

THE INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN THE NEWFOUNDLAND
HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE CURRICULUM

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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**THE INVISIBILITY OF WOMEN IN THE
NEWFOUNDLAND HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE
CURRICULUM**

by

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A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate
Studies in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education

Faculty of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

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if they ask me my identity
what can I say but
I am the androgyne
I am the living mind you fail to describe
in your dead language
the lost noun, the verb surviving
only in the infinitive
the letters of my name are written
under the lids of the new born child.

Adrienne Rich

ABSTRACT

The intent of my study was to examine critically how novels in use at the high school level portray female and male experiences, how the authors have constructed these texts, how dominant literary practices work to invisibilise women, and to express my own assumptions on the issue of women's exclusion from pages of literature texts.

I have examined how the values, norms, and knowledge prescribed by a male-organized society and in particular, a male-organized educational system served to promulgate the ideology that the masculine experience is universal. The entire educational system has a tremendous power to shape and to teach overtly and covertly a cultural view which is primarily male. This view is mirrored in the novels currently in use at the secondary school level. I have attempted to show how gender exclusive textbooks marginalize/ignore women and women's experiences.

Following from my critique of the thirty-two novels and my analysis of the gender inequality at all levels of the Newfoundland education system, I have made recommendations for change in order to include women and women's lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To trace the development of women's history is to trace the lives of countless women from the beginnings of time. Their lives have been distorted by history and hidden in dusty aisles of libraries and in the private realm of diaries, journals, and letters. In unearthing stories of pioneer women, women explorers, fisherwomen, black women, Indian women, women scholars, politically active women, housewives, mothers, and daughters, I discovered and am still discovering my own history. To all of these women who contributed unknowingly to the making of this thesis, I owe a heartfelt thank you.

I thank Dr. Frank Wolfe for challenging me intellectually and for his constant affirmation of my work.

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I thank my friend Gerry for his patience and love as I struggled to discover my place in this world.

My son, Michael, questioned me daily on the progress and the content of my thesis. My wish for him is that he continue to question the world in his own unique way. I thank him for his love.

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In a sisterhood of support and caring, many other women have given of their love, support, and encouragement. Patricia Balsam, Marie Kennedy, Clarice Burton, Helen Dunne, Debbie Crosbie, Barbara-Jean McDonald, and Michelle Murray. During a period of transitions in my life while completing this work, these women listened, loved, and accepted me into their lives. I deeply thank them all.

Without the love, support, and encouragement of three very special women, this thesis may not have been completed. My dearest friend Sharon Brown, a woman of tremendous determination, dignity, integrity, and self-awareness, has been a constant source of inspiration and support in my completing the final work on this paper. Her desire to learn and to acquire knowledge has enhanced my desire to continue to seek out the best that life has to offer. My heartfelt thanks to this woman.

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abilities to complete this work pushed me beyond the limited boundaries I had constructed. As a strong critic of my work, she gave meticulous scrutiny to my writing. I thank her.

My daughter, Michelle, provided constant love and encouragement. My wish is that her life as a woman may be a little easier as a result of those before her who worked tirelessly to make this a better world for young women.

To these three women, Sharon, Anne-Louise and Michelle, I dedicate this thesis.

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PREFACE

This is a story. This is a story about a woman who is just beginning to understand how it was that she fell into a way of life based on that prescribed for her by society. This woman made choices not as a result of her own identity as a female but as a result of a culture in which she was so immersed. She defined herself, her world according to a view of the world which was imposed upon her by a male-controlled family, educational system, and society.

Since reading was such an important part of this woman's life as a child, she came to understand the world, in part, through the eyes, minds, and hearts of others. This world view, however, often created tremendous conflicts. As this young girl matured, she made decisions blindly based not on her own needs and desires but on what society expected of her. Her socialization was shaped to a large extent by her reading of books. Moving from one text to the next, ever advancing to higher levels of reading, she slowly learned well a woman's place in society. She attempted to take her proper place in order to fit. This place, however, made her all but invisible even unto herself. Not until she discovered professors who introduced her to literary works which challenged her old world view, did she begin to analyze critically her place as a woman in society and her invisibility in the literature texts

she had been reading. Because these texts centered prominently on male experiences, this young woman had few literary, female role models with whom to identify and to assist her in developing her own self identity.

From this place of critical consciousness, she embarked on a study of literature as a powerful influence on the lives of all who live in our society. In order to do this work, a struggle ensued. Working within an educational system which taught her well the traditional way to do research and to write, she discovered that in attempting to follow traditional educational practices, specifically that of writing objectively, she was rendered invisible. The focus of her study centered on the problem of the invisibility of women in novels and now, in her own writing, she was attempting to work within a context that denied her visibility. Writing objectively was an unrealistic as well as an undesirable practice and thus she chose to resist pedagogical practices which denied the subjective as a valid forum within which to understand the implications of socially accepted norms and practices.

This story is my story. The purpose of my thesis was to analyze specifically how women are excluded from the literature curriculum. In a more general way, I have shown how the educational system plays a significant role in constructing and imparting knowledge, values and attitudes which reflect the experiences and lives of men and which exclude or minimize the

experiences and lives of women. My aim in this thesis was to investigate the novels presently in use in the Newfoundland high school system to determine if they are gender-biased. My research will focus specifically on the selection of novels recommended by the Newfoundland Department of Education.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. EMPTY SPACES

Until women's view of the world coexists with men's view of the world, our entire system of education will be limited, distorted, sexist... If we wish to describe and analyze human experience, and to formulate explanations of the world which take human beings into account, then we must include the experience and understandings of women, as well as men.

(Dale Spender, 1982, p.17)

Research studies seem to indicate that gender bias does indeed exist in programs all throughout the literature curriculum. It appears that male authors and male characters predominate. When female characters are included in a text, they are shown primarily in traditionally female roles of caregivers. Studies carried out by Canadian, American, and British researchers such as M. A. Hulme (1988), J. Newman (1982), K. Scott (1981), K.P. Scott and C. G. Shau (1985), and J. Stacey (1984) support the view that gender bias is prevalent in the current textbooks in use in the school curriculum. Studies carried out by Gonzales-Suarez (1986 and 1987), S. L. Ogren (1985), C. G. Shau and K. P. Scott (1984), and R. Slaby and K. Frey (1985) concluded that there has not been a significant decrease in sexist portrayals in current textbooks. In June 1993, the Working Group of Status of Women Officials on Gender Equity in Education and Training, headed by Status of Women representatives in Newfoundland, released a report which stated that:

the curriculum and learning materials do not yet show girls and women in realistic ways and do not include the full range of human experiences. For example, recent studies of school readers and of textbooks...in Ontario concluded that none of the books provided adequate coverage of women or issues of concern to women... (Coulter, pp. 3-4)

Renzetti and Curran (1992) concluded that young people receive gender messages through the hidden curriculum usually within the context of curriculum materials.

When women are mentioned, it is usually in terms of traditional feminine roles...Consider the books used to teach children to read. A book in the easy-to-read section of the library taught the children that boys eat, girls cook; boys invent things, girls use what boys invent; boys build houses, girls keep house. (p. 83)

In 1986, UNESCO sponsored an analysis of school literature texts in mid-east countries, China, Norway, and Kenya. The conclusion of this study was that regardless of political, social, and cultural conditions women are underrepresented in school textbooks. Those women who are included are engaged in primarily traditional activities. In 1990, UNESCO made recommendations regarding the non-sexist use of language.

The purpose of my study was to investigate the novels presently in use in the Newfoundland high school system to determine the degree of gender-bias. Although I am aware of the many biases prevalent in all forms of literature, my intent is to focus solely on gender-bias in general, with brief references to racial and social class inequalities in order to do some justice to addressing the inequalities faced by all women both non-white and white. It is not my intent to ignore any issue related to woman's oppression but due to time and space constraints it is not possible

for me to address all of the issues pertaining to women's lives within the framework of this thesis.

In attempting to determine the degree of gender-bias within the high school literature novels, I asked the following questions of each book I critiqued:

1. Do these novels, for the most part, present the "male-as-norm" experience?
2. Do these novels depict the male experience as the one which is significant, superior to any other experience?
3. Are sexist language and ideas used which exclude women?
4. Do plots focus on man's journey through life and give no mention to women's journey through life?
5. Is male representation in the form of authors and major and minor characters the predominant representation?
6. Is each novel currently in use at the high school level helping to create a mind-set that to be male is to be aggressive, domineering, superior, a leader whereas to be a female is to be docile, submissive, inferior, a follower?
7. Or are these texts instilling an enriched awareness of the

human condition of all people regardless of gender?

In discussing the issue of gender-bias and exploring ways to address the problem of gender-bias within the novels at the high school level, my intent was to give space in this introduction to my own experience with a gender-biased literature curriculum and show how I was presented with a view of the world that I think was distorted. This world view helped to shape my life as a woman and in doing so, I questioned how my knowledge of the world has been and is socially constructed, in part, by a gender-biased curriculum.

I also attempted to show how critical thinking may be used to work with existing, gender-biased texts in order to challenge the socially accepted practices and norms indicated by the authors. In my thesis, I used as a guide criteria established by McGraw-Hill Book Company Publications (1974), MacMillan Publishing Company (1975), Holt, Rinehart & Winston (1975), the Maryland State Department of Education (1984), and resolutions passed by UNESCO (1989) to detect gender-bias and to attempt to eradicate sexual biases in the educational materials published for use within the school system. These criteria reveal ways in which males and females have been stereotyped in publications, show the role that language has played in reinforcing inequality between the sexes, and indicate positive and practical approaches in providing fair, accurate, and balanced treatment of both sexes in literature. My intent was to use these criteria in critiquing the thirty-two high

school novels.

Theoretically, I discussed how knowledge, values, and attitudes are constructed and how the educational system plays a large part in the construction of knowledge, values, and attitudes which serve to marginalize the lives and experiences of women. The focus of the concluding chapters of my thesis was on the Newfoundland educational system and the decision-making process which affects the selection of curriculum materials. I hoped to show how this process is male-organized and to make recommendations for change at the administrative level as well as within the classroom context.

B. AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

PERSONAL SPACES

Literature has unwittingly aided the conspiracy of silence, neglect, as to the nature of women's lives and services. Throughout much of our literature, fanciful constructs of the female, her character and psychology, have obscured the limitations suffered by actual women. Worse, they have encouraged expectations and behaviour that only strengthen the real opposition. (Tillie Olsen, 1978, p.180)

The power of utterance rests with men. Women, as students of literature, are apprenticed to a system which is, despite its reverence or perplexity in the face of a Jane Austen or an Emily Bronte, fundamentally and normatively masculine. (Batsleer et al., 1985, p.107)

Throughout my childhood, I was enthralled by stories such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Cinderella, and Little Red Riding Hood. I was thrilled when the wicked Queen's efforts to destroy Snow White were thwarted by the handsome Prince. My fears for little Red Riding Hood abated when the wood cutter saved her life. Cinderella's handsome Prince rescued her from a life of abuse and drudgery. My Prince in shining armour would one day come to my rescue and my life would be complete.

Such personalities as Napoleon Bonaparte, Abraham Lincoln, and Father Brebeuf completely captivated my attention. When my teacher read the life history of Dr. Tom Dooley, I cried upon learning his young life was ended by cancer. Advancing to high school, my interest in literary works began to wane. At that time, the reason/s for my growing disinterest was not apparent. Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Oliver Twist, Prester John, Lost Horizon, Captains

Courageous, and the like, I found to be tedious and uninteresting. There was an endless parade of males who were in conflict with one another, with nature, or with themselves.

I did not actively seek out novels written by women, about women. In high school, my introduction to a female oriented text occurred as a result of learning about the attempts by anti-slave advocates in the United States to secure the freedom of slaves by transporting them to Canada. I was fascinated as my history teacher recounted the story of Harriet Tubman, a woman who risked her life countless times while leading black people through the backwoods to freedom. Upon discovering that a book had been written about this woman, I purchased this text and spent an afternoon completely engrossed in the dramatic story of one woman's courage and determination in the face of threats to her safety. This novel was intriguing. Were there other stories about women who had contributed to the making of history?

I slowly became more interested in books which described the experiences of women, women such as Florence Nightingale, Mother McAuley, Joan of Arc, and Golda Meir. I did not understand why I was being drawn to books which described the lives of women. In retrospect, I think I lacked a critical consciousness. I did not object when literary work presented only the male experience, when these books portrayed men as creative, strong, aggressive, curious, adventurous, and autonomous. I did not protest when these same literary works presented women as passive, docile, dependent, helpless, and incompetent. I was not critically conscious of the

invisibility of women, of the invalidation, through exclusion, of women's experiences by predominantly male authors.

The very real experiences of women were lost to me as a young reader. There were no positive, female role models in the literature curriculum with whom I could identify. Through the influences of many social agencies, including the curriculum materials used in our schools, I as a woman, learned to accept the subordinate, the culturally correct role in life because no other options were presented to me.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT LEARNING TO THINK CRITICALLY

Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world. (Paulo Freire, 1970, p.1)

Knowing how to play the game seemed to be a prerequisite to the successful completion of an undergraduate degree program. To challenge theories and assumptions put forth by many educators was often tantamount to putting oneself at risk of receiving a poor grade. To challenge appeared to be to question the authority and the integrity of those who wish to hold all the power.

Most of my educational experience both at the secondary school level and undergraduate level in university consisted of listening to lectures, scrambling to copy notes, and memorizing those notes to regurgitate them at exam time. Throughout this process, at the

secondary level, I learned not to challenge. I accepted the view of the world which was presented to me by my teachers and portrayed in my textbooks. At the undergraduate level in university, I learned very little that would assist me in becoming a teacher who could create a classroom environment where critical analysis took place, where students could challenge, question, draw assumptions based initially upon their own experiences and thoughts, and then as a group, formulate statements based upon a collective effort. Consequently, I could not, as a teacher, adequately assist my students in acquiring a critical consciousness.

I first participated in the study of the novel as a means to raise my level of critical awareness while taking my last undergraduate course at Memorial University of Newfoundland. This sociology course was entitled, "Sex Stratification". Upon learning that one of the course requirements was to complete fifteen critiques based on various readings outlined for the course and three novels, I balked at the prospect of having to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate each author's writing, while stating my own views on the various positions and theories being put forth in these writings. Having successfully completed eleven years of schooling with the denominational school system and having completed fifty university courses prior to this course, all by way of memorization of lecture notes and regurgitation at exam time, why now deviate to another way of learning? I was not at all impressed with the amount of time and energy that would be required to critique the works of others. Learning to look at the world in

a different way and acquiring more knowledge and skills were not priorities for me as a student. My goal was to receive a passing grade and receive a higher teaching certificate in order to earn a greater salary.

Dr. Anne-Louise Brookes, the facilitator of Sociology 4092, expected us to explore our own thoughts, feelings, and assumptions while demonstrating we had also grasped the content of an author's writing. We were provided with the opportunity to challenge and to question the practices that had been so ingrained in us by our culture. We were being asked to examine our own thoughts and feelings in the context of the larger cultural and social issues relating to all people. This was difficult work. Many times, especially while working on this course late at night, I thought to register for a "safer" and easier course, a course which did not challenge my intellectual abilities, abilities which I believed I did not possess. However, I had been challenged and decided to accept that challenge.

It was in this class that I began to witness the transformative power of teaching and specifically, of critical pedagogy. It seemed to be a pedagogy which required a myriad of strategies, approaches, and risks. It was and is truly an education for critical consciousness. As stated by Dr. Brookes (1990) at a conference held in Vancouver, British Columbia.

In my work as a critical pedagogue, I begin from the assumption that I am forcing my students through the manner in which I organize my course to question each and every taken-for-granted social practice which she or he assumes to be normal or natural practices rather than socially organized practices. I begin from the

assumption that teachers can develop courses which will force students how to critique and unlearn the socially produced and reproduced inequalities first taught and learned through uncritically accepted mainstream schooling practices. I suggest that it is both possible and necessary that teachers develop consciously, ritualistic, content-informed, safe courses which can help learners to critique previously learned practices... (p. 28)

As a result of participating in Sociology 4092, I was challenged intellectually by way of earnest and rigorous dialogue. It was in this class that I was given the opportunity to think and to respond differently from other classes. It was in this class that I learned another "way" to read, a way which challenged theories, assumptions, and called into question the view of the world as seen through the eyes of the authors of novels I was reading. As a result of engaging in critical exchange and critical analysis in this class, I was encouraged, and indeed, inspired, to explore new ways of knowing, thinking, and reading.

As I began to analyze and critique assumptions and theories raised in the novels I was reading, I became very conscious of the exclusion of women's experiences by the authors of these novels. Thus it was that I decided, upon entering the Masters in Education program, to research the extent and the effects of gender bias in the novels being used in the secondary schools in Newfoundland.

CHAPTER II

A. THEORY TO PRACTICE; RE-VISION

SILENCES/SILENCED

I have only one desire: that my thinking may coincide historically with the unrest of all of those who, whether they live in those cultures which are wholly silenced or in the silent sectors of cultures which prescribe their voice, are struggling to have a voice of their own. (Paulo Freire, 1971, p.82)

To those who listen, who are open to change, Freire's words are intended to disturb the passivity of societies, to instill an awareness of the many forms of silences which exist as a result of power being in the hands of the dominant few. This power hierarchy pervades all of the institutions in society - political, economic, social, and cultural. Robertson (1992) states:

Since privileged white men historically have controlled the construction of facticity, policy, priorities and, some would argue, what is said to constitute truth and virtue, it is inevitable that the centrality of gender need not be denied when it can be safely ignored. (p. 1)

This male-organized power structure controls production and process and thus, controls and instills cultural values and attitudes. These values and attitudes often serve to exclude and thus, to silence those in society who do not have access to the means of production and to decision making positions. These values and attitudes operate to ignore those who do not have the means to be involved in the process of shaping the norms of society - the poor, Black people, the handicapped, the aged, homosexuals, women. They

have been marginalized, have been accorded secondary status by those who would impose white, male norms.

