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The Color of the Dark

An earlier version of this essay appeared as a foreword to
Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer.



(1) We cannot really begin talking about television images without first laying certain old-think presuppositions to rest. Outside of the rare "landmark" broadcast, cultural interpreters of television narratives have often imputed to the creators of television drama a raw avarice that results in technically slick production values supporting only the most basic content for the television screen. Art is seen to occur by accident, if at all, in the otherwise calculated search for mesmerizing images to hypnotize the audience between sales pitches. Meaning, in this formulation, is the outcome of cultural biases filling out a skeletal narrative structure that conforms to the generic expectations of a pleasure-seeking audience.

(2) The cultural critic argues that the "false consciousness" shared by the viewer and the creator obscure the cultural biases and unconscious drives which fuel the "true" message uncovered by the scholar in a display of superior sensibility.

(3) Most critics locate the source of the essentialist message of film in the script. This is patently untrue in cinema, of course, as becomes evident when one contrasts the two defining statements of film production: designers claim that their design is in support of the narrative of the script, and yet the scriptwriter is recognizably the least important member of a film (Tashiro 1998). Even popular cinema belongs to the auteur director such as Stephen Spielberg. Many popular action films targeted to an international audience provide minimal dialogue or plot and aspire only to top their last effort in pyrotechnic visual display. Only in the limited number of producer-director-writer talents like M. Night Shyamalan does one find the script taking even second place in film. Ignoring the contradiction, however, scholars continue to ascribe intentional meaning to the visual image only as it serves the development of character and plot. Critics who complain that the image serves only to forward the narrative continue to ascribe non-narrative pleasure of the image to the unintentional. Tashiro, for example, goes to great lengths to demonstrate how non-narrative images occurring in narrative film actually obstruct or damage interpretation of the narrative intention.

(4) Ironically, of course, what is not true for film is even more an error when looking at television, where "producer" is the title for a senior writer and/or the creator and head writer of the television movie or series. The entire television production serves the intentions of the person in control of the television script, often in conflict with the network executive who may prefer a more homogenized product. That does not mean, however, that the script encompasses the meaning of the finished production. Rather, the writer of depth can depend on a meshing of the visual and verbal to create both a narrative message and a metaphoric one, as well as metanarrative commentary.

(5) Few scholars until now would credit television writers with the vision to understand the complexity of their own products. By imputing to television drama only a naively defined narrative purpose focused on the lowest common denominator viewer, scholars have served their own agenda. If a scholar denies that a television producer has created meaning beyond the most simplistic level of mimesis, then he can also dismiss the objections of the creator who disagrees with the analysis. The claim of "false consciousness," as described above, strips the creator of his authority to speak on behalf of his own creation.

(6) This interpretation is so pervasive in film and television criticism that some young writers, trained in the film schools where the criticism is taught, skitter schizophrenically between their own love of their medium and the cynical reminder that entertainment television is a "sausage factory," producing lowest common denominator material digestible by the largest number of potential viewers (Sloan; Kindler).

(7) The model is most damaging, of course, because it is partly true. No one scorns their own audience more than some network executives. A newcomer to the industry who has been indoctrinated into the belief that her art is a matter of creating empty intellectual calories for the insatiable maw of a mindless consumer-audience may produce ground-network-

product until she either becomes an executive or breaks out of the box the critics and accountants have put her in. Or she may spite the critics and struggle against an industry culture of cynicism and mediocrity to spin television gold from narrative straw.

(8) In studying the scholarship at UCLA or NYU or wherever they trained in their craft, however, the producers, directors, actors, designers, cinematographers in the creative arts, including television, have learned how to apply theory to their work. While some television creators may justify their own lack of talent by adopting the cynicism of the critics, their more gifted (and usually more successful) competitors are perfectly able to construct polyvalent, laminated meanings *on purpose*. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the television gold Joss Whedon has spun out of vampire straw: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

(9) In choosing the extended form of narrative--arc television drama--Whedon has improved upon his movie creation, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, as the vehicle for his message about the emotional and psychological morass of high school. In Sarah Michelle Gellar's *Buffy*, he has created the positive heroic role-model for girls which has been lacking in network television.

