

**Andrew F. Herrmann**

**“C-can we rest now?”: Foucault and  
the Multiple Discursive  
Subjectivities of Spike**

**Slayage**  
The Journal  
of the Whedon Studies Association

[1] Besides the lead character herself, the leather-clad vampire Spike—introduced as the “Big Bad” in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (*BtVS*) Season 2—is the most analyzed character in the Buffyverse. And for good reason. Scholars investigating Spike have determined he has multiple personas (Abbott, 2005), expresses gender fluidity (Amy-Chinn, 2005), is a comic anti-hero (Boyette, 2001), schizophrenic (Fossey, 2003), gendered feminine (Spicer, 2002), a courtly lover (Spah, 2002), unstable (Burr & Jarvis, 2007), has masochistic tendencies (Alexander, 2004), and, in the end, heroic (Wilcox, 2009). Likewise, scholars have examined Spike’s narrative from lovelorn human William (Ginn, 2012), to “Big Bad,” (Wilcox, 2002; Wilson, 2009), to chip-emasculated prankster (DeKalb-Rittenhouse, 2002; Durand, 2009), to sacrificial hero (Wilcox, 2002). Spike is, by all accounts, a character of intense complexity and a fan and scholar favorite.

[2] This article dives into Spike’s development via a Foucauldian (1980) perspective of power and discourse. From this view, discursive power resides in networks of relationships which allow “subjects [to] freely call upon differing discourses in order to enact strategic games, and therefore, play games of identity” (Herrmann, 2012a, p. 6). It follows Spike’s trajectory from William to Spike, and his uniqueness as a vampire—who maintained part of his humanity—despite becoming a member of the “The Whirlwind.” Second, I explore the chip embedded in Spike by The Initiative, as an internal, technological and material manifestation of panoptic power and how this panoptic power changes him in limited ways, positioning him as a liminal boundary-spanner. Finally, I examine Spike’s use of “technologies of the self” (Foucault, 1994) in order to become a man for Buffy, more (hu)man, and eventually, ensouled. First, however, Foucault’s concepts of identity and power need exploring, as these threads will weave throughout our exploration of the biggest “Big Bad” of them all.

[3] Although the Western tradition conceives of identity as something one creates and owns, identities are not created in isolation. Identities are mutually responsive, socially constructed and related to each other in cultural contexts. (Editors' note: See Boulware in this issue.) These discursive contexts both restrain and enable the formation of particular identities (Herrmann, 2007a; Schowalter, 2012). Identities are not unitary; they are relational. It is through narratives that individuals story their lived experiences and make sense of themselves and their surroundings. This is particularly important during transition phases and turning points that affect an individual's identity (Foster, 2007). Importantly, "narrative sensemaking and identity implicate one another as individuals reflectively impose order, meaning, and structure on life experiences" (Herrmann, 2012c).

[4] The social nature of identity is important for examinations using a Foucauldian emphasis. Foucault indicated the importance of, and interrelationships between, discourse, power, and knowledge. We enter into a world of discourses through which we are subjugated:

The original in man is that which articulates him from the very outset as something other than himself; it is that which introduces into his experience contents and forms older than him, which he cannot master; it is that which, by binding him to multiple, intersecting, often mutually irreducible chronologies, scatters him through time and pinions him at the center of the duration of things. (Foucault, 1970, p. 331)

According to Foucault (1980), power does not reside in a particular person or institution, but lies instead in discourses, practices, and procedures of everyday life. Power is everywhere in social relations, and it is exercised at all levels of a society. For Foucault (1970), society imposes both discursive and nondiscursive discipline on individual members. Power is relational, and power becomes apparent when exercised. According to Foucault—and to quote Buffy—"It's all about power" (Whedon, 2002, "Lessons").

[5] Foucault's (1982) goal was "to create a history of the different modes by which in our culture human beings are made subjects" (p. 208). Human beings are made subjects—or socially constructed—through various disciplinary discourses. Discourses are productive as they create various subject positions. For example, an individual may be constituted and see herself as a sinner or a saint through religious discourses. Through the discourses of psychology, the

idea and ideal of what constitutes a *normal* individual is constructed and becomes the standard against which individuals are judged, fixed (as through psychoanalysis), and/or excluded. Through organizational discourses, an employee is constructed as efficient, productive, lazy, etc. As Foucault (1993) noted, to understand discourses, power, and identity researchers must find the points where the technologies of domination of individuals over one another have recourse to processes by which the individual acts upon himself. And conversely, he has to take into account the points where the techniques of the self are integrated into structures for coercion and domination. (pp. 203-204)

In other words, discourses constrain subjects, but these same discourses are also resources of power that can be utilized by subjects to make, create, and act upon the self. We will weave through Foucauldian discourse as we flesh out Spike's backstory.

### **The Awful Poet Meets a New Discourse**

[6] Spike's narrative is told through a series of flashbacks in *BtVS* (Fury & Goddard, 2003, "Lies My Parents Told Me"; Petrie, 2000a, "Fool for Love") and *Angel* (DeKnight & Goddard, 2004, "The Girl in Question"; Fury & DeKnight, 2003, "Destiny"; Minear, 2000, "Darla"). He was born with the name of William in 1870's Britain, and later nicknamed "William the Bloody" behind his back because his poetry was "bloody awful" (Fury & Goddard, 2003, "Lies My Parents Told Me"). Or as one audience member said of his poetry, "I'd rather have a railroad spike through my head than listen to that awful stuff..." (Petrie, 2000a, "Fool for Love"), a comment that will carry painful significance for his victims once William becomes a vampire.