As Dorothy Smith (1978) has pointed out, most of what we know was constructed by men, and Ruth Hubbard (1981) has added that like all other human productions, knowledge reflects the outlook and interests of the producers. (Dale Spender, 1989, p.3)

Dale argues that white, heterosexual, middle and upper class men are in the privileged position of constructing the knowledge, values, and attitudes of our society. Consequently, their belief is that their own experience is widely accepted in our society and is the universal experience of humankind. This assumption excludes all those who are not white, heterosexual, middle and upper class, and male. These excluded, silenced members of society do not have equal access to policy and decision making, do not have equal access to a full range of human activities.

B. THE EXCLUSION OF WOMEN

Our ideas and ideal of maleness and femaleness have been formed within structures of dominance - of superiority and inferiority, norms and differences, positive and negative, the essential and the complementary... What is valued - whether it be odd as against even numbers, aggressive as against nurturing skills and capacities, or reason as against emotion - has been readily identified with maleness. Within this context of this association of maleness with preferred traits, it is not just incidental to the feminine that female traits have been construed as inferior to male norms of human excellence. (Genevieve Lloyed, 1984, p.104)

In order to better understand the exclusion of the woman's voice from the novels in use at the secondary school level, I think it is necessary to reflect upon contemporary cultural norms which subscribe to the philosophy that to be male is to be active,

intellectual, powerful, public, political, dominant, and thus superior; that to be female is to be passive, weak, private, emotional, and thus inferior. The patterns of exclusion that characterize our culture have resulted in "others" doing the thinking, speaking, and naming for women. As Shoshana Felman (1984) states, "to speak in the name of, to speak for could thus mean to appropriate and to silence." (p.36)

How has society excluded/silenced women? Institutions which are the controlling structures of our society are regulated, ruled, and administered by men. The political system, religious institutions, business corporations, the media, educational institutions, the medical system, the legal system, and the like are the ruling institutions which control the process wherein cultural norms are produced and maintained. The world of women is determined and directed, for the most part, by these male-organized institutions, a world which Dorothy Smith (1974) views as problematic for women:

The incomprehensibility of the determinants of our immediate local world is for women a particularly striking metaphor. It recovers an inner organization in common with their typical relation to the world. For women's activities and existence are determined outside them and beyond the world which is their "place". They are oriented by their training and by the daily practices which confirm it, toward the demands and initiations and authority of others. But more than that, the very organization of the world which has been assigned to them as the primary locus of their being is determined by and subordinate to the corporate organization of society. (p.7-13)

Socially organized practices have shaped the boundaries which women dare not step beyond. Those who do are faced with antagonism,

ridicule, explicit and implicit opposition, alienation, and are always under an intense light of scrutiny. I think women have been socialized to live within a context not created by them and which operates to alienate and to silence in order to maintain the status quo. This context originates from those who hold positions of power, positions occupied almost solely by men. Thus, I make the assumption that our culture is created, shaped, and controlled by these powerful men. As stated by Brodsky & Day (1989):

Though women are more than half the population, they are marginalized in society. Women speak from the edges, from outside the centres of power. (p. 12)

Woman's experiences, interests, and concerns are often not included in the making of our culture. Woman's voice is silent/silenced. Nowhere is this more evident than within our educational system. As stated by Glazer and Waehrer (1977), "the whole pyramid of discrimination rests on a solid extraeconomic foundation - education". (p. 178)

C. THE HIGH SCHOOL NOVELS

In reporting on the role schools play in gender socialization, Coulter (1993) states:

Recent studies of school readers and of textbooks approved for use in history and contemporary studies in Ontario concluded that none of the books provided adequate coverage of women or issues of concern to women... By the time they leave secondary schools, young women have learned the lessons of inequality and have been socialized, along with their brothers, into particular patterns of gendered expectations and limitations... Women learn that their work, their contributions and their lives are less valued in society

than those of their male counterparts. (p. 4-5)

According to a study entitled Confronting the Stereotypes, Keith Cosen (1985) reports:

Females who comprise half of the population are seriously underrepresented and appear in a very limited number of traditional roles. Although 45% of Canadian women are currently in the labour force, textbooks show scant recognition of that fact and seldom present young girls with realistic role models or methods of preparing for their futures. (p.4)

The novels in use in the high school system convey messages to our young people about the society in which they live. Literature influences our lives by creating role models and depicting human interactions. Literature may serve as a forum for male and female self-expression that encompasses the totality of all human experience. Literature may serve as a tool for consciousness-raising by providing realistic insights into social and personal problems, relationships, and other consequences of sexism in our society. Therefore, it is essential that the texts our students are exposed to reflect a holistic view, one which encompasses the female as well as the male experience. As stated by Aitken (1987):

Through an understanding of stories, we begin to perceive the influences of socialization, politics and aesthetics that have shaped our consciousness of who we are and, more often, of who we are not. By looking at our cultural images past and present, we may be not only empowered to choose, but enabled to change. (p.11)

Gender bias in school texts may take the form not only of stereotyping the female role but also of using sexual stereotypes. Are females portrayed as being possessions of males, lacking in intelligence, weak, victims, passive, unpaid housekeepers? Gender bias in textbooks may take the form of sexist language such as "old

maid", "spinster", "mankind", "sissy", "tomboy". Dale Spender's work (1980) shows how language can exclude women.

The English language has been literally man made...It is still primarily under male control... This monopoly over language is one of the means by which males have ensured their own primacy and consequently have ensured the invisibility or "other" nature of females, and this primacy is perpetuated while women continue to use, unchanged, the language which we have inherited. (p.13)

Gender bias in textbooks may also be seen in the lack of representation of female authors and female characters. Plots most often center on male experiences. Perhaps the most important criteria for judging gender bias in these novels is the relationships between women and men. What messages do students get, not only about women, but about men as well? The questions I asked are:

1. Do the novels being used at the high school level continue to advance the traditional stereotypes of women and the female/male relationship?
2. Do these novels present a perception of female/male relationships wherein the woman character reflects the image of submission and denial of her own needs as a model for all women?
3. Do these texts show the male character as the subject and the controlling force?

4. Do these novels present a view of a society in which women and men interact in a manner in which both can achieve self-control and actualization?

5. Can the young reader perceive woman to be a human being with a distinct consciousness?

6. Are our students enabled, through the reading of these novels, to watch the interplay between men and women and see two distinct people, both autonomous and self-sufficient?

7. Can a female student locate herself in these novels as a distinct, autonomous, self-sufficient person as she observes the interplay between fictional female and male characters?

It is from these criteria of gender bias that I have analyzed and evaluated the five literature courses at the secondary school level with a focus on the novels selected for use at this level. I summarized guidelines put forth by McGraw Hill Publishing Company (1974), MacMillan Publishing Company (1975), Holt, Rinehart & Winston Publishing Company (1975), the Maryland State Department of Education (1984), and resolutions from the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (1989). These organizations have attempted to establish criteria "for developing nonsexist instructional materials for elementary and secondary school use." (Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1975, Preface) It is

clear from the guidelines and resolutions they have adopted that these institutions appear to be committed to eradicating bias and stereotypes within the educational system.

I also focused on pedagogical practices and principles which may assist in establishing the place of women as well as men in literature. My intent was to argue that we need to re/construct the literature program to include women and women's experiences and also to place female and male experiences side by side as equally valid experiences. In chapters four and five, I have provided examples of novels and other literary works which include women's lives and experiences. These texts could be integrated into the literature curriculum.

D. HIGH SCHOOL LITERATURE PROGRAM

NOVELS RECOMMENDED

The following is a list of the novels recommended for selected study at the high school level as outlined in the Program of Studies (1992-1993) devised by the Division of Program Development and authorized by the Newfoundland Minister of Education.

CANADIAN LITERATURE 2204

Three of the following novels:

<u>Ashini</u> (1970)	-	Yves Theriault
<u>I Heard The Owl Call My Name</u> (1975)	-	Margaret Craven
<u>The Betrayal</u> (1964)	-	Henry Kreisel
<u>Such Is My Beloved</u> (1934)	-	Morley Callahan
<u>Marie Chapdelaine</u> (1965)	-	Louis Hemon
<u>Barometer Rising</u> (1941)	-	Hugh MacLennan

LITERARY HERITAGE 2201

One novel from Section A and one from Section B:

Section A

<u>Ivanhoe</u> (1819)	-	Sir Walter Scott
<u>Oliver Twist</u> (1907)	-	Charles Dickens
<u>Robinson Crusoe</u> (1923)	-	Daniel Defoe
<u>The Woodlanders</u> (1912)	-	Thomas Hardy

Section B

<u>Animal Farm</u> (1951)	-	George Orwell
<u>The Cruel Sea</u> (1951)	-	Nicholas Monsarrat
<u>The Old Man and the Sea</u> (1952)		Ernest Hemingway
<u>The Red Feathers</u> (1907)	-	Theodore Roberts

LITERARY HERITAGE 3202

Two of the following novels

<u>The Stone Angel</u> (1988)	-	Margaret Laurence
<u>Huckleberry Finn</u> (1981)	-	Mark Twain
<u>Wuthering Heights</u> (1988)	-	Emily Bronte
<u>The Fellowship of the Ring</u> (1981)	-	John Tolkin
<u>A Separate Peace</u> (1966)	-	John Knowles

THEMATIC LITERATURE 1200

Two of the following novels

<u>Bridge On The River Kwai</u> (1954)	-	Pierre Boulle
<u>Death On The Ice</u> (1974)	-	Cassie Brown
<u>The Guns of Navarone</u> (1957)	-	Allister Maclean
<u>In The Heat of the Night</u> (1965)	-	John D. Ball
<u>The Snow Goose</u> (1941)	-	Pa' Gallico
<u>To Kill A Mockingbird</u> (1969)	-	Harper Lee

THEMATIC LITERATURE 3201

One of the following novels

<u>The Light In The Forest</u> (1953)	-	Conrad Richter
<u>Lord of the Flies</u> (1954)	-	William Golding

<u>Lost Horizon</u> (1973)	- James Golding
<u>On The Beach</u> (1957)	- Nevil Shute
<u>Riverrun</u> (1973)	- Peter Such

One of the following

<u>Bartlett, The Great Canadian Explorer</u> (1977)	Harold Horwood
<u>Lure of the Labrador Wild</u> (1983)	- Dillon Wallace

In the following pages, my intent is to critique the thirty-two novels listed using the following headings:

1. AUTHORS - I provided the number and the gender of authors for each course.
2. CHARACTERS - I provided statistics showing the number of characters present in each text and completed a gender breakdown under the headings major and minor roles within each novel. Major characters refer to those characters who take the most prominent positions in the story and around whom the story revolves. Minor characters are those who play a supporting role to the major characters.
3. ROLE MODELS - OCCUPATIONAL AND FAMILY - I indicated the number and/or type of male and female role models presented in each course.

4. WORDS/STATEMENTS/IDEAS - I provided examples of how language is used to portray the idea of a gender-stratified society.

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS - This section included my analysis of the female/male relationships presented by the authors, the images these relationships reflect, and the messages presented to young readers.

CHAPTER IIIPRESENTATION OF THE DATAA. CANADIAN LITERATURE 2204OVERALL ANALYSIS OF NOVELS1. AUTHORS

There are five male authors and one female author.

2. CHARACTERS

The breakdown in the number of characters depicted in the six novels under study is as follows:

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROMINENT CHARACTERS	87	
A. MALE CHARACTERS	67	77%
MAJOR ROLES	14	16%
MINOR ROLES	53	61%
B. FEMALE CHARACTERS	20	23%
MAJOR ROLES	5	6%
MINOR ROLES	15	17%

3. ROLE MODELS

- A. Male Occupational Career Choices 12
- B. Female Occupational Career Choices 2

FAMILY ROLE MODELS

Fathers were represented very infrequently as sharing with mothers. They were depicted as the breadwinners, leaving the task of the physical and emotional well-being of the children in the hands of the females. Women were portrayed, for the most part, in the traditional roles of mothers and unpaid housekeepers.

4. WORDS/STATEMENTS/IDEAS

Since no women were referred to in Theriault's novel, Ashini, the message to students might be that native women did not play a role in resisting the invasion of the white man's culture on the Indian way of life. Because of this absence of women, the noun "men" was used all throughout the text.

In Barometer Rising, there were numerous examples of sexist statements. "To be a woman and work at a profession predominantly masculine meant that she must be more than good. She had to be better than her male colleagues." (p.17-18)

"It ain't natural for a woman to be smart at this sort of work."
(p. 21)

"I guess he couldn't stand it when you started out trying to beat him at his own job. A man just don't like that, Miss Penny."
(p.21)

"That young woman's too sure of herself... She should be ashamed of herself." (p. 38)

In this novel, Hugh MacLennan nowhere suggested that he disagrees with such comments.

In I Heard the Owl Call My Name there were a number of examples of sexist comments which are as follows: "The voices of the women had a shrill quality." (p.83) "She will marry me, keep my house, and have my children, and I will leave her and go off to fish." (p. 37)

I can find no evidence that Margaret Craven was critical of such comments, comments which seem to indicate that woman's place is not in the man's work world.

In Maria Chapdelaine, there was a very clear division of labor. The men worked outside the home while the women remained home to clean, cook, and have children whose needs were the sole responsibility of the woman. The message I received from this text was that men are competent in the public sphere while the women are competent in the private domain.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In general these are my observations of the novels recommended for study as listed for Canadian Literature 2204. These novels give students an opportunity to glimpse into past Canadian history and to partake in the experiences of those people who played such a significant role in the shaping of the culture and the history of Canada.

However, these novels appeared to be almost exclusively concerned with the male experience. The only novel written by a female author focused on male experience. A young priest comes to his impending death by facing loneliness in the wilderness, deprivation, and the deaths of many of his Indian friends. He is sustained always by his very deep faith and the love of the Indian community. The one strong female character in this story, Marta, plays a supporting role to the young priest who finds comfort in her wisdom and her outlook on life and death.

Male role models were portrayed as strong, aggressive, authority figures, powerful, ambitious, and fearless. In Such Is My Beloved, the powerful Bishop commands immediate respect because of religious authority. In Barometer Rising, Geoffrey Wain is a powerful, ambitious, ruthless businessman who nearly destroys the life of another man as a result of greed. In Ashini, an Indian hunter's courage and inner strength are put to the test as he battles the forces of nature and the strength of the white man. These are just a few examples of the many stereotypical male role models with whom our students must identify.

Females in these novels generally played supporting roles for the male characters. Although one novel, Maria Chapdelaine has a female name as a title, giving the impression that Maria is the main character, a reading of this text indicated to me that her father is the dominant force in this novel. The women in this novel, including Maria, remain at home awaiting the return of men, caring for children, and in general sacrificing their own needs and

desires in order to care for the needs of others. Maria's mother was victimized by the life chosen for her by the father. Because he believed that success, adventure, and happiness lay just beyond the horizon, he subjected his family to a way of life which impoverished all of its members. The pioneer experience for Maria and her mother was one in which their individuality was ignored while it upheld the idealized, standard western male myth. The covert images are repressive ones. Girls and women are trapped in unpleasant houses, caring for large families. They live in isolation from family and friends, overburdened with caring for the physical and emotional well-being of others while the men of the settlements lived in the public sphere.

In the novel, I Heard the Owl Call My Name, the old Indian woman must compensate for the deficiencies and weaknesses of the men in the community. She must attend to the needs of others.

The relationship between the two female prostitutes and the priest in Such Is My Beloved, is one which indicates the powerlessness of women who chose to live in a manner which is not condoned by powerful men in the community, men who sanctimoniously display their moral right to rid the community of immoral, social outcasts. The female characters in these stories do not give voice to their views, feelings and needs. Rather, the reader shares in the views, feelings and needs of the young priest who tries to help them.

In Barometer Rising, Penelope occupies a traditionally male job as a plant manager. She who dared to enter this male world is

made aware by her male counterparts that she poses a threat to their male identity. She discovers that the complex relationship between women and men is designed to confirm the identity of men.

The women characters in these books almost exclusively play supporting, submissive roles, deferring to male choices regarding their lives. These women exist as the female stereotypes - the mother, the wife, the victim, the seducer. There are very few positive female role models for young female readers to identify with. These books point to the economic and political powerlessness of women who appear to have very little choice but to submit to a life which victimizes them. These novels view women as the "other" - not beings who grow, change, or make their own individual choices but as vehicles for enlarging the male's sense of himself.

Plots are predominantly focused on males. In Ashini we witness an Indian hunter's connection to nature and his resistance to the effects of the white man's culture. Women are absent from this novel. In Such Is My Beloved the plot centers on the conflict between the realities of the world and the Church as a divine institution. The powerful male leaders of the church and a rich lawyer object to their social positions being tainted by the presence of two female prostitutes in the community. In Barometer Rising the main ideas appear to be ones of betrayal, revenge, and justice. A young man's life is almost destroyed because of the greed of his superior officer. The young man seeks revenge but life has a way of exacting its own justice. In I Heard the Owl

Call My Name we witness the struggles of a young man in coming to terms with the death of his Indian friends and his own death. The Betrayal seems to have as its central idea the betrayal of a man by his friend who, in fearing for his own life, made decisions which put his friend's life in jeopardy.

