THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER
ON SECONDARY ENGLISH STUDENTS’
WRITTEN RESPONSES TO TEXT

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
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DEDICATION

To my parents

Elizabeth Kathleen McIntosh
William Wilson McIntosh
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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to examine the written responses to Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities* in the Reader Response Journals of eight (four females, four male) grade 10 Enriched English students. Through analysis of journal transcripts, an attempt was made to determine the extent to which gender influences the readers’ written responses to text. Existing literature was limited in this area of study.

Eight students were selected at random from a Grade 10 Enriched English classroom in a Canadian academic secondary school in a metropolitan area. The school, with a culturally homogenous population of 1000 students, was located in an upper-middle class neighbourhood.

Over a three month period, journals were collected twice by the researcher, the contents were copied and then returned to the students. Using the constant comparative method, the researcher analyzed journal transcripts, determined categories and properties, and paid
special attention to evidence of gender influence. Collection of journals at the study site resulted in 102 pages of data from responses in eight student journals.

Findings from this study indicate female writers showed empathy for fictional characters and wrote about relationships between characters more than males. The intensity of their responses was noted in addition to the frequency. Females related their feelings about the characters involved in events, while males were more likely to state their feelings about the event itself. Engagement with text was more prevalent in the journals of females while males seemed to reveal some disengagement from the text, especially when they disagreed with a character’s actions or a specific event. Although gender influence on readers’ written responses to text was revealed, the individual nature of response and reader engagement came to the researcher’s attention.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction and Rationale


There are many text-oriented and reader-oriented factors to be considered when examining written journal responses (Beach & Hynds, 1990). One text-oriented factor is the choice of text one responds to - whether it is deemed to be a 'boy text' or a 'girl text' (Myra Barrs & Sue Pigeon, 1994; Meredith Cherland, 1994; Peter Thomas, 1994). Another factor is the genre being read (Peter Benton, 1995; Gemma Moss, 1989). A third factor to be considered is whether the text being responded to has been written by a male or female writer (David Bleich, 1986; Judith Fetterly, 1986; Annette Kolodny, 1985; Patrocinio Schweickart; Elaine
Showalter, 1985; Anne Simpson, 1996). In recent years, reader-oriented factors have been a focus of study as researchers examine cultural influences such as the impact of gender on one’s written responses (Cherland, 1996; Pam Gilbert, 1992, 1994; Janice Radway, 1986). The effect of such factors on the substance of a recorded journal response requires closer study.

Study and analysis of the role of gender in readers’ response to text would provide one with a clearer understanding of whether gender actually does affect a written response. A number of questions are central to such a study. What is the relationship between gender and reading? Does gender influence the reader’s response? Is there a difference between the reader responses of males and females? If so, why? In order to determine the extent to which gender influences readers’ written response to text, further examination is required.

Although research has been conducted about classroom strategies such as reader response journals, and on gender and reading, research into the influence of gender on students’ written responses is limited. Study and analysis of actual student journal responses in secondary English is sparse. A number of questions are central to such a study. What support for reader response theory is provided by these grade ten readers’ written responses to literature? What does a content analysis of the literary
response of grade ten students reveal about their response style and meaning-making patterns? What types of responses (efferent, aesthetic) do grade ten students make as entries in their journals when they reflect on a novel being studied in class? Is there a gendered conception of journal writing, and if so, how does this affect male and female responses? If the use of response journals privileges the experiences or skills of one gender over the other, how does this affect our classroom program? What affect does our formulation of assignments and classroom pedagogy have on the success of some students we ask to compose this form of writing? How can exploring the effects of gender on written discourse produced by students add to our knowledge of the ways gender influences language use?

Since response theory is reader-based, it seems appropriate to investigate what and how students write in their response journals on several grounds: a) it would seem to be consistent theoretically with reader response theory since the reader (the student) is the focus b) it would offer information which could lead to enhancement of current reader response approaches c) it would increase awareness about the influence of gender on the content of reader response journals in the English classroom d) it would allow teachers to make better informed decisions about curricula and instruction in classrooms based on knowing
more about the way male and female students respond to texts. e) it would provide a check on whether the theoretical and research based goals/descriptions of reader response are accomplished in student writing and f) it would provide further insight into what student response writing is. Therefore, the intent of this study is to examine student reader response journals in a secondary English classroom, to determine the extent to which gender influences readers' written responses to text.
CHAPTER TWO

Review of Relevant Theory and Research

Since reader response journals are one strategy for implementing reader response theory, a brief summary of research in the field of reader response theory would be beneficial. The literature on the relationship between gender and reading can be clustered around two major themes. The first involves an exploration of feminist literary criticism that analyzes literary texts from a reader-oriented perspective. The second presents reading research that examines the behaviour of elementary, middle school, secondary, college and university students.

Reader Response Theory

Richards (1929) believed that reader response was an "individualistic, unique and idiosyncratic process; a process in which readers were allowed to interpret any way they want (provided that their responses adhered to principles of logical thought)" (James Flood & Diane Lapp, 1988, p. 62). The interrelationship between reading and writing is the focus of Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory. The meaning of the text resides in the person rather than the words on the page (Probst, 1989; Rosenblatt, 1978). Rosenblatt asserts that the 'transaction' or interaction between reader and text is different for every reader since each is an individual (Rosenblatt, 1990). Frye (1963) urged teachers to respond to text. "The critic's function is to interpret every work of literature in light of all the literature he knows, to keep constantly struggling to understand what literature as a whole is about" (Frye, 1963, p. 44). Purves (1972) argues that at the center of the literature curriculum are not the works of literature but the mind as it meets the book, the response. Bleich (1975) stresses the freedom of the individual reader and seeks to understand the literary act by examining how individuals make sense out of literary works. Bleich (1978) argues that "response is a purely subjective activity while interpretation, a process of converting thought into knowledge, occurs within the context of the interpretive community in which the reader resides; knowledge is
therefore created or negotiated by a community that decides what is desirable to know” (Rogers, 1987, p. 219). Holland (1975) examines the differences in readers' interpretations and explains them as a function of the differences between the lifestyles and identities of readers. Iser (1978) indicates that the text and the reader interact to create what we know as the literary “work” itself. In interacting with the text, the reader receives textual messages and works to order them into a pattern of meaning. Fish (1980) attributes authority for the interpretive process to neither the reader nor the author but to the “interpretive communities” to which they belong and which are responsible for their activities and the texts those activities produce. Scholes (1985) views reading as an active process and the reader is recognized not as a consumer but as a producer of meaning. Drawing heavily on the work of Rosenblatt (1938, 1978), Probst (1988, 1994) believes that the task of teaching literature is to help students to think, not to tell them what to think. Probst’s research is practical in nature as he presents clear directions and suggestions about how response to literature can be implemented in the English classroom. The research of these individuals represents the reader-response movement, which arises in direct opposition to New Criticism, the text-centred view of literature teaching (Jane Tompkins, 1980, p. ix).
Feminist Literary Criticism

Stephen Bonnycastle (1996) states that “reader-centered criticism involves more feminine qualities -- a dispersal of authority, a plurality of ‘valid’ meanings for a work, and a concern for the community rather than authority” (p. 192). Rosenblatt’s theory (1978) emphasizes that reading is an emotional as well as intellectual experience. She discusses the effect that literature can have on the development of emotional maturity of adolescents in Literature as Exploration (1938), and argues that literature offers us an emotional outlet (Elizabeth Flynn, 1991, p.169). Reading is seen as having both a cognitive and affective component. Readers have different purposes for reading and read in different ways depending on those purposes (Flynn & Schweickart, 1986). Rosenblatt (1978) identifies two approaches to reading -- efferent reading and aesthetic reading. In efferent reading, “the reader's attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue after the reading -- the information to be acquired, the logical solution to a problem, the actions to be carried out. As the readers respond to the printed words or symbols, their attention is directed outward, toward concepts to be retained, ideas to be tested, actions to be performed after the reading. The primary concern of the reader is with what he will carry away from the reading. In aesthetic reading, the reader’s primary concern is with what happens
during the actual reading event. The reader’s attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text” (pp. 23-24). “Implicit in this distinction between the two stances of the reader, the two directions in which he focuses his attention, is recognition that the same text may be read either efferently or aesthetically” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 25).

Flynn (1991) claims that Rosenblatt’s work is distinctly feminine and can therefore enrich feminist theories of reading. “Her concept of aesthetic reading can be developed into a strategy for reading women’s texts, and her transactional approach to reading can contribute substantially to the attempt on the part of feminist literary theorists to explain how gender affects reading” (p. 170). A question that can be asked is that if readers differ in their approaches to text, how much of this difference can be attributed to gender? Do female and male readers respond to text differently, and if so, using Rosenblatt’s (1978) definitions, does one respond in an aesthetic way and the other respond in an efferent way?

Showalter’s research (1985) indicates that women readers and critics bring different perceptions and expectations to their literary experience. She states that “feminist criticism has established gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis” (p. 3). The research of Beach
(1993) reveals that "students adopting a feminist stance may be more likely to be engaged with interpersonal perspectives through engaging with the voices of an author or other students, a form of connected knowing" (p. 142). Is this stance more prevalent with female or male readers?

Studies have been conducted which examine the ways in which texts determine responses along gender lines. Flynn (1983, 1986, 1990) conducted an exploratory study to examine the interpretive strategies of college freshmen in their responses to three short stories. The twenty-six women and twenty-six men wrote responses to the stories during three different class sessions. The analysis of her data indicated "distinct patterns of response along gender lines. A pattern of dominance was evident in some of the men's responses and more women were able to resolve the tensions in the stories and form a consistent pattern of meaning. The dominant reader is often a detached reader; the text is not engaged, and so the reader feels little empathy for the central characters" (Flynn, 1986, pp. 272-273). The women students in the study were better able to achieve a balance between detachment and involvement in reading. Conclusions drawn from the study indicate that "male students sometimes react to disturbing stories by rejecting them or by dominating them, a strategy, it seems, that women do not often employ ... Women more often
arrive at meaningful interpretations of stories because they more frequently break free of the submissive entanglement in a text and evaluate characters and events with critical detachment” (Flynn, 1986, p. 285). Flynn (1990) explains that differences between males and females are “the result of an imbalance in the social order, of the dominance of men over women ... women’s perspectives have been suppressed, silenced, marginalized, written out of what counts as authoritative knowledge. Difference is erased in a desire to universalize. Men become the standard against which women are judged” (p. 114). Flynn (1990) makes a number of assumptions about texts and readers. Further research would be beneficial before drawing such conclusions. Carol Gilligan (1982) states that “male and female voices typically speak of the importance of different truths, the form of the role of separation as it defines and empowers the self, the latter of the ongoing process of attachment that creates and sustains the human community” (p. 156).

Linda Christian-Smith (1993a) claims that “reading and writing embody social, economic, and political relations that shape readers’ interpretations of books and the texts writers produce. Through literacy, young women construct and reconstruct their desires and gender subjectivities, as well as their awareness of social differences and power relations” (pp. 1-2). Shoshana Felman (1993) conducts an inquiry into
what ‘reading as a woman’ means and presents strategies for reading sexual difference. Lizbeth Goodman & Alison Smith (1996) and Judith Gardiner (1982) apply feminist thought to the analysis of differences between male and female writing. Goodman & Smith (1996) reveal that “the gendering of language reveals an assumption of passivity in the feminine and activity in the masculine ... it is often argued that women’s writing tends to be less linear than men’s -- perhaps because women’s lives do not always follow the structured lines of men’s lives” (p. 26). Gardiner (1982) supports this view in stating “women’s experiences differ from men’s in profound and regular ways ... I picture female identity as typically less fixed, less unitary, and more flexible than male individuality ... the woman writer uses her text, particularly one centering on a female hero as part of a continuing process involving her own self-definition and her identification with her character” (pp. 178-187).

Donna Alvermann and Michelle Commeyras (1994) are concerned with how gendered discursive practices are manifested in the language of the classroom and the language of the text. They argue that “classroom discussions are important sites of investigation ... for understanding why particular discursive practices tend to dominate classroom talk and what might be done to alter such practices” (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994, p. 184). They stress that students need “opportunities to question textual
inscriptions that define or relegate women and men to particular gendered positions ... we are interested in creating spaces for students and teachers to explore and discuss multiple perspectives based on multiple readings of texts” (Alvermann & Commeyras, 1994, pp. 188-197). Alvermann & Commeyras are influenced by the work of Gilbert (1989). She emphasizes that classroom discussions need to include opportunities for students to question textual inscriptions that define or relegate women and men to particular gendered positions (Gilbert, 1989).

Reading Research

Some of the research involves data collection of female and male journal responses to text, but the focus of the analysis and conclusions drawn are based on the characteristics of the female responses. Radway (1984) conducted a study to determine reasons for the emotional and cultural appeal of romance novels to women. Sixteen avid female readers were interviewed and forty-two readers completed questionnaires about their responses to romance novels. Conclusions from the study indicated that “readers preferred heroine types who were intelligent, attractive, moral, nurturing, and emotional -- they disliked portrayals of violence ... responded positively to instances in which the heroine transforms the male hero from an impersonal to a more personal character” (Radway, 1984, p. 215). Radway (1984) concludes that the appeal of the romance
novel reflects a cultural need for reinforcement of the women's own nurturing role within the context of a traditional, patriarchal society.

In contrast to Radway's research (1984), Gilbert (1992, 1994) argues that "girls are much more resistant to cultural images of romantic femininity than is sometimes assumed" (Gilbert, 1994, p. 173). Gilbert (1992, 1994) states that girls' writing is closely linked to girls' reading, and that reading and writing are learned cultural practices. Unlike Radway's study which examined the reading practices of women, Gilbert examines a study conducted on ten-year-old girls. The Canadian study conducted by John Willinsky and Richard Hunniford (1986) discovered that "romance reading was the most popular form of reading for 61 percent of girl students. By comparison, boy students of the same age listed war, adventure, and sports stories as their preferred fiction" (Gilbert, 1994, p. 179). Christian-Smith (1993b) discusses how teen romance novels constructed the gender, class, racial, ethnic and sexual subjectivities of 29 middle and working class young American women, ages 12-15. Her study demonstrates how "they negotiate the relation of their fantasy lives to their lived experiences and attempt to refashion the latter through imagining other possibilities" (Christian-Smith, 1993b, p. 46). Gilbert (1994) considered the difficulties girl readers/writers have in moving beyond romantic stereotypes. In examining the writing of young
girls, it is apparent that “in writing narratives they are forced to draw
upon the textual forms they know, and it is at this first level of narrative
construction that the gendered stereotypical and therefore restricted
nature of most literary genres becomes obvious” (p. 181).

Upper elementary and Middle school studies
Cherland (1993, 1994a, 1994b) views gender as a cultural
construction and reading as a social practice therefore concluding that
gender is unavoidably present in reading. Her study involves seven girls
age 11-12, the books they read, and how they read them. The study focused
on answering the question: “what does the reading of fiction mean to
these girls?” Discussion of novels with groups of children in literature
response groups, transcription of interviews and the dialogue journals of
seven girls who were avid readers of fiction comprised the data for the
study. Since the data were collected in school classrooms, Cherland was
able to examine both male and female responses to text. Through analysis
of her data, she identified two distinct categories which she labelled as
"discourse of feeling" and "discourse of action". Discourse of feeling is a
descriptive term for “a way of talking about literature, a way of
signifying, through language, a concern with the feelings of both the reader
of the text and the characters portrayed in the text in question ... readers
use it in order to speak of their own emotional responses to a text"
Discourse of action is a term for "a different style of talking about literature, a style that reflected a concern more with the plot, or with what happened in the story ... a desire to find meaning in the action occurring in the story rather than in any of the story's human relationships or literary stylistic devices" (Cherland, 1994a, p. 140). Based on the transcriptions of the literature-response groups, both boys and girls used the discourse of feeling and the discourse of action but the girls were more inclined to use the discourse of feeling, while the boys were more inclined to use the discourse of action (Cherland, 1994a). The girls in these classrooms who "'did gender' by working hard both at understanding other people and at maintaining human relationships, were thus more inclined to read literature in terms of characters and relationships, and to use the discourse of feeling when talking about it. The boys who 'did gender' by being active and by fighting for a place in the social hierarchy, were thus more inclined to read literature in terms of both the plot and event, and to use discourse of action when talking about it" (Cherland, 1994a, pp. 144-145). Taking a closer look at the texts girls and boys are exposed to at an early age might clarify the origin of this difference between female and male adolescents' approaches to reading literature.

Karen Evans (1996) studied the role of gender in literature
discussion groups in two Grade 5 classrooms where “literature circles were used as a cornerstone of literacy instruction” (p. 185). She noted that the students engaged in different types of talk that closely resembled Cherland’s (1993, 1994a) discourses of feeling and action. “Girls often expressed a personal connection with the characters, and their conversations illustrated how they frequently put themselves in a character’s place or personally identified with a certain character” (Evans, 1996, p.186). In contrast, “boys rarely analyzed characters, and when characters were discussed it was in terms of what they did, not what they felt ... they emphasized specific plot events in the story, but did not address the internal motivation or reasons behind the events” (Evans, 1996, p. 187).

Marjorie Hancock (1992,1993a, 1993b) conducted three studies into the content and process of literature response journals. Two of the studies focused on grade six students (1992,1993b) and the third focused on grade eight students (1993). In her pilot study, Hancock discovered “patterns of response which serve as a reference point for detecting individual ways of making sense of the text” (1992, p. 37). These patterns included character interaction, character empathy, prediction and validation, personal experiences and philosophical reflections. In her study of 10 grade six students (1993b), she examined how “the active
meaning-making process was reflected in their written responses to four books of realistic fiction" (Hancock, 1993b, p. 335). She concluded that “reader response is indeed remarkably diverse for sixth-grade readers--each reader exhibited a unique response profile” (Hancock, 1993b, p. 365). The character journals of a group of grade eight students was the focus for her third study (1993a). Such a journal is shown as a viable option for promoting response to literature. It “encourages adolescents to read quality literature, to assume the role of the main character, to compose written responses that reflect a deeper personal involvement in the reading process, and to gain insight into their own emerging identities” (Hancock, 1993a, p. 42). With regard to gender differences, the results of the study revealed “the intensity of emotional responses by both genders regardless of the gender of the character. Although most students believed it was easier to relate to a character of one’s own gender, the character journal comfortably provides an outlet to identify with either a male or female character” (Hancock, 1993a, pp. 46-47). Is a reader “more engaged” in a fiction work if the protagonist is of the same gender as the reader? How can such “engagement” be measured? The question of whether personal engagement is a pre-requisite to understanding a text is a valid one.

Moss’ research (1989) focuses on British adolescents. Moss
examines the role popular fiction plays in modelling for one's own writing. Her work concentrates on girls' use of romance, and shows that they are not "mindlessly enslaved to the forms they reproduce, but are actively deploying them to raise rich and complex questions about society identity" (Moss, 1989, p. 1). When British adolescents were asked to write narratives, "males typically wrote action-adventure stories in which they dramatically defeated their opponents in feats of physical prowess. In contrast, the females wrote stories focussing on the development of interpersonal relationships" (Anson & Beach, 1995, p. 51). Difference was observed with regard to male versus female written responses. Moss' research (1989) indicates that topics chosen for narratives are influenced by the different kinds of reading done by females and males. Females likely read stories focussing on relationships, while males chose action-adventure stories. Therefore, they used these texts as models for their own story writing.

Simpson (1996) examined the reading practices of girls and boys aged 10-12 years of age. The purpose of the study was to explore the educational context in which many of the students' reading choices are made. Written response was a part of the study. Simpson observed that "girls wrote about fictional characters and their predicaments as if they were real, they regularly empathized with the characters and related
events to their own feelings. The boys would discuss the plot, focus upon the action, and challenge the probability of particular events in the story” (Simpson, 1996, p. 271). This finding is supported by Cherland’s research (1993, 1994a, 1994b).

Margaret Finders’ (1997) research focuses on the role of literacy in the social development of five 12 and 13 year-old girls of middle- and working-class background residing in the rural Midwest. Finders’ study recognizes “literacy as a social event that constructs social identities and positions girls within their peer groups” (Finders, 1997, p. vii). She discovers that “literate choices were clearly declarations of cultural masculine and feminine identification ... boys chose to read newspapers, sports books, and sports magazines. Competition was central to their presentation of self. In contrast, girls selected novels. Girls embraced a social role that privileged relationships” (Finders, 1997, pp. 23-24). The influence of Cherland’s study (1994a) is apparent in Finders’ research (1997), especially the view of reading as a social practice.

Diane Paulsen (1996) introduces response theory in her own classroom and explores how her grade seven and eight students respond to text. Her students participate in literature study groups where they discuss and respond in their journals to the novels they have read. She notes her changed role as teacher, and the “delicate balance between
teacher involvement and student independence” (Paulsen, 1996, p. 32). Paulsen recognizes the benefits of students “negotiating meaning in a group, participating in an interpretive community, and the value of literary discussions” (Paulsen, 1996, p. 34). The teacher’s role in a response to literature classroom is an area in need of further study.

Charles Sarland’s (1991) study of teenagers’ reading shows that girls and boys react very differently to books, and put their own readings on the text. Although his focus was not on written responses to text, his results can be paralleled to those studies which deal with journal responses. Boys and girls reading the same horror and action novels took different ideas from them. Male reading of one novel “concentrates on male power and integrity, which are exemplified in the action ... they were irritated by the psychologizing of the book, feeling that it interrupted the action. Girls were much more responsive to details that render the characters human ... recognizing that they have feelings and past histories that affect their behaviour in the present” (Sarland, 1991, p.7).

Peter Thomas (1994) conducted a British study of 13 and 14 year olds on writing, reading and gender. Like Sarland (1991), he notes that the reading behaviour of boys and girls is different. “Girls favour fiction and are more likely to immerse themselves in a chosen book. Boys tend to favour illustrated information books about engines, war, football and
fishing. They are more likely to flick through a book then exchange it for another several times” (Thomas, 1994, p. 154). In writing “boys tend to favour close focus rather than depth of field. They prefer a main subject, omitting extraneous or intrusive elements around it. Girls often include in their writings contingent realities - other people, obligations, things which may have a bearing on previous or subsequent development of the person or action in focus. Girls are also more willing to credit the reader with active powers of understanding, being allusive and implicit where boys tend to be assertively explicit” (Thomas, 1994, p. 155). Boys' fiction offers “role-models equating self-esteem with power, while girls offered humanistic and socially-responsive values associated with responsibility. It may be that preference for first-person writing in girls and third-person writing in boys reinforces this pattern. Boys may prefer third-person writing because it gives authorial control over people and events” (Thomas, 1994, p. 157). Thomas stresses the importance of recognizing the strengths and limits of this gender difference and that it has implications for the teaching and assessing of students’ writing. “The greater assertiveness of boys' writing may be usefully encouraged in girls’ writing, just as girls’ greater reflectiveness and awareness of opposed values may be encouraged in boys” (Thomas, 1994, p. 158). Many studies (Finders, 1997; Moss, 1989; Sarland, 1991; Simpson, 1996;
Thomas, 1994) demonstrate the influence of reading on one’s writing and the existence of gender differences.

The research of Linda Berger (1996) and Carol Fuhler (1994) examines response journals in grades seven and eight. Berger (1996) notes that students benefit from some coaching when they begin response journal writing. She creates four questions that serve as a guide: “What do you notice? What do you question? What do you feel? What do you relate to?” (Berger, 1996, p. 381). Fuhler (1994) advocates literature response journals as they “encourage thoughtful, personal engagement with books ... students are given the responsibility of perpetuating and monitoring their own learning as they read and react in writing ... because students have the freedom to choose what to write about and how, these journals enable them to have a voice in their work” (p. 400).

Secondary school studies

Judith Langer’s research (1992, 1995, 1998) analyzes the changes in the way readers related to a text during their reading. One study involved middle and high school students’ responding to literary and nonliterary texts. Langer identified “four stances that readers take through the course of a response: being out and stepping into an envisionment, being in and moving through an envisionment, stepping back and rethinking what one knows, and stepping out and objectifying the
experience" (Langer, 1995, p. 15). Langer states that the “stances are recursive rather than linear and are a function of varying reader/text relationships” (Langer, 1992, p. 40). This notion of stances “provides a way for us, as teachers, to consider the literary experience as one where readers have room to shift among their own knowledge and histories, the text, social realities ... brings to mind ways in which we can create activities and interactions that invite students to evoke the multifaceted web of ideas that can come to mind in the richest reading experiences” (Langer, 1998, p. 18). Langer’s (1995, 1998) ‘envisionment building classroom’ is “a place where students have room to form and develop their own understandings, where they use interactions with each other to explore ideas of their own” (Langer, 1998, p. 19). Although Langer does not directly refer to the use of response journals as an appropriate means of helping teachers and students create an ‘envisioning classroom’, they appear to be an ideal strategy. By recording initial understandings of works being read, students are given the opportunity to write from their individual perspectives in a setting where their ideas are valued.

An international study of achievement was conducted by Alan Purves (1981). It examined the responses of fourteen and seventeen year old students in the United States. An analysis of the results indicated a sex difference in that girls were more concerned with hidden meaning, theme,
organization, the relation of form and content, and the work's success in involving them. They were not concerned with part-whole relationships, personal interpretation, identification, or moral lesson to be learned (Beach & Hynds, 1990).

Crowhurst & Kooy (1985) completed a study on the responses made in journals by students in grades nine and twelve. Students were asked to make "journals entries, during their first reading of the novel, either every chapter or after every 10 or 15 pages ... discouraged from merely relating the content" (Crowhurst & Kooy, 1985, p. 257). Various types of response were identified. These included: “1) comments about the book's structure 2) hypotheses about plot, characters 3) personal responses about people and events 4) comments about the author's style” (Crowhurst & Kooy, 1985, p. 258). For twelfth and ninth grade students, “journal entries which recorded some kind of personal response comprised one of the largest categories” (Crowhurst & Kooy, 1985, p. 263). Benefits of the response journal are a focus in this study. Crowhurst & Kooy (1985) state that “readers, like writers, are meaning-makers. Reading, response to literature, and composing all require the construction of meaning from text, prior knowledge, and feelings. Approaches to teaching literature that accept students' initial attempts at meaning-making, and that encourage the clarification and development of those responses are much
to be desired” (p. 265).

Joanne Golden & John Gurthrie’s study (1986) examines commonality and variation in reader response to a short story. Students in grade nine read a short story and selected preferred responses in four categories. These categories were “reader beliefs, reader empathy, text events, and text conflicts” (Golden & Guthrie, 1986, p. 408). Unlike many reader response studies, Golden and Guthrie did not use open-ended responses. They used predesigned response categories. Results of the study indicated that “variation in response occurred in the categories of reader empathy and text conflict” (Golden & Guthrie, 1986, p. 414). Another significant finding was that “although literary understanding of plot was accomplished by the vast majority of students, thematic perception was associated with the affective identification with a given character” (Golden & Guthrie, 1986, p. 420). This finding suggests that readers’ personal engagement is a necessary prerequisite to understanding and evaluating works of fiction.

In a project devoted to studying women protagonists in fiction, Aitken’s (1985) study involved grade nine students’ use of a novel-journal to record responses to one of five self-chosen novels. The researcher identified “entries which related directly or indirectly to ‘manners and morals’ “(Aitken, 1985, p. 53). The findings indicated that “since novels
are virtually ‘loaded’ with ‘manners and morals’, it is reasonable to expect that a more or less unstructured journal response is going to be rich in material relating to these manners and morals and useful in generating discussion and reflection on the topic” (Aitken, 1985, p. 56).

The research of Theresa Rogers (1990, 1991) and Michael Smith (1991) examines grade nine student responses but employs think-aloud protocols rather than written response. Patrick Dias stresses the “importance of talk in articulating and developing one’s response, talk that is tentative, shaping, recursive, and attentive to the responses of others ... protocols are close to being concurrent with the response ... thinking aloud is not necessarily inconsistent with responding aloud” (Dias, 1992, p. 140). Using ‘oral interviews’, Rogers (1990, 1991) examines the role of readers’ subjectivity or personal responses in story interpretation. This study also examines how variation in instructional environments may influence students’ approaches to and beliefs about literary response and interpretation. Rogers concludes that “a reader's critical stance is highly individual ... influenced by a complex combination of their own beliefs about how literature should be interpreted, their literary experiences, and their abilities, which will in turn influence the complexity or intertextuality of their responses” (Rogers, 1991, p. 417). Smith (1991) studies the cognitive processes used by 10 grade 9
readers as they construct meaning from narratives. He examines the think-
aloud protocols that the students recorded as they read stories. His
findings indicate that “the readers were engaged primarily in story-driven
and association-driven readings rather than in point-driven readings ... the
readers had a characteristic style of response that was not substantially
affected by the type of story read” (Smith, 1991, p. 263).

George Newell, Karen Suszynski, and Ruth Weingart (1989) conducted
a study on 65 tenth-grade students. They analyzed the quality and
elements of the students’ written products that revealed what they took
from two short stories when they wrote in a personal and more formal
mode. The writing samples produced by the students were “analyzed for
quality of response, audience, function, syntactic complexity, fluency, and
37). Results of the study indicated that “Within the personal mode, the
students were more able to construct extended responses that were top
down interpretations of the stories based on their understanding of text
elements. In using their personal voices they were able to maintain more
control over the coherence of their texts” (Newell, Suszynski & Weingart,
1989, p. 44). Results suggest that “if we do assign writing immediately
after reading literary text, not as tests but as ‘thought pieces’, students
are more likely to develop rather sophisticated literary responses”
(Newell, Suszynski & Weingart, 1989, p. 51). This viewpoint indicates the value of students recording their initial responses to text as these lead them into analytic response. Further support for this statement is evident in the research of Purves, Rogers & Soter (1995), who make a distinction between ‘impressionistic’ and ‘analytic’ response modes. “If impressionistic, the focus will be less on the literary work than on the reader’s subjective reaction to it. If analytic, the focus shifts from the reader’s self to the literary work --that is, we write about the literary work rather than how we feel or think in reaction to it” (Purves, Rogers, & Soter, 1995, p. 161).

Peter Benton (1995) conducted a study of 400 year 10 (14-15 year old) pupils into their reading of fiction and non-fiction. He records a difference in the type of reading undertaken by both boys and girls (Benton, 1995, p. 459). Boys read “a huge range of non-fiction magazines concerned with computers and video games or with sport ... girls prefer periodicals concerned with the pop scene and fashion, romance, personal problems and television soaps” (Benton, 1995, p. 463).

The research of Patricia Moonilal-Masur, Elana Cincik & Claudia Mitchell (1992) focused on the attitudes of grade eight, nine and eleven students toward journal writing and examined response logs. Most of the grade nine girls had “positive feelings about keeping a journal but they
tended to view it more in terms of a diary rather than a learning log ... the grade elevens of both sexes also viewed it in terms of a diary” (Moonilal-Masur, Cincik & Mitchell, 1992, p. 31). Some differences based on gender were revealed. “About two-thirds of the grade elevens of both sexes saw it as more of a ‘girl’ thing to do. The girls saw themselves as being more emotional, sentimental, likely to talk about personal things and being more open with feelings. The boys were seen as pretending not to be interested. The males too, saw girls as doing it more since males were more ‘conservative’ and girls were more open” (Moonilal-Masur, Cincik & Mitchell, 1992, p. 32). The study included an examination of the response logs of male and female students in response to a non-fiction article on sleep. The researchers questioned whether the word “I” as used by males and females might have gendered meanings. It was revealed that while girls in the study were “more likely to use ‘I think ... I feel ...’ and indeed the girls used the word ‘I’ much more frequently than the males did ... though the boys were not reluctant to give their personal opinions, their use of ‘I’ was more in the tone of authority and direction or instruction, using phrases such as ‘I am aware of ...,’ I can understand why ...’ The girls, on the other hand, used the personal ‘I’ response stemming more from an emotional nature, ranging from the personal level of shock to disbelief, ‘I was shocked ...’ ‘I find it hard to believe ...’ “(Moonilal-Masur, Cincik &
Martha Zacharias (1997) conducted a study on a female grade eleven student who recorded responses to short stories using the ‘circles of meaning’ technique. Adapted from the work of Bleich (1975), ‘circles of meaning’ addresses the following questions: “1) what word, phrase strikes you as puzzling? 2) what feeling or emotion does the entry in #1 evoke? 3) does the feeling in #2 bring to mind any experience from the past or present? 4) are there any connections between the entry in #3 and any aspect of the literary text” (Zacharias, 1997, p. 42). These questions appear similar to the guide questions created in the aforementioned study by Berger (1996) for use in her grade eight class. A result of Zacharias’ study (1997) was that “what began as an exploration of a seemingly insignificant word in step one of the circles exercise became for Laura a path to the development of important insights in the story being studied” (Zacharias, 1997, p. 45).

Lee Odell and Charles Cooper (1976) studied the written responses of a male grade eleven student to three self-selected novels. Employing the categories of Purves & Beach (1972), they noted that the student “consistently wrote about all three novels in terms of expressions of personal engagement with them, description of them, and interpretation of parts of them” (Odell & Cooper, 1976, p. 206). Their findings indicated
that "when John writes out his responses, he concentrates on the characters, on how they make him feel, on what they do, on what sense he can make of their actions. He rarely attempts broad interpretative statements, when he might relate the central theme of a novel to the world he knows, to the way things are as he sees them" (Odell & Cooper, 1976, p. 207). A question to be considered as a result of this study's findings would be whether readers have consistent ways of formulating their responses. Further inquiry may shed some light on this issue.

In research (McIntosh, 1992) I conducted on the reader response journals of twelve students in Secondary English classrooms, my focus was to determine the extent to which such journals provided a meaningful base for the classroom treatment of literature (novels and short stories). As a result of this study, it is apparent that response journals provide an appropriate starting point for students to examine their ideas and reactions to literature. The response journals in this study indicate that "student writers clarify their values, explore their feelings and closely examine their own lives" (McIntosh, 1992, p. 96).

Hynds & Appleman (1997) examined journal responses in Appleman's grade twelve English class. Their data revealed that "our response to literature is not purely idiosyncratic or individual; those 'individual responses' are informed by the complex intersections of race, class and
gender" (Hynds & Appleman, 1997, p. 279). The challenge faced by classroom teachers who use response to literature strategies is "how can we attend to individual responses and at the same time create the democratic classroom we envision?" (Hynds & Appleman, 1997, p. 280).

The research of Susan Day (1994) explores the effects of gender schema on memory. It is apparent that "people use stereotypes and gender-based identification in encoding and retrieving, making inferences from information" (Day, 1994, p. 91). In her study on high school students' responses to text, Day observed a difference between male and female responders. "Subjects are more likely to identify with same-sex characters ... when ascribing motivations to female characters, a basic interpretive strategy, male students frequently make stereotypical inferences that are unsupported by the text" (Day, 1994, p. 99). Day's study examines gender schema and memory of four different age groups and her research supports the view that gender schema are used to organize information in memory.

**College and University studies**

Toby Fulwiler (1989) examined journals in his college literature classes. Students used journals to "respond to questions and readings in the course, to connect personal experience with class content, to reflect on anything related to literature, to monitor the students' own learning"
(Fulwiler, 1989, p. 152). He paid close attention to the features that typify journal writing, and concluded that “journal writing is commonly characterized by informal language ... these features include the following: personal voice ... conversational tone ... informal punctuation ... emotion ...” (Fulwiler, 1989, pp. 162-163).

Susan Gabriel’s study of freshman composition students (ages 18-20) focused on determining whether and how a reader identifies with a text character. The students read two short stories, one focusing on a male character and one focusing on a female character, and wrote journal entries while pretending to be a fictional character in the story they had read. The study does suggest that “some males and females are indeed reading the same text differently and in accordance with a gender-based schema they brought to the reading of the text ... does not offer any suggestion that female readers can identify with male characters more readily than male readers can identify with female characters” (Gabriel, 1990, p. 137).

Bleich (1986) conducted a study which analyzed the responses of four adult males and four adult females to male and female writers of fiction and poetry. Study results indicated that readers “did not differ according to the gender of the author or in their responses to poetry, but did differ in their responses to fiction ... The males were more likely to
focus on the narrative voice as rhetorically acting to affect the reader, while women focussed more on entering and experiencing the world of narrative” (Bleich, 1986, pp. 230-234). Although Bleich’s (1986) study focussed on adults, this finding is similar to those of the adolescents studied by Cherland (1994), Evans (1996), and Simpson (1996).

