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Resisting Marriage: Using *Rubyfruit Jungle* to Analyze a Lesbian’s View on Societal Norms

JENNIFER JORDAN

The novel *Rubyfruit Jungle*, by Rita Mae Brown, was published in 1973 and focuses on a lesbian protagonist. This is Molly Bolt, who is followed from sixth grade into her post-college life. Molly begins the novel living in rural Pennsylvania with her supportive stepfather, Carl, and her critical stepmother, Carrie. Growing up, Molly has a tenuous relationship with Carrie, as Molly continuously lives her life in a manner in exact opposition to her stepmother’s beliefs. Throughout the novel, Molly grows both in age and ideas. She begins discovering her feelings for women in the sixth grade, when she has a romantic and sexual relationship with Leota Bisland. This occurs before Molly’s family moves to Florida with her parents and cousin Leroy’s family. In Florida, Molly starts a relationship with a high-school classmate named Carolyn that further escalates her stance against marriage. After high school, Molly works to put herself through film school at New York University, where she has multiple relationships with women. Like *Rubyfruit Jungle*, many mid-to late-twentieth century novels include lesbian protagonists who do not value marriage. This can be seen in novels such as *Odd Girl Out* by Ann Bannon and *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* by Jeanette Winterson. These books were written in 1953 and 1985 respectively, and they also depict lesbians rejecting the societal expectation of marriage. *Odd Girl Out*, as well as other lesbian pulp novels, helped to set a precedent for novels with lesbian themes: furthermore, that novel includes a lesbian protagonist with a negative view of marriage. Likewise, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit* relates back to Brown’s work by also depicting a lesbian protagonist who negatively views marriage.

*Rubyfruit Jungle* was received well in 1973, winning awards and being held in high esteem among critics. It came out in a time when homosexuality was something taboo and unspoken. Importantly, it was seen as a novel that paved the way for other novels with lesbian themes and now is viewed as a key twentieth-century lesbian novel. This paper will explore the conflict that Molly has with marriage within the plot. This includes how she feels about marriage personally, how she perceives marriage from observing other people, and what she thinks of marriage as an institution. Often marriage is something that is expected of women, including Molly, and it is expected that she will both marry a man and have children.

The main method that is employed in this analysis is close reading. The work of close reading is one of the most basic and essential tools in the work of analyzing literature. This allows for a more detailed look into the literature to gain reasoning for any particular argument, rather than relying on secondary sources to back up a claim that is central to the narrative. The work of close reading rewards the reader with a deeper understanding of the text, and the ability to use this knowledge to make a claim that is central to the idea of the novel. The other method necessary to this analysis is secondary sources that examine lesbian novels. These sources come from various places, but each is a scholarly work that deals with the specific topic or the novel itself. Examples of this research will be books that have been written on lesbian theory and articles found in academic journals that present their own argument on these lesbian novels or works that present relevant theory and critiques surrounding the topic. I will look to works that add onto the novels including the chapter “The Woman-Identified Woman” from the book *For Lesbians Only* written by the Radicalesbians, Catharine Stimpson’s article “Zero Degree Deviancy: The Lesbian Novel in English,” the book *The Safe Sea of Women: Lesbian Fiction 1969-1989* by Bonnie Zimmerman, and various other works that are relevant to the topic. These sources will add to the work of close reading as a way to gain knowledge about the novels and the time...
period that would not be possible to find within the novel itself.

The negative thoughts on marriage throughout the novel create a space for dialogue about why Molly's thoughts are so important in the world she grows up in. Molly offers a different perspective from societal norms, with a negative viewpoint on marriage. This perspective could stem from her upbringing, her relationships, as well as the time period into which she was born. This novel is set within a time where any kind of marriage equality may not have even been on her mind or taken seriously, which could also add to the negativity surrounding marriage. This novel tells the story of its time, and I will speculate how the viewpoint of one lesbian protagonist can extend into real-world thoughts at the time.

