The Tides of Time
Issue 29
Easter Vacation 2004

BUFFY AND THE BRITISH

Star Trek

The Prisoner

The career of Brian Clemens ...

...and something called Doctor Who, apparently.
The Tides of Time
Issue 29
Easter Vacation 2004

Editor: Matthew Kilburn
matthew.kilburn@history.oxford.ac.uk
Sub-Editor: Alexandra Cameron
Executive Editor: Matthew Peacock
Production Associate: Linda Tyrell

Contents

What a Piece of Work is Man
Sophia Woodley says why she likes Star Trek

A Beginner's Guide to The Prisoner
Daniel Saunders is not a number: He is a free man!

What really happened to Beagle 2
Exclusive visual evidence from Alex Cameron

My Nights with REG
Paul Dumont examines Scream of the Shalka

Slay up, and slay the game!
How Buffy gets Britain, by Matthew Kilburn

Wiles Thing!
A look at John Wiles's period as producer of Doctor Who

Brian Clemens
James Davies marks the achievements of this writer-producer

How does Doctor Who entertain?
Asking the question, Daniel Saunders

Grendel of Graacht
Matthew Kilburn looks at Tara’s chief villain

Published in March 2004 by the Oxford University Doctor Who Society. Copyright in article texts remains with the original contributors. This magazine is a work of homage and there is no intention to violate the copyrights held by BBC Worldwide Ltd, Viacom, Twentieth Century Fox, Mutant Enemy, Canal + Image, ITV plc, or any other copyright holders. Republished online in July 2010 at tidesoftime.wordpress.com

SHORELINES

By the Editor

Turn of the Tide?
The issue of The Tides of Time is being published within a few weeks of the cancellation of Anger by the WB network in the USA. The situation may have moved on by the time that you read this, but in this second week of March, it looks impossible that any other US broadcaster will be willing to commission a new series. The WB have said that they would like to commission the TV movie to air during the 2004/05 season, but Joss Whedon has pointed out that his cast and crew may all have other, regular jobs by then which would prevent them from taking up any one-off engagements. Thus, after seven years, the universe that Joss Whedon unleashed upon the telefantasy-viewing public with Buffy the Vampire Slayer looks as if it is being laid to rest. Joss himself is concentrating on his feature film, Serenity, a sequel to his short-lived series Firefly—and his experiences with Firefly were enough, by any account, to deter anybody from trying to make television for a major US network.

the difference between people and objects. When Lamia presents Grendel with her android copy of Romana, a primitive device intended to kill the Doctor, Grendel exclaims that it is a killing machine, and that he would marry it. In doing so he discloses his understanding of power, that it comprises the ability to kill people. Grendel is a powerful man, in his own society, and at least recognises the Doctor as another man of power; but the Doctor’s power comes from smiling in the face of danger; from being generous to people, and from not taking himself too seriously. Grendel is not alone among Doctor Who villains in not appreciating why the Doctor always wins through, but he’s one of the few who have a consistent basis for their villainy.

Grendel’s name is lifted from the foe of Beowulf. I haven’t read Beowulf but according to the website of the Beowulf in Hypertext project at McMaster University in Canada, Grendel’s ‘origins stretch back to Cain, who killed Abel. He is of particular cause of trouble to Hrothgar because of his disregard for law and custom: he refuses to negotiate a peace settlement or to accept tributes of gold’. The relevance to Grendel in ‘The Androids of Tara’ is only general, though Grendel is probably a close relative of Prince Reynart and Princess Stella if he is a plausible candidate for the throne in a society led by an hereditary aristocracy. The territorial titles of Princess Stella seem to be made up of Germanic elements, but Tara itself was the seat of Irish kings, suggesting either a disappointing lack of consistency, or a postmodern confidence in the way the material ransacked is deployed. Whatever the truth, ‘The Androids of Tara’ is executed with tremendous flair, and much of that flair is Grendel’s.

Matthew Kilburn

Write for The Tides of Time
E-mail articles to:
matthew.kilburn@history.oxford.ac.uk

MORE SHORELINES

Well, that’s about it for now. Thank you to everyone for getting this far; unless you have started at this end of the magazine, in which case, welcome to issue 29 of The Tides of Time! I said a few years ago, when I cancelled my own zine, The Tragolodyte, after one issue, that having got a job as an editor I didn’t think that editing in my spare time would have much appeal. The temptation of looking after this issue of Tides proved too strong to resist, however. Thanks to Mat, the man who edited Tides for longer than anyone else, and the committee, for letting me play with this venerable institution.

Time for some more acknowledgements. Alex Cameron speedily checked that everything makes sense and follows where it should, and William and Mat co-ordinated most of the articles before I took over. Outside Oxford, Alex Norrish was of particular help with the ideas in my Buffy article. I’m also grateful to the owners of the various websites from which I have borrowed images. Many pictures have been found via Google searches, but I’d like to particularly mention Steve Hill’s ‘Doctor Who Image Archive’, Ex Astris Scientia – Bernd Schneider’s Star Trek Site; Eric Alglave’s ‘Be seeing you / Bonjour chez vous’; www.the-prisoner-lesserve.co.uk; and David K. Smith’s ‘The Avengers Forever’.

Following my election as magazine editor at the last committee meeting, I think I’d better stay on for one more edition. I hope to include at least one article on Big Finish’s CDs, and a look at Peter Davison’s Doctor. With the new series not quite imminent, there might also be an article from another veteran telling of what DocSoc was like when Doctor Who was coming to the end of its first run in 1989. As a prelude to that, no fanzine in the late 1980s and early 1990s was complete without a picture of Sophie Aldred, and on the back cover is a picture from her visit to the Society in 1991.

I plan to put the magazine together over the next few months, but as I expect that work commitments will grow during term, I’m going to be very busy at the end of September and the beginning of October, so the more articles that I receive earlier, the better. Help with editing will be appreciated. Other resolutions for next issue – fewer photographs copied from websites, as they rarely reproduce well, as you’ve doubtless noticed; and maybe more consistency in typography? See you there.

PS July 2010 Reconstructed with relief, having tracked down all the fonts or near-equivalents.
Grendel of Gracht

Reflections on 'The Androids of Tara'

SOMEONE, at some time, wrote a fanzine article, or maybe it was even a paragraph in a book, that grouped together fans who liked 'The Time Monster' and 'The Androids of Tara' as people whose horizons needed broadening, contrasting them with admirers of 'The Stones of Blood'. The commentator had a point. Doctor Who fans can be an introspective lot, prone to mistaking handed-down fan lore based on half-understood memories for genuine criticism. However, I was taken aback, because I’d interpreted 'The Androids of Tara' as a different story of the same type. 'The Time Monster'.

The latter, I think of as an end of season capper story, a sort of bad flashback to 'The Daemons'. 'The Androids of Tara', unlike 'The Time Monster', is unashamedly derivative (of The Time War of Zenon, chiefly) and thus can be afforded more scope for discussion.

The key character in 'The Androids of Tara' is Grendel. I remarked during the viewing that I would have liked to see Peter Jeffrey try his hand at playing the Doctor. Certainly Grendel is under the impression that he is the Doctor’s superior, not only socially but intellectually, for much of the story; only by the end has he conceded that the Doctor may, after all, be his equal. His end has been described, by the authors of The Tides of Time, as being 'a piece of retro-chic'.

Again, it is Grendel whose character is blighted by dysfunctional sexual relationships. His relationship, or lack thereof, with Lamia, stating that he ‘once’ showed her a ‘courtesy’; implying that their physical relationship was long ago, but Romana’s bating of Lamia, that she has no chance of becoming Grendel’s queen, suggests that either Lamia holds on to Grendel in hope of resurrecting the affair, or that it still continues and that Grendel’s view of the relationship is that his courtesies was shown in making her his partner in the first place. It’s likely that Grendel would view it as his right to take all the initiatives in the relationship, and that Lamia would be too conscious of her status as a peasant to question this. Grendel’s main psychosis, though, is that he can’t relate to human beings at all. He mistakes Romana for an android on their first meeting, and despite carrying her some distance doesn’t realise that she is flesh and blood until it is almost too late. This incident primarily serves the function of sketching in the details of Taran society – that most of the work is done by androids, that society is strictly hierarchical, and that only peasants have technical skills – but it also suggests that Grendel can’t tell it, but saw the occasional episode, and wished it was screened at a time when he wasn’t cooking or added to a news programme. In hindsight, considering its vulnerability as an international co-production, it might have been a mistake that it lasted as long as it did – and so, if it’s a greater one that it’s back in production, even as a four-episode mini-series, giving it ‘more’ to the sound stages of Sydney, without former backers the Sci-Fi Channel.

I had wondered if the right moment for the resurrection of Doctor Who might be when the American telefantasy boom ended. I remember watching the telefantasy scene change in the mid-1990s, as the partly nostalgia-led covers of TV Zone with their Doctor Who and Blake’s 7 stars interspersed with those of Star Trek: The Next Generation gave way to Mulder and Scully, to John Sheridan and Londo Mollari. British broadcasters didn’t give up entirely on fantasy subjects, but they struggled to match the genre to the uniform depressing realism that seemed to be the hallmark of 1990s British television drama. The only one that I found to have found success was Ultraviolet; with its tight camerawork, urban locations and dedicated performances, combined with a light surefootedness. Ultraviolet failed to continue because its creators had failed to maintain the interest of Channel Four’s junior management during a period of high executive turnover across all British broadcasters.

