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Beyond Slayer Slang: Pragmatics, Discourse, and Style in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

Guest Editor: Michael Adams (Indiana University), Introduction PDF Version

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Recommended. Here and in each issue of *Slayage* the editors will recommend or note writing on *BtVS* appearing elsewhere.

■ Samuel Chambers and Daniel Williford. 'Anti-Imperialism in the Buffyverse: A Challenge to the Mythos of Bush as Vampire-Slayer'. *Poroi* 3.2, 2004.

■ Jennifer A. Hudson, "She's Unpredictable": Illyria and the Liberating Potential of Chaotic Postmodern Identity

Michael Adams
Beyond Slayer Slang: Pragmatics, Discourse, and Style
in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

[1] This special issue of *Slayage*, titled *Beyond Slayer Slang: Pragmatics, Discourse, and Style in* Buffy the Vampire Slayer, explores linguistic aspects of the show, as well as culture associated with it, beyond issues of lexis (that is, beyond slayer slang) as described in scholarship so far (that is, beyond *Slayer Slang*) into more broadly communicative structures of language, such as pragmatics (speech acts in their contexts), discourse (continuous speech longer than a sentence), and style (characteristic, perhaps self-conscious use of language), none of which excludes the others. The issue's purpose is two-fold: pursuit of linguistic interests and linguistic methods assist in the project of interpreting *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and its cultural consequences; conversely, study of *Buffy* within the lines drawn here exercises linguistic methods and enriches the contribution of linguistics to contemporary intellectual and cultural life. On 22 September 1997, when I watched *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* for the first time, I had no idea that a television show could be so lexically interesting, let alone that a single show would stand up to serious linguistic inquiry of all kinds. This issue measures the distance between then and now, but it isn't an end itself: a point of summary beyond slayer slang, it is also antecedent to further exploration of language in the Buffyverse.

[2] I first noticed slayer slang while surfing channels: I was sitting on my sofa, eating my dinner, plate balanced on my knee, when I heard Buffy say, "Love makes you do the wacky," and I thought, "Too true." I also reached for my notepad, in the way that lexicographers do, because I thought, "Huh. That's an interesting functional shift from adjective to noun," and I wanted a record of *wacky* in that hitherto unrecorded sense. I had never watched a show on the WB Network before that night; significantly, I heard slayer slang before I knew that I was watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I started watching regularly and took more notes, not intending to write anything particularly about slayer slang—I take notes about all kinds of language all of the time.

[3] Early in the afternoon of 13 August 1998, I realized that I had only four hours to write and submit an abstract to the American Dialect Society's annual meeting. In a panic, I thought through material I had collected about all sorts of American speech during the year and concluded that my best bet was to give a paper about slayer slang. I decided to call the paper "Slayer Slang." The conference paper, in other words, was an act of desperation, not part of a carefully considered program of research. I revised the paper as an article in two parts for *Verbatim: The Language Quarterly* (1999); eventually, the article became *Slayer Slang: A* Buffy the Vampire Slayer *Lexicon* (2003). You might call this scholarship by accretion rather than scholarship by design. In any event, *Slayer Slang* is a lexical study by a lexicographer and was barely meant to be what it is, let alone

anything more.

[4] *Slayer Slang* was well received on its own terms, but there has been an undercurrent of criticism ever since it was published. Some reviewers argued that lexis misses the point of language in the Buffyverse, that it necessarily underestimates *Buffy*'s quippiness, sense of humor, discourse structure, and style, all of which are much more interesting, much more complex, much more contextual, than any study of vocabulary alone could convey. At first, the complaint took me by surprise: undoubtedly, it had a point, but then all language is more than words; we don't do without dictionaries just because they can't capture language in all of its complexity. I came to slayer slang as a lexicographer, not as a fan, and, as a lexicographer and historian of English, I vouch for the value of a lexical study of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; yet I also accept the criticism and, more or less immediately after *Slayer Slang* was published, I began to consider how best to balance my lexical emphasis, whether over- or mis-.

[5] I found the answer at the Slayage conference in Nashville. Versions of the articles by Caroline Ruddell, Jesse Saba Kirchner, and Katrina Blasingame published in this issue of *Slayage* were presented there, and when I heard them or (in the case of Blasingame's paper) read them in the conference archive, I was impressed with how far the authors had taken study of Buffyspeak beyond lexis and how linguistics had led to fresh understanding of *Buffy* and its influence. Mark Peters was scheduled to speak at the conference, too, but was unable to attend; once I had determined to pursue publication of the other papers, however, I asked him to contribute an expanded version of the paper he had planned to present. While the rest of us were busy revising and editing, Cynthea Masson submitted the article published here, and the journal's editors passed it along to me, as particularly appropriate to a special issue on *Buffy* and linguistics. Some of the articles in the issue are completely new, then, and those aired earlier have been thoroughly reconsidered and revised. Authors and editors all hope that you will find them informative, illuminating, and, at times, provocative.

[6] Cynthea Masson's article, "'Is That Just a Comforting Way of Not Answering the Question?': Willow, Questions, and Affective Response in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," and Caroline Ruddell's "'I am the Law' 'I am the Magics': Speech, Power and the Split Identity of Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*," are both remarkable for their insight into Willow's character and her evolving position in the series, and they are surely right to focus on Willow's speech acts, because the show's writers certainly understood how certain types of speech project personality, social status, and power (both asserted and enacted, which are not exactly the same thing). Questions are put to various linguistic uses: we use them to assert facts ("Isn't that the button we're not supposed to push?"), challenge ("Do you feel lucky? Do you?"), apologize ("Have I hurt your feelings?"), command ("Will no one rid me of this troublesome priest?"), deplore ("Isn't that just the ugliest child you've ever seen?"), congratulate ("Isn't she just the most beautiful child you've ever seen?"), and to do many other things. Questions can sound harsh or they can sound hesitant; they characterize a questioner both psychologically and socially. Masson recognizes the preeminence of questioning as a pragmatic motif in *Buffy* and as a characterological marker particularly important in Willow's case. Ruddell identifies the polar rhetorical modes central to the show: Buffy assumes and asserts (with mixed results) the power of argument and law; Willow enacts power in magic, by its nature performative speech act, in which saying and doing are the same thing (judges who give verdicts—when the judge says you're guilty, then you're guilty—and those who "perform" marriages—a couple is married when someone with authority pronounces that they are married—exercise analogous linguistic powers).

[7] While they serve *Buffy* studies when they identify pragmatic elements in the show,

Masson and Ruddell also serve linguistics by considering pragmatics issues within the frame of a television show, indeed, particularly in *Buffy*. Rarely can we consider "extreme" performativity in language, unless we consider magical speech "usual" in discourse. Rarely do we observe the gamut of questioning's illocutionary effects in the speech of a single person or have the opportunity to consider those effects in social context by watching the person live with them. Of course, a television show is an artificial context, but nearly every laboratory is, to some extent.

[8] Jesse Saba Kirchner's contribution, "And in Some Language That's English? Slayer Slang and Artificial Computer Generation," is a more explicitly formal linguistic study of Buffyspeak. It explores the extent to which slayer style is rule-governed and predictable by reducing its structure into syntactic and semantic operators in a sentence-generating program. In one sense, it is hard-core linguistic description of slayer style according to standard linguistic theory; in another, it is a heuristic for understanding the nature and "translation" of style; in yet another, it is a *jeu d'esprit* in which we can speculate about the likelihood that the Buffybot would ever really speak like Buffy. Kirchner acknowledges the incompleteness of his research: after all, slayer style is a collection of characters' styles; it is also a collection of writers' styles; so we will have to take up the challenge posed by Kirchner's preliminary work on homogenized slayer style and identify the rules that govern particular styles in more complex sentence-generating programs.

[9] Mark Peters's "Getting a Wiggins and Being a Bitca: How Two Items of Slayer Slang Survive on the *Television Without Pity* Message Boards" is the most lexical study in the issue. Peters has paid careful attention to the progress of slayer slang post-*Buffy* and concludes that, at least in television-related media, some terms and speech practices have had unexpectedly long lives and seem to have moved from slayer slang into broader registers of American speech, though not quite mainstream speech—yet. *Bitca* and *wiggins* are two of the most successful items, and I am especially pleased that *wiggins* is thriving. In *Slayer Slang*, I wrote that "*Wiggins* is my favorite item of slayer slang, but it hasn't caught on outside of the Buffyverse, and it probably never will, in spite of its natural attractions and position in the system of items built on *wig*, which ought to give it a big boost." I am happy to admit that I spoke too soon, happy that others agree with my preferences: *wiggins* may be one of slayer slang's more successful incursions into the mainstream, after all. In lexicography, evidence is always more important than commentary: Peters's article is informative and interesting throughout, but the appendix of *bitca* and *wiggins* citations is particularly valuable.

[10] Like Peters's article, Katrina Blasingame's contribution, "I Can't Believe I'm Saying It Twice in the Same Century … but 'Duh …'" The Evolution of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Sub-Culture Language through the Medium of Fanfiction," charts the progress of slayer slang beyond the Buffyverse into other sub-cultural speech. Many speech practices typical of *Buffy* are exaggerated or refined in fanfiction; sometimes the difference is a matter of linguistics, sometimes a matter of perspective. There is no doubt, however, that fanfiction's appropriation of those practices models the migration of linguistic forms from sub-culture to sub-culture in an increasingly sub-culturally organized world. Blasingame points out that purely lexical study of sub-cultural language misses the point to some degree because words (necessarily) taken out of context in the course of lexicography suffer attrition of sub-cultural-meaning-by-agreement. In other words, study of discourse and style entails the study of relevant sub-cultures, and fanfiction style amply demonstrates the point, just as it also illustrates the dissemination of slayer slang and, in its attenuated relationship to the source style, the gradual diminishment of its slayerness and metamorphosis into something else.

[11] I hope that my preliminary account of this special issue of *Slayage* encourages you to

read further. There isn't anything else like it in *Buffy* studies or linguistics; it is, I believe, further proof that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* invites interdisciplinary study and promotes interdisciplinary interest. I would like to thank the editors of *Slayage* for allowing the authors to share their work in this forum; I would like to thank the authors for sharing their work and so persistently, avidly pursuing the language of *Buffy* beyond slayer slang.

Cynthea Masson
"Is That Just a Comforting Way of Not Answering the Question?": Willow, Questions, and Affective Response in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

[1] "It's a long important process, and can we just skip it? Can you just be kissing me now?" ("Entropy," 6018). Tara does not phrase her desire for renewed intimacy with Willow in the grammatical imperative; instead, she poses two questions. Yet these questions function as implied imperative statements. As speech acts, they are locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary in that they are uttered aloud, propose a desired outcome, and achieve an effect on (and, shortly thereafter, by) the addressee. Framed within the discourse function of questions, they are "indirect requests," because "the questioner is asking a question to induce the respondent to act" (Athanasiadou 1991, 110). They are, arguably, rhetorical: they imply the desired outcome without requiring a direct verbal response from the listener. Tara's questions elicit from Willow nonverbal action that effectively and affectively reciprocates Tara's desire. Willow (who has been sitting on the bed listening to Tara, watching her as she stands first at the threshold of the room and then just inside), upon hearing the final question, moves immediately to Tara. They kiss, falling again into the silence that initiated their first exchange of desire in "Hush" (4010).[1] Tara knows Willow well enough to speak her language—a language that bridges, through questions, the ineffable gap between question and answer, between spoken word and silent response, between illocutionary intention and perlocutionary effect.

[2] In his article "Bodies That Mutter: Rhetoric and Sexuality," Tim Dean (1994) asks, "Are bodies purely discursive? … [I]s sexuality purely rhetorical?" (83). Dean frames his argument in the context of psychoanalytic theory, arguing its necessity when considering the rhetoricality of desire. For the purpose of exploring Willow's rhetorical strategies, two of Dean's concepts prove particularly useful. First, he suggests, "We might modify the rhetoricalist notion that all language is performative, productive of effects, by saying that language becomes rhetorical only when it produces affective effects—that is, when it is imbued with desire" (102-103). Second, he acknowledges the effect of the trope "erotema," which he defines, within a discussion of Judith Butler's rhetorical techniques, as "the rhetorical question that implies an answer and so produces an assertion by indirect means" (106). Tara's questions, with which I opened this essay, not only produce the desired "affective effects" in Willow but are also examples of erotema. In their exchange, Willow's emotional (affective) response produces the action (effect) of the kiss, an action and exchange of desire solicited by and already implied in Tara's questions. This rhetorical

strategy of questioning, followed by either silent or indirect affective response (rather than direct verbal response) is most acute in conversations between Willow and her partners. It is, moreover, not only a consistent aspect of Willow's rhetorical strategies in the Buffyverse, but the rhetorical mode Buffy herself chooses to adopt in her critical final speech to the Potentials.

[3] This essay investigates the trope of questioning and the affective, perlocutionary effects of questioning primarily in relation to Willow throughout *Buffy*'s seven seasons.[2] Willow is, arguably, *Buffy*'s questioner: the one who, from her first scripted line to her last, poses questions to Buffy and others as a means of establishing and securing her relationships and a place of power within the Buffyverse. The rhetoric of questioning, especially as seen in early theories of women and language, can be understood as a marker of insecurity or hesitancy in women.[3] This interpretation of the use of questions as a sign of weakness certainly could be applied to Willow's character early in the series. However, questioning can also be praised for its ability to promote and allow mutual exchange: "Instead of interpreting question-asking as the expression of an insecure personality, let us consider the question's interactive attributes. [...] Questions are both explicit invitations to the listener to respond and demands that they do so. [...] Questions are stronger forms interactively than declaratives. [...] Women ask questions so often because of the conversational power of questions, not because of personality weakness" (Fishman 1988, 255).[4] Rhetorical questions, in particular, have value not only as "persuasive devices" but also in their "communicative effect" (Frank 1990, 726 and 737). As Jane Frank (1990) explains, "This effect is negotiable; it is the hearer as much as the speaker who determines the flow and management of conversational topics, and who, by response, participates in creating total meaning" (737).

[4] Questions, moreover, negotiate power dynamics between speaker and addressee. As Angeliki Athanasiadou (1991) outlines, examination and interrogation questions "imply the dominance of the speaker" in that "the one who asks the question implies the authority to require an appropriate answer" (110) .[5] With indirect requests, on the other hand, "One could argue that acts of this type of questioning express the questioner's dependence on the answerer. The speaker behaves as if he is inferior to the hearer, since he expresses his doubt as to the feasibility of this assumption; the hearer is apparently granted an option because he is induced to make a decision" (111). For Willow, questions and their subsequent affective responses represent not only a linguistic comfort zone but also a source of effective rhetorical power in her relationships—a power which eventually, in connection with her magical powers, defines who she is (both to herself and in relation to others). Questions by, to, or about Willow in the Buffyverse produce affective effects (including not only desire but also anger, sadness, and fear) in both the one who questions and the one who responds—the latter of which, of course, may include the audience. In a show that prioritizes emotions,[6] it is not surprising that Willow is the character with whom many fans sympathize even at her darkest moments; indeed, as Ian Shuttleworth (2004) suggests, "Xander may be the metaphysical heart of the Scoobies, but Willow more regularly commands the hearts of the audience for the majority of the seven seasons" (241). Although she "stutters and stammers through much of her dialogue" (Owen 1999, 26), Willow also continually provides the audience with examples of the power and effects of questioning—the rhetorical mode for which the audience members themselves will become both illocutionary addressees and perlocutionary respondents in the series' final episode.

[5] In the series' premiere episode, "Welcome to the Hellmouth" (1001), Willow is first introduced to the audience through a series of questions in an exchange with Xander:

Xander:	Willow! You're so very much the person I wanted to see.
Willow:	Oh really?
Xander:	Yeah. You know, I kind of had a problem with the math.
Willow:	Uh, which part?
Xander:	The math. Can you help me out tonight, please? Be my study buddy?
Willow:	Well, what's in it for me?
Xander:	A shiny nickel.

Xander's initial lines give us explicit details about his character: he is not good at academic work and he has a sense of humor. These qualities are consistent with Xander's character throughout the series. Conversely, Willow's lines do not explicitly give us details about her character; nonetheless, implicitly the exchange acknowledges her intelligence, and the lines establish her method of communication as question-laden. This rhetorical mode is consistent with Willow's character throughout *Buffy*.[7] However, I quote this passage with Xander mainly to illustrate that his method of response to Willow's questions is different from Buffy's and, as we will see, from that of Willow's lovers. Whereas most of Xander's lines here are direct responses to Willow's questions, other characters initiate a friendship, relationship, or moment of desire with Willow through a mutual exchange of questions and indirect response. More specifically, these indirect responses comprise three categories: silence, another question, or an indirect statement (that is, one that does not provide an explicit answer to the question asked).

[6] This mutual exchange of questions and indirect response is used to establish Willow's relationship with Buffy in "Welcome to the Hellmouth" (1001):

| Buffy: | Uh, hi. Willow, right? |
| Willow: | Why? I-I mean hi. Uh, did you want me to move? |

Whereas Willow's questions to Xander in the earlier scene imply her comfort and familiarity with him, here her questions function to show her initial tentativeness and insecurity with Buffy. She associates Buffy with the girls at school (Cordelia, in particular) who view her as unworthy of inclusion and attention. In an earlier scene, Cordelia (who is with Buffy at the time and who has run into Willow at the school drinking fountain) ends her condescending conversation with Willow by abruptly asking "Are you done?" In response Willow merely says, "Oh," and walks away. Willow's question to Buffy ("Did you want me to move?") functions as a self-deprecating directive, an imitation both stylistically and emotionally of the way she was questioned by Cordelia. Yet Buffy, who has witnessed this scene between Cordelia and Willow, clearly does not view Willow as unworthy. Indeed, as her conversation with Willow continues, she uses and responds to Willow's questions in a way that reverses (affectively and effectively) the initial negative, self-deprecating effect:

Buffy:	Why don't we start with "hi I'm Buffy." And then let's segue directly into me asking you for a favor. It doesn't involve moving, but it does involve you hanging out with me for a while.
Willow:	But aren't you hanging with Cordelia?
Buffy:	I can't do both?

Although not technically a question (with its lack of a question mark in both the original

script and the DVD subtitles), Buffy's "Why don't we …" statement is phrased as a question and has the effect of a rhetorical question. That is, the answer is implied, and, moreover, she does not allow Willow the chance to reply. Buffy then responds to Willow's question about Cordelia with another question, thus mimicking Willow's rhetorical style. Buffy again implies an answer in her own question (that is, she implies that she will be friends with both Cordelia and Willow) and, in the process, reverses the negative implication of Willow's question. Buffy has gained rhetorical power in doing so and has also taken a progressive step toward securing her friendship with Willow.

[7] Shortly thereafter, Willow (at the end of an overly enthusiastic description of Giles and books) asks, "[A]m I the single dullest person alive?" This too is meant as a rhetorical question—that is, Willow is stating, in the form of another self-deprecating question, that she believes she is the dullest person alive. She does not expect Buffy to answer. Buffy, however, responds to the question with an emphatic "Not at all!" and thereby, once again, reverses the negative effect and implication of Willow's question. Within this one short scene, Buffy not only adopts Willow's style but also uses and responds to questions for positive ends. If, as J. M. Kertzer (1987) argues, rhetorical questions "play with the notion of authority by locating, shifting, asserting, defying, and testing it in various ways" (244), then arguably Willow and Buffy test one another's authority by posing these questions. And if, moreover, "[a] rhetorical question creates, locates, or searches for authority because posing the question arouses a desire for, and expectation of, an authoritative answer" (250), then in their exchange of rhetorical questions, both Buffy and Willow gain authoritative status with each another. The exchange, therefore, not only establishes their friendship but also introduces the audience to Willow's linguistic potential to establish authority despite her seeming insecurity.

[8] Willow, as is well established, becomes one of *Buffy*'s most confident characters in the realm of language and its power. Indeed, by the end of Season Six when Dawn accuses her of being "back on the magics," Willow, having drawn the literal text of volumes of black arts into her body ("Villains," 6020), can state emphatically, "No, honey, I am the magics" ("Two to Go," 6021). This assertion arguably represents the pinnacle of Willow's power—through alchemical conjunction of word and flesh, Willow embodies locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, erasing the distinctions among them. However, this linguistic power—supernatural, if not definitively divine—is a skill that gradually develops along with Willow's character. In "Welcome to the Hellmouth" (1001), Willow complains that she is linguistically challenged during a conversation with Buffy at the Bronze:

> Willow: I don't actually date a whole lot … lately.
> Buffy: Why not?
> Willow: Well, when I'm with a boy I like, it's hard for me to say anything cool or witty, or at all … I can usually make a few vowel sounds, and then I have to go away.
> Buffy: It's not that bad.
> Willow: It is. I think boys are more interested in a girl who can talk.

Willow criticizes herself for her lack of verbal skill and sees silence as a problem rather than a potential asset. However, in Season Two's "Halloween" (2006), Buffy emphasizes the opposite approach to this linguistic problem when she sees Willow dressed in her "sexy" costume: "I can't wait for the boys to go nonverbal when they see you." Whereas Willow is initially concerned that silence in relationships is a problem, Buffy sees the possibility of silencing potential partners to be advantageous to Willow. Shuttleworth (2004), in regard to Willow's costume in "Halloween" (2006) says, "What is notable […] is

that her clothing beneath the spectral sheet, her original choice of get-up […] is unwontedly sexy. Whilst the character is plainly uncomfortable with trying to be so openly alluring, this appearance sows the seeds of her next metamorphosis" (238-39). I would argue that Buffy's reference to "nonverbal" as something positive in relation to Willow's sexiness also sows the seeds for a metamorphosis in Willow's understanding of communication. Through her relationships, Willow learns to appreciate both her own rhetorical power of questioning and the power of silence within affective, perlocutionary response to those questions.

[9] Willow initially expresses concern about her rhetorical skills directly in relation to her first partner—Oz—when she asks Buffy, "What if the talking thing becomes the awkward silence thing?" ("Surprise," 2013). Oz, however, is known for his "mastery of laconicism" (Shuttleworth 2004, 243) or, as Xander puts it in "Gingerbread" (3011), his "verbal nonverbal" communication.[8] Silence does not bother Oz. Indeed, silence (left in the wake of unanswered questions) becomes the very thing that allows space for Willow and Oz to communicate their desire. When Oz sees Willow near the end of "Halloween" (out of her ghost costume and, therefore, visible in her sexy clothing), he asks aloud to no one in particular, "Who *is* that girl?" This is the same question he asks when he sees her (two episodes earlier, in "Inca Mummy Girl," 2004) dressed as "the Eskimo." The question is arguably rhetorical in that no answer is expected immediately following its utterance. Indeed, because the question is asked and then left unanswered, a gap is opened for the possibility of discovering an answer and potential relationship. When Oz and Willow finally do meet (without costumes a few episodes later), Oz's first comment to Willow is a single word, intoned as a question: "Canapé?" ("What's My Line? Part One," 2009). This is the only word he can muster when he realizes "that girl" is sitting beside him. Willow, in response, merely looks at him and does not speak.

[10] However, a while later with another question similar in both structure and situation (posed in "What's My Line? Part Two," 2010), Oz again offers food to Willow, saying "Oh, hey … animal cracker?" This time Willow responds directly with "No, thank you," but then immediately follows this response with a question: "How's your arm?" Oz answers, "Suddenly painless," and Willow then asks, "You can still play the guitar okay?" Willow communicates her concern for (and interest in) Oz through questions and, thereby, assures interaction/response. Oz then reciprocates this interest by mimicking her rhetorical mode as the conversation continues. That is, when Willow attempts to thank Oz for saving her life, he avoids direct response to her gratitude. Instead, he asks questions about the animal crackers: "The monkey's the only cookie animal that gets to wear clothes. You know that? You have the sweetest smile I've ever seen. So I'm wondering, do the other cookie animals feel sort of ripped?" He frames his compliment about her smile with rhetorical questions about the animal crackers. The attraction Willow feels for Oz is evident in her eyes and facial expression when she responds—nonverbally—to his questions and comments. Oz communicates his desire to engage with Willow through questions; his illocutionary acts of questioning anticipate her perlocutionary effects. As Kent Bach explains, "As an act of communication, a speech act succeeds if the audience identifies, in accordance with the speaker's intention, the attitude being expressed" (*Routledge* [2005], para. 3). Willow understands the intention within Oz's illocution; her nonverbal response is clearly affective, and their friendship is thereby established.

[11] One of the more humorous yet endearing scenes between Willow and Oz also involves Willow's penchant for questions. The conversation takes place in "Innocence" (2014), while Willow and Oz wait in Oz's van for Xander and Cordy to return from the armory:

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Willow:      Do you want to make out with me?
Oz:          What?
Willow:      Forget it. I'm sorry. Well, do you?
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Certainly these are not rhetorical questions—Willow asks a direct yes/no question and expects Oz to respond. Oz, however, does not answer the question with a simple yes or no; instead he first responds with a question ("What?") and then (in response to "Well, do you?") describes the way he has dreamt about kissing Willow in what Judith Tabron (2004) calls "possibly the world's most romantic speech ever purported to come out of the mouth of a teenager" (para. 65). Their exchange, punctuated by questions, though not producing an actual kiss, certainly produces an affective effect in both Willow and Oz. Their desire for one another is established here. The two finally do kiss immediately after an exchange that, though it does not involve questions, does involve an implied question and silence. Having apologized for shooting him (in his werewolf form), Willow says, "So, I'd still if you still—"; Oz responds, "I'd very still—" ("Phases," 2016); Willow then walks away but returns and kisses Oz. Michael Adams (2003) discusses this verbal exchange within his discussion of elliptical expressions in *Buffy*: "Slayer slang, like all slang, is notable for a sort of casual efficiency, what many language purists decry as verbal laziness. […] Willow and Oz sometimes employ elliptical items, like *still*, that also participate in the general tendency to abbreviate forms" (32-33). What is significant here is that, although Willow's elliptical statement is not technically a question (in that it is not completed with a question mark), the ellipsis nonetheless functions in the same way as a question. In the silence, she is implying a question in that she leaves space for perlocutionary effect, waiting to know whether or not Oz still wants to be involved with her. In response, Oz again mimics Willow's language and style by repeating *still* and the elliptical construction, thereby engaging with her in a way that leads to their first physical exchange of desire.

