University of Huddersfield Repository

Burr, Vivien

Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: towards the democratisation of relationships

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/13700/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
‘Friends are the families we choose for ourselves’
(Buchanan):
Towards the democratisation of relationships

Viv Burr
University of Huddersfield
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Women and the family
- Changes in family forms
- Friendship
- Democratisation of relationships (Giddens)
- Implications for women’s selfhood
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Women in relationship
  Nancy Chodorow (1978)

- Patriarchy and the family
  Anthony Giddens (1999)
  Social structure and sense of self
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Changes in family forms
- Cheal (2000)
- Sasha Roseneil (2004a): “the hegemony of the the conventional family is experiencing significant challenge”
- The family in television
  ‘Cultural fantasies’ (Denzin, 1987)
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

**Friends**
So no-one told you life was gonna be this way
Your job’s a joke, you’re broke, your love life’s D.O.A.
It’s like you’re always stuck in second gear
When it hasn’t been your day, your week, your month, or
    even your year

**Chorus**
I’ll be there for you
(When the rain starts to pour)
I’ll be there for you
(Like I’ve been there before)
I’ll be there for you
(‘Cause you’re there for me too)
Buffy
THE VAMPIRE SLAYER
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: Towards the democratisation of relationships

*Buffy*: the premise

- Sunnydale, California: The ‘Hellmouth’
- The Slayer (the ‘Chosen One’)
- Buffy Summers
- Watcher (Rupert Giles)
- Willow, Xander, Tara, Anya, Dawn, Spike.
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: Towards the democratisation of relationships

‘Family’ (5.6)

Mr Maclay: ‘we know how to control her ....problem.’
Maclay: The girl belongs with her family. Hope that’s clear to the rest of you (…)
Buffy: You wanna take Tara out of here against her will (…) You just gotta go through me
Dawn: And me (…)
Xander: You’re dealing with all of us.

(...)Shot of Giles, Dawn, Buffy, Willow, Tara, Xander and Anya all standing together.

Spike: ‘Cept me.
Maclay: We’re her blood kin- who the hell are you?
Buffy: We’re family.
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: Towards the democratisation of relationships

‘Alternative’ families - the down side
- instability
- uncertainty
- roles and responsibilities unclear

A better alternative?
- ‘Normal Again’ (6.17)
Normal Again
Normal Again
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves:
Towards the democratisation of relationships

- Deacon and Williams (2004): ‘the choices people make are morally informed responses to changes in their circumstances, rather than simple expressions of individual choice or lifestyle.’
- Carol Smart (2004): transformation of relationships
- Angela Phillips: importance of media
Friends are the families we choose for ourselves: Towards the democratisation of relationships

Conclusion

Friends: the new family?

Berry Mayall (2000) ESRC Children 5-16 project

“Children spoke of friendships in terms of support: ‘telling each other everything’, ‘being there for you’.”

Buffy quote: