

## ABSTRACT

SHEPHERD, DAWN RENEE. Marketing Subjectivity: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and Construction of the Problematic Female Television Audience. (Under the direction of Carolyn R. Miller.)

Though some work has been done on the relationship between the series and its audience, most notably Tjardes's examination of the audience's constructions of Faith the Vampire Slayer, little has been written about the ways in which power relationships within the series contribute to the discursive construction of the audience, specifically the female audience. In order to examine power relationships within the series and their impact on the discursive construction of the female audience, I use the fields of rhetoric and critical discourse analysis to frame my discussion. Initially in Chapter 2, I present an overview of major critical perspectives on audience, specifically delineating the essentialist and socially constructed conceptions of audience. Synthesizing scholarship on the construction of audience and tools from critical discourse analysis, I outline three principles for examining the construction of the television audience. Next in Chapter 3, I discuss levels of social organization and the subject positions available in *Buffy*, examining specific character interactions, paying particular attention to the ways in which power relationships develop within and through the interactions. Then in Chapter 4, I consider the impact of the cultural context and the text's medium on the series. Finally in Chapter 5, I expose the problematic nature of constructing the female television audience, revisit *Buffy* and how the series interacts with dominant ideologies, offer potential for multiple audiences, and propose avenues meriting further exploration.

**MARKETING SUBJECTIVITY: *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER* AND  
CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROBLEMATIC FEMALE TELEVISION AUDIENCE**

by  
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Chair of Advisory Committee

**DEDICATION**

For Donald and Amey Shepherd and Lance Shull, who have toiled so that I  
may grow.

**BIOGRAPHY**

Dawn Shepherd earned her Bachelor of Arts in English education with a minor in dramatic arts from the University of North Carolina. Her research interests include the construction of audiences and subjectivity, the relationship between language and power, and the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. She is a native of Gibsonville, North Carolina, who now resides in Raleigh.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* premiered on the WB Television Network on March 17, 1997. As one of the fledgling network's first and longest-running series, *Buffy* helped to ensure its success. It began as a mid-season Monday night replacement and went on to anchor the WB's "New Tuesday" line-up. The series built a loyal following during that first half-season and increased its ratings by 54 percent in season two (Jacobs 20). The original movie upon which the television series is loosely based was the product of writer Joss Whedon's desire "'to see a movie in which a blond wanders into a dark alley, takes care of herself and deploys her power'" (Bellafante 83), and the television series turned out to be all that the campy, poorly reviewed movie had not been. Turning the female victim into the victor would seemingly fulfill the promise of feminism. Though the consensus of television critics was that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was a smart and entertaining series, opinions on its feminist potential were not as unanimous.

### An Introduction to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

*Buffy* chronicles the adventures of Buffy Summers, a young Southern Californian who is called to fight evil. As "The Chosen One," Buffy fulfills her destiny by slaying vampires and demons in Sunnydale, the seemingly normal small town that just happens to be situated on a hellmouth, or gateway to hell. Buffy lives with her mother Joyce, single parent and gallery owner; she is assisted in her struggle with evil by a small group of allies. The primary members of her alliance are Rupert Giles (Giles), Willow Rosenberg (Willow), and Alexander Harris (Xander). Giles serves as Buffy's watcher, an emissary of the Watcher's

Council who is responsible for the slayer's development. He works covertly as the Sunnydale High School librarian. Though he loses his position as a watcher during the third season, he continues to serve as Buffy's coach and father figure in the absence of her own. Willow and Xander are Buffy's best friends. She is a brilliant student and computer wiz who has begun to explore magic; he is a self-deprecating and endearing class clown. Along with Oz and Cordelia, they make up The Scooby Gang, named for the characters from *Scooby Doo*, the cartoon in which a group of teenagers and their dog travel around in a van solving mysteries.

The two other primary characters in the third season are Angel and Faith. Angel is Buffy's boyfriend, a vampire with a soul. After he killed a young gypsy girl, her family cursed the vampire Angelus, reinstating his soul and forcing him to live with guilt for his murderous deeds. If Angel, the ensouled vampire, enjoys one moment of true happiness, he will lose his soul and once again become the evil Angelus. After Buffy loses her virginity to Angel in season two just that happens, and the remainder of the season's story arc sees Angelus tormenting her and her friends. In the final episode, Angelus must either be re-ensouled or killed in order to save the world. Just as Buffy prepares to kill Angelus, a spell restores his soul. It is too late to take any chances, however; Buffy kills Angel and he is sucked into hell, only to reappear early in season three. The pressure becomes too great for Buffy, and she runs away from home. In fact, she does not return to Sunnydale until the second episode of the third season. In the very next episode, Faith the Vampire Slayer joins the team.

At this point, a brief explanation of the legend of the slayer is needed. As stated earlier, there is a Chosen One who serves as the vampire slayer. At a slayer's death, a new slayer is called. The Master, a powerful vampire, drowns Buffy during the first season's finale. Though Xander is able to resuscitate her, a subsequent slayer, Kendra, has already been called. Kendra comes to Sunnydale in season two to assist Buffy, but she is killed by vampires. Upon Kendra's death, Faith is called. Faith is highly sexualized and aggressive, the antithesis of Buffy. During one of her and Buffy's fights with a group of vampires, she mistakenly kills Sunnydale's deputy mayor; she eventually joins forces with the third season's villain, Mayor Wilkins (The Mayor).

*Buffy* functions under an extended metaphor of high school as hell, and many of the themes across its seven seasons deal with the difficulties of growing up, especially growing up girl. For example, when Angel changes for the worse after he and Buffy have sex, that particular adolescent nightmare/cautionary tale is undercut by the fact that he literally becomes evil. By integrating the supernatural with a look at what it means to be a girl, the series is able to deal gingerly with issues of gender.

### **Reviews and Criticism**

Not surprisingly, early popular press coverage of the series focused on its attractive star, Sarah Michelle Gellar. As the series gained momentum, however, attention refocused on the show's content and the action-adventure heroine played by Gellar. Most accounts labeled the series as some variety of modified feminism. Some compared *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to Fox's *Ally McBeal*—a series that consistently garnered higher ratings head-to-head

during *Buffy*'s first season—calling it "anti-*Ally* feminism—confident, smart, and focused" (Rogers 60). Others labeled it as "feminism that embraces the pragmatic idea that women can be smart and successful and still care about shoes, Vogue, and, of course, the charms of the opposite sex" (Bellafante 82). As one writer describes it, "*Buffy* finds a balance, a middle ground that may be lonely but is undeniably empowering. Femininity—girlness—is a slippery slope, and at least *Buffy* honors our intelligence enough to allow us these contradictions and even occasionally pokes fun at them" (Fudge 3).

It is exactly this contradictory nature that eventually attracted the attention of scholars from disciplines as diverse as philosophy, linguistics, and literary and cultural studies. It is not unexpected, then, that much of the academic and cultural criticism has focused on the show's treatment of gender issues, including female containment (Helford), sexuality (Hibbs; Mendlesohn), motherhood (Williams), and the intersection of gender with race and class (Edwards; Money; Ono). Critical examination of the show's feminist *potential* appears to be the most extensive. Some scholarship recognizes a distinctly feminist tone within the series. For example, one essay pinpoints an inversion of the male gaze as discussed by Laura Mulvey, marking *Buffy* as "a popular icon" that "represents female empowerment" (Daugherty 164). Another notes that *Buffy*'s strength and sexual attractiveness subvert traditional constructions of feminine identity as linked to a woman's vulnerability (Marinucci). And yet another discussion, dedicated to feminist ethics in the series, remarks on *Buffy*'s "strength and goodness" (Miller 48).

Other scholarly work locates much more complexity in the feminist potential of the series, presenting a "denial of the simple dualism" (Wilcox 16) between feminism and antifeminism. As Pender's extensive review of feminist criticism of the show concludes, "Instead of considering *Buffy* as a political blueprint for either feminist transgression or patriarchal containment, we might more usefully identify *Buffy* as a site of intense cultural negotiation in which competing definitions of the central terms in the debate—revolution/apocalypse, feminist/misogynist, transgression and containment—can be tested and refined" (43). The idea of "cultural negotiation" informs this thesis and its examination of *Buffy* and its audience. Though some work has been done on the relationship between the series and its audience, most notably Tjardes's examination of the audience's constructions of Faith the Vampire Slayer, little has been written about the ways in which power relationships within the series contribute to the discursive construction of the audience, specifically the female audience.

In order to examine power relationships within the series and their impact on the discursive construction of the female audience, I use the fields of rhetoric and critical discourse analysis to frame my discussion. Combining these two disciplines offers a unique way of examining the relationship between language use and the manifestation of power. Initially in Chapter 2, I present an overview of major critical perspectives on audience, specifically delineating the essentialist and socially constructed conceptions of audience. Synthesizing scholarship on the construction of audience and tools from critical discourse analysis, I outline three principles for examining the construction of the television audience.

Next in Chapter 3, I discuss levels of social organization and the subject positions available in *Buffy*, examining specific character interactions, paying particular attention to the ways in which power relationships develop within and through the interactions. Then in Chapter 4, I consider the impact of the cultural context and the text's medium on the series. Finally in Chapter 5, I expose the problematic nature of constructing the female television audience, revisit *Buffy* and how the series interacts with dominant ideologies, offer potential for multiple audiences, and propose avenues meriting further exploration.

## **CHAPTER 2: EXAMINING CONSTRUCTION OF THE FEMALE TELEVISION AUDIENCE**

### **Critical Perspectives on Production of Audience**

In the closing decades of the twentieth century, scholars in a number of fields began to turn their attention to the study of audience, discussing either a real audience, or an idealized audience, or both. Now work in rhetorical studies has begun to focus on the constitution of rhetorical subjectivity, i.e., the rhetor's creation of a subject position for the audience to occupy (Biesecker; Charland). Such scholarship conceives of subjectivity as a rhetorical happening, socially constructed. As the primary source of news and information for most Americans, television serves as a significant ideological force and contributor to the social construction of rhetorical subjectivity. Given that female viewers spend more time watching television than their male counterparts, whereas just over a third of all prime-time characters are women (Gibbons), the question of television's impact on its female audience is especially intriguing.

