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## **Are Vampires Evil?: Categorizations of Vampires, and Angelus and Spike as the Immoral and the Amoral**

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**Editors' note:** This is the second of three parts of Gert Magnusson's discussion of vampires in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Part one appeared in the preceding issue of *Slayage*; part three appears in this issue.

### **Categories**

[1] One might say that in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* vampires are presented as unquestionably evil; there's not a single trace of good in them. Perhaps it is time to scrutinise this presumption. Let's start the examination with a few words on vampires in general, exemplified by the anonymous vampires, and then continue the discussion with the well-known vampires Angelus and Spike. In order to examine the vampire's possible evilness it is necessary to come to terms both with how they are to be categorized, and with their relation to the concepts *morality* and *soul*. The anonymous vampire's evilness is mainly shown in their actions as they immediately attack anyone who comes their way. Whether we are justified in regarding this as proof that they are evil depends, however, to a large extent on how they are defined. There are at least three ways of categorizing vampires. They can be said to be humans, or demons, or even another species, and depending on how we choose to regard them, their position within the realm of morality changes. For example, the same action (killing humans) will be looked on differently, depending on what sort of creature it is that acts. When choosing the appropriate category for them, we need not only compare the different categories, but also keep in mind how each category relates to what we mean by the word "evil".<sup>1</sup> A very simple but helpful distinction to make the connection to the categories clear is the one between evil as action (to do something evil) and as a quality (being evil regardless of what we do).<sup>2</sup>

[2] The first category to be discussed is vampires as humans. If they are humans (though technically dead), they are enclosed by the same moral boundaries that apply to humans, and for any one of us to kill a human by drinking all her<sup>3</sup> blood would be considered very evil indeed. This means that if they are categorised as humans, they are definitely evil. The premise that vampires are humans is, however, difficult to uphold, since a demon has taken over both the human's body and the mind, while the soul is gone.<sup>4</sup> If we keep out of fiction, our empirical encounters with moral (and immoral) beings are all restricted to humans; we haven't met anyone who is a moral being who isn't human, which means that morality is bound to humanity.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, our conception of moral and immoral beings includes God, the devil, angels, demons, and other beings outside of our empirical experience. Thus, when we take the step into the fictitious world of the Buffyverse and look at the characters' reactions when they for the first time meet vampires, we have to keep in mind that they, just like us, never have met a person with moral responsibilities who isn't human. To meet a moral agent is in our experience always to meet a human being. It thereby follows that if vampires aren't humans, it isn't evident that we (or the characters in the Buffyverse) can use the concept *moral* (good or evil) for our valuation of their actions. Buffy insists on accusing vampires of being evil, while at the same time see them as non-humans. Apparently she doesn't use the category and moral distinction discussed in this section when she judges them. So far I just want to say that if vampires are humans, then they are moral (good or evil) beings, but it seems unlikely that they can be human. But if they aren't humans it isn't obvious that they have moral responsibilities, i.e. they could be amoral rather than immoral (evil).

[3] The next option when it comes to categorizing vampires is lexical. If vampires are given the name "demons" they are ensured to be evil, as demons per definition are evil.<sup>6</sup> But this is to keep things uncomfortably simple. We would be letting the name decide instead of examining and judging their actions in relation to the meaning of the concept (name, word) we have chosen for them. This problem occurs whenever we categorize something. The danger is that it makes thinking a onetime action (the action of categorizing). Once this is done all we have to do is to look at the name given and let that determine how to regard the thing or person that the name stands for (is it a terrorist, freedom fighter, liar, hero, thief, and so on?). The naming has in most cases already been done by someone else, and all we have to do is to apply the appropriate attitude. This is the road Buffy chooses when she calls vampires demons. If vampires aren't humans, but instead demons, she's not obliged to make any moral considerations (think twice); she can kill them without proof of any evil actions on their part.<sup>7</sup> Since they're demons, they have a demon soul and are therefore definitely evil (this is not her conclusion, but what she has been taught by her Watchers).<sup>8</sup>

[4] This rational categorization, and its slaying conclusion, is, however, mixed with empirical considerations. When Buffy kills vampires as they crawl out of their graves, she does so with a preventive purpose. The newly born vampires haven't done anything wrong yet, but she's confident that if she lets them live, or fails to slay them, they will soon kill, and she cannot allow that to happen. This assumption is supported by empirical evidence. Vampires kill; she has seen it time and again. Now, when it comes to humans, and human law, we can't (we shouldn't) presume that someone will do something evil in the future and send them to prison or execute them as a precaution; we have to wait and see if they break the law before we can act, and we must do so even if we have reason to believe that they will commit a crime. Buffy has the same problem. If she were guided by human law, she would have to leave the vampires alone until they did something bad, but as she knows that they will kill as soon as they get a chance, she cannot just wait. This is where the name comes in handy. As she knows that it's a demon, she doesn't have to wait for it to misbehave: the name "demon" gives her the right to execute the power invested in her.<sup>9</sup> To act this way is to be efficient (with a swift thrust of the arm, the stake makes the problem go away), but it's also a morally dubious road to follow. If she (and we) has a distinction that is easy to use and effective, it will, however, take a lot to change her (and our) way of thinking and acting in favor of something a lot more complicated, such as treating each vampire (person or thing) as a separate case. This example has hopefully given an idea of the power of naming. Names, words, and categories are useful, and we couldn't go a day without using them, but they can also lull us into complacency when we should be vigilant and use our judgment.

