

**FROM THE DAUGHTER'S SEDUCTION
TO THE PRODUCTION OF DESIRE:
WHY DO WOMEN READ THE ROMANCE?**

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ABSTRACT

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"Why do women read the romance?" cannot be answered by Anglo-American feminist literary criticism; a critique is brought against feminist definitions of gender and genre, and the question, "Why did women begin to write (novels)?"

Gender definition and genre formation are integrally interrelated in the modern period; this can be traced through textual analyses of textual practices in early nineteenth century texts. Analyses of *Wuthering Heights*, *Emma*, and *Madame Bovary* enable critique to be brought against tenets central to feminist criticism: the figure and function of the female author; the definitions of gender, desire and sexuality; the social and the sexual contracts; and the role of Oedipus in feminist-psychoanalytical debates. Moi's *Sexual/Textual Politics* provides a critique of feminism, Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* a feminist history of the novel, and Radway's *Reading the Romance* a feminist account of romance fiction.

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Kathryn Susan Kure

28th day of February, 1993.

To those men (the victimisation is regretted, but not really) - who had the audacity to query the obviously intellectual nature of my romance reading activities, and who professed to be privy to the answer as to 'Why do Women Read the Romance?' "It's escapism, isn't it?" - this thesis is dedicated. No, unfortunately, it's not that either, but as to why women really do read the romance is, regrettably, beyond the scope of this thesis. Prior to my research, however, I had always contemplated with a sense of wonder how it is that women like me could ever possibly marry men like you. And now I know.

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In their own way, my parents, Arne and Lesley Kure, helped to ensure the domination of academia by the bourgeoisie. For a room of my own, for emotional and, particularly, financial support during the last few months - my many thanks.

And finally, to those who, despite my declarations to the contrary, may feel that I am somewhat harsh in my appraisal of Anglo-American feminist criticism I can but offer the apologia, "It is difficult not to be unjust to what one loves" (Wilde, 1913, p.105).

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INTRODUCTION

From the Daughter's Seduction to the Production of Desire: Why do Women Read the Romance?

This dissertation attempts to answer the question posed by the sub-title, "Why do women read the romance?" The focus upon women and romance fiction indicates an interest in gender and genre, and the question itself implies a relationship between the two. "The Daughter's Seduction" refers to the subtitle of Gallop's (1982) book, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, and it indicates a feminist psychoanalytic approach to romance fiction. "The Production of Desire" alludes to the fact that historical materialist analyses are considered appropriate to adopt in relation to a mass market commodity¹ such as the romance. The central term, 'desire', retains an acknowledgement of the importance of the psychoanalytic, whilst the combination of 'production' and 'desire' refers to a possible integration of historical materialism and psychoanalysis. Originally, this research embarked upon a feminist psychoanalytic reading of romance fiction along the lines indicated by Radway's (1987) *Reading the Romance*. It was assumed that the key question addressed would be whether the romance is not indicative of both pre-oedipal and oedipal needs.²

Although the combination of feminism, psychoanalysis and historical materialism is retained, the research is redirected along the lines of a critique of the underlying question. An overview of some of the reasons for this change is given in Appendix 2; in particular, this critique was necessitated by the fact that the question, "Why do women read the romance?" could not be answered. Or rather, could not be adequately answered in the light of the simplistic relationship drawn between the psychology of the romance reader and the heroine of the romance text, i.e., gender and genre. This thesis therefore constitutes an analysis of the fundamental assumptions underlying the original question; it queries why it is that the question "Why do women read the romance?" is asked. In order to generate answers to this, and other questions, the question itself has to be contextualised - in terms of a social and historical specificity; in the light of which theoretical approaches and biases enable/produce such a question (see Appendix 2).

The question, "Why do women read the romance?" informs a romance reading enterprise which is specific to "Anglo-American feminist criticism" (Moi, 1985, p.69).³ This thesis

therefore engages in a critique of a number of the assumptions underlying this literary criticism. Romance fiction can neither be accommodated nor accounted for within Anglo-American feminist criticism: the primary reason for this is to be found in the fact that neither gender nor genre are adequately defined within such criticism; feminist criticism is therefore unable fully to analyse or explain an interrelationship between gender and genre. The question, "Why do women read the romance?" is therefore analysed in relation to the question, "Why did women begin to write (Novels)?"

Each of the above questions implicitly informs one of two projects currently undertaken by Anglo-American feminist literary critics. The first directs an enterprise which analyses contemporary romance fiction in order to account for its popularity with women readers. The second question refers to revised, or feminist histories of the novel which assert the importance of the rise of the woman novelist, and which thereby assert/insert gender into a traditional history of the novel. Both take 'woman' as the subject or object of their interest; the former deals with reading, the latter with writing, the first with 'pulp' fiction, the second with literature. Together, they indicate an interest in both gender and genre and imply that there is a strong correlation or interrelationship between the two.⁴

Three feminist works - Toril Moi's (1985) *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Nancy Armstrong's (1987) *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, and Janice Radway's (1987) *Reading the Romance* are analysed. All three are considered important theoretical texts within the field of Anglo-American feminist criticism. First, the critiques of Anglo-American feminist literary criticism in *Sexual/Textual Politics* are extremely useful and illuminating. Reference to some of Moi's key arguments provide a starting point from which to expand upon the particular issues central to this study. In particular, Moi argues that Anglo-American feminist criticism is dependent upon a critical reading practice which is only adequate to textual analyses of the realist narrative, or 'novel'. Feminist criticism tends to read texts in terms of traditional (literary-moral) criteria of 'plot', 'character' and 'author'; it thereby implicitly endorses an unproblematised notion of 'genre'. Or, as Moi puts it, "the main problem in Anglo-American feminist criticism lies in the radical contradiction it presents between feminist politics and patriarchal aesthetics" (1985, p.69). This thesis will also demonstrate the extent to which feminist criticism typically does not give an adequate definition of gender - such criticism therefore does not embark upon close textual analyses - is limited to description in terms of content.

Nancy Armstrong appears to be the only feminist theorist who has produced a historiography as opposed to a history of the novel, one which attempts to understand the

function of female writing within the tradition of the novel. The relationship between gender and genre asserted by feminist histories of the novel is not disputed, but the simplistic treatment given to the various terms and their relationship is questionable. Despite the fact that Armstrong's probably provides the most sophisticated account of the woman novelist, her enterprise is open to the same problems; like other feminist histories of the novel, her text does not answer the question it appears to raise, namely, "Why did women begin to write novels?"

Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* is an important feminist contribution to a reading of popular culture, and of romance fiction in particular; Radway combines reader-response criticism with anthropology and feminist psychoanalysis in a quest to answer the basic question: "Why do women read the romance?" I read her work in terms of the focus upon gender and genre and thereby integrate the critique of feminist histories of the novel given in this thesis with a critique of contemporary analyses of romance fiction. Similar, fundamental errors of identification and definition, of gender and genre, limit both endeavours; like Armstrong's history of the novel, Radway's reading of the romance does not provide an adequate answer to the question, "Why do women read the romance?"

The inability of Anglo-American feminist criticism to answer the two questions it sets itself is considered to relate to a number of factors. First, definitional problems - these are partly a result of historical factors; this thesis demonstrates that feminist criticism is deeply complicit with traditional literary criticism. However, I argue that the reason why feminist criticism is not critical of its own position, and therefore of the definitions given gender and genre, relates to the *functions* that such definitions serve. This thesis analyses the definitions accorded gender and genre (and related terms) within feminist criticism - the functions these serve; it will therefore uncover many of the assumptions underlying this enterprise.

Although Moi highlights the contradiction between feminist theory and methodology, she implies that both theory and methodology, which are interdependent, are secondary to feminist politics (see section 2.2). Unlike Moi, I do not believe that "feminists can in a sense afford to be tolerantly pluralistic in their choice of literary methods and theories, precisely because any approach that can be successfully appropriated to their political ends must be welcome" (1985, p.87). Feminist accounts of gender and genre are inadequate; I argue that in order for feminist methodology to be purged of many of its politically in/correct traditions, that it must engage in a critique of its own position - that in order to look to the future, it first has to recognise its past.

In chapter one an argument is brought against Armstrong's feminist 'history (or historiography) of the novel'. Armstrong attempts to analyse the construction of the modern individual through interrelating what she considers to be a Foucauldian account of the history of sexuality with a history of the novel. At the same time, Armstrong also attempts to authorise the figure of the female author - thereby claiming a positive political victory in the figure of the modern woman (novelist). That is, she does not fully concede the extent to which the modern (female) individual is constructed by means of error, upon that which is non-normative. The contradictoriness of Armstrong's dual aims is highlighted, and a number of arguments brought against her history of the novel. In particular, Armstrong does not fully concede the extent to which the 'novel' was a contested terrain; she therefore appears to refute traditional claims regarding the exclusion of "women's novels" from the 'canon' solely on the basis of gender, without fully considering the dimensions of genre.

An alternative account of women, writing and reading, is then undertaken. My argument is based on the presumption that the 'rise of the woman novelist' probably indicates the conjunction of a number of interrelating social and historical factors. Far from being 'inexplicable', the woman novelist is considered a functional consequent of these various processes. This study focuses upon Britain of the early nineteenth century; it emerges that women's textual practices did become a distinct site of institutional regulation during this period: the reading and writing of women is therefore an interesting focus of historical and discursive analysis. I argue that gender definition and genre formation are integrally interrelated in the modern period; furthermore, their interrelationship can be traced through textual analyses of the inscription of the functions of reading and writing in early nineteenth century texts.

Textual analyses of three literary texts are used to open up a number of key debates, in particular, they enable scrutiny of specific aspects of Anglo-American feminist literary criticism. All three texts were originally published during the early or mid-nineteenth century; *Emma* in 1816, *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, and *Madame Bovary* in serial form in the *Revue de Paris* between 1856 and 1857. Descriptions of women, reading and writing are found in all three texts; a common structural thread links the arguments in chapters two to five. The textual analyses I give of the texts focus upon the inscription of reading and writing; in particular, the relationship that is constructed within the text between textual practice and gender is analysed. My reading is compared with another feminist reading of the same text; through examining the claims made in both readings, an argument is developed regarding the specific aspect of Anglo-American feminist criticism my readings are meant to highlight. Many of the points raised by the textual analysis are substantiated

and expanded upon in a separate section of the same chapter, in which the feminist theoretical stance or bias which enabled or produced the particular feminist reading is explored.

Wuthering Heights is analysed in chapter two, and the reading seeks to open up a discussion regarding the notion of authorship. The fact that not one, but a number of narratorial voices produce the text is used as evidence in an argument against the focus accorded the figure of the female novelist in Anglo-American feminist literary criticism. The figure of the female author is scrutinised in terms of the political function that this figure serves within feminist criticism; in particular, the function it serves within feminist histories of the novels is examined.

The relationship between gender and genre asserted by feminist histories of the novel is not disputed; however, these histories do not answer the question, "Why did women begin to write (novels)?" I claim that this question is used as a rhetorical device to claim how 'impossible' it was for women to write. The figure of the female author is taken to assert a double victory. The fact that she wrote at all is assessed positively. Given the identification of author and protagonist, the figure of the female author serves to unify the diverse images of women given within the text. A feminist reading practice, based on the work of Gilbert and Gubar (1979), would claim these figures as indicative of the images of the "madwoman in the attic" and the "angel in the house" (see section 2.2). These figures are considered representative of the dual and necessarily contradictory images given to women within patriarchal culture. To the extent that women in patriarchal culture oscillate between the identity/being of the 'madwoman' and the 'angel', the text is considered implicitly to engage with the deep divisions patriarchy engenders within women's selves. The figure of the female author is therefore considered to uphold the notion of the whole and unitary female self in terms of being the creator of such images; a woman who can successfully integrate these two figures/selves within herself.

The above synopsis of the problem of women within patriarchal culture begs the issue as to whether or not the idea of a "fully coherent, fully satisfied, female subjectivity" (Radway, 1987, p.14) is not itself part of the very humanist, 'patriarchal' aesthetic informing traditional literary criticism, and to which feminist criticism (would appear to) take exception. The purpose of this critique, incorporating both the textual analysis and the theoretical readings, is to point out a number of flaws in the feminist argument regarding the female novelist, such that a more complex articulation of gender and its interrelationship with genre can be proposed.

The problematic feminist definitions of 'gender', 'sexuality' and 'desire' are discussed in chapter three, and the text of *Emma* yields substantiation for the interarticulation of gender, desire and sexuality. Of particular interest is the alignment of literature and morality - the 'character' of Emma is constructed, through error, by means of a correlation that is drawn between the texts she reads, her experience, and her self. Through the delineation of Emma's errors or failures in relation to the social and the textual, the character of Emma is constructed and transformed. This modern configuration of the self entails a particular technology of the self; error therefore provides the means whereby the character of Emma can discover the truth and become engendered with self-regulatory powers. The narrative sequences serve primarily as a vehicle for the development of character. The discriminatory powers of Emma are enhanced through the recognition of error. This not only constitutes a development in terms of 'qualities of mind', but the transformation and enhancement of the qualities of mind of Emma is essential to the "alliance" described within the text.

Armstrong's reading of *Emma* attempts to authorise the figure of Emma, and claim her as a positive female character. She therefore does not concede the function error plays in the construction of the 'character' of Emma. Instead, her reading is limited to description; on the basis of gender categorisations, she awards 'positive' gender-specific values to women (and, it is implied, negative values to men). Armstrong's definition of gender is obviously inadequate to a close textual analysis - it leads primarily to description in terms of content. A brief overview of feminist definitions of gender, sexuality and desire concludes this chapter. All are criticised, first, for adhering to the dualism of a conception of nature/culture, feminist criticism not only implies the antagonism of such terms, but presumes that culture has an overdetermining effect on nature. These feminist definitions represent a simplistic separation of culture and nature and are inadequate to an understanding of the interaction between nature and culture in the creation of sex/gender. Secondly, I argue that whilst gender categorisations and classifications are required at the level of definition and description - in order to describe men and women (as groups) - they are inadequate to an analysis and explanation of the cultural and political constitution and functions of gender/sex as it affects (individual) men and women.

Once gender is described or defined in absolutist terms, feminist criticism incurs the danger of repeating in its criticism the very dualism and positivism that it deplores in (what it presumes is) traditional literary criticism. The alternative account attempted throughout this document is based on the presupposition that gender is best delineated and explained through detailed textual analyses of socially and historically specific discursive formations.

These textual analyses can therefore be employed in terms of accounting for what gender categorisations can and cannot explain, and can contribute to a formulation of what it is that makes a specific cultural logic tick.

In chapter four *Emma* is again adduced, and Armstrong's argument, regarding the transcription of the social contract into a sexual contract *via* the narrative process, is analysed. I argue that Armstrong's account of this process is inadequate because her reading adheres to a simplistic and dualistic conception of gender. In contrast to Armstrong's reading, I claim that the dualism inherent in the notion of gender itself cannot be mapped directly onto a paradigm of gender politics. The cultural/political functions of gender necessarily entail a far more complex process of mapping. However, the establishment of marriage as prototypical of the (myth of the) social contract is central to an understanding of the politics of gender. An 'economy of pleasure' is defined in terms of how the construct of gender equality, on the basis of 'qualities of mind', is evoked as a prerequisite for an alliance. Recourse is thereby made to Armstrong's thesis regarding the transcription of the social contract into a sexual contract, in and through novels.

Unlike Armstrong, I do not consider that Austen's text transcribes the social into the sexual contract; instead, the sexual contract is considered to derive both validity and authority from the social contract. That is, I argue that Austen's text possibly provides the first instance in which the vocabulary of contract is used to overwrite marriage originally predicated upon bond. To the extent that women in modernity are still ambiguously situated (legally and politically) between the vocabularies of bond and contract, they are in an anomalous position. Austen's *Emma* appropriates the vocabulary of 'equality'; the "alliances" described therein are essentially contractual in nature. The contracts or alliances described within the text cannot therefore be subsumed under the notion of the 'companionate marriage' detailed by Armstrong, in which man and woman are seen reciprocally to benefit from a union - in terms of a gender-specific 'exchange': domestic, political; private, public, etc. Instead, through reinscribing a gender debate into a discourse of 'qualities of mind', Austen's fictional account of marriage transcends the dualism of Armstrong's schemata. Furthermore, this translation into 'qualities of mind' represents the means whereby the notion of qualitative equality becomes palimpsestic upon a 'quantitative' or social inequality.

Austen's text can therefore be read as providing a logic in terms of which marriage is conceptualised within the realm of the social contract; Austen's rewriting of marriage in terms of contract extends this logic into the realm of marriage and requires that it engage

with the problem of the position of women. That this conception of women's contractual rights and equality within marriage is not legally inscribed at the time Austen is writing is noted: the original bourgeois revolutionary nature of her text is not disputed. However, if women (in modernity) are situated between bond and contract (and marriage itself read as a primary instance of this uneasy positioning, serving both to denote and enforce this ambiguity), then the ambiguity of women's social position means that feminism cannot adequately employ the vocabulary of consent and contract to argue for a fuller realisation of women's "rights".

Arguments for making contract genuine for women presume that the problematic socio-political position of women would be overcome should they be fully situated within the logic of contract. That is, it is presumed that extending consent and contract such that they cover the specific needs of women will situate them within this logic (required for generalised commodity production and exchange) and guarantee justice. Instead, I query whether feminist endorsements of consent, contract, equality and "rights" can be seen to be emancipatory in their effects.

In chapter five, *Madame Bovary* is adduced, and an argument brought against the focus accorded the pre-oedipal period in contemporary feminist analyses of romance fiction. Radway's *Reading the Romance* is the main theoretical text analysed. The arguments brought against her work presuppose a continuity between the two feminist enterprises studied - in light of the definitions given gender and genre. In terms of genre, Radway claims that romance fiction is ambivalently positioned between myth and realism; she claims it as a 'contradictory' genre. However, I conceptualise romance as derivative of an epic tradition, and given that epic derivatives cannot be read in terms of traditional literary criteria of plot and character, Radway's reading of the romance is disputed.

Radway reads the romance by identifying the romance reader with the heroine in the text - a reading which is fundamentally akin to reading the figure of the female author from 'character/s' in the text (see chapter two). Both readings bespeak a traditional humanism that is fundamentally problematic for feminist criticism. Radway's apparently uncritical adoption of the relationship 'text-experience-self' endorses an unexamined notion of the literary-moral, and, on this basis, Radway's 'alternative' reading of the romance is challenged.

In particular, Radway reads the romance in the light of the focus accorded the pre-oedipal or mother-daughter relationship in (Anglo-American) 'feminist psychoanalysis'. A brief

introduction to feminist theorisations of the 'pre-oedipal' demonstrates that feminist psychoanalysis gives a naturalised, 'psychologised' reading of Freud's account of the importance of the pre-oedipal period in the psychic development of women. The argument that is developed is that this conception of the 'pre-oedipal' is neither 'psychoanalytic' (in terms of a strict definition of what constitutes Freudian psychoanalysis), nor is it adequate to an analysis or explication of romance fiction.

The historical association between literature and morality is explored in the light of the argument that both the novel and psychological forms of power are based upon epic negation. *Emma Bovary's* reading can therefore be read as 'symptomatic' of her - women's - problematic socio-psychological position in terms of modernity. In chapter four an argument was produced that enabled an alignment of Oedipus, the social contract (and the realist narrative) in terms of a "historical" (i.e., 'modern') conjunction and the "promissory nature" of all three. This integration of psychoanalysis (cultural logic), and historical materialism (social logic) promises to be fruitful in terms of providing an analysis of the position women occupy within modernity.

Within modernity, women are faced with a particular set of challenges, a peculiar and often highly problematic and discontinuous set of procedures for achieving contractual 'adulthood'. Furthermore, it is possible to read *Madame Bovary* such that the fraudulence of the essentially promissory nature of the social contract, of Oedipus - and of the realist narrative - is highlighted in terms of the particularly anomalous position women occupy within a social, cultural - and textual logic.

The 'failure' of romance fiction as text (i.e., as epic derivative, not realist narrative) echoes precisely the non-recuperation of *Madame Bovary* as 'character'; her 'failure' within a (realist) narrative. *Via* an association (normalisation-morality) between text and self, the essentially 'immoral', at least, non-normative, nature of romance fiction is highlighted. Hence, the disparagement of it as a literary form, and the denigration, devaluation of women; both find their echo in each other: *Madame Bovary* can be read as a text which explicates the problematic, negative nature of an association between the text, experience and the (sexual/moral) self.

A reading of *Madame Bovary* will demonstrate the extent to which women and romance fiction can be aligned, by means of "failure", in terms of criteria relating to what constitutes a modern configuration of the self/text. It emerges that it is precisely at the site of the 'promise' (promises neither made, nor kept) that women in modernity, and their fictional

counterparts in romance texts fixate. The promise of recuperation, of normalisation, of a reconstituted unity, of incorporation into modern forms of power, appears particularly "promissory" for women. Or rather, women have a particularly unusual path to negotiate to mature adulthood; a route not described by means of a simple 'reading' of either Oedipus, contract, or *Madame Bovary*. Whilst *Emma* notes the positive construction of the individual moral character, *Madame Bovary* provides an instance of failure - a failure of both gender and genre. By giving a reading of the reading of *Madame Bovary*, I will argue that the modern problem of individuality (i.e., individual morality) - is particularly problematic for women; this demonstrates as to the extent to which sexual/textual politics necessarily inform a 'reading' of 'women' in the modern era.

Romance fiction - the reading thereof - presents, if not a site of resistance, at least a site of non-recuperation into a normalisation process. Romance fiction, as derivative of an epic tradition, the reading thereof is encoded within *Madame Bovary* as antagonistic to the modern construct of character. Hence, the militation against the reading of romance texts; and the feminist question, "Why do women read the romance?" seen to endorse the same moralising attitude, be complicit with the same traditional literary-moral criteria feminist criticism appears to oppose. Hence, the critique of feminist criticism given in this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

Gender and Genre: the Early Nineteenth Century

An investigation into the relationship between gender and genre is championed by "Anglo-American feminist criticism" (Moi, 1985, p.69). In particular, feminists working in the area of the history of the novel and the rise of the woman novelist necessarily assert a positive correlation between the two. However, their articulation of gender and genre is simplistic, and feminist-inspired histories of the novel are considered inadequate to an explication of the interrelationship between gender and genre. Nancy Armstrong's (1987) *Desire and Domestic Fiction* appears to be the only feminist-oriented historiography of the novel produced thus far, and it provides a fairly sophisticated feminist account of gender and genre. The first section of this chapter critiques Armstrong's work, claiming that her work reproduces many of the problems of traditional histories of the novel. In particular, Armstrong's need to assert/insert the importance of female authority and female writing into the history of the novel undermines many of her arguments.

A historical overview of various interrelated factors affecting women and women's writing provides evidence for the alternative account that is then attempted in this chapter; that gender definition and genre formation are integrally interrelated in the modern period, and can be traced through textual analyses of the inscription of the functions of reading and writing in early nineteenth century texts. The textual analyses of *Wuthering Heights*, *Emma* and *Madame Bovary* given in chapters two to five are based upon this argument, and will highlight and expand upon specific theoretical concerns and debates relating primarily to the issue of gender and secondarily to the issue of genre.

1.1 Gender and the Novel

Much has been made of the fact that the rise of the novel is coincident with (to mention but a few) the emergence of the bourgeoisie as a class, capital, the division of private and public, new forms of sexuality, modern nation states, and modern forms of power. However, the drawing of a direct linear development from, or even causal connections between, these phenomena obscures the fact that transformations do not occur simultaneously across all phenomena, and that even within a particular construct such as that of the novel, 'development' of the form does not occur unimpeded by contradiction and discrepancy.

In her work, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Armstrong undertakes to map out a process whereby novels engendered certain crucial divides between the modern constructs 'male' and 'female'. Her claim is that the novel functions to define the modern individual through, first, the redefinition of the female in the creation of the domestic woman. Furthermore, in positing this kind of woman as "desirable" (Armstrong, 1987, pp.19-20), the claim is made that this is a key site wherein "political history obviously converged with the history of sexuality as well as with that of the novel to produce a specific kind of individual" (p.21). Armstrong therefore attempts to trace the development of the modern individual through a historiography of women's novels. Through interrelating the history of sexuality and the history of the novel, Armstrong claims that women's writing does not pose a form of resistance against, but instead, falls in line with, new regulatory practices at the beginning of the modern era.

Armstrong's work presents a number of problems. In tracing the development of a single theme, that of reading the history of sexuality onto the history of the novel, she runs the danger of attributing change in the form of the novel to one factor only, and in thereby mapping a form of power too simplistically onto the novel. A historical linearity is also imposed; later novels are considered to be developmental in relation to earlier novels. For instance, she claims that, "If (Charlotte) Brontë could simply assume this common ground with her readership, one for which Austen had to stake out a claim, then it was because such authors as Austen had helped to establish the woman's authority over a specific domain of knowledge - that of the emotions"⁵ (Armstrong, 1987, p.43). The line she traces between Brontë and Austen and other authors allows for little contradiction in terms of her central argument. In making strong reference to factors of time, "Thirty years later" (p.43), "more than twenty years later" (p.44), Armstrong implies that crucial shifts occurred both suddenly and without discrepancy. Obviously, when "tracing a continuity in ideas, the discontinuities will get short shrift" (Mitchell, 1975, p.382); however, Armstrong tends to read a social history from a select number of literary works, implying the direct influence of one upon another. Also, in perceiving only a continuity, Armstrong does not concede the extent to which the literary was a contested terrain, and this has a negative impact upon her argument regarding the interrelationship between gender definition and genre formation.

Next, Armstrong notes that "the distinction between literary and non-literary was imposed retrospectively by the modern literary institution upon anomalous works of fiction" (Armstrong, 1987, p.9). The creation of the term "domestic fiction" (p.9) constitutes Armstrong's attempt to posit a third term between the literary and non-literary, thereby undermining the distinction.

Many Anglo-American feminists working in the general area of "women writing and writing about women" (Moi, 1985, p.50) claim that the primary problem of literary tradition lies in the fact that women's writing is more likely than men's to be considered non-literary (Russ, 1983; Figs, 1982). It is one thing to assert that women novelists have been dislocated from a definite tradition in writing, that, generally, stylistically and thematically, their concerns are different, and that they seem to be discriminated against in that women's writing is often characterised as inferior to men's (Figs, 1982, p.11). It is another thing altogether to assert that this tradition belongs solely to women (Russ, 1983),⁶ revealing an insistence that genre categories be considered coextensive with categories of gender. Those who clearly assert the notion of a 'parallel female tradition in the novel', a "female tradition in literature" (Russ, 1983, p.87) or "'women's traditions' in the novel" (Spencer, 1986, p.viii) include Gilbert and Gubar (1979), Miles (1987), Newton (1981), Russ (1983), Spencer (1986), Figs (1982) and Todd (1989).

In contrast to these essentialist claims, it would be presumed that Armstrong's term, 'domestic fiction', is defined as neither masculine nor feminine, neither literary nor non-literary. However, 'domestic fiction' is never clearly defined, and at many levels it repeats the gender divides, in that Armstrong talks of "masculine fiction" and "domestic fiction" (1987, p.38).

The first sentence in Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* reads, "From the beginning, domestic fiction actively sought to disentangle the language of sexual relations from the language of politics, and in so doing, to introduce a new form of political power" (p.3). Later, she considers "domestic fiction" in relation to conduct books and educational treatises for women, "all of which often were written by women" (p.8). In this sense, domestic fiction is often, but not necessarily, written by women. On the next page, domestic fiction is again defined as that which "unfolded the operations of human desire as if they were independent of political history" (p.9). The standard definition of domestic fiction then appears to be that which deals with sexuality and not with politics (at an overt level, anyway). But later, she appears to redefine domestic fiction:

This chapter will consider the domestic novel as the agent and product of a cultural change that attached gender to certain kinds of writing. Female writing - writing that was considered appropriate for or could be written by women - in fact designated itself as feminine, which meant that other writing, by implication, was understood as male. But female writing was not only responsible for the gendering of discourse, it was also responsible for representing sexual relations as something entirely removed from politics. (p.28)

By her own definition, then, female writing and domestic fiction are one and the same entity. However, she continues with her argument, implying that "female writing" can be

defined as that written by a male author, provided his protagonist is female: "In assuming the guise of a woman" (p.28); alternatively, that which "was considered appropriate for or could be written by women" (p.28). She continues to claim that the "female view was simply different from that of an aristocratic male and not likely to be critical of the dominant view" (p.28). She then rephrases this last point, "domestic fiction could represent an alternative form of political power without appearing to contest the distribution of power that it represented as historically given" (p.29).

The definition of "domestic fiction" given here is not entirely satisfactory. In particular, if the definition of that which is "considered appropriate for or could be written by women" is considered in the light of the specific historical context within which novels were judged, then none of the Brontës' works can be designated as "female writing" or "domestic fiction".⁷ Given that much of Armstrong's work analyses the Brontës' works, it can only be presumed that the term "domestic fiction" is not clearly defined.

Furthermore, it is precisely the canonical texts, or what are commonly considered "Literary" works, which are the focus of her articulation of the writing of the domestic woman. The term 'domestic fiction' then, seems to be used primarily in order to assert the pre-eminence of the inscription of the female in a particular cultural/political process. Constructs other than those of gender, sexuality and class are not fully explored in terms of a sociology of literature and of the novel in particular.

Armstrong notes that the novel was considered a vulgar form of writing:

Historical studies of the novel represent early novels and romances as a rather unsavory lot. In fact, there is good reason to believe that novels did not become literary works until the twentieth century. (Armstrong, 1987, p.37)

Despite her claim to survey not only "the *great domestic novels*, but also ... texts that never developed such *literary pretensions*" (p.23, italics mine), Armstrong does not fully concede the extent to which the terrain was contested. Whilst she is aware of the contestation of the terrain of the novel, she believes that "novels themselves preserved the struggle between writing that only later became known as the novel and another kind of fiction - once referred to as novels or romances - that has since been consigned to the attics and storerooms of cultural history" (pp.97-98). This synopsis of the problem enables her to concentrate her investigation upon the novel. It is therefore unsurprising to note in her statement regarding the "*great domestic novels*" (p.23, italics mine), a bias towards the great and the literary. This is borne out by the fact that, noting an interrelationship between conduct literature and those novels which "rose to a position of respectability among the genres of writing" (p.98), Armstrong traces the historical development of what she terms "respectable fiction" (p.7).

Many of the problems in Armstrong's work can be traced from this focus on respectable fiction. It places a constraint on her argument in that it necessitates a celebratory stance *vis-a-vis* women's achievements in the novel. Armstrong claims not to "quarrel" (p.254) with the fact that the "rhetoric of victimisation has worked its way into the heart of literary critical theory and will remain there, I am sure, to generate readings of texts by, for and about women for a number of years to come" (p.255). However, her work is concerned with the "articulation of women's power" (p.255), as a "means of countering those who would emphasise woman's powerlessness" (p.26). Therefore, like other feminists working in this area, she wishes to assert the importance of female writing. Her argument is strongly directed to substantiating the notion of "The Rise of Female Authority in the Novel", the title of her first chapter in *Desire and Domestic Fiction*.

She motivates her reason for focusing upon respectable fiction in the following terms:

In the model I am proposing, culture appears as a struggle among various political factions to possess its most valued signs and symbols. The reality that dominates in any given situation appears to be just that, the reality that dominates. (p.23)

Armstrong appears to endorse an unproblematised notion of 'reality', and her project remains suspended between two concerns. Not only does she wish to stress (the 'reality' of) female achievement in the novel but she also wishes to trace the definition of the modern constructs 'male' and 'female'. In the terms in which these two projects are stated by Armstrong, they are incommensurate. For, if genre formation and gender definition are integrally interrelated in the early modern period, and have to do with normalisation, then a project which asserts an interrelationship between the two would have to consider that which is non-respectable and non-normative. That is, a history of the novel, or women's writing, or domestic fiction, cannot adequately investigate gender in the modern period if it concentrates only on "respectable" forms of fiction, refuses to acknowledge the construction of the modern (gendered) individual in terms of 'error', and if it refutes the claims regarding the problematic situation of women's novels solely on the basis of gender, without fully considering the dimensions of genre.

However, it is precisely because Armstrong's work demonstrates this tension that she denotes the extent to which traditional histories of the novel, even in their 'revised' feminist form, are inadequate. Insofar as her text raises a number of important feminist issues, it points to a new direction for feminist criticism; one that would not seek to address traditional histories of the novel, through a feminist history which asserts the importance of women's writing in the novel, but would instead look towards investigating the articulation and inscription of gender (and therefore, genre) in the early modern period.

1.2 Gender and the Novel as Contested Terrain

The novel was a contested terrain. Ian Watt, for instance, notes the extent to which Fielding staked his claim to literariness through attempting "to justify his enterprise both to himself and to his literary peers by bringing it into line with the classic literary tradition" (Watt, 1987, p.248). In his 1742 Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, he claims that, as a prose epic, or "comic epic in prose" (p.250), his novel must be referred to the Greek Epic tradition, and, as such, is to be distinguished from the French romances. Watt notes that this distinction "is entirely based on the introduction of a new fact, 'instruction or entertainment'" which the French romances lack, and "which is obviously a question of personal value judgements, and therefore very difficult to fit into any general analytic scheme" (p.250). Fielding never fully expanded upon his notion of the "comic epic in prose", or the "heroic, historical, prosaic poem", or "prosaic-comic-epic writing" (pp.250-251). His remarks show the novel up as a genre not clearly delineated, which Fielding sought to shape through reference to the classical tradition.

The literary high ground which Fielding wished to gain would be inaccessible to all but a chosen classicist few: "No author is to be admitted into the Order of Critics, until he hath read over, and understood, Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, in their *original Language*" (Fielding, in Watt, p.248, italics mine). An implicit gender bias informs this passage; since few women were ever instructed in Latin or Greek, the preserve of upper-class male education, it is unlikely that women could be admitted into the Order of Critics.

Fielding wrote during a period in which the domination of Latin as the language of "educated elite" (Houston, 1988, p.232) still held, though far less tenaciously than formerly. This marks a change, begun in Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the chronology obviously differing somewhat between countries), in which the "triumph of the vernacular as a literary medium certainly made literature more accessible" (p.204) to the general public. During "the seventeenth century, books came increasingly to be printed in just one of the vernacular languages which obtained within the borders of a state" (p.204). Previously, the majority of books were printed in Latin: "Of the 6000 books in Oxford's Bodleian library around 1600, just thirty-six were in English" (p.204).⁸

When books were printed in Latin they could be read by educated elites anywhere in Europe, thus unifying intellectual life ... It is important to recognise that in practical terms only a small minority of the population had access to the full spectrum of 'culture' since only they had knowledge of Latin. Even in the eighteenth century when vernacular publication expanded enormously, full understanding and enjoyment of scientific literature or the novel depended on high-quality education which was still restricted principally to men from the middling and upper classes. (Houston, 1988, p.232)

Houston's argument regarding the status granted Latin, and an increasing use of vernacular languages in printing in the 17th and 18th centuries is borne out by the following extract from Austen's letter to James Stanier Clarke:⁹

I am quite honoured by your thinking me capable of drawing such a clergyman as you gave the sketch of in your note of Nov. 16th. But I assure you I am *not*. The comic part of the character I might be equal to, but not the good, the enthusiastic, the literary. Such a man's conversation must at times be on subjects of science and philosophy, of which I know nothing; or at least be occasionally abundant in quotations and allusions which a woman who, like me, knows only her own mother tongue, and has read little in that, would be totally without the power of giving. A classical education, or at any rate a very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern, appears to me quite indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your clergyman; and I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress. (Austen, 1815, in Lodge, 1991, p.29)

In part then, Fielding's remarks signal a vain rearguard action against the potential takeover of intellectual property by such 'unlearned and uninformed' females. With an increasing use of vernacular printing, traditional intellectual criteria and languages were overturned. For various interrelated reasons, women were singled out as a particular group affected by the many changes occurring within Western society as a whole at the beginning of the modern era. As late in the century as 1893, Henry James notes a relationship between women and the novel, linking the "'immensely great conspicuity of the novel' in modern civilization to the 'immensely great conspicuity of the attitude of women'" (in Watt, 1987, p.299).

An investigation of the novel as a contested terrain opens up certain key debates. By focusing on the novel as a non-unitary genre, the concern is to trace the interrelationship that was drawn between individual novel reading and institutionalising practices. What makes the reading and writing of women during this period an interesting focus of historical and discursive analysis is the emergence of women's textual practice as a distinct site of institutional regulation. The education, and, in particular, the moral education of young women was unequivocally linked to their reading habits. Discrepancies between the novel reading that was (often secretly) indulged in and the moral educational practices that were embarked upon signal the extent to which women's reading became monitored and censored.

During the nineteenth century, women's activities, from leisure activities to labour, became increasingly monitored and regulated; regulation providing the means whereby femaleness, which "in its natural form offered at best an unsteady socialising force" (Armstrong, 1987, p.99) could be socialised. In particular, women's leisure pursuits, such as the reading of novels, became supervised: "Supervision presumably made all the difference between

amusements that led to corruption and forms of leisure that occupied a woman constructively" (p.100). In *Mansfield Park*, for instance, Fanny's education is essentially obtained under the auspices of Edmund, who directs her reading:

He knew her to be clever, to have a quick apprehension as well as good sense, and a fondness for reading, which, *properly directed*, must be *an education in itself*. Miss Lee taught her French, and heard her read the daily portion of History; but he *recommended* the books which *filled* her leisure hours, he *encouraged her taste*, and *corrected her judgement*; he *made reading useful* by talking to her of what she read, and heightened its attraction by *judicious praise*. (1955b, p.18, italics mine)

Leisure pursuits became monitored, 'properly directed', in order that reading, for instance, could provide 'an education in itself'. At that time, women were typically denied access to a classical education. Those of the middle and upper classes were trained by governesses, possibly sent off to finishing schools, but most other women received, at best, a primary school education; "most education for girls was in the lowest echelons of the school hierarchy" (Houston, 1988, p.21). As Austen says in *Persuasion*,

- Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove any thing.¹⁰ (1955d, p.202)

On the basis of the argument that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and could only be cured by a little more knowledge, educators and moralists began arguing for the (non-classical) education of women. By the time the dangers of a newly mass literate population, capable of reading publications in the vernacular became realised, prevention was impossible. Education was perceived as a conservative force, and was meant to ensure that women were not corrupted by the indiscriminate reading of immoral texts. Various interconnected pressures were therefore brought to bear against women's leisure pursuits, particularly the reading of romances. Constructs of morality were invoked in order to posit indulgence, idleness, lasciviousness and corruption in the form of a vulgar book against the good book which educates and enhances powers of discrimination. This bifurcates reading practices along a basic axis that is often, though not necessarily, gender related; reading for *profit* is opposed to reading for *pleasure*:

The common defense of these people is, that they have no design in reading but for pleasure, which I think should rather arise from reflection and remembrance of what one had read, than from the transient satisfaction of what one does, and we should be pleased proportionately as we are profited. (Steele, 1713, in Watt, 1987, p.48)

Steele defines 'pleasure' proportional to 'profit', as that which is derivative from profit, the profit motive in reading related principally to 'reflection and remembrance of what one had read'. In the process of defining the purposes of reading, however, Steele also defines the manner in which people should read, and, on this basis, implicitly classifies people into the learned and the morally suspect. By 'these people' Steele refers to those who do not read in

a 'settled' manner. This "unsettled way of reading ... which naturally seduces us into as undetermined a manner of thinking" (p.48) gains his disapprobation. Reading is regulated on two fronts: the manner in which one reads, and the purposes to which one puts reading. The notion of 'profit' highlights the fact that idleness was militated against for economic and educational as well as moral reasons. Education, reading for profit, was meant to replace indulgence in pleasurable reading.

Debates concerning the reading material of women required a renunciation of female (paid) labour simultaneous to a militation against the dangers of leisure. At one extreme end of the pleasure-profit continuum, reading itself was meant to be transformed into an activity which mimics unpaid labour. The development of the religious hornbooks, which attempted to instruct in the ways of God and the alphabet,¹¹ the educational battledores,¹² and conduct literature for men and women,¹³ can be traced from the notion that a good book is instructional and educational in nature. Placed oppositionally to instructional literature are children's chapbooks,¹⁴ the Gothicks, the tales of sentiment, ballads, and any literature that was perceived to have no basis in fact, no didactic or moral function, and therefore, no 'real' worth.

Despite an avowed intention to inculcate moral goodness, the Puritan agenda with regard to the education of children was seen to fail in that edification cannot occur when children refuse to read texts they consider dull and boring. A level of interest in the text must be maintained in order for the child to engage with the text and learn from it. The immense popularity and success of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* - published in 1678, it "went through one hundred and sixty editions by 1792" (Watt, 1987, p.50) - has been attributed to the fact that it "is told in the best tradition of the old fairy tales John Bunyan had enjoyed in chapbook form when he was a boy" (Sutherland, 1981, p.60), and is therefore not entirely constrained by the fact that it was intended as a religious educational treatise for adults.

Increasingly, though not necessarily, educationalists sought to accommodate some form of reading pleasure into their teaching practices. In 1801, the Edgeworths became "convinced that the 'pleasures of literature' acted upon the reader in the same way as the child's 'taste for sugar plums' (and) began to endorse the reading of fiction" (Armstrong, 1987, p.16). From this analogy, it can be inferred that whilst the 'pleasures of literature' are not considered nourishing for the young mind, such pleasures are also described as not necessarily harmful, notwithstanding the proviso that they are not the growing mind's main sustenance. The Edgeworth's attitude to 'pleasure' prefigures changes that took place in

attitudes towards novel reading; women's reading became increasingly endorsed as a harmless pursuit.

The Edgeworths' attitude, however, appears somewhat anomalous for this period of time:

The significant fact is that until the eighteen-fifties and even later a carefree attitude unencumbered by moral or instructional preoccupation was strikingly exceptional in writing for children. (Muir, in Sutherland, 1981, p.60)

Circa 1850 and beyond, novel reading appears to be less heavily censured, although some strictures, such as the proportion of time one should spend reading novels, remain. In 1861, Mrs Pullan wrote that "novels should be kept as a relaxation from study, or a source of amusement during temporary indisposition. Many are indeed excellent and unobjectionable *as amusements*; and, in the present day especially, we have several writers whose works will at once delight and instruct the reader" (in Armstrong, 1987, p.107).

During the early 1800s, however, novels were presented as vulgar, immoral and wicked,¹⁵ and militation against novel reading was primarily motivated for in terms of women's vulnerability¹⁶ to the immorality inherent in the texts. Despite heavy censure, or perhaps because of this, novel reading was a particularly popular past-time. It appears that those novels written for women and by women either were immensely popular, or at least generated most interest. The popularity of "women's literature" can partly be attributed to the fact that the readership of the first novels was primarily comprised of upper and (the recently 'created') middle-class women; in a term, women of the "leisure classes" (Watt, 1987, p.46); "Such women, therefore, had a great deal of leisure, and this leisure was often occupied by omnivorous reading" (p.44). Not only in terms of readership was the novel a female phenomenon; "The majority of eighteenth century novels were actually written by women" (p.298).

The immense popularity of women's novels attests to the fact that complex, interrelating social programs and regulatory practices had to be devised and inaugurated in order to attempt to remedy a situation which educationalists and moralists decried in the strongest terms. In the 1700s, women were advised to "be in a particular Manner how they meddle with Romances, Chocolates, Novels, and the like Inflamers" (Mr. Spectator, in Armstrong, 1987, p.273);

for as Mothers upon viewing Some extraordinary Object, often leave the Marks thereof upon their Infants, why should we not believe that the lascivious Stories in Romances may have the same effect upon our Imagination, and that they always leave behind them Some Spots upon the Soul? (DuBoscq, 1753, in Armstrong, 1987, p.102)

The fact that moral and educational programs were primarily directed at the education of women point to the fact that, increasingly, women were reading, and that reading had become defined as a private activity - the privacy entailed by silent reading construed as potentially morally debilitating to the young woman.

Gender, and the Iconography of Reading

Certain transformations in reading practices, represented in paintings and portraits, took place between 1500 and 1800: "In the eighteenth century", Chartier notes, "the iconography of reading is exclusively female and secular, whereas previously it had been almost entirely male and religious" (1989, p.147). By the 1800s, reading was also less often portrayed as a public, and was increasingly depicted as a private, activity. These changes in the iconography of reading resulted from changes both concomitant with, and resulting from, mass literacy.

(The) spread of literacy, the widespread circulation of written materials, whether in printed or manuscript form, and the increasingly common practice of silent reading, which fostered a solitary and private relationship between the reader and his book, were crucial changes, which redrew the boundary between the inner life and life in the community. (p.111)

Transformations in the ways in which reading was codified, symbolised and conceptualised can provide an insight into articulations of gender. Chardin's 1745 painting (see Figure 1) of a woman reading, entitled *The Amusements of a Private Life*, is noteworthy insofar as contemporaries "recognised a classic theme: the reading of romantic fiction" (Chartier, p.144). One contemporary of the period commented:

It represents a woman nonchalantly seated in an armchair and holding in one hand, which rests on her lap, a brochure. From a sort of languor in her eyes, which gaze out toward a corner of the painting, we divine that she is reading a novel, and that the tender impressions it has made on her have set her dreaming of someone whom she would like to see arrive at any moment. (in Chartier, 1989, pp.144-5)

Chartier notes that the comments "reveal the power of an association between female reading and idleness, sensual pleasure, and secret intimacy. More than the painting ... the commentators' remarks reveal how eighteenth-century men imagined the act of reading by women, which by then had become the quintessence of private activity" (p.147).

A painting by Baudouin, titled *Reading* (see Figure 2), clearly illustrates the association between sensual pleasure and female reading. Chartier comments,

On the right are objects pleasing to a woman, including a guitar, a small dog, and a novel that has overwhelmed its reader who has abandoned herself to sensuous imaginings. The painting carries a double message. Moralistically it warns against the dangers of romantic literature; lasciviously it violates the young woman's most intimate retreat. (p.146)

These changes in the iconography of reading illustrate that sexuality, and female sexuality in particular, became associated with (private) reading at the beginning of the modern era. Given the need for capital to create divisions between Production and Reproduction, or Love and Work as Freud would put it, the Cartesian division between mind and body, the division between spirit and flesh, appears not unrelated to the above. That the distinction between spirituality and sexuality was not necessarily common to the early Christian church is perhaps¹⁷ indicated by St John of the Cross's poem from the 1500s, addressed to Christ Himself, and which inserts the church as the female bride of Christ in a quite unashamedly erotic way:¹⁸

O living flame of love,
how tenderly you wound
my soul in her profoundest core!
You are no longer shy.
Do it now, I ask you:
break the membrane of our sweet union.
(in Miller & Greenberg, 1981, p.340)

In light of the above, and given the modern contest between Word and Flesh, it no longer seems so strange that it is the female body that is inscribed sexually. The erotic, ousted from a location within the spiritual, retains a habitation in female flesh - a flesh that is increasingly abhorred; it is incumbent upon an eighteenth century hymn to express wonder that Christ "now in flesh appearing" (*With One Voice*, hymn 228) does not shrink even from female flesh: "lo, he abhors not the Virgin's womb" (hymn 228).

In the modern period, literacy has a history inseparable from church politics, with debates about literacy informing religious activity and arguments. During the seventeenth century, the Gospel of John, beginning, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..." (John 1,i) began to be taken 'literally', in terms of a literal association between the word of God and the Word/God.¹⁹ The power of proclaiming that the "Word was God" echoes resoundingly with Luther's prophetic nailing upon the door of Worms Cathedral his 95 theses, and his insistence that every Christian should be capable of reading the Bible in their own language or vernacular (Chartier, 1989, p.119). In 1686, the Lutheran Church in Sweden, "backed by the state, had launched a campaign to teach people to read and see with their own eyes what God ordered and commanded through his sacred word" (p.118). Chartier notes that Luther's program regarding the right of all the people of God to read the word of God was later abandoned in favour of more selective literacy programs. However, there is no doubt that, originally, Protestant countries had far higher literacy rates amongst the whole populace, both male and female, than Catholic ones.²⁰

Protestantism sought to break the power invested in the Catholic priest as the sole interlocutor, the only mediator between the people and God. It forcibly encouraged people

to read their own Bibles, in order to enable them to read, and contain within themselves the power of religious interpretation. Charles Wesley (1707-88), co-founder of the Methodist movement, clearly demonstrates a belief in the power of the written word, and in the extraordinary fact that divine inspiration can be visited upon the ordinary mortal through reading the holy scriptures and becoming receptive to the spiritual truths contained therein. Addressing himself to the "Spirit of truth, essential God", Wesley claims:

Still we believe, almighty Lord;
whose presence fills both earth and heaven,
the meaning of the written word
is by thy inspiration given;
thou only dost thyself explain
the secret mind of God to man.

Come then, divine Interpreter,
the scriptures to our hearts apply;
and, taught by thee, we God revere ...
(Wesley, in *With One Voice*, hymn 332).

Wesley's proclamation, 'Still we believe' remarks a debt to the original Protestant reforms which mark a change from Latin to vernacular; the power of priestly interpretation being partly dependent upon Latin. This is referenced by Homais' debates with the *curé* in *Madame Bovary* (see chapter five), and in Marcel Pagnol's memoirs, when discussing the education of his father in a Republican France of the 1890s:²¹

The primary Normal Schools - teachers' training colleges - in those days used to be real seminaries, where the study of theology, however, was replaced by classes in anti-clericalism.

The students were taught that the (Catholic) Church had never been anything but an instrument of oppression, and that it was the priest's task and purpose in life to blindfold the people with the black bandage of ignorance, while lulling them with fables of hell and paradise.

The artfulness of the *curés* was proved, moreover, by their use of Latin, a mysterious tongue which had the insidious power of magic formulae in the eyes of the benighted faithful. (Pagnol, 1989, p.18)

Chartier notes that the notion of reading spread by the new Protestant churches advocated an intense, devout study of a few favoured texts, enabling one to enter a new relationship with God. Reading was a pious activity, or rather, duty; and intense, repetitive reading of the Bible and other religious material was seen as a means whereby one could regulate one's whole life. However, the new, technologically superior printing presses changed the nature of reading; the intensive study of a few select texts did not for long remain the pivot around which the religious life revolved. Novels were immensely popular, and the demand for new books to read led to the establishment of Lending Libraries. Reading became secularised and fully established as a private activity, with casual reading of many texts becoming the social norm.

Originally, "only clerics were authorised to interpret the secrets of God, nature, and the state" (Chartier, 1989, p.124); however, with the overthrow of the power of the priest, a

secular clerk arrives on the historical scene. Chartier asserts that these new clerks attempted to retain dominance over intellectual life, in order that knowledge would "remain the exclusive province of the new clerks; the intellectuals" (p.124). One of their first duties was to attack novel reading on the (perhaps not so spurious) grounds that it would alternatively undermine the morals or the minds of its (in England of the early 1800s at least) primarily female readership. Novels were not considered merely frivolous and a waste of time, but, bearing in mind their association with sensuality, and female sensuality in particular, were considered downright wicked, immoral and corrupting of the young female mind (as well as those of the other lower orders):

Most circulating libraries stocked all types of literature, but novels were widely regarded as their main attraction: and there can be little doubt that they led to the most notable increase in the reading public for fiction which occurred during the century. They certainly provoked the greatest volume of contemporary comment about the spread of reading to the lower orders. These "slop shops in literature" were said to have debauched the minds of schoolboys, ploughboys, "servant women of the better sort", and even of "every butcher and baker, cobbler and tinker, throughout the three kingdoms". (Ian Watt, 1987, p.43)

Silent reading was considered particularly threatening because it ensured that reading material itself could be kept private. In relation to the education of women, supervisory procedures often took the form of the prohibition of certain books. Set in Puritan New England of the 1830s, Henry James' work, *The Europeans*, references this fact. A young woman is described in search of something to do:

At last she took down a book; there was no library in the house, but there were books in all the rooms. *None of them were forbidden books*" (1984, p.51, italics mine). A footnote on the sentence reads, "It was not unusual at this period for young unmarried²² women's reading to be censored by their parents" (p.197).

Despite the prohibition of certain books by parents and educationalists, vigilance did not guarantee success. In *Madame Bovary*, Emma's first experience in the reading of novels is granted by the old maid who works in the convent and lends them to the older girls "on the sly" (p.49). The maiden lady is described as having an unnatural appetite for the books, devouring the novels, "whole chapters at a time" (p.49). Through her kindly interventions, "Emma soiled her hands with this refuse of old lending libraries" (p.50), and it is implied that thus she could have sullied the purity of her mind (see also chapter five).

