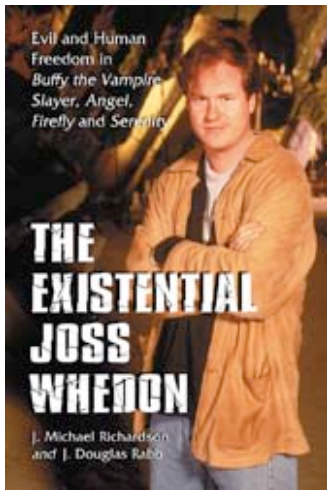




## J. Michael Richardson and J. Douglas Rabb Buffy, Faith and Bad Faith: Choosing to be the Chosen One



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[1] In this chapter and the next we compare the two slayers, Buffy and Faith, in terms of their existential freedom and moral character. But wait. How can there be *two* slayers when the Slayer is the chosen *one* and is meant to fight evil alone? As the opening of each of the early episodes forcefully reminds us, "In every generation there is a Chosen One. She alone will stand against the vampires, the demons, and the Forces of Darkness. She is the Slayer" (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* opening). Well it turns out that in the Whedon mythology, when one Slayer dies another is chosen. In the finale to Season One (1.12, "Prophecy Girl"), the Season's Big Bad, the Master, succeeds in killing Buffy in accordance with an ancient prophecy, leaving her to drown in a pool of water. Fortunately, she is immediately found and revived by her friend Xander and thus was clinically dead only for a matter of moments (her boyfriend Angel, being a non-respiring vampire, was unable to give her the kiss of life). Thus the prophecy was both fulfilled and not fulfilled at one and the same time. This confuses even the evil Master. When Buffy shows up for their final confrontation, the Master can hardly believe she is still alive and, referring to the prophecy about the death of the Slayer, says in disbelief, "You were destined to die! It was written!" Buffy, true to character, replies, "What can I say? I flunked the written" (1.12, "Prophecy Girl"). The brief period of Buffy's technical death is sufficient to allow the activation of a successor Slayer by the name of Kendra. It is important to note that Buffy is not the "official" Slayer from this moment on. Kendra is killed at the end of Season Two and is in turn replaced by Faith. Buffy, however, while not being the official Slayer, still has Slayer power and, more importantly, chooses to use it for the good of humanity: in short, she behaves as though she were still *the* Slayer, not "merely" a slayer. Later, when Faith lies in a coma for eight months and afterwards is incarcerated for a number of years, the Watchers' Council likewise treats Buffy as though she were still *the* Slayer and thus under its command, though Buffy, as usual, chooses to follow only those "commands" she herself judges worthy. As we will see, she is not one to be ordered about. Unlike Faith, however, she does know where her duty lies.

[2] It is useful to use the character of Kendra to facilitate our discussion of Buffy and Faith. In "Choosing Your Own Mother: Mother-Daughter Conflicts in *Buffy*," J.P. Williams has argued that from the perspective of the Watchers' Council, Kendra is the perfect Slayer, "solemn, respectful, and efficient...possesses more information about slaying than Buffy... [and] employs that knowledge exactly as her superiors instruct" (63). In fact, when Buffy discovers that Kendra has actually studied the Slayers' Handbook, Buffy's response is, "Handbook? What handbook? How come I don't have a handbook?" (2.10, "What's My Line, Part 2"). Giles reveals a lot about Buffy's character by telling her that the handbook "would be of no use in your case." As Williams notes, Buffy develops and utilizes experiential knowledge; on the other hand, Kendra, lacking field experience, has an essentially static

approach to slaying entirely dependent upon knowledge derived from what others have told her or from what she has learned from print sources such as the Slayer's Handbook (Williams 63). One result of this difference is that Buffy is willing to question orders, whereas Kendra clearly is not. As Jana Riess argues in *What Would Buffy Do?: The Vampire Slayer as Spiritual Guide*, Kendra makes some progress under Buffy's guidance and begins to emerge from the restraints of her "by-the-book slaying," becoming educated rather than merely trained. Ultimately however, falling victim to the vampire Drusilla's hypnotic gaze, "Kendra is killed because," according to Jana Riess, "she has always obeyed without question and has not strengthened her mind and spirit by discovering her own unique path" (70). As Jessica Prata Miller confirms, "Kendra lacks moral autonomy not because she memorized the handbook and follows the rules, but because she does so unquestioningly" (46). Insofar as moral integrity is concerned, Kendra's moral authority is imposed from the outside, and is therefore not autonomous.

[3] The character of Faith clearly exhibits the important ethical distinction between mere freedom and moral autonomy. If Kendra is hampered by following external discipline originating from the Watchers' Council, then Faith is handicapped by the total lack of any discipline whatsoever. Whereas Kendra has been trained to control and never show her emotions, Faith indulges and revels in hers at almost every opportunity. She enjoys the activity of slaying, happily admitting that it makes her "hungry and horny" (3.3, "Faith, Hope, and Trick"). When she first arrives in Sunnydale, Faith regales the Scooby Gang with stories of her previous slayage exploits, including wrestling alligators and nude slaying. Xander in particular is enthralled by her titillating tale of naked slayage, saying, "Wow. They should film that story and show it every Christmas" (3.3). Faith's lack of restraint may be refreshing at first, but it soon reveals its darker sides. Faith, after all, is the Slayer who goes bad.

[4] Now, given that Joss Whedon is using the series to explore the concepts of "freedom" and "evil" in the context of changing moral values, and given that Whedon claims that Jean-Paul Sartre's book *Nausea* is the most important book he has ever read (DVD commentary on *Firefly* "Objects in Space"), it is surely more than mere coincidence that the Slayer who misuses her freedom and goes bad is called Faith, especially since Sartre is best known for using the concept of "Bad Faith" (*Mauvaise Foi, L'Être et le Néant*, 85ff) to analyze the flight from freedom by which he characterizes the human condition. At any rate, we find Sartre's notion of Bad Faith most useful in helping us get at what we believe the series is suggesting about freedom and evil, not just in the fictional town of Sunnydale, but in America today. Like most existentialist philosophers, going back at least as far as Dostoevsky (1821-1881), Sartre prefers to do philosophy by writing novels and short stories or plays rather than by producing abstract logical arguments. Existentialists claim that our actual existence is particular, concrete, unique and cannot really be captured in language, which tends to be abstract, general, universal and far too logical and linear to deal with the chaos of being human. Sartre has written a number of long philosophical essays as well, but these too are filled with concrete examples which bring out the emotional impact central to his position. This is a good thing, because Sartre can be rather obtuse in his purely philosophical exposition, as for example in *Being and Nothingness* when he describes the human condition, or the "being" of humanbeing, as that "being which is what it is not and which is not what it is" (100). This is, in part, just a convoluted way of saying that we all have future plans and projects and that what we are depends entirely on what we choose to become through the choices that we make. But this implies a fearful freedom, since we really are nothing but what we choose to become in the future. This is in fact the "Nothing" in the title of Sartre's book *Being and Nothingness*. We are "nothing" apart from the free existential choices that we make and we are, further, entirely responsible for those choices and thus for whatever it is that we become. This is an awesome responsibility and is necessarily accompanied by extreme anxiety, or what is often called existential angst.

