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Panopticism in a Digital Age: An Examination of Transmedia Reimagining Jane Eyre

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PANOPTICISM IN A DIGITAL AGE: AN EXAMINATION
OF TRANSMEDIA REIMAGINING

JANE EYRE

A Thesis

by

APRIL L. GONZALES

Submitted to the Graduate College of
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2018

Major Subject: English

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OF TRANSMEDIA REIMAGINING

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August 2018

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to examine how content creators, Nessa Aref and Alysson Hall have reinterpreted the original character Jane Eyre in a modern and social media era. The main struggle emphasized is that between an ideal self and societies expectations. Societies expectations and the expression of self are both more influenced by economics and business. The creators of *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* heavily emphasize the motivations behind appearances. The creators shift Jane's character so she is able to navigate within these expectations and the influence present in a digital world.

DEDICATION

The completion of my thesis would not have been possible without my patient and loving husband, Benny Salinas. You are and will always be my inspiration to work hard. My daughter, Aurora, read this and remember that education is important to our lives. It helps us to learn, to grow, and to feel. I wrote this through and after my pregnancy with you and I know that you have also motivated me to finish this project. I love you both wholeheartedly.

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I would also like to thank Dr. Diana Dominguez for your assistance these past two years. Your course on *Jane Eyre* adaptations helped me narrow my studies and lead to so many interesting discussions on shifts this influential and important character has gone through since she was originally created.

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CHAPTER I

A TRANSMEDIA MECHANISM

“We update all transmedia sites daily and release more ways to dive deep into the story of Jane Eyre as it develops.” *The AoJE Website*

Introduction

Upon initially reading *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë as an adolescent, the universal ideas every individual encounter caught my attention -- realizing gender roles are present no matter how subverted, dealing with the past, learning to overcome insecurities, growing up. Even decades after the controversy it sparked during the Victorian era, Jane’s journey still remained an important marker for literary scholars. The novel *Jane Eyre* has long been and most likely will continue to be an influential novel taught in high schools. Dozens of adaptations whether novel, play, or film reinterpret Brontë words dependent on the society and culture. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar point out the novels “refusal to accept the forms, customs, and standards of society” (338). In this case, Brontë advocates for equal rights for women and better treatment for governesses. In 2013, a new web series surfaced transforming this Victorian story on to a modern platform. *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre (AoJE)* demonstrates the same thematic ideas present in the novel – feminist, economic, and social customs of each – yet it focuses on the heavy influence of one over the other. For the

purposes of differentiating adaptation from novel, I will be referring to this web series protagonist as Digital Jane. Digital Jane still encounters expectations of gender (marriage), but her main influence stems from business and economics. Chapter 1 will focus on the shift of mediums (from written to filmed), how this affects the point of view and a proposed transmedia mechanism which influences the creators' adaptation of Digital Jane. Chapter 2 highlights the instances in the web series where business and economics effect the culture within the narrative. Chapter 3 examines how this emphasized influence affects Digital Jane's development in a social medium era.

The *AoJE* is influenced by many other fictional YouTube series based off of famous novels such as the works of Jane Austen and Mary Shelley. YouTube is not reduced to a specific genre. Even though, it may have started off with individuals posting their everyday lives or instructional videos the medium has created a new form of self-expression. Specifically, the *AoJE* will be studied through a multilayered approach. Within the narrative, Digital Jane is the filmmaker and she theoretically makes artistic/personal choices when editing her film. Audiences can interpret Jane's own artifice or message through her videos; her videos stylistically present documentary techniques. On the other hand, co-creators Nessa Aref and Alysson Hall make the final decisions as they are the ones writing the scripts and filming. In reality, they are the filmmakers presenting their own interpretation of the text influenced by business and social media. Both women are heavily involved in this project, and their intent to gain followers or viewers mimics the same goal as business owners who wish to please audiences in order to make profit. That is not to say that this is the only intent. They, also, as in any adaptation make creative changes based on how they believe the story should have gone and how social norms have shifted. For instance, in interview they expressed a disliking of Rochester and Jane's decision to

marry him in the end. No longer is it necessary for a woman's journey to end in marriage, but she can now plow her own path. Aref and Hall created the web series project gathering students and professionals "looking to enter the entertainment industry" (*The AoJE Website*). These women adapted the original novel, *Jane Eyre*, moving a new Jane to Vancouver. They used transmedia to "[create] an entire world and a multi-layered story" (*The AoJE Website*).

A combination of visuals, music, and dialogue gives filmmakers the opportunity to entice younger audiences with a relatable story. In this new medium, the *AoJE* separates itself from the novel with shifted character motivation and social norms. Jane alone posts on YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram, and Twitter. All other accompanying characters post on similar mediums along with having their own website for their companies such as Thornfield Exports and Ingram Consulting Ltd. To begin, there are many changes the creators needed to shift in order to fit a modern telling. At the beginning of the series, Jane has just become a certified nurse, but she needs a career change. Grace Poole hires her as a live-in nanny and tutor. As she begins to become acclimated to their professional lifestyle, Jane finds herself questioning Rochester's parenting style and constant parties. We meet Rochester after he almost runs over Jane. Through many conversations, it becomes apparent they have opposing ideals when it comes to beauty, privacy, and marriage. In the midst of this job, she leaves to assist her cousins, John, Johanna, and Liz who are taking care of their mother (Jane's aunt). Mrs. Reed is rarely lucid, so she makes no attempts for forgiveness eventually passing away. Beth (originally Bertha) is still an essential part of the story. Since Rochester ignores her after giving birth to Adele, she becomes addicted to painkillers and sleeping pills. Unlike Jane who refused to give in to temptation, Beth gives herself entirely becoming noncompliant to treatment despite her desire to rejoin her family. Jane must leave Rochester, so he can learn to treat the women around him better. She leaves in a rush

with no money and no place to go. At a bus stop, she is attacked; Simon comes to the rescue and he brings her home to recuperate. Simon, Diana, and Mary allow her to live with them while she gets a job. She becomes a teacher while at the same time realizing this chosen family has taught her it is possible to be an individual while still accepting others can change (or for who they are). Coincidentally, after inheriting millions of dollars Jane finds out Thornfield Exports is failing and Beth has died. She realizes she needs to become more independent and she rents her own apartment. She reconnects with Adele and Rochester, but there is no mention whether they will continue their relationship. Jane ends the series after becoming content with her life.

The *AoJE* is centered on the development of Jane just as she is finishing nursing school. She realizes this is not the life she desires. Jane must also overcome childhood wrongs (with the Reeds) and a complicated relationship (with Rochester). The web series mainly focuses on her relationships with others and how these relationships affect who she becomes. Adele becomes a character she sympathizes with since she had to grow up quickly, too. Blanche Ingram becomes a character she is envious of then realizes holds insecurities just as she does. Diana and Mary Rivers become her friends. Rochester's wife, simply known as M, still demonstrates mental health. Finally, a new character taking the place of Mrs. Fairfax, Susana Maria Ramirez Gonzalez helps highlight the importance of finding oneself through your career. Careers, economics, and/or business are overt themes in the web series. Digital Jane finds difficulty in choosing a profession which fits her passions. This is difficult to do when wealth is often thought of first in Digital Jane's world.

A Bildungsroman

The medium (or rather mediums) the *AoJE* uses sheds a varied light on the experiences, thoughts, feelings, and actions of Jane Eyre. Through avenues such as YouTube, Twitter,

Instagram, and Tumblr, audiences are able to witness the division of Jane's private self and public self into varied motivations. It is important to also understand the importance of the Bildungsroman novel within women's fiction as this is the first layer I intend to breakdown in Chapter 2. Generally, a Bildungsroman is defined as "a novel that deals with the development of a young person, usually from adolescence to maturity and is frequently autobiographical" (*A Handbook to Literature* 10th ed.). However, critics have noticed different stages in a male's journey versus a female's journey prior to the twentieth century. Lorna Ellis argues male protagonists overcome obstacles while women's necessity to "grow down" is due to the patriarchal control over societal institutions (*Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* 36); this is how she is to "grow up." In other words, there is a certain amount of oppression a woman must accept to achieve happiness.

The novel of development portrays a world in which the young woman hero is destined for disappointment...Every element of her desired world – freedom to come and go, allegiance to nature, meaningful work, exercise of the intellect, and use of her own erotic capabilities – inevitably clashes with patriarchal norms. (Pratt 29)

In *Jane Eyre*, Jane must become oppressed to understand her place in society. She must subvert desires and impulses to avoid stepping too far outside the social norms. Using these terms, Jane learns in order to 'grow up' she must 'grow down'. Even though this novel is seen as a feminist novel, there were, of course, limitations dictated by societal norms affecting Jane's journey. Societal institutions such as religious duty, economic status, fitted education, and family are all

forces placing pressure upon Jane affecting how she develops throughout the novel. These are universal institutions that affect any individual, but particularly within the modern era as a woman interested in business there are still obstacles which Digital Jane must overcome in the *AoJE*. She must come to grips with the realities of a business world engrained on social media sites. The “great looking glass” in the original novel has only been transformed to a camera lens. This lens allows for Digital Jane to reflect upon her experiences; similar to the novel, it also acts as “a sort of chamber, a mysterious enclosure in which images of the self are trapped” (*The Madwoman in the Attic* 340-341). Content creators are still allowed creative freedom while at the same time motivated by their desire to satisfy audiences. In the *AoJE*, Digital Jane will not be able to live idealistically as she would prefer, but she must learn to achieve some sort of happiness in her choices. Avoiding social aberration is just as difficult today especially considering our constant self-presentation online and a shift in societal control. Since much of what is posted online reveals only appearance, societal norms often focus on the artificial traits of a person – how they dress, their relationship status, the look of their family.

Writing Styles and Content

The societal constraints of nineteenth-century England were, of course, much different than those of today, and the motivations behind self-presentation complicate a needed resolution Digital Jane would desire. A resolution – not from a patriarchal society – from a society dominated by industrial influences (or businesses). The development of the self the creators present relies heavily on a division between public self and private self within a fragmented mechanism. Since there are multiple social media sites within the narrative, there are varied expressions to keep in mind as well as compromise of motivations.

Digital Jane struggles with contrasts present within each self and the overlapping of each self. Due to the first-person point of view Brontë utilizes, audiences are able to interpret a division between Jane's internal reflections (private self) and Jane's behavior with others (public self). Key distinctions between *Jane Eyre* and the *AoJE* are the time Jane is given to reflect and the manner she uses to reflect. This includes where she begins Jane's story and what early events affect her later on in life. A difference is in the early traumatic events because in the *AoJE* we start her journey as an adult. She still narrates her internal thoughts through one-on-one vlogs and shares her perspective of life when she records events. Brontë has the authorial power to navigate her character in any way she chooses; however, in the modern era creators have chosen to start Digital Jane's story in the middle of her life and narrate her musings along the way. She still switches between present and past tense, but she has less time to reflect. In the *AoJE*, the creators film the events weekly, so there is consistent communication to consider. The creators as well as Digital Jane possess this communication; there lies a social pressure. Audience members provide a social pressure (maybe necessary) throughout her journey. She must switch back and forth between 'growing up' and 'growing down'. All of this is multiplied as she struggles with issues such as what marriage should entail, the reality of appearance/beauty, and her socioeconomic status. There is an emphasis on the influence YouTube and other social media sites perpetuate. What has complicated the image of children, adolescents, adults, etc. are the popular images presented on these sites. Aside from the ads dispersed throughout these sites, two extreme ways of living are promoted – a focus on appearance and a focus on ideals. The *AoJE* discusses appearance as a "cultural currency" and promotional videos of Thornfield Enterprises interrupt Digital Jane's life. As Jeremy Bentham proposed in his original writings of the Panopticon, the outcome of the surveillance mechanism leads to "morals reformed – health

preserved – industry invigorated” (*Discipline and Punish* 207). The *AoJE* emphasizes the economic and business aspects of Digital Jane’s life and creators’ lives. YouTube centers the site on advertisements before videos and at times within the videos. Digital Jane acts as the foil against the popular idea (perpetuated in businesses) that superficial definitions of beauty encompass the mainstream intention or motivation behind posting on social media sites; she represents the consciousness of Rochester as she must point out his wrong doings.

