

WILLOW AS HYBRID

THE TRANSITIONS OF HER CHARACTER THROUGH
STEREOTYPES ASSOCIATED TO WOMEN IN SCI-F



Gemma Horton
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Abstract

This dissertation discusses the various stereotypes represented by the character Willow from the sci-fi TV series 'Buffy The Vampire Slayer', these stereotypes being Geek, Witch, Deity, Villain and her Sexuality.

The use of clothing and make-up to create these stereotypes as well as the parallels between the two female characters in 'Buffy the Vampire Slayer' and 'Scooby-Doo' are also discussed.

Willow's Witch stereotype works with 'Magick'. The three types of 'Power' she deals with being natural and naïve dabbling, the 'Dark Arts' and the addictive 'Magicks'.

Introduction

For this dissertation I am going to look at Willow Rosenberg (Alyson Hannigan) from the TV series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" (Whedon, J. 1997 to 2003) (BVS) as a hybrid female character. Willow, as well as Buffy (Sarah Michelle Gellar), has appeared in every one of the 144 episodes of the series indicating that her character has an equal status as Buffy.

During my research for this dissertation I have examined several female characters and how they all have elements of geek, hero, villain and their sexuality. Some of these characters include Lara Croft, from the tomb Raider computer games, Seven of Nine (Jeri Ryan), from Star Trek: Voyager (Berman, R. et al 1995 to 2001), Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss), from the Matrix Trilogy (Wachowski Brothers 1999 to 2003) and several others. Trinity from the Matrix Trilogy is at first a hero and then in the course of the narrative is represented as both a 'babe' and love interest for Neo (Keanu Reeves).

In the first Matrix film, Trinity is as involved as Neo. She is as powerful and technically accomplished as either of the two male characters, Neo and Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne), and is depicted as an equal. Literally a third of a trinity. This can be seen in early fights in The Matrix (Wachowski Brothers. 1999) then she changes in the next two films become more of a worried lover and as Dr. Verena Kuni (M.A) suggests that (personal communication by email. 25 November 2005) "from the beginning Trinity believes that dying for HIM would be a necessary sacrifice."

However for this dissertation and due to the limited word count I intend to focus on Willow as she encapsulates all of the aforementioned elements.

I will analyse the multiple stereotypes Willow's character embodies throughout the series, deconstructing the various representations made. I will look at Willow as a Geek, Willow as a Witch, Willow as a Villain, Willow as a Deity and Willow's Sexuality, I will consider the social significations of these representations in terms of representing femininity her self.

Willow as Geek

We are introduced to Willow in the first episode of the show 'Welcome to the Hellmouth' (Smith, C.M. 1997) as a shy, nervous, naive and fairly stereotypical American high school 'Geek' with low self-esteem and a knack for being exceptionally clumsy. She is very good at science, and has an understanding of various hacking techniques that are used as a plot device.



As can be seen in Fig.1 Willow's clothes and appearance represents her geeky character. From this image you can see that she is wearing a jumper with a hand knitted star including the words "Be Happy" stitched onto it. Her hairstyle is shoulder length with a slight kick at the base. Her makeup is hardly visible with just natural tones being used.

Many jokes are played off her character's apparent innocence and sweetness, which allow her lightly risqué statements to be humorous. For example in 'The Pack' (Green, B.S. 1997) Buffy and Willow are discussing the way in which Willow has a deep affection to Xander. This personal moment is alleviated by Willow's character making a joke about Buffy's observation. She then goes on to use a simplistic term to describe to Buffy how Xander makes her feel. This non-sexual comment infers her innocence and childlike representation.

Fig.1

WILLOW: Did he seem upset at all on the bus back from the zoo?

BUFFY: About what?

WILLOW: I don't know. He was quiet.

BUFFY: I didn't notice anything. But then again I'm not as hyperaware of him as, oh, say for example, you.

WILLOW: Hyperaware?

BUFFY: Well, I'm not constantly monitoring his health, his moods, his blood pressure...

