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"Let it Simmer": Tone in "Pangs"[1]

Buffy: Will, you know how bad I feel about this. It's eating me up—[to Anya:] (a quarter cup of brandy and let it simmer)—but even though it's hard, we have to end this. Yes, he's been wronged. And I personally would be willing to apologize—

Spike: Oh, someone put a stake in me.

"Pangs," *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* 4.8)

[1] In his *Buffy Goes Dark* essay "Understanding the Espensode," David Kociemba argues that "what defines a series like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is not just the big moments in narrative arcs. . . . A series is also defined by how it gets to the end of those narrative arcs: by its dialogue, its voices, and its tone" (24). Paying attention to the nuances of a show is an important way to illuminate it and, one hopes, avoid the mistake of bending the evidence to fit a theory. As Douglas Pye says in *Movies and Tone*, "The centrality of tone to our experience of films is indisputable" (8)—and, presumably, to our experience of television. In this essay I want to talk about Jane Espenson's season four episode "Pangs," and more specifically what we might call the problem of "Pangs." It is unquestionably one of the most controversial episodes of *Buffy*. It is also one of *Buffy* creator Joss Whedon's declared favorites ([3]). As Espenson says, "The core of it was something Joss had wanted to do for a long time, which is have a dead Indian at Thanksgiving—a very poetic illustration, I think, that we do kind of live in this country by virtue of some very ugly conquest. And the next thing you know we had a very non-threatening bear and some funny syphilis" ("Writing" 111-12). The risky complexity of tone is clear in her comment. I want to look at "Pangs" briefly in terms of the big narrative picture for the series, but also to focus on some of the significant specifics of tone. I accept the premise that each viewer will have his or her own experience of the show, and his or her own interpretation; I can't unring the *Buffy* bell you hear in your own mind. Certainly I do not expect in one brief essay to solve the problem of "Pangs." However, I will try to make a case that the episode is progressive in its social stance and that this progressive stance is created in part by the episode's effectively nuanced tonal shifts. In fact, I would argue that "Pangs" is an exemplary case of the use of tone in television.

[2] To begin with, let me say that I think the episode has two major jobs to do: one, the presentation of the Indigenous / Native American subject, and two, a shift in the through-story in terms of Buffy's relationship to Angel and her relationship to Spike (not to

mention Spike's relationship to the Scoobies as a whole). The first job is by far the one that has received the most critical attention (in all senses of that phrase). The second job is usually commented on more casually. I think, however, that the two of them can be seen as working well together to make the meaning of the episode. As I examine each of them, I will also draw on Jane Espenson's draft versions of the episode, to enhance understanding of the final version by comparing some of the choices available to the writers.[2] It is also worth noting that Espenson reports that Whedon did "extensive rewrites" and that "much of Acts Three and Four are pure Joss, not me" ("Writing" 112).[3]

[3] Dominic Alessio, in 2001, sounded the first major note in the debate on "Pangs" with his condemnation of the episode as essentially colonialist. In 2003, Gregory Stevenson, in his book *Televised Morality*, acknowledged the controversial nature of "Pangs." His book emphasizes the importance of seeing the ethical meaning of a series through its long-term narrative, and he argues for "Pangs," saying that while both the colonizers and the indigenous people used violence, Buffy, in his declared Christian view, represents moving on to forgiveness, because of the fact that she and the Scoobies take in both the ex-demon Anya and the vampire Spike—and vampires and demons can represent oppressed, demonized peoples. J. Michael Richardson and J. Douglas Rabb acknowledge Stevenson and further emphasize the fact that Buffy, as a television series, will have done a great deal to bring to light the atrocities inflicted on Native Americans by the colonizers—much more than the books that Willow unearths, and that Giles seems to think sufficient to have spread the truth. (As viewers may recall, Willow represents concern for the Native Americans; Spike represents an imperialist view; and Giles represents a pragmatic view, while Xander is the representative for syphilis and Buffy is the representative for pie.[4]) In contrast to Richardson and Rabb, Jes Battis calls the episode "infamous" (93), and declares it "a highly misguided and patronizing attempt to discuss cultural relativism within *Buffy*," saying that the "didactic, as well as subversive, value of laughing at what is clearly a tokenized aboriginal history within the all-white-all-the-time universe of Sunnydale is virtually nil" (94). Sally Emmons-Featherston offers more or less the same perspective, also reiterating, with more specific data, Alessio's important point that while the episode presents the Chumash as "exterminated," there are in fact "approximately 3500 Chumash living across the United States, some still in California" (Emmons-Featherston 63). In another of the major analyses, Matthew Pateman notes "Buffy's reluctance to accept Willow's version" of history, and adds that "the show's subtle endorsement of that reluctance persists throughout, despite some excellent writing by Jane Espenson, whose capacity for dialogue-as-debate is very impressive" (79). And while he thinks that the show itself sympathizes with the view that treatment of the indigenous has been "shameful," Pateman argues nonetheless that "the resolution of the episode . . . is much closer to Philip Sheridan, the infamous nineteenth-century army general, whose comment that 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian' is disturbingly mirrored in 'Pangs' (4.8)" (83). Nikki Stafford, on the other hand, states that "Pangs" "lay[s] out both