Self-Presentation and Character Motivation

Rather than focusing on binary divisions such as between passionate and tranquility. There is motivation to consider behind the self-presentation existent with social media which seems to overlap with the private self and the public self. These motivations cause a further division of the self. Roy Baumeister and Debra Hutton lay out general principles which affect human behavior when presenting oneself. First, there are varying levels of power audience members have when considering “how much the self-presenter is dependent on the audience” (“Self-Presentation Theory: Self-Construction and Audience Pleasing” 71). Digital Jane is affected by both her real audience on social media platforms and most directly by the fictional characters (or implied audience) watching her videos (i.e. Rochester, Adele, etc.) – the push and pull between audience and author. She must keep her fictional counterparts in mind, so she is able to respect their privacy. Privacy is a major concept explored in regards to the posting (on YouTube, Tumblr, Instagram) Jane does. The question remains whether Digital Jane invites all types of intrusion when posting her videos and photos for the world to see or is there still a netiquette expected (in regards to civility). Jane and Rochester discuss this in a key episode which will be discussed later. There are two ways to distinguish the character motivation Digital

Jane undergoes when deciding what to post. Baumeister distinguishes two types of self-presentational motivations: “one is to match one’s self-presentation to the *audience’s expectations and preferences*” and “the other is to match one’s self-presentation to one’s own *ideal self*” (“Self-Presentation Theory: Self-Construction and Audience Pleasing” 71). The public self and the private self are each divided further when these character motivations influence Jane. Shifting from a written novel to the YouTube platform causes this influence. As stated before, the focus placed on industry, business, economics, etc. drives part of Jane’s motivation as this is what the modern audience expects. This era is more progressive in issues Brontë original depicted such as the oppression of women’s sexuality, women’s expected demeanor, and unfair dependence of social class on wealth. Even though Digital Jane has more freedom than opportunity allowed earlier, she struggles with various selves. Rebellion or adherence to social norms is still possible today, but she must also consider who she is presenting her content to (which dictates why she chooses to present herself in a specified way). The YouTube industry which fuels the mainstream image Jane compares herself to sometimes portrays an unrealistic image of a woman. In the *AoJE*, Blanche owns her own company – Ingram Consulting Ltd. The main page contains professionally taken photos of her in tight dance clothes exposing her thin body and dark makeup highlighting her pale skin; there is a constant need for businesses to portray a single image of beauty. The creators must filter her content in some episodes emphasizing a mask she (and many other characters) must possess. Some instances are visually and intentionally filtered as characters faces are out of frame or an object blocks their faces; in other instances, Digital Jane is confident in some of her opinions especially when speaking with Rochester. She switches between the character motivations Baumeister sets forth – motivated by an audience’s image of beauty and motivated by Jane’s ideal self. There is a

gray area when discussing some ethics instead of the strict social codes during the Victorian era. The more opportunities allowed in this era (including the choice to post on social media) combined with the complex nature of the medium creates a more confused character in Digital Jane.

Panopticism: A New Mechanism

Michel Foucault's idea originally developed by Bentham of a panoptic mechanism from a prison system to a social body applies to the modern medium of social media. In short, the architectural design was intended for prison systems, schools, and hospitals as a form of discipline stemming from observation/surveillance. An observer sits in a central tower, able to observe every individual in their cells (rooms, classrooms, etc.). Foucault states, "They are like so many cages, so many small theatres, in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (200). The visibility of the prisoner – in this case, vlogger – causes her to alter her own behavior since she is being watched. On social media, there is an alteration to this structure where each individual has the ability to view one another – visibly and invisibly. Since Digital Jane is able to interact with implied audience and real audience she can now be influenced.

He is seen, but he does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication. The arrangement of his room, opposite the central tower, imposes on him an axial visibility; but the divisions of the ring, those separated cells, imply a lateral invisibility. And this invisibility is a guarantee of order.
(Foucault 200)

The digital era changes the individual as the subject in communication. This replacement of lateral invisibility for lateral visibility as well as invisibility (anonymous viewers, since not all can be traced) creates possible chaos and confusion. Moving away from binary terms such as prisoner and reformed citizen, there is a blurring of the lines behind Digital Jane's motivations and selves. She presents an online public self while (at times) unconsciously hinting at her private self. We observe how familial traumas affect her opinions of Rochester's parenting. Each of these selves within Digital Jane are influenced once she begins posting on social media. The power Foucault proposes lies not only in the observer, but every individual on social media is able to become the observer. The power is neither multiplied nor increased but dispersed. Digital Jane must shift between her public self and her private self while at the same time trying to post dependent on the expectations of the audience and who she wishes to be. She gains more agency for her actions while remaining influenced in many other ways. When we keep in mind her platform she posts videos on (YouTube) the panopticon structure is valid. In this case though, the observer can alternate from viewer to viewer to Jane herself as well as each viewer having the ability to view one another.

Power has the principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up... assures dissymmetry, disequilibrium, difference. (Foucault 202)

A new disciplinary mechanism defines the social media platforms (YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr) – like the original intention of the panopticon – allowing the observer to be

interchangeable. A gaze, a viewer, an anonymous judgment raises the anxiety of those being watched. In this case, all are being periodically watched. The emphasis for the purposes of this paper will be on Digital Jane who must be wary of her self-presentation where a new set of social rules are in place. These social rules are put in place by the equilibrium of separate social media sites and are constantly shifting based on communication; currently, YouTube places an importance on ads which are even present within videos. Many vlogs contain these ads letting their viewers know what they should purchase. These motivations contained within the medium have influences the web series. The *AoJE* begins with Digital Jane's conflicted future when it comes to her career. Economics weigh on this character's mind affecting her major decisions. It is an equilibrium where there is "power of mind over mind" (*Discipline and Punish* 206). Separate minds act as the enforcer of a social system dependent on the compromise of all. Digital Jane will be at the center of the new panoptic mechanism.

The panoptic mechanism is not simply a hinge, a point of exchange between a mechanism of power and a function; it is a way of making power relations function in a function, and of making a function function through these power relations. (Foucault 206-207)

This mechanism does not work as a means to stop a plague or seclude prisoners as Bentham proposed. Instead, the many gazes and views possible through this social medium allow for power relations to flow throughout the system. Arguably, sites like YouTube are able to function due to the power relations of any given account. All users internalize the power relations "simultaneously [playing] both roles" becoming the

“principle of his/her own subjection” (202-203). The consistent back and forth between content creator and viewer (also the interchangeable central observer studied) complicates the process. The ‘subjection’ Digital Jane undergoes I propose is the motivation behind each form of self-presentation. Her struggle to compromise between who she wishes to be and what audiences expect defines this new power relation. She realizes what audience members expect from comments on videos and the atmosphere surrounding her on the social media site. The function here is the exchange of communication and the values thought on these sites. Below is a representation of the shift in mechanisms.

Figure 1: Panoptic Mechanism

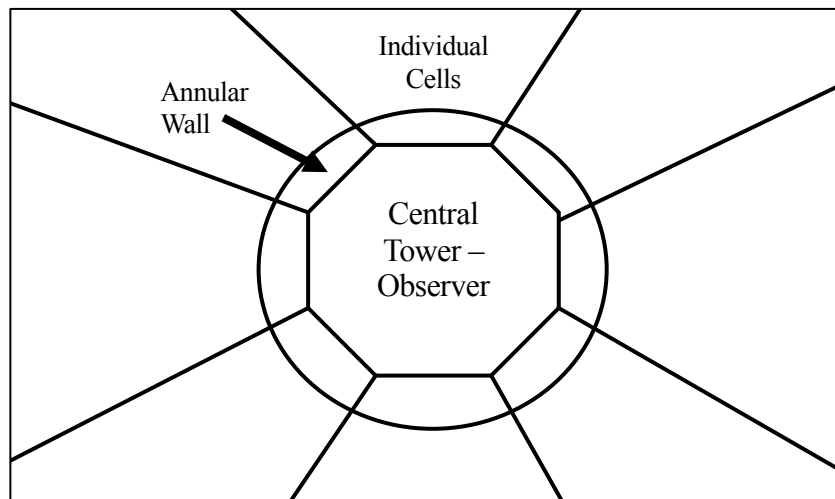
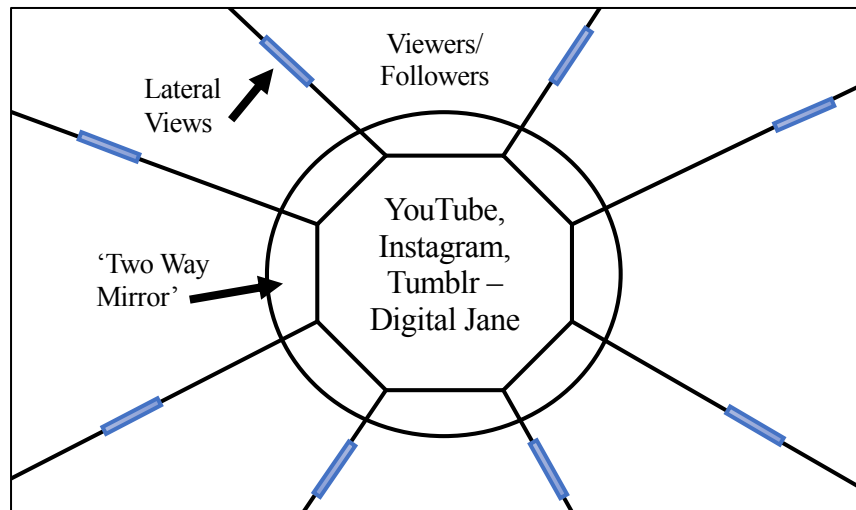


Figure 2: Transmedia Mechanism



It seems the filmmakers centralize many plot changes on Digital Jane's career, currency, and image. Rather than living in a patriarchal society, this shifted character appears to live in an economically-driven one. Not that this was not the case before, but more emphasis is placed on this social institution (and gender roles however still present deemphasized). Foucault proposed that the mechanism becomes "de-institutionalized", to emerge from the closed fortress in which they once functioned and to circulate in a 'free' state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control...developing around themselves a whole margin of lateral controls" (211). This appears applicable today on YouTube where viewers comment on one another's comment, can view each other's accounts, creating a whole new system of social norms. A new way of figuring out the self is present in this sense. The new mechanism does not require an institution to run the social interactions and the content available. Obviously, there are some extreme posts which must be taken off the sites and there are limitations

set in place by those in charge. The development of the self though is not hindered with that control.

...it is not that the beautiful totality of the individual is amputated, repressed, altered by our social order, it is rather that the individual is carefully fabricated in it, according to a whole technique of forces and bodies. (Foucault 217)

The 'forces and bodies' which help form Digital Jane are these viewers and the social media sites (particularly YouTube) as a whole. The complex social order here is expressed through her self-presentation. She becomes fragmented so she may become altered by the end of the series. She does not tell her story in reflection. Emotions, experience, and the passing of time influence her along the way creating another motivation for this character. She struggles in a varied way throughout her journey when she must keep the audience and ideals in mind.

CHAPTER II

AUDIENCE EXECTION ON THE *AOJE*

The transmedia or social media mechanism functions in a less restrictive manner than the panoptic mechanism. Placing Digital Jane in the center as an observer, the rest of the characters which will be discussed – Rochester, Ingram, Poole, Adele, etc. – each work as her implied audience. Now though there is a vital distinction in that the system may shift from a conversation to a one-way conversation. This is the ‘two-way mirror’ mentioned in Figure 3. This is also true of the lateral views present between the implied audience. All characters are able to respond to a situation, to gain information, or to simply narrate. The same is also true of her real audience. For instance, Digital Jane answers real audience questions (in her Q&A’s); real audience members also respond to each other’s comments under each video. Within the narrative, she is speaking directly to the camera, and as audience members we are able to interpret information she provides (visually and auditorily). The ‘two-way mirror’ of the social media mechanism opens and closes. We must also keep in consideration the fictional narrative creators are shifting to a new era and the nonfictional audience members viewing these videos. With the purpose of differentiating one from the other, I will be referring to the “implied audience” as all characters within the narrative that Jane addresses, and the “real audiences” are those critiquing the web series based on the transformation. This is important because from here on out I will be shifting back and forth; however, this just further highlights the intertwining of this system.