[5] To avoid these very strong unpleasant emotions, we will do almost anything to conceal from ourselves the kind of existential freedom which Sartre claims human beings exercise in creating themselves through the choices that they make. It is this attempt to hide from our own freedom which Sartre calls living in Bad Faith. One example he gives in *Being and Nothingness* is that of a woman on a first date with a young man she has only recently met, or at least with whom she is not all that familiar. At one level, she knows only too well the man's sexually charged hopes for the evening, or at least for the relationship. However, as Sartre puts it, "she does not want to see possibilities of temporal

development which his conduct presents" (96). He obviously finds her attractive and tells her so. She accepts the compliment as a mere objective description of the present moment, dismissing from her consciousness any future intentions on the part of her companion. She thinks of him as "sincere and respectful" in exactly the same way as say "the table is round or square, as the wall coloring is blue or gray" (97). The table and the wall are mere things in the present; they neither have nor can have any future intentions toward her. She would like to think of her companion in much the same way, as just another unthreatening object, but one which admires her, yes even desires her. Yet, as Sartre puts it, "the desire cruel and naked would humiliate and horrify her" (97). She therefore refuses to recognize the desire as a desire, thus refusing to recognize the fearful freedom of choice in either herself or her date. But, Sartre asks, what if he holds her hand? Now, surely, she must make a decision. To continue holding hands is, in a sense, to consent to flirt. But as Sartre puts it, "To withdraw it is to break the troubled and unstable harmony which gives the hour its charm" (97). The whole point of *Bad Faith* is to ignore our freedom of choice, essentially to pretend for as long a possible that a decision is not required, or even possible. One strategy here to accomplish this would be for her to leave her hand in his, but somehow not notice that it is there. At the same time she will speak of other things, her life, her plans and goals, and thus, indirectly, her freedom, herself as conscious subject. Sartre concludes, "during this time the divorce of the body from the soul is accomplished; the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion—neither consenting nor resisting—a thing" (97). But all of this of course is *Bad Faith*.

[6] For Sartre there is no distinction between body and soul. Though we are not things, our only consciousness of the world is a bodily consciousness. We experience the world from the point of view of the body we are, and we exercise our freedom by moving bodily through the world and bodily moving objects in that world. Some of the objects we encounter may be obstacles to our plans and projects, and some we may force to function as means to accomplish our ends, a shovel for example to help us plant a garden or a body. We also encounter other people. Unlike mere physical objects, they too have freedom, plans and projects which may, Sartre would say must, conflict with our own. To reduce this conflict we do what we can, always in *Bad Faith*, to negate their freedom or to deny our own freedom. At some level, we also want to be recognized by these other persons, but recognized as free conscious beings, not the mere things or objects to which they, also in *Bad Faith*, would like to reduce us in order to preserve their own precious freedom. Sometimes, however, we welcome the flight from freedom under the Look of the Other, for without freedom comes relief from responsibility. Whatever we have done, no matter how reprehensible, if we believe we did not do it freely, then we can convince ourselves that we are not to blame. The denial of freedom is, thus, also the denial of responsibility.

[7] All this will become clearer as we apply it to Faith, the Slayer who goes bad. We first meet her, as do Buffy and the Scooby Gang, at the Bronze, where she is dancing in very sexy attire, frantically and provocatively. Cordelia even remarks with her typical sarcasm, "Check out Slut-O-Rama and her Disco Dave." All eyes are upon this spectacle. Faith certainly knows how to capture attention. The Scoobies see her leave with someone they recognize as a vampire. Vampires often pick up meals (take out?) at the Bronze. Buffy and the Scoobies follow Faith outside to rescue her, only to find that there is "a new Slayer in town" who not only holds her own in fighting the vampire by herself, but also easily dispatches him with a stake she borrows from Buffy (3.3, "Faith, Hope, and Trick"). The scene then switches back to the interior of the Bronze with Faith the center of attention, bragging about her Slayer activities to the Scooby Gang. Buffy sits quietly by, unable to get a word in. She keeps trying, but is constantly cut off as Xander, totally enthralled, encourages Faith to tell them more, particularly about naked slayage. We think it might be revealing to ask, "Why does Faith so obviously want to be the center of attention? Is this just her, or is there a deeper meaning here?"

[8] As we noted above, Sartre argues that we all naturally seek recognition from others. But it is actually more than mere recognition which we require from others. Indeed, Sartre would agree that it is others who in fact teach us who we are (Sartre 1972, 366). He goes on to argue that "the perception of my body is placed chronologically after the perception of the Other" (469-470). There are in fact many important descriptions of the self or person which require what Sartre would call "the Look" of the Other. These descriptions have been characterized as "outside view predicates" by Phyllis Sutton Morris in her book *Sartre's Concept of a Person: An Analytic Approach*. Such predicates or

descriptions are, she argues, "those which, when applied to ourselves, imply an 'outside view' in either a literal or figurative sense" (Morris 1976, 136). Examples of outside view predicates can be either positive or negative judgments, including such descriptors as "desirable," and "beautiful," or "ugly," and "embarrassed," for example. This explains why Sartre claims that the awareness of our own body is chronologically after we become aware of the Look of the Other. It is only by being a body that we can perceive the world, but we cannot perceive our own body in the way we perceive other objects, just as for example, the eye cannot see that it is seeing. We therefore require the Look of the Other for a more complete understanding of ourselves, even though the Other may try to restrict our existential freedom.