FANTASY AS DISTANCE

(10) The history of television demonstrates that even with the best of skill and goodwill, approaching the subject of adolescent pain from a realistic point of view won't draw the mass audience required by advertisers. Excellent, critically acclaimed efforts like ABC's *My So-Called Life* (1994) and more recently, NBC's *Freaks and Geeks* (1999) did not even complete a full season on network television.

(11) Introducing a level of abstraction to the drama, one which distances the pain of the audience through the metaphor of the genres of the fantastic--science fiction, fantasy, horror--gives the creator some freedom from the stress of direct confrontation, but sets him a new problem. Such a step begins the process of abstracting the meaning from the plot; the metaphor may turn the audience away because it cannot process the abstraction (Bacon-Smith). For this reason, the genres have experienced not much more success than the adolescent angst drama itself. The original *Star Trek* and, later, *Beauty and the Beast* stayed on the air for several seasons because of persuasive campaigns waged by fans in defiance of low ratings. Later shows, including *American Gothic* and *Now and Again* did not survive a single season on network television. At this writing, there is currently no fantasy or science fiction programming on the three major broadcast networks. Fox, which has used "reality television" to boost itself into the ranks of the major players, has done so in part by jettisoning most of its fantasy and science fiction as well.

(12) Syndication, cable, and netlets such as the WB and UPN, however, offer success by niche fulfillment. A series like *BtVS* can attract its target audience by virtue of its surface narrative, which uses the fantastic as a form of distancing. The audience drawn to that niche may choose to remain at the level of the fantasy, or the viewer may find herself drawn at her own pace into the deeper truths the creator wishes to impart--the lightly veiled message.

(13) While film critics may define cinema by its efforts to achieve a sort of hyper-realism, the fantasist is faced with the truth that the closer he comes to a convincing visual representation of the fantastic, the more difficult it will be for the audience to look past the recreation to the text. Unlike science fiction, which bridges the unreal with what we know to be technically and scientifically real, fantasy bridges the real with what we know to be unreal. A style that seeks realism in fantasy only heightens the sense of discord in the viewer. For that reason, science fiction has succeeded as a visual form much more often than fantasy.

(14) Theater audiences, however, have been trained over the millennia to willingly suspend disbelief about the missing walls and the plywood trees and create meaning in active collaboration with the text and the actors and the props and sets may give. By virtue of its artful dialogue, fantastical plotlines, magicality in the character development, and the striking color saturation of the visual images, *BtVS* sets itself firmly in the realm of the unreal. Its special effects are adequate, as not to be a distraction, but sufficiently schematic that, in combination with the artfulness of the text, they mark the drama, which just happens to be on weekly television, as more suited to a theatrical interpretation than a filmic one. References to theater in the text support the audience's inclination to this reading.

(15) The narrative arc of the series over time allows for the deliberate creation of multiple levels of meaning around the text, in this case used literally to refer to the script. Already hard at work cooperatively with the creators to suspend disbelief of the theatrical screen, the audience is prepared by this work to uncover those symbolic meanings that would remain unquestioned in a realistic production. Armed with this insight, the balance of this essay will consider two ways in which the high school years of *BtVS* used color and lighting symbolically, working both with and against the text.

(16) The fourth year marked both a shift in the underlying themes and in the character dynamics. The characters graduated, leaving high school angst behind them, and Angel left for a spin-off series. When this happened, for many viewers the series seemed to lose much of its focus, and we can see the grasping after a new direction in an increasingly diffused palette. In this essay, however, we will concentrate primarily on the high school years, with reference to later use of color only for contrast.

SIGN VALUE IN IMAGE AND COLOR: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PALETTE

(17) More than traditional narrative, the high school years of *BtVS* relied upon the use of its palette of color and light not only to carry the mood of the series, but to represent its complex message by means of signs and symbols as well. When we talk about the palette used in television or film, we are already talking in metaphor. Since the mid-renaissance, the palette has come to represent the range of colors to be used in a project and their ordering based on theories of light and color and meaning (Gage 1993). When one talks about the palette, therefore, one references a whole range of choices defined not only by laws of contrast and complementarity, but by symbolic value, and sign value as well.

(18) The sign value of a color represents in an abstract form a more concrete object by means of an arbitrarily constructed cultural system (Arnheim). Pink is for girls and blue for boys because we have assigned the gender-specific meanings to those colors. The assignment is arbitrary. When Buffy wears pink, therefore, she expresses her femininity with the sign-value of the color. When the pink she wears is a scanty tank top, she claims feminine sexuality. And when she kicks vampire butt in a scanty pink tank top, she oversets expectations of what feminine sexuality means in the cultural construct of womanhood which is signified by the color pink.

