PATRIARCHY STRIKES BACK: POWER AND PERCEPTION IN BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

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ABSTRACT

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Primetime heroine Buffy Summers conquered the hearts of layman and scholars alike. For years audience members have debated about almost everything that happens in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; from opening credits to wardrobes over music choices to gender issues. This thesis focuses on patriarchal power structures inside *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. On the surface, *BtVS* proposes all the ingredients for a truly matriarchal show; it could have been the perfect series to offer a glimpse at what a female-dominated society could look like. Unfortunately, however, the series’ creator, Joss Whedon, fails to create a female character liberated from patriarchal influences. He not only reintroduces patriarchal figures and apparatuses again and again, but he also constrains his heroine to adopt the same power structures his male characters employ. Despite the fact that almost every member of the patriarchy embodies certain flaws, that make it possible to partially dismantle their authority, Whedon continues to introduce these problematic figures. This thesis illustrates how patriarchal institutions and their members assert power over the female body in *BtVS* by synthesizing examples from both the television series and the graphic novel series with the critical cultural theories of Michel Foucault, Max Weber, and John Bowlby.
To my Scoobies—you know why…
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INTRODUCTION

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.

Intro to Buffy the Vampire Slayer

While fauna presents us with multiple examples for a matriarchal society, bees and whales to name but a couple, the human realm is dominated by patriarchal structures. Although matriarchal societies are in the majority, it is noteworthy that there seems to be one example of such a society in the fictional world. Buffy the Vampire Slayer (referred to in this work as BtVS) proposes all the ingredients for a truly matriarchal show; it could have been the perfect series to offer a glimpse at what a female-dominated society could look like. Since the series’ heroine Buffy Summers can be observed as she transitions from a young, naive teenager to a powerful warrior who not only fights her own battles, but also commands her very own “slayer army,” she would have been the perfect medium to propose a world without any patriarchal influences. Unfortunately, however, the series’ creator, Joss Whedon, fails to create a female character liberated from patriarchal influences. He not only reintroduces patriarchal figures and apparatuses again and again, but he also constrains his heroine to adapt the same power structures his male characters employ. In order to understand the connection between these different aspects and how they influence the series, it is not only important to understand the struggles Buffy endures through the eight-year series, but to also be aware of the heroine’s background.

After fifteen-year-old Buffy Summers has been expelled from her school in Los Angeles, subsequent to her accidentally burning down the gym whilst fighting vampires, her mother, Joyce Summers, decides that they are going to move to Sunnydale, California. On her first day at Sunnydale High school, Buffy is confronted by Rupert Giles, the librarian who secretly works for the Watchers’ Council; Giles tells her that he is going to be her Watcher and that she has to fight against the forces of evil. Buffy soon finds friends who
eventually discover her secret Slayer double life and decide to help her. This was the birth of the “Scooby Gang” which consists of Willow Rosenberg, (Ale)Xander Harris, Giles, and Buffy herself. Every season provides a new challenge for Buffy and her friends. Over the course of seven seasons they fight a variety of enemies, including the Master, an evil vampire whose monstrosity is highlighted by his status as patriarch and father figure towards his children, and the Sunnydale Mayor who turns into a serpent demon and who becomes a father figure for one of the Slayers. Sunnydale’s Slayer also fights against a government group called “The Initiative” that experiments on demons and humans in order to create the ultimate warrior, and the First Evil itself that is working with Caleb, an evil priest. All of these villains demonstrate strong patriarchal structures and behaviors, and it is no coincidence that the main force against evil in this series is a petite blonde teenager.

Whedon, a self-proclaimed advocate of gender equality, is often asked why he constructs strong female characters and his answer is, “Because equality is not a concept, it is not something we should be striving for. It’s a necessity, equality is like gravity, we need it to stand on this earth as men and women” (Equality Now Speech). He aims for gender equality “because you are still asking me that question” (Equality Now speech). Numerous feminists concur with Whedon’s view. In “The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for further Research,” Sharon Smith remarks on how women would like to be perceived: “Women just want a chance to be heroes; a chance to be shown as humanly (not just femininely) frail; and a chance to see men in some of the ungainly situations in which women have so commonly been shown” (18). In addition to this aspect, Smith also comments on the need for gender equality and the need for equal representations of these genders. These notions do not mean that Whedon is entirely unsuccessful in his construction of a powerful female character, but the fact that he made his heroine reliant on patriarchal constructions deteriorates his effort at equality.
From the beginning of the series, Whedon claims that he wants to subvert the frequently used idea of “the little blonde girl who goes into a dark alley and gets killed” and “create someone who was a hero where she had always been a victim” instead. He proclaims that “The very first mission statement of the show was the joy of female power: having it, using it, sharing it” (Gottlieb). Despite Whedon’s claim that Buffy has been a feminist character from the beginning of the show, evidence demonstrates that she does not operate without a member of the patriarchy. Although Buffy seems to become independent in the graphic novel, a close analysis reveals that Buffy is not able to abandon patriarchy and its power structures. Moreover, critical reading of *BtVS* coupled with Foucault’s notion of power highlights how Buffy needs to embrace patriarchal power structures in order to assert power over others.

Buffy experiences these patriarchal power structures throughout the series in a number of male characters who embody patriarchy. All of Buffy’s relationships to males can be analyzed in terms of their connection to power and knowledge, as well as the consequences they have on the body (Buffy). Some of Buffy’s closest male companions Rupert Giles, Hank Summers, Angel, Spike, and Riley Finn, as well as organizations such as The Initiative and the Watchers’ Council are looked upon through different power hypotheses to analyze *BtVS*. Hypotheses proposed by Michel Foucault, Max Weber, and John Bowlby will help to explain the different dynamics between Buffy and various male characters as well as the influence these characters have on each other. Foucault and Weber have both posed different formulas related to power. While both of them describe patriarchal, or at least male-dominated, models of power, Bowlby particularly analyzes child development. However, before these ideas can be discussed in detail, it is necessary to look deeper at the notion of “patriarchy” itself.
The word “patriarchy” is a loaded term that can incorporate many different aspects. Nonetheless, despite the many misconceptions and the controversies around this term, the phenomenon itself seems to be universal. Allan G. Johnson’s definition of a patriarchal apparatus defines “[a] society [that] is … male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women” (“The Gender Knot: Unraveling our Patriarchal Legacy” 3). These ideas concur with Lois Tyson’s definition of patriarchy as “any society in which men hold all or most of the power” (Learning for a Diverse World 86). This idea is supported by Kauppinnen and Aaltio who quote Kanter in their article “Leadership, Power, and Gender.” Kanter helps to shape this concept even more; he discusses “metaphorical male ‘homosocial reproduction’—[that display] how men attempt to reproduce their dominant power relations by only uniting with and sharing the same occupational space and privilege with those males they deem similar in image and behavior, cloning themselves in their own image, and forming so-called old-boy networks” (102). This idea emphasizes how patriarchy reproduces itself and how it perpetually creates its own tradition. It also highlights how the patriarchal apparatus is able to survive without modernization.

The term “patriarchy” not only refers to the act of female oppression by males, but also to male oppression of other males. Don Sabo illustrates in his essay “Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain” the “system of intermale dominance in which a minority of men dominates the masses of men” (379). He explains how he sees himself as “one more man among many men who get swallowed by a social system predicated on male domination” (379). These claims are in harmony with Kanter who describes “homosocial reproduction,” which states that men duplicate existing power formation (Kauppinnen, Alto 102). These attributes highlight once more how the patriarchal society grants more power to dominant and aggressive men and groups.
In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault, who coins the term “microphysics of power,” takes the manifestations of patriarchy one step further by describing how an entity of power continues to assert power even if it is not physically present (178). Patriarchal power is so ingrained in society, and therefore, in the subconscious of males and females, that it is almost impossible to resist the urge to obey. This idea also demonstrates how patriarchy and its members have built their base of power over millennia. Furthermore, Foucault explains how power was reorganized and how the improvement of diverse bodies of knowledge support and cooperate with that power. Foucault claims that power and knowledge go hand-in-hand and that one cannot exist without the other. He also declares that the body is an object that needs to be acted upon. It is an instrument that needs to be “manipulated, shaped, [and] trained,” as well as an entity “which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces” (Foucault 136).

Barbara Smuts, however, argues that the origins of patriarchy need to be examined from a different angle. Smuts states in her essay “The Evolutionary Origins of Patriarchy” that human males are more aggressive than male primates in their attempt to control females of their species. In addition to this attribute, human males are also more obsessed with female sexuality. They use it as a tool to not only dominate women, but to also degrade them. Smuts offers six hypotheses that explain how gender inequality came into being, and she illustrates how sexuality is used as a tool to control and dominate women. These ideas connect to Foucault, who argues that power is highly unstable and changeable; he implies that power is not static, but that it moves and circulates.

Max Weber proposes several hypotheses that are valuable to understand power relations in *BtVS*. According to Weber authority needs to fulfill two aspects, demonstrating the ability to tell people what to do and securing the compliance of the subjects towards the one in power (132). Although Weber differentiates between three different types of rule, this
project focuses on his traditional and charismatic rule. While the traditional rule clearly leans towards patriarchy and proclaims that it is the pure form of power (The Essential Weber 135), the charismatic rule accommodates a slightly different group. The charismatic authority does not describe authority that is accomplished through tradition, but authority where the leader embraces certain attributes (138).

Weber’s traditional authority bases its power in the belief that patriarchy has been present since “time immemorial” (135). Patriarchy is considered to be a pure form of rule (pure in this case means natural), and its traditional norms must be followed even by the patriarchs themselves; Weber argues that patriarchs are substantively bound by tradition (136). Here, positions of leadership are not necessarily attributed because of competence but because of favoritism. The personal loyalty of the faithful servant is one aspect that demonstrates how the interrelationship of administrative staff is controlled. These characteristics, among others explain how the power structures in BtVS are created. However, patriarchal power structures in BtVS should be analyzed against the notion of the traditional rule and also against the notion of the charismatic authority.

The charismatic rule is less concerned with tradition; it focuses on the bonds between the ruler and the subjects. This form of authority applies to the males of the series, as well as Buffy. The ruler possesses certain “gifts of grace” such as magical abilities, revelations of heroism, and intellectual and verbal skills. The purest form of this authority would be the warrior hero and the prophet. Loyalty is given to the leader as a person because of these gifts, not because of an enacted position or traditional dignity. Another important element of this theory is that if the leaders lose their qualities, they are going to be replaced. The charismatic rule also incorporates different regulations concerning the administration. Here, the members of the administration are chosen on the basis of devotion; there are no special qualifications necessary. The administration lacks rules and regulations whether enacted or traditional.
Weber also argues that the charismatic leadership, carried on for an extended period, is most likely going to resemble one of the other forms of rule (138-45).

While Foucault and Weber discuss power structures and describe how power is obtained and kept, Bowlby focuses on the bonds between parents and their children and describes how these relations can influence future relations. According to Bowlby, a renowned psychologist, in *Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development*, children need a strong secure base while they are growing up. In addition, he also proposes that the first bonds a human being forms influence all future relationships. With the help of Bowlby’s hypotheses Buffy’s attachment to these different patriarchs will be scrutinized. Since many of these patriarchs are not human, it is necessary to discuss the otherworldly patriarchs’ positions among these authority figures.

All of these different definitions by Foucault, Kanter, and Tyson among others convey the aspect that one gendered group of individuals dominates multiple others. Men, as well as women, are affected by patriarchal structures. Therefore, the females’ relationships to power prove significant, and Buffy incorporates certain patriarchy-associated power structures in order to subvert existing authorities. Furthermore, throughout the series, different patriarchs force themselves on the female body; they try to manipulate and form it as they wish.

While it is completely clear why human males can be categorized as patriarchs, the vampires’ place among these authority figures requires more explanation. Nina Auerbach notes in her book *Our Vampires, Our Selves* that every generation creates its own vampire. She illustrates how Bram Stoker’s Dracula and Lord Byron influenced the vampire myth, and indeed, many contemporary vampires are Byronic. Peter Thorslev describes the Byronic hero as “larger than life,” and “with the loss of his titanic passions, his pride, and his certainty of self-identity, he loses also his status as [a traditional] hero.” In contrast to other forms of heroism, the Byronic hero does not incorporate the normal “heroic virtues,” but, instead, he is
in possession of many dark qualities (The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes). Another trait that belongs to the Byronic hero is his moody and brooding nature. In connection to these aspects, his emotional and intellectual capacities appear to be superior to other men. As a result, this hero is often arrogant, confident, as well as hyperconscious of himself (Thorslev 197). Often the Byronic hero is characterized by a guilty memory of some unnamed sexual crime. Caused by this distinctiveness, the Byronic hero often represents a body of repugnance, as well as attraction. In addition to Thorslev’s description, Atara Stein describes the Byronic hero as a character who embodies “defiance of society’s rules and institutions… defiance of oppressive authority;” furthermore she depicts him as “a loner and an outcast” (“Immortals and Vampires and Ghosts, Oh My!: Byronic Heroes in Popular Culture”). The qualities described by Stein contradict patriarchal qualities since they inhabit the position as an oppressive authority and they are also in need of said rules and institutions. Moreover, according to the definitions of patriarchy, patriarchs do not function on their own, they belong to a larger apparatus that represents and lives by the same values and traditions. Since the Byronic character embodies characteristics that influence his ability to be recognized as a patriarch, this figures connection to vampirism is even more important. The connection to vampirism reverses the flaws that the Byronic hero incorporates and ensures that he is recognized as a patriarchal figure. While it is mainly Angel who can be labeled as a “Byronic hero” this term is still useful for other characters as well. Nonetheless, this label is also important to the discussion of vampires since it is also compliant to BtVS’s Dracula.

Auerbach illustrates that while vampires incorporated different personas and aspect over the centuries, like the romantic Byronic hero: “The Vampires our own century creates are empire builders” (60). She emphasizes that the vampire has moved beyond such romantic notions and states that “after Dracula, they moved to America and turned into rulers” (101). Additionally, Auerbach stresses: “In the United States especially, Dracula has been one
constant in the volatile twentieth century….the king Americans are not supposed to want” (112). According to her, vampires have now more power than ever. They are “kings” who rule and act; they do not confirm their actions with other individuals. Like patriarchy reproduces itself, the vampires have reinvented their own traditions. They took charge of their own destiny driven by the urge to assert power and to dominate others. Throughout her book, Auerbach reinstates that vampires are, by all means, capable of fulfilling the role as patriarch. She reminds her audience that “Stoker’s Dracula … was fundamentally a rapist”(114) who forced himself not only on the female, but also on the male body. The vampiric figures enqueue themselves into the long line of patriarchal figures that dominate other bodies.

Besides these arguments, Auerbach also emphasizes how Dracula’s ability to survive through the times grants him authority over other, more trend-related monsters (114). Therefore, it is valid to argue that vampires, such as Angel and Spike, are eligible for the position as patriarchs. Not unlike the Watchers’ Council, vampires have all along created their own traditions; the vampires in BtVS are no exception. These vampires come from an old patriarchal system. The head of their coven, the Master, demands not only respect from his “children,” but also obedience. These vampires assert power through their own self-invented traditions.

