

ROMANCE LITERATURE IN THE EDUCATION
OF THE YOUNG GIRL

THE ROLE OF ROMANCE LITERATURE
IN THE
EDUCATION OF THE ADOLESCENT FEMALE

By

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to combine my love of reading with my interest in education. My exploration of romance literature and its popular appeal is based on a developmental "bibliotherapy" approach to reading. Focusing on the adolescent girl in her identity crisis, I examine potential benefits and pitfalls that romance reading might hold for her as she grows toward an independent maturity and becomes involved in intimate relationships.

Although it includes classroom observations, my project is not a data-based survey of adolescent girls and their reading habits; rather, it is a theoretical exploration of moral and pedagogical concerns which I have encountered through my experiences with teaching and reading. As such, it deals with issues of gender and genre and the role of the educator in the promotion of relevant texts during the transition years of adolescence. I rely on several eighteenth-century works--Radcliffe's popular gothic romance and Austen's satire of that genre (though Austen's novel, too, contains a moving romance); on Rousseau's *Emile* and Gilligan's feminist theories--to develop my thesis that romance reading can provide a landscape for sublimation and delay of early sexual experience; and that it is the educator's role to guide young girls in their reading to recognize the dangers of reification and to lead them toward a stronger sense of self.

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THE ROLE OF ROMANCE LITERATURE IN THE EDUCATION
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: BIBLIOTHERAPY

ROMANCE READING AND THE YOUNG GIRL

Jane Austen's early novel, *Northanger Abbey* (written in 1803, published in 1818), cleverly satirizes the effect of romance reading on the young girl as she approaches crucial decisions regarding love and marriage. At the same time, Austen suggests that the reading of novels--specifically, the gothic romance which was the popular genre of her time--provides her heroine with more than a spellbinding vicarious experience; the experience the young heroine finds in books becomes an important stepping-stone on her road to maturity. When seventeen-year-old Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey* tests the unreal and melodramatic world of Ann Radcliffe's gothic romance against the narrow confines of her own social realities, she is able to emerge with understanding and wisdom.

In his famous book, *The Uses of Enchantment* (1977), Bruno Bettelheim sees a similar potential for younger children to come to terms with the dilemmas of their inner lives through fairy tales which, "unlike any other forms of literature, direct the child to discover his identity and calling and they also suggest what experiences are needed to

develop his character further" (24). Thus, fairy tales and fantasy literature provide the young child with a meaningful landscape for wholesome personal growth; the adolescent, faced with tremendous physical, emotional, and social changes seeks his/her identity in the pages of romance novels, literature which is more reflective of the adolescent's emerging sexuality and quest for love.

In this paper, I wish to explore the enduring appeal of romance fiction and its possible values or dangers for the crucial years of adolescence. I will focus specifically on the young girl caught up in her feelings of ambivalence regarding her developing sexuality. Those conflicting fears and desires--so eloquently described by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1952) and vividly portrayed in the terror-filled landscapes of Ann Radcliffe's gothic romances of the 1790s--have not disappeared in the "liberated" climate of the 1990s: the young girl is as confused as ever over her role as a feminine being. It is my contention that the precarious situation of today's young girl, caught between her desire for intimacy and the need to be an authentic self, has changed very little since the late eighteenth century. Even when it is read merely for escape, it is my belief that romance reading, through its vicarious experiences and happy endings, still offers the female reader a safe territory in which to explore her ambivalent feelings and, at its best, enables her to develop a sense of her own power before she

becomes involved in a sexual relationship. Although there are dangers in romance fiction which reinforce society's sometimes narrow expectations of the young girl and can thereby stunt her growth, I would still advocate romance reading as a way of buying time, as a landscape for sublimation to delay and evaluate the crucial decisions of adulthood.

A MORAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CONCERN

As an educator and classroom teacher of children who are just entering puberty and approaching what the Ministry of Education of Ontario has termed "The Transition Years" (grades 7, 8, and 9), I am greatly concerned with the best way to help students through the often turbulent changes of adolescence. In the *FWTAO* (Federation of Women Teachers of Ontario) *Newsletter* of April/May 1993, Jean Hewitt outlines the rationale behind the Ministry's decision to destream grade 9 students. Acknowledging that "the vulnerability of the teenager in modern society is illustrated in the statistics on crime, illegitimate births, suicides, and school drop outs," Hewitt notes that "institutions which traditionally provided guidance such as the church and family are themselves vulnerable and frequently have less influence on teenagers than video stars or peers"(3). Thus, the adolescent student is seen as a vulnerable social being and a unique possessor of knowledge heavily influenced by popular culture. Moreover, with a 1990s emphasis on

student-empowerment and inclusiveness, "specific attention is paid to the development of self-esteem, particularly in young women and students from visible minorities"(2). I applaud "The Transition Years" for its wish "to address the needs of the young adolescent in a more coherent and consistent way"(2), but as a teacher about to enter a grade 7 position in the fall, I wonder how I can effectively address my class in a relevant, imaginative, and challenging manner (as advocated by "The Transition Years"). I suspect that a literature-based curriculum is not only the best answer, but in a public school system the *only* way to deal fairly with students of both genders and of various intelligences and backgrounds at the same time.

In my fourteen years of experience with sixth-graders, there have been numerous changes in the public school system of Ontario: among them, the Lord's Prayer and daily Bible reading have been eliminated along with the itinerant Bible teachers who visited our school on a weekly basis; corporal punishment has been banned; mandatory French lessons take up 40 minutes a day; teachers have been granted 180 minutes a week preparatory time; students are removed from the classroom for resource help (or resource teachers visit the classroom on a regular basis); and the brightest and gifted spend one day a week in an enrichment centre outside the school. Values clarification and sex education have become an important part of the grade 6 curriculum, the

former taught in conjunction with the local police and the latter by the school nurse. The emphasis is on facilitative, integrated learning which addresses the needs of a wide range of students in a climate of acceptance and with respect for individual rights.

While an emphasis on tolerance is necessary in our increasingly pluralistic society, and a more humane and holistic approach to learning is long overdue, the school day has never been more fragmented. This is true not just for the students, many of whom come from broken or troubled home situations, but also for the classroom teacher as she scurries about to set up various educational strategies which will effectively enable 25-30 students to become self-directed learners without imposing her own values or opinions on them. In the increasing complexity of classroom teaching with its greater percentages of troubled children, I have found that the reading of adventure or romance stories indirectly addresses the fragile identities of young adolescents while it supplies a safely distanced and imaginative forum for students to talk about their own realities; in other words, literature as bibliotherapy.

BIBLIOTHERAPY

Joseph Gold, a professor of literature and a marriage and family therapist, has strongly affirmed the therapeutic value of reading fiction in his book, *Read for Your Life: Literature as a Life Support System* (1990). In clear and

convincing prose, Gold appeals to young and old to "*respect your own reading power* because fiction is one of the most important resources of your life"(7). Gold sees fiction as a magic mirror which can reflect the veiled parts of the reader's self and life; it is his firm belief that fiction can help "to reorganize thinking, resolve problems, remember the past when you need to review it and see it differently. In other words, fiction can be a powerful agent for creative and healthy change....Fiction helps you to *restory* yourself"(4). Gold's view of literature is especially relevant for the identity crises of adolescence for it concerns itself with "the fictive *process*, about how the pleasures of reading can also be important aids in coping with stress, life crises and growing up"(5).

Moreover, Gold is acutely aware of the function of fiction in the lives of women. He stresses that "women seem to have learned (perhaps because of their reduced social opportunities they have recognized their need) that reading can help them to cope with and understand their roles, relationships and problems"(294). Gold concludes that since the early days of printed fiction up until the present day many of the best-read and most prolific writers have been women. Wondering "at this special connection between women and literature," he notes that

...nothing has done more to liberate women, to give them a sense of themselves as human, valid, important, intelligent, influential and abused, than literature.

Stories have the power to reflect back to them affirmative and compassionate images of themselves, when men and institutions present only unyielding, stony surfaces reflecting nothing but contempt (294).

Significantly, Gold refutes the common charge that the reading of popular romances merely supplies escape from the real problems of daily life. He proposes, rather, that pulp romances provide the same problem-solving opportunities that are found in detective fiction (which is largely male-dominated and *not* labelled as escapist). Gold notes that detective fiction allows us "to flirt with the other side of ourselves, the repressed side that is tempted to fraud, theft, revenge, and terrorism, to taking wild risks, to breaking rules"(297) and in the end restores us to the safety of the right side. Similarly, "the women who enjoy romance are enjoying the same fictitious experiences that give expression to the forbidden and the desired"(298). Gold's recognition that the vicarious experience of romance literature explores unexpressed emotions and hidden wishes leads him to say that reading is our "safety valve". Through the reading of someone else's love story, the young girl finds an imaginative and acceptable landscape in which to explore her heightened awareness and ambivalent feelings about sexuality. Her fears, fantasies, hopes, and possibly buried pain can be dealt with at her own pace in the evocative but safely-distanced pages of romance fiction.

READING WITH COMPASSION

In the sixties, almost thirty years before Gold's *Read for Your Life*, David Holbrook celebrated the power of English Literature to influence and transform lives in his book, *English for Maturity: English in the Secondary School* (1961). Holbrook passionately calls upon educators in England to cultivate the sensibilities of all students through the teaching of English--through reading, writing, listening and speaking--to thereby "foster inner resources, deeper literacy, and thus to deal effectively with the world" (7). In what he sees as an age of increased mechanization and alienation, Holbrook emphasizes the affective quality of literature (it contributes to "The Very Culture of the Feelings"--Chapter 3) which through its vicarious experiences elicits empathy for others. Lamenting the banal, sentimental, and often trite nature of popular culture, Holbrook warns against the dehumanizing effect of the greed and commercialism of "real" life. Holbrook senses that "the real can be better borne, and lived through, by an imaginative awareness by which we may discover some significance in our experience and escape from isolation by discovering how much we share with others"(59). This cultivation of human sympathy is a natural result of reading good poetry and novels; and it is crucial for the adolescent with his/her often turbulent inner life and weak identity to be fortified by "the moral sensitivity and robustness of a great artist's

wisdom". Holbrook makes an eloquent plea to educators to ease the pain and enrich the lives of young people through literature which rises above the "empty idioms" of an "uncreative education" and an "immature culture". Such literature will release youth from the mass production and deadening influences of a popular culture which is manic rather than celebrative (45). Holbrook's aim is to overcome a culture that has succumbed to "Earning a Living" with no concern over the quality of "Living" (Chapter 2).

Although Holbrook and Gold have much in common with their respect for the enriching and healing powers of literature, Gold has a more optimistic view than Holbrook of the role of popular culture. Whereas Holbrook as a literary critic and educator speaks in a prophetic strain warning against the dangers of a disabled popular culture, Gold is less concerned with the artistic quality of literature and cares more about its possibilities for reader identification. As a therapist of people from all walks of life, Gold sees potential growth for the reader in formula fiction and popular romance as well as in more literary texts. Holbrook, however, offers his students "higher" forms of literature, hoping they will find there "metaphors to live by" which will lift them above the status quo. This discussion of the negative and positive influences of popular culture is pertinent to this paper, and I will return to it in my chapter, "Heroines in Dangerous Landscapes" in which I

discuss the role played by Ann Radcliffe's gothic romance in the development of Jane Austen's character, Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey*.

It must be pointed out that Holbrook's fervent desire to promote literature of a high quality does not stem from an elitist point of view. On the contrary, his emphasis on the need to develop compassion in adolescents correlates with his own concern for the under-privileged, the less intelligent, and the rejected minorities of his society. It is in this spirit that he wrote *English for the Rejected: Training Literacy in the Lower Streams of the Secondary School* (1968). Just as this book underscores Holbrook's inclusive and humanistic attitudes, it demonstrates that, in practice, Holbrook fully encourages readers to respond to literature with their own voices. Among the many samples of writing from learning-disabled students, most of which echo the language of popular culture, Holbrook finds moments of greatness and creativity. In this way, Holbrook shares with Gold a strong opinion that the value of reading begins with the reader's response to the text, and that all readers can benefit from literature if they are allowed to experience it with their feelings. At stake is a discussion of how those feelings can best be elevated to promote maturity and compassion for fellow beings. Will this happen naturally through reader-response to any literature regardless of its quality as long as it is relevant to the reader's situation?

