched.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Seventh Season on DVD*. Season 7, Episode 20, 2003. Written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner, directed by David Solomon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- “Tough Love,” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fifth Season on DVD*. Season 5, Episode 19, 2001. Written by Rebecca Rand Kirshner, directed by David Grossman. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Triangle.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fifth Season on DVD*. Season 5, Episode 11, 2001. Written by Jane Espenson, directed by Christopher Hibler. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- “Two to Go.” *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 21, 2002. Written by Douglas Petrie, directed by Bill L. Norton. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.

- Vetere, Lisa M. "The Rage of Willow: Malefic Witchcraft Fantasy in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*." *Buffy Conquers the Academy*, edited by Melissa Anyiwo and Karoline Szatek-Tudor. Cambridge Scholars Press, 2013, pp. 76-88. Web. 6 June 2017.
- "Villains." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Sixth Season on DVD*. Season 6, Episode 20, 2002. Written by Marti Noxon, directed by David Solomon. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2004.
- "What's My Line? (Part Two)." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Second Season on DVD*. Season 2, Episode 10, 1997. Written by Marti Noxon, directed by David Semel. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.
- "Who Are You?" *Buffy the Vampire Slayer: The Complete Fourth Season on DVD*. Season 4, Episode 16, 2000. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2003.