

Fall 2015

# “Jane Eyre: An Ancestor Heroine for Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Literature”

Emmanuela Ann Bean

Otterbein University, [emmanuela.bean@otterbein.edu](mailto:emmanuela.bean@otterbein.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [http://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/stu\\_dist](http://digitalcommons.otterbein.edu/stu_dist)

 Part of the [Literature in English, Anglophone outside British Isles and North America Commons](#)

---

## Recommended Citation

Bean, Emmanuela Ann, “Jane Eyre: An Ancestor Heroine for Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Literature” (2015). *Distinction Papers*. Paper 37.

This Distinction Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research & Creative Work at Digital Commons @ Otterbein. It has been accepted for inclusion in Distinction Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Otterbein. For more information, please contact [library@otterbein.edu](mailto:library@otterbein.edu).

Senior Literary Studies Project  
Distinction Project  
Emmanuela Bean  
1, April 2016

## “Jane Eyre: An Ancestor Heroine for Contemporary Young Adult Dystopian Literature”

Young women make up a majority of young adult dystopian fiction readers,<sup>1</sup> and these female readers can't get enough of the strong, independent, inspiring female heroines taking center stage in popular young adult novels like, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, and *Divergent* by Veronica Roth.<sup>2</sup> But through scholarly research and critical analysis I argue that many of these young adult novels feature heroines who descend at least in part from a Victorian heroine named Jane Eyre.<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* features a heroine that young women might not think is the ancestor to Katniss and Beatrice. Written in 1847, *Jane Eyre* is a Victorian novel that has become a literary classic, appealing especially to women readers. *Jane Eyre* is a first person narrative, which gives readers an intimate experience of Jane's tragic yet restorative

---

<sup>1</sup> Megan Lewit wrote an article for *The Atlantic* claiming that “the YA genre tends to favor female authors and audiences”-Lewit, Meghan. “Why Do Female Authors Dominate Young-Adult Fiction?” *The Atlantic*. The Atlantic, 7 August 2012. Web.

<sup>2</sup> Andre Liptak's “A Brief History of the Dystopian Novel” discusses the history and significance of the dystopian novel and explains how each dystopian novel from the 19th to 21st century have been written during a troublesome time in history. The first dated dystopian novel, *The Time Machine* by H.G. Wells (1895) was written during a time where Wells was interested with Darwin's evolutionary theory and social classes. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) was inspired by the advances in socialism and communism in Europe. George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) was published post World War II, and the novel explored Orwell's thoughts on government that appeared out of devastating conflict. *The Hunger Games* (2008) by Suzanne Collins, written during the United States recession and *Divergent* (2011) by Veronica Roth written post recession were both novels questioning the power of government, and the relationship between economic classes. All dystopian novels seem to be products of their current economic and political environments, and they question power, government, and economic class.

<sup>3</sup> Another writer has also made the connection that Jane Eyre works as an ancestor heroine for Katniss and Beatrice. Miranda A. Green-Barteet wrote an essay titled, “I'm beginning to know who I am”: The Rebellious Subjectives of Katniss Everdeen and Tris Prior.” This essay discusses Jane Eyre acting as an ancestor heroine to Beatrice Prior and Katniss Everdeen. Green-Barteet states that it is Jane's ability to rebel against her aunt Reed that makes her similar to Tris and Katniss, due to their motivations in rebelling against their society, government, and authoritative figures. It is when Jane says, “I resisted all the way: a new thing for me,” that becomes Green-Barteet's basis for her argument.

life. The novel covers Jane's life up to her marriage, from her childhood with her cruel aunt and cousins, the Reeds, and her abusive experience at the supposedly charitable Lowood School, to her years as a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she falls in love with Mr. Rochester,. She then leaves Thornfield after discovering the truth about his marital status, stumbles upon her cousins, and finally returns to Thornfield to marry Rochester. It's safe to say Jane has a life filled with struggles to fit in socially and to accept the state of circumstances around her. Jane is emotionally and even physically abused as a child during her time staying at her Aunt Reed's and her education at the strict religious boarding school, Lowood. These trials leave Jane with the quiet strength to become an independent woman who can fight for self-respect, freedom, and well-being. Jane encounters dilemmas any teenager today could relate to. She suffers from self-consciousness about her appearance as well as pressure to fit in and be a socially acceptable woman. Readers can also identify with her longing for companionship, her desires for adventure, and her mixed feelings about falling in love.

The two other novels I will focus on, *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, are modern dystopian novels that have become best sellers and global sensations among young adult readers. Each of their heroines suffers from anxieties, depression, self-consciousness, and struggles of living in the lower class – much like Bronte's Jane. But these heroines also share Jane Eyre's positive characteristics such as independence, committed values, analytic and thoughtful minds, and a fiery strength.<sup>4</sup> *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins was released in the year 2008, and

---

<sup>4</sup> Green-Bartlett's essay continues to state that Jane, Katniss, and Beatrice represent and hold the same values, rebellion, and ambition. She says, "Jane, who is a distinctly nineteenth-century heroine, not only represents the possibilities of resistance, empowerment, and subjectivity, but she also acts as a predecessor to the other young female protagonists who desire independence, particularly for the rebellious young women at the heart of many contemporary dystopian novels for young adults. Like Jane, the young women of novels such as Suzanne Collins's "Hunger Games" series and Veronica Roth's "Divergent" series are coming of age in oppressive societies which do not value strong, independent, opinionated young women. Like Jane, these young women are accustomed to following their societies' rules" (33-34). Jane, Katniss, and Beatrice all have to find their inner strength and break societies' rules in order to live as their true selves in a world that silences the heroine.

its following grew quickly after readers fell in love with Collins' protagonist and heroine, Katniss Everdeen. Unlike other popular young adult fiction heroines of the 21st century e.g. *Twilight's* Bella Swan, Katniss is a 16 year old girl who is born and raised in the poverty stricken, District 12. The United States was split up into 12 Districts after an uprising happened against the government long ago (no specific date is given), and the government system called the Capital, or Panem, decided that the Hunger Games would be a reminder to each district about the "dark days" and would prevent another uprising from happening. Katniss's District 12 operates to provide coal to the other districts and the Capital, and is known to be the poorest and most dangerous district next to 11, which is a farming district. Like Jane Eyre, Katniss has had a troubling and depressing childhood, losing her father at the age of 11, and becoming the provider and hunter of the family after her mother went into a serious depression from the death of her father. Katniss struggles with her belief in beating the odds after volunteering as tribute in the games after her younger sister, Prim, is chosen. Just as Jane is a quiet but fiery heroine, Katniss also fights in the games first by holding her tongue, and then later enlisting her fire for freedom and survival to beat the odds in the hunger games and her life.

In Veronica Roth's *Divergent*, Beatrice Prior is another heroine for whom Jane works as an ancestor. Written in 2011, *Divergent* was another dystopian young adult novel that attracted the attention of young adult readers, especially women. In a very similar storyline to *The Hunger Games*, the United States has split up into five factions, and they serve as walls to what's beyond the dystopian state. The five factions each practice a value that each claim help balance out their world. Erudite is intelligence, Candor is honesty, Abnegation is selflessness, Dauntless is bravery, and Amity is peace. Beatrice and her family are a part of Abnegation. When children turn

sixteen, they must participate in choosing day, which is similar to “the reaping ceremony” in *The Hunger Games* but this test determines the faction these children will live in for the rest of their lives. When Beatrice takes an aptitude test to determine which faction she belongs in, she is told she has failed the test because she is “Divergent.” Divergent means she is all of the factions combined, and therefore she is a threat to society. They then tell her she may choose whichever faction she wants, and she chooses Dauntless. Beatrice’s brother, Caleb, however chooses Erudite, and revelations are slowly made that the Erudite leader runs a secret rebellion against the other factions. Although a reader will not have an immediate revelation that Jane Eyre is an ancestor to these two dystopian heroines, readers will next see that certain scenes in *Jane Eyre* are almost reincarnated in *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, showcasing that Jane’s struggles in the Victorian period are relevant to 21st century young women.

Previous scholars have also traced connections between Victorian writers like Bronte and contemporary fiction. One very interesting article compares Jane Eyre to Bella Swan from *Twilight* by Stephanie Meyer. The article, Katie Kapurch’s “Unconditionally and Irrevocably”: Theorizing the Melodramatic Impulse in Young Adult Literature through the *Twilight* Saga and *Jane Eyre*,” argues that Jane Eyre is a melodramatic character, and we can see Bella Swan as a modern teen heroine who embodies melodramatic characteristics very similar to Jane. Kapurch links *Jane Eyre* to other narrative melodramas that include a coming of age story, including *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Kapurch 165-166).<sup>5</sup> She argues that Jane and Bella both embody darker, more depressing emotions within the framework of a coming-of-age story.

---

<sup>5</sup> Kapurch, Katie. “Unconditionally and Irrevocably”: Theorizing the Melodramatic Impulse in Young Adult Literature through the *Twilight* Saga and *Jane Eyre*.” *Children’s Literature Association Quarterly* 37. 2 (2012): 164-187. Print.

“Everdene and Everdeen: Allusions within Suzanne Collins,’ *The Hunger Games*.” also discusses how Suzanne Collins drew inspiration from 19th century Victorian novels with Thomas Hardy’s book, *Far from the Maddening Crowd*.<sup>6</sup> When Collins did an interview with *Entertainment Weekly*, she mentions that Katniss’s last name, Everdeen, is based off of Bathsheba Everdene, the heroine of the novel. Clearly, Collins is taking influence from 19th century heroines and the significance of using their full maiden names as a means of presenting an independent and powerful heroine.

### **The Three Mirror Scenes**

One particular scene that happens in the beginning of *Jane Eyre* and has been reincarnated in *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent* is a mirror scene. These are not merely moments where the character passively looks into the mirror, but when their vulnerability and self-examination of appearance is on full display. Beatings from John Reed and abusive words and actions from Mrs. Reed have convinced Jane to hide her feelings and create the mask of a quiet martyr. When Jane is in the Red Room as punishment, she discusses her encounter with the mirror in the room. She says, “my fascinated glance involuntarily explored the depth it revealed. All looked colder and darker in that visionary hollow than in reality: and the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, had the effect of a real spirit” (Bronte 11). Jane can see in the mirror that there is an inward spirit that exists somewhere inside of her, but her sorrows conceal that strength, leaving her with a mask of gloom and despair. In Laurence Talairach-Vielmas’ article “Portrait of a Governess, Disconnected, Poor, and Plain’: Staging the Spectral Self in Charlotte

---

<sup>6</sup> Alvey, Jamie. “Everdene and Everdeen: Allusions within Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*.” *Kentucky English Bulletin* 62.1 (2012): 69-71. Print.

Brontë's *Jane Eyre*” he argues that the mirror scene in *Jane Eyre* explores outer appearance in a gothic setting.<sup>7</sup> He says, “Charlotte Brontë negotiates the tensions surrounding the aesthetic feminine ideal through her revision of gothic stereotypes. Indeed, she uses the motif of the specter both to define the inner self and to map out her heroine’s physical changes. The gothic scenes in the novel are all related to mirrors and deal, therefore, with outer appearance.” He goes on to examine Jane’s “tensions surrounding the aesthetic feminine ideal” through Jane’s unconventional beauty and her longing for acceptable beauty in the Victorian era. The author describes Jane’s longings for Victorian beauty in passages like this one: “I sometimes wished to have rosy cheeks, a straight nose, and small cherry mouth; I desired to be tall, stately and finely developed in figure; I felt it a misfortune that I was so little, so pale, and had features so irregular and so marked” (Brontë, p. 106) (Vielmas 131). Like Jane, Katniss and Beatrice see themselves as lacking beauty and failing to conform to their peers. An article by Abigail Heiniger, “The Faery and the Beast,” notes how the other female characters in the novel, such as Blanche Ingram, Rochester’s potential lover, embody the “Angel or classical goddess — an unrealistic male-created ideal” while Jane is a “changeling” or in other words, a creature from another world such as a fairy (Heiniger 24).<sup>8</sup> Just as Katniss describes, it’s not so much a decision for these heroines to hide their emotions, but it is rather the negative effects and circumstances of society that force them to hide their strength and self-confidence. Jane’s experience with the mirror also happens with Katniss in *The Hunger Games* and Beatrice in *Divergent* as well.

Like Jane in the Red Room, Beatrice experiences a mirror scene that raises the important question: Can she recognize herself? Beatrice Prior, who goes by the nickname “Tris” or “Stiff,”

---

<sup>7</sup> Talairach-Vielmas, Laurence. “Portrait of a Governess, Disconnected, Poor, and Plain’: Staging the Spectral Self in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*.” *Brontë Studies* 34.2 (2009): 127-137. Print.

