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Never Hurt the Feelings of a Brutal Killer:

Spike and the Underground Man

Buffy (to Spike): Look at you, you idiot. Poor Spikey. Can't be a human, can't be a vampire. Where the hell do you fit in? ("Smashed" 6009)

(1) The psychological embodiment of a schism: dreaming turned sour and strong will without direction, resulting in an anti-hero who suffers greatly from an inability to properly define himself and the role he is meant to play. It is not difficult to think of describing the popular *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* character of Spike in this manner. As the sensitive and introspective William he is alienated from human society and so turns to the demonic realm where at least the inhuman parts of his nature can find proper expression. Later, a microchip-shackled Spike finds himself prevented from acting as a monster and thus from taking on the role of a villain. Despite the subsequent reemergence of some of the more human parts of his nature, however, he is little more accepted as a real hero than he had come to be as a serious villain. Can't be a true force of good, can't be a true force of evil, just where *does* Spike fit in?

(2) In terms of *Buffy* scholarship, a place as been found for "poor Spikey" readily enough. To Freudian theory, for example, the vampire Spike represents the id and the human William its repression by the superego, while according to Jung he may be seen as both the shadow self which reflects Buffy's dark side and as her animus (she functioning as his anima in turn).[1] Excellent arguments have been put forward for reading Spike in this way (see Wilcox for example). What this essay will do is draw the psychoanalytic reading back a step, tying the character in with the literary work which did much to inspire Freud's theories, that is to say, with the writing of Dostoevsky. In particular, Spike will be likened to Dostoevsky's Underground Man, the alienated and dual-natured anti-hero first encountered in *Notes from Underground* (1864) and continued in *Crime and Punishment* (1866).

(3) The actual term "Underground Man" comes from the unnamed protagonist of *Notes from Underground*, but it applies equally well to various versions of the sick, spiteful, lonely hero found in Dostoevsky's works. In an introduction to *Notes from Underground*, Jessie Coulson describes the Underground Man as "a man turned in upon himself, a man of heightened awareness and self-consciousness, whose sensitivity to slights drives him alternately to retreat into his corner, his underground, and to revenge himself for his humiliations in humiliating others." The underground in this context is a metaphor for a psychological or spiritual state rather than a physical setting. In *Buffy*, the underground is also given concrete and literal form as Spike's crypt. Though the practical aspect of subterranean living for the vampire is obvious, the manner in which the space is presented to the viewer suggests that it is more than just a retreat from the killing rays of the sun. It is the place he chooses as his haven when his inability to feed on humans and his newfound pleasure in killing demons result in his rejection by the demon world; a place where he practices speeches to a mannequin clad in Buffy's stolen clothing; and in general a place for sulking, ranting, pacing, kinky sex and the occasional ill-planned black market demon egg scheme. Even when Buffy enters the crypt, there is an unspoken acknowledgment that she is entering his world. In essence, "My house, my rules." ("Crush" 5014). The Underground Man finds such refuge essential, for he is convinced that all of the world outside is against him and exists primarily to thwart his designs (Preben 32-3).

(4) Rejection and alienation are central to the character of the Underground Man. He feels separated from his peers and from society in general, and so he seeks out a state of isolation which renders this separation even more real and literal. He is at once scornful of others and hurt that they care as little for him as he professes to care for them. In *Notes from Underground* this leads to feverish and more than a little ridiculous plots to take revenge on an officer who has offended him by purposely colliding with the man in the street or to snub old school friends who respond with genuine and unfeigned indifference. In *Crime and Punishment* the protagonist, Raskolnikov, reasons that he is not simply isolated from but actually above society and sets out to prove this through the brutal yet (according to his rationale) justifiable murder of an old pawnbroker, simply "one of those acts which one must commit to be sure of escaping the limits of ordinary humanity" (Madaule 43).

(5) This facet of the Underground Man is most applicable to Spike as he appears throughout the second half of Season Four of *Buffy*. After the implanting of the chip which prevents him from harming humans in "The Initiative" (4007) he can neither participate in vampire society nor can he join human society. There is some suggestion that the Scoobies might be willing to accept him, but Spike is scornful of the idea:

GILES: Thinking about your affliction -- as well as your newly discovered ability to fight only demons. It occurs to me - and I realize it's against your nature - but have you considered there may be a higher purpose--

SPIKE: Aagh. Made me lose count. What are you still doing here?