In the next set of novels listed under Literary Heritage 2201, the authors provided our young students with a perspective of our historical past and it is this perspective which will either enhance or limit their view of their own world.

B. LITERARY HERITAGE 2201

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF NOVELS

1. AUTHORS

There are eight male authors. There are no female authors included in this course.

2. CHARACTERS

The breakdown in the number of characters depicted in the novels under study is as follows:

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROMINENT CHARACTERS		79
A. MALE CHARACTERS	56	71%
MAJOR ROLES	17	22%
MINOR ROLES	39	49%
B. FEMALE CHARACTERS	23	29%
MAJOR ROLES	3	4%
MINOR ROLES	20	25%

3. ROLE MODELS

A. Male occupational career choices	-	46
B. Female occupational career choices	-	6

FAMILY ROLE MODELS

In five of the eight novels, there were no male role models as husbands and fathers. These novels placed emphasis on men as warriors, as conquerors of the forces of nature, or as surviving alone in a strange land. In three novels, The Woodlanders, The Cruel Sea, and The Red Feathers, men were shown as having responsibilities as fathers and husbands; however, these family roles did not figure prominently in the presentations of any of these characters. Women took their usual places as mothers and caregivers in seven of the eight novels. Women's presence was not noted in The Old Man and the Sea. Scott's work, Ivanhoe, advanced the nineteenth century stereotyping of men and women. Saxon men were portrayed as blunt, rough, and roguish. Norman men were haughty, cruel, and treacherous; men who lusted after women and who earned the right to rape them as a reward for a victorious battle. These men were husbands and fathers but most were portrayed as warriors and rapists. There were no prominent female family role models in this book.

In Orwell's work, Animal Farm, most of the animal characters were males whose role it was to overthrow the old order and to build a new society. There is a clear absence of both male and female family role models.

4. WORDS\STATEMENTS\IDEAS

In the novel Ivanhoe, Sir Walter Scott embodies the ideology of the sexual stereotyping in the nineteenth century in this novel.

Much emphasis is placed upon a woman's sexuality being at the disposal of men. In a scene in which Rebecca is imprisoned, she must fight off an attempted rape by her Christian conqueror.

...my language shall be that of a conqueror.
Thou art the captive of my bow and spear,
subject to my will by the law of all nations;
nor will I abate an inch of my right or
abstain from taking by violence what thou
refusest... (p. 250)

In another scene, two men discuss the economic advantages of wedding Lady Rowena to a man of their choice.

We shall cheer her sorrows and amend her blood
by wedding her to a Norman. She must be at
our royal disposal in marriage...What thinkst
thou of gaining fair lands and livings by
wedding a Saxon? (p. 157)

Scott also shows in this novel that women are men's rewards for their noble deeds. Templar, a religious man bound by the vow of chastity is exempted from this vow due to his heroic deeds on the battlefield.

For my vow, our Grand Master hath granted me a dispensation. And for my conscience, a man that has slain three hundred Saracens need not reckon up every little failing...I must have something that I can term exclusively my own by this foray of ours, and I have fixed on the lovely Jewess as my peculiar prize.
(p. 217)

In yet another scene, Scott indicates that women are the possessions of men.

I gave her to be a handmaiden to Sir Brian de Bois Gilbert, after the fashion of patriarchs and heroes of the days of old. (p. 232)

...after the conquest, elated by so great a victory, they acknowledged no law but their own wicked pleasure...They invaded the honour of their (the conquered) wives and of their daughters. (p. 243)

The two female heroines in Ivanhoe, Rebecca and Rowena, appear to have as their central roles the task of bringing men to self-discovery and self-actualization. These two women are perceived only at a surface level for their beauty and as a result of this they are lusted after by soldiers and religious figures. From my reading of this text, I came to the conclusion that women are validated by men only in the context of their outward appearances.

In Thomas Hardy's novel, The Woodlanders, I saw evidence of a male author who attempts to divorce himself from the underlying cultural and fictional stereotypes of women and the female experience. I felt, however, that Hardy has a limited feminist consciousness in taking up the cause of women at a time in history when women were deemed to have very few rights. Although Hardy criticizes society which oppresses women because they are women, I felt that Hardy himself is not free from the sexual stereotyping of women. He defines women in terms of their sexual natures and lost in this are the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual natures of women. In portraying women as seducers, unhappy lovers, or faithful maidens, Hardy limits women to their sexual roles. Marty, a single woman, is described as a hard worker but mostly as a steadfast lover. Grace, a strong, educated woman, plays the role of a woman who is sought after by two men and she must choose on the basis of the line of descendency, according to her father's wishes. Felice seduces Fitzpier, Grace's husband, and in the end both women become victims of his exploitation.

But not withstanding such examples of Hardy's own limited

view of women, he does address issues within Victorian society which point to the cultural limitations placed upon women by such a misogynist society. Grace's attempts to secure a divorce because of her husband's infidelity was doomed to fail. She was a woman. She was of the lower class. She was not powerful. In this novel, it seems that Hardy disagrees with the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 which denied divorce to all women and to lower and middle-class men.

In the text Animal Farm, the female animal character, Mollie, is all but excluded from the restructuring of the old society. The assumption I have drawn is that females do not possess the political mind-set to construct a new order. This novel advances the old idea of a patriarchal society where females are excluded from the decision-making process.

Following my reading of The Cruel Sea authored by Nicholas Monsarrat, I came to the conclusion that sexism is prevalent in this text. Although women interact with male characters in this text, the author deems women to have made no positive contributions at a time when the world was at war. As Monsarrat states in the opening chapter, "But the men are the stars of this story. The only heroines are the ships." (p. 8)

While the men were at sea fighting German submarines, women were, according to Monsarrat, at home being unfaithful wives and lovers. All but forgotten are the fears of mothers, wives, and lovers who remained at home while sons, brothers, husbands, and fiances engaged in fierce battles at sea. No account is given of

the struggles of women to raise children alone. No documentation is provided by Monsarrat of the thousands of women who entered the previously male-dominated work force to ensure the survival of the country.

What we are presented with is a picture of the Captain's wife sitting peacefully at home, knitting; of wives seeking comfort in the arms of other men; of prostitutes who earned gainful employment by servicing men during port-calls. In this novel Monsarrat chose not only to exclude the positive contributions made by women during World War II but also pointed an accusing finger at women for the delinquent behaviour of the men aboard ship. Seaman Watt's unmilitary-like behaviour was assumed to be the result of a relationship with a woman. "...a woman too acquiescent, a wife unfaithful." (p. 36)

Ernest Hemingway deals only with traditional, male-role definitions of courage, endurance, suffering, and triumph as is evidenced in his novel, The Old Man and the Sea. The only reference to women is the comparison made by the hero, Santiago, between the moods of the sea and a woman.

But the old man always thought of her as feminine and as something that gave or withheld great favours, and if she did wild or wicked things, it was because she could not help them. The moon affects her as it does a woman. (p. 26)

The message students might well take from this novel is that women are unable to control their own behaviour since they are at the mercy of their own uncontrollable natures as women.

Theodore Roberts gives little evidence in his novel, The Red

Feathers, of the Indian woman's experiences living in the wilderness. As in other novels such as Marie Chappelaine and Oliver Twist, women's roles as mothers and wives are given little prominence by Roberts while much emphasis is placed on the man's role of providing food, fighting the forces of evil, and preparing for battle.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The following is a general overview of my observations of the eight novels listed for Literary Heritage 2201. Literary Heritage 2201, which approaches the novel from a historical perspective, exposes students to the age of chivalry in England, workhouse practices and the treatment of the lower class in England, the unequal application of the Divorce law of the nineteenth century, the overturning of the social system in Russia, the cruelty of World War II as experienced by naval men, and the conflict between good and evil forces in Eastern Canada during the time of the Beothuck Indians.

In dealing with the past, however, these novels were concerned primarily with how the lives of men were influenced and affected by the social conditions prevalent during the period under study. All eight novels are male-authored. Seven novels are male-centered. The one exception is Thomas Hardy's work, The Woodlanders. In this novel, Hardy exposed the traditional feminine stereotypes to indicate how women are caught in the grip of the sexist attitudes of a Victorian society. By portraying Marty as

passive, Fitzpier as unfaithful, and Grace as unhappy in her marriage, Hardy explores the social issues of enforced marriages, the passivity of women, and sexual double standards. In his compassion for women as is evidenced in this novel, Hardy places his characters in situations which expose Victorian sexism.

Because of Hardy's attempts to take up the cause of women in his novels, he was publically reviled for his acknowledgement of the oppression of women. He was financially at the mercy of publishers and the buying public. In his attempts to grant women full dignity and respect, he was thwarted by the classist and sexist attitudes which prevailed. In despair, Hardy ended his prose writing and turned to poetry. In his preface to Jude The Obscure, (1895), Hardy notes:

However, it was my poverty and not my will that consented to be beaten. It takes two or three generations to do what I tried to do in one.

Why is the male experience the predominant occupation of the seven other authors? Struggling to survive poverty, attempting to reclaim one's inheritance, overthrowing a political system, partaking in the war effort, the endurance of the human spirit - are these not realities for women as well? Does the gender of the author influence the fictional voice? Virginia Woolf (1957) in her text, A Room of One's Own, acknowledges differences between male and female fiction.

And since a novel has this correspondence to real life, its values are to some extent those of real life. But it is obvious that the values of women differ very often from the values which have been made by the other sex; naturally, this is so. Yet, it is the masculine values that prevail...And these values are inevitably

transferred from life to fiction. This is an important book, the critic assumes, because it deals with war. This is an insignificant book because it deals with the feelings of women in a drawing-room. A scene in a battlefield is more important than a scene in a shop. (p. 76-77)

It appeared that differences between female and male values and philosophy as a result of gender-based socialization practices would naturally appear in an author's writing. In the context of Literary Heritage 2201, masculine values and experiences seem to prevail.

Male role models shown in these texts suggest that men are courageous, strong, competitive, resourceful, decisive, and the leaders of society. In Ivanhoe, the two male lead characters, Wilfred of Ivanhoe and Sir Brian de Bois Guilbert, are portrayed as courageous and strong in their attempts to save their nation. They are shown as chivalrous in their battle to save the life of the heroine, Rebecca. In Robinson Crusoe, we are presented with a picture of a man who, by his resourcefulness, courage, and inner strength, survives the isolation and deprivation of living on a desert island. In Oliver Twist, I encountered the cruelty and the brutality of man as is evidenced in Sike's treatment of women. In Animal Farm, the patriarchal leader, Old Major, is a mirror image of Marx, a revolutionary leader. The Cruel Sea encompasses many of the stereotypical characteristics of men. The captain of the ship is courageous in battle, a leader of his men, a man whose authority is unquestioned, and a man who views the sea as his mistress while his wife he perceives as a convenience. The First Lieutenant, in my opinion, is a ruthless task master who uses his power and

position to force compliance by the other seamen. This same attitude is prevalent in his relationships with women. Their role as presented by Nicholas Monsarrat is to comply with his sexual desires each time he returns to port. Although there are very few positive role models with whom young women readers may identify, male readers are exposed to many typical male role models in all eight novels.

Women, when represented in these novels, are generally portrayed as the ideal woman - young, lovely, submissive, and sensitive. In Ivanhoe, Scott created a noble and strong hero to be worshipped by the two heroines who are in need of his protection. They are helpless women at the mercy of a society which treated women as sexual commodities, as rewards for heroic deeds. Women in The Cruel Sea were given no credit for their work during the war. There are no female role models in The Old Man and the Sea.

My overall impression of these eight novels was that women, when represented, are the inferior sex whose only hope for social acceptability and happiness lies within the context of marriage. An unmarried woman in these texts is an unhappy woman. The women in these books, whether the weak Marty in The Woodlanders or the strong medicine woman in The Red Feathers are either nurturing mothers, unfaithful wives, caretakers of men, victims of abusive men, or conquests of male infidelity. No woman in these books is given the opportunity to display her whole personality. Her roles as ascribed for her by the authors - wife, mother, lover, daughter, fiancée - leave no room for the discovery of her/self and the

fulfilment of her own needs. Women are presented as incapable of autonomy, of successfully developing and growing in the world at large. In Oliver Twist, Ivanhoe, and The Cruel Sea, women play a very minor role in a much wider plot which is male-oriented. The real subject matters are wars, rebellions, and conspiracies. Women characters are used by these authors to provide men with opportunities to display their chivalry or their sexual prowess. The heroines in Ivanhoe, Rebecca and Rowena, are young and beautiful women who wait for the return of Wilfred of Ivanhoe to rescue them not only from their captors but also from the social stigma of being unmarried. Simone de Beauvoir (1952) notes:

Woman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow White, she who receives and submits. In song and story, the young man is seen departing adventurously in search of a woman; he slays the dragon, he battles giants; she is locked in a tower, a palace, a garden, a cave; she is chained to a rock, a captive, sound asleep; she waits. (pp. 271-272)

Rebecca and Rowena are at the mercy of a society which taught them well to be helpless and thus, powerless to control their own destinies. The heroine is rescued and enters into her highest calling, marriage.

Are these novels gender-biased? Since there is a lack of positive female representation, no female role models who could advance the idea of autonomous, self-supporting women in all contexts within society, a presence of the pervading ideology of the sexual stereotyping of women in the nineteenth century, an obvious lack of female-oriented plots, it is my conclusion that these novels are gender-biased.

I think the authors of these books accentuated the place of women as designated by the social atmosphere of the time. Rather than give accounts of the many women and women's organizations fighting to build an infrastructure to deal with social and welfare issues, especially those which so affected the lives of women, these authors chose to concentrate on defining woman's role very narrowly.

As documented by Scott (1984), during the nineteenth century in England and in America, there was a flourishing women's rights movement which fought for the independence of women. In England in 1857, a group of women founded their own employment bureau for women. From the period 1848 to 1870, seven women's colleges were founded by women in England. In the United States, women played a role in the founding of the Women's Medical College of Philadelphia, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy, the John Hopkins Medical School, Goucher College, the Free Night School of New Orleans, and many others. (Scott, 1984, p. 153) In the late nineteenth century, national reformers such as Minnie Rutherford Fuller wrote and secured passage of most of the social welfare laws. Where are the references in high school novels to the lives of the thousands of teachers and female religious leaders such as Mary Baker Eddy, Barbara Buckle Heck, the founder of American Methodism, Ellen Gould White, the co-founder of the Seventh-Day Adventist church? These women helped to shape western culture. Many women, trained by women's colleges to take their rightful places in male-dominated professions, were often barred

from these career choices. These women, refusing to be excluded, found new places to use their talents. Caroline Crane, trained as a doctor, became a municipal sanitation advisor. Myra Colby Bradwell, barred from the legal profession, used her skills and knowledge to found and publish the Chicago Legal News. Mary Parker Follett, excluded by the medical profession, used her medical credentials to do psychological research. (Scott, 1984, pp. 153-155)

Rather than show women in stereotypical roles, I think those who selected the novels for Literary Heritage 2201 could have seized upon the opportunity to incorporate into the curriculum the lives and experiences of the many women who played a vital role in the development of English, American, and Canadian cultures. The age of chivalry, the frontier, the wars, the industrial revolution must, I think, be reexamined in the light of the question, what were the contributions of women? The authors of these texts chose not to acknowledge the very significant contributions of women in the nineteenth century and I feel this is an indication of sexism on their part, a sexism as a result of being socialized to perceive men and women's roles differently.

That these novels are persistently in use in our high schools today points to a possible lack of awareness of gender biased curriculum materials and the consequences of such course selections by educational decision makers. Through the use of novels, I think our schools have a tremendous opportunity to show what a vital role women did play in the development of cultures at a time in history

when women were treated as the inferior sex.

In my opinion, if we are to accurately explore and record past history, the experiences of both men and women must be examined and documented. How else are we to understand the dynamics of past history? The school system has a tremendous opportunity through the Literature curriculum to contribute to a redefinition of what is considered to be women's historical cultural heritage, thus giving students and teachers a new understanding of history and culture. The novels presently in use in our schools, I feel, do a great injustice to the many women who faced opposition, apathy, and sometimes violence in their attempts to bring about profound changes in the status of women in society. I think these novels and their authors do a great injustice to the majority of women in the nineteenth century who were not beautiful "heroines" but "beautiful women" who toiled endlessly to care for their families. Their experiences are not validated in these novels.

C. LITERARY HERITAGE 3202

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF NOVELS

1. AUTHORS

This course includes three male authors and two female authors.

2. CHARACTERS

The breakdown in the number of characters depicted in the five novels under study is as follows:

<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF DOMINANT CHARACTERS:</u>		79
A. MALE CHARACTERS	61	77%
MAJOR ROLES	12	15%
MINOR ROLES	49	62%
B. FEMALE CHARACTERS	18	23%
MAJOR ROLES	4	5%
MINOR ROLES	14	18%

3. ROLE MODELS

Women in these novels have no work occupations outside the home while the men are very active in public life. Males are engaged in occupations as doctors, teachers, headmasters, farmers, landowners, and ministers.