Or is there a role here for the educator to challenge the reader with the value-laden and time-tested works of great writers? And how does romance fiction rate as a genre? Can it be relevant and morally challenging at the same time? And specifically for this paper, how can romance fiction help young girls to understand and accept (or challenge) feminine roles while at the same time strengthening their sense of identity?

A DEVELOPMENTAL VIEW OF READING

In order to discuss the validity of romance fiction and its effect on developing identities, especially that of young women, I felt the need for a definitive theory of criticism that would address the question of how we read a text and whether there are differences in reader-responses to various genres depending on age, gender, or social background. In addition, for my purposes, this magical all-encompassing theory should include issues of education. To my delight, I found such a comprehensive view in J.A. Appleyard's *Becoming a Reader: The Experience of Fiction from Childhood to Adulthood* (1990). Appleyard's developmental theory of reader-response is based on a thorough, scholarly understanding of theories of education and literary critical traditions and, in a sense, brings them all together. Moreover, his theory conforms so fully with my experiences as a reader, as a woman, and as a teacher that I have adopted *Becoming a Reader* as my guide for this paper.

Along with my reliance on Appleyard's discussions of contemporary theories of reading and education, I wish to refer to an eighteenth-century treatise on education, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile: or On Education*, first published in 1764. This work I find both useful and fascinating for its own developmental journey: the preserving of Emile's "natural" healthy self-love in childhood, his surviving the "nascent fires" of adolescence through the learning of compassion, and arriving intact to enjoy intimacy and community life in adulthood. I will return to Rousseau's ideal liberal education for a young boy in my third chapter and use it as a backdrop to find a similar landscape for the young girl in her quest for identity.

Appleyard's developmental view of reading is about identity--"how readers change as they mature"(9). He draws his five stages or roles for the reader from Piaget's model of cognitive development (moving from pre-operational through concrete and in early adolescence to more abstract and formal thinking). Recalling Bettelheim's work on the subconsciously therapeutic value of fairy tales for children, Appleyard includes the affective themes described by Freud and psychoanalytic theorists. However, convinced that more than cognition and feeling are involved in a reader's response to a text, Appleyard looks to Erik Erikson's map of the life cycle for "a still more inclusive version of development that takes into account the interpersonal and social construction

of our values and attitudes"(11). Such an interactive approach considers the complexity of the developing individual as well as the influence of outside factors on identity:

One's *identity*, the distinctive way an individual perceives the self and relates to the world, is reorganized as one confronts and weathers the critical issues proper to each stage of growth and learns through social interaction the distinctive roles that the culture makes available to the developing individual (11).

This "reorganizing of oneself" is exactly what happens to Catherine Morland, the young heroine of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, as she applies the information learned from her reading of gothic romances to the new social interactions and unfamiliar territories during her stay at the abbey. One is reminded of Joseph Gold's statement about the therapeutic value of reading fiction--that through the reading of stories we are invited to *restory* ourselves, and of Holbrook's claim that reading gives us "metaphors to live by."

APPLEYARD'S STAGES OF READING

Deriving his stages or reader roles from years of observation and experience, Appleyard begins his description of "how a reader's sensibility changes across the life span"(14) with the preschool child. He names this early stage *The Reader as Player* and sees the young child in a fantasy world that he must learn to sort out; then *The Reader as Hero and Heroine* in the predictable, organized world of

adventure and romance into which the school-age child easily escapes. *The Reader as Thinker* marks the transition into adolescence, the reader who "looks to stories to discover insights into the meaning of life, values and beliefs worthy of commitment, ideal images and authentic role models for imitation. The *truth* of these ideas and ways of living is a severe criterion for judging them"(14). The fourth role is *The Reader as Interpreter*, the college student who learns to talk analytically about literature and acquires tools for critical theory; finally, *The Pragmatic Reader* describes the mature reader who makes conscious choices about reading, choosing to read for escape, to judge the truth of experience, to gratify a sense of beauty, to challenge oneself with new experiences, or to comfort oneself with images of wisdom (15).

Appleyard's reading stages are supposedly progressive but they sometimes overlap, or developing readers regress to former stages. As for attaining a desirable maturity in reading, Appleyard emphasizes that

maturity in reading does not occur independently of other kinds of development. It involves cognitive structures, affective issues, interpersonal relationships, and particular social roles that the dominant culture has to offer to the developing reader (12)

Those social roles and cultural factors--such as class, economic level, race, ethnocentric biases, gender expectations, and history of literary intervention--all affect the way the reader experiences stories. Appleyard is

well aware of current literary critical theories, including feminist and Marxist positions. Although, like the feminists and Marxists, he builds his theory on a social-construction perspective, his argument with these is that they place too heavy an emphasis on purely gender or class influences without a balanced consideration of the whole complex framework of individual and collective consciousness (151). Appleyard's thesis in *Becoming a Reader* emanates from his observation that "no one has addressed the psychological development that readers undergo across the whole life span from a literary point of view" and he attributes this to "the hegemony of text-oriented criticism in past decades and therefore the general lack of any attention to the role of the reader until quite recently" (9). In summary, Appleyard enumerates the different kinds of data which he feels are potentially relevant to a reader's development:

the maturing central nervous system, the evolving psychodynamics of our inner lives, the changing social roles available to us as we mature, the values we absorb from our families and communities, the kinds of books we read, the kinds of readers our educational institutions encourage us to be, the fictional matrix that is the cultural matrix in which our development occurs, and the judgments and moral commitments by which we shape our lives as we mature (14).

While this summary clearly shows that reader development is closely related to moral development, it also suggests that the values we absorb from reading are always influenced by the interpretive communities in which we are situated.

THE ADOLESCENT AND THE QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Nowhere in Appleyard's stages of reader development are these complex inside and outside influences more obvious than in his middle stage of "Adolescent as Thinker", a stage that is marked not just by the physical changes and emotional upheavals of puberty but by "one central phenomenon: the discovery of the subjective self and of subjective experience as something unique"(96). In Appleyard's dialectical reader-response view of reading, the reader's role is a highly transactive and subjective one; there is little room for a New Critical objective reading of text, especially in the adolescent reader who is in constant flux, hopefully in transition toward autonomy and maturity. Acutely aware of an authentic inner self as opposed to an outer self, a social role or appearance to be put on for others, the teenager is often painfully self-conscious and feels alone in his/her identity crisis. Drawing from the theories of moral development of Lawrence Kohlberg and Carol Gilligan, Appleyard notes:

The discovery of the subjective self is concomitant with an intensified emotionality and often ambivalent and conflicting feelings; it seems to be the necessary condition for aesthetic feeling, for the contemplative experience of nature, for religious mysticism and romantic love (97).

ROMANCE: THE GENRE FOR ADOLESCENCE

The genre which best serves "the often ambivalent and conflicting feelings of adolescence" is the

adventure-romance, the same type of quest literature read by the younger school-age child before puberty, but with a greater emphasis on the inner conflicts of the hero or heroine: in adolescence, interest in character development replaces the intrigues of plot. Appleyard has observed that the adolescent reader diverges from the younger reader in three ways; he/she becomes involved with a book not just through "*identification with the character*", but also by the "*realism of the story*", and because of its ability to make one *think* (100). Appleyard finds a suitable correlation between his reader stages and the genres of Northrop Frye's cycle of literary forms (as outlined in Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957). That cycle of the quest myth and its generic literary modes, too, is developmental in nature and moves from the adventure and conflict of *romance* to a growing awareness of the catastrophes of *tragedy*, which in turn is dealt with through the "demoralization in defeat" of *irony-satire*, and finally is resolved with the "restoration in triumph" of *comedy* (Appleyard, 63).

Romance is the genre for younger readers because of its heroic adventures and the certainty of a happy ending. Appleyard acknowledges the escapist nature of romance reading and notes that "it suits the way children view the world. It is the simplest way of envisioning the relationship of good and evil: to acknowledge their conflict and assert the inevitable victory of good" (64). In addition, he affirms

that the appeal of heroic romance for the child lies in its wish-fulfillment dream of competency and success, especially in its "double wish, to acknowledge anxiety but to be assured of deliverance from it"(63). Although adolescents share that wish, there is a pronounced difference between them and younger readers in the content of the books they read: Appleyard notes that "juvenile books all deal with an innocent world, where evil is externalized and finally powerless, where endings are happy." On the other hand, "the adolescents' books deal with sex, death, sin, and prejudice, and good and evil are not really separated but mixed up in the confused and often turbulent emotions of the central characters themselves"(100).

Because of their growing need for realism--that is, "verisimilitude corresponding to experience"(108)--the genre preferred by adolescents can be found somewhere between romance and tragedy in Frye's scheme. While Appleyard acknowledges that "even adolescent stories with tragic themes do have happy endings", he notes that "tragedy is the literary genre that suits the adolescent's realization that the real world is not the green world of romance but a much darker and more dangerous place" (110). The adolescent, using newly-developed faculties of judgment, no longer able to lose him/herself completely in the romantic adventures of the hero/heroine, becomes a *spectator* of as well as a *participant* in the story. The genre which holds the most appeal for

adolescents is not the well-resolved high adventure of childhood heroes, but a more complex form of romance which still offers hope and power even as it speaks to the newly-discovered sexual urges and mysterious, darker subjective self of the adolescent. The gothic romance I wish to refer to in this paper, Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), a suspenseful portrayal of love, mystery, and sexual danger, certainly contained that appeal for curious adolescent readers two hundred years ago. And Jane Austen in *Northanger Abbey* (1803), her clever satire of Radcliffe's gothic romance, raised the question of its effect on the various sensibilities of young readers.

ISSUES OF GENDER AND GENRE

In his discussion of the romance genre and its corresponding stage of the adolescent reader as thinker, Appleyard lists the qualities often felt by adolescents on their isolated journey without making any distinctions between the genders: he combines and describes the characteristics of all teenagers by calling attention to their "yearning to discover an authentic individuality, conceiving great ideals, agonizing over their relationships to others, burdened by a sense of fate beyond their control, wondering whether the life choices they make will be the right ones, aware of the seemingly inescapable ambivalence of their feelings" (110). Development theorists, Piaget and Kohlberg, and educators such as Holbrook, too, discuss the

changes and reactions of adolescence without mentioning gender differences. It is in reaction to Piaget and Kohlberg that Carol Gilligan felt compelled to call attention to psychological differences between the genders and wrote her leading discourse on this subject, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982). This work, to which I will refer in my third chapter (along with Rousseau's *Emile*), deals extensively with the implications of gender differences. Although Appleyard blurs gender distinctions in most of his discussions on reader development, he is well aware of recent theory on women's psychological development--just as he is thoroughly versed in feminist theories of literary criticism. In view of how well feminist criticism fits with reader-response theories, I find it interesting that Appleyard weighs the truths and implications of feminist theory but separates it from his own reader development theories (see Appleyard, pp. 150-155). This "rejection" is relevant to this paper which is very much an attempt to come to terms with my own discomfort over certain aspects of feminist theory.

Significantly, in his earlier chapter on "Later Childhood: Reader as Hero and Heroine", Appleyard does include "A Note on Sex Roles" and addresses the important question of whether boys and girls read or tell stories in different ways. He cites studies and provides concrete examples that there are, indeed, differences in gender

preferences for story content, preferences which reflect possible distinctions in what is valuable for males or females:

These kinds of data would seem to support the claim that Schweickart makes (citing the work of Jean Baker Miller, Nancy Chodorow, and Carol Gilligan) that in reading men value autonomy, separation and the arbitration of conflicting rights, whereas women value relationships with others and are more apt to be interested in negotiating between opposed needs to maintain a relationship (92).

Nevertheless, Appleyard suggests that "even if we decide that boys and girls take notably different perspectives as readers because of the sex roles they have learned to play, the romance genre seems to give scope to the imaginative needs of both," for "the task of venturing into the world and coming to terms with good and evil faces both girls and boys. If the struggle with danger draws the male reader, we must not forget that an essential of romance is the reconciliation of the ending, which may be the female reader's priority in the story"(93). Although I find that Appleyard dismisses the complexity of gender responses to literature rather too quickly with his brief synthesis, he does ask pertinent questions about the origins of distinct male and female attitudes and values, or whether, as Gilligan argues, these are complementary attitudes that both sexes need to cultivate. He admits that "these questions, on the level of reading anyway, would seem to need a much more detailed investigation before they can confidently be answered"(92).

This paper is an attempt to participate in such an investigation.

