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Do You Fit the Alloy Mold? The Homogenization of Structure and Audience in the Television Adaptations of 'Gossip Girl,' 'Pretty Little Liars,' and 'The Vampire Diaries'

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Do You Fit the Alloy Mold?

The Homogenization of Structure and Audience in the Television Adaptations of *Gossip Girl*,
Pretty Little Liars, and *The Vampire Diaries*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
English at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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Abstract

DO YOU FIT THE ALLOY MOLD? THE HOMOGENIZATION OF STRUCTURE AND AUDIENCE IN THE TELEVISION ADAPTATIONS OF ‘GOSSIP GIRL,’ ‘PRETTY LITTLE LIARS,’ AND ‘THE VAMPIRE DIARIES’

By Caitlin Murray, Master of Arts

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Major Director: Dr. Richard Fine, Professor of English

This thesis explores the ways in which the television adaptations of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries* become more homogenized during the adaptation process, thus contributing to an implied exclusivity from which Alloy, Inc.—the media and marketing company that owns these products—might benefit. This paper points out the ways in which the three products become structurally similar to one another during the adaptation process through the implementation of soap opera conventions. An exploration of consumption and class in each of the three works reveals an emphasis on class-based exclusivity in the adaptation process. Finally, a focus on portrayals of race within the source texts and their respective adaptations reveals the ways in which African American characters are presented as invisible, outsiders, or antagonists, thus creating products that become more exclusive on a race basis.

Introduction

Heavily drawing on work by Terry Eagleton, Amy Pattee explores the production process of the *Gossip Girl* novel series. Pattee investigates Alloy Entertainment, called 17th Street Productions at the time of her writing, the book packaging company behind the production of *Gossip Girl*, and makes a strong argument that the production process of the *Gossip Girl* novels indicates a situation in which “literature for young people, conceived initially as a conceptual commodity and not with charitable intent, becomes the serendipitous product of capital venture, the goal of which is to sell products—any product” (2). Examining the text of the *Gossip Girl* novels, along with the background of author Cecily von Ziegesar and the production process of Alloy, Inc. and 17th Street Productions, Pattee details the ways in which the books promote the notion of consumption—a sentiment which not only intends to sell more books, but which encourages “brand (*Gossip Girl*) and company (Alloy) visibility” (15). Writing in 2006, however, Pattee could not have anticipated the success of the television adaptation of *Gossip Girl*, and she does not expand her argument to include other Alloy products. A look into three of the longest-running and most successful Alloy-produced young adult novel series to television series adaptations—*Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampires Diaries*—not only reinforces Pattee’s argument that Alloy products promote consumption, but it reveals the ways in which the adaptation processes further push notions of consumption while simultaneously emphasizing class- and race-based exclusions to that consumption process.

Gossip Girl, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries*, all produced by Alloy Entertainment, are three very successful young adult book series. *Gossip Girl* documents the fictional lives of seven wealthy high school students who attend elite private schools in New York City. The first *Gossip Girl* book was published in 2002, and by 2011, the series had sold

over six million copies (Lodge). The *Pretty Little Liars* series, written by Sara Shepard and first published in 2006, focuses on four teenage girls in Rosewood, Pennsylvania. After the death of their friend, Alison, the girls each start to receive harassing text messages, emails, and notes from an anonymous source known only as “A,” who threatens to reveal their darkest secrets. By 2010, just four years after the publication of the first book, the series had already sold one million copies (Springen). *The Vampire Diaries* series primarily focuses on Virginia high school student, Elena, her friends, and her two vampire suitors, Damon and Stefan. The first book of the series, written by L.J. Smith, was published in 1991; and to date, the series has sold over three million books (“Vampire Diaries”).

The popularity of these three young adult book series undoubtedly served as a major factor in Alloy’s decision to adapt the novels to television, and audience reception of the adaptations has been largely successful. The premiere episode of *Gossip Girl* drew over three million viewers, and the show, which first aired in 2007 on The CW, ran for six seasons, ending in December of 2012 (“Weekly”). The television adaptation of *Pretty Little Liars*, which is currently in its third season, had amassed over four million viewers by January 2011, less than one year after its premiere in the summer of 2010. Even more impressively, for eleven consecutive weeks in 2013, *Pretty Little Liars* remained the most-watched show for females between the ages of twelve and thirty-four (“Return of 2010’s Breakout”). Finally, the series premiere of *The Vampire Diaries* became the highest-viewed premiere episode in the history of The CW when it attracted nearly five million viewers in September of 2009 (Ausiello). The show, which is in its fifth season, still airs on The CW. The overwhelming success of these three young adult novel series and their subsequent television adaptations makes them effective entry points for an analysis of Alloy Entertainment.

An examination of Alloy Entertainment's adaptation process as applied to these three series also reveals, in addition to an emphasis on consumption, strong market segmentation. Critics Clint C. Wilson II, Felix Gutierrez, and Lena M. Chao describe the phenomenon of market segmentation as "the strategy of dividing the potential consumers of a product into identifiable segments and then directing news, entertainment, and advertising through media that reach those audiences" (297). Harry Webber explains this process further, noting that the market segmentation strategy works when a business identifies "the American public's innermost values and beliefs, one at a time, and then [uses] that knowledge to initiate, navigate, influence, and maintain consumer relationships with those most likely to say yes to your client's product or service" (4). An examination of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries*, indicates very focused market segmentation on the part of Alloy Entertainment.

With Pattee's article and the notion of market segmentation in mind, an investigation into the adaptation processes of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries* will reveal a homogenization of both structure and audience, which contributes to an exclusive emphasis on the consumption process. By incorporating elements of formulaic soap opera into each of the three television adaptations, the television shows become more structurally similar to one another than were their source texts; this structural standardization, as a look into the history of the soap opera will reveal, carries with it an emphasis on gendered consumption. A look at the issues of class and race in the novels and their television counterparts will further reveal an attempted homogenization of theme and audience. An emphasis on consumption and class-based exclusion from that consumption attempts to limit audience access points to the adaptations on a class basis; and, similarly an emphasis on African American characters as outsiders and antagonists, and an unwillingness to discuss race in a didactic or productive way, results in

further efforts to limit audience access points on a race basis. In this way, Alloy attempts to attract, or perhaps create, a very streamlined, uniform audience, presumably in order to sell products. Audience members who do not fit into the privileged class and race statuses emphasized in these Alloy products are placed at a disadvantage; the works themselves imply that, in order to fully fit into the designated implied audience, excluded viewers must try to alter their own behavior in some way in order to fit the proper audience mold. The homogenization of both structure and audience therefore promotes further market segmentation, in that these three products—and the notions of consumption that these products promote, and from which Alloy hopes to benefit—attempt to create narrow, streamlined markets on exclusive gender, class, and race bases.

This homogenization of product in the adaptation process seems indicative of Alloy's role as a media and marketing corporation for teenagers; to promote the notion of consumption within this specific market segment is to promote consumers of Alloy products. The standardization of structure and audience in the adaptation processes not only reveals Alloy's focus on consumption, but also shows further market segmentation on the part of Alloy. For audience members who do not fit into this Alloy mold, the products can become harder to access, as girls who do not fit into the class, race, and gender requirements laid out in the Alloy adaptations are generally either absent from or placed at a severe disadvantage within the context of the texts; the implication, then, is that all viewers should strive to fit within this mold—to become ideal consumers of Alloy products. This standardization of structure and audience becomes either more evident or emphasized in the adaptation process, and therefore a focus on the television show adaptations, and not just on the novel series, becomes necessary to a true understanding of Alloy's promotion of consumption. It seems that Alloy has an ideal market

segment in mind, and in the adaptation process, the products tend to emphasize the importance of that particular market segment, creating more homogenized products and attempting, through a promotion of this Alloy mold, to create more homogenized audiences.

Alloy Entertainment and a Focus on Girls

Alloy Entertainment is, narrowly, a book packaging company, or a company that creates novels or ideas for novels and either publishes them in-house or sells them to an outside publisher. Book packagers have a long history in American literature—particularly in children’s and young adult literature. *Nancy Drew*, one of the longest running titles in American children’s literature, for instance, was created by Edward Stratemeyer, who founded the Stratemeyer Syndicate in 1905, a book packaging company that continued to publish *Nancy Drew* installments well after its creator’s death (Rehak 25-26). Similarly, 17th Street Productions, another book packager, created *Sweet Valley High*, also a phenomenally popular young adult book series (Pattee 2). Author and editor, Marc Aronson, details the history of the young adult genre, and he offers specific insight into the proliferation of series fiction for teenagers; and, though he does not distinguish between series produced by book packagers and other series, two of his primary examples include *Nancy Drew* and *Sweet Valley High*. Aronson explains that “mysteries such as Nancy Drew and the Hardy Boys [have existed] since the 1930s, [and] in the 1980s, publishers created paperback romance series for teenage girls, most notably Sweet Dreams and then Sweet Valley High—and there were many efforts to copy them” (85). Clearly, book packagers have a significant place within American literary history, and they have particularly become major players in the realm of children’s and young adult literature.

Alloy Entertainment, in fact, evolved from 17th Street Productions. Leslie Morgenstein, CEO of Alloy Entertainment, began working for 17th Street Productions in the late 1980s, and he, along with then-editorial director Ann Brashares, bought the company in 2000. The company was then quickly acquired by Alloy, Inc., a teen-targeted media company (Mead 9). Alloy Entertainment, then, is very much connected to earlier book packaging companies and seems to represent the evolution of book packaging from the 1980s.

After sitting in on one of Alloy's collaborative meetings, journalist Rebecca Mead wrote a detailed article, titled "The Gossip Mill," regarding the company's writing practice. Published in 2009 in *The New Yorker*, Mead's article offers one of the most comprehensive and revealing looks into Alloy's collaborative writing process. Generally, Alloy Entertainment creates ideas for novels and novel series—all targeted at youth and young adult demographics—and then assigns a writer (frequently an in-house writer, though occasionally Alloy will hire an outside writer) to do the actual work (3). Ideas for products are suggested in "weekly development meetings," and if Morgenstein and Executive Vice President Josh Bank approve the material, the work is then "fleshed out into a short summary by an editor," and a writer develops a sample chapter (12). Mead explains that if Alloy executives like the piece then the writer, along with a group of executives and editors, spend "days brainstorming in the conference room, in the manner of television writers developing a series" (12). At this stage, the writer will compose the "first act" of the book alone, and the completed first act is sent to potential publishers (12).

Mead's article offers a rare insight into the writing process of Alloy Entertainment, and collaboration seems to stand as one of the most noteworthy components of that process. As Mead explains, at any given stage of Alloy Entertainment's book creation process, multiple people are present and contributing to the discussion. Certainly, such a collaborative process differs greatly

from a traditional creative writing process, in which generally one or two people originate a text. As Pattee notes, “Authorial work—writing, editing, rewriting—is usually considered a private and individual act: [Alloy’s] available (or chosen) copying and distribution opportunities remove this initial act from the private realm” (8). Though other book packagers and publishers have certainly employed similarly collective writing processes, it stands to note that Alloy Entertainment circumvents, at least to some extent, the traditional and often romanticized notion of a single author working alone; Alloy’s process is collaborative from the start. Mead’s description of this process as comparable to “the manner of television writers developing a series” is, therefore, an accurate one.

Alloy’s television-style writing process seems to stem from the company’s desire to “produce blockbusters,” as Mead puts it (4). Elise Howard, a publisher for HarperCollins, sums up this emphasis on blockbusters: “Editors and publishers can get hung up on what’s good for kids... At Alloy, they always think first about what kids want to read” (Mead 4). She explains that Alloy developed *Pretty Little Liars* in the hopes of creating “*Desperate Housewives* for teens;” and, similarly, *Vampire Diaries* was originally written by L.J. Smith—a writer for hire—in 1991 in the hope of creating “Anne Rice for kids” (Mead 4, 12). These three novel series and their subsequent adaptations therefore represent a developmental process steeped in a desire for and similarity to multimedia products. *Pretty Little Liars*, from a conceptual perspective, began as an adult television show, which Alloy Entertainment morphed into a book series for teen readers and which was eventually adapted into a television show for teen viewers. Similarly, as Mead notes, the collaborative style of writing employed by Alloy Entertainment is very similar to the television writing process. Alloy, in this way, certainly has a defined style of writing—one that might reflect the vast, varied nature of Alloy, Inc. as a company.

Alloy Entertainment is one facet of Alloy, Inc., a company that specializes in “[capturing] the attention of today’s youth and young adults, creating conversations that create pop culture movements” (“About Us”). Along with Alloy Entertainment, Alloy, Inc. oversees Alloy Digital—“the top ranked and largest media and advertising network of youth targeted websites”—and Channel One News, a news network for teenagers and young adults (“About Us”). According to ComScore, “Alloy Digital @ YouTube” ranked ninth out of ten “Top YouTube Partner Channels” for December of 2012, and the channel has remained in the top ten since July of 2012 (“comScore”). Similarly, *Gossip Girl* and *Pretty Little Liars* both received 2012 Teen Choice Award Nominations in the “TV Show: Drama” category, and *The Vampire Diaries* was nominated in the category of “TV Show: Fantasy/Sci-Fi” (“2012 Teen”). Both *The Vampire Diaries* and *Pretty Little Liars* won their category, and Alloy shows won in each of the nine categories for which they were nominated, bringing their total victories to nine out of the twenty-four awards given in the Television category (“Teen Choice”). As the company’s many awards and nominations prove, Alloy certainly dominates the realm of young adult entertainment in television and new media.

Alloy’s novels have also enjoyed great success. In 2010, the *Pretty Little Liars* series had already sold one million copies, and by February 2011, more than six million copies of *Gossip Girl* had been sold (Springen; Lodge). Clearly, as a creative production company, Alloy has been successful and has come to dominate online, televisual, and literary productions for youth and young adult markets; their success in multiple media ventures proves that Alloy does not exist solely as a book production company but instead dominates multiple media for young adults. Alloy describes its audience as young adult and never explicitly states an emphasis on the female market, but this is undeniable.

Moreover, Alloy has ties to Delia's, a successful girl's clothing retailer—a tie that indicates Alloy's focus on the young female consumer. Purchased by Alloy in 2003, Delia's describes itself as “a lifestyle company primarily targeting customers between the ages of 12 and 19” (“Delia's, Inc.: Mergers”; “Career Opportunities”). Under Alloy, the company increased its success and profits and spun-off to shareholders in 2005 (“Delia's, Inc.: Mergers”). Now, Delia's sells its products primarily in its own mall-based stores, as well as its own catalog, but its connections to Alloy remain. Delia's, for instance, has maintained Alloy Merchandising as a shell company, and Delia's therefore has access to the Alloy brand name (“Career Opportunities”; “Investor Information”). Similarly, on Delia's website, shoppers can find links to the homepages of *Gossip Girl* and *Pretty Little Liars (Delia's)*. Interestingly, because Delia's retained the rights to Alloy Merchandising, Delia's also owns and maintains Alloyapparel.com, a website dedicated to selling clothes to a young, female audience; and, though Delia's and Alloy, Inc. no longer have a direct business relationship, one of Alloy's websites links to Alloyapparel.com (*Alloy; Alloy Apparel*). The two companies, then, still benefit from their long relationship through advertising and branding; Alloy, in this way, still benefits from the success of Delia's, and Alloy's ties to Delia's represent a clear gender based streamlining of their audience—girls can connect to Alloy through an interest in Delia's. Boys clearly are much less likely to do so.

This gender-based narrowing of audience becomes even more apparent upon visiting Alloy's two websites: Alloy.com and Gurl.com. One of the most eye-catching aspects of Alloy.com's homepage is the big, yellow “Shop Now” link, which navigates guests to Alloyapparel.com (which, as mentioned, is owned by Delia's)—a venue that sells clothes and accessories only for girls; this fact, of course, explicitly excludes boys from the shopping facet of

Alloy's website (*Alloy*). Also featured on Alloy.com's homepage are quizzes and polls, such as, "Who's your favorite Jonas brother?"—a feature which allows users to choose between Kevin, Joe, Nick, or "Can't choose!" (*Alloy*). There is, of course, no section of the website that explicitly targets a male audience. As the name of Alloy's other website would indicate, Gurl.com is solely dedicated to girls and young women. Links to categories like, "Love & Sex," "Your Life," and "News & Reviews" create an all-encompassing sort of environment, in which girls can find information about everything from sexual health to study advice and celebrity news. The site clearly excludes boys from the experience, focusing on relationships—information about straight and lesbian relationships are both featured throughout the site, though most quizzes and articles assume a degree of heteronormativity—from female perspectives, and the sexual health advice is primarily focused on females (*Gurl*). This complete lack of boy-targeted spaces on its websites indicates—as the very aptly titled Gurl.com makes clear—Alloy's primary focus on girls.

Alloy's emphasis on girls has not gone unnoticed by journalists who have written about the company. In her investigation of Alloy, Susan Berfield notes that, "Josh Bank is a cheerful guy in a red-checked shirt and pressed khakis with millions of young women under his influence" (86). Berfield goes on to describe many of Alloy's digital media products and prospects, and while she never directly addresses a question as to why it is that Alloy seems so focused on girls, she repeatedly describes Alloy Entertainment as a production company that simultaneously influences and is influenced by young women. This emphasis very clearly narrows the audience; boys get excluded from the consumption process of many Alloy products, a trend certainly consistent in the three properties examined here.

Alloy's corporate structure indicates the many-layered influence it has on the young adult and youth markets. From books to television to YouTube, Alloy knows how to market to its audience and dominates multiple media fields. Alloy's relationship with Delia's reveals not only the potential for Alloy to benefit from the success of the clothing retailer, but also a gender based segmentation of the young adult and youth markets—a segmentation that is further emphasized by the company's websites. Girls stand as Alloy's primary focus—a fact that is further emphasized in the adaptation process, for each of the three adaptations employs the use of the soap opera model.

Structural Homogenization and an Emphasis on Consumption

In the adaptation process, these three works seem to become more homogenized from a structural standpoint. Each of the three novel series fit under the young adult literature umbrella, but each series also contains elements of specific genres: just as *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Sex and the City* appeal to women, *Gossip Girl* works as “Chick Lit” for young adults; *Pretty Little Liars* stands as a mystery series for young adults; and *The Vampire Diaries* is gothic fantasy for young adults. The television adaptations, though, add a third formulaic structure to the product: that of the soap opera. While each of the three television series maintains its young adult status, as well as its individual genre elements—the *Gossip Girl* adaptation retains many of the Chick Lit conventions, despite the switch in medium—each of the shows also takes on characteristics of the soap opera genre. This additional applied set of generic conventions represents one more shared layer, added to the stories in the adaptation process, that aids in a homogenization of product; in creating one more layer of structural similarity in the final products, the television shows become more similar to one another than their literary counterparts. In addition to its role

as homogenizer, the application of soap opera conventions, which have long been associated with notions of femininity and consumption, also works to emphasize consumption for audiences of these three adaptations.

Ilene Cooper, a contributor to *Booklist*, explains that, “the definition of chick lit moves and morphs” (50). “[B]ut as fans know,” Cooper goes on to clarify, “crucial elements include cliques, clothes, and boys! boys! boys! (all served up with a dollop of self-discovery)” (50). Following Cooper’s description of Chick Lit, it seems appropriate to classify the *Gossip Girl* books, the majority of which are written by Cecily von Ziegesar, under this umbrella. The novels primarily focus on the perspectives of seven high school students: Serena, Blair, Vanessa, Jenny, Dan, Nate, and Chuck. The mostly wealthy young characters attempt to navigate their way through life in New York City and their time at elite New York private schools. Much of the series’ plot revolves around the drama present in Serena and Blair’s on-again-off-again friendship and the characters’ romantic relationships. Throughout the series, the characters’ actions and decisions are documented on a public blog written by an anonymous source known only as “Gossip Girl.”

The *Pretty Little Liars* series, written by Sara Shepard, revolves around four primary characters: Emily Fields, Spencer Hastings, Hanna Marin, and Aria Montgomery. The three girls are connected by their middle school friendship with Alison DiLaurentis; after Alison disappears at the end of eighth grade, however, the girls grow apart. The first book picks up with the girls’ lives at the beginning of their junior year in high school, when the four characters are forced to reconnect after each receives threatening messages holding some of their darkest secrets—secrets they only told Alison—from an unknown sender who calls herself “A.” Thinking first that Alison must still be alive and tormenting them, the girls receive a shock at the end of the

first book, when Alison's body is discovered. The books follow the four girls as they try to balance high school while simultaneously trying to both appease and uncover the identity of "A." The *Pretty Little Liars* series clearly falls under the mystery genre, in that the girls essentially play the part of four young detectives, trying to figure out the identity of "A" and the truth about what happened to Alison.

The novel series, *The Vampire Diaries*, written by L.J. Smith, focuses on three primary characters—Elena, Damon, and Stefan—and their friends. Elena, a high school student in Fell's Church, Virginia, meets Stefan on her first day as a high school senior. After Elena and Stefan start dating, Elena learns that Stefan is a centuries-old vampire. The book intensifies when Stefan's seemingly evil vampire brother, Damon, arrives in Fell's Church and tries to win Elena's heart. The reader soon learns that the reason for Stefan and Damon's attraction to Elena has primarily sprung from the fact that she looks nearly identical to Katherine, the vampire who transformed Stefan and Damon in Renaissance-era Italy. The books, though they contain many romance elements, essentially exist as a fantasy series, as vampires, druids, and werewolves dominate *The Vampire Diaries'* universe.

In the adaptation process, these three works become more homogenized in structure, for they also take on characteristics of soap opera. Annette Kuhn, drawing also on work by Muriel G. Cantor and Suzanne Pingree, thoroughly explains consistent characteristics of soap opera as a genre: female desire serves as the main motivator in the soap opera; the viewer is guided through the work from a female point of view; soap operas do not end and "their beginnings are soon lost sight of;" and, soap operas feature many different, interconnected plot lines, which prevents "any clear resolution of conflict" (145). The soap opera, in some ways, seems a logical choice for a television adaptation of these three novel series. The novels, after all, also situate a reader

within a female perspective. In *Gossip Girl* and *The Vampire Diaries*, the narrative voices tend to alternate between female and male characters, but the male characters still seem to exist in relation to their female counterparts. Dan's voice in *Gossip Girl*, for instance, is generally concerned with attaining the affections of one of the female characters—usually Serena, especially in the early novels. Similarly, Stefan's voice in *The Vampire Diaries* is largely preoccupied with winning the love of Elena, and, once he has won her heart, with protecting her at all times. It also stands to note that, as serial novels, all three series contain plotlines that continue from book to book, a feature that lends itself heavily to a soap opera adaptation. That said, though, novel series can be effectively adapted to films as well. Alloy, in fact, adapted *The Sisterhood of the Travelling Pants*—a five book series—into two feature length films. Film adaptations of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries*, then, were certainly viable options; the decision to adapt these three series to television, therefore, is not an entirely self-evident one, for film adaptations would certainly have been realistic alternatives.

The choice of television, and subsequently of soap opera, carries with it a number of implications regarding gender and consumption. Television, as a medium, has always depended upon advertising for profits, so television seems an obvious medium with which to promote notions of consumption (McAllister 218). Additionally, the soap opera genre is historically intertwined with advertising and consumerism. Jennifer Poole Hayward examines the history of the soap opera, which began with radio in 1922, when producers determined that the new medium could serve as an effective vehicle for advertisements and approached manufacturers, convincing them to advertise their products through these new “narrative vehicles” (Hayward 139). Hayward examines this phenomenon in the context of the development of the serial form in America, and she explains that, “[d]aytime listeners were initially considered an ‘undesirable

market,' but soap and food manufacturers such as General Foods, A&P, Kellogg, and Procter and Gamble eventually realized that their products, though consumed by a diverse population, were primarily purchased by a particular sub segment—mothers of families, or housewives” (139). This realization led to a desire on the part of manufacturers to advertise their products to a female audience with the use of daytime serials, quickly dubbed “soap operas”—a name originating from the involvement of soap manufacturers. Television adopted the soap opera format in 1951 and had become the sole medium for soap operas by the 1960s (139).

Contemporary soap operas maintain their emphasis on the feminine and on consumption. Lynne Joyrich argues that these two conventional genres have become more open to both men and women, but that they force male spectators to operate within the established, feminine sphere. She highlights the issue of consumption within the realm of melodrama and soap opera, explaining that these methods have long been associated with the feminine, and the feminine in psychoanalytic and capitalist theory has been associated with consumption (142-143). Joyrich explains that soap operas position a traditionally female viewer as too close to the object (the program, or the text of the program) to exert herself fully as an autonomous subject; she is therefore very likely to become emotionally involved in the story, to the point of exerting physical responses, such as crying (144). Joyrich further notes that this object/subject closeness “is also bound to consumer desires,” in that it, “ruptures the boundary between subject and object, allowing women a multiplicity of identifications and a self-embracing eroticism, [making] the female subject susceptible to the lure of consumerism which plays on her fluctuating position and the narcissism it implies” (144). Significantly, though, this consumptive desire is not completely specific to women. Men can also access soap operas and melodramas, but in so doing, they must position themselves within a sphere that has been traditionally

associated with the feminine. Joyrich clarifies this phenomenon, stating: “Not only are women presumed to be the best of consumers, but all consumers are figured as feminized” (145). An examination of the adaptations of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries* clearly reveals their adherence to these soap opera conventions; and the adaptations therefore carry implications of gendered consumption.

