

Georgina Willms: The Inter-Male relationships of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

BtVS is well (and rightfully) known as a show that examines and celebrates the intricacies of female relationships. Throughout the run of *Buffy*, women are shown working together to fight the evil and triumph over the powers of darkness (and, I daresay, the patriarchy?). Less attention has been paid, however, to the relationships between the male characters. Stereotypically of course we have the father figure (Giles), the de-sexualized brother-type (Xander), the romantic lead (Angel), and the bad boy (Spike) (amongst others). While a cursory glance might show the relationships between these male characters to be somewhat superficial and inconsequential, a closer look shows a fascinating framework of male bonding that proves just as fundamental to the structure of the show as the female relationships. These relationships range from the fatherly to the romantic (the sexual flirtation and hints of past dalliances between Angel and Spike are particularly compelling). Also, as often with themes in the Whedonverse, what is hinted at onscreen is adopted and expanded on by the fans. To this end I will first detail the particular elements of the male/male relationships in *BtVS* in light of, as Lorna Jowett puts it, the “renegotiation of masculinity in pop-cultural forms”¹ while at the same time remaining in a recognizable patriarchal landscape (as Marc Camron notes).² I will follow this pattern by showing how these themes have been interpreted and expanded on by the fans, particularly in fanfiction.

This paper will concentrate solely on the canonical *BtVS* television series (seasons 1-7), although mention of happenings on *AtS* may occur (but will not be the focus).

¹ From *Sex and the Slayer: A Gender Studies Primer for the Buffy Fan* (2004)

² From „The Importance of Being the Zeppo: Xander, Gender Identity and Hybridity in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.“ (2006).