WILLOW: 130 over 80!

BUFFY: (amused) You got it bad, girl.

WILLOW: He makes my head go tingly. You know what I mean?

(Green, B.S. 1997)

Over the seven seasons Willow's magical power as a Witch increases as her self-esteem increases she also experiments with her sexuality and finally comes out as a lesbian and has a long term relationship with Tara Maclay (Amber Benson)

Willow's dress code is very colourful and often humorous. Unlike Buffy who dresses provocatively and fashionably, Willow is dressed in more comfortable clothes. As can be seen in Fig.2 Buffy is a petite blond. Her character wears tight fitting fashionable, plain coloured clothes. Her hair is always perfect. Her make up is natural but seductive. Her character uses a lot of lip-gloss. This is a sharp contrast to Willow's character that wears brighter and more comical at time. Her clothes help to portray the representation of Willow as an innocent and childlike character for example her baggy jumpers and dungarees.

However as Willow's character evolves and changes, her appearance and clothes change to help show the viewers that she is a different Willow. I will go into this in more detail in later chapters when I discuss Willow as a Witch, Deity, Villain and her Sexuality.

The Geek Stereotype is also used for comic effect, used to relieve the tension as needed. Willow also makes Buffy look better in terms of looks and appearance. Her bright colourful cloths as seen in Fig.1 are a sharp contrast to the more attractive and socially acceptable clothes of Buffy as seen in Fig.2.



Fig.2

However Buffy's intelligence is definitely not at the same level as Willow. The character of Buffy is cast into the stereotype of the 'Dumb Blond' however she is streetwise unlike the childlike Willow. She is physically stronger than a man of her size breaking the stereotype slightly but she uses simplistic terms such as "Yuck" and "Does this outfit make me look fat?" This simplistic language compared to the complex language of Willow as a Geek and later during Magick spells. This representation emphasises the different strengths of the two characters.



Fig.3

This is further elaborated on when Buffy, Willow, Xander (Nicholas Brendon) and Giles (Anthony Head) start to refer to themselves as the 'Scoobies'. The name is derived from the cartoon series Scooby-Doo. The first appearance of the term is in Episode 'What's My Line, Part One', (Solomon, D. 1997) as spoken by Xander "C'mon, Cordelia. You wanna be a member of the Scooby Gang you gotta be willing to be inconvenienced every now and then".

The two main female characters Daphne (See Fig.3 female character on far left) and Velma (See Fig.3 female character behind book) in Scooby-Doo (William Hanna & Joseph Barbera, 1969-1976) match the characters of Buffy and Willow exactly. Velma like Willow is intelligent and bookish. She is always the one who solves the mysteries. Where as Daphne and Buffy are both attractive, cheerleader types who are represented in fashionable cloths but have very little metal capacity. The stereotype seems to perpetuate the myth that you must either be attractive and dumb or unattractive and clever.

Willow is constantly trying to build her confidence and her identity through out the entire series of BVS. She feels like the outsider of the group. Her awkward and geekish appearance and behaviours isolate her from the norm and makes her feel more of an outcast. With her use of Magick she begins to find herself signifying the start of her characters change and development into a new character representation.

As Ruddel states in her paper about Willow's split character:

"Her love of academic learning, new technology and researching magic are defining features of Willow's character. It is her love of knowledge, or the tools of knowledge, that seemed to spark Willow's initial interest in Magick. Willow's love of text, which inspires her knowledge seeking, is essentially a means to an end: she requires the text in order to find knowledge, and by extension power." (Ruddel, C. 2005)

This statement sums up Willow's character perfectly. She finds her knowledge and therefore her power in her research be it from books or computers. Her character seems to mirror the quote by Sir Francis Bacon "Knowledge is power" (The Quotes Page, 2005). Willow's ability to find information from the Internet and books is always her first port of call when a new mystery arises. Her Magick also starts from books. However with this power Willow does not see herself as having a clear identity in the group, whereas the other members see her as a strong reliable source of power, stability and experience.