MY ROLE AS EDUCATOR:

Appleyard's questions about gender distinctions are crucial to issues of education and the effective use of literature in a mixed classroom of adolescent students. In my role as educator, I deal with two related dilemmas--one to do with gender, the other with genre. Since I do teach teenagers of both sexes, I must address their different ways of seeing and knowing and, at the same time, facilitate the communication between them (with a keen awareness of the social dynamics and political implications of their transactions). I must do this with the moral objectives of creating healthy individuals and good citizens for the communities of our country, but without imposing any personal or religious biases upon them.

I have decided that the reading of novels can supply a background for personal growth and even a forum for the creation of an interpretative community in the classroom. But my television-saturated students read very little and need to be enticed into the valuable and value-filled territory of books. In order to hook them, literature must first of all be relevant to their experiences and that is why I am exploring the possibilities of popular romance in this paper.

READING SURVEYS

To do this adequately would require a careful survey of adolescent reading habits along with a profile of those readers and a thorough analysis of the contents of the most-read books. Elizabeth Segel who has analysed several childhood reading surveys in her essay, "Gender and Childhood Reading", notes that although girls will read "boy books", boys will not read "girl books" (Flynn and Schweickart, 182). Certainly, in my own teaching experience, adolescent boys prefer sports or technically-oriented magazines and seldom go near anything that even resembles a novel, let alone a romance (yet, they are all ears when I read certain novels to them). I will return to this discrepancy in gender reading habits in my concluding chapter, which will focus on the role of the educator and how to promote a valuable experience and encounter with literature in the adolescent years for both genders.

An important survey of popular adult romances (Harlequin and Silhouette) was completed and interpreted by Janice Radway in her book, *Reading the Romance : Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984). She includes with her data an explanation of why women find romance reading not only practically feasible and generally enjoyable but also emotionally necessary as a form of protest against their position in the patriarchy. I am indebted to this work for its comprehensive analysis and for its recognition of the

therapeutic benefits--as well as the negative "reification" influences--of formula fiction for adult women. Even more so, I have relied on Linda Christian-Smith for a similar survey of adolescent popular romances in her recent work, *Becoming a Woman Through Romance* (1990). This latter study explains "how thirty-four adolescent romance novels written in the United States from 1942 to 1982 define femininity for young women readers"(4). Christian-Smith finds three recurring themes or codes in these popular novels which help to explain their appeal to adolescent girls: the code of romance (the way in which boys grant meaning to girls' lives); the theme of chaste sexuality (kisses only and how romance regulates sexual power and practices); and an emphasis on beautification (the heroine's body as an object for men's desire and the resultant consumerism mentality). The conclusions Christian-Smith draws are most relevant to my own thesis, which says that young girls can benefit from reading romances to sort out the conflicts regarding their femininity, and explores some of the dangers that might prevent such a therapeutic experience.

CHAPTER 2: HEROINES IN DANGEROUS LANDSCAPES

A CRAVING FOR TERROR

In a recent discussion about popular adolescent novels (of the kind listed by Linda Christian-Smith in her survey), a fifteen-year-old girl and avid reader of such fiction enthusiastically exclaimed that her absolutely favourite was the V.C. Andrews gothic type--"with, you know, all that scary suspense and family secrets, like incest and stuff." In a somewhat similar vein, during my visit to the Yukon last summer, I found it disturbing that my niece, a young unwed mother, upon coming home for lunch each day, would drop immediately in front of the TV and via the satellite dish would turn to the most violent thriller she could find, often one she had seen before and already knew by heart. She paid little attention to her young son, or to us, and could not understand why we did not enjoy the gory tales of suspense with her. Whether this need for a "horror fix" was prompted by the same type of sensibility that craved gothic romances in the late eighteenth-century is difficult to assess. Yet, her obsession is reminiscent of Jane Austen's Catherine Morland who found her refuge in the gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe: "While I have *Udolpho* to read, I feel as if nobody could make me miserable"(28).

More than one critic has remarked upon the phenomenon

of "the Gothic craze of the 1790's." Deborah Ross in *The Excellence of Falsehood: Romance, Realism, and Women's Contribution to the Novel* (1991) sees the wide popularity of Ann Radcliffe's Gothics as a long overdue affirmation of the validity of women's novels: "In the 1790's, it was the feminine Gothic, as practiced by Radcliffe [as opposed to the more 'visceral' male Gothic of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*], that held sway"(140). Chloe Chard, too, in her introduction to Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* (published in 1791) refers to that novel's immediate popularity, and notes that "it was received by contemporary reviewers with an enthusiasm even greater than either of her later works" (ix).

Fascinated by the terror-filled adventures of the harrassed heroine, Radcliffe's readers couldly barely put down her novels or wait for her next publication. The popular appeal of Radcliffe's gothic romances and their effect on her readers is perhaps best summed up by Austen's comment in *Northanger Abbey* (finished in 1803, published in 1818): "Catherine Morland was then left to the luxury of a raised, restless, and frightened imagination over the pages of *Udolpho* lost from all worldly concerns of dressing and dinner" (37).

Radcliffe's novels operate on a formula which includes love and adventure for a damsel in distress, and which relies on exotic and remote landscapes for its setting. (This is why for our purposes we can feel free to replace *The*

Mysteries of Udolpho with the shorter Radcliffe novel, *The Romance of the Forest*). Typical of Radcliffe's heroines, beautiful, orphaned Adeline of *The Romance of the Forest* gets caught up in adventures of terror-filled captivity by powerful men. Mysteriously aided by her real lover, she escapes from forsaken settings of solitary inns, wild woods, a vast ruin of a medieval monastery, a decadent French chateau, and finally arrives at the peaceful Swiss village of Lelancourt, surrounded by the impressive grandeur of the Savoyan mountains, where she recuperates and is reunited with her lover. During the course of her terrors, which are interspersed with serene moments of contemplation of nature, Adeline endures tortuous journeys by coach (usually at night and in stormy weather) to unknown destinations, sometimes blindfolded, and always under the threat of violence. Only after numerous accounts of mystery, suspense and narrow escapes, with underlying threats of rape, incest and murder, does Adeline finally find security in marriage and village life.

Although Austen mocks the improbabilities of Radcliffe's plot, the stereotypical character of her helpless heroine, and the bizarre nature of her exotic landscapes, she is nevertheless intrigued by the danger which surrounds young women in their quest for love--a danger which for *her* heroine includes the indiscriminate reading of gothic romances. At the heart of Austen's novel lies a serious question about the

potential effect of such literature on the development of vulnerable young women as they prepare for a fulfilling marriage and mature participation in society.

THE GOTHIC EMPHASIS ON FEELING

Pointing out its wide contemporary appeal in the circulating libraries of Radcliffe's own decades, Coral Ann Howells in her work, *Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (1978), acknowledges that between 1790 and 1820 the Gothic novel was the most popular fiction in England (1). She attributes this strong appeal to its Gothic elements and emphasis on feeling:

As its name suggests with its medieval associations, Gothic is allied with everything which is the opposite of Augustan: instead of notions of order and decorum and rational judgement, it represents the darker side of awareness, the side to which sensibility and imagination belong (5).

Howells quotes Robert Kiely's opinion that these novels "explored feelings and compulsions which were not merely impolite to mention but often difficult to label and describe" (6). I assume that this "darker side of awareness" was for the young woman reader of that time very much connected with the ambivalent feelings of fear and curiosity regarding her own sexuality. Thus, the mysterious landscapes of Gothic romance provided female readers with more than mere escape; Howells sees in them

a number of remarkable attempts to explore the private hinterland of human personality. These explorations are expressed through intense and exaggerated imagery in which contemporary readers

found excitement, suspense and beneath it all an interplay of the passions they covertly recognised themselves as sharing (27).

The gothic genre can be described as an emotional story about a young woman in peril; and often it is the heroine's virtue--or her unblemished sexuality--that is in peril. The "private hinterland" of Radcliffe's gothic evokes the forbidden territory of woman's sexual desires; and in *The Romance of the Forest*, it includes the real terrors of sexual abuse. Moreover, by enabling her young heroine to flee and resist, or to endure her imprisonment with fortitude, Radcliffe offers her female readers a validation of female emotion and of her sensibility to nature; and indirectly, (through the heroine's longings for affiliation and in the reconciliation with her lover in the happy ending) the legitimacy and truth of female desire, which for Radcliffe is located in marriage and community.

Norman N. Holland and Leona F. Sherman begin their essay "Gothic Possibilities" by asking how a genre like the gothic has maintained its popularity for two centuries and "Why are the overwhelming majority of those who read gothics women?" (Flynn and Schweickart, 215). In a 1990s society which has become increasingly cynical about the values of hearth and home and particularly about the role of women in that home, I celebrate the feminist emphasis on gender equality and the validation of *all* women's experiences (including those found in their traditional roles as wives

and mothers). Yet, I also share Austen's concern about the potentially dangerous effects of popular culture on impressionable young women who are very much a part of their societies and who are caught up in traditional roles. In this regard, I wish to examine further Catherine Morland's fascination with the gothic genre, not for its thrills and terrors, but for its "possibilities" of a reader-response that can lead to moral maturity. Focusing on the vicarious experiences offered to female readers by Radcliffe's gothic landscapes, I wish to explore the affective quality of gothic romance not only for its dangers but also for its possibly therapeutic benefits for young women in the shifting values of that period (1790-1820). This examination of the dangers and benefits of reading gothic romance will hopefully shed some light on the ways that popular adolescent romances can provide escape and release, or hope and challenge, for young women of our own time.

AUSTEN'S READER-RESPONSES

Catherine asks everyone she meets about their reading habits, and she is especially eager for their opinions of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. The fickle Isabella Thorpe reveals her superficiality by her taste for sensationalism, while her bombastic brother demonstrates his ignorance by claiming that he has better things to do than read, except maybe Mrs. Radcliffe's novels because there is "some fun and nature in them" (but he can't identify that *Udolpho* is one of

Radcliffe's novels). On the other hand, Henry Tilney, Catherine's mentor--destined to be her husband--is a discriminating reader of novels including every one of Mrs. Radcliffe's, and he accurately recalls details to promote critical thinking about life's experiences. Thus, ironically, Ann Radcliffe's gothic romance becomes the touchstone which defines the taste and sensibility of each character in Austen's clever satire of that genre.

The irony is double precisely because it is Radcliffe's taste--her heavy and obvious reliance on outside material such as Burke, Rousseau, travel journals, the male poets, and the traditions of romance literature--which is under attack in *Northanger Abbey*. The very title of Austen's novel suggests a smiling awareness of the far-out, exotic and 'unreal' nature of Radcliffe's gothic landscapes. And certainly the machinery of *The Romance of the Forest* really 'creaks': the strangely winding plot (its secrets unfurled only near the end); the many sighs, tears and illnesses of its women and the obsessions of its men; its numerous, often obtrusive reliance on travel journals for landscape descriptions; and its all too-eager attempts to create visual effects which match the emotional states of its characters. Yet, young girls lose themselves in this kind of literature, well-educated clergymen like Henry Tilney "remember finishing it in two days--my hair standing on end the whole time"(88), and even sophisticated twentieth-century readers can get

absorbed in the replay of a damsel in distress. What is it that lurks in the shadows of Radcliffe's gothic landscapes that has such a strong appeal for its readers, and what is the effect of gothic romance on the sensibilities of young women like Catherine Morland?

THE PICTURESQUE AND THE CULT OF SENSIBILITY

The details of Radcliffe's landscapes--her forest, ruins, chateau, and mountainous territory of Savoy--are derived from a wide assortment of materials familiar to Radcliffe and her readers. Ann Bermingham (1986) calls attention to "the eighteenth-century taste for nature and the natural which reached an apogee during the 1790s in the cult of the picturesque"(57). She points out that the "picturesque" is a category of painting and landscape, and sees its emphasis on natural variety and irregularity as a compensatory response to the transformation of the English countryside produced by the agricultural revolution (66). In relation to this, the frequent portrayal of dilapidation and ruins in paintings "sentimentalized the loss of old order, but also obliquely recognized the precarious temporal nature of the new order that replaced it"(70); and the deliberate portrayal of pre-enclosed, natural variety in picturesque paintings paralleled that ambiguity. Stressing the visual and therefore imaginary appeal of the "picturesque" (basically a painterly mode), Bermingham concludes that it relies on tastes "granted to only a few and inaccessible to

vulgar minds"(71). Thus, Radcliffe's heavy reliance on popular eighteenth-century pictorial images from paintings and travel journals asserted not only her own good taste, but also that of her readers who, familiar with the contexts of her imaginary landscapes, must have felt important in recognizing them.