The conversation around the concept of the rhetorical situation serves as a microcosm for the evolution of perspectives on audience. In 1968, Lloyd Bitzer's "The Rhetorical Situation" brought audience to the forefront when he identified it, along with exigence and constraints, as one of the primary components of the rhetorical situation. An audience is more than a group of receivers of discourse for Bitzer, it must be available to be influenced by the discourse and able to act for change in response to an exigence – "an imperfection marked by urgency" (8). Richard Vatz disagreed with this characterization, arguing that rhetorical situations are created, not found. In "The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation," Vatz

contends that rhetors choose what is relevant in a situation, creating a presence and then making meaning. The rhetor holds the power and responsibility, for creation, not reflection, of reality (Vatz 158). Though their characterizations of the rhetorical situation differ, Bitzer's and Vatz's treatment of the rhetorical audience is not so dissimilar. It is not until Barbara Biesecker joins the conversation in 1989 that the very notion of audience becomes a formidable and problematic component of the rhetorical situation.

Biesecker uses the Derridean thematic of *différance*, a concept that emphasizes the contradictory and intertextual nature of language, to reexamine the rhetorical situation. She understands Bitzer's view of rhetorical discourse as characterized by the situation that produces it, whereas Vatz's position sees the rhetor, and hence rhetorical discourse, as producing the situation. Under the thematic of *différance*, however, rhetorical discourse does not originate with the speaker or the situation since both are shaped by and reshaping "a series of historically produced displacements" (121). In other words, the rhetorical situation is neither essential nor constructed, but received. Framed in terms of audience, Bitzer lies on one end of the spectrum, conceiving of audience as an actual group of people waiting to be moved to action by the rhetor; Biesecker is on the other, with audience as a "discursive production" of the situation and the rhetor (126). Vatz lies somewhere in the middle, seeing the audience as an idealized group to whom the rhetor directs his discourse.

Traditionally, audience has been thought of as a collection of actual people – citizens serving on a jury, spectators at theatrical performance, readers of a novel, "the public." Depending upon their purposes, contemporary scholars may still rely on this conception of

audience. In his discussion of television criticism and audience, Robert C. Allen refers to a number of studies that conceive of audience in this way. For example, one British study examined the ways in which women's talk of soap operas fit into their work days; another used a video camera to record actual viewing habits that provided the basis for analysis. A subset of researchers in media studies loosely bases its work on the anthropological tradition of ethnography. These participant-observers watch television with their subjects, conduct extensive interviews regarding viewing habits, and develop hypotheses. Conceiving of audience as an actual group of people enables studies that measure and track actual audience response to, and perceptions of, a text, allowing researchers to hypothesize that television violence is a factor in teen aggressive behavior or that derogatory images of marginalized groups contribute to prejudices (Allen).

Such research, though suggestive, does not explain the relationship between the text (e.g., the "text" generated by television and other media) and the audience. In order to address this relationship between a text and its audience, scholars from a number of disciplines (Black; Ede and Lunsford; Ong; Rabinowitz) have reconceived audience, identifying both an actual audience—concrete and powerful—and an idealized audience—a “fictionalized” group created by the writer. The actual audience is outside the text, focusing on the reader as receiver of the text. The fictionalized audience is inside the text, focusing on the self-actualized writer as inventor of both the text and the reader. As imagined by Ede and Lunsford, these two audiences are called "audience addressed" and "audience invoked" (Ede

and Lunsford 156), respectively. It is the interaction of these elements—the writer's imagined and actual receivers—that creates the text.

A layered conception of audience serves as a middle ground between the idea of audience as a concrete group of people and that of audience as a construction of the text, offering a way to begin to examine the power relationships at work within a text. Thinking of audience as layered allows scholars to begin to attend to the ways in which people make meaning from texts. Walter Ong's "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction," for instance, locates a fictionalized audience within the text, offering the example of Hemingway's use of definite articles and demonstrative pronouns to create that audience. For example, in English, when making an initial allusion to an object, we usually first employ the indefinite article, reserving the definite article for subsequent mentions. So, when Hemingway refers to "'a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains'" for the first time in *A Farewell to Arms* (Ong 13), he assumes that the reader knows which river, plain, and mountains. It is as if the reader has taken the journey with the story's protagonist. By including the reader in the protagonist's journey, Hemingway aligns readers with the protagonist, allowing them to see themselves in the story.

Peter Rabinowitz's work categorizes audience somewhat differently, identifying four audience positions—actual, authorial, narrative, and ideal narrative—associated with the narrative text (Rabinowitz). Actual and authorial seem most closely related to the actual (invoked) and fictionalized (implied) audience binary discussed above. Actual audience is, of course, made up of real people who read the text; authorial audience is the author's

imagined audience, the writer's approximation of who will read what has been written.

Narrative audience gets at what kind of audience would be addressed by the text if it speaks to a tangible group of people. Rabinowitz notes that in order to read a novel as it should be read, the reader must join the narrative audience. The relationship between the narrator and the ideal narrative audience is similar to that between the author and the authorial audience. The authorial, narrative, and ideal narrative layers are all projections of the text, but they do not account for the ancillary elements associated with a text—forces beyond the author that also anticipate the audience.

I would suggest that we consider an additional layer, the publisher's audience. Much like authorial, the publisher's audience is the audience—the market segment—the publisher imagines will purchase the book. For example, a book's jacket, its advertisements, and its placement in bookstores all work to create an audience for the book. The audiences imagined by the publisher and the author may differ, leading the text and its marketing to work to produce different groups of readers. This layered conception of audience, both in and outside the text, is especially useful for thinking about texts that support a range of interpretations or a seemingly unreliable narrator.

In addition to throwing light on the world of a text or assisting in untangling complex narrative inconsistencies, a layered conception of audience begins to illuminate the ideological forces at work in a text. Edwin Black understands the implied audience as a second persona within the text (Black 112); the first of the two personae is, of course, the speaker or writer. Black's consideration of the discourse's implied audience focuses on

political discourse, and he identifies ideology as the primary consideration when characterizing personae. *Ideology* is a complex term with differing, and frequently conflicting, definitions. For my purposes here, ideology will mean, in the terms used by Black and by Norman Fairclough in *Language and Power*, the "interconnected convictions" (Black 112) or "'common-sense' assumptions" (Fairclough 1-2) that are inherent in the principles that govern social interaction and the power relationships underlying them. According to Black, the second persona exists within the text to offer a model of ideological appropriateness for the actual audience. The best indication of ideology put forth in a discourse would be bald assertions, but more often, "stylistic tokens" (112) serve as indicators.

For example, if the thesis of a discourse is that the communists have infiltrated the Supreme Court and the universities, its ideological bent would be obvious. However even if a discourse made neutral and innocuous claims, but contained the term "bleeding hearts" to refer to proponents of welfare legislation, one would be justified in suspecting that a general attitude—more, a whole set of general attitudes—were being summoned ... (112-13).

The actual audience looks for these discursive signs to help define its own ideology, and the implied audience offers an example of what the rhetor would like the actual audience to become, by empowering the implied audience to change the actual audience ideologically. Black's second persona foregrounds ideology and offers a reminder of the potential for influence of a rhetor on his audience, emphasizing a text's potential for influence and the

rhetorical (and ideological) promise of addressing/invoking an audience. In the case of a political discourse such as Black's example, the use of "stylistic tokens" can inform the rhetorical constitution of that subjectivity. If the text is a commercial television series, characters' interactions and their interpretations of those interactions can signal ideologies preferred by the text. In the case of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a closer examination of those interactions and interpretations serves to answer questions about the series' feminist potential and its inculcation, negotiation, or subversion of dominant patriarchal ideologies.

While this layered conception of audience does offer a means for considering the ways in which texts can be interpreted, it requires the fundamental assumption that there is an existing audience to which a text addresses itself. Returning to the discussion of the rhetorical situation, Biesecker rethinks the very notion of the rhetorical audience, and her perspective on the rhetorical situation informs her conception of audience and subjectivity, seeing the rhetorical situation as "an event that makes possible the production of identities and social relations," obligating us "to read rhetorical discourses as processes entailing the discursive production of audiences, enabling us to decipher rhetorical events as sites that make visible the historically articulated emergence of the category 'audience'" (126).

This approach to the "discursive production of audience" highlights the problematic nature of audience. Similarly, Maurice Charland's ideologically powerful conception of audience builds on the Burkean principle of identification, pointing to Burke's choice of identification, rather than persuasion, as the primary concept in rhetorical practice. Though Burke does not explicitly address the concept of audience, Charland finds significant

implications for the study of audience in Burke's work. Charland problematizes social identity as both an effect of, and a prerequisite for, persuasion. This contradiction lies at the heart of subjectivity: "Persuasive discourse requires a subject-as-audience who is already constituted with an identity and with an ideology" (212). He explains this using Louis Althusser's model of interpellation. By addressing an audience, the rhetor has interpellated it. By acknowledging the address of discourse, an audience is accepting its projected subjectivity. Once an audience recognizes itself as addressed, it plays the role of Ong's fictive reader or Black's second persona, becoming a participant in the discourse. According to Charland, this process of interpellation and acknowledgment must occur *before* an audience can be persuaded. He is interested, then, in a constitutive rhetoric, a rhetoric that calls an audience into being. To put it another way, the constituted audience is a product of interaction between the addressed and the invoked audiences. This constituted, or constructed, idea of audience acknowledges the importance of discourse in the development of power relationships.

Texts and subjectivity are co-produced, each impacting the development of the other. In order to move from a theoretical discussion of co-production to an examination of a commercial television series, it is necessary to develop these theoretical perspectives into a critical method. There are two significant compositional components at work in the discursive production of audience: the structure of narrative and formal features of characters' language use. Scholarship on structural and formal characteristics offers insight into the relationship between those characteristics and the rhetorical constitution of subjectivity,

informing a critical method applicable generally to media like commercial television—and specifically to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

## **Narrative Structure and Formal Features**

### *Narrative Structure*

Charland's work on constitutive rhetoric examines the case of Quebec's pursuit of sovereignty and the constitution of a *peuple québécois* through narrative. He notes that "narratives 'make real' coherent subjects" (218), and that, again like Ong's discussion of the indefinite article and Black's examination of "stylistic tokens," the narrative form generally asks its audience to identify with a subject position within the text. Significantly, he goes on to characterize narrative as ideological, a medium that "occult[s] the importance of discourse, culture, and history" (218); stories can create the illusion of revealing an essential subjectivity that is already there, not created by the narrative. Specifically, the historical narrative of the *peuple québécois* serves as a constitutive rhetoric with three ideological effects: "constituting a collective subject" (218), "positing a transhistorical subject" (219), and fostering the "illusion of freedom" (220). By creating a unified subjectivity, the narrative engenders identification with something far beyond the individual, interpellating those individuals into a people. By extension, uniting the historicized people of the past with the "we" of the present collapses the temporal and spatial, constituting and aligning a people of the present.

