MASTER'S PORTFOLIO 2022

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Finding the End, Weaving It In

A thing to know about me is that I love to crochet. I love having the ability to take a ball of yarn and turn it into something useful, something nice to look at, or just something for my cat to bat around the house. Essentially, I like the idea of turning nothing into something. I have this compulsion to not start using a new skein of yarn until I roll it into a ball. It's how I make sure there aren't any huge knots in the middle of the skein that will surprise me when I'm working on a project.

I also despise what's called "weaving in the ends." When a project, or a piece of a project, is finished, I tie off a knot and it leaves a tail of sorts. That end of that piece of yarn must be woven into the rest of the work. You risk it unraveling if you just cut the end off. It's not hard, it's just tedious, especially if you've got several pieces like squares for a blanket and you've put off weaving end all those ends. I find it somewhat poetic that you start and finish a project with the end.

Back in early 2018 my mother bought me a skein of what's commonly referred to as chunky or blanket yarn. It was pale yellow, great for a baby blanket. Someone had a baby on the way, I don't recall who, and I was going to make them a blanket. I was about to start my usual process of balling up the yarn, but there was one problem: I couldn't find the end. There are two ends that you can pull on in a skein of yarn. One is on the side and pulls from the center of the skein, the other wraps around the length of the skein. I couldn't find either end. I took the skein apart slowly to finally find one end tucked up inside. Mom asked why I didn't just cut the yarn and start from there. "It's the principal of the thing," I said.

She took a picture of me holding this mess of yarn and I posted it on social media with the caption “An accurate depiction of my life right now.” That day I had been sitting in the floor in my mom’s sewing room and we’d been discussing how I was unhappy with my life and just what I was going to do about it? All while I untangled that skein of yarn. We discussed me going back and getting another bachelor’s degree and then going to meteorology school (I have a weird fascination with storm chasing). There was talk of wanting to be a professor of English someday. And there was a conversation about working in a library, amongst books, one of the happiest places I know. I uttered the words “I want to go to grad school.” Nothing changed immediately. It rarely does. I was still searching for the end.

I found that metaphorical end I’d been looking for, finished balling up that skein and moved into a couple of different lines of work, some new skeins if you will, before coming to the University of Arkansas. I was working at 40/29, a Northwest Arkansas news station, in the latter half of 2019 and I remember listening to the anchors talk about a “mysterious virus spreading in China” that would come to be called COVID-19. I got the call telling me I had been accepted into the English graduate program the same day COVID lockdowns started happening. It was, ironically, Friday the 13th. I didn’t know what graduate school was supposed to look like, but I knew it wasn’t going to be what it had been before.

I found some peace and purpose in a public library in the summer of 2020. I met and worked with some wonderful people who I still consider friends. I realized just how much a public library can do for a community, especially a rural, low-income area like mine. I’m trying to get myself back into that world after graduation.

Graduate school was not at all what I expected. For my first year we were completely online. My first classes I ever taught were taught via Zoom. I have managed to come across a couple of my students from that first year once we came back to campus. I know, though, there are some I will likely never meet face-to-face. I still haven't met some of my professors from that first year in-person. It's strange times we're living in.

Coming back to campus was a whole new set of skills and rules to learn. Seeing students' and professors' (masked) faces and being in the same room as people I'd only seen in a small box was disorienting. Having students in the room with me and still not hearing them laugh at my jokes was mildly upsetting. I was having to learn how to be out among people again. Especially as we moved into the second semester, and the masks came off, I realized we're all learning how to be people again.

I'm starting to think of all the eras of my life as different balls of yarn that have gone into the project that is my graduate school experience, and, ultimately, this portfolio. From my time getting my undergraduate degree, I was introduced to and developed my love for *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and the scholarly discussion around it. This was compounded when I read a book of essays several professors at my undergraduate institution wrote called *The Truth of Buffy.* I found and read the comic books that take place after the TV series finale. I sought out videos, podcasts, texts, and online forums discussing the series. Those became the yarn that formed the paper included here titled "When She Was "Bad": How Buffy the Vampire Slayer Punishes & Slut-shames Its Titular Heroine." In that paper I discuss Buffy's sexuality and how she is punished for behaving like the sexually liberated character she's supposed to be. I also discuss how Buffy's punishment plays into the old horror trope of punishing or killing off a

female character for engaging in sexual behavior. We had discussions around such tropes in Dr. Robin Roberts' course on *Popular Culture Theory, Gender, and the Supernatural*. I was *that* person who was mildly disappointed *Buffy* wasn't part of the curriculum but managed to mention it in nearly every class discussion. I think poor Dr. Roberts got tired of me after a few weeks.

When I told Dr. Roberts what I wanted to write my paper on, she kept asking, in good faith, for me to explain why *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a twenty-five-year-old TV show, still mattered. *Buffy* continues to be relevant for many reasons. Buffy herself subverts both horror tropes and societal expectations of a petite blonde girl. Despite the controversy around the creator of the show, *Buffy* launched many careers. And it continues to find a new audience thanks to its availability on streaming services. I regularly listen to a podcast called *Buffering the Vampire Slayer* that has been on the air since 2016 and it continues to introduce people to *Buffy* as well as gathering long-time fans of the show. I can name several new podcasts that have recently started centering around the series. The Association for the Studies of Buffy+ (who I'm hoping will accept my paper for their conference this summer) just went through a renaming and rebranding phase because people are still writing about and discussing *Buffy* in a scholarly context. It has staying power. Its ends were woven in tightly and its popularity has lasted for multiple decades. That staying power ties it in well with my other essay that's included in this portfolio.

The ball got rolling with my love of Jane Austen in my early undergraduate days as well. I came to her mostly on my own because I'd heard so many references to *Pride & Prejudice* and decided to read it. As I moved into more English courses for my minor, I was introduced to

more of Austen's work. There was also a series called *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* that put *Pride & Prejudice* in a modern setting and told the story through a series of vlogs on YouTube. Other Austen works were adapted into that format later as well and I delved further into her work. And of course, there is my deep and abiding love for the 1995 BBC miniseries featuring Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy.

When I re-read *Pride & Prejudice* for Dr. Susan Marren's *Women and the Novel* course, I was struck by how the opening sentences centered the men, the eligible bachelors, as the property of the ambitious mothers and single women in their vicinity. I had intended to write a paper centering the opening sentences more, but that gave way to a discussion on how Austen almost accidentally plays into the very materialism she is trying to poke fun at. Mr. Darcy is deemed the most suitable suitor, a masculine ideal, who is both a decent person that has money *and* property. The reader is implicitly told that Elizabeth Bennet does not choose him for his money, but for his character, but that is sometimes hard to believe when she accepted Darcy's second proposal only after seeing his house and property.

Austen herself also has a lot of staying power, even more so than *Buffy*. For more causal modern audiences she is a means of escapism. She allows a brief look into life in Regency England and laughs with the reader at it. For the more scholarly types, she is a view into that life and how the societal standards of her time are still affecting life today. Austen has also become part of the canon of English literature, a group primarily dominated by male authors.

I've included these two essays as a means of displaying a kind of media literacy in order to appeal to those within the library profession. *Buffy* is not an entirely modern piece of popular culture, but the series does continue to have effects on popular culture today. Austen,

as I said, has been canonized and is something many readers are still looking for. Both can be housed in libraries, which is where I'd like to be working after graduation.

For that reason, I have included a fall semester's worth (August-December) of library program proposals, to show what kind of work I can do in that setting. I chose a story time book and a related craft for each month for the younger children. The tweens and teens program I have proposed is a monthly book and movie club. This would feature Young Adult Books that have been adapted into films so that participants could either watch the movie or read the book and still participate in the discussion. Finally, for the adults, I have proposed a monthly craft night, using recycled book pages to make said crafts.

As I said previously, I have worked in a public library before and a few of these programs that are more craft-centered were things I had proposed, and some the library used. The setting was different, as we were trying to come up with things that people could take home and make, since COVID restrictions were still very much in place during my time there. But those I have adapted for events that could take place within the library.

The composition (and submission) of this portfolio is the weaving in of the ends for this project we call a Master's degree. It's been a lot of work. The pattern hasn't always made sense. There were some knots in the yarn despite my efforts to ball it up and prevent that from happening. I had to learn some new stitches as I went. But I'm proud of this work and it looks good if I do say so myself.

When She Was "Bad": How *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* Punishes & Slut-shames Its Titular Heroine

Abstract

This paper examines how the titular character in the series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* was punished for engaging in sexual relationships, despite claims of wanting a sexually liberated main character by the creator of the series. I argue that these instances can, to some extent corroborate, the recent (and not so recent) accusations of sexism, misconduct, and abuse in the workplace leveled against Joss Whedon. This paper will address how Whedon actively created scenarios in which Buffy faced negative consequences in response to her sexual encounters, some consequences being a direct result and some being an indirect result. Firstly, I do this by examining Xander as Whedon's self-insert character and how Xander is often used to shame Buffy for being sexually active. I then look at each sexual relationship or encounter that Buffy has throughout the series, and one of her relationships in the post-series comic books, examining how Buffy is either immediately or eventually punished in each of those. I argue that there are negative consequences for her engaging with someone sexually, whether directly or indirectly. This includes Angel losing his soul, and less direct consequences such as Buffy having her agency removed when her romantic relationships end, and she is left out of the decision-making process. And of course, there is the very direct choice to punish Buffy for engaging in a purely sexual relationship with Spike, in which he attempts to sexually assault her. I ultimately conclude that while the series succeeds in other areas of empowerment for Buffy, these kinds of narrative choices perpetuate misogyny while claiming to be creating a feminist text.

