

The horror genre has very set conventions and rules and horror films have stuck to these but in Buffy the vampire slayer a new set of rules are written. Joss Whedon has given the audience another dimension to horror by subverting the genre, in doing this the effectiveness of the program is increased.

In the first episode Buffy arrives in Sunnydale, straight away she is under the male gaze but unconventionally the boy gets hurt looking at Buffy. This continues through out the program with the roles reversed; now the heroine is the hero. This is the bases that Buffy as a character works and the fact that she is female complicates the genre.

Unlike most kids starting a new school, Buffy ignores the popular girl who offers friendship but instead goes to the social outcast showing that she can be independent. The popular girl Cordelia is shocked as she is rejected and at Buffy's intellect to outsmart her in what develops into a comic foil between the two.

At the school Buffy meets her watcher Giles, at first she doesn't know that this is the case, but it soon becomes clear that she can't get away from the responsibility that being a slayer requires. This is significant as Buffy thought for a while that vampires had gone out of her life, as this is not true the vampires are the return of the repressed. Instead of moaning Buffy accepts that she is to carry on slaying, this is her super ego telling her that it's the right thing to do.

In the rest of season 1 Buffy makes new friends like Willow, Xanda, Giles her watcher and Cordelia who she is now just about friends with, this group will develop

into the group dynamic. By having a group dynamic this subverts the genre again, as normally it is a lone hero that fights evil. In many cases it is not just Buffy that fights the vampires but the group work together to plan and workout the historical facts on many of the characters that they are up against.

In season 2 Buffy and Angel are going out with each other although Buffy is aware he is a vampire. This relationship shows that the difference between good and evil is very close with many of the evil characters having human characteristics. The relationship between Buffy and Angel complicates the genre, as Buffy is as strong as Angel so there is no patriarchy in the relationship.

The use of dreams in Buffy the vampire slayer to show Buffy's conscious fears are very powerful as it puts a question in the audiences mind that maybe her dreams will come true. The dreams that Buffy has are that Drusilla has killed Angel, these don't come true but to Buffy they seem very real as she saw what could happen.

The vampires in Buffy the vampire slayer would conventionally choose the popular kids or people who have had sex to kill but the genre is subverted because they choose the social outcasts and virgins.

Later in season 2 Angel kills Miss Calender who is a member of a gypsy tribe whom Angel had previously killed a member, resulting in the rest of the tribe being killed. As punishment they restored his soul so he would feel his guilt, this shows his human characteristics which allows him to have feeling and therefore to have a

relationship with Buffy. Angel gives Buffy a ring that symbolizes devotion, loyalty and love this is significant, as the two seem at their happiest. They say they love each other and in the next episode have sex. This again subverts the genre because they would now conventionally have to die as a result of having sex. Angel now has his soul taken from him because he had one moment of happiness, so he now has no feelings for Buffy. This is an allegory of how the man turns into a monster after having sex and leaving the woman thinking he still loves her.

Knowing that Angel is now a vampire, Buffy still has dreams that Angel is telling her he loves her this is what Buffy wants to happen.

Through out Buffy the vampire slayer the genders are blurred in there identity with Buffy having very masculine characteristics and Spike who is in a wheel chair in emasculated because he's in a weak position physically. This subverts the genre because normally the men are strong and masculine.

In "I Only Have Eyes For You" the group is faced with a spirit that is seemingly killing people but are not sure who it is, Buffy has a dream that tells her who the spirit is, this is the only dream she's had that has come true so the dreams are now given a realistic affect. The spirit takes over Buffy and Angel and they kiss but as the spirit leaves angel he throws Buffy away this is an allegory of how a man treats a woman after they've been intimate.

Season 4 and the group are still together at university as a group dynamic, but their friendship is

tested as Spike uses the Yoko factor to try and break them up. At first the rumors Spike is spreading work but the group dynamic pull through to out smart evil.

In “Primeval” the group are faced with their most evil character, Adam a creation of a group called the initiative. As they are planning if there is any possible way to defeat him Xanda says “her with slayer strength Giles’s multi lingual know how and Willows witchy power” his sarcastic idea to combine everyone’s powers is made possible with Willows witchcraft skills.

As Buffy fights Adam the others perform witchcraft to send her powers, the plan works as once again the group succeeds against evil.

Throughout Buffy the vampire slayer Buffy and her mum have a very strong relationship and whenever they are together, Buffy is safe. The home is also used as a place that is safe, which complicates the genre, because the home is usually a vulnerable place.

In Buffy the vampire slayer the genre is subverted by Buffy in many ways through the use of the group dynamic, dreams, gender identity being blurred and the physical appearance of the hero and heroine. Joss Whedon has re-written his own genre, which is the reason for the programs success, it gives a new dimension to the horror genre by subverting it.