The television adaptation of *Gossip Girl* focuses closely on Serena and Blair; the other characters seem to exist primarily in terms of their relationships to these two leads. Dan, the leading man of the show, spends much of the early seasons pining over, chasing, and then dating Serena. Vanessa appears in the sixth episode of the first season to declare her love for Dan; but, at this point in the series, Dan has already entered into a relationship with Serena, and Vanessa’s interactions with Dan therefore depend on Dan’s relationship with Serena (“Handmaiden’s Tale”). Jenny, similarly, tries desperately to enter into the elite world of her wealthy classmates, and in so doing she must vie for the attention of both Serena and Blair (this feature is seen most clearly in “Pilot” and “Wild Brunch”). Chuck, one of the male characters, seems to exist solely to antagonize his peers, and yet as the series progresses he becomes more and more infatuated with, and therefore intent on pleasing, Blair (this relationship develops primarily in seasons two and three; “Chuck,” “Grandfather,” “Summer Kind,” “Southern Gentlemen,” “Valley Girls,” “Goodbye,” and “Reversals” document this progression well). The points of view of Serena and Blair, therefore, serve to guide a viewer through the series, and the significance of nearly every other character depends in some way upon their relationships with those two leading women.

Similarly, the relationships between the characters in *Gossip Girl* never seem to resolve themselves, resulting in a continuous narrative. The sexual tension and on-again-off-again desire present between Dan and Vanessa, and Dan and Serena plays out in nearly every season of the

show. Blair's relationship with Chuck—and her relationship with Nate—features a similar on-again-off again style of progression, spanning the course of nearly the entire series. The conflicts created in this context, therefore, only meet occasional and temporary resolutions until the series finale; and, because so many conflicts are presented throughout the series, many seem indefinitely open-ended when the show comes to a close. The many interconnected plot lines, in this way, exhibit an occasional lack of resolution—a key feature of the soap opera genre.

In *Pretty Little Liars*, the viewer enters the show through four different perspectives: those of Aria, Emily, Hanna, and Spencer. Most secondary characters, such as Maya, Toby, Jenna, Paige, Mona, and Caleb, exist in relation to these four primary characters; the significance of the secondary characters is completely defined by either their romantic or antagonizing relationships with the four principle, female characters. Maya and Paige both exist as love interests of Emily; Toby exists as friend of Emily and boyfriend of Spencer; Jenna and Mona exist as antagonists of all four girls, while Mona also plays the part of Hanna's supportive friend; and Caleb exists as Hanna's computer-savvy love interest. Each of the secondary characters, in this way, exists only as a supporter or an antagonist of the four primary characters.

Similarly, the plots of *Pretty Little Liars* seem to multiply as the season progresses, and though the season finales generally offer some sort of resolution to the mystery at hand, the overarching mystery of the show—the question of who killed Alison—forces viewers to keep track of information learned in every season, even information that contributed to a seemingly resolved plot. When Mona is revealed as “A” in the second season finale, for instance, it would seem at first glance that a plot line of the show met a resolution. When the third season premieres, however, an unknown villain once again begins to harass the characters, leading Spencer to proclaim that, “There has to be someone else—someone we don't know—who's

connected to Garrett” (“It Happened” 7:00). Similarly, in the season three premiere, Hanna starts visiting Mona in the mental hospital (“It Happened” 16:00). As a new season opens, the audience must revisit all of the clues collected regarding both Garrett and Mona—two characters whose plotlines seemed resolved, or nearly resolved, during the second season. It also stands to note that nearly every episode of *Pretty Little Liars* ends with a very brief clip featuring two unidentified gloved hands performing some task, and their activity generally serves as both a cliffhanger and foreshadowing. For instance, the ninth episode of the first season ends with two gloved hands packaging up a video of Alison and addressing it to the Rosewood Police Department (“Perfect Storm”). Then, in the next episode, Aria, Emily, Hanna, and Spencer get interrogated by an FBI agent who has been newly assigned to Alison’s case, and who shows the girls the video featured in the previous episode that was sent to the police department by an “Anonymous source” (“Keep Your Friends” 11:00). Such interconnected plot lines, and the tendency to end episodes on cliffhangers while incorporating elements of foreshadowing, all contribute to *Pretty Little Liars*’ structure as a soap opera.

The audience enters *The Vampire Diaries* from Elena’s perspective. Damon and Stefan, the vampire brothers who also serve as primary characters, both fall in love with Elena and compete for her attention. Their place on the show, in that way, is very much defined by their attraction to and desire for Elena. The romance between Elena—and, eventually, her doppelganger Katherine—and the Salvatore brothers fuels the plot of the show; and, all the while, the viewer generally enters the drama from Elena’s perspective as the two brothers fight for her love.

Many interconnected plots weave together throughout *The Vampire Diaries*, and many of the episodes end on cliffhangers. Klaus, for instance, gets introduced in the second season, and

the finale of that season centers on his conflict with Elena and the Salvatore brothers. At the end of the episode, however, Stefan offers himself to Klaus in exchange for Elena's life and freedom—an offer that Klaus accepts. As the episode comes to a close, the viewer is uncertain of Stefan's fate, and season three opens with a depiction of Stefan and Klaus travelling around the country together (“As I Lay Dying,” “Birthday”). Similarly, the season two finale ends with a scene in which Jeremy encounters both of his dead ex-girlfriends, Anna and Vicki. The scene ends with no explanation, and this plot picks up again in season three, when Jeremy's ability to talk to the ghosts of his ex-girlfriends works as one of the central conflicts of the season (“As I Lay Dying”). Like *Gossip Girl* and *Pretty Little Liars*, then, *The Vampire Diaries* also contains numerous elements of soap opera.

These generic soap opera conventions create an added umbrella in the adaptation process that helps to create a series of more similar products. While each of the three novel series exists as young adult literature, they each represent a distinct genre within that young adult umbrella. Though the adaptations retain their implied young adult audience, as well as the Chick Lit, mystery, and gothic fantasy elements present in their respective source texts, they also take on elements of soap opera. The adaptation process, in this way, very clearly homogenizes the three separate novel series as products, at least to some extent, by applying the soap opera formula to each of the three television adaptations.

As the first section of this thesis established, Alloy Entertainment focuses most of its attention and resources on girls. *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries*—both the novels and the television shows—reflect this phenomenon by placing readers within an almost exclusively female perspective. The choice of soap opera carries with it these implications of the feminine, which, as Joyrich points out, also emphasize the consumptive

process. With its ties to a young adult media corporation, as well as its ties to Delia's and Alloy Merchandising, Alloy Entertainment would clearly benefit from the promotion of consumerism in young girls. Some scholarship has pointed out the issues of product placement in young adult texts—specifically in *Gossip Girl*—but it seems as though the adaptations of these three series encourage consumption as a general process as well.

As the next two sections will note, though, this consumptive process promoted by the three adaptations at hand is an exclusive one. A clear emphasis on the importance of consumption in the context of each of the three television shows reveals a class-based exclusion to that process, emphasized in the adaptations of each of the three works. Similarly, the treatment of African American characters in each of the three adaptations reveals a tendency towards race-based exclusion from the worlds created in the television shows. While Alloy has a clear potential gain from the promotion of consumption in girls and young women, and while the choice of soap opera as the adaptation medium emphasizes this notion, a close reading of the television shows themselves reveals an exclusivity—an attempted homogenization of audience—that illustrates further market segmentation on class and race bases.

Consumption and Class

The emphasis on consumption in girl-targeted media has long been a topic of debate and academic study. Joanne Hollows gives a detailed account of the ways in which consumption, specifically the consumption of fashion, has been used by media when targeting women and how it has been used by women viewers of that media. Citing Charlotte Herzog, Hollows explains that “tie-ins between women's fashions and movies were designed to promote both products and helped educate women in how particular products could ‘perform’” (153). This notion that the

promotion of various products within media help to educate women about how to incorporate those products into their lives serves as a significant insight for the following investigation into consumption and class in Alloy's adaptations. With strong ties to a media and marketing company, and considering its professional relationship with Delia's, it would clearly benefit Alloy to encourage its readers and viewers to consume. Consumption plays a very important role in each of these three series, though the products of consumption alter from series to series—significantly in the case of *The Vampire Diaries*. That importance is heightened in each of the adaptations. This heightening of the importance of consumption during the adaptation process, however, gets paired with an emphasis on class; girls of a “lower class”—I define “class” in the context of each individual show below—seem to experience a heightened exclusion from the consumption process in the television adaptations, thus revealing further market segmentation on the part of Alloy.

Gossip Girl serves as an interesting example to this point, for the novels themselves promote consumption to a very high degree, and this, naturally, runs the risk of excluding poorer girls from the culture presented in the books. As Naomi R. Johnson explains, the *Gossip Girl* books contribute to a literary atmosphere in which novels “work to create ‘needs’ and promote particular brands to satisfy them” (69). Johnson emphasizes the role of consumption in creating femininity and emphasizes Alloy's role in the consumption and branding processes in many of its novels. Pattee, similarly, points out ways in which Jenny's character struggles against the class barriers to the extravagant shopping and spending that characterizes her peers throughout the novel—a thematic element which I discuss below (10). The adaptation process further emphasizes the importance of consumption already present in each of the novels, and the adaptations therefore further highlight strong class-based barriers. This emphasis on

consumption and class barriers becomes apparent almost immediately in both media, especially in terms of the interactions between Serena, Jenny, and Blair.

In the first novel in the series, titled simply *Gossip Girl*, Serena's wardrobe serves as one of the first indications that, in the *Gossip Girl* universe, a person is almost instantly judged based on their outward appearance; and, this fact is generally revealed to the reader through the omniscient narration, which allows the reader to see what multiple characters are thinking and saying at any given moment. Serena's initial reappearance at Constance Billiard School for Girls occurs in the chapter titled, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and comes from Jenny's perspective: "Blonde hair flying. Burberry plaid coat. Scuffed brown suede boots. New maroon uniform—odd choice, but she made it work" (42). Though Jenny notes that Serena pulls off her choice of wardrobe, the text immediately shifts to focus on a conversation that takes place among the senior girls, whom Serena was friends with before she left for boarding school:

"Oh. My. God," Rain whispered to Kati in the back of the room. "Did she like, pick up her clothes at a homeless shelter on the way here?"

"She didn't even brush her hair," Isabel giggled. "I wonder where she slept last night." (42).

The comments made about Serena's choice of outfit quickly turn into gossip about what Serena did while she was in boarding school; one girl suggests that Serena might have gotten an abortion, while another claims that, while in boarding school, she manufactured homemade drugs (43). The senior girls' comments about Serena's outfit very clearly ease into comments about Serena's character. For them, her outward appearance goes hand in hand with the accusations against her character; with one, seemingly, comes the other. The omniscient narrator, who drops in and out of perspectives very quickly throughout the series, allows for this type of

gossip and the clarity with which a reader can witness it. Though Rain, Kati, and Isabel are never major characters in the novels, the narrator quickly reveals what they think about Serena as she walks into the room.

The adaptation alters this scene, in which Serena returns to Constance Billiard, and Serena's choice of wardrobe becomes more significant, in part it seems because of the lack of an omniscient narrator ("Pilot" 10:47). Eleven minutes into the episode, Serena approaches Blair and her friends on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where they sit, eating lunch, and talking with Jenny about the invitations that Jenny created for the "Kiss on the Lips Party" (10:40). The difference in appearance between Serena and the three other senior girls is obvious but not mentioned. Blair's two minions each wear white Oxford shirts buttoned nearly to the top and tucked into their matching skirts—part of their uniform for school. Similarly, each of Blair's friends has her hair tucked back neatly behind a headband so that, with the exception of one of the girls' neatly brushed bangs, neither of the girls has hair in her face; and, the two girls are also sporting matching, white knee socks.

