

MY HUSBAND'S WIFE

ALLISON KOOPMAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN FILM
YORK UNIVERSITY
TORONTO, ONTARIO

July 2021

© Allison Koopman, 2021

Abstract

My Husband's Wife is an 8 part drama mini-series set in a fictional polygamous cult in rural Ontario. My thesis will be comprised of two fully written episodes (60 pages each), a detailed Series Bible (including info on episode structure, series arc, character profiles and more), and detailed outlines of all eight episodes.

My Husband's Wife tells the story of MARYLINE (17), a prickly young woman born into a polygamous cult, who rails against her role as the Cult Leader's sixth wife. Maryline struggles to conform to the restrictive and patriarchal rules and restrictions. She copes by secretly healing the women within the cult by using her knowledge of medicinal plants. Then, her husband marries for the seventh time to a beautiful and irreverent girl, ANGELLEEE (16). Despite her anger, fear, and shame, Maryline and Angellee fall in love and plot to escape. Meanwhile, in St. Johnathon's (the town nearest the cult), a determined police officer named TALI COOPER (25) secretly conducts an investigation into the commune, convinced the cult is responsible for a string of disappearances spanning decades, including the disappearance of her cousin JUSTINE. Tali uncovers the many crimes within the cult, as well as a conspiracy that involves not only the St. Johnathon's police department, but the entire town, and her own family.

My Husband's Wife explores many intersectional feminist themes including sexism and misogyny, LGBTQ+ representation, and racism. It examines both the dangers and the virtues of faith, the importance of love in the face of fear, and the double edged sword of desire. Inspired by own religious upbringing, *My Husband's Wife* is a strange marriage between the aesthetic of period pieces like *Anne with an E* and the urgency and relevance of *The Handmaid's Tale*.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my thesis committee. To Howard Wiseman, my supervisor, for his confidence in me, his gentle feedback and his enthusiasm towards seeing my growth. To Marie Rickard, my reader, for pushing me to reach for more, to dig deeper, and to find the poetry and grace in my words. Thank you to Kuowei Lee, our Graduate Program Assistant, for always responding swiftly and patiently to my panicked emails and his trust in my abilities as a student. Thank you Manfred Becker for being a wonderful Grad Program Director. Thanks to my cohort, who intimidate and inspire me with their creativity and drive, and who were always willing to read drafts.

To my sister Rhianna Koopman, for being the first person I always want to bounce ideas off, for the long runs where she enthusiastically listened to me rattle on about my work, and for providing the illustrations in the Bible. Thanks to my mother, Janine Koopman, and my aunt, Irene Katerberg, for lovingly questioning things like grammar, continuity and realism as my proofreaders. To my best friends, Kendra Murphy, Jessica Russel and Shaveta Mohan for always making me feel better when I'm at my lowest, for laughing with me, and for always being willing to listen even when you have no idea what I'm talking about.

And finally, this thesis is dedicated to all the queer youths and folk, especially the ones that are still in the closet; who are in a situation where they don't feel they can be their true selves; where they feel unsafe. I see you. I'm rooting for you. Don't let anyone tell you that wanting more for your life is wrong or selfish.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgments.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Topic and Theme	4
Background on Specific Form	7
Previous Work	10
Influences and Inspirations	12
Film.....	12
Docu-series	13
Books	14
Music.....	15
Art	16
Research.....	17
Cults	17
Child Abuse/Religious Sexual Abuse.....	18
Feminist Film Theory	20
Potential Ethical Issues	23
Ethics of having a rape/child sexual abuse storyline	23
Ethics of exploring the sexualities of teenagers (minors).....	26
Ethics of portraying the Police in a post BLM 2020 world	27
Ethics of biracial identity	27

Progress/Tracking the Major Changes to the Story	29
Pilot.....	29
Episode 2.....	29
Character Changes/Development.....	30
Series Plot and World Building	31
Future Plans	32
Conclusion	33
Bibliography	35
Filmography.....	37
Other References.....	40
Art	40
Podcasts.....	40
Music.....	40

Introduction

My Husband's Wife is an eight-part mini-series, with each episode being 50-60 pages.

Tonally, the series combines the aesthetics of a folk-horror and a crime-thriller. Although written as a miniseries, there is more story to be explored if the series were to be picked up for another season. Ideally, *My Husband's Wife* would have three seasons, with the first exploring Maryline's time in the cult and her escape; the second season focusing on her adjusting to life outside the cult and the trial against the cult leader; and the third season focusing on Maryline's role as a cult victim advocate and her search for Angellee.

The first season focuses on Maryline (17) the bitter sixth wife of Reverend TRUELEN (50), the leader of the Congregation of King Moses; an anti-modernist and Christian polygamist cult. Maryline was raised in this cult, and knows nothing of the outside world. What she does know is that she has always been different. Although taught that a woman's pride and salvation is being a wife and mother, Maryline resists the rules and expectations of her sex. She's a dreamer and rebel, often questioning the teachings within the cult. In secret, she was taught how to use plants to heal, despite women being forbidden from practicing such things. When she was 12, she tried to escape the cult after she was forced into an engagement. But, she was caught, punished, and ever since her passions and dreams have simmered into bitterness and shame. A hollow, often cruel young woman, she copes with repeated physical and sexual abuse from her husband and his first wife SARIAH (46) by bullying her sister-wives, and by continuing to heal the women of the cult whenever she can. In fact, her goal is to become the cult's Healer, despite the risk of heresy and severe punishment. Her plans are about to come into fruition when her husband marries for the seventh time, to a beautiful biracial girl named Angellee (16). Maryline expects Angellee to be a simpering little lamb like all her other sister-wives; instead, Angellee is

irreverent, sneaky and vivacious. Despite attempts to resist her, and despite her deep seated shame, Maryline falls in love with Angellee. But stolen moments in secluded corners and dark woods are not enough. Maryline soon realizes that she will never be able to create the life she wants, with the person she wants, within the cult. The only option is for Maryline and Angellee to escape the cult.

Meanwhile, a Toronto police officer, Tali Cooper (25), moves to her hometown after her mother dies. St. Johnathon's is the town closest to the cult, and they coexist in peace. Tali joins the St. Johnathon's police department under the guise of needing a break from the fast pace of Toronto; but that's a lie. She is trying to solve a 15-year-old mystery: what happened to her cousin Justine? Tali is convinced the cult either kidnapped Justine or murdered her, and has made it her mission to solve the case. As the mystery unravels, Tali stumbles upon something much bigger than a kidnapping: a town wide conspiracy to protect the cult.

The third string that ties the story all together is SAMEEL (23), Maryline's brother. Sameel is an important member of the cult: the Evangelist, the cults' recruiter. New blood is needed within the cult, as incestuous marriages are leading to higher infant mortality rates. But, Sameel's main goal when going to St. Johnathon's is to score drugs to deal with his chronic pain. His path crosses with Tali's one day, and she blackmails him into gaining access into the cult. Through Sameel, Tali meets Maryline, and she becomes involved in their plan to escape. All the plots converge in a deadly finale, with a race against time and fear, where Maryline must decide what is more important: loving in captivity, or mourning in freedom.

My Husband's Wife is about forbidden love, resilience and defiance. But at its core, it's about yearning. About having the courage to fight for the life you want, one filled with love and purpose. About growing up and realizing what you desire is an impossible dream. About

confronting that what you long for may be killing you. And, being able to decide for yourself whether or not what you yearn for most in this world is worth fighting for. How do you discover that who you are, what you feel, and what you want are not inherently sinful? How do you take years of shame, fear and yearning and turn it into defiance, bravery and determination? Can desire and yearning be liberating rather than a sinful?

