

From the editor

The Changing Names of *Slayage* (“I Think I Can Name Myself”)

[1] This journal began its life in January of 2001 under the name *Slayage: The Online International Journal of Buffy Studies*. The peer-reviewed articles published in it were, at that time, strictly on Joss Whedon’s possibly still most famous work (insofar as it is a work primarily identified with him). Over the years, the journal gradually came to include scholarly essays on other works by Whedon and company (such as the television series *Angel*), and in 2008, the journal published a special issue on Whedon’s 2002 television series *Firefly*. That was also the year in which the Whedon Studies Association was legally established as a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization, and as of January 2009, issue 7.3, we changed the name of the journal to *Slayage: The Journal of the Whedon Studies Association*. As of the current issue, 13.2, summer 2015, the name of the journal is changing again, to *Slayage: The Journal of Whedon Studies*.

[2] Lest there be any misunderstanding, please know: The Whedon Studies Association is alive and well. In addition to the semiannual journal, the organization also sponsors the biennial *Slayage* conferences, the next—the seventh—of which is to be held 7-10 July, 2016, in London (more precisely, Kingston upon Thames) in association with Kingston University and with the help of convener (and current WSA president) Stacey Abbott of the University of Roehampton; convener (and current WSA Past President) Tanya R. Cochran of Union College, Nebraska; local arrangements committee members Simon Brown of Kingston University, Bronwen Calvert of the Open University, Lorna Jowett of the University of Northampton, and Michael Starr of the University of Northampton; and program chairs Abbott, Cochran, and myself. The first four biennials all took place in the Southern U.S., but the conference’s reach has grown, with the 2012 meeting having taken place in Vancouver, the 2014 in Sacramento, and the 2016, as noted, scheduled for London. In addition to the semiannual journal and the biennial conferences, the organization also sponsors an annual juried award (the “Mr. Pointy”) for the best scholarly writing in

Whedon Studies (both book and article; WSA member attendees also vote for the best non-keynote paper at each conference). Furthermore, the WSA has a thriving internet exchange with a rapidly growing Facebook discussion group where members help each other with everything from research questions to conference rooming advice.

[3] When we remove the *Whedon Studies Association* from the *title* of the journal, therefore, we are not removing the Whedon Studies Association from the journal itself. The WSA is still the journal's sponsor; indeed, the By-Laws of the organization specify this sponsorship as one of the organization's main activities. However, the journal's editorial board and the WSA's officers have approved the name change for more than one reason. The simplest reason is to shorten the name. While our continuing main title of *Slayage* (suggested by writer Richard Gess) is important to us, we do want the subtitle to be used as well, and the slightly shorter subtitle might make that more likely. More important, however, is our wish to clarify that the articles published herein are not (nor have they ever been) solely the productions of members of the WSA. Anyone with a serious interest in the study of Whedon and/or his associates is welcome to submit researched work for review and possible publication. (Send submissions to rhonda_w@gordonstate.edu.) The content that the journal publishes is meant to be (and, we would contend, has always been) seriously evaluative. No one should be surprised that the articles often include praise, just as no one is surprised to see praise of Dickens in *The Dickens Quarterly* or of Pynchon in *Pynchon Notes*. But readers of *Slayage* are sometimes surprised that its articles are not uniformly laudatory: They are thoughtful assessments of the ways that the Whedonverses' texts, paratexts, and communities work. The fact that an artist is important does not mean that the artist is perfect. That we think Whedon is important is self-evident from the existence of the association: We expect his creations to endure. But *Slayage: The Journal of Whedon Studies* invites submissions from any perspective, if they are grounded in careful research.

[4] Thus, one does not have to be a member of the WSA to submit work to the journal. Still, we do invite anyone with a serious interest in Whedon's work to join the association. The WSA does not

require dues; we do, however, appreciate donations—for one reason, because the conferences have on more than one occasion cost more than they generate in revenues, since we have tried to keep registration fees low. There are many more members of the WSA Facebook group than of the WSA itself. To join the organization itself, simply send an email to wsamembers@gmail.com, and the WSA secretary (currently Kristopher Woofter) will enroll you. We are a welcoming group, both for writers and readers of *Whedon Studies*.

[5] In this issue, we welcome the work of Michael Goodrum (Canterbury Christ Church University) and Philip Smith (Tunas Muda International School, Jakarta), editors of the 2015 Rowman & Littlefield collection *Firefly Revisited: Essays on Joss Whedon's Classic Series*, who here serve as guest editors for a special issue on *Firefly / Serenity*. We also welcome the recent addition of Dr. Shiloh Carroll as assistant editor. Founding editor David Lavery has graciously stepped aside as lead editor, but still helps generously (the word is often used of him). I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many hard-working anonymous peer reviewers—some of them on the editorial board, some of them not—who give authority to our scholarly work. I would also like to thank the many active members of the association, particularly including officers Stacey Abbott, Cynthia Paris Burkhead (Vice President and rising president), K. Dale Koontz Guffey (Treasurer), Kristopher Woofter, and Tanya R. Cochran; and jury chair Bronwen Calvert, jury secretary Mary Ellen Iatropoulos, and jury members Rick Albright, Ami Comeford, Sherry Ginn, Ensley Guffey, Julie Hawk, and Michael Starr. Above all, we thank you, the readers, for making this journal real. Thank you for reading *Slayage: The Journal of Whedon Studies*.

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