Introduction

Buffy the Vampire Slayer originally began airing in 1997. Its various collaborators, especially the show's creator Joss Whedon, prided themselves on inverting tropes of the horror genre within the series and position it as a feminist text. Whedon has claimed to be interested in celebrating "the blonde girl in the alley…who keeps getting killed," because "she was fun, she had sex, she was vivacious" (Jowett). So rather than seeing "the blonde girl" being killed or needing rescued, we see her doing the killing or the rescuing. Those who wrote for and were otherwise involved with the television series continue to work and contribute to current popular culture. Whedon has produced or directed multiple television series and films. Sarah Michelle Gellar and other members of the cast continue to star in various projects. And the series itself continues to affect popular culture today. There is also still an array of media being produced as a response to the series. Various podcasts and YouTube video series continue to discuss and dissect this much-loved television series, its spinoff *Angel*, and the subsequent novels and comic books.

However, in a series that attempts to center and celebrate that sexually liberated "blonde girl," Buffy is continually punished for expressing and engaging with her sexuality. Carol J. Clover discusses in her book *Men, Women, and Chainsaws: Gender in the Modern Horror Film,* how in the film adaptation of Stephen King's *Carrie,* Carrie's "women's liberation", the full use of her telekinetic powers, is the "monster" in this case. Carrie becomes the monster, the hero, and the victim all at once because of her liberation (4). *Buffy* does something similar. While Buffy is never truly portrayed as the monster (except for the season six episode "Normal Again" in which she tries to kill her friends and sister because of a demonic

influence) she is often the "victim-hero" Clover writes about, especially as it pertains to the repercussions of her sexual encounters and relationships. Buffy is empowered by her status as the Slayer, but that is often undermined by the punishment she receives for trying to be sexually empowered.

This paper will examine the sexual relationships Buffy engages in and how she is punished for them. I will be focusing on Buffy's relationships within the original television show, one episode of the spinoff *Angel*, and her first sexual relationship in the comic books that take place after the end of the original television series. I will examine the series' pattern of attempts at sexual empowerment, and repeated punishment of Buffy despite these attempts.

Joss Whedon

As we move further away in time from the original airing of the series, we are finding out more about Joss Whedon's problematic behavior with the casts and crews of films and television series he has produced. Given the allegations of sexist and abusive behavior from those who have worked with Whedon in the past, it is not surprising that a show he created was so interested in punishing the main character for being sexually empowered. In July of 2020, actor Ray Fisher, who had been working with Whedon on *Justice League* tweeted that, "Joss [sic] Wheadon's on-set treatment of the cast and crew of [sic] Justice League was gross, abusive, unprofessional, and completely unacceptable..." This prompted *Buffy* and *Angel* actor Charisma Carpenter, who starred as Cordelia Chase in both shows, to speak out on Twitter in February of 2021 on Whedon's treatment of her while she worked with him. Carpenter has spoken out before about Whedon's treatment of her at the end of her time on *Angel*. This included but was not limited to asking if she was going to "keep it" when Whedon found out

Carpenter was pregnant, mocking her Catholic beliefs, and eventually writing Carpenter's character out of the story and killing her off, despite Carpenter having begged to not be. Carpenter has previously said despite all this, she would work with Whedon again.

However, after her involvement in WarnerMedia's investigation into Ray Fisher's claims, Carpenter opted to speak out more plainly. Carpenter said that she could corroborate Fisher's claims that Whedon, "has a history of being casually cruel" and that he "created hostile and toxic work environments since early in his career." Other *Buffy* and *Angel* co-stars responded with support or with stories their own experiences of Whedon's abusive behavior. Michelle Trachtenberg, who starred as Dawn in *Buffy*, posted on Instagram that "There was a rule. Saying. He's not allowed in a room alone with Michelle again." Amber Benson, who portrayed Tara, also discussed Whedon's abusive nature on Twitter: "Buffy was a toxic environment and it starts at the top…There was a lot of damage done during that time and many of us are still processing it twenty plus years later."

Xander

With these abusive allegations, it follows that Whedon regards a much-hated character as a self-instert: "Xander is obviously based on me" (*Fresh Air*). Marina Watanabe's article on Xander from *bitchmedia* frames it best, "Xander Harris doesn't simply act as a stand-in for sexually frustrated nerd boys in the audience who want to fuck women like Buffy Summers; he is also, quite literally, Joss Whedon's self-insert character." Xander is introduced in the first episode as a bumbling teenager and regards himself as a "nice guy." He quickly becomes part of Buffy's Scooby Gang, along with Willow. Xander is possessive of Buffy, especially in the first season when openly admits to having a crush on her. He is also the first to shame her for her

sexual activity on more than one occasion. Xander being the self-insert character for Whedon also amplifies the accusations of predatory and abusive behavior. Xander is the expression of Whedon's true attitudes towards women's sexual agency.

Buffy is not Xander's (and Whedon's) only victim, however. Xander infringes on Willow and Oz's relationship and cheats on Cordelia with Willow in season three. Xander almost has an attitude of entitlement to be in a relationship with both Willow and Cordelia, despite all these relationships being intentionally monogamous. Xander does face the consequences of his relationship with Cordelia ending, but Oz and Willow remain together and remain friends with Xander. Later in the series, he over-sexualizes Willow and Tara's relationship, the first and one of only two queer relationships a main character will have in the television series. This includes him having a sexual fantasy dream about them in the season 4 finale episode "Restless." He shames Anya, his former fiancé, for her sexual activity after leaving her at the altar and ultimately ending their relationship in season six. We see Xander's (and by extension Whedon's) generally negative attitude towards Buffy and other characters' expressions of sexuality throughout the show.

There is also the matter of the eventual romantic relationship that Xander and Dawn, Buffy's younger sister, form in the comic book series. Dawn is portrayed in the television series as roughly 14-16 years old, and when the comic books begin Dawn is only about 18 years old, as there is talk of her going to college. Throughout the television series, Dawn is treated like everyone in the Scooby Gang's younger sister and ward. Buffy becomes her guardian in season five when their mother dies, and the rest of the Scoobies tend to have very parental attitudes

and relationships with her. When she first appears in the series, she expresses that she has a crush on Xander, but he is much older than her and in a relationship.

This is a disturbing plot line to introduce, and it tends to sneak past the critique the television series gets. Xander is something like five or six years older than Dawn (neither are given official birthdates in the series). He has also served as one of her unofficial guardians and, if not as a parental figure, at least an older-sibling figure. To have him become Dawn's love interest is uncomfortable at best and predatory at worst. As one would expect, all the characters from the television series are drawn to look like their respective actors. Having the character who is drawn to look like Michelle Trachtenberg, who played Dawn in the television series, be in a relationship with Whedon's self-insert character is even more disturbing considering previously mentioned comments from Trachtenberg about rules being established that she and Whedon were not to be left alone in a room together.

Buffy's Relationships

Buffy is punished for expressing her sexuality via her romantic and sexual relationships. Sometimes the relationships themselves are used to punish her, with her partner performing the retaliatory action, and sometimes there are simply negative consequences, or Buffy simply does not allow herself to continue to engage in them because she feels she is not ready for or deserving of love. Almost every time Buffy has sex or has an on-going sexual relationship within the series, we are shown that there are negative consequences. These consequences may not always happen as a direct result of her sexual encounters, but they do happen alongside them. We see these consequences in all her sexual relationships, even those that are brief or do not

involve romantic love. However, none of them are as blatant as the consequences she faces in her first relationship and sexual encounter in the series.

Angel

The best example of the series punishing Buffy for expressing her sexuality is through her relationship with Angel. Angel is a re-ensouled vampire. Within the series we find out that humans that are turned into vampires no longer have their souls. Angel has been cursed with the return of his from a group of Romani people, due to his alter-ego Angelus killing a young girl. Angel is introduced as Buffy's primary love interest in season one and we are given more information about his background as we move into season two. In the episodes "Surprise" (Lange) and "Innocence" (Whedon) in season two we see Angel lose his soul after he and Buffy have sex for the first time. The curse that was put on Angel comes with the caveat that if he experiences a moment of true happiness and contentment, he will lose his soul again. In "Innocence" Buffy grapples with the fallout of her first sexual experience and is shamed, primarily by Xander, for engaging in her sexuality. (textual evidence) Willow and Giles are more understanding and acknowledge that she could not have known what would happen and, as Caroline E. Jones points out, it was "a thoughtful decision on Buffy's part" (69) to have sex with Angel. It was a natural progression of their relationship and, while it takes place in a tense moment in the show, it still does not feel like it happened on a whim of Buffy's. Buffy's watcher Giles, who also serves as her father figure in the series, does say that she perhaps acted rashly but,

> I know that you loved him. And he has proven more than once that he loved you. You couldn't have known what would happen. The coming months a-are gonna, are gonna

> be hard. I, I suspect on all of us, but, if it's guilt you're looking for, Buffy, I'm, I'm not your man. All you will get from me is, is my support. And my respect. (Whedon)

Yet she still essentially loses her boyfriend and is punished for losing her virginity. Given that Angel is Buffy's first sexual encounter, and since *Buffy* falls into the horror genre, "the blonde girl" having sex is usually punished in some way. Despite Whedon's claims that he celebrates the "blonde girl…[who] has sex," we still see negative consequences for the newly sexually active protagonist.

