

Bernhard Frena: The Death and Afterlife of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: Examining the Cracks between TV, Comic, and Fan Fiction

The fictional universe of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* encompasses at the very least one movie, two TV shows, and a plethora of comic books. If one also counts the video games and the myriad of different works of fan fiction – ranging themselves from text to comic to video – there is an overwhelming number of different representations of *Buffy* and its various characters. Still, most of these representations purport to be about those very same characters. It doesn't seem to matter that in one, Willow ends up as a lesbian vampire and in another as a heterosexual werewolf. Both representations seem to be at their core about the same Willow Rosenberg. This directly leads to my main question: How can we try to conceptualize these different representational aspects, while at the same time affirming that we are still essentially talking about the same characters?

In my talk I will propose a possible solution to this problem. By building upon Judith Jack Halberstam's notion of the Brandon archive (Halberstam 2005) and Walter Benjamin's figurative storyteller (Benjamin 1936) I will conceptualize these characters not as fixed personas, but rather as malleable archives. These archives are in constant flux: they get added to by each specific narrative establishment of a character and embody the totality of all singular representational modes a character has ever occupied. Each concrete narrative takes some aspects from this archive, builds upon them, changes them, and by doing so, adds onto, rearranges and reaffirms the original state of the archive.

Recent considerations have already shown the importance of a character's memory (Jowett 2014) and the process of reinterpreting memory as part of a subjective narrative (Rabb/Richardson 2014). My approach fits neatly into these discussions, by showing how the characters themselves get created through narratives that build upon common cultural memories. By using this model I will try to move away from the primacy of any canonical texts (Durand 2009; Kociemba/Iatropolous 2015) and will instead focus on the complex interplay between specific narratives, their medium and the archive that they together constitute.