Topic and Theme

I was raised in a fundamentalist Christian community. There was a zealous belief in the teachings of the Bible and minister. Asking questions was frowned upon, and if anyone did have doubts, they were kept to themselves out of fear. There was a strong “us vs them” mentality when it came to outsiders. Befriending people of differing beliefs was taboo. Women were considered spinsters if they were not married with children by 25, and marrying outside of the church was discouraged. Being gay was a choice, one that would send you to hell.

As a child, faith was something I struggled with. In Sunday school (where the children between 5-12 would learn more about the Bible) I would hide under the table to avoid the lessons. I found the lessons confusing, shallow and often frightening. It was hard keeping up with all the rules and expectations. When I was not hiding, I was asking questions. “Why did God put a baby in Mary’s belly if they weren’t married?” “What if the little lamb didn’t want to be found?” The teachers did not know how to answer my questions, so they got mad at me instead. The other children did not like me. They went to private Christian schools, but my parents could not afford it, so I went to public school. I was an outcast. I would watch the congregation close their eyes as they sang hymns, lifting their hands up to God and I would wonder: why have I never felt that kind of bliss, that certainty? To me, God was someone that had yet to reveal Himself to me, and so I was always left in doubt. We were taught that unconditional faith and love in Christ meant we went to heaven. So if I did not feel those things, was I bound for hell? I would lay awake at night, begging God to give me a sign that He was with me. And then, when I was 11, I fell in love with my best friend. A girl. It was as childish as it was passionate. I would stare at her lips, wondering if God would punish me for simply imagining kissing her. We left that church when I was twelve. It turns out, I was not the only one

who was feeling stifled by the expectations of the congregation; my mother, a pastor's daughter, ultimately decided the environment was toxic and needed to get us out. The church still calls us sometimes, asking us to come back; my extended family still tries to shame us into returning to church. I do not see my extended family anymore, because their version of faith justifies racist, homophobic and classist attitudes and behaviours that I find abhorrent.

Once we stopped attending church, I began to gleefully find contradictions and hypocrisy in the Bible. I traded shame for anger, and fear for resentment. Common phrases like "God's plan" "free will" and "selfish ambition" filled me with rage. Rather than find peace in providence, I saw "God's plan" as a trap. Every terrible thing that happens to us and the world is "God's plan" and we must accept it, but every sin you commit is your fault because of "free will". Anything that is not in the name of Christ and for the good of the congregation is "selfish ambition". But who defines what is selfish and what is needed to be happy? To this day, I still wonder if some of the world's issues could be solved if there was no religion, or at least if religion was more accepting and less isolationist.

Lately, I have tried to understand the virtues of faith. Not for me, but for Maryline. I did not want Maryline's fear and bitterness to come from God, but from people with an agenda, from people who warp the Bible to hurt others. And so, I opened myself to the idea that faith can look like many things. It can be the soft thrill of the wind whispering through a forest, the trees undulating like waves; the euphoria of a song filling you with light and awe; of seeing people love each other without ego. Maybe God is within the mundanity and loveliness of the every day. Maybe we can define what it is holy. My characters represent my struggle with faith. Sameel is my doubts and my inability to find bliss in the church. Maryline is my anger, my bitterness and

my hurt. Angellee is my desire to get out, to find a way to believe that is intimate and without agenda. Tali is my urge to protect and help others who live in shame.

There were other inspirations. While reading Elissa Wall's memoir *Stolen Innocence*, an idea came to me: what if a woman fell in love with her sister-wife? And due to my upbringing, cults have always been a source of fascination for me. In this case, I was writing what I feel. My cult is an extreme version of all my fears when it comes to fundamentalist religion, but Maryline's fear, bitterness and desires, those are mine too.

My Husband's Wife embodies many themes. Forbidden love. Faith, with all its virtues and dangers.. Intersectional feminist issues like misogyny, racism and homophobia are explored throughout. Resilience, too. When I first started working on *My Husband's Wife* words like defiance flitted off my tongue easily. Later, I realized that the heart of story is not the darkest parts of religion and humanity, but love. Intimacy, the quiet and sweet moments that come before and after the violent ones; the light between the darkness. What my characters have in common, what drives them all, is a desire for something they cannot have. Maryline longs for a sense of purpose within the cult outside of being a wife and mother, and she longs to be in a relationship with Angellee. Angellee desires a new life with Maryline, one filled with adventure and joy. Tali longs for Justine to be back in her life, and for the simplicity of her childhood. Sameel yearns to feel bliss in God. Their desires, the thing they most long for, lead to actions that define their character arcs. If I had to apply a universal theme to *My Husband's Wife*, it would be this: desire and yearning can be dangerous, but it can also be what drives us to protect innocents, to love without fear, and to fight for the life we deserve.

Background on Specific Form

The first time I wrote a TV script was in Rebecca Schechter's Writing for Television 1 class. I wrote a spec for the show *SMILF*. Later in undergrad, I developed a series called *Bluefeather* for the course on Transmedia Storytelling (taught by the wonderful Temenuga Trifonova). *Bluefeather* was a YA series about witchcraft with themes on consent and queerness.

My Husband's Wife was first conceived as a short film back in 2016, but the story kept growing. In 2017 I began to toy with the idea of turning it into a mini-series. The pilot episode was written in 2018 when I was an undergrad student at YorkU. I approached my supervisor with this project because I thought it was worth exploring and expanding upon as a thesis. Before writing *My Husband's Wife* I was aware that we were in the midst of a "TV renaissance". *Game of Thrones* and *Stranger Things* were as talked about as Blockbusters and Oscar Darlings. TV, at its best, can delve deeply into a character and story because there is more opportunity to linger. To be quiet and still and with the character longer. As someone who is often told to "be more succinct", TV writing has given me more freedom to linger.

As many writers, content creators and creative people have surely experienced, once you start developing a story, you start to see threads of it everywhere. When first developing the idea of a sister-wife romance set in a cult back in 2017, *The Handmaids' Tale* premiered. At first, I was annoyed. The themes were similar, including religion as a justification for control and misogyny. But the first season of the show was excellent and so I decided to instead look to it as a source of inspiration. But then it kept happening. Films and series kept coming out that were coincidentally very similar to my own idea. *Midsommar* comes to mind, as does the mini-series *Unorthodox*. In fact, cults are a hot topic right now. NXIUM has been in the news for a few

years, as has Scientology, QAnon and the crimes of R Kelly. On one hand, all the interest in patriarchal institutions, like cults, means that there is an audience for *My Husband's Wife*. On the other hand, there is the issue of over saturation ,or worse, being accused of being unoriginal. These feelings of self doubt creep in, but I remind myself that *My Husband's Wife* is its own story, one that is personal and worth telling.

There are several other TV series that have inspired this thesis. *Anne with an E* was particularly inspiring. Moira Walley Beckett brought to life an Anne story that was darker (dealing with issues such as racism, sexual assault, and Residential Schools) but still filled with the beauty and joy of the books. Period pieces have always been a source of inspiration, so watching Anne inspired the pseudo-pioneer look that *My Husband's Wife* adopts. The unfortunately cancelled series *The OA* was also a source of inspiration while writing the first outline of the story. Although there is less in common in terms of plot and themes, what is admiral about *The OA* is that it is not afraid to linger on the ethereal imagery, even if it slows down the pace. Other shows such as *Jessica Jones* and *The Haunting of Anthology* became great examples of how genre, world-building, and character-driven stories can work together.