GILES: Talking to myself, apparently. ("The I in Team" 4013)

Spike is contemptuous of the Scoobies and vehement about his desire to have nothing further to do when them. At the same time, he refuses to leave Sunnydale, citing plans to take revenge on the Initiative for what they have done to him. These great plans come to little more than attempting to stir up trouble between Buffy and Riley by trying to implicate Riley in Professor Walsh's foiled plan to kill the Slayer ("Goodbye Iowa" 4014). And, despite his ongoing variations in the key of "I can't stand the lot of you." ("Entropy" 6018), it is clear quite early on that Spike's assertions of his disregard for the Scoobies belie, if not always a need for their unconditional acceptance, a need for their recognition and respect. If he truly did not care what Xander or Giles thought of him, then he would not be continually be drawn into "trading jabs" with them, particularly when they (at least initially) are much more authentic in their disregard. Xander's response in "Crush" to the observation that he might have hurt Spike's feelings with his dismissive "Hey, Evil Dead, you're in my seat." is at first meant as a joke. "You should never hurt the feelings of a brutal killer" indeed.

(6) Rejected by those whom he at once looks down upon and requires the regard of, the Underground Man retreats to his hole in the ground. His time is spent "resenting his situation, hatching elaborate revenge plots but never acting upon them" (Johnston). For all his seething about those who have wittingly or unwittingly humiliated and offended him, though, there is a part of the Underground Man which is plagued by inaction. This may seem the antithesis of Spike, and indeed by Season Six Buffy and Dawn have come to rely on him as an active fighting force. However, by that point his regard for Buffy has inspired the beginnings of an emergence from the underground and a desire to manifest within himself some measure of the good she embodies. More on this later. The Underground Man fails to be a man of action because he is too preoccupied with his own struggle with alienation, with "the abyss into which he sank of his own will" (Madaule 44).

(7) The inaction of the Underground Man is not total, rather it tends simply to be a function of erratic and often ineffectual *action*. Though the chipped Spike of Season Four is furious about his "little trip to the vet" and dearly hopes that some harm will come to the Scoobies, his efforts to either be rid of the chip or find some way of hurting Buffy and her friends that will not result in a migraine are not nearly as serious as one would expect from someone Riley later characterizes as "deadly, amoral and opportunistic" ("As You Were" 6015). Given Spike's understandable humiliation and rage at having been rendered vampirically impotent, one would think he would make the chip's removal more of a priority than the two occasions in which he has made an actual attempt to be rid of it ("New Moon Rising" 4019 – "Primeval" 4021, in which Adam makes a deal with and double-crosses him; "Out of My Mind" 5004, in which he and Harmony kidnap Riley's military doctor who fakes the removal procedure) [2]. Though the problem is attacked with gusto at the end of Season Four, when we next see Spike in "Buffy vs. Dracula" (5001), it appears to have left his mind entirely. Instead, he is busy disparaging Dracula and acting offended that the count came to Sunnydale in search of Buffy and not him. As for "Out of My Mind," the episode which begins with Spike looking forward to being able to at long last kill and eat Buffy ends with him realizing that he is hopelessly in love with her. The issue of dealing with the chip is promptly forgotten. Likewise, his efforts to hurt the Scoobies in ways which do not rely solely on sarcasm and character assassination tend to be impulsive and fleeting.

(8) This trend of sporadically attempted, often abortive action is distinctly at odds with Angel's assertion when we first meet Spike in Season Two: "Once he starts something he doesn't stop until everything in his path is dead." ("School Hard" 2003). The statement would presumably have been true for that time period, when Spike was motivated by a desire to please and to protect his sire and paramour Drusilla. After her rejection of him, he retains his strength of will he possessed before, but it has become a will lacking in direction. He now oscillates seemingly at random between rash, violent action and equally violent self-pity, something which is apparent even as early as "Lover's Walk" (3008). Drusilla having just left him at this point, he comes storming back to Sunnydale to take his

revenge of Angel and Buffy, who he blames entirely for his misfortune. Then he decides that it is Drusilla who needs to be punished -- "I'm going to get what's mine... Teach her to walk out on me." -- and forces Willow to undertake a love spell which will compel his ex to come crawling back to him. From a rather effectively frightening menacing of the novice witch, Spike is next found drinking cocoa in the Summers' kitchen and whining about his love life to a sympathetic Joyce. One good fight later and he has remembered his mantra of violence as fun and excitedly heads off back from whence he came. Of course the viewer knows from "The Harsh Light of Day" (4003) that Drusilla soon leaves him again, inspiring him to come back to Sunnydale and make another abortive attempt on Buffy's life.

(9) Just why is the Underground Man's will so chaotic? Spike's answer to this regarding himself would be immediate and indignant: "It's the chip. Steel and wires and silicon. It won't let me be a monster. And I can't be a man." ("Seeing Red" 6019). He cannot accept that it is his own nature and not his "little handicap" which makes him such a tangled web of psychological traits. As should be apparent from the above paragraph, however, Spike was having difficulty deciding upon and attaining a means of self-fulfillment long before the Initiative got hold of him. Though certainly magnified by it, the conflict does not stem from the chip but from his latent humanity, something which the demon in "Villains" (6020) seems to sense:

VOICE: Look what she's reduced you to.

SPIKE: It's this bloody chip, not-

VOICE: You were a legendary dark warrior - and you let yourself be castrated.

The "she" here is Buffy and the demon's mention of castration refers not to the chip but to the effect her goodness has had on Spike in inspiring very human feelings of love. There always was some measure of humanity in Spike, embodied by his devotion to Drusilla[3], but she herself was a creature of darkness and thus desired from him darker expressions of love -- sentimental presents of jewelry might please her for a moment, but the gift of a fresh human heart would bring her far greater pleasure -- and so everyone (viewers, the demon world and the vampire himself) found little cause to doubt that his nature remained primarily evil.

THE JUDGE (of Spike and Drusilla): You two stink of humanity. You share affection and jealousy.
SPIKE: Yeah, what of it? ("Surprise" 2013)

At this point, his humanity functions as what Christopher Golden aptly describes in his novel about Spike and Dru's pre-Sunnydale days as "a phantom limb": a small presence, as annoying as it is disturbing, which can be easily shrugged off. By Season Six, this minorly troubling and ultimately ignorable phantom limb has grown into a whole other self, a double. It is the resulting duality, the "diametric contrast of his humanity with his evilness" (Spah) which leads to the character's sense of inner chaos, a sense which increases in strength as the questions increase in scope.

(10) No longer is it sufficient for Spike to question whether it would be better to kill the Slayer today or Saturday, to drag Dru back or simply mope because she is gone. By the end of Season Four he has come to question whether he is defined by action or inaction (though he still blames the latter on the chip). At the end of Season Five and throughout Season Six he has arrived at the truly big questions: is he evil or good, psychologically inhuman or human, monster or man? Furthermore, he has lost all certainty of which of these he wants to be. As Victoria Spah points out, the "I know that I'm a monster. But you treat me like a man." line in "The Gift" (5022) demonstrates that at this moment, Spike is humbly grateful at having been thus elevated in her estimation. Later, after Buffy has kissed and then rejected him anew, Spike decides that he would rather be a monster, even if this requires a bit of a self-pep-talk to make himself believe this is indeed his true nature:

Creature of the night, here yeah? Some people forget that. [...] Just because she's confused about where she fits in, I'm supposed to be too? 'Cause I'm not. I know what I am. I'm dangerous. I'm evil. ("Smashed")
The fact of the matter is that he is at least as confused as Buffy when it comes to matters of identity. After his attempted rape of Buffy in "Seeing Red"[4] -- an act which shows he still could indeed be dangerous, albeit in the most disastrously human of ways -- we find him having retreated to the underground of his crypt, asking himself back to back questions: "What have I done?" and "Why didn't I do it?" As with Raskolnikov, even in the face of a violent act he

has not lost the ability to see the difference between good and evil.[5] He is certain that someone who would do such a thing cannot be good, yet a truly evil being would have felt none of the remorse which torments him. At what the shooting script for the episode describes as an all time low for Spike's self-loathing (just as Raskolnikov was at a similar point in the narrative of *Crime and Punishment* "reduced ... to the level of the most humble and despised" (Madaule 45), he realizes he cannot be wholly a monster or a man.