A second study by Bleich (1986) analyzed fifty male and fifty female college freshman students' retelling of a short story written by a male writer. The results indicated that the males were more likely to “recount the text objectively in order to get the facts straight, while females were more likely to reflect on the experience with a story, focussing on understanding the character relationships” (Bleich, 1986, p. 237).

Evangeline Newton (1991) analyzed the poetry response journals of students in a college freshman class. She was interested in students’ use of journals as a powerful metacognitive tool. A significant finding of her study was that students who “record and evaluate their interaction with text over a period of time invariably come to understand both the general process of how a reader negotiates meaning from a text and the specific sources of his or her own meaning-making” (Newton, 1991, p. 478).

The research of Linda Peterson (1991) focuses on the autobiographical essays of two groups of student writers in freshman composition courses. Peterson (1991) addressed the questions of
"performance and the commonly held view that women write better autobiographically than men" (p. 171). She rated the qualities of significance, clarity and richness of detail in order to determine which gender produced 'better' autobiographical essays. The findings indicated that women writers scored higher. Peterson (1991) discovered that "gender figures prominently in the topics students choose when they write autobiographical essays and that these choices, in turn, affect their success in writing a good essay ... the topics that women students choose are almost always 'relational'--i.e. they focus on the relationship of the writer with some other persons. The 'event' that the female writer depicts and analyzes is almost always a crisis in the relationship" (Peterson, 1991, p. 173). In studying male autobiographical essays, the researcher noted a contrast in that "male writers more frequently choose topics that focus on the self, the self alone, the self as distinct from others" (Peterson, 1991, p. 174).

Richard VanDeWeghe’s (1987) study involved the analysis of seventy reading logs collected in two college-level introductory literature courses. He examined "how students make and revise meaning when they write in purposeful, informal ways about their interpretation of literary texts" (VanDeWeghe, 1987, p. 38). Findings indicated "five clear patterns ... (the language of hypotheses, heuristic moments, difficulties with text,
meaning made through analogic conceptualization, problem finding) that indicated fundamental ways in which students use writing to develop their interpretations of literature" (VanDeWeghe, 1987, pp. 41-48). VanDeWeghe states that "the 'reading experience' extends beyond the solitary, personal encounter with text. Rather, a reading experience, when coupled with exploratory writing becomes a reciprocal process whereby writing reflects back on and modifies the initial interpretations" (VanDeWeghe, 1987, p. 49).

Donnalee Rubin (1993) "influenced by reader-response criticism and the claim that male and female responses to works of fiction and poetry differ, with men able to remain more distanced from texts--and thus more objective--and women able to join with the text and the characters in it in much more connected ways ... logical that gender differences might also inform the special occasion of teachers reading the essays that students compose" (p. 1). Her study examines the "responses of 31 freshman composition teachers to student writing and shows the negative effects of gender biases on assessment in particular cases that prove that gender perceptions and expectations can influence assessment decisions that seem neutral on the surface" (Rubin, 1993, p. 1). A teacher's awareness of a student writer's gender does appear to have an impact on how the written piece is assessed. Further study of this issue will need to be
conducted in order to examine the implications for how this might effect teachers' current methods of assessing student writing.

Jean Bauso (1988) employs reading logs in a college British literature survey course. She discovers that assigning such logs causes “students to become more actively involved in the reading/responding process ... students respond positively ... they see logs as an incentive to read, to think creatively and in depth, and to make connections” (Bauso, 1988, p. 258).

A study conducted by Jo Keroes (1990) examined several hundred essays written by male and female upper division university students, in response to two separate prompts on a writing proficiency test. Keroes (1990) wanted to know whether “male and female writers would respond in identifiably different ways to the same writing task” (p. 245). Influenced by the work of Gilligan (1982), the researcher set out to “discover whether themes relating to autonomy would appear more often in men’s essays and whether women would write more frequently about their connectedness to others. The findings were surprising in that “autonomous responses occurred in precisely equal proportions for each sex” (Keroes, 1990, p. 247). Keroes (1990) states that “close analysis has shown that the women in the study were more likely than the men to write about issues identified by Gilligan as connected: family ties,
relationships, guilt and conflict ... but, overall, most of the responses, from both men and women, were autonomous, a finding that contradicted our expectations” (p. 255).

Cinthia Gannett (1992) explores the relationship of gender to discourse and historical traditions of journal and diary writing. Using the journals of three male and three female second year Writing Course students, she notes significant differences in male and female journal entries. Men's journals “manifested several important journal traditions historically affiliated with men; the daybook as a place to record daily activity ... vent frustration with academic and social responsibilities” (Gannett, 1992, p. 166). Gannett (1992) records that “female students tended to write more extended and reflective entries regarding their social, academic and personal lives than did men ... traits that characterize women's journal writing ... a focus on relationship, reflection, and communication, and the intriguing strategy of rendering personal experience as a reflective, textual narrative, of 'composing the self' “ (pp. 168-170). With regard to attitudes towards the journal, students have a gendered conception of the journal. “Both men and women tended to see the personal writing journals as a feminized type of writing and the men in particular tended to be suspicious of its academic/masculine value” (Gannett, 1992, p. 172). The gendered
conception of the journal is a point which deserves closer attention. If female and male students view the act of journal writing in different ways, this may affect what they choose to record in their journal entries.

A study of literature response journals in a graduate language arts methods course was conducted by Dorothy Hennings (1995). Twenty-four graduate education students kept journals during the methods course which were analyzed by the researcher. Hennings felt that although some classroom teachers used journals with their pupils, most had not kept ongoing journals in which they themselves recorded their responses to literature. The results of the study indicated that “having responded in journals in an active, personal way, education students are more likely to use journals in teaching ... can model for students specific strategies for journal use” (Hennings, 1995, p. 49).

Mary Crawford & Roger Chaffin (1986) use schema theory as a framework for their discussion of gender as a factor in comprehension. Their experiments indicate that “comprehension is mediated by generalized knowledge structures, or schemata, that exist in the mind of the reader. The schemata that are activated in the process of understanding a text provide a framework for the construction of meaning. They allow the knower to process the given information and, importantly, go beyond what is actually given. In the final analysis, what one reads out
of the text depends on what one reads into it” (Crawford & Chaffin, 1986, pp. 4-5). “Differences in background between men and women in our society should, by themselves, lead to differences in the way women and men understand a variety of texts. The primacy and centrality of the gender schema should ensure differential encoding of experiences by women and men” (Crawford & Chaffin, 1986, pp. 23-24). Psychologists Gilligan (1982) and Mary Belenky, Blythe Clinchy, Nancy Goldberger, & Jill Tarule (1986) contend that “women’s schema encodes language as a tool of connectedness, while men’s schema encodes language as a tool of mastery” (Day, 1994, p. 103).
CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Qualitative Research Method

The research will be conducted in the school environment. The setting is not unfamiliar to myself as researcher, as I have taught in this school for the previous nine years. Although the students will be curious about my presence, having been on leave for six months, my purpose will be explained to both them and the teacher. This will alleviate their concerns and they can then act in what I believe to be a natural way in their own environment.

Studying response journals which have been generated within an authentic classroom setting seems most appropriate. A familiar classroom is the key to richness and depth of response. This type of learning environment, enhanced by reassuring teacher talk, can influence what students say and do. As researcher, I will have the opportunity to study actual individual student journals. The qualitative research methodology implemented for this study will involve the study and analysis of student reader response journals. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature; therefore, it will help to explain the contents of student journals. Aspects of journal contents such as authenticity would be difficult to measure in a quantitative way. These reasons suggest that
the qualitative method will be useful for this study.

Research Participants and Research Setting

I will observe students as they are introduced to the journal response assignment and begin their initial entry. Journal entries will then be collected for analysis at two intervals. The participants will be eight students, four female and four male from one secondary school. They will range in age from 14 to 15 years of age and will be enrolled in one grade 10 enriched English class. There are two such classes in this secondary school. I will explain the intent of the study to students and request volunteers who wish to participate and are willing to share their reader response journals with me. Outside the selected classroom, all the names of female volunteers will be placed in a jar and will be randomly selected. The same process will be used for male participants.

The research setting is one secondary school located in a metropolitan area. The students come from upper income homes where most of the parents are professionals and business people. They live in large, luxury, single family dwellings. There is little cultural diversity within the school population. Many of the students' parents attended this secondary school during their own adolescent years. Most of the students have attended this high school for one year and are now completing their second year. Since they are part of an enriched class, they were required
to achieve 80% in their grade nine year. They have personal and familial expectations that they will continue to achieve academically. All students in this class have been exposed to Reader Response strategies in their current English classroom. Since research will be conducted in term two, students will have completed response journal writing during term one. Many students will have used reader response strategies during their Grade 9 year.

The parents make firm demands about what the school should and should not be doing. Administration is frequently contacted by parents. Complaints from parents are handled by the principal and two vice-principals, who attempt to “keep the parents happy”. This places added pressure on the teachers, who seldom have contact with the parents, other than via the administration. Due to the cohesiveness of the community, incidents or problems are quickly circulated in various versions amongst the residents. This carries over to the student population, who are part of the community “grapevine”.

The school is on full-credit semestering at the senior levels -- Grade 11, 12, and OAC. The two semesters are of equal length. Grades 9 and 10 are non-semestered, therefore classes meet every other day throughout the school year. Formal examinations are scheduled for all students at the end of each semester. Ninety-five percent of the students
go on to post secondary education. Most of the students study courses at the advanced level. Students with exceptional ability and interest have the chance to study a subject at the advanced enriched level. There are extracurricular programs in athletics, music, visual and dramatic arts and many clubs and organizations throughout the school.

The school has 1,000 students and 60 teaching staff. The specific junior English classroom was chosen because the teacher had committed herself to implementation and continual experimentation with various response strategies, especially in the area of literature study. The teacher has used reader response strategies for five years. The class is currently using reader response journals as part of the English program.

Reader response has a specific role in the literature program in the classroom. The teacher values the potential of the literature response journal for capturing the students' thinking at significant points during their reading of text. Students are encouraged to initially react to text in an individual way rather than relying on the input from others. This is a challenge for the classroom teacher in that the enriched students are eager to please and want to make sure they "get it right". Upon initial introduction to response writing, the teacher had to make her expectations clear and address the concerns of the students about what a "correct response" actually was. Emphasis was placed on valuing the
individual responses of students in the class, rather than relying on the "teacher's interpretation" which may be deemed to be "more correct" than student responses. This focus requires that the classroom teacher step back from the role of "authority" on the text being studied. Therefore, students have the chance to respond to text on their own prior to teacher intervention. Besides writing response entries, the literature program includes whole class discussion on major issues in the class novel being studied. At this time, the teacher asks questions of a critical nature. This provides opportunities for the students to move beyond their initial responses into analysis of the text being studied. About every three weeks, the journals are collected and evaluated by the teacher. According to the teacher's 'holistic evaluation', the following aspects are considered: clarity of thought, control of language, depth of thought, development of ideas. Twenty percent of the students' final course mark is based on their response journals.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

How students will be prepared for the study

As researcher, I will explain my interest in reading journals and response to the class. I will not be indicating a specific interest in gender. Prior to recording their journal entries, students will be made
aware that both the teacher and the researcher will be reading their journals. They will be told that if excerpts from their journals are used by the researcher, their permission will be asked and their anonymity will be protected by use of pseudonyms.

Classroom Observation

I will visit the selected classroom in mid-February. Participant observation of the teacher and students will occur at this time. The teacher will distribute an assignment sheet for the response journal on *A Tale of Two Cities*, which is the core novel for the grade 10 enriched program. Although this Dickens' novel is required reading for the students, later on in the term, they will self-select a second Dickens' novel for personal reading. The two novels will be used as the focus for a comparative essay to be completed by each student.

For the response assignment, students will be asked to record 10 entries on the core novel, each entry being two pages double-spaced. Student questions about the assignment will be addressed by the teacher. In-class writing time will be given for students to complete response entry number one. I will circulate the classroom and informally peruse some of the students' responses. Fieldnotes will be collected during observation of the teacher assigning the journal, a brief discussion with the teacher about expectations, and 10 minutes of verbal interaction with
a few students while they are responding in writing. These fieldnotes are not to be used for purposes of analysis. They will assist me in determining the context in which journal responses are recorded.

Journal Collection

I will collect the journals of the eight participants twice -- once at the beginning of March when the participants have completed journal entries 1 - 5, and the second time at the end of March when journal entries 6 - 10 will be written. After photocopying the contents, I will return the journals to the students and then transcribe, examine and analyze the journal contents. The journals will be comprised of 10 entries - two pages double-spaced in length, on Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. It is expected that students will be writing entries twice a week. Over a six week period, 10 entries will be gathered from each participant.

The research will proceed through three phases. Phase I (Initial Data Collection) will consist of my receiving permission from the principal and teacher involved in this study. I will use participant observation and start collecting reader response journals. In Phase II (Category Generation & Continued Data Collection), I will utilize the constant comparative method to generate categories and continue data collection by analyzing journals. Constant comparative method is another
term for grounded theory procedures (Barney Glaser & Anselm Strauss, 1967, pp. 101-116; Strauss & Juliet Corbin, 1990, p. 62). In Phase II (Final Analysis) I will identify relationships between categories and properties, decide upon a method of reporting the analysis and then prepare the thesis.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

One transcribed copy of journal contents collected from the eight participants will be the data to be analyzed. Through the constant comparative method, categories will be generated from the contents of student reader response journals with no attempt to take account of gender at this time. This will be Part One. In order to ensure that gender is not the initial focus for analysis, a colleague will assign and record a random number between 11 and 98 on the first page of each journal transcript. She will then create a linking list which will include the participants' pseudonyms and their assigned participant numbers. This list will be kept by my colleague until I have competed the process of establishing categories and their properties.

To begin generating categories, I will re-read the journal copies and label (in pencil) the participant’s written phrases with a few related words. These words will gradually make up the coding categories. As I re-
read the transcripts, noting the common aspects among the participants, I will re-read the fieldnotes collected during participant observation to determine whether new categories exist or are the same as those that will be gathered during the analysis of the journal transcripts. I will develop a list of category names, based on the words used for coding the transcripts. A re-reading of the transcripts will help me to clarify the category labels.

Working with one transcript at a time, I will choose excerpts which reveal evidence of particular categories, cut them into strips, and mark them (on the reverse side) with the participant number and transcript page number. These meaningful segments of text will then be put into separate envelopes which I will label with the category name. After these text segments are put into the appropriate envelopes, I will re-read the contents of each envelope to look for similarities and differences. I will then develop properties for each category. Using additional labelled envelopes will enable me to arrange the text segments according to both category and property. The creation of the properties will be used to further organize the data. Some categories will become part of other categories if I notice that their properties are related. Some categories will disappear as entries appear more appropriate elsewhere. Well developed categories will become apparent as certain patterns recur.
I will focus only on the saturated categories for discussion. The categories which are saturated will be set aside, to be discussed at a later date.

In Part Two of the analysis, using the linking list as a guide to determine the identity of each participant, I will now sort the text segments from each category envelope according to gender. My focus will be on whether there are similarities and differences between female and male responses from journals. Beginning with the text segments which were written by females, I will note categories/properties. I will repeat this process with the text segments of male participants. I will pay attention to whether some categories have text segments written by a single gender or some properties are only related to one gender. I will do a comparison and contrast of data, as I re-read all text segments, one envelope at a time. My focus for examination in the Discussion of Research Findings section will be a description of reader response as related to male and female categories and properties revealed in the journal transcripts.

I will collect 160 pages of data at the study site, comprised of eight student journals (four female, four male). Transcription of data will result in 102 typed pages. Eight participant numbers will be assigned by my colleague, who will also record pseudonyms for each student on a
linking list. On the top right hand corner, I will number consecutively each journal transcript page with the participant number and the page number. For example, a journal from participant number 17 and the 3rd page would be coded as follows: 17.3. A summary of the coding will be provided in Table 1 (p.53). All 102 pages of transcribed journal data will be appropriately labelled. These codings will be used in the Data Analysis section to identify sections of the data that will be referred to. References to the data in the Discussion of Research Findings section will also be identified using the same coding.

To begin data analysis, I read and re-read the eight student journals to obtain a sense of what was in the journals. Upon third reading, I recorded ideas and brief observations in point form about each journal. After I had point-form records for each journal, I read these records again and started to look for specific patterns. I jotted down 26 observations and then used these to establish 17 preliminary categories. On separate sheets of paper (category summary sheets), I wrote a category heading. Using these categories, I returned to the original eight journals and examining each journal, one at a time, coded the data by category and copied the data onto the appropriate sheet of paper. The coding discussed under the Data Collection section was used to identify the journal from which the excerpts were copied. Excerpts were chosen which seemed to
TABLE 1
Summary of Coding System

I. Linking List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #</th>
<th>Participant Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Eric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Heather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Susan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Michael</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>John</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Diane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Lynn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Scott</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Journals coded by number

Females: 14 = Diane  Males: 27 = Eric
21 = Heather  45 = Scott
36 = Lynn  61 = Michael
59 = Susan  97 = John

III. Journals identified by number

_: random numbers from 11 - 97

_: page number from designated journal transcript
best fit the appropriate category. No attempt was made at this time to choose the clearest examples to support the categories. When data were collected from the journals, spelling and grammar was left unchanged. There were 13 categories after each journal had been analyzed and text segments from the journals were recorded, and four additional headings but it appeared that they were likely not categories but properties. These were set aside to be examined later on.

I then started writing about each of the “perceived” categories, by re-reading the data collected under each category. I attempted to decide what exactly was in the data and I discovered the properties through this method. Through the act of writing, I was able to determine the links between the categories and the properties of each category. After writing about each category, I found that some “perceived” categories were actually the properties of another category. In the end, nine categories were recorded and properties of each were delineated. I used this information to create a table entitled “Categories and Properties for all Participants” (Table 2, pp. 57-58).

At this stage, the focus was shifted to determine whether gender influenced student responses. By using the linking list, I conducted an analysis of the prevalence of categories and properties according to gender. I examined the categories/properties listed on Table 2 and by
returning to the category summary sheets, noted whether they related to female or male participants. I organized the revised categories and properties by those pertaining to female participants and those relating to male participants.
CHAPTER FOUR
Discussion of Research Findings

Nine categories were recorded and properties of each were delineated. These categories and their properties are indicated in Table 2 (pp.57-58). Each category will be defined and examples of each property will be provided to demonstrate the nature of the property. Through examination of the research findings, a number of points will be discussed. Particular attention will be focused on whether gender influences student responses. Each category and its respective properties will be discussed as related to the literature. The implications of these findings will be addressed.

In the following discussion, a distinction is made between the author of the work being written about and the student reader/writer. The author is defined as the person (Charles Dickens) who wrote the novel. The student is the reader/writer whose journal entries are the subject of this study. The names used, such as Lynn, Susan, Eric and others are pseudonyms, not the names of the students who read/wrote.

Recognition of Author’s Presence

One category labelled “Recognition of Author's Presence” comprises students’ acknowledgment of the author’s existence while responding to the work of fiction. In addition to referring to the author by name, they examine the author’s style and reasons for writing in a particular way.
TABLE 2
Categories and Properties for all Participants Table

1. RECOGNITION OF AUTHOR’S PRESENCE:
   i) examines techniques of plot development
   ii) examines techniques of character development
   iii) blames author for confusion while reading
   iv) considers possible lesson taught by author

2. STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH LACK OF UNDERSTANDING:
   i) states confusion
   ii) offers possible interpretations
   iii) uses questions to seek clarification
   iv) re-reading
   v) physical affect

3. CHARACTERS:
   i) perception of positive qualities of character
   ii) perception of negative qualities of character
   iii) use of direct quotations to reinforce judgement of character’s qualities
   iv) reliance on textual evidence brought to bear
   v) assessment of character’s actions in a specific situation
   vi) analysis of relationships between/among characters
   vii) identification with character due to similarities/differences from self and clarifying own values

4. PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND BELIEFS
   i) use of 1st person narration
   ii) own experience compared to that of character, assists reader in understanding character’s situation
   iii) examination of self/beliefs

5. EMOTIONS:
   i) positive empathy about character
   ii) negative empathy about character
   iii) positive empathy about situation
   iv) negative empathy about situation
   v) feelings about work of literature as a whole
TABLE 2
Categories and Properties of all Participants Table (continued)

6. PLOT EVENTS:
   i) use of direct quotations to reinforce evaluation
   ii) use of other textual evidence
   iii) telling in own words
   iv) physical reaction to plot event
   v) emotional reaction to plot event
   vi) disappointment when predicted outcome doesn’t occur

7. ISSUES:
   i) personal opinion which is backed-up through a fully supported viewpoint
   ii) subjects initially studied on a personal level, then related to a societal level
   iii) statements which are definite and strongly emotional

8. INTERTEXTUAL TYING:
   i) links to television and theatre
   ii) links to other books
   iii) links to own life

9. ORAL FEATURES:
   i) conversational tone
   ii) informal style
   iii) colloquial expressions
Student writers are aware that the author's writing has an effect on them. As readers and writers, they recognize that the interaction between the author and themselves contributes to their involvement with the text. The properties of this category are i) examines techniques of plot development, ii) examines techniques of character development, iii) blames author for confusion while reading, and iv) considers possible lesson taught by author. There is little evidence in the literature to support this category. In their study of grade 9 and 12 students' reader responses, Crowhurst & Kooy (1985) do identify a type of response where students make "comments about the author's style" (p. 257). This current study demonstrates that student writers recognize the author's presence and record observations about the author's style of writing.

Examines techniques of plot development

Techniques of plot development highlighted by student writers include the use of description, coincidence, connection of events, foreshadowing and metaphor. These techniques are examined in student journal segments such as when Eric (1) sees the author's use of description in a negative way, "Dickens described and described, ad nauseum. I thought he was way too descriptive, and used too many words"

1. Names used throughout are fictitious.
and his descriptions never really led to anything, either" (27.2). Michael agrees with Eric's judgement but has an explanation for why Dickens uses description:

I have nothing against long books, but Dickens seems excessive. After a lot of inquiring and thinking I came up with an explanation for this. I was told that Dickens originally wrote all of his stories in segments for a London newspaper. At that time, Dickens was apparently paid by the word! If this is true it really explains so much about his stories (61.2).

Susan's reaction to Dickens' use of detail is a positive one:

I like this repetitiveness in his work; it makes the story sound like poetry and I can imagine hearing a story-teller say it. I think this repetitiveness (2) adds to the work by making it sound more flowing. His choice of words captured my attention and really drew me in to the novel (59.2).

Susan recognizes that words are repeated for a reason. As a reader, she benefits from the story-telling quality which holds her attention.

2. Spelling and grammar are left unchanged
The use of coincidence is examined by two male writers. Michael writes, "I think that Dickens has depended too much on coincidence to tie all the plots in the book together" (61.3).

Eric's journal reveals:

I thought that it was very clear, on Dickens' part to make all of the major events in these eight chapters interconnected ... Dickens loves to tie the events together, and make connections between events ... I think this is an excellent writing style (27.11-16).

Although both student writers recognize the author's use of coincidence, one views it as negative and the other views it in a positive light.

Diane notes that:

Dickens allows the reader to hear all about the sentence and how it was surely going to be carried out but then changes his mind and allows the man a life. Dickens used his persuasive voice to make the reader feel like they are missing an important part of the story ... (14.2).

Diane recognizes the power of the author's persuasive voice as one that can manipulate the reader. This technique of foreshadowing is also examined by Heather and Michael. Michael writes:

I find it very interesting to find the small clues Dickens has
left throughout the book that forshadow the rest of the story ...
the wine is a preview to the blood to be spilled on the streets of France during the revolution (61.8).

In contrast to Michael’s “interest”, Heather complains about the author jumping from one event to another. Although she does not identify this as foreshadowing, her explanation exhibits characteristics of this technique:

One of the reasons I do not understand the book is because it jumps quickly from event to event with no proper transitions ...

I am assuming that Dickens has his reasons for jumping about so quickly, perhaps these events play an important role later on down the line ...
as these are not really fully developed,

I wonder about their importance (21.2).

Heather acknowledges that the author may have a reason for presenting events in such a way, but she doesn’t yet understand the reason.

The last technique of plot development to be discussed by student writers is the use of metaphor. Diane clearly describes this technique:

Dickens uses metaphors in his story in order to get a thought or opinion across without actually writing it. An example from book one was when the wine spilled on the street and everyone rushed over to drink as much as they could. I think that he, Dickens is trying to show that everyone was blood thirsty and
that they all wanted to kill and be better than everyone else ...

When Dickens writes like this it takes me a while and a couple of read over's to realize what he is trying to communicate (14.3).

Examine techniques of character development

In the second property, student writers record how Dickens deals with constructing character. Eric writes:

It seemed strange to me, but perhaps it was deliberate on Dickens' part, that all three men, Carton, Stryver and Jerry, were doing something that other people wanted them, and told them, indirectly or directly, not to do ... I am finding it very fascinating and enjoyable, that so many things in the story are tying in with others. For example, I thought it was very clever of Dickens to make John Barsad, the spy whom Madame Defarge "registered" in her knitting Solomon Pross; Miss Pross's brother (27.14).

Eric is clearly interested in Dickens' way of introducing characters.

Diane's journal reveals:

In the past few chapters Dickens has used the presence of mysterious people, in my opinion to make the reader see the less obvious connections between the other characters.

ie. Sydney Carton is not allowed to be seen by Dr. Manette, but
why? Dickens wants the readers to focus on other parts of the story, then he identifies the characters (14.8).

Diane analyzes the reasons for Dickens choosing to keep characters hidden for a time from the reader. John writes:

A good story never leave loose ends untied. Charles Dickens, amazingly, brought all the various characters together at the end, by having them all join in Paris. The author did an outstanding job of tying the huge and diverse cast to the story (97.9).

Compliments for the author’s technique of integrating the characters are provided by John as he sees the resulting “good story”. Michael states in his journal:

Dickens did an excellent job of demonstrating and influencing my feeling for various characters in the book ... a significant name was Charles Darnay. His initials, C and D, are the same as those belonging to Charles Dickens. This makes me believe that Dickens saw Charles Darnay as himself and instilled the same values and beliefs in him (61.4-11).

Insight into Darnay’s character is revealed by Michael when he analyzes the significance of a particular name in the novel. He moves beyond the text itself by comparing the values and beliefs of a fictional character to those of the novel’s author.
Blames author for confusion while reading

Diane demonstrates that she is upset with the opening passage and she holds the author responsible for her confusion:

I was lost after reading the first line. I caught that Dicken's was comparing England and France but why, the reasoning I just did not get. Dickens writing style was confusing to me because I was not used to it. I did not enjoy reading this work because it made no sense to me. I feel that his style was directed to a more primitive audience ... Dickens used his knowledge and his imagination to help readers visualize the story. His description helped them to be clear on what they were reading, while all it does for me is confuse me even more. (14.1)

Although Diane does see a possible reason for Dickens' style of writing, the effect on her is one of confusion, followed by agitation, and ultimately a lack of enjoyment in reading the novel. Scott echoes her concerns in saying: “It’s almost as if Dickens wants to confuse me, and what a good job he is doing” (45.10). Eric writes, “However, I seem to have been mislead. When Carton took Darnay out to dinner, I thought that Carton was trying to become friends with Darnay ... I was somewhat correct; Carton was deciding whether or not he hated Darnay (27.6). A sense of intentionally misleading the reader is addressed by Eric. He is
annoyed with the author. Scott also blames Dickens for his failed attempt at glorifying a character:

I think Dickens attempted to glorify the persona of Alexandre Manette, but went way over the edge with a letter that would have held more dramatic flare with me, had it been written at a time nearer to the event. The pages 297-311 were the most difficult fourteen pages of a novel to read through than any so far in my lifetime, lacking much of the realism for which the book has so far included constantly, and lowering the memorial value of Alexandre Manette (45.15).

Scott is unhappy with Dicken's failed attempt to create a positive impression on the reader about the character of Manette. He even uses sarcasm to show his distaste for Dickens' method and is disengaged from the text as a result.

**Considers possible lesson taught by author**

The fourth property involves student writers revealing possible lessons learned. It is difficult to determine whether the author did intend a particular lesson to be taught. Writers Michael and Diane record lessons they feel Dickens is teaching them:

This is not the only lesson Dickens was trying to teach through *A Tale of Two Cities*. He used the lessons of the
past (i.e. the French Revolution) to teach British upper
class of his time to treat British lower class with more
respect or else ... I learned a lot about the history of the
French Revolution, but more importantly about how ruthless
people can get after being put down and oppressed for so
many years (61.15).

Diane writes about a lesson she learned, “Dickens tells an amazing story
while also involving history and some very important lessons. ie. “love,
always so much stronger than hate” pg. 345” (14.9). Both Michael and
Diane feel that they have learned a lesson from the text.

Strategies for dealing with lack of understanding

In this category, student writers record their lack of understanding
and resulting confusion about aspects of the text they are reading. Some
writers recognize their confusion, but move beyond simply stating it
(property i). They employ other strategies which include ii) possible
interpretations, iii) questions to seek clarification, iv) re-reading, and v)
physical affect. If they use a variety of strategies, student writers are
better able to cope with their confusion and allow themselves to move
beyond it and into the text.
States confusion

The act of stating confusion about aspects such as the author’s style, or a textual event comprises this property. Heather explains her main reason for disliking the book:

My first impression of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* is not a favourable one at all. After reading the first 45 pages I can honestly say that I dislike the book. I think the main reason I do not like the book is because I do not understand it. I am one of those people who find it important to understand something in order to like it. I think that having the proper insight will lead to a better insight, and, more often, an enjoyment or a proper liking (21.1-2).

Although specifically what Heather does not understand is unclear at this time, she certainly values “understanding” and without it, cannot enjoy the book or as she states, have a “proper liking”. Later in her journal she writes:

One of the reasons I do not understand the book is because it jumps quickly from event to event with no proper transitions ... None of the events seem to go together and I really do not understand their significance ... I do not mind learning a lot of new things at once in a novel but I prefer them to have a bit more
development ... The proper explanation would clear up the confusing matters and make the story more understandable, and more enjoyable (21.2).

This journal segment demonstrates Heather's attempt to clarify her lack of understanding. Unlike her first entry, she now states what she doesn't understand. She seems to almost apologize for not understanding and is quite concerned about what is "proper". Lynn's initial journal entry supports Heather's viewpoint:

First impressions, I believe, are nearly always important.

An introduction to a novel must catch the reader's interest and promote further reading. As far as I have read, A Tale of Two Cities is the only book that has a confusing and uninteresting opening chapter (36.1).

Eric agrees with the assessments of Heather and Lynn but his journal entry is much more blunt: "I thought that the first sixteen pages were pretty much pointless" (27.1). He continues by examining a passage later on in the text:

I did not understand the part at the beginning of "chapter 6", about the "golden arm" pounding the gold. I understand that perhaps there was a goldsmith in the building at the back, but "... a golden arm standing out of the wall of the front hall," does
not make sense, or even seem to be relevant to the story, to me (27.6).

Eric’s sarcastic tone is apparent in this entry. The confusion he experiences seems to cause him to be exasperated with the text. This point is further emphasized when he writes:

The whole bit about the chocolates, and Monseigneur taking it escaped me completely. I had no idea what to make of it. I did not know whether the point was that Monseigneur liked or did not like Chocolate. I also did not understand why such a big deal was made of it (27.7).

Eric’s frustration is clearly shown through his word choice. When Diane expresses her lack of understanding about the same passage, the tone of her entry is contrasted to Eric’s: “I do not understand what Dickens is talking about when he says Monseigneur was shut up in his sanctuary by the chocolate sprites” (14.5). Diane states that she does not understand but does not indicate a frustration which seems to be significant in Eric’s journal entries.

When Scott writes, “Dickens confuses me yet again” (45.9), we get the impression that he is tired of being confused. Scott’s entry continues:

There seem to be an enormous number of men named Jacques.

There could not be five Jacques in the same bar, talking to the
same man, and associated with one another. It proved to be confusing ... where Dickens made several references to nobility and the plight of the bourgoesie. But the constant repetition of Jacques one, two, three, four, and five is a major distraction from the setting and detail described (45.9).

Scott's journal entry has a similar tone to Eric's. His lack of understanding seems to result in frustration which leads to possible exaggeration when he records this entry:

- It is virtually impossible to pick up the symbolizm exhibited by Madame Defarge's knitting. It took me several hours of rereading and conference with family members ...

During Dickens's confusing repetition of Jacques and his numbers, the social comment, setting, and characteristic symbolism, are completely lost on me the first time around (45.10).

Others have recorded this difference in responses between female and male writers. Flynn's (1986) research indicates that “male students sometimes react to disturbing stories by rejecting them or dominating them, a strategy, it seems, that women do not employ” (p. 285).

Offers possible interpretations

This property comprises instances where student writers move
beyond stating their lack of understanding and confusion about the text. Susan attempts to interpret two passages she doesn’t fully understand:

I am becoming very suspicious of Charles Darnay. I don’t know what it is, but I think he must have something to do with Dr. Manette’s misery because I noticed that whenever the Dr. sees or speaks to Darnay, he becomes pale and looks scared. This is really adding to the suspense and I’m dying to know why Dr. Manette is so scared of Charles Darnay. I found it very strange when Mr. Manette went back to his shoemaking and lost his identity. I guessed it had something to do with Lucy’s departure or Charles Darnay (59.6-7).

Diane offers possible interpretations of two events in the text:

I still do not understand why Darnay changed his identity, the only idea I have is because he was a traitor ... At the end of book two, Charles Darnay wrote goodbye letters to Lucie and Dr. Manette. This made me wonder if Darnay was not coming back or was writing just in case he did not come back. This quote “as he left all that was dear on earth behind him, and floated away from the Toadstone” shows that he expects not to come back (14.5-6).

Heather reveals her confusion about the text language but sees a reason
for her difficulty, “Another thing that confused me was Dickens’ choice of language. Since he wrote in the mid 1800s and we are living in the 1990s our speech patterns are quite different” (21.3). Female writers (Susan, Diane, Heather) seem to be engaged with the text as they offer possible interpretations of passages rather than merely stating their confusion. This is contrasted to male writers (Eric, Scott) who demonstrated in property i that they state their lack of understanding and are then disengaged from the text.

“Women more often arrive at meaningful interpretations of stories because they more frequently break free of the submissive entanglement in a text and evaluate characters and events with critical detachment” (Flynn, 1986, p. 285). Flynn’s research (1986) also states that “a pattern of dominance was evident in some of the men’s responses and more women were able to resolve the tensions in the stories and form a consistent pattern of meaning. The dominant reader is often a detached reader; the text is not engaged, and so the reader feels little empathy for the central characters” (pp. 272-273).

**Uses questions to seek clarification**

The use of questions to seek clarification of confusing aspects of the text is evident when Eric writes, “What I do not understand, is why it was such a huge crime to leave France. This makes no sense to me”
Diane asks questions in two entries: "Why was it so important that Jerry Cruncher beat the trial?" (14.2), "Why would he tell Dr. Manette and not Lucie?" (14.5). John asks, "Who would have thought that Sydney Carton would be so useful?" (97.9). These writers choose to record the questions they likely have in their minds, in order to give them further thought. The act of writing them down often contributes to clarification.

The frequency of questions in student journal responses is supported by the research of Iser, Thomson, Wilson and Fulwiler. Iser refers to this as interaction between text and the reader (1978). Thomson (1987) states that the reader examines by questioning, "by interrogating the text" (p. 361). Wilson (1989) indicates that when the reader is confused about the text, this "leads to questions" (p. 63). According to Fulwiler (1989), questions show evidence of curiosity in written language ... Good thinkers ask lots of questions" (p. 165).

Re-reading

The strategy of re-reading is revealed when Michael writes, "I became more and more frustrated because I had to read pages over and over again and still felt I did not really understand what was happening" (61.2). Re-reading does not appear to help Michael with his understanding. In contrast, Diane finds this strategy to be beneficial:

I did not understand why all the characters were at the trial
of this one seemingly unimportant man ... After reading the
trial over again I realized that the rest of the characters were
there because they were also involved with Tellson's (14.2).
Scott writes, "It took me several hours of rereading and conference with
family members before realizing she knitted not only to get away from the
poverty of the Revolution..." (45.10). In some instances, re-reading
assists with clarification of a difficult passage or prompts the student
writer to try a different strategy.

**Physical affect**

Some writers experience a physical reaction when they don't
understand a portion of the text. Lynn records, "a confusing and
uninteresting chapter, through which I actually fell asleep..." (36.1). In
Michael's journal, he records, "I found my mind wondering at times away
from the book, because I was getting lost in the numerous long
descriptions on the pages" (61.2). Scott writes, "I believed they were
meant as a tool to create fear or suspense in the reader because they
contained such morbid content and were repeated so often that it made me
read faster, as I would at suspenseful sections of novels" (45.1).