Rubyfruit Jungle is a novel about Molly growing up and being told that her life will be valued based upon marriage and children, in that order. Molly disregards this sentiment every step of the way. She has her first homosexual experience in sixth grade, and she never feels ashamed or turns back as time goes on. Molly continues to love women, and goes to college to pursue a career in filmmaking. She escapes to the city to live her life, and she consistently refuses to follow norms. This story is narrated by Molly, which allows for deeper insight into her thoughts and feelings. Molly's life is influenced by having sexual experiences with women, by going to college, by reflecting on her young life and the challenges that she faced, and by her adoptive mother, who only wants her to be “normal.” The setting begins in rural Pennsylvania, and then follows Molly as she moves to Florida and then works to put herself through college in New York City. The novel ends with Molly graduating from NYU with honors, having trouble finding a job within the film industry based solely on the fact that she is a woman, and continuing to promise to try to reach her dreams no matter what adversity she faces.

Molly deliberately states several times throughout the novel that she never wants to get married, and that the sex of the person does not change the fact that she would never want to get married. She is an independent, irreverent girl who lives life how she wants to. She is also expected to “grow out” of her feelings as her junior high school girlfriend Leota does, but she never makes any attempt to hide how she feels. She is a lesbian, and she knows it. She disdains marriage and the shackles that it would place her in. Molly's concept of marriage conflicts with the ideas of those around her throughout and after she grows out of childhood. Rubyfruit Jungle handles the subject very bluntly. Molly states several times that she has no interest in marriage. While Molly acknowledges that the idea of same-sex marriage may exist, she continues to reject it altogether. Molly is growing up at a time when being able to marry a woman is not quite as preposterous as it was in the past, but she would still rather be her own independent woman than be held back by trying to gain a permanent kind of love.

This novel has a relatively small amount of relevant scholarship written on it. However, there are some works of scholarship found that do not pertain to the scope of this analysis. The article “Dr. Molly Feelgood; or, How I Can't Learn to Stop Worrying and Love Rubyfruit Jungle,” written by W. C. Harris, discusses the role of identity as it pertains to Molly's life. Harris makes the claim that Molly rejects all labels, but this article deals mostly with her characterization, and does not address marriage. Another piece of scholarship is the article “Reading Queer Counter-narratives in the High-School Literature Classroom: Possibilities and Challenges” written by Kirsten Helmer. This article focuses on a high school English classroom that is teaching queer novels, including Rubyfruit Jungle. There are more articles that discuss Rubyfruit Jungle and Rita Mae Brown and the treatment of lesbian characters through arguments that pertain to topics other than marriage.

The most relevant piece of critical scholarship about Rubyfruit Jungle is an article written by James Mandrell in 1987 titled “Questions of Genre and Gender: Contemporary America, Versions of the Feminine Picaresque.” This article discusses the form of the novel, as well as the statements made within it. Mandrell writes about how Molly disregards the ideals set up for
her, which push her into an even more marginalized place than the one that she inhabited before. He writes, “it is hard to conceive of anyone more marginal, more removed from access to power and authority, than a Southern lesbian from a poor, working-class family. With neither money nor the potential for upward mobility that would be offered by a husband, Molly Bolt is essentially condemned to her marginality” (Mandrell 152). This characterization shows the independence and drive that Molly possesses throughout the novel, but Mandrell wonders whether these are enough. Later he adds, “by offering this ‘good and true account,’ Molly/Brown changes nothing, shows no possibility for change, but, rather, acquiesces to and confirms the marginality experienced by those who are not straight, white middle-class males” (Mandrell 163). This marginality is partially caused by her background and her sexuality; however, it is also caused by her refusal to get married to a man who could give her more power. Mandrell focuses heavily on this, and it adds a layer of thinking onto the idea of what it would mean for Molly to get married.

Throughout her life, Molly is expected to conform to the ideas of society in order to become a successful woman. However, she rejects these norms every step of the way, from childhood into and throughout her adulthood. Molly’s adoptive mother Carrie is one of the first people to put heteronormative expectations on her. She tries to teach Molly how to do housework or simple activities that would be necessary once she becomes a housewife. Molly has no interest in these activities, and she would rather play down by the river with her cousin, Leroy. One instance has Carrie talking to her husband Carl, saying, “She don’t want to learn none of the things she has to know to get a husband. Smart as she is, a woman can’t get on in this world without a husband” (Brown 39). Carrie is very critical of Molly throughout the novel, especially on the grounds of how different she is from other girls. Molly has no interest in learning housework or manners that will draw a man later down the road. She has high goals for herself, as does Carl, who insists that Molly will go to college. Her two parents have different expectations for Molly; Carl expects her to go to college and become an independent woman, while Carrie expects Molly to stop being rebellious and to lead a life that conforms to the expectations of those around her. Throughout her life Molly will grow to meet Carl’s expectations but to disregard Carrie’s.