[12] This is the identical method of communication Willow uses in a conversation with Tara just before they kiss for the first time:

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Willow:      Tara, I have to tell you—
Tara:        No, I-I understand. You have to be with the person you I-
love.
Willow:       I am.
Tara:        You mean—
Willow:       I mean. Okay?
Tara:        Oh, yes.
Willow:       I feel horrible about everything I put you through, and I'm
gonna make it up to you starting right now.
Tara:        Right now?
```

This scene occurs at the end of "New Moon Rising" (4019), the episode in which Willow must choose between Oz and Tara; their kiss occurs (or is implied to have occurred) in the darkness left after Tara blows out the "extra flamey" candle Willow has brought to her. Tara's "You mean—" (despite the ellipsis) is an illocutionary act, a directive that functions in the same way as Willow's "I'd still if you still—." It is an elliptical statement that intones a question waiting for a response. In both cases, the conversation ends with a first kiss, the perlocutionary effect enacted within the silence left in the wake of the ellipsis and, in this case, the final question ("Right now?"). Significantly, the first on-air kiss that the

audience witnesses between Willow and Tara also occurs in response to questions. Willow, distraught in her attempts to find clothing appropriate to meet Buffy after Joyce's death, asks Tara, "Why can't I just dress like a grown-up? Can't I be a grown-up?" ("The Body," 5016). Tara comforts her and then kisses her—an act of intimacy that effectively and affectively (rather than verbally) responds to Willow's rhetorical questions spoken in an affective moment of despair.

[13] In "Fear Itself" (4004), Willow asks, "What is college for if not experimenting? I know when I've reached my limit." Oz, who has just arrived on the scene, asks, "Wine coolers?" Buffy responds, "Magic," and Oz asks, "Ooh … didn't encourage her did you?" Willow then responds with the question "Where's supportive boyfriend guy?" At this point, Oz and Willow are still involved, still exchanging questions (rhetorical and otherwise). By the end of this season, however, "supportive boyfriend guy" will be replaced by supportive Wiccan girlfriend. Willow's rhetorical exchange with Oz, like her sexual orientation, takes a turn. Questions are asked and answered but not with the reciprocal questions or silences she desires as response (or with which their relationship was initially established). Thus, in "Wild at Heart" (4006), when Willow questions Oz's decision to leave town, she receives direct verbal responses rather than reciprocal questions or silence from him:

> Willow: Don't I get a say in this?
> Oz: No.
> […]
> Willow: Oz, don't you love me?
> Oz: My whole life I've never loved anything else.

Willow may intend her question ("Don't I get a say in this?") to be rhetorical, an assertive illocutionary act. After all, "a speaker using a rhetorical question anticipates ratification by the hearer, and thus, also anticipates consensus between himself and the hearer" (Athanasiadou 1991, 117). Oz, however, treats her statement as a simple yes/no question, inhibiting the intended perlocutionary effect. Willow may expect a simple yes/no answer to her second question ("Oz, don't you love me?); however, Oz instead makes an assertive statement that elaborates on the intensity of his love. As the relationship between Willow and Oz changes, their method of communication changes with it.

[14] In comparison, a rhetorically and emotionally similar scene between Willow and Tara ends with reunion rather than separation. This occurs in "Family" (5006), when Willow questions Tara after Tara's father claims that his daughter has a demon side:

> Willow: Tara, look at me. I trusted you more than anyone in my life. Was all that just a lie?
> Tara: No.
> […]
> Willow: Do you wanna leave?

In the first instance, Willow asks a yes/no question and receives a yes/no response. ("No," of course, is the response Willow desires in this instance.) In response to Willow's second question, Tara merely shakes her head; she does not respond verbally. But Tara's silence in the gap left by Willow's question (unlike Oz's verbal response in "Wild at Heart") gives Willow the affective answer and perlocutionary effect that she needs. In the final scene of this episode, when Tara says, "Even when I'm at my worst you always make me feel special. How do you do that?" Willow responds, "Magic." Unlike Buffy's response of "Magic" to Oz in "Fear Itself" (as noted above), Willow's answer is metaphorical here—that

is, she has not consciously used her magical powers on Tara as she does in Season Six. The shot then pulls back and we see that Willow and Tara are suspended in the air, dancing together. For now, their communication and relationship are still on solid ground.

[15] One of the early intimate moments of conversation between Willow and Tara occurs in "Who Are You?" (4016). The two women sit together on Tara's bed talking. In response to Tara's concern (phrased as a question) that Willow's friends do not know she exists, Willow attempts to explain her perspective on this:

> Willow: Tara, it's not like I don't want my friends to know you … and-and I really want you to meet them. But I-I just kind of like having something that's just, you know, mine …. And I usually don't use so many words to say stuff that little, but do you get it at all?
> Tara: I am you know.
> Willow: What?
> Tara: Yours.

Here Tara does not answer the yes/no question "Do you get it at all?" with a direct yes or no. Instead, by saying, "I am you know," she refers back to an earlier comment of Willow's, which simultaneously elicits another question from Willow. Tara's lines in this scene acknowledge to both Willow and the audience her attraction to Willow. The perlocutionary effect on Willow (based on her facial expression) certainly is affective. Thus, once again, an exchange of desire occurs within the framework of questions and indirect response. This exchange is also interesting for the fact that Willow is aware of her language and its possible effect on Tara (in that she says she doesn't usually "use so many words to say stuff that little").

[16] This linguistic self-awareness amidst Willow's questions and her partner's response also occurs in an earlier episode, immediately after Willow has sex with Oz for the first time in "Graduation Day, Part One" (3021). Lying in bed with Oz, apparently naked, Willow discusses their lovemaking (which has taken place off-screen):

> Willow: I feel different now, you know. But I guess that makes sense. Do you feel different? Oh, no, you've already—probably no big change for you. I-I-it was nice. Was it nice? Should this be a quiet moment?
> Oz: I know exactly what you mean.
> Willow: Which part?
> Oz: Everything feels different.

This conversation is very similar in structure (grammatically and rhetorically) to the one she has with Tara in "Who Are You?" That is, rather than directly answering the question (s) posed, Oz responds to Willow's question(s) by making reference to something else she has said; this, in turn, causes Willow to ask another question. In both conversations, Willow's questioning seemingly emphasizes her tentativeness and insecurity with the relationship, yet it also illustrates a method of communication that fosters Willow's affective and effective relationships. In both, moreover, Willow acknowledges the attention she pays to her use of language ("I usually don't use so many words" and "Should this be a quiet moment?"). Willow's use of language is not as naive as her tentative questions may initially suggest. As she matures sexually, she also matures rhetorically—she comes to understand her desires and her language for expressing those desires.

[17] The technique of making a statement ("I feel different"/"It was nice") followed by a question that echoes the statement ("Do you feel different?"/"Was it nice?") is also a familiar pattern of Willow's rhetoric and structure of questioning. For example, in "Lie to Me" (2007), when Willow learns that Ford knows Buffy is the Slayer, she says to Buffy, "Wow! It's neat! Is it neat?" Buffy responds, "Yeah, I guess it is." Similarly, in "Becoming, Part Two" (2022), coming out of unconsciousness in the hospital, Willow says to Oz, "My head ... feels big. Is it big?" Oz responds, "No, it's head-sized." Likewise, in "The Harsh Light of Day" (4003), during a discussion between Willow and Buffy about Parker (with whom Buffy had sex the night before), Willow says, "Oh, I love this part. Don't you love this part?" These questions (similar in form and function to tag questions) show Willow's hesitancy on the one hand.[9] On the other, they show that turning a statement into a question (in this case as an immediate echo of the statement) is a distinct part of her rhetorical style. She appears to be seeking the opinion of a respondent (and Oz and Buffy do, in fact, respond), but her rhetorical mode not only implies an answer to each question, it actually states an answer immediately before each question. As a speech act this type of tag questioning establishes "an inversion of the prescribed status relationship" (Athanasiadou 1991, 113). That is, Willow asserts her power despite her apparent submission to the authority of Buffy and Oz. Her questions, though they may appear to show Willow's lack of confidence, arguably show her to be in complete rhetorical control—she not only initiates interaction with her respondents but also ensures the response she desires.

[18] Judith Tabron (2004), in her discussion of Willow's relationships, argues that both Oz and Tara court Willow through "romantic speech" (para. 65). In her exploration of this, Tabron cites both Oz's explanation of his dream to kiss Willow (in "Innocence," as discussed above) and Tara's "I am you know .... Yours" speech (in "Who Are You?"). Tabron, however, believes that Willow's third partner—Kennedy—does not have this skill: "Kennedy, on the other hand, gets Willow's attention by asking her how long she, Willow, has been gay, or rather how long she's known that she enjoys having sex with women. Kennedy has *no* courting technique" (para. 66). However, I contend that if Kennedy's courting technique is viewed rhetorically, looking specifically at the mode of questioning and response that occurs at the beginning of her relationship with Willow, the opposite argument can be made. That is, Kennedy and Willow's early conversations comprise similar question/response strategies used in the courting techniques of both Oz with Willow and Tara with Willow.

[19] Willow's first exchange of questions involving Kennedy does not take place with Kennedy herself but with Dawn in a discussion about Kennedy. This occurs immediately after an initial disconcerting moment between Willow and Kennedy in "Bring on the Night" (7010):

> Kennedy: You, uh, better not hog the covers.
> Willow: (appears surprised and does not respond verbally)
> Dawn: Does she want to eat?
> Willow: What? Huh? Oh, she's—oh, she's new."

Willow's response to Dawn uses two rhetorical silencing techniques already discussed in this paper. First she responds with a question, and then she responds with a statement that adds something new to the discussion (rather than directly answering Dawn's question about Kennedy's desire for food). Kennedy's illocutionary directive not to hog the covers causes an obvious affective effect on Willow—she is initially unnerved by the possibility that Kennedy is flirting with her. Kennedy's far more obvious flirtation,

however, occurs in the long conversation she has with Willow at the Bronze in "The Killer in Me" (7013). This is the conversation that Tabron uses as evidence of Kennedy's lack of courting technique; it is, however, replete with questions (only a few of which are quoted here):

> Willow: All right. I'll stay for one drink. Then I'm going home.
> Kennedy: Okay. One drink. I can work with that. Let's start with the easy stuff.   How long have you known? That you were gay?
> Willow: Wait. That's easy? And, what, you just assume that I'm—I'm gay? I mean, presume much?
> Kennedy: Okay, sorry. How long have you enjoyed having sex with women?
> Willow: Hey! And what, you think you have some sort of special "lesbidar" or something?
> Kennedy: Okay, you know there's a better word for that, right?
> […]
> Willow: Can you always tell—just by looking at someone?
> Kennedy: No, no of course not. That wouldn't be any fun. The fun part is the process of getting to know a girl. It's like—it's like flirting in code. It's using body language and laughing at the right jokes and—and looking into her eyes and knowing she's still whispering to you, even when she's not saying a word.

Kennedy knows how to "flirt in code" with Willow. Notice that many of the questions in this scene are not answered directly—they are answered indirectly either with a change of topic or, in most cases, another question. Kennedy's questions are generally straightforward, directive requests for information ("How long have you known?"). Willow's response questions, on the other hand, are generally rhetorical ("I mean, presume much?"). As speech acts, requests for information are set in opposition to rhetorical questions: "[I]n contradistinction with the requesting information questions, [rhetorical questions] minimize the emphasis on the information channel and stress the social relationships involved"; rhetorical questions are "opposites to information questions, since the former minimize the emphasis on information, while the latter stress the securing of information" (Athanasiadou 1991, 109). Kennedy is courting Willow. She wants information about Willow, and she uses Willow's linguistic comfort zone to get it. She asks questions, is asked questions, and arguably illustrates that even within same-sex unions (or grammatically mimetic elements), opposites can attract. The only question answered directly is Willow's final one, in response to which Kennedy acknowledges the necessity of silence within flirting. Kennedy speaks aloud what Willow has known all along.

[20] Notably, a while later when the episode returns again to the two women at the Bronze, Kennedy says to Willow, "I like the way you speak. It's interesting." It is interesting, perhaps, because of its inherent questions. Willow's early concern that she can barely make vowel sounds around boys has been completely reversed by this point in the series. Not surprisingly, the first kiss between Willow and Kennedy occurs after a few more questions asked by Willow. In this scene, the two women have returned home from the Bronze:

> Willow: Glad we talked.
> Kennedy: Yes. Kind of cleared the air, huh?

<pre>
        Willow: Yeah, totally. Air cleared. Check.
        Kennedy: You know, in the spirit of air clearing ...
        Willow: Yeah?
        Kennedy: I feel like I need to be honest about something.
        Willow: Is something wrong?
        Kennedy: No. No. It's just ... I think you should know ...
</pre>

Kennedy then stops speaking and kisses Willow, thus moving from affect (desire) to effect (kiss). Willow's yes/no question is answered; however, Kennedy's illocutionary act falls into elliptical silence, clarifying its intention with the kiss. As in conversations with both Oz and Tara, Willow's initial conversations with Kennedy, leading first to affective response and then a physical expression of desire, involve exchanges of questions. This *is* a method of courting, one that by this point Willow understands all too well.

[21] Of course, Willow changes into Warren during her first kiss with Kennedy, and the episode moves temporarily away from their budding relationship while they search for a cure for Willow's transformation. Notably, however, in the final scene of this episode, Willow is brought back to herself after another exchange of questions and affective responses with Kennedy:

<pre>
        Kennedy: Willow, what did you make happen?
        Willow: You were there, bitch. You saw it. I killed her.
         [...]
        Kennedy: Who did you kill, Willow?
        Willow: It was your fault, slut! You tricked me. You got me to forget.
        Kennedy: Tara—
        Willow: Shut up! Shut up! You do not get to say her name. Offering
        it up to whoever's there. Tricking me into kissing you. [...] Kennedy?
         [...]
        Kennedy: This is just magic. And I think I'm figuring the whole magic
        thing out. It's just like fairy tales. (She leans in to kiss Willow.)
        Willow: What are you doing?
        Kennedy: Bringing you back to life. (They kiss, and Willow turns back
        into herself.)
        Kennedy: Hmm. I *am* good.
        Willow: It's me? I'm back? Oh, God.
        Kennedy: Are you all right?
        Willow: I have no idea. I'm so tired.
        Kennedy: Yeah. I'll make you some tea.
</pre>

Kennedy is able to bring Willow back to herself and her mode of speaking ("It's me? I'm back?") by sharing the intimacy of the kiss. Though it may seem that the kiss is the key to transformation here, Kennedy's questions are equally as important in Willow's transformation. Kennedy uses interrogation questions ("What did you make happen?" and "Who did you kill?") and, thereby, "implies the authority to require an appropriate answer" (Athanasiadou 1991, 110). She establishes her authority over Warren/Willow, and the perlocutionary effect is literally transformative. In this scene, more so perhaps than anywhere else thus far in the series, rhetorical mode is inextricably linked with physical action.

[22] Karen Eileen Overbey and Lahney Preston-Matto (2002) discuss Willow's language in "Staking in Tongues: Speech Act as Weapon in *Buffy*." They convincingly posit "the

materiality of language in *Buffy*," outlining the ways in which "[w]ords and utterances have palpable power" within the Buffyverse (73). They call Willow's language "foundational," justifiably claiming "she builds a base of operation for the crew, establishing context from text, providing a sort of local landscape for the group's actions" (80). Overbey and Preston-Matto, though they quote an exchange between Willow and Tara that includes a question, do not discuss Willow's penchant for questioning. The lines that Overbey and Preston-Matto quote are from "Primeval" (4021):

> Willow: I think I'm onto something. I've been assuming the cipher-text was encrypted with an asymmetric algorithm. Then it hit me: a hexagonic key pattern. It's—I'm scaring you now, huh?
> Tara: A little. In a good way. It's like a different kind of magic.

Overbey and Preston-Matto, in their discussion of these lines, connect magic and language, claiming "there is magic in linguistic force. And Willow, with her command of text and of magic, functions as a kind of linguist herself, exploring and exposing the systems of magical logic that give *Buffy* rhetorical potency" (80). Although this exchange between Tara and Willow may not seem significant in terms of a connection between questioning and desire, the affective effect of Tara's fear (or potential fear) in response to Willow's question and in relation to Willow's power with magic does indeed become a significant component of their relationship (leading to its demise in Season Six). Here Tara's fear is minimal; the phrase "in a good way" suggests that she is enticed by or attracted to Willow's knowledge and power. Willow's question, on its surface, is evidence of her concern for Tara's emotional reaction; yet simultaneously the question asserts the possibility of Willow's potential to cause fear and thus opens a gap that provides space for her power (rhetorical and otherwise) and, later, for the emergence of Dark Willow.

[23] Thus along with allowing space for desire, Willow's questions and questioning also leave space for other affects, such as fear and anger. Indeed, the first major argument between Tara and Willow in Season Five ("Tough Love," 5019) is full of questions, one of which picks up the thread left by the "I'm scaring you" question of Season Four:

> Tara: [...] I mean, it frightens me how powerful you're getting.
> Willow: That's a weird word.
> Tara: "Getting"?
> Willow: It *frightens* you? I frighten you?
> Tara: That is so not what I meant. I mean it impresses—impressive.
> Willow: [...] D-Don't you trust me?
> Tara: With my life.
> Willow: That's not what I mean.
> [...]
> Willow: What is it about me that you don't trust?
> Tara: It's not that. I worry sometimes. You're changing so much, so fast. I don't know where you're heading.
> Willow: Where I'm heading?
> Tara: I'm saying everything wrong.
> Willow: No, I think you're being pretty clear. This isn't about the witch thing. It's about the other changes in my life.
> Tara: I trust you, I just-I don't know where I'm gonna fit in your life when—

> Willow: When … I change back? Yeah, this is a college thing … just a little experimentation before I get over the thrill and head back to Boys' Town. You think that?
> Tara: Should I?
> Willow: I'm really sorry that I didn't establish my lesbo street cred before I got into this relationship. You're the only woman I've ever fallen in love with so how on earth could you ever take me seriously?

In this scene, the question "I frighten you?" echoes Willow's assertive question to Tara from "Primeval," "I'm scaring you now, huh?"; likewise, the Willow/Tara "Don't you trust me?/With my life" exchange echoes the Willow/Oz "Don't you love me?/My whole life" exchange from "Wild at Heart" (discussed above). The scene revolves around questions, but the questions do not incite desire. They do, nonetheless, produce emotion—anger mainly—and thus again elicit an affective effect, engaging both speaker and respondent. Notice, too, that both women are aware that they are struggling with language here (Tara says, "That is so not what I meant" and "I'm saying everything wrong"; Willow says, "That's not what I mean"). Their ability to communicate—to ask questions that imply and elicit desired response—breaks down and allows the possibility for a breakdown of the entire relationship.

[24] Another argument that involves questions and emotional response occurs in "Tabula Rasa" (6008). Here, Tara confronts Willow on her use of magic to erase memory:

> Tara: What is wrong with you? […] Do you think I'm stupid? I know you used that spell on me.
> Willow: Tara, I'm sorry. I—
> Tara: Don't. Just … don't. There's nothing you can say.
> Willow: Tara, I didn't mean to—
> Tara: To what? Violate my mind like that? How could you, Willow? How could you after what Glory did to me?
> Willow: Violate you? I-I didn't mean anything like that. I-I just wanted us not to fight anymore. I love you.

In this scene, Tara holds the linguistic and ethical power in that she not only asks but answers her own interrogation questions ("To what? Violate my mind like that?"). Each question is assertive in its accusation. By asking one after the next, Tara does not allow time for Willow to respond. Tara's technique blurs the boundary between interrogation questions and rhetorical questions and, finally, forces Willow to question, through rhetorical echo, her own unethical behaviour. The argument continues, ending with a final question from Willow: "Are you saying you're gonna leave me?" As in response to Willow's question to Tara in "Family," ("Are you gonna leave?" discussed above) Tara does not respond directly. In this case, however, the scene cuts immediately to Giles who says to Buffy "I have to." (They, the cut suggests, have been having a similar conversation in regard to Giles leaving Buffy.) Thus, although the audience does not see Tara's response to Willow, whether verbally or otherwise, the implication is clear—if Willow does not stop abusing magic, Tara will have to leave her (as, indeed, is what happens shortly thereafter). Thus we see in this scene of questions and ellipsis, words and silences, the affective effect not of desire but of anger, sadness, and fear.

[25] Another disturbing affective response in the wake of rhetorical questions occurs in "New Moon Rising" (4019) in a discussion between Oz and Tara. Oz, thanks to his keen werewolf senses, notices Willow's scent on Tara and begins to question her about this:

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Oz:          Is that her sweater?
Tara:        I just-I just hope that you guys'll be very happy.
Oz:          You smell like her. She's all over you. Do you know that?
Tara:        I can't. I-I can't talk about this.
Oz:          But there's something to talk about? Are you two involved?
Tara:        I have-I have to go.
Oz:          Because she never said anything to me like that. We talked
all night and she never— (Tara begins to walk away.) No, stop! Is she in
love with you?  Tell me! Is she?
```

Although Willow is not physically present in this scene, she is the point of contention. Each of Oz's questions is a simple, assertive yes/no question. Tara, however, responds with neither yes nor no. Indeed, in an effort to bring the conversation to a close, she avoids direct response to Oz's questions. However, Tara's lack of a yes/no assertion nonetheless constitutes a perlocutionary act in response to the intention of each question; her implied response is what causes Oz to lose emotional control and revert to his werewolf state. Willow's relationship with Tara is vocalized by Oz not as a statement but as an assertive interrogation question ("Is she in love with you?")—the implied answer to which causes in Oz an undesirable affective effect.

[26] The affective effects of questions, then, can be both positive and negative. Notably, one of the most disturbing yet unique emotionally charged scenes involving this rhetorical mode occurs when Willow exchanges questions with her double, Vamp Willow, in "Doppelgängland" (3016). In this episode, Vamp Willow first seductively approaches and then kills a young woman named Sandy; afterward, she says to everyone at the Bronze: "Questions? Comments?" Her actions produce the desired affective effect—fear—and her questions are, in effect, rhetorical: she expects no questions or comments from her audience. She thus holds power, rhetorically and physically, over the crowd. But Willow herself questions Vamp Willow later in the episode:

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Vamp Willow:      I kind of like the idea of the two of us …. We
could be quite the team if you came around to my way of thinking.
Willow:           Would that mean we have to snuggle?
Vamp Willow:      What do you say? (licks Willow's neck) Want to
be bad?
Willow:           This just can't get more disturbing.
```

Of course, an argument can be made that Willow eventually does come around to Vamp Willow's way of thinking, both in terms of her sexual orientation and in the emergence of Dark Willow. Indeed, Lorna Jowett discusses this in *Sex and the Slayer*: "Vamp Willow at first seems to be Willow's dark shadow but with hindsight acts more as a *fore*shadowing of her internal contradictions, brought out subsequently in Dark Willow. Thus Vamp Willow, in dress, speech, and action appears to be everything Willow is not" (2005, 81). Although I agree with most of Jowett's argument here, I disagree on the reference to speech. That is, Vamp Willow's choice of rhetorical mode—questions—*mirrors* Willow's speech rather than reflecting its opposite.

[27] In regard to this scene, Rebecca Beirne (2004) argues that "when Vampire Willow licks Willow's neck, Willow is completely unnerved […]. It is clear that it is not fear of being bitten that unnerves her, but rather the eroticism behind that lick, and the fact that it comes from, not only a woman, but her mirror image" (n.p.). As I've stated, the

rhetorical strategy also provides a mirror image: both Willow and Vamp Willow ask questions that the other does not answer. Thus, Willow may be unnerved, not only by Vamp Willow's sexuality, but also by her method of communication—both of which, as the series establishes, are aspects of Willow herself. She does not know what to do when confronted with her double's rhetorical questions. Elsewhere, as we have seen, an exchange of questions can lead to a positive exchange of desire. Here, when confronted with the double, the exchange of questions, followed by the sexually explicit act of neck-licking, leads (from Willow's perspective) to a disturbing moment of desire enacted by Vamp Willow.[10] Later, when the two meet again in the episode's final battle scene, Willow says to Vamp Willow, "No more snuggles?" Her tone is one of uncertainty, and Vamp Willow responds by knocking her across the face, a nonverbal response that sends Willow crashing into a drum set. Willow, whether or not tentative in tone, teases Vamp Willow with "No more snuggles?"—playing not only with sexuality but also with rhetoricality in response to her double. Willow is, one could say, playing at her own game. Thus, as in other episodes, in "Doppelgängland," the exchange of questions results in affective effects. These effects are disturbing only in that the moment of desire occurs between two aspects of the same character.

[28] Having outlined the connection between questions and affective response, I return now to a point I made early in this paper: the connection between the audience and the choice of rhetorical questions. In a pivotal scene from "Chosen" (7022) (one that links Buffy not only with the Potentials but with Willow and the audience), Buffy chooses not statements but rhetorical questions to deliver her message. The scene (chapter twelve on the DVD) moves in a series of cuts, linking Willow's final spell with Buffy's final speech to the Potentials (chronologically earlier). After Buffy exclaims as a question, "Willow?", the scene cuts to Willow who, experiencing the power of the spell with the scythe, says, "Oh … my … Goddess." The scene then cuts again, in flashback, to Buffy's earlier speech: "So here's the part where you make a choice. What if you could have that power? Now? […] Make your choice. Are you ready to be strong?" Buffy, in one of the most pivotal speeches of the entire series, uses rhetorical questions as illocutionary directives. The answers to the questions are implied, but each individual must nonetheless make the choice as perlocutionary act. Thus, Buffy is speaking here not only to the Potentials but to an entire audience of women (fans and viewers). Given that Buffy is merging her power, directly through Willow, with women around the world, the choice of rhetorical questions as speech act is both logical and powerful. No one responds verbally. The questions are left, along with their inherent silent gap, to be answered by every Potential and every viewer. Thus the audience participates in the language of the Buffyverse by entering the silence, the gap created by the rhetorical questions.

[29] Arwen Spicer (2004), in a critique of *Buffy*'s "long-standing commitment to dialogic multivocality" (para. 18) discusses a conflict between multivocal and univocal communication in Season Seven that, I would argue, is resolved by Buffy's choice to offer the Potentials directive questions rather than statements. Spicer rightly notes that "Buffy is ousted for her intransigent univocality" (para. 21) and that, furthermore, this rejection "spurs one of Buffy's most profound revelations: that she cannot be an autocratic leader; she must interact with others as equals" (para. 21). However, Spicer also acknowledges, shortly thereafter, that "dialogue is no panacea: it is convoluted, messy, far from foolproof as a means of strategizing. Diverse voices can become a cacophony" (para. 21). In Spicer's view, multivocal communication not only breaks down in Season Seven but is abandoned completely by Buffy in her final speech to the Potentials:

> Ironically, we never see or hear them make a choice. As Buffy speaks, the

Potentials watch her attentively like children in a schoolroom. Their visual representation suggests that they are receiving wisdom, not participating in its construction. […] There is no sign of any Potential offering an opinion during any part of this exposition. The nominal dialogue of the Scoobies' discussion gives way to the literal monologue of Buffy's oratory. para. 25)

Spicer argues, moreover, that "being denied the free expression of one's individual identity is not empowering. Being silenced is not empowering" (para. 28). I would agree with this interpretation if not for the presence of the rhetorical questions in Buffy's speech. The necessity of silencing individual response in this scene does not negate participation; instead, as illustrated in Willow's rhetorical strategy throughout the series, questions promote participation in that they promote affective effects. Here, each Potential responds with physical rather than verbal action. The audience, moreover, has come to understand the affects and effects of questions, through Willow in particular. Now the audience is invited into the rhetoric of the Buffyverse—"participates in creating total meaning" (Frank 1990, 737)—in the wake of the crucial rhetorical questions. Far more than direct verbal response by the teenaged Potentials could ever have been, here silence is empowering for the audience.

[30] The audience can also participate in response to the show's final questions—that is, those asked by Willow, Faith, and Dawn as the final lines of the entire series. Although these final questions of the series are not technically erotema (in that they do not imply an answer), they nonetheless function as rhetorical questions in that they remain unanswered except in the imaginations of the audience members:

> Willow: What do you think we should do, Buffy?
> Faith: Yeah, you're not the one and only Chosen anymore. Just gotta live like a person. How's that feel?
> Dawn: Yeah, Buffy. What are we gonna do now?

In response, Buffy merely looks out at the landscape and smiles. She does not directly respond to any of these questions. Her lack of verbal response allows the characters, along with the audience, to answer the questions for themselves.[11] Thus, as the series draws to a close, the final questions open infinite possibilities for a continuation of the Buffyverse. Back in Season Three (in "Graduation Day, Part Two," 3022), Willow talks with Oz about whether or not they will make it through the upcoming battle. Oz believes they will, and the conversation progresses as follows:

> Willow: Are you sure?
> Oz: I sound pretty sure, don't I?
> Willow: Yeah.
> Oz: Well, then, I must be sure.
> Willow: Is that just a comforting way of not answering the question?

As Willow suggests in the form of a question here, not answering the question is, perhaps, the most comforting and empowering response of all.

Notes

1. I refer here to the moment in "Hush" (4010) when Willow and Tara join hands and perform their first moment of magic together. For further exploration of the juxtaposition of voice and silence in this episode, see Alice Jenkins and Susan Stuart (2003), who argue

that "'Hush' is perhaps the most important single episode in the *Buffy* canon in terms of dealing with the operations of this textual/conversational economy" (para. 5).

2. I am working on a longer study of Buffy and the rhetoric of questioning in general; space limitations require that I focus this paper mainly on Willow.

3. As Robin Lakoff (1976) argues, for example, "One makes a statement when one has confidence in his knowledge and is pretty certain that his statement will be believed; one asks a question when one lacks knowledge on some point and has reason to believe that this gap can and will be remedied by an answer by the addressee" (15).

4. Jane Gallop (1982) (in regard to Lacan's use of questions) argues that "This may be a truly feminist gesture, to end with questions, not to conclude, but to open" (32). Gallop sees feminist theorist Luce Irigaray as "am impertinent questioner" (65); she analyzes Irigaray's questioning in the chapter "The Father's Seduction" (56-79). For another interesting (and more recent) discussion of the trope of questioning as potentially feminist, see Bradley W. Buchanan's (2003) "Armed with Questions: Mary Butts's Sacred Interrogative." Buchanan compares Butts's use of questions with that of Virginia Woolf and Gertrude Stein, claiming that "the interrogative themes in Stein's writing may have a powerful feminist agenda" (367).

5. Angeliki Athanasiadou (1991) contends that "questioning is a speech act which affects the way information is organized" (107). He outlines four categories of questions: [1] requests for information, [2] rhetorical questions, [3] examination and interrogation questions, and [4] indirect questions. Examination questions are asked when "the questioner is testing the knowledge of the respondent" (109); interrogation questions are asked when "questioning aims at establishing a fact and pinning down responsibilities" (110).

6. Consider, for example, Buffy's much quoted line, "My emotions give me power" ("What's My Line, Part Two," 2010).

7. Indeed, as I will point out again at the end of this paper, Willow's final line of the series, in "Chosen" (7022), is also a question: "What do you think we should do, Buffy?"

8. As Overbey and Preston-Matto (2002) point out, Willow's "partners, too, seem uncomfortable in speech and body—monosyllabic Oz, tentative Tara. But with text, Willow is, well, a wunderkind" (79).

9. In structure and intent, each of these examples is a type of tag question. According to Robin Lakoff (1976), "A tag, in its usage as well as its syntactic shape (in English) is midway between an outright statement and a yes-no question: it is less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter" (15). A tag question, moreover, "might be thought of as a declarative statement without the assumption that the statement is to be believed by the addressee: one has an out, as with a question. [...] These sentence types provide a means whereby a speaker can avoid committing himself, and thereby avoid coming into conflict with the addressee" (16-17).

10. Beirne (2004), in regard to this scene and episode, notes that "Willow can finally respond with pure pleasure, not only to her own queer desires, but also to being actively desired by another woman" (n.p.). This is an interesting reading that suggests that Willow finds some pleasure in seeing herself reflected in this powerful double.

11. Rhonda Wilcox (2005), in *Why Buffy Matters* (published after this article was written), likewise argues that "Buffy's lack of an answer means that we get to answer the question" (106).

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Caroline Ruddell

"I am the Law" "I am the Magics": Speech, Power and the Split Identity of Willow in Buffy the Vampire Slayer

[1] Throughout the story arc of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, magic has gradually become Willow's language. At the end of Season Six, Willow becomes so deeply immersed in black magic that she claims that she is magic. When performing spells, Willow seems to speak, perform and practice another language, different to that of most of the other characters (Tara being an exception). Magic is Willow's language. Other characters, such as Jonathan, occasionally dabble in magic. Tara is sometimes seen performing spells with Willow and, very occasionally, on her own. However, these characters never perform spells as extensively as Willow. Willow as a representation of magic cannot be separated from her use of language and voice; when performing spells, she switches code and with the change asserts confidence and identity as she graduates towards fulfilling her role as an all-powerful witch:

> Dawn: You're back on the magics.

Willow: No, honey. I am the magics. ("Two To Go," 6021)[1]

[2] Willow's use of magic is also the use of a language that the Scooby Gang can rarely understand or participate in (the penultimate episode of Season Four, "Primeval," 4021, is a significant exception). Her use of magic can be interpreted as her attempt to find her own voice through magic, both as practice and as speech act. This is an attempt on Willow's part to establish a secure identity for herself; often overshadowed by Buffy, Willow attempts to assert herself through magic. Willow's own voice (magic) has a dramatic effect on Buffy, who has managed to survive seven seasons as the Slayer and by extension the leader of the Scooby Gang (most markedly when Giles leaves and returns to England). Buffy struggles to maintain her identity as the Slayer in Sunnydale; therefore, it can be useful to view her as the "ego" of the tale struggling against dark id-type forces. While Willow has previously used magic to help Buffy in her fight against all that is evil, in Season Six ("Villains," 6020, "Two To Go," 6021 and "Grave," 6022), Willow uses magic against Buffy and against what Buffy herself has proclaimed as her "law." Willow's use of magic as a language indicates her split self, largely because her use of magic as a language changes with the changing face of her

fragile identity.

[3] In "Selfless" (7005), Buffy attempts to kill Anya who, as a vengeance demon, has killed several humans. Xander and Buffy argue about whether this is the right or moral thing to do:

> Xander: You have no idea what she's [Anya] going through.
> Buffy: (*stands*) I don't care what she's going through!
> Xander: No, of course not. You think we haven't seen all this before? The part where you just cut us all out. Just step away from everything human and act like you're the law. If you knew what I felt—
> Buffy: I killed Angel! Do you even remember that? I would have given up everything I had to be with— I loved him more than I will ever love anything in this life. And I put a sword through his heart because I had to. [...]
> Xander: This is different—
> Buffy: It is always different! It's always complicated. And at some point, someone has to draw the line, and that is always going to be me. You get down on me for cutting myself off, but in the end the slayer is always cut off. There's no mystical guidebook. No all-knowing council. Human rules don't apply. There's only me. I am the law.

In this conversation, Buffy negates Xander's viewpoint by ordering him to see things from her viewpoint; there is no room in this exchange for Xander's own challenges. Buffy attempts to assert herself by using specific modes of expression; her particular use of speech acts at times demonstrates her status as the heroine of the show.

[4] Speech act theory is the study of utterances in a linguistic context. In this article, I shall refer to illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, which are kinds of speech acts. Illocutionary acts are "complete" acts, or utterances, that refer, predicate, and finally state, assert, or promise, etc. (Austin 1962; Searle 1969). Perlocutionary acts refer to the effect speech acts might have on the listener, such as persuading someone to do something or affecting their feelings or actions, etc. (Austin 1962).[2] Buffy's speech acts are generally assertive and directive illocutionary acts, as they insist that her opinion is the true state of affairs. But as perlocutionary acts, they also challenge the listener, as when she confronts Xander in an authoritative manner and insists that he come around to her way of thinking.[3] Whatever Buffy's law might be, at times she asserts herself in commands; her illocutionary acts tend to be assertive and directive, as well as commissive, where she promises or threatens to perform or not to perform specific acts. For example, in "Bring On The Night" (7010) Buffy makes the following speech:

> Buffy: (*solemn*) You're right. We don't know how to fight it. We don't know when it'll come. We can't run, can't hide, can't pretend it's not the end, 'cause it is. Something's always been there to try and destroy the world. We've beaten them back, but we're not dealing with them anymore. We're dealing with the reason they exist. Evil. The strongest. The First.
> Giles: Buffy, I—I-I know you're tired.

Buffy: (*resolute*) I'm beyond tired. I'm beyond scared. I'm standing on the mouth of hell, and it is gonna swallow me whole. And it'll choke on me. We're not ready? They're not ready. They think we're gonna wait for the end to come, like we always do. I'm done waiting. They want an apocalypse? Oh, we'll give 'em one. Anyone else who wants to run, do it now. 'Cause we just became an army. We just declared war. From now on, we won't just face our worst fears, we will seek them out. We will find them and cut out their hearts one by one, until The First shows itself for what it really is. And I'll kill it myself. There is only one thing on this earth more powerful than evil, and that's us. Any questions?

Buffy vows to defeat the first; however, she promises this (to the viewers?) on behalf of all the potentials and the Scooby Gang. She says "we" far more often than "I," indicating that she has no intention of acting alone. Buffy lets slip here, amid an apparently confident and inspiring speech, that she is not self-assured without the support of others. Buffy's autonomy is not without its challenges.

[5] In Season Six, Willow's own dramatic use of magic has a huge impact on the Slayer's autonomy, when she almost destroys the world that Buffy is sworn to protect. Importantly, Willow's dramatic attack on Buffy and all of her friends depends on Willow's evil half making an appearance. Willow's split self and fragile identity cause this dramatic turn of events. This paper considers how Willow's split identity is tied to her changing use of magic, which Willow uses as her own language. Willow's fractured identity also mirrors Buffy's fragile sovereignty. Battis (2003) suggests that Willow "has been overshadowed by Buffy but...has also shadowed her, and at times eclipsed her" (¶ 2). If Buffy is the ego of the tale, forces of darkness that are to some extent out of her control besiege her constantly. In Season Six, Willow becomes such a dark force that, through the very nature of her split character, she challenges Buffy's autonomy and identity as a heroic Slayer. To examine this more closely, it is necessary to demonstrate how Willow's use of magic can be figured as her own language.

[6] Willow's use of magic as a specific language is grounded in the ways in which her speech acts change once she begins to practice magic on a consistent basis; her modes of articulation change as her familiarity with magic grows. Willow's use of magical speech differs dramatically from her usual hesitancy in speech. Viewers can recognize Willow in her various guises through the way that her expression and speech acts change. For example, vampire Willow's cutting remarks (as well as a change of dress code) allow the viewer to enjoy the stark difference between "evil" Willow and the Willow that viewers have come to know and identify with. Speech acts as suggestive of personality allow viewers to recognise which Willow is onscreen and what her agenda might be. For example, in "Doppelgängland" (3016) "normal" Willow masquerades as vampire Willow in order to avert a massacre at the Bronze; it is Willow's attempt to talk and act like an evil vampire that provides humor in this instance. In this scene she must act as vampire Willow, who has just returned from going to find "normal" Willow:

Alfonse: Did you find the girl?
Willow: (*tries to sound authoritative*) Yep. I did.
Anya: (*mystified*) Where is she?
Willow: (*bravely*) I killed her.

Anya gives her a look of stunned disbelief.
Willow: And sucked her blood, (*nods triumphantly*) as we vampires do.

The silence is thick with tension, making her nervous. She turns to the doorman.

Willow: (*quietly aside to him*) You know, I think maybe I heard something out there. Why don't you go check?

He opens the door and goes out, closing the door behind him. Outside Angel grabs him by the shoulders and holds him steady as Buffy plunges a stake into his chest. Back inside, Anya confronts Willow.

Anya: (*incredulous*) H-how could you kill her? She was our best shot at getting your world back.
Willow: (*walks past her, straightens challengingly*) I don't like that you dare question me.
Oz notices that something's up.
Willow: (*now enjoying herself*) Maybe I'll have my minions take you out back and kill you horribly.

She sneaks Oz a little smile and wave. He barely reacts, just raising an eyebrow a bit. Anya follows her onto the dance floor.

Anya: (*muttering*) Vampires. Always thinking with your teeth.
Willow: (*haughtily*) She bothered me. She's so weak and accommodating. She's always letting people walk all over her, (*turns to face her*) and then she gets cranky with her friends for no reason. I just couldn't let her live.

The joke lies in viewers being fully aware that the girl in the vampire leather outfit is the Willow that viewers know and love; Willow is unconvincing as vampire Willow, which is evident in her attempt to alter her speech and her discomfort at wearing a "vamp" leather outfit. However, she also acknowledges her link with vampire Willow by admitting, in the guise of vampire Willow, that Willow is "weak" and "accommodating"; behaving as vampire Willow allows Willow to confront what she considers the weaker and less confident aspects of her personality. The difference between Willow and vampire Willow can therefore be identified through the differences in how the two use speech (as well as changes in appearance); their very different personalities are therefore performed through speech. Speech acts are performative and functional: illocutionary and perlocutionary speech acts assert or achieve an effect respectively (Austin 1962). In *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces of speech provide insight into personality and how language can indicate developing character. Willow's hesitancy in speech demonstrates her natural tendency to stand back and allow others to take the limelight, while vampire Willow's sharp expression reflects her vicious, blood-sucking lifestyle. It is therefore possible to view speech acts and language as symptomatic of personality and identity in the show.
[7] Willow's own use of everyday language in conversation is uncertain: Farah Mendlesohn (2002) describes it as her "characteristically hesitant mode of

speech" (59). Overbey and Preston-Matto (2002) suggest that "the words sometimes get away from [Willow] ... she is awkward in talk, blushing, stammering" (78). Willow's illocutionary acts are often expressive, allowing the viewer insight into her state of mind. The hesitations apparent in her speech, the tendency to question rather than to state, point to key components of her personality, such as lack of confidence. In the exchange above, for example, despite Willow's attempt to take on vampire Willow's mode of expression, her slight hesitancy and unwillingness to lead the conversation (she generally replies to questions asked of her) allow the viewer to recognize Willow rather than vampire Willow. As Alice Jenkins and Susan Stuart (2003) note in a more general sense, "[a]ll communication is, in some trivial way, the extension of one's mind" (¶ 20). However, as Overbey and Preston-Matto also suggest, "Willow is turned on by text" (78). Her love of academic learning, new technology, and researching magic define her character. Willow's love of knowledge and the tools of knowledge spark her initial interest in magic.

[8] Willow's love of text, which inspires her knowledge-seeking, is essentially a means to an end; she requires the text in order to find knowledge, and by extension power. As Alan Sheridan suggests (1980), "power and knowledge are two sides of the same process" (220): the two concepts are inseparably linked; indeed one is immanent in the other. The demon Sweet of the musical episode "Once More, With Feeling" (6007) aptly highlights Willow's strength by retorting, "I smell power," in the presence of the witch. This remark is made after Willow has spoken, not after her performance of any magic, signifying that her power is indicated through speech. The complexity of Willow's character is evident through the fact that both her lack of confidence and growing power are apparent in her use of speech.

[9] Willow's power is referred to constantly during Seasons Six and Seven by several of the characters, most notably characters who do not know Willow very well. For example Rack describes her as the "new power" who will "blow this town wide open"; and Anya, with her supernatural status (and who has never seen eye to eye with Willow), claims that she can feel Willow's power ("Villains," 6020). Significantly, Buffy, one of Willow's closest friends, does not initially notice her rapid decline into addiction to magic. Buffy also uses Willow's magic addiction as a homology of her own problems with leaving Spike; Buffy is too busy fighting her own personal demons to notice Willow's deep problems. (Buffy mirrors Willow, which becomes increasingly apparent in relation to their split characters towards the end of Season Six).

[10] While Willow is often hesitant in conversation, by contrast, her use of magical speech is fluid and confident; in fact, many of her spells are performed in arcane languages. A significant early example is the dramatic episode, "Becoming, Part Two" (2022), where Willow alarms Oz and Cordelia by suddenly speaking in ancient Romanian during a ritual to recover Angel's soul:

> Willow: Return. (*pants*) I call on ... (*pants*)
> Oz: (*worried*) Willow?
> Cordelia: (*worried*) Are you okay?
>
> *Without warning Willow's head snaps back and she looks up with her eyes wide open. Her head snaps back down and her eyes stare into the Orb. She begins to chant steadily in Rumanian as though possessed.*

Willow: *Te implor, Doamne, nu ignora aceasta rugaminte.* [Translation: I implore you, Lord, do not ignore this request.]
Oz: (*to Cordelia*) Is this a good thing?
Willow: *Nici mort, nici al finite* … [Translation: Neither dead, nor of the living…]
Cordelia: (*freaked out*) Hey, speak English!
Willow: *Lasa orbita sa fie vasul care-i va transporta, sufletul la el.*
[Translation: Let this Orb be the vessel that will carry his soul to Him.]

Magic speaks through Willow, and subsequently, Willow's friends (or indeed the viewer) cannot understand her use of the language of magic. This expresses Willow's alienation within the group. To some extent, the alienation produced by ascent to power is shared by both Willow and Buffy. For Willow, this culminates towards the end of Season Six, where Willow's use of magic has become extraordinarily powerful. In keeping with Willow's power becoming almost unstoppable, her use of everyday language has also changed dramatically.
[11] Previously on the show, Willow's use of language during spells or rituals was lengthy or complicated, thus leaving much room for things to go awry. A prime example is Willow's attempt to conjure a ball of sunlight and accidentally conjuring a troll in "Triangle" (5011). This is due to Anya's interference, which results in Willow getting the words of the spell wrong:

Willow: Would you stop that? It's very distracting.
Anya: Fine. Make your little ball of sunshine. I'll be quiet.
Willow: Good, because this spell is very sensitive. Once I begin, any non-ritual word can disrupt it. (*mashes the ingredients together with the pestle*)
Anya: Fine.
Willow: Okay, here we go.
She pours the mixture into the cauldron. Then she closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.
Anya: Did you start yet?
Willow: (*exhales loudly, turns to give Anya an annoyed look*) Shh, no! This is it.

Again she closes her eyes and inhales.

Willow: Spirits of light, I invoke thee. Let the gloom of darkness part before you.
A small circlet of yellow-orange light arises out of the cauldron and begins to spin.
Willow: Let the moonlight be made pale by your presence. Spirits—
Anya: Is it done?
Willow: Shh!!!
The circle of light flashes brighter and grows a bit larger.
Willow: Spirits of light, grant my wishes.

Anya: Sorry, I thought you were done.
Willow:(*angry*) Do you wanna screw this up?

Willow turns away to yell at Anya. The circle of light grows bigger and
brighter, and its spinning becomes less smooth. It continues to grow and
twist crazily.

Anya: No. No. I'm sure you can do that all on your own.
Willow: Hey Anya, whatever really has you mad, why don't you just say it,
like you do every other thought that stomps through your brain?
Anya: (*stands up*) I believe I have said it.
Willow: No. You haven't. Come on. Let it out!

*The circle of light suddenly drops down through the glass of the countertop
and touches a large crystal that is in the display case underneath. It gives
off a big flash of light and Olaf, a large troll, suddenly appears next to the
counter. Willow and Anya shriek and grab each other.*

To say the wrong words, or the right words in the wrong order, results in spells getting
mixed up; Anya ensures that Willow's words are incorrect through her constant
interruption. The show therefore implies that magic is an exact and complicated art
where words performed in a particular manner will have very specific magical effects.[4]
This is not the only way that magic can go awry for Willow: in "Something
Blue" (4009), Willow attempts a spell that will enable her to enact her will upon the
world through her spoken words. As Alice Jenkins and Susan Stuart (2003) suggest,
"Willow has attempted to give her speech acts radical perlocutionary force, or extreme
power to alter reality" (¶ 3).
[12] Spells that go wrong for Willow also bring to light the link between Willow's
emotion and magic that is upheld throughout the show.[5] Willow's magic is performed
as illocutionary declarations (and they are also perlocutionary, as they are intended to
bring about significant changes in the world around her); her words of magic are
intended to result in the circumstances to which they refer, so calling on the "spirits of
light" to "let the gloom of darkness part" is intended actually to produce light
("Triange," 5011). Once Willow's alter ego makes an appearance (in the form of the
black-haired, black-eyed witch), her magic still consists of illocutionary declarations,
yet she is able to perform magic without the aid of rituals or long and complicated
reams of words. Her magic is now brisk, often merely colloquial commands performed
as directives, such as "stop," "take a nap," "back off." Willow has transcended the need
to "ritualize" her magic through lengthy citations: "take a nap" results in the offending
police officer instantly dropping sleepily to the floor. This use of magic indicates
confidence and control: rather than having to accommodate the esoteric language of
magic, she "owns" the magics.
[13] Dark Willow's use of speech becomes more reminiscent of Buffy's quipping than
Willow's hesitant speech. Michael Adams (2003) suggests that "slayer slang becomes,
not only the means to community, but finding an individual voice within that
community" (44). Willow's language is not so simply about being part of the Scooby
Gang community; language becomes a symptom of her internal conflicts and her

struggle to attain selfhood or in many ways to achieve an identity equal to that of the Slayer. Language therefore signifies Willow's internal status, which provides a commentary on the character's psychological make-up, more so than of other characters. The symptomatic use of language signifies Willow's struggle with maintaining an autonomous identity, which she experiences as dualistic and fragile. Willow's speech acts while performing magic in Season Six demonstrate her increasingly pathological identity; identity in the show therefore includes being recognized as having iniquitous characteristics as well as being identifiable as one of the characters on the side of good. This is one of the show's strengths: the series allows for an understanding of identity that is often unknowable and deeply ambiguous, which provides a progressive and differing view of identity that in much of mainstream media is represented as (misleadingly?) autonomous and wholly good.

[14] *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is about conflicts of desire, conflicts between who the characters think they are and who they actually are. Speech in the show indicates these conflicts. Dramatic values in the show often emerge through conflicts between and within characters. Willow's problems and experiences in the process of establishing identity and status are literalized through her magic and its relation to power and speech. When Willow becomes evil, changes in her use of language, both magical and conversational, reveal her split nature. Changes in Willow's language also tap into the idea of the repressed; Willow's speech acts point to a deeper, repressed side of her nature that has rarely been seen before. The play on language in the show is dually coded, indicating that the characters are essentially unaware of whom or what they really are; the repressed side of their nature will slip out, often in speech acts. Willow's use of the language of magic (which is different from her "normal" use of language) becomes a symptom of her fragile identity, as it indicates that her character is twofold, or split.

[15] The differences between "crayon-breaky Willow" and "Darth Rosenberg" emerged during Season Three, when Willow's vampire double first made an appearance in "The Wish" (3009) and "Doppelgängland" (3016).[6] Most strikingly, Willow's appearance as both a vampire and a black magic witch is dramatically different from that of the "normal" Willow. Both are adorned in black clothes and, in the latter case, black hair and eyes and are, as Battis (2003) suggests, "re-coded" negatively (drawing on codes used to decode "evil" found in other witchcraft films such as *The Craft*). Both make different use of language than that of the Willow to whom we are accustomed. In contrast to "normal" Willow's hesitant speech, "bad" Willow is more cutting and commanding when she attempts to recruit Willow as her companion, often by means of illocutionary assertives or directives:

> *The library. Vampire Willow turns Willow around and looks her up and down, particularly noticing her pink sweater.*
>
> Vampire Willow: (*appraisingly*) Well, look at me. (*doubtfully*) I'm all fuzzy.
> Willow: What do I want with you? (*catches herself*) Uh …
> Vampire Willow: (*grimly*) Your little school friend Anya said that you're the one that brought me here. She said that you could get me back to my world.
> Willow: Oh. (*gets it*) Oh! Oops!

Vampire Willow: But I don't know … (*smiles wickedly*) I kinda like the idea of the two of us.

She turns Willow around again, caressing her shoulders.

Vampire Willow: We could be quite a team, (*meaningfully*) if you came around to my way of thinking.
Willow: (*uncertainly*) Would that mean we have to snuggle?

Vampire Willow brushes Willow's hair away from her neck.

Vampire Willow: (*coaxing*) What do you say?

She gives Willow's neck an eager, lengthy lick. Willow shudders with loathing and grimaces at the feeling.

Vampire Willow: (*enticingly*) Wanna be bad?
Willow: (*completely unnerved*) This just can't get more disturbing.
Vampire Willow growls horribly with desire and bares her teeth behind Willow's neck. Willow freaks out and whirls around, stepping back and away from her.
Willow: (*flapping her hands with disgust*) Ack! Ew! No more! You're really starting to freak me out!

She tries to go around Vampire Willow, but gets blocked. She snatches up Xander's cross from the counter and nervously waves it in Vampire Willow's face, who roars and bats her arm away, sending the cross flying. She grabs Willow and throws her hard up and over the counter. Willow lands with a crash, hitting her head hard against the metal filing cabinet.

Willow: Ow!
Vampire Willow: (*stalks grimly around the counter*) You don't wanna play, I guess I can't force you.

Willow reaches under the counter for what she originally came for and pulls out the dart rifle just as Vampire Willow comes through the door to behind the counter.

Vampire Willow: Oh, wait.

Willow locks the bolt in place.

Vampire Willow: (*smiling meanly*) I can.

Willow frantically aims and fires. The dart hits Vampire Willow dead center of her   chest. Stunned, she looks down at the protruding dart, staggers and starts to fall.

Vampire Willow: (*moans*) Bitch …

Willow‛s obvious abhorrence of vampire Willow‛s proposition is juxtaposed with vampire Willow‛s confidence, manifest in a series of expressives, assertives, and directives. Willow's nervousness and lack of confidence is apparent in her cautious mode of speaking in her very first line of the scene, where she makes a mistake in her expression, obviously confused by the sight of her double. Her following remarks are generally short reactions (“Oh! Oops!”). Conversely, vampire Willow leads the conversation and her expression is either seductive in trying to win Willow over (“wanna be bad?”), or threatening (“bitch”).