[5] A further possible objection to the idea that the solution lies in naming vampires "demons" is that it's too speciesistic to appeal, as we fail to look at them individually (all vampires are evil because they are all demons, and they are therefore all the same). If we view vampires this way, the similarities between speciesism and racism stare us in the face. Most of us don't think much of speciesism when, for example, chicken's heads are chopped off in an industrial fashion, but when the species resembles ourselves to the degree that we are difficult to tell apart, it becomes obvious that speciesism and racism are related.<sup>10</sup> This example also provides a bridge from lexical categorization to the next way of looking at vampires—as another species.

[6] As hinted above, an alternative to defining vampires as demons would be to compare them to predatory animals such as lions, wolves, sharks (or vampire bats for that matter) who happen to kill humans. They are not evil. Our reaction if an animal kills someone dear to us may still be that we regard it as if it was a moral agent, and we may hunt it down and kill it as revenge. But that doesn't make the animal immoral; rather, it is the human who should be ashamed of herself.<sup>11</sup> The same goes for vampires: if they are considered as a different species, they are not evil simply because of eating humans. Blood is their food, and blood from the species human is preferable to them to blood from any other species. To continue the comparison with animals: Wildebeest would probably prefer lions to only hunt other species and leave them alone, but that doesn't

mean that lions are evil for not complying. If vampires are considered as another species, one must measure their propensity to evilness by another standard than their killing humans. As anonymous vampires seldom do anything but eat, it is hard to know if they are evil.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps they are, perhaps they have some devilish plan to hurt us in eternity, but as we haven't seen it and don't know of it, we can't judge them for what they may or may not want to do.

[7] My conclusion of this exploration of different ways of looking at vampires in relation to *evil* is that it may be best to drop the subject altogether. Whedon has set the rule that vampires are evil and I don't question that they are (even though I have tried to show that there are other categories that could be used as well), but when it comes to different ways of looking at them there is another way that make better sense—vampires are a threat to humans. They are dangerous regardless of whether they are evil or not. The threat they pose, backed up by empirical evidence of their actions, provides the ground for our vigilance towards them. How do we treat dangerous creatures that threaten us in our world? If they're animals we either move, contain, or kill, them. If they're humans, we contain and try to rehabilitate them. Both these categories work in the real world as well as in fiction. What we shouldn't do is to label them ("demons" or something else) and use the label as a sanction to kill them, no questions asked. That is something that should only be allowed in fiction.

[8] The other problematic concept in the Buffyverse is *soul*, and it can be argued that it (just as *evil*) causes as many problems as it solves. Perhaps it's best to drop that subject, too. Buffy slays persons who seem to be very similar to us, and one could argue that if they look like humans, act like humans, and talk like humans, then they're probably humans and should be treated as such.<sup>13</sup> It's that pesky soul that muddies the waters on how to regard them, since its presence or absence in persons (creatures, beings) in the Buffyverse has the dubious function of determining whether they have moral obligations or not. If vampires are seen as humans, then they have souls and are morally responsible for their actions. If instead vampires are seen as animals, they don't have souls and therefore they wouldn't be morally responsible for their actions. If vampires are determined to be demons, the replacement of the human soul with a demon ditto makes sure that they are evil. Suffice to say that it's not clear how one should regard them, and that arguments could be made for all three cases: They once were human and still have human traits remaining, they do have a demon soul, and they mostly act as predatory animals. Regardless, they're still dangerous.

## **Angelus and Spike**

[9] After these preliminary reflections on whether vampires are evil, I will mostly leave the anonymous vampires alone and instead take a close look at the possible evilness of a couple of our most well-known bloodthirsty friends, Angel and Spike.<sup>14</sup> In many ways they stand out as different from the more anonymous members of their kind, though they all have many characteristics and features in common.<sup>15</sup> The problem with sunshine and crucifixes, et cetera, is (for instance) something Angel and Spike cannot escape, but they have learned to deal with that sort of danger (at least when they are sober). Further, they are not young; they are experienced veterans. They are both bloodthirsty and violent, but they can control their urges.<sup>16</sup> While anonymous vampires almost always have their game face well on, Angel and Spike are most of the time indistinguishable from humans.<sup>17</sup> The conclusion is that although Angel and Spike do have some general features in common with the anonymous vampires, the differences seem to be more apparent than the similarities.<sup>18</sup> If we instead compare Angel and Spike to each other, however, we find a discernible difference between them, namely the approach to evil.

[10] A discussion of moral standpoints can be undertaken in a number of ways. It is possible to discuss the theme in line with most philosophical traditions, or from a psychological point of view, or perhaps from an empirical survey of how people act, or of what they consider to be morally good or bad. In this part I have chosen to discuss the matter conceptually with a peek at the German sociologist and philosopher Max Weber's

(1864-1920) concept *ideal type*.<sup>19</sup> There are two things to keep in mind when thinking along these lines. First, ideal types have nothing to do with what is average or common. Second, the mentioning of "ideal" should not be interpreted as something desirable; the word is rather used to envision a purity where everything that doesn't belong is removed or disregarded. What is pure (ideal) *beauty, evil, democracy, capitalism*, or whatever other concept we can think of? What type of person would someone be who completely encompassed one of these features, and how would we characterise her? In real life we rarely, if ever, find someone who personify an ideal type. The ideal types are typically far too extreme to be found in reality.<sup>20</sup> One way of putting it is to say that because actual persons who exemplify the concept are so rare (or nonexistent), the object of the examination is usually the concept (how the concept is used or what it means) and less any real person. In fiction, however, ideal type characters may occasionally pop up. In the following part I treat Angelus, Angel, Spike, Spike with a chip, and Spike with a soul, as different persons.