Some scholars, however, argue that vampires are too feminine to be accepted as members of the patriarchy. Dracula, or any vampire for that matter, needs blood to exist. He needs to consume it regularly, and therefore, it is unproblematic to associate women with vampires. The author Barbara Creed states that “the vampire, like the female body, is not clean and pure and closed”(The Lure of the Vampire 12). Therefore, the vampire body is as “Other” as the female body. The female body loses blood and this process is seldom painless. Bram Dijkstra, quoted in The Lure of the Vampire, argues that “the vampire demonstrates
the way Western culture simultaneously hates, fears and fetishes the female body,” and he concludes that “all vampires represent the female body in a distorted and monstrous form”(11). Despite the aforementioned objections, the vampires’ ability to penetrate and dominate the body asserts that these creatures are able to assume positions of power. In *BtVS*, they function under traditional rules and follow a very strict hierarchical order. The Master, the oldest vampire in *BtVS*, functions as the head of the family. His word is law and he does not hesitate to punish his “children” if they fail to be obedient. As Auerbach asserts, although the role of the vampire changes with each generation, his ability to adapt and the mere fact that he is still able to occupy such a powerful role in society highlights his power and his influence. In the true tradition of patriarchy, vampires create their own tradition and structures. It also needs to be noted that Auerbach uses the pronouns “he” and “his” in her description of vampires. These pronouns are not chosen randomly; they highlight that not only vampires in power are inherently male, but also that the aforementioned power structures are connected to males as well.

Much discussion hinges on *BtVS* in relation to patriarchy and power. Different articles have discussed whether or not Buffy can be considered a feminist heroine. Scholars and laymen alike praise this show because of its positive images of women. Lorna Jowett argues that none of the males in *BtVS* seem to be appropriately labeled as “patriarch.” She illustrates that “Masculinity in Buffy is predominantly binary: either new masculinity or old masculinity…. New masculinity is ‘feminized’, passive, romantic, heroic, weak and human while old masculinity is in contrast macho, violent, sexual, villainous, strong and monstrous” (59). She further argues that real masculinity has a split personality. Regular male characters are depicted as nonthreatening, nonsexual, non-homosocial, and heterosexual (59). In relation to Jowett, C. Albert Bardi and Sherry Hamby argue that “Through Buffy, Joss Whedon forges an entire anti-patriarchal universe from one creative act-giving a girl physical power
beyond any living man” (106). Thompson illustrates this point in his essay when he writes “‘Just a girl’: Feminism, Postmodernism and Buffy the Vampire Slayer” that the females occupy positions of power and not the males. He emphasizes how the presence of Cordelia and Willow adds strong female characters to the series. Although Willow’s computer skills and Cordelia’s frankness endow those females with certain amounts of power, these advantages lose their significance in light of the patriarchs’ overwhelming presence. Despite all these arguments in favor of *BtVS*, none of these scholars interpret *BtVS* in connection to the reoccurring patriarchs and their long-term effect on the female body; therefore, their arguments lose their importance and truthfulness.

While many scholars argue in favor of the series’ feminist undertones, most of them do not consider the patriarchy’s haunting presence. Although Buffy is an active woman, Whedon shows the audience that her strength is something that constantly needs to be challenged and occasionally punished as well. Buffy’s attempts to gain and redirect power while empowering patriarchal figures are as flawed as the patriarchs themselves. As Whedon reintroduces patriarchal figures throughout his series, he not only illustrates patriarchies’ omnipresent authority, but he also reveals that it is impossible to live successfully without patriarchal influence.

Whereas it is undeniable that Buffy is a strong and powerful character, who can physically overpower almost everyone else in this series, it is also clear that she is dependent on her super powers. Whereas the majority of men in the series assert power through knowledge, rather than supernatural abilities, Buffy must employ supernatural abilities in hopes of gaining equality. Although it appears as if Buffy occupies the position with the most power, the patriarchal apparatuses overshadow this perception. Since the Watchers Council is a male-centered society that is in command of the Slayer lineage, they are able to assert power more effectively. Despite the fact that Buffy is the character with mystic powers and
the Council consists of “normal” men, she is not able to subvert their positions and continues to seek patriarchal guidance and council.

Whedon’s failure to create a heroine who does not depend on patriarchy is explored by Mary Magoulick in her essay “Frustrating Female Heroism: Mixed Messages in Xena, Nikita, and Buffy.” She illustrates how “these female heroes, conceived of and written mostly in a still male-dominated world, represent male fantasies and project a status quo more than they fulfill feminists hopes” (729). One of her main arguments is that these female heroes are still sexualized and that their producers still cater to a male audience. BtVS aims not only for that, but it also illustrates how much the female protagonists depend on their male counterparts. Although BtVS offers strong female characters, all of these characters were shaped by men. Like Smith before her and also very much like Mathew Henry in “‘Don’t ask me, I’m just a Girl’: Feminism, Female Identity, and the Simpsons,” Margoulick agrees that it is hard for these male writers, producers, directors, and creators of popular television shows to go against their subconscious. Henry states that “This point is offered not as a critique of the possible limitations these individuals might have by virtue of their sex, but instead as a reminder of the ability … to transcend essential notions of authorship and to produce a mainstream television show that contains an overt feminist sensibility”( 29). All of these authors share the same idea - male producers are not able to create a female hero without interference from their own subconscious.

As was established previously, whether BtVS can be labeled a “feminist” series depends on different aspects. As it is often the case with such an evolved universe like BtVS, this discussion cannot be a matter of black and white; both sides of the argument have compelling hypotheses that help to create a diverse and interesting environment. Nonetheless, it will be proven throughout this work that Whedon created a series that is bound to
patriarchal structures and offers an array of patriarchal figures who assert power over the body.

The first chapter discusses “normative” instances of patriarchy. Evidence highlights that the majority of Buffy’s relationships are connected to patriarchy. The first chapter illustrates that, despite Whedon’s supposed theme of “womanpower,” Buffy not only engages in more relationships with men than women, but she also focuses on them instead of establishing her own independence. Furthermore, besides Willow, other women in the series are interchangeable. Throughout the series, the audience has to part with Miss Calendar, Joyce Summers, Cordelia, and Tara to name but a few. Male characters, on the other hand, are not as easy to dismiss and continue to haunt the series even though they do not play an active role.

The second chapter illustrates how, although the presence of patriarchy in *BtVS* is undeniable, all aforementioned patriarchs are flawed. These patriarchs enable Buffy to partially disassemble their power throughout the series. Nevertheless, since Whedon not only continues to use patriarchal figures, but also allows these problematic figures to assert power over Buffy, patriarchy’s influence cannot be utterly dismantled. Therefore, the patriarchs in *BtVS*, individually and systematically, incorporate flaws that enable Buffy to weaken their authorities.

Chapter three posits that, although there are multiple instances where different patriarchal institutions and their members can be dismantled, patriarchy always finds its way back to power. Regardless of their flaws, the discussed patriarchs not only reemerge multiple times, but they also regain control over the female body. The different instances of patriarchy in *BtVS* demonstrate that power cannot be located; it shifts according to how it is used and by whom it is used. Notwithstanding Whedon’s attempts to dismantle these patriarchs and their power as well as his wish to create strong female characters who do not depend on patriarchal
figures, he fails. Whedon not only reintroduces patriarchal figures throughout his show, but he also ensures that Buffy needs to adapt patriarchal power structures on her own in order to assert power over others. Thus, he not only illustrates patriarchies’ haunting authority, but he also reveals that it is impossible to live successfully without patriarchal influence.
Reoccurring Images of Patriarchal Power Structures

Buffy: "But you’re just a girl."

Buffy: "That’s what I keep saying."

Joss Whedon, a huge advocate of gender equality, explains that he creates strong female characters “because equality is not a concept, it is not something we should be striving for. It’s a necessity, equality is like gravity, we need it to stand on this earth as men and women,” but more importantly, “Because you are still asking me that question” (Equality Now speech). Whedon clearly states that there is a need for strong female characters, and the fact that he is constantly asked why he creates them reemphasizes this.

Several feminists share Whedon’s view. Fredrika Scarth and Mary Daly both argue that living under the thumb of patriarchy is an unnatural state that is neither healthy for men nor women (Scarth 100, Daly 29). In “The Image of Women in Film: Some Suggestions for further Research” Sharon Smith comments on how women would like to be seen: “Women just want a chance to be heroes; a chance to be shown as humanly (not just femininely) frail; and a chance to see men in some of the ungainly situations in which women have so commonly been shown” (18). Smith also comments on the need for gender equality. She states that women want to be heroes as well, and while Whedon supports this claim, he also falls into the trap many men cannot avoid. Smith identifies this trope, “Films express the fantasies and subconscious needs of their (mostly male) creators” (15). This claim does not mean that Whedon failed in his creation of a strong female character, but the fact that he made his heroine dependent on patriarchy weakens his claim.

Despite the fact that *BtVS* displays both male and female characters, the majority of Buffy’s relationships are connected to patriarchy. In light of the series’ supposed theme of womanpower, the patriarchal relationships contradict Whedon message. He creates a heroine who focuses most on her relationships with patriarchs instead of establishing her own
authority. Willow Rosenberg, who plays a constant and important role in the series, is Buffy’s only female friend. Other female characters in the show, and in the graphic novel as well, are interchangeable. Throughout the show, the audience has to part with Miss Calendar, Joyce Summers, Cordelia, and Tara to name but a few of the female characters who got erased from the script. In contrast to this, the male characters in the show are rarely dismissed so easily. Even though Angel left the show at the end of Season Three, he continued to stay involved in the series. Therefore, it is a fact that Buffy’s main relations are with males; among them are The Watchers’ Council; her Watcher, Rupert Giles; Spike and Angel, two vampires who become Buffy’s friends, warriors in arms, lovers, and confidants. To understand Buffy and the struggles she endures throughout the eight year series, it is important to be aware of the way she grew up.

Although this show deals primarily with paranormal instances, it is noteworthy to say that there are many “normal” relationships in BtVS. The human patriarchs in BtVS exhibit many traditional family elements. Therefore, it is important to have a closer look at Buffy’s primary caregivers, her parents. Since John Bowlby’s theory is concerned with the development of children, he offers a good starting point to explain Buffy’s desire to have a strong patriarch at her side. Bowlby’s theory helps to understand why Buffy is always in the presence of a patriarch.

According to Bowlby in, Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development, children need a strong secure base while they are growing up. Yet he claims that the need for this secure base is also present throughout one’s adult life. Bowlby describes how a secure base offers humans a basis from which they are able to explore the world around them. Knowing that they can always return to their secure base, they are able to take greater risks exploring their surroundings. The first secure base is provided by parents since children should form a core attachment to a primary caregiver. Every child feels safest
around the person who looks after the child the most. Toddlers use their mothers as a center, from which they explore their surroundings. Although Bowlby focuses his research on the relationship between mother and child, mainly because this target group is considerably bigger than a father-child one would be, he also discusses the relationship between father and child. Bowlby found out that the “pattern of attachment that were shown to fathers resemble closely the patterns that were shown to mothers, with roughly the same percentage distribution of patterns” (10). Therefore, all attributes concerning the mother-child relationship can also be applied to the father-child relationship. In addition to this, Bowlby states that his attachment theory emphasizes two main features. First, “The primary status and biological function of intimate emotional bonds between individuals as well as the making and maintaining of these bonds,” and second, “The powerful influence on a child’s development, of the ways he is treated by his parents, especially the mother figure” (A Secure Base 120).

Despite Bowlby’s hypothesis and claim that the mother is more important as the primary caregiver, Whedon chose to base the show on patriarchal grounds. This decision highlights that although Buffy’s mother was the primary caregiver; the absence of the father influenced Buffy even more, thus supporting the series’ theme of female insufficiency. Joyce’s motherly influence and care could not compensate for the fact that Buffy’s father does not fulfill his role as caregiver. Whedon implies that it does not matter how hard the female caregiver tries, the child will always need the male influence as well to grow into a strong, independent being.

The physical and emotional absence of Buffy’s biological father, Hank Summers, creates an irreplaceable loss of authority in Buffy’s life. This loss is the origin of Buffy’s dependence on patriarchal figures. Hank is a patriarch in the most rudiment sense, he functions as the head of the family, he is in control of the main resources and decisions as
Well. Not only does Hank’s absence leave her with the unconscious desire to fill the patriarchal position, but it also influences all of Buffy’s future attachments. Since the first patriarch she ever knew abandoned her, thus causing great trauma, Buffy is eager to please other patriarchs even if it means that she has to endanger her friends and loved ones. An example for this is Angel’s reappearance in Season Three; she keeps his return a secret, knowing that the others would not approve. Her need for reassurance from her former lover and friend is stronger than her sense of responsibility towards her duty as Slayer and her friends. Moreover, Buffy feels a need for guidance and reassurance. Consequently, in Season Seven, Buffy is frequently eager to let Giles handle all problems that arise. When Dawn starts to steal, Buffy tells Giles that he should address this issue (BtVS “All the Way”). Over and over, she tells Giles how much she trusts him and that she would not know what to do without him. These instances highlight Buffy’s willingness to be taken care of by a patriarch as a result of that first loss.

Throughout the series, it can be observed that Buffy fears abandonment by a patriarch again; one episode, especially, highlights the heroine’s fear. In the episode “Nightmares,” the audience is confronted with one of Buffy’s worst fears, being rejected by a patriarchal figure. Hank tells her:

Gosh, you don’t even see what's right in front of your face, do you? Well, big surprise there, all you ever think about is yourself. You get in trouble. You embarrass us with all the crazy stunts you pull, and do I have to go on? … You’re sullen and... rude and... you’re not nearly as bright as I thought you were going to be... Hey, Buffy, let’s be honest. Could you stand to live in the same house with a daughter like that? (BtVS “Nightmares”)
Buffy is devastated, and even though this encounter is just a figment of her imagination, the scene cast a shadow over the whole show, impacting Buffy’s future relationships with patriarchal figures. Later in the show, Angel uses similar words to decrease Buffy’s confidence. Bowlby addresses this aspect of foreshadowing as well, he argues that “the model of [her]self that [she] builds reflects also the images that [her] parents have of [her], images that are communicated not only by how [she] treats [her] but by what each says to [her]” (130). Therefore, this moment is very important for multiple reasons. First, Hank’s accusations function as a self fulfilling prophecy for Buffy. During the series, she demonstrates multiple instances where Hank’s words ring true. He tells her, “you don’t even see what’s right in front of your face,” and that “you’re not nearly as bright as I thought you were going to be” (BtVS “Nightmares”). Both features become true: Buffy is not a good student, a fact that is highlighted multiple times in the show, and it sometimes takes her a very long time to dismantle a problem and to see what is right in front of her. When Angel turns evil, she has no idea that there is something magical going on; she just assumes that she has been bad in bed and she disappointed him. Buffy also fails to remember the correct terms for the demons she is hunting. Giles, more than once, has to rephrase his sentences because she does not understand what he is talking about. She never plans her attacks thoroughly rather she displays a “kill first ask questions later” mentality. This aspect is reemphasized by the presence of her friend Willow. Willow functions as Buffy’s counterpart. While Buffy is popular, comfortable around boys, physically strong, someone who defies rules more than once, and not a very good student; Willow is her opposite. She, like Giles, represents the logical and knowledgeable side of the Scoobies. Willow is skilled with computers and even teaches a class while still in high school.