<sup>8</sup> Heiniger, Abigail. “The Faery and the Beast.” *Brontë Studies* 31.1 (2006): 23-29. Print.

is like Katniss Everdeen from *The Hunger Games*, in that Beatrice is a strong, independent sixteen year old who chooses to fight rather than sit back and accepting the dystopian future as it appears. As stated earlier, the factions each have a value they practice, and Beatrice's faction, Abnegation, practices selflessness. Because Beatrice and her family adhere to the value of selflessness, this permits them to live constantly for the sake of others, such as giving up the last seat on the bus, or offering to help others, no matter how difficult the task may be. But Beatrice doesn't feel like she fits it with her faction, due to her inability to think of others first. Beatrice is a heroine readers would not immediately compare to Jane Eyre, but the similarities in their appearance and character emerge right from the first paragraph of the first chapter. Beatrice mentions that there is only one mirror in her family's house and it is tucked away behind a sliding panel in the hallway upstairs. Beatrice's practice of selflessness also includes no vanity, meaning that members are not allowed to stare or even look longer than a blink of themselves in the mirror, as it would be considered vain. But Beatrice is actually able to steal a glance at herself while her mother cuts her hair, and she describes her appearance, saying, "In my reflection I see a narrow face, wide, round eyes, and a long, thin nose— I still look like a little girl, though sometime in the last few months I turned sixteen" (2). Beatrice sees herself as a plain and innocent looking little girl. She seems to crave a feeling of being a woman as opposed to a girl.

Katniss, like Beatrice, also mentions a moment of self-examination in a mirror. When Katniss has to dress herself nicely for the reaping,<sup>9</sup> she says, "I can hardly recognize myself in the cracked mirror that leans against the wall" (15). Mirrors for Jane Eyre, Beatrice, and Katniss

---

<sup>9</sup> The reaping is the choosing ceremony to determine participants for the hunger games. One girl and boy from each district, ages 12-18, are chosen to fight to the death in an arena until the last one is left standing. The winner receives a lifetime of food, water, a nice house, and fame among all the districts.

all produce a dramatic moment when the heroines actually look at their reflections in them. Katniss does not understand why she can't recognize herself, which might come from her inexperience with mirrors, but also her circumstances as a sixteen year old girl living in poverty. Wearing a dress is not common for her except for reaping ceremonies. But she might not be able to recognize herself because maybe she knows there is change or will be a change. We know this is probably the last time Katniss saw herself in a mirror at her District before she is whisked away to the Capital.

This lack of confidence and misfit identity help explain why so many readers including myself, relate to and see ourselves in characters like Jane, Tris, and Katniss. Teenagers grow tired of reading about beautiful and super-powered heroines. They want to actually see characters as reflections of their emotions, thoughts, and looks. Jane, Tris, and Katniss are heroines who are insecure about their looks and flaws but who still persevere and achieve their ambitions even though they feel flawed and uncertain.

### **Uniforms Strip Heroines Beauty**

All three novels also show external forces that are preventing the heroine from recognizing herself or acting independently. Beatrice mentions that her mother ties her hair in a knot that's twisted away from her face, and that their "gray clothes," "plain" hairstyles, and "unassuming demeanor" of their faction make them invisible (6). Roth implies that uniforms hide the individual self and instead make the wearer of the uniform represent something, whether a religious school, an office with a set attire, or even a fast food restaurant. Paradoxically, uniforms make someone visible because they are representing values, a cause for a company, but also invisible in that the wearer is dressed like everyone else. Uniforms leave little room for individual identity, which is a major theme in all three of these novels.

In the description of Abnegation's uniform, the gray clothes they wear are described as "robes" that look like long dresses on women, and their appearance actually sounds similar to the Lowood school uniforms Jane Eyre and her classmates had to wear. Jane mentions, "they were uniformly dressed in brown stuff frocks of quint fashion, and long holland pinafores" (36). Lowood's uniform is meant to hide and conceal these young girls' natural beauty and to dismiss their individual identity or selfhood. Although as a child, Jane was unhappy with her "uniform" way of dressing, she unintentionally becomes a non-conformist with her beauty. Jane sees the waste of fancy clothes, fine jewelry, and makeup and refuses to be what Heiniger refers women of the Victorian era as "angel girl" or "goddess." Jane emphatically refuses to assume the role of the angel in the house.<sup>10</sup> She must be herself — a changeling, the elf in the house. As a changeling, she challenges and deconstructs the beautiful, passive, domestic pre-Victorian ideal" (Heiniger 24). Jane is a Victorian heroine who actually breaks conventional beauty standards of her time, and provides an inspirational figure for readers in that she doesn't let makeup, nice clothes, and hair define who she is. The self-effacing uniforms of Lowood and Abnegation both work to erase the thought of self-worth and to hide women's individual appearances, but as Jane and Tris grow, they develop their own personal ideas of beauty and self-worth.

### **Suppressed feelings**

Although all three protagonists have early impulses to rebel and express their voices, they have been socialized to suppress their voices. Like her ancestor Jane Eyre, Katniss suffers from depression and insecurities about her appearance. Katniss considers why she is quiet even though

---

<sup>10</sup> *The Angel in the House* is a 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian poem by Coventry Patmore. It is studied among scholars for its Victorian ideologies of men and women role. Women were "angels of the house" meaning they were supposed to be domestic, while men could work.

she is longing for her voice to be heard. She says that when she was younger, she would bash the Capital, District 12, and their rulers while not realizing the Capital had spies and cameras secretly sent and placed to watch the districts. Katniss notes that this defiant spirit would scare her mother to death: “Eventually I understood this would only lead us to more trouble. So I learned to hold my tongue and to turn my features into an indifferent mask so that no one could ever read my thoughts” (6). Katniss hopes and craves to speak her mind, but past mistakes and the Capital have convinced her that silencing her real thoughts is the only way she can survive her surroundings. The book, *Bread, Blood and the Hunger Games* edited by Mary Pharr and Leisa Clark, features critical essays on Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games*. The chapter, “Katniss Everdeen’s Liminal Choices and the Foundations of Revolutionary Ethic” by Guy Andre Risko discusses this topic in that society and horrible politics i.e. the Capital, made Katniss a heroine.<sup>11</sup> Without coming from poverty and being protective and caring of her family, Katniss would not have volunteered for her sister in order to save her family. Risko claims that Katniss’s acting upon these circumstances makes her a “Homo Sacer.”<sup>12</sup>

Jenny Sharpe wrote an article titled, “Excerpts of *Allegories of Empire*” that addresses this issue of Jane’s suppressed feelings and her role as a “rebel slave.”<sup>13</sup> Sharpe argues, “As an orphan and poor relation at Gateshead, the young Jane has a social rank even lower than that of the servants. This opening scene, with its movement from bondage to freedom and from an imposed silence to speech, has been triumphantly claimed by feminist critics. Yet, if one reads the

---

<sup>11</sup> Risko, Guy Andre. “Katniss Everdeen’s Liminal Choices and the Foundations of Revolutionary Ethic.” *Of Bread, Blood and the Hunger Games: Critical Essays on Suzanne Collins Trilogy*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co. 2012. Print.

<sup>12</sup> *Homo sacer* is a person who is banned or outcast by society, and can be killed by anyone, which in this case is Katniss volunteering as tribute in the hunger games, allowing any tribute in the games to kill her.