Given the extent to which novels were increasingly censored in terms of immoral content, or a lack of educational content, Gothick writers began to claim that their novels were above censure. They did not reply to the aspersions cast upon their texts in a scholarly manner, such as that taken by Fielding, who attempted to distinguish the "prose epic and French romance" (in Watt, 1987, p.249). Instead, they created excessively well educated heroines who were also described as paragons of virtue. Gothick writers therefore responded, paradoxically enough, to various claims made about the texts by claiming that *their* heroines

are not typical of the romance. The way in which these authoresses portray their heroines is spoofed by Eliot in her article, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists"; she claims that such a heroine "has a superb *contralto* and a superb intellect ... She is the ideal woman in feelings, faculties, and flounces" (1963, p.302). The following description from Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* illustrates precisely Eliot's point.

St Aubert (her father) cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care. He gave her a general view of the sciences, and an exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature. He taught her Latin and English, chiefly that she might understand the sublimity of their best poets. She discovered in her early years a taste for works of genius; and it was St Aubert's principle, as well as his inclination, to promote every innocent means of happiness. "A well-informed mind," he would say, "is the best security against the contagion of folly and of vice. The vacant mind is ever on the watch for relief, and ready to plunge into error, to escape from the languor of idleness. Store it with ideas, teach it the pleasure of thinking; and the temptations of the world without, will be counteracted by the gratifications derived from the world within". (Radcliffe, 1989, p.6)

Other than the correlation that is clearly drawn between morality and education, the themes that predominate are those already outlined: idleness and languor are aligned with folly and vice and opposed to thought and innocence. In the unlikely event that her gentle reader may be unsure of her heroine's religious convictions, Radcliffe's text capitalises on the fact that her heroine wandered the gardens, "and lifted her thoughts to the GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH" (1989, p.6).

The debates around the education of women were crucial to the arguments posed against Gothick literature; Eliot's essay does not simply spoof silly novels by lady novelists, but argues cogently for the education for women. Eliot does not refer to the popular conception that these novels are corruptive in themselves, but argues instead that since such texts may contribute to a negative perception of women writers, and may therefore be used as evidence in an argument against the education of women, they are problematic literary genres *for women as a group*.²³ Eliot argues that silly novels are not indicative of women's talents as a group, and, on this basis she asserts that women *as a group* ought to be educated. She is particularly vehement in her criticism of such novels, for, as she puts it: "the most mischievous form of feminine silliness is the literary form, because it tends to confirm the popular prejudice against the more solid education of women" (p.316). Whilst she admits that such novelists do have a standing apology in that women are barred from other spheres of occupation, this, in itself, is not to be considered an honourable enough reason for poor writing - "ladies' silly novels, we imagine, are less the result of labour than of busy idleness" (p.323). Eliot appears to accord with Wollstonecraft's views in seeing "women not as a revolutionary group but as one that must be completely re-educated" (Armstrong, 1987b, p.12); "If, as the world has long agreed, a very great amount of instruction will not make a wise man, still less will a very mediocre amount of instruction make a wise woman" (Eliot, 1963, pp.315-6).²⁴

However, romance writers early on attempted to carve a space for their writing by claiming that their books were educational, and their heroine's morals beyond reproach. Although the specifics of the arguments levelled against romance fiction have changed somewhat, to this day readers claim the educational qualities of the books as a means whereby legitimacy for their reading is gained.²⁵

Claiming that "South African publishing is the 8th wonder of the modern world", and that, "Afrikaans publishers in South Africa, unlike English, have an established tradition, an audience", Mr Roelf van Rensburg²⁶ of J.P. van der Walt Publishers has some interesting comments to make about the Afrikaans romance fiction. (The full transcript of the interview is given in Appendix 3.) His comments illustrate that the relationship between education, morality, women and romance fiction still informs perceptions and appraisals of romance fiction - even those in a foreign tongue, brought out under an African sun:

We consider (the Afrikaans romances) as *educating*, building character, for example, (we are aware that our reader may be) a little old Karoo lady (and that our books could be her primary reading/educational matter). The *morals* that the books contain are that good will always be here, love is everlasting; we consider it responsible stuff that we're doing. (*italics mine*)

Mr van Rensburg admits that all their decisions are market-oriented, and that these days, career women and not housewife heroines, feature; the novels have to mirror contemporary reality: "it has to be like that - for your readers and your authors". Despite this, Afrikaans romances are not yet very sexually permissive:

What we consider is that mum reads the book first, then she gives it to the teenagers (daughters) in the house. If she doesn't like it, or consider it fit for consumption, she won't give it to her daughter ... We never know where books end up in the end. A ten-year old can read and understand a book club book - we have to be very careful.

Although he admitted that sex may happen, "we draw the curtains":

We like to keep our heroes and heroines "clean", not divorced people, things like that. It's simple, hero and heroine fall in love; we prefer it to be between unmarried, not married people. For instance, illegitimacy: it's a less uplifting theme. If it happens in stories, it's not the central part; heroine must be 'first-hand' (that is, written in the first person) all the time - we don't like depressing themes; don't like divorced people - it's a matter of projection from your readers, and they just don't like that.

Mr van Rensburg claims that, "romance fiction always guarantees a happy ending";²⁷ "It's a modern fairy-tale, that's what they are, it's all fairy-tales". Apart from registering the non-permissiveness of the genre, Mr van Rensburg also feels that the Afrikaans romance, whilst steering well clear of controversial topics, can educate its readers; he believes that romances can impact on the perceptions of conservative women, "little old ladies in the Karoo", the "lekker ou vet plaas tannies";²⁸

We are not permissive, also what we avoid at all costs is politics and religion. And, of course, racial questions, that's also out of the question. In the dialogue between servants and employers, for instance, the servants speak a simple but very correct Afrikaans, they also address their employers as Meneer, Mevrouw (Mister and Mrs) not "Baas" (Boss), "Missis" (Mistress). We know it's unnatural, but it's part of the education process we believe we are involved in. Also, we will refer to employees as a gardener, not a garden boy. Readers are also often left to assume race. (It's a little different in Cape Dutch - but that's historically different).

The links between morality and education, literature and women, are noted even to have an effect on perceptions and appraisals of the contemporary Afrikaans romance. The arguments given in this chapter postulate an interrelationship between gender and genre, and this thesis argues that an association between literature, morality and women is part of the history of the British novel, that it contributed to the establishment of the literary-moral criteria of traditional or Anglo-American literary criticism, and that it therefore constitutes the inheritance of Anglo-American feminist criticism.

The relationship between gender and genre will be pursued in relation to textual analyses of three nineteenth century texts, in the light of how the association between literature and morality was particularly pertinent to the reading practices of women during this period. As discursive practices became established, so reading was selectively encouraged; supervision, or lack thereof, becoming the criterion by which reading was alternatively fostered or censored. These regulatory measures point to the way in which silent reading redefined the boundaries between public and private life, and these demarcations correspond with the way in which public and private were delimited as male and female spheres respectively. The debates around the education of women were linked to moral constructs, and these have effects, both implicit and explicit, on current analyses of romance fiction.

The interrelation between reading, writing, and gender, and the mapping of the sphere of the social can therefore be investigated through reading and writing practices intradiscursively and intertextually (that is, in terms of the place and function of these practices within 19th century novels). On the basis of these textual analyses, it becomes apparent that the intra- and intertextual functions of reading and writing cannot be circumscribed in terms of a simplistic appraisal. The following chapters, two to five, will demonstrate both the extent to which gender and genre are interrelated and also the complex nature of this interrelationship. The textual analyses will not only attempt an analysis of gender definition and genre formation in the modern period, but will specifically engage with current problems in Anglo-American feminist discourse.

CHAPTER TWO

The Figure and Function of the Female Author

This chapter challenges the focus accorded the figure of the female author in Anglo-American feminist literary criticism. This figure serves a distinct function within feminist histories of the novel and indicates the extent to which a "traditional patriarchal aesthetic" (Moi, 1985, p.67) informs much critical feminist work. In presuming that "the author is the transcendental signified of his or her text" (p.62), such feminist criticism indicates a bias toward the realist narrative; a bias which indicates, despite distancing techniques, a certain closeness between traditional and feminist literary critics. A reading of *Wuthering Heights*²⁹ will demonstrate that the notion of the unitary authorial voice lacks explanatory power. Furthermore, the identification of the female protagonist with the female author is disrupted by the narrative structure of *Wuthering Heights*. An analysis of the text will therefore challenge a feminist "insistence on the identity of author and character" (p.61).

The relationship between gender and genre asserted by feminist histories of the novel is not disputed, but the simplistic treatment given to the various terms and their relationship is questionable. These histories do not answer the very question raised, namely, "Why did women begin to write (novels)?" Instead, the question is used as a rhetorical device to claim how 'impossible' it was for women to write. The figure of the female author is taken to assert a double victory. The fact that she wrote at all is assessed positively. Given the identification of author and protagonist, the figure of the female author serves to unify the diverse images of women given within the text. A feminist reading practice, based on the work of Gilbert and Gubar (1979), would claim these figures as indicative of the images of the "madwoman in the attic" and the "angel in the house" (see section 2.2). These figures are considered representative of the dual and necessarily contradictory images given to women within patriarchal culture. To the extent that women in patriarchal culture oscillate between the identity/being of the 'madwoman' and the 'angel', the text is considered implicitly to engage with the deep divisions patriarchy engenders within women's selves. The figure of the female author is therefore considered to uphold the notion of the whole and unitary female self in terms of being the creator of such images, as a woman who can successfully integrate these two figures/selves within herself.

The above synopsis of the problem of women within patriarchal culture begs the issue as to whether or not the idea of a "fully coherent, fully satisfied, female subjectivity" (Radway,

1987, p.14) is not itself part of the very humanist, patriarchal aesthetic informing traditional literary criticism, and to which feminist criticism (would appear to) take exception. The purpose of this critique, incorporating both the textual analysis and the theoretical readings, is to point out a number of flaws in the feminist argument regarding the female novelist, such that a more complex articulation of gender and its interrelationship with genre can be proposed.

2.1 A Cacophony of Narratorial Voices

A complex, interactive narrative process is at work in *Wuthering Heights*. Nelly Dean narrates a story by narrating the stories of others as given to her, complete with her interjections and asides, to Lockwood. He adds his own conjectures and comments to the story, as well as his own stories to the final document. Based on the journal opening of the work, written in the first person, wherein a date is given and a place referred to - "1801 - I have just returned from a visit to my landlord -" (p.45) many critics presume that Lockwood is the fictional writer or narrator of the text.³⁰ The ending is disruptive of any neat synopsis of Lockwood as the teller of the story, as he "wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers, for the sleepers in that quiet earth" (p.367). The words 'anyone', 'wondered', 'imagine', function to secure the tale as just that - a story.

The final positioning of the text as a 'story', or a number of stories, is the culmination of a process inscribed within the tale; Lockwood gains the story because he has asked Nelly Dean for one, "hoping sincerely she would prove a regular gossip" (p.74). The story within the stories continually highlights the fact that this is a "tale" (p.130), the "housekeeper's story" (p.129), servant's "gossip" (p.74, p.103), a "narrative" (p.129). Nelly Dean is required to "tell the story leisurely" (p.102), and says, "if I am to follow my story in true gossip's fashion, I had better go on" (p.103). When "too weak to read" (p.130), but in want of "something interesting" (p.130), Lockwood relates "Why not have up Mrs Dean to finish her tale? I can recollect its chief incident, as far as she had gone. Yes, I remember her hero had run off, and never been heard of for three years: and the heroine was married" (p.130). Lockwood's use of 'hero', and 'heroine', indicates the extent to which this is presented as a sometimes disjointed number of 'fables' or 'tales', of which Mrs Dean is one narrator. The tale or tales are placed in an interlocking series of narratives wherein there is no central narratorial voice, only an interrupted sequence of voices.

Nancy Armstrong reads *Wuthering Heights* conventionally, positing Lockwood as the only possible author of the tale since he is male and educated, whilst Nelly Dean as a woman who can read is perceived to be a worthy oral narrator. Armstrong claims that:

Mr. Lockwood may transcribe the Barnshaw family history that constitutes the plot of the novel. But even though his classical education, foreign travel and novel-reading experience certainly qualify him to write this history, he cannot do so without the family retainer Nelly Dean, who has access to the knowledge that makes sense of family relationships. She alone combines the knowledge contained in the "master's library" with lore garnered from "country folk," with the gossip relayed between various households, and with a memory that has recorded events in terms of the emotions they generate ... And although Lockwood is the one to solicit the tale and put it in writing, he cannot provide the source of its meaning. (1987, p.43)

Armstrong's reading sets reading against writing, female against male, and a classical education against other forms of knowledge. It axiomatises a power relationship along a gender divide and is problematic to the extent that it does not examine the ambivalences and contradictions of this inscription of gender, or even whether gender designation of the protagonists can be isolated as the sole criterion of analysis. It does not, for instance, take into account the fact that Nelly Dean herself can write: she relates how "I answered the letter by a slip of paper, inscribed ..." (p.261); and Isabella writes to her, "Don't write, but come ..." (p.173). At no stage does Armstrong query the certainty with which she asserts that Lockwood's "classical education, foreign travel and novel-reading experience certainly qualify him to write this history" (1987, p.43).

Over and above these somewhat dualistic appraisals of the figures within the text, Armstrong absolutely insists on the novel having a central narrator: "Something about the novel compels one, in other words, to create a private emotional basis for meaning, if not in Lockwood, the putative author, then in an author presumed to be Emily Brontë herself" (p.44). However, not only does more than one narratorial voice produce the story, but, within the text, the two central narratorial voices are scrutinised in terms of a relationship to truth or verity, and discovered to be lacking.

Nelly Dean's assertion, "I have read more than you would fancy, Mr Lockwood" (p.103), does not function to position her as a worthy narrator, but constitutes her response to Lockwood's class-conscious and patronising comments to the effect that he is surprised to find her faculties of thought unrepresentative of her class. Within the text, she is described as a 'regular gossip', and hers as simply the 'housekeeper's story'. Furthermore, Nelly Dean is referred to as double-crossing and tale-bearing: "The next time you bring a tale to me, you shall quit my service, Ellen Dean" (p.166); she is described as one who plays "traitor" (p.166).

Not only are the stories of Nelly Dean scrutinised, but the verity of the narrations of Lockwood are similarly questioned. The opening sequences of the book denote that he is not representative of the rational, learned and truthful male he presents himself as: "The

truth is, sir" (p.69), he says, and proceeds to dissemble. The figures of Nelly Dean and Lockwood therefore function to query the narratorial process, and to open up a debate regarding the place and function of narrative, writing and reading within the social. Whilst these are obviously interrelated with gender, gender is clearly not the sole criterion by means of which the text can be read. It is also clear that *Wuthering Heights* is not constructed in such a way that it is possible to read the text in terms of a central protagonist, narrator or author. In fact, the ambiguities of narrative and the relation of narrative to the factual or the actual are written into the text itself, which functions therefore to query "meaning". This reading therefore undermines Armstrong's assertion regarding "the putative author" or "an author presumed to be Emily Brontë herself" who would function as a "private emotional basis for meaning" (p.44).

The above analysis indicates that a reading practice which depends upon the figure of the author as the creator of meaning is problematic, at least for an analysis of *Wuthering Heights*. Moi argues that the centrality of this figure remains undisputed within Anglo-American feminist discourse (section 2.2). The following section substantiates some of the above in that it analyses the limitations of Lockwood's role as narrator. The reading also demonstrates that the inscription of gender is multiply interrelated to the functions of reading and writing, and it therefore opens up a debate around gender and the functions of reading and education.

"They's good books eneugh"

Through various narrative devices, such as letters, or in this instance, a diary, a number of narratorial voices open up the text. The following analysis will introduce the extent to which reading and writing, and the functions thereof, are differentially described by various protagonists. Opening up the range of discursive practices related to reading and writing facilitates an analysis of the contestation over morality and legitimacy, and their alignment with reading and writing. An association between literature and morality is introduced, one that will be expanded upon in chapter three in terms of the relationship between the text, experience and the self.

An introduction to the figure of Cathy³¹ occurs when Lockwood reads her "select" and "well used" library; used "not altogether for a legitimate purpose; scarcely one chapter had escaped a pen and ink commentary - at least the appearance of one - covering every morsel of blank that the printer had left" (p.62). It is clear that Lockwood considers the books to have been defaced. The phrase, a 'commentary - at least the *appearance* of one' highlights

the extent to which Lockwood interprets the writing as an illegitimate use of the books. The commentary is not the expected scholarly discursion on the text, but a diary. The diary, written *in between the lines* of printed text, is seen to set up a number of oppositions, insofar as a discrepancy exists between Lockwood's notion of what ought to be represented by writing and what is actually written. These oppositions are between the confessional form and the educative purpose, between the uses of writing and the uses of reading, the belief held by Lockwood that a commentary on the printed text may be considered legitimate whereas such a text is not altogether legitimate.

Cathy's diary opens with a tirade against the triple tyranny of her brother, preachers, and good books, and her rebellion manifests itself when she hurls the volume into the dog kennel. She has been commanded by Hindley to listen to a sermon by Joseph which continues for three hours. Once downstairs, Joseph compels Cathy to read *The Helmet of Salvation* and Heathcliff, *The Broad Way to Destruction*:

"they's good books enough if ye'll read 'em; sit ye dahn, and think uh yer sowls!"
Saying this, he compelled us to square our positions that we might receive, from the far-off fire, a dull ray to show us the text of the lumber he thrust upon us.
I could not bear the employment. I took my dingy volume by the scroop, and hurled it into the dog-kennel, vowing I hated a good book. (p.63)

A second series of themes in relation to reading is set up under the overarching problem of oppression. The books, themselves considered integral to oppressive institutions and institutionalised practices, Joseph's religious beliefs are depicted as dogmatic in the extreme. Joseph claims that these books can only properly serve their function if they initiate self-reflection on the state of the soul. Reading is purported to be not an end in itself, but a means to higher spiritual process. However, in the assignment of reading material, Heathcliff is consigned to destruction and Cathy to possible redemption. The term 'lumber' signifies the extent to which these texts are considered worthless. Considering a 'good book' indicative of religious oppression, Cathy inverts the notion of the religious vow of love, and vows that she hates a good book. Reading, described as 'employment' by Joseph, evokes the Puritan vigour which excoriated against idleness, considered tantamount to sinfulness.

In this way, employment is set against enjoyment, religious oppression against freedom of speech and action, and the good book considered so much trash or lumber. The notion of a 'good book' is queried; the titles indicate that these religious documents could be considered to be badly written, certainly not good literature, but Joseph considers the end result to justify the classification. The issue is raised as to what criteria define a good book, and whether either literary or moral criteria are sufficient in themselves to designate such a description.

7

Such contestation over what constitutes a good book is not unparalleled in the twentieth century. As even the back cover blurb on *The Great Tradition* notes, "The criticism of F.R. Leavis has always been notable for its uncompromising association of literature and morality".³² The association between literature and morality can be referred back to Chartier's arguments and the extract from Radcliffe given in the previous chapter. Furthermore, it has been noted how strongly both literature and morality, in turn, are affiliated to a concern with gender. Whilst this relationship informs feminist histories of the novel, gender is portrayed in a simplistic manner in such histories. Dualistic conceptions of gender, although often required at one level to set out the terms of the argument, are not necessarily useful for analysing the means whereby literature, morality and gender are dynamically inscribed within texts (see chapter three).

The figure of Cathy can be seen in opposition to those of Lockwood and Joseph in terms of gender, and the fact that what she writes and reads is, respectively, brought into question by these actants. The figure of Cathy can thereby be imbued with 'feminine' qualities, and Lockwood and Joseph with 'masculine' attributes. The feminine is aligned with subversion, illegality, illegitimacy, irrationality and idleness, and the masculine associated with employment, discipline, rationality, legitimacy and respectability. It is important, however, not to polarize these attributions, especially since the dualism represented by such a paradigm is disavowed in the text. The following reading illustrates that the self-presented, respectable demeanour of Lockwood is not entirely in concordance with a later portrayal. This demonstrates that respectability and legitimacy are not fully aligned with the categories of gender. Therefore, as reading and writing are shown to have multiple functions, so is the text not amenable to a simplistic reading in terms of gender categories.

In a dream sequence, Cathy's ghost appears to Lockwood. Terrified by the event, he eventually cries out and wakes the house. When questioned by Heathcliff as to the reason for this, Lockwood responds:

"The truth is, sir, I passed the first part of the night - " Here I stooped afresh - I was about to say "perusing those old volumes," then it would have revealed my knowledge of their written, as well as their printed contents; so, correcting myself, I went on, "in spelling over the name scratched on that window ledge. A monotonous occupation, calculated to set me asleep, like counting, or - " (p.69)

The above passage does not simply designate Lockwood dissembling. The terms within which his lie is couched are those of a self-corrective movement, a mistake is foreseen and rectified before it is made. He engages in the disciplined occupations of spelling and counting to draw attention away from the mistake he might have made, and to make his

employment appear respectable. Discipline and learning are joined in order to give a lie the *appearance* of a reasonable and honest explanation. The very lack of a legitimate and open purpose or appearance that is deplored in the form of Cathy's 'diaries' is repeated in the figure of Lockwood. The difference lies in the fact that the terms by which the diaries are considered illegitimate are used in a positive sense to substantiate the lie - in order that Lockwood need not admit *knowledge* of the written, not the printed, words of the books.

This reading of *Wuthering Heights* has sought, primarily, to open up a discussion regarding the notion of authorship; secondarily, to query dualistic conceptions of gender categories. Both themes are pursued in the theoretical section that follows. The central question that must be asked of feminist histories of the novel requires that the notion of authorship be scrutinised, both in terms of the textual process, and in the light of the focus given to the figure of the female novelist.

2.2 The Figure and Function of the Female Author (Why is the Novel the Preferred Genre?)

According to Moi, two distinct phases or approaches can be seen in Anglo-American feminist literary criticism. In the early 1970s, 'Images of Women' criticism analysed images of women in writing, often concentrating on female stereotypes in male writing. From about 1975, a more woman-centred approach was advocated, one which focused "exclusively on the works of women writers" (Moi, 1985, p.50) - on *Women Reading Women's Writing* (Roe, 1987). The figure that obviously gains attention in this period is that of the female author. During the 1980s, attention has turned to the woman novelist, and from *The Rise of the Novel* (Watt, 1987) in Britain is asserted *The Rise of the Woman Novelist* (Spencer, 1986) - a seemingly natural consequence of this focus on the female author.³³

Two main reasons are given for the focus on the rise of the woman novelist. The first one relates to the perceived need to assert the importance of female writing. This falls in line with the contention made by Greer, among others, regarding the "'transience of female literary fame' or the fact that women writers celebrated in their own lifetimes seem to vanish without trace from the records of posterity" (Moi, 1985, p.55). A second reason given for the focus on the early novel relates to the postulate of a separate 'canon'. From the assertion of the "conquest of the novel" (Miles, 1987) by the woman novelist, it is a small step to regarding novels written by women as distinctive or different from those written by men. As a result, the notion of a parallel female tradition in the novel is instituted.

Many of the problems underlying feminist histories of the novel can be shown to arise from the manner in which the basic question underlying this enterprise is answered. This question is best introduced by the following quote, one much cherished by feminist writers employed in academic institutions engaged in work on the "rise of the female novelist":

Thus towards the end of the eighteenth century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I should describe more fully and think of greater importance than the Crusades or the Wars of the Roses. The middle-class woman began to write. (Virginia Woolf, in Armstrong, 1987, p.1)

This programmatic claim is commonly taken by feminist literary critics to provide impetus to the question, "Why did the middle-class woman begin to write?" As Armstrong puts it, "I know of no history of the English novel that can explain why women began to write respectable fiction near the end of the eighteenth century, became prominent novelists during the nineteenth century, and on this basis achieved the status of artists during the modern period" (1987, p.7).

As posed, the question is essentially unanswerable. A most fruitful approach to this question would restate the problem, and instead of asking "why?" look at the societal structures which facilitated this development without ascribing a direct causal relationship between any one (or more) historical process(es) and the rise of the woman novelist. That is to say, women writers can be considered a function internal to various interrelated social processes.

Nancy Armstrong's social history of the novel is an important contribution to the debate on the emergence of the novel, organised around the discourses of the social, sexuality and gender. Unlike other feminist literary critics working in this area, she does not emphasize biographical detail. That is, Armstrong does not tend to investigate, through a personal history, the psyche of the individual author. Such analyses are dependent on biographical detail to locate reasons for why women writers wrote. Despite her distance from that approach, Armstrong is nonetheless not exempt from reading texts in terms of a conflation of author, narrator and character - a conflation which marks the naturalised reading of texts adopted by many Anglo-American feminist critics. Through such analyses, narrator and author are aligned, 'character' is read in terms of a psychologised being, and plot and 'reality' are assimilated. Given a focus on the gender designation of the author, the central theme and tool of such feminist criticism is that of unveiling women's oppression under patriarchy. The argument against such appraisals asks whether such approaches are not guilty of the same humanist moralism as that preached and 'appreciated' by canonic literary critics.

Whilst the focus and valorization informing feminist literary criticism appears to differ from those of traditional practical criticism, the methodology remains, fundamentally, the same. Anglo-American feminist literary criticism explains contradictions and displacements at work in women's writing as the shadow or negative image of a patriarchal aesthetics. The cracks in textual edifices concerned are pasted over by being read as telling only one story, the story of 'woman'.

The question challenging the above argument, is the following: Why is that Anglo-American feminist criticism embarks upon the endlessly repetitive resurrection of the woman novelist as the central figure around which their political agenda of rewriting cultural history turns?

The Figure of the Female Novelist

In the preface to *The Female Form: Women Writers and the Conquest of the Novel* (1979), Rosalind Miles writes:

I wrote this book to assert the supremacy of the role of women writers in the evolution of the modern novel, and to review some of the reasons why this simple fact seems to need restating again and again and again. (p.ix)

And certainly the point is restated again and again and again, from Gilbert & Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*, published in 1979, to Joanna Russ's (1983) work, *How to Suppress Women's Writing*, Janet Spencer's (1986) *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*, and Janet Todd's 1989 publication, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800*, to mention but a few.³⁴

An examination of the centrality accorded the figure of the woman novelist will contribute to an understanding of feminist literary practices. In her (1985) work, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi critiques both the reading practice endorsed by Anglo-American feminist criticism and the central figure accorded the (female) author. The following section will summarize her arguments and query some of her assertions.

Moi claims that many of the problems of Anglo-American feminist literary criticism can be traced and attributed to a "certain feminist preference for realism over modernism" (1985, p.67). The focus on the realist narrative (and the attention given to the figure of the woman novelist), points to a problematic insertion of a particular critical reading practice within feminist discourse. A key contention made by Moi is that feminist criticism relies upon what she classifies as a "patriarchal aesthetic" (p.69), and that the critical reading practice it endorses "relies on the author as the transcendental signified of his or her text" (p.62).

Moi's argument is based partly upon an analysis of Showalter's criticism of Woolf. In particular, Moi claims that criticism of Woolf is based upon an unexamined notion of 'experience':

Showalter quotes Q.D. Leavis's "cruelly accurate *Scrutiny* review" with approval, since "Leavis addressed herself to the question of female experience, making it clear that from her point of view, Woolf knew damn little about it". Showalter thus implicitly defines effective feminist writing as work that offers a powerful expression of personal experience in a social framework. (Moi, 1985, p.4)

Moi argues that Showalter's position "strongly favours the form of writing commonly known as critical or bourgeois realism" (p.4). It therefore endorses a "universalising humanist aesthetic" (p.7) and this traditional humanism "is in effect part of patriarchal ideology" (p.8). In other words, Moi defines a patriarchal aesthetic as that which is based upon an unexamined notion of 'experience' and which valorizes an unexplored notion of 'authenticity' and 'humanity'. Given these requirements, such an aesthetic would be biased toward the realist narrative. Such a bias is a result of a traditional humanism which asserts the need for the text to uphold the notion of the unified self in the form of the individual moral 'character'. As Moi claims in relation to Showalter's criticism of Woolf and Lessing:

Both writers are similarly flawed: both have in different ways rejected the fundamental need for the individual to adopt a unified, integrated self-identity. Both Woolf and Lessing radically undermine the notion of the unitary self, the central concept of Western male humanism and one crucial to Showalter's feminism. (p.7)

Through her critique of other Anglo-American feminists,³⁵ Moi establishes that the critique levelled against Showalter is generic to Anglo-American feminist criticism. It may be argued that the feminist preference for realism indicates the extent to which a humanist aesthetic, pronounced by themselves as being complicit with 'patriarchy', is adopted by them. Critics operating within this framework are therefore required to assert the authenticity and humanity of the female writer/female writing. Moi's argument in relation to readings of Woolf by certain feminist literary critics ties in with this assertion - that as modernist texts, Woolf's writings are not amenable to the methodology employed by such critics. Criteria of authenticity and humanity in texts can be seen to have resulted in the concentration on realist texts by Anglo-American feminist criticism. Those texts, therefore, written during the vintage years of the British novel, the nineteenth century, are peculiarly amenable to the approach of these critics. This then is given as one reason for the feminist interest in the history of the novel.

Moi's claim is that, "if we are truly to reject the model of the author as God the Father of the text, it is surely not enough to reject the patriarchal ideology implied in the paternal metaphor. It is equally necessary to reject the *critical practice* it leads to, a critical practice

that relies on the author as the transcendental signified of his or her text" (1985, p.62). This highlights the suspicion that the feminist enterprise in literary theory and criticism relies on a series of referential illusions whereby the author remains authoritative, heroines replace heroes in terms of character, and the plot is now shown to revolve around themes identified as specifically women's issues, as opposed to those concerning men. This involves a substitution or inversion, and leaves the problematic critical practices of traditional literary criticism unopposed. Moi's conclusion is therefore that "the main problem in Anglo-American feminist criticism lies in the radical contradiction it presents between feminist politics and patriarchal aesthetics" (p.69).

This provides a succinct analysis of the state of feminist literary criticism. However, later on in her book Moi makes a highly contentious and problematic claim: "But the study of a female tradition in literature, while not necessarily an attempt to create 'a female enclave', is surely *more* than a methodological choice: it is an urgent *political* necessity" (p.82); "the radically new impact of feminist criticism is to be found not at the level of theory or methodology, but at the level of politics" (p.87). Despite her critique of the methodology utilised by various feminists, Moi implies that both theory and methodology, which are interdependent, are secondary to politics. And to cap it all, she then states: "Like socialists, feminists can in a sense afford to be tolerantly pluralistic in their choice of literary methods and theories, precisely because any approach that can be successfully appropriated to their political ends must be welcome" (p.87).

In her elaboration of this point, she notes that the key word is "successfully". This implies that the basic problem with a patriarchal aesthetic, as she defines it, is that it does not provide a "successful" enough agenda for feminist politics. In other words, given the emphasis on the political, the ends justify the means. Therefore, the "patriarchal aesthetic" adopted by Anglo-American feminists is problematic primarily because it doesn't take their political agenda far enough. Furthermore, Moi concludes that, "all forms of radical thought inevitably remain mortgaged to the very historical categories they seek to transcend" (p.88) - rather too easy a dismissal of the problem she herself has raised.

But to return to the basic question: Why the focus on the rise of the woman novelist, and what does this mean in terms of feminist political agendas and strategies? In other words, what function does the figure of the woman novelist serve?

The Function of the Figure of the Female Author

In *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Moi quotes Gilbert and Gubar at length, claiming that Shelley's Sybil's leaves are a central motif of their work. In the "Author's Introduction" to her work (entitled interestingly enough, *The Last Man*), Mary Shelley introduces the story with the story of the Sybil's leaves; claiming that the discovery of leaves upon which are written various bits of a story, when gathered together, deciphered and translated from many different languages, have furnished this particular story (Shelley, 1985b, pp.1-4).

Moi queries Gilbert and Gubar's interpretation of this motif: "For one thing it is not an unproblematic project to try to speak *for* the other woman, since this is precisely what the ventriloquism of patriarchy has always done" (Moi, 1985, p.68). The primary problem with the re-deployment of this image is that it assumes that wholeness can only be regained through the gathering up of the Sibyl's leaves and re-telling the story; as Shelley puts it, "My only excuse for thus transforming (the leaves), is that they were unintelligible in their pristine condition" (Shelley, 1985b, p.4).

Fragmentation; disintegration; contradiction; silence - this may appear to be all that the story (of 'woman') offers in terms of Gilbert and Gubar's thesis. However, their claim appears to be that, in terms of the parable of the Sibyl's leaves, the reworking or rewriting of the fragments furnishes a book in which all can be gathered together into a seamless whole. It is the contention of this thesis that similar assumptions are at work in feminist re-writings of 'female' texts. If the text is seen to be fragmented, a unity can nonetheless be imposed upon it in the figure of the female novelist herself. Such analyses would understand contradictions within the text as splits within the female subjective self - this 'self' being ultimately referential to the female author herself, given such feminist critics' "insistence on the identity of author and character" (Moi, p.61). The reading of Austen's *Emma* by Gilbert and Gubar neatly demonstrates this argument.

A story as sexist as that of the taming of the shrew, for example, provides her with a 'blotter' or socially acceptable cover for expressing her own self-division. Undoubtedly a useful acknowledgement of her own ladylike submission and her acquiescence to masculine values, this plot also allows Austen to consider her own anxiety about female assertion and expression, to dramatize her doubts about the possibility of being both a woman and a writer. She describes both her own dilemma and, by extension, that of all women who experience themselves as divided, caught in the contradiction between their status as human beings and their vocation as females. (1979, in Lodge, 1986, p.204)

The most compelling image to emerge from Gilbert and Gubar's study informs their title, the 'madwoman in the attic' derived from the figure of Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*.³⁶ The term, the 'angel in the house' is used by Virginia Woolf to refer to the docility and submission required of women. Feminist literary criticism has focused on these two figures as central to an explication of the bifurcation and disunity of 'woman' under patriarchy. The madwoman in the attic and the angel of the house are considered polarities of one self, and

the fragments of the text can be read in terms of this figure. The figure of the woman novelist functions to maintain both the notion of woman as oppressed (by patriarchy) and the subsequent "tragic" splittings of self, and the inscription of feisty rebellion against the oppressions of patriarchy, within one figure. The figure of the madwoman is invoked to signify the ultimate madness patriarchy is seen to produce in the form of its female martyrs; that of the angel in the house denotes the full extent of the everyday miserableness of "domestic martyrdom" (Flaubert, 1985, p.137). More crucially, the humanist notion of the whole self in the form of the female *creator* of such characters is upheld; and, possibly, wholeness also restored in the form of an assumed 'original' textual unity that has been lost through the vicissitudes of patriarchy, and which only needs "women's writing" to be restored, to speak again, to find its lost power. In this way, surface and depth are reversed; the text which is seen, overtly, to conform to patriarchal norms is read in terms of its secret, 'silent', subversive strategies. The figure of the female author serves to reinstate a notion of wholeness to the analysis, and renders the text recuperable within a humanist feminist framework; one which seeks to discover 'fragments' of 'woman' under patriarchy whilst at the same time needing to affirm that the woman so fragmented is nonetheless recuperable as a political figure. As Gilbert and Gubar put it:

Women from Jane Austen and Mary Shelley to Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson produced literary works that are in some sense palimpsestic, works whose surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning. Thus these authors managed the difficult task of achieving true female literary authority by simultaneously conforming to and subverting patriarchal literary standards. (1979, p.73)

A feminist insistence on biography can be understood in terms of the figure of the female author. Biographical evidence pointing out how 'impossible' it was for woman to write, given the oppressive exclusiveness of patriarchy, also refer back to the question of "why women began to write respectable fiction near the end of the eighteenth century, became prominent novelists during the nineteenth century, and on this basis achieved the status of artists during the modern period" (Armstrong, 1987, p.7). The contention of this thesis is that the question "why"? is used as a rhetorical device to claim how 'impossible' it was for women to write. The figure of the female author therefore doubly asserts a political victory. First, the fact that she wrote *at all* is asserted as a triumph. Secondly, the arguments given above ask that the female author be considered a unifying figure which functions to synthesize the diverse notions of women's oppression under patriarchy. This one figure is considered ultimately victorious in terms of feminist politics, the writer who simultaneously subverts and conforms to patriarchal standards.

"I have insisted that the opposition of the angel and monster was just that - an opposition within the discourse of sexuality" (Armstrong, 1987, p.253). In a Foucauldian move, she

encloses this opposition within a discourse, claiming that "the very aspects of the female which supposedly resisted acculturation came to play an especially powerful role in a discourse that redefined any form of political resistance as a form of individual pathology" (p.252). Armstrong stresses that the forms of resistance presented by the figure of the madwoman actually endorsed a certain culturation process.

Both feminist approaches considered seek to contain these contradictory figures within some kind of a unity - the first seeking to discover them as aspects of the individual 'woman', the second enclosing them within a discourse of sexuality.³⁷ They differ in that the first would claim some kind of political victory on the basis of the figure of the madwoman, whereas the second implies that all forms of resistance and transgression are encoded within models of the normal and the pathological and are thereby neutralised in the modern form of power.

Feminist analyses of the 'rise' of the female novelist, and feminist-inspired historiographies of the novel must be credited with asserting/inserting the notion of gender (and gender-based oppression) into a history of the novel. That is, they draw out the crucial relationship between gender and genre.

However, the way in which the place of women in writing, and women's writing, has been articulated within Anglo-American feminist discourse is problematic. The limitations of reading all women's texts in terms of a division of character/s and unity of female author is noted by the fact that it only enables the recovery/discovery of select women's works. Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*, considered by Millett "a book too subversive to be popular" (1978, p.197), has been recovered by various Anglo-American feminists (Millett, 1978; Russ, 1983). However, what "might be said to be the first manifesto for 'Women's Lib'" (Gérin, in Brontë, 1989, p.7), *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, has thus far not been re(dis)covered for feminist literary discourse. The reason for this apparent discrepancy may reside in the fact the former is eminently reducible to "feminine fragments" (Moi, 1983, p.17), in terms of the approach advocated by Gilbert and Gubar, whereas the latter is far less amenable to a reading in terms of the divided feminine/female self.

A second problem with Anglo-American feminist criticism resides in their endorsement of an unproblematised relationship between gender and genre, wherein the category 'woman' is considered much less important than that of 'artist' or 'writer'. For instance, Armstrong makes a claim regarding "the insistence by women writers that gender differences should be maintained" (1987, p.44). Her argument is constructed in the following extract and relies on an analysis of Mary Shelley's 1831 preface to *Frankenstein*:

More telling perhaps than transgressions of the sexual division of discourse is the insistence by women writers that gender differences be maintained. Mary Shelley's preface to the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein* testifies to the fact that the novel was nothing other than 'my waking dream'. Thus she claims for this writing an unmediated source in the female imagination, her own. Her husband's tinkering with the manuscript, she assures us (placing him in much the same relation to herself as Brontë placed Lockwood to Nelly), extended only to superficial matters of style. (Armstrong, 1987, pp.44-45)

Some historical material needs to be uncovered in order to argue against Armstrong's claims. *Frankenstein* was first published anonymously in 1818, but due to the fact that it was "respectfully inscribed" (Shelley, 1985, p.8) to her father, William Godwin, many critics presumed that Percy Shelley, "Godwin's best known literary disciple" (p.8) had written it. In 1823, a second edition was published under Mary Shelley's name, and "the critics were quite thrown to find that the author had been a woman" (Hindle, in Shelley, 1985, p.8). In the 1831 preface, Mary Shelley claims that the original (1818) preface was, "as far as I can recollect ... entirely written by him (Percy Shelley)" (p.56). However, her claim is that this is the *only* part of the 1818 edition that was entirely written by him. Hindle notes that a "few additions and stylistic modifications to the (1818) text" (p.18) were made by him. Percy Shelley died in 1822.

In the "Note on the Text", it is noted that "Mary Shelley made extensive revisions for the 1831 publication, particularly in the first two chapters, which she thought 'unworthy of the rest of the narration'" (p.47). Therefore, in the final paragraph of the 1831 preface, the author denoted by Mary Shelley is clearly herself: "I will add but one word as to the alterations *I* have made. They are principally those of style ..." (p.56, italics mine).

The 1831 preface, then, serves as a final statement on the authorship of the book, given that, originally, critics thought it was Percy Shelley's work. Given this, as well as the lapse of time between the 1823 edition (bearing her name) and the 1831 edition, Shelley begins the preface by stating that she will attempt to answer "the question, so very frequently asked me, 'How I, then a young girl, came to think of and to dilate upon so very hideous an idea?'" (p.51). Within this context, Shelley's concern with gender and the authorship of the novel is clearly related to circumstances and is not necessarily indicative of an insistence that gender differences be maintained.

Shelley does insist on the fact that *Frankenstein* is nothing but a *story*, a "waking dream" (p.55). This denoted by her use of italics (the only ones that appear in the preface): "I busied myself *to think of a story*" (p.53); "I had *thought of a story*" (p.55). However, this is probably an attempt to disable the criticism that was originally levelled against the novel (even before the gender of the author was known), that the work "inculcates no lesson of conduct, manners or *reality*" (*Quarterley Review*, March 1818, in Shelley, 1985a, p.7).

Anne Brontë's comments regarding the gender of novelists, written in 1848, testifies as to the added burden of censoriousness laid upon a female author who wrote novels that were considered immoral.³⁸

Whilst Armstrong's claim is inadequate in terms of Mary Shelley's 1831 preface to *Frankenstein*, her argument is undermined by the fact that gender categories are never represented in absolute terms by the female authors themselves, or within the texts studied. A number of nineteenth century female writers chose to write under male pseudonyms,³⁹ or even anonymously,⁴⁰ thereby misleading their readers that they judge the texts concerned, rather than the authors as women. Certain female writers were unequivocal in their rejection of the biased assessment of women artists, as clearly noted in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*. A man, called upon to give his opinion of an actress, "judged her *as a woman, not an artist*: it was a branding judgement" (p.298, italics mine); a statement which queries the opposing classifications of 'woman' and 'artist'.⁴¹ A feminist enterprise which attempts to read novels primarily or solely in terms of the gender of authors and 'characters' must therefore be seriously questioned.

The politics of gender do, however, play a large, although complicated, role in the shaping of the genre of the novel. In the belief that methodology and theory are integral to a study of gender, and inform feminist politics, the primary concern at this stage is to critique feminist reading practices in order to argue for a more complex articulation of gender.

In the following chapter, the interrelationship between gender and genre will be explored through a textual analysis of the reading practices of Emma in Austen's *Emma*. This analysis explores the way in which 'character' is constructed by means of a relationship drawn between the text, experience and the self. This will substantiate the argument that literature, morality and gender were interrelated at the beginning of the modern era and continue to inform literary criticism, whether of a traditional or feminist kind. The reading of *Emma* will also be invoked against simplistic and dualistic analyses of gender; "Any division of knowledge into masculine totality and feminine fragments is obviously mystifying and mythological" (Moi, 1983, p.17), and must be guarded against. Any literary criticism dependent on dividing a text into 'feminine fragments', and then reading these in terms of the 'masculine totality' of the female author is equally mystifying and mythological, and must be argued against.

CHAPTER THREE

The Text, Experience, and the Self

This chapter will focus on several interrelated themes pertaining to gender and genre, on the basis of a reading of *Emma*.⁴² Of particular interest will be the alignment of literature and morality. The character of Emma is constructed, through error, by means of a correlation that is drawn between the texts she reads, her experience, and her self. Through the delineation of Emma's errors or failures in relation to the social and the textual, the character of Emma is constructed and transformed. This modern configuration of the self entails a particular technology of the self which "implies a set of truth obligations: learning what is truth, discovering the truth, being enlightened by truth, telling the truth. All of these are considered important either for the constitution or for the transformation of the self" (Foucault & Sennett, 1982, p.10).

Error therefore provides the means whereby the character of Emma can discover the truth and become engendered with self-regulatory powers. The narrative sequences serve primarily as a vehicle for the development of character. The discriminatory powers of Emma are enhanced through the recognition of error. This not only constitutes a development in terms of 'qualities of mind', but the transformation and enhancement of the qualities of mind of Emma is essential to the "alliance" described within the text.

The word "alliance" is derived from *Emma*, and it is often used to describe marriage in Austen's texts (eg., 1955a, p.64, p.66, p.116). The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* gives the definition of alliance as "union by marriage; kinship; (especially of countries) joining in pursuit of common interests; league, association; *community in nature of qualities*" (1980, p.26, italics mine). An interesting constellation is grouped together: marriage, familial or kinship networks, and the national are all considered to be linked in terms of the rubric of 'alliance'. Of the word 'ally', the transitive verb is defined as, "Combine or unite for special purpose *to or with* (especially of marriage and alliance with foreign States)" (p.27), and the noun as, "Person, State, etc., allied with another" (p.27). The word "alliance" presumes the concept of consent and the notion of equality. "Alliance" is therefore specifically invoked to describe the extent to which, within Austen's texts, what Armstrong refers to as the "sexual contract" (that is, marriage) derives validity and authority from the concept of the social contract (see chapter four).

It is important to note the extent to which *Emma* is constructed such that an equality between the genders in terms of 'qualities of mind' is evoked as a prerequisite for an alliance. This theme is further explored in chapter four, which will analyse Armstrong's contention that the novel served to transcribe the social contract into a sexual contract. In this chapter, a debate is opened as to whether or not gender, sexuality, and desire, as defined within feminist criticism, are adequate to the delineation of gender in the modern period. In particular, the very bifurcatory aspects of gender which feminism opposes tend to be endorsed within their readings.

3.1 Reading and the Social: Discrimination and Qualities of Mind

All of Austen's works display an interest in the education, reading materials, and the reading practices of young women. The representation of the reading practices of the female protagonists functions both to describe them, but also to construct a relationship between text, experience and the self (in terms of the relation of the self in terms of the social, and the relation of the self to its self. This is a logical requirement for the problematisation, expression and actualisation of the self which forms the *modus operandi* of a modern form of power). The following description of the reading practices of Emma clearly draws out this relationship:

Emma has been meaning to read more ever since she was twelve years old. I have seen a great many lists of her drawing-up at various times of books that she meant to read regularly through - and very good lists they were - very well chosen, and very neatly arranged - sometimes alphabetically, and sometimes by some other rule. The list she drew up when only fourteen - I remember thinking it did her judgement so much credit, that I preserved it some time; and I dare say she may have made out a very good list now. But I have done with expecting any course of steady reading from Emma. She will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding. (p.30)

The above description of Emma's reading practice stands in clear contradistinction to the following, which describes the chemist Homais of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. In both texts a central concern is with the subjugation of the imagination to reason. Judgement is linked to a systematic and industrious reading practice which, whilst appreciative of artistry of feeling, does not impede one's powers of discrimination:

For Homais' philosophical convictions did not inhibit his artistic appreciation; the thinker never stifled the man of feeling. He could discriminate. He knew where to draw the line between imagination and fanaticism. (Flaubert, 1985, p.102)

In both texts, value is accorded to a particular kind of reading practice which is carefully delineated. First, in Austen there is the 'drawing-up' of a 'well chosen' reading list which is 'arranged' according to some 'rule' - alphabetical or otherwise. A 'very good list', in itself, is seen as a 'credit' to one's 'judgement'. Secondly, however, there is the matter of 'steady reading', reading texts 'regularly through' and which requires 'industry and patience'.⁴³

Thirdly, when reading, a 'subjection of the fancy to the understanding' must take place, and it is this which would denote one's ability to 'discriminate', to 'draw the line between the 'thinker' and the 'man of feeling', between 'imagination and fanaticism'.

In the case of Austen's *Emma*, the term 'subjection' occurs immediately after the above extract, again in terms of a lack, in the sense that she is under subjection to no-one; upon her mother's death, "she lost the only person able to cope with her. She inherits her mother's talents, and must have been under subjection to her" (p.30). A parallel between the two forms of subjection is thereby drawn. This serves to construct a relationship between textual practice and the self, such that a lack of subjection to one form of discipline is aligned to another. In a similar fashion, Emma's lack of discrimination in relation to reading (which is primarily related to a lack of discipline), is allied to an inability appropriately to grade and rank people in relation to their place within the social order. This inability to codify the social is then linked back to the 'qualities of mind' of the protagonist, Emma. The inappropriateness of the codes whereby Emma interprets the social will be demonstrated to relate to the third criterion given above, that of the subjugation of the imagination to reason.

Within the text, the ability to discriminate in terms of the textual or the social is linked to "qualities of mind". Armstrong claims that, within Austen's novels, marriage "miraculously transforms all social differences into gender differences and gender differences into qualities of mind" (1987, p.51). Despite the objections raised against this argument (see chapter four), the importance given to the inherent "qualities of mind" of the protagonists is central to this work. It is only once the qualities of mind of Emma are elevated through the enhancement of discriminating powers in relation to the social that Emma is in a position to contract a marriage with Mr Knightley. Within the text, marriage is constructed to be that which is predicated upon equalities of mind as well as fortune and consequence.

The lack of discrimination in relation to reading matter that is portrayed by Emma is paralleled to a similar lack in relation to the subtle gradations of social position. Within the novel, the two themes are neatly dovetailed when the education of Miss Harriet Smith, "the natural (i.e., illegitimate) daughter of somebody" (p.17) is undertaken by Emma: "She would notice her; she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society, she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers" (p.18). From this extract, it is clear that the education of a young woman was largely bound up with morality and the social, introducing her into 'good society' and forming her 'opinions and her manners'. It is also clear that education is

conceived of as authoritarian and didactic, the young woman to be educated a mere *tabula rasa*. Reading, regarded as an essential education in itself,⁴⁴ the joint undertaking of a steady and systematic course of reading is proposed: "as Emma wants to see her well informed, it will be an inducement to her to read more herself. They will read together. She means it, I know" (p.30).

The proposed education of Harriet Smith is central to an understanding of the relation between the textual, the social, and the self - as it is constructed within the text. The role of the central male protagonist, Mr Knightley, is constructed to be that of the arbiter of taste, and his judgement is seen to be rendered valid by subsequent events. The function that he plays is that of delimiting the boundaries within which social intercourse is generally considered to be acceptable or socially prescribed. On two counts is the proposed education of Harriet considered in his terms to be unfitting for her, and unfitting her for her social position in life. First, as the "natural daughter of nobody knows whom, with probably no settled provision at all, and certainly no respectable relations" (p.52), she "is not the superior young woman which Emma's friends ought to be" (p.29), and is therefore neither entitled to, nor has, a superior education and accomplishments. Furthermore, further acquaintance with Hartfield (the home of the Woodhouses) "will only put her out of conceit with all the other places she belongs to. She will grow just refined enough to be uncomfortable with those among whom birth and circumstances have placed her home" (p.31). Secondly, the ability of Emma to guide her education is considered lacking: "How can Emma imagine she has any thing to learn herself, while Harriet is presenting such delightful inferiority?" (p.31).

However, the function that Harriet Smith plays in the novel is two-fold, and again, a parallel between reading and the self is drawn. The education of Harriet under the auspices of Emma is doubly lacking. First, the study and reading matter of the two can be shown to be inadequate in terms of the criteria of a steady course of disciplined reading originally delineated by Mr Knightley (in the first extract given above concerning Emma's reading habits). The inadequacy of their joint reading enterprise ties up with the social education of Harriet by Emma, by which she is dissuaded from marrying her social 'equal'. This clearly signals an inability on the part of Emma to discriminate the social appropriately. The match-making that is undertaken by Emma, in which Harriet is to try for the hands of those above her in social status and position, gives rise to a series of sequences, which are simultaneously encoded as developmental, emotional and moral crises within the character of Emma. These not only contribute to the intellectual, moral and social development of Emma, but also lead to her being "shocked into a realisation of her own condition of feeling" (Steiner, 1980, p.95).

'Symptomatic' Reading

The sequences are structured in line with a continuity required for the psychological development of the female protagonist after whom the novel is named. The strands that link up the textual practices of Emma with experience and the self (in relation to itself and the social) are interwoven in such a manner that a key element in analysing the novel becomes that of 'character'. With such realist narratives forming the basis of the much maligned canon, it becomes explicable why traditional literary analysis focuses on the notion of character. Within such texts, plot is enfolded almost entirely into that which explicates and parallels character development. The bias that this kind of literary analysis has towards the realist narrative is that which Moi claims Anglo-American feminist criticism still adopts and endorses:

An insistence on authenticity and truthful reproduction of the 'real world' as the highest literary values inevitably makes the feminist critic hostile to non-realist forms of writing. (1985, p.47)

Moi claims that this bias entails that feminist criticism is unable to account for or understand non-realist works such as those written by Woolf. Whilst much of this thesis necessarily criticises traditional (unproblematised) notions of character and plot, it becomes necessary, when dealing with writings such as Austen's, to analyse the construction of character. However, it is important to understand character in terms of the level of discourse and not simply to 'feel one's way into the text' in a manner that ahistorically naturalises the notion of character.