Interestingly, the cult of (or taste for) the picturesque was very much aligned with the cult of sensibility--defined by Jean Hagstrum (1980) as "the capacity for refined emotion, delicacy of taste and readiness to feel compassion for the suffering or to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art" (9). For, with the rise of commerce and trade and agricultural enclosures, middle-class women were divested of their traditional social roles in the home and the community and confined to a "leisured" life of passive femininity. There was not much for women (like the women of Austen's novels) to do but to visit, travel, occupy themselves with needlework, or cultivate their tastes in music and literature. These women, excluded from the important affairs of men, had to find images which reflected their ambivalent feelings about their fragile identities in the great works of men.

OBSCURITY AND MELANCHOLY

In specific reference to *The Romance of the Forest*, Chard notes that "the Gothic novel's concern with horror and terror is authenticated by reference to poetry" (xxii). She

cites examples from Radcliffe's epigraphs of Milton and Shakespeare, and alludes to Collins's "Ode to Fear". Chard finds, however, that the novel goes far beyond the emotions of dread--to a more ambiguous feeling which creates a prevailing mood of melancholy. In Radcliffe, that mood is always connected with obscurity and evening twilight. Having done a thorough study of the allusions found in *The Romance of the Forest*, Chard, in her final introductory paragraphs, notes "the strong element of unease" in the novel: "This unease stems, in part, from an uncertainty as to the kinds of authority which could be invoked within a work of fiction which explicitly proclaimed its female authorship on the title page"(xxiii). Such unease about woman's obscure place in the world of men inevitably lead Radcliffe to create a depressive mood of melancholy. And those evening wanderings in the gloomy mists of the forest certainly addressed the confused identities of Radcliffe's readers, most of whom were very much caught in the cult of sensibility.

THE SUBLIME AND THE BEAUTIFUL

The primary appeal of *The Romance of the Forest* lies in what Chard calls "the suspense that is created by the alternating scenes of terror and beauty, of collapse and revival"(xvi). One such landscape is portrayed when the characters first seek refuge in the imposing, gothic ruin in the forest:

...They entered the ruins by the flame of sticks...

The partial gleams thrown across the fabric seemed to make its desolation more solemn, while the obscurity of the greater part of the pile heightened its sublimity, and led fancy on to scenes of horror (18).

This passage illustrates Radcliffe's skill in arousing curiosity while she creates a mood of impending terror; and she does this by using the evocative terms of well-known discourses of the day.

Chard has done a particularly thorough gloss of Radcliffe's use of Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, a work which attempts to categorize human feelings and to outline appropriate aesthetic responses to nature and art. Although Burke's theories are much too intricate to explain here, it soon becomes apparent in studying his discourse that the "sublime" and "beautiful" are gendered concepts: the former being associated with a masculine manifestation of power "which comes upon us in the gloomy forest, and in the howling wilderness" (60) and which provokes awe, terror, and submission (59-65); while beauty is associated with feminine smallness, delicacy, softness, sweetness and smoothness (102-113), as well as with the social virtues of "easiness of temper, compassion, kindness, liberality"(100). It is significant to point out the strong link between terror and the sublime--"whatever is in any sort terrible...is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling"(36). Thus, the

"sublime" is a superior value to the "beautiful" because it is masterful, while "love" associated with the "beautiful" approaches much nearer to contempt than is commonly imagined"(61). One begins to see that Burke's aesthetics are not only gendered but hierarchical.

A PLEASING DREAD

Radcliffe relies on Burke's discourse not just for her descriptive terms--"obscurity" and "sublimity"--but, even more so, finds there appropriate language for her heroine's response to terror:

Adeline, who had hitherto remained in silence uttered an exclamation of mingled admiration and fear. A kind of pleasing dread thrilled her bosom, and filled all her soul. Tears started into her eyes:--she wished, yet feared, to go on:-- she hung upon the arm of La Motte, and looked at him with a sort of hesitating interrogation (18).

The ability to respond to terror with "pleasing dread" implies a surprising dimension in Adeline's delicate sensibility. She mixes her fear with admiration and submission, a perfect combination of Burkean responses to the sublime apparition of the obscured edifice in the gloomy forest. Yet, this passage, for all its ladylike delicacy, evokes in the reader an almost prurient curiosity--of the same kind that caused crude John Thorpe of *Northanger Abbey* to remember vaguely that there was some "fun and nature" in Radcliffe's gothic romances. The feeling of suspense raised by the proleptic description of the heroine's response to the ancient abbey is surrounded with a subtle curiosity which is

almost titillating in its effect.

The Thorpes did read Radcliffe's Gothics for sensational reasons and John found in them a hint of pornography. However, any evocation of sexual feeling in Radcliffe's landscapes is well-cloaked in the euphemisms of poetry and conventions of courtly love. Yet, John Thorpe's associations of this novel with Lewis's novel, *The Monk*, are not totally misplaced. Jean Hagstrum entitles his book, *Sex and Sensibility*, and associates sensibility with physical sensation, tracing its roots to "sensible" meaning acute pleasure or pain, and its relation to "sense" which originally meant "passion". Patricia Meyer Spacks' defines "sensibility" in the time of Radcliffe's novels as "that symbolically female value, the emotional structure associated with the beautiful" and emphasizes that it carries with it a strong "need for human attachment" (156-7). That feminine definition holds within it an association with passion and sexual feeling which was repressed and denied in the 1790s, and which could lead to what Howells calls an "exacerbated sensibility, ...the disease of the nervous breakdown (8-9)."

In this respect, Deborah Ross (1991) notes that the dangerous side of Radcliffe's portrayal of female sensibility is closely associated with female delicacy and its tightrope-walk between emotion and restraint. She suggests that

the subtler peril that threatens to upset the heroine

is 'sensibility' for that cannot simply be put aside or repressed. Depending on its intensity, sensibility can either be a means to sanity or a threat to it. It makes one able to empathize and form ties with others; yet it makes one shrink from pain, so that one may become isolated and withdrawn (155).

Although Ross wonders about Radcliffe's own sanity (155), it is a most interesting exercise to observe how Radcliffe does not merely parrot Burke to construct her landscapes but cleverly uses his terms to empower her heroine and her female readers. Although they had been relegated to a "cult of sensibility", to the drawing-room cultivation of taste and refinement outside of the world of commerce and big ideas of men, a world of delicate feeling, Radcliffe capitalizes on Burke's aesthetics to reclaim a whole range of feelings for her female readers, including sexual curiosity and desire.

THE HEROINE'S SENSITIVITY TO NATURE

As helpless and dependent as she is on the La Mottes, from her traumatic imprisonment and rescue at the beginning of her ordeal (in the isolated cottage at the edge of the forest), on through the fearful episodes in the half-ruins of the monastery in the forest, later at the seductive chateau of the Marquis, and finally in her dangerous escape to the mountains, Radcliffe's Adeline certainly demonstrates fortitude, that is, her ability to remain calm in the face of overwhelming and threatening conditions of the landscape. This fortitude comes from Adeline's superior sensibility to nature.

Whereas Austen's men and women are evaluated for their taste in literature and in terms of their response to novels, Radcliffe's characters are ranked according to their sensitivity to nature. In the first chapters of *The Romance of the Forest*, Radcliffe demonstrates a pattern regarding Adeline's response to a varied and picturesque landscape at dawn after she has experienced a night of great fear and anxiety. I quote three passages in full to call attention to the method and language of Radcliffe's landscape description; and to how Radcliffe prompts the reader to identify with the heroine's sensitive response to nature. The three passages which occur within fourteen pages of each other are remarkably similar in their reflective description of the heroine at dawn. Yet there are striking differences in the heroine's successive responses which illustrate her progressively therapeutic ability to deal with oppression. In each situation she finds her comfort and ability to survive with fortitude in a more meaningful way than she did at first.

After her initial terrible ordeal (the sinister details of which we learn much later) and exhausting coach ride with her exiled benefactors (La Motte and his wife), Adeline is greeted by the sunrise. Radcliffe's readers are invited to contemplate nature at the emergence of dawn in the freshness of spring, richly fertile in its undisturbed variety, with just a glimpse of the mountains in the

distance. The descriptive language, like Burke's aesthetics, evokes images of nature that are clearly gendered--in this case, virginal and female:

The sun at length tinted the eastern clouds and the tops of the highest hills and soon after burst in full splendour on the scene. The terrors of La Motte began to subside and the griefs of Adeline to soften. They entered upon a land confined by high banks and over-arched by trees on whose branches appeared the first green buds of spring glittering with dews. The fresh breeze of the morning animated the spirits of Adeline, whose mind was delicately sensible to the beauties of nature. As she viewed the luxuriance of the turf, and the tender green of the trees, or caught, between the opening banks. a glimpse of the varied landscape rich with wood, and fading into blue and distant mountains , her heart expanded in momentary joy. With Adeline the charms of external nature were heightened by those of novelty: she had seldom seen the grandeur of an extensive prospect, or the magnificence of a wide horizon--and not often the picturesque beauties of more confined scenery. Her mind had not lost by long oppression that elastic energy, which resists calamity; else, however susceptible might have been her original taste, the beauties of nature would no longer have charmed her thus easily even to temporary repose (9).

This scene of Nature in its most promising beauty is a reflection of Adeline's own beauty, a feminine beauty which resides in her untrammelled virginity, and which animates only those who can contemplate it with "delicate sensibility." Above all, Radcliffe reminds her readers that such virginal beauty contributes to an "elastic energy" of mind which resists calamity of any kind.

Although the descriptions of dawn are remarkably repetitive, there is a significant progression in the second passage from nature response to human sympathy: the strength and revival which Adeline receives from her delight in the

warmth and beauty of a spring morning evokes deep affection and *sublime* gratitude to those near her.

It was now the latter end of April, and the weather was remarkably temperate and fine. The balmy freshness of the air, which breathed the first pure essence of vegetation; and the gentle warmth of the sun, whose beams vivified every hue of nature, and revived every floweret of spring, revived Adeline, and inspired her with life and health. As she inhaled the breeze, her strength seemed to return, and as her eyes wandered through the romantic glades that opened into the forest, her heart was gladdened with complacent delight; but when from these objects she turned her regard upon Monsieur and Madame La Motte, to whose tender attentions she owed her life, and in whose looks she now read esteem and kindness, her bosom glowed with sweet affections, and she experienced a force of gratitude which might be called sublime (13-14).

As noted earlier, Spacks indentifies this extension of sympathy with nature to a need for human attachment as a feminine, "sensibility" ethic, an ethic associated with "beauty" (157). Such a sensibility or "care ethic" fortifies Adeline: "By considering herself obligated to others she is empowered to act for herself"(157).

After yet another night of dread and memory of horror ("uneasy dreams" and "recollection of sorrows") in the eerie tower room of the ancient monastery, Adeline is soothed once more by the "first tints of morning" breaking through the "gloom and silence" of the forest. The sunrise, particularly spectacular and beautiful--"so pure, so fine, so aethereal! It seemed as if Heaven was opening to the view", not only "soothed her mind", but "exalted her thoughts to the Great Author of Nature"(22). Thus, like many of the great poets,

Adeline's sensitivity to the beauty and infinite variety of Nature leads her to religious adoration of the Maker and, in her supplication to the Most High for protection from danger, to the power of prayer. Although Adeline can do little in the face of imprisonment and the threatening forces of male sexual power but weep, faint, resist or endure, she does find solace and fortitude through the contemplation of nature. Her "feminine" sensitivity to nature allows her to enter the language of male discourses (the great poets and the "sublime"); with this power she is able to put aside her own suffering and to expand her sympathies to humanity and even to God. Thus she proves her moral superiority; and I suspect Radcliffe's female readers when they read these soothing passages shared that feeling of power.

THE FEMALE SUBLIME

In contrast to Adeline's appropriate responses to nature, Madame La Motte is forever being overcome by her fears and spends most of her time in tears: "Terrors, which she had neither endeavored to examine, or combat, overcame her, and she told La Motte she had rather remain exposed to the dews of night, than encounter the desolations of the ruins"(17). As Chard points out:

The distinction between the response of Adeline who is able to feel not only 'fear' but also 'admiration', and Madame La Motte's unreflective 'terrors', unmixed with any such elements of aesthetic delight, is used to define the novel itself as the product of an informed sensibility capable of recognizing and expounding the complex and paradoxical forms of aesthetic pleasure

offered by the sublime (372).