Hank also states that “all you ever think about is yourself,” and indeed, the show highlights several instances where Buffy’s selfish behavior causes trouble for others. Despite
the knowledge that it is wrong and that she should not do it, Buffy sleeps with Angel. Moreover, after Angel comes back from hell, she does not stay away from him, despite her knowledge of the consequences. She endangers not only herself, but dozens of innocents as well. At the end of Season Two, Buffy leaves Sunnydale without a word to her friends; they do not know whether she is still alive or dead. This incident reveals once more that Buffy is displaying an inconsiderate behavior. Although this moment is ambiguous, since it could be argued that Buffy’s need to be alone was overwhelming her, it is still valid to say that she acted without consideration for others. Additionally, Hank also accuses Buffy of being rude and sullen. Her selfish behavior is reaffirmed throughout the show, proving that Hank’s words function as a self-fulfilling prophecy for Buffy.

The other reason why this scene is important is that this incident is the moment when patriarchy actively turns against Buffy for the first time. In this moment, she realizes that her father had not only left her mother, but also her, subsequently shattering Buffy’s secure base. And although she met Giles before this crucial moment, this encounter marks the conscious beginning of Buffy’s quest for a new patriarchal figure. Buffy is aware, even though mostly subconsciously, that she is not yet ready to live without a secure, patriarchal base. Her father is the reason for her fear of rejection, the urge to prove herself, her desire to please other patriarchs, and her general “slow” bonding process with other males. The influence patriarchy has on the characters of the show is highlighted by Buffy’s mother Joyce.

Although Joyce Summers is present in the television show until Season Five, multiple aspects hinder her from providing a secure base, which reemphasizes Buffy’s need for patriarchal guidance. Since Bowlby states that there needs to be at least one secure base in a child’s life and Joyce is not able to fulfill this need, the presence of a patriarch is needed. Bowlby argues that mothers need a strong foundation as well; otherwise, they cannot function as a secure base for others (13). Since Joyce does not have a healthy relationship with a
patriarch herself, and both she and Buffy are traumatized, she cannot fulfill the role as a strong basis in Buffy’s life. Hank’s decision is traumatizing, but this trauma is magnified because he has left Joyce with a teenager who, according to her parents, defies authorities and is a trouble maker. Joyce is left, without any help from her husband, to care for her daughter. The family patriarch failed Joyce and created an unbalance in Buffy’s upbringing.

Although Joyce has very few relationships during the show, all of them are problematic. Her boyfriend Ted, a salesman, is greatly respected among his co-workers and Buffy’s friends. He is good at his job, an able cook, and adoring boyfriend to Buffy’s mother. When he immediately makes himself the head of the Summers’ household, his self-promotion is not blocked by Joyce; she welcomes the idea to have another member of the patriarchy in the house who will take care of her. All of these facets grant Ted authority as a patriarch, but Ted turns out to be a serial killer who is also a robot. Joyce and Ted’s brief relationship leads Joyce to an argument with Buffy:

Buffy: He threatened me. He said that he was gonna slap my face.
Joyce: He said no such thing! … He caught you cheating, didn’t he?
Buffy: Yeah, I kicked my ball in, put me in jail, but he totally wigged!
Joyce: And he didn’t say anything about it in front of the others, did he?
Buffy: Uh, no, but I don’t think that’s the...
Joyce: Well, I thought that that was pretty decent of him! (*BtVS “Ted”*)

This dialogue illustrates that Joyce seeks confirmation from the patriarchy even at the expense of her own daughter, traumatizing Buffy’s relationship with patriarchs even further. Not only did Joyce ignore her daughter’s warning about Ted, but she also focused on the wrong part of the conversation. Her duty as a caring mother should have been to assure her
daughter that Ted would not hurt her. Instead, Joyce completely ignores this aspect and focuses on the fact that it was nice of Ted not to report Buffy to her friends. This example shows Joyce’s eagerness to be reaffirmed by a member of the patriarchy. The next man in Joyce’s life, albeit just for a night, is Giles. Due to cursed chocolate, they sleep together. Since this encounter also impacts Giles and his relationship to the Slayer, Joyce is deprived of power once more.

In addition to these characteristics that hinder her in providing a secure base for her daughter, Joyce’s only friend ever seen on the show is a demon. A male demon possesses Joyce’s female friend and tries to kill Joyce. This instance serves as another case where Joyce is being traumatized by the patriarchy, thus adding to the pattern patriarchs’ behavior is establishing throughout the show. Once more Joyce had to defend herself from a strong male presence, and once more she needs to recover from an attack on her by the patriarchy.

Additionally, Joyce is completely oblivious to Buffy’s real life until the end of Season Two when Buffy is forced to tell her mother her secret. Joyce cannot cope with this aspect of Buffy’s life. Joyce’s complete ignorance of her daughter’s real situation and Joyce’s inability to commit to a normal relationship make her a weak secure base. As a result of her parents’ failures, Buffy is forced to search outside of her home for a powerful secure base and a strong patriarchal figure. Since the main patriarchal figure in the show is a member of the Watchers’ Council, a bigger patriarchal apparatus, it is necessary to discuss the Watchers’ Council first. The Council qualifies as a patriarchal institution, according to Allan G. Johnson’s definition since it is “A society [that] is … male-dominated, male-identified, and male-centered. It also involves as one of its key aspects the oppression of women”(3).

In order to understand the power and influence of the Council and its members, it is useful to look at Max Weber’s hypotheses regarding authority. Although Weber describes three types of authority in the book The Essential Weber, the traditional authority is the most
fitting structure for the Watchers’ Council and its members. According to Weber authority needs to fulfill two aspects, demonstrating the ability to tell people what to do and securing the compliance of the subjects towards the one in power (132). As the name implies, traditional authority bases its power on tradition. This policy is one of the reasons why the Watchers’ Council functions as well as it does and why it is able to survive. Since the Council is considered to be tradition, its members are unlikely to be questioned. One important aspect of the traditional rule is that the administrative staff of the patriarch is selected on a different basis such as friendship, fealty, or association, and not necessarily competence. The traditional authority is based on laws and has a fixed set of rules. In addition to this, it “is also not permissible to create a new law in relation to the norms of tradition. In fact new enactments are established as verdicts based on ‘knowledge’ known ‘since time immemorial’” (Weber 135).

The Watchers’ Council is a perfect example of traditional authority because its members created the Slayers, and therefore, represent the oldest form of patriarchy on the show. The Council’s authority is based on the belief in the sacred quality of long-standing traditions and legitimacy of those who exercise authority. They present themselves as a force that is unchallengeable since they argue that its traditional rule “[has] existed since time immemorial” (Weber 135). As a result, it can be said that patriarchy gave birth to itself; patriarchy forced itself on the female body. Instead of fighting demons themselves, the Council forced a woman to do it.

This act of violence begs the question why the Council relies on female Slayers. Since the new body of a Slayer is used as a weapon against the forces of darkness like demons, vampires, evil gods, and much more, why did they not use the body of a young boy? Patriarchs usually do not have much confidence in the female body, and in BtVS this idea is reinforced by the fact that Buffy always has a male companion and is also watched by the
Council members themselves. They do not trust her to make the right decisions or to even decide what is good for her, a feature that is reemphasized by their constant intervention.

Since the Shadow Men increased the strength, abilities, agility, and endurance of the captured girl by merging her with a demon, it can be argued that they did not want to soil the male body. The Shadow Men created a female warrior because they regard her as disposable and inferior. Furthermore, through the Council the Shadow Men ensured that they would always have authority over her body. Since, until Season Seven, a Slayer is just called to her destiny once the current Slayer is dead and the slayer lineage is able to share a collective memory, the Council has asserted its patriarchal control over supernaturally empowered women for millennia. These ideas confirm Tyson’s definitions of patriarchy as “any society in which men hold all or most of the power” (Tyson 86) as well as Johnson’s idea of oppression.

In addition to these methods, the Council also asserts control over the body with the **Cruciamentum**. *Tento di Cruciamtentum* refers to a ritual which “is not easy for Slayer or Watcher. But it’s been done this way for a dozen centuries whenever a Slayer turns eighteen. It’s a time honored rite of passage” (*BtVS* “Helpless”). In the week prior to a Slayer’s eighteenth birthday, her Watcher drugs her to take her supernatural powers away so that she can fight a vampire as a “normal” and “weak” female. This ritual is not only another tradition that was created by the Council, but it also serves as a device to keep the Slayer aware of her own “powerlessness.” The ritual does not serve as a rite of passage, but mainly as a method to keep Slayers as young as possible. A Slayer is usually called to her duty around the age of 15. And more importantly, most slayers know beforehand that they are potentials. With the exception of Buffy and Faith, Slayers seem to be discovered when they are young and still corruptible. The ritual offers the Council a possibility to start with new Slayers, without
having to deal with a “mature” woman in her own right. The Council applied this method for centuries, preventing its Slayers from developing beyond the Council’s control.

The Council’s rule is also reemphasized by the location of its headquarters in Britain. Although this aspect is not openly addressed in the show, the Council displays colonial power. Colonialism is inherently patriarchal since seventeenths and eighteenths century British society functioned under patriarchal structures. Those British colonies present the foundation for the America that is known today. The British settlers imposed their world view, morals, ethics, and ideas on others; thus, they were not only replicating, but also forcing their societal structures on others. Like early North American settlers, Buffy struggles to free herself from the oppressive power of patriarchal structures.

The range of the Council’s authority is demonstrated in the episode “Checkpoint” where Quentin Travers, the head of the Watcher’s Council, confronts Buffy. Travers threatens her after she refuses to work with the Council. He tells Buffy that they will make sure that Giles never returns to America. Travers further declares, “Now perhaps you’re used to idle threats and sloppy discipline, Miss Summers, but you’re dealing with grownups now. Am I making myself clear?” (BtVS “Checkpoint”). By withholding the information Buffy seeks, the patriarchy asserts its power over the female body, Buffy. In addition, Foucault claims that power and knowledge go hand-in-hand and that one cannot exist without the other. He also declares that the body is an object that needs to be acted upon. Foucault’s idea is connected to Lindsey German’s claim in her essay “Theories of Patriarchy” where she explains that patriarchs control women by controlling their “labor power” (3). This idea can also be applied to the Council and Buffy, they control Buffy’s labor power, thus this trait functions as another tool used by these patriarchs. Travers’ response makes clear that he does not regard her as an equal, but as a subordinate; he eagerly banishes Buffy to her traditional place.
Weber’s theory manifests in *BtVS* because the Council’s strength and power relies on the personal loyalty of their faithful servant and not functional duty of office and office discipline; they need to control the interrelationship of the administrative staff (136). The Council achieves authority and control through the help of their Watchers who make sure that the young Slayers grow up with the belief that the Council’s authority is the valid and must be respected above anything else. This method ensures that their authority is not going to be questioned. Therefore, it is necessary that they are able to assert control over their Watchers. The Council does not shy away from exchanging less faithful Watchers for more loyal ones. Thus, the Council awards positions according to friendship, fealty, or association (135). This idea is supported by Kauppinen and Aaltio who quote Kanter in their article “Leadership, Power, and Gender.” Kanter discusses “metaphorical male ‘homosocial reproduction’—how men attempt to reproduce their dominant power relations by only uniting with and sharing the same occupational space and privilege with those males they deem similar in image and behavior, cloning themselves in their own image, and forming so-called old-boy networks” (102). This idea emphasizes how patriarchy gave birth to itself and how it created its own tradition. It also highlights how the patriarchal apparatus was able to survive without modernization. By choosing and forming successors who share a similar code, the Council ensures that its structures would endure over time.

Although the Council enlists females as well as males into the ranks as Watchers, the audience does not experience successful female Watchers in a position of authority. During the course of seven seasons, just a few female Watchers are visible. None of them train any potential Slayers or occupy a position of higher rank inside the Council. All female members seem to be reduced to office aids. The only female Watcher the audience gets to know better is Gwendolyn Post. Mrs. Post fulfills her duty as Faith’s Watcher for a short time, but it soon becomes evident that she is insane and tries to summon an evil powerful
demon (*BtVS* “Revelations”). This event highlights the idea that females are not able to cope with power. The moment Mrs. Post tries to reach beyond the power the Council gave her, she loses all credibility, thus demonstrating that the male body is the only one who can handle not only authority, but also the power that is connected with it.

In addition to the long standing tradition that the Council represents, it must also be recognized that neither the Council nor its members need to be present to assert power. Foucault’s term “microphysics of power” describes how an entity of power continues to assert power even if it is not physically present (178). In *BtVS*, this phenomenon can be observed after Buffy abandons the Council. Even though she is not working for the Council anymore, she is still following her Slayer “duty.” The patriarchal power that the Council asserts is so ingrained in her, that she is unable to prevent herself from obeying. This idea of ingrained power demonstrates how pervasive the power of the Council is after a millennia. Almost more important than Buffy’s unconscious compliance to the Council is Principal Wood’s cataleptic obedience to these patriarchal authority figures.

   Wood, the male descendant of the Slayer, Nikki Wood, also operates under the power of the Council. Born by a Slayer and raised by her Watcher, after his mother’s death, Wood’s exposure to the Council is even more prominent than Buffy’s. As a result he is ingrained with the same ideas about power, loyalty, and duty as the Slayers. Wood’s role in the show is interesting because it demonstrates that even a male can be affected by the microphysics of power. Don Sabo illustrates in his essay “Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain,” the “system of *intermale dominance* in which a minority of men dominates the masses of men” (379). He explains how he sees himself as “*one more man among many men* who get swallowed by a social system predicated on male domination”(379). These claims are in accord with Kanter who describes “homosocial reproduction.” Wood, neither Slayer nor Watcher, is swallowed by the bigger patriarchal apparatus, demonstrating how the patriarchy’s power incorporates
males as well as females. These attributes highlight once more that the patriarchal society grants more power to dominant and aggressive men and groups.

Although the position as a Watcher seems to be as much a calling as it is for the Slayer, it is the decision of the Council which Watcher it assigns to which Slayer. The Watchers have to report back to the Council, and they also receive their salary from them. These two attributes highlight the dependency between both parties, and they also function as additional markers of patriarchy; the Council is the distributor of the capital. The Watchers’ Council chose Giles as Buffy’s Watcher, but the moment its members discover that his feelings for her have changed from a mentor to a father, they fire him. Giles is replaced by Wesley Windham Pryce, a fairly young Watcher who is not able to assert authority over the Slayer. The only reason Wesley is chosen by the Council members is that they know Wesley will be loyal to the Council and not to Buffy. Wesley, unlike Giles, has never been a valued member of the Scooby Gang. They constantly ignore his commands, and although Wesley tries to assign certain areas of legitimate authority for particular Scooby members, as Weber says a patriarch does, he does not succeed at all. This example clearly demonstrates how the Council tries to assert its influence on the Slayers.