Whilst the notion of 'character' as a psychologicistic category has been critiqued in structuralist and post-structuralist literary theory, 'character' nonetheless functions as a key way in which to assess nineteenth century novelistic discourse. This is primarily highlighted by the way in which a relationship is constructed between the text, experience and the self. The moral development of the protagonist/s, in terms of a problematisation and actualisation of a self provides a mechanism through which the level of actions in the novel concerned is integrated with the level of discourse.

In this thesis, the term 'symptomatic reading' is defined and delimited in terms of the means whereby the non-normative reading practices of an actant can indicate the ways in which an actant is seen to 'fail' on a functional level, or fall outside of the procedures of normalisation interarticulating the psychic with the social. The reading practices of various actants (such as Emma) are 'symptomatic' to the extent that they function to describe the non-normative,

which produces a relation to the normative in terms of error and failure. That reading itself was subject to such strictures is made evident by the fact that, in the texts studied, reading practices are described as normative or non-normative in terms of criteria delineated within the texts themselves. The ways in which a protagonist's reading is described can therefore be used as a code whereby the pathology, or the 'abnormality' of the protagonist is delineated. In the case of Emma Woodhouse, a description of her reading practices functions to illustrate what kind of socialisation, symbolised by marriage, is required.

Regulation: The Literary and the Social

A return to the text of *Emma*, and an analysis of the means whereby Harriet's literary and social education is undertaken by Emma will help to explicate what is here referred to as 'symptomatic' reading.

(Emma's) views of improving her little friend's mind, by a great deal of useful reading and conversation, had never yet led to more than a few first chapters, and the intention of going on tomorrow. It was much easier to chat than to study; much pleasanter to let her imagination range and work at Harriet's fortune, than to be labouring to enlarge her comprehension or exercise it on sober facts; and the only literary pursuit which engaged Harriet at present, the only mental provision she was making for the evening of life, was the collecting and transcribing all the riddles of every sort that she could meet with, into a thin quarto of hot-pressed paper, made up by her friend, and ornamented with cyphers and trophies. (Austen, 1955a, p.60)

The most that she and Harriet do on a literary line is to collect and hand-write a volume of riddles. Although the ironic, "In this age of literature, such collections on a very grand scale are not uncommon" (p.60), serves as a humorous foil to the above paragraph, it nonetheless hints at the extent to which literature and the literary were contested. In terms of the first extract which sets out the criteria for normative reading, this endeavour clearly does not require "industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding" (p.30). In this exercise, 'chat' is opposed to 'study' and 'imagination' to 'comprehension' and 'fact'. The 'literary pursuit' engaged in does not make 'mental provision for the evening of life'. The last formulation appears common to conduct literature of the period: "Knowledge [says an elegant writer] is a comfortable and necessary shelter for us in an advanced age; but if we do not plant it while young, it will afford us no shade when we grow old" (Pilkington, 1798, p.136). Emma and Harriet's 'literary' pursuit is clearly considered not to enhance, but merely to "blunt the discriminating powers of the mind" (Wordsworth, in Enright & de Chickera, 1985, p.166).

Armstrong notes that with the departure of her governess, Emma is left "with unregulated leisure time on her hands" (1987, p.140). The education of Harriet by Emma is problematic precisely to the extent that Emma herself is portrayed as unable to regulate her own leisure

activities, never mind supervise another's. A lack of disciplined regulation of activities which would amount to education, is noted by the fact that they never read "more than a few first chapters, and the intention of going on tomorrow" (p.60). In terms of the argument (see chapter one) that 'profit' from reading should replace 'pleasure', theirs is seen to be an inappropriate use of leisure time.

A link between literary and social education is introduced by the statement that Emma "let her imagination range and work at Harriet's fortune". Emma, regulating her own leisure activities, turns to "matchmaking as the means by which to occupy her idle hours" (Armstrong, 1987, p.140). The benevolence required of a young woman of wealth is translated from duty into pleasure by Emma. Considering match-making "the greatest amusement in the world!" (p.7), and believing her previous attempt crowned with "success" (p.7, p.8), Emma's "kind designs" (p.20) lead her to predict, if not create, "an excellent match" (p.28) for Harriet.

Similarities can be drawn between this endeavour and Emma's reading practices. To return again to the initial extract concerning reading, it is said that Emma "will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding" (Austen, p.30). Although Knightley and Emma debate whether or not match-making entails industry and endeavour,⁴⁵ it is clear that fancy or the imagination is not subjected to reason or the understanding. This is evidenced by the fact that Emma, relying on her "genius for foretelling and guessing" (p.31), considers Harriet to be the daughter of a gentleman:

As to the circumstances of her birth, though in a legal sense she may be called Nobody, it will not hold in common sense ... There can scarcely be a doubt that her father is a gentleman - and a gentleman of fortune. (p.53)

Lacking information to the contrary, Emma constructs for Harriet a more notable parentage than is subsequently proved to be the case. Convinced that her father is a gentleman, Emma advises Harriet to marry a man of good social status. Emma's sense of the social is deficient and inadequate, not because she has no sense of the social, but because Harriet's situation is misread. Knightley says to Emma that "your infatuation about that girl blinds you" (p.52). In returning to the original extract concerning Emma's reading practices, it is noted that Emma's potential to judge is not called into question, that the list of reading materials she drew up "did her judgement so much credit" (p.30). However, discrimination is dependent on the ability to draw a line between thinking and feeling, imagination and fanaticism. It is this lack that is called into question by the figure of Knightley. The 'character' of Emma is read in terms of error or failure by Knightley: "Mr Knightley, in fact, was one of the few people who could see faults in Emma Woodhouse, and the only one who ever told her of

them" (p.6). He, unlike her former governess, does not "depend ... upon Emma's good sense" (p.32).

Match-making is, in a number of ways, a problematic enterprise with which Emma occupies her "idle day(s)" (p.8). First, although it is said of Emma that she "never thinks of herself, if she can do good to others" (p.8), the benevolence of the enterprise is tainted by the fact that the need for "amusement" (p.7) provides its primary motivation. Duty is therefore not so much reconciled with pleasure as subordinate to it. Bearing in mind that a climactic moment in the text occurs when Emma is chastised for placing present amusement above the sterner call of duty,⁴⁶ the subordination of duty to pleasure is a misdemeanour placed under heavy censure. Secondly, this enterprise is considered not to entail industry and patience; on the contrary, guessing, foretelling and the imagination are called upon. In relation to this, Emma's interpretation of Harriet's ambiguous status is seen as evidence of the imagination taking precedence over understanding.

Finally, a comparison may be drawn between the means whereby Emma and her sister Isabella regulate their leisure time. Isabella described as, "passing her life with those she doated [sic] on, full of their merits, blind to their faults, and always innocently busy, might have been a model of right feminine happiness" (p.123). Isabella is "wrapt [sic] up in her family; a devoted wife, a doating [sic] mother" (p.81). The image is one of happy and quiet domesticity, the regulation of activities seen not so much as harmonious, as at one with, a woman's family and domestic activities. In contradistinction to this, Emma's match-making activities spill beyond the domestic sphere, and in Knightley's terms, amount to interference. This is the most damning of the arguments against Emma's match-making activities:

A straight-forward, open-hearted man like Weston, and a rational unaffected woman, like Miss Taylor, may be safely left to manage their own concerns. You are more likely to have done harm to yourself, than good to them, by interference. (p.8)

Emma's education of Harriet also admits to "interference". Again, benevolence is translated into amusement; "It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking; highly becoming her own situation in life, her leisure, and powers" (p.18). A certain vanity is depicted by the words "highly becoming"; that Emma's prestige and talents would be highlighted and endorsed by this activity. Knightley claims that Emma's education of Harriet would not "tend at all to make a girl adapt herself rationally to the varieties of her situation in life" (p.31). It does not constitute an education in terms of comprehension, fact, or making mental provision for the evening of life. Knightley also claims that it will simply "encourage (Harriet) to expect to marry greatly, and teach her to be satisfied with nothing less than a man of consequence and large fortune" (p.55).

The socially acceptable or unacceptable nature of Harriet's aspirations towards a good marriage is debated by Mr Knightley and Emma. The claim made by Emma is that men, in general, desire a woman who is "only pretty and good-natured"; "I am very much mistaken if your sex in general would not think such beauty, and such temper, the highest claims a woman could possess" (p.54). To this Knightley says, "Upon my word, Emma, to hear you abusing the reason you have, is almost enough to make me think so too. Better be without sense, than misapply it as you do" (p.54).

The social logic of the following argument is counterposed to Emma's statement about what men really seek in a wife. It takes into account Harriet's illegitimacy, a factor omitted in Emma's argument:

Men of sense, whatever you may chuse [sic] to say, do not want silly wives. Men of family would not be very fond of connecting themselves with a girl of such obscurity - and most prudent men would be afraid of the inconvenience and disgrace they might be involved in, when the mystery of her parentage came to be revealed. (p.55)

A notion of community and society is hereby propounded. The ability appropriately to discriminate social place is constructed within the text so that it is read in terms of error or failure in Emma. Towards the end of the text, the fact that Emma's views have changed - *materially* - is demonstrated by the following exchange, in which Emma admits to Knightley her faults in the previous argument.

"You are materially changed since we talked on this subject before."
"I hope so - for at that time I was a fool." (p.418)

The statement testifying to the fact that "at that time I was a fool" (p.418) results from a series of sequences which are initiated by the way in which the social and literary 'education' of Harriet intertwine in relation to the riddle-book. Intent on an excellent match, Emma dissuades Harriet from marriage to a young farmer, claiming, in part, the fact that should Harriet marry this young man she could not longer continue on the same social footing with her.⁴⁷

Mr Elton (the clergyman) was the very person fixed on by Emma for driving the young farmer out of Harriet's head. She thought it would be an excellent match; and only too palpably desirable, natural, and probable, for her to have much merit in planning it. (p.28).

As a result, Harriet refuses Mr Martin's offer, and becomes interested in Mr Elton. For this, "Emma could not feel a doubt of having given Harriet's fancy a proper direction" (p.34). When passing Mr Elton's house Emma says to Harriet, "There go you and your riddle-book one of these days" (p.73).

Through requesting riddles from all of their acquaintance, the riddle-book leads to a comedy of errors of judgement. Mr Elton, having been applied to for a riddle of his own devising, proceeds to create one, the answer to which is "courtship" (p.63). Emma believes the message is intended for Harriet: "An excellent charade indeed! and very much to the purpose. Things must come to a crisis soon now" (p.63). The anticipated crisis occurs, but the crisis is not what is anticipated. Mr Elton has his eyes set on the conquest of Emma, and this emerges during his proposal to Emma: "Everyone has their level; but as for myself, I am not, I think, quite so much at a loss. I need not totally despair of an *equal alliance*, as to be addressing myself to Miss Smith!" (p.116, italics mine). This affirms the statement by Mr Knightley that Mr Elton is "not at all likely to make an imprudent match. He knows the value of a good income as well as anybody" (p.57).

Harriet's statement to Emma, upon deciphering the charade, that, "You understand every thing" (p.66) is seen to be false. In this sequence, Emma has to recognise her folly in presuming the message was intended for Harriet, and has to deal with the mortification of Mr Elton's proposal:

to marry him! - *should suppose himself her equal in connection or mind!* - look down upon her friend, so well understanding the gradations of rank below him, and be so blind to what rose above, as to fancy himself shewing [sic] no presumption in addressing her! (p.119, italics mine)

The above extract introduces the concept of 'equalities of mind', a theme which continues to be pursued: "Perhaps it was not fair to expect him to feel how very much he was her *inferior* in talent, and all the elegancies of mind. The very want of such *equality* might prevent his perception of it" (p.119, italics mine). Equality is not, however, limited to that of mind, but also relates to connection, fortune and consequence: "he must know that in fortune and consequence she was greatly his *superior*. He must know that the Woodhouses had been settled for several generations at Hatfield, the younger branch of a very ancient family - and that the Eltons were *nobody*" (p.120, italics mine).

The theme of the passage unequivocally affirms the fact that gender alliances are to be contracted between partners who are equal in consequence, worth, and qualities of mind. In the passages given above, Emma is not above assigning herself qualities of mind superior to those of Mr Elton. However, the very defect in judgement she claims he has, that of discrimination in terms of rank, is precisely the discrimination Emma lacks in relation to Harriet. The arguments of Mr Knightley which Emma refutes when debating Harriet's chances are used against Mr Elton's suit. In particular, Emma refutes the conception of Harriet as "Nobody" (p.53), claiming that although this is correct in a legal, it cannot hold in common sense. However, it is precisely this term which is used against Elton's suit, that he

is "nobody" (p.120). This inconsistency is not conceded here, and the other sequences, arising from errors of 'reading' communications (verbal and written), depict to Emma the extent to which her powers of discrimination are deficient. These other sequences will not be analysed. Instead, the link between literary and social discrimination demonstrated, the importance of qualities of mind will be analysed.

According to the logic of the statements made, Emma can only align herself with a rational, moneyed, and more importantly, gentrified man with superior qualities of mind. The term "superior" does not implicate gender in terms of his "superior" and her "inferior" qualities of mind, but stands as a description. Emma, declaring her intention of remaining unmarried says, "I must see somebody *very superior* to any one I have seen yet, to be tempted" (p.74, italics mine). The process whereby this goal of marriage is attained within *Emma* points to the inauguration of a new kind of heroine; one who has to learn, or be "engendered" with, certain qualities before full incorporation into the social, symbolised by marriage, is realised.⁴⁸ In this process, Emma not only has to discover herself to herself, but recognise the extent to which her judgement is deficient. A sense of her moral and other responsibilities, along the lines of *noblesse oblige*, also needs to be awakened.

However, the overriding concern is to investigate whether the way Emma's development is textually constructed can be aligned to the concept of the "domestic woman" as delineated by Armstrong - which necessarily entails an introduction to the notion of the sexual contract (see also chapter four). According to Armstrong, through "attributing political and emotional authority to the male and female respectively, the figure (of sexual exchange) inscribes the political within the male character and then contains both within heart and home" (p.51). The following section investigates whether the female is accorded emotional, and the male political, authority; secondly, whether social differences are transformed into those of gender. In other words, what is principally at stake in Armstrong's argument regarding the sexual contract is whether or not the male and the female are described in Austen's text as functionally and necessarily different poles.

3.2 The Value of Gender: Gender Values

In her reading of *Emma*, Armstrong claims that Emma and Mr Knightley differ in terms of the systems of values by which they evaluate society. Moreover, these value systems are gender-specific: "Mr Knightley evaluates Harriet according to a *male system of values* ... he assumes that *as a male* he should establish the standard of reasonableness" (p.140, italics mine). Armstrong claims that a gender conflict "arises in Austen's fiction whenever desire

overrules the dictates of one's relative social position, whenever, that is, the female mode of interpretation works in opposition to that of the male" (p.143). Moreover, "in the conflict between male and female modes of interpretation, as Austen stages it, the female does not capitulate to the male code that authorises social status" (p.141). Armstrong hereby explicitly defines the female position as emotional, and the male as political and social. Moreover, women characters are read as necessarily opposing the controls of custom, convention and connection, whereas men are seen to endorse these qualities.

Armstrong's reading of *Emma* is flawed in that it focuses overly on gender. In the same way in which her political history of the novel is problematic because it wishes to assert/insert the importance of the female author, regardless of other factors, her reading of *Emma* is inconsistent; it attempts to authorise the female voice in terms of its key protagonist, despite evidence to the contrary. Because of this, her reading of Elton, for instance, is problematic. She claims that "Elton has erred, not only because he thought too much like a *male*, but also because he fell into *female* strategies that legitimise feelings over and above one's social position" (p.143, italics mine). Armstrong's reading does not, for instance, trace fundamental similarities in the positions advocated and argued for by Elton and Emma.

Armstrong says that Elton's 'rejection of Harriet on grounds of unknown lineage amounts to intolerable rudeness and places Elton among the characters who rank very low on Emma's scale of politeness' (p.141). Armstrong reads this rejection as problematic because Elton "overvalues the income a woman will bring to marriage and thus undervalues her as a woman" (p.141). Such a reading cannot adequately account for the statements made by Emma to Harriet regarding Mr Elton's eligibility:

This is an attachment which a woman may well feel pride in creating. This is a connection which offers nothing but good. It will give you *everything that you want - consideration, independence, a proper home* - it will fix you in the centre of all your real friends, close to Hartfield and to me, and confirm our intimacy for ever. This, Harriet, is an alliance which can never raise a blush in either of us. (p.64, italics mine)

The statements regarding the eligibility of an alliance between Harriet and Mr Elton have everything to do with Mr Elton's house and social position, and little to do with the man himself.⁴⁹ Armstrong cannot therefore claim that Emma "misplaces the individual in the world of Highbury by undervaluing social status and endorsing the claims of desire over those of tradition and custom" (pp.141-2). The code whereby Emma reads social status may be faulty in that subsequent sequences prove her readings to be false, but it is not antagonistic to the "male code" which Armstrong defines as that which overvalues the social in relation to the individual. Emma's misinterpretation of Harriet's position is not due to the

fact that, as a woman, she believes that "desire overrules the dictates of one's relative social position" (p.143). Armstrong's reading does not consider that Emma believes that Harriet must be the daughter of a gentleman. It is this belief, however erroneous, that causes Emma to urge Harriet to seek a higher matrimonial prize than that offered by a young farmer. Given the ambiguity of Harriet's social position, her status is merely given a different and more imaginative interpretation by Emma than the more sober appraisal of Mr Knightley.

Armstrong's claim that "the female does not capitulate to the male code that authorises social status" (p.141) also cannot be endorsed by a reading of Emma. It is already argued that Emma and Knightley differ in terms of their assessments of Harriet's ambiguous position. Once "Harriet's parentage became known" (p.425), Emma's perspective is notably different from her original one, and very much in line with the appraisals of Knightley. This is substantiated by Emma's mortification when the community learns the true nature of Harriet's parentage:

She proved to be the daughter of a tradesman ... - Such was the blood of gentility which Emma had formerly been so ready to vouch for! - It was likely to be as untainted, perhaps, as the blood of many a gentleman! - What a connexion [sic] had she been preparing for Mr Knightley - or for the Churchills - or even for Mr Elton! - The stain of illegitimacy, unbleached by nobility or wealth, would have been a stain indeed. (p.425)

Emma's phrase, "unbleached by nobility or wealth" demonstrates the extent to which she does place tremendous value on birth, blood, breeding and bounty. Although this appraisal by Emma could be read as a capitulation to the male code that authorises social status, this would not constitute an adequate reading of Emma. Throughout the text, emphasis is placed on the ways in which Emma values the social. At no stage is it implied that the social is undervalued by Emma; on the contrary, her rejection of Elton demonstrates that Emma believes that an alliance should only be formed on the basis of an equality of connection, mind, talents, fortune and consequence. Her "male" valuation of the social is substantiated by numerous examples, amongst them her satisfaction upon contemplating the marriage her sister had made: "Isabella had connected herself unexceptionably. She had given them neither men, nor names, nor places, that could raise a blush" (p.315).

Armstrong's reading is flawed because she focuses upon the bifurcated aspects of gender, and chapter four demonstrates how this dualistic presentation of gender undermines her innovative analysis of the social and sexual contracts. Chapter four will establish how her problematic claims about gender negatively impact upon her reading of *Emma* in terms of the notion of sexual exchange. An alternative reading will be explored which will demonstrate that Austen's text is critical precisely because it manages to transcend the dualism inherent in the notion of gender. Both chapters are obviously interdependent.

A brief overview of feminist definitions of gender, sexuality and desire will conclude this chapter. All are criticised, first, for adhering to the dualism of a conception of nature/culture, a dualism which not only implies the antagonism of such terms, but presumes that culture has an overdetermining effect on nature. Such feminist definitions represent a simplistic separation of culture and nature and are inadequate to an understanding of the interaction between nature and culture in the creation of sex/gender. Secondly, whilst gender categorisations and classifications are required at the level of definition and description, in order to describe men and women (as groups), they are inadequate to an analysis and explanation of the cultural and political constitution and functions of gender/sex as it affects (individual) men and women.

Once gender is described or defined in absolutist terms, feminist criticism incurs the danger of repeating in its criticism the very dualism and positivism that is deplored in traditional literary criticism. The alternative account attempted throughout this document is based on the presupposition that gender is best delineated and explained through detailed textual analyses of socially and historically specific discursive formations. These textual analyses can therefore be employed in terms of accounting for what gender categorisations can and cannot explain, and can contribute to a formulation of what it is that makes a specific cultural logic tick.

3.3 Gender, Sexuality, Desire

Gender, sexuality and desire are problematically defined (sometimes not defined, or ill-defined) within Anglo-American feminist discourse. Moreover, the definition of each concept is interrelated with that of the others. Feminist critics appear to assert that gender belongs entirely within the realm of 'culture', as opposed to 'nature', and the social constructionism implied similarly asserts sexuality and desire as cultural or social constructs. Feminist criticism therefore implies that 'desire' can be manipulated by normative practices in the social field. The theorisations emerging from such tenets are therefore largely of a humanist and functionalist variety; they are problematic in that they limit feminist literary criticism to description in terms of content,⁵⁰ and are therefore inadequate to the tasks of analysis, explanation, and critique.

Gender:

Against the historical background of a whole series of problematic claims about the 'nature' of women (within Psychology, the claims of some supporters of Eugenics and Sociobiology

immediately spring to mind), the importance of the original feminist distinction between (biological) sex and (socially constructed) gender is not disputed:

The distinction between sex and gender, an important step in the understanding of women's position, is now widely accepted both within and beyond the feminist literature. (Barrett, 1980, p.43)

The distinction between sex and gender enables feminist criticism to be directed against assertions which simplistically and problematically proclaim aspects of gender as "natural" to women (the implication is, "natural to *all* women"). The conceptual separation of 'nature' and 'culture' therefore facilitates a critique of 'essentialist' arguments which would advocate that the subordination of women (as a group) to men (as a group) is 'natural' and therefore not only inevitable but also culturally necessary. The feminist separation of gender as culture, and sex as nature therefore constitutes an attempt to account for the politics of culture, for the construction of 'femininity' and 'masculinity'.

However, a simplistic location of gender within the sphere of "culture" as opposed to "nature" is highly problematic in that it does not contribute to an analysis of the dynamic interaction between sex/gender, nature/culture - a dynamic impossible to disentangle at an individual level; it is only in terms of men and women as groups that gender categorisations can be made - or, in the case of a problematic definition, 'unmade'.

Moi's definition of gender is typical of the formulations made by Anglo-American feminist critics. By analysing and comparing two definitions of gender within Moi's (1985) *Sexual/Textual Politics*, the limitations of the separation, nature/culture in terms of defining gender are demonstrated. Evidence is also provided in support of the argument that, within feminist criticism, the gender/sex divide has become confused with the problem of what can be asserted about women as a group or as individuals:

It has long been an established practice among most feminists to use 'feminine' (and 'masculine') to represent social constructs (patterns of sexuality and behaviour imposed by cultural and social norms), and to reserve 'female' and 'male' for the purely biological aspects of sexual difference. Thus 'feminine' represents nature and 'female' nature in this usage. 'Femininity' is a cultural construct: one isn't born a woman, one becomes one, as Simone de Beauvoir puts it. Seen in this perspective, patriarchal oppression consists of imposing certain social standards of femininity on all biological women, in order precisely to make us believe that the chosen standards for 'femininity' are natural. Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both unfeminine and unnatural. (Moi, 1985, p.65, underlining mine)

Slippages occur in the above passage, as femininity is seen both as a "social construct" and a "cultural construct", and it is unclear as to whether or not the social and the cultural are treated as synonymous. (Nancy Armstrong, for instance, appears to define the social and cultural differently, claiming the following as "separate spheres - masculine and feminine, political and domestic, social and cultural" (p.10). The 'social', it is implied, is masculine

and political whereas the 'cultural' is domestic and feminine.) The ambiguity, the difference between 'social' and 'cultural' constitutes a fairly minor definitional problem, however; Moi's major lapse occurs when she claims that a 'social standard' (which she defines as equivalent to a cultural or social construct) is also a 'chosen standard'. Only two pages earlier, Moi has criticised Gilbert and Gubar for their endorsement of a simplistic notion of ideology, claiming that, for them, "ideology becomes a monolithic unified totality that knows no contradictions" (p. 53). In this passage, she appears to make the same mistake, imply the same social constructionism deplored in Gilbert and Gubar's work.

Moi's assertion of the notion of the 'feminine' in place of the term 'female' constitutes a criticism of the work of Gilbert and Gubar, who use 'female' (and not 'feminine') to define and describe the writers whose works they are analysing. Moi's reformulation, however, does not finally contribute to a clarification of the divide that is traditionally drawn between nature and culture, gender and biological sex. That the definition Moi gives of gender is based on circular and contradictory⁵¹ reasoning (the contradictions due in part to the fact that Moi hasn't distinguished between the group 'women', and individual women) is demonstrated in the following statement:

"But the study of a female tradition in literature, while not necessarily an attempt to create 'a female enclave', is surely *more* than a methodological choice: it is an urgent *political* necessity. If patriarchy oppresses women *as women*, defining us all as 'feminine' regardless of individual differences, the feminist struggle must both try to undo the patriarchal strategy that makes 'femininity' intrinsic to biological femaleness, and at the same time insist on defending women precisely *as women* (p.82, underlining mine).

The first passage of Moi's that is quoted claims that oppressive techniques are reliant on their ability to brand female non-conformists as "both *unfeminine* and *unnatural*" (p.65). In other words, she asserts that women are not all defined as "'feminine' regardless of individual differences" (p.82), and the power of the (group) definition 'feminine' therefore resides in its capacity to designate certain (individual) females as 'unfeminine': "Thus a woman who refuses to conform can be labelled both *unfeminine* and *unnatural*" (p.65). In contrast to this, Moi asserts in the above passage that patriarchy defines "us all as 'feminine' regardless of individual differences" (p.82). If this latter claim is upheld, then there is obviously no point in labelling a woman 'unfeminine'.

Moi cannot assert that the concepts 'feminine' and 'female' be disentangled (in other words, scrap the essentialist, biological, naturalising concepts), and simultaneously retain the original biological definition of 'female', and even valorize it at that: "defending women precisely *as women*" (p.82). Moi's problem can therefore be seen to reside in the fact that she has not differentiated feminist aims regarding the individual feminine/female from the group 'women'.

Moi's more recent analysis of gender retains the definition of gender as socially constructed:

Many feminists claim that gender is socially constructed. It is not difficult to make such a sweeping statement. The problem is to determine what kind of specific consequences such a claim may have. (Moi, 1991, p.1019)

Actually, the problem does not reside in determining the 'specific consequences' of such a claim. The problem actually lies in making such a 'sweeping statement'; feminist formulations of gender as (merely) culturally constructed can only generate empirical description, which often therefore simply endorse gender biases: as is demonstrated by Moi's assertion, in the same paper, of the common, customary feminist refrain that, "under current social conditions and in most contexts maleness functions as positive and femaleness as negative symbolic capital" (1991, p.1036).

Current feminist employments of the distinction between sex and gender, culture and nature, eradicates the dialectic necessary for analysis, explanation and critique. Such literary criticism merely repetitively asserts that certain values have been "typically" associated with gender categories, on the basis of which, gender-specific values are awarded to men characters (as a group), and women characters (as a group). Despite Armstrong's (1987) resistance to assigning negative values to women characters and positive values to men - as noted by her attempt to go beyond the vocabulary of victimisation in her reading of *Emma* - she is unable to transcend description. Instead, Armstrong succumbs to the temptation to claim *Emma* as a positive female figure; she cannot therefore adequately evaluate the textual construction of the character of *Emma* (see also chapter four).

It is obvious that analyses of the (multiple and contradictory) articulations of gender cannot occur on the basis of a theory which places masculinity and femininity at opposite extremes of an axis which would appear to have no continuum. The problematic feminist separation of nature and culture, conflated as it is with definitional problems regarding women as a group and as individuals, cannot do justice to textual analysis, and cannot serve as an adequate basis for critique. Nor can it account for sexuality.

Sexuality:

Sexuality is a notoriously elusive object of study: it slides under our eyes from biology to poetry and back again. (Barrett, 1980, p.42)

Thus begun, Barrett's essay does not engage with the problematics of a subject that slides, slips, vacillates between one thing and another, being/becoming neither one thing nor the other. Instead, Barrett falls back on the tried and true, iterating the common feminist

definition of sexuality which claims a distinction between biologically 'assigned' sex, and socially constructed gender: "Sexual politics", she claims, have been established by feminists "as a significant area of struggle. This achievement is predicated upon a knowledge that sexual relationships are political because they are socially constructed and therefore could be different" (p.43).

The feminist claim that "patterns of sexuality and behaviour (are) imposed by cultural and social norms" (Moi, 1985, p.65) is challenged in terms of the implied humanism of "norms", a humanism which presumes that sexuality is amenable to normative practices in the social sphere. The difference between a humanist (psychological) and a psychoanalytic account of violence resides in the fact that the psychologist cannot ultimately account for the appearance of violence in a human not 'naturally' violent (van Zyl, 1990). A psychoanalytic account, on the other hand, accepts that "aggression or the death drive (thanatos) is as natural as the libido (eros)" (p.4), and would require culture in order "to explain the fact that aggression is regularly repressed or sublimated" (p.4). It therefore would explain violence in terms of "accounting for its reappearance" (p.4). If psychoanalysis is considered to offer the only account or explanation of violence that recognises the extent to which violence is *"both a political and a psychological question"* (p.4, italics mine) - an explanation that is obviously necessary for a feminism which requires the recognition of sexual violence as a psychological problem for individual women and as a political problem for women as a group - this provides one argument for advocating that psychoanalytic accounts of sexuality and violence be utilised within feminist discourse.

The second argument for adopting the psychoanalytic account of sexuality lies in the need to challenge definitions such as the following:

Sexuality is, in other words, the cultural dimension of sex, which, to my way of thinking, includes as its most essential and powerful component the form of representation we take to be nature itself. (Armstrong, 1987, p.11)

The above definition, sophisticated though it may appear to be, is obviously inadequate to the task of analysing a sexuality that continually slips between biology and poetry, between nature and culture. At least Barrett acknowledges this as a problem, even if her assertion of the fact that sexual violence is both a political and a psychological issue for women does not effectively resolve the problem of defining sexuality, or contribute to a critique of sexual violence against women.

In the face of the conceptual inadequacies which plague feminist theory, a radical psychoanalytic account of sexuality offers itself as an alternative. In Freud's account of

sexuality, the individual is considered divided in terms of a fundamental conflict "between nature and culture, between the body in nature subject to the pleasure/unpleasure series and the person in culture functioning in accordance with the reality principle" (van Zyl, 1990, p.4). Sexuality is therefore defined as residing somewhere *between* need in nature and value in culture. The Freudian third term - as that which is neither nature nor culture - provides a critique of all binary systems. The theory of the (sexual) drive is therefore located in neither the field of bodily need nor in the field of culture or value. The drive, therefore, is the representationally appropriated form of need, that which requires cultural organisation to be goal-directed, the displaced representative of instinct. As a representation, then, sexuality is already culturally organised, but not simply 'cultural'.⁵² Feminist definitions of gender and sexuality which define sexuality as residing simply within the realm of the (consciously) 'cultural' denote an adherence to an unmediated and unproblematised notion of "reality" which cannot do justice to the problematics of sexuality and gender, of that which is neither cultural nor natural.

Desire:

This concept is particularly difficult to analyse. Whilst all three of the feminist writers investigated refer to "desire", not one of them ventures a precise definition of desire. Moi is relatively exempt from criticism in this regard in that she never specifically invokes "desire" in a capacity that would require that she define it; it is indexed in Moi's text only in reference to the pages in which she discusses the theories of Lacan and Kristeva.

Despite the fact that Armstrong's book is entitled *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, and the frequent invocation of "desire", no precise definition thereof is ever offered. From the way in which "desire" is catalogued in the index, it appears to be derived from both psychoanalytic and historical-materialist precepts, referring variously to: "acquisitiveness versus altruism; aroused by fiction; 'corrupted' (politico-economic); desirability of daughters of aspiring social groups; displaced eroticism; forbidden; formed by words; for the phallus; psychoanalytic fables of; seen underlying domesticity (Freud); substitutes for original objects" (1987, p.293), et cetera. Armstrong claims that she will "trace the history of a specifically modern form of desire" (p.3), and says that "domestic fiction unfolded the *operations of human desire* as if they were independent of political history. And this helped to create the illusion that desire was entirely subjective and therefore essentially different from the politically encodable forms of behaviour to which desire gave rise" (p.9, italics mine).⁵³

From the way in which "desire" is used by both Armstrong and Radway, it appears that they imbue it with ontological status. Like gender and sexuality, desire is perceived as already in culture, and is similarly amenable to 'construction' by normative social practices; Radway talks about the "construction of desire" (1987, p.9), claiming to be able to "link a specific desire with a particularly chosen route to the fulfilment of that desire" (p.13).

The use of the word "desire" possibly signals both a retention of, and some kind of a departure from, psychoanalytic concepts - given that Freud seldom used this term, talking instead of the instinct and drive. This is referenced by Radway's turning "to psychoanalytic theory in general and to Nancy Chodorow's feminist revision of Freud in particular" (p.13). Perhaps "desire" then signals the problematised nature of the feminist "Desire for Freud" (Jackson, 1983); that, for many feminists, any association with psychoanalysis 'proper', as opposed to 'feminist revisions' thereof is politically problematic and psychologically fraught. The delightful ambiguity of Gallop's (1982) title, *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: The Daughter's Seduction*, nevertheless conveys an anxiety of sorts, an ambivalence regarding a feminist attraction to, and ineffectual resistance of, the necessarily Oedipal figure of Father Freud.

Although it may be incumbent upon feminist criticism to discard this nebulous notion of desire, it is important to recognise the extent to which "desire" is useful precisely because of its ability to slip between categories, to imply the psychoanalytic without having specifically to engage with the problematics of psychoanalytic discourse for a humanist feminism. However, were feminist literary criticism to abandon this ambiguous vocabulary of "desire", what would be required of it is that it similarly abandon description in terms of gender categories; and, on the basis of Oedipus would be required to launch into an explanation of the cultural logic (required for capital production) - an explanation which would attempt to account for the problematic socio-psychological positioning of women in the modern era. This would require that simplistic definitions of gender as culture, and problematic definitions of patriarchy as simply the domination of women by men, could not be invoked. Such an analysis would require engaging with psychoanalysis and historical materialism, to the detriment of some much cherished feminist definitions and arguments.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, it is important to debunk the nebulous feminist notion of gender, sexuality and desire. These need to be replaced with analyses which would attempt to trace out what kind of psychic apparatus is required for a specific social formation (that is, what particular kind of individual is a culture required to produce), and what special implications this cultural logic has for women, both as a group and as individuals.

The next chapter will return to the text of *Emma* in terms of Armstrong's notion that the novel served to transcribe the social contract into the sexual contract. In her work, Armstrong undertakes a reading of *Emma* in the light of this hypothesis. However, the very dualistic conception of gender upheld by Armstrong, far from underpinning, actually undermines her argument regarding the sexual contract. It emerges that the figure of sexual exchange, far from endorsing gender difference, functions to transcend the dualism of gender. While the "qualities of mind" of the protagonists appear qualitatively equal, quantitative inequalities such as those social inequalities concomitant to gender difference are translated into a fictive equality through "qualities of mind". It can therefore be demonstrated that one cannot read sexual exchange on the basis of gender. In this lies Armstrong's crucial mistake. By focusing on gender and celebrating the figure of the female in her reading, she is unable to pull together the argument regarding the social and sexual contracts. The next chapter will motivate against dualistic perceptions of gender. It will provide an account of Marx's notion of exchange which is invoked to demonstrate that Armstrong's argument regarding the social and sexual contracts has a certain validity, despite the problems inherent in her reading.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Social and the Sexual Contracts

The dualism inherent in the notion of gender itself cannot be mapped directly onto a paradigm of gender politics. The cultural/political functions of gender necessarily entail a far more complex process of mapping. It is the contention of this thesis that the establishment of marriage as prototypical of the (myth of the) social contract by which women and men have contractual, and thereby formally 'equal' (and reciprocal) obligations, rights and duties, is central to an understanding of the politics of gender. The following section will define the term an 'economy of pleasure' in terms of how the construct of gender equality, on the basis of 'qualities of mind', is evoked as a prerequisite for an alliance. Recourse is thereby made to Armstrong's thesis regarding the transcription of the social contract into a sexual contract, in and through novels.

In Austen's fiction, this process is definable, not so much in terms of the transcription of the social into a sexual contract, but rather, in terms of the sexual contract deriving both validity and authority from the social contract. The contracts or alliances described cannot be subsumed under the notion of the 'companionate marriage' detailed by Armstrong. Instead, through reinscribing a gender debate into a discourse of 'qualities of mind', Austen's fictional account of marriage transcends the dualism of Armstrong's schemata. Furthermore, this translation into 'qualities of mind' represents the means whereby the notion of qualitative equality becomes palimpsestic upon a 'quantitative' or social inequality.

4.1 An Economy of Pleasure

Armstrong invokes the term, "an economy of pleasure" (1987, p.15) which is not to be confused with Barthes' notion of "the pleasure of the text" (1976). Armstrong uses the term to describe the way in which criticism of the novel served to "censor and foster it simultaneously" (p.15). In other words, whilst novel reading was initially counterposed to education, educationalists also began to claim that some form of reading 'pleasure' could be harnessed in the form of amusement, keeping the student's interest alive and therefore enhancing education. This is endorsed by a statement pertaining to the education of Fanny Price of *Mansfield Park*, that she had "a fondness for reading, which, *properly directed*,

must be an education in itself" (p.18, italics mine). "Properly directed" points to the fact that supervision actuates a distinction between pleasure and education.

Within this thesis, however, the term 'an economy of pleasure' is used to describe how marriage is designated within *Emma* such that Emma's alliance with Knightley is constructed in terms of a strict economy of worth, consequence, and qualities of mind. Whilst the notion of "marrying for love" is endorsed within the text, the narrative nonetheless implicitly condemns marriage outside of one's social stratum and economic context - as noted by the Austen's use of "alliance" to define marriage (see chapter three).

Armstrong argues that novels functioned to transcribe the social contract into a sexual contract by means of the narrative process. The logic upon which the social contract is based will not be detailed, nor the critiques of it. Nonetheless, a brief introduction to the construct of the social contract is necessary, if only to set the basis for tracing and assessing Armstrong's argument. The social contract presumes two parties who enter into equal exchange. As a figure, however, the social "contract creates the two parties who supposedly enter into the exchange" (Armstrong, 1987, p.31, italics mine). Given that consent is a contractual prerequisite, "power resides not so much in the consent of the people as in their belief in the fiction that such a promise" - the individual's obligation to government - "has indeed been made. In other words, the power of consent derives from the *fiction* of the original contract and not from the fact of its enactment" (p.34, italics mine). This means that "the power of the social contract was nothing more than the power of (a) fiction" (p.34).

Armstrong argues that within various novels classified in her terms as 'domestic fiction', the social contract was transcribed into a sexual contract (pp.30-58). Whilst all the steps of the process whereby the social is transcribed into the sexual contract are not made entirely explicit, her basic argument seems to be as follows: The logic of the social contract is that two parties are able, free and willing to enter into an exchange. Armstrong claims that the logic of the sexual contract (i.e., marriage) is based upon that of the social contract. The sexual contract requires two parties as a man and a woman, who are able, free, and willing to sign a marriage contract.

Blackstone's (1765) *Commentaries on the Laws of England* describe civil marriage as valid if three conditions are met: the persons are "willing to contract," "able to contract," and "did contract". Willingness to contract, he goes on to write, consists in consent. (Scarry, 1990, p.885)

According to Armstrong, the problem of equality between the two parties is overcome by assigning formally equal but qualitatively different, compensatory and reciprocal 'powers' to each: "Man rules the mind of the world; woman its heart" (Rowton, in Armstrong, 1987,

p.40). Armstrong, referring to the sexual contract as "the middle-class ideal of love" (p.41), claims that it is transcribed into a cultural logic by means of those novels she refers to as "domestic fiction". She claims that the sexual contract has immense cultural authority, and "is still in fact regulating social relationships; it does much the same work that Rousseau imagined the social contract would perform" (p.42).

Armstrong claims that a central theme occurs wherein marriage "miraculously transforms all social differences into gender differences, and gender differences into qualities of mind" (p.51). Her argument is that "such a representation (marriage) creates personal fulfilment where there had been internal conflict and social unity where there had been competing class interests. By attributing political and emotional authority to the male and female respectively, the figure (of sexual exchange) inscribes the political within the male character and then contains both within heart and home" (p.51).

The particular novel adduced to substantiate the above claims is *Pride and Prejudice*. However, Armstrong's argument that, within the text, 'competing class interests' is replaced by 'social unity' can be challenged. Equality of class is clearly demonstrated in *Pride and Prejudice*. This is the reply Elizabeth gives to Darcy's aunt when questioned as to her intentions:

In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere (in which I have been brought up). He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are equal. (Austen, 1955e, p.308)

The corollary of an equality between the two partners undermines Armstrong's claim regarding competing class interests. None of Austen's key protagonists marry outside of the boundaries of their class. Certainly the marriage partners involved do not constitute competing class interests, even though they may represent differing 'levels' within the same 'class'.⁵⁵ In the latter instance, social unity is not a consequence of a union, even within the circumscribed world described by the text. Elizabeth's response is in reply to Lady Catherine's assertion that, if Elizabeth marries Darcy, "Your alliance will be a disgrace; your name will never be mentioned by any of us" (p.307). Elizabeth's marriage to Darcy, although finally acknowledged by those who opposed it, such as Miss Bingley and Lady Catherine,⁵⁶ is never fully accepted by them. The marriage, therefore, does not result in social unity. It is only Darcy's social prestige that entails that others accept his choice. This is attested to by the statement that answers Lady Catherine:

"These are heavy misfortunes," replied Elizabeth. "But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation, that she could, upon the whole have no cause to repine". (p.307)

Gender and Sexual Exchange

On the basis of these considerations, Armstrong's claim regarding the transformation of social differences into gender differences cannot be upheld. Furthermore (as elaborated in chapter three), the notion that nineteenth century novels accorded emotional authority to women and political authority to men cannot be upheld. Armstrong had argued that it was upon the basis of such representations of marriage that the emergence and dominance of the middle class could be explained. Such representations, according to Armstrong, define and demarcate the division between 'male' and 'female' along lines which function both to define the modern individual and position him or her in line with modern forms of power.⁵⁷

Armstrong's problematic reading of *Emma* raises doubts about her project of accounting for the narrative process as the site of transcription of the social into the sexual contract. This hypothesis suffers because Armstrong focuses on the dualistic categorisations of gender (see chapter three). This dualism cannot fully account for the mechanisms of exchange which implicitly function in the mode of the contract, and it is only from this fiction that the figure of sexual exchange acquires authority.

An analysis of Armstrong's reading of *Emma* will dispute the claims she makes about gender. Although she refers to the figure of sexual exchange, too privileged a focus on the figure and authority of the female protagonist severely restricts her argument. It also undermines the assertions made regarding the role the sexual contract plays in regulating social relationships.

The Limits of Domesticity

Armstrong utilises the term "domestication" in order to account for the formally equal and reciprocal powers women derive from marriage.⁵⁸ By "domestication" (p.90), Armstrong refers to the role assigned to women as "the bearer(s) of moral norms and socialiser(s) of men" (p.89). In particular, domestication is idealised in "the companionate marriage" (p.41) and it provides the means whereby "the female relinquishes political control to the male in order to acquire *exclusive authority* over domestic life, emotions, taste and morality" (p.41, *italics mine*). Through the implication that the female figure acquires emotional, moral and domestic authority, such "a model of sexual exchange created a gendered form of power".⁵⁹ According to the logic of this argument, then, the very "qualities of mind" the protagonists of Austen's texts will bring to a marriage are necessarily gender-specific, likewise the powers accorded to each.

Armstrong is unable, systematically, to sustain an argument regarding the powers given, and the role assigned to women in marriage. This is particularly evident in her reading of *Emma*. As a character, Emma is crucially constructed in relation to a series of errors or failures. These flaws capture Emma's failures in relation to procedures of normalisation, and are precisely contained, or encoded with respect to, the domains of the emotional, moral and domestic. Therefore, Armstrong circumvents a full analysis of an erring Emma. First, such an analysis would dispute Armstrong's claims regarding the "domestication" of men by women. Emma clearly represents deficiencies, and, inadequately socialised herself, cannot be granted full status and authority as a socialiser of Harriet, never mind as a "socialiser of men" (p.89). Not only does the notion of domestication comprise the basis of the "companionate marriage" delineated by Armstrong, but if domestication is undermined, her central term "domestic fiction" is effectively implicated by this critique. Whilst the reasons probably contribute to Armstrong's disavowal of error in the figure of Emma, possibly the primary motivation for this disavowal is grounded in Armstrong's notion of the primacy of female authority in the novel. Armstrong therefore does not concede the extent to which the figure of Emma is problematised within the text - a particularly interesting manoeuvre to make in a book which claims to draw much of its impetus from "the work of Michel Foucault" (p.10).

Although Armstrong does refer to the "formation of the nineteenth century *individual*" she claims that "The individual is, by *her* very nature, unformed and in want of perfection" (p.154, italics mine). The fact that the gender of the individual is stressed corroborates the fact that Armstrong believes that "the modern individual was first and foremost a woman" (p.8). This hypothesis is disputed throughout this reading and in the section entitled "Homo Domesticus". The description of the modern gendered individual as both 'unformed' and 'in want of perfection' induces a tension into Armstrong's reading. This contradiction highlights the contrariness of Armstrong's dual aims regarding error, the individual, and the primacy of female authority in the novel.

Armstrong converts the sexual contract into a linguistic one so that *Emma* can be analysed, dualistically, in terms of gender-segregated norms in relation to reading, writing and speech. In so doing, she not only makes a series of highly dubious claims regarding gender and culture, but she does not substantiate her original claims regarding the social and sexual contracts. Instead, she reduces the sexual contract to a linguistic debate, claiming that, "The procedures for reading and writing ... suggest that sexual relations are, before anything else, a linguistic contract" (p.138).

Armstrong claims that Harriet is an actant which serves to centre an essentially *linguistic* debate between a male and a female system of values. The over-simplistic, dualistic assignment of the value system, "intrinsic worth", to the latter and "social level" (p.140) to the former has already been criticised in chapter three. However, it is through the notion of conflicting values that Armstrong attempts to reinscribe the sexual contract into a linguistic contract. Armstrong therefore modifies her original argument regarding the fact that the sexual contract serves to replace competing class interests with social unity. No longer does Armstrong claim that a gender debate constitutes "the terms for a conflict of classes so much as it identifies the poles of opinion within only one - literate - class" (p.139); "Mr Knightley and Emma differ *only* on the issue of the proportion of feeling to rationality that one should exercise in choosing a mate" (p.139, *italics mine*). In concluding her analysis, Armstrong notes that:

The conflict between male and female did not require the conversion of the one to the other's system of values after a.; it simply required finding the right kind of currency to represent what was in the interest of both. (p.151)

The currency referred to is a linguistic one; one moreover that transacts between a male and female system of values. Armstrong therefore claims that, in the forging of an alliance between Emma and Knightley, "male and female echo one another in a mutually authorising relationship" (p.151). That is, neither has to "capitulate" (p.141) to the other's (gender-specific) value system, but each has to admit the worth of such a system, thereby recognising the value of the 'other'. Gender and value systems thus conflated, any differences between them are surmounted linguistically, this linguistic compromise being read by Armstrong as a sexual contract; "And inasmuch as the novel confines its theatre of action within a framework where social relations are determined by sexual relations, the linguistic contract is a social contract as well" (p.138).

The above argument admits a form of equality between the sexes, equality being a necessary precondition of exchange. And yet, both the 'equality' delineated, which amounts merely to the recognition of the other's value system, and the fact that linguistic agreement constitutes both the mechanism and currency of exchange, are entirely unsatisfactory. In particular, the original contentions regarding the social and sexual contracts remain, in the main, unaddressed. However, this does not comprise the whole of Armstrong's argument. A fuller analysis of her reading will indicate why the route originally proposed by her was not fully explored.

To a limited extent, Armstrong does concede the function that defect plays in the construction of the character of Emma. She claims that, "for Austen the female requires

reform at least as much as - often more than - the male' (p.151). Initially, this may appear to contradict her contention regarding female custodianship of moral, emotional and domestic authority. However, Armstrong is undeniably equivocal about the nature of error in the figure of Emma. This ambivalence relates the dual aims of Armstrong's project. On the one hand, she attempts to write a history based on the work of Foucault's (1979) *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, in which error is seen to be pivotal to the construction of the modern individual. At the same time, however, Armstrong attempts to prove that the prototype of the modern individual was a woman. In so doing, she wishes to claim, in the figure of such a woman, a positive, political feminist victory.

Armstrong does concede some degree of error in the figure of Emma. For instance, she claims that "Austen attributes the smallest lapse in social decorum to a failure within the individual, a flaw which she identifies as *a defect of gender*" (p.153, italics mine). However, Armstrong also needs to assign a positive value to Emma, and given that Knightley perceives an erring Emma, Armstrong refuses to concede error in the figure of Emma when it has been textually encoded in terms of (what Armstrong construes as) Knightley's "male" values or value system. For instance, although Knightley may condemn Emma's inability to read texts regularly through, Armstrong exonerates this fact; Emma's "failure to read may be initially regarded as a flaw, but because of Austen's apparently critical attitude toward written culture, Emma's lack of diligence in this respect proves a *virtue*, a refusal to be written by culture" (p.149, italics mine).⁶⁰

Although Armstrong cannot readily grant moral authority to the figure of Emma, it is precisely what is accorded Emma; Armstrong's bias made transparent by the use of "virtue" to describe Emma's failure to read.⁶¹ Armstrong appears intent on utilising, and thereby endorsing, the very bifurcatory aspects of gender that feminist criticism would appear to oppose. In her writing, however, women are accorded a positive value, thereby reversing the signs of the polarities usually reserved for the positions 'male' and 'female'. Armstrong sidesteps an investigation of the role and function of reading within the text - which would conceivably lead to a more detailed analysis of the function error plays in the construction of the character of Emma. Instead of reading reading practices, an initial analysis of 'male' and 'female' writing practices is translated into one which asserts significant differences between the verbal practices of men and women: "If the hierarchy among styles of masculine writing creates a gap between writing and speech in this novel, then the hierarchy among styles of feminine speech effaces these differences between speech and writing" (p.149).

Armstrong then claims that literacy (a term she never fully defines) "is not acquired from writing at all but through mastery of the rules for polite speech" (p.149). She then argues that, "Austen also grants priority to the verbal practices of women, women who may never carry out programs of reading literature, but who are nevertheless essential to maintaining polite relationships within the community" (p.150). Obviously, then, women are most likely to be "literate". Armstrong also claims that "the acquisition of this form of literacy is the same as the formation of the nineteenth century individual" (p.154). This argument duplicates her hypothesis that the "modern individual was first and foremost a woman" (1987, p.8). Not only does Armstrong consider reading, writing and speech practices to be gender-specific, she assigns women authority over verbal practices, considering these the basis of a form of 'literacy', the acquisition of which forms the modern (female) individual. Armstrong then claims that:

Austen proposes a form of authority - a form of political authority - that works through literacy rather than through traditional juridical means to maintain social relations. If, by Austen's time, sexual relations are assumed to be the specialised knowledge of the female, and if it is in female writing that the terms of such relationships are figured out, then fiction fulfills its discursive function by exemplifying the conduct of relationships between men and women. (p.158)

In this way, Armstrong is able to assert a "relationship between gender and truth" (p.150); a relationship implied in her reading of *Wuthering Heights*. This means that the argument regarding the social and sexual contracts is unfortunately sacrificed in favour of asserting "The Rise of Female Authority in the Novel" (1987).⁶²

Homo domesticus

In her introduction, Armstrong claims that her history of the novel will demonstrate "that written representations of the self allowed the modern individual to become an economic and psychological reality; and ... that the modern individual was first and foremost a woman" (p.8). This argument is not corroborated by a reading of *Emma*, and men and women are not described as essentially different in terms of the values assigned each. Within *Emma*, the men are described as domestic - "Mr John Knightley was a tall, gentleman-like, and very clever man; rising in his profession, *domestic*, and respectable in his private character" (p.81, italics mine). This introduces a new form of male protagonist, *homo domesticus*. Far from requiring 'domestication', Knightley's brother is presented as incapable of understanding that home is not all in all to all; subsequent to an argument Emma has to concede that "there was something honourable and valuable in the strong *domestic* habits, the all-sufficiency of home to himself, whence resulted her brother's disposition to look down on the common rate of social intercourse, and those to whom it was important" (p.85, italics mine).