[7] While many scholars examined Spike, none I have seen specifically address his last name. Although noncanonical, his last name in *Spike: Old Times* (David, 2005) and referenced again in the more canonical *Spike: Asylum* (Lynch, 2007) is given as Pratt. Pratt (spelled prat) is a British euphemism for a stupid, foolish, or ineffectual person; in other words, an incompetent. The term is used in this way by Giles: "It's not for me, you prat!" (Fury, 2000, "The I in Team"). The name fits William perfectly: "a sensitive but weak-willed romantic: inept, insecure, and clumsy..." (Sakal, 2003, p. 243), "a social failure" (Korsmeyer, 2003, p. 163), "effete" (Simkin,

2004, para. 34), a “mama’s boy” (Howell, 2011, p. 105), and “needy” (Sakal, 2003, p. 244). William is, by Victorian standards, a total loser.

[8] William the bloody awful poet is situated within a discursive system of power relations that is beyond his absolute control. William is subjugated and colonized through the discourses that define him, in similarity to the way *The Matrix’s* “Anderson, before he becomes Neo” is “powerless in the face of the corporation and its digital networks, which control time and space without [him] even being aware of it” (Dahaney, 2004, p. 817). Within the discourses of Victorian England that constitute “normal” conceptions of masculinity, intelligence, and social convention, William is marginalized, dispossessed, and powerless. His is a “discreditable identity” (Adams, T.E., 2010, p. 236). William’s identity is invested in him by other agents, including Cecily, his mother, and the British aristocracy, and he is trapped in this discourse.

[9] As discourses are important in creating our sense of selves as subjects, a change in discourse can change that subject in emancipatory ways (Foucault, 1978; Gramsci, 1971). A powerful discourse is introduced to William via his encounter with Drusilla, who says:

I see you. You’re a man surrounded by fools who cannot see his strength. His vision. His glory . . . . Your wealth lies here. And here. In the spirit and imagination. You walk in worlds the others can’t begin to imagine . . . . I see what you want. Something glowing, and glistening. Something effulgent. Do you want it? (Petrie, 2000a, “Fool for Love”).

Although William does not realize what is about to happen, Drusilla provides him with a new and positive discursive vision of himself, which he willingly accepts with “I—yes! God, yes!” He wants to be emancipated from the discourses that currently define him. At that moment—with the bite and the introduction of a new discourse—William changes.

[10] This new discourse as a resource of power (Foucault, 1994) provides William with the ability to become Spike. The newly emancipated William has the ability to change his subjective positioning, adopting the presentation and ornamentations of a cultural rebel, a proletarian Londoner, who embraces a childlike recklessness, and the hazardous use of violence. (And about 100 years later, the very hip adornments of punk rock.) Within this new discursive positionality William evolves into Spike, the name he adopts given his predilection for torturing people with railroad spikes. “I’d rather have a

railroad spike through my head than listen to that awful stuff" is both discursively and materially re-appropriated by Spike. The reclamation of material goods and the reappropriation of marginalizing terms has a long history (Cohen, 1972). The discourse that was once utilized to marginalize William is now a source of power, since the discourses of power are always potentially prone to "re-appropriation, reversibility, and re-utilisation" (Heller, 1996, p. 101). As he later tells Buffy, "Becoming a vampire is a profound and powerful experience. I could feel this new strength coursing through me. Getting killed made me feel alive for the very first time." Spike, in fact, *relishes* his new subjective position and takes childlike glee in being a cavalier, risk-taking vampire (Minear, 2000, "Darla"; Petrie, 2000a, "Fool for Love"; Petrie, 2001, "The Weight of the World"). He is an active participant in creating the identities he desires by relying on various discourses. He bobs, weaves, zigs and zags discursively.

[11] Spike is unusual for a vampire, retaining something of his pre-sired personality (Abbott, 2004; Sakal, 2003; Wilson, 2009), as evidenced by his love of Drusilla (Whedon, 1997, "Lie to Me"), his brotherly and competitive love-hate relationship with Angelus/Angel (DeKnight & Goddard, 2004, "The Girl in Question"; Minear, 2000, "Darla") and his desire *not* to see the world destroyed. As he tells Buffy,

We like to talk big, vampires do. "I'm going to destroy the world." That's just tough guy talk. Strutting around with your friends over a pint of blood. The truth is, I like this world. You've got dog racing, Manchester United . . . and you've got people. Billions of people walking around like Happy Meals with legs. It's all right here. (Whedon, 1998a, "Becoming Part I")

Spike's personality, while still passionate, is passionately twisted and passionately perilous, "seeking out situations that could destroy him" (Grossman, 2004, p. 3). While discourses productively produce subjectivities and provide individuals the power to transfigure themselves to achieve a condition "of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality" (Foucault, 1994, p. 225)—although I'm certain Foucault did *not* mean immortality in a literal, vampiric sense—these same discourses simultaneously constrain.

[12] Spike becomes a member of "The Whirlwind," along with Angelus, Darla, and Drusilla. The Whirlwind is "a compelling vision of just how perverse

a loving family can be" (Stoy, 2004, p. 226). Yet even within his new subject position, Spike is constricted, constrained, and confined, albeit differently. As the youngest of the three vampires, he finds himself discursively positioned as a subordinate (Linsley, 2009). Even after he kills his first Slayer, Drusilla announces to Angelus and Darla, "My *little* Spike just killed himself a Slayer" (Minear, 2000, "Darla," emphasis added). As the head of the collective, Angelus consistently and discursively puts Spike in a one-down position considering him reckless, foolish—his actions too brash and risky (Petrie, 2000, "Fool for Love"), a pattern that will continue throughout their relationship, including their reunions on *BtVS* and *Angel*. Discourses are always intermingled and recursive. As we shall see throughout this analysis of Spike, moving from one subject position to another includes moving from one discursive field to another. It furthermore means that struggle, resistance, and emancipation are also discursively fluid.