Young Adult TV is a genre that is often undervalued. Teens, especially teen girls, are dismissed as silly and dramatic, so it is admirable to see stories that prioritize the complexity and difficulties of being a teen. YA content is also some of the most inclusive out there, dealing with issues such as identity, queerness, body positivity and mental illness, which echoes the themes of *My Husband's Wife*. Some examples of excellent YA content that inspired this thesis are *Euphoria* and *Sex Education*.

Sharp Objects has been a huge source inspiration. The main character Camille is prickly and hard to love, something I wanted to imbue in my protagonist. The way the show handled the

rape storyline was beautifully done, hinting and flashing instead of showing it outright. As well, the investigative plot influenced Tali's plotline.

Recently I have noticed an emerging new genre that I like to call "domestic thrillers". These are series that focus on wives and mothers but do not minimize or mock their issues; whether its birthday parties or domestic abuse. Series such as these inspired the dynamics between the sister-wives. One example of "domestic thrillers is" *Big Little Lies*.

Michaela Coel's *I May Destroy You* and its unflinching, raw depiction of the aftermath of a rape influenced my interest in exploring trauma. Its exploration of topics like blame, denial and strength are excellent and impactful. Similarly, the limited series *Unbelievable* is was incredibly impactful for this thesis. The detectives in *Unbelievable* influenced the kind of officer Tali would be; compassionate with survivors but relentless with the perpetrators. Most rape storylines on TV only last an episode or two, and so its praiseworthy that these series focused on the aftermath, and made it fact that rape is a terrible and violent crime hat needs to be treated as such in the eyes of the law and society. As well, both series explored the complexities of being an "imperfect victim" with nuance and empathy in way that greatly impacted how *My Husband's Wife* deals with issues of sexual abuse.

Previous Work

All of my previous work has been concerned with gender, sexuality and other intersectional feminist topics. During my first year at YorkU my short horror/comedy film *Symbiosis* was produced by a group of York Film Students. *Symbiosis* is the story of a disillusioned priest who falls under the spell of the charming demon he is attempting to exorcise. The story had gay subtext, and my complex feelings about Christianity were explored within the film. Another original script was selected by a group of production students, called *We Look Through a Mirror Darkly*. It is about a woman having an affair with her husband from an alternate universe. The most important relationship in that script is between the different versions of the protagonist, exemplifying my interest in exploring the complexity of women's identity and the relationships between women. Coincidentally, the title of this piece is taken from the Bible.

Over the years I have written other projects that have unfortunately not been produced, but have still played a big part in my journey to my thesis topic. As an undergraduate I finished my first feature script. *The Wendigo* is a feminist horror movie set in an Indigenous reserve. A queer detective investigates the massacre of an Indigenous family while being haunted by her sordid past. The story features issues such as racism, Truth and Reconciliation, self-hatred and forgiveness. These themes crossover with *My Husband's Wife*.

I have also written two detailed treatments for feature films, all which have themes that have led to my thesis project. *Moffen Girls* is set in The Netherlands during the Nazi occupation. It is based on the true story of Hannie Shaft and the sisters Truus and Freddie Oversteegan; they were part of the Orange resistance, and seduced and killed Nazis. The story is about a young

woman who becomes involved with a Nazi in order to spy for the Orange Resistance. She falls in love with another girl from the Resistance and must choose between love and her freedom fighting. The second Treatment is called *Galatea* and is a sci-fi thriller about a woman trying to find her clone, who was trafficked to become someone's "perfect" wife. This story explored grooming, gender roles, incels, and resistance.

My Husband's Wife evolved from my previous work, and feels like a patchwork of the topics and themes that I return to over and over again. Someone once told me that we tell the same stories over and over again, we just dress them up differently each time. I am attracted to stories about resilient women, about injustices, and also about love. For years I have been writing horror and thrillers as a way to express my despair and fear regarding issues such as misogyny and racism. In many ways *My Husband's Wife* has surprised me. There is still horror, but there is also quiet, intimacy and softness.

Influences and Inspirations

Here I will focus on films, docu-series, books, music and art that inspired *My Husband's Wife*. First, I want to mention a few directors and writers. Greta Gerwig comes to mind, for her blend of whimsy and realism. And, the showrunners Moira Walley Beckett, Michaela Coel, and Phoebe Waller Bridge for creating content about fierce, funny and complex women.

Film

Portrait of a Lady on Fire's plot, mood and cinematography are huge sources of inspiration. The film is imbued with longing and gentle intimacy that (hopefully) *My Husband's Wife* echoes. In a similar vein, period pieces like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, and *Days of Heaven* are also sources of inspiration with their earthy, lush cinematography and delicate imagery. Jane Campion's *The Piano* was one of the first feminist films I had ever seen, and to this day its difficult and often frustrating commentary on sexuality and power is captivating. A more recent period piece that was gripping was *The Nightingale*. Although I am not a fan of the rape-revenge genre, this film is elevated through its unflinching exploration of colonialism and the cycles of violence. Although *My Husband's Wife* is not a horror, *The Witch* was a key influence in terms of creating tension through alienation, gender roles and the dangers of blind faith. Keeping with the period piece romance, *Carol* is a film filled with subtle but simmering sexual tension that influenced the sensual writing in *My Husband's Wife*.

Since *My Husband's Wife* is about a cult, films such as the original *Wicker Man* and *Midsommar* were largely influential in terms of plot and tone. Ari Aster's attention to detail in *Midsommar* and the thorough exploration of the humanity of his cult, in tandem with the

violence, is especially appreciated. Although not technically a cult, the film *Witness* and its focus on the tension between the simple and warm world of the Amish with the cold danger of the detective's world inspired the balance between Maryline's love story and Tali's investigation.

Moving into more contemporary worlds, several queer love stories have inspired this thesis. Lesbian love stories like *Disobedience* provided inspiration for finding the bravery to love who you love despite your community expectations. *Moonlight* is one of the most visually stunning and raw love stories of all time. The exploration of gender and sexuality told from the black male gaze is timely and gorgeously told and inspired the nuances of love and identity explored in *My Husband's Wife*. The film *Pariah* also does an incredible job of exploring coming out and queer identities from a BIPOC lens, and the unique issues that comes with the intersection of race, gender and sexuality inspired how Angellee's identity was developed.

Next, we move into a genre of films that explores how women navigate the patriarchy and rape culture. *North Country* provided inspiration for how Tali navigates being a woman in a male dominated work field. *Wind River* gave an unflinching account of the dangers of being an Indigenous woman (despite having some issues with the trope of the "white saviour"), and *Promising Young Woman* is by far the smartest, most relevant version of a "rape-revenge" film (despite some issues of "white feminism").

Docu-series

The two Docu-series that influenced *My Husband's Wife* are *Wild, Wild Country* and *The Keepers*. *Wild, Wild Country* explored the mania of faith, and how quickly good intentions can become dangerous. *The Keeper's* explores sexual abuses in the context of the church, and how

the sanctity of the church is often prioritized over the safety and dignity of children. These themes are echoed throughout *My Husband's Wife*.