(11) In his inability to align himself with one pole or the other or to simply accept the paradox that two opposite impulses might exist in the same space, he comes to embody the schism which often appears in the writing of Dostoevsky. This duality occurs even in the rare case in which the writer creates a good character, such as Prince Leo Myshkin from *The Idiot* whose name means "lion mouse". The symbolism of the name Raskolnikov as far more abrupt and violent, for a *raskol* in Russian literally means "split" or "schism" and is also a term used to refer to the sharp end of an ax or hatchet, which happens to be Raskolnikov's murder weapon of choice. Although Rhonda Wilcox is quite right in her assertion that Spike as a name is clearly phallic and functions as a reflection of the highly masculinized persona he has created for himself, I would argue that it can also be taken as a variation of the *raskol*. In the case of both Raskolnikov and Spike, the name is derived from a standard work implement which has been transformed by the context of use into a horrific weapon. Although a railroad spike is not in itself quite so obviously conducive to the notion of splitting or being split in two as the cutting blade of an ax, the sharp end of the spike is flat like a chisel and could be used in a similar manner, as a means of widening and ultimately splitting an object along a fault line or point of weakness. To apply this symbolism to Spike, we could say that humanity has always been present in him in the form of a hairline crack which with time and events has grown in size until it could no longer be shrugged off with a flippant "Yeah, what of it?". The original point of weakness came from his very human love for Drusilla, something which Buffy capitalized on in "Lie to Me" (2007), threatening to kill her as a means of forcing Spike to call off a small massacre.[6] When his love later comes to be directed towards the Slayer herself, by definition a force for good, the hairline crack becomes a great rift.

(12) For the protagonist of *Notes from Underground*, love is ultimately impossible due to a failure of courage which leaves him unable to venture far enough out of his underground to properly engage life and form meaningful connections with others. This is appropriate for a novel which deals with themes of rejection and rebellion. For the protagonist of *Crime and Punishment*, love is not only possible but presented as a key means of redemption. This is not to say that the character arc of either Raskolnikov or Spike follows the cardinal rule of romance novels which states that love is the answer and never the problem, far from it, for love here at once brings great suffering and offers a chance for renewal and regeneration. Indeed, Anthony Khrapovitsky writes that "Regeneration is what Dostoevsky wrote about in all his novels: repentance and regeneration, falling into sin, and correction. . . ." Love is both an inspiration and a prize, but it is not without cost.[7]

(13) The idea that love involves the hero's inner struggle with the less positive aspects of his own nature and has the power "to elevate him to a higher moral plane" is not unique to Dostoevsky and should indeed be well-known to those familiar with the mythos of Courtly Love (Spah). It is still of interest to take note of Dostoevsky's version, though, for the Underground Man shares some of the darker and more destructive qualities which are a part of Spike's nature and which Courtly Love tradition cannot so easily subsume. Although both the courtly lover and the Underground Man exhibit similar symptoms of their emotionally disturbed state: the insomnia, the weeping, and the self-questioning, the Underground Man invariably takes his responses that much lower in terms of self-debasement and general depravity. The opening line of *Notes from Underground* reads: "I am a sick man. . . . I am an angry man." By the end of the first page, he has confessed to his great capacity for spite and the delight he takes in hurting peoples' feelings. Though the writer gives him flashes of perceptiveness which may make him appear momentarily heroic, the Underground Man is an antihero.[8] Observed through the filter of Courtly Love, the viewer may find some discomfort in watching the enamored lover quickly descend from rehearsing his declaration of love to symbolically assaulting his beloved by angrily beating his Buffy mannequin with the box of chocolates he intended to give to the real Buffy ("Triangle" 5011), or in the funny yet disturbing John Cleese-style yelling fit from "Crush" in which he blames his torment on his past and future loves whom he has tied up and decides that the rational thing to do would be to kill them both. The literal assault upon the beloved in "Seeing Red" struck many as deeply disturbing and led to a spate of internet forum postings in the spring of 2002 in which fans argued over whether or not there is any apology which could be made for his actions and thus whether or not it is socially acceptable to remain a fan of the character. While one would have to offer a great deal of explanation as to why a courtly lover would commit such an act, for the Underground Man it is par for the course.