[11] Angelus has an extrovert and flamboyant personality. He is a lot more social than Angel, though his bonding with both humans and other vampires and demons often results in their not-so-sudden death.<sup>21</sup> He doesn't play well with others; i.e. he has, even though he is social, a distance towards others, with the exception of his family, Darla and Drusilla (Spike seem to be someone he tolerates mostly for Drusilla's sake). That he is extrovert is apparent when you look at what is important to him. To Angelus other people's pain is important. He is only interested in his own pleasure indirectly; he is satisfied in proportion to the pain he inflicts on others (others' suffering is Angelus' happiness). The opposite of Angelus we find personified in Spike's approach to pain. Spike isn't particularly interested in whether other people suffer or are in pain—not because he objects to it, but because that's not what's important to him. He wants to have fun. Life's a party. Spike is an egoist; he's only out to get his urges satisfied. It's fun to kill and maim, but it's not the victims' suffering that drives him. Instead it is ordinary lust for destruction. In that respect he is very much like the anonymous vampires who also relish wreaking havoc. It is not until he loses his ability to hurt humans that he contemplates that he never used to halt and enjoy the calamity of the moment. He never stopped to smell the victims, which he wishes that he had done. He was always on his way to the next feast.<sup>22</sup> One way to put it is that Angelus thinks, he represents the rational evil, while Spike acts, and in his actions it is his blood that speaks.<sup>23</sup> Their respective characters are best recapitulated by Angel and Spike (with a soul) when they look back at their lives:

Spike: I never did think much about the nature of evil. No. Just threw myself in. Thought it was a party. I liked the rush. I liked the crunch. Never did look back at the victims.

Angel: I couldn't take my eyes off them. I was only in it for the evil. It was everything to me. It was art. The destruction of a human being.<sup>24</sup>

Angelus thereby exemplifies the concept and ideal type *immoral (evil)*, while Spike comes close to that of *amoral*.<sup>25</sup>

[12] When these two characters are compared to the neutered versions of themselves, one can notice some similarities among all the differences. Angel is a lone wolf who has to fight himself to uphold connections with others and who often manages to maintain a social life only because his close friends don't give up on him but force him to social interactions (he differs from Angelus by not being social). Angel is driven by angst over what he has done and an aspiration to make up for it, and perhaps sometime in the future there is a chance that he will get redemption for his sins.<sup>26</sup> He is constantly brooding about what he has done to her, and her, and him, and what he might do to make life easier to the ones he meets. In other words, both Angel and Angelus reach out toward other people (though in quite different ways). This continuity is also visible between the two versions of Spike. When Spike has his chip, he is still a wild egoist who thinks about his own satisfaction. With or without a chip he throws himself into the action without any plan or concern for his own safety. As long as he may participate in a fight where the outcome is uncertain, he is content. In his own words (said before he got

the chip): "I'll take a good brawl any day".<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the best analogy is to compare him to an adventurer who has been addicted to adrenaline kicks. This also entails that when Spike (with a chip) wants to fight demons, it is because he relishes finally being able to fight again, not because of the good he is doing. He is quite indifferent to the question of good and evil, and doesn't particularly object to doing good (or evil, for that matter), as long as he gets a kick out of the action.<sup>28</sup> Angelus would never act like that.

[13] Angelus is far more evil than Spike but lacks his party mentality. While Spike almost personifies the hooligan (or perhaps something as odd as a ruthless epicure), Angelus is more contemplative. He loves to make elaborate plans and he is in full control of his destructive urges.<sup>29</sup> When everything is set in motion, he stands aside, watching and enjoying the suffering he has caused (thereby being both a catalyst and a voyeur). The Beastmaster is perfectly correct, when she speaks in his head, in concluding that they both like to watch. Angelus responds that he is "more of a hands-on kind of guy," but that is not entirely true.<sup>30</sup> See, for example, how he has acted through the years as shown in "Amends".<sup>31</sup> He doesn't just sink his teeth into anyone who comes his way (unless he's hungry). Instead, he has an idea of how he could inflict the most pain (preferably a combination of psychological and physiological pain) in each particular case. Perhaps the clearest example of Angelus as voyeur is shown at the end of "Passion" where he's watching Buffy and Willow's breakdown at the news of Ms. Calendar's death.<sup>32</sup> To live dangerously is, however, not something that Angelus appreciates. Not that he has any problem bashing someone's head or slitting her throat as well as Spike, but he believes others' suffering should be more severe and lasting than that, and to risk his own skin is not something he does on a whim. In that respect Angelus and Spike are miles apart, which become evident in a flashback in "Fool for Love." At the time Spike had probably only been a vampire for a couple of months, which may explain his words and actions, but his reproach still marks an important difference between them. Spike to Angelus: "When was the last time you unleashed it? All-out fight in a mob, back against the wall, nothing but fists and fangs? Don't you ever get tired of fights you know you're going to win?"<sup>33</sup> Angelus doesn't share this sentiment. He makes every effort not to get exposed. When people are hunting them they have to lay low, living in sewers instead of fancy hotels. Angelus would rather live comfortably while planning others' destruction and watching them burn.<sup>34</sup> If we take a look at Angel, he would never act on the grounds that he's having fun. To him it makes no difference if he enjoys doing something good (psychologically the opposite may be true, that he gets a bad conscience from his own pleasure); what's important is the mission.<sup>35</sup>