<sup>13</sup> Sharpe, Jenny. “Excerpts of *Allegories of Empire*.” *Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre: A Casebook*. Ed. Elsie B. Michie. New York: Oxford University Press. 2006. 79-103. Print.

scene in terms of its slave references as I have, one notices that assertions of a rebellious feminism are enacted through the figure of a rebel slave.” Similarly, Jane endures childhood beatings from her cousin John Reed and abusive words and actions from her aunt Mrs. Reed. Their harsh responses to her small rebellions have convinced her to hide her feelings and create the mask of a passive martyr, meaning that Jane tends to internalize her anger and carry it with her rather than fight back with every battle presented to her. She only releases it when there are false accusations against her and her character and values are put at risk. All three novels show heroines who must (and will) learn to recognize themselves, even as all three are surrounded by forces that would suppress them.

### **Heroines Suffer from Depression**

Jane paves a path for heroines in contemporary dystopian literature to address depression overtly, which was uncommon in Victorian literature. Jane refers openly to her struggles with melancholy and depression as a result of her traumatic childhood. This melancholy is especially present while Jane lives with her relatives, the Reeds, as a child and when she enters Lowood boarding school. In the 19th century and today, childhood is a fragile stage when bullying, peer pressure, and self-consciousness surge both at home and at school. Jane experiences terrible isolation and loneliness at Gateshead, her childhood home:

“I was a discord in Gateshead Hall; I was like nobody there; I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathise with one amongst them; a heterogeneous thing, opposed to them in temperament, in capacity, in propensities; a useless thing, incapable of serving their interest,

or adding to their pleasure; a noxious thing, cherishing the germs of indignation at their treatment, of contempt of their judgement” (Bronte 12).

This childhood depression stems from her poor treatment at the hands of her aunt and cousin due to what she sees lacking in her class, looks, and character. Jane describes herself as having come home with “a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed” (5). Clearly Jane is traumatized by the abuse of her relatives and home life. She begins to believe that no matter where she goes, she will be disliked for her character and class, and will never find true happiness or peace. Although Jane’s depression derives from childhood trauma, many contemporary readers can relate to Jane because they too have suffered from depression or melancholy. Certainly every reader of the novel has experienced some of Jane’s lack of confidence, trauma, grief, poverty, loneliness or isolation. Jane sums up her depression as an “unutterable wretchedness of mind” (16) Depression to Jane, and possibly to other young readers, feels like a diseased way of thinking that we cannot rid ourselves of. Katniss and Beatrice are contemporary heroines who suffer from depression in similar ways to Jane Eyre.

Katniss experiences depression caused in part by her responsibility as the provider of her family after experiencing the traumatic death of her father. Her life in poverty, as well as the rules and regulations set by the Capital, create a sense of void in her life. At the beginning of the novel, Katniss mentions how her father taught her how to hunt before his death, saying, “My father knew and he taught me some before he was blown to bits in a mine explosion. There was nothing even to bury. I was eleven then. Five years later, I still wake up screaming for him to run” (5). Clearly this horrifying event has traumatized Katniss and has left her mentally scarred. She describes her depressing emotions after his death, explaining, “The numbness of his loss had

passed, and the pain would hit me out of nowhere, doubling me over, racking my body with sobs” (26). She continues to explain, “I was terrified. I suppose now that my mother was locked in some dark world of sadness, but at the time, all I knew was that I had not only lost my father, but a mother as well. At eleven years old, with Prim just seven, I took over as head of the family. There was no choice” (27). As Jane was traumatized by her abusive childhood, Katniss is traumatized by her father’s physical death, and her mother’s mental psychological loss.<sup>14</sup> This leaves Katniss with no choice to grow up fast, and become the provider and protector of the family, causing a great deal of pressure to ensure her mother and Prim’s happiness, just as Jane grew up to be a governess, which presented its own struggles.

### **Heroines Strength**

As these heroines suffer from their own personal struggles and depression, they overcome their obstacles by gaining self confidence and searching for the true purpose of their lives. Katniss for example, identifies as plain, although she links it to a more important feeling. She says, “I am not pretty. I am not beautiful. I am as radiant as the sun” (121). Katniss comes to a discerning moment where she realizes it is not external appearance that makes us beautiful, but the inward radiance or positivity we decide to let show. The characters of Jane and Katniss teach young readers about beauty and how it has to come from a feeling of inward confidence rather

---

<sup>14</sup> An article by Alison Bewley argues that Katniss’s loss of her father helped create her role as a unconventional heroine by taking on masculine traits absent from her father’s death. She explains, “Fatherless heroines such as Katniss Everdeen may be in an especially good position to challenge the traditional gender binary, inasmuch as authors may show them (as Collins does) stepping into the door vacated by their lost parent and exhibiting stereotypically masculine traits. On the surface, it appears that Katniss’s “hybridity and androgyny” and “prowess in traditional male realms” such as the hunting and survival skills associated with her father have launched her out of the victim role and into the role of her own savior, as Ellyn Lem and Holly Hassel have argued” (122). Katniss becomes her own savior and unconventional heroine by taking on what would be considered masculine traits of hunting, climbing, and acting as the family provider upon her father’s tragic death.

than external praise. As Jane eventually realizes that her idea of beauty isn't about being "the angel in the house" Katniss comes to see that clothes and plastic surgery, such as the Capital practices, don't produce confidence but rather the inward feeling of radiance that makes her confident. Katniss has this realization when she is preparing to appear on the Capital's tribute talk show. Cinna, Katniss's stylist, reassures Katniss about her likability, saying, "No one can help but admire your spirit" (121-122). But Katniss responds to Cinna with a self-empowering revelation. "My spirit. This is a new thought. I'm not sure exactly what it means, but it suggests I'm a fighter. In a sort of brave way" (121-122). This scene explores Katniss's idea of inner radiance. Young adult readers want to feel good about themselves, like they are brave, strong, and confident. Katniss assures readers that one's inner self can fulfill feelings of self-doubt. A strong sense of self is internal rather than external, which protects the self and makes it impenetrable. Katniss's outlook on self as inner radiance is an important message for young women readers. It is a message that *Jane Eyre* also sends readers. Both of these texts urge readers to define the self as interior and capable of progress and strength.

Jane's insistence upon her inner self and spirit happens right before Mr. Rochester's marriage proposal to her. This passage is also probably the most famously quoted in Bronte's novel. After Blanche, Mr. Rochester's would-be lover, has had her long stay at Thornfield, Jane is certain that Mr. Rochester will marry Blanche, and is angered by Mr. Rochester dancing around the topic. Jane expresses with passion,

"Do you think I am an automaton? — a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! — I have as much soul as you — and full as much heart! And if God had gifted

me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal — as we are!” (215-216)

Jane explicitly says that she has “as much a soul” as Mr. Rochester and claims that “it is my spirit that addresses your spirit.” Like Katniss claims that radiance and self are internal, Jane insists upon her dignity and integrity by informing Mr. Rochester she has a fiery spirit that will not be diminished by his complicated games of love.<sup>15</sup> Jane and Katniss don’t want to be viewed as “machines” which might happen due to the fact that they are of a lower class and have faced tragic events that caused them to hold their tongue and always be on their guard. But there has to come a point, both heroines realize, when inner strength and selfhood offer the only voice and perhaps the only link to sanity in a unjust, unpredictable society.