By telling the story of an active people, the narrative fosters the appearance of autonomy. But the subject position in a narrative is not a free position. The very nature of *occupying* a position implies constraint. The end of the story is pre-determined, the resolution decided before its telling. As a result, the narrative constrains the audience; the reader or auditor must fulfill the promise of the narrative so that the narrative may remain consistent. This power of narrative holds significant ideological implications. If a discourse interpellates the audience as constituted subjects—not simply persuading them, but inculcating them into what is "right" according to the discourse—and these newly constituted subjects act to affirm their subject positions—recognizing themselves as the subjects in the text—then the constitutive rhetoric has been effective and an imposition of the rhetor's ideology onto the audience has occurred.

Narratives presented in the cinema and on television exert similar ideological power, impacting their audiences in similar ways. As previously noted (Charland; Ong), the grammar of the narrative generally aligns the audience with the protagonist. With narrative cinema, the gaze heightens that alignment. By looking through the perspective of the character, the audience is visually aligned with that character as well. According to Laura Mulvey's influential psychoanalytic analysis, it is possible for the female spectator to identify with a male protagonist. When the female spectator identifies with the male protagonist, three elements converge: the repressed masculine in the woman, the narrative grammar of identification with the protagonist, and the ego's need to fantasize. This is not a difficult

subject position for the female spectator to occupy; it is a cultural-ideological habit for her (33).

The process of audience-character identification operates differently when the protagonist is female. When the female character functions only as the object of the male protagonist's desire, marriage serves to sublimate female sexuality in a socially sanctioned ritual of constraint. But when the woman serves as the central figure, her presence no longer merely signifies sexuality. Instead, the story becomes "actually, *overtly* about sexuality" (35, emphasis original). No longer waiting offstage for her inescapable marriage, the princess is now center stage. The central question moves from "what next?" to "what does *she* want?" (35, emphasis original). This shift puts the audience in a challenging position, and the problematic of subjectivity and gender identity is foregrounded. Within dominant ideologies, it seems that identification with the female protagonist is awkward even for the female spectator. And for the female spectator, the "fantasy of masculinisation" is "at cross-purposes with itself, restless in its transvestite clothes" (37).

With the audience functioning as both receivers and projections of the discourse, the structure of narrative functions as an important component in its construction. By asking the audience to identify with an essential subjectivity and constraining it with a pre-determined ending, narrative creates a kind of truth, a seemingly undeniable sequence of events that the audience cannot change. Looking through the protagonist's eyes when the text's medium is visual increases alignment with a protagonist. If the protagonist is female, that alignment can be uncomfortable for the audience. To put it in other terms, the female

audience of a narrative with a female protagonist is constituted in terms of a subject position that opposes what is normalized and acceptable. If such a character is necessarily resistant, the primary question becomes what factors enable the popularity of a series like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. I will return to this question in my discussion of the series and its cultural context.

### *Formal Features*

Like the structure of narrative, the formal features of language used in character interactions can hold ideological meanings. Modality offers one example of formal discourse features manifesting ideologies. In its most traditional sense, *modality* in English is concerned with the realms of necessity and possibility. Verbs like *can*, *could*, *may*, *must* and their negatives signify modality. Situational modality deals with issues of permission and obligation within a given situation; epistemic modality relates to speakers' judgments and their level of certainty about them (Van Der Auwera). For Fairclough, modality's expression of necessity and possibility demonstrates power relationships at work within a discourse. Relational, like situational, modality concerns the wielding of power by one participant over another—implying permission/denial or obligation. Expressive, like epistemic, modality concerns the participants' authority in relation to claims made, relating their degree of certainty about what is being discussed. How participants deal with matters of permission/obligation and certainty/authenticity offers significant information regarding their power relationship; it can offer the audience signals either of a participant's power or of her attempt to assert it. Being able to make demands, grant permission and obligate other

characters is a significant indication of power, and studying the negotiation of that ability between characters offers insight into the particular power relations sanctioned by a text. In other words, if one character's exertion of control over another character is consistently successful and portrayed positively in the text, then her power is probably sanctioned by the text, constituting an authorized subject position for the audience to identify with.

Use of the definite article offers another example of the ideological power inherent in language. As discussed earlier, English speakers generally use an indefinite article for the introduction of an object into a discourse, and the definite article for subsequent references to that object in the discourse. In Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* the definite article serves to align the audience with the story's protagonist. But as Fairclough observes, the definite article is relevant "because it is extensively used to refer to referents (persons, objects, events) which are not established textually, nor even evident in the situational context of an interaction, but presupposed" (132). As an example, Fairclough offers a print advertisement for a woman's maternity bra with the tagline "The first bra to look after the woman and the mother in you" (133). He notes that the advertisement makes dual assumptions, namely that there is both a woman and a mother in the reader. Womanhood, defined as being physically appealing to men, cannot be reconciled with motherhood—that is until the manufacture of the advertiser's bra. By positioning the product in this way, the advertisement makes presuppositions and presents them as facts. Namely, the new mother cannot be alluring, and the alluring woman cannot fulfill her duties as a mother, without this product. Beyond that, it creates a reproductive mandate and equates being a woman with being sexually attractive to

men, perpetuating dominant ideologies. My examination of *Buffy* will similarly demonstrate how characters both perpetuate and resist dominant ideologies through their use of definite articles, while at the same time doing something to/for the audience.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA), as practiced by Norman Fairclough, offers a way to elucidate the complex connections between language and power. By discussing situational, institutional, and social controls, via an analysis of formal features of discursive practices, CDA is able to expose language use as both a product and producer of ideologies. In *Language and Power*, Fairclough sets up a reciprocal relationship between discursive practices and power: "on the one hand they incorporate differences of power, on the other hand they rise out of—and give rise to—particular relations of power" (1-2). For example, those who hold discursive power are able to exert social control, constraining who may speak, to whom they may speak, and what they may say. At the same time, it is these very constraints that enable discourse by authorizing subjectivity, social relationships, and content. Yet power is not assured and constant; people may negotiate power, even choosing to subvert or resist it. As a further complication, the methods for exercising discursive power are not necessarily coercive. Social control may be achieved through consent instead. Like the interpellation of a people in the case of *peuple québécois*, by "integrating people into apparatuses of control which they come to feel themselves a part of" (36-37), social control through consent allows individuals within a culture to feel that they are making active choices instead of being directed by dominant ideologies. Commercial television also

functions as just such an apparatus of control, constructing identification with a commercial "you" that enables what seems to be active choosing of products for consumption.

Though Fairclough's model does not deal explicitly with issues of gender, its ability to elucidate the discursive processes at work in developing power relationships makes it ideal for examining specific character interactions in *Buffy*. Fairclough's three-stage model for CDA includes description, interpretation, and explanation of the text. *Description* is concerned with the formal features of the text, *interpretation* with the connection between the text and interaction, *explanation* with interaction and social context. By analyzing the formal features of vocabulary, grammar, and textual structure, the *description* stage exposes the ways power relationships manifest themselves in discourse, and the formal features discussed just previous—use of modalities and the definite article *the*—prove especially illuminating for the purposes of my discussion.

Fairclough's *interpretation* is a layered process, requiring both the participants and the analyst to interpret the institutional and situational context for the discourse. Both participants and analysts use their knowledge, experiences, and beliefs—members' resources (MR)—to contextualize the discourse and to determine appropriate discourse types for the specific situations. MR allow participants to codify, for example, an institutional structure of a school and then the situational context of taking part in a classroom discussion, enabling participants to "decide which series a text belongs to, and therefore what can be taken as common ground for participants, or *presupposed*" (152, emphasis original). But presuppositions are problematic. For example, participants who are operating with different

MRs may reach conflicting interpretations of the situational (or intertextual) context and enact conflicting discourse types. In this case, the more powerful participant may impose her contextual interpretation onto the situation and exert control over discursive procedures. As an additional complication, the process of interpretation is not a linear one. A participant's interpretation of the situational context, for example, may change—potentially numerous times—during an interaction. Differences and fluctuations in the contexts and discourse types entailed by different participants' interpretation of a discourse offer a valuable opportunity for examination of both power relationships between the discourse participants and the ideologies implied by (and imposed on) a discourse.

*Explanation* takes the analysis one step further, seeking not just to understand better the differences and fluctuations in participant interpretations, but also to work out the production and development of the knowledge, experiences, and beliefs that make up a participant's MR. Societal, institutional, and situational determinants act to define participant MRs, and participant MRs define discourse. In turn, discourses define participant MRs, and participant MRs define, to varying degrees, societal, institutional, and situational effects. MRs determine and are determined by power relationships within a discourse and a larger society, and explanation is intended "to portray a discourse as part of a social process, as a social practice, showing how it is determined by social structures, and what reproductive effects discourses can cumulatively have on those structures, sustaining them or changing them" (163). An intricate relationship develops, and a commercial television series like *Buffy* serves as an interesting example. Interactions in the series are governed by social factors like

the characters' social status, gender roles, experiences and beliefs. These interactions re-determine social factors, which go on to redefine the society of the series. As these processes work within the series, the series becomes a part of them in the larger society. Of course prior to a series' production, characters' social factors are in large part impacted by the social factors of the anticipated audience, and oftentimes re-determined by the actual audience during the life of the series. This complex of influence is an important component of the ideological impact of commercial television. Commercial television both reflects and produces power relationships within the society in which it is located.

### **Three Principles for Examining the Female Television Audience**

In this thesis, Fairclough's model of *explanation* will serve to explicate the ways in which discursive procedures employed within character interactions signal ideological affiliations for the audience. Such procedures lie at the center of power of language. Regardless of discipline or genre of texts examined, most scholarly theory on audience seems to rely on a layered conception of audience. Ede and Lunsford are compositionists, and their essay focuses on teaching writing. Ong and Rabinowitz both work with narrative fiction, the latter concentrating on texts with ambiguous or unreliable narration. Both Charland and Black are concerned with political discourse. Significantly, all of these scholars arrive at similar conclusions: The concept of audience is a complex one that calls for moving from it as a mere collection of people to something that can account for the mutual influencing of texts and audiences. Drawing on Fairclough's work and contemporary scholarship on

audience, the following analysis is guided by three governing principles for examining the female television audience.

1. Texts offer discursive clues that signal their affiliations with particular ideologies.
2. Texts imply subject positions for the audience to identify with.
3. Discourses do not only speak to pre-existing audiences or discover unrecognized audiences, but also constitute audiences.