### **The Chip and the Trickster**

[13] From a discursive examination, Spike maintains this subjective position until *BtVS* Season 4, when he is captured by a government agency called The Initiative (Petrie, 1999, "The Initiative"). They embed a microchip in Spike's brain, rendering him powerless to hurt humans. For "Hostile 17"—as The Initiative calls him—this is life-changing, as a new subjective position is forced upon him. Spike is caught in a dilemma. He finds himself in a liminal space, unable to be his vampiric evil self, not because he wants to be, but because he has no other choice. He cannot hurt humans or kill them. Worse yet, he cannot feed on them. The chip is a physical manifestation of Foucauldian discursive and panoptic power (Foucault, 1978). How so?

[14] The chip embedded in Spike is suggestive of Bentham's (1995) ideal prison—The Panopticon—a large circular prison, which included a guard tower at the center. This tower was enclosed within two-way mirrors. The mirrors allowed guards to look out—and see all the prisoners—but did not allow prisoners to look in. For Foucault (1978, 1982) there are two effects of this panoptic power: the internalization of discipline of the surveilled and the deliberate subordination of the individual to the observer's potential gaze. The assumed power of the panopticon is *external*.

[15] The chip embedded in Spike is an internal, technological, and material manifestation of external panoptic power. It is constantly "watching" him. This changes his subjective positionality and sense of self in various and extreme ways (Abbott, 2005; Scott, 2006). While he is still evil, he can not fully manifest his evilness, as his vampiric nature is now emasculated. This powerlessness becomes part of Spike's new discursive position, exemplified by how he is treated by Buffy and the Scoobies. Xander tells Spike, "Hate to break it to you, O Impotent One, but you're not the 'Big Bad' anymore. You're not even the 'Kinda Naughty'!" (Noxon, Fury & Espenson, 2000, "Doomed"). Buffy calls Spike "flaccid," (Forbes, 1999, "Something Blue") and "... a neutered vampire who cheats at kitten poker" (Fury & Espenson, 2001, "Life Serial"). Spike too recognizes his changed positionality: "I'm saying that Spike had a little trip to the vet, and now he doesn't chase the other puppies any more" (Espenson, 1999, "Pangs"). He becomes the butt of innumerable jokes, a buffoon, and a pratfall—the re-manifestation of his identity as prat. Spike, the former Big Bad, is not happy at all. In fact, he's bloody well bugged.

[16] Within this new discourse, Spike is forced to change his "subject" again. As noted earlier, according to Foucault, discourses are always ready to be utilized by individuals for their benefit, to change and/or resist the dominant discourse. While Spike has always been a disrupter of the normative subjectivities, he now positions himself as trickster. The trickster is ambiguous, deceptive, a situation-inverter, carnivalesque, able to slip between the sacred/profane binaries, and a bricoleur (Hynes & Doty, 1993; Herrmann, 2012c). The trickster is "a consummate survivor in a shifting world" (Hyde, 1998, p. 43) and the "character who may lead us out of tragedy toward a bit of comic - and maybe even cosmic - relief" (Poulos, 2010, p. 53). Spike embodies the trickster for most of *BtVS* Seasons 4 and 5, in his comic attempts to kill himself (Noxon, Fury & Espenson, 2000, "Doomed") and his erectile-dysfunctionally futile effort to bite Willow (Espenson, 1999, "Pangs"), among others. Discursively positioned in the liminal space of a trickster, Spike is able to slip between differing roles: confidant and clown, ally and betrayer, and for lack of a better term, a "frenemy" of the Scoobies. Spike takes the mantle of trickster upon himself, because it is the only discursive space available.

[17] Late in Season 4 in the appropriately titled episode "The Yoko Factor" (Petrie, 2000b), Spike as trickster rebels against the Scoobies, teaming

and scheming with the Frankensteinian Adam, the part human, part machine, part demon “Big Bad” of the season. However, in the position as trickster, his troublesomeness is “an impotent churning in frustration at being neither demon nor human, neither fit for real villainy nor acceptable for heroism in the group” (Boyette, 2001, par. 14). With the chip, he is frustrated, angry, resentful, and discursively positioned as useless by the Scoobies, except for an infatuated Dawn. When Buffy tells Dawn it is “wrong to have a crush on something that is dead and evil and a vampire!” Dawn retorts that Angel having a soul and Spike having a chip is the “same diff” (Fury, 2001b, “Crush”). But the chip cannot force Spike to choose to do good. The chip merely prevents him from doing evil, similar to the techniques used on Alex in a *Clockwork Orange* (Adams, W.A., 2010). The panoptic power of the chip situates Spike in a liminal subject position. He cannot be the monster he once was, neither can he be a man. This is what makes Spike’s character work so well. He is ambiguous, a shadow, a transgressive—and transgressed—boundary-spanner.

[18] As Foucault (1978, 1994) noted, within a panopticon-like prison, it is always possible a guard could be watching you. In this respect, Spike’s chip acts as a form of external power. However, panoptic power is also *internalized*. Within the Panopticon, since prisoners realized there was always the possibility that they were being surveilled, they internalized the gaze of the guards and regulated themselves, rendering the exercise of external power or force unnecessary. This self-regulation is a form of empowerment through the “technologies of the self” (Foucault, 1994), and in Spike’s case it is directly tied to The Chosen One.

### **Spike and Technologies of the Self**

[19] Spike’s developing affection for and eventual love of Buffy is another form of power acting upon him—an internal, positive form—as compared to the negative power of the chip. This power is, in Foucault’s (1978) term, disciplinary, as people regulate themselves to act, behave, and think in certain, specific, and acceptable ways through self-surveillance, self-discipline, self-monitoring. “Individuals have the ability through these technologies of the self to reflect upon, shape, govern, and be responsible for their selves within these discourses and resources of power, to transfigure themselves...” (Herrmann, 2012b, p. 251). These internal regulatory processes are

technologies of the self (Foucault, 1994), the place where the subject compares herself to larger cultural discourses, and adjusts as necessary.