[9] Faith's attention-getting behavior, we soon learn, is connected with the fact that her Watcher has been killed, and that she feels guilty about being unable to prevent it. She has actually fled to Sunnydale to escape an ancient vampire called Kakistos (from the Greek "the worst of the worst"), whom she and her Watcher were unable to defeat. This casts an entirely new light on Faith's bragging to the Scooby Gang about her slaying exploits. She is trying desperately to maintain (at least in their eyes) the image she has of herself as a Slayer. Slayers, it will be remembered, traditionally work alone, and as a result the Watchers' Council seems to have been developed as a way of controlling and directing the Slayer's power, containing it in effect, as well as providing support for the individual Slayer active in any given generation. Lacking the Look of her Watcher to reinforce her self-image as the Slayer, Faith seems to be desperately reaching out to the Scooby Gang (including Buffy and Giles) for such validation. She is in effect saying, "Look at me! See what a great Slayer I am!" This, of course, makes the concept of Slayer an outside view predicate for Faith.

[10] "Slayer" is, arguably, an outside view predicate for Kendra as well. She is portrayed as completely under the control of the Watchers' Council, and constantly seeking their approbation. For example, we see her seeking Giles' approval by stressing how diligent she has been in her studies, ostentatiously referring to books, such as *Dramius* Volume 6, of which Buffy has never heard (2.10, "What's My Line" Part 2). Kendra has no real life outside the Slaying. Having learned to rely on the Look of her Watcher, Kendra, in fighting the clairvoyant vampire Drusilla, easily succumbs to Drusilla's hypnotic look and is killed by her. It is significant that Drusilla, in hypnotizing Kendra, says, "Look at me, Dearie... Be...in my eyes. Be...in me" (2.21, "Becoming, Part 1"). Drusilla, in effect, possesses Kendra's freedom. We noted above that Jana Riess and Jessica Prata Miller argue that Kendra is killed because she obeyed her Watcher without question rather than discovering her own way. We would add that Kendra's death is the result of her passive acceptance of the role of Slayer in *Bad Faith*, in the manner that we have called an outside view predicate. She is thus controlled by the Look of the Other, the very Look she has in fact courted all her life.

[11] Superficially, Faith's case looks different in that she is wild and free-wheeling compared to the staid and mechanical Kendra. Nonetheless, Faith is every bit as much a slave to the Look. She does, however, try to control the attack on her freedom which the Look of the Other necessarily entails. As we have seen, she cultivates Xander's gaze in particular. Faith, however, very forcefully negates any hold Xander's Look might have on her freedom. She accomplishes this by actually taking Xander's freedom from him. Faith seduces him, or rather, has violent sex with him, obviously in complete control. It's poor Xander's first time. He's never been "up with people before." The scene ends with Xander's being pushed out of her motel room, holding his clothes in a bundle in front of him, as she slams the door saying, "That was great. I gotta shower" (3.13, "The Zeppo"). A short time later, when Xander unwisely returns to her motel room, Faith, kissing him roughly a number of times, ends up choking him, and, in fact, would probably have killed him, if he had not been rescued by Angel (3.15, "Consequences").

[12] Faith's even more violent approach to Xander on the occasion of his second visit is not unexpected, since she has, in the intervening episode, "Bad Girls" (3.14), accidentally killed a human bystander while helping Buffy slay vampires. Faith, as usual fighting with enthusiastic abandon, is enjoying the battle so much that she is unable to pull back in time to avoid staking the bystander in spite of Buffy's warning, "FAITH, NO!" (3.14). It is important that Buffy, in spite of the heat of battle, is able to distinguish human from vampire. Buffy, unlike Faith, has not yet completely abandoned herself to the exciting

violence of her calling. Faith enjoys it too much, and we are shown the consequences. Despite Faith's visceral response to the manslaughter, her own immediate and visible shock at what she has done, she goes into denial, tries to cover up the crime by disposing of the body, and attempts to convince herself that this killing doesn't really matter. She pretends that she "doesn't care," and contends that Slayers do so much good for humankind that, in the balance, the death of one innocent bystander hardly matters. Faith's attitude here is not unlike that of Raskolnikov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, a novel originally published in serial form in 1866 and therefore part of the popular culture of the time, just as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is today. Although Raskolnikov's act of killing his victim was premeditated murder, still he thinks such acts are justified given the big picture, providing that there is some benefit to humanity. In fact, before the murder, he had published an article arguing that some people are superior, and therefore they have justification for committing cold-blooded murder, even on a massive scale like Napoleon's or Caesar's, providing that a balance of good over evil results. He happily discusses his article with the police officer investigating the crime, pointing out that, in his view, the world is divided into two classes of people—the ordinary run of human beings who constitute the bulk of humanity, and a much smaller class of "extraordinary" people to whom the rules, laws, and restrictions that regulate the lives of ordinary persons do not rigidly apply. Though at this point he denies that he himself is a member of the "extraordinary" class, in that he does not want to admit to the crime, he does say to the police officer with whom he is debating, "I simply intimate that the 'extraordinary' man has the right...I don't mean a formal, official right, but he has the right in himself, to permit his conscience to overstep...certain obstacles, but only in the event that his ideas (which may sometimes be salutary for all mankind) require it for their fulfilment" (219-220).

[13] Though Faith is unwilling to discuss her crime with the police, and in fact weights the body and disposes of it in the river in order to conceal the event, she does present Buffy with very similar arguments in order to justify her actions to her fellow Slayer. Faith first points out that she and Buffy are "extraordinary" in that they help people by being warriors built to kill. In response to Buffy's admonition that that fact does "not mean that we get to pass judgment on people like we're better than everybody else!," and have the right to kill human beings, Faith responds, "We *are* better!...That's right, better. People need us to survive" (3.15, "Consequences"). This clearly echoes Raskolnikov's line of argument, the principal difference between the two at this point being that Raskolnikov uses this type of cost-benefit analysis as a pretext for a crime prior to committing it, while Faith introduces the argument after the fact in order to justify the crime, especially to herself. When she then turns to a life of crime by working for the secretly demon Mayor Richard Wilkins III, this line of reasoning is no longer available to her. She has, after all, jettisoned the helping humanity part, which provided the argument with what little utilitarian plausibility it possessed, either for her or for Raskolnikov.