Blair looks much like her friends, but she stands out in a couple of ways. Like her friends, Blair wears her hair tucked neatly back with a headband. Unlike her friends, though, her white button-up shirt is buttoned all the way to the neck, and instead of a traditional collar, has a high-necked, ruffled collar; and, with that shirt, Blair pairs a neatly fastened crossover tie. Also, instead of white knee socks, Blair wears white tights, which combine with the high-necked, ruffled collar of her shirt to make her seem even more clean and neat than her friends; Blair, in this way, also reveals less of her body than her friends, neither of whom show off very much.

Serena's wardrobe, on the other hand, stands in stark contrast to the fashion choices of the other girls. When Serena makes her appearance, she sports a white oxford—similar to that

worn by Blair's friends—with a black necktie. The top buttons of her oxford are undone, and the tie—tied very loosely—hangs down well below her neckline. Her shirt is un-tucked, and, instead of white tights or knee socks, she wears black tights with black, knee-high boots, cut only slightly by bright, red boot socks. Her hair, similarly, is fashioned in a half-up, half-down style, in which the ponytail hangs down loosely; and, without a headband, some hair hangs down against her cheek. Serena and Blair appear as fashion foils in this scene. Blair's outfit is very light in color with very clean lines, and she reveals very little skin—every button is done, and her tie is fastened neatly around her neck. Blair's friends, while not quite as clean-cut in appearance, look quite similar. Serena, by contrast, with her loosely done hair and dark color scheme, looks sloppy and unkempt.

There is no gossip present in this scene on the steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, nor is there any sort of degradation of character, presumably because of the fact that the structure of the show does not allow a viewer to hear the thoughts of the characters. Gossip Girl serves as the only feasible narrator of the show, and she, like her character in the book, is not omniscient; though she frequently appears all knowing, she receives her information from other characters and from anonymous tipsters throughout the series. Seeing the “Kiss on the Lips Party” invitations, Serena asks Blair when the party will be, and Blair tells her that she will not be invited to attend, as “until twelve hours ago everyone thought [she was] at boarding school” (11:30). A clear but unspoken power struggle between Serena and Blair follows Blair's comments, in which Serena invites Blair out for drinks later. Blair tells Serena that she has plans with Nate, her boyfriend, but Serena insists, telling Blair that, “Nate will wait” (12:12). As this scene comes to a close, Gossip Girl's voiceover narration chimes in: “Spotted on the steps of the Met: an S and B power struggle. Did S think she could waltz home and things would be just like

they were? Did B think S would go down without a fight?” (12:15-12:25). The tension here between Serena and Blair is obvious, and *Gossip Girl*’s voiceover further insists upon emphasizing that tension. Unlike the novel, though, this initial Serena sighting at school is not paired with rumors and gossip; rather, the relationship between Serena and Blair serves as tension enough for the audience, and the girls’ wardrobes heighten that tension and make the characters seem very at odds with one another. The clothes in this first episode seem, therefore, to stand in the spotlight, the differences between Blair and Serena so clearly summed up in their physical appearances. Serena’s position as fallen queen trying to regain her reign is, in this scene, heightened by—and, in the absence of any defamation of character in the dialogue of this scene, only by—her outward appearance, which stands in such contrast to that of Blair. The show, in this way, seems to emphasize the importance of consumption, for Serena’s fall from grace seems almost exclusively represented in her wardrobe, which differs so vastly from those of her peers, despite the fact that all of the girls go to the same elite private school and therefore technically wear the same uniforms.

This emphasis on consumption creates clear class barriers in the *Gossip Girl* adaptations, as a look into the character of Jenny indicates. In the first novel, Jenny is introduced as a freshman and Dan’s younger sister. She idolizes Serena and desperately seeks access into the wealthy, extravagant world of her peers; throughout the series, in fact, Jenny “suffers second-rate popularity” and constantly attempts to find inclusion into this elite group of teenagers (Pattee 10). In the books, Jenny has a talent for calligraphy, and she uses this skill in an attempt to win over Blair and gain access to the “Kiss on the Lips Party,” which Blair and her friends are organizing (von Ziegesar, *Gossip* 94). After overhearing Blair telling her friends that there were problems with the invitations, Jenny approaches their group and tells them that she can create the

invitations for the party. “I can do them all by hand tonight,” she tells Blair, “and put them in the mail. The materials are the only cost, but I know where to get good quality paper cheap” (94). Blair and her friends acknowledge the fact that Jenny successfully designed the hymnals they use at school, and when Blair appears convinced of Jenny’s abilities, Jenny explains that she was “hoping that if [she] did the invites, maybe [she] could come to the party” (94). Blair agrees to Jenny’s terms, saying, “Sure, you can make yourself an invitation. Make one for one of your friends, too” (94). This scene introduces Jenny as a character with a marketable skill; she understands that, because she does not come from the same elite background as Blair and Blair’s friends, she must find a way to market herself to them in order to gain admittance into their world. In the adaptation, too, Jenny designs the invitations for the “Kiss on the Lips Party” in exchange for one for herself (“Pilot” 8:25). In the adaptation, like in the book, Jenny is able to acquire an invitation to an exclusive party by using her artistic skills to buy admittance.

The adaptation further emphasizes Jenny’s need to have a marketable skill by highlighting her ability to sew, as well as her tendency to trade her skills for knowledge and privilege from both Serena and Blair. In the first book, Jenny convinces Dan to go shopping for dresses with her. Her dad has given her his credit card and told her to go to Sears—“the proletarian department store”—but she insists on going to Barney’s (147). While at Barney’s, Dan spots Serena and flees the store; Jenny, in the process of trying on a “bright orange [dress with] a ridiculous ruffle running across it, like someone had slashed it with a knife,” spots Serena and says hello (150). Serena greets Jenny with a kiss and says, “Wow, crazy dress... I got suckered into buying the ugliest dress in the store,” and she shows Jenny the long, black dress that her mom helped her pick out; Jenny does not say anything but thinks to herself that the dress is gorgeous (151). Serena then leaves, and Jenny—despite Serena’s apparent compliment of the

orange dress and obvious disgust with the black one—then tries on a “black stretch-satin dress she had picked out for herself” (151). Clearly, upon seeing Serena’s black dress, Jenny is inspired to try on a black dress of her own; the fact that Serena hated her new dress does not affect Jenny’s love for it.

In the first episode of the television show, this scene is altered. Jenny lures Dan to Bendel’s by texting him to tell him that there is an emergency (“a fashion emergency,” as she clarifies for him upon his arrival), so that she can ask his opinion of a dress. Dan approves, but Jenny comments that the dress costs more than the Humphrey family’s rent. She notes, though, that she might be able to sew something similar to it (“Pilot” 14:00-14:05). As in the book, Serena shows up, and Jenny greets her and presents her with an invitation to the “Kiss on the Lips Party”—the party to which Blair had not invited Serena. In response, Serena tells Jenny that, “that dress would look even better in black,” gives her a smile, and then leaves (15:10-15:20).

Two aspects of this scene at Bendel’s serve to heighten the importance of consumption, as well as the class barriers to it. First, in the show, Jenny does not have her dad’s credit card; she intends to sew a dress herself and is simply looking around Bendel’s for inspiration. This fact emphasizes the notion that Jenny cannot easily compete in the world of *Gossip Girl*; if she wants to go to wealthy parties with wealthy people, then she must get creative and develop a skill, like sewing, in order to enter into the world of intense wealth. In this scene, it does seem as though Jenny has found a means of entering the world of which she so desperately wants to be a part, but it does not come easily to her. This obstacle appears much clearer in the show, of course, as in the book Jenny has access to her dad’s credit card, which at least minimizes the need for Jenny to try much harder than other girls in the books in order to fit in. Second, Serena offers direct

shopping advice to Jenny, and she does so in the form of currency. Serena tells Jenny to try the dress in black (advice that Jenny takes, as later in the episode, Jenny arrives at the “Kiss on the Lips Party” wearing a black dress) only after Jenny offers her an invitation to the party. Serena uses her knowledge of the *Gossip Girl* universe as currency, in that she offers it to Jenny to repay her for a favor. Jenny, of course, graciously accepts Serena’s advice, but she does so because she does not have the same degree of knowledge. Jenny, again, uses her creativity—her ability to design invitations—in order to win allies, and Serena repays her in knowledge—knowledge that, Jenny hopes, might help Jenny enter into the world of *Gossip Girl*.

In the next episode, Blair, upon hearing that Dan and Serena are dating, similarly attempts to use her knowledge and privilege to vie for Jenny’s loyalty. In this episode, Jenny goes to Blair’s house in order to return the calligraphy pens she used to create the invitations in the previous episode, and to ask Blair if Chuck had said anything about Jenny. Blair begins to try on dresses in front of Jenny, who mentions that she particularly loves a blue one designed by Blair’s mother. Blair responds to Jenny’s compliment, saying, “It’s average. The color is last season. And besides, Stella McCartney has a much better version at Bergdorf’s” (“The Wild Brunch” 20:30). Jenny then looks down, clearly embarrassed by her initial comments, and mumbles that she has been meaning to “go by Bergdorf’s” (20:30). Then, to change the subject, Jenny mentions that Blair might know her older brother who went out with Serena the night before. At this revelation, Blair becomes flustered—clearly concerned that Jenny will strike up a friendship with Serena—and asks, “So does that mean you’re friends with Serena now?” (20:40). Jenny responds, saying, “I mean, I don’t have a problem with her. But, if someone did have a problem with her, I wouldn’t have a problem with that either” (20:55). At this point in the scene, Blair composes herself, smiles knowingly at Jenny, and says, “You know, if you like that dress,

you can have it” (21:10). When Jenny tries to refuse Blair’s offer, Blair continues, saying, “I’m sure you’ll find some way to repay me” (21:30). In this scene, Blair uses her own privilege to win over Jenny. While Serena offers Jenny knowledge and wisdom, Blair—Serena’s foil—offers Jenny material goods that Jenny would otherwise never be able to afford. Similarly, Blair does give Jenny fashion advice regarding the blue dress, though Blair’s advice is both less conscious and therefore less charitable than Serena’s. Significantly, this scene is completely absent from the novels; it is only in the adaptation that Blair attempts to barter for Jenny. By offering her a nice dress, Blair seems to hope that she can retain Jenny’s allegiance, for though Jenny is a relatively unpopular freshman, Blair does not want Serena to have access to anything or anyone; like Serena, therefore, Blair uses her privilege as currency in her interactions with Jenny.

Similarly, in a later episode, after Blair and Jenny have a fight, Blair tears her dress while at a Debutante Ball. Jenny has volunteered to help at the Ball, and both Blair and Serena immediately approach her for help with Blair’s torn dress. Jenny tries to explain that she has other plans—she is supposed to go to her mother’s art show with her entire family—but Serena and Blair insist that she help them. “Jenny, fix my dress,” Blair says, “and all is forgiven” (“Hi, Society” 31:00). Here, Blair offers Jenny re-admittance into Blair’s popular clique in exchange for Jenny’s sewing skill, and Jenny complies, thereby missing her mother’s art show. This scene is again absent from the books, and further indicates the adaptation’s emphasis on the notion that Jenny must develop a marketable skill if she wants to stand any chance at gaining entry into Serena and Blair’s wealthy world.

These scenes—all either altered or absent from the novels—serve to emphasize class barriers present in the *Gossip Girl* adaptations. Because the show cannot directly slip into the minds of characters, the importance of fashion is heightened as a symbol for inclusion; Serena,

though a part of the wealthy world, is noticeably excluded from aspects of it, and that exclusion is strongly, and in some cases solely, represented in her wardrobe. In the show, Jenny uses her ability to sew as a marketable skill, and Serena and Blair exist as keepers of knowledge and privilege who can either consciously offer that knowledge and privilege to Jenny, or who can consciously deny it. An investigation into the different ways that these two scenes play out in the television show, as opposed to their literary counterparts, illustrates this heightened emphasis on the importance of proper consumption, and the ways in which that importance can cause problems for girls who do not share in such extravagant wealth.

As in *Gossip Girl*, material consumption plays a very important role in the *Pretty Little Liars* series. Both the novels and the show take place in Rosewood Pennsylvania, “a little suburb about twenty miles from Philadelphia [where] you were more likely to live in a twenty-five room farmhouse with a mosaic-tiled pool and hot tub, like Spencer’s house, than in a prefab McMansion” (Shepard, *Pretty* 7). While a couple of the main characters in the series struggle with things like bulimia and divorce, money—at least in the books—is never an issue for them; after all, Rosewood “was full of old, noble bloodlines, older money, and practically ancient scandals” (Shepard, *Pretty* 7). All of the girls come from what appear to be wealthy families. In both the books and the show, Spencer seems to have the greatest access to wealth, but, in the books, none of the girls hesitate to make purchases or go out to eat. The comfortable lifestyle afforded to each of the characters in the novels is largely replicated and maintained in the context of the show. In the show, however, Hanna and her single mother run into money troubles, and both characters take great pains to hide this fact from all of the other characters; this plot, created for Hanna’s character on the show and absent from the book, represents an emphasis not only on consumption, but on a potential class-based exclusion from that consumption process.