When using various strategies to deal with lack of understanding,
there is a difference between the approaches selected by male and female
writers. Males are more likely to react in a passive way by stating
confusion, demonstrating frustration and then disengaging from the text. In contrast, female writers tend to state confusion and then offer possible interpretations of a difficult passage. They take the risk that their ideas may be incorrect, but as a result, are curious about possibilities and are thus engaged with the text. They don’t show the same frustration which males exhibit. Both genders employ the other properties of using questions, re-reading, and physical affect.

Characters

Since student writers frequently write about characters, their qualities, their actions and the impressions they have of them as readers, this category is the largest. Properties include: i) perception of positive qualities of character, ii) perception of negative qualities of character, iii) use of direct quotations to reinforce judgement of character's qualities, iv) reliance on textual evidence brought to bear, v) assessment of character's actions in a specific situation, vi) analysis of relationships between/among characters, and vii) identification with character due to similarities/differences from self and clarifying own values.

According to Rosenblatt (1938), the student reader/writer has a “desire for self-understanding and for knowledge about people” (p. 53). Through examination of characters in the novel, the student writer is able
to accomplish this.

**Perception of positive qualities of character**

The first property is evident in John's examination of the positive qualities of Charles Darnay:

From the first time they met on a ship, Charles has been a gentleman. Before he revealed his feelings to Lucie, he talked, with the utmost in respect, care, and sensibility to Dr. Manette, Lucie's father. This shows Charles is a modest, non-arrogant character (97.5).

This is one of only two examples of this property to be recorded by a male writer. There are numerous examples evident in the journals of females.

Susan records:

Charles Darnay, a prisoner that was acquitted is more likeable. I think that he is innocent and should not have been imprisoned. I think this because of what Lucie Manette said about him. She talked about this man as being a good caring person and called him a gentleman (59.3).

She also gives her impression of Dr. Manette's character:

Dr. Manette, who I thought was wise but weak because of his eighteen-year imprisonment showed he was the contrary. Coming back to France to save Charles, he proved
that he was strong by being able to stand in front of all
the seemingly evil peasants and tell them that Charles
should not be in prison (59.9).

Diane records her insight into Sydney Carton’s character:

I think Carton’s character was the most incredible ... Carton’s
personality and attitude toward life gave me the thought
that something must have brought on his self-worthlessness.
When reading about the death of his parents at an early age
I recognized that his being alone as a child was probably
the reason. His love and devotion towards Lucie show that
he was able to love someone and maybe even himself but
I guess he felt no need for it since no one else would love
him (14.9-10).

Diane examines the reason for Carton’s possession of a particular
characteristic. She reveals a greater understanding of his nature as a
result of her analysis. Admiration for Carton is expressed by Lynn:

To me Sidney Carton appears as the exact opposite character
from Stryver. He does the work, he is a genius and yet he is the
one who is pitifully downtrodden. His love for Lucie is
genuine yet he knows that he is not worthy of her and could
never bring her happiness. His humility makes him likable
and his honest confession of his love for Lucie, who is surprisingly lovable ... and his honest confession of his knowledge of his unworthiness of her makes him almost lovable and certainly worthy of my respect (36.5).

Susan demonstrates her interest in Carton:

I am happy to see Sydney Carton back in the story, his character makes things interesting. He seems very witty and smart and wants to help. I like the fact that he is so generous and asks for nothing in return (59.9).

These journal excerpts indicate that female writers’ “like” of a character is associated with the positive qualities they perceive.

Four of the student writers examine Miss Pross’ character. John writes:

Miss Pross emerged as a unique and formidable character. As the “chief nurse” of the Manette household, her protective nature often appeared hostile, as seen with her first meeting with Lorry. To her credit, however, she does her job well as a housekeeper (97.3).

Susan’s journal reveals:

I find her a very interesting character. She says whatever she wants and her inhibitions don’t seem to be holding her
back. She exaggerates a lot but this makes her more amusing.

She seems to be goodhearted and generous (59.3).

The positive qualities of Miss Pross are recorded by Lynn:

I did not begin to like Miss Pross until I began to see the
humour in her. Her selflessness also struck me ... Miss Pross’s
loyalty to the family was evident in many parts of the book
but the one which struck me the most was when confronted
by Madame Defarge she said that she cared not for herself but
only wanted her “ladybird” safe (36.10-11).

Heather notes how Miss Pross’ positive qualities of being both nice and
loyal can cause her problems:

 Mostly I find her to be a nice, sweet woman with a kind heart
who attempts no harm. However, without meaning to, she
sometimes takes her niceness too far. I do think that it is
possible to be too nice and Miss Pross is an example of this.
Miss Pross’s love of Lucie is very admirable, she genuinely
cares about her, however I find that he seems to almost
smother her ... Another admirable quality of Miss Pross is
her loyalty. However, one again, I think it is possible to be
too loyal. It is nice that Miss Pross is so loyal to her
brother Solomn, however she should acknowledge that he does
have character flaws and should not keep her memories of him as a perfect person. Most people find it very hard to accept the truth about things they don’t want to know about and Miss Pross is one of them (21.10-11).

All four female student writers record their perceptions of positive qualities of characters. Few examples of male writers considering character qualities are revealed in their journal entries.

Cherland’s (1993, 1994) research supports this finding. She states that ‘discourse of feeling’ is frequently used by females as “a way of talking about literature, a way of signifying, through language a concern for the feelings of both the reader of the text and the characters portrayed in the text in question” (p. 136). Evans (1996) concludes that “boys rarely analyzed characters, and when characters were discussed it was in terms of what they did, not what they felt” (p. 186).

**Perception of negative qualities of character**

Susan states her interest in Madame Defarge and is affected by her negative qualities:

I don’t identify with her tough, bossy character but I find her interesting. I like the way she can manipulate her husband and the fact that she is a strong woman. She is not afraid to stare directly into the Marquis’ eyes when everyone else is
looking away or down (59.6).

Heather has insight into Madame Defarge’s character:

As the book progresses I was able to see Madame Defarge’s true personality develop. At first I had simply pegged her as someone to watch out for, even if I did not know why. Later on as her true vengeance showed I saw Madame Defarge for the truly nasty person she was (21.12).

Eric sees a negative aspect of Sydney Carton, “At the end of chapter five, I thought that Carton was a pathetic man” (27.3). The female writers referred to earlier when examining property one wrote about positive aspects of Carton’s character.

Lynn is “intrigued” by Jerry Cruncher and explains her reasons in this journal entry:

Jerry Cruncher is one of the most intriguing characters in the novel. He is confusing because at one point he is portrayed as an honest and loyal employee of Tellson’s Bank as well as a man of all work. At other times he is shown as the abusive husband who beats his wife because she prayed for the salvation of his soul. Jerry’s business of digging up bodies for medical and scientific research is an immoral yet beneficial art ... tries to justify his business because he knows
it to be morally wrong. He talks to himself and calls himself 
an “honest tradesman” which, I believe, he has said to himself 
so many times that he does actually believe it (36.6).

Diane examines the character of the Monseigneur:

Monseigneur seems to be the most influential man in the 
court. I have read that he can not do anything by himself, he 
needs helpers without which he would die. He seems to think 
that he can get what ever he wants with money ... Monseigneur 
is very superficial. He talks about how evil man is, and how 
they would always be stuck in the circumference and how they 
will never get back into the circle (14.4-5).

The negative aspects of Monseigneur are stated by Diane. Her comments 
demonstrate that she has acquired insight into his true nature. Susan 
reveals her impression of Defarge, “When Charles Darnay is taken to 
prison, I noticed Defarge to be very cool. Darnay asked for “a little help” 
and Defarge refused. It was like he wasn’t human anymore. He seemed 
evil” (59.8).

Lynn states a dislike for Stryver:

Mr. Stryver is my least liked of all the characters in the novel.

He is pompous, conceited and manipulative ... Mr. Stryver is a 
fake and has Mr. Carton do all of his legal work for him. This
makes him repulsive because he does no work but gets all the credit while Carton, the worker, wastes away his genius in spirits and wine. Mr. Stryver’s absolute faith in the fact that Lucie will immediately wish to marry is also a cause of my dislike. It makes me feel that he has no belief in her having an opinion of her own and that he believes that she will risk losing love and trust just to be rich (36.4-5).

All four female writers record their perceptions of negative qualities of various characters.

**Use of direct quotations to reinforce judgement of character’s qualities**

One example of a direct quotation from the text which supports an observation about a character’s quality is from Eric’s journal: “Jerry claims he is ‘a honest tradesman’, and refuses to stop ‘the dreadful business’ ” (27.10). This quotation reinforces Jerry’s character, and his commitment to his occupation although he knows its an immoral action. Lynn uses the same quotation --”honest tradesman” (36.6), to reinforce the dishonesty of Jerry’s occupation. In reference to Monseigneur, Diane writes, “...tend to his own power and pocket” (14.4), thereby supporting her judgement of the character’s selfish nature. Lynn refers to Lorry’s words to Manette, “I have a friend who has had a relapse into an illness,” (36.8) to support her view that Lorry was trying to comfort Manette who
was in a fragile state of mind. Michael notes his distaste for the attorney general who tries to force Lucie into incriminating Darnay by interrupting her testimony and asking, “Had he come on board alone” (61.4). At times, student writers choose to back up their judgements of characters' qualities by presenting a direct quotation.

**Reliance on textual evidence brought to bear**

This property comprises textual evidence other than direct quotations which writers use to clarify their statements about characters. There are many examples of student writers using this evidence to support their judgement of characters. John writes about Dr. Manette, by integrating his ideas with textual details:

Before he met her daughter, he used shoemaking as a means of escape (well, according to Lorry), to take his mind off the suffering. He “lightened up” after Lucie rejoined him, yet the effect was quite short-lived, and he resorted back to shoemaking after Lucie left to wed Darnay ... The Doctor, in his sixties, is now a respected figure among revolutionaries. Clear-headed, energetic, he has become a new man. As though all the energy suppressed in him has been building up to this point. The revolution clearly has brought out the best in him (97.7).
By integrating textual detail with his interpretation, John comes to a clearer understanding of Dr. Manette's character. Susan also chooses to write about the Doctor:

The old shoemaker seemed to be strange, withdrawn and in another world. He seemed old and quiet. His voice was worn out and weak and I felt melancholy when I imagined him speak. He seemed to be in another world; he took a long time to answer questions and asked many times for the question to be repeated. The way the room was dark also made me think he was strange. (59.2).

Susan's impressions of Dr. Manette are supported by her choice to bring textual evidence forward. She acquires a clearer picture of why he behaves in such a peculiar way. Lynn notes details about Jerry Cruncher:

Jerry's wife Aggerawayter, or Aggravater, prays for the salvation of Jerry's soul because she knows that the defilement of dead bodies is ungodly and morally wrong. Jerry tells her that she is an undutiful wife and beats her badly. I believe that Jerry's behaviour to his wife is certainly wrong especially since she is only trying to do him good (36.7).

An assessment of Jerry's behaviour is made by Lynn. By re-stating textual details, she emphasizes the "wrongness" of Jerry's behaviour. Carton and
Stryver are written about by Diane:

We read how at first they are friendly, making jokes, then they get into a deeper conversation about their lives, and when they start talking about business, they start to argue. It seems that a girl can cause a big uproar between them, but I really think that it is their difference of opinion being brought out by some girl (14.3).

Diane shows insight into the characters of Carton and Stryver. Revisiting the text allows her to better understand their characteristics. To support his observation that a character refuses to change his ways, Eric records, “Carton does not listen to Miss Manette when she tells him not to be so depressed” (27.10). This evidence from the novel reminds the writer about this detail of Carton’s character--his inability to change.

**Assessment of character's actions in a specific situation**

Student writers often evaluate the positive and negative actions of characters in certain instances. For example, Lynn agrees with the actions of Lorry and Miss Pross when they had to handle Manette’s relapse:

I believe that Lorry and Pross were right in their delicate treatment of Manette’s relapse and they were right not to tell Lucie of it although I think they should have told Charles Darnay. After the nine days, when the relapse was over and
Manette had had no memory of it, I liked Lorry’s treatment of the matter ... Lorry’s way of breaking the news of the relapse deserves applause because at the time Manette was in a fragile state of mind ... Also worthy of praise is Lorry’s suggestion of destroying the shoemaker’s bench. I found the advice, like he who gave it, to be strong and sound and all in all I find Lorry to be a loyal and sensible man (36.7-8).

Lynn’s analysis of Lorry’s actions demonstrates her attempt at forming an opinion of his character. She critically examines the action and states the characteristic of Lorry which is revealed. Eric, in examining the actions of Carton, Stryver and Cruncher writes, “All three men ... do not understand why they should not do what they are doing, or refuse to change what they are doing” (27.10). Heather records the following about Sydney Carton:

I had already known about his great love for Lucie Manette and his willingness to do anything for her, however the fact that Carton died in place of Charles Darnay was a shock to me, mainly because it seemed inconceivable (21.12-13).

Although Heather has learned a great deal about Carton from reading most of the novel, this later entry in her journal reveals her surprise at his action. Michael applauds the actions of Darnay:
As for Charles Darnay, I felt myself starting to cheer for him, even with my limited knowledge of the trial. Dickens portrayed him as the underdog with the intent, I believe, to have us cheer for him. Dickens had made it clear to me who he wants me to like and who he wants me to dislike (61.3).

Although Lynn previously criticized Jerry's behaviour towards his wife, she does see a redeeming quality, "Jerry Cruncher is an interesting character because although he commits acts which are morally wrong he is also a loyal servant of Tellson's and when he is given a job he performs it dutifully" (36.7). In a later entry, Lynn reacts to the vindictive nature of Madame Defarge:

I thought that she took her personal revenge on the Evremondes much too far and I find it disgusting that she would have killed Lucie and her daughter as well only because of what the Marquis d'Evremonde had done to her family ... I also dislike her because of her ruthlessness in killing innocent people and because of her supposed leading role in a revolution that killed so many (36.11-12).

Lynn's dislike for Defarge is a result of his actions:

I dislike Defarge as well as his wife but my dislike of Defarge is not as acute. I sense in him a hidden loyalty to the Manette
household which made him more likeable in my eye. His aid to Manette at the beginning of the novel and his reluctance to persecute Lucie and her daughter are also acts in his favour yet his prominent role in the Revolution outweigh these acts and I must still say that I dislike him (36.12).

Scott is highly critical of Lucie Manette's actions:

I’m sure Dickens meant to portray the character of Lucie Manette as a sweet little girl as she certainly seems to be. Close to her father, loving mother and wife, and always affectionate, she seemed to be the posterchild for good daughters of America. She even went outside her husband, Charles Darnay’s window every day while he was held captive. Yet it was this act which left me somewhat agast at her lack of love for her husband. What I wanted to know was why Lucie wasn’t at the prison talking with a judge ... or someone with control to free her husband. If she truly loved Charles, she should have pleaded day and night for his release ... By merely having Lucie visit the window of Charles Darnay, she exhibits some sort of love and loyalty, but I think it would have made Charles, and I as well, much happier, and instill much more hope in our souls if we knew we had our loved one fighting tooth and
These comments reveal that Scott does not feel that Lucie acted in an appropriate way. He does make suggestions about how she should act and seems to feel the necessity to state his own (and Charles') disappointment at Lucie's inaction on Charles' behalf.

Differences between female and male responses are supported by others. Simpson (1996) records that “girls wrote about fictional characters and their predicaments as if they were real, they regularly empathized with the characters and related events to their own feelings” (p. 271).

**Analysis of relationships between/among characters**

Heather investigates the relationship between Lucie and Dr. Manette:

A relationship like the one Lucie and Dr. Manette have is rare. That is why I really loved reading about the two of them and kept rooting for them throughout the book. It was such a refreshing change from constantly reading about people who hated their parents. The fact that Lucie and Dr. Manette were separated for so many years was very sad. I can only imagine how many great times they could have shared had they that opportunity (21.9).

Heather continues her analysis of this relationship:
I also liked Lucie's part in the relationship. I could see that she did not take her father's love for granted, rather she appreciated all he did. I also could tell that she had as much love for her father as he had for her and would also attempt to do what she could to make him happy. At first I was slightly annoyed by Dr. Manette's overprotection in terms of men. However I did realize it was out of love and in the end he would step out of the way so Lucie could be happy (21.9-10).

These journal entries reveal that Heather has spent some time thinking and writing about the relationship between the Manettes. She offers insight into the parts that Dr. Manette and Lucie play in their relationship. By writing about it, she gains a better understanding of the strong bond between father and daughter.

Susan reacts to the reunion between Lucie and Dr. Manette:

The part where she meets his daughter, and is filled with joy made me feel happy for them. Although I didn’t even know the characters, I was still deeply touched when I saw a poor old man re-united with his daughter (59.2).

In her analysis of the Manette's relationship, Susan becomes involved in the text through her feeling of being “filled with joy”.

Assessments of Lucie's relationships with other characters are
apparent in student journal entries. Heather examines the relationship between Lucie and Miss Pross:

Miss Pross's love of Lucie is very admirable, she genuinely cares about her, however I find that she seems to almost smother her. When she makes the comments about Lucie's many gentlemen, it seems like she is checking each of them over, as if she has the final say over Lucie's love life. It strikes me that she would try to breakup what she would perceive as a "bad" match, for Lucie's "happiness", with the excuse that she is doing it all because she loves her. However, if you really love someone you will allow them to choose their own path to happiness. I definitely think Miss Pross was a great comfort to Lucie growing up, especially when she was "orphaned". I just wish that she would not necessarily take her love to an extreme (21.10-11).

Scott has a negative viewpoint of Charles' and Lucie's relationship, "So for me, Lucie did not truly embody the loving, loyal wife of Charles Darnay, rather a passive little pussy cat, who would rather waste time talking a leasurely promenade than fight for the life of her husband" (45.13). In contrast to Scott's assessment, Heather sees Charles and Lucie to be a good match:
In my opinion, the best match for Lucie is Charles Darnay. He is a kind man who has been a friend of the family for many years. I think that Charles truly does love Lucie and it is evident in the way that he treats her, as he does so with kindness and respect. He does not let his infatuation take over and have him forget about her personality and the real reason that he likes her (21.7-8).

Diane records her impression of the relationship between Charles and Dr. Manette:

I think that Charles Darnay feels a certain closeness to Dr. Manette and it is not in the family sense. Meaning Darnay is now in the same position as Dr. Manette was and they are both fighting together to stay away from danger. Dr. Manette remembers what it was like to be a prisoner in the Bastille and he wants to use his experience to help Darnay (14.6-7).

The reason for the doctor's desire to help Darnay is stated by Diane.

Heather expresses her concern about the love between Carton and Lucie:

Sydney is also in love with Lucie but I find his love kind of strange. He is so devoted to her that it seems he would do ANYTHING for her. I'm not entirely sure whether he actually loves Lucie for who she is, or for the idea of loving someone. Although he is a nice enough man, I don't think he is the kind
of person I would want to love me, I find his intensity quite scary, I think he goes too overboard. I hoped that Sydney does find happiness, I just don’t think it should be with Lucie ... Lucie did care about Sydney but she was not in love with him, his death would not change things. However, Sydney had promised he would do anything to protect Lucie and her family. That is a very humble and noble thing to do (21.8-13).

Diane investigates the relationship between Carton and Stryver:
I know that they have known each other for a very long time and Carton admits that he feels he has been living his life in the shadow of Stryver. Their relationship struck me of one of dependency. Carton depends on Stryver to help keep him awake and thinking and Stryver depends on Carton for all of his good ideas, when he is sober enough to think of them ... Their differences of opinions being of a problem because Stryver thinks he is better than Carton and shows it in the way he speaks to him. Carton thinks otherwise. Stryver maybe his boss but Carton knows that he makes all the right choices in court (14.3-4).

This relationship is also examined by Heather:
To me, Sydney Carton represents an everyman, one we all
know and can relate to. Carton is a legal genius, yet he cannot accomplish very much because of his drinking problem. Instead, his partner Stryver manages to take all the credit for everything that has happened even though Carton truly is the brains behind the operation ... Throughout the book it is evident that Sydney is a kind person, he puts up with Stryver's abuse and tries to help others. Saving Charles from death seems to be the right thing, even if he had to die instead. While I immensely respect Sydney, I don't think it was the most necessary thing to do (21.4-13).

The property of analyzing the relationships between characters in the novel is dominated by female responses, especially those of Heather. There are few male journal responses which focus on this aspect. This finding is supported by others. Cherland's (1994) work reveals that girls were "more inclined to read literature in terms of characters and relationships" (p. 144). In contrast, boys had "a desire to find meaning in the action occurring in the story rather than in any of the story's human relationships" (p. 140). The results of Bleich's (1986) study indicated that "the males were more likely to recount the text objectively in order to get the facts straight, while females were more likely to reflect on the experience with a story, focussing on understanding the character
relationships" (p. 237). Moss (1989) reveals that when students were asked to write narratives, "females wrote stories focussing on the development of interpersonal relationships" (Anson & Beach, 1995, p. 51). Finders (1997) supports this point in writing, "girls embraced a social role that privileged relationships" (p. 24).

**Identification with character due to similarities/differences from self and clarifying own values**

Some student journals reveal instances where writers relate to a character due to similarities or differences from themselves. This identification helps them to clarify their own values. Student responders may also write about their admiration for the author's ability to grab their interest by recording a significant behaviour of a character. Michael considered Darnay's actions and says he could never act in the same way:

Up to this point I thought of Charles Darnay as a smart person. Unfortunately sense of duty clouded his judgement. I could never do something like this. I would never go somewhere I thought would mean certain imprisonment and most likely death. I admire Charles for putting someone else's life in front of his own. This is an act I like to think I could do, but I know I probably would not (61.10).

Scott contrasts Lucie's actions to the way he thinks he would act if a
family member was imprisoned:

It doesn’t identify with what I would envision my father doing if I were unjustly imprisoned, or if our roles were reversed. No man, mountain or weapon could keep us from setting the other free, not to mention what my mother would do (45.13)

Stress is placed on assisting a family member at all costs, in Scott’s journal entry. Lucie’s actions are clearly different than those Scott feels he would employ.

John analyzes Lucie’s actions when she learns that her father is actually alive:

For if I were in such a situation, I would look ahead unemotionally, whereas she looked up and was shocked, looked forward and became insensible, and looked down with a pale face. Quite frankly speaking, if I heard news about a “dead” father that I never saw, I would show less emotion than a lottery winner, because I cannot relate to an unknown parent ... I would never react so dramatically in the style of Miss Manette had I been in place of her (97.1).

All three aforementioned male journal writers assess what a character does and then state that they would act in a different way. There are few female responses which reveal this property. One female writer, Heather,
looks at Dr. Manette and Lucie compared to her own father and herself:

I was slightly annoyed by Dr. Manette's overprotection in terms of men. However I did realize it was out of love and in the end he would step out of the way so Lucie could be happy. His whole behaviour reminded me of my father, or any father for that matter. While I did not find all of the book easy to relate to, I did enjoy this part (21.9).

Heather is able to compare her own relationship with her father to the one that Lucie and Dr. Manette have. She sees similarity rather than difference which was the dominant feature of male responses which exhibited this property of identification with characters. There is no evidence that female or male readers are more likely to identify with a character of the same gender. Other research supports this point. Gabriel (1990) concluded that her study “does not offer any suggestion that female readers can identify with male characters more readily than male readers can identify with female characters” (p. 137).

Much of the literature supports the fact that student writers identify with certain characters in the literary work they are reading. Golden and Guthrie (1986) reveal through their study that “although literal understanding of plot was accomplished by the vast majority of the students, thematic perception was associated with affective
identification with a given character” (p. 420). Wilson (1989) indicates that students reveal their identification with characters. Rosenblatt’s work (1938) indicates that the student is “compensating for lacks or failures through identification with a character who possesses qualities other than our own or who makes full use of capacities similar to our own” (p. 40). Thomson (1987) uses the term “analogising” to explain how the student reader/writer is “recognizing aspects of her own behaviour and her strengths and weaknesses in the behaviour of characters in books she read” (p. 224). Evan’s (1996) research supports the female identification with characters. “Girls often expressed a personal connection with the characters, and their conversations illustrated how they frequently put themselves in a character’s place or personally identified with a certain character” (p. 186). Hancock’s research (1993a) on character journals indicates “the intensity of emotional responses by both genders regardless of the gender of the character” (p. 46). With regard to clarifying one’s values, in research (McIntosh, 1992) I conducted myself on the response journals of secondary students, writers used journals to “clarify their values, explore their feelings and closely examine their own lives” (p. 96). Pirie’s (1991) research reveals the benefits of clarifying values: “Once we recognize how our values shape our understanding, we are in a position to criticize those values, measure
them against the values of others, guard against our prejudices, and celebrate or revise our values as appropriate” (p. 36).

**Personal Experiences and Beliefs**

This category comprises student writers’ comparison of events experienced by characters in the novel to their own life experience. These experiences are as diverse as the individual students. In reflecting on these experiences, writers state their own beliefs. Properties of this category indicate the unique nature of the individual: i) use of 1st person narration, ii) own experience compared to that of character in the novel which assists the reader in understanding the character’s situation, and iii) examination of self/beliefs.

Rosenblatt (1985) states that the word ‘transaction’ “implies that the reader brings to the text a network of past experiences in literature and in life” (p. 35).

**First person narration**

In relaying a personal experience, student writers employ first person narration. An example from one journal follows:

I sometimes find the sneak previews at a movie more interesting than the feature. This is why, though I enjoy the entire book, I find searching for these clues as one of the main reasons I
have trouble putting this book down ... I spent most of this section looking for historical accuracies and inaccuracies during the storming of the Bastille which I did my project on (61.8-9). Michael uses “I” throughout his explanation of how the project he completed influenced his reading of the novel. As a result, when one is reading his journal, one is closer to the event and gets the sense that the writer is being sincere.

Scott’s journal also reveals his use of “I” as he writes, “my actions are almost exactly the same as his. It’s frightening to realize how many times I’ve left my parents in the middle of a conversation. What they had to say is probably not as important as the death of a young child, but nevertheless, they were abandoned as many other parents have been” (45.4-5). The student writer is involving himself in the text through use of “I”.

Student writers are acutely aware of their reaction to the text as they are reading it. Diane writes, “I still do not understand why Darnay changed his identity, the only idea I have is because he was a traitor” (14.5). Heather records, “I enjoyed reading the trial scene if not only for entertainment but to reinforce some of my own beliefs” (21.3). In Eric’s journal, he writes, “At first I thought they were trying to fight the government; now it looks like they are trying to help it. I am enjoying this
book, but I sometimes do not know what to think of it" (27.14). Susan's journal reveals the following observation: "I find I have to be patient and wait for something interesting to happen but this novel had no problem getting my attention" (59.1). The preceding entries indicate that the student reader/writers choose to examine the act of reading itself and their involvement in it.

The work of Fulwiler (1989) supports the student writers use of "I" or the personal voice. He indicates that phrases such as "I think", "I believe", and "I wonder", indicate the writer's own involvement in a given subject (p. 162). It should be noted that journal writing is characterized by the use of "I" (Fulwiler, 1989, p. 162).

Own experience compared to that of character, assists reader in understanding character's situation

By comparing their own personal parallel experiences to those of fictional characters, student reader/writers can better identify with characters' situations. For example, after stating her dislike of Stryver, Heather writes:

I encounter people like him all too often in my life and it always infuriates me that 1) those people always think that they are the oh-so powerful ones that can get away with twisting everything around and 2) the people that are being manipulated
are so oblivious that they allow these actions to happen (21.5-6). People like Madame Defarge have been encountered by Heather in her daily life, and later in her journal she notes:

I have never much liked people like Madame Defarge, they just stand around, always there yet not really noticed because they are not perceived to be any great threat. I have always been suspicious of these people, Madame Defarge included. They just stand there absorbing information that you don’t even realize you’re giving them. Without your knowledge they have a goldmine of information about you which they can use against you any way they wish (21.11).

This student writer compares people she has encountered in her own life to the fictional character of Madame Defarge. She clearly explains why she is suspicious of these types of people.

Through examining her own relationship with her father, Heather can empathize with Dr. Manette:

Dr. Manette truly touches me. I could see that his love is so great that he would do anything for his daughter. This reminds me quite a bit of my father, the two of us are exceptionally close and I know that he would do just about anything for me. I’m sure a lot of the reason I liked this aspect of the book was
because it was realistic and I could relate to it (21.9). By comparing her own relationship to that of two fictional characters, Heather is better able to understand the bond between parent and child.

John writes, "If I were in such a situation ... I would show less emotion than a lottery winner, because I cannot relate to an unknown parent" (97.1). The emotion displayed by Lucie is criticized by John who feels he would act in a different manner if placed in a similar situation. Michael records his concern about Madame Defarge and writes about how he would feel if he was in the novel, "If I was involved in the revolution I would have worried about Madame Defarge and her savage beliefs, of killing all aristocrats and their families, as a liability. She might someday kill the wrong person..." (61.8). Both John and Michael come to a closer reading of the text as a result of their reflection on what they believe their own actions or feelings would be if they were in the fictional situation.

According to Thomson's work (1987), the reader makes meaning from the text by "drawing on the repertoire of personal experiences, making connections between characters and one's own life" (p. 361). Student writers reveal this in their journals. The experiences discussed are of a personal nature. Students freely relate their own experiences to those of characters in the novel they are reading. The comparison of such
personal events in their lives leads to a clearer understanding of the
character's situation.

Examination of self/beliefs

This category includes reflections by student reader/writers about
themselves. These reflections occur when student writers examine
characters or situations, evaluate themselves in relation to them and
often state their resulting beliefs.

While writing about Darnay's response to Gabelle's request for help,
Lynn concludes that his actions "made me like him as a character even
more because I believe in loyalty and duty and here he exhibits both to his
former servant" (36.8). She continues her assessment of the situation
and writes that "Gabelle's honest plea for help to also makes him likeable
because to me a man who can ask for help is certainly more likeable than a
man who cannot ask for it" (36.9). Lynn's "like" for these characters is
related to her own beliefs about individual qualities. She clearly states
her belief about the role of love in marriage, "I believe that love should
by the only absolute requirement in marriage" (36.12). Lynn frequently
reveals her beliefs throughout her journal entries.

Michael analyzes the issue of capital punishment and reveals his
belief about the justice system:

I have always had questions about capital punishment, but
this section of this book gave the best argument against it. Juries make mistakes. Of course, the case of Charles Darnay and the other French aristocrats killed was a little extreme, but it did show how a justice system can be abused. It just reinforced my belief that here in Canada, we are very fortunate to live in a society with a fair justice system and fair government (61.12).

Heather records her beliefs in three journal excerpts: “if you really love someone you will allow them to choose their own path to happiness” (21.10), “I can not imagine dying for someone else, and if it was for the sake of true love ... I would at least make sure it was requited love” (21.12), “without taking the moral high road I can still say it is silly to die for someone you love who doesn’t love you back; it is pretty silly to do anything for them” (21.14).

This property is supported by other researchers. Hancock (1993a) records that composing written responses allows students “to gain insight into their own emerging identities” (p. 42). Beach (1990) concurs that “through responding, we define our attitudes and beliefs and ultimately ourselves” (p. 72). Rosenblatt (1938) states that “literature contributes to the enlargement of experience. We participate in imaginary situations, we look at characters living through crises, we explore
ourselves and the world about us, through the medium of literature (p. 37).

Emotions

In the category called “Emotions”, students reveal empathy about a character or situation they encounter in the novel. It is a difficult task to convey one’s emotions in written form. Student writers choose words carefully to describe feelings about the character or situation. When a reader is “moved” in a particular way, true engagement with the text is evident. Properties of this category are developed from the human traits of compassion, sympathy and anger. The properties include the writer stating i) positive empathy about character, ii) negative empathy about character, iii) positive empathy about situation, iv) negative empathy about situation, and v) feelings about work of literature as a whole.

Purves & Rippere (1968) refer to engagement as “the various ways in which the writer (reader) indicates his surrender to the literary work ... some form of emotional reaction to the work or to aspects of it” (p. 7). Golden & Guthrie (1986) state that empathy is a “strong concern for characters as people ... an emotional involvement comprising the reactions to author, narrators, observers, and other characters” (p. 412).

Positive empathy about character

Student writers reveal positive empathy for characters in the novel.
A number of journal entries reveal a positive emotional reaction to Sydney Carton. Lynn writes:

I think that Carton is at once the most self-sacrificing and pitiful and generous man I have ever read about. My love for his character grows from the knowledge that he is a man who has little respect for himself and yet surpasses his self-respect and realizes that he can at least be useful to Lucy and Darnay. I however have a great respect for him because his work as a lawyer did people good (36.12-13).

Susan's journal reveals:

Sydney Carton's character touched me. He seemed so sad and depressed yet he so passionately expressed his feelings for Lucy, that this was touching. I felt sorry for poor Sydney because he truly loved Lucy but she didn’t love him back (59.5).

Scott learns from Sydney’s words that he could use them if he was ever in a similar situation:

If I ever have the need to comfort a female in as dire a situation as the one Sydney faced, I will be sure to consult the words of this Romeo of the Revolution though my intentions would surely be different. He spoke so affectionately and sincerely that I felt that I should wish him farewell. When a character such as
Sydney makes you sad enough to wish you had never finished a novel you have thoroughly disliked, he possesses a magic which is, and was able to tug at my heartstrings (45.15).

The character of Sydney has clearly had a profound affect on Scott. Heather simply states that “As of now Carton is my favourite character in the book because he has the most human qualities and seems like a real person” (21.6). Eric also writes about Carton, “I actually felt sorry for him when he went home and cried himself to sleep” (27.5). Lynn notes a change in Carton’s character:

Carton improved throughout the novel. At the beginning he was pitiful as a inebriated man who let others live off his generosity. Later in the book he became more likeable as the unrequited admirer of Lucie and the almost reluctant family friend of the Manette Darnay household. At the end of the novel I admired his strength both of mind and purpose and I admired him for his sacrifice although I sympathized for him as well. Carton’s progression throughout the novel gives me happiness that even in the worst of times we can still progress (36.13).

Many student writers show positive empathy for Carton in their journal entries.

Susan’s journal reveals her thoughts about Dr. Manette, “My heart
went out to poor Dr. Manette. He tried so hard to save Charles, even after he knew of his cursed identity that lead to his imprisonment” (59.9).

Eric's journal offers his mixed emotions about the Doctor:

When Mr. Lorry, Defarge and Miss Manette met Monsieur Manette, it was also very touching, in a somewhat disturbing way. It was touching in that Manette had been reduced to this sad, humble little man, who was not really aware of his surroundings. It was also touching in the way that Miss Manette behaved towards her father. It was disturbing in that Manette was so unaware of his surroundings and thought his name was “One Hundred and five, North Tower (27.4).

Later in his journal, Eric shows that he also has mixed emotions about Miss Pross:

I was intrigued by Miss Pross's character. At first I did not like her. She was very cold and blunt in her speaking. Then she started to be a little more warm and caring sounding, but it was only about Lucie that she was more warm and caring (27.6).

By recording a change in their emotions about a character, student writers recognize that a character can change during the course of a work, just as people change in their daily lives. They can thus appreciate that people have various qualities of which different readers may have differing
impressions.

In a few journal entries, there is evidence that writers empathize in a positive way with characters who reveal evil tendencies. Lynn writes, “I like Madame Defarges character a lot because she is strong and serves her cause faithfully” (36.3). Although this is true, Madame Defarge’s actions are quite evil so most reader/writers respond differently than Lynn. As we will see in the discussion of property ii, other student writers react to Madame Defarge in a negative manner. Scott’s comments about Monsieur de Marquis demonstrate a reaction similar to Lynn’s “like” of an evil character:

His controversial attitude and actions sparked an interest in me ...
It was awkward reading the story of a character who exhibits such cruelty and lack of remorse, who still possesses characteristics we all do ... this is why he works for me. I may be wrong, but he is easily more identifiable with the average man in his barbaric actions than someone like Lucie Manette, a woman who is loving, caring and sweet. His characteristics are heightened to an extent that may seem inhuman yet Monsieur de Marquis may be the most realistic and believable character in the novel thus far (45.4-5).

Scott is drawn to the “dark side” of human nature in the character of the
Marquis. His believability attracts Scott. The student writer likely realizes that others might find his observations odd; he therefore included the phrase, “I may be wrong” as part of his response. Other student writers do react to the Marquis, but as we see in the next section, their reactions are in the opposite direction.