[14] So why does Faith move from this one crime, which is largely accidental, and certainly not premeditated in any sense, to a very self-conscious career of crime, which includes the murder of human beings solely on the Mayor's orders? She does not even question these orders or assume that the crimes somehow contribute to the greater good of humankind. When, for example, one of her victims, an apparently harmless vulcanologist, asks "Why?" to Faith's informing him, "Boss wants you dead," she answers while stabbing him, "You know, I never thought to ask"(3.21, "Graduation Day Part 1"). The fact that Faith often and happily calls the Mayor "boss" should tell us something about a fairly fundamental change in her character. When we first meet her, she seems to be a self-motivated Slayer, even more autonomous than Buffy herself. Some commentators have even likened her to the characters played by Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger (Jessica Prata Miller 47). So why all of a sudden, when she chooses to go evil, does she acquire a boss and lose her autonomy, becoming in effect merely a tool for his manipulation? It certainly looks as though she freely chooses to join the Mayor, walking into his office, informing him that she has dusted his assistant, the vampire Mr. Trick whom the Mayor had sent to kill her, and announcing, "I guess that means you have a job opening" (3.15, "Consequences"). We argue that this demonstrates that not all choices result in expanded freedom or autonomy, and that not all choices are as freely made as they appear to be. In Buffy's eyes, Faith is a criminal. Buffy tells Faith how badly she ought to feel, "Look, I know what you're feeling because I'm feeling it, too...Dirty. Like something sick crept inside you and you can't get it out. And you keep hoping that it was just some nightmare, but it wasn't" (3.15, "Consequences"). Buffy is obviously ashamed of what they have done. She herself is actually an accessory

after the fact, since she didn't inform the police or even her Watcher Giles. We contend that such concepts as "criminal," "dirty" and "shame" are functioning here as what we have called outside view predicates. We are suggesting that Faith is driven to side with the Mayor by Buffy's Look, in the Sartrean sense of Look, as that which fixes and threatens to define you, limiting your freedom. It is important to remember that Faith has fled to Sunnydale in search of approval, particularly that of her fellow Slayer, Buffy. She is now finding the exact opposite. Buffy looks upon her as dirty, shameful, a criminal. Having been labeled a criminal, Faith chooses to become the most important criminal in the Mayor's employ. Faith thus plays the role which Buffy, through her judgmental attitude, has, in effect, unwittingly chosen for her. This is a clear example of Sartre's notion of Bad Faith. Yes, we are arguing that Faith is living in Bad Faith (even before she goes bad).

[15] Sartre, in his book *Saint Genet: Actor and Martyr*, argues that the writer Jean Genet led a life of crime due primarily to the fact that as a child he was accused of stealing. Sartre claims that Genet succumbed to the Look, to the outside view predicate "thief," and thus became what he already was in the eyes of others. This is a classic example of the Look. It ossifies the freedom of human beings, turning them into mere things, objects without plans or projects. In the employ of the Mayor, this would appear to be all that Faith can look forward to, being an object that serves to carry out the projects and plans of "the boss." She is no longer an autonomous subject with her own future firmly in hand. In this crucial respect, working for the Mayor is not all that different from working for the Watchers' Council. The Council's role is to control and direct the Slayer's power, and it chooses to do this largely by attempting to limit the Slayer's freedom, giving her orders and expecting them to be followed without question or examination. As we have noted above, Kendra is the ideal Slayer in the Council's view precisely because she is more than willing to regard her Watcher as "boss." At one point, while working with Buffy, Kendra suggests that "We can return to your Watcher for our orders" (2.10, "What's My Line? Part Two"). Of course, Buffy, as might be expected, speaks quite in character when she responds, "I don't take orders. I do things my way." Kendra is likewise every bit in character when she retorts, "No wonder you died" (2.10, "What's My Line? Part Two"). This retort turns out to be sadly ironic since, as we know, it is Kendra who dies because she cannot resist the objectifying Look of Drusilla.

[16] Although Faith is also in flight from freedom, she does not suffer the same fate as Kendra. There is still a future open to her and thus the possibility of regaining her autonomy. Her flight from freedom is an attempt to avoid accepting responsibility for the death she has caused (that of the bystander), or that she was unable to prevent (that of her Watcher).

[17] We are shown that Buffy, in very similar circumstances, immediately accepts responsibility for her actions. In Episode 2.11, she believes that she has killed a human being, Ted, who was dating her mother, Joyce. Buffy catches him in her bedroom reading her diary, and Ted violently slaps her when she attempts to retrieve it. She defends herself, hardly restraining her Slayer strength, which results in Ted's falling down the stairs. He is pronounced dead. Although her mother tells the police that Ted *fell* down the stairs, Buffy interrupts, admitting that she hit him. When the police learn that he attacked her in her bedroom, they do not arrest her, though they continue their investigation, interviewing teachers at Buffy's school, and so forth. Buffy obviously feels very guilty, telling the Scooby Gang that she really doesn't know whether it was an accident or the result of the fact that she did not like Ted's dating her mother. Xander asks her, "What was he? A-a demon? A giant bug? Some kind of dark god with the secrets of nouvelle cuisine? I mean, we are talking creature-feature here, right?" (2.11, "Ted"). None of the Scooby Gang believe that Buffy is capable of deliberately harming a human being. It is just not in her character, and they tell her so. But Buffy recognizes, "I'm the Slayer. I had no right to hit him like that." She really doesn't seem to know why she attacked him as she did. She obviously did not like his dating her mother, and wonders if she were jealous about his monopolizing her mother's attention. But he also threatened her, not just physically, but also psychologically, suggesting that he would tell her mother about the "nonsense" in her diary concerning vampires and slayers. At this point, her mother does not know that Buffy is the Vampire Slayer. In the typical postmodern self-mocking way for which the series has become famous, when Buffy demands the return of her diary, Ted responds, "Or what? You'll slay me? I'm real. I'm not some goblin you made up in your little diary. Psychiatrists have a word for something like this: delusional. So, from now on, you'll do what I say, when I say,

or I show this to your mother, and you'll spend your best dating years behind the walls of a mental institution" (2.11). We later learn that before coming to Sunnydale, Buffy actually did spend a short time in a mental institution, until she chose to stop talking about vampires and her slayage activities (6.17, "Normal Again"). This, then, was even more of a threat than viewers of Season Two would realize. However, Buffy clearly cannot determine the real reason that she attacked Ted with the ferocity she did—her loathing of him, his physical and psychological threats, his intrusion into her privacy, his intrusion into her relationship with her mother, or even his winning of the affections of her friends Xander and Willow, using food to tempt the former and free computer software to allure the latter.