At the root, we must acknowledge the background Digital Jane and the creators of the web series find themselves in when adapting the web series. An issue upon conception YouTube had was the expansion of content and viewers which, of course, the creators must keep in mind. After all, the overall goal of the creators is to create a piece of work viewers wish to see and therefore the ability to make a career out of their studies and passions. Similarly, the YouTube creators changed their goal from connecting small groups of people to posting overall content larger audiences may have missed on television. It grew while (similar to television) businesses began taking advantage of the viewership. Advertisements today are posted before the videos which (given enough views) allow the person posting popular content the ability to also gain monetary value. In other words, YouTubers are paid to create content; although, their content must entice the audience members enough to also view ads which dictate their pay. The creators of the *AoJE* must now think of the audiences, and in doing so altering their content to something that they wish to monetize (in some cases, not all, of course). That is not to say that this web series only wishes to make money from their videos, but this is a driving force that influences the social system or global community Digital Jane finds herself in on transmedia platforms (or the transmedia mechanism). It is not the platform itself creating a social system, but it is the entire mechanism. The system of viewers, vloggers, and businesses all intertwine to affect the development of Digital Jane.

A focus on Digital Jane's career begins on the first episode – “This is me (An Introduction).” As mentioned before, the beginning of her journey is initiated because of a discontent with her career choice. There will be a consistent focus on topics such as career choice, economics, business/industries throughout the series; hence, the interpretation of this topic as a driving force of the entire transmedia mechanism. In this instance, Digital Jane realizes

a career in nursing does not fit well with her personality. She “went to elementary school, private school, nursing school” and she is completely consumed with education. Jane realizes this as she mentions she’s “starting to notice a trend.” Early on, she is pushed into institution after institution. She is used to amending her actions based on teacher observation which is similar to Foucault’s panoptic mechanism. Her work is critiqued, and she internalizes this fabrication of the self.

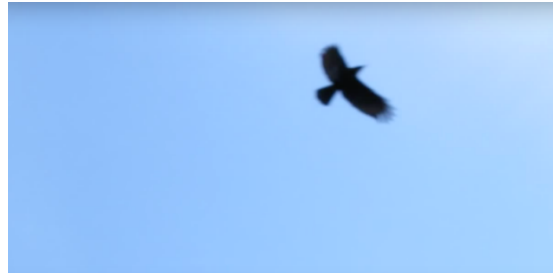
I made a big decision today. I decided it was time for a change. Because I realized that I’m starting to feel trapped by the places that used to make me feel free. I’m realizing the one thing I’ve yet to learn in all these years is how to live. The world is wide – full of hopes, of fears, of sensations and excitements, of adventure if you have the courage to go after it. My name is Jane Eyre. Here goes nothing. (“Episode 1: This is me [An Introduction]”)

Trapped in a mechanism – aside from the YouTube mechanism used in this study – the educational institution encased within begins to wear on her. The original mechanism contains only the one-way mirror – in this case, a divided self. The juxtaposition defining her originally divided self between feeling free and feeling trapped are present in this first episode. The classic representation of each are even incorporated visually as can be seen below. As she says later on, “I am no bird – I’m a free human being with an independent will.” It takes some time to develop this confidence since she does not assert this until “Episode 45: The Crux.”

Figure 3: A Cage



Figure 4: A Bird



(“Episode 1: This is me [An Introduction]”)

In this modern era, it would be inaccurate to say gender roles oppress her to the degree that the original novel expressed. Rather, businesses – which fund the education and which fund transmedia sites – are what trap her in this case. Her future is often determined for her already. The uncertainty of her decisions can be justified with what the next level in education should be. It is not “how to live” she struggles with, but instead it is how to be confident in her choices she struggles with. When shifting to this platform, she states the necessity to “[make] generalized statements about the kind of person [she is] and then makes a video blog.” For her introduction into YouTube, she remains in neutral terms here; simplifying herself to books she reads and teas she drinks (which may influence her but do not define her beliefs and values). She is making a huge career shift many would disagree with since this is a well-paid occupation, but at the same time she seems to be unsure of herself and of this decision. This struggle in life centers around choice. Her choice, however wavering and impulsive, must lead to an action (in this case changing careers). Her video begins and ends with candles reigniting. While this extinguishing and igniting of these candles could be interpreted as her divided self – a passionate side and a calm side – the reversal of extinguishing her candles highlights her uncertainty; especially considering the narration provided. In the web series, all audiences witness Digital Jane struggle

between the expectations of implied audience while still trying to stay true to herself (perhaps to too extreme of a degree). She must shift between her public life and private life while still maintaining these motivations. This complicates her journey as she attempts to become more assertive in her decisions.

Figure 5: Extinguish



Figure 6: Ignite



(“Episode 1: This is me [An Introduction]”)

There are many instances where businesses influence the action of the implied audiences (Rochester, Poole, Ingram, etc.) which for these purposes extends to the ideas YouTube seems to preserve or the real audiences (those outside of the narrative of the *AoJE*). The transmedia mechanism has been engrained with a dependency on economic growth and therefore an economic value is placed on art. The *AoJE* is meant to be a piece of art as it does incorporate similar traits to literature and extends to other forms of expression (transmedia); while at the same time, there is an emphasis placed on the importance of the businesses which surround Digital Jane’s journey. The combination of both ideas is proven since Digital Jane emphasizes the importance of art as she enjoys sketching, painting, and photography. This points to the changed culture surrounding Digital Jane from the novel’s Original Jane; a shift occurs from a traditional Victorian era to a modern era. The *AoJE* itself along with all the other forms of

communication on the internet (Twitter, Website) are art. The creators, Aref and Hall, highlight the negative aspects of business life and public life. Despite more freedom of this era as well as less stereotyping of gender roles, there is still a loss of freedom forced upon individuals too engrained within business life.

Business Motivations

Grace Poole is the epitome of a business woman and the first example of how the *AoJE* has shifted due to the medium. Creators do not shy away from layering job title after job title on her resume: “president, CEO, and CFO for TAE, also responsible for Energy, Carbon Products and Technology, Business Improvement, Industrial Analysis, IS&T, Business Analysis, Communications and External Relations.” Work and the restrictions that come from business consume her entire identity. When she is introduced, we do not see her face, but we only are able to see her concentrated on her cellphone (“Episode 4: Grace Poole”). There is an eerie laugh heard at the end of this episode foreshadowing the unhappiness and dissatisfaction stemming from the unrealistic expectations she sets for herself and others. Later we learn, Beth Mason is locked away because she failed to resist the temptation of prescription pills. Beth becomes addicted; however, Grace Poole personally restrains herself. The same rigidity restricts her from making personal connections with others.

Figure 7: Grace Poole



(“Episode 4: Grace Poole”)

Grace Poole’s identity is initially centered around her device and her focus on business. She runs Thornfield’s website, Thornfield’s Pinterest, Thornfield’s Twitter, and Thornfield’s YouTube. In this episode, she also mentions her excessive dietary restrictions and the necessity to schedule a meeting with her if ever needed. Formalities structure her life. Even when asked to describe her boss, Edward Rochester, she sticks to formalities.

Thornfield Aluminium Exports was founded with the mission to be the world's leader in high-quality aluminium products, and are confident in our ability to supply families and businesses around the world with the premium grade they have come to expect. (“Thornfield Website”)

Jane: ...Is he [Rochester] generally...liked?

Grace: The Rochester family has owned Thornfield Exports for decades and is well respected worldwide. They lead the world in high quality aluminum products, and are confident in their ability to supply families

with the premium grade they've come to expect. ("Episode 6: Bad Descriptions")

Grace chooses to describe him with almost exactly the same narrative used for Thornfield Exports. He is not identified as an individual but as a collective. She states specifically "Rochester family" and it becomes clear he has an image and reputation to uphold. These characters represent the motivation for self-presentation reliant on audiences' expectations. Their goal is to continue making profit and this would be most difficult to do with a tarnished company/family name; although, the title "Bad Descriptions" implies Digital Jane's disapproving response to Rochester's description. The need to be "well respected worldwide" and "supply families with the premium grade they've come to expect" has left her with a negative impression of these characters' values – Grace and Rochester. Their values juxtapose one another as Digital Jane remains there to point out the flaws in their economically driven mindsets. This idea of worldwide respect or global respect illustrates the motivation behind these real audience members of Jane. The idea of a global community is applicable to YouTube and other social sites (transmedia). The necessity to fund this mechanism and own businesses for many characters within the web series is the driving force which affects Digital Jane's development. She finds it difficult to fit within this social system while attempting to stay true to her ideals. In a later episode, she is scolded for attempting to understand Rochester on a personal level even though part of her job entails the well-being of his child.

Grace: Can we hurry up? I barely have time to urinate today, let alone coddle the nanny person.

Digital Jane: So, Rochester seems like a decent man. Well put together, large vocabulary. Does he ever like to have a temper tantrum now and again?

Grace: Excuse me? What are you insinuating?

Digital Jane: No, I just mean he is the CEO of a large company, and that comes with a lot of pressure. So, maybe he likes to let off some steam...throw a vase around...or something?

Grace: Ah, are you suggesting that Mr. Rochester, your employer, makes sport of throwing decorative glassware in the middle of the night, in his own house, where his daughter sleeps because he needs to let off a little steam every once in a while?

Digital Jane: No, I just meant it like...

Grace: Listen, Nancy Drew. I'd be more careful about what you imply regarding the person paying for your room and board! It was simply an accident. That is all. Now, I have business to take care of, and Adele is to be taken to class.

("Episode 14: Interrogation")

Grace uses harsh diction when answering Digital Jane's questions. Grace is defensive with phrases such as "coddle the nanny person," "excuse me," and "listen, Nancy Drew." She exaggerates the varying levels of position in the company Digital Jane alludes to in this episode. This employer/employee relationship works as the social hierarchy within the web series. Real audiences even see the shift visually. Grace continues to be consumed with her phone which is when Digital Jane possesses the courage to ask such a bold question. In fact, screens and glass continue as a motif throughout the series symbolizing the new platform and shifted identity this

Digital Jane must make. As soon as Grace puts her phone down (for one of the first times in the series), Jane's explanation become choppy since she is cut off with Grace's defensive answer. Grace turns to Jane but shifts back as to imply more space is needed if she is to look at her. The imbalanced frame is emphasized, and real audiences are to understand questioning Grace's authority will not end well. Jane then begins to look down never moving from this position until Grace leaves. Digital Jane must begin to view herself in various roles fragmenting her idea of her own identity. She cannot remain enclosed in her comfort zone, but she has to figure out how to function in public life appropriately.

Figure 8: Grace and Jane



Figure 9: Grace and Jane (2)



(“Episode 14: Interrogation”)

In the previous episode, Jane removes glass from Rochester's arm which alludes to Beth Mason as she is the one who stabs both he and Benjamin Mason. The mysterious sounds, shadows, and lies connote another motif apparent throughout the episodes. The dark effects of living within an economically driven society are hidden until Beth's fate is later discussed. Rochester, Beth, Grace, and Ingram are all immersed within business life. Grace is protective of Rochester because these dark effects have altered him beyond repair. She is well aware he holds more pressure than running a large company, but also acknowledges the repercussions on one's

personal life due to their business life. This “decent man” and the pressures that come with running a large company overtake his time. But all real audience is made aware of at first are his public life and audience’s expectations which greatly define Rochester and Grace.

The discussion is led back to the employee/employer relationship. As a result of her employee status, she is to remain unaware of every consequence business life holds since these consequences affect their private lives. Real audience members are even made aware of the fact that Grace is one of the few consistent influences in Adele’s life before Jane. Adele must mature quickly because she is left home often, but her formal language and efficient mind set seem to come from Grace. This is apparent when Adele quotes Grace: “An organized desk is an organized mind” (“Episode 15: Things I Didn’t Know”). Jane realizes the absence of her father and the employee/employer relationships Adele is exposed to affect her outlook in life. It is difficult for Adele to enjoy being a child. She isn’t given the room to explore who she wishes to become and she is left to listen to a world that usually tells people what to do.