Doctor Who looks as if it will not have the same way as a television series can be. The webcasts have acted as advance raiding parties, reaching people who might not have bought the Doctor Who books or CDs, and proving that there is still an audience out there for the Doctor. The macro-ecology of DocSoc. No longer will we be

Russell T. Davies

There has, of course, been plenty of new material. The various lines of books and the Big Finish CDs are deserving of credit for making sure that new Doctor Who stories continued to be told on a professional basis – but they haven’t been part of mainstream culture in the same way as a television series can be. The webcasts have acted as advance raiding parties, reaching people who might not have bought the books or CDs, and proving that there is still an audience out there for the Doctor. The macro-ecology of Doctor Who is being transformed by Russell T. Davies, Jule Gardner, Mat Young and their team. I look forward to seeing what they do (indirectly) to the micro-ecology of DocSoc.
defend their enjoyment of what critics might call dated, cheap children's television. However, the morals are usually very simplistic (pollution is bad; war is bad; totalitarianism is bad) and I doubt that anyone has ever radically rethought their lives or political ideals as a result of watching the show. 'The Curse of Peladon', for example, clearly parallels Britain's entry into the Common Market, but it does not present a deep analysis of the arguments for and against greater European economic and political integration. However, intelligence is relative and compared to most other television programmes, especially those aimed at a family audience, Doctor Who is intelligent. Perhaps its relative intellectual level is best shown by the fact that it has a habit of asking difficult questions, but giving easy answers. For example, if the industry of 'The Green Death', is Bad and something to be avoided, then how are we to get the Good technology of 'The Curse of Peladon?' To some extent, there is more enjoyment in spotting these subtitles than in learning anything from them. This is certainly true of the other kind of secondary layer, references to literature, mythology, films, other television programmes and so forth. These can be brief in-jokes or the basis for stories that imitate or subvert them, as mentioned above. All secondary layers, by referring to a body of experience outside the programme itself only appeal to those viewers able to understand them, most obviously adults (or some adults), although older and more intelligent children will be able to see at least some of them and appreciate being treated as an adult by the writer.

The Doctor

I think that the Doctor himself is an important part of the way the show entertains the audience. To most of the audience he is a likable, if somewhat unpredictable (arguably likeably unpredictable) lead character who is entertaining to watch (and look at the fan criticism of the sixth Doctor who was intentionally unlikeable at times), but to a significant part of the audience, I think he is more of a figure to identify with or even admire. I am thinking here of the children in the audience, but particularly those who are intelligent, bookish and not really liked by many of their peers. To put it bluntly, probably the people who become fans (well, it describes the ten year old, novice fan I was, anyway). Most hero figures (fictional or otherwise) presented by society to them are not really people they would see any reason to admire (sportsmen and women, pop stars, etc.) and I think they enjoy, and benefit from, seeing an intelligent, bookish social misfit who prefers to solve problems with his intellect and wit, rather than brute force.

Conclusions

So, having taken Doctor Who to pieces, have we learnt anything from the process? It is possible to enjoy even a single episode of Doctor Who in several different ways. Which parts are most entertaining varies according to the tastes of the viewer and also according to age; the horror appeals more to children, the humour and secondary layers more to adults. Few, if any, stories combine all of these elements, but most have a mixture of some of them, as this is needed to attract the family audience for which Doctor Who was usually produced. As a result stories should not be criticised for lacking some of these components. The series does not entertain just through horror, comedy or action, but through a mixture of various elements. There is no one-word answer to the question "What makes Doctor Who enjoyable?"
it slightly less ridiculous. Of course, if done badly it can backfire and draw attention to problems, which might explain why many writers for the show concentrate on other types of humour. Patrick Troughton, Tom Baker and Sylvester McCoy all frequently used physical comedy in their performances. Black humour makes very occasional appearances in the show. Robert Holmes used it on occasion, as do two scripts clearly influenced by his work, 'Revelation of the Daleks' and 'Ghost Light', but other than that it is very rare. Most of the comedy in Doctor Who is the witty, off-the-cuff dialogue also present in the programmes spiritual siblings, The Prisoner and The Avengers, possibly explaining why fans of one of these tend to like the others too.

Action
There is not much I can say about this aspect of the programme, as there is nothing clever or sophisticated about it, but it is very important. It is probably the most common element of the show. Some stories have no monsters or jokes; few, if any do not have a chase (up and down corridors or otherwise) or a fight scene. This is probably the element that appeals most to children, although it can be very effective for an adult audience too if directed well, as 'Inferno', for example, shows.

Storytelling
Doctor Who fans often attribute the series' success to what they call 'strong storytelling'. What they seem to mean by this vague statement is that the stories the series tells are original and told well. Taking these two points in turn, I think that Doctor Who stories were rarely entirely original. Terrance Dicks has written (in the foreword to the Discontinuity Guide) that no less an authority than Malcolm Hulke stated that 'All you need for television is an original idea – it doesn’t necessarily have to be your original idea.' They were often an original mixture of old ideas, such as 'man turns into monster', 'parallel universe Earth with totalitarian government' and 'scientific project threatens world'. These are all clichés, but 'Inferno' is probably the only work of fiction to combine all three, mixing in a bit of nuclear apocalypse fiction for good measure (and if you think the drilling project is original, read Arthur Conan Doyle's When the World Screamed).

Others are new twists on old plots. 'The Horns of Nimon' sends Theseus and the minotaur into space (one twist, and a very common one in the programme) with the monster really being in control (second twist). Most stories are a mixture of old ideas, 'twisted' clichés and genuine originality. The use of second-hand ideas can also entertain the audience. By a 'well-told' story, I mean one with a high degree of clarity, but that is also well paced, so that the story is intelligible, with no unresolved plot elements at the end, but maintains the interest of the audience until then with tension (a threat that needs to be overcome) and/or mystery (an element of the plot which the writer intentionally leaves unexplained for some time). The success of certain novelists (Agatha Christie being probably the most obvious example) shows that a well-told story can be absorbed of many sins, including improbability, a lack of originality and less than poetic prose - or in Doctor Who's case, poor dialogue and low production values.

Secondary Layers
There are two main types of secondary layers in Doctor Who. The first is an allegorical, moral or satirical subtext. This is the element that fans use most often to

TOS had the first interracial kiss on television; TNG had an episode banned by the BBC because it referred briefly to the situation in Northern Ireland.

Many, if not most, of the episodes in Star Trek are allegories of situations on Earth that would never have been dealt with on prime time television if it weren’t for the fact that they were presented through the medium of science fiction. Often, when watching an episode, I find myself identifying not with the human crew, but with the 'aliens' who represent us, the comparatively primitive 20th century viewers. Yes, the aliens act like humans—yes, it’s preachy—that’s the point.

4) An optimistic view of the future
A criticism of TNG, in particular, that is made even by fans in that it shows a world that’s ‘too perfect’: the main characters all get along, they live in a utopian world where money has been abolished and everyone has all they need, and they are motivated not by greed or competitiveness, but by curiosity and the desire to help others.

This optimism is exactly what I love about Star Trek. The characters are civilised in the best sense of the word: off duty, they play chess, paint, act, make music, and engage in hobbies like archaeology. In Star Trek, people are respected for their intelligence and their talents rather than for their looks or their money. This is the sort of world in which I would like to live—this is the sort of person that I would like to be. If only we were all, like Captain Picard and his crew, ‘too perfect’. Star Trek’s ideology is out of fashion these days, I know, but it has a long and honourable pedigree. TOS is full of the idealism of America during the Kennedy era. However, more fundamentally, its ideas derive from the eighteenth-century rational enlightenment, which argued human beings were inherently perfectible, and that reason could triumph in the world. We, of course, argue about whether or not this is actually possible. But surely, if any genre is allowed to prompt us to believe six impossible things before breakfast, then it is science fiction. If we are to pick a myth to believe in, then we could do worse than to believe that humanity has potential.

5) Focus on the human condition
Fundamentally, Star Trek, like all great literature, is about exploring the human condition. What does it mean to be human? What is humanity capable of accomplishing? Characters such as Snoop and Data are so sympathetic and so interesting ... nuclear apocalypse fiction for good measure (and if you think the drilling project is original, read Arthur Conan Doyle’s When the World Screamed).

The Prisoner is full of the idealism of America during the Kennedy era. However, more fundamentally, its ideas derive from the eighteenth-century rational enlightenment, which argued human beings were inherently perfectible, and that reason could triumph in the world. We, of course, argue about whether or not this is actually possible. But surely, if any genre is allowed to prompt us to believe six impossible things before breakfast, then it is science fiction. If we are to pick a myth to believe in, then we could do worse than to believe that humanity has potential.

TNG sets the theme in its premier episode, when the omnipotent being ‘Q’ puts humanity on trial. The crew of the Enterprise is given the secondary layers in Doctor Who. The first is an allegorical, moral or satirical subtext. This is the element that fans use most often to
The Prisoner still remains one of the most impressive, entertaining and thought-provoking television series ever made. Stylish and stylised, it has an identity like no other, yet while lots of people have heard of it, not so many have seen it, perhaps put off by its reputation for being difficult (if not downright impossible) to understand. However, while it may be less eager to explain itself than most television shows – assuming the viewer is intelligent enough to discover its meaning – it does not deserve its reputation as a surreal, but unbearably pretentious and depressing programme. On the contrary, it is exciting, witty and hugely enjoyable. As a service to those members of the public who have no idea what it is about, therefore presents this beginner’s guide. Episodes are presented in the order of their first UK transmission, and basic cast and crew details...are spoiler-free. As some of the episodes are rather abstract, this has resulted in some very brief and odd synopses!

**Regular Cast**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Actor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Prisoner</td>
<td>Patrick McGoohan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Butler</td>
<td>Angelo Muscat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Supervisor</td>
<td>Peter Swanwick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Production Team**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive Producer</td>
<td>Patrick McGoohan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer</td>
<td>David Tomblin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Episodes**

1) *Arrival*

**Written by** George Markstein and David Tomblin  
**Directed by** Don Chaffey  
**Guest cast:** Guy Doleman, George Baker, Paul Eddington, Virginia Maskell  

**Plot**

A British intelligence agent resigns from his job, is knocked out and wakes up in a strange village. After discovering that there is no easy route out of the Village, he meets Number Two, responsible for its day-to-day administration, taking orders by telephone from the mysterious Number One, and is told that he will be kept there until the Village authorities find out why he resigned. Now known simply as Number Six, the Prisoner vows to escape.

**Humour**

Humour is dismissed by many fans, presumably on the grounds that something that is funny cannot also be serious. There are two problems with this argument. *Doctor Who* is not the most intellectually challenging thing ever (see Secondary Layers below) and, more importantly, the argument is completely wrong. To pick just one example from many, Shakespeare mixed comedy and intellectual depth all the time, even in the tragedies. *Hamlet* is laugh-out-loud funny in places. Seen from the perspective of an ordinary viewer, humour is clearly an important element in *Doctor Who*. For example, I watched the Paul McGann TV movie with my parents, neither of them fans, but both long-term viewers of the series. Both thought it was quite good, but needed more ‘one-liners’ (they also complained about ‘Americanisation’, by which I think they meant that kiss, but that’s a subject for another article).

