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## Out of Anger and Deception: A Feminist Rhetorical Criticism of Toxic Relationships in Steven Universe

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The image features a central composition of overlapping organic shapes in dark blue, light blue, and light grey. The word "Just" is written in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font within a light grey shape. The background is white, decorated with several small, solid blue dots scattered across the frame. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and minimalist.

**“Just**

The image features a central text element surrounded by abstract, organic shapes in various shades of blue and light blue. The shapes are layered and overlapping, creating a sense of depth. Small, solid blue dots are scattered throughout the composition, adding to the abstract aesthetic. The overall style is clean and modern, with a focus on color and form.

**“Just say**

The image features a central text element surrounded by abstract, organic shapes in various shades of blue and light blue. The shapes are layered and overlap, creating a sense of depth. Small, solid blue dots are scattered throughout the composition, adding to the abstract aesthetic. The overall style is clean and modern.

**“Just say yes.”**



# **Out of Anger and Deception: A Feminist Rhetorical Criticism of Toxic Relationships in Steven Universe**

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# Areas Covered

01 Background



Methodology 02



03 Results



Significance 04



# Steven Universe -- The Premise

- “Gem” aliens, protect the earth
  - All have and are named after gemstones
- About Steven Universe, a half-gem, half-human boy



# Context -- Fusion

Fusion is symbolic of ...

- Intimacy
- Consent
- Harmony
- Friendship/Relationships







## Jasper and Lapis Lazuli



# Timeline

## Pre-Fusion

Beginning/initial interaction

## Malachite

Their time in a relationship/a  
literal embodiment

## Alone at Sea

Their final interaction/episode  
together

# Concepts

Intersectionality -- The cross-section of Gem status and gender.

Power dynamics -- Physical power imbalance/literal power imbalance

Gender roles -- The presentation of Jasper as the “man” in the relationship.

Gender performances -- Masculine Jasper/Feminine Lapis Lazuli

Hierarchies/hegemonies -- The societal hegemonies and social hierarchies of their position and powers.

# Goals and Objectives



1. Identify the toxic and abusive behavior belonging to the characters and relationship.



2. Identify the symbolic nature of their relationship and how the other characters' reactions give perspective to the nature of their relationship.



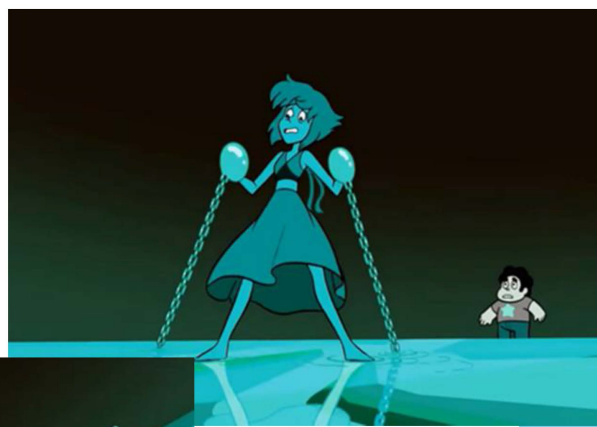
3. Identify the message and implications of their portrayal as viewed by the audience



# The Results









# Key Findings

- **Jasper's behavior is noted as being wrong multiple times, in various ways.**
- **Lapis' behavior is called into question, despite her seemingly good intentions.**
- **The relationship is noted as being unstable, and is an active concern for the main characters.**

# Significance

1. The toxic nature of Lapis and Jasper relationships is communicated to the audience as something bad.
2. Despite Lapis' complicated position in the relationship, she is depicted making the right choice.
3. Steven and other characters demonstrate appropriate reactions and opinions regarding Lapis and Jasper's relationship.



Torena, Agustín. Tumblr, 20 April 2016,  
<https://agustintorena.tumblr.com/post/143133721652/yep-i-still-suck-at-backgrounds>.

# Significance

1. The toxic nature of Lapis and Jasper relationships is communicated to the audience as something bad.
2. Despite Lapis' complicated position in the relationship, she is depicted making the right choice.
3. Steven and other characters demonstrate appropriate reactions and opinions regarding Lapis and Jasper's relationship.

● **Lapis and Jasper's relationship educates and introduces the audience to toxic relationships.**



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# Thank you for watching.

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