As Molly transitions into high school, her feelings of resentment towards marriage and those who view marriage as the only correct way to live increases. She has a relationship with Carolyn, who refuses to believe that their love makes them gay. Carolyn wants to have the perks of a lesbian relationship without giving up her heterosexual privileges and ideals for her “normal” life. After the two begin having sex Carolyn asks Molly not to tell anyone. Molly says she does not want to lie, but that she doubts anyone will ask anyway. Carolyn then says:

“I hate to lie too, but people will say we’re lesbians.”
“Aren’t we?”
“No, we just love each other. Lesbians look like men and are ugly.” (Brown 103-4)

Carolyn’s statement brings in the stereotyping of lesbians that is prevalent throughout the novel. This statement asserts Carolyn’s idea that because she doesn’t look like a man she can’t be a lesbian. This notion is one that Molly rejects because why would she lie about this? Her sexuality is something that she is never ashamed of throughout the entire novel. The difference between the reactions of Molly and Carolyn show where each of them are in terms of their sexuality. While Molly has come to terms with her attraction to women, Carolyn still acts as if it does not mean anything unless she looks the part. This stereotyping is a harmful idea that carries through the novel and through gay culture itself as well.

Along with the evidence found within the text itself, ideas about the expectations that come along with a lesbian sexuality can be found in critical theory as well. Catharine Stimpson, in her article “Zero Degree Deviancy: The Lesbian Novel in English,” discusses expectations placed upon women (including lesbian women) in the world. She writes of a growing sense of independence among women in terms of jobs and ideas on marriage. She writes:

Among the causes of the reappearance of a submerged
consciousness and its narrative of enabling escape have been the women’s movement, more flexible attitudes towards marriage (so often contrasted favorably to the putative anarchy of homosexual relations), the “modernization of sex,” which encourages a rational, tolerant approach to the complexities of eros, and the growing entrance of more women into the public labor force, which gives a financial autonomy inseparable from genuine sexual independence.

(Stimpson 374)

Stimpson’s statement adds onto the ideals that Molly faces within her world, and that any woman would also face. Molly is expected to learn what she needs to do in order to entice a man to marry her; however, she would rather do anything else. Stimpson discusses another novel by Mary McCarthy from 1963, *The Group*, that focuses on the restrictions on women within the late twentieth century. Stimpson’s statement recognizes the trend within novels of this time to take a transformative stance on what a woman’s role in life is. This can be seen within *Rubyfruit Jungle* through Molly’s longing to be free of the expectations that her environment has for her.

Molly’s childhood thoughts on marriage are explicitly stated from quite early in the novel. Molly spends time contemplating the idea of marriage, allowing her to think about why a person would want to get married. For example, as Molly talks to Leroy, he asks her, “Why do people get married anyway?” Her response is, “So’s they can fuck” (Brown 37). This conversation shows Molly’s nature of thinking that marriage is a waste of time. She sees that during this time, getting married serves the purpose of having sex and then having babies. She asserts that the only reason she can find for marriage is for sex, and she does not believe the two are mutually exclusive activities. Perhaps this is because she is living proof (as a bastard) that both sex and procreation can happen without marriage. Molly’s statement highlights her disregard for marriage from an early point within the novel. Above all, it creates a trend of thinking that will follow Molly throughout the novel, until her adult life, and into the foreseeable future of the character that exists after the end of the novel.

Molly is a character who not only rejects marriage as a point of procreation, but also rejects marriage to a man, and the idea of marriage in general. From childhood, Molly would spend much time with her cousin Leroy, and later, the relationship would turn sexual. However, in a conversation that Molly has with Leroy she says, “Leroy, we don’t need to get married. We’re together all the time. It’s silly to get married. Besides, I’m never gettin’ married” (Brown 36). Molly’s statement shows that even from a young age she had no intention of getting married. She thinks that the notion is laughable, although she is talking to her cousin who proposes marriage. This familial proposition ends up blurring the lines between romance and incest because, although Molly is technically adopted, she has been raised as Leroy’s cousin from infancy. This taboo relationship places Molly further into the periphery of societal expectations. The act of rejecting Leroy’s proposal, along with her rejection of the ideals of society for her to get married at any point in her life, creates a path towards her adult ideas as well.