Books

One of the main sources of inspiration is the memoir by Elissa Wall called *Stolen Innocence*. Wall writes about growing up in the FLDS church, being forced to be a child bride to her older first cousin, her eventual escape, and becoming the star witness in the trial against Warren Jeffs, the leader of FLDS. Other stories of survival, such as Jaycee Duggard's heartbreaking memoir *A Stolen Life* and Elizabeth Smart's *My Story* inspired *My Husband's Wife*.

I reread several of my favourite childhood books when developing *My Husband's Wife*. My favourite genre growing up was what I called "pioneer times". Books like *Sarah Plain and Tall*, *The Little House on the Prairie* books, and of course the *Anne of Green Gables* books. I know now that I heavily romanticized the past. Reading *Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder* forced me to realize that the Little House books were a collection of iconography and myths that did not fully show the family's hardships and the characters flaws. And so, in *My Husband's Wife* you can see both the romantic elements of a period piece, as well as the hard truths of the darkest part of the past.

Alice Munro's short stories have always been inspiring in terms of writing about complex relationships between women. Two of her stories that come to mind are *Boys and Girls* for it's heartbreaking tale of growing up and realizing you are girl in a world created for men, and *Turkey Season* which explores both the camaraderie and tension formed because of gender roles. Other short stories, like Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery* inspired the world building as well

as the tone of growing dread, and Kate Chopin's *The Story of an Hour* inspired the various ways gender roles can both make us feel safe and keep us caged. My favourite short story is *The Yellow Wallpaper*, a terrifying story about a woman locked away by domineering men in her life, who becomes obsessed with freeing the women trapped in the wallpaper. *The Yellow Paper* inspired my portrayal of RAYHEL (30), a woman driven mad by the cruelty of living in a patriarchal society.

One of my favourite genres is feminist retellings of Bible stories. *The Triumph of Deborah* is a lush retelling of story of one of the strongest women in the Bible, and the only female Judge. *Pilate's Wife* tells the story of Jesus's crucifixion from the point of view of Pilate's wife and explores themes such as faith and desire, inspiring the topics in *My Husband's Wife*.

Finally, one of the greatest sources of inspiration was the Bible, that gorgeously written, deeply flawed, potentially dangerous book.

Music

Max Richter's songs are deeply moving, and when writing moments of high tension and feeling I would play *The Nature of Daylight* and *November* on repeat to capture the tone and emotion I was looking for. 1950s and 1960s love songs, such as *I don't know Why (but I do)* by Clarence "Froggy" Henry and *Sunday Kind of Love* by Etta James were also very inspiring. Despite having some outdated (sexist) attitudes toward women, these songs are deeply passionate about love, helping me get into the mind-frame for writing romance. Several queer artists influenced how I wrote the sexual awakening of a young, repressed lesbian. Girl in Red sings unabashedly about

her attraction to women, as does King Princess. These artists not only normalize queer love, but celebrate it, with songs that are joyful, sad and raw.

Art

The works of art that most greatly influenced *My Husbands's Wife* are by Artemisia Gentileschi. Her depictions of women in myths and the Bible depict them as powerful and dangerous. Her use of shadow and light, of bright reds and yellows is so gorgeous, creating lush and violent scenes. Her story is also a source of inspiration. She was raped and took her rapist to court, despite knowing they would torture her to ensure her testimony was the truth. Here is *Judith Slaying Holofernes*.

Research

Cults

In order to understand more about the psychology of both cult leaders and the people who follow them, my primary source of information was the book *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities* by Len Oakes. Oakes focuses on the charisma and narcissism of cult leaders, suggesting a five-stage life cycle of the cult leader. These stages are: 1. “Early narcissism... the childhoods of charismatic leaders invariably include relationships of a “markedly narcissistic nature”, generally an overly devoted parental figure, leading the individual to actively seek the same level of devotion later in life (Oakes 21); 2. “Incubation” the narcissistic child becomes an adult and is confused by the loss of devotion, concluding that there is “something special” about them, and “something wrong with the world” (21); 3. “Awakening” occurs after the individual has explored society and their view of the world and self solidifies (22); 4. “Mission” occurs soon after the Awakening, where their “mission” becomes clear and in order to “recruit others, the leaders advances a bold claim to be the source of ultimate good in others... arousing hope, faith” (22); 5. “Decline or fall” is the final stage, generally ending in either a decline in the “influence of power”, or conflict within the larger society that leads to assassinations, mass suicides or jail (22). Learning about the narcissism and charisma of cult leaders was helpful when developing both Truelen and Sariah further. Oakes also explores the relationship between the leader and the followers, and the type of people who join cults. It’s easy to assume that people who had low self esteem joined cults, or people who were gullible and lonely. But in reality, people who join cults are generally white, middle-class and well educated people (124). People who join cults generally join during turning points in

their lives, such as when they need to decide on a career path (124). Generally, a follower has some kind of goal or need they think the cult leader will fulfill, and so they will give their devotion until that goal is achieved (124-125).

Another key source for the research on cults was the podcast *Cults* hosted by Greg Polcyn & Vanessa Richardson. *Cults* explores the history and psychology behind notorious cults such as “The People’s Temple” and lesser known cults like “The Ant Hill Kids”. This podcast also provided a deep dive into the crimes of cult leader Warren Jeffs of the FLDS, one of the cults The Congregation of King Moses is inspired by.

The issue of sexual abuse within cults was needed further research because so often the crimes committed within cults are sexually based. Janja Lalich’s “Dominance and Submission: The Psychosexual Exploitation of Women in Cults” posits that “sexual control is seen as the final step in objectification of the cult member by the authoritarian leader who is able to satisfy his needs through psychological manipulation leading to sexual exploitation” (Lalich 37). This directly relates to *My Husband’s Wife* since one of the many ways people (particularly the women) are controlled by the leader is through arranged marriages, marital rape, and the expectation of rearing many children. As well, Lalich asserts that sexual behaviour within a cult cannot be considered consensual because of the power imbalance between the leader and the followers (36).

Child Abuse/Religious Sexual Abuse

According to “The Long-Term Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Counseling Implications”, written by Melissa Hall and Joshua Hall, “Twenty-eight to 33% of women and 12 to 18% of men were victims of childhood or adolescent sexual abuse (Hall and Hall 1). For the

purposes of my thesis, I not only wanted to research the effects of CSA (child sexual abuse) on individuals for ethical reasons, but also to better understand my characters. CSA has been linked to “higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorders, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative patterns, repression, denial, sexual problems, and relationship problems” (2). From the beginning, Maryline was a deeply repressed and bitter character, and so this research made me think of her personality traits and rituals in a new, deeper light. In the story, Maryline has disordered eating as both a reaction to her abuse and her desire to remain “barren”. To understand better this mental illness in the context of religion, I read Jennifer L Manlowe work on the intersection of CSA, eating disorders and religion in her chapter “A Thinly Veiled Skein: Exploring Troublesome Connections among Incest, Eating Disorders, and Religious Discourse”. She discusses the idea of a survivor having “divine purpose” in their suffering, and that restricting food is making their body pure again (Manlowe 79). She also discusses the issue of survivors blaming themselves for the abuse, citing the belief of “God’s will” being both a personal and social mantra to keep the child suffering in silence (70).