Since Weber’s hypothesis fails to address all aspects of patriarchy, it is necessary to introduce yet another theorist who explains the patriarchy’s power in *BtVS*. In *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault explains how power was reorganized and how the improvement of diverse bodies of knowledge (the human sciences) support and cooperate with that power. For Foucault, the body is the target of power. It is an instrument that needs to be “manipulated, shaped, [and] trained,” as well as an entity “which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its forces” (Foucault 136). In *BtVS*, Buffy represents this body. Her training is determined by her Watcher, and therefore, by the Council itself. These two entities
decide what kind of information Buffy needs to possess and how this information should be applied. One member in particular is responsible for the shaping of the body.

The first male who is able adopt the role as patriarch after Buffy’s biological father left her is her Watcher, Giles, who shares many of the qualities that make him a patriarch with the Watchers’ Council. One of these aspects is his nationality. Giles, like the Council, comes from the “old world.” His British heritage emphasizes his power as patriarch. His occupation, as the former curator of the British Museum before becoming a “librarian” accentuates his power since both employments offer a certain amount of authority and power. In addition to these ideas, both entities are connected to knowledge, a tool that Giles uses repeatedly to maintain his hold on Buffy. He directs the research, and he is also the one who ensures that the Scoobies fulfill their duties. Buffy looks up to him and, more than once, manipulates her decisions for his approval.

After Buffy met Giles, he became an immense part of her secure base. Tracy R. Gleason and Nancy S. Weinfield argue in their article “An Analysis of Slayer Longevity” that Buffy’s mother and Buffy’s Watcher function as a “secure base.” Buffy never has to take complete charge of her life, first because of her mother, and then because of Giles and other male figures. As long as Giles is around, Buffy has her safe foundation. Even if something does not go according to plan, or a crisis occurs, she is always able to fall back and rely on her Watcher. Gleason and Weinfield even go one step further and disregard Hank Summers at all, at least as a father figure. When they discuss “parents,” they are describing Joyce and Giles.

Giles’ position as Watcher is soon extended to that of a substitute father. Travers reveals Giles’ affection for his charge in the episode “Helpless.” Travers states, “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” (BtVS ”Helpless”). It is not
only “useless to the cause,” but it also disrupts the Council’s traditional behavior. Giles not only successfully replaces Buffy’s father, but his position as patriarch is acknowledged by Buffy’s friends as well. Willow’s father never appears on the show, and Xander’s father appears for one episode in Season Six; Giles functions as a father figure, protector, and mentor for all of the Scoobies. They all look up to Giles; they follow his orders, and they seek his guidance. Giles is commanding based on the same rules as the Council; his authority and power among the Scoobies stems from his ability to bind them to him. Their loyalties allow him to preserve his position. Giles’ position as patriarch is reinforced later in the show when he sleeps with Joyce since Whedon presents his audience with a once again “intact family,” albeit just for a short time. Nevertheless, it appears as if the physical consumption of the relationship between Joyce and Giles confirms and strengthens their position as “parents.” Patriarchy and its place as the head of the family are once more reaffirmed.

Despite the fact that they are not together, Giles and Joyce present a normative pair of “parents.” They fight over Buffy, and they disagree on how she should be raised. While Joyce wants Buffy to experience a “normal” adulthood, Giles wants Buffy to accept her destiny. As in many “normal” families, the patriarch (Giles) wins these disagreements. Incidents like these illustrate that his authority is more important to Buffy than that of her mother. Once Giles makes a statement, it seems to be non-negotiable, at least for Buffy. By appealing to Buffy’s moral code and her feelings of responsibility, Giles secures that she not only accepts, but also resigns to her destiny. By using these methods of conditioning, Giles enforces these ideas of gender identities and power structures onto each new generation of Slayers, strengthening the dichotomous connection between Slayers and Watchers. After Buffy ran away at the end of Season Two, Joyce confronts Giles and tells him that Buffy’s disappearance is entirely his fault. Although he agrees with Joyce, and therefore, highlights his own guilt, this reality only reinforces his position since the acknowledgment of his guilt
can be considered as a statement of power as well. However, Giles is not the first patriarch who possesses this power. Hank and Angel are also able to envisage and, therefore, influence Buffy’s behavior, as was discussed earlier. Since Buffy admires Giles more than her own mother, Joyce’s voice is often silenced. Although her mother asked her more than once to stop slaying, Buffy focuses on fulfilling the destiny that was revealed to her by Giles.

Given that Giles always has a close eye on Buffy and influences her decisions, Buffy never has to take full responsibility for her life. After Buffy’s death, at the end of Season Five, and her resurrection in Season Six, she hands all her responsibilities over to Giles because she knows that he will take care of everything. She trusts Giles to make the right decisions and completely relies on his instructions. A good example for this reliance is Season Six; here it becomes evident that Giles takes matters into his own hands since Buffy is not able to do so. He looks after her sister; he takes care of Buffy’s debts, and other everyday aspects of life. At one point, he also decides that he needs to leave because Buffy becomes too dependent on him. Although this act seems like unusual behavior for a member of the patriarchy, it does serve the system. Even though the Council wants to control the Slayers, a Slayer who shows as much disinterest as Buffy does is not helpful for the Council. Her disinterest in her surroundings demonstrates a lack of care and attention that a Slayer cannot afford if she wants to stay alive. Therefore, Giles decided to leave Sunnydale for a while so that Buffy could regain interest not only in her life but in the lives of her loved ones as well.

As was mentioned earlier, the administrative staff of the patriarch is selected on friendship, fealty, or association, and not necessarily competence. An affinity for these qualities is something Giles shares with the Council. In the comic issue “No Future for You #4,” Giles is angry because Buffy left Faith behind in a battle situation, and when Buffy wants to know what is going on, he tells her, “I don’t want you to be any part of this.” This short dispute is the climax of a growing estrangement between Watcher and Slayer. In this
scene, Giles does to Buffy what the Council has done to him: he exchanges one Slayer for a more controllable one. He and Faith, Buffy’s rival and the second oldest vampire Slayer, form a “partnership;” Giles bases a great part of his loyalties on favoritism. Buffy is no longer playing by his rules, and she is also unwilling to accept everything without question. Therefore, Giles allies with Faith, a vampire Slayer in need of guidance from a patriarchal figure. Although this situation helps Giles to prove to himself that he still is important, it leaves him in a complicated situation where Buffy is concerned. His rejection reminds Buffy of her biological father’s denunciation, and it also serves as another incident where she is under attack by the patriarchal body.

The growing breach between Watcher and Slayer is exploited by Season Eight’s new villain Twilight. The audience learns that Twilight intentionally magnifies the rift between Giles and Buffy:

> It was about manipulating our enemies into waging this ugly war for us, a tactic crucial. For bringing the age of magic to a close. By pitting Watcher against warlock and Slayer against Slayer, we have pushed even the “Victors” to remove themselves from the chessboard. (BtVS “No Future for You #4”).

This passage not only indicates that Twilight knows Buffy, or at least studied her in detail, but it also shows that he thinks it will be impossible for her to destroy him now that he separated her from her Watcher and remaining patriarch. Twilight is well aware that Giles functions as Buffy’s “secure base,” and he also knows that little was needed to sever the bond that Slayer and Watcher share. Although Season Seven ended with an enormous step towards feminism and the perishing of the Watchers, Season Eight not only reinstates the Watchers, but it also argues that it will be impossible for Buffy to win without Giles. Smith argues in her essay that “Films express the fantasies and subconscious needs of their (mostly male) creators” (15). They are, therefore, mostly a representation of the unconscious male
desire. This suggestion once more demonstrates that although Whedon progressed over the years in creating a feminist character. Season Eight not only marks a return for the Watchers, but also for Dracula, a male villain, and a military organization as well.

Even though Whedon created a powerful female character, he ensured that Buffy would be dependent on male figures. In these cases, the knowledge that these patriarchs possess gives them power over Buffy. Giles, like the Council, uses knowledge to assert control over Buffy. In “Prophecy Girl,” Buffy eavesdrops on Angel and Giles who are talking about a prophecy that says that Buffy will die the next day. If Buffy had not spied on them, she would have never known about that prophecy. This encounter highlights Buffy’s hunger for knowledge, which is one of the reasons why she repeatedly turns to Giles. After her encounter with Dracula, Buffy tells Giles:

I need to know more. About where I come from, about the other Slayers. I mean, maybe ... maybe if I could learn to control this thing, I could be stronger, I could be better. But ... I’m scared. I know it’s gonna be hard. And I can’t do it ... without you. I need your help. I need you to be my Watcher again. (BtVS “Buffy vs. Dracula”).

This encounter not only demonstrates Buffy’s dependence on Giles and consequently the Council, but it also displays how Buffy empowers Giles. She refers to herself as “this thing,” and as a result she unconsciously reaffirms her status inside the patriarchy. She asserts, as Travers enlightened her earlier in the show, that she is not an equal to the patriarchs. Buffy does not even picture herself as a human. Her speech also reflects her need for guidance and the urge to prove herself to Giles. She tells him that she is “scared” and that she “could be better.” Furthermore, Buffy declares that she “can’t do it” on her own; she needs Giles help to improve herself (BtVS “Buffy vs. Dracula”). Every single utterance in this scene disempowers Buffy and empowers the patriarchy. Giles still possesses knowledge, and
therefore, power, thus he is still a reliable source for Buffy. This detail highlights the importance of this scene since Giles had decided to leave for Britain at the beginning of this episode, and it is Buffy’s plea for guidance that changes his mind and causes him to stay.

Giles and the Watchers’ Council also illustrate Weber’s contention that traditional norms must be followed even by the patriarch. The norms cannot be chosen subsequent to someone’s particular likes or dislikes. The traditional authority is based on laws and has a fixed set of rules. At this point it is important to note that Weber makes a distinction between the members of the patriarchal apparatus, who very well may be chosen according to particular likes and dislikes, and the apparatus rules and laws which are unchangeable. In addition to these factors, it “is also not permissible to create a new law in relation to the norms of tradition. In fact new enactments are established as verdicts based on ‘knowledge’ known ‘since time immemorial’” (Weber 135). The Watchers’ Council fits this description since they have certain rules that they do not bend. In “Graduation #1,” Buffy needs help from the Council because Angel has been poisoned:

Giles: Did you reach the council?
Wesley: Yes. They, they couldn’t help.
Buffy: Couldn’t?
Wesley: Wouldn’t. It’s not Council policy to cure vampires.
Giles: Did you explain that these were special circumstances?
Wesley: Not under any circumstances, and yes, I did try to convince them.
Buffy: Try again.
Wesley: Buffy, they’re very firm. We’re talking about laws that have existed longer than civilization. (BtVS “Graduation #1”)

In the eyes of the Council, it does not matter that Angel is Buffy’s friend and warrior in arms. The Watchers’ Council functions as the legal authority in BtVS. Their directives are
The Council takes its power from its traditions. Since the Council constructed these traditions itself, its members are aware of the arbitrary nature of these rules, and they do not hesitate to use them for their own advantage. Wesley states, “We’re talking about laws that have existed longer than civilization,” reemphasizing that The Council created itself. Consequently changing, or even bending, one rule could result in a chain reaction that could destroy the whole organization. This suggestion highlights how vulnerable the Council made itself, a fact that will be explored further in the next chapter. After all, if this fact about patriarchy is untrue, what else is based on a self installed tradition? The Council and its members need to protect their sacredness in order to maintain their power. It is clear that Giles represents the one patriarchal figure who almost fits all of Weber’s criteria for the traditional rule. Giles not only represents the head of the Scooby Gang and Buffy’s own family since he functions as a patriarchal figure for Buffy as well as her friends, but he is also a member of the patriarchal apparatus.

Since Hank Summers never played a fatherly role in Buffy’s life, Giles, her Watcher, occupies the role as main patriarch. Giles has to share this place first with Angel and later with Spike, who are both over 100 years old, and therefore, are representative of father figures and grandfather figures as well. In addition to these elements, the vampires also display ties to history, and therefore, tradition. It is no coincidence that two of the main patriarchs Buffy considers allies are vampires. By choosing vampires as patriarchs, Whedon creates a connection between these creatures and the first Watchers’ Council. Both of these ancient factions present powerful entities in the world. Vampires, like the Shadow Men, created their own traditions and rules, both parties’ exhibit patriarchal structures, and both assert power over other bodies. Vampires represent a powerful and mythical group. They present beings that create life and are (in most myths) attractive while dangerous at the same time. They are both known to be ruthless and morally corrupt.
While Weber’s notion of traditional authority seems to be tailor-made for the Watcher’s Council and Giles, Angel and Spike also embody aspects of Weber’s charismatic authority which is based on devotion for the ruler. This type of authority depends on the bonds between the ruler and his subjects. The ruler possesses certain “gifts of grace” such as magical abilities, revelations of heroism, as well as power of the mind and speech. The purest form of this authority would be the warrior hero. Loyalty is given to the leader as a person, for the sake of these gifts, not because of an enacted position or traditional dignity. Another important element of this theory is that if the leader loses his qualities, he is going to be replaced (Weber 141).

Weber’s notion of charismatic authority can be applied to explain Angel’s place among the patriarchs. Angel incorporates these “gifts of grace” perfectly. He is a vampire who fights his own kind and other creatures of the night, which makes him a hero. As Buffy’s boyfriend, he not only occupies a special place where her emotions are concerned, but this relationship also makes him one of the first people she turns to when she needs help. Weber would call him the “warrior hero” since Angel fights on Buffy’s side and helps her to defeat evil. Angel, as well as Giles and the Council, uses his knowledge to control and manipulate Buffy. Since he is of considerable age, Angel is a source of knowledge. Given that he was evil for the majority of his life, Angel has access to a different source of information than the Council, which makes him a valuable ally. In the first episodes, Angel’s primary role is to deliver information. But Angel does not volunteer information without a reason; everything he reveals guides Buffy’s attention to a matter that he thinks needs to be resolved. Angel, however, is reluctant to offer information when Buffy requests it. These mind games help to reaffirm his status as an authority figure.

One unfortunate aspect of the charismatic role is that the charismatic leadership, applied for an extended period of time, is most likely going to resemble one of the other
forms of authority (Weber). In Angel’s case this idea emphasizes the traditional role. At the end of Season Three, Angel determines that he knows what is best for Buffy. Angel breaks up with her using a common method; he mocks her by blaming himself and telling her that it is not her fault. He tells her that he is going to do the sensible thing and let her live the life she is supposed to have. The fact that Angel does not take Buffy’s wishes and feelings into consideration is just another example for how patriarchy forces itself on the body. Instead of offering her the chance of deciding for herself, he takes matters into his own hands. This behavior connects Angel to Giles; both men display the desire to control Buffy.

Even more important than his behavior towards Buffy, is Angel’s relationship to his sire, Darla. Although Darla made Angel into a vampire, she never occupied a position of power in their coven. Angel clearly not only dominates her in the role as patriarch, but he also fulfills this role among the small group which consists of Darla, Drusilla, Spike, and Angel. Angel clearly occupies the position of power in this group. Various incidents prove how he decides on a course of action and how he asserts power over Spike, although Spike had killed two Slayers at that point. Angel cares for his family as a father would, and he even refers to this coven as such.