Contrary to all reasonable expectation, Mr Knightley does not have to be coaxed gently into marriage. His brother observes him "having some thoughts of marrying" (p.410). When in need of distraction from his love for Emma, Knightley visits his brother's house, but finds it eminently unsuitable for his purposes, particularly given the similarities between Emma and her sister - his brother's wife:

- He had gone to learn to be indifferent (to Emma). - But he had gone to a wrong place. There was too much *domestic* happiness in his brother's house; woman wore too amiable a form in it. (p.382, italics mine)

Armstrong's claim that the "figure of sexual exchange" functions to "translate political conflict into psychological terms" (p.51) is not borne out by a reading of *Emma*.

Armstrong's conceptualisation of the modern individual as first and foremost a woman has been challenged, along with her notion of 'domesticity'. In particular, the men within Austen's fiction are clearly not described as requiring domestication at the hands of women. To the contrary, Emma is in greater need of domestication by Knightley than Knightley is in need of domestication by Emma. The reading of *Emma* advocated here does not consider the sexual contract reducible to a linguistic exchange in terms of gender-specific values.

4.2 Qualitatively Equal Exchange

In this section, the first chapter of Karl Marx's *Capital, Volume I* is adduced as an account of the process of exchange. There "can be no exchange without equality" (Aristotle, in Marx, 1990, p.151); "Equality in the full sense" between two kinds of things "can be arrived at only if we abstract from their real inequality, if we reduce them to the characteristic they have in common" (Marx, 1990, p.160). In the case of Austen's fiction, this characteristic, the "third thing" (p.127)⁶³ to which gender is reducible - that of 'qualities of mind'. Through being "reduced to the same unit" (p.141) of exchange, an equivalence is introduced, and the characters and qualities of mind of the protagonists become comparable. In Austen's fiction, the 'qualities of mind' of marriage partners are invariably compared, and described as being of equal or unequal worth. Such a means of reinscribing gender in terms of character then facilitates exchange, by means of marriage, or the 'sexual contract'.

Since exchange implicitly functions in terms of a *contract*, it is from the power of the fiction of the social contract that the figure of sexual exchange acquires authority. Marx's delineation of commodity exchange proves significant to understanding the preconditions and mechanisms of exchange underlying the alliances described within Austen's fiction. This reading does not attempt to read desire in terms of production, or marriage in terms of

commodity exchange, but simply examines the "'fantastic form' concealing what is not equivalent" (D'Amico, 1990, p.91); "the distortive and mystifying function of the equivalence form" (p.92). The argument is that the transcription of gender difference into qualities of mind not only enables marriage to occur, but serves to conceal social and material inequalities between men and women.

In order fully to delineate the role the social contract plays within Austen's text in relation to the description of marriage, it is necessary, briefly, to note some of the differences between bond and contract; Austen's text does not so much transcribe the social into a sexual contract, as use the language of the social contract to overwrite the vocabulary of marriage originally derivative of bond.

From Bond to Contract

The pre-modern form of power is "characterised by the bond" (Bowyer, 1992, p.2) as the principal mode of insertion of the subject within the social fabric. Prototypical of the bond is the filial relationship. Bond is predicated upon an unequal relationship, and "bonds allocate rights, obligations and duties differentially" (van Zyl, 1990, p.9). Bond can be distinguished from contract in terms of the right to violence accorded the older, more senior or stronger party. Violence is legitimated as an instrument of social control in terms of "nurture, in contemporary terms, in the interests of training or education" (p.10).

"The modern or psychological form of power" is "characterised by the social contract as the principal means of exchange between individuals" (Bowyer, 1992, p.2). The social contract comprises the form of social relation required for commodity production or capitalism: "The emergence of capitalism relied on a decoding of property, whereby private property was no longer the bond of personal dependence, but marked the independence of the subject, insofar as private property relates to abstract rights" (Deleuze and Guattari, in Kistner, 1992, p.2). Marx, writing about the process by which commodities are exchanged, notes the extent to which notions of consent and contract are required for capital:

In order that these objects may enter into relation with each other as commodities, their guardians must place themselves in relation to one another as persons whose will resides in those objects, and must behave in such a way that each does not appropriate the commodity of the other, and alienate his own, except through an act to which both parties *consent*. The guardians must therefore recognise each other as owners of private property. *This juridical relation, whose form is the contract*, whether as part of a developed legal system or not, is a relation between two wills which mirrors the economic relation. (Marx, 1990, p.178, italics mine.)

The "commodity is simultaneously an exchange value and a *hieroglyphics* of social relations - it is literally a text" (D'Amico, 1990, p.93); "Marx shows how the *form* in which labour

becomes abstract is also the necessity by which exchange moves towards equivalence" (p.93):

The secret of the expression of value, namely the equality and equivalence of all kinds of labour because and in so far as they are human labour in general, could not be deciphered until the concept of human equality had already acquired the permanence of a fixed popular opinion. This however becomes possible only in a society where the commodity-form is the universal form of the product of labour, hence the dominant social relation is the relation between men as possessors of commodities. (Marx, 1990, p.152, italics mine)

The concept of human equality is posited as a prerequisite to conceptualising human labour as equivalent and therefore as a necessary precondition for commodity exchange under capital. Charges relating to the spuriousness or "fictiveness" (Scarry, 1990, p.895) of the social contract have been levelled against it, since the beginning: "More than a decade before (Rousseau's) *The Social Contract* was published, British philosophers had already discounted the idea of a state founded on voluntary consent" (Armstrong, 1987, p.33). Despite the inherent fraudulence of the social contract, which presumes an equality between 'consenting' parties where no such equality exists (and which therefore disputes the extent to which one of the parties can be said to 'consent'), it is nonetheless crucial to the logic of capital.

Within the text of *Emma*, marriage between Knightley and Emma is only contracted once the 'qualities of mind' of both parties are considered equivalent. It is not so much that sexual 'exchange' can only take place once differences becomes equivalences in terms of this 'third thing' to which they are reducible, but that, within the text, marriage is seen to derive both validity and authority from the form of the social contract. Austen's text can therefore be read as transcribing the logic of the social contract into the domain of marriage, previously predicated upon bond.

Qualitatively Equal "Qualities of Mind"

The notion of an equal partnership is endorsed in Austen's fiction. However, the alliances themselves are not articulated along strictly gender-specific lines or boundaries. Instead, a gender debate is converted into a description of the "qualities of mind" of the partners. The particular qualities delineated range from those of character and disposition, resolution, delicacy and steadiness of principle, to feeling, temper, ease and liveliness, generosity, taste and manners, to those of understanding, judgement, information and knowledge. In other words, the engendered being is rearticulated into a framework that does not explicitly reveal the gendering process; 'qualities of mind' are typified in terms of gender primarily insofar as they describe either the male or female protagonist. In all alliances celebrated within Austen's texts, male and female reciprocally and equitably benefit from the union.

In some instances, the woman is described as receiving relatively greater benefit from the alliance:⁶⁴

It was a union that must have been to his advantage of both; by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved, and from his judgement, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance. (Elizabeth Bennet of herself and Darcy, *Pride and Prejudice*, p.268)

In other cases, the man is described as benefiting somewhat more from the alliance:⁶⁵

... but still as he is, beyond a doubt, really attached to Miss Fairfax, and will soon, it may be hoped, have the advantage of being constantly with her, I am very ready to believe his character will improve, and acquire from her's the steadiness and delicacy of principle that it wants. (Mr Knightley of Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax, *Emma*, p.394)

Whilst in other instances both are considered to be equitably matched, and neither is seen to benefit more greatly than the other:

"You are a good girl," he replied, "and I have great pleasure in thinking you will be so happily settled. I have not a doubt of your doing very well together. Your tempers are by no means unlike. You are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income." (Mr Bennet of Jane Bennet and Bingley, *Pride and Prejudice*, p.301)

Marx notes that as soon as a "certain customary stability" (1990, p.167) is established within an exchange relationship, the proportions in which products are exchanged "appear to result from the nature of the products" (p.167). In a similar fashion, it appears natural to describe the sexual contracts undertaken in terms of the qualities of mind of the protagonists. Not only does this description enable parity between the genders, but such an equivalence is the basis for exchange in terms of the logic of the social contract.

By describing the qualities of mind of the protagonists as equivalent, the power of Austen's fiction does not reside in the fact that gender is endorsed along the lines proposed by Armstrong, of a division between private and public, emotional and political, female and male. Instead, *Emma* can be read as rearticulating the division between public and private into a framework in which that which is private and domestic is validated for both genders. Through the reinscription of gender differences into qualitatively equivalent qualities of mind, an "equality" is described along lines that are not gender-specific: "Bourgeois society is ruled by equivalence. It makes the dissimilar comparable by reducing it to abstract qualities" (Adorno & Horkheimer, in D'Amico, 1990, p.94).

However, the construction of equivalence between the consenting partners implies that the sexual contract effectively nullifies or overrides social inequalities. Although it has previously been argued that none of Austen's key protagonists marry outside the boundaries

of class, some of them do marry an important 'level' or so above or below them. In such an instance, equality and equivalence are discursively constructed, in terms of qualities of mind. For instance, Elizabeth Bennet's reply concerning the incongruity of a marriage between herself and Darcy is that, "He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter: so far we are *equal*" (1955e, p.308, italics mine). Despite her poverty-stricken but nonetheless genteel background, Jane Fairfax is described along with Mr Knightley as an exemplar, both superior, says Emma, to Frank Churchill and herself: "there is a likeness in our destiny; the destiny which bids fair to connect us with two characters so much superior to our own" (p.422).

Whilst a qualitative equality is asserted within Austen's texts, qualities of mind are nonetheless positively interrelated with social or economic or 'quantitative' equalities. In terms of the economy of pleasure constructed within *Emma*, her alliance is celebrated on the basis of an equivalence drawn in terms of qualities of mind. Nevertheless, no strong discrepancy between Emma and Knightley in terms of social worth is indicated. Although a strict or absolute parity between marriage partners in terms of economic worth and social consequence is not essential to an alliance, Austen's texts nonetheless establish a fictive social 'equality' between consenting parties.

Those marriages not celebrated within Austen's texts are often described as having taken place between partners of unequal social and economic worth. Most, however, are considered problematic because of inequalities in qualities of mind. It is said of Elizabeth Bennet that,

Had Elizabeth's opinion been all drawn from her own family, she could not have formed a very pleasing picture of conjugal felicity or domestic comfort. Her father, captivated by youth and beauty, and that appearance of good humour which youth and beauty generally give, had married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her. Respect, esteem, and confidence had vanished for ever; and all his views of domestic happiness were overthrown. (1955e, p.205)

The problematic nature of an "unequal marriage" is discoursed on at length in *Pride and Prejudice*. In response to Mr Darcy's request for his daughter's hand, Mr Bennet, fearing that it might constitute an unequal marriage, says to Elizabeth:

Your lively talents would place you in the greatest danger in an unequal marriage. You could scarcely escape discredit and misery. My child, let me not have the grief of seeing you unable to respect your partner in life. You know not what you are about. (1955e, p.327)

Other alliances described in Austen's texts serve to demonstrate the dangers of an "unequal marriage". Again and again, the language that is evoked is that of qualities of mind, character and feeling. However, such a translation of differences into qualities of mind serves only to camouflage other inequalities. For instance, when Mr Knightley says to

Emma "of our having every right that *equal worth* can give, to be happy together" (p.409, italics mine), "equal worth" presumes not only qualities of mind but also implies or infers other kinds of equality. The transcription of gender and social difference into qualities of mind only appears to transcend social inequalities; Austen's text effectively conflates social and sexual equality, thereby concealing disparities in terms of gender and class. That the language of consent and contract informs Austen's text is partly indicated by the use of 'alliance' within the text; the word tacitly acknowledges the extent to which such concepts are presumed within Austen's text, and expanded into the domain of marriage.

The construction of the text is such that the problem of social and gender inequalities are concealed by the textual construction of character such that all differences are translated into qualitatively equivalent qualities of mind. The interrelationship between the self and the social coincides with the sexual such that the erring self simultaneously becomes the self in love. This self is then bound to the social through the sexual, in terms of a sexual contract which is entirely socially appropriate.

Social - Sexual - Self

It is only once the character of Emma Woodhouse is sufficiently engendered, transformed, and her qualities of mind enhanced that she is able to forge a contract with Mr Knightley. Austen's novel focuses on the development of Emma, and the narrative sequences serve to explicate and parallel character development. The following section will investigate the climactic moment at which Emma discovers herself. The narrative sequence is simultaneously encoded as a developmental, emotional and moral crisis. Emma's recognition of error serves a dual purpose in that it is also portrayed as an initiation or awakening into the possibility of love. The sequence brilliantly coincides the social, the sexual and the self. Through the construction of the character of Emma, the self in relation to itself and the self in relation to the social are interarticulated through the sexual.

In both *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* the female protagonists are obliged to admit the error of their ways. Their acknowledgement of the 'truth' about their dealings with others facilitates the discovery of another truth - that of love. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet has first to recognise her "prejudice"; her capacity for love is only fully awakened subsequent to the sequence given below, in which she recognises her folly:

"How despicably have I acted!" she cried. - "I, who have prided myself on my discernment! - I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity, in useless or (blameable) distrust. How humiliating is this discovery! Yet, how just a humiliation! - *Had I been in love, I could not have been more wretchedly blind.* But vanity, not love, has been my folly. - Pleased with the preference of

one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted pre-possession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. *Til [sic] this moment I never knew myself.*" (1955e, p.181, italics mine)

"Til [sic] this moment I never knew myself"; this statement initiates a process of self-discovery which culminates in a recognition of her love for Darcy. Hers is no dual or simultaneous recognition of error and love; the inner dialogue simply demonstrates how error enables the self access to "truth" about the self. However, the statement testifying to Elizabeth's blindness does anticipate her subsequent realisation of love.

The sequence in which Emma discovers herself is structured in a similar fashion to the above. Again, it is through the recognition of error that the self gains truth about the self.⁶⁶ In the following sequence, however, there is no equivocation regarding the fact that had she been in love, Emma could not have been more wretchedly blind. Instead, the interrelationship between the self and the social is manipulated into a seamless whole, and a full integration of the social, the sexual and the self is managed. The problematisation of the self in accordance with the dictates of the social is again emphasised in terms of a technology of truth. At one and the same time, however, the love awakened within the self is not only reciprocated (although the dramatic denouement is enhanced by an element of doubt), but is entirely socially appropriate. This emerges from the following 'eurekas' in the text:

A mind like hers, once opening to suspicion, made rapid progress. She touched - she admitted - she acknowledged the whole truth. Why was it so much worse that Harriet should be in love with Mr Knightley, than with Frank Churchill? Why was the evil so dreadfully increased by Harriet's having some hope of a return? It darted through her, with the speed of an arrow, that Mr Knightley must marry no one but herself! (p.360)

Emma is startled into a recognition of her love for Knightley. The moment the arrow of desire is loosed, a technology of the truth is vigilantly practiced by Emma upon her self:

Every moment had brought a fresh surprise; and every surprise must be a matter of humiliation to her. - How to understand it all! How to understand the deceptions she had been thus practising on herself, and living under! - The blunders, the blindness of her own head and heart!

... To understand, thoroughly understand her own heart, was the first endeavour.

... With insufferable vanity had she believed herself in the secret of everybody's feelings; with unpardonable arrogance proposed to arrange everybody's destiny. She was proved to have been universally mistaken; and she had not quite done nothing - for she had done mischief. (pp.363-364)

Whilst Elizabeth Bennet admits errors of judgement and discernment, both the 'head and heart' of Emma Woodhouse admit to 'blunders', 'blindness'. Emma's first endeavour is to "understand, thoroughly understand her own heart" (p.363).⁶⁷ The self in relation to the social appears best exemplified through the sexual, through that which resides between nature and culture, and which serves to bind the self into the social. In this way, the interaction between self and social is integrated as a matter of the heart.

In the arguments between Emma and Knightley, Emma appears intent both upon recognising and endorsing Harriet as an equal. However, the extent to which she discovers in herself the potential for error is demonstrated by the fact that, immediately upon Harriet's appraising her that she loves Knightley (and is not entirely without hope of a return), Emma considers the possibility of Harriet's marriage to him. Emma chastises herself severely for having not so much encouraged and endorsed, as indeed induced, Harriet's pretensions. Through the recognition of her folly, Emma becomes capable of agreeing with Knightley's appraisal: "What are Harriet Smith's claims, either of birth, nature or education, to any connection higher than Robert Martin?" (p.52). The text denotes that her awakened love for Knightley enables her to be brought into a full awareness of the social implications of her actions and errors: "Were this most *unequal* of all connexions [sic] to take place, on her must rest all the reproach of having given it a beginning" (p.365, italics mine). In this way, the full impact and horror of the social and sexual inequality between Knightley and Harriet is realised by Emma. Within the text, the words used to describe Emma's perception of the alliance between Knightley and Harriet are those of horror; "evil" (p.360) - "this dreadful sequel" (p.365) "was horrible to Emma" (p.365).

In his 1919 paper on 'The Uncanny', Freud claims that one reason for considering something 'uncanny' (the closest translation comes to the '*unheimlich*' of German) is when it is associated with "the omnipotence of thoughts, with the prompt fulfilment of wishes" (1919, p.247); "We appear to attribute an 'uncanny' quality to impressions that seek to confirm the omnipotence of thoughts and the animistic mode of thinking in general, after we have reached a stage at which, in our *judgement*, we have abandoned such beliefs" (p.241).

We - or our primitive forefathers - once believed these possibilities were realities, and were convinced that they actually happened. Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have *surmounted* these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to set upon any confirmation. As soon as something *actually happens* in our lives which seems to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny; it is as though we were making a judgement something like this: "So, after all, it is *true* that one can kill a person by the mere wish!" (pp.247-8)

Or, in the case of Emma, "So, after all, it is *true* that one can make a person want to marry another by the mere wish!" In chapter three the match-making activities of Emma were read and clearly admit a perceived omnipotence on the part of Emma. A belief in her own particular match-making powers is attested to by numerous statements. In requiring of Harriet that she devote her gratifyingly facile, thoroughly transferrable adoration to Mr Elton, "Emma could not feel a doubt of having given Harriet's fancy a proper direction" (p.34). Emma also appears to feel not a doubt of Mr Elton's reciprocation of Harriet's affections; when walking past his house, she says to Harriet, "There go you and your riddle-

book one of these days" (p.73). The apparently unshakeable conviction in her own powers of discernment, and her ability to arrange the lives and marriages of others demonstrates Freud's argument regarding "the omnipotence of thoughts"; that Emma's first match-making endeavour is crowned so soon with success appears "the prompt fulfilment of wishes" (Freud, 1919, p.247).

Emma responds to Harriet's pronouncement with horror precisely because, transferring her imagined capacities onto Harriet, Emma believes it to be true, or, at least, highly probable. Emma's horror is less related to the (apparently) gross disparity in Harriet and Knightley's situations than to its probability, in accordance with the omniscience and omnipotence Emma assigns herself regarding love and marriage: "Mr Knightley and Harriet Smith! - Such an elevation on her side! Such a debasement on his!" (p.365). This statement does not attest to the improbability of its occurrence, but rather to the rather mortifying truth that it could in fact be so:

Was it a new circumstance for a man of first-rate abilities to be captivated by very inferior powers? Was it new for one, perhaps too busy to seek, to be the prize of a girl who would seek him? - Was it new for any thing in this world to be unequal, inconsistent, incongruous - or for chance and circumstances (as second causes) to direct the human fate? (p.365)

An alliance between Knightley and Harriet is described as essentially unequal in terms of qualities of mind: 'inferior powers', 'unequal', 'inconsistent', 'incongruous'. However, the language of exchange and contract cannot adequately comprehend marriage. The reference to 'prize' denotes a slippage from the categories of equalities of *mind* that are constructed between male and female within Austen's text, a slippage uncontested by the 'debasement' on his side, 'elevation' on hers. *Ultimately, it is beyond the capacity of the vocabulary of contract to equalise the positions of men and women.*

Austen's text can be read as providing a logic in terms of which marriage is conceptualised within the realm of the social contract. *Emma* provides, if not the first instance, then at least one of the first instances in which narrative utilises the logic of the social contract to inform marriage originally predicated upon bond. Austen's rewriting of marriage in terms of contract extends this logic into the realm of marriage and requires that it engage with the problem of the position of women. That this conception of women's contractual rights and equality within marriage is not legally inscribed at the time Austen is writing can be noted by comparing two comments, one of some forty years previously, and one of almost sixty years later.

In 1765, in a book entitled, *Commentaries of the Laws of England*, Sir William Blackstone notes that "the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage,

or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband: under whose wing, protection and cover, she performs everything" (p.442). This legal definition of "what common law called 'coverture' ... actually defined the married woman's status as suspended or 'covered'" (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p.155) by that of her husband. It situates women primarily within the logic of bond, standing in relation to their husbands as serfs to lords or children to parents.⁶⁸ In 1884, Engels notes that notions of consent and contract with regard to women in marriage are only then beginning to be legally recognised: "Modern civilised systems of law are recognising more and more, first, that, in order to be effective, marriage must be an agreement *voluntarily* entered into by both parties; and secondly, that during marriage, too, both parties must be on an *equal footing* in respect to rights and obligations" (Engels, 1952, p.117, italics mine).

However, the extent to which marriage can be circumscribed within the logic of contract is queried by Engels, and, within Austen's text, by the use of "prize" to describe Knightley. The next section will raise the issue of women's positioning in terms of the vocabularies of both bond and contract, and asks the question whether feminist endorsements of consent, contract, equality and "rights" can be seen to be emancipatory in their effects.

4.3 Beyond Bond?

If feminist discourse does not have any solitary consent theorist, feminist discourse as a whole can be understood as deeply centred in the phenomenon of consent. (Scarry, 1990, p.883)

Scarry claims that feminism often overtly and rigorously critiques notions of consent and contract:⁶⁹

The overt argument in these writings is sometimes starkly against consent or contract. The charge of the "fictiveness" of contract ... resurfaces in the analysis of marriage and sexual relations: Pateman calls contract "an hypothesis, a story, a political fiction" that "justifies subjection as representing it as freedom", and MacKinnon, arguing that a woman's response to coercion in rape is often called "consent", speaks of "the contract fiction". (Scarry, 1990, p.894)

Despite the critiques levelled against consent and contract, Scarry nonetheless believes that

it is still the vocabulary of consent and contract that permits the unmasking of coercive or *patriarchal* structures. It can therefore be argued that the writings work not to displace consent (or even to offer an alternative conceptual tool) but to strengthen it by requiring that its claims be made genuine. (p.894, italics mine)

The first problem which confronts the employment of the vocabulary of consent and contract within feminist discourse relates to the definition of "patriarchy". "Patriarchy" - far from being defined in terms of a social and historical specificity - is often simply invoked,⁷⁰

invariably pejoratively. The following statement by Moi attests to the simplistic definition given "patriarchy" in feminist discourse:⁷¹

When I use the term "patriarchy" I do not mean to indicate any specific social theory of patriarchal rule. For me, the term is equivalent to the idea of "domination by men". (Moi, 1991, p.1046)

Since feminist criticism does not typically define "patriarchy" except in general terms,⁷² it is difficult to evaluate the extent to which the concepts of consent and contract can legitimately be employed by feminism in terms of a critique.

If patriarchy is conceptualised as situated within pre-modern forms of power, characterized by the bond as the principal mode of insertion of the individual within the social fabric, then a vocabulary of contract and consent can probably usefully function as a critique of 'patriarchy'. In particular, the right to violence as an instrument of social control accorded the stronger or more senior party is what feminist discourse would vehemently contest.

The logic of contract requires consent both as a contractual prerequisite and as a validation of contract. Scarry argues that consent is commonly grounded or materially anchored in the body;⁷³ this conception best exemplified by Locke's comment, "every man has a *property* in his own *person*: this no body has any right to but himself" (in Scarry, 1990, p.870). The grounding of consent within the body enables feminist theory legitimately to critique violence within the realm of sexual relations. Feminists advocate that consent be delimited such that rape within marriage,⁷⁴ for instance, becomes legally codified as an illegitimate use of violence. Introduced by "Justice Minister Kim Campbell, a self-avowed moderate feminist" (Time, 29 June 1992, p.20), new rape legislation in Canada demonstrates the extent to which feminism is reliant on the vocabulary of consent and contract to provide a critique of violence against women:

In alleged rape cases, Canada sets a tough new standard for consent. If a woman does not say no to a sexual encounter, can that mean yes? No, says the Canadian House of Commons, which passed a law that gives a new definition to consent in a rape trial. Under the legislation, unless the woman gives clear and explicit indication, either by word or conduct, that she agrees to sex, consent does not exist. A man who has sex without this voluntary agreement - including within marriage - will be guilty of rape. "The law says yes is the key. It doesn't say *acquiescence*, *silence* or *hesitation*," explains Sheila MacIntyre, a law professor at Queen's University in Ontario. (Time, 29 June 1992, p.20)

Whilst rape legislation legitimately appropriates the concepts of consent and contract, it is argued that the vocabulary of consent and contract, of equality and rights, is limited in terms of critique. For if patriarchy is conceptualised as situated in capitalism, then 'consent' and 'contract' are complicit with the cultural or social logic required for commodity production. This vocabulary therefore cannot effectively function as a critique of capitalist social relations, which take the form of the contract. Given the historical specificity of contract,

and, in particular, its relationship to capitalist modes of production, its usefulness in terms of critique is possibly limited to pre-capitalist social relations; whilst a critique of contract itself may be useful to employ against the logic of capital. That is, a historically specific social theory, or vocabulary derivative of it, can only be used to argue against a specific kind of 'patriarchal rule'; it cannot function as a critique of the nebulous notion, 'domination by men'.

The above synopsis, however, does not fully address the confusions and paradoxes which notions of consent and contract present to feminist theory. Scarry argues that much feminist theorising about contract can be read as attempting to strengthen contract "by requiring that its claims be made genuine" (1990, p.894). Arguments for making contract genuine for women presume that the problematic socio-political position of women would be overcome should they be fully situated within the logic of contract. That is, it is presumed that extending consent and contract such that they cover the specific needs of women will situate them within this logic (required for generalised commodity production and exchange) and guarantee justice: "'Bourgeois feminism' in the mid twentieth century must indicate a tendency within the women's movement that believes that its demands can be met within the context of the present capitalist society" (Mitchell, 1975, p.380). If, however, women are situated between bond and contract (and marriage itself read as a primary instance of this uneasy positioning, serving both to denote and enforce this ambiguity), then the ambiguity of women's social position means that feminism cannot adequately employ the vocabulary of consent and contract to argue for a fuller realisation of women's "rights".

Love, Honour ... Obey?

Scarry queries whether feminist critiques of consent are "directed not against contract or consent *per se*, but against some associated or overlapping attribute" (1990, p.894). If women are uneasily situated between bond and contract, it is possibly this ambiguity that feminist theorising objects to when claiming the fraudulence of contract. Charges relating to the "'fictiveness' of contract" are particularly evident "in the analysis of marriage and sexual relations: Pateman calls contract 'an hypothesis, a story, a political fiction' that 'justifies subjection as representing it as freedom'" (Scarry, 1990, p.894).

Far from transcribing the social into a sexual contract, as Armstrong claims, Austen's text may provide a means whereby the language of contract overwrites that of bond. That the marriage 'contract' is palimpsestic upon that of bond is argued for in that the language of the contemporary Anglican Christian marriage service⁷⁵ slips between those of bond and

contract. Marriage can therefore be read as indicative of women's uneasy or ambiguous positioning between bond and contract.

The opening sequences of *King Lear*, a work "written in the Renaissance but concerned with the fate of a feudal kingdom, outlines the nature and limits of the bond" (van Zyl, 1990, p.9). Within this sequence, Cordelia is placed in relation to her future husband in terms of bond; she draws a direct comparison between the filial - her relation as child to parent, subject to king - and her relation as wife to husband. When called upon not so much to declare as to confess her love for her father, the king, Cordelia states, "I love your majesty / According to my *bond*; nor more, nor less" (Act 1, Sc 1, lines 94-95, italics mine). To Lear the duties of obedience, love and honour are returned in exchange for birth, breeding (which encompasses nurture or education) and love. Van Zyl argues that "Cordelia's words capture the essence of the bond, making it clear that bonds are forged in childhood, based upon blood and kinship ties and grounded in need. They grow as the products of the gifts of life and of love and offer honour and loyalty as rightful returns for care and protection" (1990, p.10).

Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you and most honour you.
(Act 1, Sc 1, lines 97-100)

More than "nothing", but less than Lear expects, this is the sole reply his query regarding "what can you say to draw / A third more opulent than your sisters?" (lines 87-8) gains. Lear's imperious demand for love is demonstrated by a contest in which, dividing his kingdom in three, he chooses "That we our largest bounty may extend" (line 54) to the daughter who confesses she loves him most; Lear's exchange rendered fraudulent by the fact, that, two-thirds of his kingdom already dispensed with, he claims still to be capable of awarding Cordelia "a third more opulent" than the rest. Cordelia's initial reply (lines 97-100) illustrates precisely that

bonds are embodied in inequality - that of the kind necessarily found between parent and child, lord and serf, God and man. Their currency, if it is a currency at all, is that of exchanges in kind and of service, their affects those of love, devotion and honour. As extensions or reiterations of the filial, all bonds are non-contractual in essence and cannot, as Cordelia makes clear, appropriately be equated with quantitative forms of exchange precisely because they are founded upon gifts which can never be measured and therefore can never be repaid. (van Zyl, 1990, p.10)

Van Zyl's argument that bond cannot be equated with quantitative exchange may be true, but within the text Cordelia does propose a form of exchange; to Lear's third she advances half:⁷⁶

Why have my sisters husbands, if they say

They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.
(Act 1, Sc 1, lines 101-106)

The above passage illustrates that marriage is conceptualised as falling within the jurisdiction of bond; the filial and the marital relationship utilise the same essential language of love, care and duty. Cordelia's use of 'lord' suggests a fundamental inequality between husband and wife, one uncontested by 'duty', which presumes obedience (an obedience already given to the parent and now extended to the husband). It is perhaps not coincidental that Cordelia's original words to Lear, that she doth "Obey you, love you and most honour you" (line 100) recall the original words granted women within the Christian marriage service, those of "love, honour and obey".

Although the original "love, honour, obey" has been modified such that obedience becomes optional for women (never having been formally required of men), obedience nonetheless is not entirely eradicated from the contemporary Anglican marriage service. The words "to love and to cherish / and to honour in the Lord" are succeeded by an asterisk which informs us, "Here may be inserted the words: and in all things lawful to obey" (*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, p.464).⁷⁷ The necessity of the insertion of "lawful" denotes the extent to which the Church acknowledges the dual function of marriage, and provides an instance in which the logic of rendering unto Caesar that which is Caesar's⁷⁸ is transcribed from a monetary into a legal example; "A Christian marriage is both a *civil contract* and a *spiritual union* into which the couple enter by the *exchange of solemn vows* made before God" (p.484, italics mine).

In the introduction to the service, marriage is conceptualised as an "inseparable *bond* between a man and his wife" (p.458)⁷⁹; the subordinate status of women indicated by 'man and his wife': wife given as the possession of man, who alone stands without need of a relational definition. The marriage service itself, however, tends towards a vocabulary of equivalence, and the marriage partners are finally declared "husband and wife" (p.466). The language of civil contract is endorsed when "the priest asks the bride for her *consent*" (p.463). Consent is required of both bride and groom, but thereafter they are obliged to accede to a bond-like series of duties and obediences:

N, will you take N to be your husband? Will you love him, comfort him, honour and protect him, and, forsaking all others, be faithful to him as long as you both shall live? (p.463)

The symbolic exchange of rings resonates fully with the language of bond:

With my body I honour you
all that I am I give to you
and all that I have I share with you (p.465)

Whilst both languages inform the priest's declaration of marriage:

Now that *N* and *N* have given their consent and made their vows to each other before God and this congregation, with the joining of hands and the giving and receiving of a ring, in the name of God I declare that they are husband and wife. (p.466)

However, these languages appear never fully commensurate, one with the other; civil contract appearing to be that given unto Caesar whereas "the vow and covenant" (p.466) made belongs to God: before the marriage service for divorced persons the congregation is reminded that, "It is a serious matter to break a civil contract. It is a much more serious matter to break a vow which one has made for life before God" (p.484). Even the notoriously doctrinaire Catholic Church will marry in church divorced persons whose first marriages were not consecrated by means of a vow in church, and whose divorces therefore broke only a civil contract.

That the vocabulary of the contemporary Anglican marriage service slips between the languages of bond and contract demonstrates the problematic socio-political positioning of women in the modern era. In Austen's text, the logic of contract overwrites that of bond, thereby requiring of this logic that it register and engage with the particular problem of women. The marriage service, in retaining both languages, indicates the original subordinate position of women in terms of bond, and demonstrates that the problem of equality of women and men cannot be overcome, as Armstrong suggests, by assigning formally equal but qualitatively different, compensatory and reciprocal duties and obligations to each. In fact, Armstrong's conception of the 'sexual contract' as relaying between the domestic and political does not grasp the logic of the social contract which institutionalises equality at the expense of individuality; inscribed in its gesture towards the abstract, towards 'equality', is the translation of dissimilarities into similarities. Armstrong's concept of the 'sexual contract' therefore appears to describe something that lies 'between' bond and contract.

The notion of equality of duties stands midway between a system of privilege asserted by feudal landlords and the concept of equality of rights propounded by the capitalist middle classes in the seventeenth century in England and the late eighteenth century in France. (Mitchell, 1975, p.383)

Austen's text provides an instance whereby fundamental inequalities between women and men are translated into qualitative equalities by means of 'qualities of mind'. Ultimately, however, it is beyond the capacity of the vocabulary of contract to equalise men and women. The contradictory, double-bind requirements that are made of women situate them in

relation to power in a position where they are neither coerced nor given a possibility of consent. It is debatable whether the vocabulary of consent and contract is equal to the problems inherent in extending equality and human rights to women; Engels certainly argues that legislation alone cannot dispense with fundamental inequalities in the positions of men and women:

Our jurists, to be sure, hold that the progress of legislation to an increasing degree removes all cause for complaint on the part of the woman. Modern civilised systems of law are recognising more and more, first, that, in order to be effective, marriage must be an agreement voluntarily entered into by both parties; and secondly, that during marriage, too, both parties must be on an equal footing in respect to rights and obligations. If, however, these two demands were consistently carried into effect, women would have all they could ask for. (Engels, 1952, p.117)

Engels dismisses the above as "typical lawyer's reasoning", claiming that it is "exactly the same as that with which the radical republican bourgeois dismisses the proletariat" (p.117). Engels argues that consent cannot legitimately be claimed from women. "Even the inherent fraudulence of any 'consent' not predicated upon full equality; that whilst contract presumes 'voluntary' agreement to consist in consent, contract "is taken to be voluntarily entered into as soon as the law has put both parties on an equal footing *on paper*" (p.117). "The inequality of the two (marriage partners) before the law, which is a legacy of previous social conditions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of women" (Engels, 1952, p.118).

The extent to which "the progress of legislation to an increasing degree" can remove "all cause for complaint on the part of the woman" (p.117) is disputed by the fact that it is precisely the legislative which, in militating for, often curtails women's 'rights'. The curtailment of women's 'rights' with the emergence of Western liberal democratic constitutions is documented in relation to abortion legislation; the fact remains that "abortion was (first) criminalised in the nineteenth century" (Earle, 1992, p.111):

It was after the beginning of the nineteenth century (modernity) that abortion became unlawful (in English common law and later statutory law) ... American law adopted the English position soon after it was asserted, which meant that women's rights began to be curtailed after the enactment of the U.S. Constitution. (p.111)

Although feminists have dubbed it a "backlash against feminism", conservative women may be correct in their suspicions of, though not necessarily in their arguments against, feminist reworkings of the concepts of consent and contract. Instead of (legitimately and radically) launching into a *critique* of the fraudulence of the concepts of consent and contract, conservative women (equally legitimately, but conservatively) use precisely this language to *criticise* feminism; re-appropriating, for instance, the language of civil rights to argue against feminist requests that civil rights be strengthened, transformed into women's rights.

The association between civil liberties groups and conservative women is noted in their joint opposition to the tough new standards for consent introduced into Canadian rape legislation:

Some civil liberties groups and a conservative women's organisation called REAL Women of Canada unsuccessfully objected to a requirement that a defendant prove he took 'reasonable steps' to ensure consent to sex. That standard, they argued, amounted to finding the accused guilty until proved innocent. But the Canadian Bar Association has supported the law, saying the wording would not jeopardize a fair trial. (Time, 29 June 1992, p.20)

The position of women within the modern era cannot be read as falling wholly within the jurisdiction of contract, but can be conceptualised as ambiguously poised between bond and contract, reproduction and production, private and public. The language of consent, contract, and human rights cannot therefore be considered sufficient to equalising the positions of women and men. Engels notes how early capital dislocated women "from participation in social production", making the administration of the household a "*private service*" (1952, p.119).

The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of participation in social production. Only modern large-scale industry again threw open to her - and only to the proletarian woman at that - the avenue to social production; but in such a way that, when she fulfils her duties in the private service of her family, she remains excluded from public production and cannot earn anything; and when she wishes to take part on public industry and earn her living independently, she is not in a position to fulfil her family duties. (p.119)

If women are ambiguously positioned (legally, economically, socially) between bond and contract, and current feminist extensions of contract appear set only to guarantee certain rights within the workplace, and even then to be effective only for those women who have careers as opposed to jobs,⁸⁰ then conservative women's suspicion of contract legislation appears warranted. Whilst not bringing the language of bond to bear against contract, what could motivate conservative women is the suspicion that the progress of contract legislation (a legislation inadequate to the task of equalising men and women, but which nonetheless fraudulently presumes equivalence), effectively erodes women's privileges and protections in terms of bond. In an era of late capitalism, women can neither, nor unambiguously, claim protection and privilege under bond, equality and rights by means of consent and contract.⁸¹

Bond, and Beyond

The gesture towards the vocabularies of 'bond', 'contract', 'pre-modern' and 'modern or psychological forms of power' does not presume that prior to 1800, for instance, the world was governed by means of feudal kingdoms after which precise juncture the modern nation states can be displayed upon the new scene of world history. "Modernity" or "the modern" does not refer to a historical periodisation, but denotes a certain kind of epistemic configuration which entails a certain mode of subjectivity and social control.

I know that modernity is often spoken of as an epoch, or at least as a set of features characteristic of an epoch; situated on a calendar, it would be preceded by a more or less naive or archaic premodernity, and followed by an enigmatic and troubling "postmodernity" ... I wonder whether we may not envisage modernity rather as an attitude than as a period of history. And by "attitude," I mean a mode of relating to contemporary reality; a voluntary choice made by certain people; in the end, a way of thinking and feeling; a way, too, of acting and behaving that at one and the same time marks a relation of belonging and presents itself as a task. (Foucault, 1984, p.39)

Immanuel Kant's (1784) essay, "What is Enlightenment?" proves enlightening in this last regard, delineating what kind of individual is required in terms of an enlightenment episteme. His essay is read in light of the argument that "modernity does not 'liberate man in his own being'; it compels him to face the task of producing himself" (Foucault, 1984, p.42).

Against the vocabulary of 'bond' - guardianship, tutelage and sovereignty - Kant counterposes the vocabulary of enlightenment - contract, equality, rights, freedom and responsibility. The last conjunction provides an argument for the theory of the social contract which demonstrates that contract is perceived never fully to overwrite bond, or rather, that whilst the individual is conceptualised as free to use his own reason, obedience never becomes obsolete, transferred as it is into the individual conscience that is bound to obey both itself and the laws to which the individual has tacitly 'consented' through citizenship.

The question Kant asks is directed towards resolving the problem inherent in a simultaneous espousal of freedom and responsibility.

Everywhere there is a restriction on freedom. Which restriction is an obstacle to enlightenment and which is not an obstacle but a promoter of it? (Kant, 1784, p.5)

Kant argues that "it would be ruinous for an officer in service to debate about the suitability or utility of a command given to him by his superior; he must obey" (p.5); however, "the right to make remarks on errors in the military service and to lay them before the public for judgement cannot equitably be refused him as a scholar" (p.5). By the use of "scholar", Kant refers not to the private, but to the "public use of one's reason" - the reason one places "as a scholar before the reading public" (p.5). Again, a citizen "cannot refuse to pay the taxes imposed on him", but "does not act contrary to his duty as a citizen when, as a scholar, he publicly expresses his thoughts on the inappropriateness or even the injustice of these levies" (p.6).

The individual is required to 'obey' the 'command' of a 'superior' but is also entitled, has a 'right' as 'citizen' to 'debate' and argument; "*Sapere aude!*" (Dare to Know!) Have courage to use your own reason! - that is the motto of enlightenment" (p.3). Although Kant argues

for the overthrow of the dictatorship of guardians, the absolute power granted the monarch and pastor, in order that mankind no longer "remains under lifelong tutelage" (p.3),⁸² Kant also argues that progress, by means of error, in the interests of general enlightenment is dependent upon "civil order" (p.8). Hence the need for laws, but the "touchstone of everything that can be concluded as a law for a people lies in the question whether the people could have imposed such a law on itself" (p.7). In this way, "the social contract comes into being by the act of consent by the population" (Scarry, 1990, p.874).

At one and the same time, the individual must be capable of criticism - "Our age is, in especial degree, the age of criticism, and to criticism everything must submit" (Kant, 1784, p.8) - and, through the concept of tacit consent through citizenship, the individual is also bound to obedience to the laws of the state. Kant thereby describes the "paradoxical" (p.10) nature of enlightenment, the inescapable tension between freedom and responsibility. It is only through an initial limitation of civil freedom that a state is capable of producing a people "who thereby *gradually become capable of managing freedom*" (p.10, italics mine). In so doing, Kant implies the extent to which the social contract is necessarily of a promissory nature.

The promissory nature of the social contract can be demonstrated by the fact that the first 'promise' given the contracting individual by the state is that of protection of his person. (Not only does the language of the social contractarians require the insertion of 'him', but the use of a gender-specific vocabulary refers to the argument that this language explicitly un/covers the fact that it is not adequate to the specific needs of women⁸³ - hence the problematic nature of an unproblematic feminist appropriation of the vocabulary of equality, liberty, fraternity.) The nation state is required to provide protection to a citizenry that has 'consented' to the social contract: "the fundamental logic of this consensual act is the protection of persons, the prevention of injury" (Scarry, 1990, p.874); "Persons enter the social contract from mutual security: the contract comes into being to 'secure them from injury and violence' which is 'a trespass against the whole species'" (p.875). "Injury, overtly the issue in medicine, is also overtly at issue in the social contract, all the contractarians conceiving of the state as brought into being to prohibit or diminish injury" (p.879). The individual, conceived of as having "a *property* in his own *person*" (Locke, in Scarry, 1990, p.870) nonetheless has to be guaranteed this right by the state.⁸⁴

In other words, the individual is required to forfeit the right to violence (that is, the right to violence in terms of individual redress; violence, Scarry argues, requires cultural legitimization in times of war, and the modern state is dependent on the vocabulary of consent

and contract to provide this legitimation). Hence, the need for the state to take upon itself protection of the body to which no body has any right but the sovereign individual himself. Hence the promissory nature of the social contract; the individual is required not to 'take the law into his own hands' but to trust in the state to guarantee justice and protection. In this view, "culture" (that is, the culture of the modern nation state, democracy under capital) is minimally the constraint, ideally the sublimation of thanatos and eros.

If the last formulation is accepted, the Freudian theory regarding the conditions of possibility underlying the 'creation' of the psychological individual (in terms of Oedipus) can be integrated with a Marxist account which notes how the social contract provides the logic which underpins modern democratic capitalistic societies. Bowyer draws a relation between the promissory nature of the myth of the social contract and the promissory nature of "the Oedipal detour of desire - in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, the Oedipal path of resignation" (1992, p.2). In other words, the kind of individual required by the modern nation state is conceivably also the individual described in terms of Oedipus - that it is through the resolution of Oedipus that "the psychological subject becomes subject to the contractual form (of power)" (van Zyl, 1990, p.12). In this way Marxist and Freudian theories can be integrated and utilised to generate an analysis and explanation of the cultural logic capable of "producing" the kind of individual required by a capitalist democracy of the modern era; the social logic of contract requiring of the individual that he be capable, to a large degree, of producing himself.

Van Zyl argues that "modern individuality is constructed by means of a double and discontinuous procedure" (p.9); the psychological subject/individual is produced by means of a set of relations "which recapitulate at the individual level the feudal history of the group" (p.9). She argues that if "the psychological subject is expected to sustain both exchange forms" - that is, both bond and contract - she or he "nevertheless cannot acquire the second without the instrumentality of the first" (p.9). In other words, she reads Oedipal resolution as that which produces the kind of individual or adult capable of contractual relations, of the sublimation of thanatos and eros; one to whom a capitalist democratic state can extend voting rights: "In psychoanalytic terms the means by which the necessarily feudal form of power operating in the family is replaced by that of contractual power can quite accurately be described as the resolution of Oedipus" (p.11).

In the modern period, because "it is no longer possible to extend the family, the primary feudal group, into a larger but still essentially feudal structure, the first social configuration must produce single-handed, a psychological subject no longer in need of external control -

it must produce, that is, an individual capable of maintaining the form of the social internally, that is, an individual capable of a very large measure of self-control" (van Zyl, 1990, p.11). Within the modern democratic capitalist nation state, "the family now becomes not only the first but also the last legitimate external site of cultural transmission" (van Zyl, 1990, p.11).

By considering the capacity for contractual relations as attendant upon the resolution of Oedipus, a series of questions and debates are opened up. Although this limits Oedipus as an explanatory paradigm to the modern period, it nonetheless also opens up the potential to explore women's problematic socio-political positioning in terms of the cultural and social logic of the modern era. Although the promissory nature of Oedipus and the social contract is recognised as fraudulent, this fraudulence is particularly apparent, or, perhaps, apparent in specific, as yet relatively undocumented, ways in relation to women. The integration of Marx (social logic) and Freud (cultural logic) promises to be fruitful in terms of the kinds of questions that can be directed towards an analysis of the position women occupy in the modern era.

It is obvious that the individual originally described by the social contractarians is not female,⁸⁵ nor does the logic of the social contract, the promissory nature of 'equality under the law' appear to promise (never mind, deliver) the same kinds of rewards for women; the myth of the social contract is therefore considered to lack binding force for women. This can be read in the light of the problematic nature of the resolution of Oedipus for women. The reading of *Madame Bovary* picks up this argument and transcribes it into an analysis of Madame Bovary's reading activities, I read her reading of romance texts as 'symptomatic' (see chapter three) of her problematic socio-psychological positioning (see section 5.3).

That the conceptualisations given above limits this study to an analysis of the situation of (white bourgeois) women within (capitalist democratic nation states of) the modern era is not considered problematic. In fact, the question that is directed towards contemporary feminism queries its (mainly unacknowledged) complicity with the vocabulary of contract, of human rights, consent, and equality, i.e., capital. The unproblematic adoption of this terminology by Anglo-American feminism disables critique; in particular, the contemporary feminist concept of equality can be challenged. Not only does contemporary bourgeois feminism unproblematically endorse equality, but it attempts to enforce this through the proceduralistic, the legalistic. Current feminist notions of 'equality' neither encompass the original humanist revolutionary ideal which sponsored it, nor, in delimiting the territory of equality to the notion of 'equality under the law' has feminism necessarily fulfilled the aims it espouses when it appears to speak in the name of all women, for all women.⁸⁶

Feminist Rights and Women's Wrongs

In her (1975) essay, "Women and Equality", Juliet Mitchell delineates the extent to which the rise of feminism is complicit with the concept of equality, and therefore with the vocabulary of capital:

I have elicited one aspect of bourgeois thought that seems to me to make the connection between the rise of feminism and the ideology of capitalism most clearly - this aspect is the concept of equality. (Mitchell, 1975, p. 384)

Mitchell claims that a "history of the concept of equality would run in tracks very similar to a history of feminism" (p.386):

Feminism as a conscious, that is a self-conscious, protest movement, arose as part of a revolutionary bourgeois tradition that had equality of mankind as its highest goal. The first expressions of feminism were endowed with the strengths of the concept of equality and circumscribed by its limitations. (p.387)

Although Mitchell notes that the liberal conception of equality has been weakened, she does not dispute that "Under capitalism 'equality' *can only* refer to equality under the law" (p.384); "Equal rights *will always only be* rights before the law but these have by no means been won yet nor their possible extent envisaged" (p.399). That is, Mitchell argues for the extension of the vocabulary of equality such that it engage specifically with the issue of women. Mitchell notes both "the strengths and limitations of the concept of equality" (p.382), but does not seek to critique the concept of equality (under the law).

Mitchell traces a historical trajectory of ideas in order to note an interrelationship between the concept of equality and the problem of women in the modern era. Through examining the words of three writers, Mitchell finds evidence for her claim that, under capitalism, equality has come simply to mean 'equality under the law'. Although she notes that, originally, 'equality' sponsored a more revolutionary ideal, she does not dispute the validity of the compromised equality - under the law. A challenge to this notion of 'equality' is registered in the work of Engels; his words are used to query Mitchell's conclusion. The concept of equality is therefore traced, chronologically, from an original invocation of millennialism, to heaven on earth, to equality under the law, and, finally, to a critique of equality under the law in terms of the fraudulence of a 'consent' which is invalidated because predicated upon a basic economic injustice.⁸⁷

In 1700, Mary Astell concedes that equality between men and women can probably only arise in heaven:

In a word, to those Halcyon, or if you will *Millennium Days*, in which the Wolf and the Lamb shall feed together, and a Tyrannous Domination which Nature never meant, shall no longer render useless if not hurtful, the Industry and Understanding of half Mankind! (Astell, 1700, in Mitchell, 1975, p.391)

By 1792, in the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, "the millennium has come down firmly from heaven to earth" (p.393);

Rousseau exerts himself to prove that all *was* right originally: a crowd of authors that all *is* now right: and I, that all *will be* right. (Wollstonecraft, 1792, in Mitchell, 1975, p.393)

In 1869, "Mill, writing from an industrial capitalism that had hardened into fairly extreme conservatism had to stand aside and argue from the best of the past and the hope of the future ... When it comes down to it, his equality is, quite realistically, equality under the law" (p.394) - "As a politician he fought for equal rights for women under the law" (p.394).

... the principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes - the *legal subordination* of one sex to the other - is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement. (John Stuart Mill, 1869, in Mitchell, 1975, p.394, *italics mine*)

Finally, in 1884, Engels dismisses the concept of equality under the law as "typical lawyer's reasoning" (p.117), claiming instead the fraudulence of economic injustice which the granting of equality under the law may serve to perpetuate, and certainly cannot redress.

The inequality of the two (marriage partners) before the law, which is a legacy of previous social conditions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of women. (Engels, 1952, p.118)

First heaven, then heaven on earth, then to just a little bit of heaven on earth, and finally back again to the problem that it is only in a heaven (already now invalidated) that a truly classless society can be found. But at each juncture the problem has not remained the same, the terrain has changed, the critique required is different. Although an *unproblematic* feminist adoption of the vocabulary of consent, contract, rights, and equality denotes their complicity with the vocabulary of political economy, this does not constitute an argument against this vocabulary *per se*. Instead, it refers back to the problem of women's ambiguous positioning between the vocabularies of bond and contract, and on to the next chapter which examines the problematic position of women in the modern era within a cultural logic described by the model of Oedipus. The essentially promissory nature of the social contract and of Oedipus appear especially promissory, and therefore, particularly problematic, for women.