(14) It could be said that Spike's attempted rape is born of the same instincts and serves the same narrative function as Raskolnikov's murder of the old pawnbroker. The simple destructive urge which acts as a foil for the Underground Man's impulse to do good is partly to blame. Another motivating factor is the desire for existential freedom. Raskolnikov murders to assert his individuality and to prove that he is a free agent who is not bound by the rules of society. It is implied in "Fool for Love" (5007) that Spike got any major quarrels he might have had with society's rules out of his system over the course of his first years as a vampire when, as he later tells Buffy, he decided to make a few rules of his own. The lack of freedom he experiences comes from his attachment to the woman he loves.

You think I like having you here?! Destroying everything that was me until all that's left is you in a dead shell. You say you hate it but you won't leave. ("Crush")
This is Spike's first real rebellion against the "invasive Buffy-force" which is slowly but surely undermining his once prized sense of evilness and turning him into a mirror for her goodness. While the Courtly Love model requires qualifiers to deal with such clear rebellion against the good influence of the lady, for the Underground Man rebellion for the sake of personal freedom (and indeed simply for the sake of rebellion) is a hallmark of the character.

Where did all the sages get the idea that a man's desires must be noble and virtuous? Why do they imagine that he must inevitably will what is reasonable and profitable? What a man needs is simply and solely *independent* volition, whatever that independence may cost and wherever it may lead. *Notes from Underground*

In this light, Spike's base and violent act in "Seeing Red" is the ultimate rebellion against the ennobling force of the lady. It also functions as a means of asserting his right to existential choice regardless of how damaging that choice might be.[9] Through making bad choices, however, he may be brought to the realization that total freedom can only lead to chaos, something he has decided he does not desire.

(15) Nicholas Berdyaev writes of human freedom as an ordeal in that it obliges individuals to face and to question its moral limits. For him, the evil encountered in the writings of Dostoevsky can be viewed as "the path of man, his tragic path, the fate of one who is free, an experience which can also enrich man, raise him to a higher plane."[10] In *Crime and Punishment*, the committing of murder is a necessary step in the process of Raskolnikov's coming to recognize within himself the potential for goodness and to set himself on the path to salvation. In *Buffy*, Spike's action results in feelings of tremendous remorse which spur him on to taking a definite step towards redemption by having his soul returned to him.[11] Part of Dostoevsky's aim when he writes Raskolnikov is to take a young nihilist and man of action such as his contemporary Turgenev created in his novel *Fathers and Sons* and to break him. This functions both as an exercise in psychology and to create a low point from which the character will be given the opportunity to rebuild as something better than he was before. The parallel to Spike's treatment by *Buffy's* writers is obvious: the threatening villain we first meet in "School Hard" is rendered merely a "comic buffoon" by the episode "Pangs" (4008) in Season Four (Boyette). Again, this is done both because it is interesting to see what will happen and as a means of allowing the character to begin making a slow transition from Evil to Good.

(16) The redemption of Spike has proven a popular topic for internet discussion (the *Bloody Awful Poet Society* web-site actually takes this as its mission statement and has a section dedicated to essays on the topic).[12] Although at the time of writing it looks very much as though he will indeed be redeemed, the specific form this takes and whether it occurs onscreen or beyond the scope of the series is as of yet unclear. One thing that has already become clear, though, is that any eventual redemption of the character will be tied to love. Given that Spike has always been characterized as a "fool for love," how could it be any other way? Love for the Underground Man is a struggle between the warring parts of his nature: it is a struggle between the part of him which desires absolute freedom and the part which desires the moral goodness which the beloved represents, between the part which resents his alienation and the part which dares not leave the stronghold of the underground for the uncertainty of the world above. Guided by the positive influence of his lady (here not an actual Lady but a woman ennobled by her goodness), he begins a process of spiritual regeneration.[13] Love eventually forces him to realize that the steady stream of explanations he arrives at by way of critiquing his past behavior have not after all led him to a level of self-understanding far superior to that of the poor, deluded souls around him.[14]

And he had come back to life, and he knew it, and felt it with every fiber of his renewed being...
He could not think of anything long or continuously that evening or concentrate on anything. Besides, now he would hardly have been able to solve any of his problems consciously; he could only feel. Life had taken the place of dialectics, and something quite different had to work itself out in his mind.

