Julie Sloan Brannon

"It's About Power": Buffy, Foucault, and the Quest for Self

[1] "It's about power." With these words, the final season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* began, and with these words defined the central premise of the entire show. Joss Whedon, creator of the Buffyverse, has consistently maintained that *Buffy* was a feminist revision of the horror genre in which the little blonde girl was always the victim. There is no denying that aspect of the program, which appealed to thousands of viewers of both genders. What I find fascinating, though, is how much the show reflects a Foucauldian understanding of social discourses and subject-formation through manipulating the classic hero quest. Campbell's famous formulation has been applied to Buffy before (Bowman, 2002; Hinton, 2002; *et al*.), so I won't tread over stale ground here. Saving the world, as Hinton points out, has never really been the heart of Buffy's quest; rather, it is her quest for Selfhood, to understand the power she's got and how to use it, that has formed the central journey for Buffy. Campbell's formula is based on a psychological model, heavily Jungian, that presupposes a humanist concept of individualism, and most examinations of the quest aspect of the show have followed in that vein as well. What I propose, in contrast, is a quest model based on a Foucauldian understanding of power structures and the modes of Subjectification. The mythology of the Slayer tells us that her power has been forced upon her and her alone; what Buffy achieves through her quest to define her Self is to alter the very nature of that power structure and create what is, in Foucauldian terms, an "event" in power formation. In the final episode, "Chosen" (7022), Xander says, "We saved the world," to which Willow replies, "We *changed* the world." This exchange underscores the nature of the boon that Buffy bestows from her quest: power as shared phenomenon rather than power concentrated and controlled[1]. In this way Buffy defeats the enemy she'd fought for seven years: an isolation enforced by a patriarchal structure that feared the power which it bestowed. Five episodes in particular stand out in exploring this aspect of the Slayer's journey: Season 3's "Graduation Day, Part 1" (3021), Season 5's "Checkpoint" (5012), and Season 7's "Lessons" (7001), "Get It Done" (7015), and "Chosen" (7022).

[2] Season story arcs are consistently set up two years in advance on *Buffy*; for example, Dawn's appearance in Season 5 was telegraphed in Seasons 3 and 4 through a dream dialogue between Buffy and Faith ("Graduation Day Pt. 2," 3022, and "This Year's Girl," 4015, respectively).[2] True to form, Season 7's theme of power was telegraphed two seasons in advance in "Checkpoint" (5012). In this episode, the Watcher's Council, previously rejected by Buffy and Giles in favor of working on their own in Season 3, returns to Sunnydale ostensibly

to convey information on that season's Big Bad, Glory. But before they are willing to share their knowledge they require Buffy to undergo a "review" of her "methods." As the controlling bureaucratic state for the Slayers, the Watcher's Council has proven that, to them, the Slayers are merely tools that must be honed and wielded; if a tool breaks, they merely get a new one. In this way, the power dynamic of the state and the individual acquires the specific overtones of the patriarchal state and the individual woman through the Council/Slayer relationship. Buffy rejects this structure in favor of her own value system, which places the individual above the state regardless of gender. In "Graduation Day Pt. 1" (3021), as Angel lies near death from a vampire-specific poison, the following exchange illustrates Buffy's rejection of the Watcher's Council:

> Wesley: 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.
>
> Buffy: I'm talking about watching my lover die. I don't have a clue what you're talking about and I don't care.
>
> ...
>
> Wesley: The Council's orders are to concentrate on ...
>
> Buffy: Orders? I don't think I'm gonna be taking any more orders. Not from you, not from them. Wesley, go back to your Council and tell them until the next Slayer comes along, they can close up shop. I'm not working for them anymore.
>
> ...
>
> Wesley: This is mutiny.
>
> Buffy: (long pause) I like to think of it as graduation.

The Council's bureaucratic inability to appreciate individual worth puts it at odds with Buffy's understanding of the value of her support system. Earlier in the season, Wesley showed a willingness to sacrifice Buffy's best friend Willow in order to focus on the greater threat of the Mayor. Risking individual lives for an abstract goal is the Council's *modus operandi*, right down to the creation of the First Slayer, as "Get It Done" (7015) attests. For Buffy, it is her relationships that have enabled her to survive longer

than any other slayer (that we know of), a point driven home in Season 4's climactic battle in which the Scoobies combined their essences into a "super-Buffy" that was able to magically stop Adam. The Council is unnecessary for Buffy to do her job, until Season 5 confronts her with Glory.