In relation to the problem of citizenship, Scarry notes that Bickel, writing against a tradition which attempts to define citizenship as tightly as possible, argues to endow it "with the most minimal content possible" (1990, p.872). Bickel claims that the elaboration of the vocabulary of citizenship is dangerous and anti-egalitarian, whereas other theorists would

claim the opposite - that it is only through the procedural that rights of citizenship are guaranteed under the law. This example may be apposite to the problem of women and an entire legalistic vocabulary which underpins a specific social formation considered oppressive to women. Sometimes the extension, sometimes the contraction⁸⁸ of this legalistic vocabulary will be required; sometimes feminist discourse will require a critique on the basis that women are not granted equality (eg., under the law), sometimes a critique will be launched against the notion of equality - under the law or otherwise. Initially, however, what is required of feminist discourse is that it begin to engage in a critique of its own position, recognise its complicity with a certain vocabulary, and with the social, political and economic system from which this vocabulary arose. Unless feminism recognises the corrupting power of this language itself, and feminism's possible appropriation by the very forces it seeks to oppose,⁸⁹ feminist rights look set to perpetuate women's wrongs.⁹⁰

Individuality: The Modern Problem

Emma, Austen's masterpiece,⁹¹ is a text which fully engages with and explicates the processes of normalisation required in the construction of the modern individual, the individual capable of a high degree of self-regulation, of self-control. Emma Woodhouse is an actant whose 'character' - the term itself is indicative - is constructed by means of error; Emma's lack of discrimination, both in terms of the social and the textual, is encoded as error. Her reading is described as precipitate, she can't get through the books, and this is encoded in terms of a social or cultural logic. Her recuperation into the text occurs once she has learnt appropriately to discriminate in terms of social class. The construction of character is pivotal to the text, and denotes a strikingly modern, "intense moral preoccupation" (Leavis, 1986, p.16). Austen's text possibly provides a first instance in which the logic of the social contract informs marriage, and a language of equality used to transform gender and social inequalities into equivalences. This is arguably one of the conditions under which *Emma* can be read as a realist narrative, and Leavis claims that, "Jane Austen, in fact, is the inaugurator of the great tradition of the English novel - and by 'great tradition' I mean the tradition to which what is great in English fiction belongs" (p.16).

Trilling substantiates Leavis's claim, arguing that Austen is the "first truly modern novelist of England" (Trilling, 1957, p.129). The text of *Emma* systematically engages with the modern problem of the definition of the self by the self in the creation of the modern individual; how it is that through quarrelling with herself, Emma can become "more acquainted with herself" (p.129):

How modern a quest it is, and how thoroughly it confirms Dr Leavis's judgement that Jane Austen is the first truly modern novelist of England. "In art," a critic has said, "the decision to be revolutionary usually counts for very little. The most radical changes have come from personalities who were conservative and even conventional ..." Jane Austen, conservative and even conventional as she was, perceived the nature of the deep psychological change which accompanied the establishment of democratic society - she was aware of the increase of the psychological burden of the individual, she understood the new necessity of conscious self-definition and self-criticism, the need to make private judgements of reality. And there is no reality about which the modern person is more uncertain and more anxious than the reality of himself. (Trilling, 1957, p.129)

Emma therefore provides a narrative which explicates the processes of normalisation/(morality) required in terms of the modern, revealing a relationship between the textual and the social, gender and genre. It also reveals the extent to which the individual capable of self-regulation is also the individual of the social contract; the marriage to which the individual is required to 'consent' instituting an equality between men and women through a gesture towards the abstract, in Austen's text, 'qualities of mind'.

The subject of the next chapter will be an analysis of *Madame Bovary*. The 'symptomatic' nature of her reading will propound a relationship between gender and genre in terms of 'failure'. Unlike Emma Woodhouse, Emma Bovary is never fully recuperated into the text; she 'fails' on a functional level. Whereas *Emma* provides a logic of normalisation, morality and the self, *Madame Bovary* implicitly critiques this logic, demonstrating that the relationship between the text, experience and the self cannot sustain analysis. Whilst Emma Bovary's consumption of romance fiction can be read 'symptomatically', as indicative of her failure, the text also queries the extent to which increased regulation of Emma Bovary's reading activities could indeed serve to correct her behaviour, let alone inculcate the value of self-regulation. That is, Flaubert's text is read in terms of a critique of the construction of character, denoting the extent to which women (in particular) are problematically enculturated in terms of a modern or psychological form of power.

A reading of *Madame Bovary* will enable an argument to be brought against the role assumed by the "pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond" in feminist-psychoanalytical debates. Although the integration of Marx and Freud would appear to presume that bond is mapped onto the pre-oedipal and contract onto the oedipal period, this strategy is not in fact adopted. Instead, the promissory nature of both kinds of logic - the social and cultural - is evoked as a means of demonstrating how, given the relative lack of economic, social and legal imperatives, women's "resolution" of Oedipus can be considered particularly fraught. That is, the task of producing oneself in terms of the requirements of a fully adult, contractual individual lacks a certain cogency for women. Again, this does not imply that women are "childlike", incapable of acquiring 'mature adulthood'; as Foucault argues, "I do not know whether we will ever reach mature adulthood. Many things in our experience convince us

that the historical event of the Enlightenment did not make us mature adults, and we have not reached that stage yet" (1984, p.49). All that is argued is that, within modernity, women are faced with a particular set of challenges, a peculiar and often highly problematic and discontinuous set of procedures for achieving contractual 'adulthood'. Furthermore, it is possible to read *Madame Bovary* such that the fraudulence of the essentially promissory nature of the social contract, of Oedipus, and of the realist narrative, is highlighted in terms of the particularly anomalous position women occupy within a social and cultural - and textual - logic. That is, the promise of recuperation, of normalisation, of a reconstituted unity, of incorporation into the modern form of power, appears particularly promissory for women; this is read in terms of the 'failure' of the 'character' of *Madame Bovary* to be recuperated into the (realist) narrative.

The 'failure' of romance fiction as text (i.e., as epic derivative, not realist narrative) echoes precisely the non-recuperation of *Madame Bovary* as 'character', and, via an association between normalisation and morality, text and self, the essentially 'immoral' (non-normative) nature of romance fiction is highlighted. Hence, the disparagement of it as a literary form, and the denigration, devaluation of women; both find their echo in each other: *Madame Bovary* can be read as a text which explicates the problematic, negative nature of an association between the text, experience and the (sexual/moral) self. Chapter five demonstrates that romance fiction can therefore be read as indicative, 'symptomatic' of the problematic socio-psychological position of women in modernity. By giving a reading of the reading of *Madame Bovary*, I will argue that the modern problem - individuality (i.e., individual morality) - is particularly problematic for women; this demonstrates also the extent to which sexual/textual politics necessarily inform a 'reading' of 'women' in the modern era.

CHAPTER FIVE

Reading Romances, Reading Reading the Romance

This chapter challenges the focus accorded "the pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond" (Radway, 1984, p.136) in contemporary feminist analyses of romance fiction. Janice Radway's ground-breaking text, *Reading the Romance*,⁹² is the primary text investigated; an analysis of her work enables a number of contentions to be brought against contemporary feminist appraisals of romance fiction. First, the question that directs Radway's enterprise, "Why do women read the romance?" is challenged. This question is analysed in the light of the contentions (see chapters one and two in particular) brought against the question, "Why did women begin to write novels?" Like feminist histories of the novel, Radway's reading of romance fiction is problematic to the extent that unexamined notions of both gender and genre pervade her work.

In terms of genre, Radway claims that romance fiction is ambivalently positioned between myth and realism, and she never resolves this ambiguity. Although this particular 'classification' (see Appendix 2) is not queried, the apparent contradictions thereof are resolved if romance fiction is conceptualised as derivative of an epic tradition. Such a classification endorses Radway's claim that the romance is positioned between the myth and the realist narrative; this categorisation does in fact describe the historical location of the epic. However, Radway's notion that the romance is a 'contradictory' genre is disputed on the basis that it is only 'contradictory' in terms of the criteria which relate to reading a realist narrative. Radway's notion of genre is therefore queried, and, given that epic derivatives cannot be read in terms of the traditional literary criteria of plot and character, Radway's reading of the romance is disputed.

In chapter three, the relationship that was drawn between the texts a woman reads, her experience, and her/self was demonstrated to be particularly pertinent to an analysis of the position of women in the modern era. Although Radway claims to oppose traditional literary-moral criteria, she reads the romance in terms of an identification of the romance reader with the heroine in the text - a reading which is fundamentally akin to reading the figure of the female author from 'character/s' in the text (see chapter two). Both readings bespeak a traditional humanism that is fundamentally problematic for feminist criticism. Radway's apparently uncritical adoption of the relationship 'text-experience-self' endorses

an unexamined notion of the literary-moral, and, on this basis, Radway's 'alternative' reading of the romance is challenged (see Appendix 2).

In particular, Radway reads the romance in the light of the focus accorded the pre-oedipal or mother-daughter relationship in (Anglo-American) 'feminist psychoanalysis'. A brief introduction to feminist theorisations of the 'pre-oedipal' demonstrates that feminist psychoanalysis gives a naturalised, 'psychologised' reading of Freud's account of the importance of the pre-oedipal period in the psychic development of women. The argument that is developed is that this conception of the 'pre-oedipal' is neither 'psychoanalytic' (in terms of a strict definition of what constitutes Freudian psychoanalysis), nor is it adequate to an analysis or explication of romance fiction.

In section 5.3, I attempt an alternative reading of the romance. This reading of the romance will be based upon an analysis of the textual inscription of reading in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.⁹³ The figure of Emma Bovary does not simply provide an instance of 'failure' - a failure indicated by the 'symptomatic' (see chapter three) nature of her reading activities. Instead, *Madame Bovary* is read in the light of the "promissory nature" of Oedipus; Oedipus read as a cultural logic. An alignment of the promissory nature of Oedipus, the social contract, and the realist narrative promises to be fruitful in terms of providing an analysis of the position women occupy within modernity. All three 'promises' are considered problematic in terms of the enculturation and socialisation of women in the modern era, and are read in the light of the figure of Emma Bovary.

5.1 Reading Reading the Romance

Originally published in 1984 by the University of North Carolina Press, *Reading the Romance* was republished in 1987 under the series, *Questions For Feminism*, edited by a number of prominent feminists.⁹⁴ The recognition of Radway as an important theorist in the field of feminism and popular culture is endorsed by Helen Taylor's assessment of Radway in her recent work, *Scarlett's Women: Gone With the Wind and Its Female Fans*. Taylor claims that, in terms of a contribution to reader-response and popular culture reception, Radway's constitutes the "best and most influential study to date on fiction" (1989, p.242). Radway's work has received critical acclaim within Anglo-American feminist discourse, and the above statements attest to the ongoing contribution her work makes to the field of contemporary analyses of romance fiction.

Radway notes that she "had first taken up the subject of romances in graduate school as part of my dissertation on the differences between 'popular' and 'elite' literature" (1987, p.6).

Originally influenced by literary critical concerns and considerations, Radway, along with her colleagues, claims to have "moved from what Stuart Hall and others have called the 'literary-moral' definition of culture to a more anthropological one, defining it as the whole way of life of a historically and temporally situated people" (p.3). Convinced that "what American Studies needed were ethnographies of reading" (p.4), and maintaining her focus on the popular or mass-market romance, Radway conducted in-depth group and individual interviews with forty-two romance readers from the Smithsonian community.⁹⁵ In her analysis, Radway combines reader-response criticism with anthropology and feminist psychoanalysis in a quest to answer the basic question: "Why do women read the romance?" (see Appendix 2).

Radway answers this question by claiming that the romance is a complex and contradictory phenomenon, and that the behavioural *event* of romance reading cannot be analysed without considering the interaction of self and context. She sought, therefore, to analyse why readers talked "about the meaning of romance *reading* as a social event in a familial context" (p.7). Her account notes the intersection of the social situation within which they read and of "female personhood as that particular psychic configuration is constructed" (p.138). Through an analysis which presumes an identification of the reader and the romance heroine, Radway incorporates both anthropological and feminist psychoanalytic concepts into her work (see Appendix 2).

Radway claims that the repetitive consumption of texts is symptomatic of romance readers' deep dissatisfaction with their lives, and that the act of reading itself paradoxically enables a maintenance of the very conditions inducing their discontent. Hence Radway's conclusion that the act of romance reading is both combative and compensatory. She locates the compensatory aspects of the romance within the pre-oedipal. The combative nature of the romance is partly linked to the isolation necessarily entailed by the act of (silent) reading, and concomitant withdrawal from the family circle. The texts are read as asserting a "covert challenge to the notion that traditional marriages satisfy all women's needs" (p.220).

Despite her avowed intention to move away from the 'literary-moral' definition of culture, Radway's account of romance fiction is crucially influenced by literary-moral criteria. In fact, the basic question Radway asks, "Why do women read the romance?" signals that her work, although antagonistic to, has not moved significantly from, the literary-moral (see Appendix 2). The following section queries the question underlying her reading of the romance reading, and this critique of her work gains impetus from establishing a continuity between this question, and the question underlying feminist histories of the novel. Similar,

fundamental errors of identification and definition, of gender and genre, limit both endeavours.

Questioning "Why do Women Read the Romance?"

Radway reads the romance in the light of a relationship between text, experience and the self. Although she notes that this relationship remains unproved, the presumption of a relationship between the romance text and the romance reader remains unquestioned by Radway. *Reading the Romance* therefore attempts to resolve "the crucial question of the ultimate effects the fantasy resolution has on the women who seek it out again and again" (p.15).

Radway claims that "We simply do not know what practical effects the repetitive reading of romances has on the way women behave after they have closed their books and returned to their normal, ordinary round of daily activities" (p.217). She therefore claims that it is problematic to attempt to "trace real changes in women's behaviour solely to leisure reading of romances and not to other factors" (p.217). In her interviews with romance readers, Radway did not "probe very deeply into the issue of whether romance reading *actually* changes a woman's behaviour in her marriage" (p.101). For her, it was sufficient to note "that the women themselves vehemently maintain that their reading has transformed them in important ways" (p.101), and to iterate the argument that "it matters enormously what the cumulative effects of the act of romance reading are on actual readers" (p.17).

Instead of querying the fundamental assumption of her enterprise, on the basis of the recognition of the tenuous and unproven nature of the relationship text-experience-self, Radway attempts to analyse what experience is required by the romance reader such that she seeks out this particular kind of text. In other words, Radway asks the question, "Why do women read the romance?" (see Appendix 2)

The question that needs to be asked, therefore, is *why* the readers find it essential and beneficial to seek out this particular kind of vicarious experience. (p.70)

A parallel can be drawn between feminist readings of the romance and feminist histories of the novel. The question, "why?" directs both enterprises. *Reading the Romance* asks, "Why do women read the romance?" whilst feminist histories ask, "Why did women begin to write (novels)?" In both, the question, "why" remains unanswered, leaving many issues unresolved. Radway can only query:

Does the romance's endless rediscovery of the virtues of a passive female sexuality merely stitch the reader ever more resolutely into the fabric of patriarchal culture? Or, alternatively,

does the satisfaction a reader derives from the act of reading itself, an act she chooses, often in explicit defiance of others' opposition, lead to a new sense of strength and independence? (p.15)

Although Radway concedes that her text does not resolve any of the questions asked, she puts this down to a current lack of empirically derived evidence:

Reading the Romance ends without managing to resolve these questions, asserting that an adequate answer will come only with time and with careful investigation of the developmental trajectory of the lives of adult romance readers. However much I would like to resolve the issue here, once and forever, I continue to believe that such a resolution is theoretically impossible simply because the practices of reading and writing romance continue and their effects, even now, are not fully realised. (p.15)

Radway asserts a relationship between women and books, claiming that the (romance) texts a woman reads have a more or less determining effect upon her life (see Appendix 2). By analysing her conception of both gender and genre, a critique can be brought against the problematic nature of the relationship Radway draws between these two. The following section analyses Radway's notion of genre in the light of her inability to classify romance fiction; she claims that romance is a contradictory 'genre', neither myth nor realist narrative.

Between Myth and Realism: Radway's Romance

Radway claims an identity with the romance reader who "holds an ambivalent attitude toward the reality status of the story" (p.205), and she exhibits a similar indecisiveness, an uncertainty regarding what criteria to use in order to classify romance fiction in terms of genre. Radway does not resolve her dilemma; she claims instead that the contemporary romance represents a contradiction in terms of genre, and is ambivalently situated between the myth and the realist narrative. Throughout Radway's text, an "equivocation about its status as myth or realism" (p.193) is retained.

Although Radway notes Morley's suggestion regarding "a genre-based theory of interpretation and interaction" (p.10); "A theory in which genre is conceived as a set of rules for the production of meaning, operable both through writing and reading" (p.10), she never develops an argument in terms of genre classification. Instead of defining genre in terms of differences between, for instance, the myth, epic and realist narrative, Radway claims that "a genre is never defined solely by its constitutive set of functions, but by interaction between *characters* and their *development* as individuals" (p.120, italics mine). Her definition of genre is challenged on the basis of the fact that 'character' and 'development' are specific to the realist narrative.⁹⁶ That Radway's notion of genre is biased toward, and dependent upon, criteria relating to the realist narrative is demonstrated by her inability to analyse "contradiction" within the romance (see Appendix 2).

Claiming that "I have found similar contradictions in recent American romances" (p.15), Radway endorses Ann-Rosalind Jones' argument regarding the contradictoriness of the romance "genre". In an article entitled, "Mills & Boon Meets Feminism" (1986), Jones argues that encounters with feminism have produced or intensified contradictions within the romance genre. Three kinds of contradiction are produced, "narrative discontinuity, irreconcilable settings and inconsistency in realist dialogue" (in Radway, 1987, p.15).

Far from intensifying or even producing 'contradictions', the apparent contradictions of romance result from a problematic appraisal of the romance in terms of the realist narrative. Romance fiction is obviously contradictory given a reading of it in terms of the traditional criteria of plot, character and author, and the contradictions of romance unproblematised if it is read as an epic, or epic derivative. Although Radway expresses an ambivalence and equivocation regarding the classification of romance fiction, the extent to which her appraisals appear to concur with a definition of the romance as 'epic' is quite extraordinary.

Romance as Epic?

In chapter one it was proposed that fiction originally incurred the indignation of the guardians of morality on the basis of a correlation that was drawn between literature and morality. Nineteenth century commentators argued that fiction was immoral in that it fostered languor and idleness which inevitably led to folly and vice. During the course of chapter one, some differentiation between the romance and the novel was suggested. However, no taxonomy was advanced as a means of distinguishing between the two. Traditional histories of the novel commonly assume a self-evident difference between the romance and the novel, with the romance relegated to the status of 'popular fiction',⁹⁷ 'smut', or worse. Contemporaneously, the common perception of romance fiction is that it is "pulp" - generally considered to be "sensational or poor quality writing" (The Concise Oxford, 1980, p.899). Print journalism in particular continues to use the term "Mills & Boon" (within the British and British colonial press) as a shorthand for writing which is considered frivolous, fantastic, farcical and foolish.⁹⁸

In chapter one, it was proposed that the novel is, and has been, a highly contested terrain. Furthermore, it was argued that this contestation was particularly evident during the early nineteenth century (in Britain). Brown in fact argues that "the English novel was invented or instituted around the beginning of the 19th century" (in Armstrong, 1987, p.39). Prior to the early 1800s, the term "novels" was often used in a derogatory manner, referring in many

instances to romances: "Critics mentioning 'romances' sometimes referred to fiction in general - often signalled by their putting 'novels and romances' together as sharing the same faults" (Spencer, 1986, p.182). Spencer claims that it is only towards the end of the eighteenth century that "the distinction between the romance and the novel became better established" (p.182).⁹⁹ Certainly, it appears that many novels have been classified as such only retrospectively.¹⁰⁰

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, then, romances and novels became increasingly defined as distinct genres. Feminist histories of the novel do not tend specifically to exclude the romance from study, thereby declaring the political aim of including that which has previously been excluded from study (Spencer, 1986; Miles, 1987; Newton, 1981; Pratt, 1981; Todd, 1989). Apart from asserting a simplistic relationship between gender and genre, such histories devote little space to an analysis of genre formation. Instead, many critics assert the exclusion of women writers from the 'canon' on the basis of gender. They appear to typify women's writing as inevitably belonging to the lesser, or sub-genres. Russ, an advocate of the "common female tradition in literature" (1983, p.87) observes a pervasive and negative attitude towards all women's narratives. She appears to classify Austen within the genre of romance fiction, or at least within the realm of "women's fiction", as opposed to the realist narrative:

Jane Austen, for example, worked (as some critics tend to forget) in a genre that had been dominated by women for a century and one that was looked down upon as trash, a position that may have given her considerable artistic freedom. (Russ, 1983, p.100)

Figs asserts that the Gothick (romance) and the novel differ primarily in relation to plot, the former appearing to have an unhappy, as opposed to the latter's happy, ending:

During the eighteenth century there were only two basic plots for heroines. There was the story with the happy ending - the comic courtship plot with its emphasis on conduct; and the story with the unhappy ending, that of seduction, abduction and ruin. The latter variety tended to be disapproved of by the moral guardians of young ladies who frowned on the habit of novel-reading, and could only be justified on didactic grounds. (Figs, 1982, p.56)

Despite the fact that her work is probably the most sophisticated in the area, Armstrong's attempt to undermine the distinction between the literary and the non-literary through the use of the term "domestic fiction" (1987, p.9) has already been criticised (see sections 1.1 and 4.1). Whilst Spencer does concede that the romance and the novel are not alike, she claims that the "difference between the two genres would seem from this point of view to be one of *degree* rather than *kind*" (1986, p.181, italics mine). Spencer disputes the classification of romance fiction as unrealistic; she argues against this perception, and claims that this "has meant that much of women's fiction has been devalued as unrealistic" (p.183). Spencer says, "Why should women in general, and hence women writers, not subscribe to

realism?" - Her answer? - "It depends on who decides what reality is" (p.183). Spencer's polemic use of an unexamined conjunction of realism/reality is indicative of the extent to which an unexplored notion of genre informs much feminist work in the area of the rise of the woman novelist. In many of these works, gender is the primary, and in many cases, exclusive criterion in terms of which texts are classified.¹⁰¹

However, in order to expand upon the theme of gender and genre, it is necessary to conceptualise the romance as unlike the novel. "Instead of seeing the romance traditionally, that is, as a novelistic precursor, (Davis) returns the romance to the epic and argues instead for a profound rupture between the romance and the novel" (van Zyl, 1992, p.78). The romance, "far from preparing the way for the novel, must be conceived of as backward looking, as oriented primarily to the classic period. The rules of the epic were adopted wholesale into the romance" (p.78). The perception that romance fiction is derivative of the epic is substantiated by a statement made as early as 1785:

The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. - The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. (Reeve, in Spencer, 1986, p.182)

As the first genre of historical societies, the epic embodies value by means of the "ideal type and its exemplar, the epic hero" (van Zyl, 1992, p.64). The deeds of epic heroes have value in themselves and are celebrated:

The heroes' actions are advocated because they can be seen to embody the ideal, and, in so far as these deeds are valued, they are there to celebrate a culture's most worthy attributes and to suggest that it is these actions (and not others) which are valuable. The epic narrative both embodies and demonstrates the deeds to be valued by representing them directly. What is more, unlike many mythic figures, epic characters touch upon the present in so far as they advocate an ideal type, who although ideal, is also a man, one whose deeds must at least be possible. (p.64)

"The essence of an epic regime is that it is honorific, taxonomic and memorial. It cannot sustain explanation or diagnosis" (p.68). It is action which is crucial to the epic, and "the motives and intentions of the epic hero are transparent. His actions are not judged on the basis of intentions" (p.76). The actant is therefore not 'characterised', except insofar as the deed itself may mark him; it is not necessary for him to undergo any psychological or moral development. The epic hero must, however, be seen to accomplish an 'impossible' or valued deed or action; the actant's role in the narrative is therefore simply that of carrying narrative sequences forward. In the epic, then, "truth has in the last instance to do with the field of value, the ideal embodied in, and ensured by the form of writing alone" (p.66).

Radway's Romance as Epic

Despite the fact that she never names it as such, the extent to which Radway appears to concur with the appraisal of romance fiction as 'epic', or at least, as an epic derivative, is remarkable. Even her statements regarding the ambiguous positioning of romance between myth and realism indicate precisely the historical location of epic. When her remarks about the status of romance fiction are set next to the definitions given of the epic, it is evident that much of the confusion surrounding its classification can be overcome.

Even the words describing the protagonists of romance fiction, 'hero', and 'heroine', are indicative of its epic status, along with "the significance of heroine and hero as *ideal* feminine and masculine *types*" (Radway, 1987, p.131, italics mine). One of the readers interviewed by Radway substantiates that the romantic hero is perceived as the embodiment of the ideal:

You know, everybody has in their mind a certain type of person. And you know no person could possibly have all the good qualities you would like to have in your husband. Maybe you would say in your mind, this is a perfect character. This would be my hero-type. (p.203)

Radway's formulation of the romantic hero is fundamentally akin to the delineation of an epic hero given in the previous section:

In a fictivnal world that accords respect to men in general because of their strength, power, and ability to operate in the public realm, the romantic hero stands out as that world's most able representative and the essence of all that it values. (p.130)

Radway notes "the high value attached to the simple *assertion* of the heroine's special abilities" (p.79), but still considers the impossible plot convolutions - which are designed specifically such that heroine's special abilities can be asserted - as contradictory. Radway, attempting to resolve the 'contradiction' between the possibility and the plausibility of the romance, ascribes this to a difference between plot and setting:

If it seems curious that the very same readers who willingly admit that romances are fairy tales or fantasies also insist that they contain accurate information about the real world, it should be noted that the contradictory assertions seem to result from a separation of plot and setting. (p.109)

Radway asserts that "the story is fantastic" (p.109), but claims that this "does not compromise the accuracy of the portrayal of the physical environment within which the idealised characters move. Even though the Smithton women know the stories are improbable, they also assume that the world that serves as a backdrop for those stories is

entirely congruent with their own" (p.109). The seeming incongruity between plot and setting precisely defines the epic.

Whilst the epic "is the first genre of the *possible* it is not at the same time a genre of the *actual*" (van Zyl, 1992, p.65). While the epic

moves from the impossible characteristic of the mythic world to a possible ideal, it is not thereby to be thought of as having established a relation to the actual. The epic is a flexible form which may extend without radical change to incorporate the range of all possible heroes and all possible worlds and its criteria for validity are to do with its own forms not those of the actual world. That is, in other words, has no need of outside evidence. (p.67)

So when Radway claims that "Romance writers, in effect, supply a myth in the guise of the truly possible" (p.207), she is not asserting an ambivalence, a contradiction that requires resolution, but is simply defining the romance as derivative of the epic. No contradiction therefore is found in the fact that although romance readers "acknowledge that the romantic hero and heroine are idealised figures, they want very much to be convinced that such individuals are plausible if not really possible" (p.202). The plausible/possible dilemma is overcome if romance heroes, for instance, are read as epic characters, who "touch upon the present in so far as they advocate an ideal type, who although ideal, is also a man, one whose deeds must at least be possible" (van Zyl, 1992, p.64). Romance readers therefore require of the romance that "its characters will make that fantasy appear 'real' and, therefore, possible" (Radway, 1987, p.201), though not necessarily plausible.

According to Radway, a typical romance reader (though not Radway herself) "sees no contradiction in desiring an unpredictable plot and wanting to know how it ends before she reads it through" (p.199); "Romance reading, it would seem, can be valued as much for the sameness of the response it evokes as for the variety of the adventures it promises" (p.63). Although readers claim that there isn't a 'typical' heroine, "they exhibit fairly rigid expectations about what is permissible in a romantic tale and express disappointment and outrage when those conventions are violated" (p.63). Again, plot convolutions and adventures, providing "the variety and diversity of romance fiction" (p.63) can be ascribed to epic conventions prescriptive of adventure; conventions which, at the same time are stereotypical, such that readers can "expect and, indeed, rely upon certain events, characters, and progressions to provide the desired experience" (p.63); "Repetition is the rule, not the exception, governing these novels" (p.196).

The romance is derivative of an epic tradition, and Radway herself provides evidence for its classification as such. Questions relating to the extent to which romance fiction is interarticulated with the novel, of whether romance fiction may not provide a symptomatic

return of the epic in the mode of the realist narrative, are engaged with later in this chapter. Radway's reading of romance fiction is obviously problematic at the level of genre; the extent to which her definition of gender is problematic is analysed in the following section.

Radway's reading of the romance is considered analogous to feminist readings of the novel; both kinds of reading construct, depend upon, a relationship between the text, experience and the self. Feminist histories of the novel attempt to read from the psychology of the female writer an analysis of character/s in the text; Radway attempts to read the psychology of the female reader from an analysis of the 'character' of the heroine of romance fiction. Radway's reading is disputed in terms of the fact that romance fiction cannot be read in terms of 'character'; "Epics (and by extension, their derivatives) do not repay psychologisation" (van Zyl, 1992, p.76). However, an analysis of Radway's conception of the psychological-social needs of the romance reader/heroine enables a critique to be directed against an object-relations oriented, 'feminist psychoanalytic' concept¹⁰² of the "pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond" (Radway, 1987, p.136). The major criticism of the feminist approach is directed against their almost exclusive attachment to the mother-daughter relationship as the seminal, or at least, germinal, influence on a woman's life.

5.2 Romance Reading, Romance Readers: Questions of Self

The identification: author-character, essential to feminist readings of the realist narrative (and therefore to their 'history' of the rise of the women novelist - see chapter two), provides the prototype for Radway's reading of the romance. It is from this identification that the identification reader-heroine is derived. The implied relationship between the text, experience and the self (see chapter three) informs textual practices in the modern era; due to a number of interrelated historical and social processes, women's reading and writing became a particular and distinct site of institutional regulation (see chapter one). This relationship is therefore particularly pertinent to an analysis of women's reading, and from thence, to a 'reading' of 'women' in the modern era. The essentially moral relationship drawn between text and self informs traditional literary criticism; this is evidenced in a critical reading practice which focuses upon 'character' and a subsequent bias towards the realist narrative. That an unproblematised notion of the 'literary-moral' informs also feminist criticism was demonstrated in chapter two.

Although Radway espouses a distance from literary-moral criteria, her reading denotes an adherence to these criteria. The fact that the essentially moralistic relationship, text-experience-self, remains pertinent to contemporary analyses of women's reading activities is

suggested by the fact that similar questions of self are not asked of men's reading activities. As yet, no relationship between men and popular culture has been proposed by a question such as "Why do men read Westerns?" The identification between romance reader and heroine is problematic, inappropriate to employ in a reading of an epic derivative, and requires critique, particularly given its adherence to traditional literary-moral criteria of reading (realist) texts.

Although she notes Cora Kaplan's suggestion, "that readers do not identify only with the romantic heroine but in fact identify in a multiple and wandering fashion with the seducer, the seduced, and the process of seduction itself" (p.243), neither Radway nor Kaplan take a critical stance towards the relationship 'reader-romance-psychological self'. That this relationship informs Radway's reading is noted by her comment that "romances can be termed compensatory fiction because the act of reading them fulfils certain basic psychological needs for women" (p.113). Romance readers' repetitive consumption of texts, their "intense reliance on these books suggests strongly that they help to fulfil deeply felt psychological needs" (p.59).

Radway claims that the romance provides "vicarious emotional nurturance by prompting identification between the reader and a fictional heroine whose identity as a woman is always confirmed by the romantic and sexual attentions of an ideal male" (p.113). At the same time, however, Radway also claims romance reading as combative. In that romance reading cannot provide a fully satisfying reading experience or sexual-moral self, this leaves romance readers "repetitively asserting to be true what their still-unfulfilled desire demonstrates to be false, that is, that heterosexuality can create a fully coherent, fully satisfied, female subjectivity" (p.14). Despite the problematic identification between reader and heroine, an identification which is particularly problematic given the romance's classification in terms of epic, Radway's reading of the romance in terms of the importance accorded the "pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond" (p.136) requires analysis.

Radway claims that she is able to ascertain what kind of experience/self is required by the reader through identifying the romance heroine's needs, hopes, fears, etc. If not identical, the heroine's needs, etc., are at least comparable to those of the romance reader. On this basis, Radway can determine what kind of experience romance readers want:

The reading experience is valued for the way it makes the reader feel, but the feeling it creates is interpreted by the women themselves as a general sense of emotional well-being and visceral contentment ... The question that needs to be asked, therefore, is why the readers find it essential and beneficial to seek out this particular kind of vicarious experience. (p.70)

Radway concludes that the question regarding what kind of experience is sought by romance readers "can perhaps best be answered by comparing good and bad romances" (p.70); "In explaining what they do when they have determined a particular text's quality, the Smithton women provide clues to both the *deprivation* that prompts their activity and the *fears* that are assuaged and managed in the reading experience" (p.70). Radway signals her intent to "isolate the essential narrative structures" (p.161) of romance, or at least, its "alterable set of generic conventions" (p.152), by studying the differences between "ideal" and "failed" romances (see Appendix 2).¹⁰³

Based on her readings of the ideal romances, Radway locates within the romance a search for the "lost mother" of feminist psychoanalysis; thus remarking a debt to Chodorow's (1978) *The Reproduction of Mothering*, and a belated ambivalence regarding its employment as analytic tool:

Sharon O'Brien introduced me to Nancy Chodorow's work, nurtured my growing understanding of its implications for the romance, and provided important encouragement when I had difficulty believing that these books really could conceal a search for the lost mother. (p.ix)

Chodorow's work appears more indebted to sociology, or at least psychology, as opposed to psychoanalysis. It is perhaps unremarkable that the subtitle of *The Reproduction of Mothering* is "Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender", and that Chodorow is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. Certainly both Chodorow's argument and Radway's reading appear to endorse a naturalised version of the Oedipus complex, a psychologised as opposed to a psychoanalytic reading thereof. In her latest text, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*, Chodorow acknowledges that she has been criticised by Lacanian psychoanalytic feminists "for being empiricist and socially determinist and for seeing the unconscious as a sociological phenomenon rather than an analytically irreducible and unique register of being and level of analysis" (1989, p.18). Certainly Chodorow's reading of Freud is irreducibly humanist:

Many of us, also, are gripped by the grand *humanistic* claims of psychoanalysis. Freud, and others who follow him, give us standards for human fulfilment in both the emotional and interpersonal spheres. (Chodorow, 1989, p.9, *italics mine*)

In the following section the naturalist, humanist readings and object-relations which (Anglo-American) feminist 'psychoanalysis' grants the pre-oedipal will be detailed. This provides an introduction to Radway's appropriation of the pre-oedipal in her reading of romance fiction.

Feminist Readings of the Pre-Oedipal

Nancy Chodorow's feminist-oriented approach to women's psychic development has much in common with the works of Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach of the London-based Women's Therapy Centre. All three theorists have played a large role in popularising and refining the notion of the pre-oedipal or mother-daughter relationship in feminist discourse. Unlike Chodorow, however, Eichenbaum and Orbach never refer to the term 'pre-oedipal', talking only of the 'mother-daughter relationship'. Although Eichenbaum and Orbach distance themselves from the psychoanalytic, the 'pre-oedipal mother-daughter' relationship described by both sets of theorists can be seen to provide feminist discourse with naturalised, humanist readings of Freud's 1925, 1931 and 1933 essays on female sexuality and psychological development.

Eichenbaum and Orbach claim not to be interested in psychoanalysis but in "ego development". They cite an object-relations theorist, W.R.D. Fairbairn, as the major influence on their work, referring the reader of *Outside In ... Inside Out* to "Chapter 1 for our integration of Fairbairn's developmental theory" (1982, p.111). This is akin to Chodorow's statement, that she parts "company with most American psychoanalysts in my reliance on object-relations theory" (1989, p.18).

In Fairbairn's theory, a schizoid split occurs when a (particular, individual) parent is unable to gratify a (particular, individual) child's needs.¹⁰⁴ Eichenbaum and Orbach situate the personal within the political, and reinterpret this split self in the light of all mothers' interactions with their daughters. They argue that for various and complex psychological reasons, mothers as a group are not fully able to satisfy their daughters' needs. They base these hypotheses on an exploration of women's social positioning and the gender roles they are required to learn (1982, pp.27-47) without thereby denying that "the specifics of each mother-daughter relationship are unique" (p.34). However, they locate within all women the split-off "little girl" of feminist psychoanalytic theory (p.35).

The most important consequence of mother's inability fully to nurture the girl child is that part of the girl becomes split off, withdraws. She learns to "hide her emotional cravings", and instead "absorbs the idea that in order to get love and approval she must show a particular side of herself" (p.35). And whilst "this little-girl part of the ego still yearns for nurturance there is confusion about its rejection in the first place" (p.35). At the same time mother is teaching "her daughter to direct her energies towards men and that she, as an adult, must come to depend on a man" (p.36). However, since the little girl's needs were never met in the first place,

From girlhood to womanhood women live with the experience of having lost these aspects of maternal nurturance. This nurturance is never replaced. *Women look to men mother them*

but remain bereft. These needs for nurturance do not decrease any the less for the loss. This loss, which causes tremendous pain, confusion, disappointment, rage and guilt for the daughter, is buried and denied in the culture at large as well as in the unconscious of the little girl. (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1982, p.36)

And of course, having lost once - in her relationship with her mother - the little girl comes to expect loss, disappointment and frustration in her relationships with men. In terms of Eichenbaum and Orbach's model, then, the girl child suffers a double deprivation. Mother is incapable of meeting her needs, and whilst she is told to look to men to mother her, the message is that men are similarly unable to fulfil her needs. Since her needs are unmet, and remain unmet, women are thus conditioned to become sensitive to other's needs; "she learns to give what others need; she starts to give to others out of the well of her own unmet needs" (p.38). Part of women's loving, then, is a means whereby they attempt (unsuccessfully) to nurture and love those split-off parts of themselves.

Like Eichenbaum and Orbach, Chodorow also emphasises "the importance of women's mothering for the constitution of psychic life and of experiences of self and other" (1989, p.14). Even though she notes a need to "move beyond such a polarization", Chodorow nonetheless still does "privilege psychoanalytic theories that stress the mother-dominated pre-Oedipal period over the father-dominated Oedipal period" (p.14). The argument that Chodorow develops in *The Reproduction of Mothering* is that, "through relation to their mother, women develop a self-in-relation, men a self that denies relatedness" (p 15).

Through their early relationship with their mother, women develop a sense of self continuous with others and a richly constructed, bisexual, Oedipal-oscillating-with-pre-Oedipal inner self-object world that continuously engages unconscious and conscious activity: "The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world". This psychic structure and self-other process in turn help to reproduce mothering: "Because women themselves are mothered by women, they grow up with the relational capacities and needs, and psychological definition of self-in-relation, which commits them to mothering". (p.184)

During the 1980s, the mother-daughter relationship has received much attention within feminist discourse - particularly from the feminist psychotherapeutic community; "From our perspective the most critical relationship that is going to come up in the transference is that between mother and daughter", say Eichenbaum & Orbach (1983, p.72). The importance granted this relationship is noted by the titles of such texts as Nancy Friday's *My mother, My self: The Daughter's Search for Identity*, Signe Hammer's, *Daughters and Mothers, Mothers and Daughters*, Angela McBride's *The Growth and Development of Mothers*, and Adrienne Rich's, *Of Women Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*, to mention a few.¹⁰⁵ Ever since Orbach's *Fat is a Feminist Issue* (1 & 2), the mother-daughter relationship has been drawn upon in accounts of the eating disorders, informing, for instance, most of the essays in Marilyn Lawrence's *Fed Up and Hungry: Women, Oppression & Food*.

The basic problem with the feminist accounts of the "pre-oedipal" resides in their essentially humanist reading of psychoanalysis, to the extent that their notion of the pre-oedipal axiomatises the psychoanalytic model of Oedipus, thereby reducing this psychic configuration to the "mother-daughter" relationship. Chodorow's reading does tend to regard "the unconscious as a sociological phenomenon rather than an analytically irreducible and unique register of being and level of analysis" (1989, p.18). Their dependence on ego-psychology is noted, and within Radway's reading of the romance, a focus upon the possibility of some 'reconstitution' of female essence as cure is demonstrated.

The "Pre-Oedipal" Romance

Proposing a reading of romance fiction based upon "the pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond" (1987, p.136), Radway locates the compensatory aspects of the ideal romance within the realm of the pre-oedipal, connecting "romance reading to the search for pre-Oedipal merging" (p.243). Radway claims that she found "Nancy Chodorow's feminist revision of Freud" (p.12), and "theories attractive because they could account for the ongoing search for the *mother* that I detected in the Smithton women's discussion of the act of romance reading and in their preferences for particular examples of the genre" (p.13).

Radway claims that the 'ideal' romance provides "an account of the ideal heroine's journey toward female selfhood as a chronicle of her efforts to both reject and regain her mother" (p.124).

Given the nature of the female personality as a self-in-relation, the inability of men to function as completely adequate relational partners, and the reciprocal demands made upon women by the very children they rely on to satisfy their unmet needs, it is understandable that many women derive pleasure and encouragement from repetitive indulgence in romantic fantasies. On one level, then, the romance is an account of a women's journey to female personhood as that particular psychic configuration is constructed and realised within patriarchal culture. (p.138)

Radway does not fully investigate the psychic development of women or explore psychoanalytic concepts apart from using Chodorow's account of the pre-oedipal in a naturalised reading of romance. Radway reads the mother-daughter schema into the romance, and construes romance readers' social situation from their reading habits. Radway therefore claims that the psychoanalytic theories of Chodorow were used "to explain the construction of desire responsible for (romance readers' social) location and partial dissatisfaction with (their social situation), which itself leads ultimately to repetitive romance reading" (p.9). That is, she discovered that whilst romance readers "used their reading of romantic fiction both to protest against and to temporarily escape from the limited roles prescribed for them by patriarchal culture, the romances paradoxically make those

roles seem desirable" (back blurb); "the romance's short-lived therapeutic value, which is made both possible and necessary by a culture that creates needs in women that it cannot fulfil, is finally the cause of its repetitive consumption" (p.85).

Perhaps it is because relations between men and women remain relatively unexamined in feminist psychoanalytic analyses of the "pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond" (other than, for instance, in the simplistic utopia ultimately proposed in Eichenbaum and Orbach's *Understanding Women*), that romance heroes are analysed merely as inadequate surrogate mothers - hence the "Fantasy of Male Mothering" (Miles, in Radway, p.243) that Radway notes. "What all of the heroines want is tenderness and nurturance" (Radway, 1984, p.145), yes, but tenderness and nurturance is not all that they 'want'. Whilst Radway, along with Chodorow (and, originally, Freud himself), argues "that the pre-oedipal mother-daughter bond is so strong that it even persists during the oedipal period when a girl turns her attention to her father" (p.136), this does not entail that the romance ought to be misread as simply a search for pre-Oedipal merging, for the lost mother, as "fulfilling the desire to be mothered again" (Jones, 1986, p.200). Even a naturalised reading of romance texts along the lines proposed by Radway would have to read into the interaction between hero and heroine the "semi-hidden Oedipal fantasy of marrying father" (Sinason, 1986, p.57), the fact that they offer us a "fantasy of erotic domination" (Benjamin, 1983, p.292).¹⁰⁶

An alternative reading might postulate that the romance can be read in terms of both pre-oedipal and oedipal needs and issues, and it is in this that much of the appeal of the romance lies. This stance is taken up with reference to Freud's (1925, 1931, 1933) essays on female sexuality in which he claims that the pre-oedipal phase is of longer duration and importance in women, and is perhaps never fully replaced by the oedipal. His argument is that perhaps "we cannot understand women unless we appreciate this phase of their pre-Oedipus attachment to their mother" (Freud, 1973, p.153). For instance, with regard to rivalry, he concludes that it "originates from the preceding phase and has merely been reinforced and exploited in the Oedipus situation" (Freud, 1931/1984, p.378). If Freud's statement, that "a woman's strong dependence on her father merely takes over the heritage of an equally strong attachment to her mother" (p.374) is accepted, then perhaps a way around the exclusively pre-oedipal or oedipal focus found within interpretations of the romance can be negotiated. Such a reading would consider the oedipal palimpsestic upon the pre-oedipal, and the allure of the romance would be attributed to the fact that hero fulfils both good mother and seductive father roles. That is, such a reading would argue that the romance is indicative of women's problematic positioning *between* the pre-oedipal and the oedipal (this could be linked to their positioning between the vocabularies of bond and contract).

Such a reading would not, however, constitute an appropriate reading of Oedipus as a cultural logic; it would imply retaining the terminology based on Oedipus as axiomatic. It would not contribute to a reappraisal of gender and genre, nor would it provide a critique of the essentially moralistic relationship drawn between the text, experience and the self. The unmediated relationship that Radway draws between "reality" and the psychic self is noted by the ambivalence registered by her when she addresses the question as to how a feminist should appraise a romance reader; she appears disconcerted by the essentially moralistic tone she adopts towards romance readers' (psychological, social, political) needs.

The back cover informs us that Radway's text must be read as providing an alternative account of romance; she differs from those "feminists, literary critics and theorists of mass culture (who) have claimed that romances reinforce the woman reader's dependence on men and acceptance of repressive ideologies purveyed by popular culture". However, Radway's appraisal of romance fiction takes an ultimately conciliatory and moralistic stance toward the reader. Although Radway does not consider the romance reader condemned to 'desire' domination by men, her more sympathetic appraisal of the romance reader's doomed quest for the lost mother nonetheless considers romance reading to perpetuate the *status quo* of heterosexual domination.

Radway concludes that "romance is not merely the analogical representation of a preexisting sensibility but a positive agent in its creation and perpetuation" (p.151). Her analysis does not constitute a radical reinterpretation of the moral relationship text-experience-self; this can be noted by her suggestion regarding the political intervention or contribution to romance reading a feminist might make:

I think we as feminists might help this change (in power relations between men and women) along by first learning to recognise that romance reading originates in very real dissatisfaction and embodies a valid, if limited, protest. Then by developing strategies for making that dissatisfaction and its causes *consciously available* to romance readers and by learning how to encourage that protest in such a way that it will be delivered in the arena of *actual social relations* rather than *acted out in the imagination*, we might join hands with women who are, after all, our sisters and together imagine a world whose subsequent creation would lead to the need for a new fantasy altogether. (p.220, emphases mine).

Radway's synopsis is problematic for a number of reasons. Not only does the word 'protest' signify the potential for conscious (i.e., self-conscious, and political) action on the part of romance readers, but this advocacy of 'consciousness-raising' denotes that Radway does not concede the difficulties in claiming a continuity between 'desire' and political action. Radway's reading does not take into account the unconscious, which is not amenable to manipulation by means of normative practices in the sphere of the social (see chapter three). Despite the fact that, by attempting a sympathetic reading of romance readers ('who are,

after all, our sisters'), her work overtly challenges 'literary-moral' criteria (and sets up a more covert challenge to much feminist theorising of the romance), Radway's text duplicates many of the problems of traditional literary criticism. Until such time as feminist literary criticism embarks upon a critique of its own deep complicity with traditional literary criticism, recognises its own adherence to what Moi designates as a 'patriarchal aesthetic', the relationship, text-experience-self, will continue to be used by feminist critics in morally prescriptive fashions, in order, for instance, to argue against the reading pleasures of ordinary, or conservative women.

The following section will analyse the reading of *Madame Bovary* in terms of the fact that traditional literary-moral criteria are inadequate to a reading of the text. Instead, Flaubert's text provides a critique of the modern construction of character, thereby opening up a debate regarding the function that 'failure' plays in defining both gender and genre in the modern era.

5.3 Reading the Reading of *Madame Bovary*

At the level of genre, the romances Emma Bovary reads are clearly epic derivatives. On the basis of Foucault's argument that both the realist narrative and the psychological case arise from epic negation, it is obvious that a genre which is not considered to negate epic perceptions, but, on the contrary, is perceived as derivative of the epic, is liable to incur heavy censure in a modern, or psychological age.

This argument both anticipates and substantiates the fact that the reading of epic texts (eg., romances) is encoded as antagonistic to the modern construct of character. *Madame Bovary's* reading becomes the error by means of which her 'character' can be studied as 'case'. Her reading practice indicates the extent to which she errs from the normative; her reading activities are considered neither to enable, nor enhance, a particular enculturation experience.¹⁰⁷ Her reading denotes, is 'symptomatic', of the extent to which Emma (as 'character') falls almost entirely outside of the procedures of normalisation interarticulating the psychic with the social.

A reading of *Madame Bovary* will function not merely to illustrate the pathology or abnormality of Emma, in line with the 'symptomatic' nature of her reading activities. Given that normalisation in the modern period is considered reliant on the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the Oedipal injunction and the culturally required resolution of Oedipus are fundamental organising principles within the cultural logic within which a modern form

of power is imbricated. Oedipus is therefore deployed here as "a short-hand for 'the fiction of a normative psychic apparatus'" (Bowyer, 1992, p.1), and Madame Bovary's reading read in terms of the requirements for its resolution. Based on the arguments of the previous chapter, a correlation is drawn between the promissory nature of the myth of the social contract and the Oedipal path of resignation; hence, to the promissory nature of "continuous history and the realist narrative - although the promissory nature thereof functions at the level of 'meaning'" (Bowyer, 1992, p.2). As Foucault puts it:

Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject - in the form of historical consciousness - will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that were kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode. (Foucault, in Bowyer, 1992, p.2)

In chapter four it was proposed that the myth of the social contract lacks binding force for women; similarly, it emerges that Oedipal resolution is considered problematic for women:

... in women the Oedipus complex is the end-result of a fairly lengthy development ... and indeed it is all too often not surmounted by the female at all. For this reason, too, the *cultural consequences* of its break-up are smaller and of less importance in her. We should probably not be wrong in saying that it is this difference in the reciprocal relation between the Oedipus and the castration complex (i.e., various difficulties in the resolution of Oedipus) which gives its special stamp to the character of females as *social beings*. (Freud, 1984, pp.336-7, italics mine)

Freud's account of the Oedipus complex is not read in a naturalistic manner; instead, it is considered to provide an analysis of the conditions of possibility which underlie the 'creation' of the psychological or modern individual. The psychological individual is defined as one who can be integrated into a modern democratic capitalist state; as a *social being*, able to sustain contractual relations in terms of the logic of the social contract (see section 4.3). An alignment of the social and cultural logic required for the production of the modern individual/subject is promising in terms of its potential for providing an analysis of the construction/production of women; that the myth of the social contract is considered to lack binding force for women is echoed in Freud's account of Oedipus as problematic for women.

Oedipus and the social contract are aligned in terms of the promissory nature of each; given that the realist narrative is also considered promissory - at the level of 'meaning' - a reading of *Madame Bovary* can be used to demonstrate the extent to which women are problematically 'enculturated', uneasily or problematically situated within the modern. Madame Bovary's 'failure' as 'character' - in terms of recuperation into the (realist) text - is read as indicative of women's uneasy socio-psychological positioning. In particular, the promise of recuperation, of normalisation, of a reconstituted unity, of incorporation into

modern forms of power, appears particularly "promissory" for women. Or rather, women have a peculiarly challenging or unusual path to negotiate to full contractual adulthood; a route not described by means of a simple 'reading' of either Oedipus or the social contract. Nor, as this chapter argues, will a simple reading of *Madame Bovary* in terms of the criteria of 'character', i.e., as a 'realist narrative', be adequate to an analysis of the text. In particular, this reading of the text will highlight the importance granted error and failure within the technologies of the self, how the recognition (and correction) of error (the acknowledgements of 'truth') are essential "for the constitution or for the transformation of the self" (Foucault & Sennett, 1982, p.10).

A reading of *Madame Bovary* will demonstrate the extent to which women and romance fiction can be aligned, by means of "failure" in terms of criteria relating to what constitutes a modern configuration of the self/text. It emerges that it is precisely at the site of the 'promise' (promises neither made, nor kept) that women in modernity, and their fictional counterparts in romance texts fixate. Romance fiction - the reading thereof - presents, if not a site of resistance, at least a site of non-recuperation into a normalisation process. Romance fiction, as derivative of an epic tradition, the reading thereof is encoded within *Madame Bovary* as antagonistic to the modern construct of character.