Hanna discovers her mother's financial trouble for the first time in the eighth episode of *Pretty Little Liars*. Four minutes into the episode, Hanna and her mother, Ashley Marin, have a conversation about finances after Hanna tells her mom that her credit card was declined. "It was humiliating," Hanna proclaims ("Please, Do Talk" 4:07). Mrs. Marin, who divorced Hanna's father before the show begins, explains that, though she had been trying to hide this from Hanna for a while, the two of them need to "make some... temporary adjustments" (4:20). When Hanna asks how long she will have to go without overspending, her mother shows her their nearly empty refrigerator and explains that, "What happened is a mortgage, and bills, and taxes, and the fact that this is a one paycheck family, and we can't live a two paycheck life" (5:00). Mrs. Marin goes on to explain that she thought that she would be able to compensate financially for Hanna's dad leaving, but that it has been harder than she expected, and she emphasizes the fact that Hanna's card was not the first of her cards to get declined.

While it initially seems that Mrs. Marin's attempt to explain her financial difficulties to Hanna might be a positive one, in that it would encourage Hanna to approach money and spending more responsibly, Mrs. Marin is clearly embarrassed by her predicament. Her first indication of embarrassment comes in that initial conversation that she has with Hanna, when she explains that she "was trying to keep this off [Hanna's] radar" (4:10). This comment could easily represent Mrs. Marin's attempts to protect Hanna from her very adult problems, but given her interaction with Aria's father, Byron, Mrs. Marin's feelings of shame surrounding her financial difficulties become more apparent. Byron stops by the Marins' house while the girls are at school and offers Mrs. Marin an envelope of cash, saying simply, "Hanna talked to Aria, and she said that I should give this to you." Mrs. Marin immediately starts to look annoyed and says, "Hanna talked to Aria about money?" Byron then clarifies that the money is for the memorial that the

girls plan to build in Alison's memory, and Mrs. Marin, relieved, laughs and says, "Oh, that money! Of course, thank you" ("Please, Do Talk" 23:30-23:45). This scene illustrates Mrs. Marin's own feelings of shame and embarrassment over her financial situation; she immediately assumes that Hanna has told her friends about their financial issues, and she seems instantly annoyed. When Byron clarifies that the money is for Alison's memorial, Mrs. Marin quickly looks relieved. Mrs. Marin's behavior perpetuates the notion that, in Rosewood, any potential financial trouble is cause for embarrassment and shame, and is a fact that should be kept secret. This secrecy and embarrassment feed into an implication that, if the Marins revealed their financial problems, they would experience some sort of figurative banishment from their circle of friends in close-knit Rosewood.

Like Mrs. Marin, Hanna also feels embarrassed by her mother's financial problems, and she goes to great lengths to keep them hidden from her friends. In episode eight, for example, just after her talk with her mom, Hanna asks her friend Lucas to help her sell some of her old purses online. When Lucas asks why Hanna wants extra money, Hanna quickly replies, saying, "My mom cut me off" ("Please, Do Talk" 22:30). Similarly, two episodes later, after Hanna walks in on her mom arguing on the phone about her mortgage, Hanna's best friend Mona comes over to remind Hanna that, for Mona's birthday, she wants the two of them to go to dinner at an expensive restaurant. Hanna tries to cancel their dinner date, and Mona gets offended. Hanna starts to explain, saying, "You know that I'm your friend, and I totally want to celebrate with you. It's just things have just been a little tight around here. Ever since my dad left, it really hasn't been that easy to—" Before Hanna can finish explaining the situation to Mona, however, Mrs. Marin, who has been listening from the hallway, interrupts and gives Hanna the only money she has in her wallet—a one hundred dollar bill. Mrs. Marin tells Hanna that she and Mona

should take the money for dinner, and when Hanna tries to protest, Mrs. Marin simply gives her a stern look, and Hanna stops talking (“Keep Your Friends” 4:40-5:20). The shame inherent in Hanna and Mrs. Marin’s actions in these two scenes is obvious. When interacting with Lucas in the eighth episode, Hanna immediately covers up her true rationale for selling her purses; then, two episodes later, Hanna clearly thinks that it would be acceptable for her to explain her situation to Mona, her best friend, but her mother stops her before she can finish. Mrs. Marin feeds into Hanna’s desire to hide the family’s financial problems, and both characters perpetuate the notion that their financial trouble should be kept secret.

Not only does Hanna keep her financial problems hidden, but she also laughs at Mona for purchasing a second-hand bag. In the ninth episode of the first season, after Hanna has put her purses online, she and Lucas notice that Mona is carrying one of them. Mona approaches the table where Hanna and Lucas sit and immediately makes a rude comment to Lucas. In response, both Lucas and Hanna start giggling at Mona, and Lucas says, “Nice bag” (“Perfect Storm” 10:25). A few minutes later in the episode, Hanna explains to Mona that she purchased the bag that Hanna had sold online. Embarrassed, Mona tells Hanna that she bought it “as a goof” and asks if Hanna is “poor now” (14:20). Hanna again denies any sort of financial trouble and offers to give Mona her money back, to which Mona replies: “Don’t bother. Take my Andrew Jacksons and introduce them to your Benjamin Franklins. Put it towards my birthday present. I registered at Saks” (14:35). This scene presents a Hanna who is not only embarrassed by her own financial trouble, but who openly laughs at Mona for purchasing a second-hand bag. Both girls try to cover up the fact that they might either need money or need to save it, furthering the notion that in the world of *Pretty Little Liars*, you need to either have access to wealth or pretend to.

This emphasis on the necessity of wealth is furthered by the fact that, in the show, Mrs. Marin attempts to solve her financial problems by stealing money from the bank where she works—a plot that is, again, entirely absent from the novels. When Mrs. Potter, a very old woman who banks with Mrs. Marin and who checks her safety deposit box “like clockwork” once a year, leaves the key to her box on Mrs. Marin’s desk, Mrs. Marin takes money from the safety deposit box, hoping to replace the money by the time Mrs. Potter comes back a year later. She initially hides this fact from Hanna—who, in the same episode, is hospitalized—by telling her that, “The bank and I have reached an accommodation... sort of a professional courtesy, something to help us get back on our feet. It’s very short term... We’re going to be okay. You concentrate on getting well” (“Moments” 21:20-22:10). It’s not until the next episode, when Hanna discovers money in a box of lasagna—and when A begins to text her about the stolen cash—that she realizes that her mother has not been truthful about their financial situation (“Salt” 2:30-4:00). When she confronts Mrs. Marin about the money, Mrs. Marin insists that she “borrowed it from a customer who will never know it was borrowed because it’s all going to be replaced by the end of the year” (5:20-5:30). Hanna claims that what her mother describes is stealing, but Mrs. Marin insists that Hanna is missing the point. “This is our lifeline,” Mrs. Marin explains, “I was able to get our mortgage current, and what’s left in this box is our cushion. And I will pay it all back. All of it” (5:30-5:45).

In the same episode that Hanna learns of Mrs. Marin’s decision to “borrow” money, A steals the money from Hanna’s house, and for a number of episodes that follow, A attempts to blackmail Hanna using the stolen money. In episode thirteen, “Know Your Frenemies,” A begins forcing Hanna to complete tasks—like eat six cupcakes in public and then purge in the bathroom, a humiliating process that plays on Hanna’s former eating disorder—in order to get the money

back, bit by bit (12:00-15:25, 16:40-19:20). When Hanna returns the money she's retrieved to the lasagna box, her mother asks where it came from, and Hanna, unable to tell her mom about A, says that she "found it in the bathroom at Lucky Leon's" (31:40). Her mom asks if it occurred to Hanna that she should return the money to the manager, and Hanna says that it did not. To this, her mom ends the conversation by saying, "Find a better place to hide it" (31:50-32:10). Hanna and the audience both know that A stole the money from Hanna's house, and that therefore Hanna is not "stealing" money, but rather taking it back from A. Mrs. Marin, however, knows nothing about A, and she clearly makes no attempt to talk Hanna out of stealing money. Mrs. Marin therefore implies that, at least in this circumstance, Hanna's actions are likely justified. Such a response further emphasizes the notion that, in Rosewood, a person either has money or does everything in their power to pretend like they do—stealing and lying, it would seem, are preferable to losing perceived class status.

Significantly, neither Hanna nor Mrs. Marin ever suffers any real consequences for the stolen money. After being informed that Mrs. Potter planned to return to check her safety deposit box well before the end of the year, the Marins assume that they will be caught. Later in the episode, however, Mrs. Marin is informed that Mrs. Potter has died of a heart attack, and will therefore not be returning to the bank ("If at First" 31:50-33:10). A few episodes later, a man arrives in Rosewood, claiming to be Mrs. Potter's nephew in the hopes of collecting her money. With the help of Hanna's new boyfriend, however, Hanna and her mother deduce that the man is actually a con artist and is lying about his ties to the Potter fortune ("New Normal" 31:30-33:00). Hanna and Mrs. Marin are therefore never punished in any way for stealing the money from Mrs. Potter. It is implied that A might have killed Mrs. Potter to save Hanna from getting into trouble because Hanna complied with all of A's instructions; but, regardless of the reason, the Marins

never experience negative consequences as a result of stealing money. They are able to pay their mortgage and get back on their feet financially. This plotline—again, completely absent from the novels—further contributes to the notion that, in the world of *Pretty Little Liars*, one must do whatever it takes to maintain a Rosewood-acceptable class status.

These scenes in *Pretty Little Liars* perpetuate the notion that, in Rosewood Pennsylvania, if a girl wants to fit in, then she needs to have access to wealth; and, girls like Hanna, who might not have as much money as her peers, should feel a considerable amount of shame based on that fact and should go to great lengths to hide it from others. The fact that, rather than take the opportunity to convey a sensible and productive dialogue regarding class inclusion, the show consistently emphasizes Hanna's and Mrs. Marin's desire to keep their financial problems a secret out of embarrassment and shame contributes to the idea that, in the context of this show, a lack of wealth could serve as potential grounds for exclusion from the group. Neither Hanna nor Mrs. Marin feels comfortable confiding in any of their friends or neighbors; instead, each character actively keeps this secret until they can resolve the problem—and Mrs. Marin goes to great, illegal lengths to solve the problem. Like in *Gossip Girl*, this plotline—created for the show and absent from the book—represents an emphasis on class-based exclusion that becomes more prominent during the adaptation process.

The Vampire Diaries, the television show, creates a world in which class receives much more emphasis than it does in the novels. The novels, set in Fell's Church, Virginia, center around the lives of a group of high school students in the area, as well as two vampire brothers. Many of the characters in the books have ties to the mysticism that surrounds them, but that mysticism is rarely tied specifically to Fell's Church. In the show, alterations are made to the characters' backstories, and Fell's Church becomes Mystic Falls, Virginia. Stefan and Damon, in

the show, each were born in Mystic Falls and lived in the town in the 1860s, when they were turned into vampires. This plotline stands in contrast to that of the books, in which Stefan and Damon originated from Renaissance-era Italy. Similarly, in the television show, the founding families play an extremely important role. In the book, Fell's Church was founded by the Fell Family, whose lineage does not very clearly continue into the present-day setting of the book, though Tyler Smallwood claims that his family has lived in the town as long as the Fells (Smith 102). In the show, on the other hand, there exist a series of "Founding Families," which include the Lockwoods, the Gilberts, the Forbes, and the Salvatores. Members of each family belong to a council, which meets to discuss issues of the town; and, as the series progresses, it becomes clear that the Founding Families know of the existence of vampires and serve as sworn protectors of their town from any mystical forces. In this way, the Founding Families seem to represent the "upper class" of the town; they are privileged not only in the sense that most seem to have access to wealth, but also in the sense that members of each Founding Family have access to valuable knowledge regarding the existence of vampires. They serve and protect the town, and they therefore have access to great power over it.