Unsurprisingly, there are psychological effects for teens who identify as LGBTQ+ who were raised in religious households. According to Jeremy J Gibb’s study on “Religious Conflict, Sexual Identity, and Suicidal Behaviors among LGBT Young Adults” LGBTQ+ “adolescents report higher rates of abuse, victimization, and bullying than their heterosexual peers... and mental illness... and suicidal ideation” (Gibbs 1). Gibb asserts that there is a strong correlation between level of “religiosity and negative attitudes toward homosexuality” and so LBGTQ+ youths that are raised in religious households/communities report “experiencing increased discrimination and internalized homophobia” (2). 25 to 40 per cent of homeless youth in Canada identify as LGBTQ2S, and according to the website “Impacting our Future” the reason for this

stat is most commonly due to “parents whose religious beliefs cause them to reject their LGBTQ children” (Siciliano). Growing up in a Christian household, I felt a lot of confusion and shame about my same-sex attraction. In the end I was lucky. I hope *My Husband’s Wife* can reflect on not only my past shame, but will also speak to others who have felt ashamed of who they are.

Feminist Film Theory

First, because this thesis is a piece of feminist writing, Laura Mulvey is worth mentioning. Like many film student’s, Mulvey’s “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” was required reading, and for good reason. The “male gaze”, the sadistic male spectator/voyeur, and woman as object instead of subject onscreen, are fascinating and relevant topics within film today (Mulvey 59). Although Mulvey is a great place to start as far feminist film theory, I’m far more interested in the “female gaze.” The main issue with the “male gaze” is that men function as subject, as someone for the audience to identify with, while the women are treated as object; to simply be looked at. To most female directors, theorists and audiences, the “female gaze” simply means that the story is told from the POV of a woman, and focuses on the inner world of women, therefore inviting the audience to identify with the subject: the woman. The POV is both from the female protagonist, and the female filmmaker.

The two books I focused on are Molly Haskell’s *From Reverence to Rape* and Tanya Horeck’s *Public Rape*. *From Reverence to Rape* provided a wonderful groundwork for how women are represented in film. Each chapter of Haskell’s classic piece of film theory focuses on a decade of filmmaking, from the silent era to the modern times (ie 1987). She focuses on the “stereotype[s] and counter-stereotype[s]” of each era (Haskell 402). From The virgins and vamps of the 20s, to the femme fatales that inspired suspicion rather than love, to the

“bombshells” of the 1950s (42-231). She also explores the fall of the studios ushered in the “art films” and auteurs of the 60s, and in what seemed like a direct retaliation to women’s lib, women’s roles were either as victim, or object of lust (323). By the time we get to the “Age of Ambivalence” (ie 1974-1987) Haskell is still wary of the role of women in film, but she is starting to feel more hope. Her one wish is really the wish of all feminists: “we want nothing less, on or off the screen, than the wide variety and dazzling diversity of male options” (302).

One of the main questions I asked myself throughout writing *My Husband’s Wife* was: is it ethical to have rape as part of the storyline? My questions about the ethics of rape onscreen were not so much answered as expanded upon by the excellent *Public Rape* by Tanya Horeck. Horeck’s focuses on the role of the spectator, both in real rape cases (The Big Dan gang rape from 1983) and fictional (focusing on the rape narrative of *The Accused*). Horeck explores issues such as how in real rape cases the body of the violated woman goes from symbolizing personal trauma to symbolizing public and political agendas and intersecting ideologies (Horeck 77). Horeck focuses on rape as a “spectator sport”, putting the role of witness into crisis (87). In the Big Dan case, those who witnessed the rape case were not tried; in *The Accused* this is rectified, as a form of fictional justice? But what about the viewers? The Big Dan trial was televised, and so the survivor told her story not only to the members of the court, but to everyone at home watching TV. Horeck calls this a “dismemberment”, a second rape as the survivor is forced to speak about her body parts, what was touched and done to her to a crowd; once again a victim of voyeurism (70). So this is the question: is it ethical to spectate rape, fictional or otherwise? According to Horeck, one of the motives for making *The Accused* was to make people aware of the true horror of rape. Horeck calls this “conversion cinema”, and the idea behind it is “how can we know rape is bad unless we see how bad it is?”(97). This is the term I have been looking for

all this time: conversion cinema. I believe that most onscreen rape scenes are a form of conversion cinema, and that is why so many filmmakers and audiences believe in the idea of the necessary onscreen rape. Once I was speaking to a male friend about *Game of Thrones*. I told him I stopped watching because there were too many “casual, unneeded” rape scenes. He disagreed; he felt it was necessary to show someone being graphically raped onscreen “so that we know how awful and evil this one character is”. Is rape the only way to show immorality and cruelty? Is showing the rape the only way the audience can know that rape is immoral and cruel? I believe that the audience is smarter than that; they don’t need to see the rape in graphic detail to know it is immoral. The idea of the necessary graphic rape scenes is easily contested by shows such as *I May Destroy You* (which effectively uses POV camera angles to be both explicit and subtle) , *Jessica Jones* (where the rape is never shown, but the trauma is explicit) and *Sharp Objects* (with the use of flashbacks to suggest rather than show). *My Husband’s Wife* rejects the need for “conversion cinema” and purposely cuts away from the sexual assaults within the story, and Horeck’s novel solidified the reasons for doing so. I will explore this topic in even more detail in the section on Ethics.

Potential Ethical Issues

Ethics of having a rape/child sexual abuse storyline

Before I presented for the Grad Symposium in the fall of 2020 my supervisor Howard Wiseman came to me with an ethical concern. He was concerned about the ages of the girls when they get married, and therefore get raped. And I will be using the hard R for rape here because that is what it is. Although the umbrella terms “sexual assault” or “sexual abuse” have their place, I want to emphasize that the girls and women in my cult are being systemically raped from the time they are able to menstruate. Howard was concerned that having such young girls be raped (off-screen) was too intense and that there was the possibility of moral outrage. He brought up these concerns for my sake; he did not want the audience at the Symposium to attack me for being exploitative, nor did he want possible future producers to turn the project away for its extreme subject matter. And the reality is that exploring this subject is, by nature, exploitative. I want to confront the reality of young girls being preyed upon in societies such as these, and in more mainstream society. There are girls all over the world, especially in developing countries, being married off as young as eight, because they are easier to control when they are young. I am concerned about the adolescent female body under the male gaze, and equally interested in the rebellion of the adolescent female body under the female gaze. In the world of my cult, girls are considered women and therefore able bear children once they start to menstruate, which has its roots in historical fact and is an exaggeration of existing heteronormative societal norms. Often, a girls first period is treated as strange rite of passage, the first step toward womanhood, even for girls as young as ten. And the next step: penetrative sex. The transition from girlhood to womanhood is defined their sexual organs, something I find very disturbing. The theme of girl's

and women's bodies as sexual, as vessels, as dangerous, as controlled, is very important to my thesis. I asked the audience at the Symposium if exploring the topic of rape and child sexual abuse was exploitative, and overwhelmingly the audience agreed that this topic was important to explore, and integral to the messaging of the show.

I want to be clear that the rape scenes are never shown on “screen” in my thesis, and in fact the rape narrative is not the main focus of the story. It exists as a spectre in the background, always looming, but it is the soft moments, the moments of intimacy between characters who love each other that are the focus. That said, I do think it is important to confront the ethics of exploring a rape narrative. I tried to find literature and scholarly articles on the ethics of portraying rape onscreen, or having rape be of narrative importance. Shockingly, it is incredibly difficult to find material that confronted the ethics of rape on screen. There were many books and articles that discussed the exploitation genre, or the rape-revenge genre. There were articles that discussed what a “good” rape scene is, defined by whose POV it is during the attack. One of the more relevant articles was “Watching Rape, Enjoying Watching Rape...: How Does a Study of Audience Challenge Mainstream Film Studies Approaches?” By Martin Becker, which was summary of a larger study he conducted. Martin and his colleagues’ study included volunteers watching five different films that have rape within the narrative. The main question was: is showing the explicit rape scene necessary in order to understand the story, the characters, the genre and the themes? Overwhelmingly there was a feeling that in order for the films to be impactful, the explicit rape scenes were necessary. But, even this study did not quite give me the information I was looking for, nor did it answer my ethical questions.