1. *Texts offer discursive clues that signal their affiliations with particular ideologies.*

Returning to Fairclough's definition of *ideology*, it is undeniable that texts contribute to the development of the audience's "'common-sense' assumptions" as to what governs acceptable social behavior; consumption of images of appropriateness molds viewers' identity. These images fall on a covert-overt continuum – as seen in Black's "bleeding hearts" example – and enable audiences to accept or negotiate traditional power structures within a given society. As a commercial medium, television serves its own best interests by using these covert discursive clues to maintain traditional power structures and reinforce dominant ideologies.

2. *Texts imply subject positions for the audience to identify with.*

In the case of narrative, this identification operates on two levels. First, whether it is called invoked, implied, fictionalized, or narrative audience, there is an audience position inside the text that the rhetor wants the actual audience to assume. In fact, understanding of the text *requires* that the audience assume that position (at least provisionally). Second, narrative texts generally present a protagonist to whom the audience relates.

Audience members take up the role of the protagonist, see with her eyes, walk in her shoes. By accepting the subject positions sanctioned by the text, audiences are created or constituted, and by extension indoctrinated into the ideologies proposed therein.

3. *Discourses do not only speak to pre-existing audiences or discover unrecognized audiences, but also they constitute audiences.*

Biesecker's conception of discursively produced, like Charland's conception of the constituted, audience seems to combine the actual and ideal audiences of other scholars.

This constructed/produced audience provides a meaningful way to evaluate the relationship between influence and social identity. In the case of television, leaving behind the foundationalist notion of self and audience allows analysts to identify how the medium creates marketable subjectivity that can be sold to the highest bidder.

### CHAPTER 3: RESISTANCE, SUBJECTIVITY, AND *BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER*

As a high school student, Buffy spends the first two seasons trying to live a "normal" life, balancing her slaying duties with the life of a typical middle-class high schooler.

Whenever she attempts to live a "normal" life, however, her efforts are seemingly punished.

When she tries out for cheerleading or goes on a date in season one, a witch and a group of vampires, respectively, try to kill her. When she chooses a Halloween costume that she

thinks her boyfriend will like in season two, she turns into a helpless maiden and is nearly

killed by vampires. This repeated punishment of attempts to assimilate may send a negative message to the audience about following the crowd, but Buffy struggles against her destiny

as well, essentially resisting her resistance. Buffy does flirt with resistance during the first

two seasons. After all, her boyfriend is a vampire, and she does run away from home at the

end of the second season. Still, her relationship with Angel feels more like a supernatural

romance novel than a real-life taboo, and her mother effectively forces her to run away from

home when she forbids her to leave the house, insisting that she never return if she does

choose to leave. Of course, Joyce makes this insistence on the night that Buffy must kill

Angel in order to stop him from ending the world. Buffy's acts of resistance during those

first two seasons, then, are cast as either romantic or forced, removing any real subversive

potential from them. This mitigated resistance is understandable, especially for a new series

on a fledgling network that had not yet developed its audience. By the end of the second

season, with Buffy's leaving Sunnydale, the series seemed poised for a significant new form

of resistance.

### **Development of the Optional Secondary Subject Position**

When thinking about the development of power relationships within *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and their effects on the production of the series' female television audience, it is important to understand the different kinds of power available to the show's characters. In *Language and Power*, Fairclough outlines three levels of social organization—situational, institutional, and societal—that "shape the [members' resources] people bring to production and interpretation, which in turn shape the way in which texts are produced and interpreted" (25). Situational social organization refers to the direct social situation in which the discourse happens; institutional addresses the "wider matrix" (25) in which it occurs; and societal speaks to the society as a whole in which it is located. Power relationships develop and function on all three of these levels. In *Buffy*, there is an additional level of power available to some of the characters, supernatural power. Though a number of different kinds of supernatural power exist within the series (e.g., magic, demonic energy), the privileged supernatural power is the power of the slayer. Slayers are born with a potential power and called upon the death of the preceding slayer. Once called, they become supernaturally, physically strong and, while remaining mortal, develop an ability to heal quickly from injury. Since slayers are always teenage girls, this supernatural power is uniquely feminine.

Until the third season of the series, Buffy's role constituted the only subject position with supernatural power available to the audience. As a young woman, not all levels of power are available to her, so possessing supernatural power is significant. Buffy's supernatural power translates to considerable power on a situational level. Each season's

story arc centers on a primary villain that must be defeated in order to save the world.

Though Buffy and her friends work as a team, researching the villain's strengths and weaknesses, planning an attack, and then fighting (and eventually defeating) the villain, Buffy is the leader. She gives the inspirational speeches, approves the plans, and leads the attacks.

Buffy's relationship with institutional power is more complex. For the most part, Buffy accommodates herself to the institutional forces in her life, specifically Sunnydale High School and the Watcher's Council. Though she is not the best student or most obedient slayer, she does attend classes and work with the Council. Whenever she is assigned tasks at school for example, like preparing refreshments for a PTA meeting or escorting young trick-or-treaters on Halloween, she completes them. She is thus aligned with institutional power structures, but still she is not exactly compliant. When she feels threatened or does not agree with choices made by these institutions, she resists them in acceptable, culturally sanctioned ways. As one scholar's discussion of girls' anger in the series points out, Buffy's resistance is typical of middle-class white female resistance (Helford). Buffy uses non-confrontational tools like humor to deflect her anger. But because it is deflected, her anger is never registered (and never validated). If *Buffy* is a place of "cultural negotiation," as suggested earlier, then it is only fitting that negotiated resistance marks the subject position accessible for the female audience to occupy. This negotiation of resistance serves multiple purposes. First, since the female protagonist is already necessarily resistant, it mitigates the uncomfortable subjectivity of the female protagonist as described by Mulvey. It fulfills the

resistant promise of a supernatural series centered on a female heroine without pressing the boundaries of resistance. In addition, it satisfies the series' advertisers, though not necessarily its creators, by preserving dominant patriarchal ideologies.

With the addition of another slayer as a primary character, the series opened up a second, less negotiated, subject position for the audience to identify with. As a lower socioeconomic class slayer, Faith is afforded greater opportunity for resistance. Faith is closer to the edge, but in some ways, Faith's relationship to levels of power mirrors Buffy's. For example, as a young woman, societal power is generally unavailable to her as well as Buffy. Like Buffy, she resists institutional power. Unlike Buffy, her resistance is not culturally sanctioned. Faith does not attend school or work with the Watcher's Council. In fact, she convinces Buffy to leave class during a chemistry exam in order to surprise a nest of vampires and to break into a sporting goods store to steal weapons. Faith's resistance is not negotiated. For example, during the third season Giles is fired from his position as watcher and must be replaced. Since Faith is also watcherless, the Council sends one watcher for both of them. When Buffy enters the library and meets the stuffy Wesley Wyndham Price (Wesley), she immediately asks "New watcher?" of Giles and then asks twice if he is evil. With prodding from Giles, she goes on to describe the unusual vampires she encountered on the previous night's patrol, prompting Wesley to assign her a mission for that evening. Buffy, who is loyal to Giles and unhappy with both the Council's decision to replace him and Wesley's particular methods, uses sarcasm—"Whenever Giles sends me on a mission he says please and afterwards I get a cookie"—in order to communicate her discontent. Faith enters

the library shortly thereafter and, like Buffy before her, asks "New watcher?" When Buffy and Giles confirm her suspicion she responds, "Screw that," turns and leaves.

Unencumbered by affiliation with sources of institutional power, Faith feels free to say or do whatever she likes.

But the existence of a second, less negotiated, subject position does not necessarily mean that identification with it is sanctioned by the text. On the surface, identification with Faith would seem undesirable. By the end of the third season, she has intentionally killed at least two people, attempted both to poison Angel and to remove his soul, choked Xander, and held Willow hostage. Still, she captured the imaginations of the series' actual viewers, sparking lively conversations among them (Tjardes). A closer study of interactions between Faith and Buffy may thus clarify the question whether this optional second subject position is in fact available for the audience to occupy.

### **Discursive Practices and the Optional Second Subject Position**

Much of the third season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* involves the relationship between Buffy and Faith. The mere existence of two slayers is complicated, and difference in their slaying styles and life experiences only exacerbates the complication. From their initial meeting, Buffy is unsure of how to react to Faith. Unlike Buffy, Faith has a zest for slaying and enjoys talking about it; Buffy's friends and family enthusiastically welcome her. They hope that her presence will (a) help them to understand Buffy better and (b) remove some—and in the case of Joyce, all—of the slaying burden from Buffy. Of course, as Buffy and Faith become closer, meaning both better friends and more alike, the Scooby Gang

becomes increasingly concerned. The situation escalates until Faith mistakenly kills the deputy mayor. After the killing, a power struggle between Buffy and Faith is foregrounded. Until that point, Buffy had been, in Faith's words, "all dressed up in big sister's clothes," toying with her power and sexuality.

With the power struggle between the slayers now at the forefront, a close examination of exchanges between them will expose discursive clues that help articulate subject positions available for the audience to identify with. I use Fairclough's ideas to analyze four interactions between Faith and Buffy, looking for those discursive clues. The first interaction occurs at Sunnydale High School, the day of the deputy mayor's death. The next three interactions take place in the days just after the killing. The first occurs in Faith's motel room on the morning after. Next, while on a reconnaissance mission to search the deputy mayor's office, they learn that Mayor Wilkins is evil. The sample I use immediately follows that revelation. The last takes place on the docks as Faith is about to board a ship in an attempt to leave town. My transcriptions of these discourse samples are available in the appendices.

*Description: Use of Relational and Expressive Modality*

Description of participants' use of relational and expressive modality offers a way to investigate power relationships among the participants. As noted above, relational modality implies permission or obligation, and expressive modality communicates degrees of certainty. Matters of permission/obligation and certainty play a key role in suggesting ideologies and revealing which characters are allowed to permit or obligate other characters to do things, or decide what is true in uncertain situations.

The first discourse sample comes from the scene mentioned earlier in which Faith has just walked out of a meeting with the new watcher, use of relational and expressive modality is scant. Buffy follows Faith outside in order to convince her to return, and by line (8) of the sample the topic has shifted to what it means to be a slayer. It is Buffy's question of relational modality ("What else can we do?") in the previous line that inspires the shift, and Faith sees the question as an invitation to take over the interaction. Faith uses negative and non-indicative expressive modality ("You can't fool me" and "So you can give him a good UHN") in lines (19) and (26), respectively. Though Buffy is supposed to be retrieving Faith for a meeting with her watcher, the entire interaction has a playful quality to it, with lines (13-31) taking on the characteristics of a flirtation. When Buffy claims that she does not enjoy slaying, Faith insists that she does, suggesting that she gets "a little bit juiced" (17), "hungry for more" (21), and "itching for some vamp to show up so you can give im a good UHN" (25-26). The exchange remains playful, full of grins, laughs and giggles, and Buffy even demurely tilts her head down and away so that she may look up at Faith. Since Buffy maintains insider status but allows Faith to dominate this interaction, by making demands—"go on say't" (18); "you do the homework, and I'll copy yours" (34-35)—her flirtatious responses to Faith's sexualized talk about slaying seem to imply a kind of permission for the audience, hinting that identification with Faith may be allowed. Moreover, by insinuating Buffy's—the text-sanctioned protagonist's—alignment with Faith, the scene suggests that identification with Faith may be preferable to division from her.

