

Charlotte Bosseaux: The Essence of Being Spike: From Britishness to 'Un Certain Je ne Sais Quoi'

The cult TV show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* has enjoyed international fame and is still broadcast in several countries such as France and the UK. When considering *Buffy's* worldwide success, it is worth investigating how translation mediates the use of British English as opposed to American English, since the characterisation of the two main British characters, Rupert Giles and Spike, played respectively by Anthony Stewart Head and James Marsters, is primarily based on their British identity, cultural background, accents, and vocabulary use.

In order to reach various foreign audiences, *Buffy* has been translated worldwide and Spike has been travelling around the world; or rather his translated version has, reaching many destinations such as Japan and Russia. While the Anglophone world does not need different linguistic versions, other countries do, and in France there are two translated versions of *Buffy*, one dubbed and the other subtitled. This paper focuses on the 'marvellously irritating' Spike (Wilcox 2005: 33) although the other Brit, Giles, will also be mentioned since Spike's and Giles' Britishness have different connotations. We shall see what makes Spike Spike and how character specific features related to his identity have been negotiated in its French dubbed and subtitled versions. The paper ultimately reflects on what translation and non-translation do to characters whose identity is based, among other things, on cultural specificities.