This identity that she creates is a fragile one and she has to belong to someone in order to feel secure. This can be seen in her relationships with Xander, Oz (Seth Green) and then Tara. As Battis argues "Willow's relationship with Tara, like her relationship with Oz, only further demonstrates her dis(embodiment) as a subject whose mentality and materiality is fragmented.... She must belong to Tara, to Oz, to Xander, in order to be inscribed by meaning, by the validity that others place in her" (Battis, J. 2003). This results in Willow losing herself whenever the person she feels she belongs to either leaves, dies or finds another partner, making her character very unstable.

This insecurity in herself confirms the 'stay at home in your room' and only deal with the world from behind a computer screen stereotype of a geek. This geeky persona makes Willow an interesting character to look into as she has this vulnerability as well as a great strength that she finds from her Magick.

One element that breaks the Geek stereotype of Willow is the fact that she is female. Nevertheless this male dominated area was not originally male. Ada Lovelace created the first computer program in 1843 and later in 1943 Grace Hopper was the first person to write a program for the Mark 1 Calculator. She also went on to become an expert in her field of computers and technology. These two remarkable women have been forgotten meaning that representations of women in computing and technology roles such as Willow are thought of as breaking the stereotypes.

Willow's character breaks the traditional stereotype by being female, Donna Haraway argues against in Dr. Verena Kuni (M.A) paper 'The Future is Female'

"the cultural dichotomies between 'male technologies' and 'female nature' to propose a different notion of a hybrid or fragile self whose capacities are no longer built up on a concept of identity and demarcation, but rather on diverging concepts of embodiment, difference and solidarity. For Haraway, there is no consistent or 'natural' notion of 'femininity' or 'womanhood' and especially no state of being that could be called 'woman'. " (Kuni, V. 1998)

If we take what Haraway says into note the concept of a female Geek is easy to represent, as we no longer have a concept of femininity or gender. However the gender stereotype of Willow as female is also played upon within the series. Willow stays in the background, is often in danger, the damsel in distress stereotype and she is also relatively weak without her Magick. This is illustrated in the first ever episode 'Welcome to the Hellmouth' (Smith, C.M. 1997). Willow falls prey to a young male Vampire in the local club because she naively thinks that he is attracted to her and wants to go for ice cream. He easily walks her to the local graveyard and gets her inside a mausoleum. Luckily for Willow Buffy spots her leaving with the Vampire and so is in time to save her.

Willow as Witch

Willow's power and strength comes from her Magick. The stronger her Magick the more confident she becomes. However the 'Power' becomes an addiction, Willow is represented as experiencing the same as any drug user going through rehabilitation and withdrawal as shown in 'Gone' (Furry, D. 2002).

Willow a shy and slightly detached character that finds herself in the 'Magicks' as she refers to them. This means that her character has more responsibilities in the group, leading to more status. For example in 'Bargaining Part 1' (Grossman, D. 2001) Willow uses telepathic abilities to communicate incoming danger to the rest of the group from her vantage point onto of a mausoleum during a fight scene. Nevertheless this leads to her becoming more isolated due to the Magick that is only understood by her a new character we are introduced to, Tara, during season 4 in 'Hush' (Whedon, J. 1999)

Willow's needy personality creates problems when her relationship with Tara becomes romantic. Willow's character becomes dependent and is represented as though she belongs to Tara. This reliance on Tara and Tara's support allow her to be stronger and her Magick becomes more powerful. However when Tara is killed, by a bullet, that was meant for Buffy in 'Seeing Red' (Gersham, M. 2002). This pushes Willow over the edge and the 'Power' inside her takes over. The despair at the loss of her lover and the only one she feels to truly understand her pushes her to take a human life in 'Seeing Red' (Gersham, M. 2002).