It is this legitimate and subtle entry into the forbidden male territory of the sublime that gave Radcliffe's female readers their sense of identity and power. Spacks' understanding of sensibility, with its connotations of female tenderness and need for human attachment (157), matches Patricia Yeager's definition of the 'female sublime':

not as a genre of empowerment based on the simple domination of others, but as a genre that can include the sociable, the convivial, as well as the grandiose and empowering...a new mode of the sublime: what we might call 'the sublime of nearness' (Kaufman, 195).

Ann Radcliffe, in her zeal to be a recognized "authoress" and to justify her gothic novel as valid literature, endowed her heroine with a sensibility which approximates Yeager's 'female sublime'; and her eager readers identified fully, not only with the heroine's distress and sense of alienation, but with her intense longing for friendship and love. Above all, they would find strength in Adeline's "elasticity of mind". That admirable flexibility of imagination granted the heroine a power of resistance and endurance which readers could imitate in their own limited circumstances. Moreover, it allowed both understanding and compassion at the same time, and thus replaced a passive, solitary melancholy with a more active mode of response and feeling for others.

BUMBLING MALE POWER

In contrast to the heroine's virtuous response to nature, the sight of the sun breaking through the obscurity

of dawn and tinting 'the highest hills' only *briefly* subdues the terrors of Monsieur La Motte (9). Like all Radcliffe's villains, he is unable to find solace in natural scenery and is therefore a victim of unassuaged melancholy and fear. Earlier, right in the middle of his confused terror (La Motte is always connected with obscurity in the landscape), he is temporarily arrested by the delicate beauty of Adeline in distress and semi-dress (7); but his compassion, like his response to nature, is erratic and short-lived. For La Motte is morally confused--"the image of virtue, which Nature had impressed upon his heart, was sometimes obscured by the passing influence of vice" (2)--and he cannot find relief in contemplation of mountains or in the softness of dawn. He is forever wandering through dark passageways, up and down twisted staircases, into secret closets, and finding trapdoors that lead to vaulted rooms and old monastic cells where 'the living once did penance'. In his flight from creditors and search for refuge in the abbey, La Motte runs into mysterious terrors (the skeleton in the chest; Adeline's initial abduction and possible rape; his fear of his pursuers, one of whom turns out to be his son) which he is unable to interpret, and which his imagination exaggerates--"the force of passion often dazzled his judgment and subdued principle," (2). Even his name--Monsieur De La Motte--suggests that he is not a man of his word, that he gets caught up in broken promises and becomes trapped by his

own lack of integrity. Although he is often shown as a comic character in his bumbling around in the abbey and hiding out in an empty tomb in the obscurity of the forest when nobody is even looking for him, La Motte is nonetheless a dangerous figure in the heroine's landscape. And it is precisely his unreliability which makes him that. In seeking to overcome his cowardly fear, he erratically plays lord of the manor, cruelly disregarding Adeline's agony and the discomfort of his wife, and still becomes the dupe of the true owner of the abbey, the Marquis de Montalt.

SINISTER MALE POWER

The Marquis de Montalt, who lusts after the heroine and plots to have her killed when she continues to resist him, is really Adeline's uncle, the murderer of her father. A sinister and powerful figure of authority, wealthy owner of the medieval ruin and elaborate French chateau, the Marquis is intricately connected with the hidden themes of sexual abuse, incest, and murder--the real terrors of the novel. Radcliffe chooses gothic settings and ominous landscapes (such as vast forests, huge edifices, mountains and thunderstorms) to portray the awesome forces in her heroine's universe, and to ultimately symbolize the danger and power of male sexual passion. Thus, the real fear lies not in "nature's sublime" but in the "human sublime"-- as it is found in the truly evil and "mountainous" father figure of the Marquis de Montalt. Chard draws attention to the

significance of Radcliffe's unique choice of a French setting for her novel--a landscape, which like the decadent satiety of the Marquis de Montalt's castle, promotes a seductive atmosphere, connected with "immediate gratification of the senses"(xv). As Chard points out, the hedonistic Marquis represents the epitome of an unnatural and destructive danger in the life of the young heroine:

In *The Romance of the Forest*, the most extreme instances both of unrestraint and of oppression are provided by the figure of the Marquis de Montalt, who is consistently characterised by 'the violence and criminality of his passions', and is described, in a fit of anger, 'giving himself up, as usual, to the transports of his passion'(xi).

DANGEROUS UNRESTRAINT

In connection with the great danger of unrestraint, it is significant that Radcliffe begins her gothic romance with a speech which could well have been taken from Rousseau's *Emile*:

"When once sordid interest seizes the heart, it freezes up the source of every warm and liberal feeling; it is an enemy alike to virtue and to taste--*this* it perverts, and *that* it annihilates"(1).

The prevailing ideas of Radcliffe's time were that stories of romance "might lead us to form awful ideas of the force and danger of the human passions" (Chard's notes, 367). Although the opening words of Radcliffe's novel are addressed to Pierre de la Motte for his avarice and frivolous indulgence in the luxurious pleasures of Paris (thus his resultant bankruptcy and exile), they alert the reader that this

romance does emerge from a moral vision, that, therefore, it is fit reading material for young women, for it is 'interspersed with some pieces of poetry' and written by an already published authoress (title page of the novel). Thus, Ann Radcliffe justifies her novel by proclaiming that she is well aware of the dangers of passion and of the need to preserve virtue and cultivate taste. Again, her female readers would feel empowered by that assertion and (knowing full well that Adeline would be safe in the end) could live through the heroine's nightmarish adventures, relishing the suspense while exploring their own ambivalent fears and wishes.

EXPLORING DREADFUL FEARS

Using the evocative settings of Shakespearean tragedy or medieval ruins, Radcliffe creates atmospheres of dreadful uncertainty to reflect those ambivalent feelings. A striking example of this occurs in the retroactive description of events related by Adeline to Madame De La Motte in the abbey. First she tells of her repressive childhood: she had been raised as an orphan in a convent where "the Lady Abbess was a woman of rigid decorum and severe devotion," who employed numberless stratagems to gain her to her purpose" (36). One wonders what those stratagems might have been and to what purpose.

Adeline's account of her initial abduction and deliverance into the hands of La Motte is even more ambiguous and

confusing. Imprisoned in a dark room in the small house on the edge of the forest, Adeline spent nights in terror looking "for some means of fastening her door on the inside;" and then, when she did barricade her door, two ruffians entered from a small closet inside her room, and seized her--how long she didn't know because she "sunk senseless in their arms" (43). We have to trust that Adeline (being a paragon of virtue in a romance novel) was not violated, but one has to wonder whether such a nightmarish experience truly left her intact. When the men entered her room a second time, she told Madame La Motte, "I neither spoke, nor resisted: the faculties of my soul were wrought up beyond the power of feeling: as a violent blow on the body stuns for a while the sense of pain" (43). As she listened to this story, Madame La Motte remained silent--"There were circumstances in Adeline's narrative, which raised all her curiosity. She asked if Adeline believed her father to be a party in this mysterious affair"(43).

Although she adopts the formula of romance (ideally beautiful and virginal heroines of romances never lose their virtue no matter how many dangers they encounter), Radcliffe chooses gothic settings and ominous landscapes to portray the danger and power of male sexual passion. My feeling is that those trappings--of gothic romance--provided an acceptable landscape for Radcliffe and her readers to confront the painful reality of sexual abuse or, at least, of sexual

harrassment in their lives.

ADELINE AND THE BOOK

While the Grand Chase of Volume II of the novel reads like one long episode of sexual harrassment and potential rape, Volume I hints of similar disturbances in Adeline's childhood and early adolescence. Jane Austen's heroine, Catherine Moreland, who was raised in a natural, non-interfering environment much like Rousseau's young Emile, turns to books when she wants to forget about worldly cares. Adeline, as we have already seen, seeks her refuge in the quiet contemplation of nature. On one such occasion, Adeline takes along one of La Motte's books:

When her mind was discomposed by the behaviour of Madame La Motte, or by a retrospective of her early misfortunes, a book was the opiate that lulled it to repose. La Motte had several of the best English poets, a language which Adeline had learned in the convent: their beauties, therefore, she was capable of tasting, and they often inspired her with enthusiastic delight '(81).

However, Adeline never reads much; she is always distracted by the beauty of the landscape. Thus, "she closed the book and yielded to the sweet complacent melancholy which the hour inspired." The evocative power of the landscape inspires her to recite her own Ode to "Night". Among the stanzas--

And nameless objects in the vale below,
That floating dimly to the musing eye,
Assume, at Fancy's touch, fantastic shew,
And raise her sweet romantic visions high.(84)

Adeline can lose herself in the melancholy evoked by twilight, but she cannot find herself in the pages of La

Motte's books. She knows the language and recognizes the good taste, but she is herself one of the "nameless objects in the vale below", idealized and objectified through the aesthetics of the male sublime.

THE HAPPY ENDING

Volume III of *The Romance of the Forest* contains the happy ending of romance, but most of all it is an account of Adeline's recuperation at the home of the benevolent clergyman in the Swiss village of Lelancourt situated by the lakes and beautiful mountains of Savoy. Chard has noted the Volume's Rousseauian echoes in its similarity to the account of the "Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard" in *Emile* (Emile's final lessons in proper self-love were provided by the Vicar). Whereas the previous Volumes depicted Adeline's abduction and terror of sexual harrassment, Volume III follows her therapeutic recovery until her marriage and reincorporation into community life. This respite gives her the necessary delay to prepare for marriage to her rescuer, Theodore La Luc. Through her oblique reference to Rousseau's concern for Emile's individuation, Radcliffe seems to recognize that her heroine needs a similar chance for a wholesome identity.

Both Austen and Radcliffe are deeply concerned with the developing identity of the young girl in a landscape of dangerous, mysterious terrors, and sometimes exquisite beauty, a landscape which the young girl can hardly be

expected to interpret when she is herself an object in that landscape. And this is the danger of the gothic romance for young women readers: that they lose themselves in it without learning why. Although Radcliffe retains the tradition of the beautiful heroine as a victim of potential violence, she is, above all, aware of her own reputation as an authoress of good taste. Radcliffe demonstrates her good taste by interspersing her romance with poetry and appropriate quotations from the great poets and gives her gothic scenes authenticity by borrowing heavily from travel journals of the day. However, in her overdetermination to validate her novel as morally virtuous, and her equal determination to deal with disturbing secrets, Radcliffe creates a tension in her novel which is intriguing, but also begs to be ridiculed--as recognized by Austen when Catherine declares: "It seemed as if a good view were no longer to be taken from the top of a high hill, and that a clear, blue sky was no longer a proof of a fine day" (92).

By such down-to-earth statements, Austen reminds readers of certain dangers in romanticizing the landscape, the basic one being that one can lose touch with reality. Austen's heroine is not immune to fancy or beauty and the pleasures of imagination; and she is very curious about the forbidden and 'horrid' secrets found in gothic romances. Austen sympathizes with the heroine's oppression and acknowledges that the eighteenth-century heroine, too, is

capable of deep passion and yearnings, which often require years of restraint before they can be realized. However, she cannot resist satirizing Radcliffe's relentless effort to seek solace in male-gendered landscapes. Although Catherine Morland is not censored in her reading habits and her sexual curiosity is accepted as normal, she is challenged to decipher and understand the forbidden secrets of gothic romance. Rather than indulge her imagination with unreflective thrills, or seek escape from a confrontation with the sometimes unhappy endings of real life, Catherine is able to project her imagination into the veiled portraits of gothic romance and emerge with wisdom.

CHAPTER 3: ROMANCE AS THE YOUNG GIRL'S SEX EDUCATION
IDENTITY BEFORE INTIMACY

Catherine Morland's ability to develop as a reader--to sort out the exaggerated images of gothic romance and apply her new-found wisdom to the terrors and oppressions of real life--is directly linked to her original independent spirit. That attractive "energy of mind", recognized and valued by Henry Tilney, was cultivated in early years through a relatively untraumatic and carefree childhood. Yet, Catherine needs to come to terms with the dangerous figures in her landscape: the bullying and meddling John Thorpe, the fickle Isabella, and especially the class-conscious General Tilney (who almost destroys her chances for happiness with his son). These figures threaten Catherine's basically healthy self-esteem during a time when she is away from home and, like most adolescents, full of longings for attachment. Fortunately--though not without first suffering great humiliation--Catherine emerges safely from her journey; in the end, she is on the way to creating a home of her own with Henry Tilney, the young clergyman who first challenged her to discriminate and develop more fully as a reader.