An examination of the dichotomy constructed between Vicki Donovan and Caroline Forbes reveals issues of class exclusion in the context of *The Vampire Diaries* adaptation. In the television show, Vicki Donovan is the sister of Matt Donovan—Elena's human ex-boyfriend. Her character is, arguably, based loosely on a minor character from the books, Vicki Bennett. In the novels, Vicki Bennett first appears in *The Awakening* when Elena recklessly decides to visit a cemetery with Tyler, Dick, and Vicki—three characters who appear more prone than Elena to underage drinking and sexual experimentation (98-100). This experimentation with drinking and sex is, however, the only real similarity between Vicki Bennett and Vicki Donovan. In the show,

Vicki is first introduced as the love interest of both Jeremy, Elena's younger brother (also a new addition to the show, Jeremy replaces Margaret, Elena's younger sister in the books), and Tyler. She has clearly had a sexual relationship with Jeremy before the series begins, but when the first episode starts, she seemingly dates Tyler. Early in the first episode, Jeremy confronts her and asks why she will not openly interact with him at school, to which Vickie replies: "Look, Jeremy, I really appreciate all the pharmaceuticals, but you can't keep following me around like a lost puppy" ("Pilot" 15:10). Vicki continues, explaining to Jeremy that the two of them, "hooked up a few times in a drug haze [and] it's over; back off before you ruin things with me and Tyler" (15:20). This conversation takes place in a restaurant where Vicki works. This early scene sets up two key aspects of Vicki's character: first, she does drugs and is sexually active; and second, she has a job—as the series progresses, she will remain one of the few characters with a job of any sort (her brother, Matt, eventually starts working as well).

A few episodes later, Vicki and her friends go to the cemetery, where they do drugs and, presumably, have sex. Damon interrupts their party and murders all of Vicki's friends before kidnapping Vicki and taking her back to his mansion. He drinks her blood, and he feeds her some of his blood to keep her alive. The two of them drink alcohol and dance around the mansion for a long time. As it starts to get late, Vicki's mood shifts from one of euphoria to one of depression, and while dancing slowly with Damon, she tells him about her life:

My mom spends most of her time in Virginia Beach with Pete. He drives trucks. I don't remember my dad, but from what I gather, he's not worth remembering... I'm the screwed up one. Matt's got it so easy; he's the golden boy. He's going to get a football scholarship, and marry Elena, and have a lawn mower, and some babies, and when I think of my future, I just come up blank ("Lost" 24:00-24:50).

In response, Damon tells her that the solution to her problems is death, and before Vicki has a chance to respond, Damon snaps her neck (25:00). When Vicki wakes up, she has nearly completed the transition into a vampire, but she must drink human blood in order to complete it. Stefan explains the transition process to Vicki, and Vicki seems very reluctant to turn into a vampire; in tears, she asks Stefan to take her home, declaring, "I don't want this!" (36:45). Before she has a chance to go home, however, she and Stefan get attacked. Damon rescues them by biting the neck of their attacker, and Vicki immediately drinks his blood, thus completing her transition (37:40-38:35).

The seventh episode of the first season is almost entirely devoted to Vicki and her newfound vampirism. Stefan tries to convince Vicki to sustain herself with animal blood, while Damon argues that she should drink human blood ("Haunted" 5:30-6:05). Stefan explains to Elena Vicki's difficulty in resisting the urge to feed on humans: "It's going to take time," Stefan explains. "She has a very volatile and impulsive personality. She's a drug user, and all of that is going to play a part in how she responds to this" (7:40-8:00). Eventually, Vicki escapes Stefan's watch and goes to a school Halloween party, where she seeks out Jeremy and takes him outside. The two characters hide in a parking lot and begin to make out; Vicki then bites Jeremy's lip and starts to suck the blood from the wound. Jeremy begins to yell for her to stop, but she does not seem capable of stopping herself. Elena finds them first and tries to fight Vicki off, but Vicki's increased strength allows her to easily dominate Elena. Stefan then finds the three characters and, upon seeing Vicki bite Elena's neck, he stakes and kills Vicki (29:00-30:55).

Vicki, as the first character to change into a vampire on the show, serves as an example of a person who cannot handle vampirism. Stefan attempts to ease her into the transition, but, as he explains repeatedly, her addictive personality and her history of drug use keep her from

controlling her blood lust. In order to protect Jeremy and Elena, Stefan must kill Vicki. It stands to note as well that every stage of Vicki's vampirism is juxtaposed with a negative—negative in the context of the show, that is—aspect of her personality: she initially gets kidnapped by Damon while doing drugs in a cemetery; Damon kills her after the two of them get drunk; and, Stefan stakes her after she pulls Jeremy away from the party and the two of them start making out in private. Every step of the way, the show connects Vicki's fate with her desire to have sex, drink, and do drugs; and, as Stefan explains to Elena, Vicki's seemingly innate lack of willpower serves as the primary reason why she cannot control her blood lust.

An examination of Caroline Forbes's experience with vampirism, contrasted with Vicki's, reveals the class issues evident in this adaptation. Caroline belongs to one of the Founding Families of the town, and her mother works as the town sheriff. In the premiere episode of the second season, Katherine smothers Caroline—who had been in a bad car accident in the season one finale—to death in her hospital bed (“Return” 40:45-41:00). Because Caroline drank some of Damon's blood to heal quickly after the car accident, she becomes a vampire by feeding on donor blood at the hospital. Upon her recovery and release from the hospital, Caroline goes to a school carnival with Matt and quickly realizes that she can hear his pulse and starts to feel hungry, so she runs away into the parking lot, where she attacks and kills a man (“Brave” 25:00-25:40). Damon finds Caroline in the parking lot first, and he tells her that he must kill her because of what she did, but Stefan and Elena save her (28:00-29:00). Elena forces Damon to leave Caroline alone, and Stefan calms Caroline down. After comforting Caroline, Stefan promises that he “will not let anything happen to [her]” (32:08). As the series progresses Caroline becomes stronger and stronger as a vampire—and becomes even more integral to the plot of the show.

This juxtaposition of Vicki's experience with Caroline's helps create a class-based divide within Mystic Falls. Vicki serves as an example of a character who does not come from a Founding Family; her father is completely absent, and her mother is out of town during most of the show, leaving Vicki and Matt to fend for themselves. Because of this, Vicki and Matt do not have a great deal of money and therefore become two of the only characters forced to work jobs at some point in the show. Vicki struggles with drug and alcohol addictions, and she is one of the few sexually active female characters when the series begins. When she becomes a vampire, she cannot handle it; Stefan feels the need to kill her. Caroline, on the other hand, is a member of a Founding Family and good friend of Elena. When she becomes a vampire, Stefan and Elena go out of their way to save her and to help her harness her strengths. Despite the fact that she murders an innocent person, Stefan vows to protect her while she makes the transition. The Founding Families represent a small number of people in Mystic Falls who know that supernatural elements exist, and Caroline's membership to a Founding Family is emphasized in the television show; her own privilege seems to aid in her survival as a vampire, whereas Vicki's lack of privilege results in her death. Neither Vicki Bennett nor Caroline becomes a vampire in the novel series, and therefore this dichotomy does not exist in the books. In this way, the show seems to emphasize a class-based exclusion to vampirism. Just as *Gossip Girl* and *Pretty Little Liars* present consumption as a crucial element to the plot and create obstacles to inclusion for characters with less access to wealth, so too does *The Vampire Diaries* create class-based obstacles to its own form of consumption: vampirism. In *The Vampire Diaries* universe, in addition to their hunger for blood, vampires possess great physical strength, slightly heightened senses, and the ability to manipulate, or "compel," humans. Vampirism in this way carries with it notions of strength and power; and, because Stefan excludes Vicki from the process but includes

Caroline, the show seems to imply that class status in Mystic Falls directly correlates with a person's ability to become a vampire—to responsibly consume human and animal blood.

In the adaptation from book series to television series for each of these three works, issues of consumption become emphasized, and class-based exclusion to these notions of consumption are either created or furthered. Jenny's need for a marketable skill, and Serena and Blair's role as keepers of knowledge and privilege in relation to Jenny's admission into the wealthy world of the *Gossip Girl* elite serve to heighten these issues of class in the adaptation. Similarly, the addition of Hanna's loss of wealth and the shame and embarrassment associated with that loss—along with Mrs. Marin's drastic, illegal actions in response to her financial trouble—contribute to a furthering of class-based exclusion from a consumption-driven atmosphere in *Pretty Little Liars*. In *The Vampire Diaries* and its television adaptation, issues of consumption revolve around the idea of vampirism, and the inclusion of both Vicki's and Caroline's transformations into vampires—and Vicki's subsequent death as juxtaposed with Caroline's success—contributes to a class-based exclusion from the consumption process in the context of *The Vampire Diaries* universe.

The adaptation process, in this vein, contributes to a homogenization of product, in that each of the three works emphasizes this same class-based exclusivity. In each adaptation, plotlines are added or heavily altered in ways that emphasize this class focus and the subsequent class-based exclusions. The adaptations therefore become more similar to one another in this respect than are their source texts; while issues of class exist in some of the novels—particularly in the *Gossip Girl* books—the adaptations so heavily emphasize these issues, and the exclusion that springs from them, that the products begin to appear more similar thematically on television than they do in novel form. Similarly, because of this created or emphasized exclusivity resultant

of the adaptation process, the television shows seem to attempt to further homogenize their audiences; through the implication of class-based exclusion, these three shows limit viewer access points on a class basis. The final products, it seems, make it more difficult for audience members who do not fit into the wealthy, class-driven mold presented in each of these three shows to enter into the worlds at hand, and therefore these Alloy products seem to indicate a market segment that excludes members on a class basis. Because of Alloy's role as a media and marketing company, as well as its relationship with Delia's, it makes sense that the company would focus its energies on telling stories that exclude on a class basis—girls with access to disposable incomes are more likely to become consumers of Alloy products or Alloy sponsored products than girls who cannot afford to spend as much money. The adaptations, then, seem to focus in on this group of potential consumers, implying that girls who do not fit into this mold will either remain excluded from the process, or will have to try very hard, like Jenny or Hanna, to fit in; such a process seems to aim at standardizing a wide audience into a more streamlined one, composed of ideal future or current consumers to which Alloy might sell products.

African Americans as Invisible, Outsiders, and Antagonists

The treatment of African American characters represents another homogenizing trend found across all three of the adaptations. The treatment of African Americans in the media has long been the subject of study. Hollywood, for instance, has historically adhered to negative stereotypes in its portrayal of African American characters. As Wilson, Gutierrez and Chao explain, Hollywood in the early twentieth century tended to portray African American characters as “mostly... criminals and undesirables of various types” or in “roles befitting their unequal status as American citizens,” such as “domestic workers, waiters, and porters” (78). While these

racial stereotypes do not appear so pervasively in American media today, remnants of them remain, and racial stereotypes continue to evolve in order “to reflect the current political viewpoints, popular attitudes, and moods of the White majority audience” (Wilson 87).

Though I do not intend to minimize the significance of racial stereotypes, many of which undoubtedly continue to appear in the American media, I wish to focus this section on the treatment of African American characters as outsiders and antagonists, especially considering the role of Alloy as a marketing corporation. The television show adaptations of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries* either emphasize (in relation to the source text) or create anew atmospheres in which African American characters exist as outsiders or antagonists. Within the context of Alloy products, then, African Americans seem to stand outside of the world in which the other, mostly white characters inhabit, or they seem to serve as active antagonists to those worlds.

It also stands to note that in *Pretty Little Liars* and *Vampire Diaries*, the television adaptations seem to make conscious efforts to avoid addressing issues of race, despite the fact that the source text of the former creates a very productive dialogue in regards to racism, and the latter presents a world in which nearly all African Americans are also witches and in which flashbacks to 1860s Virginia play a prominent role. Karen Lindsey investigates the phenomenon of ignoring racial oppression and cultural difference in soap operas. “Although it’s still refreshing to see Black faces,” Lindsey explains, “often, the characters are simply imitations of White characters, and there is no awareness of racial oppression or cultural difference” (334). Any brief exploration of racial discrimination, Lindsey notes, tends to serve as “a rebellious ‘phase’ to be ‘gotten over’ before true, and desirable, assimilation into the White community is achieved” (334). This process, clearly evident in two of the three adaptations investigated in this

thesis, greatly contributes to an attempted homogenization of audience; African Americans exist as outsiders or antagonists, and the fact that they are African American is—actively, in some cases—ignored in the context of the show.

The alterations made to Vanessa’s character from the *Gossip Girl* novels to the show represent this notion that, in the adaptation process, Alloy products seem to introduce African American characters only to promote their role as antagonists or outsiders. In the novels, Vanessa Abrams, with her “big brown eyes” and “pale and slightly pudgy hips,” is a high school student at Constance Billiard (von Ziegesar, *Gossip* 170; von Ziegesar, *Nobody* 28). When first introduced in the novels, she is described as “an anomaly at Constance, the only girl in school who had a nearly shaved head, wore black turtlenecks every day, read Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* over and over like it was the Bible, listened to Belle and Sebastian, and drank unsweetened black tea” (von Ziegesar, *Gossip* 54). Vanessa certainly stands out in the elite private school setting of the novels; she comes from a class background lower than the rest of the girls, and she consciously dresses in an alternative manner, especially when compared to her classmates. In the first novel, Vanessa has two main defining characteristics: her passion for film and her love of Dan Humphrey.