This arc is clearly meant to mimic the stereotypical story of a teenage girl sleeping with her boyfriend and is then treated poorly now that he's "gotten what he wanted." However, we also see Buffy being punished for stepping outside her "good girl" (Jowett) boundaries. Buffy's crimes include not only losing her virginity but losing it to a creature that is supposed to be her enemy. Angel loses his soul because of their sexual encounter and turns into the murderous Angelus, who openly mocks Buffy's lack of experience and torments her and the Scooby Gang. Lorna Jowett agrees and explains that this arc "[reflects] girls' real anxieties about the value of sex in relationships" (63). Jones further states that "Buffy positions herself as an active subject and is punished for her sexual activity." While Buffy is breaking the arbitrary "good girl" rules of the series by having sex with Angel, she is not actually doing anything wrong. Her actions are certainly not deserving of the consequences of doing something that is simply a natural progression of her relationship with Angel.

In the ultimate form of punishment for what the series deems as bad behavior, Buffy must kill Angel at the end of season two. She must do this despite his soul being returned by a spell Willow performs. Here she completes Clover's "victim-hero" cycle by defeating the villain

she accidentally created. Buffy killing Angel concludes an arc in season two in which Angelus awakes a demon who will swallow the world, and his blood is what will open and close the portal the demon creates. The scene in "Becoming Part 2" presents a particularly obvious use of a phallic symbol as Buffy must kill Angel by impaling him on a sword. This serves as something of a retaliation for his sexual penetration of her body earlier in the season. It is a way of her punishing him for the pain he has inflicted on Buffy and her friends. Buffy has been forced to not only feel guilty for having sex, but also responsible for the actions of Angelus, and then the killing of the re-ensouled Angel.

After Angel's ill-explained return in season three, he and Buffy reestablish their relationship, but take on a more abstinent dynamic because of their fear of him losing his soul again. Towards the end of the season, Angel lets Buffy know that he is leaving town and breaking up with her. It's a frustrating plot point because it is patronizing. Angel is removing Buffy's ability to make the decision for herself to end the relationship. Jowett contends that "Buffy's lack of agency is highlighted" (63). This moment is not the last instance of Buffy having her agency removed. As I argue here, it is a recurring disciplinary action.

The climax of the arc within *Buffy* of Buffy and Angel's relationship is played out in season three's "Graduation Day Part 2" when Angel is poisoned and only a Slayer's blood can cure him. Angel's feeding on Buffy is an inherent sexual metaphor. Vampirism in general is viewed as a sexual act because of the penetration of a body and in *Buffy* the close association with danger and death is indicative of the very 1990s sexual ethics at play. Having Angel feed on Buffy is regarded as their last sexual encounter in the *Buffy* series and is viewed as a violation of Buffy by the other characters. Even when Buffy explains, the rest of the Scooby Gang is

generally disturbed by Angel feeding on Buffy. This serves as a metaphor for friends shaming Buffy for returning to a former boyfriend for one last sexual encounter.

Even in the plot of *Angel*, which begins after season three of *Buffy,* we see Buffy is punished and traumatized for engaging with her sexuality, albeit in a way she does not remember. The episode "I Will Remember You" sees Angel restored to being human and he and Buffy are able to have sex without Angel losing his soul. However, by the end of the episode, Angel arranges for the day to be erased so he can return to being a vampire and get his supernatural abilities back to continue to help people and fight evil (Grossman). Buffy is severely distressed and then is forced to forget what happened. Yet again we see that she is not able to express her sexuality without repercussions. With the repercussions of her relationship with Angel, Buffy is punished repeatedly by the series (and the universe it is set in) itself. She is also given no agency in the way this relationship ends, officially in *Buffy* and unofficially in the episode of *Angel*. Unfortunately, though, the series continues this pattern of punishing Buffy for expressing herself sexually as she moves into adulthood.

Parker

As Buffy moves into her college era in season four, we see her engaging in more adult sexual encounters, and yet the show still imposes its sexual ethic on her. Parker, who appears in a handful of episodes early in season four, is Buffy's first attempt at casual sex. She does, however, hope and expect it could lead to more. He is her first sexual experience in college and turns out to only be using her for sex. This plot point is a more realistic version of what the show was trying to parallel in season two with Buffy's first experience with Angel, although not as drawn out. It plays on Buffy's trauma from that experience, almost doubly punishing her. She

wakes up alone, as she did with Angel, Parker is nice to her for a few minutes, and then he discards her and moves on. Her experience with Parker leads into her relationship with Riley. Riley is upset by Parker's comments about Buffy, and this leads Riley to asking her out.

This is one of the first instances of Buffy punishing or shaming herself when she declares "I'm a slut!" (Solomon) (Jowett 62). While the scene in which Buffy says this is presented as comedic, it is still inappropriate. The choice of having Buffy refer to herself this way says more about those in the writers' room for the series and the sexual ethics of the period than it does about Buffy as a character. The term "slut" is almost always applied to women and is used to shame women for having multiple sexual partners. Even if the number is relatively small, as it is with Buffy. She has engaged sexually with two people. However, because her encounter with Parker was not entered into in the context of a long-term, loving relationship, Buffy is labeled as a slut. While it is not a labeling that is meant to be taken seriously, it is a precursor to how she will negatively label herself in the future.

Riley

As Buffy enters her relationship with Riley, we see the beginnings of her punishing herself to some extent. Riley is introduced as a teaching assistant for one of Buffy's professors, Maggie Walsh. However, we later find out that Riley, Professor Walsh, and several other students are operatives for a secret government agency known as The Initiative. Riley is by no means a fan favorite. As portrayed by Sarah Michelle Gellar and Marc Blucas, Buffy and Riley are on the more boring side of Buffy's relationships. Their dynamic lacks the chemistry Buffy had with Angel and even Parker. Spike, who I will discuss later, at one point referred to Riley as

"Captain Cardboard." While she is in what is her most normal long-term relationship, and she is following the "good girl" behavior that Jowett discusses, Buffy is unable to maintain it.

Buffy does not allow herself to truly commit to Riley, and Riley expects things from Buffy that he knows she cannot give him. One could posit that even the trauma and hurt that occurred in *Angel*, with Buffy seeing the life she could have with Angel as a human, carries into her relationship with Riley. She cannot fully commit to loving Riley because her body and subconscious carry the memory of the pain and trauma of being denied a somewhat normal life with Angel. Jowett points out that the show itself positions Buffy and Riley so that, "the relationship is all about physicality" (64). Jowett goes on to explain that their size difference is emphasized even by the choice of how they are framed within a shot (64). While there seems to be a romantic, loving relationship, the main things bringing them together are patrolling together and sex. We even see one episode ("Where the Wild Things Are") where Buffy and Riley are trapped in a room together, continually having sex, and it is escalating the danger that all the characters are in. They have a physical connection, and Buffy believes that she is in love with him, but it is made clear by the show that Buffy does not care for or love Riley as much as he does for her.

Especially as we move into season five Riley begins to express how he truly feels about his relationship with Buffy. In the episode "The Replacement" Riley explains to Xander:

> I'm well aware of how lucky I am. Like, lottery lucky. Buffy's like nobody else in the world. When I'm with her it's like, it's like *I'm* split in two. Half of me is just, on fire, going crazy if I'm not touching her. The other half, is so still and peaceful, just perfectly content. Just knows: this is the one. But she doesn't love me. (Contner)

Riley is also no longer being enhanced by medication from The Initiative, and he cannot handle that Buffy is more powerful than he is. This is when he begins turning to what are credited in the series as "vampire junkies." Essentially, Riley is getting high from the vampires feeding on him. In his final regular episode "Into the Woods," Riley leaves the decision up to Buffy about whether their relationship should end, but the show is indirectly punishing Buffy for not making Riley feel loved enough. We see this in Xander (and by extension Whedon) giving Buffy a lecture about how she has taken Riley for granted and not loved him properly. This is immediately followed by Buffy missing her chance to reconcile with Riley. He leaves in a helicopter and cannot hear her calling out to him. The show pitches Buffy's attitude towards her relationship with Riley as self-sabotaging. We see her grieving in the episodes after "Into the Woods" and it is frustrating that we have yet to have a moment of Buffy truly having agency in the ending of her romantic and sexual relationships.