[20] Discipline is not simply imposed from the outside; nor is it always complete. If it were there would be no place for reflexivity. For Foucault (1994), technologies of the self socially construct subjects, reality, objects, and rituals of truth. While individuals are constructed and subjugated through discursively-based power relations, they are never powerless. Power relations run through every field, yet there is freedom everywhere (Foucault, 1986). Subjects are not deprived of "agency or the capacity to change" (Deacon, 2003, p. 280). In other words, people reflect upon themselves and ask, "What type of person do I want to be?" "What must I do to become the person I want to be?" Rose (1998) observes the

enterprising self will make an enterprise of its life, seek to maximize its own human capital, project itself a future, and seek to shape itself in order to become that which it wishes to be. The enterprising self is thus both an active self and a calculating self, a self that calculates about itself and that acts upon itself in order to better itself. (p. 154)

Disciplining of the self is a continual project of self-construction and creation that can be extrapolated to explain Spike's desire to become the right kind of "man" for a woman he loves.

[21] Spike's boundary-spanning transgressiveness becomes more transparent beginning in Season 5, as he joins the Scoobies against Glorificus. This and other "evil on evil" violence makes him a perpetual exile in demon society. He exhibits the wretched existential angst of a stigmatized individual. Spike, however, has two stigmatizing positions. On one hand, the chip with its panoptic power keeps him from being his vampire self. On the other hand, his vampiric soulessness prevents him from returning to his former life as a human. He does, however, discipline his self to be as human as vampirically possible. For instance, he has compassion for Joyce, who has a terminal illness. He is honestly saddened by her death and feels compassion for Buffy and Dawn when she dies (Noxon, 2001, "Forever"). Glory nearly tortures Spike to death to extract information about "the key." Spike refuses to tell Glory that Dawn is the key, because to do otherwise would "destroy [Buffy]. I couldn't live her being in that much pain" (Espenson, 2001, "Intervention"). After his confession, Buffy purposefully kisses Spike for the first time, shocking him and

thrilling much of the audience. In Season 6 when Buffy is brought back from the dead, it is Spike who understands and empathizes—being the only one who has crawled out of a coffin himself (Fury, 2001a, “Bargaining, Pt. 2”). In each of these instances Spike is constructively disciplining himself to become more (hu)man, going so far as to fight alongside the Scoobies while Buffy is dead.

[22] Although he relishes that he can beat the hell out of demons and such, he is still an “outsider-within” the Scoobies. Spike is “the individual...that is a part of the larger group or organization (within) yet simultaneously peripheral to the dominant group (outside)” (Herrmann, 2007b, par. 47). Through most of Seasons 5 and 6, moving away from his subject position as trickster, Spike assists the Scoobies, patrols with them, and protects them, particularly Dawn. However, he is not truly one of the gang. Xander consistently uses the “vampire” discourse against Spike, a discourse that pushes him out of the norm and back to the periphery. Through the panoptic power of chip—and the technologies of the self he is purposefully using via his burgeoning love for Buffy—he is forced into an uncomfortable, liminal subjective position. Like Kierkegaard’s aesthetic young man in *Either/Or* (1987)—but reversed—as (n)either/(n)or, Spike is discursively trapped, unable to act on his vampiric nature, nor be human. As he tells Buffy, “I know you’ll never love me. I know that I’m a monster. But you treat me like a man” (Whedon, 2001, “The Gift”). Spike is a vampire in no man’s land, and simultaneously a man in no vampire’s land. Like Ellison’s (1947) hero, Spike is at home nowhere, marginalized and stigmatized. He is straddling the boundary between (hu)man/monster, but unable to be either. To be treated “like a man” is what is most important to Spike—not being treated like a monster. How much has Spike progressed? Any self-respecting vampire *should* desire to be treated like a monster. He should *be* a monster. For a character who says “I don’t exactly have a reputation for being a thinker” (Kirshner, 2003, “Touched”), Spike does a lot of conscious and important decision-making, weaving through discourses.

[23] In Season 6 when Buffy ends their mutually damaging relationship, she says, “I’m sorry, William” (Petrie, 2002a, “As You Were”). She recognizes that it is the man inside the monster that loves her. This is key, as it returns the discourses of William to the forefront, changing—again—Spike’s subject position. His attempts to love give him at least a piece of moral agency

through the technologies of the self. To be treated like a man, however, is different than being a man. Although Spike is disciplining himself in a positive manner (including not killing the resurrected Buffy in Season 6 when the chip no longer protects her), purposely choosing to help the Scoobies, he is still a vampire—not a man. This distinction is pivotal.

### **The Monster Within the Man Within the Monster**

[24] There is a long history of seductive, erotic, sexualized, and rapist imageries and metaphors throughout vampiric scholarship (Auerbach, 1995). Within this lineage, perhaps no other scene in the Buffyverse has gained the attention of scholars as has Spike's attempted rape of our heroine (Wilcox, 2009). Up to this point, Spike's relationship with Buffy in Season 6—as twisted and sadomasochistic as it unquestionably was—was based on consent and trust (Call, 2007). According to Abbott (2005), the attempted rape undermined Spike's goodness. The attempted rape has been interpreted as the "reinscription of the duality of gender . . ." (Shepherd, 2009), and similar to Dostoevsky's underground man (Fossey, 2003). Call (2007) noted, "the rape was empty of ethics and erotics . . ." (par. 34). It is "a last ditch effort" for Spike "to reassert his masculine prowess and reestablish the corollary between violence and sex, albeit in a decidedly human capacity" (Scott, 2006, p. 127). The scene reaffirms Spike's duality, reminding us he "is a vampire who walks a fine line between his monstrous and human desires" (Abbott, 2005, p. 332). From a Foucauldian view, the attempted rape undermined all his efforts to use the technologies of the self in a positive, purposeful way.