Across the discourse samples that occur after the death of the deputy mayor, the nature of the interactions shifts. Buffy uses relational and expressive modality appreciably more frequently than Faith. In fact, most of Faith's uses of modality are expressive, and occur in the last sample. Buffy, on the other hand, uses both relational and expressive modality in all three remaining samples. This difference could be attributable in part to the nature of the discussions at hand. In samples two through four, Buffy is engaged in convincing Faith that she is wrong, first that she is wrong about the killing, then about what it means to be the slayer, and finally about Buffy herself. Buffy's use of modality in the brief second sample exemplifies her attempts to exert control over Faith by determining how they should proceed—"We're gonna have to deal" (10), "You can shut off all the emotions you want, but eventually they're gonna find a body" (14-15)—and what is true—"We can help each other" (12). Faith firmly resists Buffy, responding first with one word, "wrong" (11), and then with a short sentence, "I don't need it" (13). With Buffy's third attempt, Faith offers her longest response, and her only use of relational modality—"gonna" in line (51).

FAITH: ...Okay this is the la:st time we're gonna have this conversation

and we're not even having it now you understand me?

There is no body.

I took it .. weighted it .. and dumped it.

The body doesn't exist. (51-55)

In this discourse sample, Faith thwarts Buffy's attempts to obligate her, to direct her. She straightforwardly asserts that she has command over the issue, states that she has disposed of

the deputy mayor's body, and denies having any feelings about the killing. Until this point, the power relationship between Faith and Buffy appeared relatively unsettled. Though Buffy may have flirted with Faith's way of doing things—breaking into the sporting goods store, leaving class during the chemistry test—killing a human represents a line that she will not cross, possibly because it represents extreme subversion of institutional and societal forces.

The next sample acts almost as an escalation of the first discourse sample in which Buffy and Faith playfully discussed what it means to be a slayer. Faith peppers the interaction with playfulness as Buffy continues her pursuit of control over the situation. At line (41) Faith again takes the opportunity to shift the topic, this time away from the divergence in the ways in which they feel the situation should be handled to the reason for the divergence: their conflicting views on the role of the slayer. During their last conversation about their conflicting views as documented in the first discourse sample, Faith made similar assertions—that they are the chosen ones, that Buffy does and should enjoy the slaying because it is what she was made for—and Buffy reacted demurely, almost flirtatiously, smiling down and away while Faith insisted that she admit that she enjoys it. After the shift in the present interaction, however, Buffy attempts to gain control over how (not) to define *slayer* by asserting that being the slayer "doesn't mean we can do whatever we want" (27) or " does not mean we get to pass judgment on people" (63), in direct response to Faith's assertion that they can do "whatever we want" in line (8) of the first sample.

In the last sample, Faith has decided to run away, but Buffy makes one last attempt to convert her. She follows her to the docks and proclaims that she and Faith "could be" (4) friends, and at lines (9-10), she makes a claim as to what Faith is obligated to do:

BUFFY: Faith nobody is asking you to be like me.

But you can't go on like this. (9-10)

As Faith responds in line (11), she shifts the topic to their similarities, and Buffy's fear of them. It is in the last sample that Faith makes her only use of both non-indicative and negative modality.

FAITH: You can't handle seein me living my own way havin a blast because  
it tempts you.

You know it could be you. (32-33)

During earlier topic shifts, Buffy continually attempts to control the interaction by controlling what is permitted, what she and Faith are obliged to do as slayers, and what is or is not certain. It is not until she has shifted the topic to the similarities between the two of them that Faith uses the expressive modality, as found in 32-33 above. She baldly affirms that it is seeing herself reflected in Faith that causes Buffy to work so hard to rehabilitate her. This is the crux of the conflict between Buffy and Faith.

*Description: Use of the Definite Article*

Though the discourse in all four samples addresses situations of which Faith and Buffy are both aware—presumably calling for use of the definite article *the* when signifying referents—Faith uses *the* more frequently than Buffy. In the first discourse sample, all of her

uses point outside the text, to their unique position—"the slayers" (9), "the chosen two" (9)—the work they do—"the fun" (10), "the look in your eyes right after a kill" (20)—or their current mission—"you do the homework" (35). Buffy's referents are evenly distributed in the text—"the fun"(12), "again with the grunting" (27), both referring to comments or gestures made by Faith—and out of the text—"the job" (6), "the assignment" (32).

As the two discuss the events of the previous night in the second sample, Buffy is unable to refer to *the* body. She instead references "a body" (15); "the evidence," "the problem" (21); and "a man" (23). Faith, on the other hand, refers directly to "the body" (20) as "no body" (18). She has returned to the crime scene, retrieved the body, and disposed of it in the river. Though Buffy has come to Faith's room so that they may discuss how to handle the situation, she seems unprepared to address the fact that the deputy mayor is dead. She speaks of him using an indefinite noun phrase ("a body" or "a man"), or as an abstract entity ("the evidence" or "the problem"). Faith, on the other hand, can use the definite noun phrase ("the body") both because she holds a different informational status and because she has, in her way, dealt with the situation. Buffy would have Faith deal with the situation emotionally, not just pragmatically, facing the fact that she has killed someone and accepting the consequences for it.

As in the first two samples, use of *the* in samples three and four refers to something that is not present, something that is outside the text—and the current interaction between the characters. Buffy's referents are almost exclusively specific and identifiable, like "the problem" (21) in sample two, or "the dead guy" (39) in sample three. Only "the rest of your

life" (39) does not indicate a specific place, person, or time. In the sample two, Faith uses the definite article similarly. But as the conversational topic changes from the situation at hand to the role of the slayer and then to comparisons between the two slayers, Faith's use of the definite article changes. In the last two samples, she frequently uses the definite article to stand for abstract ideas. This usage is most evident in the third sample. After the shift in topic to Buffy's likeness to her, Faith references "the law" (17), "the lust" (24), "the sex" (28), and "the danger" (28). Faith uses references to ideas outside the current interaction because she does not possess power within it.

Throughout the four discourse samples, Buffy remains aligned with institutional power as Faith moves farther away from them. The increasing divergence between the two subject positions may represent either increased potential for resistance through identification with the optional second position, or decreasing likelihood that the text sanctions that position. Fairclough's interpretation and explanation stages, and an examination of the series' portrayal of the character Faith, will address those possibilities.

### *Interpretation and Explanation*

The differences in the interpretation of the situational context by Buffy and Faith can shed further light on the negotiation of power in the discourse samples and in their larger relationship. As mentioned earlier, the existence of two slayers at the same time creates tension within their relationship. Both Buffy and Faith think of themselves as *the* slayer. Buffy was a slayer—the slayer—for years before Faith was called, and she has been fighting in Sunnydale most of that time. In contrast, Faith would not be a slayer if Buffy had not

died; she should, therefore, be the active slayer. A closer look at the discourse samples shows that this clashing institutional interpretation manifests itself in contradictory situational interpretations. Buffy's attempts to control the situation are consistent with what would be expected from the participant with seniority. Though she has never killed a human, she does have more experience as a slayer. She is called on time and again to take charge of circumstances, and time and again she has seen them through to a positive end; she is confident that hers is the appropriate course of action. On the other hand, Faith's life is uncomplicated by friends and family; slaying *is* her life. She feels she can teach Buffy as well, about both slaying and herself. These conflicting institutional, and by extension situational, interpretations are rooted in the slayers' conflicting conceptions of their destiny. Since slaying is a uniquely feminine, and therefore resistant, supernatural power, it follows that Buffy—the slayer aligned with institutional forces—sees her destiny as a burden. Faith, the more subversive slayer, thinks of it as a gift. In terms of subject positions available to the audience, Faith's status as outside the organizations of institutional control makes hers especially resistant. Not only does she resist traditional realms of institutional influence (e.g., school), she resists supernatural institutional power holders as well. So, though she may embrace her supernatural power, she does not embrace the institution associated with it.

The discussion of Buffy's and Faith's interaction can lead to explanation of the social forces at work in their encounters. On a situational level, the discourse is shaped by the struggle between the two slayers, each trying to position herself as the dominant one. It looks as though Buffy should hold the power in the discourse because she is most closely

aligned with institutional power. Beyond the slaying, she is able to live a pleasant middle-class life that stands in sharp contrast to Faith's life in the dingy motel room. So, in addition to the power afforded her through affiliation with the institutions mentioned above, Buffy holds a preferred position in society at large. This may explain in part her use of a wider range of modalities than Faith: Buffy occupies the sanctioned position of power. She can speak from a position of authority, giving or denying permission to—and obligating—others. Buffy's preferred position may also explain Faith's use of the definite article to make reference to things outside the discourse—in effect, to escape from it. Whereas Buffy's struggles for power in the discourse are couched, as when she uses modality to foster authority, Faith's are frequently bald, shifting the topic, interrupting, and—in three of the four samples—walking away. In all four samples, Faith has the last word. It is in Faith's, and not Buffy's, best interest to negotiate, even subvert, power within the discourse, and she is able to assert power within these four interactions. Keeping that in mind, a look at the series' portrayal of her sheds light on the potential for audience identification with the optional second subject position she represents.

### **Faith and Ambiguity**

As fans of the series have pointed out, *Buffy's* portrayal of Faith abounds with ambiguities (Tjardes). Her history is never explicitly revealed to viewers, requiring (and allowing) varied and personal readings of the character. Other than her tall slaying tales, what is known about her—her mother was an alcoholic, she grew up in South Boston, she has been taken advantage of by men in her past—is generally gathered through one-on-one

interactions with Buffy or the Mayor. The one primary exception is a scene in which Angel is present for an exchange between the two slayers, but he is physically removed—standing in the background—and interjects little into the conversation. Beyond the few details she shares, assumptions about her are gathered from character projections as they "attribute thoughts, feelings, and motivations to her; she doesn't voice them herself" (Tjardes 73). And after she kills the deputy mayor, it is unclear both how she feels about events and exactly when she decides to join forces with the mayor. She callously asserts to Buffy that she does not care about the accidental murder, but her facial expression at the moment of the killing and her choice to return to the scene—apparently both to retrieve the body and to mourn the deputy mayor's death—say otherwise. The penultimate scene in the episode following the killing shows Buffy and Giles discussing Faith's apparent return to the fold. In the final scene of the episode, she appears at the Mayor's doorstep, first revealing to him that she has killed his primary henchman and then applying for the now-open position. It is impossible, then, for the audience to know with certainty that Faith is not approaching the mayor as a double agent, not working from the inside to discover his plan and report it to the Scooby Gang. It takes another two episodes for that to come to light.