**Negative empathy about character**

One clear example of an opposite reaction is from Michael's journal:

I hate the Monsieur the Marquis with a passion, which I find incredible, because I have, of course, never met this character. My feeling come purely from the words on the page. I don't think I have ever experienced this strong a hate for a fictional character (61.5).

Michael's “hatred” for this character is so strong that he is surprised by it.

A few references to Madame Defarge are revealed in four other journal entries. Eric records in his journal:

I also thought Madame Defarge was very intimidating. I felt sorry for Monsieur Defarge, because if I was him, I would have been intimidated by her. It is difficult to explain or describe, but there was just something about everything she said and answered, and her extremely cool manner that was very
discomforting (27.11).

Diane is also disturbed about this character, “Some thing that bothered me was when Mme. Defare wanted to see Lucie and baby Lucie. I feel scared of Mme. Defare for them” (14.7). Involvement in the text is revealed in Diane’s journal entry. As she has become familiar with the novel’s characters, she fears for their safety when they encounter Madame. Susan reflects a viewpoint similar to that of Diane:

The Defarges seem to me to be cold-hearted and uncompassionate. It hurts me to see poor Lucy was once so happy and light, turning depressed and constantly weeping, Mme. Defarge only added to Lucy’s distress. I hate her, she scares me. The way she gives Lucy a cold look and falls over her like a shadow. She is creepy and reminds me of death (59.9).

Michael’s entry shows his insight into Madame Defarge’s capabilities and some of their implications:

If I was involved in the revolution I would have worried about Madame Defarge and her savage beliefs of killing all aristocrats and their families, as a liability. She may someday kill the wrong person, possibly even a supporter of the revolution. Something like this could cause a division in the revolution ... Madame Defarge should make sure that her views do not get
the better of her judgement (61.10).

The writer seems to be warning the character about what will happen if she isn’t careful. Michael’s apparent involvement in the story provides a certain level of comfort which allows him to engage with the character as he attempts to control Madame’s actions.

Heather records her dislike for Stryver:

Every book has one character in which I always end up hating ... that character is Mr. Stryver. Perhaps hate is a very strong word, but everything Stryver does causes me to at least dislike him. The main reason I dislike Stryver is because he is so manipulative. I don’t like the way that he manages to control Sydney Carton...what really bothers me the most about Stryver, he really isn’t dumb. He’s lucky but clever. Even so, I don’t like many of his actions, so I guess I don’t really like him either (21.6-7).

Although Heather recognizes that “hate is a very strong word”, she decides to use it to describe her feelings about Stryver. Her hatred is based on details which she describes in her response, which provide valid reasons for her disdain.

More female than male writers’ journal entries reveal empathy with characters in the novel. This is most apparent when examining the
evidence under (i) ‘positive empathy about character’, where all four females in this study are represented but only two males (Participants 45 & 27). This is consistent with other findings, for example, Simpson (1996), who observed that “girls empathized with the characters and related events to their own feelings” (Simpson, 1996, p. 271). Simpson (1996) does not compare the empathy of females and males.

**Positive empathy about situation**

In some instances, writers display positive empathy about situations that occur in the novel. Lynn comments on Carton’s actions when he comforts the poor seamstress at the scaffold:

... he had not only sacrificed himself for Lucie but had taken upon himself the task of comforting the poor girl who did not know why the country that she loved would do this to her. Carton’s generosity here endeared him to me all the more (36.14-15).

When referring to the same situation as Lynn wrote about, Scott writes:

... the last few pages were not only moving, heartwarming, and touching, but quite possibly the greatest read of my life. Never has a book moved me to tears, possibly because television has desensitized me. So when an author is able to move me in that way, I take notice. Dickens moved me through an outlet named Sydney Carton, a man just moments away from death. As he
comforts Lucie who praises him as an angel, he assures her of the wonder that is Heaven, and with his final act of gallantry, kisses her lips softly (45.15).

The events at the end of the novel have a positive effect on Scott.

Susan's positive empathy about the fight between Miss Pross and Madame Defarge is revealed in her response:

I was very happy when Miss Pross stood up to the witch Mme. Defarge. I was actually happy when she died. She didn't deserve to live, in my opinion. She sentenced and killed so many innocent people that I had no sympathy for her. When Mme. Defarge and Miss Pross were fighting, I felt it was the struggle of hate and love or evil and good. Mme. Defarge was the evil who wanted to get evidence so she could kill Lucy and her family, and Miss Pross was the good protecting her Ladybird. It was satisfying to see the good beat the evil (59.11).

Michael was also pleased about what happened to Madame Defarge:

I was most pleased to see Madame Defarge finally got what was coming to her. Her character was what eventually turned me against the revolutionaries and the cause. In my mind, she began to care more about revenge then the cause (61.14).
Negative empathy about situation

There are many journal responses evident where student writers record negative empathy about situations. For example, Eric reacts to Carton’s situation near the end of the novel:

The instant I read about Carton telling Darnay to switch boots with him, I thought “Oh no. Carton’s going to take Darnay’s place!” I was right. I thought it was very sad that Carton took Darnay’s place yet slightly uplifting because it was so noble. I still think however, that it is tragic that Carton had to die (27.16).

Lynn’s entry echoes the words of Eric, “I was deeply moved in the last chapter of the novel. I was moved to tears and I cried over Carton’s sacrificing himself for the happiness of the woman he loved” (36.12). In his journal entry, Scott records his reaction to Monsieur de Marquis’ demise:

Dickens ... introduces a character who brings the novel to life with his contrasting emotions and actions. This man, Monsieur de Marquis, is like the black cloud on a hot sunny day; he blocks out the loving sun just enough to give you a comfortable shade. And then he dies ... the anger and utter disappointment at the loss of my favourite character (45.7-8).
Further entries demonstrate student writers’ reaction to events involving the Marquis. Eric writes, “Monseigneur is obviously being portrayed as the embodiment of sensitivity, uncaring heartless and so on. When the woman who had the petition about her husband’s grave, Monseigneur would not even hear her out. I felt sorry for her “ (27.8). Michael records strong emotions about the Marquis’ actions when he is responsible for the death of a child:

I hate the Monsieur the Marquis! So far the Monsieur seems to be the ultimate “bad guy”. He represents everything the poor rebels in France hate about the rich and powerful ... It is not clear whether or not he has regard for any human life, but he certainly shows he does not for that of a peasant. After recklessly running a young boy over with his carriage, he seems to worry more about his horses than the child. It is not clear if he wants forgiveness, but his best way of showing his remorse is with a single gold coin to the boy’s father (61.4). Scott questions the believability of a particular incident and explains his negative reaction to it:

As the President began reading the letters he scribbled down while in prison, my emotions took a major one hundred and eighty degree turn ... Maybe I’m wrong, but I can in no way envision a man
taking the time to write a letter the length of fourteen pages in
the novel, with exact quotes, settings, emotions, and actions
engaged in a situation which had occurred years before. For a man to
remember ... over such a long period of time is ridiculous (45.13-
14).

Gender difference seems to exist with respect to male and female
responses to positive and negative empathy about situations. There is
more evidence of these properties in the response journals of male
writers. Findings in the literature support this point. Cherland (1994)
uses the term ‘discourse of action’ to explain a type of response found
only from males. It is “a style that reflected a concern more with the
plot, or with what happened in the story ... a desire to find meaning in the
action occurring in the story” (Cherland, 1994, p.140). In the current
study, it seems that male writers were better able to record their
empathy about situations rather than about characters.

Feelings about work of literature as a whole

The last property of this category is that of the student writer’s
feelings about the work of literature as a whole. All of these responses
occurred in the final journal entry and none were found earlier. It is at
this time that the reader/writer takes the opportunity to reflect on the
entire novel. John’s entry reveals his impression after he had finished
reading the novel, “The author did an outstanding job of tying the huge and diverse cast to the story ... An enjoyable work of literature that would entertain readers in Nineteen ninety-eight and beyond” (97.9). Another writer records a simple statement of his feelings about the novel. Eric writes, “All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed A Tale of Two Cities” (27.16). Scott’s feelings are clearly stated as follows: “... the last few pages were not only moving, heartwarming and touching, but quite possibly the greatest read of my life. I can’t remember how I put this book down when I read it three years ago, but as I finish today, I feel as if I should read this novel again” (45.15). Diane is honest about the confusion she felt early in her reading, but her entry demonstrates how her impression changed as she continued to read:

Dickens is a brilliant storyteller. Throughout the novel there were times when I was confused and frustrated but by the last line by Carton the whole story came together. Dickens tells an amazing story while also involving history and some very important lessons (14.9).

Michael’s words are similar to Diane’s:

After reading the book I feel I learned a lot about the history of the French Revolution, but more importantly about how ruthless people can get after being put down and oppressed
for many years (61.3).

Focussing on what they have learned from the novel appears to be important to Diane and Michael as they reflect on their reading. These recollections will likely form part of their memories about this novel.

The student writers have demonstrated through reflection in their journal entries that the novel had meaning for them. Miall (1986) reveals that in literary response “emotion can be seen as the source of authority, organizing in advance those intuitive judgements, experiences and memories which if given time, emerge in a personal construct system for explaining that response” (p. 190). Miall’s work seems to indicate that emotion leads a reader’s response. What readers record on paper is based on their feelings at that particular moment. Excerpts from response journals indicate that the reader’s emotional responses are essential to the reader as they draw themselves into the text, and cause them to relate their own feelings to those of the characters.

Plot Events

This category comprises instances where student writers refer to specific events described in the story; at times, they serve to support statements or to reinforce opinions. The properties of this category include: i) use of quotations to reinforce evaluation, ii) use of other
textual evidence, iii) telling in own words, iv) physical reaction to plot event, v) emotional reaction to plot event, and vi) disappointment when predicted outcome doesn’t occur.

**Use of direct quotations to reinforce evaluation**

Some student writers use direct quotations from the text to introduce ideas or to support statements they make. Diane writes about a well-known quotation:

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times ... this well know quote introduced me, the reader into a very confusing first couple of pages. I had heard this phrase or quote so many times before reading the book but I never understood the context of where and why it was said (14.1).'

Although Diane admits her confusion, her attention is captured as she recognizes this famous literary quotation which forms the opening paragraph of *A Tale of Two Cities*. Later in her journal, she refers to the phrase “recalled to life” (14.6) which serves as a chapter title. She repeats it a few times in her journal entry as she attempts to understand its significance and then concludes that Dr. Manette was “recalled to life or brought into a real normal world” (14.6). Re-writing this quotation allows Diane to come to a clearer interpretation of why Dickens chose to use this phrase to convey a specific idea to his readers.
Susan refers to Sydney Carton's last words near the end of the novel: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known" (59.1). This famous literary quotation has a profound effect on the student reader/writer. By recording this phrase, Susan can assess Sydney's selfless action and his feelings about why he chose to give up his life to save Charles.

John records a quotation from the novel to support a statement he makes about Lucie showing compassion toward Charles, "To be confronted with such pity, such earnest youth and beauty, was far more trying" (97.5). Later in his journal, John also incorporates a quotation into an observation he records, "This is truly a tale of two cities, 'in a Paris bursting with revolutionary frenzy, and a London alive with anxious anticipation' " (97.9). By using a direct quotation, it seems that the student writer is attempting to give his response greater credibility. He doesn't simply state his feeling or impression; he has the desire to reinforce it with a textual reference.

**Use of other textual evidence**

We assign to this property examples in student journals where writers use textual evidence other than direct quotations to support their statements about the novel. Eric frequently uses this strategy. The following excerpt allows a reader of Eric's journal to re-create the
The whole sequence about the broken wine cask was quite appealing. It created a fascinating mental image of what was going on at the time, like the people running around, trying to divert the course of the wine, people trying desperately to soak up or pick up some wine to sip, and so on. Then, the man who wrote “BLOOD” on the wall who led to the introduction of Monsieur Defarge (27.3).

The detail included in this entry helps Eric to recollect the scene he read in the novel. The evidence presented allows him to prove why the scene was “appealing” to him as a reader. Eric continues to use other textual evidence: “The whole Darnay trial especially the fact that Darnay and Carton look so alike ...” (27.5), “the part where Darnay is talking about the discovery of the ashes of the paper and leather in the abandoned dungeon of the Tower” (27.6). This evidence from the text makes the student writer’s comments more convincing to the journal reader.

Michael uses textual evidence in two journal entries. In the first, he assesses a situation after stating an event that occurred in the novel, “I’m very pleased to say that in the beginning of this section, the Monsieur the Marquis finally got what he deserved. He was stabbed and killed by Gaspard, the boy’s father” (61.5). The second excerpt from Michael’s
journal supports his viewpoint about the connection of events to the statement “recalled to life”, “Besides the recalling Dr. Manette, there was also the escape from death of Charles Darnay, Miss Pross’ brothers return and of course Jerry Crunchers body snatching activities. Every event in this book seems to be connected at some point” (61.13). Although Michael does not include as much detail as Eric does when using textual evidence in journal entries, they both seem to use this strategy for the same purpose. Making ideas credible or more convincing is often the result of incorporating other textual evidence. Examples to support this property are evident in two male response journals and none are apparent in female journals.

**Telling in own words**

Excerpts from journals where writers tell plot events in their own words compose this property. In telling of an event in this manner, student writers have the opportunity to provide their own interpretation by revealing how they perceive a particular plot event. Diane retells plot events in her own words:

In chapter 5 “The Wood Sawyer” Sydney Carton is not allowed to be seen by Dr. Manette. Why Carton is there is only explained by him saying that he has come to be useful in any way. Carton is fully aware of the dangerous situation ahead of Charles
Darnay. It seems Carton's love for Lucie and his vow to help her always are coming in handy now. Without Carton, Charles was in grave danger (14.7).

The opening sentence of this entry shows Diane telling plot detail in her own words. She then continues the entry by interpreting Carton's role based on his words and actions.

Michael discovers three major coincidences and writes about them in his own words:

The first coincidence is that Sydney Carton just happens to be in France and happens to walk in on the second coincidence which is that John Barsad turns out to be Miss Pross' brother. The third coincidence is that the family that got Dr. Manette imprisoned was actually the family Evremondes, better known as the family of Charles Darnay (61.13).

By highlighting the coincidences he has noted in the text, Michael demonstrates his understanding of how Dickens has linked the plot events.

Lynn writes about the plot events that reveal Darnay and Gabelle's relationship:

Darnay was relatively quick in securing Gabelle's release from prison and in recompense Gabelle tries his hardest
to secure Darnay's release from La Force. At Darnay's trial a year and a quarter later Gabelle testifies as to Darnay's having saved his life by returning to France (36.9).

By retelling these two plot events, Lynn helps the reader of her journal and likely herself, to see the significance of Gabelle trying to help Darnay. The sincere nature of each character is revealed as they seek to repay each other.

Scott's response reveals that he touches on a number of plot events in an attempt to summarize content in the novel:

Should this be doubted, let me say that the first two books spent much of the time discussing the death of Monsieur de Marquis and a love between two people, while book three deals with a man's secret identity revealed, the revelation of Mr. Manette's respect in the Paris legal system, and the demise of a major character at the hands of La Guillotine (45.12).

Another student writer, Eric, re-tells plot events in his journal:

Carton went to speak with Miss Manette, essentially to tell her what a miserable creature he was. They both ended up in tears, and his Manette told Carton that he should not be so miserable and that good things will come. Stryver was on his way to propose marriage to Miss Manette, and Mr. Lorry practically
begged him not to. Jerry digs up bodies, his wife knew this and she did not want him to. She did not actually tell Jerry not to, but she would pray, and called it “the dreadful business” (27.9). This plot re-telling allows Eric to support his point that “all three men were doing something that other people wanted them, and told them, indirectly, not to do” (27.9). He has included a great deal of detail and seems to feel that this is necessary to prove his point. Later in his journal, Eric tells plot details in his own words to demonstrate how Dickens connects events in the story to link the cities of Paris and London:

Another connection between two events, and this one direct, is the burning of the Marquis’ house and Darnay getting the letter from Gabelle. Some villagers burned the Marquis’ house (the Marquis who had been killed). Gabelle rode all around the village trying to get people to help put out the fire. No one seemed to care. Then Darnay received a letter from Gabelle, asking for help, because Gabelle was in jail. Darnay, however, did care and left London for the village of Saint Antoine, in France (27.11).

Rewriting events from the text in his own words provides Eric with the opportunity to reflect on how Dickens has successfully connected occurrences in two cities. Hence, the student reader/writer learns why the book is entitled A Tale of Two Cities.
By writing about the plot in their own words, student writers are able to clarify their thoughts about these events. The act of writing provides an opportunity for reflection and in some instances results in a greater understanding of the text. At times, it seems as though the reader/writer is attempting to convince the journal reader (often the teacher), that they have indeed read the assigned novel. Although both female and male student writers show evidence of “telling in their own words”, they use a different approach. Bleich (1986) conducted a study which indicated that “males were more likely to recount the text objectively in order to get the facts straight, while females were more likely to reflect on the experience with a story, focussing on understanding the character relationships” (p. 237), and this same pattern appears in the student writers’ journals.

Physical reaction to plot event

This property comprises student journal excerpts where writers focus on their own active response to the text. Lynn writes, “I was deeply moved in the last chapter of the novel; I was moved to tears and I cried over Carton’s sacrificing himself for the happiness of the woman he loved” (36.12). Another student writer’s journal offers three instances of a physical reaction to plot events. Susan records: “While reading this part of the novel, I felt my heart beat speed up. This part of the novel was
so emotional and sensitive that I could not help crying” (59.9), “Their holding hands and their last kiss was so sensitive and touching that it brought tears to my eyes” (59.10-11), “Sydney Carton’s last words, ‘It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known’ were so profound that they shed tears to my eyes” (59.11). Susan’s physical reaction is that of crying. It is interesting to note that in her last journal excerpt, she has distorted the cliche “brought tears to my eyes”, in an honest attempt to convey her reaction to a touching event in the novel.

The physical reactions of Scott are more abrupt and violent than those of Lynn and Susan. His three journal excerpts include: “Upon re-reading these words, I began laughing uncontrollably. It had just occured to me that what these men were doing made absolutely no sense” (45.1-2), “In fact I was so mad that I threw the book against the wall” (45.7), “The anger and utter disappointment at the loss of my favorite character out of any Dickens novel I’ve ever read, made me go into a fit so audible that my mother came in from the kitchen and told me to knock it off” (45.8). Scott’s physical reactions are overt rather than the subtle crying, or being “moved to tears” which Lynn and Susan write about. It is possible that as a male reader/writer, even if the physical reaction was crying, he might be hesitant to record this in his journal. References to physical reactions
supplement the student writers emotional reactions and occur in instances where the reader/writer is so involved in the event that an emotional reaction alone is not sufficient.

**Emotional reaction to plot event**

All eight student reader/writers in this study reveal in their journal entries that they react emotionally when they read the text. Eric frequently records an emotional reaction to specific plot events. In one entry, he writes:

The whole sequence about the broken wine cask was quite appealing. It created a fascinating mental image of what was going on at the time ... I did not find the “BLOOD” joke funny in the least. Perhaps this is because I do not understand it. I can see a connection between blood and wine, but the joke still is not funny (27.3).

In a later journal entry, Eric is concerned about being misled by the author:

I seem to have been misled. When Carton took Darnay out to dinner, I thought that Carton was trying to become friends with Darnay. Towards the middle of the meal, I changed my mind, and decided that Carton merely wished to know about Darnay’s character. As it turned out I was somewhat correct; Carton was
deciding whether or not he hated Darnay. I was misled because I thought that this would lead to Carton doing something not so nice to Darnay (27.6).

In the case of another excerpt from Eric’s journal, his repeated use of the word “obviously” indicates his agitated tone as he reacts to a specific plot event. Eric writes, “Obviously, the man that was hanging on to the bottom of Monseigneur’s carriage was the man whose son Monseigneur had killed. The man was obviously trying to follow Monseigneur home, to do something not nice to him” (27.7). It is as though Eric is critical of how Dickens has chosen to write about this event. Although some information has been kept from the reader, Eric doesn’t think that the mystery is too hard to solve.

Scott’s journal reveals instances where he chooses to respond emotionally to a text event. He writes:

Earlier in my journals, I have marvelled at the brute, disgraceful yet honest human nature of Monsieur de Marquis. So it is no wonder that I felt anger and hatred for the novel when he was stabbed and dies (45.7).

In two later entries, Scott continues to record how the death of the Marquis has affected him: “My interest in the novel has dropped off almost completely. Would this novel not be a prerequisite for the course
my reading would stop right here. And so would this journal entry ...” (45.8), “As for Gaspard, the murderer, I wish he would die ... Monsieur de Marquis’s refreshing attitude made the novel seem worthwhile to me. But the two men who took him away from me will have more hell to pay in further journals and class discussions” (45.8). It is clear that Scott is upset about the Marquis’ death. The three aforementioned entries support this point. It is interesting how he moves beyond the text event into the classroom context and the act of journaling. This indicates his emotional involvement in the plot events. Michael reacts to plot events in an emotional way:

Every event in this book seems to be connected at some point. Whether it is through coincidence or not I still found it forced me to pay very close attention to every event and detail Dickens mentions in the story. I really like the fact that I have to pay close attention, instead of just skimming over it as I can do with some books (61.13).

Later in his journal, his entry states:

In the end Dickens brought together all the loose ends of the plot. I was pleased to see that Charles Darnay and his family would safety return to London and be able to live their lives to the fullest (61.14).
Michael is happy with the closure of events at the end of the novel.

John’s journal reveals his reaction to Lucie’s marriage, “I suspected this. At first, it was questionable that an acquitted criminal would wed such a fair, innocent lady. Now that his true identity as the nephew of Monsieur the Marquis has been revealed, the doubts are gone” (97.5). John has a sense of satisfaction that his suspicion has been proven true.

Female journal writers also respond to plot events in an emotional way. Susan exhibits this property a number of times in her journal. She writes:

I was finally satisfied when a coin was thrown at Monseigneur. I felt he deserved it, and more for he had just gotten away with killing someone (59.5). It was disturbing to think that the peasants have absolutely no compassion for their fellow human beings and get pleasure from killing them (59.8). I was disgusted by the whole scene where the peasants kill Foulon ... It’s strange because earlier on in the novel, the poor peasants were the ones I felt bad for but as strange as it is, I have changed sides, I feel sorry for the aristocrats who are all being guillotined (59.7-8). Susan records her “satisfaction”, “disturbance”, and “disgust” at the textual events. Later in her journal, her compassion is apparent in this
entry:

The scene where Lucy and Charles had their parting embrace was very touching. What touched me was Lucy’s unselfishness and courage that she showed when she spoke to Charles for the last time ... I also admired Charles. He forgave the man (Dr. Manette) who’s letter led to his final death sentence (59.10). Although Susan writes about the plot event, her emphasis is placed on the characters in a specific situation and her emotional reaction to them.

Lynn’s journal entries reveal her emotional reaction to the first chapter of the novel, “I greatly disliked the first chapter. After reading it I thought that the novel was going to be about politics and religion, both topics that I generally dislike reading about in a work of fiction” (36.1). In a later entry, she reacts to the ‘spilling of wine’ scene:

... the scene outside the wine shop is my favourite scene. I like how when the barrel of wine is spilled Defarge, the wine shop keeper, doesn’t care about the spilt wine because he has not yet paid for it and so he does not lose money. I also like how the street in Saint Antoine springs to life from the pityful scene that it was and everyone becomes animated ... I enjoyed the scene because the wine seemed to relieve the people of their sorrows for a moment and they were playful and
frolic-some (36.3).

Like Susan, Lynn reacts to the plot event by focusing on the actions of the characters and her feelings about them.

Heather writes about her reaction to Lucie's situation:

Lucie is in a position, either fortunate or unfortunate, of having 3 different men in love with her, or so they claim. These men are Sydney Carton, Charles Darnay and Stryver. Each man has their own different way of loving her, and I, at times, doubt the sincerity of them (21.7).

Although the plot event is the love for Lucie by three men, Heather's entry examines her doubts about this "love".

Diane's journal entry demonstrates her initial confusion about a plot event and how it was resolved. She writes:

At the beginning of the novel, I did not understand the importance of "recalled to life", in this section I finally see the significance. In my opinion Dr. Manette being "recalled to life" referred to him being brought into a real normal world. I see a connection with this statement to the position Charles Darnay is now in. He is also being recalled to life, his real identity (14.6).

Both female and male writers exhibit emotional reactions to plot
events, and therefore show their engagement with the novel. Female reader/writers, however, focus on their emotional reaction to the characters involved in the event, rather than the event itself. This is consistent with other research. Simpson (1996) discovered that "girls regularly empathized with the characters and related events to their own feelings. The boys would discuss plot, focus upon the action, and challenge the probability of particular events in the story" (p. 271). Cherland (1994) writes that boys were "more inclined to read literature in terms of both plot and event" (p. 145). Evans (1996) concluded that "boys emphasized specific plot events in the story, but did not address the internal motivation or reasons behind the events" (p. 187).

Disappointment when predicted outcome doesn’t occur

Student reader/writers often record their disappointment when an expected event fails to happen. Eric writes:

I thought that the part about the storming of the Bastille was exciting, entertaining, and interesting. It got my hopes too high, though. I was hoping that Defarge would find something of extreme importance on Dr. Manette’s cell. When all they did was light a fire and leave, I was very disappointed (27.11-12). In a later entry, Eric reflects on the above event, but is disappointed again. He writes:
I guess I was also wrong about Defarge not finding anything in Manette’s old cell (as mentioned in journal Entry #7). Defarge found a journal of sorts, in which Manette told the story of the reason for his imprisonment. I was right, however, in being disappointed. At first I was disappointed that Defarge found nothing. Now I am disappointed that what he found is discrediting Doctor Manette, and incriminating Darnay (27.15).

Eric is concerned about predicting right or wrong with regard to plot events. He is clearly disappointed when his predictions are incorrect.

Michael’s journal entry reveals his wish that additional plot events were included. He records:

I found this trial to be very confusing because it seemed to come out of nowhere, and yet be crucial to the plot. I would have liked to see a greater preface to the trial and Darnay. I think it would have been good to mention that the Manettes and Mr. Lorry had met Darnay on their way back to London. Since Dickens enjoyed lots of words this would have been beneficial to both Dickens and his readers (61.3).

A suggestion for how the details of the trial could be improved for the reader is provided by this student writer. In a another entry, Michael hopes an event will occur but it doesn’t, “At this point, I was hoping that
the angered mob, would tear the Marquis apart limb by limb, but they don’t. They let him pass without any major further incident” (61.5). In this entry, Michael clearly states his expectation.

Some female reader/writers reveal in their journals the same property of disappointment. Susan writes, “I was disappointed when I found Lucie married Darnay. I wanted her to marry Carton, who had so much character and was charming in a strange way” (59.7).

In Lynn’s journal, she records her distaste for a particular plot event as well as disappointment:

I disliked at the end of the confrontation the fact that Miss Pross was left deaf. I should not have minded so much perhaps if it had been Jerry because he had been bad at times but Miss Pross had always been so good and devoted even to a brother who had ruined her. Her resulting deafness was the only part of the novel which left me unsatisfied because Miss Pross didn’t deserve what happened to her (36.11).

Lynn likely felt that Miss Pross deserved a better end. Unfortunately, as reader, she was displeased by the plot event presented by Dickens.

Heather is upset about Darnay’s treatment in the novel. Under the circumstances, it wasn’t what she expected would happen. She records:

The fact that he was punished was horrible. I was upset because
he had not done a single thing wrong, his uncle and others may have but it was certainly unfair for him to suffer because of other's actions. Also, what good would it have done? To punish Darnay for atrocities already done and over with will not change things or reverse damage ... At the risk of being a hypocrit, I will say that maybe if he himself had done the atrocities things could be different, but since he was not involved I was upset with the events and kept hoping for his release (21.14-15).

Heather's disappointment about Darnay's unfair treatment is apparent in her journal entry.

Others have recorded the existence of predictions in student journal writing. Fish (1980) states that meaning develops in a “dynamic relationship with reader's expectations, projections, conclusions, judgements, assumptions” (p. 3). Although student reader/writers cannot control the “turn of events” or the actions of the characters, they indicate their desire for specific events or actions to occur. If their expectations are not met, they actively reveal their agitation or disappointment. The inclusion of plot events on the part of the student writer in journal entries indicates an active involvement in the text.
Issues

This category labelled “Issues” comprises student opinions on a specific topic or subject. “Issues” is an appropriate label in that the student responder has taken the opportunity to explore a specific area, in writing. The area is of importance to the student reader and therefore on a larger scale becomes an “issue”. The stimulus for examining a certain issue may be the students’ desire to record their ideas about an issue directly examined in the text. The student responders may also discuss a subject which involves a character in the novel they are reading. At times the issue is highlighted because it has caught the readers’ attention and they want to compare their own viewpoints to those of the author.

Student writers examined: inequality, power, wealth, capital punishment, love, and freedom. The properties of this category focus on issues relating to personal involvement: i) a personal opinion which is fully supported, ii) subjects studied on a personal level and then related to the whole of society, and iii) statements which are definite and strongly emotional.

Probst (1988) supports the existence of reference to issues in student journals. “Some responses are topical, focusing on the issue raised by the literary work” (p. 58).
Personal opinion which is fully supported

The first property, is evident in Susan’s examination of the cruelty of the rich towards the poor:

When Monseigneur ran over the child with his carriage, I was filled with hatred toward Monseigneur. It was painful to see that a poor child had been killed because a careless citizen of high class was not careful. What intensified this horrible image was the father of the child screaming in agony that his child had died. I was filled with resentment towards the rich to run over and kill people that were of lower class. It just appauled me too see that just because you are wealthy, this gave you more rights, including the rights to take lives. This was simply not what I’d call just … Monseigneur didn’t even have to stop when he hit the boy … Monseigneur then lectured the poor people and even added that his horse might be injured, what about the poor human boy? I hate the way he treats them, as if they were rats. They are just as much human as him and are entitled to life just as much as he is. This class system to me is crazy (59.4-5).

Susan is able to support her statements with clear textual examples and as a result, her points are convincing. Credibility is important to her and she demonstrates that the best way to convince others of the validity of
her opinion is to provide support for the ideas.

Lynn assesses the actions of Gabelle and reveals her understanding of the unique relationship between Darnay and his servant. She writes:

I like Gabelle's character because he followed the orders that Darnay, as the former Marquis d. Evremond gave him such as not to collect any taxes from the people. This was unusual in a servant at that time and most would have continued to collect the taxes for his own personal gain. Although it would be unusual for a servant in any time not to take advantage of such leniency in a master it is all the more commendable for a servant in those times not to because at the time most people, the aristocracy and the peasants were corrupt (36.9).

Lynn's response moves beyond the text detail into the development of her viewpoint about how servants behaved during the time of the French Revolution.

Heather records her view of the same time period Lynn wrote about although her focus is on the principles of the era. She writes:

Perhaps the whole reason I disliked the French Revolution was because its principals do not make sense. Every child is taught that two wrongs don't make a right, that is the lesson I have grown up with. Why do the rules change when it comes to war?
Did anyone feel better imprisoning Charles? Did anything change? ... Perhaps adults should remember the lessons they’re taught as children, maybe this wouldn’t have been so bad (21.15).

In another entry in Heather’s journal, her personal opinion about the issues of treason and freedom of speech are addressed:

... I have never quite understood the whole point of being tried for treason. What exactly is treason supposed to be? From my understanding, treason is an act of disloyalty against one’s country. Yet many things can be considered treason, anything from spying to simple badmouthing. I really don’t like the lack of freedom people have in this regard. I understand that spying is harmful for everyone in the country but I think that freedom of speech is necessary. Everyone living in the country has rights and should not have to worry that any negative actions will be considered “treason” and result with their death. This would only lead to many people scared of standing up for their own beliefs or even having a belief (21.3-4).

By using questions in her entry, Heather is able to develop her opinion about the issue of freedom of speech. By the end of her second entry, she has presented a clearly developed viewpoint.

Male journal reader/writers address similar issues in their journal
entries. John gives a detailed study of the inequality leading up to the French Revolution. He is critical of the division between the rich and poor. In his journal, he writes:

When wealth is mixed with power and corruption, as in the Monseigner’s case, the rich tend to live luxuriously while standing on the backs of the poor. The root of all this evil, many believe originates from the rigid caste system in place at the time. The class system not only divided wealth unevenly, it also gives the upperclass more power ... such is the folly of the old French social structure. It oppressed the peasants, keeping them poor by heavy taxes, all of which went to feed the upper class, whom by birth enjoyed the luxury without work. Most of all, however, the system gave aristocrats power, and left crimes unpunished, as they were “above the law” (97.4).

John provides a detailed analysis of problems with the class system. He continues to develop this viewpoint in another journal entry:

From Charles Dickens’ words, readers gain an impartial picture of the French Revolution. In this time of chaos, anarchy, and lawlessness, the line between right and wrong, good and evil, is blurred. Surely, the aristocracy, such as the now-dead Monsieur the Marquis, treated peasants as “dogs”, and taxed
them to poverty. However, is it right, and justified for the lower-caste to kill him in return? In this Monseigneur’s case, probably; but what about the other, less extreme ones of his class? (97.6).

It is clear from these journal entries that John has given considerable thought to the issue of the class system. He continues to be critical in the following journal excerpt:

... the people of the revolution have lost sight of its true purpose. Perhaps a revolution will be more dramatic than reform, but seldom has a change of government been accomplished by as much bloodshed. The revolting peasants no longer represent liberty and equality, only the last word on the slogan: death. The people have become bloodthirsty and are on a killing frenzy ... the people of the revolution are just mindless followers of the tide, without thinking. Perhaps the people have been oppressed for too long, that they no longer are moved by the suffering (97.8).

Michael, like John, examines the issue of inequity in the justice system. He writes:

... Dickens dealt with mob role and anarchy in France. Though I was always aware of the obvious problems with these so-called
types of government, I never thought about the consequences of adding capital punishment to the power of these rulers. Juries decided which unlucky aristocrats were given this awful sentence. The idea of a jury seems fair, but these juries were made up only of the patriots, and they convicted almost every prisoner that came before them. Because trials were decided by jury, I believe this allowed the French people to justify their excessive use of the death penalty. This unfair justice system also allowed for prisoners to be put on trial multiple times until favourable sentence to the people was given (61.11-12).

The issue of differences between Paris and London societies is also analyzed by Michael:

France and London, in the 1750s shared many similarities, but Dickens has shown parts of the cities that I perceive as being very different. In Paris we see a poverty and disease ridden society. The people are so desperate for some of the basic pleasures of life, such as wine, they are willing to drink it out of the dirty polluted gutters of the cobblestone streets...Meanwhile, back in Jolly Old England, the book only seems to focus on the upper class in the city ... There is not much of a sign
of any poverty or disease. This is not to say, historically, that there was no poverty or disease in London, but Dickens has decided to leave these references out, as to make the reader see the cities as being distinct from each other (61.5-6).

Through looking at the differences between the two cities, the student writer is able to assess the reasons for Dickens choosing to omit details to convey a specific idea to the reader.

Suspicion about a certain type of person in society is an issue examined by Heather. She writes:

I have never much liked people like Madame Defarge, they just stand around, always there yet not really noticed because they are not perceived to be any great threat. I have always been suspicious of these people, Madame Defarge included. They just stand there absorbing information that you don’t even realize you’re giving them. Without your knowledge they have a goldmine of information about you which they can use against you any way they wish (21.11-12).

Meeting a character like Madame Defarge in the novel causes Heather to reflect on her own life and people she has encountered. Her reasons for distrusting this type of individual are clearly conveyed in her journal excerpt. Another of Heather’s journal entries reveals her assessment of
the issue of love:

The final member of this love saga is Stryver. As I have mentioned before, I dislike the man and do not think he loves Lucie at all. I think his idea of a marriage proposal was simply to one up the other so he could show them just how wonderful and powerful he was. I also think he sees Lucie more as a prize than a person. That is definitely not love. Overall, I hope things work out for Lucie and Charles. I think they have found true love (21.8).

Heather’s opinion about love is apparent in her entry. Her reasons for favouring the relationship of Charles and Lucie over that of Stryver and Lucie are clearly recorded.