[14] When it comes to Spike's view on destruction and violence, he is fairly consistent over time. From his introduction in "School Hard" to the last battle in the alley in "Not Fade Away," he remains the same.<sup>36</sup> To physically hurt someone or be hurt by someone is not that much of a deal. That happens. Getting a chip doesn't change his view; in this respect he is the same person, and has the same preferences, with and without the chip, which is consistent with the chip only having a preventive function.<sup>37</sup> His egoism is a more complex issue. He remain the same egoist after the chip has been implanted in his brain, which means that he still doesn't care, doesn't bother, about good and evil; it is only his ability to act that has been altered. When he somewhat does change, it is not the chip that causes it. What does change him is his love (for Buffy, not for Drusilla) and it is love that makes him try to do good. That he tries to do good isn't, however, necessarily the same as his being good. He tries to do good because he comes to the conclusion that it pleases Buffy, not because love has made him a better person.<sup>38</sup> But not even love makes the egoism disappear. One example is the way he deals with his desire for Buffy. To him it is quite simple: he wants her, therefore he does whatever it takes to get her—not for her sake, but for his own.<sup>39</sup> There are however, some actions that on good ground could be called selfless: His bouquet to Joyce's funeral seems to be a way of showing respect for a woman he always liked. That he refuses to give in to Glory's torture is another example. His own explanation is that he endured it for Buffy's sake, which no doubt is true, but I think there is also an element of stubbornness that strengthens his ego—no one is to force him to do something he doesn't want to do (in that respect he, Angel, and Angelus are very much alike). That he takes care of Dawn after Buffy's demise is difficult to understand as an act of self-interest, since he never

expects her to come back. It is therefore an act of altruism. Spike may be an egoistic creature who only on a few occasions acts without thinking about what is best for him, but if we take a few steps forward in the story and look at Spike with a soul, the question becomes whether he can be considered egoistic at all. In season seven of *Buffy* and season five of *Angel*, his soul seems to considerably curb his egoism.<sup>40</sup>

[15] In close relation to his diminished egoistic traits lies the question of possible remorse. Does he later in life regret the atrocities he has committed as a soulless and chip-less vampire? On the one hand we have the “three weeks in a basement” statement that indicates that there was not much in the department of remorse in Spike after he got his soul, at least not if we compare him to Angel.<sup>41</sup> But on the other hand we have his contemplation in the sickbed in “Damage” where he feels sorry for the insane slayer Dana and seems to regret what he has done to people in the past.<sup>42</sup> This change of heart is still most likely a consequence of his soul, and not of his doing only good, not a single evil act since season seven of *Buffy*.<sup>43</sup> As the soul in the Buffyverse is bound to judging from the standpoint of good and evil (not from having the *ability* to distinguish between good and evil; Angelus, for example, uses this distinction to *do* evil), the Buffyverse probably stands a long way from an Aristotelian view on good and evil, i.e. that you become good by doing good.<sup>44</sup> This is most likely linked to the fact of the soul in the Buffyverse being material (you can put it in a jar), which means that the function that the soul has is also material. The function of the soul is to make us into moral agents, i.e. to make us responsible for our actions. This capacity is something that you either possess or don’t possess. It’s not a process and therefore not something that you may gradually acquire (you either have or don’t have a soul). This characteristic is a bit disappointing as it makes the ‘verse a bit more black and white than it needs to be.<sup>45</sup> This also means that Spike in season seven of *Buffy* and five of *Angel* is good (he has a soul, has done good actions, and no evil ones), while he before season seven of *Buffy* couldn’t be good as he lacked a soul. Early on, his most prominent feature was his lack of concern for other people, rather than being evil, but as unconcerned people often treat others badly, it’s safe to say that his egoistic life style did cause him to hurt others. He didn’t have an evil agenda, but he was definitely dangerous, and without his chip he was a threat to everyone in his vicinity.

## Last Words

[16] Where do all these discussions of the categorizations of anonymous vampires, and the examples from the lives of the different incarnations of Angel and Spike, take us? What does it teach us about the concepts of *immoral* (evil) and *amoral*, and about Angel and Spike? I have put forward two strong tendencies—pure *evil*, which is contrasted to *amoral*, i.e. an indifference to evil (it is not contrasted to *good* as one might have expected)—and tried to show how these features characterize Angelus and Spike. Because Angelus and Spike are vampires, we get the opportunity to see the concepts *evil* and *amoral* exemplified in a way that would not be possible if we had kept the discussion to evilness and amorality among humans. Angelus as the incarnation of *evil* comes close to the ideal type. Someone who acts as the ideal type of *evil* should focus her entire existence on being bad (not, like Spike, just claiming it once a day); she should plan others’ misfortune, cause their unhappiness, relish being the instrument of their early painful death, and be content doing nothing else. Doesn’t that sound like Angelus?<sup>46</sup> Angelus does not have an equal among humans when it comes to being evil; he is evil personified in a way that humans (hopefully) are not. But he is not only unequalled when he is compared to humans; the same goes when we compare him to other vampires. No other vampire that we have met has been as evil as he is. Why is this? What makes him so special when it comes to evilness that he surpasses all other vampires in this area? This is, however, a further question, not suited for a conceptual investigation, but better met by an empirical (within the Buffyverse) enquiry of *evil*, either through a psychological lens or through a sociological study. I.e., there had to be something about Liam the human that made Angelus the vampire’s evil nature manifest fully when it took him over.<sup>47</sup> This is to say that neither anonymous, nor known vampires in Buffyverse are precisely evil; in that respect, Angelus is an anomaly.