[3] The Council, however, punishes Buffy for her transgression in asserting her independence. As they showed in Season 3's "Helpless" (3012), their control exists in the form of scientific tests, experiments, and data gathering, and they continue this methodology in "Checkpoint" (5012) through physical tests and interviews of her friends. These methods exemplify Foucault's definition of discipline in relation to the body: "Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience). In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude,' a 'capacity,' which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection" ("Docile Bodies" 182). For the Council, it is vital to reinstate its control over the Slayer and her power, and her desperation for knowledge allows them a way to do just that. [3]

[4] The Council is a perfect stand in for a state power in the Foucauldian sense: it is a surveilling body using discipline to contain the power it can never quite grasp completely. The First Slayer was chosen and demonic power infused into her by a tribunal of men, the first Watcher's Council. This power has then been passed down from Chosen One to Chosen One, always under the panoptic eye of her Watchers. The gendering of this relationship is not incidental to the show's themes, but I would suggest that to essentialize this structure as "patriarchy bad … bad, bad patriarchy" is reductivist. Season 7 reminds us that "it's about power," not just "girl power," a troublingly conflicted term that restricts and clouds real issues of gender power dynamics. In "End of Days," we find out that there is a female group that names itself "the Guardians" that has stood behind the Watchers Council, and unbeknownst to them has held back a weapon for the Slayer to use before the end. Their knowledge of its eventual need, that the patriarchal Watchers would in the end fail, adds an interesting layer to the gender dynamics of the show.

[5] The first glimmering of this final triumph of the Slayer's own power over that of the Watcher's Council comes in "Checkpoint" (5012) during the climactic scene between Buffy and Quentin Travers, head of the Council. Buffy has spent the entire episode feeling helpless and humiliated by various situations: her professor ridicules her in history class, Glory waltzes into her home and threatens her, the Council threatens Giles with deportation if Buffy doesn't cooperate with their review, and, when she is already late for her final test by the Council, she is attacked by the Knights of Byzantium, a Templars-like order bent on destroying the Key and whoever gets in their way. During this final confrontation, she apparently has an epiphany about her current situation (as so often on the

show, exemplified through the physical defeat of an enemy) and she enters the Magic Box ready to redefine the parameters of her relationship with the Council:

> Travers: We can begin the review at last. We'll, uh, skip the more obvious questions …
>
> Buffy (*putting sword down on his papers*): There isn't gonna be a review.
>
> Travers: Sorry?
>
> Buffy: No review. No interrogation. No questions you *know* I can't answer. No hoops, no jumps—(*Nigel starts to speak*)—and no interruptions (*looking at Nigel, who quiets*). (*pacing*) See … I've had a lot of people talking at me the last few days. Everyone just lining up to tell me how unimportant I am. And I've finally figured out why. (*Looks Travers in the eye*) Power. I have it. They don't. And this bothers them.
>
> …
>
> Buffy: You guys didn't come all the way from England to determine whether or not I was good enough to be let back in. You came to beg *me* to let *you* back in. To give your jobs, your lives, some semblance of meaning.
>
> Nigel: This is beyond insolence—
>
> (*Buffy flings sword in one move at him, it misses his head and sticks into wall*)
>
> Buffy: I'm fairly certain I said no interruptions.
>
> …
>
> Buffy: You're Watchers. Without a Slayer, you're pretty much just watchin' *Masterpiece Theater*. You can't stop Glory. You can't do anything with the information you have except maybe publish it in the *Everyone Thinks We're Insanos Home Journal*. So here's how it's gonna work. You're gonna tell me everything you know. Then you're gonna go away. You'll contact me if and when you have any further information about Glory. The magic shop will remain open. Mr. Giles will stay here as my official Watcher, reinstated at full salary …
>
> Giles (*coughing into hand*): Retroactive.
>
> Buffy: … to be paid retroactively from the month he was fired. I will continue my work with the help of my friends …
>
> Lydia: I, uh, I don't want a sword thrown at me, but, but civilians, I—we're talking about children here.
>
> Buffy: We're talking about two very powerful witches and a thousand year old ex-demon.