[25] Some have interpreted Spike's attempted rape as proof that he is still, in fact, evil. Despite the chip and despite the disciplinary technologies of the self he has applied on himself to be good, he is still a vampire. According to Smith (2002), Spike "ultimately concludes that in order to live with himself after what he has done he must accept that he is a monster, because only a monster could do what he tried to" (p. 59). We "must recognize his evil by having him respond to his rejection by Buffy as a demon would, by trying to rape her" (Loftis, 2009, para. 79). Yet reading Spike this way undermines the struggle of subjectivities he has been attempting to work through: William, Spike, vampire, (hu)man, lover, etc. We know Spike *as vampire* kills Slayers. He has killed two. His vampiric self *would not care* if he attempted to rape

Buffy. It is not Spike's subjective positionality as an evil vampiric self that attempts the rape. Rather, it is Spike's former subjective positionality as William—his former human self—and his developing (hu)man self that attempts the rape. What horrifies Spike is not that the monster within the monster (vampire) tried to rape Buffy, but the realization that it was *the monster within the man* (William) that tried to rape her. This realization horrifies Buffy—and the audience—as well.

[26] Now here is where things get ambiguous (as if the Whedonverse is not ambiguous enough). Scholars and audiences read this ambiguity in multiple ways. Spike leaves Sunnydale for Africa; some in the audience come to believe that he intends to get the chip removed and become his old full-realized evil vampiric self. Spike mourns how he is stuck between two discursive spaces, leaving him confused, marginalized, and liminal. As he told Clem:

Everything always used to be so clear. Slayer. Vampire. Vampire kills Slayer. Sucks her dry. Picks his teeth with her bones. It's always been like that. I've tasted the life of two Slayers. But with Buffy . . . It isn't supposed to be this way. (DeKnight, 2002, "Seeing Red")

Spike talks about the chip and its removal: "It's the chip. Steel and wires and silicone. It won't let me be a monster and I can't be a man. I'm nothing" (DeKnight, 2002, "Seeing Red"). "Bitch thinks she's better than me. Ever since I got this bleeding chip in my head, things ain't been right" and "It's this bloody chip..." (Noxon, 2002, "Villains"). He knows the chip is definitely part of his problem. Yet it is only one part.

### **Supernatural vs. Natural Discourses**

[27] There are different readings here. One reading has Spike going to the demonic shaman to get the chip removed so he can kill Buffy. I find this reading logically inconsistent within the discourses and narrative of *BtVS*, however. First, the chip as a technological and material manifestation of panoptic power no longer holds power over Spike in regard to killing post-resurrected Buffy. This reading is also problematized by the continuity in *BtVS* that the "natural order" of things and science are diametrically opposed to magic. (I must qualify this only because in the Whedonverse, there are exceptions to every rule and everything needs to be qualified.) The technologies and techniques used by Warren of The Trio (Warren, Andrew, and

Jonathan) and The Initiative, etc., are not qualitatively different than the magics used by Willow, Giles, Jonathan, Andrew, et al. They are *paradigmatically* and *discursively* different, and a few examples will suffice to make this point.

[28] Buffy could be resurrected by magic, because her death was due to mystical forces used by Glorificus. Joyce's death by an aneurism is part of the natural order of things and not to be tampered with through magic (Noxon, 2001, "Forever"). Tara's murder by Warren was not mystical and declared part of the natural order of things (DeKnight, 2002, "Seeing Red"). The demon invoked by Willow explains the difference between Buffy's death and Tara's: "You raised one killed by mystical forces. This is not the same—she is taken by natural order. It is done" (Noxon, 2002, "Villains"). Spike is well aware of this paradigmatic difference. The chip is a human technology—part of the natural order—and going to a shaman would be a futile mystical attempt to be rid of it.

[29] Similarly, Spike's phrases of hate and his threats may not be the spoken desire to become an unrepentent vampire again by the removal of the chip. These are also the words of an angry and disillusioned spurned lover, caught between the power of the chip and the technologies of the self that have caught him in a trap in-between the two. Spike may not be talking about the chip at all. Still talking to Clem he says, "I wasn't always this way. It won't be easy, but I can be like I was. Before they castrated me. Before... Then she'll see who I really am" (DeKnight, 2002, "Seeing Red"). Before *what* and *which* manifestation of *who*, exactly? After all, Buffy had already met the pre-chipped Spike. She had not, however, ever met William. In the same episode, as he is about to leave Sunnydale he says, "Get nice and comfy Slayer. I'll be back. And when I do... it's all gonna change."

[30] When Spike is facing the demon in Africa to undergo the trials, the demon is amazed at Spike's "audacity" to "demand restoration" (Noxon, 2002, "Villains"). The demon doesn't talk about the chip and never uses the term associated with the chip—"remove." This might seem like a small change in wording, but it is of the utmost importance, for with it comes a completely different discourse. "Restoration," unlike "remove," is a word with a long history of spiritual rather than scientific resonance in a number of traditions and folklores, something Spike—given who he is—would know. Spike does not question the terminology here, but merely says to the demon, "Do your worst.

But when I win, I want what I came here for" (Noxon, 2002, "Villains"). When Spike passes the demon trials, he doesn't say anything about the chip. He says, "So you'll give me what I want. Make me what I was, so Buffy can get what she deserves" (Fury, 2002, "Grave"). Given the overall facts of the narrative and the discursive position that Spike finds himself in, the removal of the chip would not actually solve Spike's problems. Why?

