

Media Studies : What Ideologies Lies Behind 'Gingerbread'?

This short essay focuses on an episode of the popular TV series, Buffy The Vampire Slayer. The episode is called 'Gingerbread'. The general storyline behind the episode is that Joyce (Buffy's mother) finds two dead children and forms MOO(Mothers Opposed to the Occult). This political group tries to eliminate everything tyo do with the Occult from their town, unfortunately this also means Buffy and some of her friends such as Willow. During the episode we find out taht the two children are actually ghost like creatures who have been doing this sort of thing for hundreds of years. The episode contains a lot of ideologies and beliefs about the world we live in today. I will try to explain some of these.

The first thing you notice not only about this episode but every series of Buffy is that Buffy herself is a strong female. She could be classed as a rolemodel for some and is definitely an icon. The main reason that Buffy is seen as strong is because she is usually beating up males especially vampires who are meant to be fearsome monsters. You could argue that Giles guides her and is a fatherly figure to her, which is true, but he isnt what you would call a figure of authority and doesnt always get his own way when Buffy wants to do something and he differs. At the start of the episode Buffy showss her strongness as she kills the vampires. Her mother on the other hand is shown as being less than strong as she is shocked by the killings and acts very uneasily, but to Buff this is just a daily routine. This shows that Sunnydale is a place where, in general, the teenagers have the upper hand over the adults.

Buffy also shows how strong she by saving herself and not needing help from anyone, further emphasising her strength of character.

In the modern world today it is considered that adults do things much more successfully than tenagers. This ideology is completely upturned in 'Gingerbread'. When Joyce decides to come forward and try to stop the vampires, killings and evil practices she only makes things much much worse tahn it already was. Near the start of the episode she tells Buffy that although Buffy is the Slayer she is not making things any better, she is just keeping the evil at bay. Joyce takes it into her own hands to try and weliminate all evil in Sunnydale. When she does this though her plan just increases evil in many ways by letting the ghostly children roam and by conducting witch hunts which eventually ends with Buffy and Willow burning at the stake. Also

because of this we become aware of how misunderstanding Willow's mother is towards Willow. Another thing used in the episode that makes adults look bad. Infact the creation of MOO even makes the town seem like 'A Nazi state' as said by Xander.

In 'Gingerbread' the way that the victims have no identity what-so-ever symbolises the worst in human nature. It seems to suggest that we are corrupt and will self-destruct. It tells us that although we consider our race as the most intelligent species alive etc. we will still be stupid enough to kill ourselves.

The way that the adults are manipulated by the evil demons instead of the children./teenagers also goes to show that the adults are, in a way, more naive then the younger generation. This is much like the film The Faculty. Infact in Buffy either all of the adults are monsters of evil, depraved or simply insane.

It is clear to see that the creator of the Buffy series, Joss Whedon has very strong beliefs about the world we live in today and tries to get these across and emphasis them in every episode of his show. So successful has the show been it is almost right to say that the word 'Buffy' is a metaphor for 'a strong female icon' , and this episode in particular allows Joss Whedon to express his views very clearly and precisely.