

Molly Brayman: The Morning After: Post-Coital Discourse in Joss Whedon's Film and Television Work

In the wake of *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, we have seen a renewed interest in the discussion of Joss Whedon's attitudes toward women, feminism, bodies, and sexual politics. While this is certainly well-trodden territory, this presentation hopes that by creating a narrow focus of analysis, it might reveal patterns in Whedon's work that may bear out some of the claims made by both proponents and detractors alike. Building from Sara Swain's work on Buffy and loss of virginity, this presentation will examine the conversations (or lack thereof) that happen post-sex between romantic partners throughout Whedon's work. By providing both an expansive qualitative coding of all post-coital discourses and a rhetorical examination of key couplings, I hope to show how Whedon's signature snappy dialogue both conforms to and challenges our understanding of gender expectations and sexual mores. While this project is ultimately large-scale, for this presentation I will focus on a few recurrent conversation and communication elements within Whedon's post-coital scenes in order to examine how these patterns work to establish dominant audience interpretations of positive and negative sexual behavior.