My aim in this chapter is to set up a case for the reading of romance novels with the rather peculiar goal of encouraging the female adolescent to delay sexual experience

until she has a better sense of who she really is, the promotion of "identity before intimacy". Someone asked me if I was considering romance reading as a kind of chaperone to ensure abstinence. Although I doubt that books have *that* kind of impact, I do believe that stories about romantic heroines can empower the young female reader. By appealing to her natural empathy and compassion for the plight of others, romance literature can provide the young girl with a suitable landscape to explore her own fears and wishes which, in adolescence, usually revolve around questions of sexuality. Thus, the vicarious (and often sexually dangerous) experiences of heroines in romances--who nevertheless are safe and happy in the end--can supply a valuable contribution to the young girl's sex education.

TOWARD INTIMACY

I wish to address the possibilities of using romance literature, not only for help in the repair of damaged psyches (as proposed by Joseph Gold in *Read For Your Life*), but for the delay of sexual experience, thereby giving the adolescent reader a chance to prepare for a more fulfilling, intimate relationship in her future. I will promote this idea in a rather unique way, by referring to Jean-Jaques Rousseau's *Emile: or On Education*, which first inspired me with the high priorities of promoting compassion, friendship, and chastity in adolescent education. I wish to compare Rousseau's maxims on how to teach "true pity" to Emile at

hesitance and passivity of adolescent girls regarding their identity--as opposed to the confidence and dominance of boys--lies at the root of feminist theorizing about gender differences. No one describes that passivity more vividly than Simone De Beauvoir in her chapter on "The Young Girl":

While the adolescent boy makes his way actively toward adulthood, the young girl awaits the opening of this new unforeseeable period....She is already free of her childish past, and the present seems but a time of transition; it contains no valid aims, only occupations. Her youth is consumed in waiting, more or less disguised. She is awaiting Man (325).

De Beauvoir emphasizes the ambivalence the young girl feels about her developing body: "Oscillating between desire and disgust, between hope and fear, ... she lingers in suspense between the time of childish independence and that of womanly submission" (336). In that time, the young girl experiments with her femininity, admiring and falsifying herself as an object meant to please men, grappling with a world that renders her insignificant, while she wishes to surpass society's limited conception of her and experience everything. She finds her only outlet from the patriarchal world that oppresses her through nature and poetry, both of which allow her a temporary transcendence of the repressive culture to which she knows she must eventually succumb. However, although wandering in the woods and the reading of poetry comfort her, they merely reinforce her passivity.

THE YOUNG GIRL AND HER STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY

In the introductory chapter of *Northanger Abbey*,

Austen introduces us to her adolescent heroine, who is anything but passive, but who, too, has developed a feeling for romance and poetry. Austen makes a serious statement in that chapter about the necessity of an egalitarian education for girls. In protest to Rousseau's sexism--girls were to be raised by their mothers in the arts of modest coquetry and domestic graces so they would be pleasing to their future husbands--Mary Wollstonecraft, in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), had proclaimed that girls and boys should be educated under the same liberal and natural, non-interfering conditions outlined in Rousseau's *Emile* for the education of young boys. Austen, too, celebrates her heroine's freedom to learn in harmony with her natural inclinations. Poking fun at the tragic vulnerability and feminine delicacy of traditional heroines, Austen extols the unheroic and "unfeminine" nature of her heroine, Catherine Morland--her ordinary background and homelife, plain physical features, her commonsensical mother, robust tomboyishness, and independent spirit. Catherine, as a child, prefers cricket to playing with dolls or the "more heroic enjoyments of infancy", such as "nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush;" she has "no taste for a garden" and gathers flowers only because it is a forbidden pleasure (3).

As free and outgoing as she was before puberty, it is significant that Catherine, in the vulnerability and

tenderness of adolescence, seeks her refuge in reading about heroines who might share her new insecurities. Austen notes sardonically that although Catherine had never much cared for books before, "from fifteen to seventeen she was in training for a heroine; she read all such works as heroines must read to supply their memories with those quotations which are so serviceable and so soothing in the vicissitudes of their eventful lives" (5). Like all Austen's heroines, Catherine of *Northanger Abbey* later needs to be rescued from youthful illusions which, in her case, were derived from reading gothic romances. The young girl reading gothic romance sees there a mirror image of her struggling feminine self and tries to decipher from it the implications of her relationships with others.

ROUSSEAU'S EMILE: PRESERVING IDENTITY

Catherine's robust childhood is somewhat reminiscent of Rousseau's portrait of Emile in his work, *Emile: or On Education*, a utopian profile of how a young boy should be educated to preserve his identity so that he will be dependent on no one. Although he is raised away from the debilitating effects of a greedy and competitive society in his early years, he is taught empathy and how to be a friend in adolescence so that eventually he will be prepared for marriage and citizenship in society. This confident and self-sufficient young man is the the very opposite of De Beauvoir's young girl passively wandering through the woods

and dreaming of her restricted future. And nowhere does he turn to books or poetry to find his images or experience; he learns only in the school of life.

Emile is born free with no chains or attachments of any kind. Until the stirrings of adolescence he has said "I love you" to no one: "He loves his sister as he loves his watch and his friend as his dog. He does not feel himself to be of any sex, of any species" (219). Rousseau maintains that it is unnatural for a young child to be moved by anything outside himself and he protects Emile from sentimentality of any kind, for "every attachment is a sign of insufficiency" and "a truly happy being is a solitary being" (221). For our context, it is significant that Emile was allowed to read only one novel in his childhood and that was *Robinson Crusoe* because Crusoe managed to live simply in nature and in total self-sufficiency, needing no one (which I find quite ironic since Robinson Crusoe with his excessive hoard of food, multiple shelters, and piles of ammunition was hardly the perfect example of "natural man"). The point is that Emile, in his childhood, is to keep his natural self-love intact by learning only from nature without the debilitating interference of society--or books.

EMILE AT FIFTEEN: LEARNING COMPASSION

Emile, at fifteen, awakening to the throes of sexual desires is not given books, or sex education, but he is taken by his tutor to the slums for his first lessons on pity.

Until puberty, Emile was "indifferent to everything outside of himself"(222). Raised only by his tutor outside the chains of society, Emile has been exposed only to *things*, happily discovering himself in relation to his environment and attached to no one. "This is the job of childhood" (214). However, 'a nascent fire' has animated Emile's natural passions and a new plan must begin for his sex education. Rousseau is keenly aware of his student's new vulnerability to the countless alien streams "which can corrupt and swell nature's good and primitive passion, self-love." Eager to delay, and thereby *sublimate*, the nascent urges which threaten to turn Emile's free and untainted "amour de soi" into immoderate and dangerous "amour propre", Rousseau, slowly and in orderly fashion, sets up the conditions in which Emile will establish contact with others: "Thus is born pity, the first relative sentiment which touches the human heart according to nature. To become sensitive and pitying, the child must know there are beings like him, who suffer what he has suffered, who feels the pain he has felt..."(222). Born out of eros, pity for the suffering of others teaches Emile that he is no longer alone. "When he begins to sense his moral beginnings, he ought to study his relations with men. This is the job of his whole life"(214). Emile, at the age of fifteen, is on the way to becoming moral, connected to his fellow human beings.

At this dangerous age, in the newly tender feelings

of adolescence, Rousseau sees Emile identifying with the pain of other human beings and animals. Such passions are animated even more by the dangers of imagination (the same agent that evokes immoderate sexual desires), and Emile's tutor finds it necessary to establish careful guidelines or maxims. He wishes especially to avoid comparisons with those wealthier or nobler, thus inciting envy. Therefore, the first maxim reads: "*It is not our place to put ourselves in the place of people who are happier than we, but only in that of those who are more pitiable*" (IV, 233). This is consistent with Rousseau's caution that Emile shall never desire what he cannot attain. As a result, "Pity is sweet because we nevertheless feel the pleasure of not suffering as he does"(223). Like sexual desire, pity is to be sublimated into a pleasure and thus to inspire Emile to a greater tenderness. This tenderness can only come through direct experience (through the senses of the body rather than the imagination), not through preaching or from the heroic stories of romance--"Let him see, let him feel the human calamities"(224). For Emile to become humane, he must "*pity in others only those ills from which one does not feel himself exempt*" (Second Maxim, 224). Finally, the third maxim stresses that all pretense and illusion must be avoided. Again, the reading of books (except for realistic travel journals or fables which teach moral truths), and certainly the reading of romances, is not a part of Emile's carefully

guided education.

While Rousseau acknowledges that true pity does involve memory and imagination, he cautions that these must be directed most carefully in the volatile years of adolescence toward a genuine identification or empathy with the suffering one. Therefore, Emile's tutor brings him only to educational situations "on which the expansive force of the heart can act--objects which swell the heart, which extend it to other beings, which make it find itself everywhere outside itself--and carefully keep away those which contract and concentrate the heart and tighten the spring of the human I" (223). Rousseau wants to make Emile outgoing and beneficent and compassionate through sublimation and delay of sexual gratification. To preserve the precious "I" in this vulnerable and critical stage of Emile's life, satiety, desensitization, and immoderate passions must be avoided. The only way Emile can achieve moral maturity is to preserve his chastity and "to slow up everything as much as possible" (232). The maxims for Emile's education in pity are actually the guidelines of his sex education.

IN CONTRAST TO EMILE; LISA AT FIFTEEN

Carol Gilligan's book, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (1982), contains a case study of another fifteen-year-old, Lisa. Gilligan's purpose in showing us Lisa is hardly comparable to Rousseau's detailed and utopian, philosophical account of the education

of Emile. However, there is a point to be made. Lisa is introduced in one of the abortion case studies which Gilligan uses to show how women face crisis situations and deal with them later. Lisa is actually the only one of Gilligan's sixteen abortion case studies who decides to keep her baby: "Believing in her boyfriend's love, she acceded to his wish 'not to murder his child'"(123). Lisa is quite the contrast to our robust, untouched Emile. (Rousseau should have stayed around to delay the effects of *modern nascent urges!*) "Isolated at home, taking care of the child, dependent on welfare, disowned by her father, and abandoned by her boyfriend, [Lisa] has become unrecognizable even to herself" (124). Gilligan uses the Lisa case as an example of "moral nihilism", the confused despair of women who, having been abandoned by men and cut off from love, decide not to care. Not only are they unable to feel anything for others, but they are unable to care for themselves.

GILLIGAN'S GENDER DIFFERENCES

Gilligan, in her real-life studies on conceptions of self and morality, does not even consider people outside human relationships. Largely basing her psychological theories on those of Nancy Chodorow, Gilligan begins with infancy and notes that identity is based on a baby's relationship to its mother, the primary care-giver. Because the young girl child experiences herself as like her mother, she fuses the experience of attachment with the

process of identity formation. In contrast, mothers experience their sons as male opposite and boys in defining themselves as masculine, separate their mothers from themselves, thus curtailing 'their primary love and sense of sympathetic tie' (8).

This means that girls emerge from this period with a basis for empathy built into their primary definition of self that boys do not. Thus Gilligan builds her model of female/attachment and male/separation. In reaction to Kohlberg and others, Gilligan's research analysis stresses that feminine need for intimacy is not a sign of weakness or moral insufficiency, but that it is natural for women to think of themselves in relationship to others. She claims, in fact, that women with their natural abilities to nurture and feel empathy have greater chances for success in moral maturity than men do in their life-long struggle for individuation.

As in Rousseau, sexuality and the potential for compassion are closely linked in Gilligan's theories. However, whereas Emile doesn't begin to receive lessons on pity and attachment until adolescence, "when his empassionate heart is moved by the suffering of his fellows"(220), in Gilligan's scheme, sex education begins at birth. Almost immediately, little boys begin to assert their separateness while little girls identify with their mothers as care-givers and nurturers. Gender difference is the basis for Gilligan's psychology and with it come all the complexities of male/female relationships.