Weber claims that one trope of charismatic authority includes the fact that if the leader loses his qualities, he is going to be replaced by a new leader. Spike not only, eventually, takes over Angel’s place, but towards the end of BtVS, Buffy favors his insight and company over that of Giles. Like Giles and Angel, Spike also functions as a source of information. While he gets paid by the Scoobies during earlier seasons, he later volunteers information. His physical and emotional strength reaffirm his status as an authority figure. Spike’s close relationship with Dawn and Joyce almost makes him a member of their family circle, a feature that is highlighted even more in later episodes. After Buffy dies at the end of Season
Five, Spike continues her quest; he protects her sister and her friends, while also continuing to slay. Buffy’s defiance of Giles in favor of Spike, in Season Seven, reaffirms Spike’s status.

In relation to these events, it is even more important that Joyce’s acceptance of Spike reinforces his position as patriarch. Although Spike is a vampire, Joyce openly associates with him. The audience could observe them in close proximity more than once. Joyce’s acceptance of Spike in connection to his role as Dawn’s protector and Buffy’s lover reemphasizes his role among the patriarchs. They turn to him for protection, help, knowledge, and comfort. These features reinforce his status of power among the women of this family, and consequently, enable him to fulfill his role as patriarch.

In addition to embodying these characteristics, it is noteworthy to say that Spike’s ability to free himself from different patriarchal influences in his life also highlights his patriarchal status. Spike leaves the “family” that he shared with Angel and the others when he creates a new one with Drusilla, his sire. Although Drusilla sired him, Spike occupies the position of the patriarch; he ensures that Drusilla has shelter, clothing, food, and everything else she might desire. Aside from untying himself from Angel, Spike successfully reemphasizes his position as leader by killing the Anointed One, who replaced the Master at the End of Season One. Additionally, Spike also managed to free himself from The Initiative, another patriarchal entity. All these incidents show that Spike not only deserves a place among the patriarchs, but also that he is capable of defending his position among them.

Aside from her father, the Watchers’ Council, Giles, and the vampires Angel and Spike, Buffy encounters other patriarchal figures as well. One of them is Buffy’s boyfriend Riley Finn. Upon first meeting, Riley appears to be “normal;” however, he is also a member of The Initiative. Consequently, Riley is stronger than an average college boy, his reflexes are enhanced, and he is the leader of his own military combat unit. As a kind of super-man, he poses a good candidate for patriarchy. Like almost all patriarchs in Buffy’s life, Riley can
assert power through the use of knowledge. His affiliation with the military, an enormous patriarchal apparatus, enables him to access completely different resources than other patriarchs in this series. His membership in a military organization also highlights his possibility as a patriarch. Much like the Council, the military functions as a male-dominated institution. The show presents just one female member of The Initiative, and although she is the leader, Maggie Walsh eventually becomes fanatical and is killed by her own creation, a male demon/human hybrid named Adam. Adam not only restores the traditional order, by reinstating himself, a male, as head of the organization, but he is also the first patriarch in the Christian tradition. This attribute also highlights the role patriarchy plays in history and how it reaffirms its status though tradition. These ideas support the idea that The Initiative, and therefore, the military as patriarchal institutions. These facts enable Riley to become a patriarch is his function in the military organization.

Buffy encounters multiple forms of patriarchy over the years, and while she severs some of these connections herself, others are severed by members of the patriarchy. Buffy’s desire to please said patriarchic figures and the need to feel protected by them stood in her way of becoming a woman in her own right. It also prevents her from reaching out to see how far her powers could take her and to experience what she could achieve once she reaches this independency. This transformation, which started in the television show, reaches its peak in the graphic novels where Buffy has no male at her side besides Xander. She is surrounded by females, and due to the spell, she is responsible for her very own Slayer army. Buffy and her Scoobies change the fate of the world forever because they give every potential Slayer her power. No longer can it be said that “Into every generation, a Slayer is born. One girl, in all the world, a Chosen One. One born with the strength and skill to hunt the vampires,” *(BtVS “Welcome to the Hellmouth”)*. However, Buffy is far from independent. But even
more importantly, Joss Whedon has yet to prove that he created a female heroine who is not only independent from members of the patriarchy, but who is also regarded as their equal.
A Flawed Patriarchy?

Buffy to the Shadow Men: “I can’t fight this. I know that now. But you guys? You’re just men. Just the men who did this...to her. Whoever that girl was before she was the First Slayer.”

*BtVS* “Get It Done”

As noted in Chapter one, the presence of patriarchy in *BtVS* is undeniable. Although there are many instances of seemingly “normative” patriarchal representations in *BtVS*, all aforementioned patriarchs are flawed. As a result, these patriarchs make it possible for Buffy to partially dismantle their power both during the seven seasons, and in the graphic novels. Nonetheless, the fact that Whedon not only continues to use patriarchal figures, but that these problematic figures have some control over Buffy suggests that patriarchy’s influence cannot be completely dismantled. Rather the patriarchs in *BtVS*, individually and systematically, incorporate some flaws that enable Buffy to partially dismantle their authorities.

The monstrosity of the Watchers’ Council’s acts demonstrates its flawed nature, thus casting a shadow on other patriarchs. Although the Council created the first Slayer, the same act of creation reveals its atrocity and inadequacy. Here patriarchy forced itself on the female body. Members of the patriarchy created the slayer lineage by capturing an innocent girl and infecting her with a demon. A group of African tribal elders, known as the Shadow Men, used magic to infuse a confined girl with the soul, heart, and spirit of a demon (*BtVS* “Get it Done”). The method of this infusion implies that they did not ask for permission and highlights not only their flawed characters, but also functions as the basis on which Buffy dismantles their power. Buffy demonstrates open disdain, instead of the expected gratitude when she witnesses this event in a dream sequence. She tells them that “No, you don’t understand! You violated that girl, made her kill for you because you’re weak, you’re pathetic, and you obviously have nothing to show me” (*BtVS* “Get It Done”). By modern standards, one could say that they not only raped the first Slayer, but that they also cursed all Slayers who followed. For millennia, the Council oppressed and molded the female body.
according to its own desires, and since they never expected this body to turn against them, Buffy’s defiance surprises them.

Buffy is the first Slayer who openly attacks the Watchers’ Council when she breaks with the Council’s self-proclaimed “tradition.” Buffy’s renunciation of all connections to the Council interrupts the ongoing rape of the female body, marking the first step of female independence. This act of “disobedience” towards the patriarchy loosens the patriarchy’s hold over the female body. The main patriarchal institution is reduced to a passive bystander; its very name, The Watchers’ Council, highlights its function.

The Council members watch, observe, and preserve; they offer no active contribution a fact that is emphasized by Buffy when she confronts them: “You’re Watchers. Without a Slayer, you’re pretty much just watchin’ Masterpiece Theatre.... You can’t do anything with the information you have except maybe publish it in the ‘Everyone Thinks We’re Insane-O’s Home Journal’” (BtVS, “Checkpoint”). The fact of the Council’s dependence enables Buffy to force them to acknowledge her power and authority. She demonstrates her new-found power moments later in the same episode. Buffy tells the Council members, “The only way we’re gonna find out [if they are strong enough to destroy Glory] is if you work with me. You can all take your time thinking about that. But I want an answer right now from Quin...’cause I think he’s understanding me” (BtVS “Checkpoint”). Not only is Buffy showing less respect because she addresses Travers by his first name, Quentin, but she also demands an immediate answer. This scene illustrates that the power relations are shifting to Buffy’s advantage and that Travers is aware of this fact. In addition to these aspects, Buffy also told the Council members that they are going to work with her, thus making it clear that they are equals. Buffy’s rebuke of the her own Council is closely connected to her reaction to the Shadow Men, thus she is not only revealing the weakness of these apparatuses, but she is also highlighting the flaws hidden beneath their tradition of dominance.
The aforementioned moment reveals that Buffy’s actions make it possible for the Council to react and that they are unable to function without the Slayer’s input. In this moment, the Council is forced to realize that they no longer control the Slayer. Moreover, Buffy forces them not only to work with her, but also for her. The aforesaid incident forces the Council to accept Buffy as a powerful equal. This idea contrasts with the values the Council and its members adhere to. As was demonstrated in previous chapters, the Council’s power is based on its ability to make the female body believe that the Council is most valuable while the Slayers are disposable. The suggestion that a female body defies the Council’s commands, and that this body also tries to reverse the situation by controlling the Council, is irreconcilable with the Council’s tradition.

This act of defiance leads to another closely connected flaw of the Council, namely their inability to completely control female bodies. The Council attempts to control Buffy and Faith multiple times throughout the show; they demand that Buffy endures the Cruciamentum, and they try to imprison Faith after she turns “rogue.” Nevertheless, the Council fails in both attempts. Buffy renounces them after the Cruciamentum and, later on, the Council fails in its attempt to capture Faith and bring her before the Council to receive her punishment.

Faith’s ability to escape the Council’s sentence is significant for multiple reasons. First, it displays the Council members’ inability to control Faith’s behavior since they drive her to go “rogue.” Second, the Council’s failure to enforce its judgment highlights its powerlessness even further, a fact that is not kindly acknowledged by the Council member Weatherby: “The Watchers’ Council used to mean something. You [Faith] perverted it. You trash. We should have killed you while you were asleep” (BtVS “Who Am I?”). It can be assumed that Weatherby is not the only member of this patriarchal apparatus who holds this view. More importantly, this scene demonstrates that the Council is not only helpless without the Slayers,
but that it also defines itself through their subjects. Faith’s ability to affect the Council through her actions demonstrates its dependence on its Slayers. During this episode, Giles also reveals that it is not the first time a Slayer tries to defy Council orders. In addition to this knowledge, Weatherby’s declaration also poses the question, “What are the Council’s policies concerning ‘rogue’ Slayers?” It stands against reason that they would just imprison the Slayer since this act would leave the Council without an active Slayer for many years. The Council would have been unable to await a rogue Slayer’s natural death since the Council is dependent on them. Given that there are always potentials who wait for their calling, the Council does not have any problems replacing a rogue Slayer with a compliant one. Therefore, it is valid to assume that the Council would have killed a “rogue” Slayer in order to activate a new, more submissive Slayer. Thus, the Council is not concerned with individual Slayers, but their concern lies simply within their desire to control a body. This element highlights the Slayer’s insignificance and showcases the Council’s dependency on compliance.

Faith’s very name has significant meaning in light of her resistance to the Council. The name Faith is of Middle English origin, and it means “A set of principles or beliefs on which you are willing to devote your life” (BtVS “Dirty Girls”). Faith is one of the few characters in the series who does not have “faith” at all. She loses her faith when she has to witness the death of her own Watcher, and her belief in the Council is destroyed because the Watchers impose a set of so-called “answers” in the face of what cannot be answered. Faith needs more than orders; she needs to believe that she could face anything, even the loss of her own life. Faith is willing to place her trust in the system, but instead of being rewarded for her belief in the Council’s traditions, Faith loses a person she cares about. Since Faith comes from a broken home, her relation to authority figures is already damaged, and therefore, she needs
the feeling of affiliation, but what she experienced is another dysfunctional “group.” As a result, Faith places her belief and loyalty in the only being that deserves it, herself.

Significantly, the Council fails because its members are unable to adapt to change, a trait they share with other patriarchs in this series, thus establishing a pattern of insufficiency among them. As previously established, the patriarchy, and, especially, the Council, creates its own traditions. The mere fact that the patriarchy decides what it labels “tradition” demonstrates the position of jurisdiction, and that its power lies with the ability to control these traditions. Therefore, this controlling and naming power of the patriarchy is a tool which strengthens their basis and their reach by allowing the patriarchy to adapt to changing circumstances, reinvent traditions, and proclaim new traditions as the Council deems fit. The Council is too entrenched within its identity as an organization and too entangled in its own web of self-proclaimed traditions to truly change. Changing the organization structurally or operationally would forfeit its credibility and authority. By using the power to name and claim tradition, the patriarchy, and, therefore, the Council, does not have to make any “real” change.

Giles’ status as patriarch is marred by his inability to function as a sexual threat to the women of the show. Although Giles had intimate relations with Miss Calendar, Joyce Summers, and Olivia, all of these interactions are convoluted. He and Joyce only had sex because both of them were on drugs. This encounter is nothing more than a mere accident not an actual fulfillment of desire. Therefore, it could be argued that Giles needs chemical assistance in order to fulfill a sexual act. This idea is supported by the fact that every time Olivia visits Giles, one or both of them is holding an alcoholic beverage. These encounters help to dismantle Giles’ status as a patriarch since he alone is not able to control the female body. Jowett supports this reading of Giles’ sexuality and his role as a patriarch. In her article, “Masculinity, Monstrosity and the Behaviour Modification in Buffy the Vampire
"Slayer," Giles’ role is “inevitably a passive, rather than active [one],” (61) she further argues that Giles’ alter ego, Ripper, “is not related to or triggered by sexuality,” that his “position as nurturer defuses any sexual attraction,” and that his sexual relationships with other females strengthen his “safe” factor since Ripper comes out to protect and not to assert authority (61). Giles’ age and his position as teacher/mentor predetermine him to be looked at as caretaker rather than a predator. Nevertheless, Ripper strengthens Giles’ position as patriarch because Ripper entails the more violent, darker side of Giles that he normally keeps hidden.

Furthermore, the main reason for Giles’ “safe factor” lies within the fact that, over the course of seven seasons, he had a real relationship with only one other woman, Miss Calendar. Since Ripper is inherently a part of Giles, these two entities need to be looked upon as one.

Giles’ inability to possess and dominate Miss Calendar’s body diminishes his power as patriarch even further. The night they are going to have sex, Miss Calendar is murdered by Angelus, who not only mocks Giles by positioning her dead body on his bed and arranging it as if she had planned a romantic evening, but also challenges Giles’ status as patriarch since Angel was able to dominate the female body while Giles was not. Barbara Smuts argues in her essay “The Evolutionary Origins of Patriarchy” the importance of the neckbite as a tool of male domination (7). Angel drained Miss Calendar; he managed to not only dominate her by drinking her blood and killing her, but also to penetrate her as well, an act Giles is not able to achieve. This act not only diminishes Giles’ power as a patriarch among the females in the show, but it also affects his status among the males as well.

While Giles’ fickle nature undermines his authority as patriarch, his need for reassurance displays his, and therefore most patriarchs’, fear of becoming obsolete. As has been established throughout this work, patriarchy’s primary fear is to be useless because they, unlike the women in this series, realize that men depend on the women. Without the Slayers, the Council is powerless since there is no one who can execute its ideas. The same principal
is valid for Giles; he is unsuccessfully forced to confront his fear of being obsolete. Giles, like the Council, is not able to really change his behavior; therefore, the confrontation of his fears does not have a positive effect on him. Thus, it makes him even more determined to maintain his role as authority figure. He demonstrates this behavior multiple times throughout the series.

One of the most problematic aspects of Giles is that his affection and trust determine his loyalty. More than once Giles decides not to trust Buffy and even tries to overrule her decisions. While these frequent instances are easy to find in the TV show, a few incidents are of more importance than others. Towards the end of Season Seven, the Scoobies, the Potentials, Faith, and Giles all decide to replace Buffy with Faith because Buffy starts to make all of the decisions. Giles cannot control Buffy any longer, and he decides, therefore, to displace Buffy with Faith (BtVS “Empty Places”). This incident demonstrates how his desire to control and the need to feel essential overpower his judgment.