Faith's sexuality is ambiguous as well. Every aspect of her character—her dress, speech, and gesture—mark her as highly sexualized and sexually powerful, and she has sexualized interactions with a number of characters, like the flirtatious exchange with Buffy discussed earlier. Additionally, she kisses Buffy twice, deflowers Xander, caresses Willow, and seduces Angel. Not only does she have sexually charged interactions with both female

and male characters, but her sexuality is cast as aberrant, entangled with the violence of slaying and sado-masochism.

In the end, even Faith's allegiance to the Mayor is unclear. In "Graduation Day, Part 1," Faith shoots Angel with a poisoned arrow. She mistakenly believes there is no antidote, leaving Angel to die a slow and painful death. After the Scooby Gang discovers that draining the blood of a slayer could save Angel, Buffy sets out to kill Faith so that Angel might live. Faith escapes, but not until Buffy has dealt her a near-fatal blow. The final episode finds both Faith and Buffy in the hospital—the first is in a coma from injuries sustained during their fight; the second is suffering from severe blood loss after allowing Angel to drain her to save his life. In one of the most ambiguous moments of the season, the two slayers share a dream in which Faith offers the secret that enables Buffy to defeat the Mayor. By playing a small but important role in saving the day, Faith is at least partially redeemed. Symptomatic of her continued ambiguity, it is possible—if not probable—that all of her dealings with the mayor constituted an attempt to impede his efforts.

As the first principle developed in Chapter 2 asserts, *Buffy* signals affiliation with ideologies through discursive clues used throughout the series. On the surface, power is clearly delineated; Buffy holds the power and Faith futilely seeks to wrest it from her. But an analysis informed by Fairclough's processes reveals the unsettled nature of the power relationship between Buffy and Faith. Both hold supernatural power, and both wield, at various times and to varying degrees, situational power. It follows that the series is signaling a dual affiliation, offering disparate images of appropriateness for the audience. Moreover,

in light of the second principle, both Buffy and Faith represent subject positions implied by the text for the audience to identify with. By naming her in the title, the series immediately seems to encourage identification with Buffy. Her treatment and positioning within the series—holding supernatural and situational power and being aligned with institutional power—further reinforces this notion. Allowing Faith to manifest power within her interactions with Buffy and casting her ambiguously throughout the season mark hers as an optional second optional subject position for the audience to occupy. If she had not been allowed to assert herself within those interactions, or if she had been cast as simply good or evil, Faith would have functioned as a foil, nothing more than the anti-Buffy. As it is, she becomes a more resistant character for the audience to identify with. By offering the audience two subject positions spanning a resistance continuum, the series is able to meet the needs of a wide variety of potential viewers. I will now turn my attention to the construction of that potential viewing audience.

#### CHAPTER 4: *KAIROS*, COMMERCIAL TELEVISION, AND RESISTANCE

*Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the subject positions within it respond to two primary forces at work in the construction its audience: its cultural context and its medium. Analysis of these forces will help explain the success of the series within those constraints. The complex rhetorical notion of *kairos* offers a means for examining the cultural context of *Buffy*. Though it has no equivalent in any language outside of Greek, *kairos* is generally defined as *the right thing at the right time* (Helsley; Sloane). For the Greeks, particularly the Pythagoreans, the term came to represent a balance between opposites, the perfect moment in space and time at which opposites come together and achieve harmony. The contemporary conception of *kairos* seems to rely on this idea of convergence, sometimes seen as an appropriateness, propriety, or decorum. When thinking of what would be appropriate for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, three things converge: increasing power of the young female consumer, the ambiguity of the time, and the problematic contemporary feminism.

##### A Cultural Context

By the late 1990s, young women had become an attractive marketing demographic, and the success of 1997's motion picture *Titanic* remains the most significant display of the consumer influence of girls. Apparently motivated by the attractiveness of Leonardo DiCaprio, the film's male lead, young women flocked to theaters over and over, not unlike young men did to *Star Wars* in 1977. In the end, *Titanic* became the top-grossing film of all time, garnering over 600 million dollars at U.S. box offices ([Top Grossing](#)). Young female

consumers became a prime target for advertisers, and the WB Network staked much of its success on appealing to young viewers. The network's "New Tuesday" line-up was composed of two hour-long dramas, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Dawson's Creek*, set in high schools and centered on teenage characters.

In the introduction to "Warrior Women," an article exploring the appearance of action series (e.g., *Xena: Warrior Princess*, *La Femme Nikita*, and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) that center on a female warrior, cultural critic Michael Ventura wrote, "You can gauge the public's true feeling by what its entertainment is trying to salve" (58). Weekly hour-long shows, or episodics, make up the bulk of American television drama. Classic-era episodics had firm lines between good and evil. The story was in overcoming odds and doing what was right. The elements shift in traditional contemporary episodics like *ER*, *Law and Order*, and *NYPD Blue*, and the drama now lies in the muddied waters where characters struggle to discern what is good and then do it—all in the space of an hour. The new breed of female-centered action drama described by Ventura (e.g., *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), is "fatalistic, the moral choice made for us before we were born" (58), and the struggle does not end with the episode. If evil is quelled, the viewer knows it will return another day. Whereas a *Law and Order* District Attorney wraps up his case with a jury verdict each week, Buffy will fight a villain across an entire season. Ventura offers two explanations for the female action hero phenomenon: the inflexibility both of the male action hero and of American viewers. The male action hero, it seems, needs "strong boundaries and clear choices" (59), not the ambiguous worlds of these new series – or, by extension, the 1990s. American viewers are

not prepared for the gender ambiguity – fostered by the series' lack of distinct boundaries and choices – in a male action hero.

This perceived boundlessness echoes throughout the 1990s new brand of feminism as well. As Bonnie Dow notes in *Primetime Feminism*:

From the Thomas/Hill hearings to the Tailhook scandal, from murders of abortion doctors and clinic staff to the controversy over *Thelma and Louise*, from the emergence of Hillary Clinton in the 1992 presidential campaign (and the much hyped "Year of the Woman" in politics) to the trial of O. J. Simpson on the charge of murdering his ex-wife Nicole Brown Simpson, the [1990's] have offered myriad opportunities for pundits to speak to and for media to comment on what feminism does or should mean. (204)

According to Dow, a new brand of feminist did just that, claiming that feminism had left women behind – that it was "strangling in the grip of an ideology that claims all women are passive victims of sexual violence, economic exploitation, beauty images, or sexual harassment" (201). These new-brand feminists, sometimes called power feminists, embraced a white middle-class feminism that proclaimed the end of the patriarchy, insisting that women need only their rugged individualism to survive and thrive.

At the same time, a different kind of feminism was emerging in the Pacific Northwest. The Riot Grrl Movement began in Olympia, Washington in 1990, as post-punk feminist rock bands (e.g., Bikini Kill, Bratmobile) and their fans began to talk about women's issues, music, and themselves. The meetings spread to major cities across the country, and

by 1992, young women had formed their own Riot Grrl chapters. This movement had no leadership or public relations agency. In fact, the bands associated with the movement did not accept requests for popular press interviews—choosing instead to share information with their fans and other members of the movement through small, self-published fanzines—and released their records on independent labels like Kill Rock Stars and K Records (Snead). Since the movement grew out of anti-establishment punk rock, it remained, not unlike power feminism, primarily about the personal. Riot grrls, however, were not prepared to pronounce the end of patriarchy, and discussions at meetings frequently focused on inequality, violence against women, and sexual harassment.

As a movement that rejected dominant power structures and traditional standards of beauty and femininity, the Riot Grrl Movement was not suitable for mass consumption. Still, this cultural phenomenon found major record labels scrambling to capitalize on it. Since the bands associated with the music were inherently distrustful of consumer culture and more likely either to sign with an independent record label or to start their own, a number of new female artists emerged shouting the "girl power" battle-cry, most notably the Spice Girls. In a dramatic demonstration of girl buying power, the Spice Girls sold over 35 million records worldwide between 1994 and 1998 (Spice Girls). Major record companies conspired with million-selling artists like the Spice Girls and Alanis Morissette to appropriate the Riot Grrl Movement and repackage it as girl power, a glittery new brand of feminism for young women who were uncomfortable with the "f" word.

## Commercial Television

In addition to the cultural context in which *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is situated, the series medium, commercial television, acts as a determinant in the process of audience construction. Commercial television operates in a gift economy with constant commercial appeals. Whereas the cinema patron pays for admission into a movie theater, and the premium television channel viewer pays for a subscription to the channel, commercial television viewers pay no premium for the right to watch television programming. Instead, advertisers who hope to reach those viewers subsidize their viewing, as an apparent "gift," in exchange for the assumption that those same viewers will watch commercial appeals that occur during a show. The viewers' "payment" is delayed; they pay later, in the shopping malls and the grocery stores (Allen 119-20). The programming is, therefore, addressed to a commercial "you," an audience that is expected to consume products advertised during that programming. Additionally, like the "audience invoked," fictionalized reader, or second persona, commercials feature characterized viewers, allowing the audience to see themselves on screen. The television-viewing audience looks for discursive signs to help define itself, and the ideal viewer offers an example of what the sponsor would like the viewing audience to become. In a consumer culture, in which identity is so indelibly linked to the consumption of goods, knowing what a sponsor wants an audience to buy is not unlike knowing what a rhetor wants an audience to become. Consumption is ideological, and the commercial television network's hope is to create an audience for its programming, an audience that can then be sold to advertisers who would like to reach that audience. Like the publisher's

audience suggested earlier, the advertiser's audience is the market segment that the advertiser hopes to reach when sponsoring a series.