THE FEMININE CARE ETHIC

Nel Noddings, in *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education* (1984), stresses that caring is not a product of reasoning or the analytic-objective mode which characterises so much of masculine thinking. Instead she claims it as a feminine receptive-intuitive mode which is at the heart of human existence--"a state of heightened awareness which involves both the engrossment of self with another and the growth one experiences from the reciprocity of that caring relationship" (35). To be fully human for Noddings requires involvement with others: "we in caring must respond" and "as I care for others and am cared for by them I become able to care for myself"(49). Noddings' ethical ideal--"this realistic picture of ourselves as one-caring that strives to meet the other morally"(5)--is in direct contrast to Rousseau's distrust of early attachments and the primary need for a strong sense of identity: "Love of men from love of self is the principle of human justice"(235). In Noddings' scheme, individuation or autonomy is a by-product of caring. Not only that, but it is through caring that we can truly become ourselves--autonomy is possible because of compassion. Whereas Rousseau protects Emile from the chains of attachment to preserve his valuable self-love, Noddings believes the opposite:

As I chop away at the chains that bind me to loved others, asserting my freedom, I move into a wilderness of strangers, leaving behind all who cared for me and

even, perhaps my own self. I am not naturally alone (51).

IMPLICATIONS FOR READER-RESPONSE

The polarities of Rousseau's emphasis on a self-sufficient identity and Noddings' stress on the need for intimacy hold important implications for differences in gender response to books. Noddings, in her delineation of the care ethic certainly goes further than the three R's: she includes recognition, receptivity, reciprocity, relatedness, and responsiveness. Although she does not include the reading of romances in that list, I imagine that, on account of the romance's central theme of the quest for love, Noddings would at least affirm that genre's potential for empathy and compassionate response in its readers.

Rousseau, on the other hand, would carefully steer Emile away from such temptations in his formative years, dismissing romance reading as illusionary and degrading, a source of discontent and envy--one of those dangerous things which contract the human spirit. The whole purpose of the censorship and channeling of Emile's activities in the crucial time of his sexual awakening is to prepare him for citizenship and marriage to Sophie--his one chain. As Allan Bloom points out in the introduction of his translation of *Emile*, this is "one of the very few fundamental texts for the understanding of man and woman," a text which declares that "the primary aim of the education of civilized man and woman is to prepare them for one another" (25). Rousseau's keen

awareness of the complementariness of gender differences necessarily relegates Sophie to the private sphere of a domestic role. In view of the fact that Radway and Christian-Smith have recognized in their surveys of popular romances that a central motif of these best-sellers is the perpetuation of the woman's place in the home, it is worthwhile to consider Rousseau's views on the role of women and whether young girls are to be raised with a similar guard over the rising passions of adolescence.

SOPHIE: EMILE'S OTHER HALF

Obviously, in his striving to establish a "natural base" for family and society, Rousseau sees no need to cultivate "true pity" in the education of Sophie for she is already a social being, dependent on others from birth. Rousseau does not even consider autonomy or "amour de soi" for women and he makes this blatantly clear in his objectives for the education of women:

The good constitution of children initially depends on that of their mothers. The first education of men depends on the care of women. Men's morals, their passions, their tastes, their pleasures, their very happiness also depend on women. Thus the whole education of women ought to relate to men, to be useful to them, to make herself honored by them, to raise them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, console them, to make their lives agreeable and sweet--these are the duties of women at all times and they ought to be taught from childhood (365).

What stands out in this passage is that learning to feel pity, empathy, or compassion is not one of Sophie's lessons. Her moral education consists of learning feminine virtues--

constraint, gentleness, cordiality, and above all, taste and modesty. She stays with her family so that she can be skilled in domestic management and learns to master handiwork such as lace-making. Although the "need to love by itself devours her"(397), Sophie is naturally chaste and decent: "Since almost from infancy women are on the defensive and entrusted with a treasure that is so difficult to protect, good and evil are necessarily known to them sooner"(397). Moral maturity for Sophie is closely connected to her ability to keep herself pure until marriage. The conflict in Sophie between inclination and duty is between her natural need to please her husband and a complicated requirement of coquetry and artfulness to keep Emile at bay and so keep a hold on him. She uses coquettish modesty to excite and prolong their courtship while still preserving her virginity.

Sophie does read an epic novel during adolescence--*Telemachus*, written by the Abbe Fenelon--and she falls in love with the hero, with whom she later identifies Emile. This book provides her with an ideal that spoils her for the boys in Paris because none of them can live up to the ideal hero, Telemachus--that is, until Emile arrives on the scene. Alan Bloom notes that Sophie, "unlike Emile, is given a literary base for her taste" and that "*Telemachus* is Sophie's guide in love" (notes for *Emile*, 493). Emile, too reads Fenelon's didactic novel, *Telemachus*, but he uses it as an instructional guide for his travels and for his duties in

politics. Thus, Rousseau makes distinctions between gender responses to the same novel: while Emile learns how to become a public citizen, it is legitimate for Sophie to romanticize and to fall in love with the book's hero. *Telemachus* is Sophie's *Robinson Crusoe*--as it reinforces her feminine role and teaches her, like the readers of modern popular romances, to seek her fulfillment through a man and in the home.

DOLL-PLAY AND ROMANCE READING

An even more striking example of Sophie's imaginative responses--and in many ways related to reader-response--is Rousseau's description of Sophie as a young child playing with her dolls. In that anecdote, rather than rocking her dolls, singing to them, or holding them in her arms, Sophie spends hours dressing and undressing her dolls. Sophie's doll-play is related to her basic nature which, according to Rousseau, is to be pleasing to a man. Thus, "she is hungrier for adornment than for food....She awaits the moment when she will be her own doll"(367). Since to be doll-like is the true nature of women, it is morally sound for a girl to spend hours on what would be a frivolity for Emile.

One is reminded of Mrs. Allen's trivial obsession with fashion in *Northanger Abbey* (as well as Margaret Atwood's satirical novel, *Lady Oracle*, in which the protagonist secretly makes her living by writing costume gothics). As pointed out by Radway in the analysis of her survey, women do relish romances for their clothes

descriptions; she suggests that fashion details help readers to suspend their disbelief and to identify more fully with the realism of the romance genre, which is essentially mythic in its fairy tale ending: the realistic details of clothes and furnishings make the happy ending more believable. At the same time, she notes that, similar to Sophie's doll-play, the popular romance's emphasis on fashion is a reflection of society's expectations that women beautify themselves to be appealing to men. The "Barbie Doll" mentality of Sophie's doll-play smacks of our own society's obsession with women as objects of attraction; and reminds one of "The Hurried Child" syndrome--the rushing of children into adult experiences--which is so adamantly opposed by Rousseau in the natural, non-interfering milieu of Emile's education.

The ideal of non-interference in the development of a maturing child is an educational issue which relates directly to sex education and the choices of reading materials such as romances. It is interesting to note that Sophie's doll-play, which one can easily correlate with the role of the imagination in reading (in that the reader enjoys and tries on the vicarious experiences of the book) has little in common with Gilligan's feminine model of nurturing or caring for others. Rather, it reflects the commercial codes of romance, sexuality, and beautification found by Linda Christian-Smith in her book, *Becoming A Woman Through Romance*. In that study of adolescent romances,

Christian-Smith discovered a central motif which surprisingly matches Rousseau's "sexist" outline of Sophie's role in

Emile:

Teen romances centre their version of femininity on devotion to home, heart, and hearth. In them, a woman is never complete without a man.... Motherhood is woman's destiny and woman's rightful place is in the home (xi).

If that is the main message of popular teen romance--and the primary reason for its appeal--I suggest that it interferes greatly with the development of a healthy self-esteem in young girls and does little for cultivating gender equality or empowering women. In this respect, one also has to question the truth and nature of Gilligan's "care ethic" which claims that women with their natural abilities to nurture and feel empathy have greater chances for success in moral maturity than men do in their lifelong struggle for individuation. Where in Sophie's doll-play or in the pages of teen romances do we find any evidence of the compassion or altruistic feeling which Noddings claims is such an integral part of the female psyche?

COMPASSION AND IDENTITY

Emile's sex education consisted of learning "true pity" or compassion. Sophie's natural need to love is actually a dependent need to *be* loved; and all her maturation activities centre on a narcissistic fulfillment of that need. In her article, "Rousseau's Two Concepts of Citizenship", Margaret Canovan examines the discrepancies and

ambiguities in Rousseau's view on the role of women. She attributes his desire to keep women in the home to his keen awareness of the tension between a public and private life, and of the necessity for the male citizen to be totally committed to his public role--since "only intense loyalties of small communities originally made possible a sense of justice" (Kennedy and Mendus, 81). Thus, at the beginning of *Emile*, Rousseau says that "one can be either a citizen or a 'natural man' but not both, and the virtue of losing one's individuality to be a citizen in this unmediated way is that it makes for wholeness and does not divide a man against himself" (quoted from Kennedy and Mendus, 83).

It seems to me that Sophie, even in her domestic situation as a future wife and mother, should have a similar chance for wholeness; though I'm not sure that Noddings' glorified version of the "care ethic"--the ability to care and, in turn, be cared for--can provide the wholeness or sense of identity which young girls so often lack. That 'needy' kind of caring, like the late eighteenth-century "cult of sensibility" of Austen's time, easily degenerates into mindless sentimentalism or inordinate cravings for affection that lead into abusive situations (as exemplified by Gilligan's Lisa case). Since the need to love can consume them, girls, too, need lessons on "proper pity." I suggest that they obtain these lessons from the particular experiences of characters in novels; and since romance is the

suitable genre for adolescents (relevant to their needs for identification with heroes and heroines; satisfying their need for realistic detail; and, hopefully, deep enough to make them think) I find this the least harmful, and possibly the best way for young girls (or boys) to explore sexuality.

A QUESTION OF CENSORSHIP

I realize that I am dealing here with the question of censorship and wish to explain why I find it unnecessary to ban romance novels from adolescents. Sex education, which in every family and society *does* begin at birth--for both girls and boys--should include a careful preservation and cultivation of the precious "I"; and it should develop ideals and attitudes which make caring and loving attitudes possible. For this to happen, I would suggest that parents and teachers create the most natural, non-interfering atmosphere possible. However, in our materialistic "Barbie-doll" society, Rousseau's censorship of those objects which "contract" the "expansive force of the heart" is hardly possible. Bombarded by the media and the often glaring sights and sounds of commercial popular culture since birth, our students have often become quite desensitized by the time they reach our classrooms. Christian-Smith calls attention to "the pervasiveness of popular culture in the lives of young people and its importance in shaping modern consciousness" and agrees that "political struggles must be conducted around it"(6), and she points to the role of the

educator in meeting this challenge.

A MESSAGE OF HOPE

Empathy and the discovery of identity are closely entwined in the reading of romantic stories about heroes and heroines who experience conflict and dangerous adventures that are resolved in hopeful and happy endings. In reply to charges of the escapist and addictive qualities of formula fiction, Christian-Smith argues that "romance-reading provides not only a way of fulfilling romantic fantasies, but also an occasion for self-examination"(6). Recalling Appleyard's statements on reading as a developmental interactive process, I see the reading of formula fiction as a private activity, as a reader's choice to commune with a text. That interaction can empower her towards an interpretation of her place in the world. For the young girl who is by nature quick to identify with the feelings of others, the act of reading supplies an abundant variety of characters and situations to explore the ambivalent feelings surrounding her place in society as a feminine being. During this *reframing* act, she may become aware that she requires help to decide how to balance her needs for meaningful work and citizenship with her longings for a home and family. If the romance reifies her or relegates her to a narrow setting, she can seek liberation, or find ways to make her life more bearable; reading more romances may be one of those ways. Of course, the secret to liberating growth lies in the degree of

her awareness and in the reading of more edifying texts.

As for the happy ending of romance, Deborah Ross, in *The Excellence of Falsehood*, notes that "closure is as basic to romance as adventure is....Romance is both about seeking and finding, about individual experience and the need for others, equally about fear...and love" (146). Romance reading does offer--even if only temporarily--a sublime message of hope that everything will be all right in the end. Children and teenagers need that kind of assurance which is akin to faith, and so do adults. For the adolescent girl, the happy reconciliation of the hero and heroine at the end of the romance does not necessarily imply that a woman can only find her true fulfillment with a man. It can also hold the promise of true love, the possibility of an equitable and tender intimacy for which she can make herself worthy--not by passively waiting and dreaming aimlessly--but by actively responding to a wealth of texts which work to *expand* the human heart.

Without a clear sense of her own value, the young girl will become mired in meaningless and abusive relationships. If she has not been interfered with in her emotional or sexual being as a child, and has been encouraged to think and judge for herself, she will be able to interpret the confusing messages and demands of her adolescent world; and this "restorying" of herself should be an integral part of her education. Ross, in reference to Austen's *Northanger*

Abbey, makes the astute remark that

Moral education comes not from burning romances, but from learning how to read both romances and reality accurately. A "wedding" of fiction and life takes place when the main character has learned the right relation of head and heart, or sense and sensibility (176).