FAMILY ROLE MODELS

In three of the five novels, women appear in roles as housekeepers, widows, and spinsters. In Tolkien's The Fellowship

of the Ring, the two female characters have as their central role to serve as a guardian source of strength to the male characters. Women are absent from the text A Separate Peace.

Only in Bronte's Wuthering Heights is a man depicted prominently in the roles of father and husband. In this instance, Mr. Earnshaw is cruel and abusive to his sons and demands obedience and compliance from his wife and daughter. Mr. Edgar Linton, Catherine Earnshaw's husband, is a devoted husband only if he receives Catherine's complete attention and devotion. When she asserts her independence and challenges his authority, Linton becomes emotionally abusive.

4. WORDS\STATEMENTS\IDEAS

Although there are two female characters in the novel The Fellowship of the Ring, and although most male characters are married with families, the exclusion of the experiences of the invisible wives and mothers suggested to me their roles are not perceived as worthy of mention.

In Knowles's A SEPARATE PEACE, I made the assumption based on comments made by the male characters that women are valued less than men. There are numerous examples of the sexist attitudes of young men. Due to space limitations of this study, I will list only a few as representative of the stereotypical attitudes of the young male characters in this novel. "The masters were in their stalls in front of the chapel...and in the apse of the church, their wives." (p. 64) "Next to the house there was a patriarchal

elm tree." (p. 111) The boys were incensed that maid-service would not be provided. In seeing his unmade bed, Phineas angrily shouted, "Oh Christ, it's not made up. What is all this crap about no more maids?" (p. 96) His friend Finny expressed a similar view upon finding dirty towels on the floor. (p. 105) In describing the visit of the two boys to Finny's home, the author again exposes the sexist attitudes of the time. "He sat down at the head of the table in the only chair with arms, his father's chair, I supposed." (p. 133) These comments within the context of a male-centered text appeared to me to expose the sexist attitudes of young men toward women. If these comments are not challenged by teachers or students, I wonder are we as a society continuing to perpetuate the sexist attitude that men are superior to women and that women's work is less valued than men's work.

In Huckleberry Finn, gender specific language is used quite frequently. Spinster, maid, hussy, gal, wench are just a few examples of Twain's use of words to characterize women. Here, too, I witnessed his sexist attitude toward women when he states, "And the place was full of farmer's wives. And such a clack a body never heard. Old Mrs. Hotchkiss was the worst. Her tongue was going all the time." (p. 348) Other examples of sexual stereotyping of women include: "Miss Watson, a terrible slim old maid, with goggles on." (p. 59) "Mary Jane was a red-head, but that made no difference. She was still beautiful." (p. 235)

In my reading of Bronte's Wuthering Heights, I concluded that the attitude appeared to be one of men showing characteristics of

being in control, of being independent. Women who assert independence are victimized for attempting to do so. In the section Discussion of Findings, I will devote much space to analyzing this text.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In giving a general summary of my observations and assumptions, my intent was to show that the majority of the novels recommended for study in Literary Heritage 3202 show the male experience to be the universal one.

The novels in Literary Heritage 3202 have as their themes love, corruption, power, revenge, self-discovery, and initiation. In analyzing these novels, I became aware that the focus of three of the authors was on the male experience of self-discovery and growth. In Huckleberry Finn, Huck is on a journey of self-discovery, attempting to come to grips with having to conform to society in order to be considered respectable and accepted. In The Fellowship of the Ring, most of the male characters are attempting to seize or to reject power. In deciding which route to take, they set out on a journey of discovery which involves looking within themselves for knowledge of their inner aspirations. Hobbits, wizards, elves, dwarfs, and man band together to oppose the forces of the Dark Lord - the Lord of the Rings, a lord with tremendous power, a lord who is both a hero and a monster. In A Separate Peace, all of the central characters are boys on a perilous journey

from boyhood to manhood.

As I read these three novels, it became apparent that there was a noticeable absence of female characters and especially, female lead characters. When females do infrequently appear, they are placed in roles as handmaids to men. They are not portrayed as struggling to find their own identities. Women in these books are not on a journey of self-discovery. In reading these novels, I was shown the inner struggles of males but this journey of awareness of the self for females was not in evidence.

Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights was most problematic for me in terms of critiquing the issue of gender bias. For this reason, I spent more time on it than on other novels. Some women in this novel, I think, do live in the shadow of men and live in deference to men. As I observed the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw in the opening chapters, I witnessed the life of a woman which ends as a result of the hardships of daily living. Her life consists of caring for her children and her husband while submitting to her husband's demands for compliance and obedience.

However, in reading critical reviews of Bronte's work, I concluded that some critics such as Patricia Spacks (1975) felt that the leading female character, Catherine, was an independent, free-spirited, and autonomous young woman. Yet, I saw a woman who is swayed into a marriage to Edgar Linton in order to conform to the expectation of Victorian society that marriage to one such as Edgar brings the reward of an acceptable social status. As Catherine herself states, "...and he will be rich, and I shall

like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband." (p. 117) As a young girl, Catherine revolted against her parents, rejecting the absolute power of parental authority of the Victorian age. Her desire to grow into full humanity resulted in her rejecting the kind of social order and power which would stifle that growth. Yet, she entered into a marriage contract with a man she did not love in order to conform to the dictates of her family and Victorian society. Catherine is unable to find happiness in the patriarchal society symbolized by Edgar Linton and others but remains in the marriage. In seeking happiness, Catherine turns to Heathcliff, a man who lives by no-one's rules but his own. Catherine is caught in an emotional storm as Heathcliff desires to have her as his possession. She no longer has her own identity as she states, "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same." (p. 72) "I am Heathcliff." (p. 74) Prior to her death, Catherine, the woman, is destroyed because her identity is lost to her. Her death, a form of self-destruction, occurs because she cannot survive in Linton's patriarchal world nor in Heathcliff's world of complete devotion and loss of autonomy. While reading this novel, my discomfort was as a result of the implicit message that if a woman seeks to find her own place in this world, attempts to discover her own self and to fulfill her own needs, she will be destroyed as a result of forces within society, within marriage and relationships which are stronger than the woman herself. This is a message which I, as a teacher, do not wish to pass on to my

female students.

Catherine was socialized to believe that happiness and social status lay in marriage. She believed that in loving a man, she must give of her total self and be part of the identity of another. In my reading of this text, I concluded that Catherine must die in order to rid herself of the oppression she suffered as a woman. Yet, I question why women have to die in order to escape oppression.

In my opinion, the leading women in this novel are victims of the cruel natures of the men in their lives. Isabella, a woman of noble dignity, is reduced to degradation by Heathcliff. His evil qualities of hatred, dishonesty, selfishness, and revenge are in strong contrast to the love, honesty, and strength of soul I witnessed in Isabella. Heathcliff's cruelty and abuse reduces Isabella to a woman who becomes embittered with life. She is rejected by her brother because of her marriage to Heathcliff. She, like Catherine and Mrs. Earnshaw, becomes a victim of a male-organized society and the violent and selfish natures of the men in her life.

If one critiques the issue of gender-bias by observing the main characters, Heathcliff and Catherine, then gender-bias is not as blatant as in Huckleberry Finn, for example. Critics view Catherine as one who rejects the patriarchal order, as a young woman who is able to strike back at the oppression experienced by women in Victorian society. Patricia Spacks (1975) comments on Catherine:

She embodies the adolescent as revolutionary, articulating a new set of values for the heroine, interesting precisely for her nonconformity, representing some triumph of adolescent over adult standards, articulating a kind of social criticism. (p.135)

Catherine did attempt not to conform and did in her behaviour articulate a kind of social criticism. Yet, she was eventually punished for her nonconformity in having a relationship with Heathcliff and in her unwillingness to conform to Edgar Linton's world. Catherine, I think, had no alternative but to die. This was her punishment. Thus, I viewed this novel as gender-biased because it presents no real, viable choices for women except that of marriage or death. This novel is an example of the typical, nineteenth-century stereotyping of women. Barbara Keller (1986) states:

The nineteenth-century female novel always has a very definite ending. Apart from marriage as the final point of narration there are two more conventional fates a novel can tend towards and a heroine can be subjected to: ...resignation to a life that will stagnate until the heroine's death; or, death, either as an escape from a dreary life without the beloved man or as a punishment for unfeminine behaviour. (e.g. death in childbirth) (p. 35)

Catherine fits this stereotype and in resisting the worlds of Edgar and Heathcliff, she becomes ill and dies giving birth to her daughter. For the conscientious teacher, this novel provides a tremendous opportunity to discuss women such as Mrs. Earnshaw and Isabella in submissive roles and women such as Catherine who struggle to break free of the roles assigned to them by a male-organized society but are doomed to failure. However, if teachers are not aware of the stereotyping of women within the pages of the

texts they are using, this issue will not be addressed.

The one novel included in Literary Heritage 3202 which takes up the issue of women's experience with self-discovery and growth is Margaret Laurence's, The Stone Angel. In this book, Laurence examines motherhood and its effects on women. Hagar, the main character, is presented as a feisty, spirited woman who in her old age reflects on her life and comes to a number of self-awarenesses. This novel took me on a journey backwards and forwards into a woman's life.

As a young child Hagar was rebellious, independent, aggressive, and free-spirited. As a married woman, however, she pretended to play the role of wife and mother while resenting having to do so. Although this novel portrays Hagar as being the dutiful wife and mother, Margaret Laurence ensures that the reader will be able to critique this work as she intended. While Hagar is shown in traditional roles as wife and mother, her comments and thoughts as an old woman indicate that she rejected at a deeply emotional level having to conform to the traditional way of "being" for a married woman. I concluded that this novel is a critique of how women and men are socialized.

The men in this novel are presented as authority figures in the home and in society. Women dutifully fulfill their responsibilities as wives, mothers, and daughters-in-law. However, once again Laurence uses these role models to show how socially constructed practices put men and women into certain roles. Throughout the novel, Laurence portrays men and women in these

roles but in a manner which indicates that this need not be so. As Hagar states, "I can't change what has happened to me in life, nor make what's not occurred take place. But I can't say I like it, accept it, or believe it's for the best." (p. 160)

Young adults, in reading this novel, may be assisted by these comments, which appear throughout the book, in taking up a dialogue with the characters, both male and female. Through this connection with the characters, young adults may be assisted by their teacher to raise their level of consciousness concerning gender issues. There are numerous words, statements, and ideas which indicate gender bias. However, I concluded that Laurence used these to indicate gender bias during the 1940's in a small rural community in Manitoba. She clearly indicates her sympathies for the victims of male-organized power-structures which still exist in our society today. This novel, in my opinion, is intended to deconstruct those power structures in the mind of the reader who must read with a critical perspective the society Hagar lived in and the male-organized society which still exists today. I believe Margaret Laurence is attempting to give women their own voice through the thoughts, words, and actions of Hagar. In these pages, Hagar led me through her own process of self-discovery, of affirmation, of coming out of the closet to search for one's own identity within the family and community, and to search for answers and meaning in all of our personal lives, but especially those of women. This is the type of novel which would allow for discussion of how males and females are socialized to take on gender-roles,

gender-expectations, and gender-limitations.

Literary Heritage 3202 includes seventy-nine prominent characters - seventy-seven percent of whom are male. Females comprise twenty-three percent. These women are vaguely represented most often as housekeepers and nurturers of men and children. Men are shown in their roles in the public sphere but not as positive family role models. There are many words, statements, and ideas of a sexist nature in the novels recommended for this course. The plots and themes in four of the five novels center on the power, greed, and destructiveness of men, male initiation rites, and male journeys to manhood. Thus, four-fifths of this course involves the male experience as the central focus. I argue that the time period of these novels - the 1800's and the mid-1900's - is being adequately portrayed in terms of gender differences and the norms of society. However, I must question the appropriateness of using these novels in the present day unless teachers are prepared to do a critique of gender issues and inequalities as they appear in these novels. In September, 1991, Mark Twain's novel, Huckleberry Finn and Harper Lee's novel, To Kill A Mockingbird, were removed from the school curriculum in New Brunswick because of their racist content. Spokespeople for the Black community felt that although these novels adequately documented the racist attitudes of the time, the study of these novels by young people would only perpetuate the racist attitudes which we still witness in our society. I feel that novels which simply document sexist attitudes of past history without indicating that these attitudes are wrong,

as Margaret Laurence so successfully accomplishes in The Stone Angel, only enhance the sexist attitudes which still are so very prevalent in our society today. In my discussions with students and teachers, it is apparent that most are not consciously aware of gender bias in these novels and thus, do not take up the issue of social practices prevalent in past history which so empowered one gender and victimized another.

In the next set of novels, I have explored human experiences with war, nature, prejudice, love and death and sought to discover if the authors involved women in these experiences.

D. THEMATIC LITERATURE 1200

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF NOVELS

1. AUTHORS

This course consists of six novels. There are four male authors and two female authors.

2. CHARACTERS

The breakdown in the number of characters depicted in the seven novels listed for Thematic Literature 1200 is as follows:

TOTAL NUMBER OF PROMINENT CHARACTERS:		63
A. MALE CHARACTERS	54	86%
MAJOR ROLES	11	18%
MINOR ROLES	43	68%
B. FEMALE CHARACTERS	9	14%
MAJOR ROLES	2	3%
MINOR ROLES	7	11%

3. ROLE MODELS

A. Male occupational career choices	22
B. Female occupational career choices	1

FAMILY ROLE MODELS

In five of the six novels, men appear in roles in the public sphere. These roles consist of men using their skills as experts in the legal and medical profession, as Captains of ships, and as leaders of naval and army units during World War II. Only one novel, To Kill A Mockingbird by Harper Lee, shows a man in his role as father. The main character, Mr. Finch, is a single parent of two children who provides his son and daughter not only with the material necessities of life but with a home filled with love. In communicating with his children both verbally and in his own behaviour, Mr. Finch teaches them the values of honesty, respect for others, and standing strongly for one's beliefs. This novel explores a number of social issues including the issue of single parenting, a very prominent reality in our present-day society. Thus, in reading this novel, our students may be enabled to take up a dialogue with this aspect of the text.

Women's presence is excluded in three of the six novels - The Bridge On The River Kwai, Death On The Ice, and The Guns of Navarone. In the remaining three novels, women do not figure prominently with the exception of Fritha in Gallico's, The Snow Goose. In this novel, Fritha is used by the author to represent a society which marginalizes those who are outwardly handicapped. Other women in these three novels play their usual roles as housekeepers, caregivers, and extensions of men. In John Ball's novel, In The Heat of the Night, Mrs. Endicott's only contribution is to act as hostess for her husband's social and business

contacts. Most of the women referred to in Lee's To Kill A Mockingbird are characterized as ladies of leisure. "Ladies bathed before noon, had their three o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum." (p. 11) Only two women are an exception to this characterization. Calpurnia, a black woman, works as a maid while Mrs. Fisher is the town's teacher.

4. WORDS/STATEMENTS/IDEAS

Since women are absent from Brown's Death On The Ice, Boule's The Bridge On The River Kwai, and McLean's The Guns of Navarone, I made the assumption that women's experiences in coping with economic hardships and providing for their families in Newfoundland outports while the men were at sea were not significant experiences; that women's involvement in the war effort was not as valid as the involvement of the men.

In Ball's novel, In The Heat of the Night, I think there are a number of statements and ideas of a sexist nature. Officer Tibbs, although portrayed as an intelligent, shrewd, brave man who has suffered the effects of racism, displays a sexist attitude towards women. In commenting upon an alleged rape victim, he states:

Instead of being upset, she had on figure revealing clothes and wore her brassiere...such that it pushed up her breasts in a conspicuous position. That is not the action of a modest girl who has been violated. (p. 152)

The unsupported word of a girl is seldom taken at its face value. (p. 153)

In attempting to force Purdy to withdraw her charge of rape against a police officer, Tibbs uses fear and intimidation by threatening the use of a physical examination in order to prove her claim. (p. 139) In yet another passage, attention is focused on the girl's dress and anatomy. I make the assumption that the Chief of Police believes that the girl invited the rape. (p. 115) Thus, the rape can be justified and the rapist exonerated.

In yet another passage of To Kill A Mockingbird, Lee presents an image of women as less intelligent and thus, inferior to men.

Miss Maudie can't serve on a jury.. she's a woman...It's to protect our frail ladies from sordid cases...the ladies'd be interrupting to ask questions.
(p. 234)

In my opinion, this remark indicates that a woman is incapable of making judicial decisions because of her gender. I also think the author is implying that women must be protected from the more unpleasant aspects of life.

The leading female character, Mayella Ewell is portrayed as a seducer, a liar, and a victim. She falsely accuses a young man of rape while she is the victim of her father's incestuous nature.

Following my reading of Harper Lee's novel, To Kill A Mockingbird, I felt that the author gave no evidence that she is being critical of sexist attitudes which permeate the text.

Paul Gallico's The Snow Goose, contains two sexist statements, one which indicated to me that women are heartless, callous creatures who look only for men who are outwardly handsome. "He repelled women. Men would have warmed to him had they got to know him." (p. 11) The second statement used by Gallico indicates

that if a man is sensitive and tender, his manhood is in question. "For all the artist's sensitivity and woman's tenderness locked in his barrel breast, he was very much a man." (p. 12)

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In critiquing the six novels included for study in Thematic Literature 1200, my general observation was that these novels gave prime importance to the activities of men.