(19) In one sense, the pink tank top forwards the narrative and the character development: Buffy wants to be a cheerleader ("The Witch," 1003) and go on dates like a regular girl ("Never Kill a Boy on the First Date," 1005). But Buffy asserts her right to be both a feminine teenager and a superhero in a way that usurps the irony within the text as a defense against her outrageous fortunes. The audience is invited to share with Buffy's creator the metatextual irony implicit in the overturning of the gender expectation the designer sets up when Buffy wears pink. Girls who admire Buffy's tank top can identify with her anguished desire to be both competent and normal in a society that considers maleness normal and femaleness defective and dangerous.

(20) Whedon's designers do not limit the visual field to one image of gender, of course. Willow, the faithful Wiccan companion, has shown dramatic shift in dress and color to mark her movement from the child-savant techno-wiccan of high school to the earthy witch of college. The shift has not come easily to her. From the first we have known that Willow has body issues, preferring disguises that hide rather than heighten her femininity ("Inca Mummy Girl," 2004; "Halloween," 2006). In a confrontation with a rival for the affections of the supercool musician-werewolf, Oz, however, she comes to realize that she must begin to relinquish her hold on childhood and move forward in her life ("Wild at Heart," 4006). Gone are the childlike references of episodes as late as "Graduation Day" (3021) in which Willow dresses in nursery colors--a fluffy pink sweater and carries, alternately, a handbag in the shape of a shaggy blue stuffed toy and a round backpack in yellow plush with a smiley face on it--that mark her immaturity. By the time of "Initiative" (4007) the first hints of the later peasant-style have started to emerge. As Willow uncovers new complexities in her sexuality and magical practices, her clothes take on earthy colors. Loose, feminine lines reminiscent of the sixties "flower children" signal both her spirituality and her sexuality, which are less flamboyant than Buffy's sensuality but earthier and more centered at the same time.

Editor's Note

(21) Xander, the poor relation of the Scooby Gang, signals both his material lack and his insecurity in the clashing, muddy colors of the patterned retro shirts he wears. As time has passed, Xander signals his resistance to growth in his increasingly discordant fashion; we see the social separation from his more comfortably middle-class companions in the uniforms of the working underclass he wears. And just in case we have become so accustomed to seeing Xander in his mufti that we fail to read the signs, we are given leather-boy vampire Spike transformed, to his horror, by the loan of Xander's clothing ("Doomed," 4011).

(22) Rupert Giles, the watcher turned magic shopkeeper seems, on first glance, to be the most stereotypical of the characters in the series. His tweed jackets and pin-striped vests in masculine browns and grays, his pressed white shirts and spectacles, combine with his hesitant, uppercrust British accent to offer us the perfect repressed English librarian. The gradual revelation of the character's history and context, however, undermine our image of Giles as the restrained authoritarian. We discover that in his youth Giles wore the black leather that acts as a complex sign of violent rebellion and dark sensuality in *BtVS* ("Halloween"; "The Dark Age," 2008). In "Band Candy" (3006) we see yet another Giles, a young man of contrasts: faded and torn jeans and a white tee shirt send the contradictory message of purity and danger. Giles was a bad boy; even his speech has lost its high polish, but we know the rebellious youth will give rise to the honorable watcher.

(23) Homes likewise act as important signs both to further the narrative and to undermine it. *BtVS* speaks directly to the suburban experience of adolescence. Most characters live in houses, not apartments, with all the outward signs of normative middle class. Beneath the surface, however, nothing is at it seems. Buffy's house is a typical bright and sunny suburban home, but her mother is divorced and works to support her daughter and her suburban dream. Buffy's bedroom is decorated in a froth of white flounces: innocence. Like the pink lipstick, the frilly, girlish bedroom is at odds with the beat-up chest of well-used weapons in the closet ("Welcome to the Hellmouth," 1001 and others). When Buffy visits home from college looking for sanctuary and the symbolic return to the innocence of childhood, the audience, like Buffy, is shocked and unnerved to discover Buffy's bedroom full of angular brown--masculine--crates ("The Freshman," 4001). The world of her mother's work has supplanted Buffy, and the straw that lines the crates visually recreate the real nest from which Buffy

must learn to fly.