I suggest that a wide reading of novels--including popular romances--can satisfy the young girl's curiosity about sex while it acknowledges her wildest dreams and greatest fears; and can provide her with a broad landscape to decipher life's mysterious secrets without falling prey to them.

CHAPTER 4: MY ROLE AS EDUCATOR

BOYS AND GIRLS TOGETHER

Although I am focusing on the young girl's interactive experience of reading, that experience deals largely with her as a feminine sexual being and how she relates to the world of men. In my classroom, boys and girls are always together and I must facilitate communal learning. Thus, the dilemma in adolescent education involves gender differences and cultural values as well as questions about the literary quality of popular romance. I like to think that my classroom is a "reading and writing" classroom, and do wish to share a few thoughts on how to make reading more meaningful in adolescent years; however, scores of textbooks have been written on how to teach reading and writing in the classroom and it is not my purpose here to contribute to this important research. In this concluding chapter, I return to my role as educator with some concrete suggestions as to how I can use reader-response and bibliotherapy in my classroom of young adolescents in order to promote individual wholeness in both sexes, as well as equality and harmony between them. In addition, I will attempt to reconcile the sexes by clarifying the issues raised throughout this paper concerning gender and genre.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN THE CLASSROOM

The last three years of my teaching career in grade 5-6 classrooms of eleven and twelve-year-olds have statistically been dominated by boys. Although it has been my experience that a majority of boys always makes the classroom more boisterous and difficult to manage, one year stands out in particular: from September, 1990 to June, 1991, I had thirty students in my class, twenty of whom were boys. Ten of those boys were troubled and needy youngsters; six of the ten (an unusually high number for a single classroom), due to neglect and abuse in early years, were severely disruptive and aggressive. The ten girls, mostly studious and quiet (though who knows what problems they might have had), often wrapped up in a book, tended to passively ignore the frequent class upsets. Caught between being a policeman and a social worker, I tried to keep a semblance of order while I listened to the numerous cries for help and attention. Needless to say, we (after four months of chaos, I was given an instructional aide) spent more time that year on recruiting help from outside, on role play and social skills, on individual counselling and writing up reports and referrals, than we did on learning math or spelling. But we did read novels.

It was the same year that Bible reading and prayer were banned from morning exercises. I replaced these with a moment of silence and by reading aloud a chapter from the most relevant (to their situations) and best-written novel I

could find--Walt Morey's *Angry Waters*, Zachary Ball's *Bristleface*, Roald Dahl's *Danny*, *The Grand Champion of the World*--all of them about boys growing up and facing difficult circumstances who in the end find love and acceptance and power--stories which speak clearly to the fears and wishes of the alienated young. During these readings even the toughest student struggled to control his disruptive impulses so that he could remain in the classroom. (One particularly bright and psychopathic child always obtained his own copy of the book I was reading from the public library. Since he stole anything else he wanted and seldom returned any overdue books, I have a hunch that he owns those books to this day). However, although they responded enthusiastically to my oral reading, it has generally been my experience (with a few exceptions) that boys do not read novels on their own. At least, in that setting and community of mostly working-class parents, boys were much more interested in sports and video-games than in reading books.

And where were the girls in this drama? Mostly quiet and watchful, waiting for tension to be relieved, for peace to be restored, their heads often bent over books as they waited patiently for the class to settle down after yet another disruptive power display. Puberty for many girls these days arrives about halfway through grade six, about two years ahead of boys, and it is interesting that girls do read extensively at this age--mostly series fiction (such as Nancy

Drew detective stories) or stories about social problems and relationships, the types of books listed by Christian-Smith in her survey. They often traded favourite novels and asked me to recommend more good stories like Jan Truss's *Jasmin* or Norma Fox Mazer's *Mrs. Fish, the Ape, and Me, the Dump Queen* (stories with girl heroines, which I had also read aloud to the class).

READER RESPONSE IN THE CLASSROOM

It is clear that daily reading to the class from relevant novels or stories is, for me, a most effective means of communication with my students. This process often leads to class discussions--always about feelings and values, or what makes sense, and what might happen next. Above all, students are invited to project their own feelings into the story and this is often done through writing--a method which engages everyone's imagination while it respects individual privacy. Students also read on their own silently from books of their own choice, usually twenty minutes each day. And we read to each other in groups, which are negotiated--sometimes according to reading ability, usually to the choice of reading material, or just to be with friends: we even have boy groups or girl groups. Small group work often leads to dramatic renderings which are then performed for the whole class.

In this mixture of silent and oral response--as a whole class, as individuals, or in small groups--we create an

interpretive community around a meaningful text. This valuable activity not only teaches us to appreciate the value of literature and helps us to "restory" ourselves but it provides the sense of intimate community which is so lacking in the fragmented lives of our students. Perhaps the most valuable part of that community is when boys and girls study texts together; in listening to each other's responses, they learn early about their differences.

In evoking reader response, I must constantly be aware of the differences in my students, not just of gender, race, and class, but of learning abilities and levels of maturity. To address those differences and to capture attention, I do refer to the common discourses and symbols of popular culture. Many of my students do not read print well, let alone interpret it. I have to begin with their perceptions, and in a non-judgmental way, encourage them to climb higher, to challenge them and nudge them on to a further stages of reader--and moral--development.

USING THE STUDENTS' MEDIA

Although they could not get through L.M. Montgomery's wonderful *Anne of Green Gables* or its sequels on their own (these books which I revelled in as a young girl are too descriptive, difficult in vocabulary, and perhaps too moralistic in tone for today's young readers), at the end of the school year, the whole class watched the CBC television production of the *Anne* story. Both boys and girls were

spellbound by the trials and triumphs of the impulsive and lovable redhead as she makes a path for herself from orphanage to family and love and community life in Avonlea. Speaking of Anne, it is significant that in her moments of loneliness and despair, she finds her refuge in books and poetry, a favourite being Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott". I am sure that the perennial appeal of Montgomery's heroine lies in her initial vulnerability and her determined use of the power of a romantic imagination to overcome threats to her identity: Anne promises her readers power through imagination.

What is interesting is that in my troubled class, this film spoke strongly and, as far as I could see, equally, to both genders. This leads me to conclude that my loud and aggressive boys and my quiet, passive girls share the same longings for the security and acceptance found in loving relationships. But girls, at the threshold of adolescence, are more readily able to admit their empathy for characters in novels and to identify with the deep feelings evoked by poetry. In fact, their avid reading at this age suggests that they are either trying to find themselves, or lose themselves, in the pages of books and fashion magazines (such as *Young Miss*) which address problems of feminine identity in varying ways. My concern is how to channel this keen interest in literature, an interest that is often triggered by the curiosity and ambivalent feelings of developing sexual

urges, into positive directions away from a passive acceptance of reification and male dominance into a stronger definition of female power.

FEMINIST THEORY AND LITERACY

In the introduction to her feminist anthology, *Gender and Reading* (1986), Patricinio P. Schweickart identifies three distinctive features of a feminist reading (which I wish to include here because I need to clarify why these issues are so crucial to reader-response): first, Schweickart makes the point that because of traditional obliviousness to a female perspective in literature, the issue of gender is of utmost importance; thus, to compensate for that neglect, a privileged status is given to the experience and interests of women; thirdly, feminist readers are always conscious of the political dimensions of reading and writing and of the political implications of gender--"the gender inscribed in the text is as crucial as the gender of the reader"(xiii). Flynn and Schweickart (1986) note that "reader-centred criticism and feminist criticism are alike in that they induce a heightened awareness of the way perspective conditions comprehension and interpretation" and that "it is no exaggeration to say that gender identity is acquired hand-in-hand with literacy"(xxi).

SHARING WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE: THE ROMANCE NOVEL

While I question the assumptions of feminist thinking regarding the detrimental nature of hierarchies and the

all-pervasive reality of patriarchy, I do share feminist concerns for gender equality and gladly join them in the crusade to validate women's experience. That experience, as noted by Langbauer in *Women and Romance* (1990), has often been recorded in its most interesting, readable and imaginative form in women's novels, that is novels written by women for women (though if men should care to read them, their lives stand to be enriched). Jane Austen, who deals satirically but earnestly with the devaluation of women's experience as it is portrayed in novels, often inserts her authorial voice in the pages of *Northanger Abbey*, and cries, "Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronised by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard"(23)? Although she speaks satirically about the effect of romance reading on real experience in that quotation, she is sincere about the need for women to band together to justify their experiences-- including the reading and writing of novels--when she pleads, "Let us not desert one another--we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried" (25). While she mocks the melodramatic excesses of gothic romances with her usual ironic tone and wry humour, Austen extols the validity of the novel for its ability to give an accurate portrayal of real life, and extends this quality

even to popular romances:

'It is only *Cecilia, or Camilla, or Belinda*'; or, in short, only some work in which the greatest powers of mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best-chosen language (25).

Thus, Austen pits the heroines of romance against the "improbable circumstances" and "unnatural characters" of male-dominated papers such as the *Spectator* and validates the novel for its keen and excellent description of human experience.

FEMINIST VERSUS DEVELOPMENTAL THEORIES OF READING

In his discussion of popular romance, Appleyard echoes Radway's thesis that "women read (and reread) popular romances in such quantity because they satisfy a deep-seated need arising out of the limited roles a repressive patriarchal culture allows to women" (170). What is so interesting here is that Appleyard, by his quotations from feminist theorists, acknowledges the limited roles for females in a patriarchy and is well aware of (and seems sympathetic to) feminist theories of reading but he does not adopt them for his own developmental view of reading. While he quotes from the feminist studies of Schweickart, Modleski, and Radway--and understands the importance of gender distinctions as outlined by Chodorow and Gilligan--Appleyard himself does not emphasize those distinctions and their political implications which form the basis of feminist

theories of reading. In his description of the developmental stages of readers and their responses to the various genres, Appleyard recognizes the connection between women and romance; but he still concludes that "escapist reading represents a necessary therapeutic regression, temporary or habitual, to childhood forms of pleasure" (170) for *both* men and women adults.

By sticking to Frye's definition of *romance*--"that generic mode whose central premise is that anxieties can be confronted and that wishes can be fulfilled" (167)--and by promoting a human developmental rather than a gendered view of reader-response, Appleyard is able to ignore the feminist emphasis on the gendered and political dimensions of reading and writing. Yet, I do not feel that he devalues or denigrates women for their affinity to romance or that he assumes a patriarchal stance. Rather, like Joseph Gold and David Holbrook, Appleyard sees a similar potential for growth and maturity for both sexes in the "escapist", utopian character of romance reading. Appleyard points out that in the familiar landscape of formula romance or in the predictability of series fiction, we find an easy access to repressed fears and desires that is not too probingly painful. He emphasizes that

the quality that really places escape reading in the genre of romance, however, is the psychological rewards it offers. As we have seen, it appears to confront intractable problems of good and evil, reduces them to manageable shapes. and provides the

assurance of a happy ending. It offers the image of a central character who can ultimately control threatening circumstances and achieve a glorious destiny (167).

Appleyard's use of the words "confront" and "control" in this passage does betray the feminist ideals of collaboration and community and could place him squarely in a patriarchal view of the world after all. On the other hand, the "assurance of a happy ending" and "a glorious destiny" for the heroic individual would surely include eventual mutuality between the sexes and the ideals of reconciliation and affiliation which correspond with feminist ideals (or am I being too optimistic about male desires for relationships?).

I find that Appleyard provides a balance between gender relations (he includes both males and females in his assumptions about human desires and fears): a balance that is lacking in feminist theory which sees a patriarch under every bed and is obsessed with the traditional exclusion of women to the point that there is little hope of men and women ever achieving mutuality. After considerable reflection, I would like to conclude that my comfortable reliance on Appleyard's "non-gendered" developmental reader-response theory does not spring from the common feminist accusation that my background has long ago taught me to "read like a man," but from a (possibly religious and romantic) belief that men and women--though equal in every way--were made differently and designed to complement each other in their differences.

As an educator who must teach boys and girls together in one classroom, it is my desire to open students to the mystery and wonder of sexual differences. To enable the healing and delay which is so needed by our often jaded, desensitized and troubled youth, both boys and girls, I turn to the relevant, imaginative stories of romance literature.

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