

Daisy Butcher: 'Like a Man Possessed': Masculinity in Crisis in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Season 6

Interrogating closely *Buffy* Season 6's Episodes 19, 20 and 21 I will be examining Spike and Warren in terms of masculinity crises. I will specifically pay close attention to Spike's sexual assault on Buffy in the bathroom scene and the gunning down of Buffy by Warren and his consequent flaying by Willow, highlighting how the most shocking events of the series are the results of male impotent rage (thanks to their symbolic neutering), i.e. the attempted rape and murder of Buffy and actual murder of Tara. I will examine the dysfunctional and doomed nature of Buffy and Spike's relationship despite its being a fan favourite, and how her very nature as the Slayer exposes the reality of his monstrous side. Exposing Whedon's interesting juxtaposition of sex and violence with Spike and Buffy, I link in Warren to the discussion of misogyny and how as a seemingly 'filler' or comic relief character flips the girl-power-orientated Buffyverse on its head by victimising Buffy, Tara and even, by proxy, Willow. I examine how Willow's slow burrowing of the bullet into his skin and flaying of his skin is indicative of sadistic penetration/rape and an involuntary striptease. I will look at these events as a result of Giles' absence, where his proverbial sons hurt his proverbial daughters (with the jilting of Anya as well), looking at protective masculinity versus threatening masculinity.