(24) Xander's house, and his relation to it, establish visually the estrangement of the character from home and family which the audience may only guess from the passing jokes the character makes. In "Amends" (3010) it is Christmas. Everyone else is with someone--Willow with Oz, Faith with mother-figure Joyce, Buffy with Angel. Xander is lying alone in the dark, in a sleeping bag in a backyard. As it begins to snow, he pulls the sleeping bag more tightly around himself, protection from the cold. In Season Four, Xander's friends have gone to college, but we find Xander working odd jobs in various garish uniforms and paying rent to live in the dingy gray basement of his parents' house.

(25) Giles lives in a contradictorily sensuous Spanish style apartment with an elaborate heavy door and rich yellowy, warm earth tones on the walls. "Passion" (2017) leaves the audience in no doubt as to the sensuous side of Giles's nature. Returning home, Giles finds roses in a vase and champagne cooling in an ice bucket, and candle flames soften all the colors and suffuse the room with gold. Giles follows a trail of glowing candles up the staircase, where he knows his recently estranged lover must await a romantic reunion.

(26) In the context of a Whedon text, of course, the audience knows that the pleasure promised by the scene must quickly be overturned. With horror the viewer discovers, as Giles does, the body of his dead lover arranged amid rose petals scattered on his bed. Desire, opened up and beckoning in the heat of the yellows and reds--candle glow and roses, champagne and staircase--ends in death, poetically displayed for maximum pain.

LIGHT: ABSTRACTION AS COMMENTARY

(27) "Passion" demonstrates more sharply than any other episode the complex meaningfulness of light and shadow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. While *BtVS* often uses color for its sign value, color can also function symbolically. Rudolf Arnheim adopts the definitions of semiotics to describe the difference between a sign and a symbol. As we have seen above, a sign is an arbitrary construct meant to convey in a higher level of abstraction, something that is less abstract than its sign (pink=girl). A symbol, on the other hand, conveys in more concrete terms a higher level of abstraction. Unlike the mostly denotative sign value of color and design to enhance character and context development described above, light and its absence act symbolically in *BtVS*, to connote higher complexities of conflict in the multivalent meaning. That is, unlike Tashiro's construction of visual images that act as roadblocks by throwing one out of the narrative, light and its absence in *BtVS* often act deliberately to remove the audience from the narrative and reestablish the voyeuristic point of view. From this position, the viewer may contemplate the contradictions that are a part of the message, intentional, and not a failure of transmission of meaning. In fact, the symbolic construction of light and dark in *BtVS* conforms to the Kandinsky model of the spiritual meaning of color.

(28) Influenced by Goethe's *Theory of Colours*, the artist and theoretician Wassily Kandinsky posited that colors have their own intrinsic values. By a set of binary polarities (antitheses) Kandinsky shows that colors not only trigger a subjective response that is the visual perception of the color, but themselves carry a weight that lends meaning to their use in art. In a scholarly world that regularly denies agency in the arts, in which theory has become a dead thing as separated from the art it studies as the tombstone from the life it celebrates, one might pause here to consider that I write this particular bit of scholarship as a novelist using the theory of a painter influenced by a poet, each reaching across dead centuries with living understanding.

(29) Kandinsky sets colors in opposition based on their relative warmth or cold, and their relative darkness or light. The oppositions work to explain the effect colors have on each other in terms of the palette and how they lend their meaning to the works of art in which they are thoughtfully used. Of most interest to the viewer of *BtVS*, an inclination to yellow, according to Kandinsky, gives the viewer a sense of warmth. Yellow reaches out to the viewer, in the sense that it seems to expand beyond the space of its shape. An inclination to blue, on the other hand, draws a color in on itself in a cool way. Kandinsky ascribes to yellow the weight of the physical, while blue has a more spiritual level. Yellow approaches white, which is light, while blue approaches black, which is dark. The closer yellow approaches white, the more it represents discordant possibility, femaleness, birth, life; the closer blue approaches black the more it represents discord as well, but descended into maleness, immobility and death. Blue and yellow, when joined, create green, which is peaceful, having brought life to death but calmed the aggressive outreaching of yellow. But green cannot exist for long without producing irritation by reason of its absence of movement.