[18] Interestingly enough, Sartre, in his play *Dirty Hands (Les Mains Sales)*, explores the very issue of not knowing one's own motives for action. He suggests that this is something individuals are sometimes unable to determine on their own without the help of an outside observer. Sartre describes a member of the Resistance who has been ordered to commit a political assassination. Interestingly enough, his code name is "Raskolnikov." He gets a job as the intended victim's private secretary and moves both himself and his wife into the victim's home in order to have access to him. However, he finds that he cannot bring himself to kill the intended victim until he finds him embracing and kissing his wife. Unfortunately, our hero, being a Sartrean hero, is unable to say whether this was a political assassination or a crime of passion, even though his life depends upon it. Buffy seems to be faced with exactly the same kind of dilemma. It is clear, however, that she does feel remorse and tremendous guilt, and, unlike Faith, is certainly ready to take responsibility for her actions. This suggests that Buffy is both more autonomous and of better moral character than her fellow Slayer. We can also see that she was speaking from experience when she told Faith, "I know what you're feeling....Dirty. Like something sick crept inside you and you can't get it out" (3.15, "Consequences").

[19] Actually, it transpires that Ted was in reality a murderous robot who, after reactivating himself in the morgue, tells Buffy's mother that he was clinically dead for only a few moments and had lain unconscious in the morgue. Meanwhile, the Scoobies have found the bodies of Ted's four former wives in his home, and Buffy is able to save her mother from becoming number five. This is a comedy-horror-drama after all. Still, Buffy, unlike Faith, does not have to learn how to live with the guilt of killing a human being. Angel, the 250-year-old vampire with a soul, gives Faith a chilling description of living with this kind of guilt: "I won't lie to you and tell you that it'll be easy, because it won't be. Just because you've decided to change doesn't mean that the world is ready for you to. The truth is no matter how much you suffer, no matter how many good deeds you do to try to make up for the past, you may never balance out the cosmic scale. The only thing I can promise you is that you'll probably be haunted, and maybe for the rest of your life" (*Angel* 1.19, "Sanctuary").

[20] However, it takes Faith some time to discover that she actually does want to change, that she needs to acknowledge the deeply buried guilt which at best she experiences only semi-consciously. In "Sanctuary," Angel reminds her that going into the darkness of evil was her own choice: "That...was your choice....You thought that you could just touch it. That you'd be okay. Five by five, right, Faith? But it swallowed you whole. So tell me—how did you like it?" In the previous episode (*Angel* 1.18, "Five by Five"), we are reminded that Angel knows first-hand about such guilt. We see a number of flashbacks of Angel without his soul, as Angelus, one of the most vicious and murderous vampires in history. This is the episode in which Faith flees Sunnydale for Los Angeles, and after a brief but vigorous crime spree, has a battle with Angel during which both she and the audience learn that she is not trying to kill Angel, but rather she is desperately attempting to get Angel to kill her, because she can no longer live with the pain and anguish of her now fully-conscious guilt. Faith has always felt this guilt on some level since staking the bystander. We see her bending over the body of her unintended victim and touching the wound with her hand, which she pulls away in obvious horror. Shortly after, we see her in her motel room obsessively scrubbing at the blood on her shirt in a fashion that cannot but bring to mind Lady Macbeth's equally futile attempt to wash away guilt by washing away its physical signs (3.14, "Bad Girls"). We note in passing that Joss Whedon and his crew are famous for reading Shakespeare aloud for recreation. Buffy arrives at the motel while Faith is doing her Lady Macbeth, and in the ensuing discussion, reminds Faith, "Faith, you can shut off all the emotions that you want. But eventually, they're gonna find a body." Of course, Buffy is referring to the authorities' finding the victim's body, which Faith admits she has already

disposed of. However, the grammar of the sentence suggests literally that it is the emotions that will eventually find a body to wrack with guilt and possibly even illness. Faith's body is the likely candidate. This is quite consistent with Sartre's analysis of the emotions. In *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*, Sartre argues that our body deals with such emotions as terror, or horror, for example, by either fainting, screaming, or running away, anything that physically, yet magically, blocks the horror that terrifies us. Of course we know rationally that fainting, or screaming, or running away will not really change the actual situation; but then, the emotions are not rational. Sartre argues that the emotions work at the level of the magical, which, we would point out, fits rather well with the Buffyverse.

[21] As we have seen, Faith's way of running away is to leave her friends, Buffy and the Scooby Gang, by joining up with the Mayor and helping him open the Hellmouth through his ascension into a higher being as a giant demon serpent. The Mayor, of course, helps Faith bury her guilt by giving her positive reinforcement for carrying out his orders, which, as we have seen, include further killings, actual premeditated murders. The Mayor's positive reinforcement includes various gifts. Some are employment related, like a dagger that especially gratifies Faith. "This is a thing of beauty, boss" she says as she caresses, licks, and sniffs it (3.19, "Choices"). Others are more domestic items such as an innocent country-girl style of dress, very different from the provocative style Faith generally favors; an apartment; a video game system; informal lessons in etiquette; and so forth. In short, he treats her not only as a favorite employee, but also as a daughter. He tells her, in fact, that "no father could be prouder" after she has killed the vulcanologist for him (3.21, "Graduation Day, Part One"). Paternal approbation via the approving Look of a father figure is even more valuable to someone like Faith than a mere employer's approval. It gives her her first true sense of belonging to something like a family. The Mayor and Faith have become the evil equivalent of the Giles-Buffy relationship. We note, for example, that Quentin Travers, the head of the Watchers' Council, says when firing Giles as Buffy's official Watcher, "Your affection for your charge has rendered you incapable of clear and impartial judgment. You have a father's love for the child, and that is useless to the cause" (3.12, "Helpless"). It is perhaps more than a little ironic that Quentin Travers considers normal enough human emotions to be damaging to the cause of good, since it is those very normal human emotions that prove to be the undoing of the demonic Mayor. In effect, he is defeated in large part because Buffy is able to exploit his paternal affection for Faith. In the events leading up to the climactic battle in 3.22, "Graduation Day, Part Two," Buffy has put Faith in a coma by stabbing her with the very dagger that Faith had gratefully received from the Mayor. In order to lead the Mayor, now ascended to a gigantic serpent demon, towards the cache of explosives she and the Scooby Gang have hidden in the high school, Buffy taunts him with the dagger, reminding him of what she did to Faith with it: "You remember this? I took it from Faith. Stuck it in her gut. Just slid in her like she was butter" (3.22). The Mayor/serpent pursues Buffy through the hallways until he is right where he needs to be in order to be blown to bits and buried in the sealing of the Hellmouth by the blast that destroys the entire school. What a fitting climax to any high school graduation! This is a great example of how the show works on so many levels.