[31] First, there is the fact—as Spike is well aware—that the chip no longer has any power over his actions toward Buffy. He could kill her with the chip in. Second, there is the panoptic power of the chip and the technologies of the self Spike uses upon himself—making him (n)either a monster (n)or a man. Third, there are the discourses of the "natural order" vs. magic, the technological vs. supernatural, etc. Finally and importantly, Spike has always had a remnant of William Pratt within him. Given these discursive positionings and narrative threads, it is probable that he does not want to merely be Spike without a chip, but William Pratt, the romantic soulful poet he once was. The attempted rape was due to the *monster within the man*, but the horrified reaction to the act, and what follows are activities of the *man within the monster*. It is not "Spike" the vampiric monster that loves Buffy. It is the man William Pratt inside the monster. It is not "Spike" that is disgusted by his attempted rape. It is William Pratt inside. It is not "Spike" that wants to earn Buffy's love, to show Buffy that he is worthy. It is not "Spike's" hate that drives him to the shaman at all. It is William Pratt that wants to drive out the monster, the one that wants not only to be treated like a man, but to be a man, to be the kind of man Buffy deserves, a man with a soul, the man Buffy had enough feeling and respect for to call "William."

### **Insanity and the Discourses of Human Morality**

[32] Of course, as we know, this does not exactly pan out as Spike assumes it will. With the successful example of the trials, Spike enters the discourses of human morality, a subject position he has not held in over 100 years. The new subjective position he assumes with the return of his human soul cripples him mentally and emotionally with guilt, shame, and horror, much as when Angel was cursed with his soul. (Fans of Spike argue that this choice makes Spike different than—and superior to—Angel who was cursed with a soul.) Ensouled, Spike is situated into another subjective position, this time

within the human discourses of good and evil. He is positioned as sinner within the enormity of the Judeo-Christian discourses, a fact reinforced through one of the most emotionally important scenes in all of *BtVS*'s last season, which happens not only in a church, but ends on a cross (Petrie, 2002b, "Beneath You"). While Spike is still a vampire, the vampiric discourses are no longer dominant. With his newly acquired soul, Spike is again discursively positioned as William, the sensitive poet and lover, while of course still maintaining the positionality of being a vampire. While earlier Spike was positioned as (n)either/(n)or, he is now positioned as both/and: vampire and human, he can choose between the two. Because discourses never actually disappear, but operate in simultaneous, contradictory, and complementary ways, William is not exactly the same William as before. He is still positioned as subject in the discourses of Spike the vampire and William the human being as he has been since his first appearance and throughout the series. The difference is that the discourses are inverted, shown through Spike's insanity, agony, and guilt (Whedon, 2002, "Lessons").

[33] Becoming ensouled drives Spike insane, with help from The First, which manifests itself to Spike as Warren, Glory, Adam, Wilkins, Drusilla, the Master, and, finally, as Buffy (Petrie, 2002b, "Beneath You"). Each is a manifestation of the fluidity of the complementary and contradictory discourses within which Spike has been positioned as a subject: from human, to vampire, to trickster, to comic hero, to rebel, to lover, to ensouled (Whedon, 2002, "Lessons"). As Amy-Chinn and Abbott (2005) note, Spike's appearance and clothing change over the first number of Season 7 episodes as a manifestation of Spike's deconstruction. From a Foucauldian perspective, the changing appearance is a material manifestation of Spike's rapidly changing subjective positionality through fluid discursive power.

[34] In possibly the best scene in Season 7, Spike fields Buffy's question about how he regained his soul. Rather than answering the *how*, Spike counters with a *why* answer. He tells Buffy (as well as, invisible to our eyes and hers, manifestations of The First, and possibly God):

It's what you wanted, right? It's... it's what *you* wanted, right? And-and now everybody's in here... *talking*. Everything I did... everyone I... and HIM. And it. The other. The thing... beneath... beneath you. It's here,

too. Everybody. They all just tell me go. Go... to Hell. (Petrie, 2002b, "Beneath You")

Having a soul discursively repositions Spike as a subject under guilt. That guilt, however, is not only generalized, it is also specifically directed toward his attempted rape of Buffy. "Buffy, shame on you. Why does a man do what he mustn't? For her. To be hers. To be the kind of man who would nev-" (Petrie, 2002b, "Beneath You"). Spike does not finish this statement out of shame, guilt, and fear, coming face to face with the fact that he—William—was "the kind of man who would"—and did—attempt to rape the woman he loved. This is Spike in the full glory of humanity. His guilt for his attempted rape of Buffy repeats in a number of episodes in Season 7. Interestingly, he refers to himself as William, something he has not done before. Spike confronts William the man, and the monster within that man. With his newly found soul, and despite the still embedded chip, The First triggers Spike through William's subjectivity to start killing again. Spike eventually recognizes and overcomes the Oedipal discourse The First has implanted in him. Of course, it is the restoration of his soul and the overcoming of this trigger that provides Spike the strength to become a warrior and hero (Linsley, 2009).

### **No Rest for the Wicked**

[35] From a Foucauldian (1980) perspective, discourses and power create subjectivities and positionalities. This article examined Spike's identity through the various games of identity he needed to play within the various discursive subjectivities in which he found himself. As he attempted to work through liminal spaces, he discursively intermingled, changed, shifted, and struggled with the multiple ways discourses constituted his place in the world. Rather than statically remaining in one discursive position, recognizing, employing, and reappropriating discourses allowed him to negotiate across subject positions. Spike's identity is paradigmatically postmodern: protean and improvisational, a case of "ceaseless becoming" (Schrag, 1999, p 8).