This despair and anger manifests itself in 'evil' and is represented by the changing of Willows appearance. Her normally red/orange hair turns black as do her eyes. Her clothes become black and are no longer geeky and comical as they have been in earlier episodes such as 'Doppelgangland' (Whedon, J. 1999). She also shortens her long vocabulary to short brisk commands such as "take a nap", "stop" and "back off" these are seen in 'The Wish' (Greenwalt, D. 1999) and 'Doppelgangland' (Whedon, J. 1999) as well as later episodes when she becomes the real 'Dark' Willow in series 6.

In the episode 'Doppelgangland' (Whedon, J. 1999) Willow is horrified to observe that "I'm so evil and . . . skanky! And I think I'm kinda gay" she states this when she is observing her Vampire self. At this time in the series Willow is in a relationship with Oz and so her later gay relationship with Tara which intern results in her most powerful and most evil state, as a Witch has not yet occurred. Meaning that she has not yet discovered her true self.

The representation of Willow's newly found gay sexuality and her growing Magick powers is representative of the power young people feel as they progress through adolescence. The parallel growth of her Magick and sexual awareness is also another extreme representation of her growing sexual power as a young attractive woman.



Fig.4

As Willow's power from her Magick grows her status in the group starts to shift. She is no longer the one who has to be working on the computers, the poor defenceless Geek. She becomes strong and assertive. We see this in the new style of clothes that she starts to wear. Willow no longer appears in the pink fluffy jumpers but a trendier look. (Fig.4)

Willow's clothing signifies the changes in her character. She is growing up and becoming an adult. As her power grows with her own sexual awareness, so too does her ability to become a more active character, Geek Willow evolves and this is represented on screen through her clothing, language and changes in her sexual orientation.

When Willow decides to give up 'the Magicks' the character script attempts to make the viewer identify with how she feels about her self when she is talking to Buffy in 'Wrecked' (Solomon, D. 2001) after Willow took Dawn (Buffy's younger sister) to the Magick dealer because she needed a 'hit' when she was supposed to be looking after her. After they leave the dealer Willow

is acting 'spaced out' and not her normal self which upsets Dawn but to make matters worse a Demon attacks them which they escape by stealing a car which Willow crashes knocking her self out and leaving Dawn vulnerable and inevitably she gets injured. Luckily Buffy comes to the rescue even though it is Willow in the end that kills the Demon Dawn and the others are still disappointed in Willow. Due to this Willow decides to quit the Magicks and begs Buffy for her help. We later hear this conversation in Willow's bedroom and find out what she really thinks about her self;

BUFFY: Will, there's nothing wrong with you. You don't need magick to be special.

WILLOW: Don't I? I mean, Buffy, who was I? Just ... some girl. Tara didn't even know that girl.

BUFFY: You are more than some girl. And Tara wants you to stop. She loves you.

WILLOW: We don't know that.

BUFFY: I know that. I promise you.

WILLOW: I just ... it took me away from myself, I was ... free.

BUFFY: I get that. More than you- But it's wrong. People get hurt.

WILLOW: If something had happened to Dawn tonight ... something worse...

BUFFY: I know.

WILLOW: No, I don't think you do. I-I ... I was out of my mind, I ... I did things I can't even...

WILLOW: It won't happen again, I promise. No more spells. I'm finished.

BUFFY: Good. I think it's right. To give it up. No matter how good it feels.

WILLOW: It's not worth it. Not if it messes with the people I love.

WILLOW: The magic wasn't all great. I won't miss the nosebleeds and the headaches and stuff.

BUFFY: There you go.

WILLOW: Or ... keeping stinky yak cheese in my bra..... Don't ask.

BUFFY: Now I don't have to.

WILLOW: 'Cause it's over.

BUFFY: Exactly. It's over.

(Solomon, D. 2001)

From this conversation with Buffy we see that Willow thinks that with out 'the Magicks' she is nothing. She uses the Magick to define herself. Later on when Willow becomes 'Dark' Willow we hear her talking to Buffy again about her self in 'Two To Go' (Norton, B.L. 2002) and she speaks again but more aggressively about what she thinks of herself with out Magick.

