

Aging the Vampire: Old Monsters Passing for Young People in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel*

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One of the most romantic aspects of the vampire is that he/she is a figure outside of time, witnessing lifetimes of change and cultural innovation that humans can only read about in the history books. While our culture balks at our inevitable aging process, generally characterized by physical and mental decline, vampires remain frozen in time. In film, immortality is easily achieved because most actors do not change much over the course of year-long shooting schedule. On a long running television series, however, the illusion of eternal youth is undone by tangible human reality. Angel may be a centuries old vampire, but it is undeniable that the actor who portrays him, David Boreanaz, matures and ages over the course of his eight seasons playing the character. So, not only are audiences required to suspend their disbelief of the supernatural and the fantastic, but also to disregard the aging of a character that is not meant to change at all. While I recognize that both *BtVS* and *Angel* were marketed towards younger audiences and focused on issues about growing up, growing up also requires recognition of growing old. Unfortunately, because youth is such a precious western cultural commodity, being/becoming old often times marks people other and makes them less visible in society. This phenomenon, in turn, encourages a cultural of passing for young in order to maintain a sense of worth and visibility. With this in mind, I argue that the figure of the vampire represents a paradox of aging, as one who is both old and young, and asks us to reflect on our culturally ingrained desire to keep old age invisible or require that it passes as a youthful imposter.