Along with her relationship with Leroy, Molly starts a relationship with Leota Bisland when she is in sixth grade. She ends up having her first sexual experiences with Leota, and she starts to feel positively about some of the societal expectations, even if her relationship itself goes against those expectations. At this point, Molly comes up with an idea: “I began to wonder if girls could marry girls, because I was sure I wanted to marry Leota and look in her green eyes forever” (Brown 44). Molly’s thoughts display her desire to be with Leota, and it’s the first real mention of getting married that seems to please Molly. This moment marks Molly’s toying with the idea of marriage, only if Leota will do the housework, of course. This first positive idea about getting married adds another layer to Molly’s personal ideals and thoughts about the institution of marriage.

All of these childhood thoughts from Molly lay the groundwork for the rest of the novel. Readers are given a picture of a girl who rejects the expectations of society at every turn. Molly’s feelings as a child lay the groundwork for her adolescent and adult
life decisions. All of these decisions add up to create the character of Molly, who becomes a woman who decides to take her choices into her own hands. She lives her life the way she wants to where she wants to live it. These connecting pieces are essential for understanding both Molly and her views throughout her life.

A notion that is carried on throughout *Rubyfruit Jungle* is the idea that a person can “grow out” of their homosexuality. This idea compares being a homosexual to being a child, and this thought is something that Molly has to deal with in her life. This comes to her from people like Carrie, Leota, Carolyn, and the various other people who move in and out of her life. From all of these people comes an idea that only children think that homosexual relationships can exist, and that adults realize that living a heterosexual life is the only way to live a fulfilling life. Molly argues that this is not true, and lives her life happily how she wants to in defiance of all of the expectations placed on her.

During this period of her life where she is expected to grow up, she also has to deal with attacks from within her relationships as well. Molly and Leota have a noteworthy conversation:

Molly: “Why don’t you marry me? I’m not handsome, but I’m pretty.”
“Girls can’t get married.”
“Says who?”
“It’s a rule.”
“It’s a dumb rule.” (Brown 49)

This conversation shows that Molly doesn’t care what society or her family expects, and that she is going to do what she wants, no matter what. If she wants to marry Leota, she will. If she wants to stay single, she will, and nothing will stop her. Molly’s will comes through in these statements as persevering and confident. She decides that she will not just “grow up” into someone who society expects her to be, and that she will become her own person with her own life, in whatever way she sees fit.

Leota is the first person that Molly ever has sex with, and she becomes an important part of the narrative of Molly Bolt. After her sixth-grade year, Molly’s family moves away, and she does not see Leota again for quite some time. When Molly is able to reconnect with her, Leota has grown into the kind of adult woman that Molly resents. She has changed from her “childish” self, and she lives a heterosexual life. Leota now is married to a man, and she has children. She shuns her old ways as if they were nothing but normal childhood games, and then tells Molly that she too should embrace this life and marry a man. To this, Molly responds,

“Leota, I will never marry.”
“You’re crazy. A woman’s got to marry. What’s going to happen to you when you’re fifty? You got to grow old with somebody. You’re going to be sorry.”
“I’m going to be arrested for throwing an orgy at ninety-nine and I’m not growing old with anybody. What a gruesome thought.” (Brown 219)

This conversation reinforces the idea that Leota “grew out” of her homosexuality. She has fallen into the societal norms of the need to marry and to procreate in order to have a fulfilled life in the eyes of everyone else. Molly goes against this, because she does not believe that others should be in charge of what makes her life successful. She even goes as far as calling a “normal,” heterosexual life a gruesome one. The amount of distaste Molly has for the idea of marriage is viewable from afar.

However, she does not only view the thought of being with a man forever to be the gruesome part. She deliberately states that she will not be growing old with “anybody.” If she wanted to dig into Leota for her marriage, in particular, she could have said that she would not grow old with any man. But her use of “anybody” shows her feelings towards any kind of long-term commitment, whether it is with a woman or a man. This conversation adds even more layers to the argument for Molly’s thoughts on marriage. From her thoughts presented directly within the text, Molly has shown that she places no value in marriage or getting married. She feels that marriage is used as a tool for people to feel better about themselves for having sex and, along with it, children. She knows that being legally bound to a person for the
rest of your life is not the only way to live a life that is meaningful to the person living it. She decides to become living proof that she can live a happy and fulfilled life that does not exist solely to function within the role of what she is expected to do by society. Molly is a dynamic character who always thinks for herself.

