

Gender-Related Reading, Writing, and Charlotte Brontë: Does a Woman Reader Make a Difference?

Mária Bajner

“If human beings were not being divided into two biological sexes, there would probably be no need for literature. And if literature could truly say what the relations between the sexes are, we would doubtless not need much of it, either...”

Barbara Johnson, *The Critical Difference* (1981)

Introduction to Gender Theories

In the past two decades feminist critics have demonstrated that gender leaves its traces in literary texts. They argue that gender determines everything, including value systems and language structures; as Elizabeth Abel said, “sexuality and textuality both depend on difference” (173). The introduction of gender—which is biological sex in the world of culture—into the field of literary studies works as a new phase in feminist criticism, claiming that all reading and writing, by men as well as by women, is marked by gender. By the time gender studies enter literary studies as critical discourse it is one more way of talking about books, authors and readers. This paper attempts to reveal how reading and writing relate to gender while focusing on female writers in general, and on Charlotte Brontë and her female audience in particular.

The experience and perspective of women as readers have been systematically and misleadingly assimilated into the generic masculine concept by male critics, whereas on the feminists’ part there has always been a need to correct this error. While the nineteenth century was biased towards biographical criticism, the twentieth century saw both the rise and fall of formalist criticism and countless alternatives to formalism that invalidated the possibility of definite readings and re-evaluated the personal viewpoint. It was Virginia Woolf who showed that literature read with a feminist eye involves a double perspective. She argued that since women’s social reality, like men’s, is shaped by gender, the representation of female experience in literary form is gendered. Woolf was among the first to expose androcentric literature to critical analysis

and in her essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929) she structures the reading experience depending on the gender of the reader (62-76). This new kind of approach was related to both the writers' and the readers' creative imagination, the gender of which is said to be neither masculine nor feminine, but androgynous. According to the concept of androgyny, "if one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect, and a woman also has to co-operate with the other side, the man in her" (Woolf, *Room* 168).

During the 1970s several major studies on women and literature reflected an awakening to the study of women writers and readers as distinct from male writers and readers (e.g. Rich, Spacks, Showalter, Chodorow, Fetterley). Such studies were called "gynocritics" by Elaine Showalter (5). In this context, a feminist novel is one in which the reader identifies far more with the heroine than with both female and male characters as he or she would in the case of an androgynous novel. If according to the androgynous interpretation the "Self" happens to be female and the "Other" male, and reading is constructed solely as reading for self-identity, the reading of androtext poses a dilemma. "The real question," according to Josephine Donovan, "is not whether a woman can identify with the subjective consciousness of the self if it is male, but whether she *should*, given her own political and social environment" (50). Politicized in this way, according to K. K. Ruthven, "to read promiscuously is to read perfidiously, and to be compelled to do so by a patriarchal education system which favors androtexts is an injustice to women" (43). In such conditions, the only authentic reader is Judith Fetterley's "resisting" reader, who refuses to let herself be "emasculated" into the sort of token male who succeeds aping male ways of reading, and instead gets a purchase on androcentric classics by reading them against the grain (Fetterley viii).

The feared alternative is to end up in that condition of divided consciousness described by Elaine Showalter, being at once "daughters of the male tradition," which asks them to be "rational, marginal and grateful" and "sisters in a new women's movement," which requires them to "renounce the pseudo-success of token womanhood, and the ironic masks of academic debate" (39). As a moderate, Showalter thinks that the gap which opens for an educated woman reader between a Self made up of female-specific experience and an Other which is androcentric could be closed by the invention of a new kind of discourse which would integrate intelligence with experience. Showalter claims that while reading as a woman may involve constructing a gender identity, reading as a man does not. Maggie Humm argues that no man can read as a feminist because at any time he can escape into patriarchy; the extent of "difference," she feels, is "infinite" (13-14). Judith Fetterley wants us to read her book on American fiction as a 'self-defense survival manual for the woman reader lost in "the masculine wilderness of the American novel" (viii). There is one thing, after all, that especially Marxist feminist critics emphasise, that literature is not to be undertaken simply for "its own

sake" in an aestheticist manner, but as a means of transforming readers who will then go on to transform the world.