Figure 10: Rochester’s as The Son of Man



Figure 11: Rochester in Starry Night

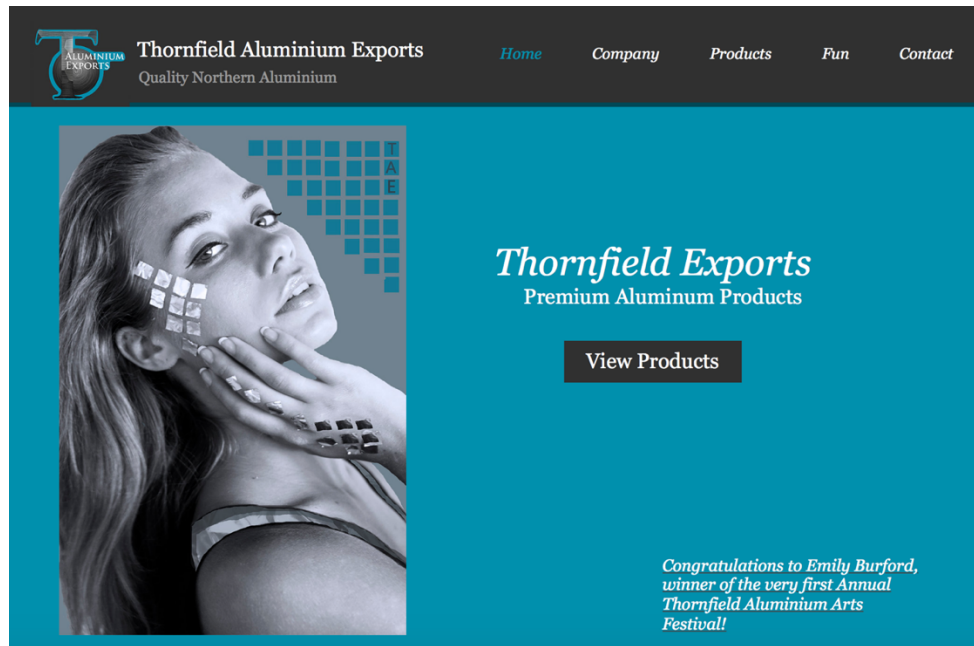


(“Episode 5: Critical Examinations of Art”)

In episode 5, Adele draws portraits of people she knows in real life in the style of various famous paintings. In the portraits above, her father's face is concealed and Digital Jane "[gets] the feeling she's lonely" ("Episode 5: Critical Examinations of Art"). The alteration or the masking of character's identities remains consistent within the public life or business life in the *AoJE*. Ironically, the absence of an identity is how Rochester remains defined until the end of the series. The emphasis is not placed on his journey so much as Digital Jane's journey. He is also a representation of the dangers when one is entirely focused on their public life or audiences' expectations. The image on the right conceals his identity while also stressing the night sky around him. Rochester is almost lost in the swirls and colors behind him just as he is almost lost in Thornfield Aluminum Exports or a collective identity.

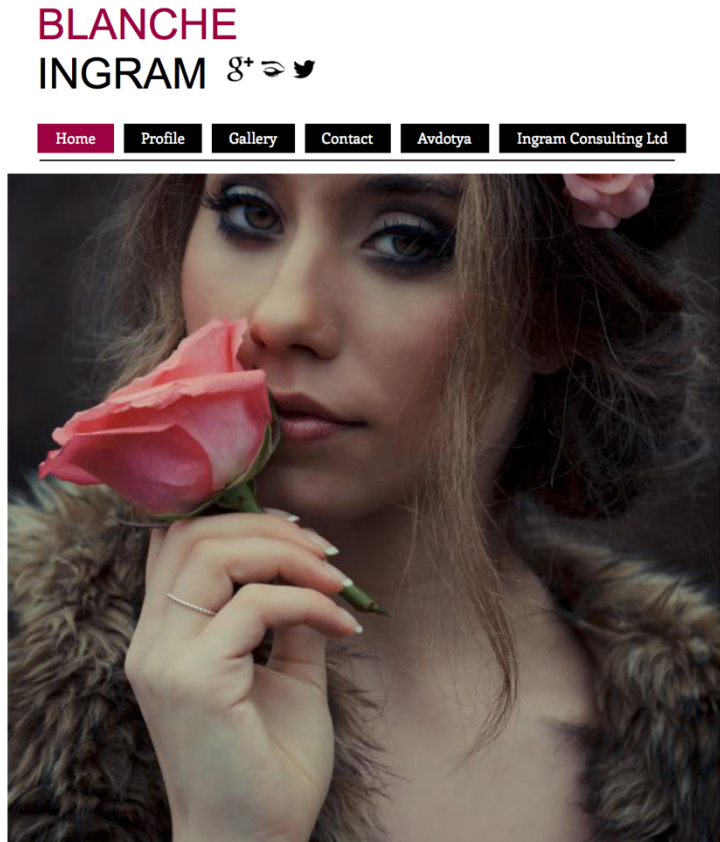
Grace Poole runs Thornfield's website which is a company that focuses on selling bauxite, alumina and aluminium. Their motto "vital to your life – vital to our world" presents the idea of a global society. As an export company, their mission is to sell to all areas of the world. It would be impossible to cater to individual audiences on a personal level, yet the characters attempt to do so with aesthetically pleasing images. At this point in Grace Poole's career, she is in the midst of rebranding the company. No reason is given for the necessity to rebrand; nonetheless, there are episodes on a separate channel that show a different perspective of the web series and Digital Jane's world. To begin, this business chooses seemingly unrelated images to represent their company. Grace and Blanche Ingram work together on this rebranding. Ingram owns a public relations company – Ingram Consulting Ltd.

Figure 12: “Thornfield Website Homepage”



These characters work together to engage audiences onto the site. This image of Ingram focuses heavily on her looks rather than the actual product. Pieces of aluminum are dispersed on her face and she becomes a part of the product. Appearances are important to business. It is not the business itself that becomes the influence of these characters (Poole, Rochester, Ingram), but the interaction between producer and consumer that is exemplified. We see the influence of Ingram in this photo and the similarities to her own company’s home page.

Figure 13: “Ingram Consulting Ltd. Homepage”



Both pages showcase Ingram’s piercing eyes expressing the representation of how beauty is defined by implied audiences and real audiences. Appearances connote a vision of an act or a performance. In Ingram’s case, a pleasing image to audience members requires beauty. Appearance and a general definition of beauty make up the prime “force and bodies that the individual is carefully fabricated in” (Foucault 217). Ingram is noted as a model since the age of 12 and given many other titles which focus on her appearance – “Best Bikini Body” and “young beauty” (“Ingram Consulting Ltd. Website”). This character is altered from the original novel though; she is not simply an arrogant aristocrat, but she is revealed to have the same insecurities Digital Jane possesses. In fact, despite all her accomplishments the pressure to be beautiful and share a life with someone still weighs heavily on her. According to her website, Ingram speaks

eight languages, holds a Business degree from Harvard University, advocates for women's issues, and acts in music videos/shows on the side. There is a pressure for women such as Poole and Ingram to be able to do it all while also looking for a partner. However, it is the success and beauty of Ingram that initially intimidates Digital Jane. In an earlier episode, Adele talks about Ingram and real audiences begin to see a pressure Digital Jane endures. Their relationship acts as lateral controls over each implied audience – Adele observes Jane and Ingram, Jane observes Ingram. Adele's conception of beauty is learned, but she (having matured quicker than most) understands there are many conceptions of beauty.

Adele: Did you know Blanche means white?

Digital Jane: No- I mean- yes. In French, Blanche means "white."

Adele: Yeah- except the name Blanche is derived from the saying "white as milk" which was once considered the ultimate mark of beauty.

Digital Jane: Oh- is Blanche very beautiful?

Adele: [nodding] Yeah. I would say that objectively that she has very symmetrical features and a well-proportioned torso. But Grace says that's a western conception of beauty. Did you know that among the Kayan people in Burma and Thailand, a woman's beauty is measured by the number of brass rings she wears around her neck?

[Digital Jane looks miserable]

Digital Jane: No I didn't know that. [Cut to Black]

("Episode 15: Things I Didn't Know")

Adele speaks in past tense when declaring “ ‘white as milk’ ...was once considered the ultimate mark of beauty.” White refers back to ideas of status’s present for race and for class; although within the marital tradition, being chaste or pure was the conception for a white during the Victorian era, but the series acknowledges it has changed. Immediately, she provides another example of beauty which takes place in another part of the world. The connection and perhaps the insight that a global community may provide is highlighted here. The more conceptions she is exposed to the more informed her decision may be. Real audiences may notice she jumps between two unassociated notions of beauty – each defined in their own specific way. This implies the sometimes erratic connotation beauty has. All audiences are left surprised with Adele’s knowledge as is Jane by the end of the episode. Perhaps the creators of the *AoJE* have magnified a younger generation exposed to the world through this platform with Adele. Unexpectedly, she is without the insecurities both Digital Jane and Ingram possess because of her knowledge that beauty is a relative term. It is difficult to market a single conception of beauty when it is global which is why it seems implied audiences struggle with expressing one on their various platforms. Their altered sense of beauty is instead expressed. Digital Jane works as a foil against this shared view implied audiences have. She realizes beauty is more than just appearance, but she still is susceptible to insecurities because of where she is posting her videos.

Digital Jane: She [Miss Temple] always used to say that we all see the world differently, so you should show the world through your lens. She gave us this exercise. You look at yourself in a mirror and draw what you see. You never look at the paper. Just draw what’s in front of you.

Digital Jane: It is not too bad. Look at those symmetrical features. I mean, I'm no Blanche, but...

Digital Jane: I googled Blanche and she's really...something. She graduated from Harvard. She speaks eight languages. She used to work as a corporate finance lawyer. She's a trained dancer, and a model, and she's the spokesperson and designer for her own line of vodka. She's been on that vampire show. And she funds a scholarship program for innovative women...She seems great.

("Episode 16: Blanche Ingram")

The creators continue the use of imagery with several instances of glass. Up until this point, real audiences have seen phone screens, mirrors, and lenses as symbolic to Digital Jane's journey. She uses them as a means to experiment with several roles she must place herself within such as employee, teacher, or in this case her private self. She uses the camera lens to document her private thoughts while at the same time posting them on a public platform. This is where the fragmentation of Digital Jane comes into play as she must keep in mind both their public self and private self while also considering her audiences. More specifically, the conception of beauty (audiences hold) in this episode haunts her. Ingram represents this artificial idea of beauty and success since she seems to have it all. Real audiences are given a glimpse of how Digital Jane views herself because of this artificial idea; in other words, her self-esteem or her self-validation she struggles with at this point are showcased.

Figure 14: Art Exercise



Figure 15: Self Portrait



(“Episode 16: Blanche Ingram”)

As Digital Jane draws herself, she seems hopeful of the outcome. She is trying to connect the advice Miss Temple gives her to this idea of beauty she is struggling with in the episode. Again, the creators are hinting at the idea of beauty as relative; however, she falls victim to the common view Adele introduced earlier when she sarcastically states, “look at those symmetrical features.” Comparing oneself becomes problematic on a platform such as this since one is doomed to fall short in one extreme or another. Digital Jane compares herself to Ingram and this traditional conception of beauty saying she is “no Blanche.” She continues to attempt to find some flaw in Ingram. All audiences view how she struggles with how to respond to all of Blanche’s accomplishments. Jane does not know what to make of her probably under the assumption that Ingram leads the perfect life. Still, as presented before there are flaws to this system Ingram was raised within – an economically driven mind set. Socializing within this mind set is difficult for Digital Jane. Rochester has party after party in the household while Jane hides in her room in fear of what these implied audiences will think of her. The same fear is revealed of Ingram as well in these later episodes.

Digital Jane: So Rochester's back and he brought people. Lots of them. I mean I like people, but I don't know. I just get nervous sometimes. They just sound like young socialite entrepreneurs who were probably millionaires by the age of 25...on one hand, I could hide up here all night even though Rochester and Grace will know I've been hiding up here the whole time. Or I could be polite and go say hi. Obviously, I've chosen the first option. Okay, I know I'm being immature. Sitting up in my room freaking out because there are grown-ups downstairs, but I don't know how to talk to these people.

Digital Jane: Okay, Jane. Just go down there and see what she's really like. Better the devil you know than the devil you don't. [says to self]

Digital Jane: I bet they are nice people and I bet they'd love to meet me even if I'm just the nanny. Here I go. Social interaction! Wish me luck.

Why am I doing this?

("Episode 19: They're Here")

She points to this separate lifestyle they seem to lead with "young socialite entrepreneurs who were probably millionaires by the age of 25." She further separates herself from them when calling them "grown-ups" and "these people." There is a clear divide between how she views the world and how these "socialite entrepreneurs" do. Real audiences are constantly led back to the importance of business in their lives. To be precise, these "socialite entrepreneurs" contrasts with how Digital Jane desires to lead her life. There is an opposing nature between only focusing on one's public life versus one's private life. At this point, Jane acknowledges the dangers of their

lives with “Better the devil you know than the devil you don’t.” They are what make up this new and transformed transmedia mechanism. The “socialite entrepreneurs” and the realities of their lives work as the invisible lateral control and the visible lateral control. Invisible in the sense that these implied audiences internalize the power relations with assumptions that are sometimes made such as the idea of beauty. Visible in the sense that real audiences are able to view this narrative from multiple points of view with the use of transmedia. This idea and expression (external beauty and platform/medium) influence all the characters created content. Real audiences can observe each motivation of self-presentation; specifically, the extremes of each are present.