Thematic Literature 1200 explores human experiences with war, nature, prejudice, love, and death. This course covers events during World War II, provides the reader with a glimpse into the racial prejudices in the southern United States in the 1950's and 1960's, and allowed me to witness the hardships of men attempting to make a living from the sea.

These six novels include four male authors and two female authors who deals primarily with male experiences during war-time, during the Depression, and during a period of heightened racial prejudice in the United States. The authors concentrate on the bravery of men who put their lives in jeopardy in order to fight for their country as I witnessed in The Bridge On the River Kwai and The Guns of Navarone. These authors focus on men who battle the forces of nature for survival. This theme is also evident in Cassie Brown's Death On the Ice and Gallico's novel The Snow Goose. In To Kill A Mockingbird and In The Heat of the Night, Lee and Ball paint a picture of the hatred in men's hearts, their arrogance in mistreating others because of their racial roots. I also witnessed

the strength and courage of two men who battle the forces of prejudice and hatred directed at their fellowmen.

My general impression of the male role models in all six novels is that these men are skilled, courageous, aggressive, decision-makers possessing a strength which enables them to survive under adverse conditions. In The Bridge On the River Kwai, the male lead characters are military officers, some of whom are prisoners at a Japanese war camp. These men are shown to possess inner dignity and courage while being treated in an inhumane manner. The remaining officers, in their attempts to hamper the movement of the Japanese, face tremendous dangers. Their courage, strength, and skill are evident as they successfully complete their mission. Throughout my reading of these novels, I noticed the absence of women in the lives of these men.

A novel of similar substance is Alistair Maclean's, The Guns of Navarone. The military officers are portrayed as heroic, courageous, and callous in the killing of their enemies. These men are members of an elite commando team who are skilled as mountaineers, explosive experts, sailors, and resistance fighters. Although heroic in putting their own lives in danger to save the lives of others, the leaders are cold-blooded in their killing of those who resist their authority. There is a very close comradeship among these men. There are no female/male relationships in this novel and no indication that women played any role during the world war.

Although Cassie Brown is only one of two female authors

selected for this course of study, she too wrote a male-centered novel. This is a true story of a Newfoundland sealing disaster in which men displayed qualities of great courage and heroism in order to earn a living for themselves and their families. Although a reader can imagine the lives of the women at home, caring for and anxious over the safety of their children, Brown makes no mention of the experiences of these wives, mothers, and daughters. I witnessed the relationships between the men in this novel but not their interactions with the women in their lives. No reference was made to the struggles of these women to cope during a time of great anxiety over the possible loss of life of their loved ones.

To Kill A Mockingbird does include male and female characters. The male leading characters display qualities of courage, integrity, and strength of character. The female leading character, Mayella Ewell displays qualities of dishonesty, anger, and is portrayed as a seducer. It is interesting to note that the only other leading female character in this course is also portrayed as a seducer and as a liar. John D. Ball presents us with the character of Purdy in In The Heat of the Night. She, as well as Mayella, falsely accuse men of rape. I question the appropriateness of using novels in which women are depicted as falsely accusing someone of rape. In the present day, when women are attempting to raise the consciousness level of society regarding the whole issue of abuse and violence directed at women, I would suggest that at least one of the novel selections dealing with the whole issue of rape be one in which a woman has actually

experienced this violent act and her experience in attempting to bring the perpetrator to justice. I acknowledge there are instances of false accusations but statistics indicate that most women who report this crime are honest in their accusations. Thus, why include two novels which indicate false accusations of rape? If these novels are to be used, are teachers prepared to take up the issue of violence against women in society both past and present?

The only positive female/male relationship in these two novels is that of a young girl and her brother, the children of Mr. Atticus in To Kill A Mockingbird. I think that when women are represented in this novel, they appear to be subordinate to men and in need of their protection. Relationships between men and women in In The Heat of the Night are ones of male superiority and female inferiority. Mr. Endicott is an all-powerful businessman whose wife is called upon to play the role of hostess for her husband. Purdy, because of her appearance, must endure the sexual advances of men and is a victim of society's attitude that marriage provides a woman with social status. "He's got a real good job, steady, and a car." (p. 157)

With the exception of a few disparaging remarks directed at women, Gallico's The Snow Goose treats the female/male relationship with great sensitivity. Mr. Rhayader is a grotesquely deformed man who chose the isolated life as a lighthouse keeper as a result of being rejected by society. As a young girl, Fritha approaches Mr. Rhayader in order that he assist her with an injured snow goose.

In reading this novel, I discovered a beautiful story of a man struggling not with his physical inadequacies but with the inadequacies of society to allow all people to be fully functioning members of society. The author uses a young girl to show that we all must look beyond outward appearances and behaviours and into the souls of others. Fritha accomplishes this and I witnessed the essence of what it means to be human. I would use this novel to take up the issue of differences in society and assist students to not just tolerate those differences in people but to accept all peoples regardless of gender, race, religious beliefs, philosophy, sexual orientation, handicaps, and class.

In my critique of all six novels, I once again reached the conclusion that five of these novels are gender-biased. I arrived at this conclusion as a result of the lack of female representation in these texts, the exclusion of positive female role models with whom our young female readers could identify, the exclusion of female-oriented themes and plots, the inclusion of sexist statements and ideas, and the overall impression that men and women do not relate to one another as equals. Women are treated as possessions, as being the inferior sex, or not worthy of any presence in three of the six novels. The woman's experience, I think, is dependent upon the reader's ability to determine what the invisible women's life experiences must have consisted of. To expect young readers to bring forth women's experiences when these are not mirrored in the novels they are reading, is, I think, unrealistic. How can I raise the consciousness level of our young

people regarding the lives of women if women are all but excluded from the novels students are required to read.

The last course which I critiqued was Thematic Literature 3201. Since the novels for this course explore diverse cultures, an interesting assignment would be to compare the lives of women in these different cultures. However, I questioned whether or not the authors of these novels included women as significant contributors to the development of these cultures.

E. THEMATIC LITERATURE 3201

OVERALL ANALYSIS OF NOVELS

1. AUTHORS

The seven novels listed for this course are authored by males.

2. CHARACTERS

The breakdown of characters depicted in the seven novels included for study under Thematic Literature 3201 is as follows:

<u>TOTAL NUMBER OF PROMINENT CHARACTERS</u>		72
A. MALE CHARACTERS	59	82%
MAJOR ROLES	13	18%
MINOR ROLES	46	64%
B. FEMALE CHARACTERS	13	18%
MAJOR ROLES	2	3%
MINOR ROLES	11	15%

3. ROLE MODELS

In three of the seven novels, women are excluded from the male experiences of exploring unknown territories and attempting to survive the forces of nature. In three of the remaining four novels women are shown in their roles as caregivers and nurturers of men.

In all seven novels, men are shown as possessing great endurance, courage in the face of death, and displaying qualities of leadership. Men are engaged in public life as government leaders, scientists, naval officers, engineers, doctors, explorers, and army officers.

FAMILY ROLE MODELS

As the world is slowly coming to an end as narrated by Nevil Shute in On The Beach, Mary, the wife of Peter Holmes, a naval officer, attempts to maintain a comfortable home environment for her child, her husband, and his co-workers and friends. Peter is shown in his role as husband and father during home visits from his official naval duties.

The strongest family unit I witnessed in these novels was within the Indian community. Conrad Richter's, The Light In The Forest, briefly touches on the great respect evident in the relationship between True Son's mother and father. The children have a close bonding with one another and with their parents.

Within the white population in the novels Riverrun and The Light In The Forest, I did not experience in my reading, any close family bondings. Words such as Captain, Reverend, and Governor in referring to the male members of the family indicated to me a male-organized society wherein men are the decision-makers and the authority figures. (Riverrun, pp. 99, 126) (The Light In The Forest, p. 90)

In the remaining four novels, I was unable to discover positive male or female family role models. Women are excluded

from the novels The Lure of the Labrador Wild, Bartlett, the Great Canadian Explorer, and Lord of the Flies. In Hilton's Lost Horizon, Mrs. Brinklow's role is to act as an intermediary between two men in conflict with one another. There are no family role models in this novel.

4. WORDS/STATEMENTS/IDEAS

In Richter's novel, The Light In The Forest, I discovered a number of sexist statements: "He felt debased. He was...made to carry with his own hands a bucket of water upstairs. That was woman's work." (p. 40) "Had you conquered me, I would have borne it with courage and died like a warrior. But you sit and whimper like an old woman." (p. 20) "Woman, stay home and boil your pots." (p. 102) "They were women and couldn't be expected to understand." (p. 102) I felt that the author was portraying the attitudes of the time. However, the persistent use of novels which constantly expose young readers to stereotypical language and ideas without indicating that this language and the ideas conveyed are only promoting the continuation of society's repression of women.

Following my reading of this novel, I felt that there was evidence of a clear division of labor for men and women in the Indian world and in the white culture. While the men hunt, kill, and fight their enemies, the women stay at home caring for the needs of their families. Since this work is seldom validated in this novel, I assumed the women worked within the home setting.

Women are excluded from Golding's novel, The Lord of the Flies. This is a novel exclusively about young boys. It is my

assumption that the author uses these male characters to examine our modern society. Excluded from this exploration of how societies are developed are women who comprise 52½ of the population.

Although Peter Such included seven female characters in his novel, Riverrun, words such as maid, servant, and descriptions of women serving food (see p. 93) and doing needlepoint (see p. 96), indicated to me that women have specific, female roles as wives and caregivers. The author gives no account of white women having warm, loving relationships with the men in their lives, or as engaging in public activities. Within the Indian culture, the woman's place is supposed to be in the home. However, these women are engaged in the hunting and killing of animals due to the shortage of manpower within the Indian community. Although the Indian men express their displeasure with the intrusion of the women in their public lives, they admit to the economic necessity of women being actively involved in the male domain. These women not only hunted, killed, and skinned the animals, they also prepared the food for the evening meal while the men sat around the fire celebrating the successful hunt. (See p. 39)

In my reading of The Lure of the Labrador Wild and Bartlett, the Great Canadian Explorer, I discovered no reference to women's contributions to the exploration of unknown and uncharted wilderness areas of Canada. The major focus in Bartlett, the Great Canadian Explorer, seemed to be the courage of man in attempting to meet the ocean on its own terms knowing that he is at the mercy of

a power greater than himself. The sense of adventure, the spirit of exploring the unknown, the intrigue of facing unknown dangers by three men appear to be the central focus of Wallace's The Lure of the Labrador Wild. Being courageous, having a sense of adventure, seeking to explore the unknown appear to be the sole domains of men. In the next chapter, I have included information on Mina Hubbard, who wrote a book outlining her adventures in travelling across Labrador ahead of Dillon Wallace.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Thematic Literature 3201 offers students the opportunity to look within diverse cultures and make comparisons between those cultures. This course also provides our young readers with the opportunity to travel to unknown lands and to take part in the quest for knowledge and adventure. This course also focuses upon the inherent evil in human nature and how that evil will eventually result in the destruction of mankind.

These novels deal with conflicts, survival, nature, death, war, power and the unknown. It was evident to me, however, that the authors of these novels place much emphasis on man's search for meaning, knowledge, and self-fulfillment. Women's inner growth, women's quest for meaning, knowledge, and self-fulfillment are left to the imaginations of those students who may be aware that women do experience conflicts, do struggle with survival, do feel the anguish of the death of a loved one, or struggle with their own

impending death, are intrigued about the unknown. The overall message of these novels seemed to be that only men are actively engaged in the full range of human activities.

Not only does this course include seven male authors but these authors have given prominence to the male characters who occupy 82% of the major and minor roles. Their experiences take precedence over female experiences. The Light In The Forest chronicles a young boy's experiences living in the Indian world and being forced to return to the white man's culture. The Lord of the Flies gives an account of twelve young boys attempting to create a society for themselves and in doing so emulate the violence in the adult society they left behind. Lost Horizon focuses on the struggles of the two main, male characters who attempt to come to terms with a world where there is an absence of competition, power, wars, and brutality. In reading On The Beach, I was provided with a chilling account of the end of the world. I witnessed seven men and two women coming to terms with their own death. Riverrun is the only novel in this course which describes the experiences of two women who endure captivity by white men. I was given a glimpse into the hearts and minds of Shawnadithit and Demasduit who experience physical and emotional hardships in the white man's world. Bartlett, The Great Canadian Explorer is a story of the adventures, courage, and endurance of men. The Lure of the Labrador Wild explores the nature of man which urges him to take part in seemingly senseless and futile expeditions which lead to death.

Thus, six of the seven novels explore male experiences. The women characters have a set, prescribed women's sphere. When represented, they stand silently and submissively in the background, the place set aside for them by the men in their lives. They have no voice in the public affairs of men. They have no place in history books or novels which celebrate the achievements of men. In my reading of these texts, I did not discover women building their own distinct identities. Their identities are tied closely to their relationships with husbands or lovers.

It is my opinion that this course does not offer female role models for young female students to admire and to emulate. Those female characters presented were part of a strong, male-organized system in which men were the decision-makers, the owners of property, the heads of households. The traditional disposition of women's lives is domestic with marriage being the outlet for their energies. It was difficult for me to conclude that in the development of our country women had no role in shaping the values and the culture of the many small communities in which they lived and labored. However, in reading these novels, I can only assume that women made no significant contributions to the development of western culture. I prefer to think that this is a myth. In reading William R. Lighton's Lewis and Clark (1901), I relived the experiences of Sacajawea, a woman who guided men with unerring skill through mountain passes and over unknown territory to the Pacific coast of the continent. Rosemary Brown, one of Canada's voices in the arena of social activism, relates her experiences

with and struggles against racism in Being Brown: A Very Public Life (1989).

Thematic Literature 3201 fails to recognize the significant contributions made by women both in their private lives within the home and on the stage of public life. I think this selection of novels is gender-biased.

CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Peggy McIntosh (1983), in a paper presented at the Claremont College Conference, discusses the revision of the curriculum. She poses the question, "Where are the women?"

Following my analysis of the thirty-two novels recommended for the Secondary Schools in Newfoundland, I too, must ask the question, "Where are the women?". Where are the women authors? Where are the major women characters? Where is the validation in these novels of the experiences of women? Where is the autonomous, whole woman? Where is the career woman? Where is the Black woman? Where is the woman's coming of age? Where is the pioneer woman? Where is the woman explorer? **Where is the woman?**

My analysis of the thirty-two novels reflected the following data:

- a) thirty-two authors
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| twenty-eight male authors | 88% |
| four female authors | 12% |

Thus, the ratio is one woman author for every seven male authors. These figures indicate that we have progressed little since findings by Tillie Olsen (1978):

Appearance in the twentieth-century literature courses, required reading lists...the year's best, the decade's best, the fifty years' best, consideration by critics or in current reviews - one woman writer for every twelve men. (8% and 92%) (p. 24)

Documentation has shown that female authorship in the late

eighteenth century, in the nineteenth and twentieth century was extensive. Ian Watt (1957) indicates that over half of the eighteenth century novelists were female. (p. 39) According to Tuchman (1989), "Elaine Showalter (1977) tells us that in the 1840's most of the novels issued by the house of Bently were by women." (p. 50) In the early twentieth century, the submission of novels to publishers by women remained fairly constant. However, according to Tuchman, more men began to recognize the financial and social rewards of being authors and they invaded the writing and publishing market. Men were identified as writing high-culture novels, or works considered to be significant. Women were identified with the popular novel, work considered to be of lesser significance. The male-dominated publishing world used different critical standards to judge the writing of men and women. (Tuchman, 1989, p. 148) Furthermore, Tuchman states that "unlike men, women never possessed the power to define the nature of good literature...Elite men defined lasting literary culture...enabling them to devalue the novels by women." (p. 206) Many male-authored texts were elevated to the status of classics. Regardless of literary content and substance, women's novels were discounted based on the gender of the author. Tuchman comments on the prevailing attitude of the male-dominated literary hierarchy: "The plain truth is that this is not woman's work, and a woman has neither the knowledge nor the literary tack for it." (p. 87) According to my analysis of the numbers of male and female authors included for the five courses under study, this attitude appeared

to be the prevailing one.

Another question which arose from my reading of these novels was whether the gender of the author influences the gender issues in the text. In the context of the novels under study, I think the answer seems clear. Twenty-seven of the twenty-eight male authors focused on male experiences which revolved around male-oriented themes and plots. Two of the four female authors gave significant voice to the female experience as I witnessed in Laurence's The Stone Angel and Bronte's Wuthering Heights. In the majority of the thirty-two novels, the authors focused primarily on the very public life of men and gave some space to the private, domestic, and sexual roles of women, excluding them almost totally from the public sphere. The division of labour is quite evident. The question is: was the labour of men more significant than the labour of women? Men battled the forces of nature for survival. Women remained at home giving of their time, talents, energy, and sometimes, even their lives to ensure the survival of their families. Yet, in the majority of these novels, significant voice is given only to the male experiences.

Further figures suggest bias against women.

b) number of prominent characters		380
male characters	297	78%
female characters	83	22%
major male characters	67	18%
major female characters	16	3%

minor male characters	230	61%
minor female characters	67	18%

All the figures included in my analysis of each course under study, indicated to me that there is a need for a more significant representation of women as authors and the inclusion of greater numbers of female role models at both the major and minor role categories.