The humour in the show is a key factor in balancing it to appeal to a family audience. It lightens the horror content, a necessary task in view of the afternoon timeslot where it was usually scheduled and the substantial child audience. If the horror is mainly for the children in the audience, then much of the comedy in the programme, which can be quite sophisticated, is for the adults (and the cleverer children). It also prevents the show becoming too po-faced and ridiculous. There is little funnier than three actors (none of whom are exactly prospective Oscar winners) in green make-up talking about technohable and intergalactic politics, especially to adults who are indifferent or even hostile to science fiction. Skilful use of humour can deflect the laughter to where the author wants it, away from the more serious aspects of the script, especially if knowing humour is used. By making jokes at the expense of the production, the author shows that he is aware of its shortcomings, making...
The Tides of Time

How Does Doctor Who Entertain?

Gothic Horror? Post-modernist comedy? Hard SF? Most fans seem to know exactly what does and does not make good Doctor Who. Unfortunately, they do not seem to agree with each other about it. One fan’s Golden Age™ is another’s Silly Pantomime ‘That Nearly Caus’d/Did Cause The Programme To Be Cancelled™’. It strikes me that all the arguments about the comparative merits about how good the show was under certain production teams are really arguments about what those producers, script editors, writers and directors thought the programme was. My hypothesis is that there are several ways that Doctor Who can succeed. Separate production teams have emphasised some of these elements to a lesser or greater degree. As we shall see, some of these elements are present in most stories, others more rarely and as a result often become associated with a particular production team.

Starting Points

For this article, I have tried to assume the viewpoint of someone watching Doctor Who on original transmission to try and decide what they would enjoy when watching the programme. As a result, there are three reasons people seem to watch the show nowadays that I have not discussed, because these mainly apply some time after transmission (although this is not so true of the last one), because they are ‘minority’ ways of enjoyment, which many people will not experience and, most importantly, because they are accidental, the product of time or production shortcomings. These are:

• camp value (which tends to increase over time, as the sets, costumes, special effects and even haircuts, themes and dialogue become dated)
• nostalgia (similar to camp value, but connected to some extent with the viewer’s memories of the first viewing, whether of the programme itself or of the experience of watching it as a child); and
• episodes that are ‘so bad they’re good’ (some stories must have been pretty bad on first viewing, but add twenty years and the process described under camp value will make it much worse in a way some people find enjoyable).

Horror

Perhaps the most well-known element in Doctor Who is the horror content. Famously, several generations grew up watching it from behind the sofa and many of the most memorable moments of the show involve the monsters: the murderous shop window dummies, Scaroth ripping off his mask, the Dalek rising from the Thames (and the Sea Devils and the Marshmen and the Haemovores…). This should only appeal to young children and I doubt whether any viewers over the age of eleven or twelve were really scared by anything they saw.

Yet many fans would argue that the programme was only effective when it had a high horror content (some even refusing to find anything worth watching in the more comedic stories or the historicals). The fans might be influenced by nostalgia, but the much higher viewing figures for seasons twelve to fourteen compared to most of the rest of the series indicate that this is a factor for adults too (I doubt the increase in

Review

As an opening episode, ‘Arrival’ works extremely well. The basic concepts behind the series, in terms of characters, setting, conflict (both dramatic and literal) and themes are established quickly and effectively. The early part of the episode has an appropriately disorientating feel, as both the Prisoner and the viewers explore the Village and are constantly surprised by it. Unfortunately, the latter part, in which the Prisoner makes his first escape attempt, is less successful, being too hurried to build up any real feeling of suspense, although it is understandable that the production team wanted to establish escape attempts as a key component of the series from the beginning. Nevertheless, by efficiently establishing the format of the series and raising many more questions than it answers (as any good opening episode should) ‘Arrival’ is a successful start for The Prisoner.

2) The Chimes of Big Ben

Written by Vincent Tilsley
Directed by Don Chaffey
Guest cast: Nadia Grey, Leo McKern

Plot

The Prisoner takes part in the Village art competition, but his entry is the cover for an escape attempt.

Review

‘The Chimes of Big Ben’ largely ignores any deeper meanings in favour of an exciting story packed with suspense, wit and unexpected plot twists, with a splendid performance by Leo McKern as Number Two. As such, it is difficult to write about, but great to watch. In many ways, this is a better introduction to the series than ‘Arrival’ and anyone new to the series and uncertain as to whether they will like it could do worse than watching this.

3) A. B. and C.

Written by Anthony Skene
Directed by Pat Jackson
Guest cast: Colin Gordon, Sheila Allen, Katherine Kath, Peter Bowles

Plot

Number Two is convinced that the Prisoner resigned because he was selling out. To test his hypothesis, he uses a new drug to manipulate the Prisoner’s dreams so that they enact what would have happened had he not been taken to the Village and observes them.
I have not got a lot to say about this episode; it is simply a great script performed well, with some nice satirical moments. It does really need a couple of viewings to be understood completely, but in the age of video and DVD, that is probably an advantage.

5) The Schizoid Man
Written by Terence Feely
Directed by Pat Jackson
Guest cast: Jane Merrow, Anton Rogers
Plot
The Prisoner wakes up in a new room and discovers that overnight he has grown a moustache, changed his taste in food, become left-handed and is now known as Number Twelve. An identical double claims to be the real Number Six.

Review
It is a fundamental law of nature that any good science-fiction television programme will produce an episode featuring a doppelgänger of the hero, a 'mind swap' episode and a cowboy episode, and The Prisoner is no exception. This is the doppelgänger story, and manages to make quite effective use of this cliche, with the Prisoner's identity crisis dealt with in a manner that almost makes us wonder who the real Number Six is. Almost, because the writer made one crucial mistake: the early scenes of the episode clearly establish the identity of 'Number Twelve'. The story is further undermined by some improbable plot developments towards the end. Nevertheless, the majority of the episode is enjoyable, if not as unsettling as it could have been, and it recovers to deliver a suspenseful conclusion.

6) The General
Written by Joshua Adam (pseudonym for Lewis Greifer)
Directed by Peter Graham Scott
Guest cast: Colin Gordon, John Castle, Peter Howell
Plot
The Villagers are encouraged to use a new subliminal teaching programme designed by the Professor and the unseen General. The Prisoner suspects the system is not as innocent as it appears.

Review
'The General' is difficult to judge, being a mixture of the good and the mediocre. In its favour are an intelligent idea (and one that is not just about the conflict between the individual and society for once), good dialogue with a sense of underlying menace to it and the excellent subliminal message scenes. Unfortunately, it suffers from a silly ending, which includes one of the most clichéd plot twists in television science fiction; as in 'The Schizoid Man', the writer appears to have thought of a great idea for a story, but been unable to resolve it convincingly. Colin Gordon’s performance as Number Two is reasonable, but disappointing after his memorable appearance in ‘A. B. and C.’, although this could be due to the script ('The General' was filmed first, incidentally) and Lewis Greifer appears to have no idea of what studying history at university level involves; as this is a key plot element, it spoils the episode (at least for history students like myself). ‘The General’ is not bad, but it could have been much better.
The Tides of Time

Canadian co-producers withdrew their support, and after two seasons and twenty-six episodes in 1976 and 1977, The New Avengers suffered the fate of the old.

The Tides of Time

28

Easter Vacation 2004

Tensions between the production team and their employers at ABC (UK) led to the services of Clemens, Fennell and Wintle being dispensed with at the close of Diana Riggs’s final season. The rift was temporary, at least in the cases of Clemens and Fennell (Wintle’s departure may also have been due to his lifelong battle with haemophilia) but in their absence Linda Thorson was cast to play Tara King, and some Tara episodes shot, before their return. The cause of the rift is unclear, it has been attributed to the production company’s dislike of the increasing outlandish style of the episodes, but the series was enjoying phenomenal success in America. Brian Clemens himself has said that the rift was unrelated to the series, and its cause remains something of a mystery. Clemens and Fennell struggled to produce a series that reconciled their own instincts about The Avengers with the demands of the British and American ABCs, but the series’ popularity had started to wane and when in 1969 ABC in the US cancelled the series ABC in the UK – no longer an ITV broadcaster, as their weekend franchise had disappeared and their shareholders’ interests had been folded into the new London weekday company, Thames – could not support it without the US market.

Brian Clemens’s career stretches far beyond one series. Screenplays followed, including the stop-go animation classic The Golden Voyage of Sinbad (starring Tom Baker), and, with Captain Kronos: Vampire Hunter, for Hammer Films, also in 1973, his directing debut. The reputation of The Avengers was still high, however, and it was not long before an attempt was made to revive the series. New backers were found in France and Canada, and Clemens planned a new direction, towards a glossy version of Starsky and Hutch: jokes, criminals, and chemistry between two lead characters. The backers, however, insisted on international locations, which made maintaining quality of production more difficult. Whilst the quality of some of writing is equal to, if not superior, to the original series, Clemens and Fennell never received the support of a British ITV company nor a US network, the French and Canadian co-producers withdrew their support, and after two seasons and twenty-six episodes in 1976 and 1977, The New Avengers suffered the fate of the old.

Many Happy Returns

Written by Anthony Skene
Directed by Joseph Serf (pseudonym for Patrick McGoohan)
Guest cast: Donald Sinden, Patrick Cargill, Georgina Cookson

Plot
The Prisoner awakes to discover that the Village is deserted. He builds a raft and tries to sail to England, but on arrival discovers that all traces of his identity have been destroyed and no one believes his story.

Review
‘Many Happy Returns’ is a well acted and directed adventure with disconcerting implications for the Prisoner. This is just as well, as it is also the most pointless episode in the series. All of its plot and thematic points are covered by other stories, especially ‘The Chimes of Big Ben’, ‘Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling’ and ‘Fall Out’. Ultimately it is only its position before most of these (in the original transmission order) that rescues this from complete obscurity.

Dance of the Dead

Written by Anthony Skene
Directed by Don Chaffey
Guest cast: Mary Morris, Duncan MacRae, Norma West

Plot
The Prisoner is invited to the Village carnival and then finds a corpse on the beach, which he sends out to sea with a message to the outside world. Meanwhile, Number Two tries to get information from Dutton, a colleague of the Prisoner who has been in the Village for some time and is approaching the end of his usefulness.