The first *Gossip Girl* novel almost immediately sets up a love triangle between Dan, Serena, and Vanessa. The love triangle begins in chapter six of the first novel, titled, “S’s Other Fan,” in which the narrative reveals Dan’s infatuation with Serena. Jenny calls Dan to tell him that Serena is back in New York City and back at school, and Dan, though he tries to hide his enthusiasm from Jenny, becomes obviously excited. When he hangs up the phone, he quickly thinks back to the first time he met Serena in eighth grade, and he acknowledges the fact that he has had a crush on her ever since (von Ziegesar, *Gossip* 48-49). The reader learns that, for two

years after this initial party, “Dan followed Serena, yearningly, from a distance;” and, as he stands on the steps of his high school, considering Serena’s sudden return to New York City, he fantasizes about how he wants to, “walk right up to her and take her coat, and welcome her back to New York,” saying, “It rained every day you were gone” (50).

Immediately following Dan’s revelation, the text shifts to focus on Vanessa, who is one of Dan’s few good friends. In chapter six, Vanessa stands in front of her film class and presents her idea for a film, which she has written and plans to direct. She explains to the class that she will audition volunteers to play the female lead in her film, across from Dan Humphrey, and the narrator notes that, “her cheeks heated up when she uttered Dan’s name” (58). As the chapter comes to a close, the narrator further reveals that, “Just thinking about Dan made [Vanessa] feel like she had to pee” (58). This chapter clearly describes Vanessa’s crush on Dan, and it comes immediately after the chapter in which the narrator reveals Dan’s crush on Serena. The structure of the plot here presents a reader with two very sympathetic characters, each of whom seem to have a clear and justifiable crush. The fact that the text reveals Vanessa’s crush on Dan so quickly after the revelation of Dan’s crush on Serena—and the fact that both of these chapters happen before any actual interaction between Serena and Dan or Vanessa and Dan—allows for a love triangle in which all characters seem equally sympathetic and justified in their feelings. The plot does not favor either outcome; either Serena or Vanessa seems like a worthy candidate for Dan’s affections.

The Serena-Dan-Vanessa love triangle also exists in the television adaptation, but the way the love triangle gets plotted on screen creates a very uneven dynamic between the characters, which results in a Vanessa who appears more antagonizing on screen than in the books. On the show, Serena and Dan go out together in the very first episode, and as they make

their way to a concert, Serena jokingly notes that she met Dan's dad on their "first date" ("Pilot" 6:45). The two characters joke about the idea that the concert, which they decided to go to together solely so that Serena would be able to avoid Blair's party, seems like a first date. Serena and Dan then quickly have their first dispute, and their still-budding relationship remains turbulent until the fifth episode of the first season, when they decide to go on a "real Dan Humphrey date," after which they share their first kiss ("Pilot" 16:00; "Dare" 37:05).

In episode six, "The Handmaiden's Tale," Vanessa gets introduced for the first time. Vanessa on the show, unlike in the book, is an African American character who had been friends with Dan when she lived in New York City, but she moved away with her parents a year before the show begins. In the sixth episode Vanessa returns for good, explaining that her parents have decided to let her live with her older sister and finish high school in the city. In the first conversation Dan and Vanessa have upon Vanessa's return, they briefly discuss the fact that Dan "said some things the night [Vanessa] left" that she quickly forced him to take back because she was leaving ("Handmaiden's Tale" 8:25). It becomes quickly apparent that those "things" discussed the night of Vanessa's departure involved feelings that Dan had for Vanessa, and Vanessa implies in a conversation with Dan's father that she came back, at least in part, because she has similar feelings for Dan (16:15).

The plot of "The Handmaiden's Tale" serves immediately both to create and to emphasize the conflict inherent in Vanessa's return. As soon as Vanessa shows up at Dan's apartment, Dan lies to Serena about the fact that Vanessa is there; while on the phone, Serena asks him if he has a girl in his room, and he tells her that the girl she hears in the background is Jenny, his sister. Serena then sees Jenny at Blair's house while still on the phone with Dan, and therefore realizes that Dan has lied to her, though she does not know why (6:25). Similarly, later

in the episode, after Serena invites Dan to a masked ball, Dan cancels plans with Vanessa, telling her that he has to work on a paper (17:25-17:30). Dan's constant lying clearly establishes a precedent for this love triangle; the plot suggests that, now that Vanessa has returned, Dan's current relationship with Serena will become extremely, possibly disastrously, complicated.

Vanessa's introduction so late in the television show—as opposed to a very early appearance in the novel—creates an imbalanced love triangle. In the books, Vanessa exists from the very beginning as a potential suitor for Dan; her feelings for him are revealed immediately after the reader learns of Dan's feelings for Serena, creating two very sympathetic romantic options for Dan. In the television show, on the other hand, Vanessa makes her initial appearance after the audience has watched Dan and Serena go on two dates, seemingly fall in love, and share a first kiss. Vanessa's character on the show, in this way, works more as an antagonist to a pre-existing romantic relationship between Dan and Serena, rather than as the third, sympathetic and understandable side of a love triangle. The romantic relationships shared between Serena and Dan, and between Dan and Vanessa, unfold and alter throughout both the novel series and the show; but, Vanessa's initial introduction, and the conflict created by her appearance, result in a Vanessa who works as more of a foil than she does as a complete character.

It is hard to ignore, too, the fact that Vanessa is introduced as an African American character on the show, an alteration from the character present in the book. At first glance, it would seem wholly productive and admirable that the creators of the show would choose to cast an African American actress to play the part of Vanessa—a fairly large role. It seems disconcerting, though, that the only primary minority character on the show plays the part of antagonist to the show's two main sweethearts: Serena and Dan. The Vanessa of the book has a much bigger role (especially in the beginning of the series), and her feelings for Dan are revealed

almost immediately, giving her all of the characteristics of a sympathetic suitor in an established love triangle. In the show, the now-African American Vanessa does not appear until after Serena and Dan's relationship has blossomed, and her appearance seems only to create conflict in a pre-existing, flourishing romance.

In the *Pretty Little Liars* novels, the character of Maya is introduced early on as one of Emily's initial love interests. The first physical description of Maya comes in the first chapter, when Emily turns to face her outside of Allison's old house. Maya appears as, "a tall, skinny girl with tawny-colored skin and wild, black-brown curly hair" (Shepard, *Pretty* 22). In this same chapter, Maya, who is from California, brings Emily up to her bedroom and offers her a joint. Emily, who "had never tried pot in her entire life" because "she always thought her parents would somehow know," smokes with Maya and enjoys the feeling, as well as Maya's company (27). Emily and Maya, over the course of the first novel, develop a romantic relationship, despite the fact that, upon their first meeting, they both have boyfriends. Maya, in her introduction, is immediately situated as someone who is "different" from anyone else that Emily knows; she is an African American, she has moved to Rosewood from California, and she smokes marijuana.

In the novels, Emily's mother makes it clear that she does not approve of Maya—not initially because of the fact that Maya is a lesbian (a fact that her mother, at this point, does not yet know), but because she is an African American. In chapter eighteen of the first book, Emily's mother tells her that she "[doesn't] have a good feeling about girls... like that" (Shepard, *Pretty* 170). Emily immediately becomes afraid that her mother somehow knows that Maya is a lesbian, and her mother continues, saying that Maya is "not a good influence" (170). Emily remains largely silent, horrified by the prospect that her mother might have somehow found out about Maya's romantic interest in girls, and in Emily, specifically. Before Emily can respond, however,

her mother clarifies: “There are just so many cultural differences with... her... and I just don’t understand what you and Maya have in common, anyway. And who knows about her family? Who knows what they could be into?” (170). Emily considers her mother’s comments, thinking at first about Maya’s family, noting that Maya’s father is a civil engineer and her mother a nurse practitioner. Her mother then says that she, “just [doesn’t] trust those people” (171). At this point in the conversation, the full weight of her mother’s words hits Emily: “Emily’s mind screeched to a halt. *Her family. Cultural differences. Those people?* She went over everything her mother just said. Oh. My. God. Mrs. Fields wasn’t upset because she thought Maya was gay. She was upset because Maya—and the rest of her family—were *black*” (171).

The racism of Emily’s mother—and Emily’s realization of it—serves as an excellent attempt to open a dialog about race and racial discrimination. For Emily, Maya appears “different” due to the fact that she openly admits to her attraction to Emily, as well as the fact that she has moved from California and smokes marijuana. Emily’s mother, on the other hand, does not know anything about Maya other than the fact that she is an African American; and, while all of Maya’s differences draw Emily to her, that one racial difference upsets Emily’s mother. Emily never considers justifying her mother’s racist opinion, but she finds it hard to shake. In chapter twenty-two of the first novel, Emily runs into Maya at a party, and Maya asks Emily how she has been doing, as the two have not seen each other in awhile. Emily’s first thoughts after hearing Maya’s question are, “*Confused. Upset at my possibly racist parents*” (193). The dialog present in this novel between Emily and her mother, and between Emily and Maya, present a reader with a very real problem; Emily’s mother expresses racist opinions of Maya, and Emily immediately feels upset. Emily does not convey her mother’s opinion to Maya, implying that Emily is acutely aware of the fact that her mother’s views are clearly wrong and

that she is ashamed of them. Emily then continues to interact with Maya, and while she remains in the closet until A eventually reveals her relationship with Maya, Emily never once considers ending the relationship on a racial basis. The text, in this way, acknowledges the fact that interracial couples—or even interracial friends—might encounter racism, but clearly stands on the side of Emily, who, apart from her anger towards and embarrassment of her mother, never considers Maya’s race to be an issue in their relationship.

In *Perfect*, the third book in the *Pretty Little Liars* series, A outs Emily at one of Emily’s swim meets. Other than A, Maya, Toby, and Alison—the latter two of whom are either dead or presumed dead at this point in the series—nobody knows that Emily might be gay or bisexual before A distributes pictures of Emily and Maya kissing to everyone at the swim meet, including Emily’s parents (86-93). After the incident at the swim meet, Emily’s parents confront her and explain that she will be forced to undergo treatment through “Tree Tops,” a rehabilitation program for LGBTQ youth (111-114). When Emily resists the notion of Tree Tops, her mom gives an ultimatum: “...either you do Tree Tops—*successfully*—or you will go live with your aunt Helene,” Emily’s aunt who lives on a farm in Iowa (115-116).

As *Perfect* progresses, Emily genuinely tries to participate in Tree Tops, though the program has little success, and by the end of the book Emily has returned to Maya. A tips off Emily’s mom about her inability to stay away from Maya, and in the fourth book, Emily does in fact get sent to live with her Aunt Helene in Iowa. Miserable in Iowa, Emily decides to run away; after a brief period of living on her own, however, Emily realizes that she has been declared a missing person and that her parents are searching for her, so she calls her mom and returns home. When she returns to Rosewood, though, her parents’ attitudes toward her have changed; they

have decided to try to be more tolerant of Emily's decisions and of the fact that she might be gay (Shepard, *Unbelievable* 92-97, 108-12, 129-34, 178-88).

In the television show, Maya—who, like in the novels, is an African American who has moved to Rosewood from California and who smokes marijuana—first meets Emily's mother in the second episode. In this scene, Maya has come over to Emily's house before school, and the two girls sit on Emily's porch, sharing coffee and discussing the fact that Maya has trouble sleeping in Alison's old house. Emily's mom interrupts the conversation when she arrives home from a morning run. She immediately extends her hand to Maya and begins to welcome her to the neighborhood, though Emily interrupts her mom, noting that an appropriate welcome to the neighborhood is “kind of hard when [their] backyard is a crime scene” (“Jenna Thing” 9:00). Maya agrees with Emily and mentions that the constant swarm of people around her family's new house makes it very difficult to sleep. Emily's mom immediately suggests that Maya stay with them for a couple of nights: “You know, Maya,” Mrs. Fields says, “why don't you just spend a few days with us? You can sleep in Emily's room” (9:20-9:30). Mrs. Fields' hospitality continues in this vein until she discovers the romantic relationship building between Emily and Maya, but Maya's race never seems to factor into Mrs. Fields' opinion of her. Unlike in the novel, Mrs. Fields makes no comments regarding Maya's race; and, in fact, the fact that Maya is an African American is never once mentioned in the show.