It follows that commercial television is not afforded the same luxuries as the cinema or premium television. These media may offer a female protagonist who opposes what is normalized and acceptable. Producers need only to secure funding for the film's or show's production and distribution. And though these concerns are not insignificant and can encounter much of the same resistance to the inherently oppositional female protagonist, these roadblocks are generally encountered prior to production. The producers of a commercial television series, on the other hand, must not only secure funding for series production, but must also locate a network to broadcast the series. Since the commercial television network's product is an "audience share" that is marketed to advertisers, and not the actual television series that is marketed to viewers, the producers must be able to (a) identify an audience segment that would potentially watch the show and (b) create the viewing audience. This viewing audience is not just an audience the producers can conceive of, but an audience that Coca-Cola or the Gap can also conceive of (and wish to reach). And it is not enough for Coca-Cola or the Gap to wish to reach the conceived-of audience; they must also believe that the show will reach that audience. It is possible for the advertiser's audience, like the publisher's audience, to be conceived of differently than the creator's (authorial) audience. That is to say, the audience share the advertisers would like to reach could be different from the audience the series' creative team envisions when they originate, write, direct, and edit the series. I explore this idea in relation to *Buffy* below.

The challenge for a television series that presents a resistant female protagonist is twofold. First, there is an "ideological problematic" (Deming 206). As is generally the case with narrative, the audience is expected to identify with the protagonist. However, the audience may accept the position of the protagonist, but not necessarily the norms put forth when that protagonist is a (resistant) female. Like readers joining Rabinowitz's narrative audience, viewers may identify with that protagonist in order to make sense of the series, but they may not accept the ideologies implied by it, especially if those ideologies subvert dominant power structures. Further, media scholars have noted (Allen; Deming; Dow; Kaplan) that viewers are more likely to accept, than resist, the dominant ideology, preserving – rather than resisting – existing power structures and social norms. One primary factor in this tendency to comply is the viewer's "television archives," their "memories of past programs and surrounding discourses" (Deming 207), which are generally more likely to support dominant ideologies. Additionally, codes for the preferred "readings" are easier for audiences to acquire, making them easier and more likely than resistant readings. Even if readers are inclined to a resistant "reading," they must first understand the dominant meaning in the series in order to resist it (Dow). The dominant constantly constrains resistance.

The second challenge in constituting a female audience for a television series that presents a resistant female protagonist is the unsettled nature of women as consumers. As one scholar notes, even as recently as the late 1980's, the majority of advertising directed at women centered on products for men and children (Nightingale 28). This limited commitment by advertisers to women as audiences constitutes the patriarchally defined

desired image, a narrow conception of women as mothers and housewives that cannot accommodate the complexity of contemporary women's lives—or, for that matter, consumption. The projected image cannot, for example, meet the needs of young consumers or women who choose neither to marry nor to have children. In addition, women who do marry and have children are doing so later in life. Entire generations of women are not having their needs met, and are therefore not appropriately constructed as an audience (or a commercial "you") by this narrow conception. Interestingly, restricted notions of the female audience provide greater opportunities for resistance. In other words, any woman who is not a wife or mother has resistant potential.

### A Trajectory of Resistance

Thinking about the construction of *Buffy*'s female audience in the context of its appropriateness to its particular cultural context and the constraints of its medium raises a number of interesting questions. For example, *Buffy* began its run at the height of "girl power pop-feminisms" (Woodlock par. 1) and it aired primarily as a part of a teen-focused programming line-up. We can assume, then, that the advertiser's audience is the powerful young female consumer discussed earlier. Though the series' first two seasons were popular with female viewers, the median age of those viewers was 29 (Rogers). Was the series missing its target audience, constructing instead an older, more experienced group? Or, was there a discrepancy between the audience imagined by advertiser's and the one the constructed by the series? The answer is probably both. *Buffy*, along with *Xena: Warrior Princess* and *La Femme Nikita*, was in the first wave of action-adventure series with female

protagonists, and it was the first of these series to air on a broadcast network. The other two series aired on commercial cable networks, the former in syndication and the latter as a USA Network original series. The ground was untested, and the possibilities for audience construction unknown. There were two other hour-long dramas on broadcast network television that centered on women, *Touched by an Angel* and *Ally McBeal*, but they functioned more like the contemporary episodic dramas as described by Ventura. With the territory primarily unexplored by network television, it is not surprising that the series would construct an audience beyond, both in addition to and different from, its target. Additionally, the series creators may have intended to construct an audience different from the one imagined by the advertisers. As creator Joss Whedon puts it, "I designed *Buffy* to be an icon, to be an emotional experience, to be loved in a way that other shows can't be loved. ... I wanted people to internalize it, and make up fantasies where they were in the story, to take it home with them, for it to exist beyond the TV show" (Robinson par. 32). This nearly religious commitment to the creation of a series and construction of an audience goes beyond the advertiser's desire to reach potential consumers. Whedon's commitment to making such subjectivity available to viewers obviously met an unforeseen need, but as the female protagonist, Buffy's resistant potential was mitigated. The addition of the second slayer, and by extension the optional second subject position, allowed the audience to go to, as Whedon puts it, "that dark place that we all want to go to on some level or another" (Robinson par. 34).

The opportunities for resistance afforded by Faith reach far beyond occupying the subject position she presents. As discussed earlier, Faith's resistance empowered Buffy to break away from the Council at the end of the third season. Beyond that, her mere existence enabled the series to test other boundaries. For example, during the series' fourth season, Willow's friendship with her fellow Wicca Tara develops into a romantic relationship that lasts until Tara's death in the sixth season. Unlike the ratings-grabbing attempts by other series (e.g., *Ally McBeal*), the couple's first onscreen kiss was not promoted. Instead, it occurred as a natural moment during an episode in season five that focused on Joyce's death. After the fifth season, *Buffy* moved from the teen- and family-oriented WB Network to UPN; during the series' seventh and final season, Willow and her girlfriend Kennedy engage in broadcast network television's first onscreen lesbian sex scene. In the season directly following the move to UPN, the series explores much darker terrain. Buffy engages in a purely sexual relationship with the vampire Spike. After she ends the affair, he attempts to rape her. Buffy's younger sister Dawn, tortured by their mother's death, becomes a kleptomaniac and experiments with self-mutilation. Warren, one of the season's villains, kills two women (including Willow's girlfriend Tara) and shoots and nearly kills Buffy. Willow, an increasingly powerful witch, becomes addicted to magic and avenges Tara's death by brutally killing Warren. In the final episode of the season, she nearly destroys the world. As a series populated in large part by demons, *Buffy* never had a shortage of horrific behavior. But in the examples from season six, with the exception of Spike's attempted rape, all of these horrific acts were committed by humans. Interestingly, as the human behavior

begins to mirror demon behavior, the shows humanity becomes more real. By taking all of the characters, including Buffy, to "that dark place" the series offers a number of resistant subject positions that better reflect the contemporary ambiguity as discussed by Ventura.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Reframing the notion of audience as constructed by a complex of discursive procedures is a complicated process, and applying that reframed notion to the construction of a commercial television audience, especially audience that is as problematic as the female audience of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. It seems that highlighting the ways in which discursive practices of characters and the formation of subjectivities by/within the text work to construct the audience provides meaningful insight into the ways in which power relationships are manifested by/within it. If the goal of the commercial television network is to manufacture segmented audiences that are easily identifiable demographically (e.g., women, 18-34 years old), the problematic character of the female audience and the nature of the medium complicate this endeavor. As Mulvey illustrates, identification with a female protagonist constitutes an oppositional subject position for the audience. As a commercial medium, television is invested in maintenance of dominant ideology, but it must construct the commercial "you" for female consumers to identify with. Commercial television must find some way to mitigate maintenance of traditional power structures and create a basis for identification for the female viewing audience.

*Buffy* reconciles its resistance of traditional ideologies with maintenance of dominant power structures in a number of ways. First, since the power available to the slayer(s) is a uniquely feminine, supernatural power, Buffy is able to wield a form of power without overtly subverting dominant societal power. The subversive power is extended when a second, optional (more resistant) subject position is made available for the audience to

identify with in the form of the vampire slayer Faith. By problematizing this second, optional subject position with ambiguities, *Buffy* fulfills multiple purposes: (a) it again does not overtly subvert societal power and (b) it responds to the ambiguity and boundlessness of its time. As the series matures, and the audience it has constructed begins to solidify, the resistance born of Faith is transferred to other, nearly all, characters. Through negotiated resistance and optional subject positions, *Buffy* is able to construct multiple audiences, meeting the needs of a variety of demographic groups. Initially, the kairotic moment to which *Buffy* responds necessitates nothing more than an adjustment of the strategies and tactics required to address certain audiences successfully. As Dow puts it in her discussion of the hegemony present *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*, "Enough difference is introduced to give the appearance of change, yet enough remains the same to avoid upsetting the balance within the dominant ideology" (Dow). But what starts as appropriation of discourse or commodification of a social movement, when envisioned by producers like Joss Whedon, may enable changes in the nature of dominant ideologies.

In the end, this discussion may raise more questions than it answers. There are multiple sources of discursive clues in commercial television—advertising, network breaks that announce upcoming programming, actual programming—that can signal what is expected from the audience. In addition to the commercial television series' discursive practices discussed at length here, and the advertisers' attempts to create a commercial "you," network breaks present affiliations with particular ideologies. For example, teasers for evening newscasts or radar images of local weather suggest what others in the viewers' area

do (or should) find interesting or important. Trailers for upcoming programming like similar series or a special movie event function like a friendly and informed recommendation—"If you like *Friends*, you'll love the special movie presentation *Behind the Camera: Charlie's Angels*" or "If you enjoy the suspense of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, stay tuned for the kidnapping drama *Without a Trace*." Multiple sources with multiple purposes working to construct the already problematic female television audience make fertile ground for future exploration.

Beyond the multiple sources producing discursive clues, a number of other issues arise for discussion. For example, subscription cable television networks function almost as a different medium from commercial broadcast television. In fact, HBO's tagline boldly asserts, "It's not TV. It's HBO." In a recent interview, *Sopranos* writer and producer David Chase comments on the differences between commercial and subscription network television, remarking that commercial television's "first priority is to push a lifestyle (Gross)":

And I think the programming is subservient to [selling products], a handmaiden to that. Of course they're trying to sell those things on the commercials, but the programming ... what they're trying to sell is that everything's okay, all the time, that this is a great nation, and a wonderful society, and everything's okay. ... There's some indefinable vision of America that they're constantly trying to push, as opposed to actually trying to be entertaining. (Gross)

An increasing number of cable television's series include female protagonists, and an examination of the ways in which they construct their female audiences, and whether and how they contrast with the vision of commercial television as presented by Chase, may also prove illuminating. HBO's award-winning *Sex in the City* and Showtime's recent *The L Word* have proved popular with both audiences and critics alike. These series openly portray women having, and dealing with, sex. The latter may be especially topical as it has heterosexual, gay, and bi-sexual characters. A number of questions surrounding network television arise as well, such as how do power structures develop in commercial television series that do not conveniently offer a uniquely feminine, supernatural power to their protagonists? Additionally, how do products such as TiVo, which offer viewers the ability to create distinctive viewing experiences by pausing and rewinding live television, alter the construction of the commercial television audience? The experience may become refracted, a hybrid of traditional commercial television and subscription cable television, but that remains to be seen. This thesis scratches the surface of the relationship between television and its audience. Since nearly all American households own at least one television set, continued excavation is warranted.