sides of the Thanksgiving debate without ever taking sides" (269). As for Whedon himself, he says that "Pangs" is "to me, among the most radical and potentially offensive and necessary messages we ever played. American History has fictionalized itself, and in an attempt to deconstruct it, we find ourselves repeating it" ([3]).

[4] I would remind you that the sides of this historical-social debate are not the only source of complexity in "Pangs"; there is also the personal element. Of course, most *Buffy* episodes contain both social symbolism and personal story; "Pangs" is more overtly on the social issue than most *Buffy* plots, which normally incorporate social symbolism—but we should not underestimate the personal here, especially if we remind ourselves that the personal is political. The unusually discursive presentation of the social issue may be a tribute to the issue's intractability. It may also turn the form on its head, and use the social as symbol of the personal instead of vice versa. For some viewers, both symbolisms will operate simultaneously.

[5] In any case, the complexity of the subject matter is reflected in the complexity of the episode's tone. Every *Buffy* episode is complex in tone; that is part of its art; however, probably none is more complex or displays more instances of tonal shift than does Espenson's "Pangs." There are many different categories of tonal shift. There can be a shift in tone within one character's single speech (as in this essay's epigraph); there can be, for one character, a shift in tone from one speech to another; there can be a shift from one to another character's tone in juxtaposed scenes; and naturally, there can be a shift from one character to another in the same scene. These are categories of tonal shift as expressed through wording of the dialogue and actors' voices, facial expression, and body language, but of course the episode's tone is conveyed not only through conversational discourse but in many other ways as well, such as music and visuals—the non-diegetic and diegetic music and sounds; the mise-en-scène, visual tropes, costumes, and camera work, etc. Other than diegetic music (which is not applicable here), "Pangs" illustrates all of these.

[6] First let us consider a case of clear-cut shift in tone from one character to another within a scene. This shift occurs when the social debate begins to be overtly presented in the scene immediately after the credits. In preface, however, let me note that the teaser, before the credits, touches on both of the two jobs I've mentioned for the episode: Buffy confronts a vampire who asks "Why don't you go back where you came from?", implicitly connecting her with the colonizers and the vampire with Native Americans;[5] and she pauses after dusting him, subconsciously aware that she is being watched by Angel, whom we see hiding as he observes her: Angel and the Indigenous are the two major subjects of the show. More specifically, the two major subjects are Buffy's *attitude* towards the Indigenous and Angel.

[7] But to return to the post-credits scene, the beginning of Act I: The young women of the Scoobies—Buffy, Willow, and the still-peripheral Anya—are watching the University of California-Sunnydale Cultural Partnership Center's groundbreaking, in which Xander participates as a construction worker. The tone of the discourse shifts from speaker to speaker. Dean Guerrero and the Center's curator,