[17] Nor are vampires in general, however, as indifferent towards evil as Spike is. Spike is unique in that respect, which has provided an opportunity to investigate the concept of *amorality* as a Weberian concept of ideal types. One may conclude that even if he has a rare indifference toward human suffering, he is probably not as unique in that area as Angelus is in his; i.e. people who can't care less for others aren't unheard of. When it comes to *egoism*, my conclusion about the analysis of Spike is that egoism is separated from the concept of *evil*; i.e., being an egoist doesn't entail being evil. The concepts are not logically entwined, which means that if someone is either evil or an egoist, you have to examine whether she is also the other; it doesn't follow conceptually. There is also, in Spike's case as in the case of Angelus, a need to go further and in another study clarify why he among vampires (without his soul) is so indifferent to moral issues. This investigation would also, as in the case of Angelus, be an empirical (psychological or sociological) study.<sup>48</sup> It would be intriguing to interpret Spike's amoral behaviour as if he didn't know or wasn't aware of the difference between good and evil, but I think it's safe to say that he is correct when he says "I'm a vampire. I know somethin' about evil."<sup>49</sup> It's just that he for some reason doesn't seem to care about it, nor has he lived in accordance with that distinction in a very long time. Ultimately he seems to have acquired an amoral attitude, much like nature (well, at least if nature cared about having fun). Here is a marked difference if we turn to Angelus. Angelus is acutely aware of the difference between good and evil, since it is a prerequisite for him to be able to act meticulously evil. When it comes to other vampires (anonymous or other known vampires), they are usually positioned somewhere between Angelus and Spike. Vampires are probably more evil than humans, i.e. they choose, in contrast to most humans (and Spike), rather to do evil than good (though, apart from their eating, we haven't seen much of this in the show), but their whole existence doesn't seem to be diabolical, as is Angelus'.

[18] So, are vampires evil? There seems to be a wide span from good through amoral to the most evil creatures we can imagine. When it comes to vampires generically, most clearly seen in the anonymous vampires, it depends on how we define them. Are they best described as humans, demons, or as another species? The big question waiting to be answered is: What is a vampire? Of the well-known vampires, Spike is more ruthless and selfish than evil. In the case of Angelus, we are confronted with a really horrible and evil vampire, while Angel, in Cordelia's words is "pretty cuddly".<sup>50</sup>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> In Wiktionary "evil" is explained as "[i]ntending to harm" and "[m]orally corrupt" ("Evil").

<sup>2</sup> The perhaps most action based philosophy of all is utilitarianism, where focus is set upon people's usefulness in society, a usefulness that is measured by the consequences of their actions. Utilitarian philosophers don't generally speak in terms of evil, but actions that diminish the amount of happiness in society would be seen as something bad. When it comes to non action-based philosophy, the most well known proponent is probably Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). For him evil is something separate from the action performed. What is important is the maxims that direct the action. If the maxims are evil, then the action is evil regardless of the result. In Kant's words: "We call a man evil, [...] not because he performs actions that are evil (contrary to law) but because these actions are of such a nature that we may infer from them the presence in him of evil maxims" (Kant 16). The connection to actions is, however, not totally absent from Kant; instead it's made clear by the parenthesis that he defines evil actions as actions that oppose the law (the moral law), but an evil maxim is evil even if no one acts in



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accordance with it. The difference between a Kantian view and that of utilitarianism is that Kant doesn't use consequences when he judges the moral merit of peoples actions.

<sup>3</sup> Editor's note: The author informs us that "In Swedish the word for human is feminine."

<sup>4</sup> Angelus and Angel always have the other part locked within their consciousness clawing to get out, depending on who's in charge. Vampires without a soul don't have that duality. This means that although vampires have several traits remaining from their human days, these traits are still soulless. That Angelus carries Angel inside his mind is an assumption based on the episode "Orpheus" (*Angel* 4.15) where Angelus is confronted with his better half.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that the concept *moral* is used in two distinct ways. We often use it as the counterpart to evil (moral—immoral). A moral person is a good person, and someone who is evil isn't a moral person. But it is also used as a counterpart to nature, which isn't subjected to morality (moral—amoral). When we use the concept *moral* this way, it contains everything within the whole field of morality (good and evil). We talk of moral agents who can be either good or evil, or a bit of both (as humans generally are). This means that when I say that morality is bound to humanity, I include both good and evil (moral and immoral, but not amoral; humans are not amoral beings).

<sup>6</sup> The Christian "demon" (evil spirit) has to be distinguished from the earlier Greek "daemon" (divine spirit).