(30) Color, at its most perceptually subjective, evokes responses which the mind must read symbolically in order to process the response. An artist uses colors not only to replicate the natural environment, therefore, but to tap into the primal meanings that resonate to the warmth or cold, the light or darkness that those colors evoke. In this sense, the concrete symbol of color is used to represent to the viewer something that is both more abstract and less so: the emotional, even limbic response the artist covets for his more cerebral message.

(31) From the very beginning it is clear that Joss Whedon is using light and darkness, yellow and blue, for both their traditional resonances and, symbol-like, for their opposites. Buffy, a pale young blond, moves to a new town, a clean small city suffused with California sunshine--bright, almost white yellow light. With frequent repetition, Joss Whedon signals the viewer to pay attention to the light: Buffy's context has a name, Sunnydale, California, which Whedon uses as a sign.

"Warning: symbolic sunshine ahead." So, immediately the viewer knows that the light suffusing the frame in Buffy's daytime has more than its transparent, or "reality" function.

(32) But Sunnydale sits on a Hellmouth, and horrors ascend upon the town after dark. Vampires, which are the very symbol of death, creep in disguise among the unwary who do not heed the warning to turn away from the dark. Teenagers, of course, never heed warnings, and Sunnydale's teens spill into the dark, dancing, with only their golden heroine to protect them from the predators that circle just beyond the light ("The Harvest," 1002).

(33) To this point, no expectations are overset; symbols function at their simplest level. Then, bad things begin to happen in the daytime. A mother magically supplants her daughter to relive her own youth as a cheerleader ("The Witch," 1003), a predatory teacher entices male students to her home to seduce and kill them ("Teacher's Pet," 1004), a pack of students eat their principal ("The Pack," 1006). The apparent and the deeper meanings are thus set in opposition. The clean and bright high school in the golden town of Sunnydale are set in ironic counterpoint to the darkness that preys within: Buffy goes to her death in a literal pit of darkness, dressed in white like the sacrificial virgin she is. ("Prophecy Girl," 1012) She is the heroine, so she returns to her life, of course, but the point has been made. Adolescence is, in a way, a painful but necessary symbolic death of the child so that the adult can be born.

(34) In all its seasons *BtVS* makes its point about the emotional danger of high school so effectively that, in the wake of the massacre at an equally sunny and clean Columbine High School, a wary Warner Brothers seemed finally to recognize the metaphor for what it was. They pulled two episodes from the schedule ("Earshot," 3018; "Graduation Day," Part 2, 3022). Real deaths in high schools had been going on for years, of course, but only Columbine caught the national attention enough to make it recognize what shows like *BtVS* had been trying to tell them for years. While many faithful viewers criticized the delay in airing the episodes, and went to extraordinary lengths to obtain the banned material, artistically this censorship makes a sort of grim sense. It was too late for warnings, and metaphors that allowed a resistant public to hide in the artificial light from the real message had become pointless. Chillingly, this culmination in the real world of a warning given in art came at the same time that *BtVS* had come to the natural end of its examination of high school. Buffy was going to college, leaving behind the wreckage of Sunnydale High and the wreckage of our own illusions about safe suburban schools.

THE DARK

(35) It is important to note that the world of Buffy and Angel never really deals in shades of gray which, Kandinsky reminds us, is the frozen point, neither light nor dark. In their world light is very bright, darkness is very dark; in both the viewer finds opposition, conflict, surrender, but never compromise. Buffy sees the world in black and white--or, rather, in yellow and blue. Light is goodness, and Buffy is the physical embodiment of all that brilliant yellow-white light, so blond that, as she passes through the dark on her nightly rounds, she seems to walk in a nimbus of light she creates around her. But light can blind as well as illuminate. *BtVS* offers life in the bright light of Sunnydale and then takes it away again in stories that subvert the visual message. At the same time, however, it offers the danger of darkness, and then subverts the coldness and death of night with Angel, the vampire with a soul, who carries within him no compromise, but only the contradiction Whedon wants his audience to recognize in the name ("Angel," 1007).