Professor Gerhardt, use typically cliché-ridden ceremonial language, the dean referring to his colleague's "dream" and the professor, in explaining the move to a bigger building, saying, "it was like seeing one's child grow up and move on to better things," her use of the third person singular possessive "one's" emphasizing the formality of her language. There is wonderful realism in the difference of tone in the quiet chatter of the audience while the ceremonial discourse proceeds publicly: the thousand-year-old ex-demon Anya, in her usual unadorned directness, tells Buffy, Willow, and viewers, that she is imagining having sex with the hard-hatted Xander, while Buffy and Willow comment on Xander's pre-construction-worker jobs; they focus on their private lives even while observing the ceremony. When Professor Gerhardt praises the "melting pot" (with smiling disregard of any questions about this term), the episode undercuts her formal tone and the official line even further by having a car alarm horn sound repeatedly in the distance as she speaks.[6] Thus the official point of view that failed to acknowledge the damages colonization inflicted on the Chumash and other tribes—that pompously expressed view is already being subtly undercut by its reception on-screen even before Willow more directly challenges it with "What a load of horse hooey!" For the quiet, intellectual Willow, this is particularly abrupt language, expressing anger much more directly than she usually allows herself to do. The newly collegiate Buffy replies with a much more moderate tone, using language more characteristic of Willow: "We have a counterpoint?" she asks. Later in the episode, as she tries to persuade Willow to have Thanksgiving dinner in spite of her reservations, Buffy uses academic language again, citing her psychology professor Maggie Walsh, and referring to "sense memory" to justify what she admits is a desire to return to childhood, to being eight years old, in response to seeing so much change in her life (going to college, losing Angel).

[8] But for now, while the official speaker drones on, Willow's much more informal tone and self-deprecation—acknowledging that she "sounds a little overwrought"—carries much more emotional impact as she reminds us of the "destruction of the indigenous peoples." As for Anya, as Pateman (79) points out, she performs an anthropological function by defining the holiday: It is, she says, "a ritual sacrifice, with pie." This bald description is not only humorous but accurate; her objective tone might make us laugh, but it might also make us look at ourselves from a slightly different, thousand-year-long perspective. In fact, she seems in this moment a more useful anthropologist than the speechifying Professor Gerhardt, perhaps in part because Anya's analytic gaze is directed at the behavior of the majority. The scene's tonal shift from character to character opens the debate in a very real way, making the differences more than didactic.

[9] In spite of my dismay at Professor Gerhardt's linguistic style, I would not wish her dead; she soon ends up that way, though. Of course her death is more likely attributable to her position as traditional authority figure than to her discourse; in fact, the characters assert as much. In earlier drafts, Professor Gerhardt even more emphatically represented traditional authority, because she was a he: Espenson created both the dean and professor as males ("'Pangs': Outline" 2-3). The male Catholic priest Father Gabriel,

representing the religious establishment, also ends up dead—as does Hus, the vengeance spirit of the Chumash, who was in draft versions identified by the characters as a shaman, a priest of an indigenous tradition (Espenson, "'Pangs': Writer's First Draft" 27; second draft 26).

[10] Hus is not only connected to the professor and the priest in his demise; he is also connected to the professor linguistically (the priest never speaks). While the emotional tone of the two characters is quite opposite—the curator complacent, while the vengeance spirit is outraged—nonetheless they are both, one might say, linguistically dead. Sally Emmons-Featherston describes Hus's language as "clipped, simple English" (59). In his first encounter with Buffy, she finds him with the dead body of Father Gabriel, cutting off the priest's ear. "You can't stop me," he says, and "I am vengeance. I am my people's cry. They call for Hus, for the avenging spirit to carve out justice." "They tell you to start an ear collection?" Buffy replies. Now this reply at first seems to be an example of Buffy's signature wit, and its lively contrast to the pompous language of the Chumash spirit shows to her advantage. Her tone is not only acerbically humorous but also steeped in moral righteousness. But her wit is born of ignorance. Not much later in the episode she learns that the ear-cutting began with the *settlers*' mutilation of the Chumash, as a form of proof of death. Thus Buffy's seeming linguistic dominance is undone; the complacency of her confrontation with Hus was based on mistaken assumptions.

[11] In the earlier drafts of the episode, Espenson also gave Hus a much more human voice and, in fact, a name. She had *his* character present the case about the atrocities in his own words—still impassioned, but in much less stilted language. Huluyanawchet and Buffy have an actual conversation, and among other things he says, "Our people were slaughtered! Imprisoned in your Missions [sic], forced into labor. Cut down by the thousands by your diseases. Our lands taken. Our women raped. Our children starved. The men driven to theft. And when we fought back, we tried to take back what was ours…we ended up like the priest here. Like this seller of lies" (First Draft 24-25). The contrast between the original Hus and Buffy is much less in terms of language and tone; Hus's—or Huluyanawchet's—language and tone are farther from the empty ceremonial statements of the academics, and closer to the voice of our hero.