As in the novels, the show presents Maya as an African American character for whom Emily develops romantic feelings. The fact that, in the show, Maya's race is never mentioned is not an inherently negative characteristic. Considering the plot line in the novels, however, in which Emily's mother openly discriminates against Maya due to the color of her skin, the show seems to actively eliminate any mention of Maya's race. Any viewer of the television show who

had read even the first novel of the series would likely realize that this plot had been eliminated, as it serves as a major conflict within the context of the first novel. Similarly, the source text uses Maya's race as a means of creating a dialogue about racism in twenty-first century America; Emily, for instance, does not know that her mother holds any racist views until she develops a friendship with an African American character. The novel seems, therefore, to suggest that, though it may not always be very obvious, racism certainly still exists—especially in a small, upper-middle class town like Rosewood, Pennsylvania. The show, however, completely eliminates this plot and therefore eliminates the opportunity for such a dialog. Because the show actively ignores the race-based conflict present in the source text, it seems to make race, in the context of the show, invisible. It ignores a very realistic conflict presented in the book, and therefore ignores a valuable opportunity for the show to open up a dialog with its viewers on such a difficult topic.

Another incident that sees alterations in the *Pretty Little Liars* adaptation is Emily's coming out. On the television show, Emily comes out to her parents in the eleventh episode, "Moments Later." When her parents confront her about changes they have noticed in her behavior, she tells them that she is gay (35:33). After Emily comes out to her parents, her mom reveals that she has known for a while, having been sent a picture of Emily and Maya kissing in the mail by an unknown sender (37:27-39:13). While her parents are initially upset at Emily's coming out—particularly her mother, who continually describes Emily's relationship with Maya as "wrong"—they both make attempts at tolerance, and in the very next episode they ask Emily to invite Maya over for dinner ("Moments" 39:00; "Salt" 6:21-7:15). Though her mother continually struggles with the fact that Emily is gay, she does so almost entirely in private. She does tell Emily that she is, "not okay with it" and that "the whole thing makes [her] sick, sick to

[her] stomach,” but she never threatens to send Emily away, or to make any formal attempts to change the fact that she identifies as gay (“Salt” 38:00-38:15).

The primary conflict that occurs between Emily, Maya, and Mrs. Fields happens in the thirteenth episode of the first season, “Know Your Frenemies.” After Mrs. Fields walks in on Emily and Maya studying together, she becomes noticeably upset at the situation and declares that she “can’t even imagine where this was headed,” had she not interrupted (15:50). Maya then leaves quickly, and Emily storms out soon after. Emily’s mom, left alone in Emily’s room, realizes that Maya left her bag behind when she left so quickly, and when she decides to go through the bag, she discovers a joint and a small amount of marijuana (20:00-20:10). Mrs. Fields contacts Maya’s parents, and instead of Emily getting banished to Iowa, Maya gets banished to “True North,” a rehabilitation camp for young people (41:00).

By eliminating the racism present in the *Pretty Little Liars* books, the show consciously ignores an opportunity present in its source text to address issues of racism in the twenty-first century. Similarly, in the books, when Emily comes out of the closet, her parents send her away to Iowa to try to “fix” her. In the show on the other hand, Maya is the one who gets punished and banished from Rosewood. As the only African American character on the show, Maya represents an underlying theme in which an African American character is presented as an outsider and is, eventually, punished for it. Maya can never fully enter into Emily’s Rosewood circle of friends, and she is eventually killed off—a plot twist not present in the book (“unmAsked” 42:10). And, through all of this, the show never attempts to openly draw a connection between Maya’s perceived differences and the fact that she is an African American, and the show therefore does not use these facts as potentially didactic elements of character and plot, as does the book.

Like in *Gossip Girl*, the white character of Bonnie in *The Vampire Diaries* is cast as an African American character in the television adaptation; and, like in *Pretty Little Liars*, the writers of *The Vampire Diaries* seem to actively avoid discussing issues of race. Described as “pale in the darkness” with a “curly red head,” the Bonnie of the books is a white character who, as a descendent of Celtic druids, has mystical powers (Smith 59, 13). On the television show, the character of Bonnie is an African American character descended from Salem witches who initially arrived in Mystic Falls in the 1860s. In flashback sequences, Emily Bennett, Bonnie’s ancestor, is seen travelling to Mystic Falls with Katherine in 1864 (“Children”). While it is never explicitly stated in the series, considering the year and the fact that the characters live in Virginia, it seems probable that Emily is Katherine’s slave. The show, however, never uses the word slave. Similarly, despite the fact that nearly every other witch introduced in the series is portrayed by an African American actress, the series never makes an attempt to explain this phenomenon, nor do any of the other witches have a detailed enough backstory for a viewer to deduce some sort of connection on his or her own (this phenomenon can be seen in “Bloodlines,” “Disturbing Behavior,” “End of the Affair,” and “Masquerade,” among others).

Reviewers of the show have noted the fact that all of the witches are portrayed as African Americans, and that no explanation exists to explain this phenomenon. Sayantani DasGupta, for instance, notes this phenomenon:

There’s the Bennett family of witches, who are all (relatively light skinned) African Americans. Ok, I get it, they’re a family—genetically related—and therefore it makes sense they are all similar ethnically... [but] more importantly WHY is this family of witches Black? We are told the Bennetts are supposedly descended from some ‘powerful Salem witches.’ Are the makers of the show

hinting that they are descended from the slave woman named Tituba who supposedly ‘read the fortune’ of all those young white Salem girls and got their vicious imaginations spinning? But no, Tituba is never mentioned by name. Nor ever, ever, ever the word slavery. Which is weird, no?

DasGupta very clearly points out one of the most confusing aspects of *The Vampire Diaries* adaptations: all of the witches in this Virginia town, in which family ties play such an important role, and in which most important flashbacks take viewers back to the 1860s, are African Americans, and the show gives no solid explanation for this fact. Just as the adaptation of *Pretty Little Liars* seems to consciously avoid opening a dialog about racial discrimination, so too does *The Vampire Diaries*, despite the fact that they chose to transform Bonnie’s character from a fair-skinned, red-haired Celtic druid to an African American Salem witch.

Because Bonnie has magical powers, she can generally protect herself from vampires. Even before she begins to harness her magic, she can fend off attackers; this ability becomes clear in “Haunted,” when Bonnie inexplicably burns Damon’s hand once he tries to take his necklace off of her neck without her permission (27:50). After her grandmother’s death, Bonnie’s attitude towards vampires changes. At one point, she explains to Elena the reason for her attitude change: “Everything my grams did was to protect us from those vampires in the tomb, and now they’re out, which means she died for nothing... I blame [Stefan], Elena. [Stefan] and Damon” (“Miss Mystic” 15:10-15:45). From that point on, Bonnie’s feelings towards Stefan, Damon, and nearly all vampires remain wary. She still helps Elena from time to time, but she also begins to refuse Elena’s requests for help on occasion.

Significantly, the Bennett family does not stand among the Founding Families, despite the fact that they have been present in Mystic Falls since Emily’s arrival in 1864. This fact, of

course, likely has something to do with the fact that the Bennetts are African Americans, but, again, the show makes no clear note of this fact. Therefore, Bonnie does not have any ties to the primary group of vampire hunters in the show, which largely consist of members of the Founding Families. Bonnie, then, exists in between two worlds; she refuses to whole heartedly join forces with Elena and the vampires, and she does not belong to the council of Founding Families. She remains outside of both groups, and therefore also seems to exist as an outsider; and, this outsider status is very clearly tied to her race, although the show never mentions that fact directly, nor does it offer any justification for it.

The Vampire Diaries adaptation, despite having cast an African American actress as Bonnie, seems to actively avoid addressing issues of race. The show takes place in Mystic Falls, Virginia, and unlike the books, most of the show's flashback scenes take a viewer to the 1860s. The setting itself, therefore, makes an acknowledgment of slavery almost unavoidable; and yet, the show refuses to address this point. Similarly, the show never clearly justifies the fact that nearly every single witch introduced on the show is an African American. Further, Bonnie's nature as a witch, coupled with her grandmother's death, prevent her from whole heartedly supporting Elena and the vampires; and, in that same vein, because Bonnie does not belong to a Founding Family, she cannot fully participate in the town's tradition of vampire hunting. As an African American witch in Mystic Falls, Bonnie exists as an outsider in the world of a show that refuses to address issues of race.

The adaptation processes of these three properties from book series to television series seems to create a similar portrayal of African American characters in each of the three works. *Gossip Girl* casts Vanessa as an African American character, and her plot in the show gets altered from a sympathetic equal third of a love triangle to the late-coming antagonist to a

preexisting relationship. In the *Pretty Little Liars* adaptation, the television show seems to consciously avoid addressing issues of race when dealing with Maya, a departure from Maya's plot in the books; and, similarly, the show seems to emphasize and further Maya's role as outsider in the series and eventually punishes her for it. Bonnie, in *The Vampire Diaries* adaptation, is cast as an African American, and like in *Pretty Little Liars*, the show seems to actively avoid addressing seemingly obvious issues of race present in the show; also, like in *Pretty Little Liars*, Bonnie's character seems to stand as a perpetual outsider, incapable of entering either the world of the vampires or the Founding Families' world of vampire hunters.

This trend presents another example of how these three products become more similar to one another in the adaptation process. Maya is the only character who is presented as an African American in the novels; Vanessa and Bonnie are written as African American characters specifically for the shows. Because the shows treat all three of these African American characters in a comparable manner—as antagonists or outsiders—and because the adaptations generally ignore issues of race, the shows once again seem to become more thematically similar to one another during the adaptation processes. It also seems that the adaptation process further homogenizes the audience by either actively ignoring issues of race and/or by creating or furthering the roles of African American characters as outsiders or antagonists within these worlds. These adaptations thereby limit access points on racial grounds. African Americans, in the worlds created by these three television shows, exist as innate outsiders or antagonists; an implication is created, therefore, that in order for African Americans to assimilate into the worlds at hand, they must somehow mimic the normalized white characters against whom they are so often situated. This notion gets perpetuated further by a tendency to ignore possible (or even probable) instances of racial discrimination or oppression, as is evidenced in the *Pretty Little*

Liars and *The Vampire Diaries* adaptations. This trend surrounding the portrayal of African American characters in the adaptations at hand further indicates the process of market segmentation; Alloy's intended young adult market appears to exclude African Americans, at least in the context of these adaptations.

Conclusions

Alloy Entertainment creates young adult novels and, in part, funds their adaptations. Its products are explicitly targeted at young adults, a fact which seems obvious considering its ties to Alloy, Inc., a marketing company that explicitly advertises to a young adult market. An examination of three Alloy novel series and their subsequent television adaptations, however, reveals a homogenization of structure and audience that leads to further market segmentation; rather than a mass young adult appeal, these products limit access points for viewers who do not fit into an upper middle to upper class, white, girl mold.

Obviously, as the book sales and ratings of these three series would indicate, many readers and viewers can enter into and enjoy Alloy worlds; yet, the exclusivity of the consumption process in each of these three adaptations is clear. This notion of exclusive consumption seems to promote a specific mentality—one that coincides with Alloy's favored market segment—and thereby encourages viewers with varying backgrounds to attempt to adhere to the mentality associated with the targeted market segment. A limiting of audience access points, in other words, seems to encourage all viewers to attempt to fit into Alloy's exclusive market segment, even if such an attempt would require viewers to alter their own behavior in some way.

Gossip Girl, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries* have much to offer. Each of the books presents a reader with depictions of strong, active, smart female characters. They allow readers to enter into the stories through the perspectives of these strong young women. And, while the books emphasize a need for their girl characters to consume, they also emphasize the importance of female bonding and female friendship. The shows, in large part, seem to uphold these ideals. Strong female characters dominate each show, and the importance of female bonding and female friendship persists and is, in the cases of *Pretty Little Liars* and *The Vampire Diaries*, heightened in the adaptation process. The fact still remains, though, that the television shows seem to resist access on class and race bases. Similarly, Alloy's ties to Delia's and the adoption of soap opera conventions for each of these three television adaptations reveal a strong focus on girls and on gendered notions of consumption. These facts serve to create exclusive products, and as I have detailed in this thesis, that exclusivity is emphasized in the adaptation processes of *Gossip Girl*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *The Vampire Diaries*. In its clear promotion of such a focused market segment, Alloy establishes a particular, exclusive mold; and, the company seems to encourage its viewers, regardless of individual background, to do their best to fit into this Alloy mold.

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