Giles’ insufficiency is confirmed by another member of the patriarchy. Spike comments on Buffy’s exile after Giles tells him that Spike does not understand: “You know, I think I do. Rupert. You used to be the big man, didn’t you? The teacher all full of wisdom. Now she’s surpassed you, and you can’t handle it. She has saved your lives again and again. She’s died for you” (BtVS “Touched”). Spike understands the Watcher’s need for acknowledgement, and he also realized that the loss of this authority has made Giles switch his alliances. Giles’ desire to feel needed overrides not only his paternal feelings for Buffy, but his ability to make the right decisions as well. Buffy no longer needs the knowledge that Giles, according to Magoulick, “parcels out… rather sparingly, thus maintaining a level of control” (737). Furthermore, this scene also illustrates that Giles failed in his role as protector; Buffy died not only once but twice to save her friends, and the world. Spike has no
inhibitions to point the Watcher’s flaws out to him, thus confronting Giles with his shortcomings.

Giles’ desire to keep his position as controlling authority poses a valid example for the patriarchy’s need to dominate despite the needs of the greater good. In the fittingly titled episode “Lies My Parents Told Me,” Giles tries to convince Buffy that Spike is “a liability” and that he should be leaving for his own good. Buffy soon discovers that Giles is stalling her so that Wood can kill Spike (BtVS “Lies My Parents Told Me”). This scene sheds light on the fact that while Giles does not trust Buffy’s judgment, he reveals his own untrustworthiness at the same time; he decides to take matters into his own hands through deception. Given that Giles is affiliated with a larger patriarchal apparatus, whose principals he not only incorporates, but also disseminates to others, his actions reflect on the Council as well. This idea is also connected to Weber and Kanter who stress the desire of patriarchs to be surrounded by individuals who share the same ideals and morals. Therefore, it can be argued that Giles did not help Wood because he thinks that Spike will eventually break and kill an innocent being, but that Giles does it because he feels threatened by Spike’s presence since Spike does not conform to the Council’s beliefs.

Giles’ deceiving behavior can be observed several seasons earlier with Faith and the Mayor. Season Three’s villain replaces Giles and the Council as a patriarchal figure for Faith. The Mayor treats her like a daughter; he clothes her, gives her shelter, but more importantly, the Mayor believes in Faith’s abilities. He never disappoints her, while Giles fails not only to control Faith, but also fails Faith. Giles is determined to prevent another “evil” patriarch from taking control of his Slayers. He acts out of self-preservation, without the ability to control the female body; thus, his status among the patriarchs will be diminished. Giles shares this feature with other members of the patriarchy, such as Travers. They both fear the loss of their self-proclaimed authority. As Weber illustrates, traditional rule “[has] existed since time
immemorial,” (135) and therefore, it has not been previously challenged in this fashion. Therefore, Giles tries so hard to influence Buffy’s decisions while he also represents the patriarchy’s most prominent fear, becoming obsolete.

Although Giles has been a Watcher since the beginning of the series, his position as patriarch is not stable; thus, he unknowingly highlights one of patriarchy’s key flaws. Giles’ unstableness is demonstrated in his transitions from a First Wave Watcher to a Second Wave Watcher who partially acts under Buffy’s authority. The term “First Wave Watcher,” embraces all Watchers who were called before the assassinations by the First, while Second Wave Watchers became Watchers after this incident. First Wave Watchers function under the old regime. They are not only descendants of the Shadow Men, but they are also chosen by destiny and family tradition. Thus, First Wave Watchers embody the very attributes that define patriarchy. As Kanter indicates, “metaphorical male ‘homosocial reproduction’—[displays] how men attempt to reproduce their dominant power relations by only uniting with and sharing the same occupational space and privilege with those males they deem similar in image and behavior, cloning themselves in their own image, and forming so-called old-boy networks” (102). First Wave Watchers ensured that only men with the right morals, upbringing, and sense of “tradition” would be able to teach the Council’s values to the Slayers. They were born out of the necessity to bring the old order back and because an authority figure needed to oversee the new Slayers. Giles is the only one who fits both categories while Andrew is just a Second Wave Watcher.

The graphic novel’s Second Wave Watchers are chosen by coincidence and accessibility, not because of tradition; thus they dismantle the patriarchy’s position of tradition in the series. The Second Wave Watchers lack training, and more importantly, they are not called to duty as the First Wave Watchers, a fact that attacks the Council’s self-invented traditions. During one of the earlier episodes, Giles confessed that he did not want
to become a Watcher, but that it was his destiny just as it was Buffy’s to become a Slayer. Unlike Buffy, however, Giles was not chosen by random but because of family tradition. This selection process is fascinating since it shows that the Council places more emphasis and care into the choosing of its Watchers than into that of the Slayers. Thus, the Council is accentuating the Watchers’ importance while undermining that of the Slayers. In connection to the Second Wave Watchers and the loss of these traditionally chosen Watchers, these aspects gain even more momentum.

The fact that Giles cannot completely be categorized as either First or Second Wave Watcher further weakens his position. The impossibility of isolating Giles’ function highlights the inconsistency of his character and power. Additionally, Giles is faced with the fact that Watchers seem to become extinct and obsolete. To complicate Giles’ new function even further, he starts to appear less and less in the graphic novels. Giles briefly appears in Issues: 2 and 5-9 before he disappears all together (out of 21 issues so far). This small number of appearances stands in great contrast to the 123 episodes, out of 145, where Giles participated during the television show. This discrepancy illustrates how Giles’ status as patriarch lessens over the years. The most important fact, however, is that his role as Watcher is diminished since Giles now occupies the same position as Andrew, a Second Wave Watcher who was chosen by accessibility rather than tradition. Like Andrew, Giles independently and simultaneously trains many Slayers. To understand how Andrew’s presence complicates the Watchers’ power positions, one needs to have a closer look at the Second Wave Watcher.

Since Andrew Wells, a former hostage of the Scoobies and seemingly bisexual young man, occupies a patriarchal position greatly weakens the patriarchy’s authority. Andrew undergoes a significant transformation that is related to his status in the show, and as a result, changes the power dynamics between Slayers and Watchers during the graphic novel.
Although he is not called to his Watcher duty as Giles was, Andrew is trained by Giles. Giles breaks with tradition; he decides to train a man whose morals and abilities do not clearly conform with the Council’s guidelines. In less than two years with the appearance of the graphic novel, Andrew is given control over a group of Slayers. These events demonstrate that the training of this new Watcher differs significantly from the previous Watchers’. The First Wave Watchers need to be physically fit in order to instruct and train their Slayers; they were also chosen by destiny and trained for their roles all of their lives. Thus, Andrew’s function as Watcher illustrates how ill-equipped he is for this task. As a result, Andrew highlights how insufficiently prepared the new generation of Watchers are, and how they are enabling other bodies to challenge the Council’s position of power.

The fact that Andrew manages to transform from a hostage to a Watcher who trains his own Slayer unit is interesting; the detail that Giles trains him is even more important. Throughout the show, Giles does not react well to other men, such as Angel and Spike, who try to share and/or take his position as patriarch. Therefore, it is obvious that Giles does not consider Andrew a threat to his own position. Despite all of his flaws, Andrew occupies a position of authority, at least to a certain extent. He trains the Slayers in Rome and is given authority over difficult Slayers. Andrew’s position as a traditional patriarch is problematic since he appears to be “one of the girls” by hosting pajama parties and telling stories around a campfire. This behavior diminishes his respect to some extent since he is also mocked by the Slayers for some of his actions, such as dressing up as Dracula when he tries to educate the Slayers about Dracula. Andrew unmistakably stands apart from the “traditional” Watchers. While it is clear that Andrew is placed in a position that requires him to assert authority, it is also clear that he struggles to even gain respect from his Slayers. His membership in the new Council diminishes the institution’s overall credibility and authority. Therefore, Andrew’s
actions not only degrade his status among the Slayers, but also among the other patriarchs as well.

Equally important is the fact that Andrew’s sexuality cannot be pinpointed, thus disempowering patriarchy even further. The audience could easily identify Andrew as being homosexual if they wished to do so during the TV show. Lines like “He [Warren] never really lov… wanted to hang out with us,” “Spike is so cool … oh, and the chick’s hot, too,” and “I’m not sure a straight man, even a very ‘Lord of the Rings’-obsessed one, is going to enthuse about Spike’s ‘Viggo Mortensen pecs’” (Angel “Damage”) all illustrate that Andrew is interested in men. Season Eight, however, highlights his homosexuality even more when he says how bored he was while the Slayers played strip poker, and when Willow flies him over to Scotland, he replays a scene from Superman telling Willow that she needs to call him Lois (BtVS “Wolfs at the Gate”). All these examples highlight how Andrew’s sexuality undercuts his own position among the patriarchs, thus demeaning the entire Second Wave Council’s power. Andrew, however, is neither interested in controlling or dominating the female body. Therefore, he lacks not only the physical strength to dominate the female body, but he is also disinterested in a significant form of dominance.

As Andrew’s femininity diminishes his qualities as patriarch, his presence could be Whedon’s most successful attempt to leave the power of the patriarchs behind. Whedon says, “Andrew’s sexuality is always on the cusp of self-awareness because Andrew is stunted emotionally and because it’s hilarious” (“Whedonesque.com”). Moreover, his feminine side further weakens his status even more because it is impossible for the series’ patriarchs to take Andrew seriously. Therefore, it is Andrew and his presence that deliver the most serious attack on patriarchy. Since Andrew is not taken completely serious by the Slayers and is also mocked by the Scoobies, his character demonstrates that the Council actually needs its traditions and highlights this institution’s inability to truly adapt once more. The Council and
its Watchers are not the only patriarchs who play vital roles in this series; “normal” human males occupy an important position as well.

Since Xander Harris is, next to Andrew, Giles, and Dracula, the only male left in the graphic novels, his role reflects on the place patriarchy occupies in Season Eight. Although flawed, Xander occupies a position of power as Buffy’s second in command. From the beginning of the graphic novel, Xander is established as Buffy’s right hand since he is not only assigning missions to the Slayers, but also observing their work. Although Xander gains authority and power over time, these attributes do not hinder the dismantling of his status. Xander seems unable to cope with females in any other way than friendship, a fact that is undermined by his inability to have a normal male-female relationship. He also tends to fall in love with demons. As a result, he seeks women who can physically and/or mentally overthrow him (Jowett 58). As is demonstrated in previous discussions, a patriarch needs to be able to dominate the female body; Xander, however, often fails to accomplish this criteria. Xander’s feminization is highlighted by his brief encounter with Faith where he loses his virginity, their sexual encounter disempowers him since he occupies the female part in this scenario; after Faith uses him for sex she disregards him. Xander has no power during this encounter, even more so, because Faith compliments him out of her hotel room and closes the door while he is still in his underwear (BtVS “The Zeppo”). These events diminish Xander’s ability to assert power over the female body despite the position of authority he occupies.

Xander, unlike other patriarchs in the show, does not possess any kind of special skills. He is the only member of the Scooby Gang who is just a “mere human.” Given that he was tortured by an evil priest and lost his eye in the process, Xander can no longer be considered a “true” male. The missing eye equates to a semi-castration. His disability is open for the public to see, and it emphasizes the fact that Xander’s use is limited. But even more important than his physical disability is something else- his lack of knowledge. This obstacle
can be observed repeatedly during the television series and is even more visible in the graphic novel. One scene in the graphic novel emphasizes his lack of knowledge:

Xander: [reads: an unusual symbol.] I think it’s a frown turned upside down. And then turned upside down again.

Buffy: So you think it’s a frown.

Xander: Guy with a monocle frowning.

Buffy: You’re a terrible Watcher.

Xander: I’m not a Watcher.

Buffy: Well, clearly. (*BtVS “The Long Way Home #1”*)

This scene raises the question of how Xander can be classified. Willow is a witch, Dawn is the key used to open otherworldly portals, and Buffy is the Slayer. Xander is just a “normal guy” who was transformed into a soldier for one Halloween night when an evil magician sold cursed Halloween costumes. This is his only source of knowledge. Nor does he compensate with scholarly ability: Xander never went to college but was a construction worker. Significantly, he loses access to even that masculine position as a consequence of his blinding.

Xander is also the first character who is a primary object of ridicule. The most prominent example is his relationship to Dracula. Xander functions as the “Renfield” character during Dracula’s visit in Sunnydale; Xander is reduced to eating spiders and serving his “Dark Master.” After Buffy tells Dracula to leave, Xander storms in the room yelling:

Xander: Where is he?? Where’s the creep that turned me into his spider-eating man-bitch?

Buffy: He’s gone.
Xander: Dammit! You know what? I’m sick of this crap. I’m sick of being the
guy who eats insects and gets the funny syphilis. As of this moment,
it’s over. I’m finished being everybody’s butt-monkey!

Buffy: Check. No more butt-monkey. (BtVS “Buffy vs. Dracula”)

The language Xander uses in this scene illustrates not only his awareness of the fact that he is always the one who has to deal with these kinds of ridicule, but it also highlights his helplessness. He addresses himself as “bitch” and as “butt-monkey,” thus degrading himself and his position in the series. While the term “bitch” hints at Xander’s feminine attributes, “butt-monkey” highlights the comical and emasculated aspects of his character. But even in his rage, no one takes him seriously. Even when Xander is magically transformed, he always ends up in a subordinate role: a mere soldier and Dracula’s minion, to name just two. Therefore, he is rarely able to lead or guide anyone but often takes orders.

In the graphic novel, Xander’s relationship to Dracula is even more emphasized. After the end of Season Seven, Xander spends three months living with Dracula. One of the other slayers comments on that, asking “And Buffy allowed that?” (BtVS “Wolves at the Gate #1”). This comment alone demonstrates that Xander lacks the respect of others and that the Slayers think he is deprived of the right to make his own choices. Buffy may rely on him as a friend, and in Season Eight, as a strategist, but not as an authority figure. All the aforementioned incidences demonstrate that Xander’s status as an authority figure is compromised by his many flaws; a fact that not only further diminishes the patriarchy’s status but also reflects negatively to other patriarchs of the show.

Despite the fact that Riley Finn is a member of a superior patriarchal apparatus, his fragility helps to dismantle patriarchy even further. Buffy soon discovers that Riley’s fragility disrupts their relationship. She is easily able to overpower Riley physically, and Buffy sensitively balances making sure that Riley is safe, while pretending not to see his
vulnerability, in order to protect Riley’s pride. But Buffy is not the only female body that
manages to overpower Riley; Professor Walsh manages to drug and subdue him without his
knowledge for years. Furthermore, the one time the audience can observe him while he is
engaging in sexual acts with a vampire illustrates that the female is also in the more dominant
position. Riley’s shortcomings result in an inability to dominate the female body. These
aspects diminish his status among the patriarchs, especially among Angel and Spike since
both of them equal Buffy in strength and stamina. Among Buffy’s three partners, Riley is the
weakest and the most fragile. Both of these features dismantle his power as patriarch despite
the fact that he is in possession of specific knowledge. This knowledge connects Riley to
other members of the patriarchy. Like Giles, he is unable to dominate the female body
without help. While Giles is dependent on chemicals, Riley is dependent on military
weapons. These incidents highlight that human patriarchs are seriously flawed due to their
constant inability to dominate without an outside stimuli.