…

Philip: The boy? No power there.

Buffy: The *boy* has clocked in more field time than all of you combined. He's part of the unit.

…

Buffy: Now. You all may be very good at your jobs. The only way we're gonna find out is if you work with me. You can all take your time thinking about that. But I want an answer right now from Quentin, 'cause I think he's understanding me.

momentary silence

Travers: Uh, your terms are acceptable.

[6] Speaking truth to power, Buffy effectively negates the Council's methods of control over her by reminding them that it is only through her mission that they have a purpose. She also effectively silences their attempts at reinstating their superiority (Nigel's indignation at her "insolence" and Lydia's naming of Xander, Willow, and the rest as "children") through a combination of re-naming ("two powerful witches …"), reminding the Council of their lack of real involvement or experience (Xander's "field time" which is more than "all of [the Council] combined"), and sword-flinging, thus underscoring her own power. Her willingness to concede that the Council "may be very good" at their jobs shows that she is not interested in simply inverting their paradigm (in which one side must dominate and control the other) but in finding a new way to cooperatively work for a common cause. Already we see a glimmering of the plan which will come to fruition in Season 7's "Chosen" (7022).

[7] Buffy's triumph here allows us to examine her quest for Self under a Foucauldian rubric: for Foucault, the aim of his work was to "create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects" (qtd. in Rabinow 7). The Council's methods fall under a mode Foucault called "dividing practices":

> Essentially [they] are modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of a science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion—usually in a spatial sense, but always in a social one. [These practices include]: the objectification of individuals drawn first from a rather undifferentiated mass…, and later from more highly preselected populations …; the interconnections of dividing practices with the formation and increasingly sophisticated elaboration of the social sciences; the historical relationship of these modes of classification, control, and containment to a distinctive tradition of humanitarian rhetoric on reform and progress; the increasingly efficient and diverse applications of these combined procedures of power and knowledge mainly, although not

> exclusively, to dominated groups or to groups formed and given an identity through the dividing practices. (Rabinow 8)

Chosen at first from an "undifferentiated mass" of women and slowly over time preselected from adolescent girls, the Slayer is given her identity through training and application of arcane knowledge by her Watcher, as part of a credo of the greater good, and the Watcher's Council became, over time, an increasingly sophisticated bureaucracy dedicated only to one thing: watching over the Slayer, using her to stop the demons—a further group given identity through the Watchers as evil, even though the show consistently complicates such a definition. The social isolation of the Slayer, even alienating her own family, is part of the dividing practice of the Council. This practice is exemplified by Nikki Woods, the Slayer killed by Spike, and who we see in "Lies My Parents Told Me" (7017) tell her own son, "the mission is what matters." Robin Woods is left to confront the legacy of that rejection when he tries to revenge himself on Spike, the vampire who killed his mother. Spike explains to Woods that "[he knows] slayers. No matter how many people they've got around them, they fight alone. Life of the chosen one. The rest of us be damned. Your mother was no different." When Woods plaintively tells Spike that his mother was different, that she loved him, Spike replies: "But not enough to quit, though, was it?" Nikki, unlike Buffy, conforms to the Council's mode of defining who she is.

[8] The Slayer's isolation, her dedication to the mission rather than "having a life," has been the central struggle Buffy faced throughout the show. Early seasons explored her struggle to be a normal girl even though she had a most abnormal calling, and it was her tie to that world that made her unique among Slayers. This struggle falls under Foucault's mode of Subjectification, which "concerns the way a human being turns him- or herself into a subject," and is defined as "those processes of self-formation in which the person is active" (Rabinow 11). Buffy's search for Self, particularly with her mentor Giles as a guide, conforms neatly to Foucault's formulation that these "operations characteristically entail a process of self-understanding but one which is mediated by an external authority figure, be he confessor or psychoanalyst" (Rabinow 11). In rejecting the dividing practices of the Council, both Buffy and Giles enable her to embark on her own exploration of what it means to be not just a Slayer, but Buffy the Slayer. At the end of Season 5, when she realizes that "death is her gift," she believes that she has fulfilled her quest and realized her purpose in life when she sacrifices herself to save Dawn and the world—her mission and her personal needs converged and she was able to meet both obligations. Her death had always been preordained as a Slayer (one must die before another is called) but in this instance she died in a way that was her own choice and dictated on her own terms—not just some random lucky vamp or demon taking her out, but a full-blown affirmation of her Selfhood.