[12] In the broadcast version, the information about atrocities is presented mainly by Willow rather than Hus. This transfer of presentation results in at least two effects: First, Hus seems to be less of a person and more of a symbol—as the story specifies, a spirit rather than a living being; and second, we hear about these atrocities and are likely to think about them through the point of view of one of the Scoobies, someone with whom we as audience members presumably already have an emotional connection. Clearly there are both advantages and disadvantages to this transfer. As Whedon has said, he did not write *Buffy the Lesbian Separatist*—because he wanted to effect change indirectly, not so much through confrontation (Nussbaum 65); and having Willow speak seems in line with this plan. In her essay "'We Don't Say Indian,'" Agnes Curry has voiced her

shock at the angry reactions of some who have been denied the comfort of their prejudices (note 5). On the other hand, denying Hus his voice—or limiting him to a voice that speaks in a pompous tone—helps explain why critics like Battis call the episode "patronizing" (94). Nonetheless, eventually within the episode, the voice of Hus is shown to have justification and Buffy's flippant mockery of it is very clearly shown to be mistaken, while the similarly pompous academic voices of Gerhardt and Guerrero are never unmocked, so to speak.

[13] The positioning of Hus and the tone of his presentation are also affected by his placement within a visual trope in the episode, a set of variations on thresholds. In "Pangs," there are two sets of three instances, the first set relating to windows and the second set relating to doors. As has been noted, the teaser seems to connect vampires with Native Americans—or, more specifically, Buffy's (and some audience members') attitudes to Native Americans; so does the series of window images. Angel, who left Buffy at the end of season three, has secretly returned to town because of a prediction that Buffy is in great danger. He is repeatedly shown standing alone outside, looking wistfully in through a window at Buffy. In the first draft he tells Giles, "Being a spectator just outside her life is the most painful thing I can imagine" (18). But in the final version his statement is phrased so as to allow for more general application: "To be on the outside looking in at what I can't . . . yeah, I'd forgotten how bad it feels."

[14] The episode then immediately cuts to the second of the three instances, and perhaps I should say three characters, of the window trope: the vampire Spike. The dynamically vicious Spike is shown reduced to starvation (having been "chipped," rendered harmless, by the secret U.S. military group the Initiative), staring through a dirty window at a vampire version of a Thanksgiving feast, a group of vampires with an older one patting a younger one on the back to offer him a turn at their nice big turkey, a human stretched out on a table. While the tone of this passage could be (and in part is) played for humor, the dinner shot is followed by a close-up of a pathetic expression on actor James Marsters' face accompanied by drippingly sympathetic music. The scene clearly represents the outsider looking in, as identified moments before by Angel in the preceding scene. It is one of many parallels of Spike to Angel, foreshadowing Spike's later role in Buffy's life. But for now it is more obviously a parallel granting sympathy, though in Spike's case, with a touch of gruesome humor. As Espenson describes it in the first draft, the vamp dinner is "a heart-warming domestic scene," and Spike is "a picture of misery and longing" (18).

[15] The third instance of the window trope in "Pangs" involves Hus himself, in the incarnation of a coyote. In the first draft, Buffy opens Giles's front door to see a coyote flash by. When Willow suggests it is Hus and Buffy starts to follow it, Spike immediately appears in the doorway (34). The equation of Hus and Spike is thus quite direct. It is still present, however, in the final version, as Angel, Spike, and Hus form a trio of outsiders, looking in the window. In fact, Hus's part of the window trope amounts to a voiceless conversation. The coyote, unseen by Buffy, Willow, or Giles in the broadcast version,

looks in at them through the window while they debate their reaction to Hus. The coyote only stops listening and turns away at the moment when Giles says, "No, I think perhaps we won't help the angry spirit with his rape and pillage and murder." Giles, Buffy, and Willow are voicing the debate, but as Curry says in another context, the visual has "enormous epistemological privilege" (par. 19), and here we share the point of view of the coyote looking in through the window. Giles, Buffy, and Willow are unaware of the coyote's perspective, but we are aware—a fact that I think shifts the tone of the episode, along with Hus's placement in parallel with Angel and Spike—characters who are problematic but in the end worthy of emotional investment.