<sup>7</sup> One objection to this line of thought is that the name "vampire" also defines an evil creature, and that there is no need for the extra step of calling vampires demons. It is true that in our world demons (not daemons) and vampires are both seen as evil per definition, but as I in this section try to say something about the nature of vampires, I can't say that vampires are evil because they are vampires: it is a tautology that says nothing (even though that's exactly how the word works). On the other hand, things are a bit more complicated in the Buffyverse than in reality. It is only in fiction that we can have good vampires. (Editor's note: Presumably, it is only in fiction that we can have vampires at all.) It is only in the Buffyverse that Anya may demand a clarification on what kind of demons they are discussing, as "some [demons] have been considered to be useful members of society." *Buffy* "Family" 5.6. It should, however, be noted that Buffy mostly has a more rigid view on demons (Clem is an exception) than Anya.

<sup>8</sup> We have two slightly different examples of the "not thinking twice" approach, in *Buffy*. To Giles, being a vampire is the same as having a demon soul; the vampire is therefore regarded as beyond hope, and the only just course of action is to kill it. This categorizing is based on his extensive knowledge of vampires and demons. Xander draws the same conclusion when it comes to killing. The difference between them is that Xander bases his judgement on the simple categorizing: If someone is a vampire, Buffy, as a vampire slayer, should slay it. There's almost no base in knowledge and nothing to think about, just kill it. *Buffy* "Angel" 1.7.

<sup>9</sup> Remember the division between *evil* as a quality and as an action. To wait for the vampire to act is to look at the consequences, whereas to label the vampire "demon" is to look at the vampire's core, rather than its actions.

<sup>10</sup> See the first chapter ("All Animals Are Equal...") in Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* for a discussion of the connection between racism and speciesism.

<sup>11</sup> That's how Forrest in the Initiative explains the demons and vampires they capture, experiment on, and kill: "[t]hey're just animals, man, plain and simple." (*Buffy* "Doomed" 4.11).

<sup>12</sup> They do have a foul mouth and intimidate their victims before dinner, but by that criterion of evilness Buffy would be the Dark Lord, as she is far more inventive in her taunting than any vampire.

<sup>13</sup> This raises the question of whether Buffy isn't just a slayer or even a killer, but perhaps a murderer.

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<sup>14</sup> The problem with different categorizations of vampires and each category's relation to morality is of course relevant to the well-known vampires too, but I have already said what I wanted to say and I will not continue that discussion here.

<sup>15</sup> See my "Being a Vampire Sucks: Regarding the Anonymous Vampires in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*" in *Slayage* 9.1 for additional discussion of some of the features of anonymous vampires in the Buffyverse.

<sup>16</sup> The vampires' rage and bloodlust seem to get easier to control in time. Angel, for example says in "Billy" (*Angel* 3.6) that he lost his hatred and anger a long time ago.

<sup>17</sup> As Spike puts it: "I hate being obvious. All fangy and grrrr!" *Buffy* "The Initiative" 4.7.

<sup>18</sup> In the gap between the anonymous vampires and the well-known characters such as Angel, Spike, Darla, and Drusilla, we have a number of vampires who constitute borderline cases between the two groups, e.g. Kakistos, Mr. Trick, and the Gorch brothers. As soon as a vampire is given more attention (more screen time), the complexity of the character is also increased and she gets more personality than when she is totally anonymous. As a rule such characters have lived a long life as vampires (Holden Webster is an exception) and thereby they get harder to fight—and though they still are fairly easy to kill, they do have an agenda that adds something to the plot, and sometimes they are even presented as Monsters of the Week.

<sup>19</sup> Max Weber discusses ideal types in *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Ideal types are primarily discussed in the first chapter.

<sup>20</sup> Think of an ideal type of thief. That she is an ideal type of thief means that this aspect of her permeates all her existence (which is not the case with real thieves). One consequence is that she steals absolutely everything she needs or wants, which in turn entails that she has no use for money. With money she would pay for something she buys, and even if she had stolen the money, she would nevertheless pay, but if she is an ideal type of thief she per definition never pays for anything. Such a person doesn't exist, but the purity is very useful when it comes to investigating the concept *thief*.

Try it yourself: What would an ideal type of *Democrat* or *Republican* in the U.S. look like? What would she do and how would she lead her life? However macabre the persons you end up with, it is still a viable method to investigate the political concepts involved. I have discussed ideal types further in my *Språk och värld: Metod, exempel, etik* [*Language and World: Method, Example, Ethics*], 92-97 (in Swedish).

<sup>21</sup> Look at him partying with the other vampires and demons in "Salvage" and "Release" *Angel* 4.13, 14.

<sup>22</sup> *Buffy* "Where the Wild Things Are" 4.18.

<sup>23</sup> Compare to the distinction in par. 1 between evil as a quality and evil acts.

<sup>24</sup> *Angel* "Damage" 5.11.

<sup>25</sup> I use the words "immoral" and "evil" synonymously despite the fact that there are some differences. Whereas to be evil is to intend harm, an immoral act could be determined to be either an act without moral considerations (what I would call an amoral act), or an unjust, dishonest, or vicious act (what I would call evil). The easiest way around this obstacle is to always think of Angelus as evil. See Wiktionary "Evil" and "Immoral" and also Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary "Immoral."