How do these texts represent men and women? As a reader of these novels, I was presented with the perspective of men as being rational, authoritative, aggressive, adventurous, and courageous, and women as being docile, sometimes seductive, idealized creatures in need of the protection and guidance of men. This perception by students of male and female stereotypes would hardly be surprising when the plots of these novels are developed around the binary opposition of knights and dames (Ivanhoe), priest and prostitute (Such Is My Beloved), master and mistress (The Cruel Sea, Oliver Twist, Wuthering Heights), gentleman and seducer (In The Heat of the Night, To Kill A Mockingbird), working men and ladies of leisure (To Kill A Mockingbird), career man and wife (On The Beach, The Cruel Sea, Oliver Twist). Women characters appear to be used as mediums for expanding the image of the male as someone who is courageous, strong, active, and adventurous. These women characters are presented in roles as mothers, wives, victims, healers, or seducers. As Stauffer and Rosowski state in (1982):

While the female was physically, intellectually, and economically the inferior of men, spiritually and emotionally and for the purposes of nurturing, she was clearly the superior. (p. 4)

This view of the relationship between men and women permeates these novels with men taking their place in the public sphere as the authority figures and decision-makers while women were confined to their nurturing roles, that place reserved for them by society. The male privilege of earning money gave men autonomy as well as control over women.

Following my reading of these novels, I made the assumption that men's sphere is one of power and significance while women's world confirms her own powerlessness and dependence upon men. Women in these novels live their lives, seek their identity through men whose task it is to guide, protect, and love the women in their lives. In order to gain social status and to be happy, women must enter the state of marriage. The plots of some of these novels end most often with marriage or the death of the unmarried female character, death presumably as a result of a broken heart as represented by Catherine in Wuthering Heights. Where are the women who chose an alternative way to live and did so quite successfully?

Many of these novels concentrated on the exploration, settling, and the building of the Western culture. The pioneer experience as described in these novels is almost exclusively the experience of men. These novels do nothing to enlighten the reader about the prairie woman's history and woman's contribution to the development of Western culture. There exist fictional accounts of the true life experiences of Nellie McClung who, in 1880, immigrated to the Canadian prairie. Her story is one of endurance in living an isolated life on a homestead. Moving into active

social and political participation within the community and eventually throughout the Prairie provinces, she endeavoured to improve the lives of women. In 1914, a group of women formed the Saskatchewan Provincial Franchise League. These women set the stage for women's right to vote, for social and moral reform, pay equity, maternity allowances, equal property rights, and a limit on work hours for women. In 1916, through the efforts of these women, the right to vote was granted to all women in Canada. In 1918, two women were elected to the Provincial legislature. In 1921, Irene Parlby became the first female cabinet minister and worked to improve the lives of women. In the early 1900's, women became involved in grass-roots, political work. A new voice of protest was heard, aided by Violet McNaughton, the editor of the Western Producer, which provided a forum for the woman's voice. In print and in speeches, these women called for nationalization of health services, redistribution of wealth and taxes, public ownership of industries and utilities, and the protection of natural resources. These women had the added burden of battling men who did not want women in decision-making positions. Women joined together to legalize the woman as person concept. Nellie McClung, Henrietta Edwards, Louise McKinney, Irene Parlby, Emily Murphy (the first woman magistrate in Canada), petitioned both the British and Canadian courts. In 1929, women were declared persons in the eyes of the law. In 1930, another group of women, travelling the country under great hardships, collected 500,000 signatures to support the legalization of the publication of birth control

information and to establish family limitation clinics. This was the first wave of women to demand the right for control over their own bodies. These women were the forerunners of the Planned Parenthood Associations which are so firmly established in our society today. (NFB film Prairie Tales, 1986).

Stories of the experiences of women and their contributions in the development of our country and culture have been excluded from the literature curriculum. I have included the names of only a small proportion of prairie women and their contributions to indicate that there is a rich history of women who helped significantly to build our country. To help reconstruct past history and to include women in that history, women writers resurrected frontier letters, diaries, poems, songs, paintings, journals, and memoirs in order to give women their proper place in history. According to Carol Fairbanks (1976), "over 120 works make up the tradition of prairie women writers." (p. 4) But these writers, nor the experiences of pioneer women, are nowhere to be found in the novels under study.

Some of the novels in this critique focused on the war experience, concentrating solely on the experiences of men. No mention is made of the significant participation of women during the war years. As described by Cooper, Munich, and Squires (1989),

Claire Sobart organized the Women's Convoy Corps, a medical unit stationed between the front and the base hospitals: the commandant, doctors, nurses, cooks, and dressers were all women. (p. 102)

During World War II, women worked as welders, mechanics, harvesters, ambulance drivers, air transport pilots, fire fighters,

bus drivers, conductors, and defense personnel for towns and cities. (NFB Film, Women In The 40's and 50's). Helen Zenna Smith's Not So Quiet (1930) gives voice to the experiences of six women involved on the war front. Yet, the experiences of women during the war are not reflected in the novels recommended at the High School level.

In the novel Death On The Ice, Cassie Brown vividly documents the lives of Newfoundland sealers and their struggles to earn a living by facing the brutal forces of nature. Nowhere in this novel is any space given to those Newfoundland women who endured poverty, isolation, and very real physical and emotional difficulties during the years of economic hardships in Newfoundland. I do think the curriculum should include literary works which documents the lives of Newfoundland women. In past history, women in Newfoundland were a viable and necessary part of the work-force in rural communities. Hilda Chaulk Murray documented in her book (1979) the lives of women in a typical Newfoundland outpost. According to Murray:

A woman had to be versatile and prepared to work hard. In summer, her day could take her from house, to stable, to garden, to meadow, to stage, to flake. In fall, her days were taken up with picking berries, harvesting crops, making preserves, cleaning house, preparing for Christmas, and doing the preliminary preparations for making wool. In winter, carding, spinning, and knitting wool, sewing clothes, joining quilts and hocking mats were all done indoors. The woman had little leisure time, for in addition to having to pull her weight at a variety of jobs, she had to see to it that her family was properly fed and cared for. A man whose wife was competent in all these areas was rich because of her real contribution to the economy of the household. (p. 32)

Today, women in Newfoundland work not only in the home but in society in a great variety of occupations. Mayors, teachers, university professors, engineers, truck-drivers, firewomen, contractors, biologists, doctors, nurses, are just a few of the many "places" Newfoundland women occupy. Yet, in my opinion, our high school literature program does not acknowledge the very significant past and present contributions of Newfoundland women to the development of a culture which is so unique in its rural beauty, simplicity, and the interchangeableness of male and female roles. The lives of women in Newfoundland have been documented but these stories are not in evidence in the selection of novels at the High School level. I think our young people who have benefited from this cultural heritage of Newfoundland women should be aware of this part of their history.

The themes and plots of a number of the novels under study explore the lives of male explorers who ventured courageously into the unknown. Did women explore the unknown lands and territories? To read these novels, one can only assume that this is a male preoccupation. Yet, there is a literary storehouse of women explorers. A book authored by Mina Hubbard (1908) chronicles her travels across an unchartered section of Labrador in 1905, a journey never previously completed by any other explorer. Mary Vaux Walcott (1900) was the first Canadian woman to ascend a mountain over 3050 meters. In 1907, Mary Schaffer Warren explored the untouched lands surrounding the Athabasca and Northern Saskatchewan rivers. In 1909, Mary Jobe A. Coley and Bess MacCarthy

explored the unchartered territory now known as Jasper National Park. (Smith, 1989, p. 23, 50, 80) One of the best known women explorers, Harriet Chalmers Adams, explored every country in Latin America, crossed Haiti by horse, and explored untravelled territory in Spain and Portugal before her death in 1937. (Tinling, 1989, p.

3) The list of women explorers is extensive. According to Tinling:

A surprising number of women had the initiative and fortitude to visit lands marked unexplored on maps...Their lectures and writings carried new ideas to the rest of the world and even helped to influence public policies. A number added significantly to geographical knowledge. (p. xxiii)

Yet our High School students have access in their novels only to the male occupation of exploration and are not exposed to the female contribution to the world in attempting to explore the unknown.

Literary Heritage 2201 emphasises the Victorian era, exposing students to traditional feminine stereotypes. The pious and passive female is the norm in these novels. Women are denied opportunities to develop their identities, are shown only in roles as wives and mothers. The crux of a woman's life is marriage and motherhood. There are no other alternative choices for her if she is to be happy and attain social status. These novels do not indicate that a woman has the potential to grow as an autonomous, independent person with unlimited choices and full control over her own life. Perhaps, novels which do not portray fictional characters who mirror these characteristics would best be replaced by novels which are representative of the view of women today who

wish to extend to young readers the full range of human possibilities rather than novels which mirror the stereotypes of women in past history. As stated by Light, Staton, and Bourne (1989) on the exclusion of women from textbooks:

The consequences of neglect, trivialization and separate marginal treatment of women that we have identified is profound. Female students may be deprived of a sense of their own past or even that they, as girls, have a past. They are deprived not only of knowledge about the achievements of notable women, but they are also deprived of knowledge about the collective history of their sex in areas such as education, employment, political and social reform, religion, the arts or the law. Equally, male students are deprived of a chance to understand the different individual and collective experiences of women. (p. 20)

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. THE NEWFOUNDLAND EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

As Dorothy Smith (1978) states, though women's participation in the educational process at all levels has increased in this century, this participation remains within marked boundaries. Among the most important of these boundaries, I would argue, is that which reserves to men control of the policy and decision-making apparatus of the educational system. (Dale Spender, 1989, p. 39)

As institutions designed to transmit the knowledge and values of our culture, schools are both manifestations and vehicles of patriarchy and androcentrism...National statistics continue to confirm that women's exclusion from designated leadership positions is more entrenched than in any other professional category...(Heather-jane Robertson, 1992, pp. 6-8)

Within the Newfoundland educational system, men control and occupy, almost exclusively, the most powerful positions. This power base extends from the government level to the administrative level within the schools themselves. Statistics indicate wide discrepancies in the numbers of males and females who hold key positions in the Department of Education and at the administrative level in the Newfoundland school system. (See Appendix i) According to these numbers, in 1993 eighteen or sixty-nine percent of the key instruction and curriculum positions at the Department of Education are occupied by men. Seven, or thirty-one percent of the positions are held by women. The majority of the female

positions are as advisors to the male executive. At the School Board level, twenty-seven Superintendent positions are all male-occupied. There are no female school Superintendents in Newfoundland. Assistant Superintendents number 58: 51 males (88%) and 7 females (12%). Approximately 120 males (70%) occupy the Program Coordinators positions while only 51 females (30%) hold similar positions. At the school level, Principals total 487. 104 women (21%) are employed as Principals while 383 men (79%) hold this job classification. Vice-Principals number 310: 225 males (73%) and 85 females (27%). (See Appendix ii) These figures coincide with data made available by the Canadian Teacher's Federation (1993). According to the CTF, the percentages of women working at the administrative level as principals and vice-principals in the Newfoundland school system in 1989-1990 were 21.8% and 24.5%. In the 1979-1980 school year, 21.7% of principal's positions and 20.6% of vice-principal's positions were held by women. (CTF, 1993, p. 22) Thus, from 1979 to 1990, the percentage of females participating at the administrative level as principals has increased by .1% and as vice-principals by 3.9%. As stated by the CTF (1993) in referring to top level administrative positions within the school system at the national level, "representative data demonstrates that the more senior the position, the less likely that it will be held by a woman." (p. 24)

What is to be taught, the teaching methods to be employed, and who is to do the teaching are decisions made mostly by male

administrators. Women, for the most part, are not in decision-making positions. Thus, the woman's voice and the woman's experience are not heard, are not made visible. Women's struggle for equality within the educational system amounts to accepting entrance into a system in which they must, in order to survive, maintain and support the male status quo. In their report on women in education, the CTF (1993) quoted Cecilia Reynold's (1989) who stated:

Gender equity cannot be achieved by making women into male images of the successful employee. If our efforts to alter socialization patterns are guided by the principles of equality as sameness, we may easily accept the general experience of males as the norm and encourage women to assimilate. (p. 5)

As further reported by the CTF (1993), "women could join management only by buying into values which tended to exclude women." (p. 5) Rather than supporting such a system, women must work toward equal access to the policy and decision-making positions. Only in this manner, I believe, can women represent women's interests and the women's perspective rather than deferring to the male view. The male-dominated educational system must be reorganized to reflect a system wherein women's experience is not trivialized but is accorded equal status with male experiences. An equal number of policy and decision-makers should be women. Their views and concerns about education, especially for young women, should be heard and acted upon.

Within the curriculum itself, the textbooks, for the most part, present the male-as-norm experience. According to an interim report (1981) on women's issues in education in Newfoundland, the

following conclusion was drawn:

From research undertaken across Canada, we may assume that the majority of school readers and curriculum materials present a traditional stereotyped view of the sexes; most often in the over-representation of men and an under-representation and narrow portrayal of women in particular. (p. 17)

As a teacher of literature in the Newfoundland school system, it is my opinion that the novels in the curriculum for both the Junior High School and the Senior High School continue to ignore women writers, women's history, and women's experiences. As a result, students have been and continue to be exposed to a limited view of history and culture. They have not been provided with a true sense of history and culture and thus, have a limited knowledge of how the world might be organized. There appears to be so little emphasis on the importance of literature as a tool to aid students in developing a sense of self-definition. Through emphasis on the critiquing of history and culture, through the inclusion of women's important place in history and the creation of culture, both male and female students may be able to identify with that which is portrayed in literature. Yet, what is there for female students to identify with? Where are their role models? How could their reading of male experiences help them to make choices as young women?

All too often, these novels emphasize man's quest for self-discovery through confrontation with the forces of nature, like Dillon Wallace's Lure of the Labrador Wild, or through male initiation rites such as that depicted in Knowles's A Separate Peace. Novels such as Twain's Huckleberry Finn point to the male

quest for self-identity by pitting man's "natural" desire for adventure and conquest against the female's "natural" tendency to domesticate by her "genteel" nature as is so aptly characterized by Aunt Sally. Many of these novels validate the coming of age of young boys and men through solitude in the wilderness as in Theriault's Ashini. A woman's coming of age, menstruation, and a woman's experiences with pregnancy, childbirth, child care, and menopause are relegated to the margins as insignificant in comparison to the male experience of being a man. These significant moments in a woman's life should be portrayed as times of celebration in the novels in use in our schools.

How different my own coming of age and that of other women might have been if we could have identified with female characters in novels who celebrated these experiences as significant moments in their lives. Most young girls keep the onset of menstruation a secret. A woman's experience with pregnancy and becoming a mother are very real, very poignant experiences, yet, they too are not viewed as such on the pages of our literature texts.

All but excluded from the high school literature curriculum are stories of those women such as Lydia Campbell (1980) and Elizabeth Goudie (1975) who attempted to raise children under adverse wilderness conditions. The reality of our cultural past indicates that while the men battled native inhabitants, both human and animal with weapons of death and destruction, the women used their tools - knitting and sewing needles, cooking utensils, wash tubs, gardening tools, and healing skills to ensure the survival of

the family. Throughout the pages of history and literature texts, authors have glorified the weapons of war, have sanctified those men who fought battles where death and destruction were the inevitable outcomes. All but absent from these texts are stories of women who used their tools of peace with the ultimate outcome being survival, modest comfort, and a safe and loving environment for themselves, their children, and their husbands. Are our young readers to assume that a man's way of surviving is far more valid than a woman's way?

In the novels used in the High Schools, no recognition is given to those women such as Joan of Arc, a woman in the fifteenth century who faced terrible consequences as a result of remaining loyal to her own self. Warner (1981) wrote a biography documenting the life of Joan of Arc. She speaks about a time in history, the 15th century, when a young woman emerged as a heroine. This text takes a fresh look at a woman whom Warner considers

anomalous in our culture, a woman renowned for doing something on her own, not by birthright. She has extended the taxonomy of female types; she makes evident the dimension of woman's dynamism. (p. 28)

Why is this novel not offered for selection in the high school curriculum. Phyllis Wheatley, a slave in the 1700's who used her gift for writing poetry to keep alive the idea of freedom in a world that enslaved her is not known to young students. Where is Rosemary Brown's voice in our literature curriculum? In her book she outlines her life as a Jamaican student who experienced the "polite, denied, and accepted racism" (Brown, 1989, p. 25) that exists in Canada. As a political, social activist, as a wife and

mother, Brown's inspiring story of her experiences with and struggles against racism, sexism, and oppression is nowhere to be found in our school curriculum. Nor does Maya Angelou's (1969) account in her autobiography of the experiences of black females in our society have a place in the curriculum. These women and countless other female authors have been lost to our young people. Why does the curriculum include William Golding's Lord of the Flies but not Charlotte Perkins Gilman's text, Herland? Why are students exposed to a boy's refusal to conform to society as they experience in Twain's Huckleberry Finn but not able to experience the resistance of a woman to conform to the usual female roles as voiced by Virginia Woolf (1977) in To The Lighthouse? Theriault's Ashini depicts a man's attempt to escape the oppression of the white man's civilization by seeking comfort in nature. Why is Ethel Wilson's novel, Swamp Angel (1954) not included as a novel selection at the high school level? Is not a woman's attempt to escape the oppression of her marriage and to discover peace in the natural environment an equally valid experience to be shared with our young students? Would not the reading by a young girl of this experience indicate to her that women do have options, that women can make conscious decisions about their lives? Why include the adventures of Dillon Wallace in The Lure of the Labrador Wild and exclude Mina Hubbard's adventures as described in A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador (1908)? Helen Fogwell Porter, a noted Newfoundland author, wrote and published a novel entitled January, February, June or July (1988). The story narrated by Porter takes

the reader on a journey with the lead female character who must cope with the sometimes painful process of growing up. Would not young female and male students identify with characters such as Heather and Frank who are dealing not only with family and peer relationships but also with the consequences of a brief teenage affair. Jean Stafford has contributed to young people's literature through the writing of her novel The Mountain Lion (1977). In reviewing this novel, Carolyn Plummer (1986) comments:

This novel provides teenage readers an opportunity to examine the female's crisis in growing up through a story which features warm, humorous characters appealing to eleventh or twelfth grade readers...The difficulties inherent in the female's initiation into adulthood are dramatized without becoming a book that would appeal to female readers only. (p.23-25)

Margaret Atwood, a renowned Canadian author, has written a number of bestselling novels, including Cat's Eye (1989). This story of female friendships is as stated by the Boston Herald, "a pensive meditation on life's relentless forward march into the consolidations of middle age." (Atwood, 1989) Other novels by Atwood include The Handmaid's Tale (1985) and Bodily Harm (1981).