Beatrice also comes to the realization of her own integrity and independent selfhood.

When Beatrice is first introduced to her living quarters at Dauntless, and is informed about the stages of initiation she needs to pass to permanently stay with Dauntless, she is threatened by

---

<sup>15</sup> Some critics argue that Jane’s denial of her cousin, St. John’s, hand in marriage showcases Jane’s independent will and fiery spirit. In Kelsey L Bennett’s article, “Exile and the Reconciling Power of the Natural Affections in *Jane Eyre*” she says, “Beyond the fact that Jane recognizes without any doubt that her own spirit will not conform to the same mould as her cousin’s, it remains for her to discover a fitting alternative. While she is at Morton, natural affection has come for her to mean the joys of kinship, or ‘full fellow-feeling’ (Bronte 398). As such, Jane conforms closely with the Wesleyan model of disinterested benevolence which, as schoolmistress for the poor, works in tandem with her devotion to her newly discovered family and her love of country. And yet while this situation, set ‘in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England’, satisfies her principles, her propensities remain unfulfilled: she remains, in the most vital sense, in exile. Only through the crisis which St John precipitates is Jane able to reach a way of knowing unprecedented in her life — one that enables her to move beyond mere principle or inclination and act from her whole being. It is at once a moving out and a returning.” Through living with her cold, yet faith filled cousin, Jane recognizes she is in exile. She is safe, which is not satisfying to Jane. She needs to exercise her spirit and follow where her will takes her, even if it’s away from her family.

other current and potential members. She says, “My odds, as the smallest initiate, as the only Ab-negation transfer, are not good” (72). And when one potential initiate asks what will happen if they are cut, one of the leader’s replies that they would have to leave the faction even if they’d been placed there from the test and have to live factionless. When Beatrice hears this news, she resists her first impulse to cry and says, “I feel colder. Harder.” and promises herself, “I will be a member. I will” (72). There is an immediate revelation when Beatrice realizes she can turn her weakness into strength. She doesn’t want to resort to tears or surrender to defeat because of her social status and lower class upbringing. Inner strength will motivate her to action.

### **Heroines Face Societal Judgement**

Along with the struggle to feel beautiful, Katniss, Beatrice, and Jane all fall under the pressures of being watched and judged by their societies in very distinct ways. One major scene from all three of these novels that stands out to young readers is the scene in *The Hunger Games* where Katniss volunteers as tribute to replace her young sister, Prim, in participating in the Hunger Games. It’s a moment when Katniss decides to make a full visible display in front of the Capital, literally screaming to have her voice and actions be heard and seen. Her lines that are famously quoted as a pop culture phenomenon: “I volunteer! I volunteer as tribute!” Katniss is making herself noticeable as a result of unfortunate circumstances. If Prim had not been chosen or if Katniss didn’t care about Prim, she would not have spoken up. Jane is faced with the same circumstance when she is called out for being a liar and ridiculed by her classmates. This is not because Jane out of her own free will wanted to be a liar, but a disastrous circumstance put her in that position to be “put on the pedestal” so to say like Katniss at the reaping ceremony.

This disastrous circumstance scene in *Jane Eyre* has a similar effect to *The Hunger Games*, when Jane is publicly called a liar by Mr. Brocklehurst at Lowood School, and must

stand on a platform with a sign that says “liar” around her neck. Any child who walks by her is free to riddle, mock, and say harsh words to Jane. Jane says, “I felt their eyes directed like burning glasses against my scorched skin” (Bronte 56). Jane, like Katniss, is placed before the public and is allowing herself to be judged in front of her peers. In Beth Newman’s article, “Excerpts from *Subjects on Display*”<sup>16</sup> Newman claims that “Jane’s desire to avoid being seen seems particularly fitted to the social norms of interclass protocol, as well as to an ideal that is setting itself up against the spectacle of aristocratic display” (156). Katniss and Jane experience society as a place where they are not safe from judgement and watchful eyes. As teenagers and young women know, judgement and being the center of attention for the wrong reasons are some of our biggest fears.<sup>17</sup> Katniss and Jane suffer as a result of public acknowledgement and judgment, although both of them learn from their experiences.

Beatrice is put on display and judged just like Jane and Katniss. On choosing day, Beatrice must decide if she wants to stay in her faction, Abnegation, or join a new faction, which in her case after taking the test is Dauntless. Dauntless practices the value of fearlessness, meaning that they are the protectors of the five factions’ borders, watching for and then addressing any dangers that arise. Despite Beatrice’s sheltered upbringing and conservative values, she is willing

---

<sup>16</sup> Newman, Beth. “Excerpts from *Subjects on Display*.” *Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre: A Casebook*. Ed. Elsie B. Michie. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2006. 155-166. Print.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Cayton’s article, “The “Rights of Women” and the Problem of Power” discusses Europe’s 18th societal view of women, and how a single woman was judged. He states that social standards of marriage and beauty were heavily weighed on women. He writes, “In this patriarchal world, women exercised influence but they rarely exercised power. Elizabeth Tudor was the exception that proved the rule. Women mattered to the extent of their attachment to powerful men; young women mattered even more because their bodies, in particular their wombs, mattered. Court politics revolved around marriage, that is, an alliance among rival families. Gossip about women’s virginity, fertility, and sexuality facilitated and destroyed dynastic dreams. Fathers, uncles, and brothers chose suitors, negotiated the exchange of property, and dispensed patronage; mothers and other post-menopausal women supervised the transformation of daughters into wives (or mistresses) and eventually mothers.” Women were seen only as housewives, mothers, and incubators for children. The slightest idea of a young woman unmarried, childless, and working was shameful and embarrassing for the woman and her relations.