Riley returns in season six in the episode "As You Were", and he is working for a government agency like the Initiative and is married. His wife Sam joins him on his mission in Sunnydale. When she and Buffy have a moment alone together, she explains that Riley was "ripped up inside" (Whedon & Petrie) from his relationship with Buffy and says it took a long time for Riley to be comfortable being in a relationship with Sam. Again, the series takes agency away from Buffy by making Riley "off limits." He is married and therefore inaccessible to her. This is a harsher punishment and removal of agency than even Buffy and Angel's breakup. Angel is at least still somewhat available to Buffy and makes appearances through the later seasons. But this forced removal and inaccessibility of Riley is a further punishment for Buffy's

perceived crime of not loving Riley properly. This news also drives her back to Spike, who she had already begun a sexual relationship with before Riley's return.

Spike

Buffy's final relationship in the regular series was her less-than-healthy sexual relationship with Spike. The show seems to be trying to tell the viewer that the relationship is unhealthy simply because it is only about sex, but I would argue it is unhealthy because of the mental states of the two people involved. Spike is taking advantage of Buffy's vulnerable state after her resurrection at the beginning of season six. Buffy is taking advantage of the fact that she knows Spike is in love with her, which he revealed in season five. Buffy acknowledges more than once that she's using Spike for sex, trying to feel something, both during and after their relationship.

Buffy is also shaming and punishing herself because of the supposedly deviant nature of their sexual encounters. They are often violent, and consent is often dubious. Buffy sees this as something that makes her a bad person. In the episode "Dead Things" we see Buffy asking Tara if something is wrong with her since she came back from the dead and Spike's brain chip (which keeps him from harming humans) does not work on her. We see her finally confessing to Tara about her relationship with Spike at the end of the episode. Tara offers no judgement or shaming. In fact, she tells Buffy, "It's ok if you do [love Spike] …and it's ok if you don't. You're going through a really hard time." Tara is one of the few characters who holds space for what Buffy (and the show itself) perceives as deviant behavior. But Buffy herself does not agree with Tara. Buffy says she is "…wrong. Tell me that I'm wrong, please...Please don't forgive me" (Contner). Buffy is seeking a reason or forgiveness for her relationship with Spike, but then

openly rejects it. Jowett points out in her chapter describing the "Good Girls" of *Buffy* that, "having violent and kinky sex with a vampire is clearly not the sort of thing a 'good girl' should do" (61). Within the series' rules of good and bad behavior, as Jowett explains, Buffy has violated those rules. Tara, however, as the replacement maternal figure for the group (Jowett 52), tries to ease Buffy's mind that she is not doing anything wrong by sleeping with Spike. Giles simply laughs when Buffy tells him in the episode"".

With this relationship, Buffy is finally given agency to end it on her terms and she breaks up with Spike, who does not take it well. Their breakup leads to the events of the episode "Seeing Red" in which we see Spike attempt to sexually assault Buffy. While *Spike's* motivation is not to punish Buffy, this is yet another instance of the show attempting to punish her. This time though, she is being punished for engaging in a sexual relationship that is not contained inside a loving, romantic one, as we saw with Parker. In an interview on the podcast *Buffering the Vampire Slayer*, James Marsters describes the discussion in the writers' room that lead to this scene being included in the story. Whedon himself was frustrated at the overall positive fan reaction to Buffy and Spike's relationship and, according to Marsters, wondered, "How far do we have to go before people are going to open their eyes to what, the way that I want them to see this thing?" Those writing the show wanted the audience to understand that Spike was the "bad boy" (Marsters). Spike being a "bad boy" emphasizes that the writers of the show wanted the audience to know that the relationship was bad or wrong. And with Xander all but shaming Buffy when he finds out that Spike attacked her [quote], we continue to see Whedon's attitude towards his titular character coming into play. Here we see not only Buffy being punished, but also the fanbase. Whedon was upset that fans liked Spike and Buffy in a relationship together,

and Whedon claimed that he wanted to remind fans that Spike is toxic and a "bad boy." However, the way it plays out in the show, it is Whedon yet again punishing his main character for engaging in "bad" behavior, with the character she is not *supposed* to like.

Spike and Buffy do have some reconciliation in season seven after Spike receives his soul at the end of season six, but they are not ever officially a couple within the television series. They work together in season seven but have no further sexual encounters. While season seven has much for Buffy to do that is not relationship-related, she seems to be forced into a period of abstinence, like the time after she and Angel are reunited in season three, as penance for her sexual "crimes." Other characters are involved in the main plot and have romantic and sexual partners, but Buffy is left unattached at the end of the series.

Cookie Dough

In the television series finale "Chosen," Buffy has a brief monologue in a discussion with Angel about how she does not believe she is ready for a long-term relationship, or any relationship, and that she will not be any time soon:

> I always figured there was something wrong with me, you know, because I couldn't make it work. But maybe I'm not supposed to…Because, okay, I'm cookie dough. I'm not done baking. I'm not finished becoming whoever the hell it is I'm gonna turn out to be. I make it through this, and the next thing, and the next thing, and maybe one day I turn around and realize I'm ready. I'm cookies. And then, you know, if I want someone to eat—or enjoy warm, delicious cookie me, then...that's fine. That'll be then. When I'm done. (Whedon)

At first glance this sounds like Buffy is taking control of herself and her relationships by focusing on herself and figuring out who she really is. However, the cookie dough metaphor is underbaked. Buffy equating herself to food objectifies her and reduces this metaphor to the context of sexual relationships. The "eat—or enjoy…" comment especially solidifies this. The idea that she is some*thing* to be "enjoyed" is especially bothersome. The implications seem to be that Buffy is going to remain single and abstinent until she's "done." The cookie dough metaphor is particularly frustrating because a large part of the series has been dedicated to Buffy reconciling who she is as a person and who she is as the Slayer. The events at the end of the series also seem to indicate that Buffy is now able to do more to explore who she is apart from her Slayer identity. However, this is almost immediately thrown out once we get into the comics that take place after the end of the television series, although the sentiment about not being able to be in a real relationship does remain.

Satsu

Satsu is introduced early in the *Season 8* comics. Following the end of the series, and while the series was airing, there were releases of comic books with various *Buffy* and *Angel* related stories. *Season 8* is meant to be a continuation of the story from the television series. It picks up after an indeterminate amout of time after the events of the series finale "Chosen." At the end of the television series, Willow and Buffy perform a spell that empowers all the potential Slayers worldwide. Potential Slayers were young women or girls that *could* be called to be the Slayer should the current Slayer die. Satsu is one of the Slayers that Buffy and her team have recruited; she is also Buffy's first queer sexual experience. Over the course of the first few issues of *Season 8*, we find out that Satsu has feelings for Buffy, and this eventually

leads them to sleeping together in issue #12. Before their sexual encounter, Satsu asks Buffy if she is gay, and Buffy responds with “Not so you’d notice.” It is a nod to Buffy’s sexuality existing on a spectrum but is immediately dismissed. Buffy also informs her that despite their sexual encounter, they cannot engage in a relationship.

Scholars like Hele`ne Frohard-Dourlent have pointed out that Buffy’s brief relationship with Satsu is part of a trope referred to as “heteroflexibility.” This occurs when a character, nearly always a female character, who has previously been depicted as heterosexual, has a queer sexual experience, but then carries on afterwards as though they are heterosexual. Frohard-Dourlent also notes that, despite this not being in the regular television series, this falls into the tradition of “lesbian sweeps” in which popular television shows would have a “lesbian kiss” during sweeps week to drive up viewership and ratings (34). While the context here is different, the insistence that Buffy is, in fact, “straight” despite this foray into queerness, it does exist within that tradition. For that reason, it falls flat as a plot point in Buffy’s arc. It is an objectification of both Buffy and Satsu. The plot line exists to drive readership or stir up discussion around the comic books, rather than be a nuanced exploration of Buffy’s sexuality. And it certainly plays into the 1990s/2000s idea that people were either fully gay or fully straight, without acknowledging that sexuality is a spectrum.

Buffy has other sexual relationships within the comic book series, but Satsu is her first and only queer experience. Because their encounters are considered Buffy “experimenting” any potential queer identity for Buffy is immediately dismissed. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Whedon himself insisted that Buffy is straight and Satsu was merely a moment of exploration: "We're not going to make her gay, nor are we going to take the next 50 issues

explaining that she's not. She's young and experimenting, and did I mention open-minded?" (Gustines). This patronizing statement is further evidence that Buffy's sexual experience with Satsu is merely another in a long line of "lesbian sweeps" moments. Whedon was not interested in exploring Buffy's sexuality any further and discusses the use of Satsu in the comic books in very objectifying terms. He continues

> We're not going to dump her off the face of the earth, unless we kill her, because we love to kill characters…If we do, don't worry, she'll probably come back as a ghost…She's in the rotation…For as long as she can live. (Gustines)

This discussion and dismissal of Buffy's first and only queer experience is problematic on its own, and it nods back to the problematic behaviors and attitudes that have been directly expressed by Whedon himself or pointed out by cast and crew that he has worked with in the past. Buffy does not allow herself to engage in the relationship because extra-textually, Whedon was not interested in her being that complex in her sexuality.