[9] But, as we know, the Quest requires a Return. And so Buffy comes back from the dead, through the offices of Willow's magic, and all of Season 6 can be seen as the "refusal of return" that is part of Campbell's formula. Buffy cannot bestow any boon on humankind because she is not able to cope with being pulled from Heaven. Her depression, the breakdown of her support system—in the guise of Willow's addiction, Giles's departure, Xander and Anya's relationship crumbling at the altar, her mutually abusive sexual relationship with Spike—all of these elements contribute to her inability to dispatch what would seem to be the most bumbling of all her prior foes: the Nerd Trio. Each of the Scoobies becomes isolated in their own problems and the support network is gone. The ultimate resolution of Season 6 does not even require Buffy's presence, as it is Xander who stops Dark Willow from destroying the world. The final lesson we learn from Season 6's finale is that only through connecting again can the power of the Slayer be fully realized. Xander defeats Willow through unconditional love, and Buffy is able to shake off her depression and irresolution by connecting again with the world around her—Dawn in particular. The first step toward Buffy's radical alteration of the nature of Slayer power was taken here. Although Season 6 was not, by and large, a fan favorite, the crucial moment of Buffy's answer to the call of Return occurs during this season and the elements of connectivity and power are highlighted in preparation for the final season.

[10] And so we go back to the beginning. Season 7 brings to fruition the lessons that Buffy learned throughout the earlier seasons, and ultimately she uses that knowledge to alter the Slayer heritage. The early part of the season shows us, though, that she was drawing the wrong conclusions about power and its nature.[4] She, in essence, becomes a stand-in for the Watchers Council by embracing their "dividing practices." In training Dawn, as we see at the beginning of "Lessons" (7001), she merely imitates the methodology of the Council. She chooses one young woman—Dawn—and bestows upon her the knowledge and training of a Slayer:

> Buffy: It's about power. Who's got it. Who knows how to use it. So, (*tosses a stake to Dawn*) who's got the power, Dawn?
>
> Dawn: Well, I've got the stake.
>
> Buffy: The stake is not the power.
>
> Dawn: But he's new. He doesn't know his strength. H-he might not know all those fancy martial arts skills they inevitably seem to pick up.
>
> Buffy: Who's got the power?
>
> Dawn: He does.
>
> Buffy: Never forget it. Doesn't matter how well prepped you are or how well armed you are. You're a little girl.

Dawn: Woman.

Buffy: Little woman.

Dawn: I'm taller than you!

Buffy: He's a vampire, OK? Demon. Preternaturally strong. Skilled with powers no human could possibly ever—

Vampire: Excuse me. I think I'm stuck.

Buffy: You're stuck?

Vampire: My foot's caught on a root or something, and I don't even know how I got down there. If you girls could just give me a hand.

Dawn: Hm. So, he's got the power?

Buffy: Zip it.

Through comical inversion, this scene actually illustrates the complete instability of the Council's methods and ideology. As Buffy tells Dawn, "You're a little girl" she echoes the repressive patriarchal discourse of the Council, and when that discourse is shown to be false through the vampire's need for the "girls'" assistance (perhaps indicating that patriarchy itself needs the assistance of women's participation to continue—several Watchers are women, after all), Buffy can only react by silencing Dawn. In this way she embodies the Council's methodologies (and their often pompous intonations) and the larger patriarchal discourse which gives it ascendancy. The fact that this scene disrupts that discourse foreshadows the way Buffy herself will disrupt that same discourse in realizing the end of her quest.[5]