Text and Gender

Since the significance of gender in reader response criticism has already been explicitly raised it evolves the question: if the meaning of a work is the experience of a reader, what difference does it make if the reader is a woman? While we are searching for an answer to this question there are some issues of reading which need to be investigated thoroughly.

The first issue is the question of control: does the text control the reader, or vice versa? Critics like Abel, Donovan or Rich say that the reader has a creative role but the text is the dominant force, so reading means creating the text according to its own prompts. The second issue derives from the first one: what constitutes the "objectivity" of the text? What is "in the text"? What is supplied by the reader? The third problem is identified by the ending of the story. Readers may be manipulated—especially by happy endings—but after finishing reading their experience turns into knowledge. However, some critics find these optimistic endings questionable, and prefer stories that stress—as Paul de Man calls it—the "impossibility" of reading. "If," Paul de Man says, "rhetoric puts an obstacle in the way of any reading or understanding, then the reader may be placed in impossible situations where there is no happy issue, but only the possibility of playing out the roles dramatized in the text" (51).

The process of reading is necessarily subjective even if it should not be so. One must respect the autonomy of the text. To quote Schweickart, "the reader is a visitor and, as such, must observe the necessary courtesies" (86). A good text, regardless of the gender of its author manipulates the reader. Readers, men or women, also manipulate the text to produce the meaning that suits their own interest. Without the reader the text is nothing—it is inert and harmless. It is the dynamic of reading that makes it alive. Reading and writing for women has a kind of therapeutic value, a collective remedy, something that binds them with other women. Even in childhood girls discouraged from thinking about becoming generals and emperors, tend to live more in novels than boys do, and to live longer in them. Girls have known from novels about the most important things in their lives, sexual and personal relations, in training for marriage, "the great profession open to our class since the dawn of time" as Virginia Woolf put it ironically (*Essays* 204).

Rachel Brownstein claims that women want to become the heroines they read (36). Of course men also read fiction, and have been affected by what they read. But for women, I think, novels have been particularly preoccupying.

The Woman Reader

Patricia Meyer Spacks in *The Female Imagination* examined similarities of experience and response in writing by women throughout the centuries. Spacks's book reflects her own teaching experience when her students found connections between their own lives and those of characters in fiction written by women—even in fiction written by men—more than a hundred years ago. She looks for an answer to the question: "What are the ways of female feeling, the modes of responding, that persist despite social change?" (3). She considers aspects of power and passivity, adolescent development and independent women to mention just a few. Spacks claims that women have always wanted to read books written by members of their sex since they are looking for help, for models, ways of being, of coping with perplexing perceptions and feelings even if they suspect that they are not supposed to feel anything of the sort, moreover, it is not "intellectual" to say that to read books by women would have direct personal meaning for them. Nonetheless it is believed that the investigation of other women's feelings and the acceptable modes of expressing them might provide a way to justify individual intensities of emotion.

Women, as much as men, want to be "special" to someone and struggle with the problem of individuality. For women the burden of "uniqueness" is particularly heavy, since they have often been bred to believe that they are not supposed to be different from the accepted "norm," that there is something wrong with wishing to stand out, except possibly on the basis of physical beauty. If they can discover their kinship with women who have boldly asserted themselves as writers, they may also be helped toward self-realization and building their self-esteem.

The gender of the reader and the writer raises an additional question: how do women read differently from men? Is there a difference between women reading male texts and women reading female texts? Is there something "distinctively female" in reading? While it is difficult to specify what "distinctively female" might mean, there are currently speculations about differences in the way males and females conceive of themselves and of their relations with others. The works of Jean Baker Miller, Nancy Chodorow, and Carol Gilligan suggest that men define themselves through individuation and separation from others, while women have more flexible ego boundaries and define an experience in terms of their affiliations and relationships with others (Miller 63-65, Chodorow 42, Gilligan 87-93).

Men value autonomy, and they think of their interactions with others principally in terms of procedures for arbitrating conflicts between individual rights. Women, on the other hand, value relationships, and they are most concerned in their dealings with others to negotiate between opposing needs so that the relationships can be maintained. In *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* Adrienne Rich suggested why women read

and interpret literature differently: because "we take the work. . . as a clue to how we live, how we have been living, how we have been led to imagine ourselves, and how our language has trapped as well as liberated us" (35).