Even the most controversial rape scenes are controversial not necessarily for being rape scenes, but for the style of filming. *Irreversible* is a film that is often called “unwatchable”

because of its 9 minute rape scene, and indeed it is a strange exercise in durability. It is the time, the “realism” that causes outrage. If the rape scene was shorter, would there be less controversy? Similarly, *À Ma Soeur* is controversial because the victim is underage and halfway through the attack she appears to participate in the rape. If she had been an adult, if she had fought the attacker, would there have been controversy? My point is that the rape itself was not what was controversial; the way the rape was filmed, and the narrative elements of the rape, was what caused outrage. That begs the question: is rape onscreen ethical, as long as it’s a “comfortable” rape? What does a comfortable, moral rape look like?

In the Renaissance of TV, there have been many challenging and relevant topics explored. Including rape. But there is the concern that rape is being used as narrative commodity, or used as a motive for a character; a motive for revenge, or used as character development to make the survivor “stronger” (Sansa from *Game of Thrones* is an example of this trope). The excellent article called *Representing Rape Trauma in Film: Moving beyond the Event* by Amanda Spallacci discusses the use of quick cuts and flashbacks used in *Sharp Objects*. Camille’s rape as a teenage is never shown in explicit detail, but is hinted at when triggered by certain images or words; a quick, vibrant cut, not unlike the way Camille cuts into herself. The style of cutting quickly between images “mimic[s] the structure of trauma in the way the images intrude increasingly into the narrative without being given meaning and refuse us a sort of closure” (Spallacci 7). Spallacci says “Hollywood cinema have slowly shifted from the presentation of a graphic rape scene that, based on its construction, can generate affects such as disgust or sympathy, towards a representation of traumatic memory that accounts for the “inter-intra-subjective processes through which meanings are conferred, negotiated and mediated””(9). Because *Sharp Objects* is long form storytelling, there is time to unpack and fully explore her

trauma in a way that is not always possible in feature films. The aftermath of a traumatic event is what I am more interested in as well. I am interested in the way characters like Maryline cope, lash out, and create rituals to feel safe. I am not interested in the initial violence, and I do not see any need to “see” it. Do we need to see the rape in order to empathize? I do not think so. The echoes of the violence, and the way someone can either weather it or fight it, are far more interesting. I have tried to depict a rape narrative that is as ethical and tasteful as possible.

Ethics of exploring the sexualities of teenagers (minors)

There is also the issue of whether or not it is ethical to have explicit sexual scenes between characters that are in their teens. Although Maryline and Angellee only kiss in the fully written episodes, episode 4 explores their budding sexualities. Although I am not sure as of now how explicit those scenes will be (ie if there will be nudity, if there will be sex acts onscreen), it does raise the issue of whether or not it is ethical to show minors engaging in sexual acts onscreen. In previous series and films this issue is dealt with by simply having of age actors portray the teens (ie *Riverdale* or *Euphoria*). But that only solves the ethical issue within our world; yes, it is a relief that minors are not being put into unethical positions, but it still raises the question if it is ethical for adults to watch what is *supposed* to be teens (within the world of the show) have sex on screen. This is issue is incredibly compelling and difficult. On one hand, teens (especially teen girls) are heavily sexualized in real life and the media, and presenting them as mature, sexual beings (being played by mature adults) could perpetuate that social issue, as well as give teens unrealistic expectations about their bodies and sexuality. On the other hand, it is important to explore topics like female pleasure, enthusiastic consent, and female-gaze centric lesbian sexual intimacy. Therefore, I believe the significance of two rape survivors safely exploring their sexual autonomy is more important than it is exploitative.

Ethics of portraying the Police in a post BLM 2020 world

I grew up on a TV diet of *Law and Order SVU* and *Criminal Minds*. Complex, ruthless but still kind police characters like Stella from *The Fall* were the inspiration for Tali's role. But then in 2020 George Floyd was murdered by the officers restraining him, and there was a wake-up call. Many articles have discussed whether or not police shows should be as revered as they are. Shows like CBS's drama *S.W.A.T* responded to the protests with storylines reflecting current issues surrounding police brutality and racism. I have educated myself on this issue as much as possible, donating to the cause when I can, I have reflected on my idolization of the "detective" archetype. As a white person I have never been afraid of the police, but I know that is not the case for many BIPOC. The police narrative now questions the agenda of the police institution.

Ethics of biracial identity

When I first was worldbuilding, my cult members were all white. This is due to my own experience with church; it was made up of all white Dutch Christians. But, I realized that in order for the story to be as rich as possible, the cult needs to have some BIPOC members. So, Angellee became biracial. It is irresponsible not to explore how being a BIPOC in a mostly white society will create unique issues and prejudices, so the story explores how Angellee feels about her identity, and how others view it. Angellee became a desired commodity for her "exotic" beauty, and an outsider. Anne Marie Nakagawa's documentary "Between: Living in the Hyphen" was crucial in my understanding of how having a mixed ancestry can feel isolating and confusing in a world where labels often feel imperative, and how embracing fluidity can be how our society moves forward from alienating and exotifying mixed identities.

Because of my interest in Truth and Reconciliation and the Stolen Sisters, I initially wrote Tali as half Indigenous. But, after I spoke with my supervisor, and in light of the tragedy of finding the mass graves of Indigenous children on Residential School land throughout Canada, I have made the difficult decision to make Tali's race, and the race of her father, ambiguous. I have realized that good intentions, like having a diverse main cast and wanting to tell diverse stories, can still ultimately be harmful if they are told from a place of privilege, and from a place that is not prioritizing the voices of the Indigenous people of Canada.

These identities and stories may not be mine to tell. I am interested in the unique prejudices women of colour (particularly queer ones) face , so I do not want to leave them out of my stories. This is the paradox: white writers have no right to BIPOC stories, but it is also unethical to not include BIPOC within our stories. I support BIPOC storytellers and stories, and I respect that certain stories can only be told by the people who have experienced them. Ideally, if *My Husband's Wife* ever got produced, the writing room would be as diverse as possible, and so black, Indigenous and other BIPOC voices could be heard and centred. For now, all I can do is do my best at being inclusive, and hope I have told these stories as responsibly as possible.

Progress/Tracking the Major Changes to the Story

In the following, I will track the major changes made to *My Husband's Wife* from 2019 to now.

Pilot

In the first draft of the pilot there were three major plots: Maryline, the Wedding and her flashbacks (plot A); Sameel at the market place (Plot B); and the flashbacks to Truelen and Sariah's past (Plot C). Tali's plot/investigation was not featured at all in the first pilot. In fact, in the first draft of the series arc, Tali was more of a side character, only becoming involved in the story about half way through. The first major change to the pilot and the story overall was Tali becoming the second main character, and the investigation being a parallel story to Maryline's. After a great talk with my supervisor, we decided that while Maryline's story was the heart, that Tali's story was the backbone; a way to ground the story, and to keep the stakes high throughout the season. Now, Sameel's market plot doesn't happen until episode 2, and the flashbacks to Truelen and Sariah's past are all in episode 4.