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1973) in her text, The Yellow Wallpaper paints a picture of a woman imprisoned by the cultural norms of the nineteenth century. In the Afterword of this novel, Elaine R. Hedges speaks of Gilman as "one of America's foremost feminists." (p.39) She describes Gilman's novel as a "rare piece of literature...by a nineteenth century woman which directly confronts the sexual politics of the male-female, husband-wife relationship." (p.39) She goes on to state that books such as The Yellow

Wallpaper (1973), "are all deliberate dramatic indictments, by women writers, of the crippling social pressures imposed on women in the nineteenth century and the sufferings they thereby endured." (p. 55) Kate Chopin (1976), in publishing her novel The Awakening threw more light on the submissive and inferior place women have within the institution of marriage during the nineteenth century. This novel also shows how women attempted to defy the social norms of the time with the end result being death. These novels by Gilman and Chopin, rather than simply relating a story, delve into the hearts and minds of women and help us to come to an understanding that it is society which imprisons woman and results in her eventual destruction.

The novels and authors which I have outlined in the preceding paragraph are just a few examples of novels available which may provide young readers with the opportunity to look at the experiences of women in past history and within contemporary society as they journey through life. Since I and many other women were taught a view of the world that may not be real for us, isn't it time that we gave our young people a chance to see the world as it might be by portraying that world on the pages of the books they are reading. This can be accomplished by balancing the literature program, by providing students with a program of studies which will reflect and affirm women's experiences as well as those of men.

I have shown that the novels currently in use at the high school level in Newfoundland present the male experience as the universal experience. Novels which mirror the female experience

have been perceived to be unscholarly, unsubstantial, and insignificant. (Tuchman, 1989, p. 148) The inclusion of the token few female-authored, female-oriented novels are generally not selected for study by an overwhelming number of high school teachers, most of whom are male. As documented by Sharon Taylor (1986), "in secondary school, students encounter fewer and fewer females...Women make up only 22% of the teaching personnel in high school."

B. CRITICAL RE/VISION: DE-STEREOTYPING THE NOVEL

Before changes can be implemented to eliminate gender bias in literature programs, recognizing the bias is a crucial first step. Included in the agenda for the annual conference of the English Special Interest Council (November 21, 1991) was the topic Gender Issues In English Education. This conference was opened to all English teachers and administrators in the Province of Newfoundland. This is one of the myriad of ways to raise the awareness of educators to the problem of bias in the current curriculum. The educators must be educated. Inservice sessions could be developed and implemented to assist teachers in recognizing sex-role stereotyping within the whole context of the educational system. These sessions could provide teachers with strategies on how to de-stereotype their own instructional method- and how to deal with bias within existing curriculum materials. Further inservice workshops could be implemented at the district

level which would focus specifically on gender-bias in the novels teachers are utilizing in their classrooms. These teachers must be provided with the knowledge to detect gender bias, to develop pedagogical practices to deal with the bias, and materials and strategies to combat the bias. Since gender-bias is so blatant in all areas of curriculum study, the conclusions of educators will probably be that this problem does indeed exist.

Before recommending a re-vision of the High School curriculum to include a significant and intense course of study for young women and men, I would like to suggest that the Department of Education would implement a Women's Studies component at the High School level, especially the study of women's fiction. Women's Studies courses could then be recognized and included as course work for those in training to be teachers. A required course for those completing a Bachelor of Education degree could be one which assists teachers in recognizing bias within curriculum materials, what strategies to use to eradicate the ideas and values which this bias may instill in students, and what criteria to follow in purchasing supplementary material for the existing curriculum. Many of the novels in use should portray a woman's coming of age and realizing their own full potential within the context of a wide range of cultural and social options. Although I do not wish to deny the difficulties encountered by those many women who attempt/ed to live as autonomous, active people with a well-developed sense of identity, I suggest that novels be introduced into the curriculum which show women developing physically,

spiritually, emotionally, and morally through an exploration of the "real" world, a world outside the protection and the limitations of the "home". Most women depicted in the novels under study define their identity through others, through their nurturing roles. Why not study books such as Jacob Have I Loved by Katherine Paterson (1980), Teacher by Sylvia-Ashton Warner (1963), and Underground To Canada by Barbara Smucker (1978). These novels question the male status quo and the refusal of women to be victimized by patriarchal oppression. Why not introduce to our young readers the many stories of women who choose not to marry or who may opt out of marriage and still survive as independent individuals who live satisfying lives.

Why have I recommended a Women's Studies course which focuses specifically on women's lives as seen through the eyes of women writers who seek to provide the reader with a complete picture of the whole woman? My recommendation comes from an awareness that in many of the novels used at the high school level show males as encountering conflicts and hardships as they explore the world outside the home, a world which provides a wide range of social opportunities for males. Human development in these novels is masculinized. I am advocating that for every male-centered novel, there be included in the curriculum by way of this Women's Studies course a female-centered text. For example, Golding's Lord of the Flies is a critique of modern day society as developed by men. As a comparative study with this novel, I would recommend Charlotte Perkins Gilman's novel, Herland. This is a critique of a

potential modern society as established by women. By critiquing Herland, students may be motivated to reshape their way of thinking on how the world could operate by observing a community of women working together to create a peaceful society. Gilman forces the reader to observe the often ludicrous but very real norms, beliefs, and values of a patriarchal society. By recommending the inclusion of feminine novels into the curriculum, my intent is to provide all students, male and female, with a woman's view of life, with women's experience. My intent is also to challenge the supremacy of the male-centered, masculine novel which stands unchallenged as representing the realities of all of our lives.

On the other hand, females in the novels under study, rather than explore and experience public life, often move from one home as daughters to a similar private milieu as wives and mothers. Their human development consists of preparing for and taking their places as nurturing women while under the mantle of male protection. Thus, these women, instead of being portrayed as developing an autonomous self, are shown to be passive, dependent, and quiescent i.e. Marty, Fitzpier, and Grace in The Woodlanders. Many of the texts under study suggest that a woman's exploration and discovery of self is to culminate in marriage and motherhood. Nineteenth century heroines, who complied with society's expectations of their roles in life, either died or opted for insanity i.e. Catherine in Wuthering Heights. These appear to be the only forms of protest and resistance to social expectations as I witnessed in Wuthering Heights. I saw these options, death and

insanity, and the portrayal of these in High School novels without critiquing the sexual politics involved in a woman's decision to opt for insanity or death, not as victories for women in resisting and challenging patriarchal authority but as a further victimization of women, women who must self-destruct in order to escape the limitations of their lives. I suggest that a Women's Studies course centering on women's writing focus on the developing self of women in all contexts in society. Just as men in the current novels are shown partaking of journeys of self-discovery, so too should women be accorded the same experience in the pages of novels which our young people are studying.

In revising the curriculum to include an equitable balance of male and female authors, male and female issues and experiences, I realize, however, that it would be somewhat unrealistic to expect that new, unbiased novels be purchased to replace the ones currently in use during this period of fiscal restraint. In the interim however, I feel it is imperative that teachers confront the issue of gender bias in the novels under study to indicate to students that biased materials and the messages they convey are unacceptable. It becomes the responsibility of teachers to work with the existing materials until new materials and programs can be introduced to bring students to an awareness of the stereotypical messages concerning males and females. How may this be accomplished?

A CLASSROOM CONTEXT

The most predominant teaching method in Literature classes has been to read a novel to our students and to dictate notes, rather than to dialogue and to critically analyze. Our tradition has been to lecture, not to debate or discuss variations of the dominant themes. Our tradition has been to test basic literary skills and comprehension of the author's perception, not to evaluate growth in depth and perception of the society in which we live. I think that our students today, as in the past, are subjected to a school system which fails to teach critical analysis. These students have not been exposed to a way of thinking which would enable them to critique their own individual experiences and lives, and to integrate these with theories and assumptions put forth by others. Critical analysis allows one to challenge, to question the authority of the written word. Because critical analysis is so central to exploring different ways of looking at assumptions and "truths" as prescribed for us by others and because critical consciousness is necessary in order to combat the problem of gender-bias, teachers need to assist our young people to take a critical look at the world they are living in and the world which is presented in their texts.

Literature can be an aid to help students to perceive others and their experiences, to envisage new possibilities, and through them better understand oneself and one's global neighbour. This is essential to inner growth. The immensity, the intensity, and the

variety of experiences provided to students through literature is extremely important. Curriculum materials utilized within the classroom context instill values and attitudes in our students. According to the Advisory Committee on Women's Issues (1981), "there exist no stated policy, nor selection guidelines which ensure the elimination, or at least the minimization of sex-role stereotyping and bias in curriculum materials." (p. 26) In order to provide all students with an education which will assist them in achieving their fullest potential and in accepting the worth and dignity of all people, curriculum materials should reflect these as values which are endemic to both sexes.

In the context of the study of the novel, one of the many areas of concentration within the classroom should be the issue of gender representation in the text. In order to indicate a method which takes up the issue of gender within existing texts, I will proceed with a model of a teaching strategy which critiques past and present attitudes within society regarding gender.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

One essential feature of an active, vibrant learning environment is the entire classroom context. According to Bloom and Green (1984), "...what is learned and who is learning it is directly linked to the entire classroom context, an environment created by the teacher." (p. 395) The way a teacher interacts with her or his students will create either a safe environment or

a threatening one. Whether or not a student actively participates in reading and thinking, in the learning process, depends a great deal on the environment in which she or he finds herself or himself. A student will not take risks in an environment which may be perceived as threatening.

In order to take up the issue of gender bias within an existing text, students must be given a "safe space" to express their own biases. How can we, as teachers, create a "safe space" which will enhance teaching and learning through dialogue with one another in which all views are listened to and respected? Based on my own experiences as a teacher who worked to create a safe environment for my students, I make the following suggestions:

- 1) The teacher has the responsibility to try to come to an awareness of each young person as an individual, a unique person who carries into the classroom life experiences, fears, needs, joys, insecurities, and sensitivities.
- 2) So often teachers and students approach an issue, a concept, a theory only on an intellectual level, discounting or frowning upon the emotional response. Only through sharing thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a responsible manner can any real consciousness-raising occur.
- 3) Being available to address the concerns of students is an important aspect of creating a positive climate.
- 4) The teacher may create an environment wherein all

participants will have their views listened to and affirmed in a positive manner. Students will be more willing to respond in the future if this approach is used.

5) Cooperative learning groups could be established. In these groups, students can encourage and assist one another. Students who find it difficult to speak in a larger gathering may be able to voice their views in a smaller, safer gathering. This kind of shared learning gives students the space to actively participate in discussions, to take responsibility for their own learning, and to engage in critical thinking. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is conclusive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. Proponents of shared learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within these small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking.

PROCEDURE

Rather than putting forth abstract theories regarding our society and gender relations, the teacher would require each student to read a specific novel with the focus being to detect gender inequalities. Following this reading, a number of class periods would be devoted to this particular focus. In small groups, students would participate in critiquing the gender aspect bringing into play their own assumptions, their own experiences,

and relating these to the assumptions and theories of the author.

In bringing the students together as a collective group in a seminar format, discussion of what was elicited in the small group discussion would be encouraged. The goal would be that students would begin to understand how it is, according to Brookes (1988), "...that theories and assumptions are formed by authors and how they can construct their own individual theories and assumptions based on their own individual experiences in society." (p. 59) The class may then be able to form their own collective theories and assumptions regarding gender relations based on open dialogue with one another, with the teacher, and with the text.

Following these discussions, the teacher should request that each student write a critical essay addressing the issue of gender inequality as presented in the text. In the writing of this critique, each student should be invited to speak in her or his own voice while doing an analysis of the author's assumptions. Thus, we are giving equal weight and importance to the views and assumptions of the students as well as the author.

As a teacher, my response to this work may be in the form of a written dialogue with each student. This dialogue would consist of asking questions of the assumptions made, affirming each student's views as indeed valid and worthwhile, while making suggestions on how to see an issue from a different perspective. (Brookes, 1988)

As an additional exercise in critiquing gender relations and how these are socially constructed, I would suggest that teachers

provide students with supplementary reading materials. The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood, I would suggest, could be used as a supplementary text to the prescribed texts set down by the Department of Education. The focus of Atwood's novel is the oppression and abuse of women in a puritanical, totalitarian society named Gilead. I would use this novel for a number of reasons. First of all, there is sadly lacking in the high school program a fair representation of female authors and female lead characters. Secondly, Margaret Atwood is a well-known, well-respected Canadian author who received the Governor General's award for this provocative, startling, and futuristic novel. Third, this novel, according to Atwood, shows "nothing that we as a species have not done, aren't doing now, or don't have the technological capability to do." (The Canadian Press, 1990) Thus, students will be assisted in looking at modern-day society through projection by Atwood into a futuristic society, a place which Atwood assumes is not much different from the world we now know and experience.

In using the small group format, the seminar style, the analysis of a text, the written dialogue, I am encouraging students to use all of their own resources - their minds, emotions, attitudes, experiences - to learn, to search, to struggle, to question, to think, to feel, and ultimately, to grow. I am, in effect, forcing students to think critically and analytically, to evaluate their own thinking and to change their behaviour as a result of a change in their thinking process. This classroom procedure encourages students to participate in their own learning

within a structured framework provided by the teacher who is a facilitator of that learning. When we provide students with the opportunity to discuss a text from their own perspective within a supportive, cooperative environment, we are assisting them in developing into independent, critical thinkers who are learning to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge. Hopefully, through the use of the novel and other literary genre, I as a teacher, can help students to acquire the skills necessary to come to their own assumptions, to question the world, and not to just passively accept certain given "truths".

The implications of these recommendations are that the teacher may have an increased work-load. Teachers are already overwhelmed with a conventional teaching load that offers few opportunities for utilizing unfamiliar material, or to rethink existing material from a new and different perspective. In selecting supplementary materials which are less gender-biased, what criteria will the teacher use? Are teachers committed to put the time and energy into exploring different pedagogical practices in order to explore gender issues which are prevalent in our society? Will the school administrators cooperate in terms of allocating money for the purchase of supplementary reading materials? Will male students feel threatened in a class which is questioning a society which is male organized? These are some questions generated by the study to which I have no clear answers.

If a School District does possess the financial resources to implement an appropriate non-sexist literature program, are they

prepared to take up the cause? Are they prepared, for example, to set up a committee to review new publications in order to ensure an equitable balance in male and female authorship and male and female experiences? Are they prepared to establish guidelines which will assist in the purchasing of new curriculum material.?

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PURCHASING NOVELS

When purchasing new novels for introduction into the Secondary School curriculum, the Department of Education Curriculum Committee should have in place guidelines in order to ensure the implementation of a Literature program which is gender-biased free.

As recommended by Coulter (1993):

Curriculum content should be reviewed to ensure that students at all levels of schooling are taught course content which is inclusive and sensitive to gender issues... (p. 10)

I would like to make some suggestions based on my increased awareness of sexist novels as a result of this thesis work.

1) BALANCE THE CURRICULUM

Include a balanced representation of female and male authors who represent the female and the male experience. Would it not benefit both male and female readers to read Porter's January, February, June, or July (1988) as well as Twain's Huckleberry Finn (1981), Hubbard's A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador (1908) as well as Wallace's Lure of the Labrador Wild (1983)?

2) PORTRAYAL OF NON-SEX ROLE STEREOTYPING

Both male and female characters should be portrayed in a wide range of activities in both the public and the private sphere. Both female and male characters should be presented as competent and intelligent in a wide range of occupations. Women, especially, should be made visible in occupations which are presumed to be the sole domain of men. Men should be more visible in their roles as fathers. Alternative family life-styles such as single parent families, two working parent families, and homosexual parent families should be validated in these novels.

3) CONCEPT OF SEXUALITY

Cooperation rather than domination and submission should be in evidence. Relationships between the sexes should be ones which indicate the worth, dignity, and autonomy of each person regardless of gender.

4) EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Female and male characters should be shown as possessing emotional characteristics such as bravery, fear, happiness, sadness, empathy, and sympathy. Those characteristics should not be limited by the gender of the character. A man can equally display the quality of tenderness which often is designated as a woman's characteristic.

5) PERSONALITY TRAITS

As indicated in my analysis of the thirty-two novels, males are portrayed as being aggressive, courageous, leaders and women as being passive, emotional, and caregivers. Males and females should be shown as having a diversity of personality traits not exclusive to either sex.