Writers and Readers: The Common Link

One of the motives for reading fiction which construct an illusory reality is curiosity about the world the writers depict. How does it feel to have that kind of experience? How do the people relate to each other? What does it mean to be a woman or a man? Many of us encounter major events like love and death more commonly in fiction than we do in normal life, and to that extent fiction influences, perhaps unconsciously, our understanding of these events themselves and our experience of them. If fiction is often the unconscious source of our image of ourselves and the world, it follows that fiction can make an important contribution to the process of reaffirming or reconstructing cultural norms. Feminist writers since Virginia Woolf have considered this a major point of discussion. A good many of the political propositions recently put forward by feminists have been formulated in fiction. Correspondingly, when feminists like Rosalind Coward, Tania Modlensky, and Janice Radway write about current popular fiction addressed to women, they take it seriously as the location of both patriarchy and possible pressure points for change.

Women reading texts written by men are usually motivated by the need to disrupt the process of emasculation, women reading texts the authors of which are women are motivated by the need "to connect," to recuperate or to formulate the context, the tradition, that would link women writers to one another, to women readers and critics, and to the larger community of women. Maggie Humm in *Feminist Criticism* gave a good example of this gender-debate by bringing up the disagreement between Woolf and her father, the literary critic Leslie Stephen, about Charlotte Brontë's "hysteria." Woolf argues that Brontë's subversion of syntactic order, her incomplete sentences and emotional outpourings are a sign of the isolation of writing women and a lack of cultural space, while her father in his essays described Brontë's "hysteria" as a sign of feminine instability (Humm 2).

A woman writer would hardly write from a different position and perspective rather than her own; she would rarely condemn her own sex. As Virginia Woolf observed: "In *Jane Eyre* we are conscious not merely of the writer's character, but we are conscious of a woman's presence—of someone resenting the treatment of her own sex and pleading for its rights. This brings into women's writing an element which is absent from a man's" (Barrett 44-52). She also pointed out in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1942) that Charlotte Brontë's novels are the vehicles of personal revelation, rather than vehicles of conscious criticism of life (76).

A woman reading novels written by another woman encounters not simply a text, but a "subjectified object": the heart and mind of another woman. Giving the role of a narrator to a woman instead of a man in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is not by chance; it has its own importance. Women are usually eager to share their feelings and thoughts about men with other women as better understanding can sometimes be expected from the representatives of their own sex.

The woman reader takes the part of the woman writer and regards the text as the manifestation, the "voice" of another woman. What fantasy structures do girls take away from reading *Jane Eyre*? The book gives them alternative ideals of female autonomy and female solidarity. Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre* shows the heroine's intellectual and emotional development, her growing self-confidence and maturity. Her rejection of conventional marriage where sexuality was of secondary importance, is highly refreshing. Jane's refusals to be contained within gender categories, in the face of countless pressures and temptations to accept a subordinate role, can inspire her reader with a determination to make the fantasy of defiant autonomy her own. But I suspect that many readers are attached to *Jane Eyre* because it reflects so vividly their own ambivalence.

The ambivalence of the author's personality impedes her in describing male experience. This disability manifests itself in her style where tension is tangible. The sense of strain arises partly from contradictions of tone—the frequent alliance of morality and passion—and partly from the conflicting impulses of wish and fear. The axiom in modern psychology that one's greatest wish is simultaneously one's greatest fear surely describes the opposing elements in Charlotte Brontë's prose. Margaret A. Bloom writes that while Charlotte depicts unmated women as psychologically crippled, they can only respond to a male whose ability and willingness to control them are in part sadistic, so that Jane Eyre, Caroline Helstone and Lucy Snow rightly fear what they seek (89). Lucy Snow's ambivalent behavior in accepting a masculine role in the play enacted for Madame Beck's *fete* reveals a lot about her insecurity. Quite literally refusing to wear the pants, symbolic of masculine sexual and social dominance, Lucy—and Brontë, as her career as a novelist writing under a male pseudonym indicates—can still play a masculine role well, despite the liability of femininity. The exhilaration Lucy feels on stage playing the role of the fop and the revulsion she experiences afterwards is a confirmation of the neurotic ambivalence of Lucy's mind which can also be interpreted as a reflection of the author's mind. With this understanding, we can hypothesize that a conflict between Brontë's ardent desire to be married and a rooted distaste for that same condition resulted in a state of neurotic agitation that quite literally contributed to her rapid decline after marriage, and to her death.