[11] As the season progresses, and she is given more responsibility in the form of the Potentials, she becomes ever more rigid and almost self-parodic in her St. Crispin's Day speechifying. For Buffy, it's about controlling her power and being a leader—a Chosen One. In "Lies My Parents Told Me" (7017), she echoes Nikki Woods's Council-inspired mantra: "the mission is what matters." During this episode, Giles conspires with Robin Woods and manipulates Buffy to keep her away while Robin attempts to kill Spike. He, in effect, isolates Buffy much like the Watchers Council. Giles can only see William the Bloody and brushes aside Buffy's repeated protestations that she needs Spike; he thinks it's an emotional need and doesn't realize that she needs Spike as a tool. She isn't blind to the danger; she's just willing to risk it because Spike is strong enough to help her fight. She's buying into the "greater good" philosophy, as she tells Giles that now she would let Dawn die to save the world. By the end of that episode, Buffy has become isolated completely because she believes that her power is by necessity one that can only be wielded successfully by herself. Both Giles and Buffy use dividing practices (control, manipulation, exclusion), and echoing the Council's methods

ultimately brings them almost to the brink of disaster. Again, the show underscores that the Slayer's power must be understood in a dynamic other than that of the disciplining force and the object of discipline.

> Not only did the monarchies of the classical period develop great state apparatuses …, but above all there was established in the period what one might call a new "economy" of power … procedures which allowed the *effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted, and "individualized" throughout the entire social body*. These new techniques are both much more efficient and much less wasteful (…less risky in their results …) than the techniques previously employed, which were based on a mixture of more or less forced tolerances … and costly ostentation (spectacular and discontinuous interventions of power…). ("Truth and Method" 61, emphasis added)

Buffy's reformulation of the Slayer heritage into one that is continuous, adapted, and individualized throughout all potential Slayers (and by extension, metaphorically to every woman) exactly reproduces the shift Foucault outlines in *Discipline and Punish*.

[13] Spreading the Slayer power to all potentials makes that power less easily controlled, and the possibility of "rogue slayers" like Faith is very real. But, as Buffy points out, the choice now belongs to the potentials, rather than the Council:

> Buffy: What if you could have that power now? In every generation, one slayer is born because a bunch of men who died thousands of years ago made up that rule. They were powerful men. This woman (*points to Willow*) is more powerful than all of them combined. So I say we change the rule. I say my power should be our power.
>
> …
>
> From now on, every girl in the world who might be a slayer will be a slayer. Every girl who could have the power will have the power, can stand up, will stand up. Slayers, every one of us. Make your choice. Are you ready to be strong?

With her final speech as a general, Buffy makes it plain that patriarchal structures dictating the power dynamics of the Slayer heritage are only in place because countless generations have believed that only one could wield power at a time. Buffy offers another way, one that she has learned over and over again is the only way to be strong: to share the power, to rely on others. The lessons learned from her journey are that connectivity is strength, that shared power is increased, not diluted. Hinting at this truth, Willow reveals at the beginning of "Lessons" (7001) that "everything's connected." By the end of "Chosen" (7022), Buffy has enabled a change from the prior state created by the Council: one of

"fundamental reference … not to the state of nature but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility" ("Docile Bodies" 186). Foucault here is describing an alternate view of utopia provided by militarist thinkers of the 18th century, but he could very well be describing the workings of the Watchers Council, with Slayers as the cogs, permanently coerced into sacrifice through training and demanding automatic docility (*a la* Kendra in Season 2).

[14] It was never clear how the Slayer power was transferred from one girl to the next, what role the Council may or may not have played in that transfer, nor how or why a particular girl was chosen. But Buffy's radical reordering of that dynamic now makes those questions moot, and enables her to reach what Campbell called the "freedom to live" stage of her own quest. For Buffy, she can now be master of two worlds, the Slayer and that of a "normal girl," because it is no longer necessary for her to die before another Slayer can be called. Her destiny is no longer foreordained. The closing scene of "Chosen" illustrates the final moment of Buffy's quest to realize her own full potential as an active Subject:

Willow: …the First is scrunched, so what do you think we should do, Buffy?

Faith: Yeah, you're not the one and only chosen anymore. Just gotta live like a person.

How's that feel?

Dawn: Yeah, Buffy. What are we gonna do now?