The Epic and the Realist Narrative

Van Zyl argues that "while the epic is the first genre of the *possible*, it is not at the same time a genre of the *actual*" (p.65).¹⁰⁸ It is only in the realist narrative (i.e., the 'novel') that narrative enters into a relation to the actual or the factual, "the major prerequisite for modern knowledge" (p.60). In order to be brought into a relation to knowledge, a "new triangle, that of error, evidence and explanation" (p.69) replaces the canonic, memorial and taxonomic functions of epic; "those forms which can legitimately make knowledge claims do so at the expense of epic perceptions" (p.59). The novel and the case¹⁰⁹ therefore "arise simultaneously from epic negation" (p.60). In other words, the "psychological dimension in our culture is the negation of epic perceptions" (Foucault, in van Zyl, 1990, p.72):

Michel Foucault describes a single gesture (which he calls 'epic negation') in such a way as to make it possible to argue that with it both the prototypical psychological case history and the earliest *Bildungsroman* or realist novel are inaugurated. (van Zyl, 1992, p.4)

Foucault claims that in a disciplinary regime, that is, in terms of the modern, psychological form of power, individualisation is 'descending', exercised by surveillance, observation, "comparative measures that have the 'norm' as reference", by "gaps rather than deeds" (1982, p.193). No longer is it "something outside himself, a set of preordained trials which

may confront any potential hero, but that which is unique to him, which is idiosyncratic in his response" (van Zyl, 1992, p.70) which marks the individual. Foucault, describing the "passage from the epic to the novel", refers also to the passage "from the noble deed to the secret singularity" (1982, p.193). Within the modern era, individuation is achieved through the notion of error, and through the logical and transcendental requirements of evidence and explanation.

Although the realist narrative specifically engages with the problematics of error, "more significant than error or epic negation itself is the means by which error is presented and crucially explained" (van Zyl, 1992, p.87):

The novel is essentially corrective and diagnostic, however subtly it may be so. It is critical of the present mode of the social primarily by way of an assessment of the form of contemporary individuality and reveals the two as integrally related. Recent or actual events always need to be diagnosed in order that treatment may be undergone. (p.90)

Flaubert's text initially appears eminently suitable for an analysis of the 'simple, positive' ¹¹⁰ interrelationship, individuality-textuality. The idea for the novel was suggested to Flaubert by a true incident; a 'certain local occurrence that would make an excellent theme for a cool, realistic novel' (Russell, in Flaubert, 1985, p.6), and the text overtly and specifically engages with a series of problems relating to a woman, Emma Bovary, and her sexual/moral self. Her 'character' (morality) appears capable of being read in the light of her adulterous affairs (sexuality); her failure in this regard initially denoted by the symptomatic nature of her romance reading activities. The construction of an interrelationship between sexuality, textuality and individuality certainly informs the text; *Madame Bovary* explicitly engages with the relationship between the (romance) texts Emma Bovary reads, her (adulterous) experiences, and her (erring) 'self'.

However, the apparently simple nature of the relationship constructed within the text is deceptive; *Madame Bovary* does not constitute a prototypical realist narrative. In particular, the text can be read as providing a critique of the construction of 'character'; 'character' considered an essential characteristic of the realist narrative: "character serves as a major totalizing force in fiction - everything in the novel exists in order to illustrate character and its development" (Culler, in Bowyer, 1992, p.4); "'character' operates as one of the most important means through which to facilitate the recuperation or naturalisation of the literary text, and the novel in particular" (Bowyer, 1992, p.5). Flaubert's text provides a critique of the (simple, positive) construction of character; *Madame Bovary* resists recuperation into the realist narrative. Hence, "there are those who would deny its claim to 'realism' on the ground that it contains not one character of positive virtue" (Russell, in Flaubert, 1985, p.12). Or, rather, on the ground that Emma's erring self is not amenable to normative social

processes, to a disciplinary regime; her recognition of error does not provide the means whereby she becomes capable of producing herself as a self-regulating, moral individual.

According to the requirements of 'character', Emma's reading activities ought to contribute to a 'diagnosis' of error, potentially, to a 'cure'. Her reinsertion into the text could occur should she become capable of recognising and renouncing her 'secret singularity' (eg., her reading of romance). The realist narrative "facilitates the inferral of 'character' from action such that the reader is encouraged to take pleasure in the manner in which action accords with characters; so as to grant to such action the appearance of reality - so as to render it intelligible" (Bowyer, 1992, p.4). In other words, Madame Bovary's actions should not only coincide with character, but, more importantly, development (of character and action, or plot) is predicated upon a systematic self-diagnosis (and, it is implied, *correction*) of error which engenders the self-regulating individual. Emma Bovary, however, steadfastly refuses to regulate her own activities; although she periodically renounces romances, she requires of socially prescriptive procedures (eg., the reading of religious texts) that they alone will 'discipline' or 'produce' her. That is, Emma Bovary is never compelled to "face the task of producing (herself)" (Foucault, 1984, p.42). Flaubert's text is read here as providing a critique of the extent to which institutional regulation, socially normative routines, can in fact produce the self-regulating individual. Flaubert's text appears to suggest that cultural and social imperatives are relatively lacking, are less effective, in requiring of a woman that she face the task of producing herself.

If the epic is considered narrative as possibility, and Austen's *Emma* considered to place narrative in relation to the actual, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* may be read as narrative as critical practice. Whilst *Emma* can be read in terms of the requirements for the construction of the modern individual, *Madame Bovary* explicitly engages with, and critiques modernity in terms of the contradictory requirements made of the individual, particularly as these relate to the subject-position of women. The following section presents my reading of the reading of Madame Bovary, this will demonstrate the extent to which Flaubert's text provides a critique of the modern construct of character.

The Reading of Madame Bovary

It is comparatively easy to draw a comparison between Austen's *Emma* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*. In both texts, a relationship is drawn between sexual/textual practice and the self such that the reading activities of the female protagonist becomes crucial to an analysis of the construct of character; both Flaubert's and Austen's *Emma* are introduced as

non-systematic, indiscriminating readers. Trilling draws out this relationship, claiming that, like Emma Bovary, Emma Woodhouse's "mind is shaped and deceived by fiction" (1957, p.129). Like Austen's Emma, Emma Bovary's reading can be regarded as 'symptomatic' in terms of the criteria delineated in chapter three.

Similarities between the two novels in terms of the construction of character cannot be considered accidental. Within the realist narrative, the construction of self is described as necessarily, even essentially, predicated upon error. The notion of "individuation through error" (van Zyl, 1992, p.73) provides the basis of the modern construct of character, which constitutes a new form of subjectivity. Through individuation, "ordinary individuality - the everyday individuality of everybody" (Foucault, 1982, p.191) becomes amenable to the procedures of observation and examination. As a result, the individual can be "trained or corrected, classified, normalised, excluded, etc." (p.191).

In both *Emma* and *Madame Bovary* a particular, clearly delineated reading practice is valorized. This observation finds its historical correlate in the fact that reading practices fell in line with regulatory practices at the beginning of the modern era, whereupon the manner in which a person reads, the purposes to which reading is put, and reading material itself became subject to observation and correction (see chapter one). Furthermore, a number of interrelated social and historical factors prevailed that regulatory and supervisory practices were particularly evident in, or pertinent to, women's reading activities - women became the prime targets of a new kind of discourse which accorded diagnostic status to women, treated in terms of error. The significance reading assumes within these texts is therefore partly attributable to the debates which were generated during the early nineteenth century regarding women, morality and education.

A salient similarity between the novels resides in the fact that individual error can be plotted on the basis of the reading practices of the protagonists. In chapters three and four, it was argued that Emma Woodhouse became engendered with superior qualities of mind; these facilitate her full incorporation into the social, symbolised by marriage. Within *Emma*, the moral and psychological development of the female protagonist is fully detailed and analysed. Unlike Emma Woodhouse, however, Emma Bovary falls almost entirely outside procedures of normalisation, and is never fully recuperated as a character of a realist text, except perhaps through her death.

Within Flaubert's text, particular attention is given to the fact that Emma Bovary is continually "reading novels - wicked books - works against religion, that ridicule the priests

with quotations out of Voltaire!" (p.139). Throughout, the text explicitly, and critically, engages with the relationship text-experience-self; Madame Bovary's reading activities are best analysed in comparison with the normative reading practices of the chemist, Homais.

Although Homais does not act as the moral centre of Flaubert's text in the way that Knightley does in *Emma* (in itself, this is indicative of the critical stance taken towards procedures of normalisation, modernity), his figure is representative of the normative, of Enlightenment: "he is Technical Man, Apostle of Progress,¹¹¹ up-and-coming committee-member, imitation Voltaire" (Russell in Flaubert, 1985, p.9). Homais is an exemplar of the age of reason and rationality, of debate and ideas, his personal library "comprising the best authors" (p.96).¹¹² The reading practices of Homais are presented as normative (see section 3.1); in particular, he valorizes the "subjection of the fancy to the understanding" (p.102), as it is this that denotes one's ability to "discriminate", "to draw the line between imagination and fanaticism" (p.102). For instance, he finds himself in a quandary as to his classification of Racine's *Athalie*:

In this tragedy of *Athalie*, for example, he censured the thought while admiring the style, denounced the conception but applauded the execution, was exasperated by the characters and spellbound by their speeches.

When he read the great passages he was carried away - until he remembered what an asset they had been to the clerical profession, and then he felt mortified: floundering in such a confusion of feelings, he longed simultaneously to crown Racine with both hands, and to give him a good piece of his mind. (Flaubert, 1985, p.102)

As a representative of Republican France, Homais engages in a series of debates with the *curé*.¹¹³ Homais, for instance, claims the fraudulence of Christianity on the basis of reason; when the *curé* refers to the Bible for evidence to substantiate his argument, Homais scoffs: "Oh, the texts, the texts! Look up your history. Everybody knows they were falsified by the Jesuits" (p.340). Many of the debates centre on the use and purposes of reading; Homais queries the *curé's* statement that he saw "less danger to morals in music than in literature" (p.229), and concludes:

I'm surprised that in these days, in this age of enlightenment,¹¹⁴ you should still persist in condemning an intellectual recreation which is *quite harmless and moral*, and sometimes even good for the health. (p.230, italics mine)

That Flaubert's text explicitly engages with the question as to whether or not the intellectual recreation provided by books is actually "harmless and moral" (p.230) is supported by statements throughout the text. Even when Homais discovers, concealed in the pocket of his young apprentice, Justin, the book *Married Love* (obviously a pseudo-medical erotic masterpiece - with pictures!) Homais' initial bourgeois bluster, consisting of warnings detailing the dire consequences of Justin's accumulation of "all the vices" (p.261) is rapidly replaced by an avuncular appreciation of the 'scientific' nature of the pornographic:

with quotations out of Voltaire!" (p.139). Throughout, the text explicitly, and critically, engages with the relationship text-experience-self; Madame Bovary's reading activities are best analysed in comparison with the normative reading practices of the chemist, Homais.

Although Homais does not act as the moral centre of Flaubert's text in the way that Knightley does in *Emma* (in itself, this is indicative of the critical stance taken towards procedures of normalisation, modernity), his figure is representative of the normative, of Enlightenment: "he is Technical Man, Apostle of Progress,¹¹¹ up-and-coming committee-member, imitation Voltaire" (Russell in Flaubert, 1985, p.9). Homais is an exemplar of the age of reason and rationality, of debate and ideas, his personal library "comprising the best authors" (p.96).¹¹² The reading practices of Homais are presented as normative (see section 3.1); in particular, he valorizes the "subjection of the fancy to the understanding" (p.102), as it is this that denotes one's ability to "discriminate", "to draw the line between imagination and fanaticism" (p.102). For instance, he finds himself in a quandary as to his classification of Racine's *Athalie*:

In this tragedy of *Athalie*, for example, he censured the thought while admiring the style, denounced the conception but applauded the execution, was exasperated by the characters and spellbound by their speeches.

When he read the great passages he was carried away - until he remembered what an asset they had been to the clerical profession, and then he felt mortified: floundering in such a confusion of feelings, he longed simultaneously to crown Racine with both hands, and to give him a good piece of his mind. (Flaubert, 1985, p.102)

As a representative of Republican France, Homais engages in a series of debates with the *curé*.¹¹³ Homais, for instance, claims the fraudulence of Christianity on the basis of reason; when the *curé* refers to the Bible for evidence to substantiate his argument, Homais scoffs: "Oh, the texts, the texts! Look up your history. Everybody knows they were falsified by the Jesuits" (p.340). Many of the debates centre on the use and purposes of reading; Homais queries the *curé*'s statement that he saw "less danger to morals in music than in literature" (p.229), and concludes:

I'm surprised that in these days, in this age of enlightenment,¹¹⁴ you should still persist in condemning an intellectual recreation which is quite harmless and moral, and sometimes even good for the health. (p.230, italics mine)

That Flaubert's text explicitly engages with the question as to whether or not the intellectual recreation provided by books is actually "harmless and moral" (p.230) is supported by statements throughout the text. Even when Homais discovers, concealed in the pocket of his young apprentice, Justin, the book *Married Love* (obviously a pseudo-medical erotic masterpiece - with pictures!) Homais' initial bourgeois bluster, consisting of warnings detailing the dire consequences of Justin's accumulation of "all the vices" (p.261) is rapidly replaced by an avuncular appreciation of the 'scientific' nature of the pornographic:

Not that I entirely disapprove of the work! The author was a doctor. There are certain scientific aspects of the thing that it does a man no harm to know - I'd even say that he ought to know. But not yet, not yet. Wait at least until you're a man yourself, till [sic] your temperament matures. (p.261)

Although it is necessary to compare Austen's *Emma* with Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, it is clear that the function that reading plays within each text is different. Whilst the reading of both protagonists can be considered symptomatic, the construction of character in Austen's text relies upon Emma's ability to recognise error in herself and respond appropriately. Chapter three argued that *Emma* is constructed such that plot is enfolded entirely into that which explicates and details the development of Emma's character, i.e., 'qualities of mind', such that she is able to contract a marriage with Knightley.

However, within *Madame Bovary*, the relationship text-experience-self depicts or denotes, but does not explain, the extent to which she 'fails' on a functional level. The critique that the text launches against normative practices in the sphere of the social can be investigated in the light of an analysis of the school-days of Charles Bovary and Emma Rouault. The text queries whether regulation, by means of various external procedures and routines, can inculcate self-discipline - lead to self-regulation; that is, whether a disciplinary regime alone can produce a certain kind of individual.

Fashioning the Ideal: Problems of the 'Real'

Bovary's father

had in his head a certain *manly ideal* of boyhood, according to which he tried to *fashion* his son. He wanted him brought up the Spartan way, to give him a good constitution. He sent him to bed without a fire, taught him to drain down great swigs of rum, and to jeer at church processions. Being of a peaceable disposition, the child responded poorly to these efforts. (p.19, italics mine)

Despite Bovary's attempts to produce a particular kind of son by means of various routines - he lets him "run about barefoot" (p.19), and "even asserted, with a high philosophical air, that it would do him no harm to go quite naked, like a young animal" (p.19) - Charles resists incorporation into this 'manly ideal of boyhood'. Of a 'peaceable disposition', his "mother kept him tied to her apron strings" (p.19). Charles also fails to reap the "greatness" (p.20) his mother desires for him from the institutional procedures of education;¹¹⁵ his failure in this regard is detailed within the opening passages of the text wherein his days as a school boy are presented. Charles denotes no particular promise, he owes it to his "evident willingness (to work) that he was not put down into the class below" (p.18); it is only by "dint of steady work" (p.21) that he keeps his place in about the middle of the class. He passes his medical exams because he "studied assiduously, learning all the questions by

heart" (p.24); however, it is noted that "He passed pretty well" (p.24). Discipline is seen partly to compensate for a lack of potential, but his 'natural', "incurable ineptitude" (p.263), and subsequent inability to succeed at "greatness" is highlighted by his failure to correct Hippolyte's clubfoot - at which disaster, Emma laments that "the ridicule attaching to his name would now sully her as well" (p.197).

In contradistinction to Charles, Emma is particularly promising scholarly material; "She knew her catechism well, and it was always she who answered the curate's harder questions" (p.48). Throughout the text, Emma's abilities and intelligence are never disputed; the curé writes to the Bishop's librarian and asks for "some work of note, for a female with brains" (p.225). Homais says of her, "She's a very clever woman, who wouldn't be out of place as the wife of a subprefect" (p.120), and her father that she was "too clever for farming" (p.36); "Possessing such a wife, Charles came to have an increased respect for himself" (p.55).

Emma, however, never fulfils her 'promise'. Tracing a relationship between the text and self, the fact that, like Austen's Emma, she "went at her reading too precipitately" (p.226) is considered symptomatic. However, drawing on the medical vocabulary continually employed within the text, whilst her reading can be read as a 'symptom' it can only be read as *potentially* (but not actually) contributing to a diagnosis; romance reading alone constitutes neither explanation, nor renunciation a cure. That is, it turns out neither the prohibition of novels (which is initially recommended, eventually carried into 'battle' action by Charles' mother), nor Emma's own various renunciations of the texts constitutes a remedy. Like the innumerable "irregularities of the nervous system" (p.220), the imagination eludes diagnosis, correction and cure.

When Emma falls into strong hysterics at the departure of Rodolphe, her lover, Homais wonders whether the fact that her attack had come on "while she was eating apricots" (p.220) could provide the explanation for her illness; "it's possible the apricots caused the syncope" (p.220). Whilst conceding "how innumerable are the irregularities of the nervous system" (p.220), he says to Bovary, "your wife, I confess, has always looked to me the true sensitive *type*" (p.220, italics mine). He attempts diagnosis and cure in terms of "Diet ... sedatives, emollients and syrups" (p.220), but says to Charles:

"And then, don't you think we ought perhaps to strike at the imagination?"
"How? In what way?" said Bovary.
"Ah, that is the question. Such is indeed the question. 'C'est là la question', as the paper was saying the other day". (p.221)

Such indeed is the question the text continually engages with, how 'to strike at the imagination'? Russell claims that Flaubert, "saw himself as 'exorcizing the romantic demons that hover about literature'" (in Flaubert, 1985, p.8). Russell concedes that it "would be truer to say that he *resolved, or by-passed*, the conflict, which much exercised his age, between the claims of romanticism and those of realism" (p.8, italics mine). Russell's 'resolved, or by-passed' admits an ambivalence that is not misplaced - perhaps Flaubert's text interrelates, through the figure of Madame Bovary, narrative as possibility with narrative as critical practice. That is, to the extent that her character is never actualised, the text can be read in terms of narrative as possibility; that her failure of character is attributed to the fact that external discipline alone cannot produce the self-regulating individual provides the account of narrative as critical practice. In particular, Flaubert's text engages with the problematic position women occupy within the modern form of power.

The "good nuns, who had felt so sure of her vocation" (p.52)

had lavished on her so many offices and retreats, novenas and sermons, had preached so much about the reverence due to the saints and martyrs, given her so much good advice on the modesty of her person and the salvation of her soul, *that she did what horses do when you rein them in too tight - pulled up sharp and dropped the bit from beneath her teeth.* (p.52)

Emma, far from capable of deferring gratification, pleasure, needs to "derive a sort of *personal profit* from things, she rejected as useless whatever did not minister to her heart's *immediate fulfilment*" (p.49, italics mine). Hence, she rejects the discipline, the deferral of gratification, involved in the devotion of a life to the eventual salvation of the soul; "Practically minded in the midst of all her enthusiasm, she loved the church for its flowers, music for the words of the songs, literature for its passionate excitements, and she rebelled against the mysteries of the faith as she grew the more *irritated with discipline, a thing repugnant to her nature*" (p.52). Emma refuses discipline; instead, she appears to believe in the 'epic' mode of production of individuals; "that certain parts of the world must produce happiness, as they produce peculiar plants which will flourish nowhere else" (p.53). Emma believes that external events alone ought to produce difference:

It was the fourth time she had slept in a strange place ... Each had seemed to mark the inauguration of a new phase in her life. She didn't think things could present the same aspect in different places. And since life had not been kind to her so far, the future must surely hold something better in store for her. (p.98)

Russell notes that Flaubert "specifically disclaimed all direct moral intention" (p.7). This is corroborated by Leavis' argument that Henry James' evaluation of the text is correct; the weakness in *Madame Bovary* resides in "the discrepancy between the technical ('aesthetic') intensity, with the implied attribution of interest in the subject, and the actual moral and human paucity of this subject on any mature valuation" (Leavis, 1986, p.22). If 'moral' is

defined as that which gives a positive account of individual morality in terms of 'character'; i.e., that which is 'moral' demonstrates the fulfilment of promise, of recuperation, of normalisation, of reconstituted unity, then Flaubert's text is not 'moral'. However, Wilde's assessment of Zola's works may be apposite to use in relation to *Madame Bovary*, that the text is

wrong not on the ground of morals ... From any ethical standpoint it is just what it should be. The author is perfectly truthful, and describes things exactly as they happen. What more can any moralist desire? We have no sympathy at all with the moral indignation of our time against M. Zola. It is simply the indignation of Tartuffe on being exposed. (Wilde, 1913, p.11)

The word, "moral" is therefore taken to describe models of normalisation in terms of the creation of the modern or psychological individual - such an individual considered capable of self-regulation through error - of individual, internal and internalised morality. The realist narrative, with its emphasis on 'character' corroborates this, is therefore intensely "moral", hence the association, 'literature-morality', more specifically: 'realist narrative-character'. On the grounds that Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* is difficult to define by means of 'character' - even though the text explicitly engages with, or problematises character - perhaps it is possible to say of Flaubert that, whatever he is, "he is not a realist. Or rather I would say that he is a child of realism who is not on speaking terms with his father" (p.15).

In fact, the only 'thing', person or object that appears to receive direct moral benefit from a disciplinary regime, exercise serving to improve it, is the clubfoot of Hippolyte:

With long service it had developed as it were *moral qualities* of energy and endurance, and on it he preferred to shore his weight when he had heavy work to do. (p.188, italics mine)

However, it is Hippolyte's clubfoot that is considered non-normative - in terms of the statistical model of health; it is this perfectly functioning, 'as it were moral', clubfoot which Bovary, as medical doctor, 'promises' to 'correct'. This promise Bovary cannot fulfil; to the contrary, Hippolyte has afterward to "describe a painful arc on the floor with his artificial leg" (p.263) when setting down luggage, thus standing as a "living rebuke to (Charles') *incurable ineptitude*" (p.263, italics mine). Similarly, Charles Bovary cannot fulfil either of the 'promises' Emma assumes are implied by his marriage to her. Neither the promise of Bovary as 'prize' (in terms of the vocabulary of bond, of love, of epic hero), nor of 'profit' (in terms of the marriage contract, abstract equal exchange, the money form) are realised by Emma's marriage to Bovary. Emma, in full anticipation of the fulfilment of promise, vacillates between two sets of promises: searching for the 'prize' of an epic hero, she embarks upon adulterous affairs; furious because cheated of her 'due' (the text details the relationship between women and failure, inferiority: women's economic inequality - unpaid labour - and legal subordination), she attempts profits with money that is not 'here', except

by proxy, by Power of Attorney. Neither promise - of prize nor of profit - is fulfilled; similarly, Emma's other 'promises' (and the 'promise' of Emma as character) - are neither made, nor kept.

Promises: Prizes and Profits

As a child, Emma Bovary's school-girl promise had been rewarded with prizes; "She remembered prize-giving days at the convent, going up on the platform to receive the little crowns" (p.58), "the little volumes she had been given for prizes, and the oak-leaf crowns" (p.35). In a similar manner in which her promise as a scholar and as a potential novice is not realised, so are the promises of happiness, of love through marriage, not fulfilled - her promise of 'prize' (see section 4.2) reduced to a contract between two men, and a matter of personal profit to one.¹¹⁶ Her father, who "pondered the whole affair beforehand" (p.37) considers Charles no 'prize' - "rather a wisp of a man, to be sure, not quite the son-in-law he could have wished for. But he was said to be steady and thrifty, and well-educated. *Most likely he wouldn't haggle too much over the dowry*" (p.37, italics mine); thus he dispenses with his daughter's hand. This contrasts with Charles' dreams for their daughter: "And then they'd have to find her a good young fellow to settle down with - somebody pretty soundly placed, who'd make her happy, happy ever after. ..." (p.207). Emma's marriage to Charles provides her with neither happiness nor love:

Before the wedding, she had believed herself in love. But not having obtained the happiness that should have resulted from that love, she now fancied that she must have been mistaken. And Emma wondered exactly what was meant in life by the words 'bliss', 'passion', 'ecstasy', which had looked so beautiful in books. (p.47)

In particular, she contemplates the potential, the possibility of having attained " - that different life, that unknown husband. For they weren't all like this one. He might have been handsome, intelligent, distinguished, attractive, as were no doubt the men her old school friends had married" (p.57).¹¹⁷ Subsequent to the ball at La Vaubyessard, the soles of her satin slippers are "yellowed with wax from the dance floor" (p.69), at which she concedes, "Her heart was like that. Contact with riches had left upon it a coating that would never wear off" (p.69). The conjunction of 'heart' and 'riches' denotes the extent to which her unhappiness is related to the fact that none of the promises of marriage: of love, of prize or of profit - as the title of one of Barbara Cartland's romances puts it: *Money, Magic and Marriage* - are realised:

Then the appetites of the flesh, *the craving for money*, the melancholy of passion, all blended together in one general misery. Instead of turning her thoughts away, she riveted them to it the more firmly; she worked up her grief, and sought out its occasions. She was irritated by a meal badly served or a door left ajar; she moped to herself about the velvet she did not possess, the happiness that was passing her by, the loftiness of her dreams and the littleness of her house. (p.121, italics mine)

Searching for an epic hero, or an event that would produce her, Emma became "prepared for any act of worship, if only it would absorb her soul and swallow up her entire being" (p.123); "Love, she believed, must come suddenly, with thunder and lightning, a hurricane from on high that swoops down into your life and turns it topsy-turvy, snatches away your will-power like a leaf, hurls you heart and soul into the abyss" (p.113). Thus Emma's life becomes punctuated by a series of resolutions and crises, wherefrom she acquires, chameleon-like, new identities. These represent, not an active seeking of self, nor even a wish to obliterate self, merely an acute receptivity to endlessly deferred promises of possibility. However, it was with her new resolutions, "with her reading as with her needlework, which cluttered up the cupboard all unfinished: she picked it up, put it down, passed on to something else" (p.137). At no stage does any one new life phase become complete, its promise fulfilled, she is never compelled to produce herself: "And all the time, deep within her, she was waiting for something to happen" (p.75); "She longed to travel - or to go back to the convent. She wanted to die, and she wanted to live in Paris" (p.73). Until the last, she pursues the possibility of alternatives: "She would have liked to stop living, or else to remain consciously asleep" (p.302).

Emma's constant deferral of choice, but continual receptivity to change, creates her as an actant that is potentially, but not actually, capable of characterisation, of normalisation, i.e., correction, or self-correction, of producing herself in accordance with the technologies of self - hence the perception of Flaubert's text as narrative as possibility. The promise, the allure of 'prize', of epic hero, of romance, proves false. So too, the promise of profit - this relates narrative as critical practice; Emma Bovary, "irritated with discipline, a thing repugnant to her nature" (p.52), reveals herself to be incapable of managing money appropriately; she ends up in debt.¹¹⁸ However, the text explicitly draws out a relation between the constraining, irritating, small domestic routines and disciplines which comprise Emma's womanly duties - which constitute unpaid labour - and her frustration and anger that a man has "his money, his happiness, his freedom" (p.323);¹¹⁹

Whereas a woman is constantly thwarted. At once inert and pliant, she has to contend with both physical weakness and legal subordination. Her will is like the veil on her bonnet, fastened by a single string and quivering at every breeze that blows. Always there is a desire that impels and a convention that restrains. (p.101)

When the full extent of her financial distress becomes known, Emma seeks help from the notary; he enables her to regret that he had not had management of her accounts earlier, "for there were any number of ways, *even for a lady*, of turning one's money to account ... He worked her into a devouring rage at the thought of the fabulous profits she would have been certain to make" (p.314, *italics mine*). However, when he attempts to seduce her, she cries,

"You take despicable advantage of my distress, Monsieur! I am to be pitied ... I am not to be bought!" (p.315). A similar conjunction of ideas (the social and economic inferiority of women whose sexuality can be bought, but who should therefore be pitied, not seduced) inform the thoughts of Emma when she contemplates the shame that their joint debts, thanks to her Power of Attorney, will bring Charles; she, however, becomes furious at the foreknowledge of his forgiveness and his potential (moral), or actual (social), superiority - a superiority which does not find its correlate in financial terms, in money: "he'll forgive me - he, whom *I'd never forgive for having known me though he had a million to offer me!* No, never never!" She felt furious at the idea of Bovary's being *superior* to herself" (p.316, *italics mine*).

Despite her expressed need to dissociate herself from Charles, even if he had a million to offer her (i.e., she cannot be bought), it is noted that "she was perhaps beginning to regret that she hadn't yielded to (the notary)" (p.316); Russell's translation of Emma's fury at Charles' 'having *known me*' maintains the relationship between a sexual morality that appears to be overridden, to lack a certain cultural (individual) imperative, given a relative lack of social (it is implied, financial) imperatives. That is, "a desire that impels and a *convention* that restrains" (p.101, *italics mine*) - i.e., a conventional, not an individual morality that restrains.¹²⁰ Emma hearkens to Rodolphe's *proposition*; he approaches her "boldly ... - it's the best policy!" (p.144). She agrees with Rodolphe's arguments, acquiesces to his proposition; "'All the same,' said Emma, 'we must take some notice of what the world thinks, and conform to *its* morality'" (p.157, *italics mine*).¹²¹

Prior to her visit to the notary, she has attempted a final bargain with Lheureux, the draper: "'Come!' he exclaimed with a shrug of the shoulders. 'You've nothing left to sell!'" (p.305). Her encounter with the notary, has, however, taught her that she has a commodity, or at least a property in her own person - this she can sell;¹²² she approaches Binet, the tax collector, with what "must indeed have been a scandalous proposition" (p.317), but is refused. As a last resort, Madame Bovary approaches her first lover and debaucher, Rodolphe,¹²³ and is denied money/love in a final humiliation: "If he had had it (the money) he would doubtless have given it to her, distasteful though it usually is to perform such noble deeds: a request for money being of all the icy blasts that blow upon love the coldest and most uprooting" (p.322). Madame Bovary, however, has a different perspective, she is furious at "him with his money, his happiness, his freedom ... - he turns me away because it'd cost him a hundred and twenty pounds!" (p.323).

Madame Bovary associates men with her financial distress; "She was in a fighting fury. She would have liked to hit men, to spit in their faces, to trample on them" (p.315). However,

"the thing that had brought her to this frightful condition - *her need for money* - she could not recall" (p.324, *italics mine*). Flaubert's text implies the fraudulence of a system that delegates duties and responsibilities to women without payment, thereby rendering women amenable to a form of "labour that is not labour - economy that is not money" (Armstrong, 1987, p.ix). Discussing her extended visit to the theatre with Léon, Emma says:

"Yes, though I ought not to (stay)", she said, "for there's no sense in acquiring tastes you can't indulge, when there are a hundred and one things that have a claim on you. ..."
"Oh yes, I can imagine."
"I doubt if you can. You're not a woman." (p.243)

At one stage Emma claims the various duties that rule her life - "her domestic martyrdom" (p.137) - effectively prevent her enjoyment of leisure activities such as playing the piano: "Heavens, haven't I the house to run, my husband to look after, a hundred and one jobs, a whole host of duties that come first?" (p.118). At this particular period in her life, Madame Bovary was a 'reformed character'; the "housewives were won by her thrift, the patients by her courtesy, the poor by her charity" (p.120). However, when she 'reverts' to 'type', the failures of the relation between labour that is not labour, leisure, and Emma's sexual/textual self is drawn out. That is, her mother-in-law urges upon her 'hard, manual work', such that she not indulge in leisure activities, the reading of novels; Emma nonetheless cannot 'earn her bread, like a lot of other people' - the ambiguity of the description of her 'idle life' is denoted by the fact that Charles claims she's always 'doing something'.

"I'll tell you what your wife needs," said his mother, "and that's hard work - manual work! If she were obliged to earn her bread, like a lot of other people, she'd never get these hysterical moods of hers. It all comes of the pack of ideas she's stuffed her head with, and the idle life she leads."

"But she's always doing something," said Charles.

"Doing something! Yes, reading novels - wicked books - works against religion, that ridicule the priests with quotations out of Voltaire! It's playing with fire, that is, my boy! Anyone without religion will always go wrong in the end!" (p.139)

Emma's position is contradictory, the promises of prize and of profit illusory; the social and financial imperatives which would require of Emma that she produce herself as an individual in terms of a particular cultural/social logic appear to lack binding force, hence the problems of 'character'. Within the text, Emma's problems are diagnosed by her mother-in-law as problems of self, flaws of 'character' - Madame Bovary Senior ascribes these moral deficits to Emma's novel reading; thus she implies a direct, causal relationship between the romances Emma reads and her erring self:

So they decided to prevent Emma reading novels. It seemed no light undertaking. The good lady said she would do it, by stopping at the lending-library on her way through Rouen and telling them that Emma was giving up her subscription. If the shopkeeper still persisted in his *poisoner's trade*, would they not have the right to inform the police? (p.139, *italics mine*)

Reading Romances

There was an *old maid* who came to the convent one week in every month to mend the linen. Being *under the Arch-bishop's protection as coming of an old family of gentlefolk ruined in the Revolution*, she took her meals in the refectory along with the holy sisters, and afterwards joined them in a little chat before resuming her work. The girls often slipped out of preparation to go and see her. She sang half to herself as she plied her needle *some romantic ballads of the last century, which she knew by heart*. She told you stories, brought news, and did little errands for you in the town. In the pocket of her apron she always kept some novel or other, which she would lend to the bigger girls on the sly, and which the maiden lady herself devoured, whole chapters at a time, in the intervals of her task. They were all about love and lovers, damsels in distress swooning in lonely lodges, postillions slaughtered all along the road, horses ridden to death on every page, gloomy forests, troubles of the heart, vows, sobs, tears, kisses, rowing-boats in the moonlight, nightingales in the grove, gentlemen brave as lions and gentle as lambs, too virtuous to be true, invariably well-dressed, and weeping like fountains. And so for six months of her sixteenth year, Emma soiled her hands with this refuse of old lending libraries. (pp.49-50, italics mine)

The above passage designates the extent to which romances are perceived as belonging to a previous era; the maiden lady, of an old family, is under the Arch-bishop's protection, knows romantic ballads of a half-century ago by heart - is a purveyor of romantic goods. The historical (epic!) nature of the novels is highlighted, the settings: Gothick and fantastic - postillions, lonely lodges, rowing boats in the moonlight; the emotions overwhelming - vows, sobs, tears, kisses. ... These novels are clearly epic derivatives; as a reader, Madame Bovary's requirement is that texts are not like everyday life, frighten the reader, hurl the reader precipitately from adventure to adventure:

"(Poetry) palls in time, though," replied Emma. "In fact, nowadays I'm all for stories that rush you along breathlessly and make you frightened. I hate commonplace heroes and moderate feelings such as are to be found in life." (p.96)

Emma's absorption in these fantastic pleasures is complete, any intrusion which breaks her concentration on 'other worldly' visions is unbearable:

... she would lie awake *turning* reading fantastic fiction, all blood and orgies. Often she screamed out in terror and Charles came running in. "Oh, go away!" she said. (p.300)

Emma takes a full sensual, almost innocent delight - *pleasure* - even in examining the books, "Delicately fingering their satin bindings"; "She thrilled as she blew back the tissue paper over the prints. It rose in a half-fold and sank gently down on the opposite page" (p.51). Her indulgence - reading for pleasure as opposed to profit - is encoded as antagonistic to the modern 'economic' conception of what constitutes reading - what Armstrong would term an 'economy of pleasure'. The pleasures Emma derives from books are escapist, indulgent - they appear to entail a fully absorbing, bodily, but nonetheless mystical experience - the text presents as akin the erotico-spiritual dimensions of both church rituals and textual experiences.

In particular, Emma appears not to *discriminate* between word as thing and word as word; word and picture appear always akin; when reading in the convent, "The argand lamp fixed

in the wall above Emma's head shone down on this 'world in pictures' as it passed before her" (p.51). On her way to the convent, she and her father stop at an inn, where "supper was served on painted plates depicting the story of Mademoiselle de la Vallière. The explanatory wording, worn away here and there by the scratch of cutlery, all glorified religion, the tender heart and Court ceremony" (p.48) - That "enduring memory of the painted plates glorifying Louis XIV" (p.50) was one of those 'phenomena' that "stood out for her like comets upon the dark immensity of history" (p.50). The unsystematic, undisciplined nature of her reading activities - reading for pleasure (sometimes, not even reading) - is noted in the fact that, "Instead of following the Mass, she used to gaze at the azure-bordered drawings in her book. She loved the sick lamb, the Sacred Heart pierced with sharp arrows, and poor Jesus falling beneath His cross" (p.48).

The fact that Emma does not distinguish word/thing and word/word finds its correlate in form of synaesthesia, a blurring of sense boundaries, where look, smell, touch, become one - her pleasure in books as much a tactile as a cognitive experience.¹²⁴ The word 'Paris' is not only visual but an audible, a fully physical entity to her, "It dinned in her ears like a great cathedral bell, it flamed before her eyes on the labels of her jars of cream ... So Paris swam before her eyes, like a shifting ocean glimmering through a rose-coloured haze" (p.70-71).¹²⁵ Emma's reading activities do not demonstrate a systematic subjection of the imagination to a disciplined understanding - Emma does not read for *profit*, is presented as incapable of *discrimination*, i.e., unable to "draw the line between imagination and fanaticism" (p.102). Emma is presented as incapable of denial, needing to "derive a sort of *personal profit* from things, she rejected as useless whatever did not minister to her heart's *immediate fulfilment*" (p.49, italics mine). That is, she takes her delights where she finds them, irrespective of the constraints of church religion; of worldly morality; of discipline and regulation; she takes little heed, therefore, of standard reading practices.

She had read *Paul and Virginia*, and seen in her dreams the little bamboo hut, Domingo the nigger and Faithful the dog, and, above all, the dear little brother, gentle and loving, who fetches down red fruits for you from great trees taller than church steeples, or comes running barefoot along the sands to bring you a bird's nest. (p.48)

With the progression of the passage, Emma is transported from reading, to dreaming; the first tentative acknowledgement of the dear little brother becomes fleshed out into an almost tangible, vivid impression. With such a 'world in pictures', such visions passing before her, Emma would "sooner stay in her room all the time, reading" (p.95) and "even brought her book to the dinner-table, and turned over the pages while Charles ate and talked" (p.71). That is, 'turned over the pages', dreams "between the lines" (p.73), "went at her reading too precipitately" (p.226) - Emma's reading practices clearly admit of error, reading for pleasure

(personal 'profit', immediate gratification) is opposed to reading for profit - a systematic discrimination, subjugation of the imagination to the understanding.

The 'character' of Emma Bovary, read in terms of error, is consistent with her failure as reader - both in the manner in which she reads and the texts she reads. All admit a historical ('pre-modern') association, Emma's requirements (of self and text) are therefore considered inappropriate - her textual pleasures, her reading of epic texts, admit the social logic of a 'pre-modern' society; this logic encoded as antagonistic to the modern requirements of 'character'. Emma's requirement that Bovary become an epic hero, or at least a great man in terms of the norms of the time, is problematic. Emma is frustrated by the fact that she is a woman, at her marriage to Bovary - her acquisition of his name.

A momentary lapse before a greater gathering of concentration is noted as Emma recalls "this name of Bovary, *that was hers*" (p.74, italics mine). In this is detected a slight steadying motion, as a woman may balance a water-jug before a difficult crossing; a hesitation so subtle she hardly breaks stride in her progress towards wanting this name "to be famous, on view at the bookshops, always cropping up in the papers, known all over France" (p.74). The hesitation derives from the peculiarity of Emma finding herself with another man's name, with her wish that this name should be "on view" she relegates or uplifts it to the status of other objects.

Throughout this reading, a series of associations have been drawn between Emma's textual practices and her self. I have argued that Flaubert's text can be read as providing a systematic critique of modernity; in particular, the text analyses the relationship between gender and genre in terms of 'failure'. The following analysis presents similarities in the reading activities of the clerk, Léon, and Emma Bovary. Unlike Madame Bovary, Léon exhibits the capacity finally to renounce the imagination, whereas Emma fails at the task of producing herself in accordance with the requirements of a modern character.

Upon her introduction to Léon, he is told by her husband,

"She's been advised to take exercise, but she'd sooner stay in her room all the time, reading".

"I'm the same," remarked Léon. "What could be better than a book by the fireside, with the wind beating on the window-panes and the lamp burning ..."

"Yes! ... yes!" she said, gazing at him with her dark eyes wide open. (p.95)

"So a kind of *bond* was formed between them, a constant traffic in books and ballads" (p.112, italics mine); Léon "used to read aloud to her" (p.137). Emma's and Léon's reading activities are both akin and apart - certain crucial differences exist. Whilst Léon's claim that

reading books is "the one distraction I've got" (p.96), excites Emma's sympathy, he clearly does have other working distractions. And whilst she is described as having "picked up a book, then started dreaming *between the lines*, and let it drop into her lap" (p.73, italics mine), the sights that greet his eyes when he stops reading are more prosaic: "I go (to a hill) with a book sometimes on Sundays, and lie there watching the sunset" (p.94). Léon's heroine is potentially attainable, of flesh and blood: "his law book would drop from his hands, and thoughts of Emma would return to him" (p.242). On the other hand, Emma keeps imagining epic heroes in a variety of settings; even when embarked upon her affair with Léon, she has to keep imagining him anew in order to fan the flame of her dimly conceived love for him. She then sees him as "a phantom of her most ardent memories, of the finest things she had read, of her most violent longings; who became in the end so real and so accessible ... *though she had no clear picture of him*" (p.302, italics mine). It is doubtless this imagined other self, this epic hero, whom Léon finds so perturbing an element in their relationship: "something extreme, mysterious, mournful, which seemed to Léon to come subtly stealing between them, to set them apart" (p.293).

When the world itself seeks to intercede between the two, it is only Léon who survives the test, becomes a self-regulating, mature adult individual. Like Emma, Léon too had "an echo of Paris in his ears" (p.132); previously, "Léon had not entirely abandoned hope, and the future dangled a vague promise before him, like a golden fruit hanging from some fantastic tree" (p.242). However, when even his employer (thanks to a few motherly interventions), questions him about his affair with Emma, he decided that

It was time to be serious. Accordingly he was renouncing the flute, elevated sentiments, and the imagination. Every bourgeois in the ferment of his youth, if only for a day or a minute, has believed himself capable of a grand passion, a high endeavour. Every run-of-the-mill seducer has dreamed of Eastern queens. Not a lawyer but carries within him the débris of a poet. (p.301)

At various times, Emma attempts repentance. When Rodolphe doesn't visit her for a few days, an abrupt transformation is noted: "Then it was that Emma repented" (p.186). As sign, as mark of this particular repentance, of her "constant sacrifice" (p.196) in marriage to Bovary, she attempts to make Bovary's name great; "her one wish was for something more solid than love to lean on" (p.186). She even urges Bovary to operate on Hippolyte for free: "a generous suggestion of Emma's which Charles had readily accepted, remarking inwardly that he had an angel of a wife" (p.188). However, when the operation fails, Emma is furious that "the ridicule attaching to his name would now sully her as well. She had tried to love him; had repented in tears her surrender to another man" (p.197). It is then that the "thought of her lover returned to her with a dizzy seduciveness, she gave herself up to it utterly, drawn to him with a new enthusiasm" (p.197).

Emma has yearned for "the alluring phantasmagoria of real feeling" (p.50), has "yearned, as she gazed at the stars, for a princely lover" (p.300). At various stages she has become "blind to everything around her, absorbed in the foretaste of her promised happiness" (p.206); at other stages she concludes that "such happiness must be a fiction, invented to be the despair of all desire" (p.236). Again and again, come her own personal sack-cloth and ashes time, her question is: "How could she have deceived herself again, she who was so intelligent?" (p.196).

However, like her remorse, her repentance never compels her to produce herself as an individual, as a task: "She was smitten with remorse, or rather with an intense regret which, far from extinguishing her passion, served only to awaken it" (p.307). To the contrary, her regret appear to impel her forward into greater debauchery and sin: "Think! You may repent!" Rodolphe cries, to which she replies, "Never!" (p.211). And indeed, she never repents, is never capable of systematic self-control, of regulation, of continual correction of the erring self. Her 'epic' mode of being does not enable analysis of the self, and therefore, regulation: in terms of modernity, error requires correction of the self by the self. Emma requires external forms of control, yet rebels against these; she can neither encompass nor understand her happiness or her unhappiness:

Happy days, days full of hope and freedom, days rich in illusions! She had no illusions now. She had laid them out in all the varied ventures of her soul, the successive phases of maidenhood, marriage and love, strewing them along her path like a traveller who leaves behind a portion of his gold at every wayside inn.
... But if that were so, why was she unhappy? Where was the rare catastrophe that had cast her down? She raised her head and glanced about her as though to detect the cause of her suffering. (p.185)

Emma's various repentances at differing times - noted by such about-turns as: "Then it was that Emma repented" (p.186), have not enabled/compelled her to produce herself: she cannot 'detect the cause of her suffering' - cannot correct herself. The logic of a disciplinary regime is that it enables the individual to be "trained or corrected, classified, normalised, excluded, etc." (Foucault, 1982, p.191) - the vocabulary itself takes failure into account - through classification, the individual can be excluded if the individual proves resistant to 'normalisation' by means of training or correction. The case of Emma is finally diagnosed, classified, her internal distress takes on visible manifestations, is *witnessed*; through the evidence of her failures, she is excluded by the community at large.

These are the diagnoses of her failures: financially, she is in debt - the debt collectors take an inventory of her house, at which it is remarked that "her whole existence was spread out like a corpse at a post-mortem, for the three men to pry into its innermost secrets" (p.306).

Her approach to, and proposition of Binet is witnessed by two ladies who climb to the attic of a house in order to take "up a position commanding the interior of Binet's house" (p.316); from what they witness, they are able to ascertain that "Women like that ought to be whipped!" (p.317). Her sexual/moral self therefore becomes a matter of public concern, consumption, and scandal.¹²⁶

Finally, under the expert gaze of Dr Larivière (p.332), Emma is pronounced to be dying.¹²⁷ Dying, despite the fact that her system is now purged of poison:

"Damn! ... But she's purged now, and the minute you stop the cause ..."
"You stop the effect," said Homais. "That's obvious".
"Save her!" cried Bovary.¹²⁸ (p.331)

Save her! Reading *Madame Bovary* as indicative, 'symptomatic' of women in modernity, the implication is - save women? From their own sexual/moral selves? ... - but how, how "to strike at the imagination?" (p.221). Will stopping the 'cause' of women's 'error'¹²⁹, their romance reading activities, prevent them from failure or not? Radway queries whether romances are not perhaps implicitly feminist (p.16)? That is, she queries whether they could provide modern women with a narrative that will enable/enhance their enjoyment of a "fully coherent, fully satisfied, female subjectivity" (Radway, 1987, p.14); Radway therefore asks whether the texts in fact do promise recuperation, normalisation, a reconstituted unity ... - i.e., can they enculturate, incorporate women into modern (feminist?) forms of power? - This Radway does not know;

What does seem clear, however, is that the struggle over the romance is itself part of the larger struggle for the right to define and to control female sexuality. Thus, it matters enormously what the cumulative effects of the act of romance reading are on actual readers. Unfortunately, those effects are extraordinarily difficult to trace. (Radway, 1987, p.17)

Given the suspicion that romance readers require cure (in terms of a 'fully coherent, fully satisfied, female subjectivity'), and certainly therefore require diagnosis and explanation - "The question that needs to be asked, therefore, is why the readers find it essential and beneficial to seek out this particular kind of vicarious experience" (p.70) - Radway's research attempts to answer the question asked by Anglo-American feminist criticism: "Why do women do read the romance?"

"Ah, that is the question. Such is indeed the question. 'C'est là la question', as the paper was saying the other day". (p.221)

ENDNOTES

- 1 The concern of this dissertation is with romance fiction, particularly pulp romances. The term 'pulp' refers to what is generally considered to be "sensational or poor quality writing". (The Concise Oxford, 1980, p.899) The particular romances which will be studied are those which are clearly marketed as category romances. This last expression refers to a particular strategy used by publishing houses in which romances are not marketed as individual books, but in terms of the 'category' or 'line' (Radway, 1984; Rabine, 1986) they fit into. Examples of such categories are Mills and Boon's "Temptation" series, and Silhouette's "Desire" series - see also Appendix 1 & 2.
- 2 Radway (1984, 1986) and Radford (1986) both advocate that the romance has pre-oedipal elements, whereas Light (1984) appears to assert the oedipal elements of the romance. The role of Oedipus in feminist psychoanalytical debates is discussed in chapter five.
- 3 Diana Fuss criticises Moi's deployment of the term Anglo-American feminism. Fuss talks about "Moi's sweeping criticism of writers as diverse as Elaine Showalter, Myra Jehlen, Annette Kolodny, Sandra Gilbert, and Susan Gubar" (Fuss, 1990, p.213, italics mine). Fuss therefore implies that these feminists do not constitute a well-defined school of feminist thought, an implication reinforced by the fact that Fuss places Anglo-American in inverted commas when referring to Moi's conception of "Anglo-American" (p.213) feminism. Fuss appears to argue that the only commonality between all the theorists listed is the fact that Moi accuses their analyses of slipping into essentialism. Fuss claims that a notion of "falling into" or "lapsing into" (p.20) essentialism can be "used to dismiss entire schools of feminist thought" - note Fuss's use of schools as opposed to school - in Moi's cases, to discredit 'Anglo-American' feminism" (p.213, italics mine).

Without detailing Fuss's argument against Moi's alleged use of 'essentialism', it is important to define the term, "Anglo-American feminist criticism". Moi claims to present in her 1985 work, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, "the two main approaches to feminist literary theory, the Anglo-American and the French, through detailed discussion of the most representative figures on each side" (1985, p.xiii, italics mine); The terms "Anglo-American" and 'French' must not be taken to represent purely national demarcations: they do not signal the critic's birthplace but the intellectual tradition within which they work. Thus I do not consider the many British and American women deeply influenced by French thought to be 'Anglo-American' critics" (p.xiv).

Moi does not simply group feminisms in terms of the intellectual tradition within which they work when she partitions her text into two components: "Anglo-American feminist criticism" and "French feminist theory" (pp.vii-viii, italics mine). The shift from "criticism" to "theory" is significant. It denotes that literary criticism is a central technique deployed by the former, whereas the latter are perceived to focus more on theoretical concerns. Moi's term therefore implies that Anglo-American feminist criticism is derivative of traditional English Literature Departments or

American Studies programs and departments which, whatever their differences with more traditional English departments, at least still assumed that the most reliable and complex record of the American past could be found in the country's 'greatest' works of art. (Radway, 1987, pp.2-3)

Therefore, it can be claimed that what Moi refers to as "feminist criticism" is heir (as much because of, than despite, disavowal) to the "practical criticism" or "literary criticism" employed within traditional literature departments.

Moi's employment of the term identifies a group of feminist critics who argue against the tenets espoused by what Jameson refers to as "Anglo-American critics" (1983, p.65). Jameson claims that the textual analyses of Trilling are "moralizing"; "with its defense of the tradition and the canon, and its obligatory great books format" Trilling's analyses denote "the 'high seriousness' of the Anglo-American critic's sense of the moral vocation of criticism itself" (1983, p.65). Anglo-American feminist criticism directly addresses this very moralizing, and argues forcibly against the traditional canon. Although the feminist agenda with regard to a feminist canon is problematic, it does indicate that these feminists can be defined precisely in terms of Anglo-American criticism, as Anglo-American feminist critics.

Moi's term is therefore retained because it does indeed designate "a specific approach to literature" (1985, p.175), and because her critique has obviously and amply fulfilled its purpose in helping students in the English-speaking world to find "a language that enables them to criticise the strategies deployed and detect the underlying ideological and theoretical assumptions" (p.182) of Anglo-American feminist criticism.