[22] From a Sartrean perspective, the dagger and Buffy's stabbing Faith with it turn out to be even more important. The dagger is Faith's possession. As we have seen, upon receiving it, she admires it almost erotically. Sartre would say that she possesses it in the sense of putting her spirit into it. It is as though the dagger thus becomes a part of her, or rather that she has become the dagger. It is the symbol of her warrior nature but also a mere physical object with no freedom to choose projects and plans for the future as humans do. This is one way in which Faith can deny her freedom and thus responsibility for what she has done. She is nothing but a weapon to be wielded by the freedom of the Mayor. She is merely the instrument of the Mayor's will, as Dostoevsky might put it. "You murdered him; you are the real murderer, I was only your instrument, your faithful servant" (*The Brothers Karamazov*, 330). Faith herself has no more responsibility than the dagger itself would have. *Daggers* don't kill people, people do. Of course, she is lying to herself in Bad Faith. *Daggers* don't kill people, *people* do.

[23] Sartre points out that it is in actual fact impossible to lie to yourself, since to lie is to conceal the truth, and in order to conceal the truth, you must know what it is. Some might want to say, with Freud, that a person in Faith's position knows the truth, or feels her guilt, "unconsciously." Interestingly enough, a Freudian interpretation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* leads to a reading of that text as a narrative not so much about crime and



punishment as about "the internal discord in Raskolnikov's soul" which ultimately forces him to confess to his crime. As the classic 1935 study, "The Problem of Guilt in Dostoevsky's Fiction," by Russian-born scholar A. Bem argues, "The crime...does not penetrate Raskolnikov's soul and conscious mind, but conceals itself in his subconscious as a potential force of his conscience" (626). Sartre, however, rejects the Freudian solution to the puzzle of lying to yourself, because it involves appealing to this very notion of the subconscious or unconscious mind. Sartre argues in effect that introducing the concept of the unconscious is just cheating, inventing two persons where there is, in actual fact, only one: "I must know the truth very exactly *in order* to conceal it...and this not at two different moments...but in the unitary structure of a single project" (*Being and Nothingness*, 89). Instead of saying that Faith, or Raskolnikov, for example, feel their guilt "unconsciously," Sartre would say that they are "pre-reflexively" conscious of it. We become reflexively conscious of ourselves only after we encounter the Look of the Other, when we begin to see ourselves as others see us, and thus apply outside view predicates to ourselves. This is, certainly, one of the meanings of being self-conscious, embarrassed in front of others. Sartre uses the concept of reflexive consciousness quite literally. The single consciousness turns back upon itself and thus becomes conscious of its very consciousness. The term "reflexion" means, quite literally, "to bend back" as, for example, the word "return" means "to turn back." The word "flexible" means "the ability to bend." So "reflexion" literally means "to bend back."

[24] According to Sartre, it is the Look of the Other that forces our consciousness to bend back upon itself, as it attempts to look out upon the world. We have already seen that Faith was fleeing from Buffy's judgmental Look, not wanting to accept responsibility for her guilt. Buffy's Look becomes quite literal when she stabs Faith with the dagger Faith regards as her possession, as the objectification of herself. We regard this moment as the beginning of Faith's reflexive consciousness of her own guilt, her self as object (the dagger) turning back upon itself (quite literally Faith's body). Faith keeps taunting Buffy by claiming that if Buffy kills her, she becomes her, because Buffy would then have deliberately killed a human being (3.17, "Enemies"). When Buffy finally stabs Faith in battle, Faith looks at Buffy and says, "You killed me" (3.21, "Graduation Day, Part One"). This, we contend, is Faith's first recognition (since the accidental staking of a human bystander) that killing a human being is a tremendous crime, and that she has committed it. Buffy has, in a sense, possessed Faith by taking her dagger since the dagger was Faith's possession.

[25] It is important to understand the two different, but related, senses in which Faith herself possesses the dagger and is possessed by it. Certainly she owns it; it is the object of her possession. This is simply a legal property right. The more telling sense of possession is the one in which her spirit, as it were, possesses the object. Sartre gives a number of examples of such possession. A haunted house, for instance, is possessed by the ghost of a former owner or inhabitant, "To say that a house is haunted means that neither money nor effort will efface the metaphysical absolute fact of *its possession* by a former occupant" (*Being and Nothingness* 750).

[26] We have an example of this in the Buffyverse when the character Cordelia Chase moves from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to the *Angel* series (when Cordy moves from Sunnydale to Los Angeles). In Los Angeles, she discovers it is very difficult to find a decent apartment she can afford. When she is finally shown a charming old apartment in her price range that is actually vacant, she is delighted and moves in immediately. She soon discovers why such a great apartment has been vacant. It turns out to be haunted by a ghost called Dennis, who has frightened off all previous tenants. Cordelia is not about to let a little thing like phantom Dennis deprive her of an otherwise perfect apartment. As she lies in bed on her first night in the apartment, the glass of water on her bedside table suddenly begins to boil and the bed itself levitates. Her response is, "I just knew this was to good to be true. I just knew it! I'm from Sunnydale, you're not scaring me, you know" (*Angel* 1.5, "Room With A View"). She eventually develops a very cordial relationship with phantom Dennis, as he opens drawers, helps her find things, etc. It turns out that Dennis and his insane mother lived in this apartment many years ago, and that his overly possessive mother had walled him up in an alcove of the apartment, where Cordelia eventually discovers his body during renovations. He is, it seems, very much possessed by the apartment.