[16] To return, however, from the visual to the voice: Willow, Buffy, and Giles are not the only characters to voice elements of the debate. As many critics have noted, Spike vividly does so as well. As a British character born in the nineteenth century, he not surprisingly expresses an imperialist colonialist view with emphatic zest: "You won. All right? You came in and you killed them and you took their land. That's what conquering nations do. It's what Caesar did, and he's not going around saying, 'I came, I conquered, I felt really bad about it.' The history of the world isn't people making friends. You had better weapons, and you massacred them." And the other two males in the room agree with him. Spike speaks with the kind of certainty of tone Buffy used in her "ear collection" line. The character of Spike has been given some of the most memorable speeches in the Whedonverse. This one, while harsh, is unquestionably eloquent. The lucid, verbally controlled, supercilious tone is an absolute contrast to another brief line of Spike's, later in the episode. More than once I have seen an email signature incorporating this quote: "A bear! You made a bear!" Hus has earlier taken the shape of a flight of birds, then a coyote; in the climactic battle, he becomes a giant grizzly in Giles's living room. Later in the episode, Giles talks about losing control in violence, and Spike comments that "that's the fun." Part of the fun of this moment of bear-confrontation is Spike's lack of control linguistically. Here, we do not have condescending eloquence, but instead brief, blurted childlike words and simple syntax. "Undo it! Undo it!" he shouts, and our vampire imperialist no longer seems so smooth. The contrast in the tone of his "Caesar" speech and his bear blurt undermine the political position he has voiced. And his visual correlation with the outsider makes his role in the episode even more complex. Spike reminds us that things are never simple in a Whedon series.

[17] Spike is also part of a second visual trope in "Pangs." In addition to the Angel-Spike-Coyote Hus window pattern, there is also a three-part doorway pattern. Buffy has told Giles that, while her mother is away, he must host the Thanksgiving festivities because he is the "patriarch"—a term not used in the earliest drafts, but which emphasizes Giles's alignment with traditional forces—even while serving to let Buffy humorously underscore her recognition of the patterns of the ritual, *and* "stick [Giles] with the clean-up." A magical three times in a row, Buffy the cook and Giles the patriarch open the door upon people who come to participate in the ritual. First comes Willow, who brings a large stack of books topped by a much smaller stack of boxes of frozen peas—in fact, information is her main

contribution to the occasion. Next comes Xander (assisted by Anya), dreadfully infected by the mystical venereal disease from the old mission: "You look like death!" says Giles. "You didn't bring rolls?" says Buffy. Last comes Spike, who pathetically says, "Help me" to Buffy, who reaches for a stake. "You haven't murdered anybody lately? Let's be best pals!" Her dismissal of him is just as glib as was her earlier rejection of Hus, though with more justification. But Spike is allowed in when he offers, like Willow, to provide information—though for completely selfish reasons. "I came to you in friendship," he says, and—off Buffy's quizzical glare—"Well, all right, seething hatred." Even the slap on the head she gives him seems strangely casual and intimate—not the tone of body language one would use with a mortal enemy. Spike is being domesticated, and the trio of threshold-crossings brings the point home. Hus, who shared Spike's position in the window trope as outsider looking in, is never invited in through the threshold of the door; instead he breaks in and then is killed. He is never domesticated; he remains an outsider.

[18] The significant tonal shift from one speech by a character to another by the same character, then, is memorably exemplified by Spike when we move from the debate to the fight scene. But an even more memorable shift comes in the middle of a single speech by a single character. At the height of the debate on how to deal with Hus, Buffy talks with Willow while simultaneously giving Anya cooking directions. When Willow says Hus is just "one lonely guy" (not the only one in this episode)—that he is an "oppressed warrior guy who's just trying to—" and when she pauses, Buffy fills in with "Kill a lot of people?" "I didn't say he was right," concedes Willow; and Buffy launches into her speech: "Will, you know how bad I feel about this. It's eating me up—[to Anya:] (a quarter cup of brandy and let it simmer)—but even though it's hard, we have to end this. Yes, he's been wronged. And I personally would be willing to apologize—" "Oh, someone put a stake in me," Spike injects. This passage is perhaps richest in implication of any in the episode; it is exceptionally illuminating in it use of tonal shift. Pateman also singles it out, saying, "[Buffy's] pragmatic and unconcerned response to the situation is very funnily presented . . . the rhetoric of historical concern is wonderfully juxtaposed with the reality of immediate need" (80).