Lynn observes Madame Defarge’s knitting and this leads her to comment on how this action is linked to her viewpoint about memory:

... she repeats the information in her head as she knits and so whenever she looks at what she has knitted she remembers the information. I think that this is a very effective way of remembering information because memory is often triggered by objects and we remember things that were said or thought of when that object was made or when something happened to it (36.2-3).
As stated by Fulwiler (1989), the student writer “examines an issue and redefines it in his or her own terms” (p. 167). The issues examined by female and male reader/writers are similar in nature. Both genders devote considerable time to writing about the issue of inequality between the rich and poor as a result of the class system.

*Subjects initially studied on a personal level, then related to a societal level*

Some student reader/writers go beyond simply stating and supporting their viewpoint in journal entries which constitutes the aforementioned property. Excerpts from student journals reveal issues being studied on a personal level, then related by the writer, to a societal level. Often characteristics of fictional characters are compared by the reader/writer to those of people in the real world. Heather’s three journal excerpts reveal how she takes a critical look at characters from the novel and compares them to people in society, often those she has met. In writing about Miss Pross, Heather records:

I can’t help liking a woman like her, people with pure motives and truly good hearts are hard to come by. I also feel sorry for her in a way, many severely nice people, those who really go overboard, suffer from low self esteem and see this as their way to be liked (21.11).
Heather responds to Carton’s situation:

I found that I could very much sympathize with Carton. Alcoholism is as prevalent today as it was during the time of the book (if not more so). Many, otherwise nice, ordinary folks are alcoholics. My making Carton one, Dickens has made him seem more human, rather than the often perfect characters found in novels or the very stereotypical villains, all found when there is only black and white but no grey. Carton is a bit of both, a person that I could actually meet in the street, a person who’s character can withstand time (21.5).

In her third journal excerpt, Heather examines the issues of people with problems and those who are abused by others. She writes:

Carton strikes a chord with me because of his great brain but failure to accomplish much because of his drinking problem. Once again, I think of many people I know who have so much talent and so much promise but one problem is constantly holding them back ... One more way in which Carton seems human is in the fact that all his glory is stolen by Stryver. There is nothing more frustrating than doing all the work only to gain none of the credit. This has happened to me (as it has happened to most
people) so I can really feel for Carton when it happens to him (21.5-6).

John contrasts the class system in the novel to that of today’s society. He begins with his personal opinion, uses textual evidence as support and then states the difference between the beliefs today and those of long ago:

This class system not only divided wealth unevenly, it also gives the upperclass more power. To an aristocrat like the Monseigneur, the peasants were inferior beings, and were treated by him as such. Seeing from the incident at the fountain in Paris, where he showed no remorse for running over a baby in his carriage, the Monsieur the Marquis considered the peasants to be inferior. Even though today we consider everyone as equal, and no one is above the law, the old caste system kept the Monseigneur unpunished (97.4).

Our current legal system is contrasted to the one during the year 1775. John poses some serious questions which show that he has given some thought to this issue:

No doubt, our current legal system has evolved since the year One thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, but has it gotten any better over 200 years? In the old days the accused was quite
helpless. Darnay had not a lawyer to defend him. Today, lawyers are used to bend the truth and make wrong seem right. Back then, the guilty was excused on the spot; while today's criminals on the death roll are allowed to appeal indefinitely, costing the court more money than it would to keep him in prison. In effect, we see more crimes of every sort in 1998 than 1978. Perhaps our current legal system does not pose a strong deterrent to crime (not when a murderer can go on parole after three months in prison) (97.2).

Heather and John respond frequently to issues in their journals; evidence has shown that they are not the only ones who choose to write about issues, but their subject choice is more varied and their analysis extensive.

Statements which are definite and strongly emotional

Definite statements about issues, rather than single events, which are strongly emotional are evident in student journals. John makes frequent statements of this nature in his journal entries. When analyzing the relationship between Lucie and her father, he writes, “There is no emotional attachment between a child and a father, if the child was never aware of the parent” (97.1). When examining inequality during the French Revolution, John records these three statements: “It’s time we began to
emphasize the rights of the victim rather than that of the criminal” (97.2), “The French caste system must go down” (97.5), “In those days, a person is judged and treated not by who he is but by the label that the public have inconsistently affixed on his head” (97.8). By making these statements clear and concise, the writer appears to allow no room for the reader of his journal to dispute the points. His emotional reaction to the issue is apparent in these statements.

Like John, Heather has definite views about particular issues. In two of her journal entries, she records these views about the issues of freedom and inequality: “I understand that spying is harmful for everyone in the country but I think that freedom of speech is necessary” (21.3), “Although I firmly believe all people should be treated equally I think that at times things went too far. Just like the poor cannot help being born that way, the rich do not choose to be born into their families either” (21.14).

Student writers other than John and Heather choose to write definitively about the inequality in the novel. Michael writes, “The upper and lower class will never mix” (61.6). Eric attempts to assess why some people were treated so poorly and concludes, “I guess that in those times, people’s rights were differently defined than they are now” (27.13). Susan states, “It just appauld me too see that just because you are
wealthy, this gave you more rights, including the rights to take lives. This was simply not what I'd call just” (59.4). When student reader/writers become engaged with a textual issue, they tend to write in a definite and strongly emotional way. The tone and word choice they present reveals their commitment to reading and writing about the issue.

According to Rosenblatt (1978), “A reader who has been moved or disturbed by a text often manifests an urge to talk about it, to clarify and crystallize his sense of the work” (p. 146). Although writing is not actually talking in the spoken word, journal writing is often referred to as “talking on paper”. Through examination of student responses to issues in *A Tale of Two Cities*, it is clear that students seize the opportunity to examine areas they have pondered.

**Intertextual Tying**

The next category is called “Intertextual Tying” (Robert De Beaugrande, 1980). “Intertextual connections refer to the process by which readers utilize multiple sources such as other texts, personal experiences, art, drama, or songs to build a mosaic of intersecting texts” (Evans, 1996, p. 188). While reading, students may take the opportunity to compare the current literature to other reading/viewing/experiencing. While interpreting one’s present reading, links to prior experience are
automatic. Aspects of previous works are often related to one’s current reading material. Properties of this category are based on the reader’s connections between prior reading or viewing. They include writers indicating i) links to television and theatre, ii) links to other books, and iii) links to own life.

Others have recorded that readers draw comparisons between the books they are reading and other books read previously. According to Beach (1990), “with each new text, readers apply an evolving literary ‘data-bank’ of priori literary experiences ... readers learn to evoke prior knowledge or related literary experiences” (p. 70).

**Links to television and theatre**

A connection between current reading and television is revealed when Scott writes, “It made me think of a Married With children episode during a Family Matters festival; real life for a moment in Happyland” (45.4). This reference is to a television show with which Scott is familiar. Later on in his journal, Scott links another television program, Seinfeld and focusses on comparing a character from the novel he is reading to one on Seinfeld:

In the chapter entitled, “A Companion Picture”, Sydney Carton and Stryver discuss marriage, and the prospect of being married to Lucie Manette. After a casual dialogue of who Stryver would
marry and which of the two men has it off worse, I watched some television. And what program? Seinfeld. But it felt like I had never put the novel down; it felt as if Sydney and Stryver were now in an apartment in Manhattten and given the forms of Jason Alexander and Jerry Seinfeld. Suddenly the scene came to life; I could picture Stryver as Jerry saying, “Guess who I’m going to marry?”, and Sydney or George’s response of, “I’m not going to guess at five o’clock in the morning with my brains frying and sputtering in my head!” (45.5-6).

A link to a play currently being performed in the city is recorded by Scott. “Writers and authors of all genres and styles have been focusing their plots on events that actually happened such as “Rent”, a rendition of ‘La Boheme’ ” (45.3). The student writer has likely seen or read about the play Rent. He links the focus on true life events to Dickens’ attention to the historical detail of the French Revolution in A Tale of Two Cities. All references to support this property are from the journal of Scott. Although it is likely that all participants in this study are television viewers, perhaps watching television is a significant part of Scott’s life so he takes the opportunity to record links in his response journal.

**Links to other books**

Heather refers to the published play, Romeo and Juliet when
referring to Carton's actions in the book she is currently reading: "I cannot imagine dying for someone else, and if it was for the sake of true love, such as Romeo and Juliet, I would at least make sure it was requited love" (21.13).

John’s journal entry demonstrates his link between a character in the Dickens’ novel and one in Caesar and Cleopatra. He writes:

Although the books were written in different times by different authors, Miss Pross behaves quite like Ftatateeta of Caesar and Cleopatra. Their characters’ similarities compells me to do a comparison. The two caretakers are both fiercely protective of their “children”. Although the magnitude differs due to the setting. They both appear hostile to outsiders. Compare Miss Pross’s meeting with Lorry and Ftatateeta’s actions toward the Roman guards, and their hostility shows through very clearly (97.3).

Like John, Scott chooses to link the play Saint Joan to A Tale of Two Cities:

Reading this section of the book did happen to be the most exciting part of the novel so far, yet it was strikingly similar to St. Joan. Both stories pertained to a person before a court where a mob of people had a fixed opinion against them and
the outcome was omniscient. Upon realizing this I began to make more mental comparisons between the two trials and realized that both defendants were tried for treason; Joan against the church and Darnay against his country (45.3).

It is not coincidental that both student writers have chosen to link the same play to Dickens' novel. Shaw's Saint Joan is a core play studied by their whole class during term one. Romeo and Juliet, the play referred to in Heather's journal is the core Shakespeare play. These student writers have chosen to link books which they read and studied earlier in the Grade ten enriched program. There is no evidence in this study of their writing about links to other books not on the course they are currently enrolled in.

An adolescent reader has likely read many books, in and out of school. These books make up a large data bank of information in the reader's mind. It is interesting to note that student reader/writers in this study have not chosen to link, in their journal writing, personal reading to the assigned novel. This does not mean that links do not exist; it likely means that they didn't feel that writing about books beyond the course would be appropriate, or even acceptable, for an in-class journal assignment. Writing a response journal provides an opportunity for students to make links between their current and previous reading experiences.
Dias and Hayhoe (1988) state that “the poem communicates its meaning, the reader receives ... such a role authorizes readers’ bringing their own knowledge, experience and sensibilities to their reading. That knowledge should include experiences of other texts as well ...” (p. 35).

Pirie’s research (1997) indicates that:

the way we understand something new is by filling it into what we already know ... we bring to the text our experience of other literature, as well as anecdotes, advertisements, film and television ... students must be explicitly and insistently encouraged to make links between ‘texts’ of whatever kind (p. 42).

**Links to own life**

The final property of this category comprises student writers connecting situations or characters’ actions to their own lives. Scott contrasts what he believes his father’s actions would be to those of the fictional character Lucie:

It doesn't identify with what I would envision my father doing if I was unjustly imprisoned, or if our roles were reversed. No man, mountain, or weapon could keep us from setting the other free, not to mention what my mother would do (45.13).

Heather frequently links text situations to her own life. When referring to Dr. Manette, she writes:
...I could see that his love is so great that he would do anything for his daughter. This reminds me quite a bit of my father, the two of us are exceptionally close and I know that he would do just about anything for me (21.8).

In a different entry, she states:

I think of many people I know who have so much talent and so much promise but one problem is constantly holding him back ... there is nothing more frustrating than doing all the work only to gain none of the credit. This has happened to me (as it has happened to most people) so I can really feel for Carton when it happens to him (21.5-6).

By linking Carton’s experience to her own, she is better able to sympathize with his problem. In two other instances, she refers to people in her own life who she is reminded of when she reads about Madame Defarge and Stryver. She writes:

Although I have always wondered about the people who just stand there and seem to do nothing I am now very suspicious. I’m sure none of my acquaintances are like Madame Defarge but now my eyes are open. It’s not being untrusting; just careful (21.12).

The main reason I dislike Stryver is because he is so manipulative
...I encounter people like him all too often in my life and it always infuriates me (21.5).

By comparing current reading to previous reading or viewing experiences, students enlarge their already extensive collection of literary experiences. Combining these experiences allows student writers to gather a wealth of information about the study of literature.

Oral Features

The last category, "Oral Features" includes words and expressions used by student writers which are usually used in speech rather than writing. The writing is free-flowing in nature. Properties of this category are associated with the spoken word: i) conversational tone, ii) informal style, and iii) colloquial expressions.

Fulwiler (1989) examines features of expressive discourse in journals. He states that journal writing is "informal language-like speech written down. It also has a conversational tone" (p. 162). Wilson's work (1989) concluded that students are "talking to themselves in their reading logs" (p. 68). Beach and Marshall (1991) state that "students in their journals may stop to reflect on an entry, often engaging in a conversation with themselves" (p. 106).
Conversational Tone

In the property dealing with conversational tone, the writer is speaking “with” rather than “to” someone. This interaction is evident in Susan’s use of “you” in two excerpts from her journal, “just because you were wealthy, this gave you more rights, including the rights to take lives” (59.4), “he thinks of himself as undeserving and when you think of yourself that way, you will not go too far” (59.5). Heather also employs “you” in one of her journal entries, “absorbing information that you don’t even realize you’re giving them. Without your knowledge they have a goldmine of information about you which they can use against you any way they wish” (21.11). Scott uses the word “us” in two journal entries: “...and instill much more hope in our souls if we knew we had our loved one fighting tooth and nail for us” (45.13), “For Charles Dickens to expect someone as critical a reader as I am, to swallow such a huge pill as the one he tried to hand us is insulting” (45.14).

The use of internal dialogue and questions in student journals contributes to the conversational tone. Using internal dialogue, Eric writes, “I thought it was like some kid with a crush, and that he was doing the whole, “Do you think he likes me? Does she have a boyfriend?” thing (27.9), “the instant I read about Carton telling Darnay to switch boots with him, I thought “Oh no. Carton’s going to take Darnay’s place!” I
was right (27.17). John's entry reveals a question, "Is this what we mean by Liberty, Equity, and Fraternity? (97.6). Scott's question is, "Why oh why does Dickens toy with my emotions the way he does?" (45.7).

The conversational aspects invite the reader into the student writer's journal. The reader becomes involved in the writer's reaction to a text situation, or character. This attempt to include others in the interpreting process is a characteristic of all eight student journals in this study.

**Informal Style**

Evidence of an informal writing style indicates that writers are comfortable sharing their ideas with others. All eight student reader/writers use "I" in their journal responses. An informal style is apparent in the phrases they choose to write; sometimes awkward wording is a feature. Diane writes, "I thought that there would be no way it was Carton" (14.7). Lynn records, "I nearly understood" (36.1), "I find the advice, like he who gave it, to be strong and sound" (36.8), and "It made him more likeable in my eye" (36.12). Heather writes, "those people always think they are the oh-so powerful ones" (21.5), "I think his idea of a marriage proposal was simply to one up the other ..." (21.8), and "However, once again, I think it is possible to be too loyal" (27.10). Scott's journal excerpts include: "I could really picture ..." (45.7), "I
think it would have made Charles, and I as well, much happier” (45.12). In Eric’s journal, informal passages are: “... gave me a bit of trouble” (27.1), “I really wish ...” (27.6), and “escaped me completely” (27.6). Michael writes: “I know I must be way off, but at this point ... it was the best I can do” (61.1), “I felt myself starting to cheer for him” (61.2), and “I hate the M. the M. with a passion, which I find incredible, because I have, of course, never met this character” (61.4).

These numerous excerpts convey that student writers are comfortable with writing in an informal manner in their journals. Their intent is to have their meaning understood by the reader, so their informal phrases seem to say “best” what they mean. Although some research (Moonilal-Masur, Cincik & Mitchell, 1992) indicates a difference between female and male writers’ use of “I” in writing, this study did not find gender difference with regard to frequency or usage.

Colloquial Expressions

These types of expressions, prevalent in oral speech, are abundant. Since the writer appears to be talking “with” the reader on paper, these oral features are present. Eric writes: “all in all” (27.4), and “it caught me completely off guard” (27.14). “I was lost” (14.1), is recorded in Diane’s journal. Scott writes: “... told me to knock it off” (45.8), and “greatest read of my life” (45.15). In Heather’s journal, these excerpts
are colloquial: “Carton strikes a chord with me” (21.4), “It strikes me ...” (21.10), and “I had simply pegged her” (21.11). Susan writes, “I am dying to know” (59.6). In Michael’s journal, the following phrase is used: “... significance of two characters names dawned on me” (61.9). In a few cases, student writers attempt to use a popular phrase, but actually distort it when writing it down. John writes of a “criminal on the death roll” (97.2), rather than ‘row’. Scott records that “the question that has been racking in my brain” (45.6). Susan writes, “they shed tears to my eyes” (59.11). Sometimes inverted word order is apparent, or they have misunderstood a phrase they have heard in the past, so a key word is recorded incorrectly.

The use of colloquial expressions support the existence of oral language features in student journals. Many of these expressions are frequently used in speech, but not in writing. It appears to serve the purpose of bringing the reader closer to the writer’s text. The student writer is comfortable with this informality and is able to effectively convey ideas. It is apparent that student journal writers have conversations with themselves on paper. The opportunity to pause and reflect results in drawing the reader/writer closer to the text. The relaxed tone of such a conversation makes the student writing appear authentic. This use of the authentic voice adds credibility to the writers’
journal entries. The reader believes that what the writer is writing about is honest. Both female and male writers exhibit the three properties of the category entitled Oral Features.
CHAPTER FIVE

Final Discussion

Through the study and analysis of student reader response journals, a number of conclusions can be drawn about whether gender influences student responses.

Both female and male responders recognize the author’s presence while they are reading the novel. They are aware that the author’s writing has an effect on them and deduce that the interaction between the author and themselves contributes to their involvement with the text. “Response journals empower readers to collaborate with an author as they create uniquely personal meaning together” (Fuhler, 1994, p. 401). Student writers examine techniques of plot development and character development. In her journal, Susan writes, “I like the repetetiveness in his work; it makes the story sound like poetry and I can imagine hearing a story-teller say it” (59.1). Scott compliments the author by stating, “Dickens is a master at detail, description, and setting” (45.7). In the journal entries, there is no apparent difference between genders.

When experiencing a lack of understanding about a textual aspect, females and males in my sample used different strategies to deal with their confusion. Males state their confusion, then demonstrate frustration through their use of exaggeration or a sarcastic tone in their responses.
Eric writes, “Aside from the fact that the language, style and flow of writing were difficult to follow, these sixteen pages were just boring” (27.1). Females also state their confusion but in contrast to males, they do not express frustration about it. They often offer possible interpretations of a difficult passage, rather than merely stating confusion. In her journal Lynn records, “Although these comparisons were very confusing to me at first after reading the first book I realized that they were referring to either the conditions in France and England or ... to the conditions in the upper and lower classes” (36.1-2). Females are therefore engaged with the text while males' lack of understanding causes them to become disengaged from the text. Males react in a dismissive way, while females show active involvement. Both females and males use the strategies of questioning, re-reading and physical affect to deal with their lack of understanding while reading. According to Berger (1996), “students who are aware and asking questions as they read are engaging in self-monitoring of their understanding, leading to independent comprehension” (p. 382). VanDeWeghe’s research (1987) indicates that “many log entries revealed difficulties students have with texts ... Often, however, students use the act of writing to work their way through a block. Thus, writing serves as a tool not only for overcoming a reading block but also for developing a richer understanding of a text at the same
time” (p. 44). More often than not, writing one’s thoughts down results in a closer reading of the text for the student reader/writer. When writing about characters, female writers record that their “like” or “dislike” of a character is associated with their perceived positive or negative qualities of that individual. Heather writes, “I can’t help liking a woman like her, people with pure motives and truly good hearts are hard to come by” (21.10). In fewer instances, males consider character qualities. Both females and males reinforce or judge characters’ qualities through use of direct quotations and use of textual evidence. Female writers demonstrate empathy with characters and relate their own feelings. In her journal Lynn records, “I believe that Aggerawater is a good person who wished to bring God to her husband, a man who does not deserve her” (36.7). Analysis of relationships is frequently recorded by female responders. Susan writes, “The scene where Lucy and Charles had their parting embrace was very touching. What touched me was Lucy’s unselfishness and courage that she showed when she spoke to Charles for the last time” (59.9-10). The student writer records her admiration for Dickens’ ability to write in a way which invites her, as reader, to react in an emotional way to the fictional relationship. When identifying with fictional characters due to similarities or differences from self, males tend to assess what a character does and then state that they would act
differently. This point is demonstrated in Michael’s journal entry where he writes, “I admire Charles for putting someone else’s life in front of his own. This is an act I like to think I could do, but I know I probably would not” (61.9). In female responses, the similarity between character and self is addressed rather than difference which is frequently addressed by male writers. Heather writes of the similarity between Dr. Manette and her father: “…his love is so great that he would do anything for his daughter. This reminds me quite a bit of my father…” (21.8).

In my study, there is no evidence to suggest that female or male student writers more strongly identify with a character of the same gender. This finding contrasts other studies. Perhaps classroom discussions which involve teacher questioning might contribute to shaping students’ identification with a particular character. Since the journal responses for this current study were recorded prior to class discussions, intervention was not possible and therefore student writers responded in an individual way. As researcher, I had anticipated that identification with same sex author by student reader/writers might have appeared in my categories. There was no evidence of this. None of the student responders wrote about Dickens’ gender or whether they were influenced by a male viewpoint. I wonder whether they had even considered this. It is quite likely that a whole class discussion did not
highlight this issue so student writers didn’t pursue this in their responses.

Female and male student writers employ first person narration to record personal experiences, compare these experiences to those of fictional characters and examine their own beliefs. Diane records, “In my opinion Dr. Manette being ‘recalled to life’ referred to him being brought into a real normal world” (14.6). In his journal response, Eric reveals that “when Carton took Darnay out to dinner, I thought that Carton was trying to become friends with Darnay. Towards the middle of the meal, I changed my mind...” (27.4-5). “With personal writing in particular, they were able to integrate their own knowledge and experience, with the content of the text allowing them to probe the meaning of the stories” (Newell, Suszynski & Weingart, 1989, p. 51). Anson & Beach (1995) state that “students are more likely to express their own beliefs and ideas if they feel strongly about or are bothered by a particular topic or issue” (p. 40). In this study, there is no apparent gender difference between frequency of issue analysis or type of issue examined. The teacher-chosen text may have influenced the results. The issues which the student responders wrote about were predominant in A Tale of Two Cities. Whole class discussions could possibly bring forward additional issues, but as mentioned previously, these discussions occurred after students had the
opportunity to record their responses. The role the teacher assumes in the classroom would also explain this finding. In my own classroom, which I consider to be response-based, I attempt to let the students initiate the discussion topics. This is a challenge as the traditional teacher’s role is that of “controlling” the discussion and speaking more often than the students (Christine Howe, 1997). I have noticed that if students are given the opportunity to speak first, chances are good that they will choose issues they have an interest in or an opinion about rather than those the teacher feels are important. Since there was limited classroom observation in this study, I devoted little time to assessing the classroom dynamics including the roles of students and their teacher.

Positive and negative empathy about characters is strongly displayed in the journals of female writers. When referring to Sidney Carton, Lynn records, “His humility makes him likable ... and his honest confession of his knowledge of his unworthiness of her makes him almost lovable and certainly worthy of my respect” (36.5). In the case of male writers, there is limited evidence of empathy for characters. Numerous journal entries of male writers demonstrate their positive and negative empathy about situations. Michael writes, “At this point, I was hoping that the angered mob, would tear the Marquis apart limb by limb, but they don’t” (61.4). Females show greater emotional response to characters,
while males respond more to situations. This finding can be linked to an earlier point about female writers choosing to write more frequently about character qualities. The honest and sincere passages which appear in response journals are the result when students choose to record their emotions in written form. According to Berger (1996), “adolescents honestly share feelings when they are allowed to write about them as they read, and this involvement deepens the meaning for them” (p. 383). Rosenblatt (1938) records that the existence of emotional responses leads student readers to a clearer understanding of themselves:

Only on the basis of such direct emotional elements ... can (the reader) be helped to build any sounder understanding of the work ... any sensitivity to literature, any warm and enjoyable participation in the literary work, will necessarily involve the sensuous and emotional responsiveness, the human sympathies of the reader (pp. 51-52).

When writing about plot events, both female and male writers use direct quotations to reinforce their evaluation. Contrast between females and males occurs with regard to the use of textual evidence and telling plot events in their own words. Male writers clearly exhibit the use of textual evidence whereas female writers do not. Textual evidence provides support for John's observations about the Marquis when he
writes, “Seeing from the incident at the fountain in Paris, where he showed no remorse for running over a baby with his carriage, the Monsieur the Marquis considered the peasants to be inferior” (97.4). Telling about plot in their own words is a strategy used by both genders but the focus is different. Female writers focus on the character while males focus on the facts. More specifically, females focus on their emotional reaction to the characters involved in the event, rather than the event itself. Heather’s journal entry focuses on her feelings about the males who say they love Lucie: “Lucie is in a position, either fortunate or unfortunate, of having 3 different men in love with her, or so they claim” (21.7). There are many examples of male student writers writing about specific plot events. “Recasting information in their own words allows students to incorporate it into their existing knowledge” (Anson & Beach, 1995, p. 29).

Female and male writers chose to write about issues. Often these issues involve a character in the novel they are reading. Highlighted issues have caught the readers’ attention and they want to compare their own viewpoints to the author’s. Some issues examined are: inequality, power, wealth, capital punishment, love, and freedom. The issues addressed by female and male writers are similar in nature. Both Susan and John examine the inequity of the class system. Susan records, “It just appauled me too see that just because you are wealthy, this gave you more
rights...” (59.4). In John’s journal, his assessment is as follows: “When wealth is mixed with power and corruption, as in the Monseigner’s case, the rich tend to live luxuriously while standing on the backs of the poor” (97.4). Personal opinions are supported and subjects are studied on a personal level and then related to a societal level.

Intertextual tying occurs when students take the opportunity to compare the current literature they are reading to other reading/viewing/experiencing. Scott’s journal entry links a character in the television program Seinfeld to a fictional character in the novel he is reading (45.5). Heather writes about a link to her own life: “I’m sure none of my acquaintences are like Madame Defarge but now my eyes are open” (21.12). Evidence in student journals demonstrates that “such intertextual connections often revealed their lived-through connection with the book and appeared to enhanced their constructing of meaning” (Evans, 1996, p. 188). Both female and male writers record links to television, theatre, other books and their own lives. Hancock (1992) concludes that:

‘life-to-text interactions’ in which the reader takes direct or indirect experiences outside the text and applies them to make sense of the text ... as readers read, thoughts about their own lives whirl quickly through their minds. The literature response
journal captures those personal fleeting thoughts (p. 39).

Oral features include words and expressions used by student writers which are usually used in speech rather than writing. Both female and male student writers employ conversational tone, informal style and colloquial expressions in their journal responses. Lynn’s informal style is apparent when she records, “I nearly understood ...” (36.1). Scott uses a conversational tone when employing the word “us” in the following phrase: “... and instill much more hope in our souls if we knew we had our loved one fighting tooth and nail for us” (45.13). According to Anson & Beach (1995), “to extend and explore their thinking, students learn to engage in a dialogue with themselves” (p. 34). Hancock (1992) discovers that “the free form of the literature response journal has provided an efficient means for tapping responses to reading by capturing the spontaneous inner language of the mind in a natural written form” (p. 37).

According to the findings of this study, the influence of gender is not clearly divided by category, but within the properties of a category. Aspects of journal entries of both male and female student reader/writers comprise some part of each property. The difference between genders frequently lies within how student reader/writers express their written response. A closer examination of the ways one can respond to text would be appropriate. Rosenblatt’s (1978) definitions
of efferent (nonaesthetic) and aesthetic types of reading will be applied to assist in clarifying this issue. Although her emphasis is on the “reading” of text, these terms are also useful for examining written responses to text. In efferent reading, the “reader’s attention is focused primarily on what will remain as the residue after the reading—the information to be acquired, the logical solution to the problem, the actions to be carried out” (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 23). In contrast, in aesthetic reading, the “reader’s primary concern is in what happens during the actual reading event ... the reader’s attention is centered directly on what he is living through during his relationship with that particular text” (Rosenblatt, 1978, pp. 24-25). When applying these definitions to student written responses, there is evidence of both efferent and aesthetic responses. At times, female and male students do differ in their approaches to text, but one is not efferent and the other aesthetic. An example of this is revealed in the “Plot Events” category. Females relate their feelings about the characters involved in the event, while males are more likely to state their feelings about the event itself. These are therefore both aesthetic responses as the emphasis is on the feelings of the reader/writer. Therefore, one cannot conclude that one gender is more likely to respond in an aesthetic rather than efferent way.

There are limitations to Rosenblatt’s definitions. John Willinsky
(1991) writes:

the terms were often employed to attack a pedagogical tradition that was satisfied to teach literature by asking students twenty questions about the poem’s form and content. Such an approach was clearly attempting to teach literature efferently, with an eye to what students could cart away from the work. What was missing, the two categories made clear, was the opportunity for students to experience the text in an aesthetic manner ... what art was all about (pp. 92-93).

A concern is stated in that:

the aesthetic and efferent reading seem too much like exclusive categories ... seems to discourage the sense of combination or oscillation that we might suspect is closer to our own varied experiences in reading any given text. Even when she sets two terms on a continuum, the tendency is to place the entire ‘reading act’ at a given point, even if the choice is left up to the reader (Willinsky, 1991, p. 93).


I do not think that efferent and aesthetic readings exist on a continuum, although some critics do. To me, they appear to be poles between which a reader may oscillate during the
course of reading a given text, and the sum total of reading may tend on ‘average’ to be seen as aesthetic or efferent (p. 213)

The attempt to separate aesthetic and efferent responses is somewhat limiting, as it does not acknowledge combined responses. I have considered this issue in the past five years. As a high school English teacher, I have often noted student written responses which are both efferent and aesthetic in nature. I view the aesthetic response to be one in which the student moves beyond the text itself, often into a personal experience or reveals some aspect of self. In the case of the efferent response, recall of detail, sometimes plot summarizing and no movement beyond textual detail are the features. I encourage my students to move beyond efferent responses, so I am likely favouring the aesthetic. Research on response to literature suggests that movement from response into analysis shows evidence of a student’s higher level thinking (Probst, 1988). In senior English classes, the emphasis on analysis is a critical component of the curriculum. Since this study was conducted in a junior English class, one would not expect all responses to be aesthetic in nature, as these students are in the process of developing their analytical reading and writing skills. But, my own classroom experience with response to literature would suggest that an aesthetic response is often
recorded when student reader/writers are engaged with the text, regardless of their grade level. This issue of engagement is deserving of closer examination.

The type of response selected by a student reader/writer is linked to factors other than gender. One factor is whether a reader is "engaged" with a particular passage in the text. Bill Corcoran (1986) defines engagement as a process which, captures not only the reader’s emotional reaction to the text, feelings of identification, empathy, involvement, admiration, or one of a thousand other psychological states she may be able to name, but also to suggest that texts, because of their inscribed ideologies, have at least the potential to change readers (p. 47).

Another significant factor is that of teacher expectations. If a teacher indicates a preference for efferent rather than aesthetic responses, students are likely to comply. Purves (1991) writes that: the penchant for aesthetic reading is learned; certainly it is driven out of the heads of readers by instruction ... Rosenblatt shows that how we read a text depends upon what is in our heads, just as much as the meaning or emotion we gain from reading the text. Aesthetic or efferent reading is, as she
argues, a matter of stance ... one can learn that it is not appropriate to read aesthetically. How we read is a matter of stance, which is a matter of choice ... It is hard to select the aesthetic stance when there has been no encouragement for so doing (pp. 213-216).

This current study reveals that student reader/writers respond to text in both efferent and aesthetic ways; one is not valued over the other. In some cases, a single response is both efferent and aesthetic. An argument can be presented concerning the implications for classroom practice and the teacher's role. Purves (1991) argues that students are not given enough opportunities to respond in an aesthetic way as it is not valued as much as efferent response.

Teachers usually encourage students to read literature efferently, as information retrieval. They give quizzes or lead discussions which focus on objective features of the text. Then they ask students to write essays that pour their private thoughts into an impersonal rhetorical mode (Newton, 1991, p. 476).

Bleich (1975) believes that “students should first be asked to write about a literary text affectively and associatively. Affective writing encourages aesthetic reading by recording untutored, spontaneous feeling”
(Newton, 1991, p. 477). Hennings (1995) concurs that "instructors must encourage students to go beyond retelling, summarizing, comparing, generalizing, and critical judging and relate what they read to their own lives" (p. 62). Scholes (1985) states, "We must help our students unlock textual power and turn it to their own use ... the response to a text is itself always a text ... our job is not to produce 'readings' for our students but to give them the tools for providing their own" (pp. 20-24). According to Smith (1991):

the application of one's experience and knowledge is essential to constructing meaning. Teachers need to recognize that some of their students may be reluctant to apply what they know of the world to their reading of literature or may not know how to apply it. Consequently, teachers should work both to teach students how to apply what they know and to encourage them to make that application (p. 270).

The research of Russell Hunt (1991) reveals modes of reading beyond the aesthetic and the efferent. Consistent with Rosenblatt's view of reading as a transaction, Hunt (1991) writes that "some of the readers we have studied ... are more likely to make connections between their experience of reading and their own immediate situations, or to take into account peripheral information about the physical presentation of the
text” (p. 116). Whether a reader reads in this way “is influenced by the reader’s own experience, preferences, and expectations; by what sorts of reading the text seems to the reader to afford; and by the situation in which the reading occurs” (Hunt, 1991, p. 116). Hunt's work extends Rosenblatt’s view in stating that,

the readers who seem most engaged in, and who feel most satisfied with, their readings (of those texts in those situations) appear to act as though the purpose predominating in their reading were to make social contact, by sharing evaluations, with a narrator or author who is assumed to be somehow ‘behind’ or ‘implicit in’ the text (1991, p. 117).

Hunt’s research (1991) reminds us that students use various kinds of reading (and writing) when encountering text. Examining only Rosenblatt’s aesthetic and efferent modes would lead to confining student responses to two narrow categories. The challenge of this current study is to clearly describe what constitutes student written response. It does not seem necessary then to categorize each response but rather to delve further into the influences which affect these responses.

Although gender influence on readers’ written responses has been the focus for the current inquiry, the individual nature of response cannot be overlooked. “Studies have continually affirmed the individuality of the
reader and the uniqueness of response” (Hancock, 1993b, p. 337). Rogers (1991) reveals that “a reader’s critical stance is highly individual ... influenced by a complex combination of their own beliefs about how literature should be interpreted, their literary experiences, and their abilities, which will in turn influence the complexity or intertextuality of their responses” (p. 417). Kooy & Wells (1996) concur that “the way we respond to a text is influenced by our cultural background, as well as by our personal experiences. Inevitably, we all see a text through a personal set of cultural lenses” (p. 106).

The fact that no two students have identical novel journal entries and that no student would respond in the same way to a second reading of the same work bears out Fish’s contention that there is never, even when there appears to be, a single text in any class (Aitken, 1985, pp. 56-57).

It seems appropriate that the issue of individuality be considered by the classroom teacher when implementing response strategies in the English classroom.

As I reach the end of this study, I reflect on the study design and the categories and properties generated by the data collection. My initial concern about being biased by a focus on the journal writer’s gender was addressed by using a linking list. This list removed the temptation for me
to draw conclusions, based on knowing a student responder's gender, before reading their journal transcript. "Blind reading" of the journal transcripts allowed me to assess aspects as I saw them, rather than based on the writer's gender. The gender identification came later in the process of analysis.

Developing the list of category names was dependent on dominant or recurring features within the journal transcripts. In the later stages of data analysis, I recorded the properties of the categories. It was my intent to create a list of female categories and properties and a separate list of male categories and properties. I was surprised to discover that the influence of gender was not clearly divided by category, but within the properties of a category. Aspects of journal entries of both male and female student responders comprised some part of each property. As a result, it was impossible to create two separate lists. This did not cause a problem in the Discussion of Research Findings since it addressed the individual nature of reader response.