Review
Although most of its elements fuse together into a coherent whole towards the end of the episode, for much of its length ‘Dance of the Dead’ is a series of surreal incidents with a dark, unconnected, nightmarish quality. More than any other episode of The Prisoner (with the possible exception of ‘Fall Out’) this is less a thrilling story and more an intelligent parable about the conflict between the individual and conformist society, with a conclusion (in both senses of the word) that makes for unsettling viewing. Leavened with cynical wit, this is one of the most powerful and memorable episodes in the series.
components, including the symbolic human chess game and brainwashing.

Unfortunately, these elements do not all fit together perfectly, with the brainwashing subplot feeling underdeveloped. That said, it is better to leave an audience wanting more than to bore them with the repetition of one idea and ‘Checkmate’ is an enjoyable story, albeit one memorable more for its visuals than its ideas.

**10) Hammer into Anvil**

*Written by*: Roger Woddis  
*Directed by*: Pat Jackson  
*Guest cast*: Patrick Cargill

**Plot**

Number Two goads a young woman into committing suicide and the Prisoner decides to avenge her death by convincing Number Two that there is a conspiracy against him in the Village.

**Review**

Ask a *Prisoner* fan about ‘Hammer into Anvil’ and he will almost certainly tell you that it is a Jacobean-style revenge tragedy. This is rather odd, as it seems to me to be a comedy, its powerful opening and closing scenes excepted. Although an interesting idea and entertaining at first, the Prisoner’s attempts to convince Number Two that he is a spy soon become repetitive. The story also lacks any sense of urgency; it might have worked better if Number Two was trying new, possibly violent, interrogation methods on the Prisoner, giving the impression that if he can not remove Number Two soon, he will be forced to reveal why he resigned.

**11) It’s Your Funeral**

*Written by*: Michael Cramoy  
*Directed by*: Robert Asher  
*Guest cast*: Derren Nesbitt, Annette Andre, Marc Eden

**Plot**

Number Two ensures that the Prisoner finds out about an assassination plot, but then refuses to listen to his warnings. Undaunted, the Prisoner tries to prevent the murder.

**Review**

‘It’s Your Funeral’ turns the conventional Prisoner story on its head by having the Prisoner try to save Number Two. Although an interesting idea and entertaining at first, the Prisoner’s attempts to convince Number Two that he is a spy against the Village are not successful. More could also have been made of the fact that the Prisoner is manoeuvred into working for the good of the Village. However, the episode has enough in its favour with its original plot to be successful.

**12) A Change of Mind**

*Written by*: Roger Parkes  
*Directed by*: Joseph Serf (pseudonym for Patrick McGoohan)  
*Guest cast*: Angela Browne, John Sharpe

**Plot**

The Prisoner is declared unmutual by the

In the period 1956 to 1959 Brian Clemens wrote nineteen screenplays which were released as films. However, due to the nature of his lock-in contract with the Danzigers, any writing for television that Brian did on his own account had to be done in secret outside of his work hours. One of the products of this work was the pilot for *Danger Man*, ‘View from the Villa’. The series, made by ITC, the production house allied to the ITV Midlands franchise-holders ATV, launched Patrick McGoohan as Special Agent John Drake onto our screens, and Brian worked as script editor for the early years of the series. Drake was initially a UN agent, but later metamorphosed into a representative of a shadowy British government department, M9.

Clemens found his move to television a highly successful one. He was involved with The *Avengers* almost from its inception at the close of 1960. Sydney Newman, then head of drama at ABC Television, another ITV company, serving the north of England and the Midlands at weekends, came up with the title and decided there would be two regular characters – initially a doctor, David Keel, played by Ian Hendry, and a mysterious government agent, John Steel, played by Patrick Macnee. Brian Clemens co-wrote the first two episodes with Ray Rigby (best remembered as the screenwriter for the Sean Connery film set in a military prison, *The Hill*), but was only credited on the second episode, albeit as sole writer. For the first three seasons of the programme Clemens was one of the most prolific contributors, although he never formally held a production post.

This situation changed dramatically when, at the end of the third season in 1964 (which also ended Honor Blackman’s run as the first ‘Avengers girl’, Cathy Gale) the decision was taken to change from shooting on primitive video tape to film, which was of a higher quality and easier to edit, as the export market became a target. ABC contracted the series out to freelance producer Julian Wintle, who brought on Brian Clemens and Albert Fennell as his associate producers. Clemens’s experience with working with film in his days with the Danzigers helped recommend him for the post, and his partnership and friendship with Fennell was to last for many years. Production of the first film series of *The Avengers* began in late 1964, and after problems with the initial choice of actress, Diana Rigg was cast as Emma Peel. The weekly game to secure the biggest name guest stars had begun, with the shooting of each episode revolving around a ten day cycle.
IN ORDER to gauge Brian Clemens’ impact on British popular television since the mid-1950s, it is almost quicker to list those programmes with which he has not been involved. *The Avengers* may be his most well known production, but he was also scriptwriter for *Danger Man*, *The New Avengers*, *The Professionals*, *My Wife Next Door* (for which he won a BAFTA), and series consultant for *Bugs*. Additional credits have included screenplays, directing and producing. However, a biography must be more than just a catalogue of achievements. Brian Clemens was born in 1931 in Croydon. A bout of childhood pneumonia led to him being regarded as a sickly child, and at fourteen he went to work as a messenger boy in an advertising agency, with the intention of finding his way into a career as a journalist. It was at this time that Brian began writing, initially for television, and having a plot for a thriller accepted by the BBC. He then moved to full-time writing with Edward J. Danziger and Harry Lee Danziger, two American brothers who specialized in producing second features (‘B’ movies) and cheap TV series in the United Kingdom. This was to be Brian Clemens’ training ground, shaping his entire approach to writing and production. The Danzigers built and worked from the small ‘New Elstree Studios’ building in Hertfordshire, but were dependent upon using existing sets and studio space that had been used by other companies. The scripts had to fit what facilities were available, and films had to be shot in a matter of a couple of weeks. There was no six month ‘pre-visualisation’ phase. The short shooting time meant that rewrites had to be done instantaneously. The result was a crash course in writing to order and producing the best quality, if occasionally bizarre, output possible. These were skills Brian was to utilize fully in his later career.

At one time, all of British episodic television was written by about ten writers, and I was one of them

– Brian Clemens speaking in an interview in 1999

However, a biography must be more than just a catalogue of achievements. Brian Clemens was born in 1931 in Croydon. A bout of childhood pneumonia led to him being regarded as a sickly child, and at fourteen he went to work as a messenger boy in an advertising agency, with the intention of finding his way into a career as a journalist. It was during two years National Service that he finally threw off the image of the sickly child, serving as weapons training instructor and competing in athletics’ competitions.

On his return to advertising, with a position at advertising agency J Walter Thompson, Brian Clemens took the advertising copywriters’ tests. There were two tests, one practical and one psychological. The results were somewhat contradictory. The practical test produced one of the highest scores the agency had ever seen, whilst the psychological test inferred he was a rather lunatic. Clearly suited to copywriting, Brian was taken on.

It was at this time that Brian began writing, initially for television, and having a plot for a thriller accepted by the BBC. He then moved to full-time writing with Edward J. Danziger and Harry Lee Danziger, two American brothers who specialized in producing second features (‘B’ movies) and cheap TV series in the United Kingdom. This was to be Brian Clemens’ training ground, shaping his entire approach to writing and production. The Danzigers built and worked from the small ‘New Elstree Studios’ building in Hertfordshire, but were dependent upon using existing sets and studio space that had been used by other companies. The scripts had to fit what facilities were available, and films had to be shot in a matter of a couple of weeks. There was no six month ‘pre-visualisation’ phase. The short shooting time meant that rewrites had to be done instantaneously. The result was a crash course in writing to order and producing the best quality, if occasionally bizarre, output possible. These were skills Brian was to utilize fully in his later career.

Village committee and is sentenced to ‘instant social conversion’, a form of lobotomisation.

Review

This episode could be called formulaic, as once again the Prisoner tries to subvert the latest scheme to make him conform. It is redeemed by its emphasis on the negative aspects of the individualistic philosophy of the Prisoner (both the character and the series). Its message that anyone who rejects the negative aspects of society must be prepared to forfeit its benefits too gives a less didactic and more questioning feel to the series as a whole. There are also some nice satirical touches especially the scene where the Prisoner is denounced as both reactionary and revolutionary, perhaps the fate of many freethinkers.

14) Living in Harmony

Written by David Tomblin (from a story by David Tomblin and Ian L. Rakoff)
Directed by David Tomblin
Guest cast: Alexis Kanner, David Bauer, Valerie French

Plot

The Village authorities want to kidnap Professor Seltzman, who has developed a way of transferring minds to different bodies. The Prisoner was the last person to see him, so his mind is transferred to a body in London and only by finding Seltzman can it be returned to his body.

Review

There is usually nothing I hate more than judging intelligent television programmes by their production values, but ‘Do Not Forsake Me, Oh My Darling’ looks so bad it has to be commented on. In most episodes of *The Prisoner*, the use of footage from other episodes is a result of the pressures of production that does not affect the final programme; here it causes problems, with shots of Patrick McGoohan clearly used instead of Nigel Stock. The plot is a little slow and while it is interesting to see someone else play the Prisoner and Stock’s performance is not bad, he lacks McGoohan’s screen presence. Nevertheless, the story has undoubted strengths. This is one of the most important episodes in terms of understanding the series, giving the clearest hints about who runs the Village and perhaps also why the Prisoner resigned, although these are present to a lesser extent in several other stories. The story also has a wistful atmosphere largely absent from the rest of the series, making Stock’s subdued performance more suitable than might otherwise be the case. This is not one of the best episodes of the series, but is certainly not worth ignoring.
After the next two episodes, you will be grateful for it…

16) Once Upon A Time

Written by Patrick McGoohan
Directed by Patrick McGoohan
Guest cast: Leo McKern

Plot

Number Two decides that the only way to find out why the Prisoner resigned is for them both to undergo Degree Absolute, a process which only one of them can survive.