(17) Instead of always engaging in a futile effort to find a rational explanation to his own paradox and then concluding it is everyone else who is crazy -- "Nothing wrong with me, something's wrong with her." ("Smashed") -- the Underground Man who has "come back to life" also comes to accept that basic human (or perhaps more accurately in this case, "humanoid") nature is irresolvable and that he, like everyone else, must balance and navigate between the two polar extremes as best he can.

(18) The redeeming power of love is in its ability to inspire in the Underground Man a desire to strive to come out on the side of good. Dostoevsky does not require that this goodness take on saintly proportions, indeed in his estimation a person who is wholly and exclusively made of good impulses can only be an idiot.[15] As with the courtly lover, the Underground Man who allows himself to be redeemed by love "evolves, becomes something better [...] while staying true to character" (Spah). He will, no doubt, continue to falter, continue to on occasion say and do quite the wrong thing, for he is only just beginning to consider the possibility of a new life above and beyond the underground and still possesses (though he is learning to curb) the irrational and destructive parts of his nature. It is more important to Dostoevsky that the character decides to set out on the journey rather than it is to present conclusive proof of his arrival at the other end. In fact, in the closing passages of *Crime and Punishment* he tells us that Raskolnikov has much farther to go than he realizes, and that trials which he has undergone in the past are not the only ones which will be required of him before he can reach true expiation for his sins.

(19) And this is where, for the present, we leave Spike. In his effort to come as close to the light (where Buffy is) as his nature (both dualistic and vampiric) allows,[16] he has endured punishing and dangerous trials such as withstanding torture by a hellgod and surviving combat with demon opponents. Though the first won him Buffy's respect and the second his soul, Spike clearly has a long way to go before he can look forward to an existence filled with "hugs and puppies". The underground is not behind us just yet. As with Raskolnikov, we can expect any process of rebirth or regeneration to be a gradual one. Even at the end of it, Spike will never be "God's gift" ("Wrecked" 6010) in terms of virtue and perfect goodness, but then as he says himself, that "wouldn't be nearly as interesting, would it?"

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[1] See Wilcox. "'Every Night I Save You'" and Nurss. "Spike as Shadow."

[2] Though viewers were initially led to view Spike's encounter with the demon in "Villains" – "Grave" (6020-6022) as a third unsuccessful attempt at a chipectomy, the episodes "Beneath You" (7002) and "Never Leave Me" (7009) leave no doubt that he sought only his soul.

[3] Victoria Spah discusses at length the elevating and humanizing effects of love on Spike's character in her essay "'Ain't Love Grand?' Spike and Courtly Love."

[4] It has been pointed out in recent entries to a number of fan forums that referring to The Incident as an attempted rape is problematic given Buffy's past pattern of sparring with Spike and saying 'no' but not really meaning it. I am using the word rape here because it is the one Buffy herself uses in "Beneath You" and which Spike acknowledges as an appropriate description of his actions. As with Raskolnikov's actions in *Crime and Punishment*, in this context "crime will be understood only as the *awareness by the subject himself of some moral norm which he has violated*, quite apart from whether this violation has been recognized externally, morally, as a real crime."
Alfred L. Bem. "The Problem of Guilt" in Robert Louis Jackson ed., Twentieth Century Interpretations of Crime and Punishment. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1974, p. 77.

[5] Jacques Madaule. "Raskolnikov," p. 45. "Although he had committed a double murder ... Raskolnikov has not committed the absolute evil. The notion of the distinction between good and evil remains alive in him even when he contemplated his crime." This is presented in contrast with the more absolute evil embodied by the character of Svidrigailov, who would think nothing of inflicting suffering on even the most innocent of people. A similar contrast might be seen with regards to Spike in the character of Angelus, whom the Judge deemed in "Innocence" as being utterly without humanity and who would likely have had no hesitation following through where Spike pulled back.