<sup>26</sup> In the same manner that we in Christian tradition carry the sins of our fathers, Angel carries the burden of Angelus' sins. Angel's attempts to get redemption are in this perspective not strange. This is however not to say that it is logical; it is as incomprehensible as (but not more than) the idea that we are sinners because of original sin, i.e. that we are responsible for our forefathers' actions. This is again something that separates Angel from Spike. Spike doesn't carry the burden of the crimes he committed before he got his soul the same way that Angel does. As Angel puts it: "I spent a hundred years trying to come to terms with infinite remorse. You spent three weeks

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moaning in a basement, and then you were fine!" (*Angel* "Just Rewards" 5.2). What's done is done, and it doesn't help to cry over spilled milk (or blood). This is an attitude that Spike always has had and it gets very pregnant when Spike (with a soul) is confronted with the son of one of the slayers he killed. He doesn't show any remorse over killing Nicky (*Buffy* "Lies My Parents Told Me" 7.17). This is partly because the rules are clear, vampires and slayers are mortal enemies: "Slayer. Vampire. Vampire kills Slayer, sucks her dry, picks his teeth with her bones. It's always been that way" (said before he got his soul) (*Buffy* "Seeing Red" 6.19). Partly it has to do with his not being the same person with, as without, a soul, a distinction that Angel fails to make.

<sup>27</sup> *Buffy* "Fool for Love" 5.7.

<sup>28</sup> *Buffy* "Doomed" 4.11. Spike is equally indifferent when it comes to breaking the ancient code that demons and vampires leave each other alone, as he is when it comes to considering whether he does good or evil to humans. He gets a beating in Willy's bar from demons that understandably are angry because he doesn't adhere to the rules (*Buffy* "Goodbye Iowa" 4.14).

<sup>29</sup> Spike on the other hand is terrible at following his plans through, because he lacks patience. Both in "School Hard" (*Buffy* 2.3) and in "In the Dark" (*Angel* 1.3), he gets tired of waiting. He does, however, plan to get the ring of Amara in "The Harsh Light of Day" (*Buffy* 4.3), and he does get his hands on it. He's not really bad at planning; he is simply too easily bored to make his plans work.

<sup>30</sup> *Angel* "Release" 4.14.

<sup>31</sup> *Buffy* "Amends" 3.10.

<sup>32</sup> *Buffy* "Passion" 2.17.

<sup>33</sup> *Buffy* "Fool for Love" 5.7.

<sup>34</sup> Darla, though Angelus' teacher, is closer to Spike in character. She finds it titillating to be in real danger, to the point that she, in a flashback in "Offspring," lets Holtz live despite that he has pursued them relentlessly for years, while Angelus humbly suggests that it perhaps would be a good idea to kill him now that they have the chance (*Angel* "Offspring" 3.7).

<sup>35</sup> There is a likeness between Angel's and the slayer's way of looking at evil. They all put the mission first and any other considerations have to yield. See *Buffy* "Lies My Parents Told Me" 7.17.

<sup>36</sup> *Buffy* "School Hard" 2.3, *Angel* "Not Fade Away" 5.22.

<sup>37</sup> In "Bargaining (Part 2)" (*Buffy* 6.2), Spike gazes longingly at how some demons destroy a house, and when Dawn asks him what's the matter, he answers "[I]ooked like fun." He would really like to be part of the fun, but he knows that that time has passed. Now he has obligations. It is still evident, though, that the lust for destruction is there, despite the chip. The last remark presupposes a difference between evil and lust for destruction. That Spike would love to participate in the destruction of the house doesn't count as proof of his being evil. The distinction between the concepts *evil* and *lust for destruction* fits with how we usually use the words. Not everyone who stops to watch when a house is demolished by means of heavy machinery (or likes to use the paper shredder) is evil, despite the fact that it is the fascination of destruction that is put in gear. Both the fascination of destruction and the lust to destroy has a relation to, but is not the same as, being evil (when we determine that the Mayor is evil, it's not because the paper shredder cheers him up [*Buffy* "Consequences" 3.15]). It would, however, be possible to argue that the lack of inhibitions when it comes to destruction in itself would be evil, the difference between most of us and Spike being that he (chip- and soulless) does not hesitate to act out his fascination out of concern for other people. If so, Spike isn't amoral, he is evil.

<sup>38</sup> Which role the chip plays in Spike's journey toward a possible Shanshu (to become human) is an interesting but difficult question. At odds with the idea that the chip might

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have been instrumental in the process, we have Drusilla's word that Buffy was "floating all around" Spike already when he and Drusilla arrived to Brazil after the second season (flashback in "Fool for Love" *Buffy* 5.7). If we assume that his interest in and obsession with Buffy is of a defining importance to his journey, it follows at least that the chip was not the only reason. But it is also possible to turn the argument upside down and claim that his journey would have been impossible without the chip because the chip allowed him to be close to the Scooby Gang, who in turn had a humanizing effect on him. In that case the next question becomes what the chip metaphorically stands for. According to Aristotle, we become good by doing good (*The Nicomachean Ethics*, book 2). Is it possible to extend Aristotle's argument one step further and say that we could make someone good by preventing her from doing evil? If so, apply this reasoning to the treatment of offenders and the penal legislation it builds on. Do we want a society where violent recidivist criminals become "bagboys at Wal Mart," still filled with rage and a wish to inflict pain, but without any physical means to satisfy their urges? (*Buffy* "The 'I' in Team" 4.13). The parallel between the arc with the Initiative and the story in the movie *A Clockwork Orange* (with Spike as Alex) becomes apparent. What need is there in such a society for therapy or other treatment when the wing-clipped criminals can't hurt us anyway?