Review

Written by Terence Feely (from an idea by David Tomblin)
Directed by David Tomblin
Guest cast: Kenneth Griffith, Justine Lord

Outside the Village, the Prisoner investigates the death of Colonel Hawke-English. He was on the trail of a mad scientist named Schnipps who wants to destroy London and the Prisoner picks up the scent.

Review

Once Upon A Time: a lot of shouting, but careful viewing shows it to be the subtlest episode of the series; careful attention to the dialogue is essential to understand it. It strips The Prisoner down to its essentials: the conflict between two men and the opposed ideologies that they represent. They are fighting for their lives and more for their beliefs, their souls. The battle at the heart of the series, between Number Two, who believes each person is a unit of society and the Prisoner, who insists he is an individual, ‘number nothing’, is enacted one last time, more intensely than ever before. Uncomfortable viewing at times, it is also one of the most thought-provoking and rewarding episodes of the series.

17) Fall Out

Written by Patrick McGoohan (Kenneth Griffith wrote much of his own dialogue uncredited)
Directed by Patrick McGoohan
Guest cast: Leo McKern, Kenneth Griffith, Alexis Kanner

Plot

The Prisoner is told that he can leave the Village or lead it and meets Number One.

Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Eve - never to be attempted again in the series.

John Wiles’s idea of heroism was expressed through the actions of ordinary young people agaist the symbols of enduring evils. In The Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Eve the drama revolved around Steven’s attempts to steer a moral path in the face of religious intolerance in seventeenth-century France. Dolé’s innocent but principled stand against the embittered and narrow-minded Monoids drives much of the final two episodes of The Ark. In ‘The Celestial Toymaker’ both Steven and Dodo have to negotiate their way through a maze of petty deccres where one slip will lead to eternal corruption as a plaything of the Toymaker.

The Doctor represented the human being’s continuing quest, not just for knowledge but for experience. He journeyed through the universe as more mortals joumneyed through life. The situations in which he was called upon to make moral judgements were comparable to those faced in a British viewer’s everyday life, even though the Doctor effectively had the run of the universe. It was that universal viewpoint that helped give the Doctor’s life meaning, his companions and those they encountered were seeking meaning too.

The Doctor carried on despite himself. John Wiles was more frail, and he left Doctor Who after just a few months in charge. The reasons for his departure seem either to have been the pressure of making the three-month epic, ‘The Daleks’ Master Plan’, inherited from Verity Lambert, specifically ordered by senior management, or at odds with his intentions for the series or his failure to remove William Hartnell from the role of the Doctor, perhaps after Hartnell arranged the renewal of his contract over Wiles’s head. Wiles’s plans for Doctor Who were never entirely carried through. The script editor who shared his vision for the series, Donald Toash, resigned with him, and the remaining stories they had commissioned were taken through production by their successors, Innes Lloyd and Gerry Davis.

It’s been recorded that Lloyd and Davis did not have a harmonious working relationship, and both died before fan historians began the reassessment of their period in creative control of the series; these are just two reasons why we will never know exactly which features of Doctor Who as it emerged in the latter part of 1966 were based on the initiatives of Davis or of Lloyd, or what they thought of the programme they inherited. There was an interview with Gerry Davis in Doctor Who Magazine in 1987 in which he described the stories commissioned by his predecessor as ‘too precious for children’, indicating low expectations of his young audience. Lloyd, like Wiles, had a background in children’s entertainment, but it was of a different stamp to Wiles’s history as a playwright, having been producer of the television version of the school quiz series Top of the Form in 1965, he seems to have regarded the series as in need of a major overhaul, and in the longer term as a stepping-stone away from Doctor Who into plays. Before the 1990s Wiles’s period at the helm of Doctor Who was usually interpreted as a rudderless time before Innes Lloyd and Gerry Davis saved the series by aiming it at a more ‘adult’ audience. It’s true to say that their stories are superficially more ‘ gritty’ - ‘The Tenth Planet’, for example, begins with several minutes that establish the masculine, aggressive environment of the South Pole base before the more whimsical elements of the Doctor, Polly and Ben arrive – but they are also more simplistic. Yet Lloyd and Davis engineered a Doctor Who that was more robust, that appealed to the broad audience that the programme was aimed at, and went out of its way not to confuse viewers. Wiles’s Doctor Who universe was a less reassuring one than the one that Lloyd presented, where the good always won. Perhaps, though, today’s more jaded audience will demand more complex storytelling. I rather hope that the soundtrack recording of ‘The Massacre of St Bartholomew’s Eve’ was part of the crash course Russell T. Davies prepared for his new colleagues.

Matthew Kilburn
The contribution of John Wiles as producer of Doctor Who, 1965-1966

"In all my plays for young people I have concentrated - usually unknowingly - on the theme of heroism. In many ways this has run counter to the general trend of drama today, but I firmly believe that what we still crave (individually and collectively) is an identification with something bigger than ourselves, some cause, some theme, some faith that transcends ourselves and gives our life some meaning. To find no meaning in life is to render life meaningless; I believe the search continues in spite of ourselves."

— John Wiles, 1978

John Wiles wrote these words to accompany the published version of his play The Golden Masque of Agamemnon. Like much of his work for the theatre it was written to be performed by companies of young people, and was intended to be as much an education for them as for the audience. The concerns which emerge from this aspect of his career also shed light on his period as producer of Doctor Who.

Wiles's plays for young people emerged from his involvement with drama projects run in East London in the 1950s by a drama teacher called Alan Garrard. The English secondary education system of the 1950s was shaped by the 11+ examination; those students placed in secondary modern schools rather than the more sought-after grammar and technical school places were regarded by many in society as lost causes. Garrard sought to unleash this wasted potential by introducing teenagers to improvisation, emphasising drama through physical expression rather than the language of the conventional theatre which failed to reach most of his pupils. These led to a series of 'physical dramas' with large casts which were widely praised and copied in other areas. Wiles became involved when he was one of the judges of a school drama competition in the London area. His first production of this type was The Battle of Agincourt, at Turner's Court vocational training centre in Oxfordshire in 1957. Developed from the battle scenes in Shakespeare's Henry V, Wiles directed a cast of 120 educationally and socially disadvantaged boys, six horses and 50 staff on an outdoor 'stage' that was 200 yards long by 50 yards wide.

Most of Wiles's subsequent plays also retold stories from history or legend. His second play at Turner's Court was The Trojan Horse in 1959, foreshadowing his first credit for Doctor Who on 'The Myth Makers'. He later returned to Greek mythology with The Golden Masque of Agamemnon and The Magical Voyage of Ulysses, both for youth theatre companies in the London area. All these stories were expansive tales that sought to deal with the great questions of human existence.

This epic quality can also be found in Wiles's Doctor Who work. For a lot of commentators Doctor Who stories are at their best when they involve a small number of people in an isolated spot besieged by an external threat. Serials commissioned by John Wiles were set against vast backdrops: the plains of Troy, a spacecraft the size of South London, the limitless realm of the Celestial Toymaker. The fates of countless numbers of people would be foreground elements in the storytelling: the Protestant community in France, the entire human and Monoid races—or, indeed, the peoples of the entire galaxy.

Wiles's interest in education reflected Sydney Newman's desire that Doctor Who should appeal to a young audience whom previous BBC programmes had missed. The replacement of the futuristic teenager Vicki with the contemporary adolescent Dodo gave the series a character very close to the original young female character who appeared in the 1960s format documents but who had evolved into the otherworldly Susan. Jackie Lane had appeared in a John Wiles play four years before she was cast as Dodo as a young Cockney girl, and she represented a down-to-earth, urban ordinariness—clearly a Coronation Street northern English from the soundtrack of 'The Tides of Time' review

What really happened to Beagle 2…

Daniel Saunders

By all accounts, 'Fall Out' was hurriedly written to conclude the series when it was suddenly cancelled. If this is true, it certainly shows on screen. It is disappointing that it only making sense on a metaphorical level, not providing any literal answers to the questions posed throughout the series, but at least it contains some interesting ideas. The real problems with the script are that it contains hardly any plot, being padded out with song and dance routines and that the Prisoner gets very little to do. He spends most of the episode watching events unfold with a bemused look on his face, which seems surprising for the last episode of the series in which he is the title character; perhaps it is some kind of postmodernist reflection of the reaction of the audience!

'Fall Out' does have some redeeming features. It is directed very well, with an impressive use of incidental music, the unveiling of Number One is one of the most memorable and thought-provoking moments in the series, and perhaps on television as a whole, while the disorientating, nightmarish quality of much of the series reaches new heights here, especially with the implications of the last few scenes. 'Fall Out' is a disappointing end to The Prisoner, but it is difficult to imagine a better conclusion; a more literal one might have been less anti-climactic, but would also have been a less intelligent, memorable and disturbing resolution to a series that is all three of these.

Daniel Saunders
'THE SCREAM OF THE SHALKA' was announced as an official anniversary story in July 2003, a webcast starring the new BBC approved Doctor, Richard E. Grant. Less than eighty days later the news of the 2005 revival was leaked in The Daily Telegraph. 'Shalka' changed; from being the sole new BBC sanctioned Doctor Who pilot, a possible, to an interesting diversion before the main event. In the space of one day, the 26th of September, Richard E. Grant made an effortless transition from the torchbearer for the future of the show to an also-ran of indeterminate status. It’s as if the TV Movie had suddenly become as important as ‘The Ghosts of N-Space’ – before being broadcast. Early in November, a couple of weeks before episode one of ‘Shalka’ was due to be streamed, I stood in the basement of the new Shaftesbury Avenue branch of Forbidden Planet, browsing through the design nightmare of Doctor Who: The Legend. Tucked away in the back of the book was most of the crucial plot points and surprises in ‘Shalka’. I expect that over the next few months there will be spoilers and leaks about the upcoming series all over the internet, and in various unlicensed SF media magazines. I doubt very much though that any future Doctor Who story will be as thoroughly ‘spoilered’ by an official BBC publication! So, as I sat down to watch ‘Shalka’ part one, my expectations were tempered somewhat, from ‘This is the first episode of potentially the only new format that the BBC will give to the series’ to ‘When’s the Master going to pop up, then?’ (‘Not much change then, I suppose, from sitting down to watch the first episode of Season 9, or Season 20’). It’s slightly ironic that a story dependent on new technology to reach its audience should be so rooted in the past. Part One in particular comes across as a pic’n’mix selection of other part ones. The opening shot of the Earth in space (‘Spearhead from Space’/’Rememberance of the Daleks’); the Doctor stepping out of the TARDIS to castigate unseen superiors (‘The Brain of Morbius’); mysterious, deserted streets following some unidentified civil emergency (‘Invasion’); and for good measure there’s even a feeble joke about ‘rock’ music (‘Genesis of the Daleks’).