In addition to Riley’s frailty and his insecurities, his need to feel needed also
dismantles his position as patriarch while simultaneously connecting him to other members of
the patriarchy. Riley shares this feature with the Council and its members; all parties need to
feel needed in order to function. Riley’s desire to feel needed becomes an important issue,
one that Buffy addresses after she finds out about his connection to the female vampires:

Buffy: Tell me what on earth they were giving you that I can’t.

Riley: They needed me.

Buffy: They needed your money. It wasn’t about you.

Riley: No. On some basic level it was about me. My blood, my body. When
they bit me ... it was beyond passion. They wanted to devour me, all
of me. (BtVS “Into the Woods”)
This passage demonstrates that Riley tried to suppress his insecurities by getting confirmation not only from another “normal” woman, but also from a female vampire. In order to “feel like a man” again, Riley turns to the very thing that he is supposed to destroy. His desire to feel needed and to be the dominant partner in a relationship makes him forget about his duties. Vivien Burr states in “Ambiguity and Sexuality in Buffy the Vampire Slayer: A Sartrean Analysis” that sadomasochistic “erotic power” can primarily be seen in the human/vampire pairings (353). Burr elaborates on the archetypical nature of vampires and humans saying they display the “ultimate other,” which “threatens their subjectivity through death;” consequently they are for each other “a perfect example for Sartrean hatred” (353). Therefore, Riley needs the rush of death in order to function as patriarch, another detail that ties him to Giles. As a result of his inability to dominate Buffy, Riley shifts his focus to other female bodies; engaging in a problematic non-normative eroticism: indeed he kills female vampires after he lets them feed from him. Thus, he simultaneously fulfills two major aspects of patriarchy: the need to dominate others and the need to be needed. He defines himself though the roles he plays for others. In this case, it is his inability to compete with and be equal to Buffy that fuels his inferiority. These aspects highlight patriarchy’s extreme vulnerability while underlining patriarchy’s easily corruptible nature.

Besides his feelings of inferiority, Riley’s sexuality causes one of the most problematic aspects in relation to patriarchy. Like Giles, Riley does not pose a threat to most females in the show. Although Riley is able to sleep with Buffy, he is not able to satisfy her completely. For example, often after they had sex, Buffy would go patrolling as a method to expel her excess energy. Furthermore, Riley lets female vampires penetrate him, and thus he slips into the female role. Burr consequently concludes that human/human relationships are sexual, but that they are not erotic (352). She adds that even Buffy misses the “spark” in her relationship with Riley and that “Riley is ‘fixed’ in the attitude of [masochistic] love, in
Sartre terms, and the scenes between Buffy and Riley are romantic rather than exciting” (352). Significantly, while Buffy is the whole world for Riley, he does not fulfill the same role for Buffy. This is another aspect that he shares with the Council, who depend upon the Slayers for their self-definition; like Giles, Riley needs a purpose in his life. His purpose is Buffy and he fears becoming as obsolete as the Watcher he tries to replace. Burr also argues that their relationship “lacks the human ‘vicious circle’ quality” (352). Therefore, his relationship to Buffy does not make him a sexual predator, or even exciting. If anything, the sex he has with vampires would have accomplished this reaction if it were not for the fact that he fails to create the “spark” even in these encounters since he is no more than a passive bystander. He pays the vampires for drinking his blood, but otherwise he is does not interact with them.

In addition to Riley’s inability to physically affect the female body, his authority is undermined by several other aspects as well. He is not able to function as an authority outside of military structures. This inability accentuates that patriarchs need to be a part of a larger institution if they want to represent figures of authority. The military functions as another instance for a patriarchal apparatus. Like the Council, they choose their members according to certain criteria. Riley is dismissed because he is no longer of service for the military since his ideas and values have changed. This deviation from the military “tradition” makes him unreliable, and therefore, he, like Giles, is denounced from their affiliated groups. As Sabo illustrates in his essay “Pigskin, Patriarchy, and Pain,” the “system of intermale dominance in which a minority of men dominates the masses of men” (379) even males function under patriarchal law. They need to fulfill certain aspects in order to belong to patriarchal institutions, and they are also required to demonstrate the institution’s values and traits. Sabo explains how he sees himself as “one more man among many men who get swallowed by a social system predicated on male domination” (379). These claims are in accord with Kanter
who describes “homosocial reproduction.” These events illustrate that patriarchs who are
disconnected from these larger institutions illustrate their inability to function without their
peers’ support; thus emphasizing the whole institutions’ fragility.

When Riley leaves the military, he becomes less focused and reliable. His problems
with Buffy escalate, and he becomes more and more useless. While Giles is still able to focus
on Buffy and her Slayer education, Riley is at a loss. Moreover, because of his
denouncement, Riley loses his access to the specific knowledge he was able to contribute to
Buffy’s life before. Furthermore, Riley is also emasculated by the fact that he is addicted to
the strength enhancing drugs given to him by the government. His helplessness is highlighted
when Buffy’s mother becomes ill. Riley fails as emotional support when Joyce is in the
hospital. As a result, he is failing at yet another patriarchal role: that of the protector.
Although Riley is not the first serious partner Buffy had, he is the first human one.

Angel’s sexuality is compromised in several areas which not only help to dismantle
his status as patriarch, but also illustrate how this flaw is universal among patriarchs. One of
the most important failures is that Angel makes the transformation after he and Buffy had
sex. Although Whedon is playing with male roles at this moment, it is still interesting that he
chose a member of the patriarchy for this event since stereotypical the female is supposed to
change. Angel suffers because of the “forbidden” act. He loses not only his soul, but, he also
realizes that he can never again engage in sexual intercourse with Buffy since it would have
dire consequences for him. Interestingly, Angel shares this inability to control the female
body through sexuality with Riley. Although both men fail because of different reasons, they
are both not able to assert control over Buffy through sexual relations. Together with the fact
that vampires cannot impregnate humans, this event highlights Angel’s impotence. This flaw
dismantles his status as patriarch since he, much like Giles, cannot assert sexual control over
the female body. In addition to these aspects Angel is also not able to dominate Buffy during
combat. These events emphasize how he, like the Council, is not able to continue his control over the female body.

Angel’s sexuality is another aspect that hinders him in controlling the body, and in connection to this, it also diminishes his ability to assert sexual power. The most prominent aspect of Angel’s sexuality is displayed in the graphic novel during issue #19. He appears in a dream sequence in which Buffy reduces him to a sexual fantasy that he has to share with Spike. This scene reduces Angel to nothing more than a toy for Buffy’s pleasure. Since this fantasy also includes a second patriarch, Spike, this scene depicts a power shift. Through her dream Buffy takes charge of the situation while she also reduces both patriarchs to a passive position. In addition to this power shift, this scene also implies that Angel is not “man enough” for Buffy since she is in need of a second man, thus castrating Angel even further. This aspect connects the vampire to Riley again, both men’s manhood, Angel because of the inclusion of a second male character and Riley because he cannot satisfy Buffy, is compromised by Buffy, attacking their positions as patriarchs even further. Since the graphic novel reduces him to an object of sexual desire, his ability to function as a patriarch is diminished even further. Besides the flaws that are connected to Angel’s sexuality, his alter ego, Angelus, also diminishes his function as patriarch.

The monstrous nature of patriarchy is highlighted in the fact that Angel needs to embrace his “evil” self, Angelus, in order to dominate the female body, thus illustrating the close connection between patriarchy and monstrosity. It seems evident that patriarchy needs to incorporate some monstrous characteristics in order to assert power and attraction, thus highlighting its inability to function under “normal” circumstances. Not only are most patriarchal deeds, like looking after his family and deciding what course of action needs to be taken, committed by Angelus and not Angel, but Angelus also incorporates the majority of patriarchal traits. Since Angelus’ behavior can be connected to the Council, as well as the
Shadow men and even Riley, these qualities demonstrate that all patriarchal traits and tools demonstrate a certain affiliation to the monstrous. Burr, for instance, argues that Angel, in the moment when he loses his soul, “moves into the attitude of sadism in a symbolic ‘failure of desire’” (354). Burr claims that the possibility of losing his soul plays an important part in Buffy’s and Angel’s relationship and that it also serves as the catalyst that creates the tension between Buffy and Angel later on. The only aspect that keeps the tension between Buffy and Angel alive is the possibility that he reverts to Angelus.

Besides his inability to control the female body through strength, Angel’s status among the patriarchs also suffers because he is unable to make peace with his condition as a vampire with a soul. His inability to accept his vampiric side makes it impossible for him to fit into a specific group. Not only is he othered by the fact that he is a vampire, but because of his reluctance to accept his self, he also is not a complete vampire. Angel is not able to penetrate humans because of his soul. According to Smuts, the neckbite serves as main tool of domination among males. Not only is Angel no longer able to drink from humans, but this useful tool of domination is also lost to him. Unable to dominate humans, his only way of domination lies within his own world. Since he belongs neither to the demonic world nor to the human realm, this possibility is also taken from him. As a consequence, Angel, like Giles, is not easy to categorize. Thus, these patriarchs establish a pattern that demonstrates the unstable nature of their status, which reflects back on all patriarchs.

Naturally, as a member of the patriarchal apparatus, Angel should assert authority, but since his decisions are often influenced by others, and not his own values, his stance among the patriarchs weakens the whole institution. Not only do Giles and Joyce, respectively, tell him to leave Sunnydale, but his wrongness for Buffy is also highlighted by Spike who tells them that “You’ll never be friends. You’ll be in love till it kills you both” (*BtVS* “Lover’s Walk”). In the same episode Buffy tells Angel that they cannot be together, disregarding his
attempts to stop her. He tells her “I don't accept that,” but Buffy counters making it clear that he has no other choice. These events pose the question to what extent is Angel responsible for his own decisions. Much like Xander, Angel is not in control of some of his actions. Since he is often influenced by other members of the patriarchy, Angel’s status among them suffers as well, while it simultaneously casts a shadow on all patriarchal figures. Besides the flaws demonstrated by Angel and Giles, Spike also incorporates elements that dismantle the status of patriarchs.

Spike’s status as domesticated male diminishes his position of authority and power and serves as another tool to dismantle other patriarchal figures. Spike’s sexuality is often attacked and feminized. He is neutered first by the Initiative and second by his feelings for Buffy. The chip implanted by The Initiative prevents him from doing what he was reborn to do, kill and drain humans. Spike’s neutered state also affects his sexuality since he is now unable to penetrate, and in connection to this, dominate the female body. His disability demonstrates patriarchy’s limitations. At one point, he tries to bite Willow but fails. His response reminds the audience of a specific male fear, impotence. Willow tells him that this can happen to every vampire and that he should not worry. She even asks him if it is her fault that he cannot bite her. She assumes that she is not pretty enough (“BtVS “Love’s Fool”). Spike shares the aspect of impotence with Angel and Giles, but there is another twist that makes Spike’s domestication even more visible. Spike has always been under female influence; before Buffy, Spike was fixated on Drusilla, and before her, he was enamored by his mother. Spike’s desires to be loved and to be able to care for his women transform him into the domesticated male. He tries very hard to please the current woman in his life, no matter what it may cost him. This behavior stands in stark contrast with patriarchal behavior patterns. According to Weber authority needs to fulfill two aspects, demonstrating the ability to tell people what to do and securing the compliance of the subjects towards the one in
power (132). Spike acts on the desires of the women in his life, but not because he wants to act, but because he cannot avoid seeking recognition through these females. This reversal of traditional roles is highlighted by Lindsey German who argues that patriarchs control women by controlling their labor power (3); in this case, the women control Spike’s labor. Although Spike is aware of this aspect, “I may be love's bitch, but at least I’m man enough to admit it” (BtVS “Lover’s Walk”), his awareness of his status does not distress the effectiveness of this flaw. Even if Spike is aware of his deficit, he still endeavors to strengthen his position as authority figure. As much as the Watcher’s are useless without the Slayers, Spike is useless without a woman in his life. He needs someone he can look after and care for. Since Spike’s main focus, in the series, lies with Buffy, the term woman and Slayer become interchangeable. Both, Watchers and Spike, are dependent on the Slayers to give their life meaning.

Spike’s sexuality is also attacked since Buffy uses him for sex, forcing him into a passive position, thus putting him in a female role. Buffy, not Spike, controls the relationship. Buffy turned Spike’s own desires against him. Like the Council and Giles, she allows Spike to react according to her actions; thus she displaces him from the decision making process, rendering him powerless. In light of their relationship in Season Seven, this trait is even more important. Season Seven reduces Buffy’s sexual relationship with Spike to cuddling. He moves from a violent sexual partner to someone she uses for comfort. This idea also stresses Spike’s sexual “safeness” for the other Scoobies. He is not a threat to them because his feelings for Buffy render him impotent even once the chip is removed. Spike’s failure to rape Buffy reflects the patriarchs’ inability to assert control over the female body. Spike did not try to rape her because he desired her; it was his attempt to gain control of the situation. He tried to use his physical strength as a tool of domination. Spike’s inability to conclude the rape diminishes his status as patriarch even further while it also highlights his impotence.
Spike in fact, does what patriarchs in this show have been doing for centuries; he bases his position of power on self-invented traditions.

Spike’s desire to keep his status as patriarch leads him to pretend that he is still able to be a villain. Spike is mainly working with the image he and his kind have built over thousands of years. He hides his impotence by using memories of fear and powerlessness to his advantage, hoping most people will not call him on his bluff. This characteristic connects him to the Watchers’ Council and their ancestors the Shadow Men. Much like them, Spike uses his race’s own tradition to exert power over others. He functions as a modern mirror image of the old patriarchy. Since vampires and the Council are closely connected in their hierarchal structures and traditions, Spike’s inability to assert power over the female body reflects on these larger institutions as well. The placement of the chip, which is put into Spike’s head by The Initiative, one of the most traditional patriarchal organizations, is significant as well. Spike is limited and punished by a power that is similar to the structures he is knows well. Since The Initiative is able to control his entire being by using the chip, Spike is reduced to his more primal functions. This event demonstrates another instance where patriarchy is asserting power over one of their own. Like Giles, Wood and Andrew before him, Spike is affected by intermale behavior structures, and thus dominated by the bigger patriarchal apparatus.

The vampires Buffy fights are equally important in the discussion of patriarchy since they function in similar ways as the “friendly” vampires. This proposal illustrates that patriarchy needs to demonstrate some kind of monstrosity in order to assert power over others. The Master, the oldest and also most strict patriarch on the show, is eventually defeated by Buffy as well. The Master is the first villain Buffy has to fight. It is no coincidence that Buffy’s first opponent is an evil vampire, who is also hundreds of years old.
since the Master also functions as a patriarch. Like other patriarchs in the series, the Master incorporates several flaws that make it possible for Buffy to dismantle his status as patriarch.