to join Dauntless to prove she can escape her somewhat predictable future. When she is first being introduced to its members, they are quick to judge Beatrice based on her innocent appearance and her ties to Abnegation. They even give her the nickname “Stiff” by which they refer to her as throughout the novel. She says, “My elbow stings. I pull my sleeve up to examine it, my hand shaking. Some skin is peeling off, but it isn’t bleeding.” “Ooh. *Scandalous!* A Stiff’s flashing some skin!” “Stiff is slang for Abnegation, and I’m the only one here. Peter points at me, smirking. I hear laughter. My cheeks heat up, and I let my sleeve fall” (56). Like Jane, Beatrice is physically ashamed and embarrassed by the bad attention she is unintentionally calling to herself. In another scene, initiates are put through a series of dangerous situations to test their fearlessness, and Beatrice has knives thrown at her against wall. The knife thrower is not supposed to harm or hit the initiates, but only to test their bravery. Tris does get her ear cut, which she believes was done on purpose, and she comments on this, saying, “Fear prickles inside me, in my chest and in my head and in my hands. I feel like the word “DIVERGENT” is branded on my forehead, and if he looks at me long enough, he’ll be able to read it” (164). There is even a description of feeling, “burned” and “heat” from the attention, which says that their embarrassment is a sort of public scorching. Jane is an ancestor to Katniss and Beatrice in that all three heroines are judged and publicly shamed although they try to avoid any attention. It just seems to happen because of their quiet, more hidden demeanors that draw others, and themselves into these unfortunate and awkward situations. Beatrice seems to undergo the same experience Jane seems to describe this idea of embarrassment as a “brand” or stigma on the face. Embarrassment is described as a sort of public shaming, and mentally breaks down the heroine’s integrity and character.

### **Self-recognition**

As an ancestor for modern dystopian heroines, like Beatrice and Katniss, Bronte's *Jane Eyre* comes to a moment when she finally sees herself and the public recognizes her as well. This creates one of the most critical aspects of the characters' journey that shape these women into the inspiring heroines that young women identify with today. This is where the heroine comes to a moment where they finally see themselves and the public recognizes the heroine as well. But before they come to this moment of recognizing their true selves and values, the heroines are faced with moments of spiritual immaturity. In Kristin Sexton's article, "Jane Eyre: Jane's Spiritual Coming of Age"<sup>18</sup> Sexton stresses that although heroines all experience a coming of age story, it is Jane's coming of age story that breaks the mold of 18th women novels, due to her disinterest to be identified by men in a male dominated world. Sexton also mentions that Jane's spiritual immaturity makes her journey unique in that she stands up to men and questions authority.

Jane comes to this moment when she learns of Mr. Rochester's marriage to Bertha Mason and must deny her marriage to him. She says, "The present—the passing second of time—was all I had in which to control and restrain him: a movement of repulsion, flight, fear, would have sealed my doom,—and his. But I was not afraid: not in the least. I felt an inward power; a sense of influence, which supported me" (258). Jane is never afraid to be alone or to face it. Her experience with expecting a life of loneliness has led to look inwardly, and to see who she truly is and what she truly wants in life. Her "inward power" is a predecessor to Katniss and Beatrice, who realize it is in truly knowing themselves and their strength that they will come to a full recognition of themselves.

Katniss comes to her moment of recognition when she witnesses Rue's death. "But I told Rue I'd be there. For both of us. And somehow that seems even more important than the vow I

---

<sup>18</sup> Sexton, Kristi. Jane Eyre: Jane's Spiritual Coming of Age." *Bronte Studies* 39.3 (2014): 178-86. Print.

gave Prim” (242). Although Katniss loves her sister, she is referring to how Rue’s death led her to fight against the tyranny and cruelty of the Capital. She continues to say, “I really think I stand a chance of doing it now. Winning. It’s not just having the arrows or outsmarting the Careers a few times, although those things help. Something happened when I was holding Rue’s hand, watching the life drain out of her. Now I am determined to avenge her, to make her loss unforgettable, and I can only do that by winning and thereby making myself unforgettable” (242). Rue, a 12 year old tribute from District 11, reminds Katniss of Prim and essentially becomes the only person Katniss would die for in the hunger games. Her death awakened Katniss to rebel against the Capital’s murderous and unjust games, to not only avenge Rue, but to save the lives of future generations. This moment is when Katniss becomes the symbol of hope for all the districts.

Beatrice recognizes herself when she finally understands her role as “Divergent.” When Four confronts Beatrice about paying her respects to Albert, a dauntless initiate who committed suicide, Four and Beatrice get into a conversation about her dual Abnegation and Dauntless qualities. Tris who is still questioning whether her heart is with her old or new faction, Four tells Beatrice that her abnegation’s practices are valuable, saying, “it’s when you’re acting selflessly that you are at your bravest” (311). Four adds that dauntless breathes life into Beatrice as well, saying, “Fear doesn’t shut you down; it wakes you up” (313). Beatrice comments on this by asking herself a simple question, “Am I wired like the Abnegation, or the Dauntless? Maybe the answer is neither. Maybe I am wired like the Divergent” (313). When Beatrice finally meets up with her brother, Caleb, who has joined Erudite, a faction that practices knowledge, she notices that Caleb is unsure about his choice of faction. When Beatrice asks him if he believes their leader, Jeanine Matthews, who is under their suspicion for speaking against Abnegation, Caleb

answers, “No. Maybe. I don’t...” He shakes his head. “I don’t know what to believe” (353). Beatrice answers, “Yes, you do,” (continued) “You know who our parents are. You know who our friends are.” (353). She finalizes her conversation by stating, “At least I know what I’m a part of, Caleb. As she’s walking away she says, “The Dauntless compound sounds like home now—at least there, I know exactly where I stand, which is on unstable ground” (355). At this moment, the reader can see Beatrice coming to terms with her choice of Dauntless as her faction. Instead of doubting and holding back from the Dauntless customs in the beginning, she can proudly defend her choice to her brother, and it sounds as if she is admitting she made the right choice in that Dauntless is a part of her, and later that Divergent is all of the factions combined.

### **Love Story as an Afterthought**

*Jane Eyre* of course has an underlying love story between her and Mr. Rochester, but it’s not the typical princess marries her prince type of Victorian novel. Jane Eyre’s arrival back at Thornfield is anything but a happy ending as Mr. Rochester doesn’t become the prince-like figure the reader would assume when Jane realizes she must go back to her true love. In fact, after Jane flees from Thornfield to distance herself from Mr. Rochester and stays with her cousin St. John, she ends up returning to Thornfield and finds that Mr. Rochester has lost his vision and is crippled. Bronte mentions, “a beam had fallen in such a way as to protect him partly; but one eye was knocked out, and one hand so crushed that Mr. Carter, the surgeon, had to amputate it directly. The other eye inflamed: he lost the sight of that also. He is now helpless, indeed—blind and a cripple” (365). Jane Eyre’s arrival back at Thornfield is a highly compromised happy ending. Mr. Rochester doesn’t become the prince figure the reader would assume when Jane realizes she must go back to her true love. Instead Mr. Rochester is visually impaired and crippled. “And,