[6] It is peculiar that Buffy would think this a workable plan given her many later claims that Spike's lack of a soul means he is incapable of love. A likely explanation is that she senses the same thing that the Judge does later in the same season: that Drusilla matters to Spike rather more than is usual among vampires. This explanation is further supported by her later use of verbal attacks on the subject -- "What's the matter Spike? Dru dump you again?" ("Harsh Light of Day") -- as a conscious means of hurting him. As for Buffy's claim that any love a soulless Spike might profess cannot be real, it is clearly an out which allows her not to deal with his love... or the moral implications of the fact that the creatures she nightly kills may possess some very human traits.

[7] Khrapovitsky goes on to say that "The life of all his heroes revolves solely around those moods". This observation applies equally well to Spike's many missteps in his quest to win Buffy and the considerable energy he spends making up for them.
[8] Jackson. "Freedom in *Notes from Underground*" in Dostoevsky Notes from Underground. trans and ed. by Michael R. Katz 180. Similarly, even when he is presented as a largely malevolent force, it is Spike who is not fooled by Buffy and Angel's claims that they are "just friends" ("Lovers' Walk"), who alone can see how broken Willow is in the wake of Oz's departure ("Something Blue") and who predicts that Buffy will eventually succumb to a death wish ("Fool for Love").
[9] Jackson writes that "The Underground Man recognizes that in 'certain circumstances' man may insist on the 'right to desire even the very stupid.' He may, indeed, deliberately desire something that is harmful and stupid" (Jackson, "Freedom" 181).
[10] Though with the final season yet to reach its conclusion at the time of writing it cannot yet be said what will ultimately become of this first step, the comparison to the conclusion of Dostoevsky's novel is still illuminating for he leaves us at a similar point in the narrative, with Raskolnikov having taken a first step towards redemption but facing the prospect of many trials ahead of him yet before he might hope to reach this goal. Some critics of *Crime and Punishment* (Konstantin Mochulsky, for one) have suggested that Raskolnikov will not change after all, the uplifting ending being purely the result of censorship considerations. However, the theme of redemption and expiation through suffering was a favorite of Dostoevsky, and so it is in fact quite logical that he would wish to offer his hero the promise of spiritual regeneration.
[11] It could be argued that this is the point at which Spike has the strongest affinity with the protagonist of *Notes from Underground* in that like Dostoevsky's character, he is himself as serous as ever and yet is not seen by others as one to be taken very seriously (Lord 38-9).
[12] The statement reads as follows: "The Bloody Awful Poet Society continues to champion the redemption of the character 'Spike' on the television series 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer'. We believe that Spike's humanity eventually will triumph" (http://bloodyawfulpoet.com/index.html).
[13] Raskolnikov's love, Sonia, is actually a prostitute, forced into the streets as a means of supporting her family because her dissipated father and terminally ill mother. Her spiritual goodness and sense of morality elevate her and she is intended to be read as a force for good who can inspire goodness in the hero. Though the relationship of leading to supporting character is reversed in *Buffy*, a similarity can still be drawn in that Buffy, whose demeaning Season Six Doublemeat Palace job places her in a position of low social status, still represents a force for good and can thus be an inspiration Spike.
[14] This, of course, only works if the character is able to accepts such a realization; Raskolnikov was in the end able to do so, whereas the protagonist of *Notes from Underground* was not. Fortunately for the sake of happy endings (although 'happy' is as relative and as strange in the worlds created Russian literature as it is in the Buffyverse), Spike's affinity seems to lie more with the former in that he has demonstrated on a number of occasions an ability to love an accept love in return.
[15] Dostoevsky deals with the problems of a character who possesses a Christ-like goodness in his novel *The Idiot*.
[16] In her essay "'Every Night I Save You': Buffy, Spike, Sex and Redemption," Rhonda Wilcox further examines Spike's relationship to the light as a metaphor for his growing aspiration to be where Buffy is: in the light, a force for good. In full sunlight "he is still unable to reach her, but he has tried -- and it seems that he is closer than he once would have been." As with Dostoevsky's model, there is an suggestion that the attempt is in itself a worthy thing.