Episode 2

I had a lot of trouble with episode two. My pilot was written, and I had a strong idea of the middle of the story and the end, but what happens immediately after the pilot eluded me. The first drafts of episode 2 were weak, clunky and caused a great grief and doubt. The most recent draft is the strongest in terms of plot, tension and character motives. Some examples of the changes are: Tali's subplot, especially the bar scene. There was very little tension between Tali and the other officers in previous drafts. Tali needed more interpersonal conflict in the "cop

world” and so I was inspired by *In the Heat of the Night*, playing up the “city cop” cop vs the “hick cop” (as well as sexism and racism within the police) in episode 2.

A recent breakthrough in terms of character arc for Maryline came when rewriting the second episode for the twentieth time. Up until then, Maryline’s main goal for most of the season was simply survival. Her motives were about avoiding things, like becoming pregnant or being put on Bed Rest. But avoiding is not as strong of a motivation as striving. Maryline needed an external goal that fit her character and the world she was in. After several days of brainstorming it came to me: Healing. A key facet to Maryline’s character was her green thumb, so expanding that into something that drives her was a logical expansion of her character and arc. She wants to heal. She wants to help her people, especially the women. She wants to have sense of purpose within the cult that has nothing to do with her being a wife or mother. Being a Healer made sense in terms of her rebellious nature; women are not allowed to heal. It also created an interesting dichotomy. Maryline is prickly, distrusting, and often cruel, and yet it is instinctual for her to help others. This breakthrough not only made the written episodes more interesting in terms of character, stakes and arc, but also made the entire series more rich.

Character Changes/Development

Maryline is a volatile character. She is hard to get close to, difficult to love. But once you earn her loyalty, she is protective and affectionate. That said, in the first few drafts of the pilot and Bible, Maryline was far more cruel. I wanted a character that the audience would have to work to love, who they would dislike at first, but then hopefully either understand or love. But in doing Maryline was written as one note instead of complex. So, her softer side was developed

further. She became Rayhel's caretaker, she helps and heals others in her own gruff way, and her "meanness" is more reserved and motivated.

In the first draft of the season outline, Rayhel's big plot twist was that ARDENT (20s) was actually her son, and that Sariah stole him (similar to the Bible story of King Solomon), which drove her mad. Justine was originally going to be revealed to be dead, burned as a witch. Howard Wiseman had the idea of making Justine a more central character and so she became Rayhel.

Tali initially did not have a defined sexuality. I always thought of Tali as queer, but I did not think it was important to her character arc. But after watching *Schitt's Creek*, I realized that in order for Maryline's queerness to seem dangerous and tragic, Tali's queerness needed to be casual and accepted by comparison. Also, Tali's motives became far more fleshed out. At first, she was simply a police officer that wanted to take down the cult. There was no real emotional or personal reason, and so Justine's missing persons case was created.

Series Plot and World Building

Once Tali's plot became central to the story, conspiracy was needed that involved her family and all of the St. Johnathon's. The idea that an entire town would keep this conspiracy alive just for money felt both despicable and realistic. Howard Wiseman came up with the idea of the cult owning a gold mine, and that the gold mine was the economy of the town; so as long as St. Johnathon's kept quiet about the cult, they could continue to work the gold mine.

Future Plans

I went into the York University Screenwriting grad program right out of undergrad. When I was in undergrad, my peers and I were equals. We all had around the same experience with filming and the Canadian film business (ie, just about no experience). But as a grad student, I feel unequal to my peers. Many of them are successful filmmakers, and although my cohort is wonderful and supportive, I often feel like an imposter. I am at the absolute beginning of my career in every way. I have never sold a script, I have never been part of a production (other than student ones), and I don't have an agent. All of this is to say, my future plans for *My Husband's Wife* feel more like dreams than concrete plans. First, I need to hustle, to break in, to somehow make my words and vision heard by people who have the knowledge, creativity and power to make onscreen stories. Maybe, one day, when I've thoroughly broken in, when I've paid my dues, I will pitch *My Husband's Wife* to some producer. I dream that one day *My Husband's Wife* will flit off the page and burst onto the screen, but right now, I can't say for sure what my future plans are for it. But I can yearn for that future, and maybe that will turn into something wonderful.

Conclusion

There's a quotation I love from the fantastic British series *Call the Midwife*: "I have come to the conclusion that there are only two reasons for ever doing anything. One is love, the other is fear." Maryline, despite leaving Angellee behind at the end of the season, acted out of love. Her journey is about realizing that she deserves more, and that only she can define how to live, love and believe. This is an act of love. Angellee's love for Maryline and her fear of the unknown are separate entities, but in that critical moment, fear won. All of Tali's actions are mixed up in love and fear. Fear that she will never feel loved like she did when Justine was still in her life; love for the girl that everyone was too afraid to save. Sameel is driven by the fear that he cannot feel God, and therefore cannot love. Truelen is driven by the fear that he will lose the adoration of his followers and Sariah is driven by the fear that she may never truly be in control.

How do you realize you deserve more? By letting love define your needs and your future. How do you discover that who you are, what you feel, and what you want are not inherently sinful? By realizing that love without agenda and without ego is inherently holy. And how do you take years of shame, fear and yearning and turn it into defiance, bravery and determination? By having something to fight for; a future filled with uncertainties and joy and wonder. Can yearning and desire be liberating rather than sinful? Yes. Desiring something so bad it hurts can lead to great acts of kindness and courage. It is not a sin to want more, to need something better. I believe *My Husband's Wife* answers each question I posed in the Introduction.

My journey with *My Husband's Wife* has not been easy. Writing has always been such a natural part of my life, a key part of my personality and self-worth. I don't want to say it's always come easy to me, but in the past solutions to story problems were always within reach.

My Husband's Wife has caused just as much stress as it has joy, but that stress and self-doubt has made all of this more worthwhile. I know that it is not perfect. I am just one person attempting to build an entire world, and my vision can be narrow and flawed. I take comfort in the knowledge that most series are created and planned out in a room full of talented writers, and so the flaws are hopefully forgivable. *My Husband's Wife* has forced me to return to the most basic elements of storytelling, forcing me to dig deeper into story and character. The want and the need, the motivation, the fears of a character, the contradictions and virtues and flaws. It's hard to be kind to yourself when writing is such an isolated activity. I am thankful to every person who listened to me rant without judgement; who gave me advice and feedback with kindness and candour; who read draft after draft, being in this story with me so I felt less alone. Thank you for reading.