BUFFY: Willow, I know what you want to do, but you have to listen to me. The forces inside you are incredibly powerful. They're strong ... but you're stronger. You have to remember you're still Willow.

WILLOW: (scoffs) Let me tell you something about Willow. (advancing toward Buffy) She's a loser. And she always has been. People picked on Willow in junior high school, high school, up until college. With her stupid mousy ways. And now? Willow's a junkie.

BUFFY: I can help.

WILLOW: The only thing Willow was ever good for...

WILLOW: ...the only thing I had going for me ... were the moments - just moments - when Tara would look at me and I was wonderful. (grimly) And that will never happen again.

(Norton, B.L. 2002)

We see here that Willow thinks that she was "stupid" and "mousy" and that the thing that defined her and she felt she was ever good for was to be with Tara who has now been taken from her. This reconfirms the construction of Willow's character as needy and longing to belong to some one to be valid. She belonged to Tara and now that she has died she has no meaning and so no purpose to be normal Willow and nothing to hold her back from being 'Dark' Willow and using Magick as that reason has been removed.

Willow's power also starts to rival that of Buffy's strength. Her new power means that Buffy is no longer the one in control and as she says "the Law" (Ruddell, C. 2005) but Willow is. The Power eventually takes her over due to the death of Tara and we watch as Willow goes on a revengeful killing spree and almost causes the end of the world. Nevertheless Xander shows her there is still meaning in her life and still love in the world and so averts the apocalypse.

'Grave' (Contner, J.A. 2002) with his childhood recollections of 'crayon-breaky Willow'

"First day of kindergarten. You cried because you broke the yellow crayon, and you were too afraid to tell anyone. You've come pretty far, ending the world, not a terrific notion. But the thing is? Yeah. I love you. I loved crayon-breaky Willow and I love ... scary veiny Willow." (Contner, J.A. 2002)

It is Xander's love for Willow that brings her back from the brink.

Willow as Deity

At the end of season 5 we see the death of Buffy. Nevertheless when season 6 begins we see her up and fighting again. However this miraculous recovery is not real. Buffy is still dead and the 'Buffy' we see is a robot that was created for Spike (James Marsters) by Warren (Adam Busch) in 'I was made to love you' (Contner, J.A. 2001) in season 5. Willow maintains and reprograms the robot Buffy so that the Vampires and other demons still think that the slayer is in town.

This creation is one example of Willow being a Geek as well as a Deity. When the robot is damaged it is programmed to return to Willow for repairs. Its god, its fixer, is Willow. The Buffy 'bot', as it is referred to, can fight the same as the real Buffy for fills the role of defender however this still leaves the personal gap that the rest of the 'Scoobies' still feel the loss of the real Buffy.

This leads to Willow coming up with the plan to resurrect Buffy with Magick. She has found that because Buffy did not die a natural human death there is a chance that she can bring her back from what Willow believes is a Hell dimension.

She manages to convince Tara, Xander and Anya (Emma Caulfield) that they should bring Buffy back and start to collect the things that they need to resurrecting Buffy. Willow's Magicks have been growing stronger over the past episodes and she is starting to feel the power with in her. This Magick act of resurrecting Buffy marks the transition in her character to 'Dark' Willow. We see Willow killing a living creature (a fawn) to get its blood. She feels repulsed that she has taken a life, however this first tiptoe into the dark arts gives her a taste of the power that is available.

This is also the start of Willow's addiction to the Magicks, which I will discuss more, in the next chapter about Willow as a Villain. After Willow has resurrected Buffy and acquired the taste for the Magicks she starts to become arrogant. This is represented when she is talking to Giles after the resurrection and his return to Sunnydale. He says to her in 'Flooded' (Petrie, D. 2001)

Giles: Of everyone here.... you were the one I trusted most to respect the forces of nature you rank, arrogant amateur

Willow: Your right the Magicks I used are very powerful, I'm very powerful, and maybe its not such a good idea for you to piss me off.