[36] Spike is possibly the only character in the Whedonverses who is able to extract himself from various discourses through reclamation, reappropriation, reconfiguration, and reconstitution. Buffy is always "The Slayer" and embedded within that discourse. Angel is always ensnared within the discourses of the gypsy curse. Spike is different. The appearance of an

emancipatory discourse (via Dru) and the reappropriation of an old one ("railroad spike") facilitate his early narrative trajectory of identity from William to Spike. The chip, as a material manifestation of panoptic power, repositions Spike as a liminal boundary-spanner, creating his need to become a trickster. Finally, Spike uses "technologies of the self" in order to become "a man for Buffy," more human, and eventually, an ensouled champion. This is not the end of Spike, who reappears as a ghostly trickster on *Angel*, and slowly reestablishes himself as hero by that series' end. His adventures and subject positions change throughout Season Five of *Angel*, as well as in the canonical graphic novels. Spike's fluid use all these various discourses and subjective positionalities is why he continues to be one of the most intriguing characters within the Whedonverses. No, Spike. You can't rest, now. Neither can we.

### References

- Abbott, S. (2004). A little less ritual and a little more fun: The modern vampire in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies* 1.3. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage3/sabbott.htm>
- Abbott, S. (2005). From madman in the basement to self-sacrificing champion: The multiple faces of Spike. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8, 329–344. Doi: 10.1177/1367549405054865
- Adams, T. E. (2010). Paradoxes of sexuality, gay identity, and the closet. *Symbolic Interaction*, 33, 234–356. doi: 10.1525/si.2010.33.2.234
- Adams, W. A. (2010). "I made a promise to a lady": Critical legal pluralism as improvised law in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, 6. Retrieved from <http://www.criticalimprov.com/article/view/1083/1707>
- Alexander, J. (2004). A vampire is being beaten: DeSade through the looking glass in *Buffy* and *Angel*. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 4.3. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage15/Alexander.htm>
- Amy-Chinn, D. (2005). Queering the bitch: Spike, transgression and erotic empowerment. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8, 313–332. doi: 10.1177/1367549405054864
- Auerbach, N. (1995). *Our vampires, ourselves*. Chicago, IL: University of

- Chicago Press.
- Bentham, J. (1995). *The panopticon writing*. London: Verso.
- Boyette, M. (2001). The comic anti-hero in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or silly villain: Spike is for kicks. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 1.4. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/PDF/boyette.pdf>
- Burr, V., & Jarvis, C. (2007). Imagining the family: Representations of alternative lifestyles in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. *Qualitative Social Work*, 6, 263-280. doi: 10.1177/1473325007080401
- Call, L. (2007). "Sounds like kinky business to me": Subtextual and textual representations of erotic power in the Buffyverse. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 6.4. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage24/Call.htm>
- Cohen, S. (1972). *Folk devils and moral panics*. Oxford: MacGibbon & Key.
- David, P. (2005). *Spike: Old times*. San Diego, CA: IDW.
- Danahey, M. A. (2004). The Matrix and business @ the speed of thought. *New Media & Society*, 6, 803-821. doi:10.1177/146144804047514
- Deacon, R. A. (2003). *Fabricating Foucault: Rationalizing the management of individuals*. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press.
- DeKalb-Rittenhouse, D. (2002). Sex and the single vampire: The evolution of the vampire Lothario and its representation in *Buffy*. In R.V Wilcox & D. Lavery (Eds.) *Fighting the forces: What's at stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (pp. 143-152). Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- DeKnight, S. S. (2002). Seeing red. (M. Gershman, Director). In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- DeKnight, S. S., & Goddard, D. (2004). The girl in question. (D. Greenwalt, Director). In *Angel*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Durand, K. K. (2009). It's all about power. In K. K. Durand (Ed.), *Buffy meets the academy: Essays on the episodes and scripts as text* (pp. 45-56). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Ellison, R. (1947). *Invisible man*. New York: Vintage.
- Espenson, J. (1999). Pangs. (M. Lange, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Espenson, J. (2001). Intervention. (M. Gershman, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.

- Forbes, T. (1999). Something blue. (N. Marck, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Fossey, C. (2003). Never hurt the feelings of a brutal killer: Spike and the underground man. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 2.4. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/PDF/fossey.pdf>
- Foster, E. (2007). *Communicating at the end of life: Finding magic in the mundane*. Mahwah, NJ: LEA.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things: An archeology of the human sciences*. New York, NY: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. (A. Sheridan, Trans.) New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977* (C. Gordon, Ed.) New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The care of the self: The history of sexuality, Vol. 3*. (Robert Hurley, Trans.) New York, NY: Random House.
- Foucault, M. (1993). About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self. *Political Theory*, 21, 198-227. doi:10.1177/0090591793021002004
- Foucault, M. (1994). Technologies of the self. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth* (pp. 87-92). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Fury, D. (2000). The I in team. (J. A. Contner, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Fury, D. (2001a). Bargaining Pt. 2. (D. Grossman, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Fury, D. (2001b). Crush. (D. Attins, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Fury, D. (2002). Grave. (J. A. Contner, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Fury, D., & Espenson, J. (2001) Life serial. (N. Marck, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Fury, D., & Goddard, D. (2003). Lies my parents told me. (D. Fury, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.