[27] The whole notion of objects possessing spirits is more widely believed than one would think in a rational world. Sartre points to the fact that many people are willing to pay a small fortune to buy relics or any objects owned by famous or historical people. The

object itself may be worthless, but we somehow think that by buying that object we are possessing something of the previous owner. In a somewhat magical sense, we are possessing the previous owner, actually becoming that famous person to some extent. As Sartre argues, "To possess is to be united with the object possessed in the form of appropriation; to wish to possess is to wish to be united to an object in this relation" (*Being and Nothingness* 751). Sometimes, even just imitating the attributes (i.e., objects, clothes, habits, etc.) of a celebrity will suffice—look, for instance, at the world of Elvis impersonators, as well as the crowds of pilgrims who visit the "shrine" at Graceland every year, many in costume or driving pink cadillacs. For Sartre, it is the possession of another person which is of paramount importance, because the Look of the Other is a form of possessing: "By virtue of consciousness the Other is for me simultaneously the one who has stolen my being from me and the one who causes 'there to be' a being which is my being" (*Being and Nothingness* 475). Buffy, in taking Faith's dagger, a dagger, functioning like a relic, which is possessed by Faith's spirit, is in effect taking Faith herself, possessing Faith. She then makes Faith conscious of herself, and reflexively conscious of her concealed guilt and remorse, by returning the dagger to her in the most forceful way possible, by stabbing her, making it part of her, thus revealing to her the gut-wrenching guilt from which she has been fleeing. The dagger, then, is a symbol of Faith's guilt as well as the objectification of Faith herself in her attempt to hide from that very guilt. The dagger thus functions, in part, like Macbeth's spectral dagger, which, he says, appears before him, "its handle towards my hand." Faith's dagger is rather more revealing, since hers is more than simply a "dagger of the mind" (Shakespeare *Macbeth* 2.1., 34, 38). And, unfortunately for Faith, the pointy end abruptly moves in her direction. Although she exclaims to Buffy, "You killed me," as the knife slips into her body "like she was butter," she does not in fact die. We see her wounded body falling from her upper-floor apartment and landing in the back of a passing truck, which continues on its way.

[28] We next see the now comatose Faith lying in a hospital bed where she remains for eight months until her awakening in Episode 4.15, after a series of dreams in which Buffy both stalks Faith and stabs the Mayor with Faith's dagger. Thus Buffy's Sartrean Look, and hence Faith's growing consciousness of guilt, pursue Faith relentlessly, even in her dreams. When she awakens, Faith continues to try to negate Buffy's Look. She actually hunts Buffy, intent on what she consciously thinks is "payback." When they finally happen to meet on the crowded campus of UC Sunnydale, Faith's first words to Buffy are, significantly, "You're not me" (4.15, "This Year's Girl"). We see this, at some level, as Faith's attempt to deny her possession by Buffy, implicit in the Look. However, she is beginning to become conscious of her guilt, brought on by this very Look. Before they fight, Buffy expresses her concern that there are too many innocent bystanders around. Faith responds, "No such animal." If Faith can say that there is no such animal as an innocent person, then Faith must realize at some level that she herself is not innocent, but is in fact guilty of horrendous crimes. Their fight at this point is cut short by the arrival of the police. Faith flees. She later encounters a demon who gives her a package containing a videotape and a mysterious object, which she shortly discovers is a gift from the late Mayor, which allows her to switch bodies with Buffy.

[29] The body-switch episodes, "This Year's Girl" (4.15) and "Who Are You" (4.16), the latter written and directed by Whedon himself, make quite literal the Sartrean outside view predicates necessary for Faith's reflexive consciousness of herself and thus of her own guilt through the Look of the Other. Whether intended or not, the body-switch is a brilliant device for exploring the impact of Sartrean outside view predicates. Faith can see herself as Buffy sees her, since she is seeing herself, or at least her body, from Buffy's point of view, literally from Buffy's body, which she now occupies. Talk about possessing the Other! Buffy, too, is more than shocked to find herself in Faith's body and being pursued by agents of the Watchers' Council. Faith thinks that she finally has the opportunity to take over Buffy's life, a life which at some level she has always wanted. In fact, she gets to sleep with Buffy's current love interest, Riley Finn, but finds herself unready for the genuine love, tenderness, and concern he shows toward her. To keep up the pretense, her cover in effect, of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, she actually saves a young girl from a vampire attack, but again she is unprepared for the Look of genuine gratitude as the girl says, "Thank you. Thank you" (4.16). The Look from Riley establishes Buffy (not Faith in Buffy's body) as someone worthy of love and respect, while the Look from the rescued girl establishes Faith in Buffy's body (and potentially Faith herself) as a hero, a champion, someone worthy of admiration as well as gratitude. At this point, however, Faith is disturbed and confused by these Looks. She is

having a kind of moral experience that has not been available to her before, but she is not yet ready to fully appreciate all of its ramifications for her possible future.

[30] Confused and conflicted, Faith attempts to flee Sunnydale and start a new life and identity as Buffy, but at the airport she happens to see a television news report of an ongoing hostage taking situation at a local church. From the report, it is obvious to her that the culprits are vampires since the police seem unable to defeat the ones they have encountered. (Most of Sunnydale do not know that vampires exist and they would certainly not be mentioned in a serious television *news* report.) Faith realizes that she is probably the only one capable of saving the hostages. Having played the role of Buffy the Vampire Slayer, having quite literally lived in Buffy's body, Faith begins to feel the responsibilities of the Slayer and rushes off to save the hostages, instead of turning her back on them and catching her plane. As Karl Schudt argues in "Also Sprach Faith: The Problem of the Happy Rogue Vampire Slayer," Faith finally comes to recognize a basic moral truth: "She has strength and the means to defend the defenseless, and therefore has the duty to do so." He concludes, "Furthermore, she must save the people because the sort of person she will be if she doesn't is unacceptable" (32). We would add that she has already become that unacceptable person, but that she is now beginning to become reflexively conscious of her untenable position. This is a crucial step toward her redemption. Gregory Stevenson, in *Televised Morality: The Case of Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, finds it significant that this step toward redemption occurs in a church, and argues, "It is here that she confesses the truth about herself and begins to experience the weight of moral responsibility" (122).