Once past the inconsequential opening scene Down Under, which seems have no other purpose except to remind viewers that the foreign accents haven’t improved since ‘Death Comes to Time’, and there is much to admire. The supporting cast acquit themselves well. Andrew Dunn is just the sort of actor I hope to see in the new series, a recognisable TV face (from, among other things, Dinnerladies, Brenner, Bird and Fortune, The Bill) doing something slightly different (resigned despair, not something you associate with Ben’s of Bond, Alistair Campbell or a senior CID officer). Jim Norton provides everything that one could want from a senior military liaison figure – bluff, hearty and sceptical. Sophie Okonedo rises to the challenges set by Paul Cornell’s scripting; her scene-setting, flashback soliloquy is one of the highlights of the first episode. This soliloquy also demonstrates the affinity of ‘Shalka’ with graphic novels. It’s easy to imagine Alison’s speech being trailed across three panels (pencils by Martin Geraghty, inks by Robin Smith, lettering by Elitta Fell). The Doctor’s response isn’t so much a line of dialogue as the contents of a speech balloon: It might seem self-evident that ‘Shalka’, as animation, would have affinities with a comic strip, but this certainly wasn’t the case with the three webcasts that preceded it. Paul Cornell’s dialogue, I would argue, tends towards this ‘speech balloon’ pattern, unless it’s being delivered by a performer completely sure of what they are doing. Sadly, it seems to me that the performer having the hardest time of all is our leading man. One of the more lacklustre items in BBC ONE’s Jewish, as we are occasionally reminded through dialogue, and so is part of an older religious tradition than the Christian one regularly invoked in the flashback sequences described above. In the first three seasons of Buffy she is principally characterised by a remarkably swift intellect and especially a facility with computers, enabling her to pluck obscure information from unlikely or classified sources and reach plot-furthering insights that elude Giles. At the climax of the second season, however, Willow discovers an aptitude for magic, and this aspect of her character comes to predominate. This is followed in season four by her realisation of a lesbian sexual identity. Willow thus not only arises from the wellspring of the Judaic-Christian tradition, but is a witch, able to channel the natural world by magic. Willow’s lesbian sexual orientation also underlines her embodiment of a distinctive form of womanpower that perpetuates itself without male involvement.

At the start of the seventh season Willow is in the care of Giles in the west of England, and is being taught how to use her gifts by the aforementioned coven of witches in Devon. The scenes shot in England arguably represent the coming together of the American and British sides of the series as well as the assimilation of the ‘other’ into the contemporary. The seventh seasons shows Willow able to function as witch, as TECHNOLOGICALLY ADEPT GENIUS, and also begin a new sexual relationship. At the end of the season, and of the series, it is Willow’s magic that enables the powers of the Slayer to be shared with every potential slayer and thus create a physical army and surge of goodwill that overwhelm the First Evil. This is a magic innate in her (‘Jewish’ = ancient) make-up, and refined in self-consciously modern California and in the mystical landscape of the English west country. Willow’s understanding of the wholeness of the natural world in the end enables her to see that the occult is part of the everyday world and is not something to be feared. The division between the popular kids and the outcasts from high school that was so foregrounded in the first two seasons of Buffy is finally despatched, and with it factionalism and the First Evil. (If there had been no Angel, it might well have been Cordelia, symbol of aggressive, oppressive and insecure cool, who fell fighting in the front line against the Turok-Han in ‘Chosen’, 7.22, and not her shadow Anya).

The conclusion of Buffy the Vampire Slayer thus depicts the acceptance and control of the unknown other, often characterised as British, by the young Californian lead characters. This is not all the story, however, nor its end. Spike has already transferred to Angel where rivalry will resume between the nineteenth-century Englishman and eighteenth-century Irishman in Los Angeles. There will also be a convincing robotic Englishman at one point in the new season, perhaps representing Britons as no more than a programmed set of reactions who lack genuine self-awareness. There will be more flashback sequences. Angel has not stopped exploring and playing with the tensions between America and the British Isles, and between Ireland and Britain-England. The understanding of universal common humanity that the characters of Buffy have achieved has yet to reach. Angel, it remains to be seen whether they will do so or whether their backgrounds will continue to divide them.

Matthew Kilburn
Buffy’s engagement with colonial America is fleeting and uncomfortable. The slayer’s encounter with Chumash Indians in ‘Pangs’ has been mentioned above. The Angel episode ‘Darla’ (2.7) included a brief glimpse of colonial Virginia; its society is barely established and so is scarcely distinguishable from the hierarchical European societies we see in service to the story. Between July and September last year it seemed that the legacy of the bumbling and the sinister – the Briton as comic foil and as oppressive colonial administrator. Much is made of his attempts to interact and even integrate with the modern, technologicallyiterate, consumer society of California. These processes in some way always lead to crisis, as seen in ‘I Robot… You Jane’ where the scanning of occult texts unleashes a demon on the internet, or ‘The Puppet Show’ where Giles’s presence as director of the Sunnydale High talent show reveals that the participating students are being cherry-picked by an organ-harvesting demon. However, as his personal history is revealed, Giles is shown to be a powerful occultist, a representative of the old knowledge which America lacks. In contrast to his former friend Ethan Rayne (a name which, to me, is more suggestive of New England than old England), borrowed from Edith Wharton’s Ethan Frome, and thus again suggesting that Britishness in Buffy in part represents class in America) Giles uses that knowledge to help rather than exploit Americans. If the inhabitants of Sunnydale are ignorant of what goes on around them, then Buffy portrays Americans as a nation of innocents, a reading which perhaps echoes earlier seasons of the series than the last, where as the ascendancy of the First Evil gathers pace, the inhabitants leave rather than seek a way of fighting. Giles is there at the end to provide what knowledge he can, though at the last this is a new situation where Buffy’s actions will set new precedents not available in Giles’s books; the destruction of the Watchers’ Council and their library confirms the independence and isolation of Buffy as the only power able to stop the First Evil, as the United States appears to have become the world’s only superpower, menaced by elusive forces who come from another moral universe. Giles remains a valuable resource. His most dramatic intervention as possessor of hidden knowledge and secret traditions from the barely-recorded past comes at the end of the sixth season, when he comes armed with the power that can stop Willow’s orgy of destruction. Significantly, though, the decisive power wielded by Giles is borrowed from a coven of witches in Devon. The power is British, but it is female, and so Giles has in a sense become the representative not just of mature Britishness, but also of mature womanhood against a young American woman who has let grief lead her to self-indulgence. It is a reasonable assumption that the coven are female, while the Watchers’ Council are mainly male, and its female members are through dress, manner or ambition presented as would-be men rather than as comfortable with their female identity.

The Giles Question

Giles, in contrast to Darla, is very successful in America. His secret is that his studied Britishness of the first season turns out to be just that. In that season he blends elements of the bumbling and the sinister – the Briton as comic foil and as oppressive colonial administrator. Much is made of his attempts to interact and even integrate with the modern, technologicallyiterate, consumer society of California. These processes in some way always lead to crisis, as seen in ‘I Robot… You Jane’ where the scanning of occult texts unleashes a demon on the internet, or ‘The Puppet Show’ where Giles’s presence as director of the Sunnydale High talent show reveals that the participating students are being cherry-picked by an organ-harvesting demon. However, as his personal history is revealed, Giles is shown to be a powerful occultist, a representative of the old knowledge which America lacks. In contrast to his former friend Ethan Rayne (a name which, to me, is more suggestive of New England than old England), borrowed from Edith Wharton’s Ethan Frome, and thus again suggesting that Britishness in Buffy in part represents class in America) Giles uses that knowledge to help rather than exploit Americans. If the inhabitants of Sunnydale are ignorant of what goes on around them, then Buffy portrays Americans as a nation of innocents, a reading which perhaps echoes earlier seasons of the series than the last, where as the ascendancy of the First Evil gathers pace, the inhabitants leave rather than seek a way of fighting. Giles is there at the end to provide what knowledge he can, though at the last this is a new situation where Buffy’s actions will set new precedents not available in Giles’s books; the destruction of the Watchers’ Council and their library confirms the independence and isolation of Buffy as the only power able to stop the First Evil, as the United States appears to have become the world’s only superpower, menaced by elusive forces who come from another moral universe. Giles remains a valuable resource. His most dramatic intervention as possessor of hidden knowledge and secret traditions from the barely-recorded past comes at the end of the sixth season, when he comes armed with the power that can stop Willow’s orgy of destruction. Significantly, though, the decisive power wielded by Giles is borrowed from a coven of witches in Devon. The power is British, but it is female, and so Giles has in a sense become the representative not just of mature Britishness, but also of mature womanhood against a young American woman who has let grief lead her to self-indulgence. It is a reasonable assumption that the coven are female, while the Watchers’ Council are mainly male, and its female members are through dress, manner or ambition presented as would-be men rather than as comfortable with their female identity.

The Willow Answer

Willow’s career in Buffy provides a commentary on the themes of this essay. Although the relationship between Britain and America has in part been explored through Christian iconography, Willow is Christmas line-up was the EastEnders Christmas Party, a bizarre attempt to marry audience-grabbing doom, gloom and misery of life in the Square with the razamataz of Christmas Night with the Stars. At one point the scene switches to the Café, where an assortment of minor celebs are being given lessons in how to talk Walford by, if I recall correctly, Big Mo and Ian. Lines such as ‘It’s family, immit’ are rehearsed and then critiqued, by, of all people, Carrie and David Green (two judges from Fame Academy). The scene at the back of the Café, is REG, and here is his namesakes’ verdict on him: ‘Pathetic… no conviction at all. If you can hear it, have another listen to the Doctor’s triumphant ‘Got You! Got You!’ at the start of episode two. It’s meant to be the first real indication that this Doctor is capable of mercurial changes of temperament, from sardonic bystander prone to petulance to childlike glee as a plan works. That’s how it’s written – but, as it’s played, the lines just fall off the page on to the ground.