<sup>39</sup> Spike becomes aware of his feelings when he wakes up from his wet dream at the end of "Out of My Mind" (*Buffy* 5.4). He knows right away that he is in trouble and that it probably won't end well. He has through the series gone from being obsessed with killing her in the third and the beginning of the fourth season (or perhaps as early as in "Halloween" [*Buffy* 2.6], where he videos her fight with a vampire and looks at it over and over), to desiring her in the beginning of the fifth season. Eventually the sexual tension develops into love. But why did he start to desire her? One possible explanation is that he was prone to fall for her after their love affair in "Something Blue" (*Buffy* 4.9). I will however try another line of explanation. Maybe it wasn't Buffy herself who made him fall. Perhaps it was Faith who roused his sexual feelings, and maybe she got him to change from being obsessed with defeating Buffy, to being equally obsessed with conquering her. There have always been traits in Buffy's personality that Spike has found it hard to accept, even after he fell in love with her. He learns in time to deal with them, but it is not until the last season that he likes all he sees. There is in Buffy a self-righteous Puritanism and a self-centered sense of justice (everyone has to comply with what she thinks) that Spike early on became aware of, and that both he and Faith find tiresome. Buffy is in that respect quite like Angel, and Spike dislikes them both for the same reason. When Faith in Buffy's body bumps into Spike at the Bronze, she plays on exactly those feelings:

"Spike: You know why I really hate you, Summers?

Faith as Buffy: 'Cause I'm a stuck-up tight-ass with no sense of fun?

Spike: Well, yeah, that covers a lot of it.

Faith as Buffy: Cause I could do anything I want, and instead, I choose to pout and whine and feel the burden of slayerness? I mean, I could be rich, I could be famous, I could have anything. Anyone. Even you, Spike. I could ride you at a gallop until your legs buckled and your eyes rolled up. I've got muscles you've never even dreamed of. I could squeeze you until you popped like warm champagne, and you'd beg me to hurt you just a little bit more. And you know why I don't? Because it's wrong. Humh humh.

Spike: I get this chip out, you and me are gonna have a confrontation.

Faith as Buffy: Count on it." *Buffy* "Who Are You?" 4.16.

She points exactly at what Spike would like to accuse Buffy of, but it is she (Buffy, as Spike understands it) who relishes and seemingly takes pleasure in her self-realization but without ultimately acknowledging that he is right. Her end note that it would be wrong to act out her wishes is said in a tone alleviated with pure lust but immediately turned to its opposite. That exchange is probably a forceful contribution to his wet

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dream. Who would ever be able to forget a confrontation like that? And of course Spike remembers it almost word for word when he and Faith meet again in the seventh season (*Buffy* "Dirty Girls" 7.18). During the body switch, Faith makes a mess of Buffy and Riley's relationship (though she is hardly responsible for their breakup), but if this interpretation is correct, she might during that same period have helped in laying the foundation of Buffy's next intimate relation. See also Justine Larbalestier, "The Only Thing Better than Killing a Slayer: Heterosexuality and Sex in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," 215. Our interpretations of the event at the Bronze are almost exactly the same.

<sup>40</sup> Sure, he fights constantly with Angel in the fifth season of *Angel*, and sure, he gives all he's got to win the chalice in "Destiny" (*Angel* 5.8), but are these expressions of egoism? Isn't it possible to be irritated at someone and do everything to make him stumble, and isn't it possible to have goals to strive towards, without at the same time being labelled an egoist? At the end of the season when everything is at stake, he puts away his grievances and fights the good fight alongside Angel.

<sup>41</sup> Angel makes this remark to Spike in "Just Rewards" (*Angel* 5.2).

<sup>42</sup> *Angel* "Damage" 5.11.

<sup>43</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the soul's function in the Buffyverse, see Scott McLaren, "The Evolution of Joss Whedon's Vampire Mythology and the Ontology of the Soul."

<sup>44</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, book 2.

<sup>45</sup> A discussion of the clash between the Buffyverse's consisting of shows with a lot of grey, while the rules of the 'verse are explicitly black and white, would need to be covered in a separate essay.

<sup>46</sup> It's refreshing that Angelus is completely evil. There are so many characters who are morally ambivalent in the Buffyverse (every human for instance), that we don't need more of those. Angelus has never gone soft, he has never cared for a human and made sacrifices for her, he has never refrained from inflicting pain when he's been able. He is evil—cunning, resourceful, rational, evil—that's it. I think that this is something that we, the audience, like. We want to keep Angelus in the box that is Angel, take him out every two seasons and play with him, and then put him back inside Angel. In between times, when he is locked away, we find it exciting to wonder if this is the episode where he will surface, or if we have to wait a bit longer.

<sup>47</sup> Luckily there already is a convincing psychological study on how Angel became the person he is, how Darla recognised Liam for what he was and moulded him into what she wanted. There is still no explanation as to why Angelus does not have any peer, why he of all the vampires became a personification of evil, but Joy Davidson has laid the groundwork for such an explanation in her essay "There's My Boy..."

<sup>48</sup> There is at least an embryo for such an investigation in Matthew Pateman's *The Aesthetics of Culture in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, 82f.

<sup>49</sup> *Buffy* "Tough Love" 5.19.

<sup>50</sup> *Angel* "I Fall To Pieces" 1.4.

"Angel: Am I intimidating? I mean do I put people off?"

Cordy: Well, as vampires go, you're pretty cuddly."