Three Parties

There are three pivotal parties which translate the varied points of view between Digital Jane and these “socialite entrepreneurs” and which highlight their tendencies to focus on either external beauty or internal beauty. The first episode entitled “Hijacked” (Episode 21) turns to the perspective of Warren (a colleague of Rochester) and Blanche Ingram. Digital Jane is assumed to have left her camera on the table and Warren picks it up to record their conversation. They begin their conversation pretending to take a selfie. Warren seems hyperbolic in his pose as he sits in discussion with Ingram.

Figure 16: Warren and Blanche



Warren: Tell me. What is it that you are wearing on this fabulous evening? I'm serious. It's a serious question.

Ingram: Well, Warren, I'm wearing a very very uncomfortable and expensive dress. And frankly I'm not loving these shoes either.

Warren: Well, you look stunning. Hey, Ed. E.D. Edward! I have the prettiest little angel here in the whole world and if you're not careful I'm gonna steal her away from you.

Ingram: Stop, he's busy.

Warren: Now tell me Blanche. Have you ever been to a party with so many people that you don't know?

Ingram: Come on. You know people here. Like work people – Mallory, Richard, Matilda. [both wave to work people with fake smiles]
(“Episode 21: Hijacked”)

Warren seems to be a satirical character as he asks insincere questions and speaks in a mocking tone. Ingram plays along answering his questions with “a very very uncomfortable and expensive

dress” and “like work people.” Real audiences (in comments) even pointed out that she pulls up a Louboutin heel onto the table. Many of these details point to high priced items despite their irrational purpose. Their discussion is led to appearances or their business life. Warren’s demeanor is similar to a talk show host (perhaps due to the attention of the camera). He dismisses Ingram’s response with “you look stunning” and watches the party ensue before him as if it were a spectacle. This poses an interesting perspective since real audiences can now observe the implied audiences’ demeanor.

Warren: Who’s that one? [points off camera]

Ingram: What? You don’t know her? Don’t let her hear you say that.

Warren: Who is she?

Ingram: She’s the nanny.

Warren: Oh, for Anabell. Hey, didn’t you have a nanny when you were growing up?

Ingram: Yes, she was an awful woman. She was always yelling. She was always like conjugate...

Warren: What a witch!

Ingram: Yeah, and she smelled awful. Seafood chowder every day!

Warren: Can’t believe she’d inflict herself upon such an innocent girl. Blanche, you were innocent, weren’t you?

Ingram: Nobody’s perfect. And I didn’t see anything wrong with filling someone’s room with jack-o-lanterns when they clearly deserved it.

(“Episode 21: Hijacked”)

Warren also highlights the superiority felt over employees even though Digital Jane is not his employee. It becomes clear real audience members are not meant to take this character seriously when he refers to Rochester’s daughter as Anabell in a mocking manner to the camera. Even Ingram realizes some of his actions are inappropriate when she attempts to spare Digital Jane’s feelings. He remains just as hyperbolic in the Thornfield Exports promotional video. Real audiences also begin to see the world these characters were brought up in coming from wealthy means and given every opportunity. Their negative experience with nannies also highlights the societal problem within this social system. Despite Ingram’s name, she also plays a part in the superior/inferior relationship. She is not pure, but she is flawed like any human. These characters are used to their statuses just as Rochester has become accustomed to business life within Thornfield Exports. When Rochester enters the episode, Ingram’s yearning for a chance to settle down is introduced. The creators even imply this as the characters are wearing the exact same colors – maroon and black. Utilizing a similar camera style, the characters heads are cut off from the frame, but interestingly Rochester’s face is blocked with a martini glass. The clever use of purposeful object placement continues as a motif of glass fragmenting and distorting his face. Socializing in this business world has altered his identity. In this case, this party and those spectators that are in attendance expect Rochester to marry within their social circle and their economic equal. Both run their own companies. The digital panopticon mechanism within this narrative (and transmedia) has affected Rochester just as much as Digital Jane. A recall to the original character they converse about outrageous parties and singing around a piano.

Figure 17: Blanche and Rochester



Ingram: Never. It's not Montreal – but it's beautiful here. [beat.] oh
–wouldn't it be fun to do Whistler again? We could go as a big group –
with a gallon of wine. [Blanche laughs] Remember Matilda trying to ski
last time?

Rochester: I remember your singing. You were lovely.

Ingram: Pft! Lovely! I was decent.

Rochester: If you were decent at singing – then my piano must have
been excruciating.

Ingram: We were equally mediocre – I'd say. [beat.]

Rochester: To mediocrity.

[Ingram laughs – and they clink glasses. Rochester finishes his scotch.]

Rochester: If you'll excuse me – my drink's empty.

[Rochester goes to get up. Ingram touches his arm.]

Ingram: Relax. I'll take care of it.

[Ingram takes his glass and kisses him on the cheek like a girlfriend – and exits. Rochester smiles to himself – and checks his phone absent-mindedly. Jane enters off screen.]

(“Episode 21: Hijacked”)

Growing up together and working together, these characters are used to being around crowds of people. Earlier, Warren declares they are at a party with people they do not know (in scripts described as “several miscellaneous party-goers”). They are used to parties and business connections. However, creators depict Rochester and Ingram as simply human in this episode. They each have their own desires even if they do not line up with one another (and even if Rochester seems to lead Ingram on). As they toast to “mediocrity,” real audiences begin to feel sympathy for Ingram. This episode sticks to the implied audiences point of view so real audiences are able to bypass societal and economic barriers between employee and employer. Real audience gain omniscient point of view for a time. One real audience member comments that Ingram is not “as pretty as Jane made her out to be but she seems really nice.” Another audience member states based on her behavior in this episode creators are “not making the character anywhere near as unpleasant as she is in the book.” Despite her fancy clothes and accolades, Ingram is changed. At first, Digital Jane is intimidated, but Ingram becomes a round character exhibiting complex emotions similar to Jane. Ingram and Rochester logically share more in common with one another than Rochester does with Jane. They were both raised in wealthy means, own profitable companies, and have the same friends. Perhaps Rochester is reacting to the societal expectations of real audiences when he toys with Ingram, but in the next moment we witness his true desire to be with Digital Jane. According to Poole and Rochester,

she is “required” for many of the parties; he wishes her to have fun and to talk to him. As she leaves though he says “goodnight my...” (another callback from the novel) and real audiences begin to witness their romance unfold. In the next episode, we continue to witness Rochester toying with each woman’s emotions – torn between his real desires and audiences’ expectations.

Rochester: Bride! That’s it! And what a lovely bride she is!

Ingram: (exaggerated thespian) Oh, kind sir, you flatter me!

Rochester: (exaggerated thespian) No my lady. It is I who is flattered, for you have accepted my invitation to marry.

Jane (O.C.): (sotto) So this is happening.

[Rochester lowers again to one knee, puts a hand on his chest.]

Rochester: (exaggerated thespian) Soon we will be one, and then we can be joined by children.

Ingram: (exaggerated thespian) Oh sir! You mustn’t speak of such things! You have brought colour to my face!

[The camera slowly begins to zoom on Rochester until Ingram is out of frame]

Rochester: (exaggerated thespian) My fairest lady. Your maidenly countenance should not blush at such topics. It is with tremendous pride and honour that I kneel before you. And what preposterously beautiful children we would have! Surely, this you cannot deny!

Ingram (O.C.): (exaggerated thespian) Oh my! I suppose –

Figure 18: Bride



(“Episode 22: Charades”)

In a game of charades, Rochester coincidentally obtains the word ‘bride.’ He uses Ingram as a prop to signify the word. Through a literal game, creators have also incidentally reinforced the façade or illusion Rochester is keeping in front of all his guests. The spectators that are trying to guess the word are in the foreground seen pointing to Ingram. They are placed in front signaling the control a community has – not one single person. At the same time, he is making Digital Jane witness and document his performed proposal as we can hear her commentary off camera. She intentionally lowers her voice for a dramatic effect either pointing out the absurdity of this proposal or the disbelief of having to witness this proposal. Real audiences witness the disconnect each character faces when considering all audiences and what they really desire. In addition, Rochester and Ingram take on a hyperbolic thespian persona. It is unclear if both characters realize this is all an act or just Rochester. Nonetheless, their melodramatic language evokes an almost idyllic scene for real audiences. All details – including the “preposterously beautiful children” – cynically paint the expected next act of this play. The web series’ implied

audiences anticipate an actual proposal to come which Rochester has internalized. Again, Rochester and Ingram are wearing matching colors highlighting how well they go together. Implied audiences watch as Rochester pretends to propose marriage and a life together with Ingram. Ingram is even wearing white (not to mention a dress seemingly symbolizing a wedding dress). Once their performance has ended, Rochester looks to the camera and there is a quick cut to another turn. Rochester and Digital Jane are off camera talking to one another. With both women in the room, it is apparent he focuses his attention on both feeding their insecurities. He tells Jane “Afraid you might have too much fun and never be the same again?” and “it just would be nice to see you smile a bit.” There is evidence he wishes her to be happy, but he uses material objects and flirtations to do so.

A vital shift occurs at Rochester’s final party which incites many episodes to come which include conflict (including episodes such as “I Think I’m Fired,” “Consequences,” and “Blood”). As mentioned before, Thornfield Exports is rebranding their company attempting to focus more heavily on aesthetics. They include a competition as incentive to join their festivities – “the very first Annual Thornfield Aluminium Arts Festival.” To expand their clientele, they have advertised aluminium as fun and easy to work with. There is a continued focus on beauty.

Aluminium Art

Aluminium isn't just a practical metal from the Boron group, it's a fun one too. Its low density, lightweight, and malleable properties [not to mention its appealing silver-white appearance] make it the perfect metal for contemporary art, modern furnishings, and crafts! We, at Thornfield Aluminium Exports, love that

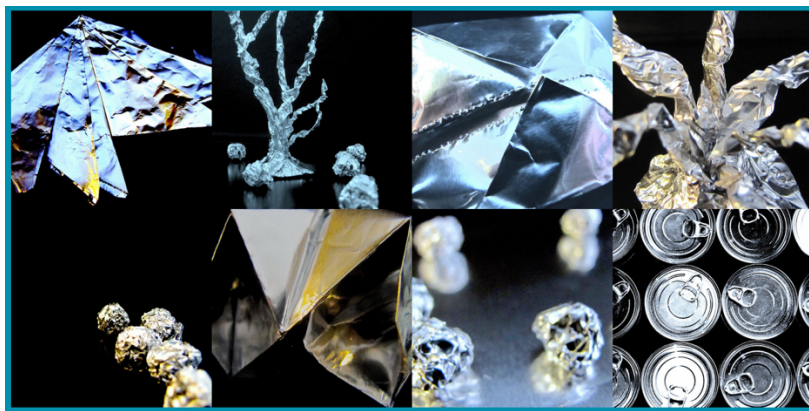
aluminium alloys are strong enough to make cities out of - but soft enough to bring beauty to those same cities!

We'd love our products to not only be enjoyed commercially, but artistically as well. So if you know an artist, or artisan who is using aluminium in their work - let us know! And we'll let the world know through twitter.

And if you just feel like doing a little aluminium foil origami - that's great too!

Consider us your biggest fan.

Figure 19: Thornfield Art



“Thornfield Exports Website”

A desire to create a product commercially friendly as well as artistically friendly are constantly at odds in this web series. This is a difficult balance to strive for since many times audiences' expectations do not always collide with artistic visions. Even the definition of art itself is a difficult one to determine. The company's description points to both the practical use of aluminium and the artistic use of aluminium – “low density, lightweight, malleable properties [not to mention it's appealing silver-white appearance].” This view of silver-white as appealing

is similar to Adele and Digital Jane's discussion of white as the "ultimate mark of beauty." There is still a necessity in this business world to cater to a global community. These images alone could perhaps signal a genuine attempt at reaching out to artistic creations, but other images confirm a balance needed as implied audiences can view Ingram dressed up in aluminium. It is as if the company is another character on its own which must uphold the values of this social community. The back and forth between implied audiences and real audiences within all forms of transmedia make up this mechanism. The transmedia aspect is the imperfect medium each artist has to work with to create something which may be seen as beautiful. Many characters have a role in this website – Poole, Rochester, Ingram; however, it is a collaborative work which transmit the message that there is a balance within this company. They must market themselves as with "honesty and integrity" or Hydro powered while at the same time needing to survive as a monetarily driven entity. They attempt to present the company as ethically conscious while still objectifying women. The danger enters in the incorporation of such importance to companies/businesses/careers/etc. as the motivations shift. The balance cannot always be kept. Below Ingram is dressed in aluminium and the advertisement (while still pointing to the product itself – aluminium) magnifies the importance of allure, appeal, or glamor. As the rebranding party occurs in the first quarter of the web series, it seems that the foremost conflict of the plot stems from the difficulty in achieving this balance.