As I re-read the Categories and Properties Table, I note that although I chose them carefully, they cannot be considered final. There are links between some categories and I wonder whether I could have modified or even expanded some categories. For example, the category of 'Characters' includes the property of 'identification with character'. It
could be connected to the property of 'links to life' in the 'Intertextual Tying' category. The category of 'Emotions' includes the property of 'empathy about a character', and this could be linked to the property of 'Characters' called 'perception of qualities'. I realize that there are similarities between these categories and their respective properties but they are not identical. I remember that as I wrote about these categories and properties, I resisted the temptation to change my initial labels. I saw that student writers' responses were influenced by their own emotions, perceptions and personal experiences. All of these properties had a place in their individual response. Some of these properties were revealed in more than one category but this did not create a problem for me. I feel that the properties provided data which was well integrated. I do not see how expanding the properties in each category and then reducing the number of categories would have assisted with clarification of the findings in my study. It is more likely to have had the opposite effect. I believe that creating nine categories provided me with the opportunity to include more detail within each property as I analyzed the journal transcripts. The result was that I wrote in a more descriptive way in the 'Discussion of Research Findings' section, especially in the sections examining the influence of gender on readers' responses. I believe that the system I used for this study was effective.
CHAPTER SIX

Cautionary Notes

Although the findings enrich previous research on reader response and gender, several limitations of the study warrant consideration. First, the student participants whose journals are the focus for the study are in an enriched grade 10 English classroom. As a group, these students have high academic standing since they were required to have at least 80% in grade 9 English, before enrolling in the grade 10 enriched programme. The classroom selected for this study is at a school in an upper-middle class neighbourhood. Most of these students are raised in highly literate environments, where academic success is encouraged and reinforced in the home. Parents frequently discuss issues and ideas with their children. As a result, these students are encouraged to voice their opinions. Many of these students are active readers at home because there are books and newspapers available in the household. Therefore, there are frequent opportunities for them to be exposed to both written and spoken language. This usually results in adolescents who have a fluidity of ideas and an eagerness to share in both written and spoken form. The aforementioned points should be considered when examining the results of the findings for this study. The situation might have been different for students who are less fluent with language. If they do not have opportunities to read and discuss viewpoints in the home environment, this might have affected
their performance in the school environment. They might have had greater difficulty recording their ideas in reader response journals. If students who attended a less “academic” school were used for this study, there might have been a greater hesitancy for them to reveal themselves in written or spoken form. The lack of extensive opportunities to become language literate might have influenced the content of their response journals.

A second limitation is that the interpretation of journals was limited to eight grade 10 enriched students. The sample size was determined because of the amount of data collected and the intensity of the analysis. I believe we can generalize the results to other students who closely resemble those in this study, but beyond this rather special group generalization is risky.

The fact that student participants responded to only one literary genre (fiction) and to a single novel designated by the core curriculum of the grade 10 enriched programme is a third limitation. The novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, was written by a male author, Charles Dickens. The writing of a response journal was a required assignment in the classroom. If student choice had been an option with regard to novel selection or type of assignment completed, the results might have been different.

The fourth limitation is the teacher’s gender. Since the focus for
this study is on gender and reader response, it is possible that the female teacher had an effect on the students’ responses, but this is another question beyond the scope of the study.

The student participants’ prior experience with reader response strategies is the fifth limitation. They had likely been exposed to response writing during their previous grade 9 year, but they did not all have the same teacher since five teachers teach the grade 9 programme. It can be assumed that each teacher had individual expectations with regard to response writing. Student participants had completed a response journal in the first term of the current grade 10 enriched programme, and since this study was conducted during the second term, they had similar prior experience with response journal writing. Their combined experiences during grade 9 and 10 influenced their response journal entries. It is important to note that although student participants’ experiences were similar, they were not identical.

A final limitation which should be considered concerns the assignment instructions given to students by the teacher when assigning the task of completing a reader response journal based on the core novel. Her expectations were stated verbally and in written form. Although students were all given the same oral (Appendix C) and written (Appendix D) instructions by the teacher for the assignment used as the focus for
this study, they may well have been influenced by their previous experiences with response writing.
CHAPTER SEVEN

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this study suggest several possibilities for future research in English classrooms on how gender influences readers' written responses.

In my inquiry, student writers responded to a teacher-selected text, written by a male author. The question that comes to my mind is whether student writers respond differently to texts they self-select rather than those which the teacher selects. Does the text chosen affect one's written response? A possible study could have student participants selecting a text they wished to read (perhaps selecting from a list supplied by the teacher) and then recording their written responses. Journal transcripts in response to teacher-selected and student-selected texts would be the focus for comparison and analysis.

I am curious about how student participants will select the text they wish to read. Student choice of text might be based on the texts they had been exposed to at an early age. Elizabeth Segel (1986), who writes about gender and childhood reading, states that “one of the most obvious ways gender influences our experience as readers is when it determines what books are made available to us or are designated as appropriate or inappropriate for our reading” (p. 165). Are student reader/writers likely to chose ‘girl texts or boy texts’? Research has been conducted on book
choices made by elementary school students (Barrs & Pigeon, 1994; Sarland, 1991; Simpson, 1996; Thomas, 1994). Other studies focus on girls’ reading (Cherland, 1994a, 1994b; Christian-Smith, 1993a, 1993b; Enciso, 1996, 1998; Finders, 1997; Gilbert, 1992, 1994; Moss, 1989) and the ‘Sweet Valley’ reading series. Female reader studies indicate that this gender is more likely to be influenced by the literature they read. The publishing industry markets books for specific audiences that are defined by age and gender. How do students actually choose a book to read? Do they select one which is a ‘girl book’ or ‘boy book’ (depending on their own gender), one by an author of the same sex, one by an author whose work they have read before, or one a friend recommends? Does this selection process enhance engagement or not? If they have a certain level of comfort with their choice, are they more involved in their reading and therefore able to write responses in a more passionate way?

The issue of reader/writer engagement with a text deserves further inquiry. As a researcher, I frequently found myself quite involved while reading student journal transcripts. At times, I was so immersed that I wanted to only read or respond to them, rather than analyze them! I believe I was ‘engaged’ with the writing because it seemed to be so honest and sincere. I reacted specifically to the journal segments where writers conveyed their emotions, especially when relating personal experiences to
events or issues in the text. I wondered then, and continue to question whether this is truly engagement with the text. How are engagement in reading and writing linked? Limited research (Corcoran, 1986; Patricia Enciso, 1996, 1998) focused on engagement. Further research could be conducted to better define ‘engagement’ with text and how it can be measured. I wonder whether my students share my view of engagement. Do my male and female students engage with text in different ways? If there is a difference, is it related to the reading that they do? If they are engaged with a text, do their written responses reflect this engagement, and does gender difference exist?

Findings from this study indicated that female writers showed empathy for fictional characters and wrote about relationships between characters more than males. The intensity of their responses was noted in addition to the frequency. I wonder about the reason for this difference, and have considered that the student writer’s attitude towards the act of journal writing could have an effect on the written responses. In the case of my study, the writing of a response journal was assigned and other modes of writing were not offered as options to the student participants. One study (Moonilal-Masur, Cincik & Mitchell, 1992) examines the attitudes of grade 8, 9 and 11 students toward journal writing. Gannett (1992) analyzes the male and female journals of
college students, and concludes that "students have a gendered conception of the journal" (p. 172). Although both of the studies examine student attitudes towards journal writing, neither one focuses on reader response journals. More inquiry into this issue might help to clarify whether this gendered conception exists. Creating a questionnaire and distributing it to students in an English classroom would allow a researcher to gather the views of female and male students about journal writing. Does one gender prefer journal writing to other types of writing? I intend to devise and distribute such a questionnaire after I have completed this study. If females write in a more engaged way in their journals, is it because they are more comfortable with this mode of writing? If this point can be proven, then males are at a disadvantage in a classroom where they are asked to write reader response journals. I need to keep this possibility in mind as I plan for my next English classes. How can the creation of a classroom program account for gender differences?

The findings of this study were gathered in an enriched classroom of an academic school. I am curious about how the findings would have been different if I had selected a regular classroom in a less academic school. It would be interesting to devise a comparative study where I would assess student response journals at these two study sites and determine the extent to which environment affects one's written responses to text.
A further study could occur in a different school culture. For example, responses could be acquired from an 'all boys' and an 'all girls' environment. What are the characteristics of the written responses gathered in these environments? Is there a difference between responses written in an 'all girls' setting and those written in an 'all boys' school?

The classroom environment and the teacher's role likely affects students journal responses. In this study, one classroom and one teacher were the parameters. The participant teacher taught English in a response-based classroom and held specific views about response writing. Limited time was devoted to these aspects in my study. I, too, teach English in a response-based classroom. I would like to take a closer look at this idea to assist me in understanding my own role in the classroom. The environment I set up for my students will likely have some effect on their ability to thrive in my classroom. I wonder how the results of this study would differ if written responses were collected in a classroom where students had no previous exposure to response. Research (Christine Howe, 1997; Langer, 1995, 1998) on classroom interaction is available but none focuses solely on the response-based classroom and written responses. The dynamics of the English classroom deserve closer study to answer questions on the influence of classroom environment. How comfortable are the student reader/writers with voicing/recording their opinions?
Do they see their classroom as a safe place where risk-taking can occur? A future study could focus on whether female and male reader/writers experience different degrees of comfort in a response-based classroom. Interviewing students, individually or in focus groups, could provide a means of acquiring this information. What is the teacher's role in the classroom? Sometimes she is the “expert” and at other times, she is part of the “community of learners” who facilitates response by encouraging and guiding students. The classroom teacher's experience with response and personal expectations would be of interest. In the present study, only a female teacher was a participant. What affect does the teacher's gender have on students' written responses? Do students respond better to a teacher of their same gender? A study of student response in two classrooms, one of a male teacher and one of a female teacher, could assist with answering these questions.

As my study draws to a close, I reflect on a few issues that have been prevalent in my mind over the past year and a half. As a teacher of high school English, I've often been concerned about the view in many English departments that reading and writing are separate activities. My study findings have confirmed that this is not the case. I am now convinced that reading can be seen as a 'composing' activity, while the very act of writing involves reading. Therefore, the two activities are
actually interrelated. The writing of reader response journals supports this contention. "In transaction with the text, the reader envisions the characters, participates in their uttered thoughts and emotions, and weaves the sequence of events into a plot" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 68). The acts of both reading and writing are an integral part of this 'transaction'.

I believe in the value of reader response journals in the English classroom program. They provide my students with frequent chances to become independent readers and interpreters of literature (McIntosh, 1992). Response journal writing allows them to be actively involved in the learning process while recording personal ideas about texts they are studying. Rosenblatt writes:

the selection and organization of responses to some degree hinge on the assumptions, the expectations, or sense of possible structures, that he brings out of the stream of his life. Thus built into the raw material of the literary process itself is the particular world of the reader (1978, p. 11).

Such emphasis on individual experiences empowers students and deepens their independence as readers and writers.

To honour the role of literary experience in the context of individual lives, has powerful educational implications ....
a primary concern throughout would be the development of the individual's capacity to adopt and maintain the aesthetic stance, to live fully and personally in the literary transaction (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 161).

As an English teacher and a life-long lover of literature, this is my hope both for the students I teach, and myself.
Appendix A

TIME SCHEDULE

December 16th, 1997: - submission of Formation of Thesis Committee form

January 16th, 1998: - submission of Ethical Review to Grad. Studies

January, February 1998: - development of proposal
- acquire research participants

January 29th, 1998: - Informed Consents signed at research site
(principal, classroom teacher)

February 17th, 1998: - visit research site
- teacher assigns response assignment

March 1998: Data collection during 2nd term of school year

March 11th, 1998: - Data Collection - Journal Submission #1

March 26, 1998: - Data Collection - Journal Submission #2

March, April 1998: - transcription of data
- ongoing analysis of participants’ reader response journals
- category generation

May, June 1998: Analysis of Data
- identifying relations between the categories and properties

July, August, September, October, November 1998: Preparation of the Thesis
1. The purpose of this project is the preparation of a doctoral thesis in the Ed.D. Programme at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. The intention of this study is to examine student reader response journals in secondary English classrooms, to determine the extent to which gender influences readers' written responses to text.

2. The procedures used in this study will include informal interviews with English teachers, classroom observation and the analysis of student reader response journals.

3. A benefit which is hoped would result from this study is increased awareness about the influence of gender on the content of reader response journals in the English classroom.

4. Your school was chosen to participate in this project because some of your English teachers employ reader response strategies in the classroom.

5. The comments expressed by teachers and the contents of reader response journals will be treated in a confidential manner. Although the information will be used as part of the data, and in some cases, actual excerpts presented, quoted, there will be no use of names or statements made in the paper, which identify whose information is being used.

6. Participation in the project is voluntary.

7. You may discontinue participation at any time.

8. You may contact the Graduate Studies Office at 923-6641 Ex. 2608, for answers to questions about the field work and about the rights of participants.

9. I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

(Signature of participant)  

(Date)  

(Printed name of participant)  

(Signature of investigator)
1. The purpose of this project is the preparation of a doctoral thesis in the Ed.D. Programme at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. The intention of this study is to examine student reader response journals in secondary English classrooms, to determine the extent to which gender influences readers' written responses to text.

2. The procedures used in this study will include informal interviews with English teachers, classroom observation and the analysis of student reader response journals.

3. A benefit which is hoped would result from this study is increased awareness about the influence of gender on the content of reader response journals in the English classroom.

4. You were chosen to participate in this project as a secondary school English teacher who uses reader response journals in the classroom.

5. The comments expressed by teachers and the contents of reader response journals will be treated in a confidential manner. Although the information will be used as part of the data, and in some cases, actual excerpts presented, quoted, there will be no use of names or statements made in the paper, which identify whose information is being used.

6. Participation in the project is voluntary.

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9. I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement.

(Signature of participant)

(Date)

(Printed name of participant)

(Signature of investigator)
Tuesday Feb. 17th, 1998  9:00 - 9:45 a.m.
Research site - classroom, Gr. 10 enriched class
18 students - 10 male, 8 female
  - female teacher

9:05- my introduction to students - student at OISE/UT - study on reader response journals, names will be fictitious

9:07-9:20 - teacher had assigned the reading of the first 50 pages of Tale to the students
 - discusses with students that they will have a response journal assignment on the text
 - distribution of assignment sheet, asks class to read and then ask questions if necessary
 - teacher clarifies the marking scheme and expectations as per criteria recorded on the sheet
 - Due date: 1st day after March Break
 - cautions are added...refers to previous journal assignment from 1st term which they completed on Shaw play..."if you state “I like”, you must remember to clarify your ideas as you write".
 - many student questions are about the logistics of the assignment:
   - one student was concerned about the length limit of two pages since she thought she would want to write more...she states that on her last assignment it was too short when she wrote only 1.5 pages (the teacher explains the criteria...all students will be assessed using the same criteria, reminds students to avoid summarizing- this tends to cut down on the length)
   - one asks whether she can read the whole book and then write - (the teacher clarifies the criteria- and the process of writing while you read)
   - teacher stresses the importance of developing ideas and that students should be attentive to “controlling their language” and “efficiency” - - (these terms are used on the assignment sheet when explaining the criteria for evaluation)
   - teacher explains that the first few entries will be written in class so that she can monitor their process - stresses that they read - feel - write...they will need to do some thinking about what they are writing
   - a male student asks whether they can talk about the novel before
they write, since he didn’t get it and doesn’t know what to write about
- teacher clarifies that this comment IS a response...they are encouraged to respond rather than analyze at this stage
- lots of comments from students about this same issue
- the teacher assures them that they will talk after the response is recorded...if they discuss the novel as a group first, individual ideas will not be recorded

9:21 - writing time of 1/2 an hour is given so that students may write their first response entry
- some ask if they can read again...teacher suggests that they write rather than read (perhaps there is an uncertainty, and they want to check the details before they make the commitment to paper)
- a few individual questions about whether they need a good copy, process work...the teacher gets the student to focus on the assignment sheet which deals with these questions

9:24 - writing time - most are on task

9:25 - I have a brief discussion with teacher about her expectations for the assignment, the types of questions students have asked...the risk-taking involved in an independent thinking assignment...their anxiety about getting it right...aspects of teaching enriched class, which I had taught last year

9:30 - I circulate the classroom and read a few of the “beginnings” of student responses. I encourage those who are uncertain
- teacher fields individual questions as necessary
- I observe response writing in process...

9:45 - I leave classroom
A TALE OF TWO CITIES  JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT

You are required to read A Tale of Two Cities outside of class. As you read the novel, you will be writing a response journal in which you examine and explain your response and reactions to the novel, the characters, the issues, the ideas, the themes, etc... Do not summarize. Provide brief examples to illustrate a point. Remember to fully explain your response/reaction in depth.

PERSONAL RESPONSE JOURNAL

Some journal entries will be written in class during assigned writing periods and kept in your writing folder. The bulk of the assignment will be completed at home following the same criteria and format as outlined below. Process work is not required as this assignment focuses on your immediate reaction to the topic. However, your work must be legible and exhibit control of language.
1. Date all entries
2. Divide the novel into ten sections, either by plot, issue, character, theme, etc, or a combination of the above
3. Write one journal entry on each of the ten sections
4. Each entry must be two pages double spaced, hand written, and legible (I stop reading at the end of the second page of each entry)
5. In each entry, follow proper paragraph structure and S.E.E.
6. In each entry state and explain your response, reaction, thoughts, opinions, feelings, and/or reflections about the topic of the entry

EVALUATION
The entire journal (all ten entries) will be evaluated holistically for the following aspects:
Clarity of thought  Control of language/quality of expression
Depth of thought  Development of ideas
The journal will be marked out of 50. The mark will put into the writing folder unit.
DUE DATE: March 23, 1998
Entry #1: Confusing First Chapters

First impressions, I believe, are nearly always important. An introduction to a novel must catch the reader’s interest and promote further reading. As far as I have read, A Tale of Two Cities is the only book that has a confusing and uninteresting opening chapter, through which I actually fell asleep, and yet develops into an interesting plot.

I greatly disliked the first chapter. After reading it I thought that the novel was going to be about politics and religion., both topics that I generally dislike reading about in a work of fiction. The first chapter was confusing and misleading but once I had read the entire first book I nearly understood the point of its being there. I understand that the first chapter was written to establish the time period and was accurately called “the Period”, but if it was used to establish the mood, I would not wish to read this novel because the mood that it establishes is rather gloomy and grim and I prefer happy endings. The first paragraph is confusing mostly because it is one long run-on sentence and because it is full of what Dickens calls “superlative degrees or comparison.” Although these comparisons were very confusing to me at first after reading the first book I realized that they were refering to either the conditions in France and England or were refering (1) to the conditions in the upper and
lower classes.

One thing in the chapter that I found confusing but liked nonetheless was that Dickens used specific events to describe “The Period” such as the reference to the one hundred and twenty-five-year-old woman. This reference makes the chapter more “human” and gives at least a spark of interest to it.

Thurs. Feb. 26, ‘98    Entry#2: Madame Defarge’s Knitting

Madame Defarge’s knitting is confusing because it seems that she never ceases doing it. I think that Madame Defarge is something like the backbone or leader of the Jacques. If she is not one of these then I think she is the secretary of sorts. There is a lot of talk of registering people. I believe that when Madame Defarge is knitting she somehow knits into the pattern the information that she is given and therefore is able to find it later as it is “registered”. Another possibility is that she repeats the information in her head as she knits and so whenever she looks at what she has knitted she remembers the information. I think that this is a very effective way of remembering information because memory is often

1. The spelling and grammar which students have used in their journals have been reproduced as written.
triggered by objects and we remember things that were said or thought of when that object was made or when something happened to it.

I like Madame Defarges character a lot because she is strong and serves her cause faithfully.

March 4, '98  Journal Entry #3: Wine Shop Scene

As far as I have read the scene outside the wine shop is my favourite scene. I like how when the barrel of wine is spilled Defarge, the wine shop keeper, doesn't care about the spilt wine because he has not yet paid for it and so he does not lose money. I also like how the street in Saint Antoine suddenly springs to life from the pityful scene that it was and everyone becomes animated.

Although the desperateness and hunger of the people is shown in their greedy actions of damming up the cracks in the sidewalk and in drinking in the mud as well as the wine, to me the atmosphere is more like that of a party or a festival with the people dancing in the street. I enjoyed the scene because the wine seemed to relieve the people of their sorrows for a moment and they were playful and frolicsome. They were all in the same boat of starvation but for one moment all was forgotten in the joy of life and companionship.
I thought it interesting but correctly written that as soon as the wine was all gone the people immediately returned to whatever activity they had previously been at. I thought this well written because it emphasized the freedom which the wine had given the people. That as soon as the wine was gone, so was their freedom.

The only part that I disliked was when Gaspard, the joker, wrote the word ‘BLOOD’ on the wall in wine. This was disturbing foreshadowing of what was to follow and Defarge’s response to this occurrence seemed calming but disturbed me as well because of its implied meaning.

March 6, ‘98 Journal Entry #4: Stryver and Carton

Aside from Monsieur le Marquis, Mr. Stryver is my least liked of all of the characters in the novel. He is pompous, conceited and manipulative. The two actions or thoughts of his in the book that make me dislike him so much are firstly his illusage of Sidney Carton and secondly his conceited conviction that Miss Manette would be pleased to marry him.

Mr. Stryver is a fake and has Mr. Carton do all of his legal work for him. This makes him repulsive because he does no work but gets all the credit while Carton, the worker, wastes away his genius in spirits and wine.
Mr. Stryver's absolute faith in the fact the Lucie will immediately wish to marry is also a cause of my dislike. It makes me feel that he had no belief in her having an opinion of her own and that he believes that she will risk losing love and trust just to be rich.

To me Sidney Carton appears as the exact opposite character from Stryver. He does the work, he is a genius and yet he is the one who is pitifully downtrodden. His love for Lucie is genuine yet he knows that she would never love him and knows that he is not worthy of her and could never bring her happiness. His humility makes him likable and his honest confession of his love for Lucie, who is surprisingly lovable as opposed to insufferable in her "sweet compassion", and his honest confession of his knowledge of his unworthiness of her makes him almost lovable and certainly worthy of my respect.

Although Carton's working for Stryver is represented to me as degrading I believe that it is best for him because he has not the open character that Stryver has. If Carton had been able to stand up for himself he would, without a doubt, be successful.

March 10, '98     Journal Entry #5: Jerry Cruncher, An Honest Tradesman?

In my opinion Jerry Cruncher is one of the most intriguing
characters in the novel. He is confusing because at one point he is portrayed as an honest and loyal employee of Tellson’s Bank as well as a man of all work. At other times he is shown as the abusive husband who beats his wife because she prayed for the salvation of his soul. And still at other times he is the accomplice of two other “honest tradesmen”. Jerry’s business of digging up bodies for medical and scientific research is an immoral yet beneficial art. Defiling bodies which have not been properly donated to the progress of science and medicine is not only illegal but immoral and is unjustifiable. Jerry however continually tries to justify his business because he knows it to be morally wrong. He talks to himself and calls himself an “honest tradesman” which, I believe, he has said to himself so many times that he does actually believe it.

Jerry’s wife Aggerawayter, or Aggravater, prays for the salvation of Jerry’s soul because she knows that the defilement of dead bodies is ungodly and morally wrong. Jerry tells her that she is an undutiful wife and beats her badly. I believe that Jerry’s behaviour to his wife is certainly wrong especially since she is only trying to do him good. Jerry also gives added pain to his wife by turning their son against her. I believe that Aggerawayter is a good person who wished to bring God to her husband, a man who does not deserve her.
Jerry Cruncher is an interesting character because although he commits arts which are morally wrong he is also a loyal servant of Tellson's and when he is given a job he performs it dutifully.


I believe that Doctor Manette's relapse was caused by the shock of the information revealed to him on the morning of Lucie and Darnay's marriage. As we have been told Darnay revealed to Manette the truth of his real identity. It is my assumption that Darnay or Darny's family, most likely the former and by now deceased Marquis d'Evremonde, somehow caused Manette to be imprisoned in the Bastille in the first place. It was the information of his connection to that imprisonment that lead to Manette's relapse. I believe that Charles Darnay was right in telling Manette and not Lucie of his true identity. This release of information made Manette able to assist Darnay later on.

I believe that Lorry and Pross were right in their delicate treatment of Manette's relapse and that they were right not to tell Lucie of it although I think that they should have told Charles Darnay. After the nine days, when the relapse was over and Manette had had no memory of it, I liked Lorry's treatment of the matter. He broke the news to Manette in a
comforting way and although Manette knew what Lorry was speaking of he also continued with the story of Lorry’s “friend” for he did not wish to make Lorry anymore uncomfortable.

Lorry’s way of breaking the news of the relapse deserves applause because at the time Manette was in a fragile state of mind although he did not know it and “I have a friend who has had a relapse into an illness” is less harsh than saying “You had a relapse and did not know me for nine days.”

Also worthy of praise is Lorry’s suggestion of destroying the shoemaker’s bench. I find the advice, like he who gave it, to be strong and sound and all in all I find Mr. Lorry to be a loyal and sensible man.

March 17, ‘98 Journal Entry #7: Darnay and Gabelle, Duty and Loyalty

I think Charles Darnay to be an honest, dutiful man. His prompt response to the letter that Mr. Lorry gave him from Gabelle shows his dutiful nature. The speed at which he leaves and the knowing of what he has left behind made me like him as a character even more because I believe in loyalty and duty and here he exhibits both to his former servant. The French revolutionists’ treatment of Gabelle and of Darnay is reprehensible because Darnay had practically given the land to the people
and Gabelle had collected no taxes and yet these good men were treated badly simply because they had wanted to live their own quiet lives.

Darnay was relatively quick in securing Gabelle’s release from prison and in recompense Gabelle tries his hardest to secure Darnay’s release from La Force. At Darnay’s trial a year and a quarter later Gabelle testifies as to Darnay’s having saved his life by returning to France.

I like Gabelle’s character because he followed the orders that Darnay, as the former Marquis d-Evremond gave him such as not to collect any taxes from the people. This was unusual in a servant at that time and most would have continued to collect the taxes for his own personal gain. Although it would be unusual for a servant in any time not to take advantage of such leniency in a master it is all the more commendable for a servant in those times not to because at the time most people, the aristocracy and the peasants were corrupt. Gabelle’s honest plea for help to also makes him likeable because to me a man who can ask for help is certainly more likeable than a man who cannot ask for it.

March 19, 1998 Journal Entry #8: Miss Pross, Opinion of Character

At the commencement and throughout the entire first half of the novel I felt a slight inclination to dislike Miss Pross. My dislike was ill-formed
as it mainly generated from the belief that she was over-protective and tyrannical. I found her tyrannical when, in the fourth chapter of the first book, she pushed Mr. Lorry and ordered him to help her in a forceful manner. I found her over-protective in the sixth chapter of the second book when she protested against the “hundreds of people” who were unworthy but were “coming here to look after her.”

I did not begin to like Miss Pross until I began to see the humour in her. Her selflessness also struck me. I saw that she did indeed have a sense of humor which was displayed when she joked with Mr. Lorry about the “gift of plate” which he had given Lucie and Darnay for a wedding present. Her selflessness was easy to see at the end of the book when she held out against Madame Defarge for as long as she could as she was uncertain of their fates. Her thoughts at the time were not for herself but were for her “ladybird” and her other friends.

Miss Pross’s loyalty to the family was evident in many parts of the book but the one which struck me the most was when confronted by Madame Defarge she said that she cared not for herself but only wanted her “ladybird” safe.

I disliked at the end of the confrontation the fact that Miss Pross was left deaf. I should not have minded so much perhaps if it had been
Jerry because he had been bad at times but Miss Pross had always been so good and devoted even to a brother who had ruined her. Her resulting deafness was the only part of the novel which left me unsatisfied because Miss Pross didn’t deserve what happened to her.

March 20, '98 Journal Entry #9: Revolutionary Leaders

In the novel the main fighters for the Revolution were the Defarges and also Jacques Three and The Vengeance. Of these four characters I disliked Madame Defarge the most. She was the most vindictive and was the person thickest in the plotting against the Manettes and Darnays. I thought that she took her personal revenge on the Evremondes much too far and I find it disgusting that she would have killed Lucie and her daughter as well only because of what the Marquis d’Evremonde had done to her family. I thought that it was a little too coincidental that she happened to marry Ernest Defarge, Manette’s old servant. This is another although less weighty reason for my dislike of Madame Defarge. I believe that she married to promote the interests of her own personal revenge rather than for love and I believe that love should by the only absolute requirement in marriage. I also dislike her because of her ruthlessness in killing innocent people and because of her supposed leading role in a revolution
that killed so many.

I dislike Defarge as well as his wife but my dislike of Defarge is not as acute. I sense in him a hidden loyalty to the Manette household which made him more likeable in my eye. His aid to Manette at the beginning of the novel and his reluctance to persecute Lucie and her daughter are also acts in his favour yet his prominent role in the Revolution outweigh these acts and I must still say that I dislike him.

Jacques Three and The Vengeance were not very developed as characters but their undying support and awe of Madame Defarge and their involvement in and approval of her vengeful plot to also murder the Lucies made me dislike them as did their involvement in the Revolution.

March 21, '98 Journal Entry #10: Sydney Carton Sober

I was deeply moved in the last chapter of the novel; I was moved to tears and I cried over Carton's sacrificing himself for the happiness of the woman he loved. I think that Carton is at once the most self-sacrificing and pitiable and generous man I have ever read about. My love for his character grows from the knowledge that he is a man who has very little respect for himself and yet surpasses his self-disrespect and realizes that he can at least be useful to Lucie and Darnay. I however have a great
respect for him because his work as a lawyer did people good, his saving the Lucies from Madame Defarge did good, his comforting the poor seamstress at the beheading did good and his sacrifice did good to the Manette family.

One aspect about the book that I particularly liked with regards to Carton was the fact that he improved throughout the novel. At the beginning he was pitiful as a inebriated man who let others live off his generosity. Later in the book he became more likeable as the unrequited admirer of Lucie and the almost reluctant family friend of the Manette Darnay household. By the end of the novel I admired his strength both of mind and purpose and I admired him for his sacrifice although I sympathized for him as well. Carton’s progression throughout the novel gives me happiness that even in the worst of times we can still progress.

The two scenes involving Carton which troubled me were when he declared his never dying and “undeserving” love for Lucie and when he comforted the poor seamstress at the scaffold. The second, however, touched me the more because he had not only sacrificed himself for Lucie but had taken upon himself the task of comforting the poor girl who did not know why the country that she loved would do this to her. Carton’s generosity here endeared him to me all the more.
Feb. 17th - Journal Entry Number One

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...this well know quote introduced me, the reader into a very confusing first couple of pages. I had heard this phrase or quote so many times before reading the book but I never understood the context of where and why it was said. I was lost after reading the first line. I caught that Dicken’s was comparing England and France but why, the reasoning I just did not get. Dickens writing style was confusing to me because I was not used to it. I did not enjoy reading his work because it made no sense to me. I feel that his style was directed to a more primitive audience. In our society we have the ways and the means not to have to use our imagination, we live in a modern society where if you can not picture something in your head, all you have to do is look around. We are able to imagine something written not by what is written but by previous experiences. Dickens used his knowledge and his imagination to help readers visualize the story. His description helped them to be clear on what they were reading, while all it does for me is confuse me even more.

Feb. 26th - Journal Entry Number Two

The man next to Jerry had said he would be found guilty. Jerry Cruncher
was to be found guilty of treason without a doubt. The jury had ended up finding him not guilty, but how? Dickens allows the reader to hear all about the sentence and how it was surely going to be carried out but then changes his mind and allows the man a life. Dickens used his persuasive voice to make the reader feel like they are missing an important part of the story, that it may not have been Jerry Cruncher but a look alike. I did not understand why all the characters were at the trial of this one seemingly unimportant man. Why was it so important that Jerry Cruncher beat the trial. It wasn’t, he was only a messenger for Tellson’s bank but Dickens made a very big deal about how he needed to be there. After reading the trial over again I realized that the rest of the characters were there because they were all also involved with Tellson’s. To me, Dickens included irrelevant information. i.e. Jerry licking rust off of his fingers, in order to confuse the reader, or so it seems.

March 2 - Journal Entry number three
Dickens uses metaphors in his story in order to get a thought or opinion across without actually writing it. An example from book one was when the wine spilled on the street and everyone rushed over to drink as much
as they could. I think that he, Dickens is trying to show that everyone was blood thirsty and that they all wanted to kill and be better than everyone else. Another example in Book two was when he wrote “the Jackal loosened his dress” meaning that Sydney Carton, realized that what he was doing was wrong so he went to compose himself. When Dickens writes like this it takes me a while and a couple of read over’s to realize what he is trying to communicate. His views and thoughts are so completely different than mine because of the time difference that it is hard to know exactly what he is writing about without putting a lot of thought into the time period when he wrote.

March 6- Journal Entry number four

The relationship between Sydney Carton and Stryner has already seen some ups and downs. I know that they have known each other for a very long time and Carton admits that he feels he has been living his life in a shadow of Stryver. Their relationship struck me of one of dependancy. Carton depends on Stryver to help keep him awake and thinking and Stryver depends on Carton for all of his good ideas, when he is sober enough to think of them. In chapter 5 “The Jackal””. We read how at first that they are friendly, making jokes, then they get into a deeper conversation about
their lives, and when they start talking about business, they start to argue. It seems that a girl can cause a big uproar between them, but I really think that it is their difference of opinion being brought out by some girl. Their differences of opinions being of a problem because Stryver thinks he is better than Carton and shows it in the way he speaks to him. Carton thinks otherwise. Stryver maybe his boss but carton knows that he makes all the right choices in court.

Mar. 10 - Journal Entry number five

Monseigneur seems to be the most influential man in the courts. I have read that he can not do anything by himself, he needs helpers without which he would die. He seems to think that he can get what ever he wants with money - “....tend to his own power and pocket.” This line, to me, means two different things. When read first I thought it meant about him paying money for what he wanted. But the second time, I thought it was talking about him “pocketing” the power, or receiving admiration he thought that he deserved.

Monseingeur is very superficial. He talks about how evil man is, and how they would always be stuck in the circumference and how they will
never get back into the circle. He doesn’t care as long as his guest are dressed nicely it did not matter what would happen to them. I do not understand what Dickens is talking about when he says Monseigneur was shut up in his sanctuary by the chocolate sprites.

March 16 - Journal Entry number six
In this section of pages I found out the secret that was told by Charles Darnay to Dr. Manette the morning of his wedding. I still do not understand why Darnay changed his identity, the only idea I have is because he was a traitor. Why would he tell Dr. Manette and not Lucie? Another thing bothering me is the Defarges and their attitude toward the Bastille and why Mr. Defarge is so interested with what Dr. Manette may have written in the tower. I think that if I knew more about what was going on (referring to the revolution) at the time, it would help me to understand this part of the novel more easily. At the end of book two, Charles Darnay wrote goodbye letters to Lucie and Dr. Manette. This made me wonder if Darnay was not coming back or was writing just in case he did not come back. This quote “as he left all that was dear on earth behind him, and floated away for the Toadstone” shows that he expects not to come back.
I was quite surprised Dickens did not include the letters or segments of the letters Darnay wrote. He usually writes in complete detail so his readers would be able to visualize the story and I expected him to include them. With the letters I could have been able to get a picture of the difference in closeness of his relationship with Lucie and Dr. Manette.

Mar. 16 - Journal Entry Number seven
At the beginning of the novel I did not understand the importance of “recalled to life”, in this section I finally see the significance. In my opinion Dr. Manette being “recalled to life” referred to him being brought into a real normal world. I see a connection with this statement to the position Charles Darnay is now in. He is also being recalled to life, his real identity. I found it quite ironic how it was Dr. Manette who was trying to keep him from entering this state of being. I think that Charles Darnay feels a certain closeness to Dr. Manette and it is not in the family sense. Meaning Darnay is now in the same position as Dr. Manette was and they are both fighting together to stay away from danger. Dr. Manette remembers what it was like to be a prisoner in the Bastille and he wants to use his experience to help Darnay. Some thing that bothered me was
when Mme. Defare wanted to see Lucie and baby Lucie. I feel scared of Mme. Defare for them. Lucie was not involved in her husbands doing and now Mme. Defare was probably registering them in her knitting so she can have her revenge. Mme. Defare probably thinks that since they are family they are involved.

Mar. 18 - Journal Entry Number eight

In chapter 5 “The Wood-Sawyer” Sydney Carton is not allowed to be seen by Dr. Manette. Why Carton is there is only explained by him saying that he has come to be useful in any way. Carton is fully aware of the dangerous situation ahead of Charles Darnay. It seems Carton’s love for Lucie and his vow to help her always are coming in handy now. Without Carton, Charles was in grave danger. I do not know how the Defarges prescence at the tribunal of Charles helped secure the release. And how he changes the opinion of the crowd by saying he is married to the daughter of Alexander Manette. In Chapter 7 “A knock at the door” Charles is denounced by the Defarges and someone else who is not allowed to be identified. At first I thought the unidentified man was Sydney Carton but after reading Chapter eight, I thought that there would be no way it was Carton. In the past few chapters Dickens has used the presence of mysterious people, in my
opinion to make the reader see the less obvious connections between the other characters. ie. Sydney Carton is not allowed to be seen by Dr. Manette, but why? Dickens wants the readers to focus on other parts of the story, then he identifies the characters.