Charlotte Brontë's Audience

Charlotte Brontë's narrators often turn to imagined "readers" and speak directly to them. In *Villette* (1853) most readers automatically think of the fictionalized reader addressed by Lucy as female, though on the rare occasions that Lucy refers to her reader by pronoun, she uses the generic 'he' and 'his' (Ch. 8, 29, 30). In addition to following an accepted literary convention (and despite the fact that most novel readers were women), Lucy may deliberately be positing a male audience to emphasize that the power to pass both literary and moral judgments on her story belonged, in the public sphere, predominantly to men. Lucy is deliberately creating not only a new form of fiction for women, but a new audience: part critic, part confidante, part sounding bored—whose willingness to enter her world and interpret her text will provide the recognition denied to women who do not follow traditional paths of development.

In order to test this hypothesis, we must trace Lucy's relationship to the fictionalized reader in the text. There are, in fact, particularly at the beginning of the novel, at least two readers to whom Lucy reveals different aspects of her experience and herself. They are the conventional or socialized reader, who embodies society's expectations about women and whom Brontë creates to ask the implied questions she anticipates in her relation with the world; and the rebellious or unsocialized reader with whom she has a shared perspective—an arbitrary narrative—that gradually dominates both readers and the text. The split between the two readers in the early part of Lucy's narrative may signify a split between those readers who accept male dominance and women's subordinate position and want to find them mirrored in novels—an audience that speak with a male voice and male authority and might well condemn her actions—and those readers who like and understand Lucy's psychic outbreaks, in whom she can trust. If this distinction breaks down later in the novel when the different readers begin to merge, it may be owed to Lucy's sense that she has so shaped her audience to her own ends that gender becomes insignificant.

In *Shirley* (1849) Brontë urges her reader to accept her characters: "You must not think, reader, that in sketching Miss Ainley's character I depict a figment of the imagination—no—we seek the originals of such portraits in real life only" (198). In *Jane Eyre* (1847) the reader is often appealed to in order that s/he be drawn into closer involvement with the story. These appeals tend to come at crucial moments in the action: when, in the afternoon of their interrupted wedding, Rochester asks Jane to forgive him ("Reader! I forgave him") (241) or when the happy ending approaches ("Reader, I married him") (552), or when Jane runs away from Rochester: "Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt! . . . for never may you, like me, dread to be the instrument of evil to what you wholly love" (351). The fact that the direct appeals to the reader increase rather than decrease in frequency in her later novels suggests

that Charlotte Brontë used them as a very deliberate device: to involve the readers with the story, to make them part of the experience. There is always an attempt in her writing to create a bond of agreement between herself and the reader. Her habit of addressing the readers is not unique: she has good precedent for the device in Fielding and Scott, and also in her much-admired contemporary, Thackeray. Charlotte Brontë goes on: she also uses this device for venting tensions and regarding balance between her natural impulse towards the thrilling and the supernatural and her belief in the importance of the rational while discovering the female experience.

When speaking about "female experience" as related to the Brontës we must not forget that their model hero in most cases was the product of ignorance, the projection of women's fantasies about how they would act and feel if they were men. When G. H. Lewes complained in 1852 that the literature of women was "too much a literature of imitation" and demanded that women should express "what they have already known, felt, and suffered" he was asking for something that Victorian society had made impossible (qtd. in Showalter, *Literature* 132). As Charlotte Brontë admitted to her friend, Jane Taylor: "When I write about women I am sure of my ground—in the other case I am not sure" (qtd. in Showalter, *Literature* 18). In most cases the female imagination is responsible for the themes and sexual awareness and the special point of view that absorbed female minds during the past centuries.

Charlotte Brontë's Heroines and Their Traits

Novels written by women in the 19th century do not destroy or even seriously challenge the old, male-created myths about women, but they shift the viewpoint: for example in interpreting the Freudian description of women as masochistic, passive, and narcissistic (Berman 88-89). Autobiographies and fiction by women supply abundant evidence of these traits. Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, for instance, make their characters' physical beauty or plainness a matter of intimate importance. Sandra Lee Bartky defines female narcissism as an infatuation with an inferiorized body and suggests that the social identification of a woman with her body reflects her self-image (129). Admiration of the heroine of a romantic novel—beautiful, wise, beloved, and lucky—is love for an idealized image of oneself. Studies have shown that there is a girl within each female reader with childhood experiences and a wish to be beautiful, which leads to further investigation into women's psyche. Charlotte Brontë, who herself did not belong to the most ravishing beauties, created plain heroines who might also be called outsiders.