[16] Willow incorporates her evil counterpart‛s self-assurance when she becomes consumed by magic in Season Six; note here a similar mode of expression to her vampire self:

Warren: (*yells*) Help! (*normal voice*) Let me go. (*yells*) Somebody! Help!!
Dark Willow: What‛s the matter? Thought you wanted to talk.
Warren: No.
Dark Willow: Okay.
Dark Willow opens her hand, revealing the bullet that she took from Buffy‛s chest earlier.
Dark Willow: I‛ll talk.

She waves her other hand, and Warren‛s shirt rips open.

Warren: What, what are you doing?
Dark Willow: Shhh.
Warren: (*seriously freaked*) Hey, hey, I‛m sorry, okay? I‛m sorry.

Dark Willow holds the bullet about an inch from Warren‛s chest, right over his heart. She lets go, but the bullet continues to hover in place.

Dark Willow: Wanna know what a bullet feels like, Warren? A real one?
(*Warren looking nervously down at the bullet, then up at her*) It‛s not like in the comics.

Warren: No. No.
Dark Willow: I think you need to. Feel it.
The bullet slowly starts to push its way into Warren‛s chest.
[…]
Warren: Oh god! Stop it! Please! God! I did wrong, I see that now. I need, I need jail! I need … But you, you don‛t want this. You‛re, you‛re not a bad person. Not like me.
Dark Willow stares at him.
Warren: Oh, and when you get caught, you‛ll lose them too. Your friends. (*panting*) You don‛t want that. I know you‛re in pain, but –

Dark Willow: Bored now.
Dark Willow makes a casual gesture with one hand. A bolt of magic rips through Warren and tears the skin off his body in a single piece.

The difference between the expression of normal Willow and that of vampire/black magic Willow is partly a dramatic device, but it suggests Willow's repressed or buried side and further signifies a deeply split identity. Perhaps most noticeable is "bad" Willow's use of the catchphrase *bored now*. James South aptly describes the use of this phrase throughout the series and demonstrates the significance in Season Three, where both Willow and the vampire Willow suggest that "this world's no fun" ("Doppelgängland," 3016). As South (2003) argues, it is no surprise that vampire Willow finds this to be the case; however it seems unusual for "normal" Willow to agree with such a sentiment. South goes on to suggest that "normal" Willow is indeed bored mainly because of all the pressure she is under (139-140). Drawing on Freud, South suggests that Willow's pressure reflects that which we are all subject to in psychological terms; as he puts it, a "too much" (140).

[17] Vampire Willow is bored because this world is ruled by a Slayer (instead of the Master), and again this is similar to the reason why "normal" Willow might also feel bored. She, like all in Sunnydale, must live under the rule and law of the Slayer. While Buffy is a friend, her law is a difficult one to live by; morals are very clearly laid out and there is very little room for mistakes or bad judgements. More important, Buffy's law leaves only a sidekick-shaped space for Willow's own voice (magic). The Slayer's physical strength sidelines Willow's magical power, leaving her a sidekick with no heroic status of her own and specifically no language of her own (or none with which she can communicate with others). South interprets Willow's sidekick status as "her biggest fear" (134). In fact, ironically for Willow her background (often magical) work/ research has bolstered Buffy's status as a hero. Through the majority of the show Willow's metaphoric pen has never been mightier than Buffy's literal sword, until now.

[18] It seems necessary to discuss further Buffy's own proclamation, "I am the law," for it is this law that Willow so fiercely attacks. Buffy, the tale's ego, is besieged by forces with which she cannot reckon; Willow becomes one of the forces that challenges Buffy's law. This occurs in a number of ways. Willow undermines Buffy's moral law by attacking humans. She also attempts to take over Buffy's identity by making herself as physically strong as the Slayer and attacking her, retorting "this is a huge deal for me, six years as a sideman, now I get to be the Slayer" ("Two to Go," 6021). Willow attempts to take over with her own language or voice of magic, rendering Buffy (in her position of power) redundant. Buffy makes a proclamation similar to Willow's statement that she is "the magics," when she claims, "I am the law." Buffy does not mean that she is a representative of the police of Sunnydale, nor does she in any way associate herself with that type of authority; in fact, one of the few things that Buffy and Principle Snyder ever agreed upon was that "the police force in Sunnydale are deeply stupid."[7] State law is not the only law apparent in Sunnydale however. As Anthony Bradney (2003) suggests, "[p]luralistic legal systems exist in Sunnydale" (¶ 6), and he is, of course, referring to the Watchers' Council. By Season Four, Buffy has distanced herself from the Watchers' Council in England, and even Giles is no longer officially her Watcher; therefore, she in is no way a representative of the law of the Watchers' Council.[8] It therefore becomes necessary to ask, "What law is it that Buffy fights for?"

[19] Generally, Buffy fights the "good fight" and represents a force of good that keeps

at bay the never-ending forces of darkness (demons, monsters, and some vampires). However, as suggested recently, the show has insisted increasingly on blurring the line between good and evil. For example, Krzywinska (2002) suggests that the show takes an increasingly "relativistic approach" in its representation of magic (178-194). This relativism is also evident with the arrival of demons such as Clem, both Spike and Angel on rocky roads to soulful redemption, and the final revelation that Buffy's power is driven by demonic forces. In addition to these factors, Anya reverts to demon status (and back again), and Willow certainly crosses the line, blurry though it might be, from light to darkness. It seems that Buffy's law is an individual law applied as a universal "good," a law upheld by her power as the Slayer; but not every Slayer similarly attempts to assert herself as representing a specific law. Faith most certainly abides by no law; or, if we are to push the issue, her agenda would be to have as much fun as possible without acknowledging the ties of duty that Buffy seems to always bear in mind. Importantly, Faith herself announces to Buffy that "we don't need the law; we are the law" during the Season Three episode "Consequences" (3015); but, as her lack of rationality becomes apparent, her capacity to uphold any law slips through her fingers. Faith generally abides by few rules during the show, although it should be noted that she does seem to do what the Mayor asks (orders?) her to do, and she is certainly more stable on her return in Season Seven, to the extent that she briefly takes over for Buffy.

[20] Kendra, like Faith, does not adhere to the same rules that Buffy does. Kendra is the most Council law-abiding of the Slayers in that she stands for the rules and laws of the Watcher's Council and would never perform any task without first receiving permission from her Watcher. Finally, the first Slayer, introduced at the end of Season Four as an enigma related to Buffy's origins as the Slayer, is never fully explored; but her vicious attack on the Scooby Gang implies that she is a force of rage and vengeance. The first Slayer also works alone and tells Buffy that she, too, should be a solitary Slayer. It is made clear that the first Slayer precedes all language: she cannot communicate with Buffy other than through Tara, who provides her voice. Tara is used to bridge the gap between the non-speaking Slayer and Buffy who represents the law in the present time; interestingly, it is Tara who provides the first Slayer's voice, though Tara's own speech can on occasion be stammering, particularly in her early appearances. Her speech role is similar to her interplay with Willow: she helps Willow to secure a more stable identity through magic, their common "language."

[21] Vitally, none of the Slayers who meet become good friends. Friendship is hinted at between Buffy and Kendra and early on between Buffy and Faith. Both friendships are fruitless once it is discovered that Buffy's idea of being a Slayer differs dramatically from Kendra's and Faith's, though it should be noted that the relationships between Kendra and Buffy and Faith and Buffy are later re-established to some extent. Kendra abides by external rules suggested to her by an outside force. I suggest that Buffy's law is actually her own beliefs and morals, beliefs and morals that she manages to uphold vigorously through having the power of being the Slayer. It is also likely that Giles has been an influence during her time as the Slayer, providing her with a strong sense of duty. Yet this sense of duty is on her own terms; the movement "arc" of the show has placed increasingly more emphasis on Buffy being in charge. Often, in earlier episodes, Giles's despair at not being able to control Buffy is a source of humor; later, it becomes a problem, when, ironically, Buffy relies too much on Giles, and he returns to England to ensure that she matures into adulthood ("Tabula Rasa," 6008).

[22] Bradney (2003) argues that Buffy chooses when to abide by certain laws (state

law and/or the Watchers' Council's law) and when to break those laws, which further enforces the view that Buffy in fact has her own law, her own rules to live by. As Bradney goes on to point out, this is largely because Buffy has a far more accurate picture of the world than either the state, the Watchers' Council, or even the Initiative: these organizations simply equate demon with bad, apart from state law which disavows the presence of vampires and demons altogether.

[23] Buffy is arguably the most successful of the Slayers. She outlives Kendra, and Faith survives but experiences many problems along the way. Buffy's success is largely due to the strong team behind her, but it is also because she clings to the idea that she is human and wishes to retain this humanness—hence she refuses more power in Season Seven, despite the fact that refusing puts her at a disadvantage in her combat with the First. The moral of the tale is that, while Buffy refuses extra (dark) power, she still wins out, and the force of good is once more triumphant. One of the themes of the show is the continual sliding between good and evil; the show focuses on the grey area between them. Buffy is at the center of this battle; hence her desperate attempt to stay on the "light" side of the fight. Importantly, *evil* is not synonymous with *demon*, and *good* does not equal *human*. Buffy is ambiguous in this sense, as she is both human and demon; to some extent, this explains her tricky position as Slayer (vampire hunter with demon power) and human (young woman who attends school/university, etc). Buffy deals with this ambiguity by performing her "law" (fighting all that she perceives as evil); Willow equally performs her magic, and the two become juxtaposed in that they both perform their law/magic habitually and, at times, irrationally.

[24] What becomes so problematic for Willow in the close of Season Six is Buffy's law, not because Buffy's law is static and Buffy refuses to see Willow's point of view, but because Buffy has to draw the line somewhere. (The show hints at this previously, for example, in "Pangs," 4008, where Willow sympathizes with the plight of the Native American Spirit.) Tara's dramatic death pushes Willow's moral boundaries beyond what the Slayer can allow: Willow must kill humans in order to avenge Tara's death, and this Buffy, understandably, will not endorse. The conflict is a source of tremendous dramatic tension, as long-term viewers of the show are accustomed to Willow and Buffy being the best of friends, not the worst of enemies.

[25] It is necessary to clarify what Willow loses through Tara's death that results in her fierce attack, not only on the "nerds," but also on Buffy and Giles. South (2003) argues that Willow has no clear identity of her own, no way of defining herself within the group, which South describes as "no core identity" (134). However, in the eyes of others, Willow does have a clear identity in the group as another source of power. It seems, however, that her actual experience is that of surviving on the perimeter. Perhaps this is due to her own language (magic) having little significance to the other group members, at least, until she turns evil. The group has relied on Willow's use of magic in the past and has even become angry at the prospect of Willow giving up magic for good.[9] However, they have shown little appreciation of the skill and knowledge that Willow has acquired to help them in such a way. Willow's identity does not rely on the other group members, yet it is evident that her identity is experienced as fragile, as represented through her split character in the form of both vampire Willow and dark magic Willow, and this is reflected in her group identity profile.

[26] Willow's fragmentary nature is also evident in her relationships. Battis (2003) argues that "Willow's relationship with Tara, like her relationship with Oz, only further demonstrates her dis(embodiment) as a subject whose mentality and materiality is

fragmented … She must belong to Tara, to Oz, to Xander, in order to be inscribed by meaning, by the validity that others place in her" (¶ 25, 27). It would therefore follow that, without Tara, Willow feels that she has no "meaning." Willow and Tara form a very close bond; Tara, apart from being Willow's lover, is also someone who understands Willow's language or voice (magic). Willow often appears to be unsure of herself, and it is only in the presence of Tara that Willow appears more confident; Willow and Tara maintain their identity as witches together through intimate trust in using magic together (magic seemed to hint at sex between Willow and Tara early on in their relationship).[10] As Battis argues, "magic brings [Willow] closer to Tara, and closer to what she believes is an authentic identity" (¶ 24).

[27] On the sudden and tragic death of Tara in "Seeing Red" (6019), Willow's grief is violently apparent. Tara's death causes great grief for Willow because she provides a ground for Willow in the "normal" world; Tara's death also leaves Willow with no one to communicate with through the use of magic. (Willow does not consistently perform spells with other characters; before dark magic consumes her, magic becomes increasingly "personal" for Willow, an intimate exchange.) Willow instantly tries to resurrect Tara with magic in the next episode "Villains" (6020), and her lack of success puts Willow straight back "in the magics," meaning that her use of magic as a language becomes once more powerful, but also out of control. Willow's grief at being told that Tara will remain dead (unlike Buffy, who is raised by Willow's magic) results in her screaming "No" at the offending god (Osiris) on whom she calls to bring Tara back. The word is graphically represented as a visible sound wave to the viewer, and it sends the god (also screaming) back to where he came from. Willow's use of dark magic is instantly aligned to her use of language, and this becomes unmistakable in the remainder of Season Six.

[28] It is necessary to substantiate the language or discourse of magic in the context of the tradition of magical "words" or the traditions of magic and the word in religions. James Frazer (1993) in *The Golden Bough* explored the use of words in ritual in religious and magical practices, where he discusses the significance of tabooed words in certain cultures. In what he terms a "tyranny of words," Frazer describes how the names of relatives, loved ones, and kings may not be mentioned after their death: new names were often devised in order to refer to the departed. Such practices were due to beliefs that calling the name of the departed was disrespectful and could result in such consequences as the ghost of the departed returning to haunt the dreams of the disrespectful. The ritual nature of words corresponds to the implied power of words within magical practice and it also hints at the instability of language because it changes constantly as cultural identity changes.

[29] Frazer brings to light both the power and the taboo of certain words in magical thinking and practices. Similarly, Geoffrey Hughes (1998) discusses the power and taboo surrounding certain words. Hughes's work concerns swearing, and he suggests that gradually over time society has developed a "modern insensitivity to the language of cursing" (7). Language not only evolves, but reactions to uses of language also change. While Willow's more aggressive expression cannot produce much more than emotional responses from her friends (who, as Hughes suggests, would quickly adjust to her different manner of speaking), her magic can produce very real effects. Cursing in the context of swearing, and cursing in the context of magical practice have certain similarities; swearing often has the aim of either producing a reaction in the listener and/or expressing anger, disbelief, grief, etc. Cursing (performing a spell) in a magical

sense, for Willow, also usually has the aim of producing some kind of affect, a "real," physical affect; for example, Willow uses magic against her enemies such as her attack on Glory after she has invaded Tara's mind ("Tough Love," 5019). Here Willow both attempts to attack Glory physically with her magic and expresses anger and grief. When "bad" Willow makes an appearance, her changing use of language has the aim of producing a reaction, in the viewer and other characters. Magic (cursing in a magical sense) has specific physical consequences, but Willow's use of razor-sharp language (similar to cursing in the context of swearing) also has the aim of jarring the listener and is a reminder that she is not really Willow, or not all of Willow.

[30] According to Hughes, swearing has a complex (and changing) relation to authority, he argues that depending on context profanities can either work against or in favour of the person doing the swearing. Willow's cursing (both as magic and as increasingly cutting language) is a performance of her authority, as she attempts to display her power and assert her identity.

[31] The idea that words have power is regarded as superstitious and "represent[s] survivals of primitive beliefs in word-magic" (Hughes 1998, 7). Jeanne Favret-Saada suggests (1980) that the word is implicit in both the ritual and also the person who speaks it, "for if the ritual is upheld it is only through words and through the person who says them" (9). In this pre-Structuralist understanding of language, words have intrinsic power, and this directly implicates the word and language in the discourse of magic. This is upheld by Willow as she uses the word and text in magical discourse to maintain her power. For her friends (and perhaps the viewer), however, her changing use of language, along with the changing face of her increasingly fragmented identity, is jarring and serves the purpose of reminding us that Willow is acting out, and that Buffy's enemy of Season Six was once her best friend. The tensions between the two characters are exaggerated and play out as hero vs. villain; they also act as a homology of the friction between the two over Buffy's recent resurrection by Willow's use of dark magic.

[32] In order to avenge Tara's death Willow arrives at the Magic Box to "load up" on magics. Importantly, she does not research as she usually would if she were attempting a new spell; instead she compiles a huge pile of the darkest magic books, sinks her hands into their middle, and literally soaks up the text. Willow's use of magic allows her to use text and language in anyway that she requires;[10] she can literally morph with the text, and it will become part of her psychic and physical make up. This is made painfully clear by the image of Willow with her hands in the books: the text covers her body and face as she internalizes the available knowledge. Dark magic turns her hair and eyes black and consumes her. The image of the text on Willow's body becomes a form of writing (on) the body, where the divisions between text and the body are transgressed.

[33] After killing Warren with her trademark expression, "Bored now," she seeks out Jonathan and Andrew at the prison; however, on arriving she discovers that Buffy has already arrived and has rescued them. Her initial anger is displayed in an incredibly high-pitched scream that cripples all those in the near vicinity. Jenkins and Stuart (2003) argue that, while screaming is not strictly a perlocutionary act, it is, nonetheless, perlocutionary: "screaming has immense perlocutionary force whilst not strictly counting as a perlocutionary act … In normal circumstances we would hope that screaming will have an effect on a hearer's behavior; it would, we hope, urge someone to run to our assistance" (¶ 18). Willow's scream has direct perlocutionary impact on

those in the surrounding area; her previous hesitant mode of speech has become a force to be reckoned with and is, through her voice, aligned to magic and power. Buffy's law prevents Willow from carrying out her desires; thus Willow violently attacks Buffy, as well as Giles, who upholds Buffy's law and sanctions it.

[34] Buffy is placed in the difficult position of attempting to persuade her friend that the world is a place worth living in:

> Buffy: Dawn, get out of here. Go!
> Dawn runs to the door, but it's suddenly locked.
> Willow: Don't. We're all friends.
> Buffy: Willow, I know what you want to do, but you have to listen to me. The forces inside you are incredibly powerful. They're strong … but you're stronger. (*Dawn cowering in the corner*) You have to remember you're still Willow.
> Willow: (*scoffs*) Let me tell you something about Willow (*advancing toward Buffy*). She's a loser. And she always has been. People picked on Willow in junior high school, high school, up until college. With her stupid mousy ways. And now? Willow's a junkie.
> Buffy: I can help.
> Willow: The only thing Willow was ever good for …
> She pauses, drops the bitter sarcasm and grows pensive.
> Willow: … the only thing I had going for me … were the moments—just moments—when Tara would look at me and I was wonderful. (*grimly*) And that will never happen again.
> Buffy: I know this hurts. Bad. But Willow, if you let loose with the magics, it will never end.
> Willow: (*smiles nastily*) Promise?
> Buffy: You don't want that.
> Willow: Why not?
> Dawn moves away from the wall and approaches them.
> Buffy: Because you lose everything. Your friends, your self …. Willow, if you let this control you then the world goes away. And all of us with it. There's so much to live for. (*forcefully*) Will, there's too much—
> Willow: (*scoffs*) Oh, please! This is your pitch? Buffy, you hate it here as much as I do. I'm just more honest about it.
> Buffy: That's not true.
> Willow: You're trying to sell me on the world.
>
> The camera starts to do a slow turn thing where it stays focused on Willow but the background turns behind her …
>
> Willow: The one where you lie to your friends when you're not trying to kill them? And you screw a vampire just to feel? And insane asylums are the comfy alternative? This world? Buffy, it's me. I know you were happier when you were in the ground. The only time you were ever at peace in your whole life is when you were dead. Until Willow brought you back.

The background has been changing as it turns …

Willow: You know, with magic? ("Two To Go," 6021)

Buffy struggles with trying to be positive for Willow after the recent trauma of being brought back to life by Willow's hand from a heaven-like dimension. Buffy, posed in the role of heroine, is forced to lead in a post-Structuralist world; her desperate attempt to assure Willow of the good in the world is exaggerated and unfortunately unconvincing. While we expect a heroine to produce a speech that means exactly what it intends, she doesn't, and she convinces neither Willow nor the viewer. Arguably, Buffy can only return to the role of heroine once her urging that Willow should stop meshes with Willow's pre-Structuralist language; while Buffy and Dawn are stuck underground, Willow communicates to Buffy through telepathy, and it is during this time that Xander can approach Willow and finally bring her destructive journey to an end. Xander, rather than Buffy, is the hero in this instance; however, the scene draws out the similarities between Buffy and Willow, doubles that deal with the problems of ascending to power. Also apparent is the overall interdependence of the characters within the Buffyverse; the dynamic between Buffy and Willow allows Xander to change the course of events.
[35] Buffy's sense of duty or law as the Slayer prevents her from killing humans. She frequently maintains, "a killer isn't a Slayer" ("Two To Go," 6021). In fact, as the heroine, Buffy has to be fairly rigid in her moral beliefs; this underlies her complex and ambiguous relationship with Spike, which Buffy finally ends, believing it to be amoral because Spike lacks a soul, knowing that resisting is an attempt at remaining human. The popularity of characters such as Spike and Faith lies in the fact that they are polarized with Buffy's moral self: they celebrate all that is unprincipled, a refreshing role in the Buffyverse. Despite this invigorating slant, it is difficult to see Willow's use of magic in Season Six as more than an addiction. However, Willow does transgress Buffy's moral boundaries in order to fulfil her vengeance. Moreover, by using her magic successfully as a language that Buffy cannot (or will not) understand, she overturns Buffy's authority and law, which are key to her sense of autonomy and identity. Buffy is arguably defeated by Willow. It is Xander's sense of humanity and his deep friendship with Willow that averts the apocalypse and stops the end of the world. Buffy's law becomes ineffective in the face of Willow's powerfully textual and magical language; Buffy cannot understand or compete with that language and therefore has no hope of defeating it.
[36] Whether Buffy is actually defeated by Willow at the close Season Six is debatable. Xander (one of Buffy's allies) does, after all, stop Willow in her tracks. What is apparent in Season Six is that Buffy stands on the moral high ground while Willow decides that it is more appropriate to let morals slip from view. As noted earlier, Buffy is offered dark magical power during Season Seven, but she refuses it as immoral and inhuman. Buffy's law dictates that she must not edge into the dark side of her power; if she does, she might lose herself, like Willow in Season Six. In Season Six, Buffy represents "humanness," made painfully apparent through her recent death and resurrection, while Willow represents power and the corrupt through her use of magic. The show makes it clear that Willow abuses her power and proposes it as the polar opposite of Buffy's stark sense of duty, morality, and what is right.
[37] However, Willow's dismissal of morality in Season Six does offer a significant

pleasure for viewers in that she challenges Buffy's sense of duty. Buffy is our heroine; however, she is not as likeable as several other characters, the price of being at the frontline of fighting evil. Buffy can appear overbearing and authoritarian in her attitude towards fighting evil; her use of directives and commissives when making speeches to the other characters, particularly in Season Seven, suggests an authoritarianism sometimes immediate, sometimes illocutionary in force, sometimes perlocutionary in effect. She offends her friends on many occasions, making them feel worthless and unnecessary. Buffy often distances herself from her friends, and lays down her own law. I therefore disagree with Bradney's (2003) assertion that law in the series is shaped by love, and that the Scooby Gang agrees on the law that Buffy enforces. While the Scooby Gang agrees with Buffy's law at times, at other times Buffy makes judgments that infringe on the other characters and consciously disavows their friendship and love. In her barrage against Buffy in the last episodes of Season Six, Willow provides pleasure similar to that provided in other contexts by Spike, Angelus, or Drusilla, as she asserts the polar opposite of Buffy's sense of duty. Potentially, this provides a refreshing point of identification for viewers who might find Buffy's view of the world, at times, narrow. However, story arcs such as Willow's interaction with dark magic also reinforce one of the overall messages of the show, which is that inhabiting a heroic position such as Buffy's entails difficult decisions and ultimately a need to remain as human as possible. By the end of the series, Buffy's position is the "right" position: a successful Slayer is not purely synonymous with having supernatural strength; but the Slayer must also learn to navigate the seductive power of darkness without becoming consumed by it. Willow's magic, then, and the language of magic that she embodies, is an essential context for Buffy's ultimate success.

[38] Willow's use of magic in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is strongly aligned with her use of language as her own individual voice. Her sense of identity is fragile throughout the series, and it is only through her use of magic with Tara that her sense of identity becomes stronger. Tara's death leaves Willow with no partner in magical language; other members of the Scooby Gang have no knowledge of the text or the language in which Willow lives. It is not that Willow feels excluded in this sense; rather, she has positioned herself as fluent in magic where others are not. Previously, this has provided her with a clear sense of identity and function; ironically, magic also eventually renders her undeniably dualistic and fragmentary. Her dramatic use of text and magic in the close of Season Six is an act of vengeance for Tara's death, which Buffy attempts to obstruct (notably Tara died from a bullet that was meant for Buffy). By such use of magic and language as power, Willow directly attacks Buffy's autonomy rendering her out of control of events and without authority. Willow has a very different way of dealing with grief than Buffy (who does not wish her mother to be brought back by magic). Buffy bases this decision on her moral approach to the world and events. To some extent Buffy seeks to preserve her humanity in this way, and her morality is based on this premise.

[39] Buffy, as the ego of the tale, is directly attacked by external forces (in this case Willow) and is confined by her moral law (super-ego?), or her need to retain her "humanness." Buffy strives to do what is always right, what is most human, and this clashes with Willow's agenda; she fails to maintain harmony in Sunnydale. Willow's split character, which is demonstrated through her changing speech acts and appearance, successfully overturns the Slayer's autonomy and provides an effective mirroring of Buffy's own struggle with maintaining her identity and autonomy as the Slayer through performing her own law. In the end it is not the endless supply of

demons and vampires that can so easily usurp the Slayer, but one of her closest friends with a force that, steeped in darkness, is essentially far more dangerous than Buffy's own ambiguous power.

Notes

1. I have changed the transcription spelling of *magick* to *magic* throughout the article, in order to avoid any confusion over terms.

2. See Jenkins and Stuart (2003) for more on the benefits of using speech act theory in interpreting *Buffy*.

3. In this article, I shall refer to five kinds of illocutionary acts: "Assertives" are representative acts that describe a situation, such as making statements or insisting; "Directives" are illocutionary acts that are meant to get the listener to do something, such as making orders; "Commissives" are illocutionary acts by which the speaker does something, for example, promising to carry out a certain action; "Expressives" are acts that convey the psychological position or the emotional state of the speaker, for example, apologizing; finally, "Declarations" are illocutionary acts that are meant to result in the circumstances to which they allude, for example, Willow's spells (Loos 2004).

4. For example, in Season Four, Xander accidentally sets a book on fire by saying a specific Latin word while holding a book of spells. The fact that Xander did not mean to perform this spell is testimony to the power of words in the show when uttered in a magical context: intent is not necessary.

5. The most obvious example of Willow's emotion linked to magic is her vengeance spree at the close of Season Six, sparked by Tara's death. Other examples might include her attempt at floating a pencil, which spins out of control at the mention of Faith's name (of whom she is jealous, because Faith had sex with Xander) ("Doppelgangland," 3016). Her "will" spell also goes awry and only works when she is angry or upset, etc.; her emotion drives the spell without her (conscious) knowledge ("Something Blue," 4009).

6. During the final episode of Season Six, "Grave" (6022), Xander refers to Willow's "normal" self as "crayon-breaky Willow." This is a reference to when they were in school and Willow cried because she broke a yellow crayon. In "Two to Go" (6021) Andrew describes Willow's evil self as "Darth Rosenberg." This is one of the many names he calls Willow's evil half. Others include "truck-driving magic mama." Xander calls her "scary veiny Willow" ("Grave," 6022).

7. Anthony Bradney (2003) also makes the point that the police are figured as largely incapable of dealing with the supernatural in the show. He further suggests that, while Buffy and the Scooby Gang accept that the world has laws, they do not mind breaking them for the "greater good." One of his examples is Willow's computer hacking skills, useful for breaking into restricted files.

8. In the Season Three episode, "Graduation Day, Part One" (3021), Buffy resigns from the Watchers' Council and refuses to take any more orders from them. Giles is fired by the Council for not being an objective Watcher; he has become a father figure for Buffy ("Helpless," 3012).

9. Anya becomes antagonistic toward Willow while they are trapped in Buffy's house and tries to persuade her to perform magic despite her having given it up ("Older and Far Away," 6014). Buffy has also criticized Willow's use of magic in the past, claiming it to be unreliable ("Fear Itself," 4004).

10. For example, in the episode, "Who Are You?" (4016), Willow and Tara perform a spell together to find out if Buffy is in Faith's body and vice versa. The spell hints at orgasmic pleasure between the two witches, figured through the performance of magic.

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Jesse Saba Kirchner
And in Some Language That's English? Slayer Slang
and Artificial Computer Generation*

PDF Version

[1] New viewers of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* are often struck by the show's use of distinctive slang. Every episode contains some sort of anomalous English, from the ubiquitous *wiggins* to the exotic *Slaymaster General*. Interest in the use of slang in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (henceforth *Buffy* or *BtVS*) has occasioned a significant proportion of media coverage about the phenomenon that was *Buffy*. A more comprehensive treatment of the subject is given in Michael Adams's *Slayer Slang* (2003), a book including a linguistic analysis of what Adams calls "slayer slang," as well as an extensive lexicon of slayer slang terms.

[2] Despite the attention focused on this aspect of *BtVS*, most write-ups do not go beyond the descriptive level of listing a few hand picked terms from the cornucopia of slayer slang used in the show. Therefore, work remains to be done to fully understand slayer slang as a linguistic phenomenon and to understand the role it has played in the online *BtVS* fan community, many of whose members adopted terms from the show for their own use and even invented terms of their own in the style of the slayer slang used in the show.

[3] In Fall 2003, I initiated a research project to investigate slayer slang in a novel way, by creating a computer program capable of automatically generating sentences in the style of slayer slang. This paper describes the methodology of that program's construction and operation, the results obtained by it, and a sketch of the implications of this research and future research in this vein for understanding slayer slang from the perspectives of linguistics, sociology, and stylistics.

Slang in *Buffy*
[4] The words and phrases that we call slayer slang come in many shapes and kinds. The indispensable compendium of *BtVS* slang is Adams's *Slayer Slang* (2003). Using the data in this book, I divided slayer slang into seven different levels, with each level representing a different kind of slangy deviation from ordinary English. I outline and illustrate those levels in Table 1. (The nature of each level is discussed in the next section.)

table 1: seven levels of *Buffy* slang

1. Jargon and new vocabulary, e.g.:

   wiggins
   Slayer
   Hellmouth
   oogie

2. Affixation (suffixes and prefixes), e.g.:

   Go act baity! ("Anne," 3001)
   He's not one to overshare ("Halloween," 2006)
   He was unmad ("Halloween," 2006)

3. Changing the part of speech change without affixation, e.g.:

   How much the creepy is [that]? ("Out of Mind, Out of Sight," 1011)
   It gives me a happy ("Lie to Me," 2007)

4. Other syntactic change, e.g.:

   Having issues much? ("Ted," 2011)

5. Truncation, e.g.:

   What's the sitch? ("Welcome to the Hellmouth," 1001)

6. Discourse sensitivity and semantic shift, e.g.:

   Giles: Punishing yourself like this is pointless.
   Buffy: It's entirely pointy! ("When She Was Bad," 2001)
   You are sadness personified ("Two to Go," 6021))

7. Pop-culture references, e.g.:

   I can't believe you of all people are trying to Scully me. ("The Pack," 1006)
   Does anyone feel like we've been Keyser Sozed? ("Puppet Show," 1009)