Bibliography

- Baker, Martin. "Watching Rape, Watching Rape, Enjoying Watching Rape ...: How Does a Study of Audience Challenge Mainstream Film Studies Approaches?" *The New Extremism in Cinema: From France to Europe*, Ed. Tanya C Horeck and Tina Kendall, Edinburgh Scholarship Online, 2012
- Chopin, Kate, *The Story of an Hour*, Vogue, 1895
- Duggard, Jaycee Lee. *A Stolen Life: A Memoir*, Simon & Schuster, 2011
- Etzioni- Halvelvy, Eva, *The Triumph of Deborah*, Plume, 2008
- Fraser, Caroline. *Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder*, Metropolitan Books, 2017
- Gibbs, Jeremy J, and Jeremy Goldbach. "Religious Conflict, Sexual Identity, and Suicidal Behaviors among LGBT Young Adults." Archives of suicide research : official journal of the International Academy for Suicide Research vol. 19,4 (2015): 472-88.
doi:10.1080/13811118.2015.1004476
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins, "The Yellow Wallpaper" *The New England Magazine*, 1892
- Hall, Melissa and Joshua Hall, "The Long-Term Effects of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Counseling Implications" VISTAS Online, 2011
- Haskell, Molly, *From Reverence to Rape : The Treatment of Women in the Movies*. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press, 2016
- Keveney, Bill and Kelly Lawler, "TV has to 'walk the walk': How cop shows are handling racial justice issues after a summer of protest" *USA TODAY*, 2020,(
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/tv/2021/01/22/cop-shows-racial-justice-how-series-adapt-after-protests/6541175002/>)
- Horeck, Tanya. *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film*. Routledge, 2013
- Jackson, Shirley "The Lottery" *The New Yorker*, 1948
- Janja Lulich. *Dominance and Submission, Women & Therapy*, 19:4, 37-52, DOI: 10.1300/J015v19n04_06, 1996

- May, Antoinette, *Pilate's Wife*, Harper Collins, 2009
- Montgomery, Lucy Maud, *Anne of Green Gables*, Dover Publications New York, 1908
- MachLachlan, Patricia, *Sarah Plain and Tall*, Scholastic, 1997
- Manlowe, Jennifer L. "Faith Born of Seduction: Sexual Trauma, Body Image, and Religion". NYU Press, 1995. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qfqk0. Accessed 25 Feb. 2021.
- Mulvey, Laura. "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." *Film Theory and Criticism : Introductory Readings*. (New York: Oxford UP, 1999: 833-44.)
- Munro, Alice "Boys and Girls" *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Ryerson Press, 1968
- Munro, Alice "The Turkey Season" *The New Yorker*, 1980
- Oakes, Glen, *Prophetic Charisma: The Psychology of Revolutionary Religious Personalities*, Syracuse University Press, 1996
- Siciliano, Carl " Religious Rejection and the Crisis of LGBTQ Youth Homelessness" *Impacting our Future*, <https://www.impactingourfuture.com/lgbtq-empowerment/religious-rejection-and-the-crisis-of-lgbtq-youth-homelessness/>
- Smart, Elizabeth and Chris Stewart, *My Story*, Pan Macmillan Australia, 2013
- Spallacci, Amanda "Representing Rape Trauma in Film: Moving beyond the Event" *Arts* 8, no. 1: 8., 2019 (<https://doi.org/10.3390/arts8010008>)
- The Niv Study Bible*, The New International Version, The Zondervan Corporation, 1985
- Wall, Elissa and Lisa Pulitzer, *Stolen Innocence: My Story of Growing Up in a Polygamous Sect, Becoming a Teenage Bride, and Breaking Free of Warren Jeffs*, Harper Collins, 2009
- Wilder, Laura Ingalls, *Little House in the Big Woods*, Harper, 1932

Filmography

- Aguirre-Sacasa, Roberto. *Riverdale*, TV drama, USA, 2017-
- Aster, Ari. *Midsommar*, folk-horror, 147 min, USA/Sweden, 2019
- Batmanglij, Zal, Brit Marling, *The OA*, TV drama, USA, 2016-2019
- Benioff, David, D.B Weiss. *Game of Thrones*, TV fantasy, USA/UK, 2011-2019
- Breillat, Catherine. *À ma soeur!* drama, 86 min, France/Italy, 2001
- Campion, Jane. *The Piano*, period drama, 121 min, New Zealand/Australia/France/USA, 1993
- Caro, Niki. *North Country*, drama, 126 min, USA, 2005
- Coel, Michaela. *I May Destroy You*, TV drama, UK/USA, 2020
- Cubitt, Allan. *The Fall*, TV crime, UK, 2013-2016
- Davis, Jeff. *Criminal Minds*, TV crime, USA, 2005- 2020
- Duffer, Matt, Ross Duffer. *Stranger Things*, TV Sci-fi, USA, 2016-
- Eggers, Robert. *The VVitch*, folk-horror, 92 min, Canada/USA, 2015
- Fennel, Emerald. *Promising Young Woman*, crime/drama, 113 min, UKA/USA, 2020
- Flanagan, Mike. *The Haunting Of Anthology*, TV horror, USA, 2018-
- Grant, Susannah, Michael Chabon, Ayelet Waldman. *Unbelievable*. TV crime/drama, USA 2019
- Hardy, Robin. *The Wicker Man*, folk-horror, 88 min, UK
- Haynes, Todd. *Carol*, period romance, 118 min, UK/USA
- Jenkins, Barry. *Moonlight*, drama, 112 min, USA, 2016
- Jewison, Norman. *In the Heat of the Night*, crime/drama, 110 min, USA, 1967

- Kelley, David E. *Big Little Lies*, TV drama/mystery, USA, 2017-2019
- Kent, Jennifer. *The Nightingale*, period drama, 132 min, Australia, 2018
- Lelio, Sebastian. *Disobedience*, romance, 112 min, Ireland/UK/USA, 2017
- Levinson, Sam. *Euphoria*, TV teen drama, USA, 2019-
- Levy, Dan and Eugene. *Schitt's Creek*, TV comedy, Canada/USA, 2015-2020
- Malick, Terrence. *Days of Heaven*, period drama, 94 min, USA, 1978
- Miller, Bruce. *The Handmaid's Tale*, TV psychological thriller, USA, 2017-
- Nakagawa, Anne Marie *Between: Living in the Hyphen*, documentary, 43 min, Canada, 2006
- Noé, Gaspar. *Irréversible*, crime/drama, 97 min, France, 2002
- Noxon, Marti. *Sharp Objects*, TV thriller, USA, 2018
- Nunn, Laurie. *Sex Education*, TV comedy/drama, UK, 2019
- Rees, Dee. *Pariah*, drama, 86 min, USA, 2011
- Rosenberg, Melissa, *Jessica Jones*, TV action/thriller, USA, 2015-2019
- Sciamma, Celine. *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, period drama, 121 min, France, 2019
- Shaw, Frankie. *SMILF*, TV comedy, USA, 2017-2019
- Sheridan, Taylor. *Wind River*, drama/crime, 107 min, USA, 2017
- Thomas, Heidi. *Call the Midwife*, TV period drama, UK, 2012-
- Walley-Beckett, Moira. *Anne with an E*, TV period drama, Canada, 2017-2020
- Vinterberg, Thomas. *Far From the Madding Crowd*, period drama, 120 min, UK/USA, 2015
- Way, Chapman and Maclain. *Wild, Wild Country*, crime docuseries, USA, 2018

Weir, Peter. *Witness*, crime/romance, 112 min, USA, 1985

White, Ryan. *The Keepers*, crime docuseries, USA, 2017

Wolf, Dick. *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*, TV crime, USA, 1999-

Wright, Joe. *Pride and Prejudice*, period romance, 129 min, France/UK/USA, 2005

Other References

Art

Gentileschi, Artemisia, *Judith Slaying Holofernes*, 1613, Museo Capodimonte, Naples, Italy.

Podcasts

Polcyn, Greg and Vanessa Richardson. *Cults*, Parcast, 2017

Music

girl in red, *Chapter 1*, world in red, 2018

Henry, Clarence. *You Always Hurt the Ones You Love*, Argo, 1961

Jones, Etta. *At Last!*, Argo Records, 1960

King Princess, *Make My Bed*, Columbia Records, 2018

Richter, Max. *Memory House*, Late Junction, 2002

Richter, Max. *The Blue Notebooks*, 130701, 2004