[19] In most ways I agree with Pateman's assessment of the passage, but I quibble with his description of Buffy as "unconcerned," and I would also like to further examine the implications of the passage. Here we have a clear case of a shift in tone within a single speech, and it is the passage which led me to write on this subject. Buffy's remarks in earlier scenes suggest she is genuinely troubled by her confrontation with Hus; she is not just attempting to pacify Willow. To Giles, she has said, "I like my evil like I like my men—evil. You know, straight up, black hat, tied to the train tracks, soon my electro ray will destroy Metropolis bad. Not all mixed up with guilt and the destruction of an indigenous culture." And as Richardson and Rabb (163) point out, this speech emphasizes a visual of costuming that many have noted: Buffy herself is wearing a black cowboy hat in the debate scene during the groundbreaking ceremony. Her confusion about what is wrong suggests that her concern is genuine. But it is

ludicrously undercut when she stops to give cooking instructions—right after having said that the Chumash problem is "eating her up," no less. Yes, she does have food on her mind. As Angel says much earlier in the episode (and as most viewers likely notice), she seems "intense about this Thanksgiving thing," and Giles responds that he thinks she is "lonely"—using the same term Willow has applied to Hus. What I am saying here builds on what others have said before, but with a different focus. We are not just talking about pangs of hunger, but pangs of guilt. I think Buffy is truly concerned about the plight of the Chumash and the right way to react to Hus; at the same time, she is desperate for the comforting ritual of the holiday dinner. Consider the brief scene in "The Body" when she either fantasizes or recalls a holiday dinner with all of the Scoobies and her mother, and she and Joyce cut and drop the pie—one could write a whole essay on pie. And as Kociemba reports, Espenson loves writing about food (34-35). With Buffy's "quarter cup of brandy" interruption, there is the intrusion of the personal into the political. I would not say that the effect is to make a mockery of concern for the Chumash; instead, it makes a mockery of the speaker, fond of her though many of us may be. The tonal shift suggests not a debasement of the significance of the issue, but a weakness in Buffy—a very human weakness in a person many of us identify with—a weakness in someone who asserts conscientious consideration for the social issue, but who at this moment is more involved in getting dinner than righting wrongs. How many of us can claim to be much different? We may express liberal sympathies (and if you are reading an essay on the Whedonverse, there is a fairly good chance that you express liberal sympathies), but how easy is it to go no farther than words? I believe that kind of weakness, more than anything else, is what is mocked in this passage. When I laugh at that speech, I laugh at myself. And I'm not really happy about it.

[20] At the same time, I think the ritual of the shared dinner is important, and is valorized by the episode. We have to take time to be human, and the ritualized sharing of food is eminently human. It is yet another case of the great Buffy divide—the "Vampire Slayer" versus the Buffy. She is strong because she is both—human and hero. So while I laugh at the tonal shift of this speech, while I feel excruciating embarrassment for her failure to recognize the conjunction of the two different tones, I am nonetheless touched by her human weakness. And in fact, as many have noted, throughout the episode there are similar passages in which Buffy retreats from the pain of a seemingly insoluble ethical question (how to respond to Hus) and the pain of her lonely life by immersing herself in batter. Or cranberries. This is simply the passage in which the tonal shift is most marked.

[21] And so we return to the personal, ever a part of the political. Many of the nuances of tonal shift suggest that the Scoobies' response to the Chumash situation is problematic (which suggests that the episode's response is less so). The tonal shift involved in the second major subject of the episode, the Angel / Buffy relationship (or, if you prefer, the Angel / Buffy / Spike relationship) is indirectly connected to the social subject in the broadcast version, and more directly connected in earlier drafts. Angel disappears when Hus disappears—though in many other ways they are far from equivalent.