- 4 If it were not for the known idiosyncrasies of the Higher Degrees Committee regarding title changes, this thesis would probably have been re-entitled, "Textual Politics: Gender and Genre".
- 5 Armstrong's account of the novel does not fully investigate the fact that the terrain was a contested one. This conflict is reflected in Charlotte Brontë's assessment of Austen. In a letter to G.H. Lewes, Charlotte writes, "Miss Austen being, as you say, without 'sentiment', without poetry, maybe is sensible, real (more real than true), but she cannot be great" (Gaskell, 1971, p.241). The particular area that Brontë considers Austen most lacking in is precisely the domain of the emotions; being "without poetry" or "sentiment". Armstrong does note

- that Brontë "criticised Jane Austen for failing to plumb the depths of her characters" (p.45). However, she does not investigate the extent to which this specific contestation of the terrain does serve to query generalist statements about the role of and function of female writing. It effectively undermines Armstrong's assertion regarding the establishment of female authority over the domain of the emotions.
- 6 Russ argues that not only was there a female tradition in writing, but she suspects "that higher education has had one bad effect not foreseen in the middle of the last century: an informal acquaintance with the common female tradition in literature has been replaced by a formal education which entirely omits it. In the former case the models and the tradition, though denigrated, were there." (1983, p.87)
 - 7 *Jane Eyre* received much condemnation subsequent to its publication in 1847, with particular reference being made to the coarseness of the love scenes (cf., Leavis, in Brontë, 1985, p.23). *The Quarterly Review* of 1848 went so far as to say of her, "She must be one who for some sufficient reason has long forfeited the society of her sex" (in Gaskell, 1979, p.360), and of her book as that which "has overtrown authority and violated every code human and divine abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home" (in Russ, 1983, p.30). Charlotte Brontë responded to this criticism in the Preface of the second edition by reminding readers that "Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion" (Brontë, 1985, p.35). In fact all of the Brontë sisters' novels received much adverse criticism. *The Quarterly Review* said of Emily's *Wuthering Heights* that it was "too odiously and abominably pagan to be palatable even to the most vitiated [sic] class of English readers" (in Leavis, 1969, p.85), whilst in the character of Helen Huntingdon of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, "Anne Brontë was not only shocking the social conventions of the day, but flouting the current laws of the land" (Gérin, in Brontë, 1988, p.7). The initial reaction to the Brontë sisters' works signals the extent to which the terrain was a contested one, an argument not fully conceded by Armstrong.
 - 8 Although the triumph of the vernacular in printing occurred somewhat later in Germany than in France, Houston notes that, "In 1650, the ratio of Latin to German books sold at the Leipzig and Frankfurt books fairs was 71:29 but by 1700 that ratio had been reversed to 38:62 (the 1680s was the key transitional decade), 28:72 in 1740 and just 4:96 by 1800" (1988, p.204).
 - 9 Clarke was Librarian to the Prince Regent, and when originally introduced to Austen, had "indicated that she might dedicate her next book to the Prince. Though she had no respect for his personal character, Jane Austen accepted the compliment to her literary merit, and *Emma* appeared with a dedication to the Prince" (Lodge, 1991, p.13). "Clarke, a well-meaning but somewhat conceited and fatuous man", drew from Austen "one of her most characteristic letters by suggesting that she try her hand at a historical romance 'illustrative of the history of the august House of Cobourg'" (p.13). The letter discussing the clergyman (Lodge, 1991, pp.29-30) predates this correspondence, and Austen's reply to this request/command Lodge claims as "a masterpiece of politely disguised irony, and also a serious, perceptive attempt at artistic self-definition" (p.13). Her letter regarding the clergyman can be read in a similar light, particularly given whom it is addressed to, and the themes tackled in her novels. In particular, it is claimed that Austen's novels (especially the early texts) directly address and engage with both conduct literature and Gothick romances. Whilst romance authors claim legitimacy for their genre by creating heroines who are classically educated in the best tradition of conduct literature, Austen addresses the silliness of both, and, certainly *Northanger Abbey* has to be read in the light of both kinds of literature.
- Austen's statement that "I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress" must be read as "addressing her own lack in classical education, in terms of the fact that she 'knows only her own mother tongue', but also as spoofing those authoresses who spuriously claim such knowledge for themselves or their heroines. Unlike Radcliffe, neither Austen nor her heroines espouse "a general view of the sciences ... (a knowledge of) Latin" (Radcliffe, 1989, p.6). Austen claims instead to 'know nothing' of 'science and philosophy' and to be incapable of sprinkling her texts with 'quotations and allusions'. Given the tediousness of such moral sentiments, highlighted by the figure of Mary Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen's profession to an inability in this regard must be read ironically. Against Emily's "exact acquaintance with every part of elegant literature" (Radcliffe, 1989, p.6), Austen professes no 'classical education', no 'very extensive acquaintance with English literature, ancient and modern'. Although she appears directly to address Radcliffe's text, and certainly claims a knowledge of various 'romances', including Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* in *Northanger Abbey*, Austen's words probably refers to Gothicks generally (this ties in with the comments made by Eliot in her essay, 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists').
- Austen therefore squarely (though ironically) situates herself within a particular group of lady novelists, and is aware of various 'limitations' in her education, in terms of a classical idea of education. This, however, possibly enabled her to write such a 'modern' text (see also chapters three and four) and is possibly why she decides 'I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible vanity, the most unlearned and uninformed female who ever dared to be an authoress' (italics mine).
- 10 The argument between Anne Elliot and Captain Harville in *Persuasion* continues, Captain Harville asks:

"But how shall we prove anything?"
 "We never shall. We never can expect to prove any thing upon such a point. It is a difference of opinion which does not admit of proof. We each begin probably with a little bias towards our own sex, and upon that bias build every circumstance in favour of it which has occurred within our own circle ..." (pp.202-203)
 - 11 "The hornbooks, which first appeared in the 1440s, were not books at all but little wooden paddles on which

were pasted lesson sheets of vellum or parchment ... The lesson sheets began with a cross followed by the alphabet ... and the Lord's Prayer ... in general they were designed to teach the child letters and their combinations and to continue religious instruction" (Sutherland et al., 1981, pp.57-8)

- 12 "The battledore ... was in use from about 1746 to 1770. It had three folding cardboard leaves. Unlike the hornbook, it had no religious material but contained alphabets, easy reading, numerals and woodcut illustrations" (Sutherland, et al., 1981, p.58)
- 13 For an analysis of conduct literature, see Armstrong, Nancy & Temmerhouse, Leonard (eds.) (1987) *The Ideology of Conduct: Essays on Literature and the History of Sexuality* New York and London: Methuen.
- 14 "Then came the chapmen, the pedlars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with newsheets, ballads, broadsides, and chapbooks tucked in among their trinkets. Chapbooks were cheap little books that could be bought for as little as a penny. They had from sixteen to thirty-two or sixty-four pages and were often not stitched but merely folded ... The attitude of serious-minded adults of the day toward these crude, often vulgar little books was generally scornful. The clergy viewed them with alarm ..." (Sutherland, et al., 1981, pp.58-9)
- 15 "The novel had a reputation for displaying not only the seamy undersides of English political life, but also sexual behaviour of a semi-pornographic nature. On both counts, it was considered a vulgar form of writing" (Armstrong, 1987, p.96)
- 16 "In shaping an ideal woman out of the stuff of novels, then, novelists did not appear to be assaulting the dominant culture so much as rescuing both the female and the domestic life she superintended from their fate at the hands of degenerate authors" (Armstrong, 1987, p.97).
- 17 The extent to which St John of the Cross can be read as indicative of a pervasive attitude toward the erotic-spiritual dimensions of a Christian life is impossible to determine without a detailed analysis of church doctrines and debates. Foucault and Sennett, for instance, remark the extent to which Augustine's *Confessions* drew a line between the sexual and the spiritual. However, the poem does denote the extent to which it is possible to think a relationship between the erotic and the spiritual, a relationship that is unthinkable in the modern.

Personal conversation with Graeme Maclean of the philosophy department of the University of the Witwatersrand revealed that, apparently, the concern with the split between sullied flesh and unembodied spirit constituted an importation of the early Greek philosophers' denial of the body into the early Renaissance church. The modern separation of spirit and flesh is clearly denoted in a hymn written by the co-founder of the Methodist church, Charles Wesley (1707-1788): "He deigns in flesh to appear, / widest extremes to join; / to bring our vileness near (in *With One Voice*, hymn 229, emphasis mine). Whilst the tracing of this relationship would require a thesis on its own, it may prove worthy of exploration in terms of accounting for an association between women and sexuality, female flesh and the earthy, sensuous pleasures.

- 18 In its entirety, the poem by St John of the Cross (1542-1591) translated from the Spanish by Willis Barnstone (in Miller & Greenberg, 1981, pp.340-1), reads:

O living flame of love,
how tenderly you wound
my soul in her profoundest core!
You are no longer shy.
Do it now, I ask you:
break the membrane of our sweet union.

O soothing cauterly!
O wound that is a joy!
O gentle hand! O delicate touch
tasting of eternity,
repaying every debt.
Killing, you turn my death to life.

O lamps of human fire,
in deep transparency
the lowest caverns of the senses,
once shadowy and blind,
flare in light and warmth
and wake the lover with amazing joy!

How lovingly and soft
you make my breast recall
where you alone lie secretly;
and with your honeyed breath,
replete with grace and glory,
how tenderly you make me love!

- 19 In terms of the Old Testament, God's name was never allowed to be said, only referred to as "Word", or as

contemporary translations have it, "Logos". This was because God was considered too holy, too powerful to be called by name. Obviously, an analysis which simplistically claims "the Word" as the written scriptures is problematic. Although this approach is undoubtedly flawed, it nonetheless gives rise to an interesting series of associations, which traces the symbolic significance of an association between word and God and notes how revolutionary was its original invocation. Though this reading may be fanciful, Luther (1483-1546) appears to associate the power of the word and the Word/Christ; as noted in the following hymn, *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott*. It is not impossible to conceive that Luther's 'prince' (of darkness), 'prince of *this world's* ill' may refer also to the Catholic pope, or that the "word/Word" refers both to Christ and to a revolutionary program of bringing the word of God to the people of God. For to whom (translation willing) does Luther refer to with his 'they', than to an earthly power capable of imprisonment? And unless he were also addressing a secular-spiritual body or institution, capable of depriving him of all earthly goods, why else need he conclude that 'to us remains the Kingdom'?

The prince of this world's ill
may scowl upon us still,
he cannot do us harm,
to judgement he has come:
one word can swiftly fall him.

The Word they must allow to stand -
for this they win no merit;
upon the field, so near at hand,
he gives to us his Spirit.
And though they take our life,
goods, honour, child, and wife,
though we must let all go,
they will not profit so:
to us remains the Kingdom.

(Luther, *With One Voice*, hymn 8, tr. Honor M. Thwaites.)

- 20 In the Lutheran Church of Sweden, "the parish clergy ... took charge of teaching reading ... the campaign, which reached a peak of intensity between 1690 and 1720, left an enduring mark on the populations of Sweden and Finland, where everyone knew how to read (having been trained to do so by the clergy for religious purposes) but only a narrow elite knew how to write ... Such a situation was probably not peculiar to Sweden ... Thus, *in some Protestant countries, the ability to read was universal*, regardless of the 'literacy rate' measured by counting signatures" (Chartier, 1989, p.119, italics mine). Chartier notes the inaccuracy of counting signatures, since "children who attended school learned first to read and then to write, everyone who could sign his name could also read, but not everyone who knew how to read could sign his name. Furthermore, not all signers could actually write ... Paradoxically, the signature is the mark of a population that knows how to read but not necessarily how to write" (p.112).
- 21 The Latin/vernacular debate is not well referenced in British texts of the nineteenth century, probably due to the fact that Catholicism was effectively banned in Britain from the days of Henry VIII, and Latin thereby practically silenced (that is, in terms of its effect on the religious populace at large). The first translation of the New Testament into English was published as early as 1526 (tr. William Tyndale, a follower of Martin Luther), and the King James version brought out in 1611. The extent to which Catholics were discriminated against in England is referenced in Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia of 1829: "Parliament was opened, and the great Catholic question brought forward" (in Gaskell, 1979, p.118). It is noted that, "The Roman Catholic Relief Act, effectively emancipating Catholics and placing them on the same footing as Protestant Dissenters, was passed in 1829, after threatening to split the ministry headed by the Duke of Wellington" (p.573). Charlotte Brontë's works are not noted for their pro-Catholic sympathies.
- 22 One can only presume that marriage to a man was considered sufficiently corruptive in itself that all further monitoring of reading materials became unnecessary.
- 23 "... we believe that the average intellect of women is unfairly represented by the mass of feminine literature, and that while the few women who write well are very far above the ordinary intellectual level of their sex, the many women who write ill are very far below it. So that, after all, the severer critics are fulfilling a chivalrous duty in depriving the mere fact of feminine authorship of any false prestige which may give it a delusive [sic] attraction, and in recommending women of mediocre faculties - as at least a negative service they can render their sex - to abstain from writing" (Eliot, 1963, p.323).
- 24 Some contemporary feminist criticism considers Eliot's essay problematic in the light of the notion of 'sisterhood', i.e., in terms of her betrayal of her fellow female writers. As Rosalind Miles assesses it, George Eliot

always sought to be free of any close involvement with the feminist movement of her time, either in life or in literature. So while she contributed substantially to the foundation of Girton College, she remained tepid about female suffrage. And although her work must surely escape any classification as 'woman's writing', she was sensitive about and strict towards 'Silly Novels by Lady Novelists', in the title of her famous essay. At no point in her work does George Eliot ever address her reader in anything that sounds like a

woman's voice. (Miles, 1987, p.38)

Miles entirely disregards the fact that Eliot's essay was written during the time of the debates regarding the education of women, and the main thrust of her essay is to argue for the further education of women. It seems particularly silly for current feminist criticism to examine writers' work upon the basis of whether or not they fit the criteria of contemporary feminist notions of political correctness.

- 25 See Radway, 1987, pp.106-118 for a detailed exposition as to how romance readers claim instructional and educational values from the books in order to legitimate their reading practice.
- 26 From a personal interview with Mr van Rensburg, J.P. van der Walt Publishers, Pretoria, July 1990: see also Appendix 3.
- 27 Writing about lesbian romance fiction, and claiming to be a fan of both lesbian and heterosexual romance, Jerke Hermes argues against unhappy endings in either romance:

Since I happen to enjoy the codes of romance and do not mind either the history or the connotations of the genre, I like a romance to adhere to the rules of the genre and give me my, admittedly conservative reader pleasure. I hate open endings in romances ... Conservative though it may be, in the case of narrative politics in lesbian romance fiction, I would like to move that outright social criticism be spared for other books. For there is no way, whether in lesbian or in heterosexual romances that rape and moralising will give me any amount of reading pleasure. (Hermes, 1992, p.65)

- 28 When asked about controversial romances, Mr van Rensburg noted that Kas van der Berg once wrote a column "Saterdag aan Tuis" (Saturday at Home) in *Huisgenoot* (the most popular women's magazine in Afrikaans - sales figures of 500 000, in a total Afrikaans speaking population of more or less 3 million) about "Lekker ou vet plaas-tannies" (Nice old fat farm aunties, or as Mr van Rensburg translated it, 'Fat, idle, lazy farmer's wives'). "In the same month, we published a novel of his, a detective with romance. We got hundreds of letters back, sending back the book, asking us to make a note on their cards not to send them a Kas van der Berg book ever again. The lekker ou vet plaas-tannies sent them back; The Silent Majority didn't like it".
- 29 All page references are to Brontë, Emily (1986) *Wuthering Heights* London: Penguin Books.
- 30 Armstrong, for instance, talks of Lockwood as the "putative author" (1987, p.44) of *Wuthering Heights*.
- 31 Some confusion can arise from the name Catherine within the text. Within *Wuthering Heights*, the complexity of name-changing is denoted by the fact that Cathy Earnshaw becomes Cathy Linton, and her daughter, Catherine Linton, becomes Catherine Heathcliff and, finally, Catherine Earnshaw. Obviously, in this instance, I am referring to the original Cathy. Some theorists refer to the two by their maiden names - Cathy Earnshaw and Catherine Linton.
- 32 Throughout this thesis, it is argued that the association between literature and morality is part of the history of the British novel, and that the textual analyses of Anglo-American critics such as Leavis and Trilling cannot be rejected simply upon the grounds that they are uncompromising in their assertion of a relationship between literature and morality. First published in 1891, Wilde's *Intentions* references an association between realism and moralism, literature and ethics. In his essay, "The Critic as Artist", Gilbert says to Ernest:

Of the three qualifications you mentioned (for being a critic - the third was rationality), two, sincerity and fairness, were, if not actually moral, at least on the borderland of morals, and the first condition of criticism is that the critic should be able to recognise that the sphere of Art and the sphere of Ethics are absolutely distinct and separate. When they are confused, Chaos has come again. They are too often confused in England now. (Wilde, 1913, p.191)

- 33 Whilst it is asserted that feminist criticism currently devotes attention to the "rise of the woman novelist", the use of Watt's title, *The Rise of the Novel*, does not imply that feminist histories simply attempt to re-read his work in terms of feminist concerns. His is, however, the original, authoritative text in the field of the British novel. The use of this title simply refers (chronologically) on to Spencer's title, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*. Spencer's text obviously acknowledges the place Watt's text occupies within the field, and implies a dissatisfaction with traditional histories of the novel in terms of not fully accounting for the woman novelist.
- 34 Others include, Nancy Armstrong's (1987) *Desire and Domestic Fiction*; Eva Figes' (1982) *Sex & Subterfuge: Women Writers to 1850*; Rosalind Miles' (1987) *The Female Form: Women Writers and the Conquest of the Novel*; Newton, J.L. (1981) *Women, power and subversion: Social strategies in British fiction, 1778-1860*.
- 35 Moi's study investigates the work of Anglo-American feminist critics Ellen Meers, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Kate Millett, Mary Ellman, Elaine Showalter; it studies the works of Anglo-American feminist theorists, Annette Kolodny, Showalter, and Myra Jehlen.
- 36 Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is eminently suited to a reading in terms of Gilbert and Gubar's thesis. Against the figure of plain, repressed Jane Eyre is posited the figure of Bertha Mason, the 'madwoman in the attic'. On Jane Eyre's solitude the "curious laugh - distinct, formal, mirthless" (1985, p.138) of Bertha intrudes itself, sometimes

coming hard upon Jane's musings upon those millions "in silent revolt against their lot" (p.141). Of Bertha Mason, Jane Eyre asks:

What crime was this, that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner? What mystery, that broke out, now in fire and now in blood, at the deadest hours of night: What creature was it, that, masked in an ordinary woman's face and shape, uttered the voice, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey? (Brontë, C., 1985, pp.239-40)

However, to admit the promise of Gilbert and Gubar's thesis in relation to *Jane Eyre* is not to admit that their reading is suited to all other nineteenth century texts written by women.

- 37 This 'discourse of sexuality' is itself problematically defined by Armstrong in terms of its relation to the social.
- 38 The relationship between gender and morality is noted in Anne Brontë's comment at the beginning of the second edition of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*:

As little, I should think, can it matter whether the writer so designated is a man, or a woman as one or two of my critics profess to have discovered. I take the imputation in good part, as a compliment to the just delineation of my female characters; and though I am bound to attribute much of the severity of my censors to this suspicion, I make no effort to refute it, because, in my own mind, I am satisfied that if a book is a good one, it is so whatever the sex of the author may be. All novels are or should be written for both men and women to read, and I am at a loss to conceive how a man should permit himself to write anything that would be really disgraceful to a woman, or why a woman should be censured for writing anything that would be proper and becoming for a man. (Brontë, Anne. 1988, p.31)

- 39 The Brontë sisters originally wrote under the pseudonyms Acton, Ellis and Currer Bell; the novels of George Eliot are still brought out under that pseudonym.
- 40 As noted above, *Frankenstein* was originally published anonymously. Jane Austen's works were originally brought out anonymously, even though it was noted that her novels were written by a Lady. *Sense and Sensibility*, for instance, was originally brought out in 1811 as "A Novel in Three Volumes By a Lady, London: Printed for the Author" (in Kirkham, 1983, p.xiv).
- 41 The "old-fashioned" nature of the request to judge a woman artist by her works, not her sex, is noted by a recent Time article which describes the American sculptor Hesse. Of her, it is said that she

never wanted to see her work snugly categorised as women's art. Quite the contrary: she was a sculptor who, like all serious artists, wanted her work to join the general argument of modern images. "The best way to beat discrimination in art is by art", she replied to a list of questions a journalist sent her for an article on women artists. "Excellence has no sex". Very old-fashioned of her, by the standards of cultural complaint we have in the early '90s. (Hughes, "Telling an Inner Life", Time, 4 January 1993, p.49)

Hughes unproblematically claims that 'all serious artists' (and the association of 'all' and 'serious' is dubious in itself) do not want to be judged in terms of gender. Hughes nonetheless specifically singles out Hesse's 'femaleness' as the means whereby to judge her artistic "inner life". In contradistinction to Hughes' statement, Moi's contention is noted, that "until recently the very fact of being a non-neglected woman writer was so rare as to turn the author into a *miraculée* almost per definition" (Moi, 1991, p.1038). Whilst the need for the original feminist interventions with regard to women artists is not disputed, the problematic nature of the conjunction of "woman" and "artist" obviously cannot be overcome by assigning precedence to either categorisation.

- 42 All textual references are to: Austen, Jane (1955a) *Emma* London: J.M. Dent & Sons.
- 43 The text establishes 'industry' as crucial to all success, and simultaneously establishes Mr Knightley as necessary for the intellectual and moral development of Emma. Emma is often upbraided for not being sufficiently industrious: "I do not understand what you mean by "success", said Mr Knightley. 'Success supposes endeavour'" (p.8).
- 44 In *Pride and Prejudice*, Miss Bingley claims that the definition of an accomplished woman is one who, amongst other attributes, "must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing and the modern languages ...". "All this she must possess," added Darcy, "and to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading" (Austen, 1955e, p.33, italics mine).
- 45 According to Knightley, the term "success" is used incorrectly by Emma; "Success supposes endeavour" (p.8). Instead, Knightley claims that Emma's involvement merely entailed "planning it ... one idle day ... you made a lucky guess" (p.8). The word "idle" confirms that this enterprise is not considered to involve "endeavour". This is disputed by Emma, "If I had not promoted Mr Weston's visits here, and given many little encouragements, and smoothed many little matters, it might not have come to anything at all" (p.8).
- 46 The way in which Emma ridicules Miss Bates is called into question by Mr Knightley who reminds Emma that, because of her position in the community, she, more than others, ought to be careful as to how she takes her pleasure (pp.330-331).

- 47 "A young farmer, whether on horseback or on foot, is the very last sort of person to raise my curiosity. The yeomanry are precisely the order of people with whom I feel I can have nothing to do. A degree or two lower, and a creditable appearance might interest me; I might hope to be useful to their families in some way or other. But a farmer can need none of my help, and is therefore in one sense as much above my notice as in every other he is below it" (Austen, 1955a, p.23).
- 48 In many ways, a parallel can be traced between the development of Emma and that of Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey*. What distinguishes the two is that in the latter, a subversion of the Gothick form creates a modern day, commonplace, 'romantic' heroine. Morland acts as a cypher, symbolic of the Gothick heroine, thereby denoting what is problematic with such heroines; once she is disabused of her romantic fancies, she marries. What makes her functionally equivalent to Emma is the fact that both of them denote a new kind of female protagonist. However, in the case of Emma, her moral development is more fully sketched, detailed, psychologised and analysed. This development then, details how engendering is integrally linked to full incorporation into the social.
- 49 Although Elton's social position is emphasised in this extract, statements such as the following demonstrate that some weighting is given to the person (who would contribute to a happy marriage). However, the social position (that being well-married would constitute) is given most emphasis. At no stage can it be said that Emma undervalues social status and position. The following is said to Harriet by Emma about the prospect of Harriet marrying Mr Elton:
- This is an alliance which, whoever - whatever your friends may be, must be agreeable to them, provided at least they have common sense; and we are not to be addressing our conduct to fools. If they are anxious to see you *happily* married, here is a man whose amiable character gives every assurance of it; - if they wish to have you settled in the same country and circle which they have chosen to place you in, here it will be accomplished; and if their only object is that you should, in the common phrase, be *well* married, here is the comfortable fortune, the respectable establishment, the rise in the world which must satisfy them. (p.66)
- 50 A suspicion that current feminist readings place 'content' over analysis suggests the extent to which feminist criticism is problematically implicated by the current wave of "political correctness" (PC) sweeping Northern American campuses.
- "By dictating the content of the readings," Prof Alan Gibben of University of Texas in Austin asserts that the English faculty "presumes that content is the most important thing about the writing course." But that is just the point: in the context of PC, political content is the most important thing about everything. (Adler, Newsweek, 14 January 1991, p.46)
- Instead of reading gender in terms of description and 'content', gender is best delineated and explained through detailed analyses of discursive formations, both intra- and intertextually.
- 51 The already problematic nature of feminist definitions of sex as biology and gender as culture are not enhanced by Armstrong's confusion of the two. "This authority, as I will demonstrate, was not a matter of *biological* gender, for any use of language was considered essentially female if sufficiently detached from the contentious ways of the market-place and rooted instead in the values of the heart and home" (Armstrong, 1987, p.41, italics mine).
- 52 For these formulations I am indebted to Sue van Zyl's series of lectures on Freud, given at a seminar series, University of the Witwatersrand, 1991.
- 53 The problematic manner in which Armstrong, for instance, utilises "desire" can be gathered by the following extracts which describes how "the novel (*Emma*) produces a reliable language of the self by the curiously backward process of allowing its heroine to repeat her misreadings of sexual relations until she knows her own feelings" (Armstrong, 1987, p.150); "This is the language of *pure desire* uncoloured by any form of value other than its own" (p.152, italics mine); "it is only the novelist who can turn Emma's self-sufficiency into a deficiency that instigates *desire independent of a social origin*" (p.152, italics mine); "Emma is finally shot through with *genuinely monogamous desire*" (p.153, italics mine).
- 54 The extraordinarily problematic nature of a feminist critique of feminist criticism must not be underestimated. Feminists are criticised by other feminists for apparently exhibiting an "extreme reluctance to acknowledge any debt to ... (their) own feminist precursors" (Moi on Millett, 1985, p.25). Feminists are also criticised by other feminists not only for not acknowledging other feminists, but for thereby apparently snubbing such feminists. It is claimed that Cixous made a "bid for power - *legitimacy* - within the field of French feminism" (Moi, 1990, p.1041) by not acknowledging de Beauvoir in a special issue of a magazine devoted to de Beauvoir, in which other feminists also do not mention de Beauvoir by name but whose essays, unlike Cixous', are "consonant with Beauvoir's own feminist positions" (p.1041). Moi therefore reads this as "an effort to snub Beauvoir" (p.1041). With such insisterly precedents set, on the basis of which not acknowledging other feminists is read in terms of rebuff, it is not difficult to understand why the notion of a feminist 'sisterhood' can be read as problematic in itself (Dixon, 1971). And, if no criticism is read as criticism, whereto criticism? It is not without a certain degree of reluctance and a relatively large amount of ambivalence that this particular intervention in the field of sexual/textual feminist politics is registered.
- 55 Armstrong's argument regarding competing 'class' interests may also be undermined by a reading which

considers Austen's texts not so much to describe class as to *define* it - that the texts engage with the problematics of a society in transition from inheritance and aristocracy, to 'new' money, capital and industry. Within *Emma*, the bourgeois are not portrayed as disruptive; although they are a potentially disturbing force, the text explicitly engages with a society that is learning to accommodate the bourgeoisie - and, increasingly, is formed of members of that class. Although Knightley as elder son inherits Donwell Abbey, no shame is attached to his younger brother, who, 'rising in his profession', is earning his living through commerce in the city. Highbury society is also seen to accommodate the Coles; their 'new' money transformed into the semblance of old through social acceptance: Emma accepts the invitation to the Coles' party because - despite her 'superiority' (she could put them in their place if she cared to) - it's a small village, and ... she could see no fit reason why not to accept it. The thoughts of Emma when contemplating her condescension in this regard are illuminating, and illustrate a dialogue between the distant allure of aristocratic seclusion and the distinct pleasure of bourgeois popularity:

Emma did not repent her condescension in going to the Coles. The visit afforded her many pleasant recollections the next day; and all that she might be supposed to have lost on the side of dignified seclusion, must be amply repaid in the splendour of popularity. She must have delighted the Coles - worthy people, who deserved to be made happy! - And left a name behind her that would not soon die away. (Austen, 1955a, p.202)

- 56 Within *Pride and Prejudice*, Lady Catherine finally and formally acquiesces to the match of Elizabeth and Darcy: "she condescended to wait upon them at Pemberley, in spite of that pollution which its woods had received, not merely from the presence of such a mistress, but the visits of her uncle and aunt from the city" (Austen, 1955e, p.337).
- 57 In *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Armstrong sets out her argument thus: "To describe the history of domestic fiction then, I will argue several points at once: first, that sexuality is a cultural construct and as such has a history; second, that written representations of the self allowed the modern individual to become an economic and psychological reality; and third, *that the modern individual was first and foremost a woman*" (1987, p.8, *italics mine*).
- 58 It is from this term that she appears to extrapolate the term "domestic fiction". Armstrong never critiques this term, and therefore appears, unquestioningly, to endorse the social division of labour by means of which women are relegated to the realm of the private and the unpaid.
- 59 Armstrong claims that Rowton "illustrates how a model of sexual exchange created a gendered form of power *peculiar to a society that was undergoing industrialisation*" (p.41, *italics mine*). However, Armstrong does not appear to limit her argument about sexual exchange to a period of industrialisation.
- 60 Conventional readings of *Emma* consider Mr Knightley to be "the most morally reliable character in the book" (Lodge, 1986, p.21). However, the reading of Knightley's character as exemplary is contested by various feminist critics; Lodge notes that in two feminist essays, "some tendentious criticism of Knightley's character in order to defend the heroine" (p.25) occurs. The (feminist?) contestation over whether or not Knightley or Emma constitute the moral centre of the text appears to be taken up by Armstrong in her reading of the text. The making of specious claims, based upon inadequate readings which overvalue the importance of gender categories do not contribute to appropriate, or even possibly feminist, readings of the text.
- 61 Armstrong's use of "virtue" in this regard is akin to Moi's consideration that the overemphasis of gender by feminists comprises a small sin, of the venial as opposed to the mortal variety: "If feminists sometimes are guilty of overemphasising gender to the detriment of other factors, then, this is a *venial sin* compared to the massive repression of gender routinely carried out by the great majority of workers in every intellectual discipline" (Moi, 1991, p.1037, *italics mine*). The suspicion that feminist criticism has something to do with morality appears to find some kind of evidence in this terminology; Moi's reference to a classificatory system not routine outside of Catholicism is particularly provocative in its evocation of hell and damnation for the great majority of workers in every intellectual discipline.
- 62 Armstrong informs us that the chapter, "The Rise of *Female* Authority in the Novel" is partly based upon an earlier paper, "The Rise of *Feminine* Authority in the Novel" (1982). Armstrong never gives a reason for the change.
- 63 As Marx says of commodities, "Each of them, so far as it is exchange-value, must ... be reducible to this third thing" (1990, p.127).
- 64 "Her character depends upon those she is with; but in good hands she will turn out a valuable woman" (Mr Knightley of Harriet, *Emma*, p.49)
- 65 "... Elizabeth really believed all his expectations of felicity to be rationally founded, because they had for basis the excellent understanding, and super-excellent disposition of Jane, and a general similarity of feeling and taste between her and himself" (Elizabeth Bennet of her sister and Mr Bingley, *Pride and Prejudice*, p.300).
- 66 Emma's first admission of error is over her treatment of Miss Bates at Box Hill, but her acknowledgement of fault in this regard is entirely due to the interventions of Knightley. The passages in which she realises her love for Knightley are noteworthy not only because they expand upon the inner dialogue first hearkened to as an

- aftermath of the Box Hill incident, but because it is Emma herself who initiates the language of self-castigation, having finally learnt how to quarrel with herself. Previously, "Mr Knightley might quarrel with her, but Emma could not quarrel with herself" (p.59).
- 67 The slippage between head and heart, the vocabulary of mind brought to bear upon heart is akin to, echoes, the words of the Anglican confessional: "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts" (*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, p.105).
 - 68 Blackstone does, however, also recognise the importance of consent to the marriage contract (section 4.1). It may be useful to distinguish between the "common law" definition of coverture and Blackstone's acknowledgement of the modern legal necessity which recognises the extent to which the marriage 'contract' must be grounded in consent in order to be valid.
 - 69 Scarry says, "It would be difficult to overstate the degree to which the first wave of feminist theory and practice was grounded in consent - and more particularly, women's repossession of the powers of consent over their own wave of feminist work, the centrality of 'consent' and 'contract' continues, becomes more explicit, and begins to take the form of a rigorous critique which should work to strengthen the two as conceptual tools in the service of feminist goals. The critique of consent and contract comes from multiple spheres" (1990, p.894) within feminist discourse - philosophy, law, political science and literature.
 - 70 The subtitle of *Reading the Romance* is "Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature". Although the index directs the reader to "Patriarchy, definition of, 10" (Radway, 1987, p.271), the signpost apparently lacks a textual destination. It is therefore difficult to ascertain what Radway means when she claims to use the "explanatory constructs of feminist theory" and "the notion of 'patriarchal marriage' in particular" (p.8) in her analysis of romance fiction.
 - 71 The specific introductory wording of Moi's statement has a, perhaps unfortunate, echo in the words of Humpty Dumpty in *Alice in Wonderland*, who claims: "When I use a word ... it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less". (Carroll, 1966, p.185). Alice queries "whether you *can* make words mean so many things", to which Humpty Dumpty replies: "The question is ... which is to be master - that's all" (in Gardner, 1970, p.269). Humpty Dumpty's statement does not concede the difficulties encountered by a "portmanteau" (Carroll, p.186, p.188) word - "words that are packed, like a suitcase, with more than one meaning" (Gardner, 1970, p.271). However, he does at least claim that, "When I make a word do a lot of work like that, I always pay it extra" (p.270). Were such an attitude to become common, one could only presume that, under feminist criticism, patriarchy would become a very wealthy word indeed.
 - 72 Obviously, some feminists do define 'patriarchy' in terms of a specific social theory of patriarchal rule, as noted in Mitchell's statement that "Hysteria is the women's simultaneous acceptance and refusal of the organisation of sexuality under *patriarchal capitalism*" (Mitchell, 1984, p.290). Many Anglo-American feminist literary critics do not, however, appear fully to engage with definitional exercises regarding "patriarchy".
 - 73 Concluding her paper, Scarry argues that the body is:

First, the thing protected;
 Second, the lever across which rights are generated, political self-authorisation achieved;
 Third, the agent and expression of consent, the site of the performative;
 And fourth and finally, a ratifying power. (1990, p.887).
 - 74 The very definition, "rape within marriage" can possibly be argued against in terms of the logic of bond, wherein the wife's body becomes property of the husband, over which he is entitled to exert certain, inalienable 'rights', including the right to violence (given the proviso regarding the limitations of its use as social control). As noted by the definition of 'coverture' given by Sir William Blackstone in 1765, a married woman, her person defined as property of her husband, her "very being ... incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband" (p.442), is not defined as capable of exerting rights of access over her body. However, the logic of bond should also presume that a wife is entitled to care and protection, and that a husband should devote, at least, the same care and attention to his wife's body as to his own - as denoted by the "with my body I honour you" of Christian marriage service. Obviously, however, a language of privilege and protection is inadequate to the task of ensuring all women "rights" over their own bodies in terms of the vocabulary of the modern legal system.
 - 75 The focus upon the Anglican marriage service is consistent with a reading of Austen's novel in terms of its situation within an England of the early 1800s.
 - 76 Lear requires the *all* (not "nothing") of love from his daughters, in exchange for which he gives a third of his kingdom. Cordelia grants Lear half her love, in exchange for which she gains nothing. Although the logic of bond is used to argue against the fraudulence of Lear's translation of bond into exchange, Cordelia also evokes the language of exchange to argue against Lear: proposing half to his third. Cordelia's is therefore probably as illegitimate an argument as Lear's, given the profound inequality bond is based upon, and the argument that bond cannot appropriately be equated with quantitative exchange. Cordelia, having appropriated Lear's vocabulary, is vulnerable to the same critique.
 - 77 The full text reads:

I, N, take you, N
to be my wedded husband
to have and to hold
from this day forward;
for better, for worse
for richer, for poorer
in sickness and in health
to love and to cherish
and to honour in the Lord*
till death us do part
according to God's holy law;
and this is my solemn vow.

*Here may be inserted the words
and in all things lawful to obey
(*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, p.464).

- 70 "And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Caesar, or no? But he perceived their craftiness and said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Caesar's. And he said unto them, Render thou unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's" (Luke, 21, verses 21-25).
- 79 "The inseparable bond between a man and his wife thus mirrors the relationship between Jesus and his bride the Church. Jesus gave himself completely for the Church in a sacrificial love that the bridegroom is to imitate. As the Church responds to Christ's self-giving in wonder and awe that he should love so much, so, according to this pattern, the bride is to love her husband. For both husband and wife, the high calling of Christian married life is this total self-giving. It is communion of the deepest sort" (*An Anglican Prayer Book 1989*, p.458, emphasises mine). Again, slippages from bond towards contract are noted; man and wife becomes bride and husband, finally husband and wife. However, the use of 'sacrificial love', 'communion', 'self-giving' contains all within the vocabulary of 'inseparable bond'.
- 80 In an article entitled, "Feminism and Class Consolidation", Barbara Ehrenreich argues that "from a class perspective, what is important about feminism is that it helped save the professional middle class from economic decline" (1991, p.53). Ehrenreich thereby argues that feminism's primary achievement in a late capitalist America has been the perpetuation and domination of the (upper) middle-class. If my understanding of a personal conversation with Moira Maconachie is right, then feminist economics proposes a difference between "primary sector" and "secondary sector" jobs for women. The former define 'professional' work and the latter what is typically considered 'women's work' - teaching, nursing, the caring professions. Apparently, whilst the discrepancy in pay between men and women in both 'sectors' has decreased, the gap between earnings in primary and secondary sector jobs has increased. That is, typically 'women's work' has been devalued in relation to 'gender-less' or 'male professional' work. Hence the argument that "feminism", or, at least, the vocabulary unproblematically appropriated by various feminists is complicit with capital and cannot therefore serve as a critique of it. As Dixon puts it, "Exploitation, the very heart of the Free Enterprise System (a nice way of saying Capitalism) remains all-American. Thus we have a situation of 'equal exploitation' as the basis of a liberal utopia" (1991, p.151).
- 81 With an apology to Robert Frost's "Mending Wall", the following interchange is made possible. It concerns the musings of a feminist critic questioning the notions of contract and equality, and is addressed to a conservative woman:
- "Before I gave up bond, I'd ask to know
What I was giving up, or letting go,
And to whom I was like to give offense.
Something there is that doesn't love a contract,
That wants it bond." I could say "Men" to her,
But it's not men exactly, and I'd rather
She said it for herself.
- 82 "If I have a book which understands for me, a pastor who has a conscience for me, a physician who decides my diet, and so forth, I need not trouble myself. I need not think if I can only pay - others will readily undertake the irksome work for me" (Kant, 1784, p.3).
- 83 The fact that the 'myth', the fraudulence of the social contract has been known since its inception does not in any way mitigate its "logic and social and political effectivity" (Kistner, 1992, p.3). Nor is it an argument for the fact that only women are placed in a fraudulent position; all that is argued here is that the social contract places women in an especially anomalous or peculiar position.
- 84 One way in which a state can be seen to guarantee an individual protection of his person is by means of a bill of rights. Professor Christine Boyle of the University of British Columbia claims that for women, "a bill of rights is a mixed blessing. The aim is to protect the vulnerable individual from the power of the state and not to protect

individuals against other individuals. This means that in the case of rape the bill of rights ensures a fair trial for the rapist, but fails to protect the rape survivor/witness" (reported by Anthea Garman, *The Natal Witness*, 10 February 1993, p.11).

- 85 Kant appears to recognise the extent to which the step to competence, to self-regulation, to freedom and responsibility will be particularly problematic for women: "That the step to competence is held to be very dangerous by the far great portion of mankind (*and by the entire fair sex*) ... is seen to by those guardians who have so kindly assumed superintendence over them. After the guardians have first made their domestic cattle dumb and have made sure that these placid creatures will not dare take a single step without the harness of the cart to which they are tethered, the guardians then show them the danger which threatens if they try to go alone" (Kant, 1784, p.3, *italics mine*).
- 86 Mitchell claims that, "at the point where it is challenging an old order a revolutionary class speaks a universalistic language initially on behalf of all oppressed groups. If this is true in general it must be true for women - the seventeenth-century feminists appealed in a universalistic language on behalf of women to the highest concepts of freedom and humanity of which their society was capable" (1975, p.391).
- 87 That this trajectory of ideas stops at 1884 and does not include theorists subsequent to Engels is perhaps problematic, but this example is intended simply to depict some kind of historical precedent for a critique of the notion of 'equality under the law'; it is therefore not considered the final word on the problem.
- 88 Scarry, in fact, notes that there is a third way in which the feminist preoccupation with consent and contract can be read; that "Anderson argues that the second wave feminist objections to contract are actually directed against 'proceduralism' and a distinctly male preoccupation with self justification" (1990, p.894).
- 89 cf., "the corrupting power of language itself and the possible appropriations of both literary forms and even (the imaginative compulsion itself) by the very forces they seek to oppose" (Beale, 1986, p.16).
- 90 My claim is that feminist rights look set to perpetuate women's wrongs unless feminist discourse recognises its own complicity with capitalism - i.e., recognises the limitations of feminist arguments in relation to other systems of oppression. Although all oppression may spring from the same fundamental impulse, oppressions do not manifest as equivalences - they differ in accordance with historical and social specifics. That is, before feminists can offer 'feminist' solutions to women who are not situated within capitalist democracies, etc.; that is, in order for feminist theory to become analytical and critical, it first has to criticise itself. As Foucault puts it:

But if we are not to settle for the affirmation or the empty dream of freedom, it seems to me that this historico-critical attitude must also be an experimental one. I mean that this work done at the limits of ourselves must, on the one hand, open up a realm of historical inquiry, and, on the other, put itself to the test of reality, of contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take. This means that the historical ontology of ourselves must turn away from all projects that claim to be global or radical. In fact we know from experience that the claim to escape from the system of contemporary reality so as to produce the overall programs of another society, another way of thinking, another culture, another vision of the world, has led only to the return of the most dangerous traditions" (Foucault, 1984, p.46).

Foucault's wording, the 'most dangerous traditions', alludes to Marx's dramatic problematisation of tradition and revolution:

The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something entirely new, precisely in such epochs of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle slogans and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language. (Marx, 1852, in Tucker, p.595)

Karl Marx, 1852, illustrates clearly one of the problems of theory construction; that no matter how 'new' the theory is, it always partakes of older theories, even if the stance taken is solely in opposition to older modes of thought. As Marx again puts it: "(People) make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past (Marx, in Tucker, p.595)". Marx does not dispute that people can 'make their own history', only that this new history tends to duplicate the mistakes of the past. In order for feminism to look to a new future, it first has to recognise its past.

- 91 Lodge states that "there has been a growing measure of agreement through the years among her more devoted and discriminating readers that it is her most perfect and fully representative work" (1984, p.11).
- 92 All references are to: Radway, Janice A. (1987) *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* London: Verso.
- 93 All page references are to: Flaubert, Gustave (1985) *Madame Bovary* (tr. Aina Russell) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. This text was originally written in *French* by a man, and is set in the mid-nineteenth century. The choice of this text therefore appears to contradict the claims I make regarding the need to be historically and

socially specific - i.e., I base most of my arguments upon an analysis of women's novels in Britain of the early nineteenth century. The need to transcend gender categorisations is registered throughout this thesis; the fact that *Madame Bovary* was written by a man does not make the text any less amenable to an analysis of gender. *Madame Bovary* is a remarkable document, and the critique it offers of the position women occupy within modernity is considered absolutely essential to the argument constructed throughout this thesis - it is for these reasons that it was chosen.

- 94 The series, *Questions For Feminism*, brought out by Verso, is edited by Michèle Barrett, Annette Kuhn, Anne Phillips and Ann Rosalind Jones.
- 95 For reasons undisclosed, but which probably have to do with anonymity and with respect for the confidentiality of her interviewees, Radway did "disguise the identity of Smithton" (p.249).
- 96 In itself, the endless proliferation of categories within the romance genre (see Appendix 2) provides an argument for regarding the romance as derivative of the epic. Despite Radway's best efforts, no "narrative logic of the romance" (p.150) can encompass all categories of romance. Instead, the question must be asked as to what it is about the quality of romance that allows for quantity. Given romance's derivation from the epic form, numerous narrative sequences and adventures are guaranteed by the romance. An analysis of the romance genre cannot expect to plot a linear development of the story, instead, must ask what kinds of adventures, narrative sequences, climaxes are commonly introduced into the romance, and what these are indicative of.

For instance, within romance fiction, the consensual, contractual system is often clearly demonstrated to fail the heroine; Radway designates this as the first sequence of the romance, the "heroine's social identity is destroyed" (Radway, 1987, p.134). Invariably the heroine has asked to be granted respect and rights according to who she is as a person, but has been mocked and denigrated by the hero or another man, who refuses to recognise these rights. Particularly evident in the romances of Netta Muskett, of the 1940s and 50s, heroine's feudal instincts are seen to arise; she goes forth and gets her man, marrying, often lovelessly, for power, position and privilege. Yet somehow she is then able to remould hero closer unto to her own desires. This could possibly be read in terms of the fact that heroine requests rights in terms of contract, upon this denial, goes for bond or broke, and ends up negotiating contracts from the position and power granted her as wife. (Known in the womanly body trade as having your cake, eating it, and not getting fat.) Radway therefore talks about the "heroine's transformation from an isolated, asexual, insecure adolescent who is unsure of her own identity, into a mature, sensual and very married woman who has realised her full potential and identity as the partner of a man and as the implied mother of a child" (p.134). However, this does not take into account all the contradictions of the romance, nor the fact that heroine is not normally recuperated into the text in the kind of humanist wholeness that Radway implies.
- 97 Terry Eagleton claims that "Mills & Boon novels are fictional but not generally regarded as literature, and certainly not as Literature" (1983, p.2).
- 98 eg., "In the opening lines of this novel, the author trills, 'The girl was wearing a red tam-o'-shanter and that was the first thing he noticed about her. It was pearly with drops of rainwater ... Fortunately, the 'Mills and Boon' mercifully fades away as Mrs Barraclough gets into her stride and, but for the fact that her heroine's behaviour lacks credibility, especially in the historical context, her story is readable romantic fiction" (Beryl Roberts, *Fair Lady*, 22 November 1989, p.29). As to what precisely constitutes the difference between 'readable', and what is presumably 'unreadable' romantic fiction - i.e., Mills & Boon, is beyond the ingenuity of this reader to ascertain.
- 99 Armstrong writes that, "Historical studies of the novel represent early novels and romances as a rather unsavory lot. In fact, there is good reason to believe that novels did not become literary works until the twentieth century" (1987, p.37). Within *Madame Bovary*, Emma Bovary's mother-in-law castigates her son for the fact that Emma is often to be found "reading novels - wicked books - works against religion" (p.139).
- 100 Brown in fact argues that the history of the 'rise' of the novel "did not become institutional until the middle of our own century" (in Armstrong, 1987, p.39).
- 101 In locating gender outside its specific historical, socio-political and other spheres, the implication is that there is something universal or trans-historical about gender which entails that women as a group inevitably write 'differently'. It is postulated that the literary canon, unable to admit 'difference', excludes women writers on the basis of gender. For instance, Joanna Russ, an award-winning science fiction author and academic, writes,

When I became aware (in college) of my 'wrong' (i.e., not male) experience, I chose fantasy. Convinced that I had no real experience of life, since my own obviously wasn't part of Great Literature, I decided consciously that I'd write of things nobody knew anything about, dammit. So I wrote realism disguised as fantasy, that is, science fiction. (1983, p.127)
- 102 Chodorow notes the "partly arbitrary" (1989, p.184) differences in the approaches of psychoanalytic feminism; "Three self-identified approaches stand out, and I think we can see large commonalities between the first two in comparison to the third. Here, I distinguish an object-relations and interpersonal psychoanalytic feminism from a Lacanian psychoanalytic feminism" (p.184).

Chodorow clearly situates her own work as following "for the most part British object-relations theory" (p.184); noting her "own reliance on object-relations theory" (p.221). Her work is therefore clearly comparable to the

work of Eichenbaum and Orbach, who base their reading of the mother-daughter relationship upon the work of W.R.D. Fairbairn. It is difficult to ascertain Chodorow's position on Eichenbaum and Orbach's work in that her recent (1989) text does not even reference their phenomenally popular texts (at least, their names are missing from the index). However, the similarities between the two kinds of readings given of the mother-daughter relationship appear remarkably similar. Both sets of theorists appear to give a naturalised, humanist, psychologised version of the psychoanalytic - certainly classical psychoanalysis would not legitimate mapping the pre-oedipal onto the mother-daughter relationship.

- 103 A criticism has to be brought against the limited range of texts Radway read, in that she studied only twenty "ideal" and twenty "failed" romances. Furthermore, the majority of these texts would probably seek inclusion under the rubric, "Fat Historical Romances", a category of which Kathleen Woodiwiss is queen. This is noted by the fact that, of the 42 women interviewed, "a Kathleen Woodiwiss novel was listed as the first, second, or third most-loved romance thirty-eight times" (p.121). Altogether, Radway's range of texts comprises a not altogether random sample. Variations occurring within romantic fiction can, and have been categorised in a number of different ways (eg., Medical Romance, Contemporary Romance - see Appendix 2). These variations on the basic formula of girl meets boy are themselves so standardised that each basic category can be read as formulaic in itself. Radway's attempt to isolate the "essential narrative structures" of romance is therefore likely to fail, all she can delineate are the "alterable set of generic conventions" applicable to the large historical romance.

- 104 The psychotherapist W.R.D. Fairbairn has been described as belonging to the 'British school' of object-relations. The term 'object-relations' has been defined as referring "to individual's interactions with external and internal (real and imagined) other people, and to the relationship between their internal and external object worlds" (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983, p.14). "Fairbairn believed the ego, the person, the self, develops only in relationships", (Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1982, p.111); "All portions of the ego are always joined with objects" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p.152).

Fairbairn "envisions a unitary, integral ego with its own libidinal energy, seeking relations with real external objects. If these relations are satisfactory, the ego remains integral and whole. Unsatisfactory relations with natural, external objects necessitate the establishment by the ego of compensatory internal objects. The splitting of the ego is a consequence of this proliferation of internal objects, since different portions of the ego remain related to different internal objects" (Greenberg & Mitchell, 1983, p.163). In Fairbairn's scheme there are three different kinds of internal objects: ideal object, exciting object and rejecting object. The ideal object is related to the gratifying components of the mother, whilst the other two are related to her ungratifying components. Two types of non-gratification can occur: mother can reject, or she can reject subsequent to enticing with hope. The central ego is bound to the ideal object, and it is this part of the ego "which is still available for relations with real people in the external world" (p.164). The libidinal ego is "the piece of the ego that remains bound to and identified with the exciting object, which is, therefore, perpetually seeking and longing for the enticing promise of relatedness" (p.164). Finally, the anti-libidinal ego remains hostile to any kind of gratification, as it is bound up with the rejecting object.

"The ego is unthinkable except as bound up with objects" (p.165), and aspects of both libidinal and anti-libidinal ego attach themselves to the exciting object. The libidinal ego "has not given up the unsatisfied longings and demands of infantile dependence" and "in its attachment to the exciting object, remains bound to images of unfulfilled promises, enticements, and potentials ... (it therefore) remains in a perpetual, deprived relationship with the exciting object. The promise is kept alive, but fulfilment is impossible" (p.166). On the other hand, the anti-libidinal ego "continually attacks the exciting object for its false promises, and the libidinal ego for its naive hope and devotion" (p.166). The splits that occur, the schizoid self of Fairbairn's theory, are read by Eichenbaum and Orbach as providing a schema wherein the non-gratification of the girl-child by her mother produces a particular psychic configuration, and is used in their argument that all women's needs are unmet and remain unmet.

- 105 Other titles include: Judith Arcana, *Our Mother Daughters*; Elizabeth Banditer, *Mother Love*; Jessie Bernard, *The Future of Motherhood*; Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering*; A. Daly: *Mothers*; Colette Dowling, *The Cinderella Complex: Women's hidden fear of independence*; Luise Eichenbaum and Susie Orbach, *Understanding Women*; Jane Lazarre, *The Mother Knot*.
- 106 The Benjamin quotation has been taken from a previous paper I wrote on the romance; unfortunately I have been unable to locate the full reference.
- 107 For instance, even the back-cover blurb of the Penguin edition of *Madame Bovary* says, "The central character of *Madame Bovary* is the bored wife of a provincial doctor, whose desires and illusions are inevitably shattered when reality catches up with her".
- 108 While the epic "moves from the impossible characteristic of the mythic world to a possible ideal, it is not thereby to be thought of as having established a relation to the actual. The epic is a flexible form which may extend without radical change to incorporate the range of all possible heroes and all possible worlds, and its criteria for validity are to do with its own forms not those of the actual world. The epic, in other words, has no need of outside evidence" (van Zyl, 1992, p.67).
- 109 "Case" refers to the medical or psychological case, in terms of the case history, the documentation that is compiled on an individual so as to render him or her amenable to diagnosis and correction as a 'case'.