(36) Vampires, the evil dark to Buffy's innocent light, inhabit the blue-black world of night. While all vampires are by definition evil, Whedon's vampires show their audience the monster in the mirror. Stupid, cloddish vampires are despised and dispatched with little concern. Smart vampires present more of a challenge, but Buffy and the Scooby Gang must ultimately assert their control over the dark by defeating their intelligent foes as well. Even children, the very symbol of innocence, can be evil vampires, undermining our sense of security in the symbols we know ("Nightmares," 1010, "School Hard," 2003). Young, hip vampires in black leather (Spike) and white lace (Drusilla) play with the viewer's own moral sense. Clearly Spike and Drusilla are evil. Drusilla likes to dine on small children and offers Spike a fluffy puppy for a snack.

(37) The playfulness with which they taunt their victims sets up a cognitive discord; even the symbols are mixed. Spike wears the black leather that, as mentioned above, marks a dark and rebellious sensuousness: the attraction of the dark side of Sunnydale. Drusilla, by contrast, wears the white of innocence by reason of her insanity. With their arch dialogue and their hip fashion sense, and their love for each other, Spike and Drusilla are the dark side of Buffy and Angel: even the color of their hair turns the pairing around, with Spike's brazenly peroxidized blond exaggerating Buffy's glowing light and Drusilla's dark hair darker by far than Angel's well-moussed brown hair. No matter how terrible the vampire duo are, we do not want them to meet the dusty fate of other Sunnydale vampires. Even at their worst, we are too aware of how close the dark is to the light. In the episode "What's My Line?" Part 1 (2009), images of Buffy and Angel in a loving relationship are juxtaposed with Spike and Dru sharing their own bond of domesticity. Just in case the viewer might forget that, "The Wish" (3009) shows Cordelia (and the viewer) an alternative Sunnydale, where the dark has overwhelmed the light: the Slayer never came to Sunnydale, and Willow and Xander, vampires themselves, have become their own leather-clad Spike and Drusilla.

(38) While Spike and Drusilla confront the viewer with his own attraction to the dark, Angel represents the greatest danger to the light in Sunnydale. As Angelus he has a long history of particularly terrible murders committed artistically to

create the greatest level of anguish not only to the immediate victim, but those around them as well. We learn that he turned Drusilla into a vampire after first murdering all her family in acts so terrible they drove her to her present madness ("What's My Line," Parts 1 and 2, 2009, 2010).

(39) While the characters who serve good travel in the light and usually visit the dark night only in their battles, Angel alone is condemned to the darkest of blue shadows. We first see him appearing out of the shadows, and when his message is delivered, he disappears mysteriously into the shadows again. However close he comes to the forces of good that gather around the Slayer, he can never join them in the light, because he remains marked with the evil he has done. Angel is the core of what blue, approaching black, means in the Kandinsky model: inwardly directed and cold, a male force, a symbol of discord and death. Angel's remorse does not result from a pure and repentant heart--the heart of a vampire is dead, after all--but from a curse. Angel must *suffer* for all the evil he has done, the death he has caused. If he experiences true happiness, he will lose his soul and return to the evil that now horrifies him as an ensouled being. Once again expectations are overturned. The character looming in the shadows is a guardian Angel, watching over his beloved, who is fated by her very nature--the light she carries around her--to slay him as a creature of the dark. Cursed to do good, he loses his soul at the moment of greatest joy--the moment, as well, when the virgin heroine gives up her innocence to the pleasure of the dark flaunted by that other loving couple, Spike and Drusilla.

(40) Light and dark, locked in love and combat, battle and die and will not stay dead--not either of them. Which is, after all, the cycle of the day and the seasons from which the symbolic resonances of light and dark arise. The day dies, the night follows and dies in turn, but each comes back in its time. And which brings comfort and which danger depends on the part of the brain you ask. The limbic brain of sex and danger still hides from the great predators that stalk the light. (Slayers, too, are predators, after all, with a great many kills to their existence.) The higher brain, tied to duller vision and a calculating mind, fears the vampire dark of mystery and death and desire.

(41) *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* symbolically presents the struggle of good and evil, desire and duty in the playing out of battles between the champion of light and the murky shadow self of the dark. When Buffy and her companions play out the struggle between the light and dark of human nature, the viewer grows to understand that neither side can ever completely win or lose, because each is a part of the whole they make between them.

Notes

*Editors' Note. In "The Body" (5016), as Willow dresses for the aftermath of the death of Buffy's mother, rejecting outfit after outfit, she remarks in disgust, "Why do so many of my shirts have stupid things on them? Can't I dress like a grown up, can't I be . . . be a grown up. . . ."

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