Figure 20: Allure

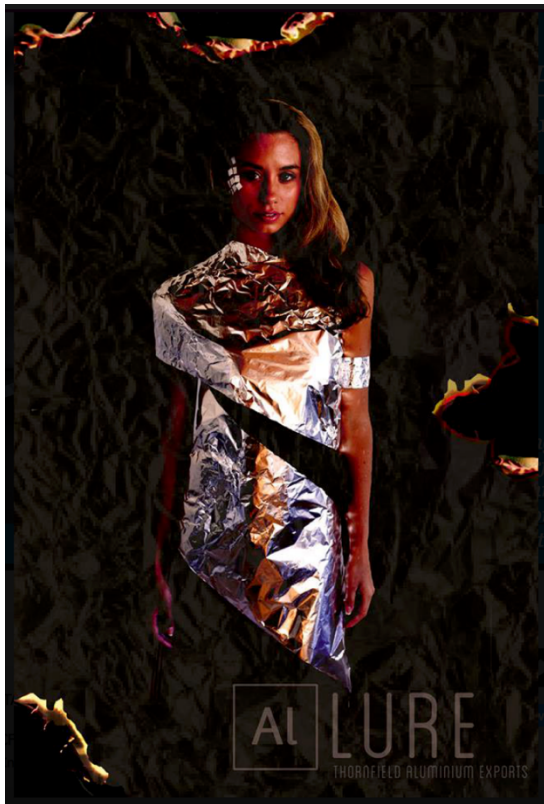
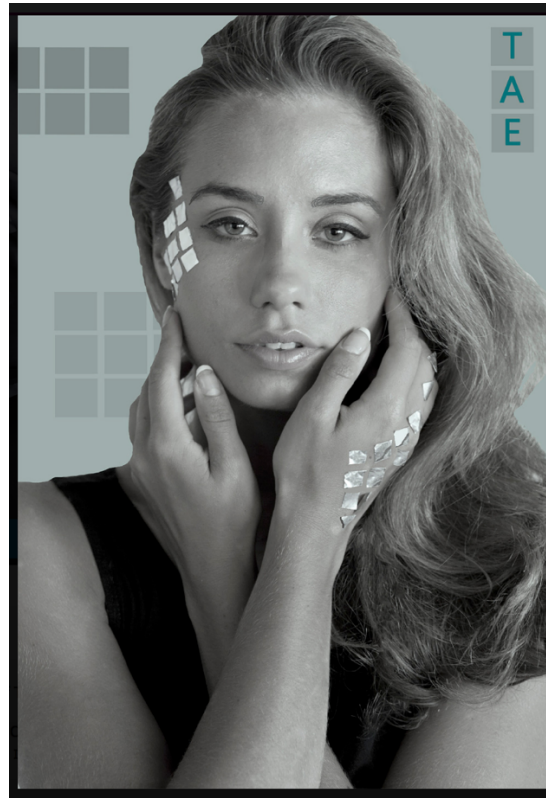


Figure 21: Blanche on TAE



“Thornfield Exports Website”

The rebranding party focuses on this idea of beauty, although it is represented in a superficial way. Only the external is represented through this video. It is also important to note that this episode does not fall under Digital Jane’s vlogs, but it is on its own separate channel on YouTube. Similar to the novel, Rochester dresses up for this party; although he is recognizable, his attire is excessive. He dresses as a clown, and he pretends to tell fortunes. He is obviously drunk at this point, but he continues to go around mocking those he works with in the company. Right before his entrance, there is an unexpected dance number with unknown characters (probably those faceless workers the company is built of). Although it is not mentioned, it seems

that this party is a masquerade as many people are wearing masks atop their heads. All of their masks are white while characters wear black.

Figure 22: Masks



“A New Age of Aluminium”

They dance in unison and fall in line at the end of the song. This seems to demonstrate the dangers of unified definitions especially when it comes to ideas of values and beauty. Before leaving the screen, characters approach the camera, but audiences are still unaware of their identities with their masks. Creators explore disguises or facades often in this web series. This is one extreme of self-presentation where characters are only motivated monetarily. The creation does not become distinct, but rather it falls in line with the rest of the creations on transmedia. The business of creating content must take importance over the actual content being created. Even the lyrics (which come from the original novel) touch upon the risks the person posting takes, the “eagerness of a listener quickens the tongue of liars.” If more audience members are accustomed to the same definition or idea, the creator is more susceptible to follow along. The motivation of only wanting an audience fuels this extreme of content (that is the appearance of

an idea motivates this business). There is also a continued motif of dull lighting (only seeming to be illuminated with the small lights above them) and an eerie laugh similar to Beth's we hear throughout the series. The giggle continues throughout the song until the screen goes completely black and we hear one final laugh. There is a threatening tone interrupting the company party. At this point, Rochester is entirely confused with who to choose as a bride, so he masks himself entirely. The end of the song reveals his indecision and his lies – “you might get the truth of a liar.” These dancers are seen throughout the episode foreshadowing the darkness to come because of the imbalance. Below, one dancer stands in between Rochester and a guest as he pretends to read her leaves from a mojito. She warns audiences Rochester is the liar they were referring to in their song (as if to say, ‘beware of his tricks’).

Figure 23: Rochester as a Clown



Rochester: Ladies and gentlemen, I am Party Archie and it is my mission this evening to entertain you, to beguile you, and amuse you. And what better way to speak to a crowd then to speak to their favorite subject, themselves! A toast to the young, the rich, and the beautiful!

“A New Age of Aluminium”

The juxtaposition between a truth and a lie display the far extremes that can be taken. Rochester has chosen to “beguile” and “amuse” this implied audience. He points to the fact that they each have a desire to be in the spotlight. His ridiculous fortune telling might hint at the outlandish things people may need to present themselves in to be noticed. Although, his goal to “speak to their favorite subject” only places himself in the spotlight even more. To be the entertainer, he must pretend to focus on his audience while also promoting himself. Similar to their last theatrical performance with charades, Rochester believes and realizes at this point that focusing on appearance becomes tiring. He even attempts to give Ingram what she desires, but he mocks her in the end.

Rochester to Ingram: I’m sensing something. I see something. I see, I see a circle. No, wait...it’s a ring! And on top! Oh, my beautiful bride! [pulls out a Ring Pop]

Rochester to Jane: Careful, Jane. You can’t go racing around corners like some sort of crazed maniac.

Rochester: And now the play is played out.

Figure 24: Second Proposal



“A New Age of Aluminium”

This outlandish nature he acts in after building up Ingram as a potential bride sheds light on his confusion. He realizes the social reasons for marrying Ingram, but it is not his true desire. Relying too heavily on society’s expectations works well in business, but it fails to make him happy in his personal life.

The Truth

There continue to be warnings for all audiences and Digital Jane about the dangers of an imbalanced self with two key episodes – “Episode 55: The Lie” and “Episode 56”: The Truth. Specifically, these episodes are juxtaposed to represent the lie Rochester must live out in order to maintain his business lifestyle. In his case, the lie was more enticing and pleasing to audiences or customers, so this is what he chose to preserve. Benjamin Mason is at the aforementioned party and he ends up having to be taken to the hospital while Jane patches up Rochester. Grace Poole even tries to warn her about Rochester. Right before his proposal, she reflects in “Episode 44: Moderation”. She recognizes that it is difficult her to have “much restraint” and that she “[ends] up

overindulging.” She too struggles with the balance between motivations that must be kept, and it confuses her just as much as Rochester. Jane is given the harsh truth of how going against this balance severely affected his personal life when she finds out about Beth (who they refer to as M at first for legal reasons). Real audiences and implied audiences are now made aware of Rochester private life and public life; they are now able to judge him for immersing himself completely in his public life. In addition, real audiences are able to witness how these creators choose to modernize Beth’s mental state from madness to post-partum depression.

Rochester: M told me later that it was her family who tried to make the problem disappear. And then it was my father who stepped in and...and tried to convince them that our marriage would be beneficial to everyone.

Rochester: Even before the pregnancy her parents always put a lot of pressure on her. She never slept. She worked too much. She drank too much. When she found out she was pregnant all that stopped, but I think she was ashamed. She stopped going to school. She stopped doing anything that made her happy.

Rochester: We didn’t know she had post-partum depression...And she found a psychiatrist that would prescribe whatever...whatever pills that she asked for. Painkillers for headaches, sleeping pills because she couldn’t sleep properly. She started mixing new drugs. Lying in bed all day. Drinking when the drugs weren’t enough. She spiraled. We’d fight. She’d throw things. She’d cry and cry and cry. (“Episode 56: The Truth”)

M or Beth manifests the complexity of mental health in the original novel transformed into a new era. A real audience member brings up the point that many papers are written about the novel contemplating “whether Rochester’s wife was really mentally insane, and whether Rochester’s way of taking care of her was kind and enlightened or just cruel and ignorant” (“JJ Lonsdale”). First, the issue of mental health is presented in a way that it seems to be another industry. Rochester mentions “a psychiatrist that would prescribe whatever pills that she asked for.” This health professional disregards medical ethics to gain profit similar to Rochester’s business mindset. The health industry is presented in a negative light, another industry looking to please their consumers rather than curing them. The act of pleasing Beth led to her addiction. Real audiences and implied audiences are left with the issue of addiction. Some may argue, she could and should have fought her addiction to raise her daughter. Others may refute, as Rochester says “addiction isn’t that simple.” Rochester notes she has a desire to fight this addiction, but she remains “noncompliant” when it comes to treatment. Second, Rochester, Digital Jane comes to realize, is a part of the reason Beth is lead to addiction. He ignores her because he has suddenly become the CEO of Thornfield Exports (brother passes away and father commits suicide). Investors are bailing and workers are laid off. Rochester chooses to immerse himself in work, but he constantly is aware what he is doing is wrong. Real audiences can now see a consequence of the imbalance Rochester lives; however, it is not he who is mentally harmed. He is obviously hurt when Beth chooses her addiction over a life as a family, but he channels that energy into business again as he ignores Adele hiring nanny after nanny. Digital Jane even states by the end of the episode that he “[mistreats] all the women in [his] life.” There is a stark transition between Jane at the beginning of this episode and the ending of this episode. At first, she is unsure whether Rochester is justified in his actions or wrong in his actions.

Figure 25: Veiled



Figure 26: Unveiled



(“Episode 56: The Truth”)

Here Digital Jane is in the foreground while her wedding veil is emphasized. She is masked or concealed at a vulnerable moment in the web series. A veil is meant to be symbolic of a bride’s innocence before marriage. Traditionally, the father unveils the bride’s face to signal ownership has now been given to the groom. However, Digital Jane does not need marriage in this society to mark a new chapter in her life. If at first, she is disillusioned, it is only due to the fact that she

struggles between what she knows is right versus what she self-interestedly desires. She walks in front of this veil and this is where Rochester tells Digital Jane the truth. Creators use markers within the marital ceremony to address the shift of importance from marriage, female oppression, and station to industries and individuality. Digital Jane must leave saying she needs “to go after what [she wants] for a change” and “[she’ll] look after [herself].” She is making this decision, so Rochester can rightfully change his priorities; equally important, she must also continue to figure out what she desires. After all, the web series started because she wished to figure this out in a new career.

Jane: We’ll be fine. Both of us.

Rochester: You believe that.

Jane: I do.