Of course, the slang in *BtVS* could be divided in other ways. It would also be reasonable to divide slang by chronology or by the characters who use particular slang items or slang types. Constructing a typology of slayer slang is complicated, because slayer slang contains a great deal of information about the speaker and about what speakers assume of hearers. (I discuss this in more detail in later sections.) The exchange is mediated differently depending on whether one looks at slang used on the

show itself, in which case two kinds of audience can be assumed (those on the screen and those watching the screen), or one looks at slang used in the online *Buffy* fan community, where different assumptions about audience operate.

[5] Dividing slayer slang by chronology would uncover different facts about the phenomenon. Broadly speaking, slayer slang goes from a period of great innovation and change, in the first two or three seasons, into a period of stability until season five, followed by a period of marked decline in the use of slang (along with an interesting return of some kinds of innovation, particularly jargon) in the final two seasons. Michael Adams (2004) has connected some of these changes with the story arc of the show and with the audience's developing perspectives on the characters.

[6] Dividing slang terms according to the characters with which they are associated provides another interesting way to understand the slang system as a whole. On one hand, some aspects of slayer slang are common to all or almost all of *Buffy*'s main characters; on the other hand, some characters are very strongly distinguished by their relationship with slayer slang generally or with specific elements of it. For example, Giles is distinguished by his nearly complete nonparticipation in slang. In fact, this tendency applies to all adults in *Buffy*, but Giles takes it to the extreme. Faith also has a strong tie to particular slang, especially her characteristic phrase *five-by-five*. In the episode "This Year's Girl" (4015), in which Faith and Buffy switch bodies because of a magical artifact, Faith-in-Buffy reveals herself to the television audience by using that phrase. Faith also idiosyncratically truncates Buffy's name to *B*. At the same time, Faith's inability to use other slang terms in the same way as Buffy, Willow, and Xander is symptomatic of her failure really to become part of the Scooby Gang.

[7] An interesting character to consider from this sociolinguistic perspective is the Buffybot. Since the bot is physically indistinguishable from Buffy, viewers rely on differences in their speech patterns to distinguish them. This difference is conveyed in part by the bot's inability to use slang like Buffy's. In Season Six, before the Buffybot is destroyed, her inability to use slang correctly: for example, she attempts a Buffyesque post-slayage pun but comes up with, "That'll put marzipan in your pie plate, bingo!" ("Bargaining, Part 1," 6001) symbolizes her failure to substitute for Buffy. Seen in this light, slang is an essential quality, the kernel of each young character's personality.

Studying slayer slang

[8] One of the most important aspects of *Slayer Slang* (2003) is that it went beyond simply listing every instance of slayer slang to attempting a linguistic analysis. *Slayer Slang* explains a great deal about what is characteristic of slayer slang and why it is an interesting topic of study. But it raises more questions than it answered: Is slayer slang really governed by rules, as Chomskyan linguistics asserts that all human languages are? Or is it just the product of writers taxing their imaginations to try to sound like hip teenagers? As Adams (2003) writes, "the hazard of fictional jargon for a fictional profession is that it does not develop naturally, but rather in authors' imaginations" (16). No one gave *Buffy*'s writers a handbook on how to write like Buffy talks. Instead, the writers had to rely on invention or imitation of what had been written before. As *BtVS* writer and producer Jane Espenson notes in the introduction to *Slayer Slang*, "the only thing that gives us coherence is that we're all writing segments of the same story and that we're all doing our darnedest to do a Joss Whedon impersonation" (Adams 2003, ix). Is that coherence enough to produce a consistent, rule-governed kind of slang?

[9] The balance between repetition and innovation constitutes another problem for slayer slang. Repetition of terms and patterns is crucial for making slang understandable and usayable by wider groups of people. But some of *Buffy*'s most memorable slangy lines are single-use nonce-formations that refer to pop culture or cleverly extend linguistic commonplace:

> Buffy: I'm the one getting single-white-femaled here. ("Faith, Hope and a Trick," 3003)

or

> Giles: Punishing yourself like this is pointless.
> Buffy: It's entirely pointy! ("When She Was Bad," 2001)

Ubiquitous slayer slang like *Scooby Gang* (with all its derivative forms) traces back to a single line written by a single author. Of course, every item of slang has to begin with some single use. But there is a contradiction in any slang system between the need to retain its novelty and edge, to resist incorporation into mainstream language and, at the same time, to exert its own conservative force, one that promotes maximum comprehensibility by keeping meanings static and discouraging innovation. The research described here was designed to help us understand how slayer slang maintains the balance between innovation and repetition.

[10] The question of whether or not slayer slang is really rule-based was what first intrigued me about studying the use of language in *BtVS*. As I soon discovered, the importance of this question goes beyond a purely linguistic level of interest: it is also important for understanding the relationship between slayer slang as used in episodes of the show (what I will call "canonical slayer slang," as explained in the next section) and the slayer slang used by fans and other followers of *Buffy*, including writers of fanfiction and others in the online *Buffy* community, writers of the official *BtVS* novels, and also the writers of *Angel*. If slayer slang can be called a rule-based slang system, then it should be possible to see how faithfully different users of slayer slang follow the rules laid down by canonical slayer slang and how those users challenge or develop those rules. If, however, slayer slang does not follow predictable rules, then it is necessary to ask how we can identify the slayer slang used by fans and other non-canonical speakers as such. The answer is important to any accurate understanding of the relationship between *BtVS* and its fans and followers. It also bears on the projection of lexicon into syntactic structures, as the latter are systematic, but development of a lexicon is relatively unpredictable.

[11] As I began to study this question, my interest in the use of language and slang in *BtVS* expanded into other areas. Studying the adoption of slayer slang led to the study of the group of people adopting it. What could we learn about *Buffy* fans from the stylistics of slayer slang? Like Dick Hebdige (1979) in his study of style in youth subcultures, I became "intrigued by the most mundane objects [such as language] which, none the less, ... take on a symbolic dimension, becoming a form of stigmata" (2). Although less stigmatized than the punk rock styles studied by Hebdige, slayer slang can also be understood as a "signifying practice," the nature of which reveals information about the individuals and groups who adopt the practice.

[12] These were the general questions driving my research: How much of slayer slang

was derivable from consistent rules? And what could we learn about the users of slayer slang from the slang itself? Answers to these questions originate in the project's design.

Methodology

[13] In designing my project, I had the good fortune of following the work of other writers who had already begun to study slayer slang in a rigorous way. Thus, I could approach slayer slang from a new direction, using computational methods. The mandate of the slayer slang sentence generator was to answer this question: Can a computer, given the vocabulary of the show and the patterns of slayer slang, produce original sentences that sound like real dialogue from *BtVS*?

[14] This question was not picked quite as much at random as it might seem. Computers are useful tools for the investigation of language phenomena because they lack some of the amazing language abilities that all normal human beings take for granted. Humans have highly evolved brains that can accommodate and make sense of sentences that are awkward or ungrammatical. But a computer is entirely constrained by the rules given to it and cannot accommodate beyond them. This limitation is an advantage because it very quickly reveals any flaws in a linguistic analysis. However, it also presents certain liabilities: perhaps the most significant of these is that computers do not adhere to the Cooperative Principle that governs conversation and similar modes of discourse unless explicitly programmed to do so. Because slang is often unique to the conversational exchange in which it occurs, the computer's conversational ineptitude hampers its production of slang. I return to this point below.

[15] The resources needed for this project were as complicated as the requirements for it. Two kinds of data were needed: slang terms used in *BtVS* and information about how patterns of slang were formed and with what frequencies. Adams's *Slayer Slang* (2003) serves as a point of entry for both types of data. Its extensive lexicon is the most comprehensive list of slayer slang assembled to date, drawing on several different sources; the lexicon is also large enough to provide statistical information about frequency and patterns of use. The lexicon lacks some slang terms that should have been included (for example, items from the show's last season), so statistics derived from it are not completely accurate. However, they are more than adequate for a computer program that includes proof of concept as a major purpose.

[16] The lexicon in *Slayer Slang* lists slayer slang gathered from a number of more or less distinct sources: from episodes of *BtVS*; from the authorized novels set in the Buffyverse; and from the online *Buffy* fan community, particularly the two official fan forums for the show (namely, the Bronze during *Buffy*'s five years on the WB, and the Bronze: Beta after the show moved to UPN). *Slayer Slang* presents all of these terms as examples of slayer slang, which indeed they are. However, in designing this program, I was more selective. For reasons explained in some detail below, I used only the slayer slang words and patterns that actually appeared in episodes of *BtVS*, what I will call "canonical slayer slang." This category is distinct from slayer slang in *BtVS* novels, online fan forums, fanfiction, and other discourse, most of which is more or less derivative from the slang used on episodes of *Buffy*. The decision to use only canonical slayer slang as the basis for the program was intended to keep linguistic analysis of slayer slang as unproblematic as possible.

[17] Canonical slayer slang was the source of data that I divided into the seven different levels shown in Table 1. Those levels divide the slang according to types of linguistic deviation from mainstream American English and also largely correlate with the predictability or novelty of member forms.

[18] The first level, comprised of jargon, is the easiest to include in such a program. All that is necessary is to compile a list of the particular words. It is also one of the least productive and least innovative areas of slayer slang. There are very few enduring jargon terms introduced later than *Scooby Gang* in Season Two (and *Scooby Gang* could be considered a Level Seven pop-culture derived form, as much as just jargon). The levels grow more and more difficult to incorporate into a sentence generator until they reach a point of near-impossibility (although the exact frontier depends on the skill of the programmer). Very few people in the world would invent the term *Undead-American*, and no computer can match such innovation yet.

[19] The scale does not correspond exactly to the frequency with which each kind of slang is used. The most productive and most frequently used kinds of slang are the suffixes *-age* and *-y* (in words like *slayage* and *crayon-breaky*). These suffixes are only Level Two slang in terms of implementation difficulty. All the words at Level Two, however, are products of relatively few prefixes or suffixes, which generally work in predictable ways. If jargon and affixation were not restricted, slayer slang would become so complicated and cumbersome that only full-time Buffyologists could understand it.

[20] On the other hand, pop-culture derived words and utterances admit no such limits. Counting their occurrences is tricky, but it's easy to think of many examples, from the first season ("She's our Sabrina" ["The Witch," 1003]) to the last ("It's like somebody slaughtered an Abercrombie & Fitch catalog" ["Selfless," 7005]). If *Buffy* had gone on past seven seasons, quips like these would have continued to pile up, while new jargon terms and new affixes would have been comparatively rare.

[21] Slayer slang from Levels One and Two is an integral part of the program. The vocabulary used by the program began with the list of jargon and *Buffy*-specific terms that would be used and then was expanded to include other generally useful words. Affixation and other patterns of forming new words (or finding new uses for old words) were also included in the basic functioning of the sentence generator. The sentences generated by this program are like canonical slayer slang in that most instances of slang come from these two levels. Slang from Levels Three, Four, and Five was implemented with only partial success. Slang from these levels was included only when there existed an explicit precedent in *BtVS*. The program itself has no ability to create new words by means of truncation or changing parts of speech. Levels Six and Seven forms are more or less absent from the program. This is an area that particularly needs to be addressed in future versions of the sentence generator.

[22] It is important to note that none of these kinds of slang from the higher levels is impossible to characterize linguistically or to implement in a program. For example, the nouning of words like *creepy* and *happy* works in a straightforward way from their usual uses as adjectives. This phenomenon has been the subject of detailed investigation at least as far back as Clark and Clark (1979). Their analysis not only treats the functional shift common nouns, but also proposes a theory to explain the use of proper names and other nouns surfacing as verbs with meanings that are not straightforwardly predictable. They illustrate with examples from real texts: "You're in danger of being Hieronymous Bosch'd"; "She wasn't Krishna'd out, she was only hippied out." Clark and Clark propose one analysis for what I have identified as elements from two different levels of slayer slang—changing parts of speech and making pop-culture references. This indicates that some of the distinct problems faced by the Buffy sentence generator are manifestations of a smaller number of significant

gaps in the program's capabilities.

[23] Clark and Clark's analysis actually identifies what is now the main gap in the *Buffy* sentence generator's output, sentences whose meaning depends on active cooperation in a conversation. Such cooperation in turn depends on shared knowledge of the world and the most salient properties of the objects and people in it. This kind of slang—Level Seven in my hierarchy—has the most obvious sociological importance. Slang depending on shared knowledge serves to create group solidarity and to separate knowledgeable insiders from ignorant outsiders. It is also the kind of slang that a program like the current version of this sentence generator cannot generate, because it has no sense of dialogue or cooperative speech.

[24] What is needed to fill the gap is a computational system that builds conversation and stores information that serves as shared information for the cooperative process of generating higher level slang. Perhaps most appropriate would be an implementation of Hans Kamp's Discourse Representation Theory (Kamp 1981). It should be noted, however, that any substantial improvement in the sentence generator could be obtained only by implementing such a system (at considerable expense). Short of that, electronic artifice will not scale the highest ramparts of *BtVS* linguistic creativity, the sort represented in "I know Faith's not gonna be on the cover of Sanity Fair" ("Doppelgangland," 3016).

Program design and operation

[25] The details of how such a program is put together are more technical than would bear the telling. Nevertheless, it is useful to have a conceptual understanding of how computer-generated slayer slang is created. Inherent in this method are the project's strengths and weaknesses, which are apparent in the results it has produced.

[26] The sentence generator takes a "seed" generated at random and turns it into a grammatical (and slangy) English sentence by passing it through a series of modules tailored for different tasks. We can look at the design of the program by following an example sentence (taken from the real data in the appendix) as it goes through its path through the different modules. A list of these modules is given in Table 2.

table 2: component modules of the *Buffy* slang generator

Main program:	`scoobyage.cgi`
Modules:	`Pattern_Generator`
	`Structure_Builder`
	`Lexicon`
	`Orthographizer`
	`Theta_Checker`

The sentence we will follow through the program is the following:

> 118. I think some researchy gals are not loving that rushy werewolf.

[27] The program is initiated when a user loads the Website where the program resides into her Internet browser. The program here is represented by the main Webpage, called scoobyage.cgi. This page calls various modules, each of which performs some

special tasks, and then prepares the sentence it has generated for display to the user:

> `scoobyage.cgi` starts up, loads all the modules it will use later on, and then summons the first module: `Pattern_Generator` ;

> `Pattern_Generator` has a list of possible sentence patterns and it picks one at random: NP.VPb, that is, "Noun Phrase" and "A 'to be' Verb Phrase" (i.e., a verb phrase including some form of the verb *be*), the most basic skeletal pattern on which the eventual sentence is built;

> NP.VPb is passed to the next module: `Structure_Builder`; the pattern is expanded by another random pick from a list of possible structures based on NP.VPb. NP is expanded to D.AJ.N—a determiner (such as "the" or "some"), an adjective, and a noun; VPb expands to VB.VS.PROG.NP, meaning the verb "to be" followed by a singly-transitive verb in the progressive aspect, followed by the noun phrase which is the object of that verb.

Since there is still an unexpanded phrase—the NP at the end of VPb—the module reiterates. It expands that NP into D.AJ.N. Now there are no more unexpanded phrases, so the concatenated structure goes to the next module—Lexicon—which will turn it into almost-English.

[28] The input into Lexicon is this structure:

> D.AJ.N.VB.VS.PROG.D.AJ.N

`Lexicon` fills each placeholder with a word of the appropriate type. Each word is chosen at random from a list of words of that given type. This means that the sentence being created might end up grammatically correct but semantically unlikely, either because it is unidiomatic English or because it is implausible said of or in the Buffyverse. This problem will be dealt with in a later module, but we need not worry about it at this point, because we know that the words in this sentence make sense together.

[29] The skeleton from `Structure_Builder` is replaced by this pseudo-English sentence: a research+y gal be love+ing that rush+y werewolf. Concealed in this sentence is one of the most characteristic features of slayer slang, namely rampant suffixation, particularly of -y. Of the terms included in *Slayer Slang* that were found in *BtVS* episodes, almost one-third of them were produced just by adding the -y suffix. This very important suffix is represented in this program by two possible ways of picking adjectives, either from a list of standard English adjectives or by adding -y to any of the words in the noun or verb lists. Simple random choice makes the first noun phrase plural but keeps the rushy werewolf singular. Another random choice makes the sentence negative instead of positive, so the result looks like this:

a+pl research+y gal+pl be not love+ing that rush+y werewolf

[30] The next step is to fix the orthography of the sentence, for which purpose we have the module Orthographizer. Simple substitutions turn a+pl into some, research +y into researchy, etc. They also find the appropriate conjugation for be given a plural subject, and the final product of this module is

   some researchy gals are not loving that rushy werewolf

which is then sent to the last module. The sentence at this point has already been put in working order as far as grammaticality is concerned. The last step before preparing the sentence for presentation is to make sure that the content of the sentence makes some sense as well. The last module is therefore named Theta_Checker, after the linguistic notion of "theta roles," which refers to those restrictions on classes of words that are based on the meaning of other words in the sentence. These are the controls that, given a verb like *eat*, will limit the possible subjects to living things that can physically consume other things. Checking that all proper theta restrictions are adhered to is the main, though not the only, task for this module.
[31] Any sentence generator for human language must perform a number of theta role checks, but a *Buffy* sentence generator must perform some additional checks. For instance, a standard theta role check makes sure that nouns in certain positions must be animate. Verbs like *hit* or *kick* require an animate subject: in this sense, they are analogous to verbs like *sire* and *feed* which (in the world of slayer slang) require an undead subject. Other slang terms may have non-slang meanings that allow a wider range of use, but their usage in *BtVS* tends to adhere to the slang definition. So, while one could imagine a situation in which it would be necessary to say, "She staked Joyce!" it is much more common for the verb *stake* to be used only when the stakee is a vampire and prone to dusting. Theta_Checker therefore disfavors the non-slangy use of slayer slang.
[32] Theta_Checker also checks other aspects of the sentence for acceptability. Certain words are syntactically plausible but improbable because they sound like standard English words or because they are phonologically difficult. Words like "hottiey" (as in "She has a hottiey brother") and "destinyey" are disallowed because of the difficulty in pronunciation. The module rules out sentences that repeat a vocabulary element more than once, to avoid typical machine-produced awkward sentences like "Buffy kicked Buffy."
[33] These and other checks cull the sentences that are most likely to be unacceptable for reasons of semantics, phonology, or logic. In a more powerful program, such sentences could be fixed, but because the processing power for this whole program is negligible, when Theta_Checker detects an error it instructs scoobyage.cgi to reject the entire sentence and begin from another random generation. Thus, when this program is run, it may consider and discard any number of problematic sentences before finding an acceptable sentence to display.
[34] The test sentence we have followed is almost ready for display now. The last step is another random check to decide whether to add an "interjection" to the sentence. The "interjections" used by scoobyage.cgi vary widely in their exact functions and could be said to interact variously with the rest of the sentence. But all of them have in common with real interjections the attribute of being included in a sentence mostly to indicate the speaker's feelings or thoughts about the statement or question being made

(surprise, happiness, doubt). This time the random check picks out *I think*, which is effectively an interjection serving to distance the speaker from the factuality of the statement being made. This is concatenated with the sentence, punctuation is added, and capitalization is checked. The sentence is finally ready for display and, along with HTML tags for Web display, the sentence is displayed for the program user:

I think some researchy gals are not loving that rushy werewolf.

This process, although tortuous to fully explain in prose, takes only a fraction of a second to be computed, making the response to the user's request for a sentence almost instantaneous.

The Results

[35] The corpus of 150 sentences generated in sequence by this program (included as an appendix to this essay) provides a representative sample of both the strengths and weaknesses of the *Buffy* sentence generator. A corpus of this size is large enough to suggest the rate of success of this program and to suggest directions for future development.

[36] Out of the full 150 sentence corpus, three sentences are positively ungrammatical:

(57)   Faith didn't love who.
(102)   Her freaky sires pretty don't like some demons.
(133)   Her pretty much don't like Cordelia.

These sentences are marked in the appendix with the symbol "*."

[37] In addition to these three ungrammatical sentences, there are eleven sentences almost impossible to imagine in a *BtVS* episode. These sentences may not be grammatically impossible, but they are implausible for other reasons. Nine have the appearance of being contrived; they seem to be slayer slang run amuck, to the point where they are almost impossible to understand. Consequently, they are hard to imagine as actual *BtVS* sentences in any context. The other two questionable sentences are unlikely because of the real personalities and chronologies of the *BtVS* characters to whom they refer. Although almost anything is possible in the Buffyverse, these utterances seem basically implausible. Examples of the two types of unlikely sentences include the following:

(1) Your totally violent guys don't love her gatheringy ashes.
      (148) The pretty sirey slayer didn't like Giles.

These sentences are marked in the appendix with the symbol "?."

[38] The shortest sentences in the corpus are two words long. These include

(33) Cordelia freaked.

and

(64) Warren babbled.

Easy to understand, they are not particularly interesting. The reverse is true of the longest sentences in the corpus, weighing in at 11 words. There are two sentences of this length:

(77) Don't you think Anya pretty much didn't like her baddie minions?

and

(80) Okay, the unusual vampires pretty much don't love this witchy bad.

The average sentence length is 6.227 words. To determine whether these tendencies correspond with those of canonical slayer slang, it would be necessary to analyze the entire body of *Buffy* transcripts very carefully. These lengths are certainly consistent with ordinary casual English.

Remaining issues to be researched
[39] Two areas on which this research does not shed light are differences in slayer slang among *BtVS* characters and changes in slayer slang over the course of seven seasons, not to mention in its extensions on *Angel*, into Buffy fandom, and perhaps even into mainstream speech. The approach taken in the construction of this program, treating all the canonical terms in *Slayer Slang* as of equal weight, ignores the important differences in speakers and contexts.
[40] The original design for the sentence generator included a plan to produce sentences in the peculiar styles of particular characters. After all, it is obvious to any *Buffy* fan that each major character has a unique way of talking. One of Xander's lines would never sound right were it spoken by Riley. But capturing these stylistic differences systematically would be the work of a much larger project. It would entail using *Buffy* scripts or transcripts to build an individual corpus of utterances for each major character. Then each corpus could be compared with the others to find the salient differences among them. One might even wish to go further and to treat each utterance with sensitivity to the preceding dialogue, and to the other characters present, as well as to other aspects of the context. Each step in this direction would produce a program better trained, not only to generate sentences that successfully imitate slayer slang, but actually to write plausible dialogue according to the principles used by the show's writers. But it also would entail ever-growing corpora and constantly increasing program complexity.
[41] Changes in slayer slang over time include changes in the composition of the slang and changes in the role of slayer slang in *BtVS*. Examples of the former are the replacement of old slang by new words or patterns, such as when *slayerette* gave way to *Scooby Gang*, or when the suffix *-age* declined while the suffix *-y* grew increasingly common (Adams 2003, 19 and 42). An example of the change of the role of slayer slang in *Buffy* is the general decline of slang in later seasons (Adams 2004). It is impossible to analyze the slang in *BtVS* fully without taking both kinds of change into consideration. What really must be sought is an understanding of slayer slang that transcends the superficial (transcript) level in multiple dimensions: it must extend to some understanding of the birth and re-birth of slayer slang in the minds of *Buffy*'s writers and must accommodate adaptation of slayer slang by *Buffy*'s fans.

Interpretation and analysis
[42] The results of the slayer slang sentence generator tended to give a strong affirmative answer to the question of whether computer-generated sentences could really sound like slayer slang. Although the program is imperfect, its failures do not undermine the possibility of such generation. So, to answer this article's original question, how much can we consider slayer slang to be shaped by consistent rules? The computer sentence generator shows that slayer slang is heavily rule-based, since the computer is only capable of following rules: it is certainly possible to create slayer slang sentences by adherence to consistent rules.

[43] But this picture is incomplete. We must acknowledge that although the sentence generator can reliably create novel sentences in the style of slayer slang, it cannot generate every kind of slayer slang that occurs in other sources. Some kinds of this slang (those determined by pop culture references and discourse sensitivity, for example) entirely evade computer generation. And the sentence generator also produces implausible and impossible sentences. Thus, the rules used by the slayer slang sentence generator are necessary but not sufficient to produce the entire corpus of slayer slang and nothing else. The relationship between these predictable rules and the unpredictable aspects of slayer slang is one of the key elements in the organization of the slayer slang speaker community.

[44] The questions this program was designed to study are critical for understanding the nature of *Buffy* fandom, and they go to the heart of what made *Buffy* different from other TV shows. With regard to a community like that of *Buffy* fans, connected through online messageboards, fansites, and other Internet-based communication, the importance of language cannot be overstated. This is true not only in terms of content, but also in terms of language used as a sign of affiliation and a factor of group cohesion. Slayer slang is the secret handshake of the Buffyverse, and for that reason understanding language in the show and understanding the two-way relationship between *BtVS* and its fandom is much more important than studying the slang for its own sake, as an object of linguistic interest.

Slayer slang and slayer style
[45] Dick Hebdige (1979) describes style (and particularly linguistic style) in subcultures as a "signifying practice" (118). In other words, style (including slang) is best understood as an action or a process, taking place between a speaker and an audience. It is a process in which a message is transmitted. Although this may be a literal message—as in the case of any utterance of slayer slang—the literal content of the message does not exhaust its meaning: the manner of the message, that is to say its style, transmits information about the speaker and the audience, as well. This information may pertain to their respective sex or class or their worldview or relationship to mainstream culture and is conveyed in the active practice that is style. As Hebdige says, "subcultural styles do indeed qualify as art but as art in (and out of) particular contexts; not as timeless objects, judged by the immutable criteria of traditional aesthetics, but as 'appropriations', 'thefts', subversive transformations, as *movement*" (129).

[46] What can we learn about the speakers of slayer slang from the nature of the slang itself? In this question, we are concerned with speakers of canonical slayer slang—slayer slang as used in episodes of *Buffy*—and with fans of the show who adopt slayer

slang as an idiom of their own. The practice of slayer slang suggests a speaker (and an audience) invested in pop culture. Pop culture references are used frequently and usually without an explanation. Slayer slang tends to use pop culture references, not just as metaphors, but also as building blocks of language, nouns or verbs that can be affixed onto or put into another tense or case. This is no less true of slayer slang as used by *BtVS* fans than it is of the slang used in the show. *Slayer Slang* includes examples of pop culture used in these ways in *Buffy* online communities. One example is *Ewanage*, seen in the Bronze and defined by Michael Adams (2003) as "Exposure to . . . Ewan McGregor" (175).

[47] These references are sometimes so casual that the pop culture terms have become literally a part of the language; yet they often require a complex understanding of the reference. To understand Buffy's statement, "I can't believe that you of all people are trying to Scully me," not only must the listener must know what character is being referred to and what television show she comes from, but furthermore must be able to pick out from among all of that character's attributes (being female, being a government employee, being fervently Roman Catholic, etc.) the one relevant to the moment (being skeptical).

[48] Remembering Hebdige's description of subcultural style, we should consider the message conveyed by this kind of slang at a level beyond the literal. What is conveyed by these common yet complex and layered pop culture references? They suggest a deep investment in popular culture and require thorough familiarity with a wide range of American popular culture. This suggestion is quite ironic, given the many patterns in slayer slang that are distinct from standard English and therefore marks its distance from mainstream culture; but the contradiction represents a central aspect of the sense of identity and cultural affiliation encompassed by the use of slayer slang.

[49] Slayer slang also tends to develop new usages and creative twistings of words already incorporated into the slang. For example, the new term *Scooby Gang* was changed and played with on *Buffy* (*Scoobies*, *Scoobs*, *Scoobycentric*, *Scooby-sense*, etc.), as well as in the *BtVS* fan community. Slayer slang both illustrates and depends upon a speaker's cleverness and discourse sensitivity. This aspect of slayer slang more than any other derailed the idea of analyzing full *BtVS* episode transcripts to gather complete statistical data about the patterns of slayer slang, given the frequency and complexity of exchanges like these:

> Giles: Let's not lose our perspective here, Xander.
> Xander: I'm Perspective Guy. Angel's a killer. ("Becoming, Part 1," 2021)

A similar but distinct kind of slayer slang in *BtVS* fan communities is exemplified in posts from the Bronze saying *Slay you later* or *Don't let the bedvamps bite*. Since online message board conversations cannot have the temporal immediacy of real-time discourse, perhaps these examples of slayer-slangy plays on English clichés are the closest possible thing in online fandom. Certainly they suggest a similar cleverness and a keen awareness of language.

[50] Significantly, these sentences use the least mechanical aspects of slayer slang. In the terms in which I proposed my original problem, they are characteristics that rely on innovation instead of repetition. The question might be raised of whether it is fair to pick out these characteristics as the most essential parts of slayer slang. Are they not, after all, less common than slayer slang characteristics like jargon and novel affixation? The relevant measure, however, is not frequency. The most important elements of

slayer slang (as of any kind of slang) are those that reveal something of the speaker's social position: -*y* suffixation could be just as easily part of thieves' cant or an elite affectation. The most frequent items of slayer slang are revealing about slayer slang speakers only if they are typical of youth slang or have some other sociological relevance.

[51] The fact that such nuances fall through the cracks of a computerized version of slayer slang may seem like a disheartening result. Yet the program acquits itself well enough: after all, it produces reasonable slayer slang much of the time. Instead of throwing up our hands over this result, we can let it lead us to a deeper understanding of the slayer slang speech community. Recall that the data used to design this program came only from canonical slayer slang, and data from *BtVS* online communities was not included. Sentences generated by this program therefore are a sort of "second-order" slayer slang. In this sense, they are like the slayer slang sentences used in *BtVS* fan communities. Both are weakly bound by canonical slayer slang: they can be innovative but cannot depart too radically from the text of *BtVS* or they will become unrecognizable as slayer slang. Of course, the members of fan communities can and do innovate in more interesting ways than this computer program. Fan innovations have also occasionally been cited as inspiring slayer slang later used in *Buffy*. This truly dialectical behavior seems rare, however. We can at least impressionistically see a general adherence to the patterns laid down by canonical slayer slang, in both second-order slayer slang sources.