Recall that in worrying about the justice in Hus's motivation (the "I like my evil" speech), Buffy compares Hus to her "men." But after all, Angel is Buffy's undead beloved, and Hus is the vengeance spirit of the dead Chumash.[7] Hus is largely presented as an enemy or a problem, not someone with whom Buffy enters into real relationship—though Xander inadvertently reminds us of the parallel between the vengeance spirit Hus and Xander's vengeance demon girlfriend Anya—who also points out that automatically slaying either of them without thought is wrong. But as for Buffy's boyfriend, or former boyfriend, for her he seems mainly to be a part of the personal life that Buffy so desperately wants and finds so hard to maintain. Yet he has returned to Sunnydale only to secretly help in part of her Slayer life—the attack by Hus and the dead fighters he calls up[8]. Nonetheless, the tone of Angel's presentation focuses mainly on personal emotion. And the tone gradually shifts from the beginning of the episode to the end. "Pangs" was broadcast immediately before "Something Blue," the hilarious episode in which Willow unwittingly bespells Spike and Buffy to plan a wedding. In terms of the big narrative picture, the serious tone of the Buffy / Angel relationship moves in "Pangs" to a middle ground of humor for both the Buffy / Angel and the Buffy / Spike relationship; then the Buffy / Spike relationship gradually, over years, moves to a more serious tone.

[22] As for the tonal shift from the serious to the humorous for Buffy and Angel in "Pangs," the episode begins with Angel in the dark—where we so often find him—watching Buffy without her knowledge—as he so often does.[9] He is hidden in the foliage nearby as Buffy fights the vampire who tells her to go back where she came from, and poignant music plays the scene out. The significance of their relationship is reemphasized by the fact that Buffy seems to somehow recognize that she is being watched—as she does repeatedly during the episode when he watches her. Her awareness lessens the suggestion of weakness on her part and heightens the suggestion of connection. Not only the knowledge of their past, but also Angel's face in the dark, the music, and Buffy's reaction contribute to the seriousness of the tone.

[23] As the episode proceeds, the tone varies. In Angel's discussion with Giles, he voices his sadness at the separation from Buffy and, as already noted, the window trope adds to that effect. But along with the repeated visual imagery, we have a running joke about Angel: "You're evil again!" Willow accuses, as he grabs her in the Espresso Pump. His repeated denials put salt in the emotional recipe of the episode. By the time he leaves, the sad music goes with him. And then there is the very last shot.

[24] The last *scene* of "Pangs" has the Scoobies plus Anya and Spike sitting around the Thanksgiving dinner table in Giles's home. In Espenson's earlier version, the dinner has failed, and Spike is eating raw turkey, while the rest of them go hungry (Outline 11; First and Second Draft 35-37). Also in an earlier draft, Espenson has Riley and the other Initiative soldiers note that the "Hostile" (i.e., vampire) needs a pint of blood a week (First Draft 9), and in a different scene she has Buffy say that she will get blood from the butcher tomorrow (First Draft 42; Second Draft 41). In the broadcast version, though the

pilgrim centerpiece has an arrow through it, the group except for the still-hungry Spike has thoroughly enjoyed their dinner after all. Buffy has throughout the episode referred to this dinner as a way to hold on to the past—her eight-year-old self—and the private scene between Angel and Giles reminds us that she is missing her more recent past as well. Alessio (736) notes that she has also wished to hold on to a more innocent, or perhaps naïve, view of our national past as well. It also seems to be a desire for order and control, and sitting in the disorder of Giles's apartment after the fight, there is still some order as the six of them, including the rope-tied Spike, sit around the table. Repeatedly through the episode, characters have complained that everything seems to be changing. The dinner was Buffy's valiant attempt to hold on to the past. And in the end, Willow, having condemned herself for joining in the violence, now focuses on the comfort: "At least we all worked together; it was like old times." Then comes Xander's addition: "Yeah, especially with Angel being here and everything."

[25] That last shot of the episode that I mentioned occurs at this point. The point of view is Buffy's, and with a Frasier lens we share her sight of all five of the others—Spike with a quiet, knowing smirk (and his face is the largest), Anya looking at Spike, Giles looking down, and Willow and Xander looking guilty. This is the image included for the episode in Nancy Holder's *Watcher's Guide* (214). The painful humor of the situation is clear, as the image cuts to the credits and we hear Xander's voice say "Oops." So the solemn poignancy of the opening scene's Buffy / Angel tone has shifted to a grimace or a wince. The effect is to leave Buffy seeming vulnerable and very human. The last note of the episode, if I may use a musical metaphor, does not emphasize heroism but personal limitation—a rather likeable impression, in my view.