reader, do you think I feared him in his blind ferocity?—if you do, you little know me” (367). Jane notes that if a reader imagines her as judgmental towards Rochester’s physical features, or disabilities, that reader has not read her narrative clearly. When Jane regards her actual marriage to Mr. Rochester, she simply incorporates it in her biography by stating, “Reader, I married him. A quiet wedding we had: he and I, the parson, and clerk, were alone present” (382) Without little to no detail about their current married life, Jane concludes the last paragraph of the novel “I have been married ten years” (383). Jane doesn’t care so much about discussing the details of her marriage but rather fast forward to when she has had children.<sup>19</sup> In an Steven Earnshaw article, “‘Give Me My Name’ Naming and Identity In and Around *Jane Eyre*”<sup>20</sup> Earnshaw brings up a valuable point, that the use of Jane’s full name as the title of the novel is groundbreaking, considering Jane is an unwed, poor woman. He argues, “‘Jane Eyre,’ the heroine’s complete unmarried name, asks the reader to appreciate the heroine not as somebody who is primarily seeking identity through marriage, and hence in pursuit of a married name, but *as a single female*, whose identity is important as a single female, not as somebody who will only gain significance once married” (176). Not only does Jane avoid thinking of marriage as her escape from poverty, but the title of the novel clearly states that Jane is an important character. Earnshaw continues to explain that novels centered around 18th/19th century women used their full names if they were rich, married, and of high class, and if women were single, they could only be referred to by their

---

<sup>19</sup> For Jane, marriage was never an idea of escapism, nor a constant thought. It was through Rochester and Jane’s undeniable connection that planted the seed of marriage. Jane never looked at marriage as a means of escaping her cruel Aunt Reed or her abusive experience with Lowood school. Pekin’s argument that feminists of the Victorian era looked to marriage as freedom, proves Jane as an unconventional Victorian heroine, as she mentions, “Even those we would call feminists were often ambivalent in their attitudes towards a husband and family. Freedom is a relative concept, and for many women marriage meant release from a childlike and humiliating dependence on parents” (Perkin 75). Jane didn’t marry or have a child to prove independence from her relatives, but only by her choosing to accept Rochester’s marriage after his wife, Bertha’s death.

<sup>20</sup> Earnshaw, Steven. “‘Give me my name’: Naming and Identity In and Around *Jane Eyre*” *Bronte Studies* 37.3 (2012): 174-190. Print.

first names. He gives examples, such as *Emma* (1816) by Jane Austen, and Samuel Richardson's novels, *Clarissa* (1747-48) and *Pamela* (1749-41). For Bronte to title her novel *Jane Eyre* is directly telling the audience that Jane doesn't need to be married to be referred to by her maiden name, and that there is not shame in her maiden name. She narrates on the birth of their first child, saying, "When his firstborn was put into his arms, he could see that the boy had inherited his own eyes, as they once were—large, brilliant, and black" (384-385). Jane would rather talk about the gift of a child her and Mr. Rochester have received years later as opposed to talking about intricate and intimate details about married life. To Jane, discussing her married life is not as important to the reader, as the mention of passing years that shows their commitment as a couple.

*The Hunger Games* also incorporates a love story, but it is not essentially the driving force, or the aspect that sells the novel to young women readers. Since the beginning of the first Hunger Games book, readers were anticipating an engagement or marriage between Peeta and Katniss. Of course, they have displayed signs of affection and love to one another, but don't really mention the word "date" when around each other. Collins seems to be implying that marriage wasn't the motive or "saving grace" for Katniss's fate, but rather a choice in the end. In the epilogue of the third and last book of the trilogy, *Mockingjay*, it is revealed that many years later Katniss and Peeta finally marry and have two children, a boy and a girl. Katniss briefly mentions about childbirth in the last two pages, "It took five, ten, fifteen years for me to agree. But Peeta wanted them so badly" (389). Regarding her marriage to Peeta, Katniss ends the last chapter by saying, "Peeta and I grow back together. What I need is a dandelion in the spring. The bright yellow that means rebirth instead of destruction. The promise that life can go on, no matter how bad our losses. That it can be good again. And only Peeta can give me that" (388). As Jane and Beatrice are faced with a choice, so is Katniss, who could have chosen Gale because he was her

childhood friend, and knew her family very well. But she kept coming back to Peeta because she chose to keep him alive. She could have killed him long ago in the games, but she didn't. Katniss chose Peeta because he balanced her fire with comfort and coolness, something Gale couldn't do, like St. John with Jane. Bronte seems revolutionary in a way, as she wrote in Jane and Mr. Rochester's marriage as a few sentences in the last chapters of the novel. But Bronte is clever in setting up a scenario where the reader may think marriage will be the answer to Jane's happiness. It is in fact the opposite when Mr. Rochester reveals to Jane that he is still legally married to his mentally insane wife, Bertha Mason. Collins seems to integrate this plot twist in her story as well, by having Katniss scoff at the idea of marriage and having children, yet within the first chapter of *The Hunger Games*, Gale, Katniss's childhood friend mentions that Katniss will have children someday. Taken aback by Gale's statement, Katniss responds, "I never want to have kids," and Gale responds, "I might. If I didn't live here," and Katniss has the final word, saying, "But you do" (9). Katniss doesn't see marriage as a priority when it comes to finding true happiness and a way of escaping her poverty. Jane also never explicitly mentions marriage as her pathway to true happiness and freedom, but rather her own respect of self. It's also interesting to think about how both Peeta and Mr. Rochester are impaired spouses. When Jane finally marries Mr. Rochester, he is blind from Thornfield hall burning to the ground. Peeta is also impaired due to having his leg amputated from an injury in the 74th Hunger Games. His leg is replaced with an artificial one. By featuring a physically impaired husband, both novels suggest that marriage will not lessen these heroines' strength and dominance.

In *Divergent*, Tris, like Jane and Katniss, is also not chasing after a man, nor does she explicitly say that marriage will make her happy. In the last book of the *Divergent* series, *Allegiant*,

Tris comments on her struggles with staying in a relationship with Four. “I stay with him because I choose to, every day that I wake up, every day that we fight or lie to each other or disappoint each other. I choose him over and over again, and he chooses me” (372). This is almost a reincarnation of Jane and Mr. Rochester’s conversation about marriage. “‘Which shall you make for me, Jane. I will abide by your decision.’ ‘Choose then, sir—her who loves you best.’ ‘I will at least choose—her I love best. Jane, will you marry me?’ ‘yes sir’ (382). There is a theme of commitment as a choice and not just a feeling. Jane chose Mr. Rochester because he truly loved her for her soul and spirit, not because she was an “angel on the outside” like Blanche. Four and Tris could choose to leave each other or walk away after a fight, but they don’t. They use their freedom of choice to keep coming back to each other. Jane and Mr. Rochester are the same, in that Jane gives Mr. Rochester the choice of marriage, and Mr. Rochester asks Jane to choose if she wants to be married to him. All of these marriages are realistic rather than idealistic. They are not fairy tale endings, and they keep the focus on the heroine’s own strength and independence rather than the love story.

Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* is a classic and well renowned novel of the Victorian era that is relevant to young women readers then and now. Jane Eyre works as an ancestor to today’s heroines of dystopian young adult fiction. Jane’s role as an unconventional character breathes life into modern teenager heroines, Katniss and Beatrice. It is Jane’s determination to overcome her depressing childhood and attain independence as a young woman that makes her an ancestor for modern literary heroines. Young women today need the same types of strong, down to earth heroines in modern dystopian literature just as Jane was a breakthrough heroine in the Victorian era. Jane is anything but a conventional heroine. She suffers from self-consciousness, poverty,

depression, and pressures from Victorian society and her class. She urges for meaning and freedom and her life and uses her quiet like strength to achieve her independence and happiness. Katniss and Beatrice embody almost the exact same characteristics as Jane, with both 21st century heroines trying to discover their place in their dystopian worlds and where they belong in their district (*The Hunger Games*) and faction (*Divergent*).<sup>21</sup> Katniss and Beatrice are going through the same teenage problems as Jane faces with self-consciousness in their appearance, depressing childhoods or current livelihood, surviving in a middle class, poverty, and beating the odds of their adversities. Collins *The Hunger Games*, and Roth's *Divergent*, prove that Bronte's *Jane Eyre* features a relevant heroine who embodies not only realistic characteristics of a teenage girl, but comfort in that young women readers can relate to and can even be helped by reading their stories. *Jane Eyre* presents the biography of a teenager who had a very depressing life, and Bronte could have incorporated the message that there is always a bright side. But the message with *Jane Eyre*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Divergent* is that these heroines are flawed, sad, and fighting for their lives, and that is what life is like for many. It's about going through the bad to discover who we are, what we want, and where we belong in this world, and that's what Jane brought as an ancestor for Beatrice and Katniss as modern dystopian teenage heroines.

---

<sup>21</sup> Referring again to Green-Barteet in her essay, *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*, "I'm Beginning to Know Who I Am" she explains the the role of adolescents in dystopian fiction, and the how we can see its application in *Jane Eyre*, *The Hunger Games*, and *Divergent*. She claims, "In Dystopian settings, the expectations placed on young adults are much more rigid. They are required to perform the roles society dictates to them without question. They are not meant to develop into independent subjects. In fact, I contend that the dystopian governments of these novels need their citizens to remain in an extended state of childhood if the governments are to maintain absolute control. While adolescence does mark the end of childhood, it does not indicate the beginning of adulthood. Rather, it signifies the period when citizens become fully integrated as objects into their repressive societies in which they accept—either willingly or unwillingly—their positions as powerless subordinates" (36) Although Jane is not living in a dystopian world, Green-Barteet seems to argue that for any heroine to be considered dystopian, they are objects of a controlling and governing society where they have to decide whether to rebel against and change their society, or become a part of it. Jane could be considered a dystopian heroine by rebelling against her Aunt Reed and teachers of Lowood School. Green-Barteet makes a good argument that like Katniss and Beatrice, Jane is a dystopian heroine, and set a grounding for the environment and circumstances contemporary dystopian heroines face.

## Works Cited

Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. New York: W. W. Norton Company. 2001. Print.

Collins, Suzanne. *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic Press. 2008. Print.

Collins, Suzanne. *MockingJay*. New York: Scholastic Press. 2010. Print.

Roth, Veronica. *Divergent*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books. 2011. Print.

Roth, Veronica. *Allegiant*. New York: Katherine Tegen Books. 2013. Print.

Alvey, Jamie. "Everdene and Everdeen: Allusions within Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games*."

*Kentucky English Bulletin* 62.1 (2012): 69-71. Print.

Bennett, Kelsey L. "Exile and the Reconciling Power of the Natural Affections in *Jane Eyre*."

*Bronte Studies* 37.1 (2012): 19-29. Print.

Bewley, Alison L. "Literary Traditions on Fire: Mimetic Desire and the Role of the Orphaned

Heroine Suzanne Collins's *Hunger Games* Trilogy." *Children's Literature Association*

*Quarterly* 40.4 (2015): 371-385. Print.

Cayton, Andrew. "The Rights of Women and the Problem of Power." *Journal of the Early Republic* 35.2 (2015): 295-301. Print.

Earnshaw, Steven. "'Give me my name': Naming and Identity In and Around *Jane Eyre*" *Bronte Studies* 37.3 (2012): 174-190. Print.

Green-Barteet, Miranda A. "'I'm beginning to know who I am": The Rebellious Subjectives of Katniss Everdeen and Tris Prior." *Female Rebellion in Young Adult Dystopian Fiction*. Ed. Sara K. Day, Miranda A. Green-Barteet and Amy L Montz. Ashgate. Burlington: Publishing Company, 2014. 33-49. Print.

Heiniger, Abigail. "The Faery and the Beast." *Bronte Studies* 31.1 (2006): 23-29. Print.

Kapurch, Katie. "Unconditionally and Irrevocably": Theorizing the Melodramatic Impulse in Young Adult Literature through the Twilight Saga and Jane Eyre." *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 37. 2 (2012): 164-187. Print.

Lewit, Meghan. "Why Do Female Authors Dominate Young-Adult Fiction?" *The Atlantic*. The Atlantic, 7 August 2012. Web.

Liptak, Andrew. Rev. of "A Brief History of the Dystopian Novel," by Andrew Liptak. *Kirk's Reviews* 25 June 2013. Print.

Nelson, Claudia. "Growing Up: Childhood" *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Ed. Herbert F. Tucker. Malden: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1999. 69-81. Print.

Perkin, Joan. *Victorian Women*. Washington Square: New York University Press. 1995. Print.

Risko, Guy Andre. "Katniss Everdeen's Liminal Choices and the Foundations of Revolutionary Ethic." *Of Bread, Blood and the Hunger Games: Critical Essays on Suzanne Collins Trilogy*. Jefferson: McFarland & Co. 2012. Print.

Newman, Beth. "Excerpts from *Subjects on Display*." *Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre: A Casebook*. Ed. Elsie B. Michie. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc, 2006. 155-166. Print.

Sexton, Kristi. "Jane Eyre: Jane's Spiritual Coming of Age." *Bronte Studies* 39.3 (2014): 178-86. Print.

Sharpe, Jenny. "Excerpts of *Allegories of Empire*." *Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre: A Casebook*. Ed. Elsie B. Michie. New York: Oxford University Press. 2006. 79-103. Print.

Talairach-Vielmas, Laurence. "Portrait of a Governess, Disconnected, Poor, and Plain': Staging the Spectral Self in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*." *Bronte Studies* 34.2 (2009): 127-137. Print.