The Master’s inability to escape from his prison independently dismantles his power, a fact that is highlighted by the constant challenge his own “children” present. As head of the Aurelius order and because of his age, he should be in a strong position of power; however, neither Angel nor Spike obeys him, which is their duty as members of the same order. The Master is also challenged by Darla; she drinks from one of his meals (a young boy) before he can, and he asks her if he is nothing more than a dog fed from table scraps (BtVS “Welcome to the Hellmouth”). His greatest flaw, however, is that despite his age and experience he is defeated by Buffy in battle. He is not able to hold his ground against Buffy; this is the most prominent aspect that challenges his ability to assert patriarchal power.

Despite the fact that he portrays one of the main patriarchs in history, Dracula’s appearance on BtVS diminishes the patriarchy’s position of power even more. Even though he appeared in only one episode during the TV show, his character gains importance in the graphic novel. Although the episode “Dracula vs. Buffy” shows that he is able to penetrate Buffy once before she rejects him, this event cannot redeem his inability to dominate her permanently. This inability puts Dracula in the same position as Xander and Angel. Both males, Xander and Dracula, are used by the woman before they are cast aside. They basically represent the female part in these one night stands; Xander, as was mentioned before, because of his physical relation to Faith and Dracula because Buffy rejects him after their first bite. These aspects together with the fact that Dracula depends on others dismantles his position as patriarch.

Another one of Dracula’s traits that connects him to other patriarchs, like the Council and the Watchers, is his desire to feel needed and, by extension, his fear of becoming obsolete. His authority lies in the fact that he is needed and that he possesses knowledge. This
aspect becomes especially visible in the graphic novel. Dracula, like Giles and the Council, needs a purpose. Without this purpose he does not know what to do with himself; as Buffy would say, he is just “watching Masterpiece Theater” (BtVS “Graduation #1”). The graphic novel displays that he has grown old and that his servant is trying to entice him to get out of the bathrobe so he can wash it. Dracula transforms into a slob because no one needs him. It is not until the moment when he learns that Xander comes for a visit that he gets dressed and instantly rejuvenates. Dracula regains his strength because he discovers that he is needed again. This truth confirms that, despite the reality that he is a vampire, he and the Council function under the same conditions; both need to be useful in order to feel powerful. These ideas illustrate the vulnerability of these patriarchs.

As was shown on the basis of these different patriarchs and patriarchal institutions, patriarchy, individually and systematically, incorporates flaws that enable the female body to dismantle its authority. Whether it is patriarchies’ inability to assert power outside a larger patriarchal apparatus or its inability to operate alongside other patriarchs without fear of being overpowered, it is proven that its authority weakens throughout the series. Although Whedon created powerful patriarchs, he also endowed them with significant flaws. Thus, he maintains the possibility for equality despite his constant reintroducing of patriarchal figures.
CONCLUSION

Buffy: “I don’t take orders. I do things my way.”
Kendra: “No wonder you died.”

*BtVS* “What’s My Line #2”

Although there are multiple instances where different patriarchal institutions and their members are dismantled throughout the series, patriarchy always finds its way back to power. Despite their flaws, the discussed patriarchs not only reemerge multiple times, but they also regain control over the female body. The different instances of destruction and return demonstrated in patriarchy illustrate that this power cannot be broken; patriarchal power structures are dominant throughout the series. As the creator of *BtVS*, Whedon not only fails in crafting a series where strong female characters act independently, but he also fails in his attempt to deconstruct patriarchs and their power. Whedon reintroduces patriarchal figures throughout his show, and he also ensures that Buffy needs to adapt patriarchal power structures in order to assert power over others. Thus, he not only illustrates patriarchies’ haunting authority, but he also reveals that it is impossible to live successfully without patriarchal influence.

Whedon’s failure to craft a female protagonist who does not depend on patriarchy is investigated by different authors, like Mary Magoullick, Mathew Henry, Shannon Smith, and many more. Although Buffy is an active woman, Whedon demonstrates to the audience that her strength is an aspect that constantly needs to be challenged and occasionally punished as well. Buffy’s attempts to gain and redirect power while empowering patriarchal figures are as flawed as the patriarchs themselves. Since Whedon reestablishes patriarchal characters all through his series, he not only exemplifies patriarchies’ all-pervading influence, but he also exposes that it is unfeasible to live effectively without patriarchal authority. As was mentioned earlier, power, according to Foucault, cannot be fixed; it is fluent and malleable.
One of Foucault’s central ideas about power is that it needs to be subverted. He suggests that power needs to allow its subjects the illusion that they can subvert the power structures under which the subjects function. The patriarchs in *BtVS* allow the female body to believe that it is able to subvert power when in reality the female body can only subvert as much as these patriarchal institutions allow. In an interview with members of *Quel Corps*, Foucault shares his opinions about these aspects of power: “Suddenly, what had made power strong becomes used to attack it. Power after investing itself in the body, finds itself exposed to a counterattack in the same body… But the impression that power weakens and vacillates here is in fact mistaken; power can retreat here, re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere…and so the battle continues” (*Power/Knowledge* 56). It is only natural that the same body that was exposed to power will at one point attack the same power which has subverted it. Therefore, the Council arguably knew that Buffy was trying to switch the roles by asserting power over it and welcomes these attempts since they reaffirm the Council’s status as a powerful entity. By allowing Buffy to believe that she succeeded, the Council actually strengthens its base of power. The power of the Council and its members “can retreat …, re-organize its forces, invest itself elsewhere” (56). The fluidity of power makes it possible for these patriarchs not only to survive, but also to keep their status as authority figures, regardless of the fact that they may have to adjust their traditions.

Notwithstanding their obvious flaws, Whedon constantly reintroduces patriarchs, thus keeping not only their power, but also the myth of their influence alive. As was explained before, neither the Council nor its members need to be present to assert power. Foucault’s term “microphysics of power” is useful here because it describes how an entity of power continues to assert power even if it is not physically present (*Discipline and Punish* 178). Patriarchal power structures are so ingrained in society that they not only became “natural,” but also necessary.
Notably, the patriarchs in *BtVS* do not randomly appear; they seem to be overtly present during predicaments, such as Giles who is sent to assert power over evil Willow, or Angel who appears towards the end of Season Seven to hand Buffy a magical amulet. Thus, these patriarchs reaffirm that the female body is unable to cope with difficult situations alone. This theme of dependence is continued in the graphic novels as they mark the return of Dracula; Buffy inquires after him and asks for his help. Since Buffy is unable to solve the new crisis alone, she sends Xander to talk to Dracula. Buffy relies on the two men in this scenario, Xander and Dracula, to fulfill their part and remedy the situation. Another example that illustrates this theme is Faith; her acts, after she decides that she does not need a patriarchal figure in her life, highlight her inability to function without said authority figures. As a result of these events, Faith not only severs the last remaining bonds between the Council and herself, but she also allies with a different patriarch, the Mayor. He becomes the new patriarchal figure in Faith’s life. The Mayor clothes her, feeds her, provides shelter for her, but more importantly, he trusts Faith and believes in her. Not only did he “rescue” Faith from a life of despair, but he also “rescued” her from herself. Faith’s inability to cope independently with her failure demonstrates not only her inability to entirely exist without this patriarchal influence, but it also illustrates Whedon’s reluctance to part with patriarchal figures. But Faith is not the only one who is “rescued” by a patriarch.

While Giles left the show for a short while, the moment of his return marks the beginning of a new crisis. Towards the end of Season Five, Willow turns evil and endeavors to destroy the world. Since no one in Sunnydale has the magical abilities to stop her, a British Wiccan coven equips Giles with all their power so that he can destroy Willow. Although Giles is versed in magic, he is neither witch nor warlock; nonetheless, he is chosen to “rescue” not only Willow, but the world. Very much like a father who scolds a child, Giles demands that Willow stop. He tries to subvert her and is joined by Xander who ultimately
“wins” because he loves her unconditionally. The patriarchs, not Buffy, rescue the world. These incidents demonstrate that patriarchy’s power is still a force to be reckoned with. Their actions mark a return to “normal” structures. Incidents like these keep patriarchy’s myth and its haunting presence alive and indispensable. While these incidents occur in the television show, the graphic novel reintroduces patriarchy as well.

As the only male character on Buffy’s side in the graphic novel, Xander serves as a constant reminder of patriarchy. Xander develops into a valuable ally for Buffy, and he functions as an authority figure for other Slayers as well. The fact that he, and not one of the other Slayers, becomes Buffy’s second in command demonstrates that the male power cannot be completely discarded and finds ways to adapt. Although these new patriarchs do not appear as strong and as “masculine” as before, they are not only present, but also still in power. Xander’s character demonstrates how power can shift and how it is redefined in order to emerge on a different level. His ability to adjust, despite the tradition, signifies the need for these apparatuses and their power structures.

Although Whedon demonstrates that the Council incorporates major flaws, he continuously reintroduces new Council members. During Season Seven, all Watchers, except Giles, are killed by the First. This event could have presented the end of this particular patriarchal influence in the show since it demonstrates the Council’s insufficiency to survive. Instead, this incident highlights that, although it is far from being perfect, the Council not only survives, but also manages to adjust to new situations. It can be argued that this near destruction forced the remaining member of the patriarchy to revalue and reform the Council’s tradition, an act that eventually undermines the Council’s power base.

The Second Wave Watchers occupy an important role in the graphic novels since they represent the primary change patriarchy endures throughout the series. During the television show, one Watcher is responsible for one Slayer; the graphic novel, however, shifts these
power structures; now one Watcher is responsible for hundreds of Slayers. These new Watchers are able to influence and shape more bodies than ever before, giving them the opportunity to reemphasize the Watchers’ authority and importance. While it appeared as if the patriarchs were banished to second place, they just reorganized their structures and recreated themselves in the process, emerging stronger and more efficient. But the Watchers’ existence is not the only incident of the patriarchy’s haunting presence.

It is impossible for Buffy to subvert these power structures and to use/mold them without adapting and incorporating them for herself. Her sexuality plays an important role in this power struggle. In the graphic novel, Buffy entertains a homosexual relationship with another Slayer. Interestingly enough, Buffy chooses a partner who in due time could be her equal in battle, and who is also able to understand her completely since they share the same powers, beliefs, goals and ultimately the same fate. And even though, Buffy’s new lover, Satsu, is a Slayer as well, Satsu does not have as much knowledge or experience as Buffy.

Despite her attachment to Satsu, Buffy does not hesitate to assert power over her lover; thus, she mimics patriarchy’s domination over the female body. Although this seems to be a normal occurrence for a relationship, it signals a change in Buffy’s approach to liaisons. During former relationships, as illustrated in chapter one, it is evident that Buffy tries to please her partners. While she made various exemptions for other partners, such as Angel and Riley, she treats Satsu differently. Since Satsu is not a member of a patriarchal apparatus, and Buffy, therefore, does not seek her approval, Buffy seems to completely dismiss Satsu’s input. When Satsu tries to question one of Buffy’s commands, Buffy brusquely interrupts her, reaffirming her status as sole leader by making it clear that “this isn’t up for discussion, Satsu. I gave you an order get moving” (BtVS “Wolfs at the Gate #2”). Willow reminds Satsu about her position and Buffy’s role in their operation: “She’s not like us. She’s the General. We’re her army. And that’s never gonna change” (BtVS “Wolfs at the Gate #2”). Buffy, like
the Council and other patriarchs, expects obedience without question from her subjects. Buffy adapts these patriarchal power structures, and thus becomes a member of the patriarchal apparatus as well. Furthermore, as Foucault states, power reshapes according to different influences. Buffy starts out with the best intentions, but she cannot escape falling into the same trap as the patriarchs before her.

The fact that Buffy rarely takes other ideas into consideration demonstrates how she is aligning with patriarchal structures. She, like others before her, is not only forcing herself on the female body, but she is also disconnected from her fellow Slayers:

Buffy: Why can’t I feel it [the bond all the other Slayers share]?

Xander: Maybe you don’t get to. Maybe the girl who brings it all together, is the one that has to give that up.

Buffy: Yeah. Yay me. (*BtVS “A Beautiful Sunset”*)

This scene not only highlights that Xander still thinks of Buffy as a “girl,” not a woman in her own right, but it also illustrates that Buffy cannot be one of the other Slayers. Although neither the television show nor the graphic novel explicitly address how Buffy came to power, it stands to reason that she is chosen because of her seniority. Therefore, it can be argued that Buffy’s ascension to power requires certain sacrifices. In attempts to assume the position of the leader of the Slayer army, Buffy distances herself from the other Slayers. This role of leader requires an objectivity that can only be achieved by separation. This necessary rift between her and the other Slayers demonstrates that Buffy subconsciously adapted patriarchal structures, confirming that one cannot escape patriarchy’s poignant presence. Like the Council, Buffy inhabits an outside position; she commands the new Slayers, like she was commanded; she sends them on missions, and she also transforms them into the body that needs to be acted upon. It is an instrument that needs to be “manipulated, shaped, [and] trained,” as well as an entity “which obeys, responds, becomes skillful and increases its
forces” (Foucault 136). Both entities look upon the body as something that needs to be
“manipulated, shaped, trained, which obeys, responds becomes skillful and increases its
forces” (136). As Foucault declares, power never leaves; it is always around, even though it
may change its appearance. As a result of the empowerment of all potential Slayers, Buffy
transitions from the power who was formed to one of the bodies in charge. She effectively
becomes their new leader. Buffy does not grant the Slayers the same freedom she fought for;
she expects them to obey her commands and to follow her beliefs. Among the Slayers, Buffy
is a living legend.

While Buffy has the perfect opportunity to create a world without patriarchal
structures, a world where its individuals are equal to each other, she opts for a return to her
“roots,” the patriarchal system. As Kanter and Weber declare, patriarchy not only created
itself, but it is also using this myth to create and shape its own traditions. Since Buffy now
inhabits a position that has never been there before, General of the Slayer army, she creates
her own traditions according to the structures she is used to. While Buffy replaces the
traditional patriarch as provider, protector, and decision maker, she is not able to flee its
presence. These ideas highlight that although patriarchy allows its subjects the illusion of a
possible dismantling, its power structures allow for a constant reshaping and reforming,
making its destruction impossible.

Buffy and her Scoobies changed the fate of the world. No longer can it be said that
“Into every generation, a Slayer is born. One girl, in all the world, a Chosen One. One born
with the strength and skill to hunt the vampires” (BtVS “Welcome to the Hellmouth”); since
the end of Season Seven, the number of Slayers is increasing every year. Although a new
generation of women was brought into the world, it is a generation that follows the traditional
patriarchal models instead of embracing their own embodiments of power. For Foucault
states, “Power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are
endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (History of Sexuality 92-93). Both Buffy and the series’ patriarchs work with these ideas of power. They reshape and reuse them according to their needs. While these ideas propose the notion of an equal access to and use of power, in reality, they illustrate that the haunting presence of the patriarchs cannot be circumvented. Nonetheless, these female bodies made their first steps on their journey towards equality. Sunnydale’s original Slayer changed the Slayer’s lineage forever; she laid the ground for a world where females not only try to dismantle male authority figures and power structures, but where they also try to adopt those structures their own.
Works Cited