The subject-matter of *Jane Eyre*, *Villette* and with certain elaborations that of *Shirley* is the Cinderella-theme. Charlotte Brontë treats it in the form of "naiveté": instead of supposing that Cinderella has the advantage of physical beauty over the Ugly Sisters, it is suggested that it is they who are beautiful, and she who is ugly, though possessing a

spiritual quality which abolishes that disadvantage. In her use of the Cinderella-theme Charlotte Brontë demonstrates our hope that, though we are plain and distressed, a miracle will happen and we shall be made queens of the world. Everywhere women gaze into mirrors, embrace suffering, welcome roles of helpless submissiveness. To prefer suffering to pleasure may seem perverse from one point of view, and profoundly wise from another. It is well illustrated by the sickroom in Victorian fiction which seems to be a haven of comfort, order, and natural affection.

The sickroom scenes in the novels of the Brontës are linked to moments of crisis during which the sufferers have become separated from the social roles and norms by which they previously defined themselves. The heroines' capacity to accept, even welcome unhappiness derives from their refusal to compromise, their unwillingness to conform to social definitions of what should constitute happiness, their determination to preserve their own identity. Narcissism, masochism, and passivity can provide means of self-preservation; they can be strategies for maintaining the personality. Charlotte Brontë's writing supplies an awareness of the necessity for such tactics, given conditions of life that make direct methods of survival impossible.

To want to be a heroine is to want to be something special, something else, to want to change, to be changed, and also to want to stay the same. The Brontë reader wants to identify with Jane, Caroline, Shirley, and Lucy as they attempt to comprehend, anticipate, and deal with the ambiguous attentions of Rochester, Louis and Robert Moore, John Graham and M. Emanuel, who inevitably cannot understand their feelings at all. The point of the experience is the sense of exquisite tension, anticipation, and excitement created within the reader as the female reader imagines the possible resolutions and consequences for a love affair and then observes that once again the heroine in question has avoided the ever-present potential disaster because finally the hero has fallen helplessly in love with her. By immersing themselves into the romantic fantasy, women readers vicariously fulfill their needs for nurturance by identifying with a heroine whose principal accomplishment is her success at drawing the hero's attention to herself, at establishing herself as the object of his concern and the recipient of his care.

While the Charlotte Brontë heroines may appear foolish, dependent, and even pathetic to readers who have already accepted, as given, the equality of male and female abilities, they appear courageous, and even valiant, to others still unsure that such equality is a fact. Their desire to believe that the romantic heroine is as intelligent and independent as she is asserted to be, even though she is also shown to be vulnerable and most interested in being loved, is born of their apparently unconscious desire to be assertive within traditional institutions and relationships. Nonetheless, it is essential to recognize that the readers' revelling in the heroine's intelligence, independence, self-sufficiency, and initiative is as important to their reading experience as the fact of the heroine's final capture by a man who admits that he needs her.

Summary and Perspectives

The question of Charlotte Brontë's readership has been much discussed since the last decade. If Charlotte Brontë's novels are considered "feminist" readings we are supposed to read them differently, in the way feminists would read and interpret them. How feminists read "differently" needs to be explained briefly. In a feminist story there is a necessity of choosing between two modes of reading. The reader can submit to the power of the text, or she can take control of the reading experience. A feminist reader should take the latter alternative. An example of reading Charlotte Brontë is at hand. What do feminists get from reading *Jane Eyre* or *Villette*?