[52] How much is the slang of scoobyage.cgi like the slang used in the Bronze and other *BtVS* fan sites? Once we look past the jargon particular to the online fan communities (*bezoar*, *bitca*, etc.), we find firm conclusions evasive—therein lies another research project.

[53] What is at stake in the current research? We seek to understand a basic cleavage in the community of slayer slang speakers, between innovators and imitators. This is another aspect of the same question with which I began my research. Although I was interested in the overall balance of innovation and conservatism in slayer slang, it is also important to understand the relationship between them. This perspective places slayer slang in the context of other slang systems. Any group with slang of its own and in which privilege differentials exist (in slayer slang, one group of speakers—the Scooby Gang— certainly has a privileged status for its speech) may tend to separate innovation and repetition among distinct groups of speakers.

Conclusion

[54] My research began with the goal of answering questions about the nature of slayer slang and about its relationship to its community of speakers. To find these answers, I constructed a computer program that uses the vocabulary of *BtVS* and the patterns of slayer slang used in the show to construct original sentences in the style of slayer slang. Theoretically, this program can generate an infinite number of never-before-spoken sentences that are unmistakably in the style of slayer slang. This gives a solid answer to the first question raised in this paper: yes, slayer slang is largely based on rules which are as consistent as the rules of dialects and other variation from mainstream speech in the real world.

[55] More difficult questions concern the relationship of slayer slang to its community of speakers and the different levels of command and authority over the slang given to different groups and individuals within that community. Here the products of the slayer

slang sentence generator are inconclusive: more work must be done in this area before we can answer all of the attendant questions, including those about the reciprocity between canonical slayer slang and the slayer slang used by fans and other language users, those underprivileged within the community of slayer slang speakers. How much do their extensions of slayer slang and their original coinages feed back into canonical slayer slang? A greater influence by *BtVS* fans on the development of canonical slayer slang would change our understanding of the relationship between the different groups of speakers. Work must also be done to investigate the development of slayer slang within the show over the course of seven seasons, along with its parallel development on *Angel*.

[56] This article explores many new ways to study longstanding questions concerning the characteristics of slang and subculture. Like Adams's *Slayer Slang* (2003), this work problematizes its own conclusions by looking forward. Thus I do not apologize if this article raises more questions about slayer slang than it has answered: some other student of the Buffyverse will feel the need to solve the remaining problems and, in doing so, will advance our shared understanding of that world and what it tells us about ourselves.

Appendix: *Buffy* sentence generator corpus
(Gathered August 9, 2004, 4:36 - 4:40 p.m.)

(1)   Your totally violent guys don't love her gatheringy ashes.
(2)   Who vamped Faith?
(3)   Alright! Her yawnworthy ashes didn't dust Angel.
(4)   Your demons are not brooding.
(5)   Xander researches.
(6)   Okay, her sombernesses totally freaked.
(7)   I think the sillinesses are vampirey.
(8)   You know, her sadness doesn't show.
(9)   Don't you think her somberness totally doesn't love your majornesses?
(10)   I think Xander doesn't miss that freaksome guy.
(11)   Her freaksomenesses don't watch your slayers.
(12)   Okay, Angel so dusts her sirey school.
(13)   The girlfriend didn't stake Spike.
(14)   And yet some totally clue-free gatherings had been feeding.
(15)   Alright! A minion-free gal very much doesn't like Cordelia.
(16)   Don't you think her girlfriend totally wigs?
(17)   Some witchy werewolves had very not been feeding.
(18)   The really watchery covens are feeding.
(19)   Whoa, he really researches.
(20)   Okay, Willow didn't brood.
(21)   He really avoids.
(22)   Principal Wood pretty much didn't freak.
(23)   This sadness has pretty much been feeding.
(24)   Cordelia doesn't watch her wickednesses.
(25)   That destiny-free girlfriend kinda didn't like his minion-free crazy.
(26)   Xander didn't like your sitches.
(27)   A slayer pretty much loved your dollsomeness.

(28) Your coveny vampires were wigging.
(29) And yet Oz didn't wig.
(30) Maybe the Mayor freaked.
(31) Spike vamps her dead demons.
(32) Whoa, your girlfriend-free sitches have really not been feeding.
(33) Cordelia freaked.
(34) These sadnesses have not been feeding.
(35) Okay, her bad didn't hit the witch.
(36) The yawnworthinesses had really been feeding.
(37) And yet the violent slayers totally freaked.
(38) Joyce was Anya.
(39) Okay, some minion-free slayers pretty much like Xander.
(40) Okay, these slayers love these sitches.
(41) That gal pretty much didn't like her vampires.
(42) Buffy was not wigging.
(43) Xander totally rushed.
(44) And yet Xander very much didn't avoid Buffy.
(45) Whoa, her miniony demon liked some girlfriendy gals.
(46) Oz totally showed.
(47) You know, her freaksome clues very much don't babble.
(48) You know, Willow is coveny.
(49) You know, a stakey guy so doesn't avoid.
(50) Her skankinesses don't like that yawnworthiness.
(51) Okay, a demon dusts Spike.
(52) Spike muchly likes those pretty wiggy clues.
(53) Don't you think Anya doesn't dust her vampirey weirds?
(54) Buffy didn't dust her broody library.
(55) Don't you think Anya loved her dollsomenesses?
(56) And yet Cordelia didn't love his crazinesses.
(57) Faith didn't love who.
(58) Joyce likes this freakedness.
(59) And yet Principal Wood totally didn't dust her ampedness.
(60) Cordelia totally freaked.
(61) Cordelia didn't save Buffy.
(62) The girlfriend-free slayer didn't wig.
(63) Whoa, Angel didn't like your wicked clues.
(64) Warren babbled.
(65) The really demony girlfriend muchly researched.
(66) Alright! Spike totally fed.
(67) That watchery guy really kicked Oz.
(68) Maybe Willow totally didn't like that book.
(69) Don't you think that wiggy gal really doesn't love Angel?
(70) Joyce is wigging.
(71) Don't you think her very violent happies don't see Willow?
(72) Buffy really doesn't rush.
(73) Don't you think those freaksomenesses had been feeding?
(74) Maybe Spike pretty much doesn't love a freaksomeness.
(75) Those vampires fed.
(76) I think Buffy muchly saw her destinies.

(77)   Don't you think Anya pretty much didn't like her baddie minions?
(78)   Don't you think her girlfriend totally freaks?
(79)   You know, her demons freak.
(80)   Okay, the unusual vampires pretty much don't love this witchy bad.
(81)   Her dollsomenesses don't vamp this really wiggy slayers.
(82)   I think her messedness really loved this pretty yawnworthy slayer.
(83)   Buffy was his clue.
(84)   Some clue-free guys kinda didn't rush.
(85)   I think Xander didn't freak.
(86)   Alright! The slayers are watching those demons.
(87)   Anya rushed.
(88)   The demon totally saved her.
(89)   Oz so bails.
(90)   Maybe your crazinesses have pretty much been feeding.
(91)   I think Cordelia totally researches.
(92)   Dawn doesn't brood.
(93)   Her dollsomeness muchly likes your wickedness.
(94)   Her sirey library very much didn't like Willow.
(95)   Alright! The minion-free demons very much babble.
(96)   That vampire pretty much doesn't bail.
(97)   Whoa, Cordelia pretty much loved your demony zombies.
(98)   I think that dollsome boyfriend doesn't research.
(99)   And yet the slaggedness kinda was not girlfriend-free.
(100) Warren stakes her bloody school.
(101) Don't you think his yawnworthinesses pretty much were miniony?
(102) Her freaky sires pretty don't like some demons.
(103) Dawn really slays the Master.
(104) Your slayer doesn't avoid.
(105) The deadness feeds.
(106) Her somber covens didn't avoid these boyfriend-free witches.
(107) Alright! The Hellmouth had really not been feeding.
(108) Okay, these slayers didn't see her sires.
(109) These witches loved your slayy happies.
(110) The Master loved those slayers.
(111) Whoa, those covens had been feeding.
(112) Whoa, your slayers were not rushing.
(113) Buffy liked her so freaksome school.
(114) The Mayor really didn't nap.
(115) I think Willow really sees these yawnworthy guys.
(116) I think that exactness pretty much was not kicky.
(117) Willow so doesn't babble.
(118) I think some researchy gals are not loving that rushy werewolf.
(119) Those watchery vampires brooded.
(120) And yet the Mayor avoided some nappy witches.
(121) Okay, some hitty slayers avoid your dollsome girlfriend.
(122) Alright! Willow likes your slayers.
(123) Alright! Angel pretty much doesn't freak.
(124) Angel doesn't bail.

(125) Your watcher didn't miss his slayer.
(126) The Master vamped Oz.
(127) Her crazinesses bail.
(128) Her majornesses don't like Angel.
(129) Angel kinda doesn't like your pretty coveny crazy.
(130) His yawnworthinesses totally was not sire-free.
(131) I think she likes Cordelia.
(132) The Master pretty much doesn't bail.
(133) Her pretty much don't like Cordelia.
(134) The pretty bloody girlfriend kinda bailed.
(135) Maybe an uber guy doesn't babble.
(136) Her ampedness didn't avoid.
(137) The Master pretty much doesn't like her covens.
(138) And yet Willow doesn't research.
(139) Okay, the girlfriend really doesn't wig.
(140) Her book-free demon muchly loved that vampire.
(141) Okay, the sucky gal doesn't nap.
(142) Her werewolf has been researching.
(143) Whoa, Angel pretty much watches Principal Wood.
(144) The girlfriend-free guy pretty much loved the boyfriend-free slayers.
(145) Willow pretty much staked her slaggedness.
(146) Oz totally didn't love that gal.
(147) Some violent slayers pretty much don't love Cordelia.
(148) The pretty sirey slayer didn't like Giles.
(149) I think her creepies pretty much avoided the slayy watchers.
(150) And yet these vampires kinda babble.

Notes

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Mark Peters
Getting a Wiggins and Being a Bitca: How Two Items of Slayer Slang Survive on the *Television Without Pity* Message Boards

[1] It's not news that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is one of the most verbally creative television shows in history. *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons* are its only rivals in the production of neologisms, slang, and memorable one-liners, and discussions of the linguistic contributions of those shows can be found in *Verbatim: The Language Quarterly* (see McFedries, 2003 and Peters, 2005). "Slayer slang"—as named by its strongest proponent and primary recorder Michael Adams—has spread beyond *BtVS* and *Angel* to Buffy-related books, fan fiction, and Internet communities. This article will look at the continued use of two examples of slayer slang (*bitca* and *wiggins)* on the popular message boards of *Television Without Pity* (http:// televisionwithoutpity.com). The survival of these terms is one of many signs of how television has expanded and enlivened the language of its fans and students.

Slayer slang
[2] Adams (2003) has written at length in *Slayer Slang: A Buffy the Vampire Slayer Lexicon* about the distinctive and innovative language of the show. In this book, Adams distinguishes between slayer slang and slayer jargon, summarizes scholarship on new word formation, shows why studying emerging words is an important and rare opportunity, and presents a delicious glossary of slayer slang terms such as *lunchable*, *break and enterish*, *cuddle-monkey*, *fester-free*, and *wow-potential*. Along the way, Adams looks at expressions like *give (one) a happy*, words like *bezoar*, suffixes like the *-age* in *whuppage* and usages like the much in *Control freak much?* and *Broken-record much*.
[3] Most of these words and tendencies have not spread widely in the language, and therefore remain what linguists call "nonce words"—words coined for specific occasions that might be "invented" by different speakers or writers at different times but ultimately do not catch on. If a nonce word is intended as a joke or to show off the virtuosity of its author, then the word is called a "stunt word."[1] In any case, I prefer Adams's term "ephemeral language" as a blanket term for both nonce and stunt words. As to the value of ephemeral language, I strongly agree with Adams, who writes:

> Most American culture is wonderfully superfluous, and the language that expresses our experience of it is often wildly creative and relatively short-lived; but words thus created are no less important because they are the linguistic

products of living in a particular place, at a particular time, doing particular things, the various threads from which our individual, not to mention cultural, experience is mostly woven. To travel among ephemeral American English and the conversational grammar that accompanies it is simply to participate broadly and deeply in American culture, here and now. The words and linguistic habits one picks up along the way are souvenirs of any one person's American journey. (114)

[4] Of course, slayer slang is also slang—which isn't the same thing as ephemeral language, though as slang scholar Connie Eble points out, "[S]lang is ephemeral. A constant supply of new words requires the rapid change characteristic of slang. Most slang items enjoy only a brief time of popularity, bursting into existence and falling out of use at a much more rapid rate than items of the general vocabulary" (1996, 13). Though there is little agreement as to a precise definition of slang, there are several definite factors that distinguish slang words from non-slang words (ephemeral or not)— the first has to do with slang's dignity-lowering, stuffiness-demolishing effect. In the introduction to the *Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, Jonathon E. Lighter writes:

> [T]he use of slang undermines the dignity of verbal exchange and charges discourse with an unrefined and often aggressive informality. It pops the balloon of pretence. There is often a raw vitality in slang, a ribald sense of humor and a flip self-confidence; there is also very often locker-room crudity and toughness, a tawdry sensibility. Whether slang's undignified sensibility communicates abrasive disrespect or a down-to-earth egalitarianism depends on one's point of view. (1994, xii)

This "undignified sensibility" of slang can be seen in slayer slang words such as *destiny-free*, which takes the wind out of the portentous word and concept *destiny*, and a similar effect is achieved by Buffy's oft-quoted "Sacred duty, yadda yadda yadda." As to how these terms "lower the dignity" of discourse, imagine sticking slayer slang words such as *crack-whore-free*, *butt monkey*, or *cuddlesome* in a CNN broadcast, newspaper obituary, or job application—in each case, the balloon of pretence would be quite popped.

[5] The social aspect of slang is equally crucial and has been much remarked upon in discussions of slang, such as Eble's book *Slang and Sociability*. Eble defines slang as "an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large" (1996, 11) and Lighter touches on the same point: "Like the use of any special vocabulary, unselfconscious and accurate use of an identifiable group's slang both implies and contributes to a strong emotional allegiance to that group and its values" (1994, xxxv). All language is social, but unlike standard English's assumption of universal, neutral diction and personhood, different slang vocabularies cultivate and maintain different communities and identities.

[6] Slayer slang is typical slang in that it is characterized by a "raw vitality" and "often aggressive informality" that serves to bond both the characters on *BtVS* and the fans who watch the show. It's no wonder then that the distinct social setting of *Television Without Pity*—which partially overlaps but is not synonymous with Buffy fandom—has been an important site for the spread of slayer slang.

Television Without Pity (TWoP) and language

[7] *TWoP*-—originally known as *Mighty Big TV*— is a particularly fertile breeding ground for slang, and the slang-happy fans of the Buffyverse have found a home there. With an avowed mission statement of "Spare the snark. Spoil the networks," the site is made up of witty, sarcastic, humorous recaps of almost a hundred and fifty shows from the recent-past and present, and the message boards discuss these and many more shows. Though it's not hard to find praise on the site, biting criticism is far more common, and this blurb for the discontinued recaps of *Big Brother* is pretty characteristic of the site's tone:

> Being a really, really bad show is usually not enough to get you banished to Permanent Hiatus. However, being a really, really bad show that's on constantly, is 80% filler, and includes that skeevy live feed phenomenon? Yeah, that'll do it. We decided to save the money we would have had to spend on carpal tunnel treatment for recappers and redirect it to … anything else.

[8] *TWoP's* prolific recappers and posters are also frequent neologizers—a trait they share with *BtVS's* writers. Ephemeral words I have found on the site include *ass-owning*, *badassery*, *chest-thrustage*, *crap-diddly-tastic*, *deadee*, *double-meh*, *fluttery-nugget*, *horrendo-mom*, *mom-burban*, *nunliness*, *ominousity*, *ovary-style*, *sexual genius-dar*, *skankspionage*, *soap-opery-ness*, *soulmate-itude*, *su-diddly-fucking-uck*, and *super-grope-y*. Just like the writers of *BtVS*, *TWoP's* users revel in making up words that communicate and entertain, even if just for one post, one topic, and one day.

[9] To emphasize the shared language of the site, *TWoP* publishes a glossary of terms that are often used there. Some, like *asshat* and *YMMV* (your mileage may vary), are becoming very common slang terms, at least on the net; they can be found on many websites, message boards, and blogs, while other terms are more (though not completely) unique to *TWoP*, such as *for God's sack*—which was created when recapper Sep mistyped *for God's sake*.[2] Another of the site's more distinctive catchphrases is *blah blah blah [fish]cakes*—an expression used to mock and/or dismissively summarize any tedious speech, conversation, or situation, like so: "I would agree that Sam and her problems seem recycled, but for me they're recycled from some lazy T.V. movie (Feisty nurse, single mum, teenage pregnancy, vaguely abusive ex, troublesome tow headed son, dark, brooding widower doctor wanting to rescue both she and her child from it all … blah, blah, blah badromancenovelcakes" (Jenn, 2005). And that's just the tip of the fishcakes-berg, as the widely varied use of *blah blah blah [fish]cakes* shows the willingness of *TWoP* users to experiment and play with language. Just to show the flexibility, I've compiled an alphabetical list of forty variations from the site:

> *blah blah blah abstinence cakes*
> *blah blah blah look-at-me-attention-getting-antics cakes*
> *blah blah blah medical gobbledy-gook-cakes*
> *blah blah blah pretentiousfashiontalkcakes*
> *Blah Blah Blah Repressed Feelings for Jack-Cakes*

blah blah blah soulmate slavery fishcakes
blah blah blah stalkercakes
blah blah blah terrific opportunity-cakes
blah blah blah, destiny-cakes
blah blah burning in Hell cakes
blah blah fictionalcharactercakes
blah blah jealousy cakes
blah blah repetitive bullshit-cakes
blah blah revenge cakes
blah blah Utopia cakes
blah blah wiccacakes
blah obviouscakes
    blah, blah, "How do you guys deal with such a tough subject matter?"
    cakes
blah, blah, blah anvilcakes
blah, blah, blah No Joy in Mudvillecakes
blah, blah, blah sexist-cakes
blah, blah, blah, more High&MightyMe-cakes
blah, blah, blah, rehabcakes
blah-blah inspiring-others-and-following-dreams-cakes
blahblahblah it isn't that easy cakes
blah-blah-blah-meltdown-cakes
blah-blah-blah-the world revolves around me-fishcakes
yada yada be sure to tune in Wednesday-cakes
yada yada conflict cakes
yada yada evilcakes
yada yada peace and love fishcakes
yada yada yada 2 forms of id-cakes
yada yada yada it's-been-a-big-week-cakes
yada yada, shudder, chicken cakes
yadda yadda afterschool special cakes
yadda yadda breaking stereotypes-cake
yadda yadda fish cakes
yadda yadda impendingstormcakes
yadda yadda redemption-cakes
yadda, yadda, boring, Vera Wang-copy, snooze-cakes

Clearly, the "cakes" can be virtually any flavor or size, providing nearly endless possibilities for dismissive-and-bored-yet-creative-and-clever writers. The "cakes" can be one word (*anvilcakes*, *stalkercakes*) or many words (*look-at-me-attention-getting-antics cakes*). There can be one, two, or three *blahs*, and the *blahs* can be separated by commas, hyphens, or nothing—the *blahs* can also be replaced by *yadas* or *yaddas*. *TWoP* recappers and posters revel in this kind of improvisational, performative language play, and the creativity of shows like *BtVS* and the cake-baking *TWoP* users is mutually reinforcing and impossible to separate completely.

The words
[10] As Adams discusses, many of the innovations of slayer slang are of a piece with larger trends in slang; for example, one of the most characteristic tendencies in slayer

slang is making atypical adjectives with the suffix –*y*, such as *heart-of-darkness-y*, *out-of-the-loopy*, *stammery*, *twelve-steppy*, *unminiony*, and *crayon-breaky*. But increased productivity of --*y* can be seen far beyond the Buffyverse—even by as unlikely a speaker as Donald Rumsfeld, who was quoted at a 2002 press conference as saying: "I'm not into this detail stuff. I'm more concepty."

[11] Though adding -–*y* to nouns is not unusual in itself, and *concepty* doesn't have an unusually-long root like *stiff upper-lippy*, I'd say the sound and tone of *concepty* has more than a touch of slayer slang: *concepty* wouldn't seem out of place next to *avoidy*, *metaphory*, *developmenty*, *slippy*, *chickeny*, and *commandery*. I find it remarkable that Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld would choose this word instead of *conceptual*. Whatever your political beliefs, few would accuse Rumsfeld of being on the cutting edge of anything; I also doubt he's got a collection of *BtVS* DVDs stashed away at the Pentagon.[3] So if Rumsfeld is capable of making up a word like *concepty*, then clearly the wider usage of –*y* has spread beyond both the Buffyverse specifically and youth culture broadly. Since the increasing use of suffixes like -–*y* -and -–*age* is not exclusive to the Buffyverse, I opted against searching for them.

[12] Instead, I picked *bitca* and *wiggins*—two Buffyverse neologisms that can't easily be explained as part of larger trends in American English slang. As most fans will know, *bitca* is simply a euphemism for *bitch* that came about when Xander misheard Willow's spelling-out of *bitch* in "When She Was Bad" (2001). Adams (2003) has identified related terms such as *bitcalet* ("diminutive bitch"—a term of endearment) and *uber-bitca* ("superbitch"), and I have found, through Google searching, examples of *super-bitca*, *mega-bitca*, *psycho-bitca*, *bitca-ish*, *bitca-esque*, *bitca-like*, and *the bitca from hell*.

[13] Adams defines -*wiggins* as an "episode of fear, over-excitement, agitation" (279). This word was used several times on the show, and its meaning is quite clear when Buffy uses it in "Welcome to the Hellmouth" (1001): "That place just gives me the wiggins." *The wiggins* seem to be a close cousin of *the creeps* and *the willies*, and from examples on the show and elsewhere, it's clear that one can have *the wiggins* or *a wiggins*.[4] Adams has pointed out that *wiggins* hasn't spread far beyond the Buffyverse despite the potential advantage of being related to words such as *wig*, *wigged*, *wiggy*, and *wig out*.

[14] With *bitca* and *wiggins* in mind as good candidates for searching, I was curious how (and if) slayer slang had persisted in the absence of new episodes and in a particular place where the Buffyverse is a priority but not the priority. I collected all the appearances of *bitca* and *wiggins* on *TWoP* from June 2004-February 2005—a nine-month period that took place a full year after *BtVS's* final episode Chosen (7022) aired on May 20, 2003. In the next section, I will present these citations in the style of *American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage*, though I have added bold for each use of the terms to make skimming easier. Quotations are reprinted as presented on the board; emendations are placed in square brackets, except that quotation marks and dashes are regularized to minimize confusion.

The citations
[15] **bitca** *n*. Bitch.

2005
Jan 17 TeenLibrarian http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?

showtopic=3122122&view=findpost&p=2402454 Some stories work better as a series than either a movie or a mini-series; and while I enjoyed the new miniseries I didn't love it. I thought Apollo was too moody & Starbuck was a **bitca**; but I have since changed my mind. A lot. I didn't rewatch the mini so I'm not sure if the writing changed or if they are both better an hour at a time.

Jan 19 kenyaj http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3122259&view=findpost&p=2414427 My brother also jokingly said Vaughn was was only pretending to be asleep to avoid talking to Sydney (it's a guy thing, he informs me), but I thought it was sweet that he was finally able to sleep peacefully next to her. Insomnia is a bitch, but especially when it's Lauren's worthless mug that's keep you awake at night. Burn in hell, **bitca**.

Jan 22 enness2000 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2285194&view=findpost&p=2425984 It's strange—I hate season 6 a lot more, but I get way more worked up over the flaws of season 7. I think its because season 6 was *so* bad it's pretty much irredeemable in my mind, whereas season 7 started off so promisingly (the final scene of Lessons, Buffy not being a mopy **bitca**, Selfless, CWDP) only to end up as a total train wreck. I can write off season 6 in my mind, but the wasted possibilites (I'm loathe to use the easy pun here) of season 7 will always annoy me.

Jan 25 minisprout
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3119187&view=findpost&p=2438509 Well, perhaps shrew was the wrong word. But, there are times when the **bitca** really emerges from her.

Jan 27 PeachesNCream
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3120113&view=findpost&p=2446417 We are well aware that these hopeless morons can barely string together basic sentences, and are more preoccupied with sitting on beaches with vapid long-lost stares, engaging in semi-macho-yet-unbelievably-insipid pissing contests, or f*cking their siblings, YET we feel that if you do not come forward and expose yourself for the backstabbing **bitca** you are, consequences will be dire. Castaways should be informed immediately that you have pulled "babymamadrama" before, and are not above seducing male leads with your doe-eyed looks. Pull it together, Tess, before we mind-meld your ass out of this galaxy.
Jan 28 No Other Way

http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2641556&view=findpost&p=2454185 Sadly, Willow seems to think she's still dealing with the best friend she had in S1 and S2, and not the selfish **bitca** Buffy is being transformed into. How is Willow supposed to know that Buffy *isn't* actually concerned about their friendship, that she's only come to Willow because she wants Willow to make her problems with Faith (the same Faith she "dumped" Willow for) go away? [This citation was quoted by both Stargazer and namrog on January 28.]

Feb 2 wounded
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3122740&view=findpost&p=2472983 I'll start off with the Emily issue: I
hate her for what she did, yes, but to rub this off as character assassination? Hell no! I
remember at the beginning of the season when we were all, "Why is Emily acting so
rude towards Luke? She's always liked him!" leading to the conclusion that while it was
fine and dandy that she knew that Lorelai perhaps had a thing for him, it was a whole
other story when Lorelai began dating him. She was threatened by it, and had to do
something, and was a **bitca** at dinner. (Kind of like she and Richard being manipulative
assholes by trying to break Rory and Dean by throwing her the Male Yale party.)

Feb 9 jase-bot
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2932285&view=findpost&p=2502299 The only thing that can salvage
Evangeline for me - and this was true long before John/Van began—is if they own her
hypocritical bitchiness and go for making her a career—oriented villainess. I would love
it if Natalie was what made her little internal screw turn all the way over to Evil **Bitca**,
scheming against Natalie, etc.

Feb 11 musetta
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3123062&view=findpost&p=2508781 This episode was a mixed bag, some
highs and some lows. Loved the return of Julie, and her just being a blunt **bitca** to
everyone.

Feb 18 PeachesNCream
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3120113&view=findpost&p=2541116 Dear J.J. Abrams, [¶] Stop stealing
my writers, **bitca**. [¶] Love, Joss Whedon.

2004
June 6 kat_may
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=603319&view=findpost&p=1521133 I always thought Nathan was the best
thing that would ever happen to Grace, as Harrelson was to the show—he was hilarious
and she wasn't such a selfish shallow **bitca** when they were together. While I like Harry
Connick, Jr. I hated him on this show, and he brought out the worst in Grace. She's
shrill and unlikeable, IMO; I kept hoping that Nathan would come back.

June 8 Paris Madeleine
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2285194&view=findpost&p=1526472 I recently discovered *Buffy* durning
my vacation and went on an all-out marathon of seasons 1-3. I was in love! But then I
started watching F/X reruns on season 7 and I can barely comprehend that it's the
same show. **Bitca** Buffy? Obsessed-insane Spike? Spike has a soul? Xander as a prop?
Willow as the crazy Yoko? I could only bring myself to watch 2 eppies yesterday (7.2
and 7.3) … that was enough.

June 8 Peachy Keen
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3090924&view=findpost&p=1528771 Don't worry, we've all defended that
crazy **bitca**. I blame it on Ryan's white knight complex carrying into real life.

June 10 gr8red
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3113070&view=findpost&p=1536845 It seemed to me that putting Cara
with Steven was supposed to redeem her. She was such a **bitca** earlier in the series,
and once Steven "saw the real Cara," she was ready to show everyone else that she
was good. Just my HO.

June 11 Mamalita
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3115076&view=findpost&p=1543083 Raquel's wardrobe was truly
unfortunate and Pati was indeed a raving **bitca**. Angela seemed relatively normal but
her boyfriend was too old for her and sleazy, which was fun to watch, but she was
obviously slumming.

June 12 Shika
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3117165&view=findpost&p=1544100 It is SO not just you. I had this
feeling about her at last years awards where she seemed to show up tanked (which
really didn't bother me i guess) and had this holier-than-thou attitude about things. I
seem to remember her making some crack about the "Daredevil" movie stealing the
upside down "Spiderman" kisss and a cut to Jennifer Gardner looking like she wanted
to wipe the floor with that snotty little **bitca**. I know she thinks she's all cool and indie
but darlin' get ovah yourself.

June 16 Endeavour
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3106028&view=findpost&p=1560410 **Bitka** or **bitca** means bitch. I first
heard it on *Buffy*. I think they were spelling out the word for some reason, and Xander
replied "**bitca**?"

June 21 TenPea
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3100820&view=findpost&p=1575215 I was actually hoping to find the
Menopause Monitor in my store. It will give me a bona fide reason to be a **bitca**. I can
wave the test-stick-or-whatever at my boyfriend and say "See, THIS is why I'm yelling
at you, I have no control!"

June 28 Hitwoman
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2060075&view=findpost&p=1603441 Coleburg, that's a scenario I can live
with. I just didn't care for the implication that Joey was some kind of heartless **bitca** by
forcing Pacey to wear a condom. Birth control should be the responsibility of both

partners, and Pacey as the experienced partner should at the very least be just as responsible as Joey. And honestly, no matter what adults choose to do or say or believe, I'd be pretty disappointed if any show marketed at teens chose to show two kids having sex without using a condom. It's the most easily acquired and user-friendly form of birth control, and as such I'd expect to see it at least implicitly stated that one was used.

July 5 boardnow http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=497846&view=findpost&p=1625475 Good job we're talking about Xander's lines in S2 (kinda), as watching my DVDs last Friday, I finally got the B-I-T-C-H/**bitca** line. Yeah, I've seen the ep ("When She Was Bad") about a million times, and never got it, but it finally clicked last week – it's in the pronuciation, y'see. Next week, I'm going to learn how to use a knife and fork.

July 7 EONdc http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=576641&view=findpost&p=1635433 Me too. While I think Buffy is a **bitca** in The Yoko Factor, I think her friends meet her by exhibiting their own worst personality traits too.

Aug 11 TAPhD http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=1878967&view=findpost&p=1789938 Is your keyboard Cordy after Cordelia? And if so, is it named after early Buffy Cordy, late Buffy Cordy, early Angel Cordy, or that character on later Angel who was *named* Cordy but actually bore no resemblance other than the physical to the snarktastic **bitca** we knew and loved? [This citation was quoted by healing fish on August 11.)

Aug 19 bloody_walker http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3113416&view=findpost&p=1828021 About the capitalization, I use it to separate the different roots. For example: [¶] **PhoeBitca**: "Phoe" for "Phoebe" and "**Bitca**" because I'm a Buffy fan and thats the only way I can say "Bitch."

Aug 21 Penny Robinson http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=1754944&view=findpost&p=1836845 Word, word, word. I liked Val because I love me some good **bitca**, but she was no Brenda.

Aug 27 Just'sin http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3113416&view=findpost&p=1861473 Persephone—smart and bookwormish, clean, and eager to learn the ways of the wicca and **bitca**.

Aug 27 Just'sin http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=95288&view=findpost&p=1861400 A young woman named Persephone, smart and bookwormish, clean, and eager to learn the ways of the wicca and **bitca**.

Sept 12 Camo http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3118758&view=findpost&p=1915514 Didn't like her on sight. I fear she'll

alternate between cutesy-pooing it up and being a snide little **bitca** in an attempt to get! tough! I have no real clue why I get this from her. Buts I do.

Sept 27 DavidK93 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=164056&view=findpost&p=1982014 Aw, crap. Pigeon *is* channeling Braindead. Ugh. Ugh. Ugh. However, I think Pilar should talk about sex in every episode. Pigeon, shut up about being Pilar's maid. The woman just cooked you dinner, **bitca**!

Oct 7 BlackOrchid http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3116749&view=findpost&p=2026275 SouthernMom: Cold **bitca**.

Oct 8 amani http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2984473&view=findpost&p=2034297 Ugh, jcp … er, retr, that sucks. She's a **bitca** and don't let her bring you down. How rude and unprofessional of her. Do you think you could report her or would that be too tattletaleish? There's no excuse for behavior like that in the workplace.

Oct 13 Brahmsian http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3119141&view=findpost&p=2055961 Our girl hasn't turned into an overly cynical **bitca** *yet*, but she is in some danger of becoming one. She needs a guy who can help her avoid going down that road, and Weevil doesn't seem a very likely candidate for that job.

Oct 26 huntergrayson http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3119482&view=findpost&p=2109975 If the Teri rumors are true, that would support the blind item being her (or vice-versa). It'd be especially grating because she doesn't turn 40 for another two months. Yet, (a) TH was nice to the other gals on Oprah (watch her body language) and (b) she got the role because she's not a diva. The **TH-as-bitca** seems entirely media invented since they are adoring the SATC-comparisons way too much. Another possibility is the rumours were drummed up by NBC for LAX interest. Hey, it makes sense if you live here and know how weird the publicity machine is. Then again, the A-list mentions a grudge held against her by every single person involved in Lois & Clark.

Nov 3 jo_tornblade http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3086685&view=findpost&p=2140688 I missed the Shannen Doherty interview because the show was pre-empted for election coverage. I think I'm one of the few people who likes Shannen Doherty, but I tend to like strong women. Or **Bitca's**, if you will.