This thinking is extended not only by a close reading of *Rubyfruit Jungle*, but can also be seen within one of the critical texts as well. Bonnie Zimmerman, in her study *The Safe Sea of Women: Lesbian Fiction 1969-1989*, discusses Brown’s novel in brief. She writes, “Molly decides early in her life that she does not want to be like other women, trapped by the female destiny of marriage and motherhood, nor does she want to grow old or die like her cousin Leroy’s mother” (Zimmerman 47). This statement from Zimmerman adds further evidence to this idea of Molly’s feelings about marriage. Zimmerman writes that Molly does not want to be “trapped,” and that Brown’s usage of words that conjure up ideas of incarceration or being forcibly held against her will are a common theme within the novel. She also includes the fact that Molly does not want to die like Leroy’s mother, Jenna. Jenna dies in the novel because she hides her cancer from Leroy’s father, Ep, because she knows the family cannot afford to hire a doctor to treat her. Molly does not want to sit back in life and let things happen to her. She wants to take control when things are wrong, and live a life she will not be ashamed of. This childhood idea influences Molly’s thoughts about marriage that are carried into adulthood.

As Molly enters adulthood and the world, she starts to notice even more how unbalanced the world is towards the people who live in it. She sees how people perceive her based on the facts that she is a woman, that she is lower class, and that she is a lesbian. This understanding comes from the men in her film classes at New York University demeaning and underestimating her because she is a woman in a “masculine” field of work. This understanding comes from the film executives who refuse to hire her for anything other than low-level reception jobs. It comes from women like Mighty Mo who try to tell Molly what kind of lesbian she has to be, simply because that makes it easier for others to judge whether she is a “butch” or a “femme.” All of these simple judgments form Molly’s outlook and her ability to see the injustices that she faces as a poor, gay woman. Collectively, this leads Molly into a space where she ends up rejecting marriage and the social expectations presented to her to the point where she is resentful of them all. Above all, her adult thoughts allow for a prediction of the future life of Molly Bolt. She is such a powerful figure, that it is hard to imagine a scenario in which Molly could be forced into a life that she does not intend to live.

As Molly grows older, she has relationships with both men and women. Her relationships with men are boring and short-lived, while her relationships with women are wild and full of passion, before eventually fizzling out. Molly reaches the point where she says, “I didn’t even want a husband or any man for that matter. I wanted to go my own way. That’s all I think I ever wanted, to go my own way and maybe find some love here and there. Love, but not the now and forever kind with chains around your vagina and a short circuit in your brain. I’d rather be alone” (Brown 88). Molly’s statement shows that she views marriage as something that will stop her from living life freely. Molly wants to be able to love who she wants when she wants, and she doesn’t want to be controlled by outside forces. She would rather live her life alone than be forced to be with one person for the rest of her life. The idea of being chained to or forced to be with another person seems like torture to her, and seeing other people be within that force repels her even more.

In the above quote, she mentions that she does not want a husband, or even any man in her romantic life. This is far off from the Molly who would sleep with men and go on dates with them because she could. This displays an internal change: Molly transitions from having relationships with men because she can to wanting to remove these men from her life. Molly states that she wants love, but not the type of love that society expects her to have. Instead of a love where she will be submissive and raise children, she wants a love that is casual and fun. The “now and forever” kind of love does not appeal to Molly; she wants to live her own life. She
wants this even above any love at all. Molly values her freedom and independence more than any love she could have, and she wants to retain that feeling. She has goals in her life, and she will not let anyone get in the way of them. These statements create a larger lens through which to see Molly’s actions. Although she does not say that she would not want to marry a woman, aside from childhood she may not retain thoughts that marrying a woman would be an option in her life. Furthermore, she rejects marriage itself, and she chooses to live how she wants instead of putting her own desires aside for a long-term partner.

Towards the end of the novel, Molly returns to her hometown and goes to see Leota for the first time since sixth grade. When the two reconnect, Molly expects to see a woman who resembles her first love, beautiful and vibrant. Instead, what she gets is a tired woman who looks far too old for her age. Leota tells Molly that she is married now, and her children can be seen in her house. Molly is horrified at the change that has happened to Leota, and how she is forcing herself to fit into the societal expectations for women rather than being her true self. Leota claims to be happy, that her life is just something that was always meant to happen this way. Molly does not buy into Leota’s way of thinking that a heterosexual life is unavoidable, and she talks of their childhood love. Leota mentions that it was just childish, and that it is not like they would have stayed in love anyway because that is not how a normal life turns out. Molly rejects this statement as well.