Conclusion

While *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* seeks to give its heroine agency and invert horror tropes, punishing the sexually active main character for *being* sexually active is not one of the series' positive accomplishments. Whedon gives Buffy supernatural abilities that (usually) prevent her from dying when fighting evil, but then finds other ways to fulfill the horror trope of sexually active or empowered women being made to suffer. Her first love Angel loses his soul immediately after they have sex. Even after his soul is returned, he leaves her "for her own good." Her first casual encounter is using her. What is arguably Buffy's most normal and stable relationship, Riley, she is unable to fully commit to because of her past trauma, and she has her

agency removed in how that relationship ends as well. In the one relationship where she embraces her sexual empowerment *and* can end it on her own terms, Spike attempts to sexually assault her. Buffy's one and only queer relationship ends because Buffy believes herself to be dangerous and not ready for a relationship. *Buffy* accomplishes empowering the women in the series in some ways, but it fails to do so when it comes to sexual empowerment in Buffy's case.

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Pride, Prejudice, & Property

Introduction

Though it was considered a taboo topic to discuss, Jane Austen was not afraid to approach the subject of money and property, or to use it to satirize the society she lived in. This is particularly obvious in her open discussion of each suitor's financial situations and occupations in *Pride & Prejudice*. Each man is almost immediately described by his financial status, with a notable lack of physical description. As Mary Jane Evans points out in *Jane Austen and the State*, "well-bred people do not talk about the source of their income" or lack thereof (26), so this was not something that Austen should have been writing about. She chose to do so anyway in a way that critiques the materialism she saw in the culture around marriage at the time. I will be explicating Austen's characterization of suitors by their possession of property and wealth as they are presented to the reader in *Pride & Prejudice*. I will also explore how this sense of materialism is used with satire to comment on the society Austen lived in.

Within the text, Austen categorizes the suitors as morally good or bad men according to whether they are in possession of money or property. This does not appear deliberate upon first glance. However, Austen crafts Mr. Darcy, the only suitor in the novel who has wealth *and* currently owns property, as a masculine ideal for her heroine Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy is set apart as the most suitable financially, and the man of the highest moral character. Evans explains that Austen was not an "anti-trade conservative; on the contrary, trade and professional activity are positively endorsed" (26). However, the only two suitors presented to the Bennet family that have an occupation are considered the two least suitable by the main character: Mr. Collins and Mr. Wickham. It is worth pointing out that Elizabeth does not reject Collins' proposal and turn

away from Wickham because of their lack of wealth. She rejects Mr. Darcy's first proposal, and he is extremely wealthy and holds property. Elizabeth does this from a place of finding these men unsuitable due to their poor character. Or, in Mr. Darcy's case, what she perceives as poor character. Austen has a tendency to categorize the wealthier men as the better men, morally speaking, putting her protagonists with them at the end of the novel. *Pride and Prejudice* is no exception. Austen asserts some of her own beliefs, sets the subtly satirical tone of the novel, and makes a jab at the materialism she saw in her culture's attitude towards marriage in the opening sentences of the novel.

Opening Sentences

> "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters" (Austen 64).

Austen opens *Pride & Prejudice* establishing a specific brand of single men as the property of the marriageable women in their vicinity. In Austen's time, men may have jokingly been seen as the property of women in the courtship process. However, once they were married, according to the law, women and all their possessions became the property of their husbands. As Margaret Turano states in her paper "Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, and the Marital Property Law," marital law at the time, known as coverture, "utterly transformed a woman's status upon marriage and trampled her like a Juggernaut; it stripped away her personal freedom and most of her rights to her property, her children, and her body" (179).

Coverture essentially made a woman and her property the property of her husband the moment she was married. This can lessen the humor of those opening lines when one understands that it was in fact the women who were regarded as property in the society Jane Austen was brought up in. However, it strengthens Austen's place as a satirist as she is proposing the "universal truth" that is the opposite of what the law at the time tried to enforce.

We also see a nod to a materialistic and objectifying view of men in the opening of the novel as well. J. R. Herman argues that "the commodification of potential marriage partners acts as an ever-present theme…" (208). Women seeing men as only a source of financial stability reduces them to their financial worth. We see this especially in Charlotte's explanation as to why she marries Mr. Collins. She is not looking for a love match, she is simply looking for someone to provide for her. While this does not affect their rights as human beings, it does create a less severe system of objectification for men in Austen's world. It is no wonder marriage was viewed as more of a business transaction in that time, since both parties often were viewing each other as a means to an end, rather than as human beings. And this is likely the point that Austen was trying to make.

Considering all of this, the opening sentences set the satirical tone for the rest of the novel. Firstly, Austen is openly defying the rules around the discussion of money. Turano observes that, "the opening lines of all of Austen's novels have money in them" (201). Monica Alvarez explains in her paper "Deciphering Mr. Darcy: Gendered Receptions Through Time" that the opening lines of the novel, "present the dominant masculinity of the gentleman engulfed by the concerns of a matchmaking—and by extension, a primarily female—community" (2). By establishing that a single man is the property of the single women in his vicinity and calling it a

"truth universally acknowledged," Austen is trying to turn her contemporary gender roles on their head. However, she was also inadvertently making a statement about the events of the novel by implying, to some extent, that the most marriageable men were those "in possession of a good fortune." This "universal truth" plays out as the suitors are presented to the Bennet sisters.

Bingley

Mr. Bingley is the first suitor to be introduced. Bingley is not considered ideal enough by Austen to be the love interest for Elizabeth Bennett, however. He comes with wealth, but not property. We are told that his father, "had intended to purchase an estate, but did not live to do it," and that Bingley also intends to purchase an estate. However, since he is "provided with a good house and the liberty of a manor, it was doubtful to many…whether he might not spend the remainder of his days at Netherfield" (Austen 15). We see this as an early indication of how Mr. Bingley's character is perceived.

At first glance Bingley is a decent man who happens to have a large annual income and is non-committal like his father. However, the community accepts him because, as Alvarez points out "Bingley fulfills the community's notion of masculinity" (2). Alvarez also notes that, "Jane Bennet's admiration reflects the community judgment, its standard of masculinity" (2). On further inspection he is very easily persuaded and a bit of a pushover. While he is, to some extent, "in want of a wife," he is not convicted enough in his affection for Jane to pursue the matter after Darcy has convinced him that she is not a good match for him, and he leaves town.

The most insight into Bingley's character comes from Darcy's letter to Elizabeth. Darcy reveals that was he put off by the Bennet family and he believed that Jane's "heart was not

likely to be easily touched," and that she was, "indifferent" towards Bingley (Austen 188). The reader, her family, and Charlotte are aware that she is not, she is genuinely interested in him. Darcy also gives us further insight into exactly what kind of man Bingley is when he explains, "Bingley has a great natural modesty, with a stronger dependence on my judgement than his own. To convince him, therefore, that he had deceived himself [about Jane's feelings] was no very difficult point" (Austen 189).

In the end Bingley is united with Jane. Mr. Bennet acknowledges that they are well matched because they are of similar character: "You are each of you so complying that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy that every servant will cheat you; and so generous that you will always exceed your income" (Austen 328). Jane balks at this slightly, saying that, in her own case at least, "Imprudence or thoughtlessness in money matters would be unpardonable…" (Austen 328). While Jane Bennet is not a man, she is reinforcing Evan's point that, "To be materially irresponsible is, to Jane Austen, a sign of moral failing" (26). Mr. Bennet does not cast Bingley as materially irresponsible; he only points out that he *could* be, especially in combination with Jane.

Collins

Mr. Collins will eventually have property because of the entail on Longbourn. He also has an occupation as a clergyman. While he is not "in possession of a good fortune," he will soon inherit Longbourn and therefore will be in possession of property. Before even meeting him, Mrs. Bennet declares that he is, "hypocritical," and a "false [friend]" (Austen 60). However, upon meeting him he gives her compliments about everything that, "would have touched Mrs. Bennet's heart, but for the mortifying supposition of his viewing it all as his own future

property" (Austen 63). He is complimentary but, as is revealed in Mr. Bennet's discussion with Collins after dinner, Mr. Bennet finds that, "his cousin was as absurd as he had hoped" (Austen 66).

Mr. Collins believes himself to be the personification of the man-as-guardian theory to which Turano refers. In the man-as-guardian theory, it was believed that "every woman married an intellectually and physically superior husband and that every wife was juvenile and helpless…" (Turano 190). Collins makes a point to let people know that he studies and tries to sound as intelligent as possible. He frequently talks down to Elizabeth and, at the ball at Netherfield tells her, when he plans to approach Mr. Darcy, "I consider myself more fitted by education and habitual study to decide on what is right than a young lady like yourself" (Austen 95). These discussions are set up to show that his character does not match what Austen wants for her protagonist.

It is revealed that Mr. Collins came to Longbourn with intentions to make amends with the family by marrying one of their daughters. He settled on Jane at first, but after a conversation with Mrs. Bennet redirects him, he sets his sights on Elizabeth. Elizabeth denies his proposal because they could not make each other happy (Austen 105). Here Mr. Collins continues to believe that he knows better than Elizabeth, playing into the man-as-guardian theory, even about her answer to his proposal. He is, "by no means discouraged by what [she has] just said, and shall hope to lead [her] to the alter ere long" (Austen 104). When Elizabeth refuses him, he assumes she is toying with him and even expresses intentions to undermine her refusal by going to her parents. He is sure that "when sanctioned by the express authority of both [Elizabeth's] excellent parents, [his] proposals will not fail to be acceptable" (Austen 106).