Buffy smiles.

Cut.

Cutting the scene here re-emphasizes that Buffy's choices are now open to anything. Giles has revealed that there is another Hellmouth in Cleveland, so we know that she can continue her role as a Slayer. But, because she has actively altered the power dynamic which gave that role its meaning, she has reached a Subjectification at the same time she has bestowed the boon on womankind. She can choose not to be a Slayer, and instead be another kind of cookie. Buffy's shifting of the power dynamic made all potential slayers special and chosen—metaphorically, by extension all women are revealed to have the potential for agency. It really is about power, who's got it, and who knows how to use it. In exploring the nature of Self, Buffy also offers a different model for gendered power dynamics. Foucault much?

Works Cited

Bowman, Laurel. "*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: The Greek Hero Revisited," online article. 2002. 7/31/2003. http://web.uvic.ca/~lbowman/buffy/buffythehero.html.

Foucault, Michel. "Docile Bodies." *The Foucault Reader* 179-87.

___ "Truth and Method." *The Foucault Reader* 31-120.

Hinton, Sofrina. "Confluence: The Quest for Self in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*" *Phase Five* 1.2 (2002). 25 Nov. 2002. http://www.bibliora.com/P5_0302/html/confluence.html.

Rabinow, Paul. "Introduction." *The Foucault Reader*. Ed. Paul Rabinow. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. 3-29.

Rambo, Elizabeth. " 'Lessons' for Season Seven of Buffy the Vampire Slayer." *Slayage* 11-12 (2004). 9/19/2007. http://www.slayageonline.com/essays/slayage11_12/Rambo.htm

South, James. "On the Philosophical Consistency of Season Seven: or, 'It's not about right, not about wrong . . ." *Slayage* 13/14 (2004). 9/19/2007. http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage13_14/South.htm

Spicer, Arwen. " 'It's Bloody Brilliant!' The Undermining of Metanarrative Feminism in the Season Seven Arc Narrative of Buffy." *Slayage* 15 (2004). 9/19/2007. http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage15/Spicer.htm

---

Notes

[1] Rhonda Wilcox, in *Why Buffy Matters: The Art of Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (2005), discusses this exchange in terms of political and economic globalization (Ch. 6). Her analysis is insightful, although it does not necessarily connect globalization to any theoretical model. If we view both Buffy and real world globalization through a Foucauldian lens, though, both are events in the shifting of power structures. Buffy's re-ordering of power, however, is a less diffuse event than the ongoing shift of political and economic power occurring in global markets. In addition, Buffy's global sharing is meant to be seen in the context of the show as a true diffusion of power to be used independently by its recipients ("Make your choice," Buffy tells the Potentials in "Chosen," 7022), whereas the globalization of particularly Western capitalist models are not consistently greeted with enthusiasm, a point Wilcox also makes (91-94).

[2] "Graduation Day, Pt. 2" (3022): BUFFY—There's something I'm supposed to be doing. FAITH—Oh, yeah. Miles to go. Little Miss Muffet counting down from 7-3-0. "This Year's Girl" (4015): BUFFY—I wish I could

stay, but… FAITH—Oh, you have to go. BUFFY—It's just that… FAITH—Little sis coming. I know.

[3] James South makes an interesting suggestion that perhaps at this point in Season 7, "Buffy was perhaps the *real* Big Bad" (*Slayage* 13, para. 3). South argues that Plato's parable of the cave allows us to understand Buffy's position here. The cave—the Slayer mythology—keeps everyone trapped by a "teleological principle … for the sake of which everything is done, no matter how distorted" (para. 26). This principle is the Chosen one mantra, and the notion that "the mission is what matters" ("Lies My Parents Told Me," 7017). His focus runs somewhat parallel to my own, in that only through "a reconfiguration of options" (para. 40) can Buffy find freedom from the trap of the Slayer heritage. His discussion is grounded in Plato rather than Foucault, however, and does not address the particularly feminist aspect of that reconfiguration.

[4] Again, see South, paras. 3, 18-19, 23-28.

[5] For another look at the importance of "Lessons" (7001) to the eventual resolution of the series and to the notion of "power," see Rambo (*Slayage* 11-12).