A non-feminist reader would see in Rochester's blinding the embodiment of a godlike hero symbolically castrated by his female author while for a feminist Rochester's mutilation is a necessary counterpart of Jane's independence in the condition of a relationship of equality. Besides, Jane's rejecting St. John's marriage proposal for a conventional marriage where sexuality was of secondary importance can also be interpreted differently, according to the reader's expectation of marriage. If, for the reader, marriage is a situation of mutual interdependence, a relationship where neither partner is submissive to the other and both are equals by submitting themselves to mutual limitation, then St. John Rivers's view is closer to the modern concept of marriage than anything Rochester can offer. Rivers offers a marriage in which love will grow with habit, in other words married love instead of romantic love. Rochester, despite his passion, attempted to turn Jane into a plaything, a dependent, a sexual object and a slave as soon as she agreed to marry him. A feminist who really wants to reject the eternal feminine role would choose Rivers rather than Rochester.

To read books by women has its challenges. It is illuminating to seek the special point of view, and to find how the stories women tell shape themselves into patterns, even if not universal, but at least very widespread in the female experience. Women readers often identify with many incidents and actions and reactions from earlier centuries on the basis of their own lives. Women who write directly or indirectly about their own lives in letters, journals, or autobiographies, demonstrate that the experience of women has long been the same, that female likeness is more fundamental than female difference.

Currently, feminist critics are interested in studying relationships between women, including mothers and daughters, sisters, friends, lesbians and female communities. Such studies are extensions of Virginia Woolf's comment in *A Room of One's Own* that women are rarely portrayed in relation to each other in fiction by men (13). This new focus allows feminist critics to move on towards a feminist criticism, which, according to Judith Fetterley "is a political act, whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read" (viii). In order to

“change the consciousness” of the readers we need to ask much more persistently what we want to know and how we can find answers to the questions that come from our own experience.

Works Cited

- Abel, Elizabeth, ed. *Writing and Sexual Difference*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988.
- Bartky, Lee Sandra. “On Psychological Oppression.” *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism*. Ed. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn. London: Methuen, 1985. 93-135.
- Berman, Jeffrey. *Narcissism and the Novel*. New York: New York UP, 1990.
- Bloom, A. Margaret. “Charlotte Brontë: Feminist Manquée.” *Bucknell Review* 21 (1973): 87-102.
- Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. London: Penguin, 1979. (1847)
- . *Shirley*. London: Penguin, 1979. (1849)
- . *Villette*. London: Penguin, 1979. (1853)
- Brownstein, Rachel M. *Becoming a Heroine: Reading about Women in Novels*. New York: Viking, 1982.
- Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. Berkeley Ca: U of California P, 1978.
- Donovan, Josephine. “Beyond the Net: Feminist Criticism as a Moral Criticism”. *Denver Quarterly* 17 (1983). 46-54.
- Faderman, Lilian. *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love Between Women from the Renaissance to the Present*. New York: Columbia UP, 1981.
- Fetterley, Judith. “Introduction: On the Politics of literature.” *The Resisting Reader*. Ed. J. Fetterley. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1978. i-ix.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women’s Development*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982.
- Humm, Maggie. *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics*. Hempstead: Harvester, 1986.
- . *Practising Feminist Criticism*. Hempstead: Harvester, 1995.
- Johnson, Barbara. *The Critical Difference*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins UP, 1981.
- Lewes, G. H. “The Lady Novelist.” *Westminster Review* 11 (1852): 128-45.
- Man, Paul de. “Nietzsche’s theory of rhetoric.” *Symposium* 28. (1974): 39-65.
- Miller, Jean Baker. *Toward a New Psychology of Women*. Boston: Beacon, 1976.
- Rich, Adrienne. *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*. New York: Norton, 1977.
- Ruthven, K. K. *Feminist Literary Studies. An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984.

- Schweickart, Patrocínio P. "Reading Ourselves: Toward a Feminist Theory of Reading." *Speaking of Gender*. Ed. Elaine Showalter. New York: Routledge, 1989. 79-92.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own*. Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1977.
- . "Towards a feminist poetics." *Women Writing and Writing about Women*. Ed. Mary Jacobus. London: Routledge, 1979. 4-12.
- Spacks, Patricia Meyer. *The Female Imagination*. New York: Knopf, 1975.
- Todd, Janet. *Women's Friendship in Literature*. New York: Columbia UP, 1979.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. London: Hogarth, 1931. (1929)
- . *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. London: Hogarth, 1942.
- . *Collected Essays I*. New York: New York UP, 1967.
- . "Women and Fiction." *Women and Writing*. Ed. Michele Barrett. London: Women's, 1979. 4-12.