Mar. 20 - Journal Entry Number nine

Dickens has generously woven the lives of all of the characters together. In this section we find out why Mme. Defare is so eager to take revenge on Charles Darnay (Evremonde) and anyone in his family. We also realize that Mr. Defare did find something in the tower chimney, which Dickens did not tell us, when he was storming the Bastille. Dickens surprised me when he wrote that Dr. Manette was the third unknown denouncer. I do not understand how that worked because throughout the novel I had thought that that person had to go to the court, but Dickens makes it obvious that Dr. Manette did not do that. Sydney Carton, again in this section finds a way to help save the day. One thing I do not understand is why he is so insistent on Dr. Manette doing everything he can. I think that maybe he wants to prove himself to everyone for one last time. He wants to make sure that Lucie knows that her father could not save Charles but he (Carton) was able to. This last act of courage and strength would show
Lucie that he had kept his promise to her. In a way I think Carton has this idea prepared for a long time because of his comment to Lucie back in Book 2, Chapter 13.

Mar. 21 - Journal Entry Number ten

Dickens is a brilliant story teller. Throughout the novel there were times when I was confused and frustrated but by the last line by Carton the whole story came together. Dickens tells an amazing story while also involving history and some very important lessons. i.e. "love, always so much stronger than hate" pg. 345. The characters that Dickens created were believable and essential to the plot of the story. Dr. Manette was the connecting point of the story. His character helped me make sense of the whole story. I think Carton's character was the most incredible. At the beginning of the novel I did not realize that his character would play such an important role in the book. He seemed to be insensitive and not always there, when in actuality he always knew what was going on and how to fix all of the problems. Carton's personality and attitude toward life gave me the thought that something must have brought on his self-worthlessness. When reading about the death of his parents at an early age I recognized
that his being alone as a child was probably the reason. His love and devotion towards Lucie show that he was able to love someone and maybe even himself but I guess he felt no need for it since no one else would love him.
A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens has been difficult to read but has been quite interesting. Dickens has a very different style than most writers. In the story he says ‘there were a king with a large jaw and a queen with a plain face on the throne of England’ and then uses those exact words when describing the throne of France changing only the word plain to fair. I like this repetetiveness in his work; it makes the story sound like poetry and I can imagine hearing a story-teller say it. I think this repetetiveness adds to the work by making it sound more flowing. His choice of words captured my attention and really drew me in to the novel. The first sentence of the story “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” especially caught my attention. I liked the way the words kept contradicting themselves, it made the novel sound more interesting and made me wonder what it would say next. Most books don’t usually get my attention at the beginning. I find I have to be patient and wait for something interesting to happen but this novel had no problem getting my attention. Although it was interesting at the beginning, it lost my interest after page two. I think he used too much description and made every sentence so complex that it was barely understandable.
Overall, I found the novel quite enjoyable so far.

Journal Entry #2 - pg. 35-70

In these pages of *A Tale of Two Cities*, I was introduced to a few characters.

The old shoemaker seemed to be strange, withdrawn and in another world. He seemed old and quiet. His voice was worn out and weak and I felt melancholy when I imagined him speak. He seemed to be in another world; he took a long time to answer questions and asked many times for the question to be repeated. The way the room was dark also made me think he was strange. But then I found out why he acted in such a weird way. When he said his name was One Hundred and Five, North Tower, I realized that this was a place in prison and I felt sorry for the poor old man. I thought about it more and concluded that the name stuck in his head after being called that for many years. This made me wonder how long he had been imprisoned.

The part where he meets his daughter, and is filled with joy made me feel happy for them. Although I didn’t even know the characters, I was still deeply touched when I saw a poor old man re-united with his daughter. The novel is becoming quite interesting.
Journal Entry #3 - pg. 71-105

In these pages, more characters are introduced and we learn more about previous characters in the novel.

I learned that Jerry was a messenger that Mr. Lory was sending to deliver messages. Jerry doesn’t seem to be a very strong person. He just goes along with Mr. Lorry most of the time. He is not the kind of character I would call admirable.

Charles Darny, a prisoner that was acquitted is more likeable. I think that he is innocent and should not have been imprisoned. I think this because of what Lucie Manette said about him. She talked about this man as being a good caring person and called him a gentleman. This man went out of his way just to help her father. I was happy for Charles Darney when I found out he was acquitted because this man appeared to be a good-hearted human being and should not be killed. Miss Pross was also introduced. I find her a very interesting character. She says whatever she wants and her inhibitions don’t seem to be holding her back. She exaggerates a lot but this makes her more amusing. She seems to be good-hearted and generous.

This is what I have learned about these characters in these pages.
Journal Entry #4 - pg. 106-135

I learned a lot in these pages of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. I was able to see the cruelness of the rich towards the poor.

When Monseigneur ran over the child with his carriage, I was filled with hatred towards Monseigneur. It was painful to see that a poor child had been killed because a careless citizen of high-class was not careful. What intensified this horrible image was the father of the child screaming in agony that his child had died. I was filled with resentment towards the rich who had the right to run over and kill people that were of lower-class. It just appalled me too see that just because you were wealthy, this gave you more rights, including the rights to take lives. This was simply not what I'd call just.

Monseigneur didn't even have to stop when he hit the boy, he could have kept going if he pleased. Monseigneur then lectured the poor people and even added that his horse might be injured, what about the poor human boy? I hate the way he treats them, as if they were rats. They are just as much human as him and are entitled to life just as much as he is. This class system to me is crazy.

I was finally satisfied when a coin was thrown at Monseigneur. I felt he deserved it, and more for he had just gotten away with killing
March 6/98 - Journal Entry #5 (pgs. 135-172)

In these pages of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities*, I learned a lot about several characters.

Sydney Carton's character touched me. He seemed to be so sad and depressed yet he so passionately expressed his feelings for Lucy, that this was touching. I felt sorry for poor Sydney because he truly loved Lucy but she didn't love him back. I really sympathized for the poor soul and after reading the scene where he confesses his love for Lucy, I decided that this was the character I liked most and wanted to succeed but I have a feeling he will not go very far because he thinks of himself as undeserving and when you think of yourself that way, you will not go too far.

Another character we learn about is Mme. Defarge. I don't identify with her tough, bossy character but I find her interesting. I like the way she can manipulate her husband and the fact that she is a strong woman. She is not afraid to stare directly into the Marquis' eyes when everyone else is looking away or down. I find Madame's knitted register unusual but eye catching. Whenever I hear that she is knitting, I wonder who she is
registering.

This is what I have learned about these characters in these pages.

March 8/98 Journal Entry #6 (pgs. 172-204)

In these pages, I learned more about certain characters and their pasts.

One of these characters is Dr. Manette. I am becoming very suspicious of Charles Darnay. I don't know what it is, but I think he must have something to do with Dr. Manette's misery because I noticed that whenever the Dr. sees or speaks to Darnay, he becomes pale and looks scared. This is really adding to the suspense and I'm dying to know why Dr. Manette is so scared of Charles Darnay. I found it very strange when Mr. Manette went back to his shoemaking and lost his identity. I guessed it had something to do with Lucy's departure or Charles Darnay.

I was very disappointed when I found Lucie married Darnay. I wanted her to marry Carton, who had so much character and was charming in a strange way.

I thought Dickens' portrayal of the storming of the Bastille was well written because of all the similes and the description but I also thought it
was gruesome. How he made Defarge’s wife cut off the governor’s head. I realize he did this for the purpose of showing the anger and revenge of the poor.

That is what I learned in these pages.

March 10/98 Journal Entry #7 (pgs. 204-240)

In this part of the novel, the suspense is building up and more and more incidents are occurring.

I was disgusted by the whole scene where the peasants kill Foulon. The description was so detailed that I have an image of the grisly scene. I read through this part in haste because I didn’t want to know and picture the horrible things the peasants were doing to a man. It’s strange because earlier on in the novel, the poor peasants were the ones I felt bad for but as strange as it is, I have changed sides, I feel sorry for the aristocrats who are all being guillotined. I just feel bad for them because some of these aristocrats are basically good people who are innocent and haven’t done anything wrong, but they are still mercilessly executed. It is disturbing to think that the peasants have absolutely no compassion for their fellow human beings and get pleasure from killing them. I
understand that they have gone through a lot and have suffered immensely but they should still have mercy.

When Charles Darnay is taken to prison, I noticed Defarge to be very cool. Darnay asked for “a little help” and Defarge refused. It was like he wasn’t human anymore. He seemed evil. He wouldn’t even give a message to Mr. Lorry.

This is what has been happening in the novel.

March 11/98 Journal Entry #8 (pgs. 241-280)

In this section of the novel, many of the characters that we didn’t see for a long time return. The characters develop greatly.

Dr. Mannette, who I thought was wise but weak because of his eighteen-year imprisonment showed he was the contrary. Coming back to France to save Charles, he proved that he was strong by being able to stand in front of all the seemingly evil peasants and tell them that Charles should not be in prison. He gets Charles out of prison but his freedom only lasts a few hours.

The Defarges seem to me to be cold-hearted and uncompassionate. It hurts me to see poor Lucy who was once so happy and light, turning depressed and constantly weeping. Mme. Defarge only added to Lucy’s
distress. I hate her, she scares me. The way she gives Lucy a cold look and falls over her like a shadow. She is creepy and reminds me of death.

I am happy to see Sydney Carton back in the story, his character makes things interesting. He seems very witty and smart and wants to help. I like the fact that he is so generous and asks for nothing in return.

These are some of the characters who have developed in the story.

March 14/98 Journal Entry #9 (pgs. 280-315)

While reading this part of the novel, I felt my heart beat speed up. This part of the novel was so emotional and sensitive that I could not help crying.

My heart went out to poor Dr. Manette. He tried so hard to save Charles, even after he knew of his cursed identity that lead to his imprisonment. Now I understand why he looked pale and scared when he saw Darnay, because he knew that his relatives were the ones that were cruel to the peasants and imprisoned him. Dr. Manette did everything he could to save Charles but what he wrote can not be taken back and has lead Charles to doom.

The scene where Lucy and Charles had their parting embrace was very touching. What touched me was Lucy’s unselfishness and courage
that she showed when she spoke to Charles for the last time and even put on a smile just so he wouldn’t feel too bad. I also admired Charles. He forgave the man (Dr. Manette) who’s letter led to his final death sentence. Both Lucy and Charles were very brave through this tragic turn of events. Sydney Carton’s behaviour was very sensitive and sweet towards Lucie and little Lucie.

This is what has been happening in the novel so far.

March 16/98 Journal Entry #10 (pgs. 315-352)

This end part of the *A Tale of Two Cities* was strangely not the sadest. After finishing it, I felt calm and at peace. Sydney Carton and the young seamstress he had talked to, consoled each other to such an extent, that they confronted their death with ease and had no fears. Their holding hands and their last kiss was so sensitive and touching that it brought tears to my eyes.

I was very happy when Miss Pross stood up to the witch Mme. Defarge. I was actually happy when she died. She didn’t deserve to live, in my opinion. She sentenced and killed so many innocent people that I had no sympathy for her. When Mme. Defarge and Miss Pross were fighting, I felt it was the struggle of hate and love or evil and good. Mme Defarge was the
evil who wanted to get evidence so she could kill Lucy and her family, and Miss Pross was the good protecting her Ladybird. It was satisfying to see the good beat the evil.

Sydney Carton’s last words, “It was a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known” were so profound that they shed tears to my eyes.

Overall, A Tale of Two Cities has been very much enjoyed.
Feb. 17/98 - First Impression of *A Tale of Two Cities*

My first impression of the novel *A Tale of Two Cities* is not a favourable one at all. After reading the first 45 pages I can honestly say that I dislike the book. I think the main reason I do not like the book is because I do not understand it. I am one of those people who find it important to understand something in order to like it. I think that having the proper insight will lead to a better insight, and, more often, an enjoyment or a proper liking.

One of the reasons I do not understand the book is because it jumps quickly from event to event with no proper transitions. For instance, one minute Dickens is talking about Tellson’s Bank, and then the next thing we know he is talking about a person who had been buried alive and then he’s moved on again. None of the events seem to go together and I really do not understand their significance. I am assuming that Dickens has his reasons for jumping about so quickly, perhaps these events play an important role later on down the line. However, I still do not understand them. I do not mind learning a lot of new things at once in a novel but I prefer them to have a bit more development. As these are not really fully developed, I wonder about their importance. I think if they were really that important they would be properly developed (the characters would have names and
personalities, the whole significance would be explained, etc.). The proper explanation would clear up the confusing matters and make the story more understandable, and more enjoyable.

Another thing that confused me was Dickens' choice of language. Since he wrote in the mid 1800s and we are living in the 1990s our speech patterns are quite different. I also felt he went overboard on the descriptive passages, sometimes giving 4 or 5 adjectives at a time. I only enjoy descriptive passages if they are truly describing something important, so that I can really feel it. Here the descriptive passages bored me. I felt they were too numerous and only used to cover up how little a plot there was. Chapter 1 was nothing more than description. Because of these 2 reasons I really did not enjoy the book. I hope as I read on my viewpoint will change so I can get the most out of reading.

Feb. 24 - Journal Entry #2 - Treason

The second book of A Tale of Two Cities opens with a trial in which a man is being accused of treason. The punishment is execution. Since the book is set in the mid 1700s where this sort of activity is common, I was not very surprised. However, I have never quite understood the whole point of being tried for treason. What exactly is treason supposed to be?
From my understanding, treason is an act of disloyalty against one's country. Yet many things can be considered treason, anything from spying to simple badmouthing. I really don’t like the lack of freedom people have in this regard. I understand that spying is harmful for everyone in the country but I think that freedom of speech is necessary. Everyone living in the country has rights and should not have to worry that any negative actions will be considered “treason” and result with their death. This would only lead to many people scared of standing up for their own beliefs or even having a belief. I do not blame Dickens as he only wrote about what actually happened. I just truly dislike the whole event.

In the book the accused, Charles Darnay, was lucky enough to get a trial and a proper lawyer, Mr. Stryver. I was happy to see that he was at least given proper human treatment with the trial and was not just presumed guilty, which has happened in many instances. I also know about cases in which the witnesses skewer their testimony in order to falsely convict the accused. Once again, Mr. Darnay was lucky, as two of the witnesses, Mr. Lorry and Ms. Manette, were unable to implicate him. He ended up acquitted which made me very happy as I dislike the whole notion of treason to begin with and also because this proved the importance of a justice system at times like this. I enjoyed reading the trial scene if not
only for entertainment but to reinforce some of my own beliefs.

March 2/98 Journal Entry #3 - Sydney Carton

To me, Sydney Carton represents an everyman, one that we all know and can relate to. Carton is a legal genius, yet he can not accomplish very much because of his drinking problem. Instead, his partner Stryver manages to take all the credit for everything that has happened even though Carton truly is the brains behind the operation.

I found that I could very much sympathize with Carton. Alcoholism is as prevalent today as it was during the time of the book (if not more so). Many, otherwise nice, ordinary folks are alcoholics. My making Carton one, Dickens has made him seem more human, rather than the often perfect characters found in novels or the very stereotypical villains, all found when there is only black and white but no grey. Carton is a bit of both, a person that I could actually meet on the street, a person who’s character can withstand time. He is as believable now as he was 200 years ago.

Carton strikes a chord with me because of his great brain but failure to accomplish much because of his drinking problem. Once again, I think of many people I know who have so much talent and so much promise but one
problem is constantly holding him back. I feel sorry for Carton because I know there is so much he would be able to do, but until he quits drinking he never will make it. I also feel bad that all the promise of what could happen is not enough of an incentive to encourage him to quit drinking.

One more way in which Carton seems human is in the fact that all his glory is stolen by Stryver. There is nothing more frustrating than doing all the work only to gain none of the credit. This has happened to me (as it has happened to most people) so I can really feel for Carton when it happens to him. As of now Carton is my favourite character in the book because he has the most human qualities and seems like a real person.

March 4/98 Journal Entry #4 - Stryver

Every book has one character in which I always end up hating. In A Tale of Two Cities that character is Mr. Stryver. Perhaps hate is a very strong word, but everything Stryver does causes me to at least dislike him. The main reason I dislike Stryver is because he is so manipulative. I don't like the way that he manages to control Sydney Carton. I encounter people like him all too often in my life and it always infuriates me that 1) those people always think that they are the oh-so powerful ones that can
get away with twisting everything around and 2) the people that are being manipulated are so oblivious that they allow these actions to happen. Stryver goes through life as he pleases and gets away with whatever he does. I truly don't like it.

Stryver’s biggest manipulation is of Sydney Carton. Sydney Carton is the brains behind their “legal team” but Stryver manages to take all the credit. He gets away with it because of Sydney’s drinking problem, which makes it too hard for him to actually object. It is my belief that Stryver’s brains coexist at two levels. On one hand, he is quite stupid, he is unable to do any of the work himself and must resort to getting his credit from another source. Yet, on the other hand, Stryver is smarter than anyone (myself included) would realize. He is brilliantly able to twist things around for his benefit. Although it is easier to say he is just some dummy who I wish would go away, he really is not. No dummy would be able to mastermind his operation. That is probably what really bothers me the most about Stryver, he really isn’t dumb. He’s lucky but clever. Even so, I don’t like many of his actions, so I guess I don’t really like him either.

March 6/98 - Journal Entry #5 - The Love for Lucie Manette

Lucie Manette is in a position, either fortunate or unfortunate, of
having 3 different men in love with her, or so they claim. These men are Sydney Carton, Charles Darnay and Stryver. Each man has their own different way of loving her, and I, at times, doubt the sincerity of them.

In my opinion, the best match for Lucie is Charles Darnay. He is a kind man who has been a friend of the family for many years. I think that Charles truly does love Lucie and it is evident in the way that he treats her, as he does so with kindness and respect. He does not let his infatuation take over and have him forget about her personality and the real reason that he likes her. Charles Darnay is the kind of man that anyone would want to have love them, myself included, because he speaks from the heart and his love is true.

Sydney Carton is also in love with Lucie but I find his love kind of strange. He is so devoted to her that it seems he would do ANYTHING for her. I’m not entirely sure whether he actually loves Lucie for who she is, or for the idea of loving someone. Although he is a nice enough man, I don’t think he is the kind of person I would want in love with me, I find his intensity quite scary, I think he goes too overboard. I hoped that Sydney does find happiness, I just don’t think it should be with Lucie.

The final member of this love saga is Stryver. As I have mentioned before, I dislike the man and do not want to see him happy. I also really
don’t think he loves Lucie at all. I think his idea of a marriage proposal was simply to one up the other so he could show them just how wonderful and powerful he was. I also think he sees Lucie more as a prize than a person. That is definitely not love. Overall, I hope things work out for Lucie and Charles. I think they have found true love.

March 21/98 - Journal Entry #6 - Lucie and Her Father

A relationship like the one Lucie and Dr. Manette have is rare. That is why I really loved reading about the two of them and kept rooting for them throughout the book. It was such a refreshing change from constantly reading about people who hated their parents. The fact that Lucie and Dr. Manette were separated for so many years was very sad. I can only imagine how many great times they could have shared had they that opportunity.

Dr. Manette truly touches me, I could see that his love is so great that he would do anything for his daughter. This reminds me quite a bit of my father, the two of us are exceptionally close and I know that he would also do just about anything for me. I’m sure a lot of the reason I liked this aspect of the book was because it was realistic and I could relate to it.
I also liked Lucie’s part in the relationship. I could see that she did not take her father’s love for granted, rather she appreciated all he did. I also could tell that she had as much love for her father as he had for her and would also attempt to do what she could to make him happy.

At first I was slightly annoyed by Dr. Manette’s overprotection in terms of men. However I did realize it was out of love and in the end he would step out of the way so Lucie could be happy. His whole behaviour reminded me of my father, or any father for that manner. While I did not find all of the book easy to relate to, I did enjoy this part. Also, considering all the trauma Dr. Manette went through, I know he is very deserving of Lucie. And so is she of him.

March 21/98 - Journal Entry #7 - Miss Pross

Miss Pross is a woman with many qualities that can be considered both good and bad. Mostly I find her to be a nice, sweet woman with a kind heart who attempts no harm. However, without meaning to, she sometimes takes her niceness too far. I do think that it is possible to be too nice and Miss Pross is an example of this.

Miss Pross’s love of Lucie is very admirable, she genuinely cares
about her, however I find that she seems to almost smother her. When she makes the comments about Lucie’s many gentleman, it seems like she is checking each of them over, as if she has the final say over Lucie’s love life. It strikes me that she would try to breakup what she would perceive as a “bad” match, for Lucie’s “happiness”, with the excuse that she is doing it all because she loves her. However, if you really love someone you will allow them to choose their own path to happiness. I definitely think Miss Pross was a great comfort to Lucie growing up, especially when she was “orphaned”. I just wish that she would not necessarily take her love to an extreme.

Another admirable quality of Miss Pross is her loyalty. However, once again, I think it is possible to be too loyal. It is nice that Miss Pross is so loyal to her brother Solomon, however she should acknowledge that he does have character flaws and should not keep her memories of him as a perfect person. Most people find it very hard to accept the truth about things they don’t want to know about and Miss Pross is one of them.

I can’t help liking a woman like her, people with pure motives and truly good hearts are hard to come by. I also feel sorry for her in a way, many severly nice people, those who really go overboard, suffer from low self esteem and see this as their way to be liked. I’m not really sure
about Miss Pross, I just like her regardless.

March 22/98 - Journal Entry #8 - Madame Defarge and Her Knitting

Madame Defarge spends the majority of the novel knitting, she seems oblivious to everything going on. In fact, the opposite is true. I have never much liked people like the Madame Defarge, they just stand around, always there yet not really noticed because they are not perceived to be any great threat. I have always been suspicious of these people, Madame Defarge included. They just stand there absorbing information that you don’t even realize you’re giving them. Without your knowledge they have a goldmine of information about you which they can use against you any way they wish.

When Madame Defarge stands and knits she, is ignored, in truth she is doing more in knitting, she is storing a memory of every person she sees, in an attempt to use them against her. As the book progresses I was able to see Madame Defarge’s true personality develop. At first I had simply pegged her as someone to watch out for, even if I did not know why. Later on as her true vengeance showed I saw Madame Defarge for the truly nasty person she was. I formed my own conclusions about the knitting besides the remembering. I think it was also used to cover up the true
Madame Defarge, to make her just seem like a sweet innocent woman taking everything in. Although I have always wondered about the people who just stand there and seem to do nothing I am now very suspicious. I'm sure none of my acquaintances are like Madame Defarge but now my eyes are open. It's not being untrusting; just careful.

March 22/98 - Journal Entry #9 - Sydney Carton's Death

I had always found Sydney Carton to be an interesting character, one of my favourites, so it came to no surprise that the ending of *A Tale of Two Cities* would have a plot twist featuring him. I had already known about his great love for Lucie Manette and his willingness to do anything for her, however the fact that Carton died in place of Charles Darnay was a shock to me, mainly because it seemed inconceivable. I can not imagine dying for someone else, and if it was for the sake of true love, such as Romeo and Juliet, I would at least make sure it was requited love. Lucie did care about Sydney but she was not in love with him, his death would not change things. However, Sydney had promised he would do anything to protect Lucie and her family. That is a very humble and noble thing to do (I suppose I would be flattered if someone did that for me) but it leaves
me with two opinions on Sydney.

One such opinion is simply he is unselfish. He deeply cares about others and wants to save them. His act saved Charles from an undeserving death as well as his whole family. Throughout the book it is evident that Sydney is a kind person, he puts up with Stryver’s abuse and tries to help others. Saving Charles from death seems to be the right thing, even if he had to die instead. While I immensely respect Sydney I don’t think it was the most necessary thing to do.

Which leads me to my other opinion, Sydney’s patheticness. Without taking the moral high road I can still say it is silly to die for someone you love who doesn’t love you back; it is pretty silly to do anything for them. It also shows that the state of Sydney’s life (alcoholism, being used by Stryver) was so bad he didn’t feel he would miss anything. Although I was happy Charles was saved, I wish that Sydney, who I liked, didn’t have to die for it.

March 22/98 - Journal Entry #10 - Two Wrongs Don’t Make A Right

One of the main plots in the story was the imprisonment and “death”
of Charles Darnay, from an aristocratic family, for the sins his family had committed. In the effort by the revolutionists to equalize society they went as far as to punish all those that were “upperclass” to make up for years of unfairness. Although I firmly believe all people should be treated equally I think that at times things went too far. Just like the poor cannot help being born that way, the rich do not choose to be born into their families either. Also, not all of the rich people treated the poor badly, Charles Darnay himself did not and even tried to hide his true identity. The fact that he was punished was horrible.

I was upset because he had not done a single thing wrong, his uncle and others may have but it was certainly unfair for him to suffer because of others’ actions. Also, what good would it have done? To punish Darnay for atrocities already done and over with will not change things or reverse damage. Nothing will be accomplished that way. Perhaps the whole reason I disliked the French Revolution was because its principals do not make sense. Every child is taught that two wrongs don’t make a right, that is the lesson I have grown up with. Why do the rules change when it comes to war? Did anyone feel better imprisoning Charles? Did anything change? At the risk of being a hypocrit, I will say that maybe if he himself had done the atrocities things could be different, but since he was
not involved I was upset with the events and kept hoping for his release. Perhaps adults should remember the lessons they’re taught as children, maybe this wouldn’t have been so bad.
In the year One thousand seven hundred seventy-five, Miss Manchette was absolutely terrified by Mister Lorry’s description of Monsieur Manchette as being “recalled to life” and in the year of common era One thousand nine hundred ninety-eight, I, as a reader, cannot resist laughing at Miss Manchette’s frailty. For if I were in such a situation, I would look ahead unemotionally, whereas she looked up and was shocked, looked forward and became insensible, and looked down with a pale face. Quite frankly speaking, if I heard news about a “dead” father that I never saw, I would show less emotion than a lottery winner, because I cannot relate to an unknown parent. There is no emotional attachment between a child and a father, if the child was never aware of the parent. I would never react so dramatically in the style of Miss Manchette had I been in place of her.

Furthermore, as Miss Manchette said, “I’ll be seeing a ghost,” her father was not in his true self. The man has no memory of his past life (This is an inference, I’ll have to read further), no recollections of fatherhood, and does not recall his real name. In summary M. Manchette isn’t her father. He may be the biological parent, but he is not her father anymore.
Entry #2 -

The first five chapters of Book Two revolve around the trial for Darnay, who was accused of treason, based on his frequent travelling between Britain and France. After reading through the court process, and hearing about the brutal, no, barbaric, punishments in store for the guilty, I started to think about their legal system. Is it “better?”.

No doubt, our current legal system has evolved since the year One thousand seven hundred and seventy-five, but has it gotten any better after 200 years? In the old days the accused was quite helpless. Darnay had not a lawyer to defend him. Today, lawyers are used to bend the truth and make wrong seem right. Back then, the guilty was excused on the spot; while today’s criminals on the death roll are allowed to appeal indefinitely, costing the court more money than it would to keep him in prison. In effect, we see more crimes of every sort in 1998 than 1978. Perhaps our current legal system does not pose a strong deterrent to crime (not when a murderer can go on parole after three months in prison). It’s time we began to emphasize the rights of the victim rather than that of the criminal.
Entry #3 -

As I kept on reading *A Tale of Two Cities*, written by Charles Dickens in the year of the Common Era one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine (1859, for those who prefer concise and modern language), Miss Pross emerged as a unique and formidable character. As the "chief nurse" of the Manette household, her protective nature often appeared hostile, as seen with her first meeting with Lorry. To her credit, however, she does her job well as a housekeeper.

Although the books were written in different times by different authors, Miss Pross behaves quite like Ftatateeta of *Caesar* and "Cleopatra". Their characters' similarities compells me to do a comparison.

The two caretakers are both fiercely protective of their "children". Although the magnitude differs due to the setting. They both appear hostile to outsiders. Compare Miss Pross's meeting with Lorry and Ftatateeta's actions toward the Roman guards, and their hostility shows through very clearly.

Pross, however, lowers her defenses once one gets to know her a bit. Lorry's second encounter with her at the Manette residence was a lot friendlier. Her character fits well with her occupation as a housekeeper
and caretaker.

Entry #4

After reading Chapter 7 and seeing the sharply contrasting lives of the rich and poor, it became clearer that France indeed was in need of a revolution. Not that affluence is "wrong", but when wealth is mixed with power and corruption, as in the Monseigneur’s case, the rich tend to live luxuriously while standing on the backs of the poor. The root of all this evil, many believe, originates from the rigid caste system in place at that time. This class system not only divided wealth unevenly, it also gives the upperclass more power. To an aristocrat like the Monseigneur, the peasants were inferior beings, and were treated by him as such. Seeing from the incident at the fountain in Paris, where he showed no remorse for running over a baby with his carriage, the Monsieur the Marquis considered the peasants to be inferior. Even though today we consider everyone as equal, and no one is above the law, the old caste system kept the Monseigneur unpunished. Such is the folly of the old French social structure. It oppressed the peasants, keeping them poor by heavy taxes, all of which went to feed the upper class, whom by birth enjoyed the luxury without work. Most of all, however, the system gave aristocrats
power, and left crimes unpunished, as they were "above the law". The French caste system must go down.

Entries#5 & 6

Aha! Monsieur Charles Darnay will be marrying her! Ever since I received the Character Sketch Worksheet, where Miss Manette was named Lucie Manette-Darnay, I suspected this. At first, it was questionable that an acquitted criminal would wed such a fair, innocent lady. Now that his true identity as the nephew of Monsieur the Marquis has been revealed, the doubts are gone. On second thought, this marriage has been forshadowed ever since the murder trial, where Lucie Manette emotionally witnessed for Charles in defense. "His (Charles') hurried right hand parcelled out the herbs before him...and his efforts to control and steady his breathing shook the lips from which the color rushed to his heart." In Dickens' words, "To be confronted with such pity, such earnest youth and beauty, was far more trying." The compassion Lucie showed toward Charles was a strong indication of her feelings.

From the first time they met on a ship, Charles has been a gentleman. Before he revealed his feelings to Lucie, he talked, with the utmost in respect, care, and sensibility, to Doctor Manette, Lucie's father.
This shows Charles is a modest, non-arrogant character, unlike Stryver. As such, Charles will most likely marry Lucie, for he truly loves her. His character will win her.

Entry #7 -

From Charles Dickens’ words, readers gain an impartial picture of the French Revolution. In this time of chaos, anarchy, and lawlessness, the line between right and wrong, good and evil, is blurred. Surely, the aristocracy, such as the now-dead Monsieur the Marquis, treated peasants as “dogs”, and taxed them to poverty. However, is it right and justified for the lower-caste to kill him in return? In this Monseigneur’s case, probably; but what about the other, less extreme ones of his class? Take Monsieur Gabelle for example, he “remitted the impost they had ceased to pay: collected no rent; had recoursed to no process...” And yet, he would be executed on the basis of “acting against them [the people] for an emigrant” (more on that later). Clearly, Gabelle did everything in his power to ease the burden on the peasants, but his fate would be no better. “The eye could not detect one creature in the group free from the smear of blood,” Dickens described the revolutionaries. The “people” would murder every man of the upper class, without discrimination. Is this what we mean by Liberty, Equity, and Fraternity?
Entry #8-

"Doctor Manette then!" He had been a very prominent character since the beginning of story, and up until now, his true feelings were hidden.

Before he met her daughter, he used shoemaking as a means of escape (well, according to Lorry), to take his mind off the suffering. He "lightened up" after Lucie rejoined with him, yet the effect was quite short-lived, and he resorted back to shoemaking after Lucie left to wed Darnay. The second incident foreshadowed that he would re-experience a part of his life again in some way, and it did. The Doctor, in his sixties, is now a respected figure among the revolutionaries. Cleared, energetic, he has become a new man. As though all the energy suppressed in him has been building up to this point. The revolution clearly has brought out the best in him.

The newfound strength was essential in helping Lucie coping with the capture of Darnay. Before the revolution, Lucie was the source of his strength. Now, however, the positions have reversed. The Doctor became a new man, but Lucie Darnay grew weaker. The Doctor wanted to repay her for being recalled to life, he did.
Entry #9 -

In continuation of the topic of the seventh entry, the people of the revolution have lost sight of its true purpose. Perhaps a revolution will be more drastic than a reform, but seldom has a change of government been accomplished by as much bloodshed. The revolting peasants no longer represent liberty and equality, only the last word on the slogan: death. The people have become bloodthirsty and are on a killing frenzy. "...tears were shed as freely as blood at another time." The riotors embraced fellow-revolutionaries just as easily as they executed the "suspects". The verdict changes quickly as well, as in the case with Charles Darnay, who was arrested, what? The day after he was judged innocent? One moment, tears of sympathy fell for him; the next minute, the crowd riots to imprison the same man. In those days, a person is judged and treated not by who he is but by the label that the public have inconsistently affixed on his head.

The people of the revolution are just mindless followers of the tide, without thinking. Perhaps the people have been oppressed for too long, that they no longer are moved by the suffering. Still, the fierceness of massacres is simply unexpected.
Entry #10 -

A good story never leave loose ends untied. Charles Dickens, amazingly, brought all the various characters together at the end, by having them all join in Paris. The author did an outstanding job of tying the huge and diverse cast to the story. Miss Pross finally found her brother Solomon, who first came into Defarge’s bar as Barsad. Who would have thought that Sydney Carton would be so useful? What’s more unbelievable, Jerry Cruncher’s second profession as a grave-digger now reveals that Roger Cly did not die; his coffin filled with rocks. Defarge, a bartender in Saint Antoine, happens to be a high-ranking member of the revolution. Although his and his wife’s involvement in the frenzy was hinted in the beginning, it was unimaginable back in chapter five that their role would be so important. All this suggests Dickens’ extraordinary ability to merge all the untrackably numerous subplots into the main story. This is truly a tale of two cities, “in a Paris bursting with revolutionary frenzy, and a London alive with anxious anticipation.” An enjoyable work of literature that would entertain readers in Nineteen ninety-eight and beyond.
Participant #27

Feb 17 - Journal Entry #1

This entry is about Chapters one through four, and what I thought of them. I thought that the first sixteen pages were pretty much pointless. Aside from the fact that the language, style and flow of writing were difficult to follow, these sixteen pages were just boring. The language used some words that I did not at first remember or understand, like "blunderbuss". (I assumed, from reading on, that a blunderbuss is a kind of gun). Another word that gave me a bit of trouble was the "Dover mail". When I first read it I thought, "O.K., this part must be about mail", as in letters. As I read on, I found it had nothing to do with mail, but it was simply a carriage with passengers. The relative strangeness of the language can be explained by the fact that this book was written in 1859. The style and flow of the writing gave me difficulty because they were hard to follow. At times, it took a while to figure out who was talking, and to whom. For example, I, as yet, do not know who Jerry is. I thought maybe Jerry could have been Mr. Jarvis Lorry, because Jerry could be short for Jarvis. However, I realized that Jerry could not be Lorry when Lorry asked, "...Is it Jerry?" I now think Jerry was probably the messenger, but I may be wrong as the messenger, even when he was alone with his horse,
was talking to Jerry. He may have been referring to himself by his own name, but I do not know. I found chapters one through four to be unlike anything I have ever read, because the language, flow and style of writing were difficult to follow.

These chapters were also boring. They just seemed to drag on and on. Dickens described and described, ad nauseum. I thought he was way too descriptive, and used too many words and his descriptions never really led to anything, either. It was boring because it seemed pointless to describe things like Lorry’s wig and how Lorry was sitting. However, the story picked up and got more interesting with the introduction of Miss Manette but that will be discussed in the next entry. I thought that the first four chapters on average (except for the last eight pages of chapter four, when Miss Manette enters) were very, very boring.

Feb. 26 - Journal Entry #2

This entry will be about the first book, from the beginning of chapter five to the end of the book. As I said in the first entry, the story picked up and got more interesting with the introduction of Miss Manette. However, before the introduction of Miss Manette in Chapter five, the story is not only interesting, but seems to be building to something. The
whole sequence about the broken wine cask was quite appealing. It created a fascinating mental image of what was going on at the time, like the people running around, trying to divert the course of the wine, people trying desperately to soak up or pick up some wine to sip, and so on. Then, the man who wrote “BLOOD” on the wall who led to the introduction of Monsieur Defarge. First of all, I did not find the “BLOOD” joke funny in the least. Perhaps this is because I do not understand it. I can see a connection between blood and wine, but the joke still is not funny. Anyway, the joke did help introduce Monsieur Defarge. I thought it was very good writing to give this whole scene with the wine and Defarge, and then to introduce Monsieur Manette.