- Ginn, S. (2012). *Power and control in the television worlds of Joss Whedon*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Goddard, D., & DeKnight, S. S. (2004). Why we fight. (T. O'Hara, Director.) In *Angel*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Gramsci A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
- Greenberg, D. (2001). Smashed. (T. Meyer, Director). In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Grossman, J. (2004). *Spike, the initiative, and the substitution of the technological for the metaphysical*. Paper presented at the Slayage Conference, Nashville, TN.
- Heller, K. J. (1996). Power, subjectification and resistance in Foucault. *SubStance*, 25, 78-110.
- Herrmann, A. F. (2007a). How did we get this far apart? Disengagement, relational dialectics, and narrative control. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13, 989-1007. Doi: 10.1177/1077800407304468
- Herrmann, A. F. (2007b). "People get emotional about their money": Performing masculinity in a financial discussion board. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12. Retrieved from: <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue2/herrmann.html>
- Herrmann, A. F. (2012a). "I hit the Ctrl-Alt-Del button": *Technology professionals' stories of quitting*. Paper to be presented at the 97th National Communication Association Convention, Orlando, FL.
- Herrmann, A. F. (2012b). "I know I'm unlovable": Desperation, dislocation, despair, and discourse on the academic job hunt. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18, 239-247. Doi: 10.1177/1077800411431561
- Herrmann, A. F. (2012c). Never mind the scholar, here's the old punk: Identity, community, and the aging music fan. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction*, 39, 153-170.
- Howell, A. (2011). More than just a rock 'n' roll reversal: Tracking gender on Buffy the Vampire Slayer. In K. P. Leonard (Ed.), *Buffy, ballads, and bad guys who sing: Music in the worlds of Joss Whedon* (pp. 99-118). Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Hyde, L. (1998). *Trickster makes this world*. New York: North Point.

- Hynes, W. J., & Doty, W. G. (Eds.). (1997). *Mythical trickster figures: Contours, contexts, and criticisms*. Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1987). *Either/Or*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kirshner, R. R. (2003). Touched. (D. Solomon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Korsmeyer, C. (2003). Passion and action - In and out of control. In J. B. South (Ed.), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and philosophy: Fear and trembling in Sunnydale* (pp. 160-72). Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2003.
- Linsley, B. (2009). Complexes my mother left me: Spike meets Robin Wood. In K. K. Durand (Ed.), *Buffy meets the academy: Essays on the episodes and scripts as text* (pp. 131-136). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Loftis, J. R. (2009). Moral complexity in the Buffyverse. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 7.3. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/PDF/Loftis.pdf>
- Lynch, B. (2007). *Spike: Asylum*. San Diego, CA: IDW.
- Minear, T. (2000). Darla. (T. Minear, Director.) In *Angel*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Noxon, M. (2001). Forever. (M. Noxon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Noxon, M. (2002). Villains. (D. Solomon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Noxon, M., Fury, D., & Espenson, J. (2000). Doomed. (J. A. Contner, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Owens, A., & Gischler, V. (2013). *Spike: a dark place*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Comics.
- Petrie, D. (1999). The initiative. (J. A. Contner, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Petrie, D. (2000a). Fool for love. (N. Marck, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Petrie, D. (2000b). The Yoko factor. (D. Grossman, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Petrie, D. (2001). The weight of the world (D. Solomon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Petrie, D. (2002a). As you were. (D. Petrie, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.

- Petrie, D. (2002b). Beneath you. (N. Marck, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Poulos, C. N. (2010). Spirited accidents: An autoethnography of possibility. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16, 49–56. Doi: 10.1177/1077800409350063
- Rose, N. (1998). *Inventing ourselves: Psychology, power and persons*. Cambridge: Policy Press.
- Sakal, G. J. (2003). No big win: Themes of sacrifice, salvation, and redemption." In J. B. South (Ed.), *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and philosophy: Fear and trembling in Sunnydale* (pp. 239-253). Chicago, IL: Open Court, 2003.
- Schowalter, D. (2012). Financialization of the family: Motherhood, biopolitics, and paths of power. *Women and Language*, 35, 39-56.
- Schrag, C. O. (1999). *The self after postmodernity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Scott, S. (2006). All bark and no bite: Siring the neutered vampire on Buffy the Vampire Slayer. In C. T. Kungl (Ed.), *Vampires: Myths & metaphors of enduring evil* (pp. 125-128). Oxford, UK: Inter-Disciplinary Press.
- Shepherd, L. J. (2009). Morality, legality and gender violence in Angel. *Journal of Gender Studies*. 18, 245-259. doi:10.1080/09589230903057050
- Simkin, S. (2004). "Who died and made you John Wayne?": Anxious masculinity in Buffy the Vampire Slayer. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 11/12. Retrieved from [http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage11\\_12/Simkin\\_Wayne.htm](http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage11_12/Simkin_Wayne.htm)
- Spah, V. (2002). "Ain't love grand?" Spike and courtly love. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 2.1. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage5/spah.htm>
- Smith, J. (2002). Into the woods . . . and far away. *Starburst Slayer Special* 53, 54–59.
- Spicer, A. (2003). "Love's bitch but man enough to admit it": Spike's hybridized gender. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies* 2.3. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/PDF/spicer.pdf>
- Stoy, J. (2004). Blood and choice: The theory and practice of family in Angel. In R. Kaveney (Ed.), *Reading the vampire slayer: The new, updated unofficial guide to Buffy and Angel*. New York, NY: I. B. Tauris.

- Whedon, J. (1997). Lie to me. (J. Whedon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Whedon, J. (1998a). Becoming, pt. 1. (J. Whedon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Whedon, J. (1998b). Innocence. (J. Whedon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: The WB.
- Whedon, J. (2002). Lessons. (D. Solomon, Director.) In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Los Angeles: UPN.
- Wilcox, R. V. (2002). "Every night I save you": Buffy, Spike, sex and redemption. *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*, 2.1. Retrieved from <http://slayageonline.com/essays/slayage5/wilcox.htm>
- Wilcox, R. V. (2009). "Set on this Earth like a bubble": Word as flesh in the dark seasons. In L.Y. Edwardss, E.L. Rambo & J. B. South (Eds.), *Buffy goes dark: Essays on the final two seasons of Buffy the Vampire Slayer on television* (pp. 95-113). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.
- Wilson, M. (2009). She believes in me: Angel, Spike, and redemption. In K. K. Durand (Ed.), *Buffy meets the academy: Essays on the episodes and scripts as text* (pp. 137-149). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.