Nov 16 TAPhD http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3120499&view=findpost&p=2190899 Rory, you're a self-centered **bitca**. Marty is awesome and he's sitting there on your bed and after you're done talking about your own issues you just fall asleep in 2 seconds flat. You didn't even attempt to stay awake and listen to him. Unacceptable. [This citation was quoted by Polter-Cow on November 16 and Summer InA Bowl on November 17.]

Nov 21 caltrask55 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3117444&view=findpost&p=2203268 heh. I've heard that about her too. Apparently she has **bitca** qualities. [This citation was quoted by gleebo on November 21.]

Nov 21 raen http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3016155&view=findpost&p=2204842 Yeah Marcia is a total **bitca** and I agree that last night at the start of her song she was either taking the piss out of Chanel or copying her because she wants to be young and interesting too.

Nov 25 tracyKAY http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3120707&view=findpost&p=2221399 Jen: Hmmm … nice try **bitca**. But. No. Looking awfully lonely there, chicky. Flying under the radar, indeed.

Dec 3 fishboots http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3120931&view=findpost&p=2248345 Eliza has book smarts, but she is emotionally needy. She would never have voted for Ami if Ami hadn't been such a smug **bitca** last week. She would have wanted to sit at the popular girls table FOREVA! It'll be interesting, if the previews are to be believed, if Eliza's upbraiding Twila has any consequences. Personally, all of the parroting of Ami's opinions and imagined moral superiority has made me hate her more than I could ever hate Ami … at least Ami had a reason for buying the bullshit.

Dec 4 Perfect Xero http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2830122&st=2925&p=2250899&#entry2250899 Eh? The episode implies that Buffy doesn't know about the pendant. Aside from her insistence that there's no option other than killing Anya, there's also the scene where she runs her though with a sword and then just stands there (rather than making a grab for the pendant) while Anya has a flashback to OMWF then wakes up and pulls the sword out. Buffy even seems surprised by this, in spite of the fact that Halfrek pulled the same stunt in Season 6. So Buffy is either just being a vindictive **bitca** looking to prolong Anya's suffering before her death, or she genuinely doesn't know (and this is just a product of bad writing/continuity).

Dec 6 babybluez http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=1154497&view=findpost&p=2256982 Yeah, Serena was a total **bitca** tonight. FOSH!

[16] **wiggins** *n.* A feeling of dread similar to *the creeps*, *the willies*, *the heebie-jeebies*, or *the whim-whams*.

2005
Jan 1 kariyaki

http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=
509312&view=findpost&p=2343179 I also liked it because I didn't really like either
Chakotay or Seven with their respective other options. J/C? Nope. Dr/7? Negatory. In
fact, I found the Doctor's infatuation with Seven to be pretty creepy because his
instruction throughout her journey from Borg to Human seemed more paternal. For
him to start crushing on her gave me the **wiggins**. I was glad that Seven seemed to
have the same reaction I did.

Jan 23 BottomLine http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/ index.php?
showtopic=3122335&view=findpost&p=2430635 I've actually never watched this show
before, mostly because The Donald gives me The **Wiggins**. But, I was assured by
some friends it was a good show, so I am giving it a shot. For someone like me who is
just finding the show, it was a good start.

Feb 1 DrShell http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3112947&view=findpost&p=2468649 The kid smacking dude gave me a
serious case of the **wiggins**. He just looked like he could go off and hit you any time.
Ugh.

Feb 7 LennoxHC http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=263163&view=findpost&p=2495011 ETA: Traci Lords wasn't just a porn
star, but an underage porn star. If I think too much about that, I just get the **wiggins**.

Feb 8 Andeely http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=196664&view=findpost&p=2498266 I still get the **wiggins** thinking about
that movie.

Feb 16 DrShell http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3112947&view=findpost&p=2530465 God, no lie. What a sleazeball. And he
had those watery, glassy drug-abuser eyes. He gave me a serious case of the **wiggins**.
What did Mr. Plaintiff ever see in him?

2004
June 1 Beelzebubba
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3100820&view=findpost&p=1499810 The "girthy" hot dog guy. That has to
be the filthiest, dirtiest commercial on TV. It's not even funny dirty, it's just creepy
watching this guy fellate a hot dog before visciously biting into it. It gives me **wiggins**.

June 8 Set
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2285194&view=findpost&p=1527177 Although it would have been Worse.
Thing. Ever. material had they treated Tara the same way, as a walking queer joke.
Fortunately, they dealt with the whole Tara / Willow thing respectfully, almost
hypersensitively so, with the whole gangs reaction being glossed over, save for a 10
second **wiggins** from Buffy, a "Tara's you're girlfriend?!" and a "Bloody Hell!" from the

funny drunk. I would have dreaded someone as much a woman-hater as Marti was a man-hater getting their hands on the whole lesbian story arc and making Tara into a grotesque cliche like Andrew.

June 20 Bent137
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3116452&view=findpost&p=1572910 I got bit by a tick this morning, and this episode was seriously one of my first thoughts. I even said to my parents, "But I don't WANT to start seeing GOD!" (Dad watches the show, so he got it.) I was, however, bit by a LoneStar Tick, which isn't known to carry Lyme Disease. Instead it carries "Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever" which really sounds like a similar thing. There's even rash and hallucinations! As well as fever, head aches, muscle pains, nausea, vomiting, diareha and loss of appetite. Sounds fun! Only not. Really hoping this tick was NOT a carrier. It didn't get a chance to bed itself in me so maybe I caught the stupid little bugger in time. Seriously though, they're gross and evil and painful and did I mention gross? They look … *shudder* Creepy. Gave me the **wiggins**. So watch yourselves when you're outside everyone!

June 25 IcyLuna
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=762743&view=findpost&p=1594916 I know the story sounds like the lamest thing that ever was. It seriously creeped me out at the time though. It was night. My lights were turned off. I had a few porcelain dolls at the time. I suddenly realized that I had all these beaty little doll eyes starring at me from their shelves. It scarred me for life! Plus, the doll on the TV show really did look like it was posessed. It looked nasty and mean. To this day, just thinking about it gives me the **wiggins**.

July 1 Lillilux
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3116197&view=findpost&p=1614604 Yes! I felt that, too. I always felt like a police raid was going to burst in on them and arrest Marina. Truly. It grossed me out. At least with the boy they seem the same age, and the trapeze artist as well. Marina feels like my contemporary so it just gave me the "**wiggins**" that she'd be doing DBJ™

July 4 jazmyne
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1625083 Ooh! Kittens! Yes, Miss Kitty Fantastico was black and white. I've had several black and white cats—Stanley, **Mrs. A-Wiggins**, and Bogie. None of them are Buffyverse names, but they are all inspired by various entertainment media. I like Riley as a name for your kitten, though. It also hearkens back to Dawn telling Riley that Buffy liked that he was "weak and kittenish." Kitteny? One of those, anyway.

July 9 Sureshot26 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3117219 &view= findpost&p=1645331 Personally, Nicole creeped me out way more than Brandon did. He's merely a dipshit, whereas she has this very "I'm an evil robot" vibe that gives me the **wiggins**. During the infamous "God's plan" interview

where Brandon pats her shoulder, she had this incredibly disturbing look that I can't even describe adequately. It seemed like a combination of "Touch me again and you can say goodbye to your nutbunches," "Oh, so this is how humans behave when they're being totally patronizing," and "Note to self: Pick up milk." Cree-pee.

July 13 Neen http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3117766&view=findpost&p=1663116 Speaking of eye candy, I think that was quite possibly the hottest Phil has ever looked. I'm still having palpitations. That smile that he gave Charla at the pit stop made me all melty. But yeah, I think Mirna may have given him the **wiggins** last week. Hee!

July 16 Boliver http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1675713 valny, I don't think that's just you-Egyptian stuff is creeptastic. It doens't help that a good portion of the PC game Heretic 2 was in Egypt, and it had scary Pharoah-panthers and spiders. When I go to the Luxor in Vegas I still get a wiggins, but it's the good kind of creepy and cool **wiggins**. I'll get the creeps in a scary movie, but it doesn't keep me away.

July 16 casperchick http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1676572 But *Scream* I love. I've probably seen it 20 times and the part with Drew still gives me the good creepy **wiggins**.

July 16 valny http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1679535 Do clowns give anyone the **wiggins**? If they do, don't watch the horror movie, Clownhouse I did like it though. Marionettes and some puppets for some reason also give me the wiggins.

July 18 LittleVoice http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1683436 hobbit, your *Exorcist* experience would have given me the **wiggins**.

July 20 alexias http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3112420&view=findpost&p=1692871 I hated the sisters (piper excluded) in that one. They couldn't understand why Piper was freaking. HELLO! She's taking on the demon who KILLED HER MOTHER!!! [¶] I think she was entitled to some **wiggins** on that one.

July 28 catndahat http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3118038&view=findpost&p=1730767 And I frequently use the word "**wiggins**" and the phrase "that's not of the bad."

Aug 2 Boqueisha http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=762743&view=findpost&p=1753235 I followed that link for *Bad Ronald* and was severely disturbed. Not quite so much by the story of the movie, but because I

was following a link to a horror movie and a page opens up with my name on it. "Loren" isn't a very common name, I almost never see it, so it gave me a bit of a **wiggins**.

Aug 12 nqllisi http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=927368&view= findpost &p=1794483 In fact, her speech at the end makes more sense in that context. She might be saying that Trill society, because of its inclusion of the symbiotes, has a more fluid understanding of such things than the society that Bev grew up in. In effect, she's saying, "I can't cope with you being a woman now, because the society I grew up in didn't provide a lot of examples of sexual relationships being continued after a sudden gender switch. Frankly, I can't conceive of myself in such a situation—it gives me the **wiggins** because I'm heterosexual. After continued exposure to species such as yours, perhaps my culture will adopt the same understanding of the fluidity of gender as yours, but that's just not where I'm coming from."

Aug 16 valny http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1813006 Oh man, I don't care how small the spider is, that would squick me out AND give me the **wiggins** all at once.

Aug 18 valny http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1819905 Ugh, you just gave me the **wiggins**, neighbors, and a frightening visual.

Aug 23 NickChick http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3111912&view=findpost&p=1846552 Speaking of gymnastics, did anyone else's ped-o-meter go off with all the *inappropriate touching* going on between Carly Patterson and her coach? They gave me the **wiggins**.

Aug 24 Knee High Boots http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3100820&view= findpost&p=1846761 I don't even know how the damn thing ends because the first time I caught it (on TiVo), I was so terrified by the mass o' skin with the blinking eye that I immediately fast-forwarded through it. Thanks a whole lot, Milk Pimps, for giving me a severe case of the **wiggins**. You bastards.

Aug 26 NickChick http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=3111912&view=findpost&p=1859901 Talk about your **wiggins**. It's generally a really big damn planet, ya know? Are you also the sorts who travel and run into random people you know in far-flung airports? Slip—love that about mom-induced e-mails. Hee!

Aug 26 Gwynevere1 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?showtopic=721445&view=findpost&p=1861190 *Major* rec for Annakovsky's piece. I mentioned it once before. It is truly amazing. Probably the best Xander fic I've ever

read. It succeeds in being a completely insane piece of crack and, yet, a highly emotionally effective dramatic work at the same time. Annakovsky seems to have the entire piece plotted from the beginning: every twist and turn in the story is completely surprising, until you realize that hints were dropped all along. I love the parallels she creates amongst the "characters," particularly between Xander and Dom. The author has a beautiful writing style, with detailed descriptions of settings and genuinely human reactions. Plus, the story is balanced by a wicked sense of humor. Even if RPF usually gives you the **wiggins**, Annakovsky is very respectful of the actors, who she appears to understand very well; the fic is not exploitative in the least.

Aug 27 Mr. Pointy
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=721445&view=findpost&p=1862917 I agree that Annakovsky is a great writer, but will have to disagree that *A Critique of Pure Reason* doesn't give you the **wiggins** if you don't like RPF

Sept 3 IcyLuna http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=394850&view= findpost&p=1887525 I think Abby is precious and she's far better than most of the child actors I see on the television screen. I love her scenes with the Bradbot. They are so sweet. It brings out a sort of vulnerable and tender side to the Bradbot. Yet, the actress kind of freaks me out. It's the Dakota Fanning Syndrom from the mini series *Taken*. She seems so poised and ladylike. There's no 5 or 6 year olds like that. I guess we're supposed to believe it's because she's spawned from TheSpermPig who is the epitome of grace *gag*. It just gives me the **wiggins** to see children act beyond their age. Even Cassie squicked me out when she was acting too mature for her age. Child genuises disturb me slightly too for the very same reason.

Sept 22 Crackopuff http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3115913&view=findpost&p=1959306 I agree with Eegah on the creepiness, that gave me major **wiggins**.

Sept 29 Putli Bai http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3119213&view=findpost&p=1992672 Dude, no kidding. That, followed by "it has been playing for sixteen years" has given me some serious **wiggins**.

Sept 30 zoeyblue13 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=1995712 Mr. ZB was telling me about some helicopter crash in Hawaii recently, but I can't find any reference to it in the news. Did anyone hear about this? I think he was just trying to give me the **wiggins**. He lives to creep me out and play jokes one me. Its pretty funny … for him.

Oct 4 Rhea13
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3119295&view=findpost&p=2014396 I also agree with this. That being said, Amy had a point too - you shouldn't complain about not having friends if you're not willing to give *anything.* of course, Hannah is still giving me subliminal **wiggins**,

so …. [This citation was quoted by Busted Flush on October 5.]

Oct 13 Katrinawitch
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2828258&view=findpost&p=2056991 Speaking of game show hosts, I could
never stand the smarm that is/was Richard Dawson on Family Feud. His fake tan, his
pinky ring, his Julius Caesar haircut, the way he called all the women "darlin" and had
to kiss all of them, right down to the blue-haired grannies. I'm getting a **wiggins** just
thinking of him now! Shudder! However, I always loved his character on Hogan's
Heroes. Go figure.

Oct 15 SiameseCatLady
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=1763083&view=findpost&p=2067917 Great description—glad to know I'm
not the only one who gets the **wiggins** from Shill's handsiness and attitude toward
young girls. He's like that teacher in junior high or high school who goes right to the
line of being inappropriate, but never quite crosses it – at least not in front of anyone.
He just seems a little bit too fascinated with the psyches and souls of these girls and a
little too anxious to be their White Knight/Saviour/ Protector.

Oct 21 NickChick http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3119812&view=findpost&p=2099790 The doc was creepy. When he was
ratling off his, "I give women …" items, I thought, "You're giving me the **wiggins**."

Nov 4 zoeyblue13 http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=2891151&view=findpost&p=2143335 Chyna, I can't even tell you how
happy I was that Obama won. Though I don't think he had much of an opponent in
Keyes. Keyes is creepy, gives me the **wiggins**. [This citation was quoted by Chyna on
November 4.]

Nov 4 kariyaki
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3120169&view=findpost&p=2146146 To add to the creepiness, they had to
hire Harriet Sansom Harris. I still get the **wiggins** from that actress ever since I saw
her in that "Eve" episode of *The X-Files*.

Nov 11 Bean9879
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3113300&view=findpost&p=2170489 I watched it … and actually enjoyed
the way it was edited together. It did some skipping between her time in France & her
making the same sorts of food at home. The did a cocktail party, a luncheon for two,
and a late supper for her & the hubby. As an aside—something about her and her
husband together gives me the **wiggins**. Just me? Okay then.

Nov 16 SiameseCatLady http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3117693&view=findpost&p=2187806 Anne-Marie made my head hurt and
my blood sugar level hit dangerously high spikes. I know a fair amount of born again

Christians, some I like, some I don't, but that woman and her associates gave me the **wiggins** with a capital-W (as in her fave president). I always say, if you have to keep telling people what a good Christian you are, then you probably aren't. Kudos to whoever came up with the candy is better after the wrapper is removed and you don't share your candy with the whole football team analogies!

Nov 24 angryhamster
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3120566&view=findpost&p=2217831 As an aside, Koontz is one seriously creepy dude. I realise he's probably gonna be the closest thing this show has to an exposition fairy, and while his interaction with Veronica was excellent, I'm not really sure if I want to see more of him on the show —he really gives me the **wiggins**.

Nov 25 triumveratex http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3119440&view=findpost&p=2220630 ok now i know im new to the thread and about to give a few people a **wiggins** but i was thinking that one of the reasons for chris leaving san fran could be a moment of weakness, like say "borrowing" one of raiges friends, [¶] i was thinking of a scene where the GL return to the manor and hear a noise from upstairs, (boys rooms or attic) and without thinking paige would orb up to investigate and find chris getting sweaty with, i dont know maybe glenn.

Dec 8 NickChick
http://forums.televisionwithoutpity.com/index.php?
showtopic=3111912&view=findpost&p=2268603 A friend sent me a creepy clown bday card as a laugh—and it's definitely a generational **wiggins**. My mom thought he was cute while I blame *Poltergeist* for stripping me of any notion clowns might ever mean well.

Looking at the citations
[17] As I collected the preceding citations, some of the questions that interested me were:

> Are the terms being used in relation to non-Buffyverse shows? If so, are there patterns to the types of shows?
>
> Were just a few prolific users using the terms or were many users familiar with *bitca* and *wiggins* and comfortable enough to use them?
>
> Have the terms shifted in form or meaning at all? Have any new shades of meaning or new usages developed?
> Are there any good signs for the success of these terms in the future? Could they make the leap from slayer slang to a more established vocabulary?

[18] From June 2004-February 2005, there were a total of forty-six *TWoP* posts containing *bitca* and forty-seven posts containing *wiggins*.[5] *Bitca* was used to discuss twenty-five different shows while *wiggins* was used to discuss twenty different shows, and both were used in the "TV Potluck" area for miscellaneous chatter.[6]

[19] I was pleased to see the terms used in reference to so many shows; this confirmed my hope that they had moved beyond the Buffyverse to some extent. It's not surprising that slayer slang would have migrated over to discussions of supernatural shows like *Charmed* and *The X-Files*, arc-heavy shows like *Alias* and *Lost*, sci-fi shows like *Star Trek* and *Battlestar Galactica*, or witty shows like *The O.C.* and *Gilmore Girls*, but there is little to connect the Buffyverse with *The 2004 MTV Movie Awards*, cop shops like *C.S.I.*, or reality shows such as *The Apprentice*, *Starting Over*, *Survivor*, and *Wife Swap*. Buffy and Judge Judy may both be strong women with a fondness for wielding blunt objects, but I would never have guessed that a word like *wiggins* would be used (twice) to discuss *Judge Judy* (though the good judge has probably given more than her share of the wiggins to viewers and defendants). I was equally surprised to note that the large and active *Angel* boards included not a single *bitca* or *wiggins* for this time period.[7]

[20] The *BtVS*-related areas included eight *bitcas* and fifteen *wiggins*, so of the two terms, it seems that *wiggins* remains more closely tied to *BtVS* and may be used slightly less widely than *bitca* on *TWoP*.[8] Given the "without pity" slant of the site, I think *bitca* has an inherent advantage—folks who prize snark and lack pity could probably avoid talking about the creeps if they wanted, but they would have a harder time avoiding a word like *bitch*, so the synonym/euphemism *bitca* may fill a strong need/desire. Since there isn't an obvious need for *wiggins*, I'm impressed that the word is holding its own.[9]

[21] Of the 40 versions of *bitca,* many were accompanied by an adjective, which is obviously similar to how *bitch* is used; these included: *backstabbing bitca*, *blunt bitca*, *cold bitca*, *crazy bitca*, *Evil Bitca*, *heartless bitca*, *mopy bitca*, *raving bitca*, *self-centered bitca*, *selfish bitca*, *smug bitca*, *total bitca* (twice), *vindictive bitca*, *overly cynical bitca*, *selfish shallow bitca*, *snide little bitca*, and *snotty little bitca*. These modifiers, along with the near-*bitch* spelling, make it easy for readers not familiar with slayer slang to understand *bitca* in context, (though I wonder if some users may believe the word is merely a typo).

[22] *Bitca* was used four times in commands or imperatives (*Burn in hell, bitca*; *Stop stealing my writers, bitca*; *The woman just cooked you dinner, bitca!*; and *Hmm … nice try bitca*) three times in names (*Bitca Buffy*, *PhoeBitca*, and *TH-as-bitca*), and once as an adjective (*bitca qualities*). Users discuss *bitca's* status as a word three times, which indicates a little self-consciousness about its status as a "real word." Only one user discussed *wiggins*'s status as a word, indicating a solid level of acceptance. Since relatively few users discussed or questioned the words, one can assume that *bitca* and *wiggins* were generally easy to understand based on prior knowledge or context.

[23] Adams (2003) has written about variability in how *wiggins* is introduced—some folks get *a wiggins*, others get *the wiggins*, and still others avoid the whole mess by getting something along the lines of *serious wiggins* (107). Of the 45 original citations for *wiggins*, thirty-one used the article *the* before *wiggins*, indicating a strong preference among users. Most of these thirty-one citations were some version of *gives me the wiggins* or *get the wiggins*, though modifiers were sometimes added to create usages such as *the good creepy wiggins* and *the good kind of creepy and cool wiggins*. The *a* article didn't fare nearly so well, with only five examples: Two users simply used *a wiggins*, and this version had longer variations such as *a 10 second wiggins*, *a bit of a wiggins*, and *a generational wiggins*. Users who avoided the "a vs. the" issue altogether described *some wiggins*, *some serious wiggins*, *subliminal wiggins*, *your wiggins*, *major*

wiggins, and in one case simply *wiggins*. This variation may indicate, as Adams has noted, that *wiggins* is still searching for a stable idiomatic form (107).

Do these words have a future?

[24] I am a fan of both these terms, and I would love to see them graduate from slayer slang to a wider category of American English slang. Is this possible? Allan Metcalf's (2002) FUDGE scale may be helpful here—this tool for predicting the success of new words assigns a 0, 1 or 2 to five factors: "Frequency of use," "Unobtrusiveness," "Diversity of users," "Generation of forms and meanings," and "Endurance of the concept." So a score of 10 would indicate a word with the highest possible chance of success, and a zero would indicate a word unlikely to catch on (152).

[25] I don't need to crunch or otherwise harm the numbers to see that neither term would fare well in Metcalf's system: both would get low marks for frequency of use, unobtrusiveness, and diversity of users. *Bitca* might score a little better in the "generation of forms and meanings" category, but *wiggins* would do poorly; both would do fine in the "endurance of the concept" area, though I doubt this would help overcome the other low scores. Concepts may endure, but words usually do not, and I believe *bitca* and *wiggins* have little chance of approaching the popularity of *asshat* and *batshit* (two slang terms used very widely on the web), much less the broader usage of slang terms such as *apeshit* and *dude*.

[26] However, the place *bitca* and *wiggins* have carved out on *TWoP* is promising in many ways. "Standard American slang" may be out of reach, but movement from strictly *BtVS*-related web spaces to a broader television-related site like *TWoP* shows that these terms can infiltrate the vocabularies of non-Buffy fans. Who knows which fans of *Lost*, *Gilmore Girls*, or *Judge Judy* might see the words, like the words, and use them elsewhere? It's also promising that of the 43 *bitca* users and 37 *wiggins* users, there was no overlap. For eighty different users to employ such distinctive slayer slang while causing so few raised eyebrows might indicate the terms are becoming equal parts slayer slang and *TWoP* lingo. This migration is reason to hope that other migrations are possible: perhaps the terms have a shot at crossing over to other slang subsets, maybe even to online discussions of non-*BtVS*, non-TV-related obsessions.

[27] It wouldn't in the spirit of slayer slang to end with a clichéd, "further research is needed" but … only time will tell how many *bitcas* will be named in the future, and if the *wiggins* will be embiggened or not.

Notes

1. A classic example of stunt words is Rich Hall's (1984) "sniglets," such as *choconiverous*, or the "tendency when eating a chocolate Easter bunny to bite off the head first" (22).
2. Naturally, other rapidly spreading slang terms, such as *batshit*, can be found frequently on *TWoP*, too; see Peters (forthcoming).
3. Though someone might, as indicated by the existence of Anthony Cordesman's "Biological Warfare and the 'Buffy Paradigm,'" a post-9-11 report on homeland defense from the Center for Strategic and International Studies (see Adams 2003, 100-101).
4. On *Angel*, another, much less successful Whedonverse synonym for *the creeps* was coined when Cordelia Chase answered the question, "What have you got?" with "The weebies" ("Sense and Sensibility," 1006).
5. Six of the *bitca* posts were quotations of other posts, and this was the case for two of the *wiggins* quotes, as well; so the actual number of original uses are forty for *bitca*

and forty-five for *wiggins*. Unless otherwise noted, I will count the quotations as equal to non-quotations for the bulk of this article, since this repetition is very much like one person echoing another in conversation and, in my estimation, should "count" as a use.
6. *Bitca* occurred in posts about the *2004 MTV Movie Awards*, *Alias*, *Arrested Development*, *Australian Idol*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Charmed*, *Dawson's Creek*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Destinos*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Lost*, *Neighbors*, *One Life to Live*, *Passions*, *Starting Over*, *Survivor*, *Sweet Valley High*, *The Apprentice*, *The Ellen Degeneres Show*, *The O.C.*, *Veronica Mars*, *Wife Swap*, and *Will and Grace*. *Wiggins* appeared in posts regarding *Amazing Race*, *Barefoot Contessa*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Charmed*, *CSI*, *CSI: New York*, *Dr. Phil*, *Everwood*, *Gilmore Girls*, *Joan of Arcadia*, *Judge Judy*, *Lost*, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, *Star Trek: Voyager*, *The Apprentice*, *The L Word*, *The X-Files*, *The Young and the Restless*, *Trading Spaces*, and *Veronica Mars*.
7. Oddly enough, *bitca* has only appeared in six *Angel* posts and *wiggins* in one. All of these posts were in 2003 or early 2004.
8. The message boards of several other shows featured *bitca* and *wiggins* more than once. *Bitca* appeared multiple times in discussions of *Arrested Development* (2), *Charmed* (2), *Gilmore Girls* (8), *Lost* (3), and *The Apprentice*, while *wiggins* showed up more than once for *Amazing Grace* (2), *Charmed* (2), *CSI* (2), *Everwood* (2), *Judge Judy* (2), and *The X-Files* (3)—plus six uses in the "TV Potluck Area."
9. I focused on the message boards but searched the *TWoP* recaps as well: *bitca* has been used only four times in recaps that appeared from 1997-2001, and *wiggins* has appeared in eight recaps from 1998-2002. the most notable usage I found in all of these is a combined Buffyism/Simpsonism written by Sep in a recap of "Conversations with Dead People" (7007): "I'm so glad I'm watching this in daylight this time around because this scene really embiggens the wiggins."

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"I Can't Believe I'm Saying It Twice in the Same Century. . . but 'Duh . . .'"1 The Evolution of Buffy the Vampire Slayer Sub-Culture Language through the Medium of Fanfiction

[1] I became interested in the evolution of fan language due to the story from which the title of this article derives, *Chocolaty Goodness* by Mad Poetess. Mad Poetess appropriates canonical language constructions from the *Buffy* mythos, changes them into something completely her own yet still recognizably from *Buffy*. Reading Mad Poetess led me to speculate that fanfiction writers are internalizing *Buffy*'s language and style for their own ends, their fanfiction, and especially for characterization within their fanfictional worlds. As a fanfiction writer, I find myself applying the playfulness I witnessed in *Buffy*, and later *Angel* and *Firefly*, to non-Whedon texts like *Stargate: Atlantis*.2 I also find other writers, whether familiar with Whedon-texts or not, who use language with a Whedonesque flair. Fanfiction is copious on the Internet, so I have chosen to illustrate the *Buffy* influence on fanfiction language from a small and admittedly personal selection. Though not a comprehensive reading of fanfiction language, this article is an introduction, a place to start that can be applied to all *Buffy* fanfiction and, potentially, further afield and applied to other fanfiction appropriated universes, perhaps even further, in the course of history, to mainstream English.

[2] The idea of an evolving fan language is a bit confounding. Admittedly, language constructions in fanfiction are difficult to track from fanfiction's modern origins in series like *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*, and *Blake's 7*, to current fan creations related to series like *Stargate: SG-1*, *Andromeda*, *X-Files*, or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. We cannot assume that current fanfiction has more blends or compounds or other linguistic constructions than the fic of pre-Internet generations. Nor can we easily analyze the fanfiction produced by the pre-Internet communities. There would be too much material to manage, and there is a problem of access, since pre-Internet fanfiction was shared through friends, zines, and conventions, but not generally available—much of the original material exists only in hard copy. However, we can analyze Internet accessible fanfiction, the appropriation of *Buffy*'s language constructions within that fanfiction, and how those constructions evolve into something vastly different from the source language, while still bearing the source's mark.

[3] It is even more difficult to show the evolution of fan language in fanfiction when few scholars have looked at actual fan language rather than concentrating on ethnographic studies of fan interaction. Such studies occasionally refer to the liveliness of fan language but do not explore it further. They also overlook distinctions between insider and outsider communities, the differences between which have as much to do with recognizing information from the source as with language used among acknowledged members of a community. There have been several articles written about *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fanfiction, as well as the construction of its slang via the mediums of the *Buffy* and *Angel* series, novels, graphic novels, and the *Bronze* and *Bronze: Beta* posting boards.3 Yet

there is a noticeable lack of attention paid to the continuation and evolution of slayer style through fanfiction. One of the few to look thoroughly at the source language, as well as fan appropriate message boards, is Michael Adams, author of the seminal work *Slayer Slang: A* Buffy the Vampire Slayer *Lexicon* (2003). Jane Espenson, co-executive producer and writer on *Buffy*, writes that "With so many of us laboring over so many years and with so many fans writing about the show, and indulging in creative fanfic, together we have extended the language of the Buffyverse" (Adams 2003, ix). Espenson seems to be stating that slayer slang, or Buffyspeak, is a continually evolving subculture language partly due to fanfiction, even though academics tend to dismiss fanfiction as inherently non-canonical.

[4] An intrepid few have dared to write about fan communities. Camille Bacon-Smith (1992, 2000) has worked extensively with fan community interaction and initiation but she is not primarily concerned with linguistic fluidity in fanfiction. Bacon-Smith's appendix to *Enterprising Women* (1992), titled "An Introduction to the Language of the Fan Community: Glossary," is more or less a who's who of the *Blake's 7* and *Star Trek* universes and also includes some very general references to *Star Wars* and other, less well known, series, like *Doctor Who* and *Alien Nation*. There are also entries for some fan specific creations, from the letterzine and genres like slash, but, ultimately, the suggestion that the appendix is an introduction to fan language is misleading.

[5] Bacon-Smith's *Enterprising Women* (1992) hearkens back to pre-Internet fan communities that relied upon ink and paper production of their fanfiction and snail mailing (traditional postal delivery) of their zines; it is historically interesting but less relevant to study of current fanfiction language. Fanzines still exist, but many have become Web-based or Web-accessible, and fanfiction is no longer limited to small groups of people and initiated-by-the-community participants. Internet access has broadened fan activity across social, economic, ethnic, age, gender, and national backgrounds; as a result, fanfiction and its creators have flourished, crossed genres and universes. Online archives have also promoted diversity.4 Archives open up the insider/outsider communities of fandom, blurring divisions between participatory and non-participatory involvement and promoting mythos inclusion and crossing. For instance, James Walkswithwind writes fanfiction across a multitude of series, including *Angel*, *Buffy*, *Forever Knight*, *Harry Potter*, *The Sentinel*, *Stargate: SG-1*, *Stargate: Atlantis*, and *Firefly*.

[6] Bury (2005) takes some salient technological changes into account, but, like Bacon-Smith, Bury focuses on language that appears primarily in message boards and listservs, rather than in fanfiction, and is overly invested in the idea that members of fan communities are female, university educated, and share a "middle-class aesthetic." This may have been true of the few lists in the few fandoms she studied, but it does not consider the changing faces of fan communities, which are becoming more diverse and inclusive due to the accessibility of computers, the anonymity of pseudonyms, and the identities that one can choose to put forth by means of style.