Time and again, watching ‘Shalka’, I got the impression that Richard E. Grant was all at sea. To be fair, even Sir Derek Jacobi would probably have struggled with ‘Take me home big boy!’ (Although it’s possible to imagine his delivery). There wouldn’t be so obtrusive if REG wasn’t burdened with such portentous, self-reflexive lines – ‘manifesto lines’, to borrow a handy term from an online reviewer. ‘Only the monsters know me, only the monsters know how weak I am’ ‘I’m just popping out to something eccentric’, ‘I have a tradition of getting in the way’, ‘I’m not human and I don’t care, as the actress said to the bishop’ and ‘I don’t like the military but I have so many friends in it. I say I do not kill but then I kill thousands’… Paul Cornell stops just short of having the Doctor recite the ‘never cruel or cowardly’ mantra – I wonder if we’ll get those lines in his television story next year.

There are other elements in ‘Shalka’ that I hope to see in the new TV series. There are some excellent cliffhanger endings, and, in episode four, an excellent cliffhanger resolution – ingenious, satisfying, and delayed (we have to wait for about a quarter of the episode to pass by before we get back to the Doctor in peril). This is a lesson to be learnt, I think, from 24, which usually ends each episode on three or four moments of jeopardy, and then, despite the split-screen technique, tackles them one by one. (The other element I would like to see transferred over wholesale from the webcast is Sir Derek Jacobi). Despite being set in ‘2003’, ‘Scream of the Shalka’ doesn’t feel particularly contemporary. When the ninth Doctor phones the UN secretary-general, it doesn’t seem very likely that Kofi Annan (and eavesdroppers from British Intelligence) are on the other end of the line. As for line of dialogue about weapons of mass destruction, apparently you can hear one broadcast in a May 1956 edition of Hancock’s Half Hour.

Instead, the concerns are those standbys of the Pertwee era, mutual tolerance and lessons in ecology. Animation provides the series with a chance to depict the threat of destruction on a global scale. Paradoxically, it doesn’t seem that dramatic – mainly because none of the supporting cast (or anyone that we care about) seems to be in any peril. When the TV series debuts in 2005, I hope that the temptation to ‘do’ big apocalyptic special effects is reined in – unless such effects are in service to the story.

Between July and September last year it seemed that the legacy of Scream of the Shalka would be an ongoing stream of annual webcasts and multimedia DVDs, as the BBC gingerly felt its way to making a new series for television. As it stands now (March 2004), it seems likely that ‘Shalka’ will not be followed up. Perhaps the legacy is now twofold. Even a classically cast, ideally ‘Doctor’-esque actor can be inconsistent and less than successful as the lead. And ‘Shalka’ shows what a thoroughly traditional, base-under-siege tale looks like these days – and how much room for improvement there is, should the series revival tackle such a story.
CONSIDERING the content of some episodes of their productions, Mutant Enemy could do with a production base in the mid-Atlantic. Not only has Buffy the Vampire Slayer included a throwaway reference to The Sun (in ‘Amends’, 3.10), much of its backstory takes place in the British Isles. Several of its regular and semi-regular characters are of British or Irish origin - to name six, Giles, Angel, Spike, Drusilla, Wesley and presumably also Darla. There is a strong British flavour to the creative staff. Joss Whedon attended Winchester College in his teens. Marti Noxon’s father is British. Gareth Davies, credited as producer on all seven series of Buffy, began his career in Britain forty years ago, where he worked in the BBC Drama Group under Sydney Newman, and although he never directed for Newman’s pet Saturday afternoon serial Doctor Who, he did work on the strand of single plays at the heart of the Newman project, The Wednesday Play and its post-Newman successor Play for Today. That connection is enough to make Buffy and Angel cousins on the British television drama family tree, albeit grafted onto a Hollywood vine.

The relationship of Buffy with the British Isles has caught the attention of several university teachers and researchers. This article considers two scholarly papers: ‘Convents, Claddagh rings, and even The Book of Kells: Representing the Irish in Buffy the Vampire Slayer’ by Donna L. Potts of Kansas State University, published in Studies in Media and Information Literacy Education 3/2 (May 2003), and ‘“You Say Tomato”: Englishness in Buffy the Vampire Slayer’ by Matthew Pateman of the University of Hull, published in Cercles 8 (2003). Potts explores the portrayal of Angel in Buffy’s third season, which depicts long-dead Chumash Indians as spirits seeking to avenge the decimation of their tribe by settlers in California. The episode acknowledges that their claim has some justice, but ‘nonetheless depicts them according to the colonizers’ stereotypes as irrational savages unfit for the civilized world’ who are eventually defeated by Buffy and her friends in a fashion that restores the status quo ante. Angel, she argues, similarly embodies a stereotype Irishman of the sort used by the British, from the twelfth century onwards but particularly in Victorian times, to justify ‘Anglo-Saxon’ domination over the Celt.

Potts’s argument is hampered by the quality of her sources for cultural stereotypes, some of which are derived from a secondary source (L. Curtis, Nothing but the same old story: the roots of anti-Irish racism, 1984) that appears to be a republican text from the 1880s attempting to associate Ireland’s relationship to England and Britain with that of the experience of Britain’s nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonies. However valid or invalid this interpretation, it is so widely-power, but even in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries British imperialism walks abroad in slayerdom. Giles’s suspicion of modern technology, foregrounded in the first series, is intermingled with a British reserve that verges on the aloof, and even as late as the fourth season (as Potts notes in her essay) he says he is ‘still trying not to refer to your lot as “bloody colonials”’ (Pangs, Buffy 4.8). The Watcher’s Council, who thinly conceal their brutal management of the slayer lineage under a veneer of benign paternalism, have never devolved power to America; they regard the United States as a British colony. Wesley, when he becomes a ‘rogue demon hunter’ in Los Angeles in the first season of Angel, is treated by the Watcher’s Council in a fashion that is perhaps intended to parallel British treatment of their American colonies in the decades immediately before and after the American War of Independence. As Wesley was expected to assist the Council to recapture Faith in return for a pardon, so Britain’s actions in the second half of the eighteenth century and after, up to the War of 1812, could be interpreted as offering America integration into and advancement within the British Empire. In return, the American colonies had to perform duties for Britain; pay taxes, restrain their westward expansion, and shun ties with European countries other than Britain. All these could be seen as suppression of self-expression, something which Wesley, who during his first few episodes in Angel rapidly sheds his repressed, comic persona, has suffered within the hierarchical, paternalist structure of the Watchers’ Council. In the United States he is at first a free agent, then a member of a Commonwealth of like minds (Angel Investigations) and then is elected their leader. Wesley’s progression thus represents both his own liberation from British notions of deference and class, and Buffyverse-America’s independence from a prolonged colonial rule. Buffy herself eventually is forced to seek an accommodation with the Watchers’ Council, during the fifth season, as depicted in the episode ‘Checkpoint’. There, she and her friends are subjected to exhaustive and intrusive interrogation. Much of the episode is played for laughs, no doubt to defuse what the script reveals as a harrowing process for Buffy and the slayerettes. The process could be interpreted as that of a weakened colonial power attempting to impose the terms by which her stronger former colony is readmitted into international politics, attempting to obscure from the ingemue that she, in fact, is the stronger. Buffy realises the full force of her negotiating position late in the episode, to great dramatic effect, much as the United States, refusing to join the League of Nations after World War One for fear that her distinctiveness would be erased and that her weight would be abused by self-interested European government, found during World War Two that she was able to dictate many of the terms of her involvement in the conflict, and be a decisive voice in the post-war settlement. Discussion of the parallel that might be hypothesised from this argument, that the goddess Glory is an embodiment of the de-personalising forces of Stalinist communism is a topic for another article. However, Buffy’s triumph over her foes is a rejection of glory in the abstract. The Watchers’ Council are smug colonialists who enjoy their little triumphs; Buffy, on the front line, a pioneer in contrast to the directors of colonisation, never glories in victory, and when she comes close to doing so (for example, when in ‘Real Me’, 5.2, she drunkenly dismisses the threat from Harmony, who then invades her house) she stares defeat in the face.
re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy in 1850, and the effects of Irish immigration; women were encouraged to take orders to assist in the work of an overstretched priesthood. So, the presentation of Drusilla’s religion is the most credible of the three.

Buffy and Angel show greater respect for the European past as depicted in cinematic horror. Angelus, Darla and the Master are in some respects the successors of the rational sceptics who scoff at Van Helsing and his kind in the Hammer horror films, only to end up either collaborating with the forces of evil or fall prey to them. Old knowledge is to be respected, although it is not put forward through the pervasive but inept church but through a rationalist who does not close his mind against what others dismiss as superstition. Giles is thus an heir to Hammer’s Van Helsing, although one who is dependent on the superior physical strength and unorthodox youthful mental agility of the Slayer. The flashbacks in this sense contribute towards placing Buffy and Angel in a tradition of British horror cinema - although the Hammer films in their turn were indebted to the Universal films made in Hollywood in the 1930s and 1940s.

Most importantly, though, Buffy and Angel need their European contexts because the series needed to continue to play on the contrast between the modern and the ancient. From ‘Lie to Me’ onwards, Giles is increasingly absorbed into the modern; as Buffy and her contemporaries learn what it is to be adults, Giles, too, learns how to live as an individual in America and also to share his knowledge rather than authoritative impart it. While Buffy’s narrative becomes more complex the viewer isn’t burdened with much detail about the past of Sunnydale, which continues to play the part of modern America; the series instead develops an exotic, superstitious Europe which doesn’t need more than a slight resemblance to the Europe of history. As one commentator on an earlier draft of this article remarked, ‘It’s no accident that the historical / English scenes are almost all shot in the dark, and either outdoors or in very lavish interiors (like the house at the Christmas parties where we see Angel) – it sets up a deliberate contrast to the bright sunlight and modern classrooms which dominate the visual world of Sunnydale.’

Britain: A Class Joke, with Cruel Intentions?