[26] And it may help console us for her limitations in resolving the social issue as well. In earlier drafts of the episode, Espenson has Buffy frantically hunting for the mate to the little pilgrim man centerpiece; there was also a little pilgrim woman—something from her past, her home: "It's not here—Mom's centerpiece. This little pilgrim couple. I only have Michael. Lisa Marie is missing." "You're joking, right?" says Willow. And Buffy replies, "I named them when I was twelve. I had high hopes for those kids" (First and Second Draft 33). Many viewers had high hopes for Buffy and Angel, too, but they were just as doomed as Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley. Clearly the separated couple of the centerpieces suggests the separated couple of Buffy and Angel, whose changed relationship is one of the two major subjects of the episode. But Michael and Lisa Marie the pilgrim couple also connect to the idea of the second subject, the colonists versus the Chumash, and remind us of the naiveté of that part of Buffy's world view—and for some of us, by extension, our own. As I hope I've shown in my earlier comments, I believe the broadcast episode also establishes these parallels; but Michael and Lisa Marie may sing out a little more clearly.

[27] "Under-explain," says Jane Espenson in her essay in Stacey Abbott's *Cult TV Book* ("Playing" 46). This episode certainly qualifies in

that regard. "Pangs" is a problem play, not a solution play. The problem of the U.S. past with Native Americans is certainly not sorted out in this 48-minute television show. And the lessened humanity in the depiction of the Chumash Hus does not help; nor does his demise; as Pateman reminds us, citing Frank Kermode by way of David Lavery: endings have heavy weight. But the narrative of "Pangs" is more troubling if we do not attend to these touches of tone—conveyed in dialogue, music, and visual patterns. And the *very* ending of the episode, and its tone, remind us of the weakness of our hero; thus the show as a whole may remind us *why* the problem is not solved. Throughout the episode Buffy is barely, if at all, conscious of the outsiders looking at her through the window. She is caught up in her very human desire for comfort and sustenance, both emotional and physical; she is holding on to a past that was never there. In the last shot she and we are very conscious of those looks that tell us how much we have not known. And if we have paid enough attention to the subtle tonal shifts of "Pangs," it is possible we will come up with a recipe for action outside the episode—if we just let it simmer.

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Notes

[1] An earlier version of this essay was presented at the fourth biennial *Slayage* Conference on the Whedonverses, Flagler College, St. Augustine, FL, June 3-6, 2010.

[2] My thanks to Jane Espenson for giving me permission to consult the drafts and to Matthew Pateman for providing me with pdf copies. I was also given the caveat that, among the various drafts, some were mislabeled and/or had missing material, and that there were problems in some cases with material translated ineffectively from one computer program to another. However, as far as I can observe, these problems do not apply to the "Pangs" drafts.

[3] My thanks to Doug Rabb and Mike Richardson for reminding me (at SCW4) of Espenson's comments on this matter.

[4] In "Pangs," Buffy fixates on the Thanksgiving food, and the pie in particular. See Kociemba 34-35 on Espenson's frequent focus on food and its significance; and see further discussion later in this essay. Xander, while working construction, gets a case of mystical syphilis from the old mission where the Chumash were imprisoned and given various illnesses.

[5] My thanks to the blind reviewer who commented on the possible implicit insult in the symbolic equivalence of vampires and Native Americans. I hope that my revisions have made clearer that (in my view) the symbolism is associated with the problem in Buffy's (and others') attitude, which this episode explores. There is also a history of Whedon scholarship discussing the symbolic equivalence of vampires and various outsider groups. For two of the many divergent views on this subject, see Kent Ono and Mary Alice Money. See also Stevenson, as referenced in par. 3.

[6] The professor's rather surprising apparent ignorance of postcolonial theory allows her to provide viewers an implicit postcolonial lesson.

[7] As Emmons-Featherston notes, in the real world the Chumash are by no means all dead.

[8] Like Willow in the episode, Alessio points out that the Chumash have been historically peaceful(735).

[9] For a discussion of this pattern in their relationship, see my essay "The Darkness of 'Passion': Visuals and Voiceovers, Sound and Shadow" in *PopMatters* and in *Joss Whedon, The Complete Companion—The TV Series, the Movies, the Comic Books and More*: *The Essential Guide to the Whedonverse* (forthcoming from Titan Books, 2012).