NOTES

1 Many of these same elements appear prominently in the gothic genre from the Romantic period onwards, and one might thus argue that the genealogy of *Buffy* would lead back through vampire literature, gothic literature, and, above all, Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Yet I would suggest that *Buffy* shows a greater affinity to the Baroque mourning play than the gothic genre as it emerged in the late 18th and 19th centuries.

2 That the mourning play involves the spatialization of the historical time of Christian eschatology is among the most central theses of the *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*. For its most pithy expression, cf. Benjamin I.1:260, 274.
There are exceptions to this—in one episode it even snows—and these exceptions always prove the rule, since as this last instance clearly suggests, the appearance of seasons is linked to positive appropriations of Christian thematics which can no longer be reconciled with the subversion of Messianic elements.

Compare with Benjamin I.1:271.

For the significance of Schwulst or bombast in the German Trauerspiel, cf. Benjamin I.1: 376–381.6. This is especially significant given the role of mourning in Vampire literature. Mourning, conceived of from a psychoanalytic rather than Benjaminian perspective, is at the heart of Lawrence Rickel’s extraordinary study of vampire literature and film, The Vampire Lectures (1999).

Compare with Benjamin I.1:249–250.

Here again we might refer to the fragmentary demonology presented by Giles in the first season.

Compare with Rickels, The Case of California (1991, 10): “California is where unending mourning achieves its society-wide manifestation (or massifi-
cation) as sadomasochism, where the death wish yields to the death drive (which takes a detour via suicide), and where the femininity of mourning constitutes the group’s secret agenda, gender, and desire.”

So, for example, in the last episode of the second season, Spike justifies his motives for not annihilating the world: “We like to talk big, vampires do. ‘I’m going to destroy the world.’ It’s just tough guy talk. Strut round with your friends over a pint of blood . . . the truth is I like this world. You’ve got dog racing. Manchester United. And you’ve got people. Billions of people walking around like Happy Meals with legs. It’s all right here” (19 May 1998).

The vanity of the world in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* may even be regarded as, in a certain sense, more radical than the vanity of creation experienced in the Baroque, which, as Benjamin argues (I.1:317–320), issues from the Reformation and its denial of an expiatory function to earthly works. For indeed, now it is not only the sacred function of works that is called into question, nor even their human meaningfulness, but the values of worldly productivity and accumulation that gradually took their place with the advent of capitalism.
and its ideology. Not only does the world of Buffy seem scarcely touched by the economic boom of the late nineties, not only does prosperity itself (as in the episode “Lizard Boy”) appear as satanic, but it is only when the world is threatened with annihilation that it appears worth anything at all. The self-generating dynamic of economic growth, in other words, has been rendered inoperative. It is no longer possible to value the world as the possibility of future growth, but merely negatively; as what is not yet destroyed.

12 The only exception is Willow, whose bookishness, Jewishness, lesbianism, and sorcery mark her as different from her peers.

13 Or we might go back even further to the birthplace of the Modern theater in the intermezzi of the Italian Renaissance. Here the theater is a branch of architecture, involving the application of principles of perspective and mechanics to create a moving tableau and thus deceive the viewers. Noverre’s contribution, in a sense, consists in attempting to assimilate this purely speculative Renaissance conception of the theater with the loftier pretensions of high drama toward expressive power and coherence. Indeed, with the development of dance as an
autonomous theatrical art form, the principal technai of the Renaissance architect—perspective and mechanics—become inscribed into the human body, becoming a sort of second nature to the dancer. Mechanics and perspective, rather than serving as means to the end of spectacle, instead become what is first and foremost expressed through the dynamic interaction of the dancers on stage. In this respect, moreover, the tendency of the Modern cinema toward special effects at the expense of everything else may be regarded as a largely unreflective return to the thaumatopoesis of the first theaters. The action hero himself remains only as a vestige of the choreographic impulse of the dancer, and, not surprisingly, shows a tendency—one need only think of Arnold Schwarzenegger’s terminator—to relinquish almost all human characteristics, becoming pure machine. If, unlike the theatrical productions of the Renaissance, the action film trades in ever more hyperbolically conceived “end-of-the-world” scenarios, it is perhaps because, whereas then the mastery of technology testified to, and served the ends of, human dignity, now technology has emerged as an end in itself, or rather as the eclipse of all human purposiveness, in such a way that the film medium, with its ever increasing submission of every artistic prerogative to the exigen-
cies of purely instrumental reason, itself reproduces, through its own medium, the very process that it also incorporates as content. The catastrophe film, we might say, is always already also itself the catastrophe of film.

14 Significantly, precisely this moment of supreme happiness must be exiled offstage, regarded as obscene, in Buffy the Vampire Slayer: not merely in order to satisfy the censors, but because this alone, within the logic of the film, and in sharpest contrast to the ballet, is unrepresentable.

15 Precisely because, in the ballet, expression is not direct but is mediated through a formal, non-phonetic language which, as the consequence of training, thoroughly saturates and denatures the human body, we cannot confuse this creativity with a vitalism rooted in natural organization.

16 The relation of this reality and its experience to the media that both structure and reflect it and must never be regarded as external instances nor yet simply as the whole of reality, however, is complex, falling outside the scope of our immediate concerns. Nevertheless, it may be helpful to point toward one particularly il-
luminating facet of this relation. Even though the seriality of television shows, like the sequalization of films, is in some sense purely a function of market forces, nevertheless these market forces, which demand new growth at every turn in order to stave off the catastrophe of economic crisis, themselves partake of the same logic of episodically-deferred catastrophe as the serial genre itself.

17 It is also significant, in this regard, that whereas in every other episode the essential clues come from the quasi-sacred texts of demonology, here the unraveling of the demon’s secrets, and ultimately its defeat, depends on a purely scientific discovery made not by a watcher or gatherer of ancient lore, but an ordinary professor and researcher.

18 Compare with Benjamin, I.1:391.

19 Here one might recall the following passage from Der Kunstwerk im Zeitalter ihrer mechanischen Reproduzierbarkeit, which suggests the nature of the opposition of science and magic:

Der Chirurg stellt den einen Pol einer Ordnung dar, an deren andern der Magier steht. Die Haltung des Magiers,

[The surgeon represents one pole of an order at whose other pole stands the magician. The comportment of the magician, who heals the sick through the laying on of his hand, is different from
that of the surgeon, who undertakes an operation on the sick. The magician maintains the natural distance between himself and the one being treated; put more precisely: he diminishes it—by virtue of the hand he lays on—only a bit and increases it—by virtue of his authority—a great deal. The surgeon proceeds the other way around: he diminishes the distance to the one being treated a great deal—by pressing into his interior—and increases it only a bit—through the caution with which he moves his hand among the organs. In a word: in contrast to the magician (who is still hidden in the practicing doctor) the surgeon, in the decisive moment, refrains from confronting the sick person as one human being to another; rather he penetrates into him with an operation.]

Benjamin’s essay also suggests the political dimension of their conflict. Whereas the extreme political tendency of modern science is the dissolution of individual differences, reconstituting society into a homogenous mass that, acting according to rational principles, is free from all internal strife, magic, bound in its operations to
the aura, amplifies the cult of personality. Thus when Jonathan Levinson uses the dark arts to transform himself into a superhero, Sunnydale, his face plastered on every billboard, begins to resemble a fascist dictatorship.

20 Nowhere is this so clear than in the episode where the leader of a group of teenagers who wish to have themselves transformed into vampires insists on forcing reality to conform with the scripts of old movies, and at one moment even repeats the lines of a film playing silently in the background (“Lie to Me,” 3 November 1997).