As Matthew Pateman points out in his article, the British characters in Buffy (less so in Angel) often serve as figures of fun. In the first three seasons of Buffy the old-fashioned lifestyle of Giles is regularly mocked. The addition of Wesley leads to much humour at the expense of all-male boarding schools, particularly during Wesley’s fun-loving courtship of Cordelia. During ‘The Prom’ (3.20), Giles and Wesley contrast their education with that of the Sunnydale High School students; they do so in clipped British accents and so the viewer might assume that democratic, relaxed, young America is being contrasted favourably with stuffy, class-bound Britain. Yet the discussion between Giles and Wesley is couched in American language, talking of ‘an all-male preparatory’ instead of a public school (which of course in American English is a state school). To a British viewer the conversation seems very self-aware, the characters using American terminology to speak to an American television audience, in the full knowledge that the characters’ authenticity is being compromised. Although apparently British, this conversation reveals that as characters in an American television series Giles and Wesley are American conceptions; their British accents displace what is effectively a comment on American as well as British class divides.

The most important class divide, though, is that between the Americans and the British. Both Buffy and Angel depict the British as remote authority figures who condescend to other peoples, who they regard as inferiors. Angel, regressed to his eighteenth-century, pre-vampire Liam persona in ‘Spin the Bottle’ (Angel, 4.6) expresses his distrust of Wesley as the representative of an occupying disseminated that it is part of political folk culture in many parts of the world, and therefore part of the stock of lore or information that Buffy the Vampire Slayer can expect its viewers to share. Potts is perceptive in emphasising that Angel, as a young human (Liam) in eighteenth-century Galway, ‘embodies virtually all the characteristics that the English attributed to the Irish as a means of proving their unsuitness for self-government.’ She places less emphasis, however, on the way in which Liam’s characteristics also place him outside eighteenth-century social structures irrespective of his nationality; he is arrogant and outwardly self-satisfied, honours not his father and his mother (ignoring most of the other commandments as well), and lasts after women. His sexual advances towards Darla signify transgressive ambition; a desire to be self-made that makes him evil to the traditional society that is the Ireland of Buffy and Angel, and thus an exceptionally powerful vampire in his own century and continent.

As a vampire, Angelus is obsessed with religious symbolism, which Potts sees as another Victorian English stereotype of the Irish, an obsession which leads him to turn Drusilla into a vampire on the day that she was to take her vows as a nun. Angel’s tattoo of Buffy describes as “a bird or something” is actually a winged lion from the Book of Kells, which represents the evangelist Mark. It is held to symbolise the supposed spiritual qualities of the Celt, and within the context of Angel’s conflicted identity - a being cast out of the sight of God, but who seeks to do good. (God is mentioned with the reservation that both Buffy and Angel seek to avoid a narrow identification with the Christian faith.) The most overt sign of Angel’s Irishness, however, is the Claddagh ring that he gives to Buffy in ‘Surprise’ (2.13); it is presented as an assertion of his cultural Irishness as well as of his fidelity to Buffy, and it is that ring which calls Angel back from Hell at the end of ‘Faith, Hope, and Trick’ (3.3). Just as Angel displays Irish characteristics, so Potts sees his conflict with William/Spike as one between Celt and Saxon. Angel is artistic: as a killer, he is promiscuous and prefers to draw out the agony of his victims. Spike, conversely, is direct and practical when he wants to kill, and moderate and restrained in his choice of victims, displaying the supposedly Anglo-Saxon qualities that were held to legitimise British rule in Ireland.

Matthew Pateman: Three Faces from England

Pateman’s article on Englishness explores Giles’s role as father-figure to Buffy; he suggests that a model for a discussion of the relationship, and for those Buffy has with Wesley and Spike, would be the way in which some critics see Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita as an allegory of the shaping of young America by sophisticated but depraved old Europe. I haven’t read Lolita but feel that this parallel leads itself to misinterpretation; Giles, as Pateman emphasises, is very much a father-figure to Buffy in a way that Humbert fails to be to Lolita. Initially he is a collection of clichés about Englishness, asserting at the Bronze nightclub that he would ‘much rather be at home with a cup of Bovril and a good book’ (‘Welcome to the Hellmouth’, 1.1) but later becomes more complicated as we learn his occultist past as ‘Ripper’.

The other male English Watcher is Wesley, introduced as ‘much more closely allied (than Giles) to a bumbling, cowardly, effeminate Brideshead Revisited Edwardian sort of character’, his
obsession with rules being his way of compensating for his lack of maturity. Both Wesley and Giles, however, are seen by Pateman as belonging to ‘a rather idealised notion of the English gentleman-scholar’ in a tradition established (for all his supposed French origins) by Star Trek: The Next Generation’s Jean-Luc Picard.

Spike is the third English male character discussed by Pateman. He is introduced as ‘a version of reasonably recent Englishness as exemplified through youth culture’. Pateman notes that Spike and Drusilla were intended to evoke Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen, whose decadent behaviour ‘scandalised the British media’ in Pateman’s words; Pateman seems to have missed that Nancy was American and the drama of their relationship was played out on both sides of the Atlantic, a potential parallel first for the reign of Spike and Drusilla as the lords of the undead in Sunnydale, and later for Spike’s psychologically intense sado-masochistic sexual affair with Buffy. Pateman discusses how the characters of Spike and Giles are much closer than they initially appear in ‘Restless’ (4.22) both manifest themselves in Buffy’s (Xander’s) dream, wearing tweeds and sitting side by side on a set of swings. As discovered early in Buffy’s fifth season, in ‘Fool for Love’, Spike was once a ‘softly spoken, rather effete poet’ called William, from the same upper (or perhaps more precisely upper-middle) class background as Giles or Wesley. Pateman discusses at length ‘Tabula Rasa’, the episode where all the regulars lose their memories: when Spike realises that he is English, after insulting Giles as effete, Giles responds with ‘Welcome to the nancy tribe’.

Flashbacks and faith

My interpretation of the use of Ireland and England by Buffy and Angel is perhaps close to Pateman’s. I see both countries as being principally important as representations of the Old World in contrast to the New, and these similarities in the depictions of both countries are more important than their differences. Both countries, as imagined by Buffy and Angel in their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century guises, are depicted as spiritual and observantly Christian, in contrast to the secular and materialist worlds of Sunnydale and Los Angeles. Almost at the very end of Buffy’s second season, in ‘Becoming, Part One’ (2.21) we glimpse the end of Angelus’s murder of a priest to whom Drusilla was about to make her confession. When in the Angel episode ‘Prodigal’ (1.15) we see Liam’s funeral in Galway, about a century earlier, a man in antique clerical garb presides. Even in the twenty-first century it seems that Britain is more attuned to the ancient evils that imperil the world than contemporary Sunnydale and Los Angeles - we learn at the beginning of the seventh season of Buffy that there is a benevolent witches’ coven in Devon that helps Willow achieve a workable peace with herself following her attempt to destroy the world at the end of the sixth season.

The ‘flashback’ sequences set in Europe in previous centuries, however, are central to the argument, as they are used not only to provide retroactive information about characters but also to validate Buffy’s cosmology to the viewer. This cosmology, highly developed by the end of the seventh season, and developing onwards through the continuation of Angel, has its origins in the need to contrast Buffy Summers, the modern Californian teenager, with her vampire slayer heritage, as interpreted to her by the stereotypically stuffy Briton, Rupert Giles. Initially this cosmology was part-anecdotal, as Buffy and her friends received information, usually incomplete in some way, about that week’s foe; it was then part-revelatory, as Buffy discovered information through the appearance of the new demon. En route, humour was extracted from the clash between Buffy and her friends, representing the newness of California – Buffy is fashion-conscious, Willow techno-literate, Xander always questioning through his cheerfully-admitted ignorance – and the experienced and knowledgeable but apparently culturally inflexible Giles. There was only one short sequence set in the European past in the first season, at the beginning of ‘I Robot… You Jane’ where the audience was allowed to see the capture of the demon Moloch and anticipate what would happen to the text in which he was trapped once it was scanned into a computer connected to the internet. As the series became more complex and began to question, in effect, elements of its own narrative (a process that begins round about the episode ‘Lie to Me’ in the second season) then the flashback sequence was re-adapted as a device to tell viewers, but not the characters themselves, about the prehistory of the fictional universe that was emerging and provide them with a context for the characters’ actions.

Most of these sequences involved the vampire characters, including their entries into undeath. Overt attention was given to vampire behaviour and the tensions between Angel, Darla, Drusilla and Spike - beings in a moral universe who had lost their ability to see their way through it. As previously noted the church is present, through the implicit Catholicism of Angel’s Irish background, the Master’s imperious assumption of a churchman, and Drusilla’s religious vocation; there is also a religious dimension of a sort to William’s fall into vampirism, for Drusilla sees Pre-Raphaelite imagery in his mind, and seduces him with the temptation of becoming her Sir Lancelot, an iconic figure of medieval lay spirituality. William/Spike may have been a virgin when seduced by Drusilla - many fans have thought that they did not have sexual relations for nearly two decades after Drusilla sired William’s vampire self - in which case William could be seen as Sir Lancelot and Spike as his and Drusilla’s offspring, Sir Galahad, who eventually achieves the Holy Grail and, like Spike at the end of the seventh season of Buffy, disappears in a blaze of light.

The depiction of the British and Irish pasts in Buffy and Angel is of questionable value to anyone hoping to learn a little about history. This is in part the result of budgetary constraints; the flashbacks are usually short and so are reliant on existing studio lots and (I suppose) use few new sets and costumes. The late Victorian London of ‘Pool for Love’ could easily be somewhere in central Europe. In some ways this setting is appropriate; vampires first became part of English-language culture in the mid-eighteenth century, when the press reported tales of a vampire-hunt in Hungary. The area with the greatest potential to mislead, however, is the depiction of the church. I doubt that either the Church of England men and women who founded the colony of Virginia, or their Catholic neighbours in Maryland, would have entertained someone disguised as a monk to administer the last rites to Darla; in one colony it would have been inconceivable, and in the other they probably would have been risking arrest. Whether it is a Catholic priest or Church of Ireland clergyman who presides over Liam’s funeral, it’s unlikely that in the eighteenth century that he’d be wearing anything that we would recognise as clerical dress, which was reserved for the higher clergy of the established church. As for Drusilla’s religious vocation, recent research has shown that in the 1850s and 1860s it was becoming increasingly common for young Catholic Englishwomen to become nuns, following the