In many of Austen's works, as Turano points out, she "satirized misogynist Clergymen…" and Collins is one such victim of that satire (202). In the end Mr. Bennet refuses to force Elizabeth to marry Mr. Collins because he also has seen the man for what he is and, "Mr. Collins was not a sensible man…" (Austen 67).

Notably, it would have been much more pragmatic on Elizabeth's part to accept Collins' proposal. Herman describes Elizabeth's rejection of him as, "a financially reckless, rash decision" (211). While he is clearly portrayed as someone who is not enjoyable to be around, it would have made more sense for the sake of Elizabeth herself and her family. Especially since Collins was to inherit Longbourn and his marrying outside the Bennet family afforded them no protections. Mrs. Bennet is mocked for her concerns of her and her daughters being turned out upon Mr. Bennet's death, but it is not an unfounded concern. However, Elizabeth, and by default Austen, cannot see herself with this man because he cannot make her happy. Clearly Elizabeth does not equate financial comfort with happiness, and this seems to be yet another critique Austen is presenting in the novel.

Wickham

By far the character with the least moral fiber, Wickham comes with no wealth and no property. Not only does he not come with wealth, but he is also revealed to have squandered and shown to be greedy. This is a mark against him because, harkening back to Evans' argument, Austen tends to write in a way that implies, "an over-interest in money suggests greed and a false set of priorities" (26). This is evidence of his over-interest in money and greed in Mr. Darcy's letter to Elizabeth. He explains that Wickham had asked for his inheritance when he elected to not enter the clergy and intended to study law. Wickham then petitions Darcy for

money to help him go back to study for the clergy and Darcy refuses. Wickham then goes after Darcy's sister and Darcy was sure that, "Mr. Wickham's chief object was unquestionably my sister's fortune, which is thirty thousand pounds; I cannot help supposing that the hope of revenging himself on me was a strong inducement" (Austen 192). Wickham's lack of wealth and property are his motivation for his moral failings in the latter chapters of *Pride and Prejudice*. He goes after Darcy's sister because Darcy will not give him money he feels entitled to.

More of his moral failings are revealed when he marries Lydia simply because Darcy forces him too. It does not appear that even Mr. Bennet was going to push the issue. Elizabeth points out that, "Lydia has no brothers to step forward, and [Wickham] might imagine, from my father's behavior, from his indolence and the little attention he has ever seemed to give to what goes forward in his family…" (Austen 265). Not only had Lydia been ruined because, "a woman who had sex outside of marriage was forever tainted," but all of her sisters were going to be ruined by association (Turano 193). This is a societal rule that Wickham was aware of, and he ran off with Lydia anyway. He hid himself and Lydia away, with no intention of marrying her. He is the least advantaged of the suitors in *Pride and Prejudice*, and he is also the least well-off financially. This situates him as the least-eligible along with being the least suitable.

Wickham is both materially irresponsible and has an over-interest in money. Like the rest of the men in the novel, his character coincides with his social status and how much money he has or lacks, whether that was the point Austen was trying to make or not. He is eventually married to Lydia and they are sent away. Mr. Bennet very sarcastically remarks, "He is as fine as a fellow...as ever I saw. He simpers, and smirks, and makes love to us all. I am prodigiously proud of him. I defy even Sir William Lucas himself to produce a more valuable son-in-law"

(Austen 310). This very subtle ties Wickham and Collins together as the less "valuable" suitors to the Bennet sisters.

Wickham is certainly the suitor with the least moral fiber, while being the one with the most to gain by entering into almost any marriage. Herman argues that he is villainized partially because he is trying to marry a wealthy woman (211). This is not entirely accurate because he is not villainized when he is courting Mary King. Elizabeth even discusses how she understands why he is doing what he is doing. What he is villainized for is going after Darcy's younger sister in both an act of revenge and as a means of acquiring more money, after having squandered his inheritance from Darcy's father. He is also villainized because he compromises Lydia and only agrees to marry her after he has been bribed by Darcy. So, he is villainized for being deceitful and underhanded, not for simply seeking to marry a wealthy woman.

Darcy

Mr. Darcy is presented as the masculine ideal in *Pride and Prejudice*. In fact, all the other suitors presented in the book exist in comparison to Mr. Darcy. In her paper, Alvarez explains that Austen was writing in a time of transition when the regency idea of gentlemanliness was being replaced with the Victorian ideals of manliness and that,

> "The eighteenth-century gentleman's refinement and easy, sociable manners give way to a masculine individualism based on a serious moral tone and a strong sense of purpose. Manliness rather than gentlemanliness is what Darcy so openly displays and what Pemberley so loudly advertises" (2)

It is significant then that Darcy is the only suitor presented to any of the Bennet sisters who owns property *and* has a significant annual income from said property. Herman points out that,

"rejecting Mr. Darcy must be classified as insane" (214), but that is exactly what Elizabeth does the first time he proposes. She does not see him as someone she aligns with morally and blames him (rightfully) for breaking up her sister and Mr. Bingley. She also believes that he has slighted Mr. Wickham because that is how the story was presented to her.

Austen purposefully does not present his monetary value as the reason why Elizabeth accepts his second proposal. Herman argues that Elizabeth is presented as ignoring financial standing because Austen wanted Elizabeth to value, "compatibility and personality far more than material wealth" (215). Evans points out that, "although Jane Austen allows one of her sterling male characters to be a traditional landowner, she does not associate virtue solely with the possession of land or with an income drawn from agriculture" (26). However, Evans also emphasizes that Darcy is not well loved and respected and in financial standing, "through an accident of nature, but because of the care, the attention, and the good judgement exercised by the owner." Elizabeth begins to realize the truth about Darcy's character when she visits Pemberley. Evans explains that, "it is at Pemberley that Elizabeth Bennet sees for the first time that Darcy is no male dilettante but a man with a genuine – if hierarchically organized – concern for the lives of those people who depend on him" (28). His housekeeper sings his praises, and this allows both Elizabeth and the reader to see Darcy in a new light.

Upon further reading, it is revealed that Mr. Darcy is a person who works to protect his friends and family. Sometimes that instinct is misguided, as it is with Jane and Bingley's relationship, which he acknowledges and apologizes for. Even in his own moderation with his feelings towards Elizabeth, that instinct to protect himself and his family's image, is misguided. He is also incredibly shy and proud, which causes him to come across rudely to others.

However, Darcy corrects his mistakes and goes through a good deal of emotional development over the course of the novel. He admits his faults to Elizabeth and that is what it takes for her to admit that she returns his feelings. As Alvarez explains, “Elizabeth’s recrimination is a source of much anxiety for Darcy and informs Darcy’s more thoughtful, civil behavior for the remainder of the narrative” (3). Elizabeth is not simply after his money. She sees him for who he is and initially calls him out for his bad behavior. She accepts him later because he changes. She does not want a meal ticket; she wants to partner with him in life. He goes so far as to rescue her sister and persuades (or rather, bribes) Wickham to marry Lydia. This not only rescues Lydia’s reputation, but also the reputation of entire family. Indeed, Darcy and Bingley’s willingness to marry into the Bennet family reestablishes them as respectable after the incident with Lydia and Wickham. Thus, Darcy also secures the future marriageability of Mary and Kitty as well.

These are the actions that solidifies Elizabeth’s feelings for Darcy, despite her apprehension that he will not want her because of her sister’s actions. Elizabeth worries because, “they were under obligations to a person who could never receive a return” (Austen 306). This is not the case because Darcy knows that Wickham is deceitful and selfish and he knows that Elizabeth and her family, particularly Lydia, are victims of Wickham’s schemes. Darcy is aware that his own sister was taken in by Wickham. Alvarez explains that Darcy is Austen’s ideal masculine character in *Pride and Prejudice* because, “Austen makes Darcy’s masculinity unique and enduring because she fastens it neither to perfunctory civilities nor to the business of the public sphere but to female needs and desires: never a courtier, whatever degree of politeness Darcy attains is a direct response to Elizabeth’s expectations” (2). While his

morality is not explicitly tied to his wealth and property, Austen implies as much with his characterization and his financial situation in the novel.

Conclusion

Austen does not want to correlate wealth with moral superiority, but she tends to do so anyway. She presents the Bennet sisters' suitors as men with flaws with the various advantages and disadvantages they may bring. Only those with wealth or property truly develop beyond those flaws. Darcy and Bingley (to some extent) acknowledge their faults, learn from them, and in the end marry the women they love. Austen does not outright say that Elizabeth and Jane do not marry these men for their money, but they are not turned away from them because of it. Collins and Wickham do not acknowledge their flaws and are made the butt of the joke and the villain, respectively. Wickham must be bribed into a marriage with Lydia. Collins settles himself down with Charlotte Lucas when Elizabeth will not have him. Because of this it is evident that Austen does not have time for men who are flawed and do not work to improve themselves, even if they present certain advantages. Austen certainly does not have time for flawed men without money or prospects and does not deem these men worthy enough for her main character.