(Petrie, D. 2001)

When she delivers this line her whole character changes and we see a glimpse of 'Dark' Willow. There is no physical change, yet we still hear her voice change and become harsher, her mannerisms change and she stares at Giles. However, when she has delivered the line she literally shakes off the 'Dark' side, we see and hear the normal Willow again as she tries to reason with Giles.

Willow's new self confidence with the power that she now has due to the Magicks means that she starts to lose her grip and she starts to shift her belief system to fit the way the Magicks makes her feel. Her old way of thinking of only using Magick to help others is blown out the window and we see her using Magick to create party decorations and she even wants to use the Magick to clean the Magick shop but Giles stops her.

Both Tara and Giles see her use of Magick as dangerous for her. The power rush is going to her head and we see the two characters becoming more and more concerned for her welfare. Tara tries to confront Willow and they have an argument that leads to Willow doing a spell on Tara so that she forgets they ever had an argument. This in turn leads to Tara leaving Willow.

In Willow's grief at the break up with Tara the one person she feels she belongs to she decides that she needs a replacement and so brings Amy Madison (Elizabeth Anne Allen), also a powerful witch, back from being a rat in 'Smashed' (Meyer, T. 2001). This gives Willow a playmate allowing her to go off and have fun with her power. It is Amy who then introduces Willow to the Magick Dealer who 'jacks' Willow up on some more powerful Magick. The Power has gone from being sacred to 'fun' and commonplace to being misused when she is given the Magicks by the dealer.

When Willow experiences her 'hit' we see her with black eyes for the first time this signifies that this Magick is bad for her. The scene implies that the Magicks will become an addiction for her and will only lead to bad things.

Willow as Villain

Willow is represented as a Villain in two instances. When she is a Vampire in 'The Wish' (Greenwalt, D. 1999) and 'Doppelgangland' (Whedon, J. 1999) and when she becomes 'Dark' Willow at the end of Season 6 ('Villains' (Solomon, D. 2002), 'Two to Go' (Norton, B.L. 2002) and 'Grave' (Contner, J.A. 2002))



Fig.5

These two representations of Willow as a Villain give Willow's character more depth. Vampire Willow is created in an alternative reality because Buffy was never born. Vampire Willow dresses in tight leather but her hair stays red signifying her character still having some humanity. She also acts in a seductive manner. Making the character evil but also sexy. Fig. 4 shows the clear difference between the two Willows.

The 'power' created due to her Vampireness and the 'power' due to her Magick both empower her character and break her from that need to belong by increasing her self-confidence. Yet they still isolate her from the rest of

the group and so the feelings of being the odd one out still remains even though she has power and so self-confidence.

When she becomes 'Dark' Willow her clothes and appearance change again. Her eyes go black similar to sharks eyes signifying her loss of humanity, her hair goes black and her clothes are also black. There is no sexiness signified in this construction, she is dressed in a practical trousers, top and over jacket. (Fig. 6)

Her speech and way of delivering the words is also different to Vampire Willow. The manner is direct and to the point whereas Vampire Willow's is more seductive and playful. They both use shorter words and phrases than 'normal' Willow such as "board now" and "take a nap". However when 'Dark' Willow delivers these phrases they are more aggressive than Vampire Willow's delivery of them.

This is another way that the distinction between the different aspects of Willow is portrayed to the audience.



Fig.6

The physical strength of the two characters is also different. A Vampire automatically gets a type of super strength whereas 'Dark' Willow has to perform Magick on herself so that she can have the same strength as Buffy allowing her to fight Buffy and subsequently beat her. This also signifies a difference between the two sides of Willow. 'Dark' Willow has to literally absorb the Dark Arts books so that she can perform her Magicks. She also has to keep topping up her 'power' as she becomes drained. Whereas Vampire Willow once she becomes a Vampire, has a new instinct and her strength does not run out like 'Dark' Willow's Magicks.