(“Episode 56: The Truth”)

With this simple “I do,” Digital Jane has changed a traditional marker to a contemporary marker. His episode asserts a ritual where she is now aware she must explore her individuality. With Rochester and in his home, business, formalities, etc. entirely influence her decisions, but on her own, she is forced to figure out what makes her happy. To restate, audience expectations and her own desires impact her choices, but the creation of a balance is difficult to achieve as Rochester, Grace, and Ingram have demonstrated. They live in a business-driven society where audience or consumer expectation takes precedence. Digital Jane yearns for more which is evident as she continues and will continue to change roles (teacher, nanny, bride). The next chapter will explore

the values she stresses early on in the web series, and how she continues to change roles in an examination of the self.

CHAPTER III

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A DIGITAL JANE EYRE

“Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion.” Charlotte Bronte

Digital Jane eventually realizes a balance between her public self and her private self must be kept. Up until this point, she feels ostracized from her biological family, her dear friend, Helen, has passed away from cancer, and Miss Temple does not remain constant in her life. Her personal relationships are lacking. There is an emphasis placed on contrasts and divisions which overlap similar to a public self and a private self. These same contrasts are universal opposites which exist naturally within the narrative thematically. Rochester struggles with the truth he lives with and the lie he must emit to the public; however, he must always keep both in mind. Other major ideas such as masks or facades and appearances are prominent, but Digital Jane discusses only strict ideals or remaining sincere (especially when it comes to beauty and art). Furthermore, emotions and logic do not overlap at all times. For instance, she desires to marry Rochester, but she knows he must focus on his family instead. Each of these contrasts causes inevitable internal conflict leaving her further fragmented.

Early on in an episode entitled “An Interview,” real audience can see Jane struggles with assimilating to a business world while still remaining true in her artistic expression including

painting, sketching, and photography. She describes her interests to Rochester using formal language, but intimate messages juxtapose her speech.

Digital Jane: Film is just a way for me to take personal memos...a hobby.

Rochester: Are you happy when you do these?

Digital Jane: Yeah, I love photography. Sometimes I can spend a whole week working on ten photos.

(“Episode 11: An Interview”)

Here, Rochester also connects the idea of happiness to her artistic expression. Later he asks, “Are you happy with how this one turned out?” acknowledging the separation between the expression itself and the end result. These are two distinct and varied points as the emotion can transform. The same way each character represents a way the transmedia platform informs and influences their development within the mechanism and therefore is transformed as well through time. Each are influenced to a different extreme creating a varied emotion and a varied belief. The audience’s expectations entirely inform Rochester while Jane’s ideals inform her. This contrast is demonstrated when these characters are conversing over dinner.

Digital Jane: I mean to say that regardless beauty isn’t important.

Rochester: Beauty is our cultural currency. You can buy the world with a perfect smile.

Digital Jane: I don’t think that’s true. A smile is only as good as the words behind it.

Rochester: Are you enjoying this conversation, Jane?

Digital Jane: I don't know, but you seem nice.

Rochester: Seeming is not the same as being.

Figure 27: Beauty



(“Episode 12: Dinner”)

Ironically, Rochester's favors the idea of appearances, but his back is usually turned to the camera or his face is cut off from the camera. As mentioned before, business and economics heavily influence this transmedia mechanism; this is apparent when Rochester professes external beauty as a means to make wealth. Digital Jane favors internal beauty, ideals, words, language, communication, etc. This is not to say having ideals is unrealistic, but one can say being too idealistic is unrealistic within this social medium. There are aspects of what Digital Jane favors that are not taken into account. For instance, the miscommunication that can occur unintentionally or even the miscommunication that can occur intentionally when deceit is intended. Rochester ends with, “Seeming is not the same as being.” Even if Jane is perceived as her ideal self through clear communication, action or “being” do not always align. Misalignment

of Jane's appearances versus Jane's ideals which can occur are not acknowledged at this point. This is another contrast presented – seeming versus being – and as audiences find out, Rochester appears or performs one way in his public life while he actually feels and acts differently in his private life. He hints at the risks of focusing too heavily on one aspect of life, and even though he is aware of this danger, he still participates within his performance presented earlier. Rochester and Digital Jane stick to their ends of the spectrum – a focus on audiences' expectations versus a focus on one's ideal self; however as mentioned before, a fault these characters do not realize (or perhaps choose to ignore) is that these contrasts are much more complex than they realize as they overlap with one another.

Rochester: You don't drink. What do you do?

Digital Jane: What about your own faults?

Rochester: I know I'm faulty. I am filled with faults, but I've had a lot more practice at it...I find it easier to drink than to regret.

Digital Jane: Maybe you find it easier to drink.

Rochester: No, I am determined I'm right. It makes me very happy.

Digital Jane: You're full of contradictions. You say you're not handsome, but you're watch is expensive. You say you're happy, but you surround yourself with distractions. You're determined to make me speak, but you don't like any of my answers.

Rochester: The truth is not as simple as you think.

Digital Jane: Truthfully, I don't understand you at all.

("Episode 12: Dinner")

Digital Jane heavily restricts herself because of her values and what is socially acceptable. Rochester fails to restrict himself because he must attempt to medicate in order to ignore the realities of his life. Juxtaposition is further emphasized, and parallelism places equal importance on Rochester's contradictions or contrasts. Jane phrases his contradictions in such a way that a rhythm is produced. Real audiences demonstrate a disapproving tone along with Jane as they realize the disconnect within his life and the arrogance he professes. The creators end the episode with the idea of truth; there is more to the black and white areas present within ethics. The gray areas or overlapping areas complicate the contrasts. Rochester overindulges as his wife, Beth, has with her addiction. There is a necessity to "surround yourself with distractions" in order to find however twisted sense of content (which Rochester attempts). Perhaps Digital Jane ignores the business world for fear of what money does to people. Just as she left the nursing world feeling she needed to find another path. Realistically though a certain amount of wealth is necessary to make a way of living.

Digital Jane describes her values in many episodes. First, in an episode originally titled "Religion" she discusses her own understanding of the world; however, creators change the title to "Confession" adding a more pointed connotation to Jane's spiritual life. This is also an episode where she is speaking directly to audiences; she attempts to be more personal.

Digital Jane: Helen shared all of her books with me...Reading these stories helped me understand them [other people]. And that's what the Bible was for me. A way to understand. There are a lot of different religions and a lot of different belief sets and a lot of different stories that people take for varying degrees of

truth. What's important about religion is that it reminds me to be forgiving. Helen taught me to turn the other cheek to those kids in the schoolyard. And the adults that let it happen. There are terrible things done in the name of religion. And there are hypocritical people...I'm not perfect. I can't be one hundred percent selfless. I want to be happy. The Bible says, "love others as you love yourself." This implies that you love yourself in the first place...I guess that's the connection for me. Both reading and religion encourage me to think of others; to imagine them as fully human as I am. It's my goal to always be true to that.

("Episode 20: Confession")

This is one instance creators discuss the "varying degrees of truth." Jane struggles with this faith she is professing while at the same time attempting to accept others as they are. This is difficult to do as she mentions there are those that have twisted interpretations in comparison to her own beliefs. She wavers back and forth between emotional reaction and acceptance. Of course, she is angry at those that do wrong, but there must be some leeway given as all humans have faults. The episode seems to focus on the ritual of confession – an action. This is a combination of internal reflections with external communication. This is the struggle she must continue throughout the rest of the series. Especially on transmedia, it is difficult to make audiences understand abstract ideas clearly since as she mentions language can be interpreted in different ways. She further describes this spiritual experience with fictional books.

Digital Jane: Have you ever read a book in a single sitting? And then there's that moment when it's over, and it's like that whole world of fiction is still swimming

inside your head...like your brain is a sponge, just soaked in all the feelings and emotions of that whole adventure. And the scary parts and exciting parts, and interesting parts all kind of blur together. Well, I feel like that. So much happened that night. (“Episode 27: A Walk”)

Throughout the series, Rochester and Jane share a few conversations where they discuss their common interest in books. When reading a work of art or working on a piece of art, Digital Jane professes an entire immersion of the self within the art. She focuses on the experience, the emotion. Rather than performing, she is passively observing adventure and taking in information. The characters she reads about teach her more about others, but in order to learn more about herself she must both physically experience and spiritually experience the world herself. In this episode, however, she has had an experience in which she is completely active – unable to process all her emotions during the adventure. Jane opens herself up in a moment of necessity. She is a nurse, and Rochester is forced to ask her to help save Mr. Mason’s life. When faced with the dark side of Rochester’s life, she is now unsure of whether she wishes to acknowledge and accept her feelings for him. Romanticism is what draws Jane closer to Rochester though. She continues to disagree with his values, but she separates emotion and rationality when making decisions. Earlier, they disagree when it comes to the idea of beauty, then when they discuss privacy. At first, Digital Jane believes she is in trouble when Rochester finds out about her videos, but he along with Grace understand the reality of this social community. He tells Jane, “Privacy is a luxury that people imagine they have” and “All press is good press” (“Episode 24: Consequences”). Ultimately, there may always be negative ramifications of an individual’s self-presentation, but this should not discourage her. The exploration she is doing through these

videos is a means of presenting a public self, but at the same time she unconsciously reveals more of the private self. This means understanding the limits to her idealism on transmedia. In his work, Foucault mentions “visibility is a trap” (*Discipline and Punish* 200). However, the transmedia mechanism complicates this because she is the “object of information” and a “subject in communication” (*Discipline and Punish* 200). While Rochester’s encouragement to Jane is perhaps jaded, she is given the ability to participate actively in this mechanism while also being influenced by it. She is introduced to a different public life online, but she would have encountered public life inevitably. Public life and private life are necessary since Jane admits she wishes to understand the world, but she also must participate in it. In this case, visibility assists her in understanding the appearance of a presentation (or art in a more abstract manner) also influences what the interpreter gains (not just her ideals). The creation of presentation and the reaction to the result may change with time and audience. Digital Jane demonstrates this as she changes her mind when she understands Rochester further through time and experience.

In the latter half of the series, time, change and decision become important for Digital Jane’s journey. Since this transmedia mechanism acts as a constant and flowing system, these are abstract ideas which will change the individual. Jane’s implied audience begins to change when she encounters her family, the Reeds, and her chosen family, the Rivers. These families act as contrast to one another. The Reeds are stagnant in their actions and personalities since they refuse to change. In Episode 31, Jane visits the Reeds when she finds out her aunt is dying. She is greeted with an aunt who still resents her, John is still spoiled, Johanna hides under a seemingly peppy façade, and Liz must stand back ignored. Their family dynamic does not change much over the years.

Digital Jane: It's strange being here again after having gone away for so long. Mostly, it's the same. I mean, part of you expects the place where you grew up to stay the same. It isn't supposed to. Time changes everything and everyone. People learn things about the world and about themselves. So, I was expecting it to be different. How so many years can have no effect...Family is important. That's the whole reason why I'm back here. It's really not bad being here and it's the right thing to do despite everything. ("Episode 31: So Far")

Jane understands morally she must be there for her family during this difficult time, but she also is confused. This is the first instance time is introduced to affect the decision and morals of an individual. Through her family's abusive and ostracizing behavior, Jane is attempting to accept those who will give her a chance. She bakes with Johanna, and she gives French lessons to Liz. In the end, they still end up going their separate ways. However, Jane still realizes time is needed in order to interact with the world to better understand yourself. On the other hand, a larger portion of Jane's journey is spent with the Rivers. They encourage her to explore herself especially after finding her robbed and abandoned at a bus stop. Opposite to the Reeds, the Rivers, especially Diana, voice their beliefs in the ability for a person to change.

Diana: Sometimes people change. Clearly, he's working on stuff, but the most important thing for you to do is work on your own stuff. And then just see what happens. Either it will work out or it won't. The most important thing is for you to be happy regardless.

Digital Jane: Sound like a lot of hypotheticals. But I think you're right.

Diana: Move on as if there was no going back, Jane. Dare to live in reality.

Digital Jane: Sounds terrifying.

(“Episode 81: Trails”)

There are many characters Digital Jane must accept possibly will never change – Rochester, the Reeds. Here, the web series is referring to Rochester; nevertheless, these contrasting families still mark a distinction clearly probable with time. As the transmedia mechanism continues to grow and thrive, it is still up to the individual whether to learn from others stories or remain in their own beliefs. At this point, Jane does not know if Rochester is spending more time with Adele or Beth. She has separated herself from him; forcing herself to determine her next step in life on her own. Hypotheticals can be determined for the actions that may follow, but the emotion from the result cannot always be determined. Jane will never know the perfect solution or the absolute right choice to make, but she must take a leap of faith with herself and others. Diana states, “Dare to live in reality.” There are many contrasts and choices to be made; in particular, accepting any choice should move an individual forward is difficult. She mentions change again when Digital Jane and Simon argue over Simon’s proposal.