[31] But an even more significant event occurs. The real Buffy (locked in Faith's body) has managed to escape from and elude the agents from the Watchers' Council and shows up at the church to save the hostages. The vampires having been dispatched, Faith turns her attention to the real Buffy, seeing her own body from the outside. The two Slayers fight. Gregory Stevenson quite rightly points out, "[t]he visual impact of this scene is crucial as Faith (in Buffy's body) repeatedly punches her own face in a fit of self loathing and cries out 'You're nothing! You're disgusting!'"(122). The dialogue, actually Faith's monologue delivered on the verge of tears between violent punches, is even more dramatic than Stevenson reports. It is more like "You're nothing. Disgusting! Murderous bitch! You're nothing. You're disgusting" (4.16). These are all, of course, outside view predicates. Faith is finally seeing herself as Buffy sees her and is even harder on herself than Buffy has ever been. Faith has suddenly come to realize what kind of person she has become.

[32] We think the repetition of her judgment "You're nothing" could have an even deeper significance. Just as the term "possession" has two different but related meanings, legal ownership and spiritually inhabiting an object, so too the term "nothing" can mean two quite different things. Besides the derogatory "your loss would be no loss" obviously meant in the monologue here, another meaning of "nothing" can be "no thing." This is the Sartrean meaning of "nothing" as it appears in his book *Being and Nothingness* (*no-thing-ness*). It is intended to draw attention to existential freedom, to the fact that human beings *are* freedom as Sartre would put it. Mere physical objects, on the other hand, are only things and cannot make themselves into any thing else. As we explained in more detail above, we human beings can, through the choices we make and the projects we undertake, continue to constantly remake ourselves, and therefore because of these indeterminate potentialities can never say what it is that we are. As Buffy once famously described herself, "I'm cookie dough. I'm not done baking. I'm not finished becoming whoever the hell it is I'm going to turn out to be" (7.22, "Chosen"). We always have the potential for radical conversion. Faith may currently see herself as "a disgusting murderous bitch," but that can be, for her, a step toward redemption because she is not a thing (not even her dagger) and can therefore change. We suggest that the repetition of the reflexive "You're nothing" could be seen as Faith's dimly conscious (pre-reflexive) realization of this possibility. We admit, indeed insist, that the extremely negative outside view predicate meaning of "you're nothing" is what is foremost in Faith's consciousness at this moment. She truly sees herself as "a disgusting murderous bitch," and cannot stand what she has become.

[33] Fortunately, for viewers and slayers alike, the real Buffy, thanks to her Wiccan friend Willow, has acquired another magical body-switching device and is able to activate it during their fight. The re-embodied Faith flees to Los Angeles and we next see her in the *Angel* series, engaging in the crime spree we mentioned above. The most significant event in

this crime spree is the kidnapping and gruesome torturing of her former Watcher, Wesley Wyndham-Pryce. We contend that the fact that Faith chooses to bind and torture the very Watcher assigned to her after Kakistos killed her original Watcher corroborates our Sartrean reading of Faith's redemption narrative. If, as Gregory Stevenson, Karl Schudt, and we ourselves acknowledge, Faith is already on the path toward redemption, why does she suddenly revert to this especially loathsome criminal activity? She is, after all, threatening to employ all "five basic torture groups. We've done blunt, but that still leaves sharp, cold, hot and loud" (*Angel* 1.18, "Five By Five"). Her behavior makes sense only if she is trying to negate the freedom of her Watcher while preserving his Sartrean Look, which brands her as the criminal she perceives herself to be. She still requires the Look, but no longer wants the loss of freedom and possibilities the Look implies. She still seems to be trying to take ownership of her crimes in much the way that Jean Genet did.

[34] She still does not fully see the possibility of redemption through radical conversion, and in order to rid herself of the overwhelming guilt closing in upon her, she attempts to get Angel to kill her by picking the fight with him we mentioned earlier: "I'm evil! I'm bad! I'm evil! Do you hear me? I'm bad! Angel, I'm bad! I'm ba-ad. Do you hear me? I'm bad! I'm bad! I'm bad. Please. Angel, please, just do it. Angel please, just do it. Just do it. Just kill me. Just kill me" (*Angel* 1.18, "Five By Five"). This is not as extraordinary an event as it might seem. Criminals often try to goad police officers into a fight to the death, a fight they know the police are bound to win. Police forces are in fact trained to recognize and avoid this sort of situation, colloquially referred to as "suicide by cop" (see, for example, Barr, 2005; Center for Suicide Prevention, 1999; Conner, 2003; Dingsdale, 1998; Gerberth, 1993; Huston, et al., 1998; Kennedy, et al., 1998; Keram and Farrell, 2001; Lindsay and Lester, 2004; Lord, 2004; Parent, 1998, 2004; Pyers, 2001; Stincelli, 2004; Treatment Advocacy Center, 2005; VanZandt, n.d; Wilson et al., 1998; and the "Suicide by Cop Webites" in the bibliography).

[35] Eventually, Faith, with Angel's help, freely chooses to turn herself in to the police and serve time in prison for the crimes she has committed. That this represents her move toward autonomy is confirmed by the fact that no prison can contain a Slayer against her will. When her services as Slayer are once again required by Angel and Wesley, she has no difficulty breaking out of prison, which again confirms our contention that she was freely choosing to accept her punishment (*Angel* 4.13, "Salvage").

[36] Ironically, once out of prison, Faith finds herself working with Wesley. Even more ironically, she has occasion to criticize him for torturing a drug-addled prostitute for information. Wesley retorts defensively, "Oh, you have a problem with torture now? I seem to recall a time when you rather enjoyed it." Faith responds significantly, "Yeah, well, it's not me anymore. You know that" (*Angel* 4.14, "Release"). Wesley replies to this claim by hurling a series of outside view predicates at Faith: "This the part where you tell me you've turned a new leaf, found God, inner peace? We both know that isn't true. You haven't changed. You can't....Because you're sick. You've always been sick. It goes right down to the roots rotting your soul. That's why your friends turned on you in Sunnydale, why the Watchers' Council tried to kill you. No one trusts you, Faith. You're a rabid dog who should've been put down years ago!" (4.14). Faith obviously has changed, since she is not devastated by these outside view predicates. She also refuses to accept Angelus's similar claim that she is unable to change: "Nothing will ever change who you are, Faith. You're a murderer,...an animal,... and you enjoy it....Just like me." Faith proves that she will no longer be categorized and stultified by the Look of the of the Other, in responding, "No! You're wrong. I'm different now. I'm not like you" (4.14). It is now evident, we contend, that Faith, by once again choosing to be the Slayer, the Chosen One, has achieved the strength of character and level of autonomy necessary for redemption, and is approaching the authenticity and moral integrity which, as we will show, Buffy has possessed all along.

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