At this point, Molly tells Leota that she still loves women. Leota tries to tell her that she needs to get married in order to have a fulfilled life, and Molly replies, “Let’s stop this shit. I love women. I’ll never marry a man and I’ll never marry a woman either. That’s not my way. I’m a devil-may-care lesbian” (Brown 220). At this point, Molly officially removes any doubt that she will remain single. She doesn’t care who it is; she refuses to be tied down to any person. She knows that marriage is not something that she foresees in her life, and she doesn’t shy away from showing it. She refers to herself as a lesbian in front of Leota, which presents itself as a way to dig back to their former relationship that Leota has written off long ago. Molly decides that she does not want to marry anyone, man or woman. She will continue to love women, but having a legally bound relationship is not something she is even slightly interested in.

She says that it is not “her way” to be married to anyone. From her actions within the novel, this proves to be correct. Molly’s independent nature leads her to a life of whirlwind romances rather than to one steady love who will change her world. She does not need the grand gestures and grand romance that comes with a long-term relationship. She wants to have a connection with someone that is meaningful and worthwhile. Molly’s approach to love and romance is far from the relationships that society and people like Carrie would expect from her, but that means nothing to her. Her life and how she loves are completely up to her, and she makes sure that everyone around her knows that.

Along with a close reading of Brown’s work, critical scholarship can also be used to understand Molly’s adult thoughts. The Radicalesbians were a group of women fighting to be a part of feminism rather than be ostracized as a group that would take away from the feminist movement. It is important to note that Rita Mae Brown was a member of the Radicalesbians, and that she was a part-author of their manifesto. Her ideas about feminism and the importance of lesbians flows through both her work with the Radicalesbians and within *Rubyfruit Jungle*. This scholarship shows that other women may feel the same way that Molly does about marriage and the state of the world as a whole. Molly notices all of the things around her, and she wears all of her hardships like a badge of honor in order to keep trudging through until she gets the life that she truly desires. However, along the way, some of her setbacks come from other women, the people who should be helping her because they understand her struggles. Many women want to shy away from lesbians as if they can somehow “catch it” or simply because they feel it is wrong. These women view lesbians as a distraction to the feminist movement as a whole. This is primarily what the Radicalesbians refer to in their manifesto, “The Woman-Identified Woman.” They write:

Affixing the label lesbian not only to a woman who aspires
to be a person, but also to any situation of real love, real solidarity, real primacy among women is a primary form of divisiveness among women: it is the condition which keeps women within the confines of the feminine role, and it is the debunking/scare term that keeps women from forming any primary attachments, groups, or associations among ourselves. (Radicalesbians 174)

This passage from “The Woman-Identified Woman” displays some of the same theories that Molly notices in Rubyfruit Jungle. The Radicalesbians claim that labels such as that of “lesbian” are used as a tactic to hold women down. The word is used to keep women in the roles they are traditionally told to be in, because if they stray from the norm they will be ostracized as lesbians. The fact that this word is used to hold women within their designated place creates a disconnect between heterosexual women and the lesbians they so desperately want to be distanced from, and it suggests that Molly’s negative feelings towards marriage are valid.

This close reading along with the scholarship creates a wealth of evidence for Molly’s disdain for marriage. From childhood, everyone around her tries to force her to become the woman that she is supposed to be. All of these forces lead Molly to decide to live her life however she wants to, even if that life is not one that garners respect from others. This life turns out to be one of personal struggle along with triumphs, and Molly goes much farther than people thought she would. She graduates from NYU and becomes a strong woman who does not need to depend on others to get what she wants. Through the analysis of the text, Molly is shown to be a woman who appreciates her own freedom more than conforming to the ideals of others.

Works Cited


About the Author

Jennifer Jordan is a senior majoring in English and Early Childhood with a minor in Special Education. Her research project was completed over the course of the Fall 2017 semester as an Honors Thesis, under the mentorship of Dr. Matt Bell (English). Jennifer presented this paper at the Massachusetts Undergraduate Research Conference in Amherst, MA. She plans to pursue her Masters of Education in the fall of 2019.