6) DEVELOPMENT OF SELF

Women should not be presented as living their lives primarily through their children or through men. There is a need for a depiction of women who grow and develop as autonomous, active, and creative persons. Female characters should be presented as having viable choices in life other than marriage or death.

7) VISIBILITY OF WOMEN

The accomplishments of women in science, art, medicine, politics, etc. should be acknowledged. They should be recognized for the historical contributions they have made to society. As well, their role and contribution to the political, economic, and social welfare of contemporary society should be validated. Novels should be chosen which indicate the significant contributions of women to the building of our culture. Equally as well, women's experiences as homemakers must be validated and not serve as

a backdrop to the male experience.

D. CONCLUSION

Re/revision - the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical condition - is for women more than a chapter in cultural history; it is an act of survival. Until we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched, we cannot know ourselves. (Rich, 1972, p.35)

As a teacher of high school literature and as a woman, I have learned not to be satisfied to read and to teach literature in the prescribed way. It is not enough that I teach the literary characteristics of the novel - plot, theme, irony, conflict, symbolism, characterization. Literature, I think, can be a means whereby past and present society can be critiqued with a view to how we all are socialized into mindlessly accepting prescribed patterns of behaviour based on gender. I think literature can be used to critically analyze assumptions presented in the text, assumptions which prevail within society. By this critical analysis, I would hope to make students more aware that they do not have to passively accept these assumptions; that they can think, question, challenge, and possibly engender their own assumptions based upon a critical, well-informed consciousness. Within the context of critical pedagogy, I seek to use the existing novels not only to indicate to young women how the female experience is all but negated from the pages of their texts but also to assist young men to come to an awareness of how these novels masculinize not

only past society but the present-day world. The male-organized values and attitudes of our society are mirrored in literature and to a significant extent, the old ideologies of the past may still persist

In the teaching of the novel, I seek also to encourage young students to explore and to encounter the whole issue of power and powerlessness and how these operated not only in the lives of men and women in the past but in our public and private lives. In focusing upon power and powerlessness and the oppression of women in the past, I seek to use the existing gender-biased high school novels to point out the exclusion of women from the making of history, the oppression and the victimization of women in a male-organized world. However, in providing documentation all throughout my analysis of the thirty-two novels, I feel I have given voice to the very significant contributions of women to the development of societies. In recommending the use of supplementary reading materials, I seek to shift the focus from sole emphasis on women's lack of power in past and present history to a focus on a heritage of determination and resistance by women who fought against the limitations placed upon them by a male-defined world. (Newton, 1981, xviii)

In deconstructing the text, I seek to assist my students to look at theories, assumptions, and issues in another way. I endeavour to concentrate not only on women's oppression but also to look for the hidden lives of those women who resisted those agencies in society which sought and, I think, still seek to keep

woman in her place. The thirty-two novels included in this study are an example of an agency - the educational system in Newfoundland, backed by the various male-dominated, powerful religious denominations in Newfoundland - which covertly attempts to keep women in their place as subordinates to men. These novels do nothing to validate the experiences of women. These novels do not present a view of women as fully functioning members of society who, along with their male counterparts have the right by virtue of their humanness, to participate in a full range of human activities.

By deconstructing the existing novels, by providing novels which give woman her voice, I, as a woman and as a teacher, hope to assist young students to view the world not from a single point of view - the male view - but from a holistic perspective - the human view which encompasses all people regardless of gender.

CHAPTER VICONCLUSION

Men have had every advantage in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree: the pen has been in their hands. (Jane Austen, 1881, ch. xxiii)

In my thesis I discussed my own experiences with a gender-biased literature curriculum. I talked about how education can function as a tool to assist students to critique the world at large. I examined the novels used at the high school level and found them to be gender-biased. I made recommendations for the implementation of a balanced curriculum which would include the equal representation of both females and males. In researching material for this thesis, I discovered stories of independent, resourceful, ambitious, assertive, and strong women who played a vital role in the development of our culture. I remain somewhat discomfited as to why women and their experiences are excluded not only in the novels used at the high school level but also in the selection of those novels. Too, the question arises once again: does the gender of the author affect the gender relations of the text? Perhaps the answer may be found in Mary Eagleton's comments. Eagleton (1986) quotes a review given by Virginia Woolf:

...no one will admit that he can possibly mistake a novel written by a man for a novel written by a woman. There is the obvious and enormous difference of experience in the first place; but the essential difference lies in the fact not that men describe

battles and women the birth of children, but that each sex describes itself. The first words in which either a man or a woman is described are generally enough to determine the sex of the writer. (p. 225)

In focusing on the thirty-two novels selected by the Department of Education for study at the high school level in Newfoundland, my assumption is that the male authors did indeed masculinize the plots, themes, and relations between the sexes. However, I hesitate to make the broad assumption that all novels authored by men are necessarily male-centered. To make this assumption would lead me to conclude that in order to provide a balanced curriculum wherein there is an equitable portrayal of male and female experiences, wherein both sexes can identify with those experiences, a curriculum would have to be implemented which would separate the sexes - a set of male-authored novels for boys and a set of female-authored novels for girls. Since there are already deep divisions between the sexes based on the inequalities in our male-organized society, this separateness would only deepen the divisions.

In my writing of this thesis, in my work as a teacher, as a social activist, in my private life, I am deeply committed to the monumental task of assisting to bring about change in the social order of our society, to ensure that all people, regardless of gender, class, race, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation are provided with the opportunities to live fully functioning lives with dignity and respect. This is difficult work. In a patriarchal society, the efforts of women to shape a society which gives them full status as human beings is slow and painstaking, and

yes, at times often discouraging.

The difficulties arise as a result of a male-centered society which acknowledges gender inequalities in our society, which admits that much work needs to be done to provide fair and equal opportunities to all regardless of gender. Yet, in the decision-making, male-dominated boardrooms, in schools, in churches, et. al, the oppression of women is proliferated on a daily basis. To resist this form of power in order not to subject oneself to practices which serve to perpetuate the victimization of women and which enhance male-produced ideologies, is to place oneself in a position of being silenced. Within the context of her formal education, my eighteen year old daughter is encountering male-domination and the male-perspective on a daily basis. As a result of her growing feminist consciousness, she consistently challenges the male view and the male experience which confronts her throughout the curriculum and most especially in her Grade XII literature program. She does not yet have the language to adequately express her discomfort with the novels she is studying but in attempting to verbally critique the issue of gender-bias in these texts she is often silenced by those who label her "the feminist bitch". But she feels she really has no choice but to protest and to resist in a society which punishes and marginalizes those who refuse to passively conform. Her developing feminist consciousness is making her increasingly aware of how literature especially, perpetuates the oppression of women. These texts pose a problem for her. How is she to discover her/self, her own

identity as a woman, her own woman's herstory in texts which are predominantly male-centered? As Elaine Showalter (1971) states:

Women students are estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity, in part because they do not see it mirrored and given resonance by literature. Instead they are expected to identify as readers with masculine experience and perspective, which is presented as the human one. Since they have no faith in the validity of their own perceptions and experiences, rarely seeing them confirmed in literature or accepted in criticism, then we wonder that women students are so often timid, cautious, and insecure when we exhort them to "think" for themselves? (p. 856)

In my work as a teacher and as a social activist, I am not advocating replacing the current male-centered novels with all female-centered novels. What I am advocating is a critical analysis of these texts by teachers and students in the context of gender issues. A definition which gives the vision of the classroom as an environment in which teachers and students can be actively engaged in critical thinking is that given by Carolyn M. Shrewsbury (1987):

Critical thinking is not an abstract analysis but a reflective process firmly grounded in the experiences of the everyday. It requires continuous questioning and making assumptions explicit, but it does so in a dialogue aimed not at disproving another person's perspective, nor destroying the validity of another's perspective, but at a mutual exploration of explications of diverse experience. (p. 6)

According to Paulo Freire (1987), the major goal of reading and the study of the novel is:

for the construction of meaning whereby readers engage in a dialectical interaction between themselves and the objective world. Although the acquisition of literary skills is viewed as an important task in this approach, the salient feature is how people construct meaning through problem-solving processes...The cognitive

development model...emphasizes a process that allows students to analyze and critique issues raised in the text with an increasing level of complexity. (p. 148)

Freire's approach enables students to critique their own life's experiences and history in order to take part in indepth critical reflection. Through critical reflection regarding their own practical experiences, through critiquing the experiences put forth in the novels they are studying, and most especially, gender-biased novels, the goal will be to assist students to come to a critical consciousness about issues in the larger society. Novels can be a tool to help students to perceive the world not only as it is but as it could be, to envisage new possibilities, and through reading and critical exchange come to a clearer understanding of oneself and all others in society. By critiquing social practices within society, by critiquing the implicit and explicit assumptions of the author regarding the place of men and women in that society, students can be engaged in critical dialogue with the novel, with their peers, with the teacher, and with their own way of thinking. Thus, students may come to an awareness not only of gender-bias in their text-books but the whole issue of woman's place in this world and what that place should rightfully be. In teaching students to think critically, teachers will be helping students to remove the blinders that have always shaped their worldview, in order to look at and think about the world in a new way, a way which validates the experiences of women as well as men.

In critiquing novels in this manner, I am interested in assisting students to look at a time period as outlined in their

novels and to explore not only the social practices of that time but also to raise their awareness of why those social practices existed and to what extent they exist today. What is the point of denying that many women in the Victorian Age were the possessions of men, were perceived to be inferior to men? But what I will deny is that this stereotypical image of women should be presented as the norm in our own society by not addressing the social contexts of past history as presented in literature texts. What I will deny is that it is politically correct to have a male-focused literature curriculum as representative of the entire human family. Toril Moi, (1990) in supporting Kate Millett's (1977) view of critiquing the text states:

Millett argued that social and cultural contexts must be studied if literature was to be properly understood...The most striking aspect of Millett's critical studies is the boldness with which she reads against the grain of the literary text. Her approach is devoid of a conventional respect for the authority and the intention of the author. Her analysis openly posits another perspective from the authors. (p. 24)

Social and cultural influences have shaped the consciousness of who we are, our public and private roles, our place in society, and more importantly, who we may want to be but cannot be because we have learned well our place as dictated by society. Adrienne Rich (1979) comments:

A radical critique of literature...would take the work as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been a male prerogative...We need to know the writing of the past, and know it differently than we have ever known it; not to pass on tradition but to break its hold over us. (p. 35)

Literature often perpetuates the restraints placed upon women by not only describing certain social and cultural expectations but by also "prescribing" those expectations. Teachers and students must, I think, address these prescribed social and cultural expectations if any change in thinking about gender relations is to occur. As Robert Scholes (1985) comments:

Texts are places where power and weakness become visible and discussable, where learning and ignorance manifest themselves, where the structures that enable and constrain our thoughts and actions become palpable. (p. 11)

I think it is important for the literature curriculum to mirror both the male and the female experience. As so clearly stated by Aitken (1987):

Through an understanding of stories, we begin to perceive the influences of socialization, politics, and aesthetics that have shaped our consciousness of who we are and, more often, of who we are not. By looking at our cultural images past and present, we may be not only empowered to choose, but enabled to change. (p. 11)

Through the process of bringing to light both male and female expression of their lives, men and women who are willing and able to think critically, will hopefully bring to voice the idea of creating a new social order, an order based upon new standards by which all people, regardless of gender, can measure themselves against. A novel should "instill" a positive sense of feminine identity by portraying women who are self-actualizing, whose identities are not dependent on men. (Martin, 1987, p. 33) Old stereotypes of women which are not respected in a woman's world, which are not realistic portrayals of modern-day women, should be

critically addressed as unacceptable, and if at all possible, eliminated from the curriculum. A literary work need not include an explicit political commentary by the author. It is enough that an experience be presented with the character deciding on plausible solutions. I feel it should be left to the students, with facilitation by the teacher, to attempt to identify with the experiences presented in the novel, to determine the social forces at work, and to provide possible alternative social and political solutions.

I think it is important to address and eventually, to eliminate gender-biased novels from the current High School literature program. Since literature is one of the core subjects reaching all students within the school system, it is important that the novels being utilized should present the dignity and the worth of all peoples. These novels provide students with role models for family life, social life, and, in general, the larger world. The beliefs of young people about appropriate roles and behaviours for males and females are fashioned partly by exposure to the reading materials they encounter in their daily lives. As Scott and Schau (1984) argue "exposure to sex-equitable materials results in more flexible sex-role attitudes for both males and females." (p. 11) If presented with a steady diet of gender-biased novels all throughout their schooling, young people may develop a mind-set that these biased presentations are the roles and behaviours which are appropriate for them when they become adults. If literature portrays women as subordinate, passive, and

as having limited roles in society and men as active, dominant and as having roles apart from the family, young adults may have expectations and may make assumptions about roles in society based on biased gender portrayals in literature. The school environment, in its entirety, must reflect an honest effort being made to change attitudes and behaviours in our society. However, I question whether or not the majority of people take this issue seriously. In listening to teachers in staff-rooms and in interactions with students at the Junior High and Senior High School level, it became apparent to me that many are not aware of gender-bias in the novel portion of the curriculum. Upon discussing with teachers the possibility of the existence of gender-bias within the curriculum, many of the educators agreed that there may be a disproportionate gender representation in favour of males in the themes and in the characters portrayed in the novels they teach. However, some of these same teachers argued vigorously that this gender bias in one part of the curriculum is more than compensated for in the equality of educational opportunity provided within the school system. I do not dispute the fact that attempts are being made to provide equal opportunity. My problem with this claim is that there can be no equal opportunity if we have an educational system constructed by men who, while professing to be fair and equal to both sexes, continue to impose the male experience through curriculum materials on all others.

I also have problems with their claims of equal opportunity within the school system when teachers who are a part of that

school system admit that they are not aware of gender-bias in textbooks. In my discussions with colleagues, they indicated that they gave no thought to the issue of gender-bias because they were not consciously aware of its presence in the novels they were teaching. This lack of awareness will result in their not dealing with the issue of gender-bias.

What I discovered even more disturbing was the apparent lack of awareness by students, and most especially female students, of gender-bias in their textbooks. In bringing up examples of this type of bias during Literature classes, it became apparent as a result of the views they expressed that some young people think women have gained full parity with men in our society. The world, they feel, provides equal opportunity to all regardless of gender. They also did not perceive gender-bias to be a major educational concern for them. They felt that literature plays a very minor role in the instilling of cultural values and attitudes, so why should they concern themselves with this issue of gender-biased textbooks.

What do young people gain by the integration of female and male characters, language, roles, and behaviours in novels? What do young adults lose by not insisting on gender-biased free textbooks? Young people exposed to equitable gender-oriented materials will probably have more flexible attitudes about roles that are appropriate to both sexes and will model those behaviours as adults. While few would maintain that the written word is the only factor involved in people's way of thinking, it is believed

that language use and literature do have an effect on the transmission and preservation of attitudes and values. Young and older adults are often not consciously aware of the covert messages of sexism in novels, and in literature in general. Since there are so many excellent female role models in our own city, our own country, and in our world, why are there so many empty spaces in our literature curriculum? A fair and balanced portrayal of females in novels is not only justifiable but long overdue.

*If women's stories are not told,
the depth of women's souls will
not be known. (Carol Christ, 1980)*

*The most difficult thing of all: listening and watching in art and literature, in the social sciences, in all the descriptions we are given of the world, for the silences, the absences, the nameless, the unspoken, the encoded - for there we will find the true knowledge of women. And in breaking those silences, naming our selves, uncovering the hidden, making ourselves present, we begin to define a reality which resonates to us, which affirms our being, which allows the woman teacher and the woman student alike to take ourselves, and each other, seriously: to begin taking charge of our lives.
(Rich, 1979, p. 245)*

APPENDIX: (i)

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF NEWFOUNDLAND

KEY POSITIONS HELD BY MALES AND FEMALES

1992 - 1993

POSITIONS

Minister of Education	Mr. Philip Warren
Deputy Minister of Education	Mr. Cyril MacCormack
Director of Educational Programs	Mr. Frank Marsh
Assistant Deputy Minister	Dr. Edna Turpin Downey

CURRICULUM DIVISION

Director	Mr. Wayne Oakley
Assistant Director	Wilbert Boone
Consultants	nine males six females

INSTRUCTION DIVISION

School Libraries Director	Calvin Belvin
Assistant Director	Patrick Balsom
Director of Division	Wayne Oakley

PLANNING AND RESEARCH DIVISION

Director	Claude Clarke
WOMEN'S EDUCATION SERVICES	
Consultant	Barbara Hopkins

APPENDIX: (ii)**ADMINISTRATORS: SCHOOL BOARD AND SCHOOL LEVEL - 1993**

POSITIONS	TOTAL #	MALE	FEMALE
Superintendents	27	27	0
Asst. Superintendents	58	51	7
Program Coordinators	171	120	51
Principals	487	383	104
Vice Principals	310	225	85

(Division of Evaluation, Research, and Planning. Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education, St. John's, Newfoundland. 1992-1993)

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NON-PRINT MEDIA

Lorna Rasmussen, Anne Wheeler (Producers)
Great Grandmother (video, 1975)
 National Film Board
 Studio D
 Montreal, Quebec

Barbara Evans, (Director)
Carol Brandt, Tom Radford, Graydon McCrea (Producers)
Prairie Women (video), 1987

National Film Board (Producer)
Women In The 40's and 50's (Film)
National Film Board
Studio D
Montreal, Quebec