One of the main differences between Vampire and 'Dark' Willow is the spark of Humanity. Vampire Willow's humanity is purely sexually driven and can never be in total control of her. Where as 'Dark' Willow even though she has taken a life still has humanity at her core allowing her to come back to being 'Normal' Willow. This spark is enhanced by Giles in 'Grave' (Contner, J.A. 2002) by tricking 'Dark' Willow into taking the Magick that he was entrusted with. This new 'power' is stronger than anything she has felt before giving her a very big trip.

The image of Willow's face blurs to signify that she is 'tripping out' and how strong this new Magick is for her and she even comments "I'm so Juiced". When the rush starts to settle down she starts to realise that she has too much power and as she puts it "no mortal person has ... ever had ... this much power" (Contner, J.A. 2002). She then realises that she is connected to every one in the world and all of their emotions.

"All the emotion. All the pain. No, it, it's too much. It's just too much." Giles tries to tell her that it does not have to be this way and that she can stop it. It is this that makes her decide to stop all the pain "Yeah. I, I can. I have to stop this. I'll make it go away. [...] Oh, you poor bastards!" (Contner, J.A. 2002)

It is this that makes her decide to destroy the world to stop all the pain.

It is this connection with humanity and her desire to help the world by stopping the pain that gives that glimmer of hope she is not acting out of hate and revenge any more. She is now acting out of compassion be it confused and dangerous. This signifies that she still has some humanity in her.

It is this difference in the left over humanity that defines the difference between 'Dark' Willow and Vampire Willow. Xander's love for Willow eventually gets through to 'Dark' Willow saving the day with his talk about their childhood memory. This memory of 'crayon breaky' Willow helps to remind her of her own humanity and his love for her. He keeps repeating the words "I love you" and getting in the way of her Magick. Allowing for her to release her grief on him instead of the world.

Willow's Sexuality

Willow's sexuality is an integral part of her character. Through out the seven series she has several partners. Starting with Oz the first person she has a sexual relationship with.

She also has a crush on Xander her best friend since kinder garden. This story of unrequited love brings 'will they, won't they' tension to the relationship. We eventually see Willow and Xander get together. However in doing this they are both cheating on their partners.

The relationship nevertheless cannot become more than friendship and after they are caught kissing each other by their partners the sexual side of there relationship comes to an end. This leads to their love for each other going beyond sexual desire and becomes extremely strong and it is partly this that stops Willow from destroying the world at the end of season 6.

Willow's relationship with Oz continues. The fact that he is a werewolf becomes another relationship trouble that they seem to hurdle with ease.

This beast within is not just kept to men in BVS. Willow has her own beast that we see when she is a Vampire. She is represented as a sexualised female when she becomes a Vampire, wearing tight leather clothes, talking in a playful and erotic manner and the way she reacts to men is the exact opposite to Geek Willow.

Vampires have always had sexual undertones and Buffy even mentions it in 'Conversations with Dead People' "See, this is what I hate about you vampires. Sex and death and love and pain, its all the same damned thing to you." (Marck, N. 2002)

"Vampirism stands as a metaphor for promiscuous sexuality. Both acts involve desire, penetration, the flow and exchange of bodily fluids (blood, in the case of vampirism), and have similar physiological effects - namely, a temporary healthy-looking flush which soon gives way to feeling drained."

(Novelguide.com, 2005).



Fig.7

A female Vampire is also regarded as an ultimate fantasy figure, she is a sexualised, dominant, strong, aggressive and insatiable and yet she is the ultimate nightmare at the same time. This creates a character that male audience members can fantasies about and the element of nightmare gives an extra thrill. Nevertheless the male control is restored when a Vampire is killed, as the tool of destruction is a wooden stake (A phallic symbol), thus restoring male dominants over the female and so their control over the situation.