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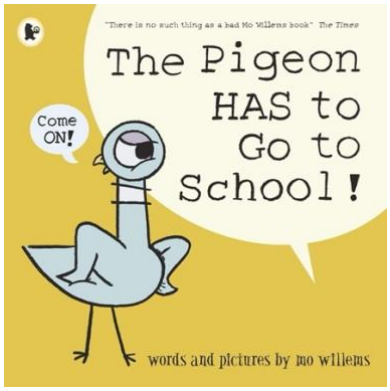
Library Program Proposals

Fall Children's Programs

The purpose of these programs is to engage with community children, ages 5-12 by featuring a monthly story time and craft. Most of the books are aligned with the season or a holiday happening within that month to have a theme and catch the children's interest. The best time for these to take place would be during the after-school period. Children in attendance will be encouraged to check out the library's selection of children's books.

August Children's Program



***The Pigeon HAS to Go to School* story time and paper Pigeon craft**

Explanation:

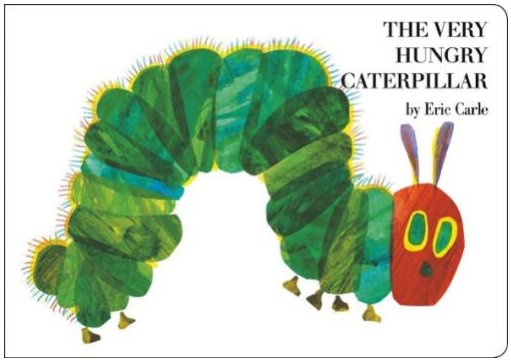
This choice was made hoping to engage with area children by helping them commiserate about or celebrate their return to school. August's monthly story time will feature *The Pigeon HAS to Go to School*, followed by a Pigeon-themed craft.

Items needed:

- *The Pigeon HAS to Go to School*
- Colored card stock (in light blue, black and yellow)
- white card stock
- black marker
- pencil
- 1" googly eyes
- scissors
- glue stick

September Children's Program

***The Very Hungry Caterpillar* story time and paper chain craft**



Explanation:

The Very Hungry Caterpillar continues to be a very popular children's book and many children enjoy the familiarity of it. The paper chain caterpillar is a low-cost, easy craft for the kids to make and would allow the library to use up possible scraps of construction paper or card stock from previous crafting programs.

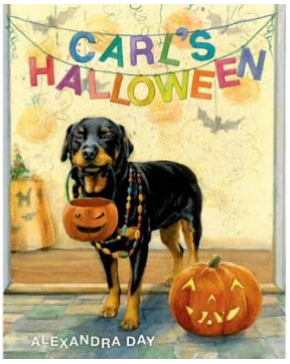
Items needed:

The Very Hungry Caterpillar

- Red construction paper or cardstock cut into strips
- Green construction paper or cardstock cut into strips
- Black construction paper or cardstock cut into antennae
- Google eyes
- Black marker
- Tape or glue

October Children's Program

***Carl's Halloween* and Craft Bead Necklaces**



Explanation:

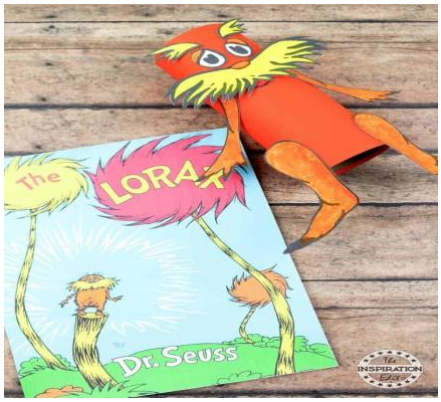
Since this is intended to be done in the month of October, I have selected a children's favorite, Carl's Halloween. It is a very visual book and therefore appeals to some of the younger children who may be new to reading. The craft bead necklaces are meant to mimic the necklaces that Carl and the young girl in the book wear as they go out trick or treating.

Items needed:

- *Carl's Halloween*
- String or yarn
- Scissors
- Craft beads

November Children's Program

***The Lorax* and Toilet Paper Roll Lorax**



Explanation:

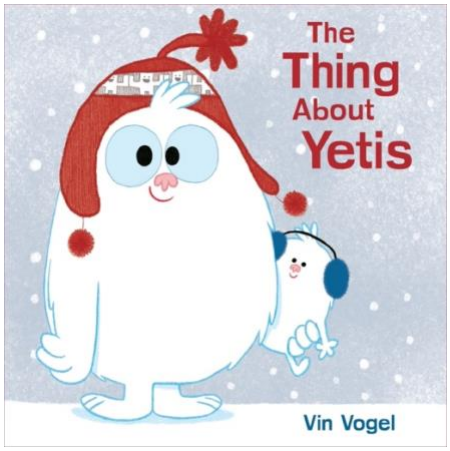
In the spirit of being environmentally conscious, this project can use paper towel rolls the children can bring from home, and some the library provides for those who do not bring one. I would propose doing the craft before the story time so that the children can mimic the Lorax's lines in the book and use their craft as a prop.

Items needed:

- *The Lorax*
- Toilet paper rolls
- Lorax templates (website for this listed on the references page)
- Black markers
- Orange acrylic paint
- Paint brushes
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

December Children's Program

December: *The Thing About Yetis* and Pipe Cleaner Snowman



Explanation:

As we are moving into the winter season, this book is a fun reminder that even though we may love some things about winter, we don't have to love winter all the time. The pipe cleaner snowman is a simple craft meant to tie into the winter theme of the book. It's also a nod to Yetis being called Abominable Snowmen.

Items needed:

- *The Thing About Yetis*
- White pipe cleaners
- Brown pipe cleaners
- Red pipe cleaners
- Black pipe cleaners
- Black markers

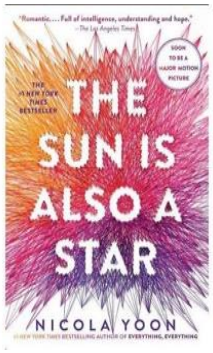
Teen's Program: Book and Film Club

The purpose of this program is to engage with young people ages 13-18. The primary goals are to help them take an interest in reading and films and to connect with their peers. The list of books was compiled from *Book Riot's* "The Ultimate Guide to YA Movie Adaptations." This list was compared with the library catalogue to insure we had a physical copy of the film as well as checking that we had multiple physical and digital copies of each book.

To introduce area teens to a more diverse group of books and films, and a broader range of ideas, some books and films are included that deal with difficult topics. Some themes discussed in these books include immigration, family expectations, racism, sexual orientation, antisemitism, violence, and class conflict. Parents should talk with their teen to decide if they are able to handle discussing certain topics with a group of their peers.

The Book and Film club will meet once a month to give participants time to read through the book if they choose to. The library will also need to request more physical and digital copies of the book. The film will be viewed at the monthly meeting with snacks provided. This will allow those who are unable to read the book for any reason to still be able to participate in the program. This would work best as a Saturday afternoon event.

August: The Sun is Also a Star



Explanation:

The Sun is Also a Star was also adapted into a film in 2019. The story centers on two teenagers who are both facing pressures from their family: Natasha, whose is an undocumented Jamaican immigrant facing deportation, and Daniel, the child of Korean immigrants, who does not want to go along with his family's plans for him to become a doctor. This opens several paths of discussion for this book and film, that will in some ways be relatable for the participants.

Discussion questions:

- How is the concept of home characterized over the course of the story?
- Daniel believed in fate. Natasha did not. Are you more like Daniel or Natasha?
- In your opinion who has 'better' parents, Natasha or Daniel?
- How does Natasha view the relationship between science and love at the beginning? How does her viewpoint change?
- What pressures do young people face when choosing colleges, majors, career paths, etc.? Where do those pressures come from?

September: *Love, Simon/Simon vs. The Homo Sapien Agenda*

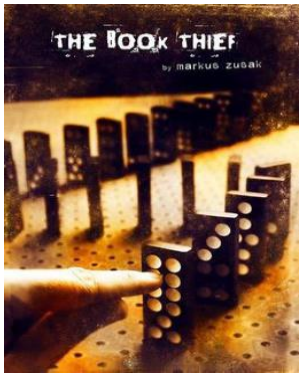
Explanation:

Simon vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda was adapted into the film *Love, Simon* in 2018. Both the film and the novel focus on Simon, a closeted gay teenage boy, who is engaged in an initially anonymous email exchange with another character primarily referred to as Blue. Both Simon and Blue are threatened with being outed unless Simon helps his classmate Martin get into a relationship with Simon's friend Abby. The story explores themes of friendship, sexuality, identity, bullying, and family.

Discussion questions:

- Simon claims that he can't just talk to his parents, but he has to "perform it." What does he mean about performing for his parents? What are some of the other ways Simon performs in order to navigate his relationships—with family, friends, and Blue?
- Simon explains that his parents "have this idea of me, and whenever I step outside of that, it blows their minds". What are some of the ways that Simon steps outside of other people's ideas of him? What other characters in the novel grow and change beyond others' expectations of them? How does Simon respond to these changes?
- Do you think straight people should have to "come out"? Or should it be something that nobody has to do, whether they're gay or straight (or anywhere in between)?