- 110 The wording, 'simple, positive', deliberately echoes Freud's description of the "simple positive Oedipus complex" (1923/1958, p.32). In contradistinction to humanist, naturalised readings of Oedipus as constituting merely the 'simple, positive' complex, a psychoanalytic account has to analyse also the 'negative Oedipus complex'. In the boy-child, this consists of affection for father and jealousy towards mother; Freud claims that it is this complicating bisexual element which makes it difficult "to obtain a clear view of the fact in connection with the earliest object-choices and identifications" (p.33). However, it is precisely this, and other 'complicating' factors that enables Oedipus to be used as an explanatory model. That is, Oedipus cannot be read in a self-evident manner (e.g., pre-oedipal = mother-daughter); similarly, a 'simple, positive' reading of the Flaubert's text in terms of the criteria for reading a realist narrative is inadequate. Furthermore, this analogy implies that, against Austen's 'simple, positive' account of gender and genre, Flaubert's text sketches out the 'complicating, negative' relationship between gender and genre; the wording, 'simple', 'positive', 'complicating', 'negative' - like Oedipus and the realist narrative - is not to be read axiomatically.
- 111 Homais is designated within the text as an "apostle of progress" (p.186). The text implies that it is he himself who describes himself as such.
- 112 "If you will do me the honour of making use of it Madame," said the chemist, catching these last words, 'my own library is at your disposal, comprising the best authors - Voltaire, Rousseau, Delille, Walter Scott, *The Literary Echo*, and so on" (p.96)
- 113 The lengths to Homais will take his debate with the *curé* is evidenced by the fact that it provides entertainment for them during the vigil the two men maintain in Emma's death-room:
- "Come, my friend," said the chemist, "you have been here long enough. This is a terrible sight for you." Once Charles had gone, the two gentlemen resumed their debate.
 "Read Voltaire!" said the one. "Read D'Holbach! Read the *Encyclopedial*"
 "Read the *Letters of some Portuguese Jews*!" said the other. "Read the *Proof of Christianity*, by the ex-magistrate Nicolasi" (p.341).
- 114 Flaubert's "in these days, in this age of enlightenment" cross-references Austen's ironic, "In this age of literature" (1955a, p.60) - see also chapter three.
- 115 Charles Bovary's mother "gathered up all the fragments of her ambition and centred them upon his young head" (p.20). Her ambition is to "make a scholar out of Charles, - already seeing him as a grown man, handsome and intelligent, with a settled portion" (p.20).
- 116 Perhaps it is not appropriate to consider the "deal" old Rouault strikes with Bovary, whereby Rouault asks Emma if she would marry Charles, as a "contract"; the word however does convey the idea of 'profit' and the extent to which Rouault reaps personal benefit from the marriage in that he does not have to provide a large dowry for Emma. The fact that Emma is neither provided with a dowry, nor is granted the capacity for earning her own money, denotes the extent to which she falls between the vocabularies of bond and contract, of economic protection and privilege vs an economic 'right' to a wage *via* a contractual relation.
- 117 Emma is furious that Charles is no epic hero:
- He couldn't swim, or fence, or fire a pistol, and was unable to explain a riding term she came across in a novel one day.
 Whereas a man, surely, should know about everything; excel in a multitude of activities, introduce you to passion in all its force, to life in all its grace, initiate you into all mysteries! *But this one had nothing to teach; knew nothing, wanted nothing.* He thought she was happy; and she hated him for that placid immobility, that stolid serenity of his, for that very happiness which she herself brought him. (p.54, italics mine)
- 118 That Emma has a capacity, an ability, to handle money is not doubted, she astonishes Bovary "by her practical common sense" (p.266); the "technical terms rolled out, together with imposing words like 'order', 'foresight', 'the future' ... She had profited by Lheureux's instruction" (p.266). "Emma knew how to run the house, as well. She sent out the accounts to the patients, in well-phrased letters devoid of all commercial flavour" (p.54, emphases mine). That is, Emma can handle money, but the language of dutiful housewife is incommensurate with that of commerce. That is, her domestic duties comprise unpaid labour - during her first transactions with the draper, she is wary, but, having access to no money of her own, she pays him back out of money Bovary receives: "She made a resolution to economize, so as to be able to pay back in time ... 'Heavens, no, he'll forget!' she decided" (p.202). It is this that initiates her path of deceit; when in need of money, "Madame then sent out bills to two or three clients, and as this expedient proved a success she started making considerable use of it. She was always careful to add in a postscript: 'Don't say anything to my husband, you know how proud he is. I greatly regret ... Your obedient servant ...' There were some protests, which she intercepted" (p.298). She also buys trinkets which she then re-sells, "She drove a hard bargain, the lust for profit running in her peasant blood" (p.298).
- 119 The extract regarding a 'desire that compels and a convention that restrains' follows upon Emma's wish, when pregnant, for a son: "She wanted a son. He should be dark and strong, and she could call him Georges. The thought of having a male child afforded her a kind of anticipatory revenge for all her past helplessness. A man,

at any rate, is free. He can explore the passions and the continents, can surmount obstacles, reach out to the most distant joys" (p.101).

- 120 The fact that it is convention and not an internalised morality that restrains is noted in Flaubert's description of "her sterile virtue" (p.137); "But her pride, her joy in saying 'I am a virtuous woman', and in contemplating her own attitudes of resignation in the mirror, brought her some solace for the sacrifice *she believed herself to be making*" (p.121, italics mine).
- 121 Although the text notes that the social and financial imperatives towards creating a contractual adult are relatively lacking for women, it also notes that women's activities are more monitored than men's, the conventions that restrain are therefore far more developed, more rigid, in relation to women. This is possibly because the social/cultural logic of modernity cannot enculturate women to the same degree as men - Flaubert's text notes, for instance, how women's lack of access to money makes a mockery of sexual morality, a "sterile virtue" (p.137).

Madame Bovary, setting off to visit her child, "requested (Léon) to accompany her. By nightfall news of this had spread throughout Yonville and Madame Tuvache, the mayor's wife, declared in her maid's hearing that Madame Bovary was *compromising herself*" (p.104, italics mine). Madame Tuvache pronounces her opinion of Madame Bovary 'in her maid's hearing': Like Madame Bovary Senior, she probably believes that "... you ought to keep an eye on your servant's morals - unless morals were to be treated as a laughing-matter" (p.204). - The small, insidious, daily monitorings of a community, a neighbourhood, are designed to ensure that social conventions may prevail where individual morality does not succeed:

- Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you - Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing; where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies and where roads and newspapers lay every thing open? Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting? (Austen, 1955c, p.163)

Modernity simultaneously establishes the individual as a self-regulating, mature moral adult and, lest this individual morality fail, situates him - more particularly, her - in a 'neighbourhood of voluntary spies'. In this way morality becomes conflated with normalisation; humanist psychology bases diagnosis on a statistical normative model of mental health; feminism, politically correct movements, far from enabling/enculturating individual morality (hence ascribing to the bourgeois revolutionary *ideal* of mature adulthood, human rights, equality), attempts *legislation* by means of the normative model. Some of the agendas of the PC movement currently sweeping North American campuses "implies a network of (Politically Correct) spies reporting to the 'enrichment-liason person' in each department" (Newsweek, 14 January 1991, p.47).

The potential of a community capable of the most minute monitoring of the individual life is becoming realised in an electronics age which finally and fully dispenses with the myth of privacy: what price Prince Charles' Camillagate tape to a newspaper syndicate in an information world increasingly governed by faxes? A recognition of the problems and the humorous potentials of this kind of community, also the fact that the community is essentially one of "women" - reaches its fullest potential and highest developmental form in the gossip of housewives - is noted in Mr Bennet's advice to Elizabeth: "You are not going to be *Missish*, I hope, and pretend to be affronted at an idle report. For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn?" (Austen, 1955e, p.315).

- 122 The text explicitly engages with the fact that women have a commodity in their bodies, and that, denied access to other forms of remuneration, individual 'moral' imperatives against prostitution, against the selling of one's *own body*, *selling one's (birth-?)right to one's body* - "every man has a *property* in his own *person*: this *no body has any right to but himself*" (in Scarry, 1990, p.870) - these "moral" 'imperatives' lack binding force for women. The conjunctions of poverty and sexual immorality, money and virtue is noted within the text: "the wealthy woman seems to have all her bank-notes about her to defend her virtue, like so much armour-plate inside the lining of her bodice" (p.243). The text also acknowledges the increasing commodification, exchangeability of everything - the money form dominating social relations; when Charles spills a drink on a lady at the theatre, her furious husband does not shrill a 'Meet me at dawn, you scoundrel!'; he "muttered surlily the words compensation, expense, repayment. ..." (p.238).
- 123 Rodolphe, "Refusing to be inconvenienced by a sense of shame, he treated her as he pleased, and turned her into something pliant and corrupt" (p.203).
- 124 Synaesthesia is peculiarly common to romance fiction - is one of the common causes of complaint against the texts - the blurring of sense boundaries read by literary-moral commentators as indicative of poor writing - unsystematic thought processes.
- 125 Léon urges Emma to an affair: "'Why not?' retorted the clerk. 'It's done in Paris'. And that word, with its unassailable logic, decided her" (p.255).
- 126 The text establishes Homais as representative of the Enlightenment, of individual morality, and simultaneously

establishes him as the enforcer of norms and laws, institutional rules and regulations (provided such regulations do not impede his financial progress, of course). Subsequent to his successful (thanks to his public campaign) incarceration of the blind beggar in an institution, the text notes that, "Success emboldened him, and from then on there was not a dog run over, not a barn fired, not a wife beaten in all the district, but he immediately retailed it to the public, guided always by his passion for progress and his abhorrence of priests" (p.355).

- 127 "Goldsmith tells us, that when a lovely woman stoops to folly, she has nothing to do but to die; and when she stoops to be disagreeable, it is equally to be recommended as a clearer of ill-fame" (Austen, 1955a, p.341):

When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom - is to die.

(Oliver Goldsmith (1730 - 1774), in Miller & Greenberg, 1981, p.111).

- 128 Thus Bovary echoes Madame Bovary's cry to Rodolphe: "Save me!" (p.205).

- 129 According to a Johannesburg psychotherapist interviewed by Linda Shaw about the current royal spate of extra-marital affairs - apparently indicative that not only the well-bred, but also that lesser breeds of homo sapiens are suffering a deep-seated malaise, and are increasingly apt to stray from the marital fold - neither husband nor wife are to be blamed: "*The real enemy is the fantasy of romantic love. It's the desire for that magical feeling of intimacy with someone we imagine to be a soul mate*" (Sunday Times, 10 January 1993, p.11, italics mine). Shaw poses the question, "So what next? Do we do away with marriage and fly happily into the (many and different) arms of passion? Or do we learn what commitment means? *Alternatively, we could stop reading stupid novels*" (p.11, italics mine). Shaw's statement testifies to a belief, no less deep-seated than problematic, regarding the drawing of a relationship between text, experience and the self. Whether or not the 'fantasy of romantic love' is entirely to be blamed upon 'reading stupid novels' is particularly inappropriate to this argument. Shaw and the therapist claim that the old routine of blaming the wife for affairs does not hold water (but who are the main - sole? - culprits for reading stupid romantic novels?); only, in this case, the wine, dine and sublime of romantic love.

APPENDIX 1:

The Worldwide Phenomenon of Romance Fiction

The profit figures from Harlequin are so staggering that every publisher is dying to get in. It's a small investment and few books are returned. Clearly, it's a license to print money. (Ross Clairborne, Dell Publishing Company, in Radway, 1987, p.42)

Romance publishing is a multi-million dollar industry, claiming an extremely large readership; "Certainly, the publishers do not sniff at the expected total sales of a half billion dollars in the industry in 1983 or the 15% annual increase in sales forecast for the next few years" (Fredette, 1984, p.32). The following represents a fairly representative list of various publishers who currently publish, or have published, romances; "Although the category romances are the mainstay of the romance section in the bookstores, most major commercial publishing houses publish the 'nonformulaic' or 'nonseries' titles" (p.32).

- * Arrow Books
- * Avon Books
- * Ballantine
- * Bantam Books
- * Berkeley-Jove
- * Daan Retief
- * Dell
- * Fawcett
- * Fontana Books
- ** Harlequin Enterprises
- * Hodder & Stroughton
- * Houghton Mifflin
- * IPC Magazines Publication
- * J.P. van der Walt
- * Methuen
- ** Mills & Boon
- * NAL
- * Pageant Books
- * Pan
- * Paperback Library
- * Pinnacle
- * Pocket

**	Silhouette Books
*	St Martin's
*	Tafelberg
*	Tyndale
*	Warner
*	Worldwide Books
*	Zebra Books
*	Zondervan

Whilst most large publishing houses have a romance line, a number of houses specialise exclusively in romance fiction, or bring out the mainstay 'category romances' - these are denoted by a double asterisk.

The Romance Houses are a phenomenal success story; "Mass market romances are an international phenomenon, with single romances or whole romance series being translated into as many as fourteen languages" (Rabine, 1986, p.265). In England, a "new Mills & Boon title has a print run of nearly 100,000, a figure which exceeds that of many best-sellers", (Stratford, 1987, p.141) whilst the American based Fawcett publishing house claims that the first printing of paperbacks written by such illustrious writers as Victoria Holt or Phyllis Whitney starts at figures of 800,000 copies (Radway, 1987, p.33). In 1977, the Canadian company, Harlequin enterprises, alone accounted for 10 percent of the paperback book market, which constituted the printing of 100 million books. By 1979, this figure had risen to 168 million, and 188 million in 1980. The international success of romance publishing is denoted by the fact that, in 1979, Harlequin enterprises could boast of publishing in 98 different countries (p.40).

Whereas other publishing houses distribute 12 000 copies of an average paperback and expect 35 to 40 percent of the first run to be returned, Harlequin (in Canada) generally prints 500 000 copies, of which less than 25 percent are ever returned. Indeed, some dealers report selling 80 percent of their allotment within ten days. Heisey has observed that while "other companies print ten books to sell six, (Harlequin) print(s) seven and a half" to sell those same six. (Radway, 1987, p.41)

The financial viability of romance publishing has caused many other publishers to explore this market (p.42), and the romance industry expanded significantly during the early 1980s. Whilst Harlequin's original success has been largely attributed to its marketing strategies, the increased competition from other publishers has placed emphasis upon the importance of market-related research (p.42). The detailed market-research that precedes the creation of a new romance line has been perceived as a factor largely contributing to the success of the new ventures during the mid-1980s.

Currently, the publishing world is characterised by the domination of large conglomerates (The Pretoria News, 14 April 1990), and in the romance field, larger houses have bought out successful new romance publishers. For instance, Harlequin, a Canadian-based company has recently taken over both Mills & Boon (its British sister company) and Silhouette books, a highly successful romance publishing company started in the early 1980s, originally sponsored by Simon and Schuster. Without tracing the vagaries of the romance publishing industry, it is important to note a number of characteristics common to all mass market romance publishing.

The Marketing of Romance Fiction

The romance houses are mass production orientated, and this has led them to perfect a "category method of production, which has been labeled by the literary sociologist, Robert Escaprit, as 'semi-programmed issue'" (Radway, 1987, p.26). What this entails is that books are "distributed within a small circle (of regular readers) whose requirements are known and whose preferences have been thoroughly established" (p.26). The rationale behind this kind of venture is that, by dispensing with much of the uncertainty attached to the book trade, book sales are virtually guaranteed. The term "semi-programmed" denotes that whilst the literature produced is considered formulaic, a degree of speculation is still involved; "semi-programmed issue involves the selection of texts from a large variety of offered material with the idea that those texts will be distributed to informally identified readers whose requirements and preferences have been determined partially in advance" (p.29). The precise nature of the relationship between the literature the publishers assume will appeal to readers, and the literature actually bought by them, is therefore not fully understood. In statistical terms, the better the 'fit' between reader's perceived tastes and actual book-buying behaviour, the more successful the publishing company.

It is apparent, however, that the companies concerned cannot absolutely predict the success of each individual book, and since mass production relies heavily on a large buying audience, the marketing strategy adopted by the romance houses is deceptively simple. They appeal primarily to a phenomenon known as "brand-name loyalty". Whilst a reader may not have enjoyed the last three books in the "Desire" series brought out by Silhouette books, she nonetheless consistently prefers, and therefore buys from this series as opposed to similar series such as the "Temptation" series brought out by Mills & Boon, or Harlequin's "Love Affair".

The key to building brand-name loyalty, Fernell has observed, is the ability to "deliver exactly what the customer expects". He adds, "Readers of books of this kind ask not, 'Have I heard of this book?' but, 'Did I enjoy the last dozen Silhouettes I read?'" (p.43)

The notion of brand-name loyalty is specifically referred to by Heisey, of Harlequin Enterprises, who feels that "the qualities of the product itself are unimportant in designing sales campaigns" (p.40). He therefore shares with President Fennel of Silhouette Books the philosophy that, "We're out to get brand-name loyalty, so we're not selling individual titles" (Rabine, 1986, p.264). This leads to a generic conception of the product, for instance, few people refer specifically to reading a romance novel; instead, one is reading a "Mills & Boon" if one is British or South African, a "Harlequin" if American. Like Xeroxing versus photostating, the publisher's name has become synonymous with the product it is selling.

Market-Research

Whilst the concept of brand-name loyalty is central, another crucial factor needs to be taken into account in relation to the marketing and production of romance fiction, namely, the market-research conducted by the various publishers which leads to the creation of what have been termed the various series, ranges, categories or lines brought out by the various romance publishers (see Appendix 2 for the definitions given the various terms). For instance, Mills & Boon brings out a typical "Romance" series, a "Doctor Nurse Romance" and a contemporary romance series entitled "Temptation". Whilst Radway refers to "sub-genres" (1987, p.249) occurring within the field, the classificatory system employed by her does not take into account the systematic segregations made by romance publishers in their creation of different series which differ in terms of plot structure, length of book and typical characters portrayed (Fredette, 1984) - see also Appendix 2.

An acknowledgement that different audiences are probably catered to by the various series is important, as this relates to the emphasis placed on market-research by romance publishers, and possibly to the increased popularity of the romance genre during the 1980s. The contention that romances have become even more popular recently is problematic to verify by means of reader surveys, particularly given that many romance readers appear to be defensive about their habit (Radway, 1987, p.294). However, publishing figures denote that more romances are being published every year, and given the means whereby romances are produced on a mass basis, this presumes that a larger number of romances must be being bought. It appears that some romance readers have an almost voracious appetite for the books - Radway claims that "37 percent (of her sample) report reading from five to nine romances each week" (p.129), and this figure has been borne out by informal interviews conducted by myself over the last few years. However, presuming that even within this group of avid readers a saturation point is reached - at least in relation to their ability to buy

romances - this entails that more women, world-wide, must be buying romances. Various reasons have been given for this phenomenon, some citing it as part of a "backlash" against feminism (Douglas, 1980), whilst romance readers and writers themselves may claim that the newest books are in fact implicitly 'feminist' (Radway, 1987, p.219), and it is possibly in this that their appeal to the contemporary reader lies. Although Fredette notes that "Naiad Press publishes feminist and gay romances; Alyson Publications has expanded its title lists with gay and gay gothic romances", these apparently represent "the small press" (1984, p.32) in the genre. In a recent article, Joke Hermes (1992) investigates lesbian romance fiction, claiming dissatisfaction with some of the new, 'feminist-oriented' open-ended conclusions to these works. Without according precedence to feminist or anti-feminist arguments regarding the romance, it is nonetheless important to note both the controversy surrounding romance fiction, the increase in romance production; and, most importantly, the proliferation of *series* within the genre (see Appendix 2).

Although it would be hard to date it exactly, the romance market has undergone significant changes since the early 1980s. During this time, some of the larger companies began to lose their domination over the romance market as more and more publishing houses began to explore the field of romance fiction. However, if a date can be ascribed to this change, many South African readers of romance fiction would claim that the major changes were felt during the early 1980s. Insights into the change taking place have been provided by Cecilia Blight, Bob Hurst and Sharon Rose, librarians working at the Natal Provincial Administration library in Pietermaritzburg. They cited one particular case as pivotal to certain policy amendments made by their library service, and seemed to feel that this was in keeping with various changes occurring internationally.

According to Cecilia Blight, in 1983 Mills & Boon brought out a book entitled *Valentine's Day* (written in fact by a South African author, J. Bauling), in which a step-brother and sister fall in love. The apparently incestuous nature of the relationship was not appreciated by many readers, and in Natal, at least, this book provoked a spate of angry letters. Their readers' protests led to the implementation of a new policy by the Natal Provincial Administration; whereas previously they had simply subscribed to all books brought out under the Mills & Boon logo, and had distributed these to the libraries, they now receive books from all the Romance Houses, read and select what they consider to be the best of the range, and order these. As a result, some librarians employed by the library services spend much of their time reading the latest in the romance range.

The librarians interviewed generally felt that, due to the changes occurring within the romance genre, and particularly given the expansion in title production and the newly

created series, it was no longer viable for many romance readers simply to subscribe to a particular series brought out by a particular company. The first, and most logical reason for this change resulted from the fact that a greater range of romance material was available to readers. They could therefore become more selective, buying a number of books from the various series offered by the different Romance Houses. However, another reason cited by readers for their change from subscription buying was that increased competition meant that innovations to the traditional formula was made. For instance, in order to attract a younger readership, sexual relations were described in far more explicit detail, and many older readers were opposed to this change. Given the experiments being made to the romance formula, some readers felt that they preferred to be more selective as a particular series did not guarantee them the kind of story they most enjoyed, and they therefore felt the need to "shop around".

This last argument needs to be placed in perspective in that the romance houses are particularly noted for their market-research. Therefore, whilst the innovations made may have offended some older readers, it seems fairly certain that it must have attracted a number of new readers. It must also be taken into account that whilst the different publishers produce slightly differing demographic figures regarding the age differentiation of its readers, all would agree that "the majority of romance readers are married women between the ages of twenty-five and fifty" (Radway, 1987, p.55). Therefore, the concern with losing a percentage of their older readers would be offset by the need to attract younger readers. However, the competitive element mentioned does place greater pressure on the romance houses to maintain their innovative, contemporary series, but not to err too greatly in judging readers' changing tastes.

Although many readers still appear to subscribe to a particular series, increasingly, readers are buying books from series brought out by other publishers. (Although J.P. van der Walt publishers rely almost entirely on subscription sales in South Africa, this company is small and has a limited market in terms of language - see Appendix 3.) The possible shift from subscription sales internationally tallies well with the overall thrust of the romance houses to push for 'impulse' buying. In order to facilitate impulse buying, romance fiction is primarily carried by supermarkets, large book-store chains, and, in America, at Drug (pharmaceutical) stores. Certain publishers in fact consider the recent success of the mass market book industry to be due to the less up-market giant book chains such as Dalton's in America (Radway, 1987, p.37). In such stores, the elitism attached to book-buying is largely dispensed with, and by making books accessible to a larger proportion of the population, book sales, particularly in the category (i.e., detective, thriller, romance) sections

have increased. This egalitarian rationale is particularly applied to supermarket buying, as the idea promoted is that buying a romance is equivalent to magazine purchase (particularly given the cost-cutting that is facilitated by mass publication), and therefore romances are to be perceived as one purchase amongst many a woman buys with her monthly groceries.

The above represents a very brief overview of some of the most important factors affecting the romance market world-wide. In her book, *Reading the Romance*, Janice Radway undertakes a detailed analysis of the romance publishing industry, and most of the arguments of the above section have been derived from her book, particularly chapter one, "The Institutional Matrix: Publishing Romance Fiction" (1987, pp.19-45).

APPENDIX 2:

The Classification of Romance Fiction

Initially, the idea of romance formulae appeared more captivating than subsequent analyses have proved it to be. However, the exploration of this idea gave rise to a number of questions that directed the research, such that the critique of feminist research into the romance became necessary. In particular, the fact that most romance researchers did not investigate the various categories of romance was considered problematic. The problem of the ever-expanding number of generic formulae (or series) that the romance industry publishes was eventually overcome by classifying the romance in terms of the epic. The following extract therefore presents an early account of romance fiction, one that was eventually dismissed. Despite this, a number of issues are raised in this appendix that provide an interesting background to some of the material covered in the thesis; many of these arguments have particular relevance to chapter five. The notion of formulae advocated in this appendix necessarily queries a feminist enterprise that would read a narrative logic of the romance upon the basis of the conventions espied in twenty first historical romances, as is attempted by Radway.

A number of feminist critics (Radway, 1986, 1987; Light, 1984; Radford, 1986; Jones, 1986; Hermes, 1992) have undertaken to analyse romance fiction, but, apart from Radway, none of them have attempted any kind of a classificatory system. And even Radway's is limited in that she analyses only 40 texts altogether, in terms of 20 texts classified by a limited sample of readers as "good" romances versus 20 "failed" romances. Radway does, however, refer to "sub-genres" (1987, p.249) - what I'd class as "series" - occurring within the field:

Readers were instructed to identify the particular kind of romance they like to 'read the most' from a list of ten sub-genres. The titles had been given to me by Dot during a lengthy discussion about the different kinds of romances. Although I expected the women to check only one subgenre, almost all of them checked several as their favourites. The categories and totals follow: gothics, 6; contemporary mystery romances, 5; historicals, 20, contemporary romances, 7; Harlequins, 10; Regencies, 4; family sagas, 1; plantation series, 3; spy thrillers, 0; transcendental romances, 0; other, 2. (Radway, 1987, p.249)

However, the classificatory system employed by her does not take into account the systematic segregations made by romance publishers in their creation of different series which differ in terms of plot structure, length of book and typical characters portrayed (Fredette, 1984). These factors are taken into account by romance publishers, potential writers, and of course, readers. Publishers' market romances in terms of series, and classify

texts accordingly. In her article, Fredette gives a brief synopsis of the different 'category lines' - what I refer to as "series" - brought out by the various publishers. This is meant to help potential writers direct their MSs to the best publisher for that text.

The tremendous variety of terms used to describe romance fiction could result in semantic confusion. It is therefore necessary to give precise definitions of the various terms used in this appendix. *Series* refers to the various series brought out under each company's logo - eg., the "Temptation" series of Mills & Boon. *Category romance* refers to the fact that formulaic literature is studied, however, *category* is primarily employed to denote what Radway refers to as "sub-genres". For instance, the category Contemporary Romance relates to a number of series such as Mills & Boon's "Temptation" series and the "Desire" series of Silhouette. The term *range* denotes the entire gamut of romance fiction brought out by the various romance houses, whilst *genre* and *sub-genre* are used only within the context of canon formation. These terms refer specifically to the debates concerning what is, or is not considered acceptable in terms of a genre, such as that of "the novel"; and genre definition and canon formation therefore considered interrelated. (In this I differ from Radway, who calls what I'd term series, 'genres or sub-genres'.) The notion of *formulae* corresponds closely to the *categories* of romance fiction. The term *formula* refers to the general, overarching narrative; with regard to romance fiction, the formula is simple - girl meets boy, falls in love with him and eventually marries him.

The problem inherent in many feminist appraisals of the romance is that they consider the texts simply to adhere to a single, relatively homogeneous formula: girl meets boy. This necessarily restricts what can be said about the texts; it almost necessarily presents one with the notion of a bland, uniform, not to mention passive readership, one whose sole function (on the part of theory) is simply to imbibe both the books and the ideology contained therein. This approach is obviously reductive, and cannot adequately explain why "a housewife, clerical worker or schoolgirl (should) escape from a world economically and psychologically dominated by men into fictional fantasies of the same thing expressed sexually" (McNeil, in Radford, 1986, p.7).

Variations occurring within the romance formula have therefore been categorised in a number of different ways. The notion of *formulae*, as opposed to that of a single formula, is thereby introduced. Again, whilst certain writers argue that differences between the books constitute mere modifications, and would therefore discredit the notion of *formulae*, these variations on the basic theme are in fact themselves so standardised that each basic category can be read as formulaic in itself.

If the argument is accepted that women do exert conscious choice over the material they select to read within the romance range, it entails that different audiences are being catered to by the various romance series and companies. This last point is problematic in that large statistical data banks would need to be compiled in order to substantiate this notion and to provide evidence regarding any reader group differentiations. Since an extremely large readership is catered to, however, it is likely that one cannot typify romance readers in terms of any psychological, demographic or other variables and therefore the notion of the "typical" romance reader is itself a spurious one. Sweeping generalizations regarding the generic romance reader are therefore highly problematic.

The romance publishing houses tend not to publicise their data for fear of competition, a practice common to most large companies. However, the available data does substantiate the hypothesis that romance readers vary in that different demographics are compiled by the various companies. For instance, Silhouette appears to have more university educated women amongst its readers than Harlequin (Radway, 1987, p. 55). Further breakdowns in this audience could probably be made in terms of which series they buy, and these differences could possibly broadly be encapsulated in terms of the general 'category' of romance they most often buy within. (Note: the idea of variation within romance readers (or possibly, the publishers' notion that readers can be loosely grouped) is used as an argument for differences between romance formulae. It is not an argument advocating that romance fiction caters to a particular 'type' of woman, or even 'types' of women - this is clearly what Radway was expecting, hence her astonishment that readers checked more than one 'subgenre' (p.249). Such broad demographic variables as would differ between groups of readers cannot enlighten us as to reader's psychological needs in the same way that they will be unable to predict height, weight or hair colour of the reader. This argument is crucially different from those that argue for a typical reader, or typical groups of readers, based on the experience of the books; this argues for different groups of books based on the knowledge that romance publishers seem to bear in mind various demographic groupings of readers for whom they cater.)

Many researchers have ignored differences occurring within romance fiction, an elimination which is problematic in that it impacts upon the analyses and kinds of theoretical assertions one is able to make both about the texts read and the reader who reads such material. It is for this reason that the next section attempts to explore and analyse the variations in romance fiction. These variations are used to substantiate the argument that there are differing categories and formulae of romance fiction.

Rationale of the Classificatory System

This section will attempt to describe the romance in terms of the various categories or formulae which occur. This strategy of identifying the books primarily in terms of content is virtually identical to the current classifications of science fiction, with its newest category branded "cyber-punk". This category is defined as hard-edged, contemporary, realistic fantasy, and is seen as one amongst many of the series (sometimes referred to as 'sub-genres') of science fiction.

Over and above the classification by content (series), romance fiction also differs in terms of a number of other dimensions, such as the era in which it was written, its historical and geographical setting, which publishing company brought it out, the kind of 'sensuality' it depicts, as well as which category it can be placed within.

The basic concept that will be argued for is that the "content fillings" differ between romances. These may be seen as not constituting radical transformations of the basic formula. Some critics would then argue that since these formulae do not transform the basic formula, any argument which claims that variations do occur within the romance formula is specious in that it attempts to insert differences into a realm where fundamental differences do not occur.

The classification of romance fiction in terms of categories or formulae given was considered too simplistic by a referee of an article I had sent in for appraisal:

The categories given ... are merely superficial classifications according to content, with no unambiguous criteria even with regard to this (e.g. Medical Romance and Afrikaans Romance are given as separate classes, whilst girls/nurses were swooning about doctors - and, by the way, singers, actors and artists - all over the pages of Afrikaans Book Club fiction more than half a century ago.)

It is true that the schemata given in the following section are not necessarily unambiguous, and certainly the classifications given in terms of the categories (comprised of a number of series from different publishers) or formulae of romance fiction are according to content. The justification for this approach is simply that it has not previously been done, except within publishing magazines, and it is enlightening to the extent that it depicts the potential audiences (as opposed to audience) the romance houses are clearly attempting to target.

Categories of Romance Fiction

There are a number of different ways in which romance fiction can be conceptualised. Obviously none of the following are considered to include all cases, nor are they considered mutually exclusive; this simply represents a general overview of some of the ways in which romances can be categorised.

Publishing Company

American-Canadian, British, Afrikaans

Geography (setting)

Australia, America, Britain, Canada, Europe, Exotic Island, South Africa (English vs Afrikaans)

Time (by 'era' - 1900s+ - or by historical "period")

1950s: Post WWII, mercenary women, lack of 'real men', sex occurs within in the novels ...

1970s: domestic women - anorexic, wide-mouthed, brown-haired country mice

1980s: career women, voluptuous, etc., sexual; has a cleavage, titian hair or tumbling golden locks ...

"Historical Romances" are set in the Regency period, Tudor period, the American Wild West.

Sexuality:

"Harlequin publishes a set number of romances per month, categorised into different series according to a carefully measured degree of explicit sex, known as 'sensuality' in the trade" (Rabine, 1986, p.265).

Categories

Established Romance Tradition, Contemporary Romance, Historical Romance, Medical Romance, Christian Romance, Afrikaans Romance, Lesbian Romance, Astrological Romance, Teen Romance

ESTABLISHED ROMANCE TRADITION

Mills & Boon: Romance, and Doctor-Nurse Romance

IPC Magazines Publication: Woman's Weekly Fiction Series Omnibus

Pan: Barbara Cartland

also, Netta Muskett, Denise Robbins (author as name-brand)

CONTEMPORARY ROMANCE

Harlequin: Love Affair

Berkeley-Jove: Second Chance at Love

Silhouette: Desire (bought out by Harlequin)

Silhouette: Sensation and Special Edition (bought out by Harlequin)

Worldwide Books: (untitled romance)

Mills & Boon: Temptation

HISTORICAL ROMANCE: (The Bodice Rippers)

Zebra Books (Kensington Publishing Corp): Historical Romance

Avon Books: Avon Romance ("ribbon books")

TEEN ROMANCE

Bantam: Sweet Dreams

Dell: Young Love

the "Caitlin" series

CHRISTIAN ROMANCE

Publishers: Thomas Nelson, Tyndale, Zondervan (USA); Kok in Kampen in Holland

AFRIKAANS ROMANCE

Series: The Book clubs (see Appendix 3)

Publishers: Daan Retief, Tafelberg, J.P. van der Walt

Problems of Classification

The primary problem with the above classificatory system resides in the fact that it is dependent on 'content' and does not contribute in any way to an analysis or understanding of romance fiction. However, although it is more interesting than it is compelling, it served a useful purpose in that it enabled this research to break with traditional and feminist appraisals of romance fiction. In order to compile the above (very much reduced) account of the 'categories' of romance fiction, conservative estimates would place my romance reading at about 400 books. This had a number of dire consequences:

1. It problematised the romance reader.

No longer did any account of what romance readers "really want" have quite the same appeal; having become addicted to the "genre", I was not quite willing to believe of myself that, in the words of a referee regarding an article I had sent in for publication:

The Romance reader is encouraged to keep looking. A Romantic hero is out there somewhere: if she conforms to the female role model offered in the text (i.e., social coercion) she may win the romantic hero (which she will probably 'produce' or 'construe' according to her insertion into the text/ideology."

(I do not concede that someday my prince will *not* come; merely that the above represents a rather dreary, mechanistic version of the romance reader - it also displays an extremely negative attitude towards the romance reader - see point 4. below.)

2. It problematised the romance text.

It became obvious that this particular task of classification was impossible; no sooner had two books (minimum sample size) from one series been devoured, and classified in terms of 'category' than yet another, and another, series - or even category - of romance fiction would intrude itself upon my consciousness. (The problems of classification did, however, contribute to the only direct (i.e., causal) relationship that could be drawn between my romance reading and my socio-psychological self: my bank balance became significantly depleted. Financial imperatives alone made possible, "produced" a transition from romance reader to feminist academic - the latter not construed as developmental in relation to the former.)

3. It problematised the relationship: romance reader - romance text.

Given my original psychological training, which presumed some kind of match between reader and books, and an original attraction to Radway's "reader-response" criticism, the increasing impossibility of any kind of classification of romance fiction in terms of 'plot' necessarily placed what could be said about the romance reader's 'character' under strain. It therefore became 'obvious' that not only was another kind of classificatory system necessary, but, given the contention raised above, the mapping of romance reading onto the romance reader - and thence onto the female psychological self became problematic (see chapters three and five). Hence the compelling argument offered by a conceptualisation of the romance as derivative of an epic tradition, and the need to go beyond what became established as 'literary-moral' criteria of reading the character of the romance reader from the heroine of the romance text.

4. Beyond the problem of utilising 'literary-moral' criteria, the problem remained, that romance fiction receives particularly adverse criticism. This seemed to betoken that the relationship between 'text-self' maybe had something to do with the FEMALE READER.

Gemma Moss notes that popular fiction is "a blanket term which in fact conceals a variety of genres. These are not treated equally. At certain points I have drawn attention to the way in which romance is singled out and dismissed in particularly strong terms" (Moss, 1989, p.79). Moss feels that part of the problem lies in theorists feeling "considerable contempt for the women who fall prey to sexist ideology" (Moss, 1989, p.50). This perception is supported by Modleski who criticises the fact that the three attitudes generally adopted toward "popular feminine narratives", are "dismissiveness; hostility ... or, most frequently, a flippant kind of mockery" (1982, p.14). It is also borne out by a comment made by a former lecturer in the Wits Education Department, about students applying for entry into an academic course through an interview procedure: "We used to ask them whether they liked reading, if they had read any books in the last month, and if they said they had read a Mills & Boon, we usually used to fail them" (Personal discussion with a person who, for obvious reasons, would prefer to remain anonymous, Giovanni's restaurant in Rosebank, Johannesburg, 10 January 1992).

The question now became, "Why do we ask the question, 'Why do women read the romance?'"

a. Why does there appear to be a particular relationship between women and pulp fiction - i.e., why are similar questions not asked about men and science fiction?

- b. That is, is there a relationship between gender and genre?
- c. Given that feminist criticism has propounded such a relationship in terms of women and the novel, can the relationship between gender and genre be traced, historically, in terms of the question, "Why did women begin to write (Novels)?"
- d. The association between literature and morality appears to be particularly pertinent to women - are there historical precedents for this - i.e., When did this association (if it exists) arise? How did it arise? Can we trace its effects to contemporary appraisals of women's fiction? Can this relationship between literature, morality and women be analysed in relation to the history of the novel?
- e. What are the biases underlying the asking of the two questions, "Why do women read the romance?" and "Why did women begin to write (novels)?" What does this say about feminist criticism? How does it implicate feminist criticism in terms of a bias towards the realist narrative, and to literary-moral criteria of reading texts? In terms of modernity?
- f. Can these biases then account for the question directing feminist appraisals of romance fiction?

Through attempting to answer the above, and other questions, the research was redirected along the lines of the critique given throughout this thesis.

APPENDIX 3:

"The 8th Wonder of the Modern World": Afrikaans (Romance) Publishing

The following represent excerpts from interviews with two people involved in Afrikaans publishing in Pretoria. Although I did not have a tape recorder, most of it was written down verbatim. Those sentences enclosed within inverted commas are definitely transcribed verbatim. Translations have been given, where required, and if some of the phraseology or words may seem strange this is due to the fact that both interviewees are Afrikaans speaking, and were often translating directly from Afrikaans to English during the interview process.

The first interview was with Mr Roelf van Rensburg, who is involved with romance publishing, the second with Ms Hettie Scholtz, who is not involved with romance publishing, but who nonetheless had some interesting comments to make about the Afrikaans publishing world.

Excerpts from an interview with Mr Roelf van Rensburg, J.P. van der Walt Publishers

Afrikaans publishing is changing over time. 49 years of Romance book-club. Originally the Springbok biblioteek - library: letterkundige' - 'novelistic' romances). Over the war years we didn't stop publication, even though the quota system on paper limited the number of members. Gradually, an atmosphere change, lighter novels, more romantic.

Yes, (there have been formula change over the years):

We are more varied, still romance fiction, also, adventure with a romantic theme, action, detective. But romance fiction always guarantees a happy ending. Modernity - absolutely modern or contemporary. Or "Cape Dutch" period. These are set in the Cape of sword fights, balls, wigs. Authors have considerable freedom, liberty, artistic license. Also, an adventurous period. Very little documented history, gives greater artistic license. But, publishers watch out for historical detail (for instance, if set during the French Revolution, we check that the Governor is the right one for that time).

J.P. van der Walt have five book clubs. Earlier, there used to be 17 book clubs, brought out by other publishers. Most of them have closed down. About 8 years ago (in the early

1980s) book clubs peaked. (This was before the advent of TV in South Africa, the economy was good, inflation not bad, book prices hadn't gone up. Also, book prices have gone up because of paper prices - SAPPI and MONDI, the two conglomerates dominating the paper market in South Africa.) Printers determine the price of books, publishers have to pay them.

People are reading less these days, and I believe TV will hurt them (the book clubs) more. Selling figures are down. At height, we sold 35 000 - 40 000 books per month. At best, 1 million copies per annum. Now, our numbers are down, but still exist and make profit.

Of the five book clubs:

Keurbiblioteek: is the oldest; straight romance

Eike: straight romance

President: bought from original book club. Themes vary from month to month, hero and heroine may be middle-aged, may be an adventure story. (They refer to it as the "family club")

Romankeur: reprints of old evergreens, the best-sellers of yesteryear (about 10 years ago).

Treffer: adventure and romance. An adventure story with a romantic line in it, every time.

A member of any club can buy books from the other clubs at 30% less (retail). Mail order system.

Also, we have a shop. The book club sells 95% of their books. Also, library and retailers, but we don't rely on them heavily.

Each club brings out its own program twice a year.

Three or four times a year, we bring out a colour catalogue.

About 30% or more subscribers belong to more than one book club, in some cases, 4 book clubs. Some members have belonged to a book club for more than 40 years.

"We consider (the books) as educating, building character, e.g. a little old Karoo lady.

Morals: good will always be here, love everlasting, we consider it responsible stuff that we're doing".

Also, part of that are the omnibus - 3 novels in one (normally same author). Distribute again through book stores, also member's price through book club.

Our popular and prolific authors are:

Ena Murray

Susannah M. Lingua (their own 'queen': exclusive to J.P. van der Walt and very popular)

Ella Spence (who is now retired)

Our authors are not on a contract, they must send in a MS. Most send in between two and five a year. 99% of our authors are female, most of them full-time authors. They are romantically inclined, basically they become authors because they are readers. We have about 100 writers in total (some send in a book only every 5 years). No royalties - a one-shot lump sum determined by popularity, quality of MS, and the period of time they have been writing for us.

An advertising agency has done surveys for us, but not in a professional way. We don't LEARN anything from them.

Demographics of readers:

From 18-80, female, both rural and cities, overseas members. (Would you claim they had 'universal appeal'? "Yes")

Adverts: magazines, annual campaign. We offer a year membership, plus 4 free novels of their choice. When their membership expires, some members resign, then sign up again (to get freebies).

Two campaigns: big one in January, February, March, smaller one in August and September.

Advertise in popular Afrikaans magazines where we derive members from.

Huisgenoot (500 000 distribution), Keur, Rooi Rose, Sarie.

We have tried the Sunday, regional radio, but have not got a good response from these adverts. Also newspapers, not a great response.

We mainly publish hard-cover books in small runs; paper-back is not much less expensive, but readers expect greater reduction than is profitable if paper-back.

Libraries buy more of these than any other books. The extent to which they buy our romances is dependent on the library service (i.e., the provincial administration - the reason why Natal is not mentioned, for instance, is because it has only a small Afrikaans speaking population). In Transvaal, they give readers not what they want, but what they think they

should have. The Cape library service is better, gives readers what they want. Our surveys show that Coloured readers in the Cape read more of the Afrikaans romance than white (something like 1.2 million as opposed to 1.1 million - get hold of Cape Library service, to check those figures out). This, despite the fact that hero and heroine are white.

City libraries - English city libraries buy Mills & Boon almost on a standing order.

We sell very little to booksellers.

Books - are read ONCE for the story, very seldom re-read. There have been only two reprints in the 20 years I've been in the company. One: Hannah du Plessis *Melody*. (We once reprinted very small quantities of it for the Elna Spence medal every two years for most popular romance, given at same time as the Volkskas prize for juvenile literature in English and Afrikaans).

Popularity determined by the "oor-en-weer verkoper" (the 'over-and-again buyer'). If you are a member of book club A, you can order from B, C, D and E as well. We know the print-runs, and see how they go. We over-print for free copies (the four 'freebies' given away with the annual special offer, for instance). But we never hesitate to tell authors how very popular they are.

Controversial romances:

'n Pot vol Winter: ('A Pot - Vessel (?) full of Winter') written for young adults: first Afrikaans juvenile novel in which sexual relations talked about (written by a Dominee's (priest's) wife)

The most controversial romance fiction of Keurbiblioteek book club was Tryna du Toit's *Groen Koring*. Student and medical student, get married because she's pregnant. It was written about 30 years ago - Jamie Uys made a film from it, very popular in South Africa. (Roelf wrote film script). It was called "Debbie", filmed about 25 years ago.

Difference between best-seller and average romance fiction = about 1000 novels in South Africa

Another Afrikaans romance publisher is HAUM-Daan Retief: Groot-druk (large print), reprint older novels.

Sometimes, we may print in large print for older audience who have trouble reading, also for some younger readers, it's less strain on the eyes. It's more expensive, has a smaller print-run, therefore we only print the most popular in this way.

Whereas, J.P. van der Walt is modern. Forecast, according to authors (that is, rely on the authors to keep in touch with audience expectations and changing perceptions, not market-research statistics).

J.P. van der Walt book club books are NOT set on the Platteland (the rural, farming highlands of the Transvaal), but are about city life, doctors, nurses, etc. Very contemporary. But settings are not so important, the stories are. In the juvenile novels, stories set in hostels in the Platteland are no longer written, kids now live in cities, if we gear it otherwise, we won't catch the market. All our decisions are market-oriented. These day, career women, no housewife heroines anymore. Novels have to mirror contemporary reality: "it has to be like that - for your readers and your authors". Older readers do complain about it, though, write letters asking J.P. van der Walt why they don't write in the old style.

But NOT very permissive. (Anecdotaly, I know the two Misters Boon had a long argument about whether Mills & Boon should become more permissive or not).

What we consider is that mum reads the book first, then she gives it to the teenager (daughters) in the house. If she doesn't like it, or consider it fit for consumption, she won't give it to her daughter. Market-oriented question: (sexuality may happen), but "we draw the curtains".

We are not permissive, also what we avoid at all costs is politics and religion. And, of course, racial questions, that's also out of the question. In the dialogue between servants and employers, for instance, the servants speak a simple but very correct Afrikaans, also address employers as "Meneer", "Mevrou" (Mister and Mrs) not "Baas" (Boss), "Missis" (Mistress). We know it's unnatural, but it's part of the education process we believe we are involved in. Also, we will refer to employees as a gardener, not a garden boy. Readers are left to assume race. (It's a little different in Cape Dutch - but that's historically different).

We like to keep our heroes and heroines "clean", not divorced people, thing like that. It's simple, hero and heroine fall in love; we prefer it to be between unmarried, not married people.

For instance, illegitimacy: it's a less uplifting theme. If it happens in stories, it's not the central part: heroine must be first-hand (that is, written in the first person) all the time - we don't like depressing themes; don't like divorced people - it's a matter of projection from your readers, and they just don't like that.

"It's a modern fairy-tale, that's what they are, it's all fairy-tales".

Letters from readers happen only with very popular or very problematic novels.

Kas van der Berg wrote in a column "Saterdag aan Tuis" (Saturday at Home) in Huisgenoot (the most popular women's magazine in Afrikaans - sales figures of 500 000, in a total Afrikaans speaking population of probably around 3 million) about "Lekker ou vet plaas-tannies" (Nice old fat farm aunties - Fat, idle, lazy farmer's wives). In the same month, we published a novel of his, detective with romance. We got hundreds of letters back, sending back the book, asking us to make a note on their cards not to send them a Kas van der Berg book ever again. The lekker ou vet plaas-tannies sent them back. The Silent Majority didn't like it.

We never know where books end up in the end. A ten-year old can read and understand a book club book - we have to be very careful. Jo'burg library - standing order.

The list of requirements from Mills & Boon change 6 months to yearly. International markets, greater change. Adaptations within MONTHS geared to market. At J.P. van der Walt, we let our authors tell us, if they're off-target, our readers tell us.

Internationally, advertising plays a LARGE role in the campaign. Our advertisers are part of Saatchi & Saatchi; they brought out and showed us Harlequin TV ads, image ads - soft focus ads, the rose petal dropping ... But, our readers wait six months for their first book, the image ad won't work: "We've been doing it our way for 50 years now".

We are not part of a publishing concern, we are publishers only. Romance fiction accounts for 40% of our books. We only are not in school-books and textbooks. We've suffered a lot from TV, especially in this field, entertainment. But a need for romance fiction will always be there, we're convinced of this, it's not going to disappear.

Our surveys show that most women read: mostly in mornings, less so at night. After the dishes are done, the kids are at school, you make a cup of tea and read. It's quiet, you don't have things to distract you.

Springbok radio: romantic novels serialised in mornings and afternoons.

But, being quiet and being alone has a lot to do with the success of it.

South Africa publishing is the 8th wonder of the modern world. Afrikaans publishers in South Africa, unlike English, have an established tradition, an audience.

Excerpts from an interview with Hettie Scholtz at Haum-Literari

We are esoteric publishers, have a small readership group. We are trying to educate the public to read more literary pieces. Pieter Pieterse has enormous appeal, about fishermen, but also 'literary'. A novel by Jean Goysen - was a watershed, *Ons is nie almal so nie* ('We are not all like that'). It attracted a wider audience: Standard six (eighth grade) students could read and understand the text (at least), but academics could enjoy the sub-text.

In The New South Africa (a word coined by F.W. de Klerk to describe the changes taking place in South Africa since February 2, 1990), we are uncertain about the future of Afrikaans - what our publishing scenario is like? It is likely to entail more English? Afrikaans will lose its prominence, still, there is a market to cultivate.

What I don't like about romance fiction?

"My feministic [sic] attitude: a question of the stereotyping you get in the novels - stigmatization: the books I read in my youth, the woman is in the home, the man has a muscle in his cheek, takes an umbrella with him on the train. A typical Mills & Boon situation, man and woman meet, hate each other on sight, finally realise they love each other".

"It's years since I last read a book like that, but it insulted the intelligence - it appeals, I think to young women in the years between young and full adulthood. They're gravitating towards the romantic, but are not yet discerning enough".

Lighter novels are read by young girls, can phase them into better reading. Older women: completely reading for relaxation, soppy stuff, etc.

Best sellers? I do know, Tafelberg - Tryna du Toit is one of their best-sellers for all these years, therefore popular.

Of our book clubs, we're honing it down a bit, might be closing down more.

Ettie Bierman: sent a MS in recently for the teenage fiction series. It had the making of a good novel, but she is so used to writing for book clubs, it wasn't in-depth, "putting in the knife and turning it around" writing.

Many book club authors aspire to doing better. They, of course, receive their cheque when they hand in a book. Here, they receive twelve and a half percent for a book. (There is no parity in publishing world - better authors get less).

'n Pot vol Winter by Maretha Maarteens: (originally she wrote romance fiction - now she writes more heavy and significant work). This is our book, extremely controversial and extremely successful. We let it out on the market discreetly, but it created a huge furore; it was quite unprecedented in Afrikaans publishing, we had to reprint it just after it hit the stores. Already, 5 reprints, some of 5000 and 10 000 books. Film rights been acquired (see also interview above).

We have to deal with societal structures: church, schools, libraries (The old Afrikaans Calvinistic thing).

For example, we have recently brought out a volume of homosexual verse, by Worden de Naak. (Showed me the cover). Originally we were worried about the naked torso on the cover, but this received an O.K. from the libraries; however, the cloven foot enclosed by the O of Worden not O.K., a Satanistic image.

Now, teenage fiction series wanting to tackle drug abuse, child molesting...



FIGURE 1:

Jean-Baptiste Chardin *The Amusements of a Private Life*
(Stockholm, National Museum)



FIGURE 2:

Pierre-Antoine Baudouin *Reading*
(Paris, Musée des Arts décoratifs)

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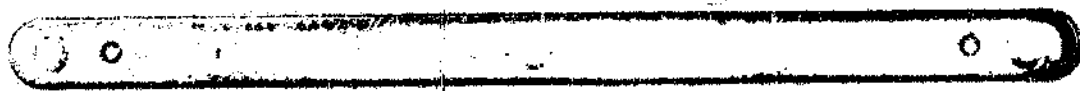
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