The twist or bonus in some male viewers case is that Vampire Willow is gay and we later find that Willow herself is gay and starts a relationship with a fellow witch who she meets at a Wicca group in college. Tara and Willow's relationship is a strong and loving one and we are led to believe that they are sole mates. (Fig.7)

As Zacharek, S. (2002) suggests the lesbian community saw Willow's lesbian relationship with Tara as one of the most positive lesbian role models on television and when Tara was killed off, some fans and members of the lesbian community have argued that this was clearly an anti-gay and anti-female statement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have analysed how the character of Willow Rosenberg is a hybrid by discussing the transitions of her character through the stereotypes that are associated with women in Sci-fi. These stereotypes being Willow as a Geek, Witch, Villain and Deity and the way her sexuality influences these representations.

The Geek stereotype of Willow is portrayed by creating a naive, nervous and dependent character. She has to belong to someone to feel a part of something, part of the group. This makes her personality very fragile and so when the 'Power' she gains from her Magick develops she needs the support of Tara and her other friends to keep it under control. Willow's Geek persona operates to give the series humour as well as a more down to earth human side.

Willow's isolation from the group drives her to succumbing to peer pressure and get involved with more intense and addictive Magick to try and become part of the group when the reality is that due to one thing, in Willow's case her intelligence. She will never fit into the group, she wishes to, as the rest of the 'scoobies' intelligence and understanding of the Magicks is far below hers and so, she will always be the odd one out.

Willow's Magick defines her in the group as well as giving her more confidence and presence. Her status as a Witch and eventually a renowned powerful Witch means the group as a whole becomes stronger. However the Magick also isolates Willow from the group, as she is the only one until Tara arrives who understands it. The power of her Magick also becomes an addiction as she becomes stronger and she is faced with a difficult decision of giving it up completely or losing herself and the people she loves. This dilemma marks another turning point and transition for Willow's character.

Willow is defined by being a Witch but she is also controlled by it. It keeps her from being totally incorporated in the group but at the same time a strong member of the group.

The representation of Willow as a Witch goes against the traditional stereotypes of a Witch. The Witch stereotype has always been portrayed as everything that is opposite to what a 'traditional' woman should have been. They were portrayed as being 'evil', child eaters, unattractive, and homosexual as well as in league with the devil. This can be seen in most Disney classics such as "Sleeping Beauty" (Disney, 1959). Willow's character breaks these stereotypes except of the homosexual aspect. She helps to demonstrate to the viewers that Witches are not all bad. She shows the true, healing side of Witchcraft but also demonstrates the destructive power of the Magicks when she becomes 'Dark' Willow and represents the old stereotypes of a Witch.

The portrayal of Willow as two types of Villain in BVS, she is a Vampire who is representing by her sexuality more than her evil side. She dresses in leather, talks and acts in a seductive manner. Whereas 'Dark' Willow's is pure black energy driven by grief and vengeance. Her hair, eyes and clothes are all black and there are no connotations of sexiness in her look. Nevertheless her human emotions of grief and revenge means she can still be saved and it is Xander's show of love that brings her back from the brink.

Willow's sexuality is an integral part of her character. She defines herself by the people she is committed to and she has to belong to them. When she is a Vampire however she becomes a sexualised female and with this power does not need anyone else to define her. Her relationship with Tara however reverts to the old pattern. It allows her to grow and become more self-aware. She belongs to Tara and when Warren takes her from her this leads to her losing her mind with grief and rage. She is represented as a passionate character through the act of revenging Tara's death.

The representation of the Magicks as a metaphor for drugs and Willow's addiction is used in series 6 to help viewers to understand drug addiction and what it does to a person and their family. Willow uses drug related words such as 'spaced out' and 'juiced'. These terms and the use of the Magicks instead of drugs allows BVS to tackle the tricky area of drug addiction.

Willow's representations also allows for the fans to see a strong intelligent female character succeed. Each episode ends in Victory. The death of Tara and the loss of Oz and even her addiction all demonstrate to the fans that even when we feel grate pain and loss there is always light.

Willow's strong but bookish representation is a turning point in female character representations in sci-fi. Unlike the females of old this new generation of characters such as Willow, Lara and Trinity are demonstrating to the viewers and women that women can be strong, sensitive, sexual, can fight alongside men and most of all are equals.

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