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**APPENDICES**

## Appendix 1: Discourse Sample 1

### Transcription Conventions

.	sentence-ending intonation
,	phrasal-ending intonation
?	question-ending intonation
:	lengthening
...	pause
Underscore	slight emphasis
ALL CAPS	strong emphasis
[]	bracketed phrases overlap
()	parenthetical phrases indicate action

- BUFFY: (1) Faith wait.  
 (2) Look I know this new guy's a dork but  
 (3) Weh, I have nothing to follow that  
 (4) He's pretty much just a dork  
 FAITH: (5) You're actually gonna take orders from 'im?  
 Buffy: (6) ...'is the job,  
 (7) What else can we do?  
 Faith: (8) Whatever we want.  
 (9) We're the slayers girlfriend, the chosen two.  
 (10) Why should HE take all the fun out of it?  
 Buffy: (11) That'd be tragic.  
 (12) Taking all the fun out of slaying, stabbing, beheading.  
 Faith: (13) Oh like you don't dig it.  
 Buffy: (14) I don't.  
 Faith: (15) You're a liar.  
 (16) I've se:en you.  
 (17) Tell me stakin a vamp doesn't get you a little bit juiced.  
 (18) Come on say't...  
 (Both stop walking. FAITH looks at BUFFY who responds by smiling,  
 first looking away and then down.)  
 (19) (laugh) You can't fool me,  
 (20) The look in your eyes right after a kill,  
 (21) You jus get hun:gry for more.  
 Buffy: (22) You're way off base.  
 Faith: (23) Tell me that if you don't get in a good slayin  
 (24) After awhile  
 (25) You just start itching for some vamp to show up  
 (26) So you can give 'im a good UHN.

Buffy: (27) ... A:gain with the grunting.  
(28) You realize that I'm not comfortable with this.

FAITH: (29) Hey, slaying's what we're built for.  
(30) If you're not enjoying it,  
(31) You're doin somethin wrong.  
(FAITH begins to walk away.)

Buffy: (32) ... What about the assignment?  
(FAITH turns to face BUFFY, but continues to walk backwards.)

FAITH (33) Tell ya what,  
(34) You do the homework,  
(35) And I'll copy yours.  
(FAITH turns and leaves. BUFFY watches her walk away).

## Appendix 2: Discourse Sample 2

### Transcription Conventions

.	sentence-ending intonation
,	phrasal-ending intonation
?	question-ending intonation
:	lengthening
...	pause
Underscore	slight emphasis
ALL CAPS	strong emphasis
[]	bracketed phrases overlap
()	parenthetical phrases indicate action

- BUFFY: (1) (Knocks) Faith, it's me.  
 (FAITH crosses room and opens door.)  
 BUFFY: (2) Hey.  
 FAITH: (3) ... Hey.  
 (FAITH turns back to BUFFY and crosses room. BUFFY enters, closing door behind her, and follows FAITH.)  
 BUFFY: (4) ... So I uh ... Howeryadoin?  
 FAITH: (5) I'm awright. You know me.  
 BUFFY: (6) ... Faith we need to talk about what we're gonna do.  
 FAITH: (7) There's nothing to talk about. I was doin my job.  
 BUFFY: (8) ... Being a slayer is not the same as being a killer.  
 (9) ... Faith please don't shut me out here.  
 (10) Look, sooner or later, we're gonna have to deal.  
 FAITH: (11) Wrong.  
 BUFFY: (12) We can help each other.  
 FAITH: (13) I don't need it.  
 BUFFY: Yeah? Who's wrong now?  
 (14) Faith, you can shut off all the emotions that you want,  
 (15) but eventually they're gonna find a body.  
 FAITH: (16) ... Okay this is the la:st time we're gonna have this conversation  
 and  
 (17) we're not even having it now you understand me?  
 (18) There is no body.  
 (19) I took it .. weighted it .. and dumped it.  
 (20) The body doesn't exist.

BUFFY: (21) Getting rid of the evidence doesn't make the problem go away.  
FAITH: (22) It does for me.  
BUFFY: (23) Faith, you don't get it. You killed a ma:n.  
FAITH: (24) N:o. You don't get it. I don't care.

### Appendix 3: Discourse Sample 3

#### Transcription Conventions

.	sentence-ending intonation
,	phrasal-ending intonation
?	question-ending intonation
:	lengthening
...	pause
Underscore	slight emphasis
ALL CAPS	strong emphasis
[]	bracketed phrases overlap
()	parenthetical phrases indicate action

- FAITH: So the Mayor of Sunnydale's a black hat. ...
- (1) Tha's a sh:ocker, hunh?
- BUFFY: (2) Actually, y:eah. ...
- (3) I didn't get the bad-guy vibe off of em.
- FAITH: (4) Whenerya gonna learn, B?
- (5) It doesn't matter what kinda vi:be you get offa person
- (6) cuz nine times outta ten
- (7) (Buffy stops walking.)
- (8) the face they're showing you is not the real one.  
(Buffy turns to Faith.)
- BUFFY: (9) I guess you'd know a lot about that.  
(Faith stops and turns to Buffy.)
- FAITH: (10) ... W:hat is that supposed to mean?
- BUFFY: (11) It's just
- (12) look at you Faith,
- (13) less than twenty-four hours ago,
- (14) you killed a man,
- (15) an..and now it's all zip-a-dee-doo-dah.
- (16) It's not your real face,
- (17) and I know it.
- (18) Look, I know whatcher feeling
- (19) because I'm feeling it, too.
- FAITH: (20) Do you?
- (21) So fill me in
- (22) cuz I'd like to hear this.
- BUFFY: (23) D:irty.
- (24) Like something sick creeped inside you and you can't get it out.
- (25) And you keep hoping it was just some nightmare but it wasn't.

(26) And we're gonna have to [figure out]  
 FAITH: (27) [Is there] going to be an inter:mission  
 ... in this?  
 BUFFY: (28) Just let me talk to Giles okay [I swear]  
 FAITH: (29) [NO.]  
 (30) We're not bringing ANYbody else into this. ...  
 (31) Ya gotta keep your head, B.,  
 (32) this is all gonna blow over in a few days.  
 BUFFY: (33) And if it doesn't?  
 FAITH: (34) If it doesn't?  
 (35) They got a freighter leavin the docks at least twice a day.  
 (36) It ain't fancy, but it gets you gone.  
 BUFFY: (37) And that's it?  
 (38) You just live with it?  
 (39) You see the dead guy in your head everyday for the rest of your  
 life?  
 FAITH: (40) Buffy, I'm not gonna SEE anything.  
 (41) I missed the mark last night,  
 (42) and I'm sorry about the guy,  
 (43) I REALLY am,  
 (44) but it HAPPENS.  
 (45) Anyways, how many people do you think we've saved by now?  
 THOUSANDS?  
 (46) And didn't you stop the world from ending?  
 (47) Because in my book?  
 (48) That puts you and me in the plus column.  
 BUFFY (49) We help people.  
 (50) It doesn't mean we can do whatever we want.  
 FAITH: (51) Why n:ot?  
 (52) Guy I offed was no Ghandi.  
 (53) I mean we just saw he was mixed up in dirty dealings.  
 BUFFY: (54) Maybe.  
 (55) ... But what if he was coming to us for help?  
 FAITH: (56) What if he was?  
 (57) You're still not seeing the big picture, B.  
 (58) Something made us different.  
 (59) We're warriors.  
 (60) We're built to kill.  
 BUFFY: (61) To kill DEMONS.  
 (62) But it does not mean we get to pass judgment on people  
 (63) like we're better than everyone [else].  
 FAITH: (64) [We] ARE better. ...

(65) That's right. .. BETTER.  
(66) People need US to survive.  
(67) In the balance?  
(68) nobody's gonna cry over some random by-stander  
(69) who got caught in the crossfire.  
BUFFY: (70) I am.  
FAITH (71) ... That's your loss.

#### Appendix 4: Discourse Sample 4

##### Transcription Conventions

.	sentence-ending intonation
,	phrasal-ending intonation
?	question-ending intonation
:	lengthening
...	pause
Underscore	slight emphasis
ALL CAPS	strong emphasis
[]	bracketed phrases overlap
()	parenthetical phrases indicate action

- FAITH: (1) You don't give up do you?
- BUFFY: (2) Not on my friends, no.
- FAITH: (3) Ye:ah, cuz you and me are such SOLID buds, right.
- BUFFY: (4) We could be.
- (5) It's not too late.
- FAITH: (6) For me to cha:nge and be more like you, you mean?
- (7) Little Miss Goody Two Shoes?
- (8) It ain't gonna happen B.
- BUFFY: (9) Faith nobody is asking you to be like me.
- (10) But you can't go on like this.
- FAITH: (11) It s:cares you, doesn't it.
- BUFFY: (12) Y:eah, it scares me.
- (13) Ya- Faith you're hurting people, you're hurting yourself.
- FAITH: (14) That's not it.
- (15) That's not what bo:thers you so much.
- (16) What bugs you is you know I'm right
- (17) You know in your gut we don't NEED the law, we ARE the law
- BUFFY: (18) N:o.
- FAITH: (19) Yes.
- (20) You know exactly what I'm about because you have it in you too.
- BUFFY: (21) No.
- (22) Faith you're sick.
- FAITH: (23) I've seen it B,
- (24) You've got the lust,
- (25) And I'm not just talking about screwing vampires

BUFFY: (26) Don't you da:re bring him into this.

FAITH: (27) It was good, wasn't it,  
(28) The s:ex, the dan:ger.  
(29) I bet a part of you even dug'im when he went psy:cho.

BUFFY: (30) ... No.

FAITH: (31) See you need me to toe the line because you're afraid you'll go over it aren't you B  
(32) You can't handle seein me living my own way havin a blast because it tempts you  
(33) You know it could be you  
(BUFFY slaps FAITH)

FAITH: (34) The:re's my girl.

BUFFY: (35) No.  
(36) I'm not gonna do this.

FAITH: (37) Why not?  
(38) Feels good,  
(39) Blood rising.  
(Crate falls and lands on BUFFY.)