[7] Mice, who writes fanfiction in the *Stargate: Atlantis*, *Lone Gunmen*, and *X-Files* universes, exemplifies such multiple identity. Mice identifies himself as a "retired iconoclast and rabble rouser" who likes guys and writes fanfiction. Mice also identifies himself with the Emperor penguins that raised him, Buddhists who (also) raised him, Hillary Rodham Clinton in disguise, and Sir Edmund Hillary in disguise. He claims that, "Some of this might be true on alternate Thursdays. Maybe. Except the walruses. That's all true" (www.squidge.org/mice/). While Mice does present a "true" identification, he also creates other identities for himself that one can accept as utter silliness or as an association that means something to the chooser. Identity implies style; multiple identities imply complex style, the sort of style as yet undiscovered by academic discourse on Web communities and fanfiction.

[8] Fanfiction is, quite literally, fiction written by the fans of a particular TV show, book, movie, etc., which changes or modifies the source in some way. There is a long tradition in literature of adapting someone else's work. An apocryphal set of stories was based upon the character of Quixote during the ten-year hiatus between Parts 1 and 2 of *Don Quixote* (Cervantes 1957). These non-canonical stories, acknowledged as apocryphal, are early fanfiction, similar to later exemplars like Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), which imagines the story of Rochester's insane, caged wife from *Jane Eyre*. Rhys's need to write Rochester's wife's story was the same sort of need that prompts many fanfiction

writers to create their tales.

[9] Discussing fanfiction in a modern context, Henry Jenkins (1992), director of Media Studies at MIT, wrote that "fan fiction is the way of culture repairing the damage done in a system where contemporary myths are owned by corporations instead of owned by the folk" (23). Given the number of fanfiction writers and readers that have it up on their sites, this statement has become a rallying cry for fanfiction, which gains legitimacy by its presence within the carnivalesque space of the Internet and its opposition to corporate exploitation and traditionally accepted projections of self.5 According to Kristina Busse (2002), "Generating their own version of the Buffyverse, these fans use fiction to emotionally respond to the show, comment on its plot, and character development, and most important, interpret and analyze the series, thereby teasing out its subtext" (207). Fanfic writers oriented toward the Buffyverse pick up on the subtleties of the texts and utilize them to create a version of the Buffyverse that most accurately projects who they are as individuals, especially their perceived status as outsiders within society.

[10] The phenomenon of fanfiction is not restricted to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, nor is it restricted to recent TV shows or books. Yet, the Buffyverse is among the few fandoms that encourages flexible play with the conventions of a mythos in which fans' efforts participate in the canonical Buffyverse (Larbalestier 2002, Rust 2003). Erik Davis (2001) asks,

> What does it mean to own culture? For media companies, ownership means an exclusive right to squeeze dollars out of materials gripped by the ever-growing tentacles of copyright. But fandom is essentially an open source culture, even as it feeds on corporate media. Fan ownership is really stewardship, a commitment that does not center on individual control but on shared imagination and collective process—one that includes passionate consumers alongside actors, directors, bean counters, and PR flacks. In a sense, fans have always been preparing for today's more participatory and open-ended media universe: It's no accident that Trekkers and Deadheads were among the first to colonize the Internet. But it's equally true that fandom harks back to a time when we sat around the campfire and swapped the old, untrademarked tales of heroes and gods.

Davis's reference to fanfiction as stewardship seems to echo the self-perceptions of fanfiction writers who see themselves, not defilers of the text, but as creators of potential readings generated by the text's possibilities. As C. S. Lewis wrote, "Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become" (quoted in Holmer 1976, 76). Even if it is non-canonical, fanfiction could be seen as a way to illuminate the human experience. The language of fanfiction contributes to culture and to personal discovery and bears looking into. Fan language challenges language restrictions and the role of Standard English. What does it mean that fanfiction writers feel both compelled and entitled to manipulate language conventions to develop new forms of old types, create completely new types, and to play at the margins of Standard English?

[11] The power of fanfiction lies in its language, language in flux, because it incorporates popular culture references that change meaning from moment to moment and from person to person. Yet the language of fanfiction also depends on textual stability rather than the permeability of visual media. Fanfiction construction of language, particularly in the Buffyverse, is even more transgressive and subversive than the language of *Buffy* itself, partially due to the method of presentation, that of text. Fanfiction is stable because it is printed and typed. In other words, fanfiction exists in a regimented letter form, but, because the text is housed on the Internet, it is also, paradoxically ephemeral. The fic could disappear or be removed at any moment. Fanfiction language also can be subversive and transgressive because it is not censored. Writers can say what they mean rather then dance linguistically around the subject as writers of a TV series often must do.

[12] The subversive and transgressive constructions of canonical and non-canonical Buffyspeak are similar to those of Early Modern English; some are reminiscent of Old English or Middle English. Early Modern English was still in a state of flux and did not have a conventional grammar *per se* (Baugh and Cable 2002, 250). Of course, English in any period operates according to structural rules, but the sense that some English is better than the rest is more or less a Modern attitude. In Early Modern English, there was little grammatical correctness, little consistency of spelling, and new words were constantly being introduced from other languages, which increased the fluidity and hybridity of the language. Today, youthful exuberance and ready changeability of language have been relegated to slang and sub-culture languages.

[13] Slang and sub-culture languages have a bad reputation, because they bend generally accepted English. Slang and sub-culture languages express alienation, but really they are more about self-identification. By contrast, jargon is alienating because it belongs to those of a particular profession or craft. Many times with spoken slang or sub-culture language, and particularly with the written language of *Buffy* fanfic, meaning is a matter of subtext. When the subtext is overlooked, the text loses the potency of its meaning, and when the reader attends to frequency of forms rather than fluency in the style, misunderstandings occur.

[14] Michael Adams, author of *Slayer Slang,* often notes that frequent exposure to a subculture's language does not necessarily result in fluency; in fact, he urges that view onto potential students of slayer slang. Yet even a careful student of sub-cultural language like Adams can misapprehend intentions behind what insiders say and write. For example, Adams seems to misunderstand the context and subtext of the sub-culture language of *Buffy* in his treatment of the terms *overshare* and *overthink*. Adams (2003) writes of *overthink* that "I suppose that one can think too much or too often about a particular subject at a particular time, yet I am unconvinced that *overthinking* is possible in general, rather, I suspect that the word reflects a frequent adolescent concern, sometimes recovered by adults, an unwillingness to think as hard as certain situations in life demand or deserve" (32).

[15] Based upon the prefix construction of *overthink* and *overshare*, *over-* is defined as "1: so as to exceed or surpass <*over*achieve> 2: EXCESSIVE <*over*stimulation> 3: to an excessive degree <*over*thin>" (*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* 2005), so *overthink* means exactly what it sounds like. Adams's comment shows how someone from outside a subculture may interpret the subculture's style without fully grasping subtleties of meaning apparent to an insider. Within the subculture, *overthink* means pretty much the opposite of what Adams proposes: one can think about a topic for so long and so hard that the thought lacks clarity, thinking breaks down completely, and any actual meaning becomes lost, or even interferes with the thinker's functionality. Adams (2003) explains *overshare* along the same lines as *overthink* and suggests that it "compactly and neutrally expresses the act of being stingy (with things or information, etc.)" (32), but it simply means that one person gives too much information (TMI in the colloquial) to another. Adams defines *overshare* lexically as "Share generously or in excess," but stylistically he evaluates it from an outsider's perspective (203).

[16] The example of *overshare* cited in *Slayer Slang* is from "Halloween" (2006), in which Buffy says of Angel, "If you haven't noticed, he's not exactly one to overshare." Buffy says this with a self-deprecating irony about Angel's inability to share anything with her, let alone potentially *overshare* (or give Buffy too much information), and none of this is lost to the general audience. The context lends itself to Adams's suggestions of stinginess, yet *overshare* still retains its TMI meaning. *Overshare* and *overthink* are not idiolectic: they are straightforward prefixations used frequently among gen-X-ers and younger generations; within those generations, they have taken on connotations beyond dictionary definitions and speakers outside the subculture, but generally agreed upon within it.

[17] Adams's criticism of each of these terms depends on a single citation. In the case of *overthinking*, he refers only to Lisa Loeb's song "I Do," and, in the case of *overshare*, he refers only to the line from "Halloween" (2006), a single instance spoken by the one and only Slayer, regarding a single undead person. Adams defines as though the meaning in each case were idiolectal, when he should understand them as sociolectal for a particular sub-cultural group of speakers. Without a broader array of citational evidence from within the appropriate sub-cultures, Adams, like many outside of them, finds it difficult to

identify subcultural meaning.

[18] In spite of the occasional misunderstanding, Adams compiles an admirable lexicon of the slang used in the Buffyverse. He subdivides his discussion of Buffyspeak into sections about slayer jargon, slayer slang, slayer style, and about modes of word formation, such as prefixing, suffixing, and functional shifting from one part of speech to another. Many slayer slang items, such as *Angel-angsty*, *chocolate vampire crispies*, and *Mr. I Freeload Off Everyone* are nicknames for people, places, products, emotions, etc. These not-quite-nicknames or, as I refer to them in honor of Michael Adams, Slayer Pseudonyms, encapsulate complex concepts in a minimum of space.

[19] Slayer jargon includes the professional terms of a vampire slayer, or other pursuits specific to the Buffyverse, like *stake*, *dust*, *Bronze*, and *Hellmouth*. Many of these slayer-specific words move from jargon to actual slang. The most interesting example of this is the word *Hellmouth*. Although *Hellmouth* is a very specific place name or word for a type of place in the Buffyverse (see, for example, "The Wish," 3009 and "Chosen," 7022), the noun *Hellmouth* becomes the adjective *hellmouthy* (Mad Poetess *Chocolaty Goodness* and James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Small Fry*) in *Buffy* fanfiction. Actually, *hellmouthy* appeared in fanfiction several years before it appeared in Season Seven of *Buffy*. Whether fanfiction use of *hellmouthy* prompted the term's later appearance in the series is unclear.

[20] Although slang is generally thought of as singular words in a sub-cultural lexicon, much *Buffy*-inspired slang in fanfiction is more in line with Adams's idea of slayer style. Slayer style is created by compounding, suffixing and prefixing, and functional shifting, certainly, but also by combination of these traditional word-formative practices with pop cultural references and promotion of parallel constructions. For instance, the Xanderism *chocolatey goodness* ("Nightmares," 1010) is later echoed in Season Seven's *contracty goodness* ("Lessons," 7001), but also in fanfictional contexts, as in *cocoa goodness* (*Chocolate Hurricane*); *Peter Paul goodness*, *doughnutty goodness*, *calorie-laden goodness*, *dirty goodness*, and *fannish goodness* (*Chocolaty Goodness*); *frozen goodness* and *blueberry-banana goodness* (*Domestic Piranha*); and *malty goodness* (*Skelping*). Many forms created in fanfiction that depend on slayer style are difficult to categorize, since many cross word-formative categories. Some are long, self-explaining compounds yet blends at the same time. Others are explicit popular culture references but are also compounded statements borrowed (at least in part or pattern) from *Buffy*. In this blurring of categories, fanfiction invigorates slayer style but only because it owes its stylistic opportunities to *Buffy*.

[21] Richard W. Bailey (2004) points out in his review of *Slayer Slang* that some techniques of slang formation are rarely used within the canonical Buffyverse like, for instance, acronyms (like *MASH*), noun-noun or verb-verb compounds (such as *warp-speed* or *slam dunk*), infixing (as *The Simpsons*' Ned Flanders's *mur-diddly-urderer*), and distinctive exclamations (for instance, Homer Simpson's *doh!*) (96). Bailey's assessment is not exactly accurate, but words from *Buffy*'s Season Seven were not included in *Slayer Slang*; and Adams (2005) admits that he overlooked a few earlier infixings and syntactic interposings. A noteworthy example of such omissions is Buffy's *muhuh*? ("Lessons," 7001) response to the job offered by Principal Wood in Season Seven. Although some constructions for which Bailey checked are not frequent within the canonical Buffyverse, they do thrive in fanfiction: you'll find noun-noun and/or verb-verb constructions like *Sally Jessy questions* and *hell-vibes*, infixings like *box of pop—well, store-brand Frozen Fruit Pops, but they tasted the same, and more importantly were just as cold—sicles*, and distinctive exclamations like *blurble*. The distinctive exclamations are omnipresent in facial expressions, the astonishing variety of Spike pouts, Cordelia glares, Gilesy quirks, Buffy Frenchisms, patented Willow babble, and Xander-speak.

[22] Abbreviations, such as initialisms, clippings, blends, and factitious forms, the origins of which can be traced back to the 1830s (Crystal 1996, 120), are all formed in slayer slang, but the most frequent in Buffyverse fanfiction are blends. A prime example is *Count Bloodula*, which is a blend of *Count Chocula*, the trademarked name of brand of sugary cereal that, ironically, has a cartoon vampire on the box; another is *Scoobyriffic*, which blends *Scooby* and *terrific*. *Scooby*, aside from being a cultural reference to the cartoon *Scooby Doo*, is also the term by which Xander, Willow, and whoever else has joined Buffy in defending the world from the evil-of-the-week each refers to him or herself; it derives

from *Scooby Gang*, which refers to Buffy's colleagues collectively. Besides *Scooby*, there are an extraordinary number of constructions formed on *Scooby Gang* in canonical slayer slang, such as *Scoobies*, *Scoobs*, *Scoobycentric*, *Scoobyganger*, and *Scooby-sense* (also indebted to *slayer sense*; see Adams 2003, 208-212 and 237).

[23] Some fanfiction forms ultimately from *Scooby Gang* are extravagant compounds, clippings, clipped compounds, or pop-cultural blends, such as *of the Scoob*, *Scoobathon*, *late-night Scooby sessions*, *Scooby-related*, *Scooby Snack* (which directly parodies the Scooby Snacks fed to Scooby in the cartoon series *Scooby Doo* and which, in the fic, are made from Count Chocula cereal), *gone all Scooby*, *Scooby togetherness*, *Scooby peer facilitator*, *extended Scooby family*, *emergency of the Scooby variety*, *Scooby Jeopardy*, *Scooby Maturity Squad*, *Scooby-boy* (meaning Xander) (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*); *Scooby looks* (Cicircisso, *Chocolate Hurricane*); *Scooby meeting* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Small Fry*); *Scooby habits* and *Slayer Scoob* (James Walkswithwind and Wolfling, *Sands of Time*).

[24] Popular culture references inundate *Buffy*, from Spike's comment before the Scoobies go into battle to square off with Glory in "The Gift" (5022), "We band of buggered," which is obviously a take on King Henry's pre-battle speech in Shakespeare's *Henry V* (4.3.60) and is quoted in *Renaissance Man*, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers," to Buffy's quip in response to Xander's dismal attempt at a Yoda-like pep-talk in "The Freshman" (4001), "Thanks for the Dadaist pep talk. I feel much more abstract," a reference to the Dadaist movement of the early twentieth century which, by its abstraction, criticized contemporary culture. The presence of an overt Dadist reference within *Buffy* is rather ironic since much of the subtext in the Buffyverse either criticizes or questions the culture that gave it birth. In fanfiction, pop-cultural reference is both more prevalent and more obscure than in the canonical Buffyverse, and it is not always deferential to its source.

[25] Fanfiction writers exploit the obscurity of popular culture references. Lexical items they create reflect the diversity of writers and their interests, but the writers disseminate their work over the Internet, where they will find readers reader sure to understand even their most obscure creations, as the following list illustrates:

Powerpuff Princess' Pad (a blend of *Pony Puff Princess* from *Dexter's Laboratory* and *Powerpuff Girls*) and *Angel and his Zoobilee Zoo* (a reference to a mid to late '80s children's show that becomes a slayer pseudonym) (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Pirahna*);

evil-dead stare (referring to Sam Raimi's *Evil Dead* movies) (Cicirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*);

Or should he be checking the empties, to see if they were really full of undead amber joy? (referring to the cartoon *The Last Unicorn*, in which a literally, and celluloidly, animated skeleton gets drunk off of the memory, the ghost, of wine [Mad Poetess, *Skelping*], a reference even more oblique than at first appears, since *skelping* refers to the ghost movie *High Spirits*, 1988, starring Darryl Hanna, Peter O'Toole, Liam Neeson, and Steve Guttenburg);

Ives St. Laurent of Sunnydale (referring to the fashion and beauty maven Yves St. Laurent, Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*);

Hair Dyers Anonymous (reminiscent of *Alcoholics Anonymous*); and *Come out of the follicle closet* (referring to non-heterosexuals "coming out of the closet") (Mad Poetess, *Dyeing Young*);

Like Daniel Boone said, he was just bewildered; *ask the Sally Jessy questions*; *anime eyes* (a reference to the popularity of anime and the way the characters seem to all possess very large, very round, guilt-inducing eyes); and *unrealistic grassy knoll* (referring to the assassination of JFK) (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Piranha*);

How could the rest of his body be subzero when his face was Mr. Heat Miser? (referring to the character Mr. Heat Miser [Mr. Green Christmas] in the Rankin Bass claymation, *The Year Without Santa Claus*); *The movement set off a chain reaction of tremors that would make Acme Earthquake pills proud* (recalling the Warner Brothers cartoons, in which Acme is god of the product market); and *with an Eliza Doolittle squeal* (referring to the musical *My Fair Lady*, based on George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*) (Cicirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*);

lack of white light at the end of a long tunnel and other new-age bollocks notwithstanding (referring to the supposed light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel), *a veritable E. M. Forster on the subject of pining* (referring to a twentieth century novelist who wrote *A Room with a View*), and *the Matt Damon of Bracken Demons or not* (Mad Poetess, *Skelping*);

Creature of the Night and all (referring, not only to *Dracula* and all the subsequent movies based on Bram Stoker's book, but also to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*), *Peter Paul goodness* (referring to the company that made Almond Joy and Mounds bars), *that wasn't meant to be a Chandler Bing moment* (referring to a character on *Friends*), and *if you want to play Tom Bodette to Chip-boy* (referring to the author and radio personality from *All Things Considered* who was the narrator for the recent Motel 6 commercials) (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*).

[26] Compounding, especially self-explanatory compounding, whether long or short, is rampant in slayer style. Compounding in *Buffy*, but especially in *Buffy* fanfiction, results in phrases from short to very, very long. Examples from the canonical Buffyverse include *Cave Slayer*, *Net Girl*, *Prophecy Girl*, *Edge Girl*, *Destructo Girl*, *Disco Dave*, *Exorcist twist*, *Hacker Girl*, and *inner Slayer* (Adams 2003, 82-83), all of them short, most of them noun plus noun. In fanfiction, however, proper name compounds mix freely with long explanatory compounds, and the result epitomizes slayer fanfiction style, as in the following:

come out all "swoony-gothic heroine", *cocoa-gods*, *Not To Think Of It box*, *sanity-giving-milk-chocolate-happiness*, *Discovery-channel-voice*, *looked all action-woman again*, *And it made sense in a twisted "ever since the chocolate came in the mail" kind of way*, *the "possessive vampire" growl*, and *have a babbling-question-answer-hug-fest, okay?* (Circirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*);

a bigger-meaner-sadder-woefuller-pout; *Angel and his crew-staff-gang-sewing-circle*; and *the familiar thunderous "I am going to slay you and your little dog Toto, too" expression* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Pirahna*);

all one big-concussion-induced-dream (Jessamyn, 2001, *All Dressed Up in Big Sister's Clothes*);

khaki Dockers-wanna-be uniform pants, a *"who do you think you're fooling?"* look, *wiggins-inducing* (versus *dream-induced wiggins* [Adams 2003, 280]), and *Uncle Rory's repaired-for-the-moment car* (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*);

box of pop—well, store-brand-Frozen-Fruit-Pops-but-they-tasted-the-same-and-more-importantly-were-just-as-cold—sicles; *Spike-logic*; *the same mind-numbing, kill-me-now-and-let-me-go-to-hell-where-it's-cool heat*; *boyfriend-slaying-implements-of-death*; *like some big "Here, find your hopeless, pathetic vampire here' spotlight*; *"can't let it touch the ground or it might get contaminated" kind of hop*; *with a "Come on, argue with me, I'm actually telling the truth for once" challenge*; *Filing that one—again—under Things We Do Not Talk About*; *giving him the "you're the insane one, no matter what anybody says" look*; *Spike's chip-allowed-parameters*; *Mr. I Freeload Off Everyone* (reminiscent of *Mr. I-Loved*-The English Patient (see Adams 2003, 198); and *Angel-I-have-friends-in-the-police-department-this-week-Investigations* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Piranha*);

plain old dump-it-over-your-head peroxide, *Five-foot-and-not-much-more of Chosen One*, *weirdness-meter*, and *the mousse-master* (Mad Poetess, *Dyeing Young*);

ever-flowing-beer-keg, *slept the exhausted sleep of the too-knowing-to-be-innocent*, and *Angel-angsty* (Mad Poetess, *Skelping*);

it's a "he doth protest too much" approach and *Only without the whole principal-making-it-bad sorta thing* (Kirasmommy, *The Key of the Dragon Witch*); and

parking-gods (James Walkswithwind and Wolfling, *Sands of Time*).

[27] Compounds are combinations of words that inevitably extend meanings of those combinations, yet nothing can compact subcultural meaning like a compound. *Angel-angsty* is a compound of *Angel* and *angsty*, a noun and adjective compound, which signals complication from the outset. In fanfiction, the suffix *–y* is usually an intensifier, and *angsty* is a common colloquialism within the fanfiction subculture. *Angel-angsty* occurs in Mad Poetess's *Skelping*, as follows:

> … he wanted that now, and he wanted to *touch*, and that was all that was really bothering him. Odd. He wasn't sad, or really frightened, or depressed, or Angel-angsty. He was hanging about, getting to know another sort of crowd, and waiting, waiting for whatever he was here for to reveal itself to him.

Angel-angsty expresses concepts well known in the *Buffy* subculture, that Angel cannot have a moment of true happiness without losing his soul and that he lives with guilt that constantly recalls the horrid things he did when he was Angelus. This little compound compresses seven seasons of *Buffy* and five seasons of *Angel*, all of the pain, torment, guilt, and regret of all of those seasons of both of those shows in one compact package.
[28] Another compound that captures complex sub-cultural understanding is *Spike's chip-allowed-parameters*. This type of compound depends heavily on conventions within the fanfiction subculture. Spike, a once soulless demon, was caught by the Initiative. The Initiative put a computer chip it had created in Spike's head so that he would no longer be able to bite, feed from, or harm humans. In much of the fanfiction, Spike is involved in

relationships with various and sundry Scoobies much as he is involved with Buffy during the last two seasons of *Buffy*. The only difference is that, whereas in Season Seven, Spike's chip malfunctions and is removed after he is ensouled, Spike is generally unensouled with an operational chip. Willow and Spike find ways to ensure that the chip causes a limited amount of pain for pleasure.

[29] This type of motif within fanfiction is referred to as "hurt/comfort": one partner cares for a suffering partner. This does not automatically imply a "slash" relationship (that is, a relationship between unorthodox partners, such as Kirk/Spock), though the item depends on slash conventions. The term also embeds a "get" convention in which the hero suffers yet receives no comfort. A version of the hurt/comfort motif within fanfiction, psychological torment, is a recent occurrence and may have direct connections with *Buffy*: character turmoil and insecurity can be addressed more completely than a series can accommodate, and psychological turmoil comes out (no pun intended) in queer readings of the series, particularly in *Buffy* slash fiction. The most common form of this specific type of slash fiction is the love/hate relationship based upon improbable but plausible pairings of Buffy and Angel, and on other oppositional relationships (Saxey 2001, 199-202). These phrases are so multi-layered that it is hard to explain all of the different implications. A few examples that illustrate such slash include:

Daddy's socially correct princess (Mad Poetess, *Skelping*);

Spike-logic, *non-Gilesy*, *the mousse-master*, and *Watcherish* (Mad Poetess, *Dyeing Young*);

personal ad in the school newspaper gayness; *Anne Rice family togetherness thing*; *Grown Up Ripper*; *manlike, even*; and *Prozac for the poor* (Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness*);

his Poofiness and *fake-cheese* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Domestic Piranha*);

hell-vibes (Jessamyn, *All Dressed Up in Big Sister's Clothes*);

the Giles (Boxerman, *Pirates of the Hellmouth*); and

un-Xanderlike, *witched*, and *the mosquito* (Cicirossi, *Chocolate Hurricane*).

[30] As was mentioned before, many of the constructions discussed in this article overlap into one another; some words and phrases that carry fanfiction style combine several word-formative processes in a single form. The multi-use items of fanfiction multi-textually intensify terms from the canonical Buffyverse. As Adams (2003) illustrates in *Slayer Slang*, and as Mark Peters continues to illustrate in this issue of *Slayage*, the series and the other canonical works, by means of lexical diffusion and appropriation, have projected potentially disposable nonce words unique to the Buffyverse into broader literary contexts and linguistic communities. Fanfiction extends their use and development into sub-cultures otherwise unrelated to *Buffy*, including *Firefly*, *Stargate SG1*, *Stargate Atlantis*, *Harry Potter*, *Andromeda*, *Sentinal*, and *The West Wing* fanverses, to name a few. There even seems to be some influence into the areas of anime and manga fanfiction. The influence is sometimes lexical—that is, a word is borrowed or adapted from slayer slang, for instance *mathy* (see below; cf. Adams 2003, 196)—but usually it is structural, as word and phrase formative patterns typical of slayer slang are introduced in

new contexts, for new stylistic purposes.
[31] Examples of this cross-pollenization include the following:
from *Andromeda* fanfiction

Holo-Rommie (maryavatar, *Beer and Sympathy*);

Mr. Hot Shot (Harper's, *Choices Given, Choices Taken*);

adrenaline-sharpened sweat (maryavatar, *Hunting Harper*);

Will-to-Power aphorisms; *Miss Gold-and-Shiny*; *making-friends-'n-influencing-people department*; *making-foes-'n-extinguishing-people schtick*; *"give Harper a bell and treat him like a leper" bit*; *the full one hour "who-the-hell-does-he-think-he-is-Captain-Rebecca-Valentine-is-way-too-good-for-him-thank-god-I-didn't-notch-up-yet-another-loser-boyfriend-my-taste-in-men-really-sucks' rant"*; and

patented Harper Outraged Squeak (tosca's kiss, *Hypothermia*);

from *Stargate: Atlantis* fanfiction

ancient underwater Hoovers; *the director's cut of Wes Craven's* The Little Mermaid; *little crystal-wire-pen-thingy*; *The Secret Life of Sushi*; and

> *not post-coital tickling-level annoyed* (Merry, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea (give or take)*);

mathy; Buffy *part of my brain*; and *new and improved teddy bear Rodney, complete with kung fu grip* (Amireal, *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*);

the anti-kryptonite; *big porny slide show complete with prime numbers*; *with the sort of horror the new Skeptical Inquirer usually inspires*; *Something is rotten in the state of Atlantis*; *starting to put irrational number and irrational number together and coming up with the square root of five*; and *he imagines a neon sign above them that flashes "big gay Lieutenant Colonel here!"* (Amireal, *Chaos Theory*);

We're not in Flowers for Algernon; and *"gone through the McKay-related stages of irritation followed by loathing and hit the unwilling respect, and they took it as the compliment he meant it to be* (shallot, *Proof by Contradiction*).

from *Firefly* fanfiction

Simple Simon, shattered Simon … (Rebecca, *The Glue Series*); *and a ghost in the wings,*

keeping track of scenes I'm not in (Nicole Clevenger, *A Butterfly Pinned*), which seems to be a direct reference to the *Angel* episode, "Waiting in the Wings" (3013), where Summer Glau plays a time-loop trapped ballerina;

from Harry Potter fanfiction

non-Apparating relatives; *It was the fact that she was equally cheerful when informing him of the daily impending catastrophe. Or possibly Impending Catastrophe. It happened so often that it deserved an official title*; *Everybody to the dinner table on the gallop, trouble*; *Ron looked at his extended hand as if it were a haddock, or perhaps a shrieking eel...*; *grovelly*; and *It didn't help that her braids—long, black, leather-wrapped, "I am the dominatrix who ate your mother for breakfast" cornrows—were gathered at the ends with yellow children's duck barrettes* (James Walkswithwind and Mad Poetess, *Price of Wisdom*);

from *The Sentinel* fanfiction

James—my, is that your night-stick or are you just pleased to see me?–Ellison; *Capt. Simon—I own your ass Sandburg so shut up and follow orders—Banks*; *Kermit the Twit*; *Kermie the Love Newt*; *the original model for the Elbeews—Weebles, only the version where they fall down but don't get up again*; *Oh God. Thursday. I could never get the hang of them*; *Kermit—the Bog of Eternal Stench—Holt*; and *If he is an example of the elder statesmen of homicide, then bring back Columbo* (Dangermouse, *End of Term Report*);

From *Stargate: SG-1*

I know these things. I have a sixth sense. I see dead relationships; *Dust to dust. Ashes to ashes. Copies to copies*; *I found myself craving a smoke for the first time in almost thirty years*; *Xerox and original time combined that is*; and *suffering from some residual effects of savetheworlditis* (Danvers, *Bring in the Clones*);

his little-archaeologist-lost, *sex-in-waiting substitute*, and *0-Goddamn Livid in Sixty Seconds flat* (Anais, *Daniel's Journal*);

dumbfounded land; *with the kind of voice you use on children and mental patients*; *Only question left was whether it was General Hammond or himself who'd been "podded"*; *He sighed his patented, "I'm such a jerk" sigh*; and *bookboy* (Sideburns, *A Lifetime*);

From *The West Wing* fanfiction

yankee jackass self (Cat, *Josh Lyman Best Friend Files*);

and the look on her face says "if you hurt Josh I will destroy you" and *happy-Toby* (Sophia, *500 Dollars*); and

It does have a distinctive Randy Spears/Savannah kind of feel to it (Sophia, *3 Hour Tour*).

[32] Of course, these are just a few isolated examples, but they demonstrate something of the variety of fanfiction "universes" and their intertextuality. Together, these universes contribute to the (admittedly) loose parameters of fanfiction style, the results of which are patterned and somewhat predictable, though expressive, too, of each author's stylistic objectives. Whether the allusions to Buffyspeak in other ficverses are coincidental or are connected to fan cross-interests is often difficult to assess. Some of the writers quoted in this article have written *Buffy* fanfiction, and stylistic similarities in their fics from universe to universe may originate in Buffyspeak. Others among the writers have no clear connection to *Buffy*: they contribute to fanfiction style by appropriating marginal tendencies of American speech and emphasizing them as central to the discourse of fanfiction. While patterns of discourse hold across fanverses, many of the examples in the previous paragraph, compared to those presented earlier in the article, demonstrate the increasingly tenuous connection of fanfic language and slayer slang—fanfiction has subsumed slayer slang as one influence among many on a sub-cultural discourse with its own identifiable character.

[33] Though sub-cultural, fanfiction is one among many universes of discourse affiliated with Buffyspeak, a few items and patterns of which may, given the unexpected reach of its influence, someday enter mainstream English, perhaps even (a long time from now) Standard English. Though the medium is constantly in flux, and thus unremittingly inventive, fanfiction also draws on familiar, mainstream patterns as it negotiates the limits of its own style. This stylistic hybridity allows sub-cultural outsiders to attain the edginess associated with outsider status, without entirely (or even mostly) leaving the comfort-zone of the mainstream. The story is not new; outsider sub-cultures are continually appropriated by the mainstream in media that cross boundaries between the two. Consider the development of punk into corporate punk and emo, metal into hair metal and cheese metal, and goth sub-culture on sale at your local mall. In a commercial culture, such appropriation is unavoidable, because markets play on the antagonism between margin and mainstream.

[34] Fanfiction represents the outsideness of sub-culture, and its language the outsideness of sub-cultural style. Slayer slang depends on its role as one element of fanfiction style for its participation in language beyond the Buffyverse, though, of course, fanfiction is only one medium of dissemination. But looking at fanfiction style reminds us that, in order to gain general currency, a sub-culture's language must get outside of itself. Inside the Buffyverse, slayer slang is one thing; at large in the world, in fanfiction or any other site of hybrid style, it's something else.

Notes

1. Quoted from Mad Poetess, *Chocolaty Goodness* (2001).

2. I write under the pseudonyms squid and trie_squid in the *Stargate: Atlantis* mythos, and my fics are archived at Wraithbait (www.wraithbait.com).

3. Among these, Saxey (2001), Overbey and Preston-Matto (2002), Busse (2002), Larbalestier (2002), and Zweerink and Gatson (2002), are most prominent, but Jowett (2005), Wilcox (2005), and Williamson (2005) also comment on fans and fanfiction, *passim*.

4. Online archives include the multimedia *fanfiction*.net (www.fanfiction.net), which includes books, music video games, etc, as well as television series); the visual media

archive, *The Wonderful World of Makebelieve* (www.squidge.org/~peja/cgi-bin/index.php); the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* archive, *The Slayer's Fanfic Archive* (slayerfanfic.com/); the *Stargate: SG-1* and *Stargate: Atlantis* archive, *Area 52: The HKH Standard* (www.area52hkh.net); the *Stargate: Atlantis* archive, *Wraithbait* (www.wraithbait.com); the *Firefly* recommendation archive, *The Cortex* (fireflyrecs.diaryland.com); the *West Wing* archive, *The National Library* (library.westwingstories.com/index-02.shtml), and the Harry Potter archives, Ink Stained Fingers (inkstain.inkquill.net) and Fiction Alley (fictionalley.org).

5. Rachel Shave (2004) makes a compelling argument that the subversive nature of slash in conjunction with the permanent-impermanence of the Internet creates a modern site for Bakhtinian carnivalesque resistence.

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*These sites did not have published dates or update dates. The date written was when I collected my information from them.

**Although these sites had update dates (excluding *Sands of Times*), these stories, in their current forms, have existed for several years (at least since Season Four of *Buffy*).