Digital Jane: It was like he’d already decided everything.

Diana: ...should act the way he imagines they should or that somehow their brains work the same way that his does...other people aren’t there for his convenience. Human beings are complex, and interesting, and different and if he just gave them a chance maybe he’d be pleasantly surprised...Everyone is capable of change. (“Episode 85: Diana Says”)

Simon possesses a similar struggle to Digital Jane. He expects all other individuals think as logically as he does. Jane does not understand others actions when they are not constantly considering the moral background. She struggles to understand Rochester at the beginning of the web series and she struggles to understand Simon here. Perception is difficult to change since it is based on an individual's beliefs, experiences, etc. Jane subjectively judges Rochester and Simon, but she does not objectively view their circumstances, their lives. When she inherits money for a distant relative, she is placed in the same circumstance as Rochester. She has money she can now share with those that she loves. She goes from viewing all the gifts Rochester gives her as "just getting carried away" and "an obligation" to "a way to show people you love them" ("Episode 47: Changes"; "Episode 50: Discordant"; "Episode 74: Double or Nothing"). She comes to see the motivation Rochester wishes to shower her with gifts came from the expectations he was raised with and the wealth he knew was plentiful. This is not only what he "[wanted] to do for [Jane]" but this is "what [he] can do for [Jane]" ("Episode 50: Discordant"). Their perceptions of love and marriage are also varied because of their upbringing. Digital Jane describes a wedding to Adele as "a celebration" and recognition of happiness with those around you. She continues on to tell her a metaphorical fairytale which describes their romance.

Digital Jane: Why does she have to be a princess?

Rochester: It was a fairytale. In the fairytales, the girls always the princess and the princess is always beautiful.

Digital Jane: So, you're saying that normal people can't be beautiful.

Automatically beauty makes you royal to you.

Rochester: No, I...it was...it's a fairytale. In the fairytales the girls always, a princess and she's always beautiful.

Digital Jane: She's not a princess and she's definitely not made of ice. She doesn't want to go to the moon and she just wants to stay home with her stupid fairy who she stupid loves. ("Episode 49: Fairytales")

Digital Jane attempts to change the stereotypes of a fairytale including actual fairies as characters, excluding appearances, and discussing how these characters get to know one another. However, Rochester is focusing on the beauty of a princess wishing to create this fantastical appearance of what their lives would look like together. Jane also brings up the fact that he assumes beauty is what makes her a princess. Beauty automatically gives her an elevated status (perhaps an easier way of life). Rochester repeats himself because he feels he was misunderstood. Rochester and Digital Jane are each speaking using the same type of communication they are accustomed to using in their private lives. Rochester is privileged and he is used to having access to more of the world around him. Jane though views his tale as patronizing and ignored of those lacking wealth. In the next episode, the same type of communication is used.

Rochester: Well, all you need to know is I would get the sun and the stars for you.

Digital Jane: I like them where they are.

Rochester: Everyone says that. It's because they can't imagine the constellations any other way.

Digital Jane: The constellations are already kind of imagined. People see what they want to see.

Rochester: I would buy more hours in the day so that we can spend more time together. I don't think you know what you're worth.

("Episode 50: Discordant")

Here each character is discussing the same topic – the constellations. Yet again, audiences observe how viewing the same object can still result in varied perspectives or in “what they want to see” as Jane points out. Interestingly, Rochester views constellations and “hours in the day” through means of obtaining them. Jane views them as a way of viewing them differently – maybe learning from this varied view. Each do not have malicious motivations, but they are so far apart in the spectrum when it comes to economics it is difficult to look past. There is a metaphoric veil or distorting of language and visuals throughout the web series. The struggle Rochester and Digital Jane endure attempting to communicate clearly is acknowledged. Both are right in their own spheres – public versus private, appearance versus ideals, appearance versus ideals. They focus on their opposing spheres and therefore their speech can be veiled. Realizing that both public and private are important can lead to the happiness they both desire. Digital Jane recognizes these flaws (again) when there is a storm.

Digital Jane: Maybe I'm careless for staying with a man who's so clearly terrible at communication? Who is obsessed with grand gestures and who's far from perfect. I'm not perfect.

Figure 28: The Storm



(“Episode 51: Storm”)

There is also a literal veil that hangs over her as she discussing the action that distract her from seeing the secret Rochester hides and the genuine feelings he has for her. The lights go out after this line, and a candle is placed directly adjacent to the veil. Beth sneaks into Digital Jane’s room once she falls asleep and she tries on the veil. The consistent darkness, veils, and secret parts of the house demonstrate gothic imagery. This veil seeming to symbolize communication or language severs the connection between individuals at times. The necessity to control the outcome through hypotheticals or continued discussion negatively affect her experience in these past episodes. Rather than viewing her videos as a means to an end, she begins to view them as a means of art and self-expression.

Digital Jane directly refers to the platform she posts on when she explains her vlogs to Diana and Mary. The nature of this transmedia mechanism requires some impulsivity with posts creating its own social system.

Digital Jane: Sometimes people watch them and leave comments, but mostly it’s for me. It kind of helps me air things out. Organize my thoughts.

Diana: Like a diary?

Digital Jane: Yeah, sort of, but it's more, immediate, like you don't have to get tangled up in language in the same way. It's kind of just right there. I'm not explain this very well.

(“Episode 61: Marzipan and Dianimal”)

She discusses the immediacy of visuals present with video and the need to step away from overly tailored language. Doing so forces her to be more genuine in some cases as there is less opportunity to edit. The entire mechanism is acknowledged when Diana discusses her research in “virtual communities” – “we tend to see online activity as something totally trivial, but it's a geographically unbounded material culture made out of immaterial things” (“Episode 61: Marzipan and Dianimal”). Diana lays out the platform in which the *AoJE* expresses its journey as well as where the transmedia mechanism functions. At first, functioning on one site in a free state and then transforming to others; collectively, expressing a rounded image of Digital Jane. Along with YouTube, audiences view companies' websites, comments, and posted images to all develop lateral controls for the creators. Ironically, even though this transmedia mechanism is influenced by institutions or businesses, the entire transmedia platform becomes “de-institutionalized” as Foucault proposed. It would be inaccurate to say simply the platform itself created the “virtual communities” (as there are multiple forms of thinking present even between characters); rather, the content creators (both fictional and non-fictional), the viewers, and the communication that occurs on such platforms that the entire mechanism is made up of. Each video done on Digital Jane's site is a form of self-expression. She is a fictional content creator. Rather than suppressing her emotion, she is embracing it through her videos and through this

new form of art. Jane attempts to understand her students near the end of the web series. Her co-worker, Rose, develops the task to give the students disposable cameras so they can “take pictures of whatever they find beautiful.” Rose points out it will “help [them] to understand each child...if [they] could see what they all thought was beautiful in their lives” (“Episode 69: Portrait”). This is the same advice Miss Temple gives Jane; through art they are able to “show the world through [their] lens” (“Episode 16: Blanche Ingram”). Jane also uses art exercises with Adele once her mother, Beth, has passed away. Although, rather than creating art inspired by others Adele asks “if [they] can use the art supplies but not make art” (“Episode 90: Abstract”). Adele is so affected by her loss that she begins to form her own desires and self-expression. Jane informs her “[she doesn’t] have to make art like anyone else...you can just make art like you” (“Episode 90: Abstract”). In this episode, both characters are conflicted with their emotions. They are not as saddened with the passing of a parent since they did not know them too well or were too young to get to know them. Sometimes, it is necessary “to let yourself feel what you feel” with impulsive art. The interpretation or the message can be figured out after with the result or metaphorically with the decision. In a discussion with Simon, they discuss decision making specifically. Both Simon and Jane struggle with risk taking – one due to complete rationale thinking and the other due to fear of being immoral.

Simon: Just because something is accomplished in one part of the brain doesn’t mean it can’t be accomplished somewhere else. There have also been cases where the brain is partially rewired itself, and that doesn’t even take into account Wegener’s “Illusion of Control.” ...Even if neuroscientists were to map out every possible scenario and every possible pathway, there is still a gap between that and

our feelings. Sure, some part of your brain might light up when you are making a decision, on some scan but why do we feel like we are still in control of that decision? There's research that shows that pathways in our brains are lighting up even before we are consciously aware we are making a decision. So, are all decisions just illusions? ...So basically, the brain works like dominoes. So, you have a brain cell, another brain cell, and in the middle there's a gap or a synapse. When one brain cell fires, it released neurotransmitters into the gap which transmits the signal to neighboring cells. ("Episode 86: Apologies")

Digital Jane comes to learn that the reaction or the emotion behind decisions, art, or values are all separate from one another. Wegener's "Illusion of Control" is defined as "an expectancy of a personal success probability inappropriately higher than the objective probability would warrant" (Langer 311). In other words, in situations of chance individuals still behave and believe these "events are subject to control" (Langer 311). These scientific explanations Simon details are many instances where choice and decision making become muddled with emotion or disillusioned control. Digital Jane's emotions fluctuate throughout the web series – lonely, bored, unsatisfied, conflicted, devastated, guilty. These emotions along with unwieldy events such as inheriting millions of dollars teach Jane to relinquish control at times. Choosing how to react and being content with that reaction though is controllable. When deciding what to do with the money, she jokes, "[leaving] it up to blind chance."; however, later stating she'll "keep [flipping a coin] until [she gets] it right" ("Episode 74: Double or Nothing"). Jane comes to recognize circumstances placed on her versus the action afterwards – the uncontrollable and the controllable. The contrasts within the web series – a lie versus the truth, private versus public,

internal versus external – are all necessary as one cannot be fulfilled without the other or learned without the other.

Digital Jane: I've made a lot of changes this past year. But some things are still the same. I still buy more books than groceries. I still drink too much tea, and let my mugs pile up around me. I still miss the people who can't be here anymore. I started all this because I thought I wanted something else, or to be someone else. But if nothing else, this year's made me re-examine who I am, who I want to be, and where I want to go. Among other things, I've learned how to let my passion and my reason to coexist, instead of letting one crush the other. I've learned how to go after what I want. I've learned how to stand up for myself. I've learned how to make myself happy. And in doing so I've realized that I don't need to change who I am. I am a reader, a tea drinker, a storyteller, a university graduate, a new apartment inhabitant, a teacher, a soon to be business owner, a cousin, a niece, a sister, a friend. I have a family now. They're not perfect or conventional or even very easy to explain. And as long as I'm happy, I don't need to explain. They're mine, and I love them. All of them. I'm proud of them, and I'm proud of me. And the thing is, I don't need to press record to start my day anymore. So, thank you. Thank you for staying with me. Dear viewer, I made a home.

Figure 29: Endings



(“Episode 95: Endings”)

Digital Jane comes to see there is no such thing as a fixed self as it is a constant and everchanging with communication between contrasts. At times, these choices – these contrasts – become disarrayed: veiled, distorted, reflected, refracted. Through her time on transmedia, she is able to present herself in many different roles (reader, storyteller, teacher, etc.). Each role blurred into another, she has presented a rounded self. There are many degrees of the self– “who I am, who I want to be, and where I want to go” – and this helps her to understand conflict is inevitable and ever present. There are many lessons she learns along the way, but most importantly she “[learns] how to make [herself] happy” (“Episode 95: Endings”). She is assertive and active in her language now. It is not only about the circumstance she finds herself in, but what she desires to do with it. By the end, she no longer needs the exploration vlogging provided for her. Digital Jane learns to balance natural contrasts without focusing on and therefore depending on one or the other. She still has her audience outside of the transmedia mechanism, but now they are in reality. The lack of inclusion of Rochester in the end marks a monumental change from original

to adaptation. She has chosen to be a part of the business world she so opposed in the beginning realizing artifices and appearances are inevitable; it is possible to create a genuine appearance. The impossibility of creating a fixed appearance influences her now to become more impulsive with her expression. Even if entering the world means there may be disingenuousness present does not limit her any longer. The series ends with the image of a home and she thanks the viewers for helping her find that. Rather than having a camera lens to validate and view back her life, she leaves a formal family to now actively reflect with a chosen family. The creators have also left their self-expression on the transmedia sites. Perhaps their documentation on YouTube and other sites is a testament to the overall influence (of business) present on these sites, but the genuine intention of expression that is intended by most content creators. In a world where self-expression is constant, this does not mean what is expressed is constant.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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