

Jay Bamber: History as Its Own Character in *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*

Buffy: I can't hold on to the past anymore

Buffy the Vampire Slayer and *Angel* are noted for their dense mythologies/histories and are lauded for the ways in which those histories inform and enrich the text as it is presented to the audience. Both shows self-consciously reflect on their characters' pasts, some of which are revealed visually throughout the shows and some of which are only alluded to, in order to expand their world and present more complex narratives. I would argue that the protagonists, Buffy and Angel, are uniquely suited to be thrust into narratives about the past and history due to her status in the Slayer tradition and his identity as a vampire who has experienced historical changes. As characters and as archetypes they both fit into clearly defined socio-historic roles.

I would like to use the examples of 'I Only Have Eyes For You' (*Buffy* Season 2, Ep. 19), 'Fool For Love' (*Buffy* Season 5, Ep.7), 'Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been' (*Angel* Season 2, Ep.2), 'Darla' (*Angel* Season 2, Ep. 7) and 'Waiting in the Wings' (*Angel*, Season 3, Ep.13) to illustrate and examine how the past becomes necessarily entangled with the present in these worlds. Both shows present a permeable boundary between the historic and the contemporary: affecting both the personal and the political. These episodes also illustrate how Whedon's early televisual texts engage with the classic tenet of the Gothic genre - that the repressed sins of the past will re-emerge and effect the present.

I will engage with pre-existing *Buffy* and *Angel* scholarship by using work by Tammy A. Kinsey, Stacey Abbott, William Wandless, Elana Levine, Rachel A. Melnyk, Philip Mikosz, Dana C. Och, Lorna Jowett, and Rhonda V. Wilcox to situate my argument.