October: *The Book Thief*



Explanation:

The Book Thief was adapted into the film of the same name in 2013. The story is narrated by the personification of Death. It follows the coming of age of Liesel Meminger, a young girl living in Germany at the time of rise of the Nazis. Liesel's family harbors a fugitive from the Nazis. She begins stealing and collecting books the Nazis are trying to destroy. The story centers on themes of friendship, love, and loyalty.

Discussion questions:

- What was the author's purpose behind choosing Death as a narrator? Is this a trustworthy narrator? How does Death see things that a human narrator might not?
- Knowing that Liesel is called a "thief," how does the book complicate our ideas of justice and judgment? Which characters do you view as just/unjust or brave/cowardly, and why? Which events or details most color your perceptions of these characters?
- What choices do characters make about groups they will belong to? What groups do they belong to without choice? What are the consequences?
- Who has power in this book? How does Liesel gain power, and how does Max? Toward the end of the novel Liesel remarks to herself that words give power. How so?

November: *The Hate U Give*

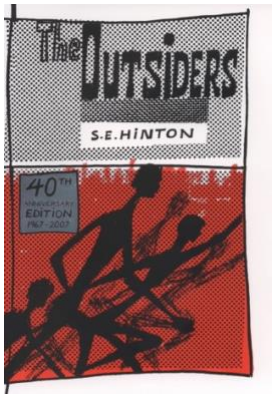
Explanation:

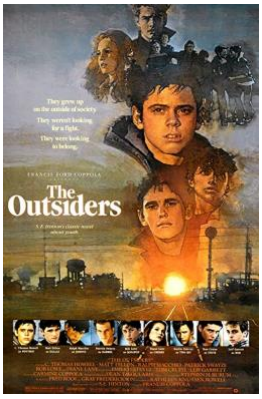
The Hate U Give was adapted into the film of the same name in 2018. Both center around Starr Carter, a young Black girl who witnesses her childhood friend Khalil being killed by a police officer during a traffic stop. The novel and the film were created in response to several similar cases that sparked hundreds of Black Lives Matter protests across the US. They explore themes of dealing with racism, double-identities, and family and community.

Discussion questions:

- Starr is often found engaging in what is called code-switching. Do you think Starr switches successfully between the two places? What other characters do you see code switching? Are there any instances when someone doesn't switch and makes things socially awkward? Is this something you can relate to?
- Throughout the novel, Starr refers to police officer Brian Cruise as One-Fifteen, which is his badge number. Why do you think she does this? Does her attitude toward police officers change over the course of the book? How does her uncle play into this change?
- Starr vows to "never be quiet" (Chapter 26, p. 444) and that her commitment is beyond Khalil. Angie Thomas says, "I look at books as being a form of activism because a lot of times they'll show us a part of the world we may not have known about." Has this book changed or reaffirmed your views on the world? How so? How can you take steps to use your voice to promote social justice?

December: *The Outsiders*





Explanation:

The Outsiders was adapted into the film of the same name in 1983 and focuses on a group of friends who are known as “greasers” and their conflict with a rival gang, the “Socs.” The novel is well known for being written when Hinton was 15 and 16. The story deals with themes of divided communities, empathy, preserving childhood innocence, and individual identity.

Discussion questions:

- Who do you think the “Outsiders” are? What are they outside of? Are they still outsiders by the end of the story? If not, when did they stop being outsiders? If so, do you think they'll always be outsiders?
- What do you think this story is trying to say about class? Do you think it says this thing accurately and effectively?
- This story has been praised as being very relatable, do you think it is? What are some aspects you think are no longer relatable? What are some aspects that are timeless?
- Do you think that different groups of people are treated differently? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Ponyboy says that he would rather have someone’s hate than their pity. Why do you think he says this?

Fall Adult Programs

The purpose of these programs is to engage with adult members of the community (ages 18+). This will allow patrons to interact more with those of us working in the library and each other. I would also like to recycle weeded books and excess donated books; therefore I am proposing we use book pages to do a series of book-page craft nights during the fall semester.

August: Book Page Origami

Explanation:

The first of several crafts that will repurpose weeded books or excess donated books. These book pages will be folded following this tutorial: (link). They can then be strung up as a garland or made into ornaments.

Items needed:

- Book pages
- Scissors
- String or yarn
- Ornament hooks

September: Book Page Wreath

Explanation:

Heading into both the holiday season and the fall, many folks put out wreaths, and this comes with a back-to-school theme as well with the use of book pages. These can be themed towards different holidays or seasons depending on the glitter colors used and any ornaments participants may want to put in the center of the wreath.

Items needed:

- Book pages
- Foam board
- Glitter
- Craft glue
- String or twine
- Staple gun

October: Book Page Pumpkin

Explanation:

In the spirit of Halloween, October's crafts will feature turning recycled books into pumpkins.

Items needed:

- Whole paperback books
- Craft knives
- Chopsticks or twigs
- Orange paint
- Glue
- Green or tan ribbon or raffia

November: Pumpkin with Decoupage Pages

Explanation:

Continuing with the fall themes and giving folks a break from winter holiday themed activities, participants will mod podge book pages over decorative pumpkins. These will be artificial pumpkins to avoid any rotting issues. This will need to be an event participants sign up for in advance to ensure that we have enough supplies.

Items needed:

- Artificial pumpkins
- Book pages
- Foam brush
- Decoupage or Mod Podge
- Glitter

December: Book Page Ornaments

Explanation:

In order to close the year out on a high note, and to keep the craft fairly simple, I am offering these book page roll ornaments. These are super simple and would be more of an opportunity to focus on community building rather than just making a craft together. The most complex part of this craft would be rolling the strips of pages.

Items needed:

- Plastic clear or translucent globe ornaments
- Book pages, cut into strips (or have participants cut them up)
- Chopsticks or skewers for rolling the paper around

References:

Children's Program

https://www.simpleeverydaymom.com/handprint-pigeon-craft/

https://www.acraftylife.com/colorful-bug-crafts-20-plus-kids-crafts/

https://www.theinspirationedit.com/dr-seuss-craft-lorax-toilet-tube/

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/341147740534431614/

Teens Program

https://www.state.lib.la.us/files/LYRC/The_Sun_is_Also_a_Star_Discussion_Guide.pdf

https://www.cmlibrary.org/sites/default/files/TSIAAS%20Study%20Guide.pdf

https://b0f646cfbd7462424f7a-f9758a43fb7c33cc8adda0fd36101899.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/reading-guides/RG-9780062839701.pdf

https://www.chipublib.org/the-book-thief-discussion-questions/#:~:text=What%20was%20the%20author's%20purpose,a%20human%20narrator%20might%20not%3F

https://bookriot.com/the-hate-u-give-book-club-questions/

https://www.ypsilibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/OUTSIDERS-DISCUSSION-QUESTIONS.pdf

Adult Program

https://theinspirationboard.com/book-page-pumpkin/

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https://www.etsy.com/listing/494898773/glass-ornament-with-book-page-curls?gpla=1&gao=1&&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=shopping_us_-home_and_living&utm_custom1=_k_Cj0KCQjwyMiTBhDKARIsAAJ-9VvSPOGkBbD7-EFaQ-IooqM-Jcit-K7xfv1yTkzGiL7ePZtXf88Cn80aAljpEALw_wcB_k_&utm_content=go_12665398257_121762925993_511610210343_aud-1184785539978:pla-303628061699_c__494898773_12768591&utm_custom2=12665398257&gclid=Cj0KCQjwyMiTBhDKARIsAAJ-9VvSPOGkBbD7-EFaQ-IooqM-Jcit-K7xfv1yTkzGiL7ePZtXf88Cn80aAljpEALw_wcB

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EDUCATION

M.A. English, University of Arkansas 2022
Research interests in Feminist Theory and Popular Culture
Organizations: Graduate Students in English, MA Liason

B.A. Communications: Radio & TV Option, Minor: English 2015
Awards: Distinguished Graduate, Department of Communications 2015
Organizations: Student Broadcasting Association, Chi Alpa

EXPERIENCE

August 2020-May 2022 Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Arkansas Fayetteville, AR
2020-2021 Academic Year
Taught two sections of Composition I (Fall) and Composition II (Spring) fully remote
2021-2022
Taught two sections of Composition I (Fall) and Composition II (Spring) in-person

June 2020-October 2020 Library Clerk, Eastern Oklahoma Library System Kansas, OK
Created programs for public participation and content for library social media
Checked materials in and out
Assisted patrons with finding materials and use of library technology

May 2015-June 2019 Traffic Coordinator, Rogers State University-RSU TV Claremore, OK
Helped choose programs to inform, entertain, and educate the viewership.
Managed RSU-TV social media and assisted with branding initiatives
Increased Facebook following by 150%
On the team that planned and facilitated fundraising and promotional events
Promoted programs the station produced to viewership and other public television stations
Ensured that daily logs are received by Master Control Operators.
Prepared monthly programming schedules.
Updated TV provider program guides as needed.
Oversaw duties of Traffic Assistant.
Updated Nielsen schedules for ratings.

SKILLS

Web and Social Media:	Software:
Facebook Ads	Microsoft Office
Instagram Ads	ProTrack
Twitter Ads	Rasier's Edge
Wordpress	Adobe Premiere
	Adobe Audition