I have to say, however, that it was not at all as expected. I expected Manette to be solemn, but solemn in the way that a condemned man, who knows he is unsafe is solemn. Manette was actually solemn, but solemn because he was confused. He did not know what he had been or who he was. When Mr. Lorry, Defarge and Miss Manette met Monsieur Manette, it was also very touching, in a somewhat disturbing way. It was touching in that Manette had been reduced to this sad, humble little man, who was not really aware of his surroundings. It was also touching in the way that Miss Manette behaved towards her father. It was disturbing in that
Manette was so unaware of his surroundings and thought his name was "One Hundred and five, North Tower". All in all, I thought that chapter five to the end of book one was a lot better than chapters one through four.

Journal Entry #3 - Mar. 2

This entry will be about the second book, from chapter one through chapter five. I said, in the first entry, that Dickens described too much, and that it was boring. I still think that Dickens overdescribes, but it has now become much more interesting. I like his choice of descriptive words, like "...a species of Condemned Hold...". Throughout these five chapters, the description captured my imagination and made me anxious to get to some dialogue in the writing. Dickens' vocabulary add to his descriptions and make them much more interesting and enjoyable.

The plot also seems to thicken and start to take on some definite direction in these five chapters. The whole Darnay trial especially the fact that Darnay and Carton look so alike, and then building on and developing Carton's character all seem to be helping the story take shape. However, I seem to have been misled. When Carton took Darnay out to dinner, I thought that Carton was trying to become friends with Darnay. Towards the middle of the meal, I changed my mind, and decided that
Carton merely wished to know about Darnay’s character. As it turned out I was somewhat correct; Carton was deciding whether or not he hated Darnay. I was misled because I thought that this would lead to Carton doing something not so nice to Darnay.

I liked “Chapter five”, because it revealed two interesting truths. The first one was that Stryver never really did much, and it was mostly Carton working for Stryver, behind the scenes. This is interesting because Stryver got all the credit, when Carton deserved it. The second interesting truth was that Carton was a sad little man. I actually felt sorry for him when he went home and cried himself to sleep. Here, again, Dickens’ descriptions were quite effective. I especially thought that, “...he threw himself down in his clothes on a neglected bed, and its pillow was not with wasted tears,” was quite pity-inspiring. At the end of chapter five, I thought that Carton was a pathetic man. All in all, I thought that the first five chapters of “Book Two” were very interesting.

Mar. 4 - Journal Entry #4

This entry will be about “Book Two”, from “Chapter six” to “chapter seven”. I did not understand the part at the beginning of “chapter 6”, about the “golden arm” pounding the gold. I understand that perhaps there
was a goldsmith in the building at the back, but "...a golden arm starting out of the wall of the front hall," does not make sense, or even seem to be relevant to the story, to me.

I was intrigued by Miss Pross's character. At first I did not like her. She was very cold and blunt in her speaking. Then she started to be a little more warm and caring sounding, but it was only about Lucie that she was more warm and caring. She maintained a coldness in her manner, which made it seem like she though she was too important to talk to the likes of Mr. Lorry.

I think that the most interesting part of "chapter six" was the part where Darnay is talking about the discovery of the ashes of the paper and leather in the abandoned dungeon of the Tower. When speaking of this made Dr. Manette ill, it was obvious that this was very significant to him, perhaps something he did not wish to recall. I really wish Dickens would build more on the Tower part of the story.

I do not really understand the significance of the "Hundreds of People". There were none. Perhaps this was foreshadowing about certain unworthy people coming to see Lucie.

The whole bit about the chocolate, and Monseigneur taking it escaped me completely. I had no idea what to make of it. I did not know whether
the point was that Monseigneur liked or did not like chocolate. I also did not understand why such a big deal was made of it.

I do not really know what to say about the scene when Monseigneur kills the boy. It is very straightforward. This scene was obviously intended to convey that Monseigneur is a ruthless, heartless person, that none of the villagers liked. All in all, I enjoyed chapters six and seven.

Mar. 10 - Journal Entry #5

This entry will be about “Book Two”, chapters eight to ten. Obviously, the man that was hanging on to the bottom of Monseigneur’s carriage was the man whose son Monseigneur had killed. The man was obviously trying to follow Monseigneur home, to do something not nice to him. One of the clues to the fact that the man was the man whose son had been killed is, describing the man as being, “...tall as a spectrel”. Monseigneur is obviously being portrayed as the embodiment of insensitivity, uncaring heartless and so on. When the woman who had the petition about her husband’s grave, Monseigneur would not even hear her out. I felt sorry for her.

I saw little point in “Chapter Nine”, “The Gorgon’s Head”, aside from
killing Monseigner and showing that he is even cold, heartless and uncaring to his own family (not in that order). At the beginning of the chapter, Monseigneur is paranoid about some movement outside his house. This is foreshadowing his own death because he seems so nervous, there is movement outside and someone was hanging on to his carriage. Throughout the chapter, Monseigneur was acting cold, heartless and uncaring to his own nephew. I just realized that Monseigneur was supposed to symbolize the French government at the time, which was also cruel, oppressive, heartless and uncaring.

'Chapter Ten' was a very interesting one. It was interesting in that Darnay came to express his love for Lucie to Doctor Manette, and Darnay had no idea whether or not she felt the same way about him. I thought it was like some kid with a crush, and that he was doing the whole, "Do you think she likes me? Does she have a boyfriend?" thing. I also thought "Chapter Ten" was interesting because it obviously disturbed Doctor Manette that Darnay was in love with Lucie.

Mar.12 - Journal Entry #6

This entry will be about “Book Two”, chapters twelve through
sixteen, but it will be divided into two sections, one about the three men, the other about the knittings.

It seemed strange to me, but perhaps it was deliberate on Dickens' part, that all three men, Carton, Stryver and Jerry, were doing something that other people wanted them, and told them, indirectly or directly, not to do. Carton went to speak with Miss Manette, essentially to tell her what a miserable creature he was. They both ended up in tears, and Miss Manette told Carton that he should not be so miserable and that good things will come. Stryver was on his way to propose marriage to Miss Manette, and Mr. Lorry practically begged him not to. Jerry digs up bodies, his wife knew this and she did not want him to. She did not actually tell Jerry not to, but she would pray, and she called it "the dreadful business". All three men, also, either do not understand why they should not do what they are doing, or refuse to change what they are doing. Carton does not listen to Miss Manette when she tells him not to be so depressed. Stryver cannot see a reason why he should not ask Miss Manette to marry him. Jerry claims he is "a honest tradesman", and refuses to stop "the dreadful business". I thought Dickens' use of these parallels was very good.

Regarding the knitting, I think Madame Defarge is a very clever woman. At the end of "Knitting", her whole metaphor comparing the King
and Queen to birds and dolls was very effective in teaching the mender of roads a lesson.

I also thought that Madame Defarge was very intimidating. I felt sorry for Monsieur Defarge, because if I was him, I would have been intimidated by her. It is difficult to explain or describe, but there was just something about everything she said and answered, and her extremely cool manner that was very discomforting. All in all, I thought that Madame Defarge was a very interesting character.

Mar.16 - Journal Entry #7

This entry will be about “Book Two”, chapters seventeen through the end of the book.

I thought that it was very clever, on Dickens’ part to make all of the major events in these eight chapters interconnected. To start things off, Darnay and Lucie are married. This triggers a relapse of Dr. Manette’s old condition, that is, Doctor Manette thinking he was still the old shoemaker. Also, before Lucie and Darnay were married, Doctor Manette told Lucie of his days as a prisoner in the Tower. Then, the inhabitants of the village of Saint Antoine stormed the Bastille and captured and killed the governor.
During this, Defarge went to Doctor Manette's cell in the Tower, which was in the Bastille, to look for something. I thought that the part about the storming of the Bastille was exciting, entertaining, and interesting. It got my hopes too high, though. I was hoping that Defarge would find something of extreme importance in Doctor Manette's cell. When all they did was light a fire and leave, I was very disappointed.

Another connection between two events, and this one direct, is the burning of the Marquis' house and Darnay getting the letter from Gabelle. Some villagers burned the Marquis' house (the Marquis who had been killed). Gabelle rode all around the village trying to get people to help put out the fire. No one seemed to care. Then Darnay received a letter from Gabelle, asking for help, because Gabelle was in jail. Darnay, however, did care and left London for the village of Saint Antoine, in France.

These connections helped to clarify the plot. The connections are all between Paris and London. Doctor Manette was in London and the Bastille was in Paris. Gabelle was near Paris, in Saint Antoine, and Darnay was in London. I now understand why the book is called A Tale of Two Cities.
This entry is about “Book Three”, chapters one through six.

There are two aspects that I do not understand or agree with in this section. The first aspect is somewhat explained in the book, yet I do not understand the explanation or agree with it. This aspect is why Darnay was thrown into prison. It seemed to me that Darnay was imprisoned, not for no reason but for a very stupid one. All he was trying to do was get to Paris to help get Gabelle out of prison. On his way there, Darnay was stopped several times, and asked questions, about where he was from, where he was going, who he was and so on. On one of these stops, the questioner arrested him, on grounds that Darnay was an emigrant and a traitor to France. He obviously was not, and this is evident when he speaks at his trial before being released. What I do not understand, is why it was such a huge crime to leave France. This makes no sense to me. I guess that in those times, people’s rights were differently defined than they are now.

The second thing that I do not understand is how Doctor Manette became so powerful and influential. Manette was a prisoner in the North Tower of the Bastille for many years. Then, he was a withered old shoemaker, living above Defarge’s wineshop, who thought his name was “One Hundred and five, North Tower”. He lived in the apartment above
Defarge’s wine shop, making shoes, and pretty much existing without a purpose, for years. Nobody knew him. Then, miraculously, he was “recalled to life”, and resumed being an influential, highly esteemed Doctor. When he went to France to save Darnay, all the people revered him as though he was a god. I do not understand how, after so many years of being a confused old man, Manette has so much influence over French commonfolk and prisoners.

Mar. 22 - Journal Entry #9

This entry is about “Book Three”, chapters seven through ten. I am finding it very fascinating and enjoyable, that so many things in the story are tying in with others. For example, I thought it was very clever of Dickens to make John Barsad, the spy whom Madame Defarge “registered” in her knitting Solomon Pross; Miss Pross’s brother. Another tie in was Roger Cly, John Barsad’s associate, being a witness at Darnay’s first trial (the one that happened before he married Lucie). Also, suddenly bringing back Sidney Carton, seemingly to save the day yet again for Darnay is very unsuspected, and therefore I liked it. (Regarding Carton saving the day again for Darnay, recall at Darnay’s very first trial, it was Carton who got
Darnay acquitted).

Another unsuspected, surprising event was Jerry Cruncher discrediting John Barsad. When Jerry proved that Barsad was lying about Roger Cly being dead, it caught me completely off guard. This was another interesting tie-in. Jerry knew that Cly was not dead because, during his days as a “resurrection man”, Jerry dug up Cly’s supposed coffin, and instead of Cly, found paving stones and lime. I think that Dickens’ way of writing about things that one would think are insignificant, and then later on in the story tying them in with other things that make them important.

I guess I was also wrong about Defarge not finding anything in Manette’s old cell (as mentioned in journal Entry #7). Defarge found a journal of sorts, in which Manette told the story of the reason for his imprisonment. I was right, however, in being disappointed. At first I was disappointed that Defarge found nothing. Now I am disappointed that what he found is discrediting Doctor Manette, and incriminating Darnay. It also makes me wonder whose side the Defarge’s are on. At first I thought they were trying to fight the government; now it looks like they are trying to help it. I am enjoying this book, but I sometimes do not know what to think of it.
Mar. 22 - Journal Entry #10

This entry is about “Book Three”, chapter eleven to the end. There are three main things that come to my mind when I think about these five chapters. The first is that Dickens loves to tie the events together. The second is that these five chapters are very sad, yet somewhat uplifting. The third is that some things remain unresolved.

Dickens loves to tie the events together, and make connections between events, as stated in previous journal entries. I think that this is an excellent writing style. In the two main cases here, the tying together of events was foreshadowed in previous chapters. The more important case is Barsad taking Carton through the prison, to Darnay. This was foreshadowed when Carton, Barsad, Mr. Lorry and Jerry were having a discussion, and Carton took Barsad to talk in private. The lesser case is when Carton uses certain chemicals to knock Darnay out. This is foreshadowed when Carton goes to the chemist, buys the chemicals, and puts them in his breast pocket. Then, while talking to Darnay, Carton keeps his hand near the pocket. I still think that this foreshadowing and tying together of events is good writing.

These chapters are mainly sad because of Carton’s actions. The
instant I read about Carton telling Darnay to switch boots with him, I thought, “Oh, no. Carton’s going to take Darnay’s place!” I was right. I thought it was very sad that Carton took Darnay’s place yet slightly uplifting because it was so noble. I still think however, that it is tragic that Carton had to die.

It is also sad that Miss Pross went deaf after her ordeal with Madame Defarge, and that Doctor Manette turned back into the old shoemaker.

There are two things that remain unresolved, but I can make educated guesses as to what happened. First, it does not say what happened to Jerry and Miss Pross - whether or not they met up with Mr. Lorry and his group, and so on. I assume that they did. Also, the book does not say if Doctor Manette returned to his proper self, after turning back into the old shoemaker. Once again, I assume that he did, what with Lucie, Darnay and their daughter all safe. All in all, I thoroughly enjoyed A Tale of Two Cities.
Participant #61

Feb 17, '98 - Journal #1  p.1-45

This first section of *A Tale of Two Cities* showed me that Dickens had a very vivid style of describing things. When the shoemaker answers one of Mr. Lorry’s questions, Dickens does not give an answer, but instead spends three lines describing the shoemaker’s reaction, “His haggard eyes turned to Defarge as if he would have transferred the question to him...”. I found this long winded style, though at some points it was very helpful in picturing the scenes, to be boring and at times quite confusing. I found my mind to be wondering at times away from the book, because I was getting lost in the numerous long descriptions on the pages. I became more and more frustrated because I had to read pages over and over again and still felt I did not really understand what was happening. So far my understanding of the story consists of a man from London (first city) goes with a woman to Paris (second city) to help settle her father’s estate, but discovers he is still alive. I know I must be way off, but at this point, even with all the descriptions, it was the best I can do. I have nothing against long books, but Dickens seems excessive. After a lot of inquiring and thinking I came up with an explanation for this. I was told that Dickens originally wrote all of his stories in segments for a London newspaper. At that time, Dickens was apparently paid by the word! If this
is true it really explains so much about his stories. Even after all this complaining I would like to say that I am actually enjoying the book. It seems to be very interesting.

Feb. 24, '98 - Journal #2  p.46-77

This section begins with a vivid description of Tellson’s Bank in London. As usual with Dickens, this description goes on for almost three pages. This long description allows me to have a very detailed picture of the setting in my head. I imagine this was very useful in Dickens’ society which had no televisions or radios and had to be able to picture book from the words on the page. This section also introduced me to Charles Darnay at his trial for what I think is a charge of treason. I found this trial to be very confusing because it seemed to come out of nowhere, and yet, be crucial to the plot. I would have liked to see a greater preface to the trial and Darnay. I think it would have been good to mention that the Manettes and Mr. Lorry had met Darnay on their way back to London. Since Dickens enjoyed lots of words this would have been beneficial to both Dickens and his readers.

As for Charles Darnay, I felt myself starting to cheer for him, even
with my limited knowledge of the trial. Dickens portrayed him as the underdog with the intent, I believe to have us cheer for him. Dickens has made it quite clear to me who he wants me to like and who he wants me to dislike. In the same way I liked Darnay, I hated the attorney general. I did not like the way he tried to prompt witnesses into saying what he wanted to hear, such as when he interrupted Miss Manette’s testimony and asked, “Had he come on board alone.” The attorney general tried to force Miss Manette into incriminating her friend Mr. Darnay. Dickens did an excellent job of demonstrating and influencing my feeling for various characters in the book.

Mar. 2 ‘98 - Journal #3 p. 77-102

I hate the Monsieur the Marquis! So far the Monsieur seems to be the ultimate “bad guy”. He represents everything the poor rebels in France hate about the rich and powerful. They hated the attitude the Monseignure had of “that that was made for them”, and that he was better than the peasants. These attitude seem to apply to most of the Monsieurs, but are epitomized by the Monsieur the Marquis, Dickens introduced me to in Chapter 7. It is not clear whether or not he has regard for any human life,
but he certainly shows he does not for that of a peasant. After recklessly running a young boy over with his carriage, he seems to worry more about his horses than the child. It is not clear if he wants forgiveness, but his best way of showing his remourse is with a single gold coin to the boy's father. At this point, I was hoping that the angered mob, would tear the Marquis apart limb by limb, but they don't. They let him pass without any major further incident. This altercation with the Marquis was just another example of a cause of the anger that built up in the peasants, and eventually led to their rebellion against the French Aristocrats.

Once again, Dickens has made me feel a strong like or dislike for a character in the novel. It is fairly obvious that I hate the Monsieur the Marquis with a passion, which I find incredible, because I have, of course, never met this character. My feelings come purely from the words on the page. I don’t think I have ever experienced this strong a hate for a fictional character. This, in my mind, is one of the reasons why Dickens was and still is one of the most popular authors in our history.

Mar. 4, '98 - Journal #4  p.103-136

I’m very pleased to say that in the beginning of this section, the
Monsieur the Marquis finally got what he deserved. He was stabbed and killed by Gaspard, the boy's father. This, I believe, is the only justice that could be found in France at this time for a peasant, such as Gaspard.

France and London, in the 1750s shared many similarities, but Dickens has shown parts of the cities that I perceive as being very different. In Paris we see a poverty and disease ridden society. The people are so desperate for some of the basic pleasures of life, such as wine, they are willing to drink it out of the dirty polluted gutters of the cobblestone streets. The upper and lower class will never mix. In fact, their relationship is to the point where they have a strong hate for each other. Meanwhile, back in Jolly Old England, the book only seems to focus on the upper class in the city. The main characters of the story, Mr. Lorry and Miss Manette drink wine out of glasses and not off the streets. There is not much of a sign of any poverty or disease. This is not to say, historically, that there was no poverty or disease in London, but Dickens has decided to leave these references out, as to make the reader see the cities as being very distinct from each other. The lower class in London, for example Jerry Cruncher, are able to make an honest living and are not frowned upon by the upper class. Dickens does not mention the lower class are frowned upon in London, or the respected lower class in Paris.
Because of these obvious clashes, though, Dickens has successfully made me realize his contradictorial comparison of the cities in the opening of the book, are correct for the story.

Mar. 12 ‘98 - Journal Entry #5 pp.136-172

Knowing what happens in the future of this story and what happened historically during the French Revolution, I find it very interesting to find the small clues Dickens has left throughout the book that forshadow the rest of the story. Two major clues that come to mind are the wine spilling in the streets and a line from Sydney Carton which is found early in this fifth section of the book. The wine is a preview to the blood to be spilled on the streets of France during the revolution. Carton’s line is found in chapter 13 and is that to Lucie, he says “For you and for any dear to you, I would do anything.” This is a preview to the ultimate sacrifice Sydney eventually makes for Lucie and her husband Charles Darnay. I sometimes find the sneak previews at a movie more interesting then the feature. This is why, though I enjoy the entire book, I find searching for these clues as one of the main reasons I have trouble putting this book down.
This section also introduces some important facts to the plot. John Barsad makes sure we know that Charles Darnay is the nephew of the hated aristocrat, the Marquis D'Evremonde. Even though I know what happens I still find myself hoping that Charles Darnay does not go back to France. My feelings about the differences between the Defarges have changed. I used to think that Monsieur Defarge was the harsher of the two, but I now think Madame Defarge is the more dangerous of the two. The main thing that changed my mind are their views on Darnay. Though both believe Darnay shall be killed if he comes back to France, but Monsieur Defarge would rather him just not come back to France, while Madame seems to almost pray that Darnay returns.

Mar. 12 /98 - Journal #6 pp.172-209

The blood has finally spilled on the streets of France in this sixth section. I spent most of this section looking for historical accuracies and inaccuracies during the storming of the Bastille which I did my project on. From what I could see Dickens did an excellent job when it came to research. The biggest inaccuracy I could find was something Dickens did not mention. He had made the point that the Revolutionaries liked to
liberate prisons. Yes, the Bastille was a prison, but at the time of the storming, there were only seven prisoners. None of these prisoners were true rebels. In fact, some of them were rich aristocrats who had embarassed their families. Historically there was only one woman involved in the storming. I am sure this one woman was the famous or notorious (depending on what side you were on), Madame Defarge. In my mind she was probably one of the leaders of the storming. Her vengeful views were just what I believe the rebels needed to get excited about the battle. I bet she even suggested the beheading and parading of the heads of the government officials after the battle. If I was involved in the revolution I would have worried about Madame Defarge and her savage beliefs, of killing all aristocrats and their families, as a liabillity. She may someday kill the wrong person, possibly even a supporter of the revolution. Something like this could cause a division in the revolution maybe even a breaking of the revolution. Madame Defarge should make sure that her views do not get the better of her judgement.

Mar. 15 '98 - Journal #7 pp. 210-228

Up to this point I thought of Charles Darnay as a smart person.
Unfortunately sense of duty clouded his judgement. I could never do something like this. I would never go somewhere I thought would mean certain imprisonment and most likely death. I admire Charles for putting someone else’s life in front of his own. This is an act I like to think I could do, but I know I probably would not. This is an attitude Dickens wanted to teach his readers. This is not the only lesson Dickens was trying to teach through *A Tale of Two Cities*. He used the lessons of the past (i.e. the French Revolution) to teach British upper class of his time to treat British lower class with more respect or else.

While reading this seventh section the significance of two characters names dawned on me. Mr. Stryver was always striving or trying to get Lucie’s love. Jerry Cruncher’s last name was significant to the fact that the Jerry Cruncher beat his wife. I thought Cruncher was a good word to go with someone who beat his wife. These names prompted me to look for significance in other names. I thought Lorry was interesting so I looked it up. A lurrie was a car in a train that carried luggage. Mr. Lorry travelled with many items over long distances just like a lurrie. The final significant name was Charles Darnay. His initials, C and D, are the same as those belonging to Charles Dickens. This makes me believe that Dickens saw Charles Darnay as himself and instilled the same
values and beliefs in him.

Mar. 16 '98 - Journal #8 pp.229-273

In this eighth section Dickens dealt with the mob role and anarchy in France. Though I was always aware of the obvious problems with these so-called types of government, I never thought about the consequences of adding capital punishment to the power of these rulers. Juries decided which unlucky aristocrats were given this awful sentence. The idea of a jury seems fair, but these juries were made up only of the patriots, and they convicted almost every prisoner that came before them. Because trials were decided by a jury, I believe this allowed the French people to justify their excessive use of the death penalty. This unfair justice system also allowed for prisoners to be put on trial multiple times until favourable sentence to the people was given. This happened in the case of Charles Darnay. The Defarges knew that it was only a matter of time until a jury gave Charles Darnay a sentence to “La Guillotine”.

I have always had questions about capital punishment, but this section of this book gave the best argument against it. Juries make mistakes. Of course, the case of Charles Darnay and the other French
aristocrats killed was a little extreme, but it did show how a justice system can be abused. It just reinforced my belief that here in Canada, we are very fortunate to live in a society with a fair justice system and fair government.

Mar. 19 '98 - Journal #9 pp.273-311

My criticisms of *A Tale of Two Cities* are very few and far between, but I have another one to add to the very short list. That criticism is that Dickens used too many coincidences to bring the plot together. In this section alone I discovered three major coincidences. The first coincidence is that Sydney Carton just happens to be in France and happens to walk in on the second coincidence which is that John Barsad turns out to be Miss Pross’ brother. The third coincidence is that the family that got Dr. Manette imprisoned was actually the family Evremondes, better known as the family of Charles Darnay. There have been many other coincidences throughout the rest of this book. One of the other major ones, in my mind, is that Monsieur Defarge, one of the main leaders of the rebellion, just happened to be one of the servants of Dr. Manette. I think that Dickens has depended too much on coincidence to tie all the plots in
the book together.

In this section I also found more events connected to the statement "recalled to life". Besides the recalling of Dr. Manette, there was also the escape from death of Charles Darnay, Miss Pross’ brothers return and of course Jerry Crunchers body snatching activities. Every event in this book seems to be connected at some point. Whether it is through coincidence or not I still found it forced me to pay very close attention to every event and detail Dickens mentions in the story. I really like the fact that I have to pay close attention, instead of just skimming over it as I can do with some books.

Mar. 19 ‘98 - Journal #10 pp.311-352

In the end Dickens brought together all the loose ends of the plot. I was pleased to see that Charles Darnay and his family would safely return to London and be able to live their lives to the fullest. I was, though, saddened by the loss of Sydney Carton. He made the ultimate sacrifice, but I believe to him it was a form of redemption or purification for all of his sins during his life. I was most pleased to see Madame Defarge finally got what was coming to her. Her character was what eventually turned me
against the revolutionaries and the cause. In my mind, she began to care more about revenge then the cause. Her husband, Monsieur Defarge, even realized that she was chasing the personal vendetta against the Evremondes instead of the people’s rebellion. Dickens left no stone unturned and when the book was finished I did not feel unsatisfied as I do with a lot of books. Dickens also found time to get his personal message to the British people, his readers. That message was that the French Revolution was not necessarily an isolated incident. There was no reason it could never happen in England. I believe that Dickens thought it was inevitable if the British people of that society did not change their ways of treating the lower classes.

After reading this book I feel I learned a lot about the history of the French Revolution, but more importantly about how ruthless people can get after being put down and oppressed for many years. These lessons are so important, it makes the work of the great authors, such as Dickens, still relevant today.
Participant #45

Journal Entry #1 - Dead Man Talking

There were portions of repetitive dialogue on pages eleven and twelve where a passenger in a carriage seems to have a dialogue with someone who has been dead and buried for almost eighteen years.

Upon first reading these lines, I believed they were meant as a tool to create fear or suspense in the reader because they contained such morbid content and were repeated so often that it made me read faster, as I would at suspenseful sections of novels. It gave me a clear view of the setting where this dialogue took place.

I imagined a young man standing atop an empty grave talking with an old corpse; now mainly a skeleton covered in rags. Both men are in a dark, misty cemetery, repeating the same lines over, and over again.

After reviewing the dialogue, I found I could not identify what context it was to be used under; it merely struck me as an interesting yet strange conversation. It’s uncommon for me to observe a man and an eighteen year old corpse engage in meaningless, repetitive dialogue. This, my second reaction, was one of confusion, as this fantastic situation had absolutely nothing to do with the plot line.

Then came my third and thus far my final reaction to this dialogue. Upon rereading these words, I began laughing uncontrollably. It had just
occured to me that what these men were doing made absolutely no sense. Why on earth would this happen?

I came to this final conclusion after having obtained the knowledge that Dickens was payed by the word. He clearly must have included this scene as an excuse to put down more words and make more money. Although this doesn’t further establish him as a literary genius, it does confirm the fact that Dickens was no idiot; he knew that he made more money by including unnecessary scenes.

It took me three guesses, but I now realize the motive behind Dickens’s writing.

Journal Entry #2 - Courtroom Drama

Upon reading through the section of book 2 where Charles Darnay is put on trial for treason, the novel exhibited characteristics of foreshadowing when Jerry remarked that Darnay would be acquitted for his crime.

I knew this would happen for two reasons; first, I have already read the novel; and second, it occured to me that no court drama I have ever seen, has ended in tragedy for the defendant.
Reading this section of the book did happen to be the most exciting part of the novel so far, yet it was strikingly similar to St. Joan. Both stories pertained to a person before a court where a mob of people had a fixed opinion against them and the outcome was omniscient. Upon realizing this I began to make more mental comparisons between the two trials and realized that both defendants were tried for treason; Joan against the church and Darnay against his country.

Upon making these two comparisons I then came to my now final statement on the matter. Shaw’s novel was a story of Joan’s life, but Dickens’s trial was a shameful plageristic rendition of the incident and called it his own.

But I then thought so what? Writers and authors of all genres and styles have been focusing their plots on events that actually happened such as “Rent”, a rendition of “La Boehme”.

Dickens is a talented author and can get away with plagerism, but some things should remain sacred. He took the story of a young woman, the first suffragist of all time, and created a courtroom scene mocking her. There was a drunken lawyer and a guilty witness.

In short, Dickens’ courtroom drama exhibited foreshadowing due to his plageristic interpretation of an event in history of which he mocked by
adding two characters whose flaws put Joan of Arc to shame. Darnay's trial was very entertaining however, the one part of the novel thus far to keep me awake.

Although being disappointed at the content of this scene, its reference to Joan, it provided a thoroughly entertaining read.

Journal Entry #3 - Monsieur de Marquis's Human Nature

The dispicable Monsieur de Marquis, the man who cruelly, without remorse, ran over a child with his carriage and then tossed him a coin so his family would have compensation for their departed son.

As the book unfolds, Monsieur de Marquis is quickly becoming the most interesting character. His controversial attitude and actions sparked an interest in me, one that was missing throughout the first one hundred pages. His cruelty and lack of love for his fellow man are a refreshing breeze in the otherwise dull novel whose characters all look out for one another. It made me think of a Married With Children episode during a Family Matters festival; real life for a moment in Happyland.

Monsieur de Marquis also sparked a sense of fear throughout my body. Although to a lesser extent, my actions are almost exactly the same as his. It's frightening to realize how many times I've left my parents in the
middle of a conversation. What they had to say is probably not as important as the death of a young child, but nevertheless, they were abandoned as many other parents have been.

It was awkward reading the story of a character who exhibits such cruelty and lack of remorse, who still possesses characteristics we all do. That may be why this character works; the wrongful, dispicable act to be committed is actually one of human nature, but greatly out of context with the manner in which many of us exhibit it.

In a story of a man looking out for his fellow man, Monsieur de Marquis portrays cruelty and hate for others, and this is why he works for me. I may be wrong, but he is easily more identifyable with the average man in his barbaric actions than someone like Lucie Manette, a woman who is loving, caring, and sweet.

His characteristics are hightened to an extent that may seem inhuman yet Monsieur de Marquis may be the most realistic and beleiveable character in the novel thus far.

Journal entry #4 - Dickens and Seinfeld?

In the chapter entitled, “A Companion Picture,” Sydney Carton and
Stryver discusses marriage, and the prospect of being married to Lucie Manette. After a casual dialogue of who Stryver would marry and which of the two men has it off worse, I watched some television.

And what program? Seinfeld. But it felt like I had never put the novel down; it felt as if Sydney and Stryver were now in an apartment in Manhattan and given the forms of Jason Alexander and Jerry Seinfeld. Suddenly the scene came to life; I could picture Stryver as Jerry saying, "Guess who I’m going to marry?", and Sydney or George’s response of, “I’m not going to guess at five o’clock in the morning with my brains frying and sputtering in my head!”

It was amazing how this classic novelist, a legend, had a writing style that was mimiced in one of the most popular television shows of all time. It not only gave me a new found respect for Dickens’s writing style, but it made me rethink the whole concept of writing.

In an earlier entry, I criticized Dickens for plagiarizing the trial of St. Joan. But I now realize that writing is based on some sort of influence; it can’t be completely original. Every author has his inspiration.

So the question that has been racking in my brain for the last several days has been, “Is Seinfeld dipping back into old literature, or has
Dickens tested out a new writing style?" If Seinfeld is purely written on Dickens style, then Jerry’s a sham; but either way you look at it, both writers have used this back and forth which is repetitive, continuous, and goes nowhere.

I felt good about A Tale of Two Cities while reading Sydney and Stryver’s dialogue, because although Dickens is a master at detail, description, and setting, I could really picture the two men talking and moving through the room thanks to tv’s Seinfeld. It’s amazing how the two are on totally different sides of the writing spectrum, yet manage somehow to interact and relate.

Journal Entry #5 - I Love Dickens, and then I hate him

Earlier in my journals, I have marveled at the brute, disgraceful yet honest human nature of Monsieur de Marquis. So it is no wonder that I felt anger and hatred for the novel when he is stabbed and dies. In fact I was so mad that I threw the book against the wall.

Why oh why does Dickens toy with my emotions the way he does? he takes a novel full of saps, who’s only concerns are declaring love for one another, and helping everyone, and crying about their lives, and introduces
a character who brings the novel to life with his contrasting emotions and actions. This man, Monsieur de Marquis, is like the black cloud on a hot sunny day; he blocks out the loving sun just enough to give you a comfortable shade. And then he dies.

The anger and utter disappointment at the loss of my favorite character out of any Dickens novel I've ever read, made me go into a fit so audible that my mother came in from the kitchen and told me to knock it off.

From the chapter called “A Companion Picture” which contains light, Seinfeldesque humour, to the death of the French Revolution's version of Al Bundy, my interest in this novel has dropped off almost completely. Would this novel not be a requirement for the course my reading would stop right here. And so would this journal entry.

As I have already read this novel, I am prepared and unexcited for the metiocre scenes, plot, and characters that lies ahead. My only refuge is in the fact that one of my favorite lines of any novel will soon arrive; but I can't help but wonder what might have been if Dickens would only have kept Monsieur de Marquis alive.

As for Gaspard, the murderer, I wish he would die. Somewhere in the novel there must be a scene that I don't remember where he falls into a
pit or worse. Monsieur de Marquis’s refreshing attitude made the novel seem worthwhile to me. But the two men who took him away from me will have more hell to pay in further journals and class discussions.

Journal Entry #6 - What’s With All These Jacques?

Dickens confuses me yet again with his irribulous style of writing. In the chapters “Knitting” and “Still Knitting” there seem to be an enormous number of men named Jacques. There could not be five Jacques in the same bar, talking to the same man, and associated with one another.

It proved to be confusing, as this was an important two chapters of the novel, where Dickens made several references to nobility and the plight of the bourgoesie. But the constant repetition of Jacques one, two, three, four, and five is a major distraction from the setting and detail described.

It’s almost as if Dickens wants to confuse me, and what a good job he’s doing. It simply did not occur to him that the numerous Jacques could readily be replaced by someone with one name who is referred to by a one word title.

It is virtually impossible to pick up the symbolizm exhibited by
Madame Defarge’s knitting. It took me several hours of rereading and conference with family members before realizing she knitted not only to get away from the poverty of the Revolution, but as an example of how the control of her stitching and her remembrance and knowledge of the stitches symbolized her control and knowledge of events that seem to trace to others around her.

During Dickens’s confusing repetition of Jacques and his numbers, the social comment, setting, and characteristic symbolism, are completely lost on me the first time around. Perhaps such important details were easier to grasp during their period of origin, but they are easily overlooked now.

Journal Entry #7 - ?Confusion?

In the past chapters, Dickens devoted several chapters to depict a short discussion, or a short moment in time, as in Chapter 1 when twelve pages is used to show the Mail halted on a hill for a few brief moments. Although heavily detailed and achingly difficult for me to read through due to boredom, I knew what went on during the scene.

Yet during the beginning of the third book, nine years seemed to have
passed. Such a drastic time change in the style of Dickens's writing is confusing, yet one I welcome.

Through the course of the novel, I have acclimated to the slow paced, detailed, irribulous style of writing that is Dickens's, it has become a routine expectation that I need not think about it anymore.

But now that the pace has picked up, the detail has been greatly reduced, and the plot unfolds to the point of excitement, it is obvious that the style of writing has changed. It has changed to the point that the main character in the novel has been traveling to France, charged, and had a new identity revealed in only ten pages.

With this new writing style comes a personal realization has come to light. Although more detail was included in the first two books of the novel, I am able to understand and keep awake more easily while reading the last book. I believe that is so because the fast paced plot and interesting events make a novel a winner with me, not the plot with confusing repetition, endless detail, and unnecessary scenes.

Should this be doubted, let me say that the first two books spent much of the time discussing the death of Monsieur de Marquis and a love between two people, while book three deals with a man's secret identity revealed, the revelation of Mr. Manette's respect in the Paris legal system,
and the demise of a major character at the hands of La Guillotine. The first two books clearly show detail and social commentary which leads to the climax of book three.

Journal Entry #8 - Lucie Manette

I'm sure Dickens meant to portray the character of Lucie Manette as a sweet little girl as she certainly seems to be. Close to her father, loving mother and wife, and always affectionate, she seemed to be the posterchild for good daughters of America. She even went outside her husband, Charles Darnay's window every day while he was held captive.

Yet it was this act which left me somewhat agast at her lack of love for her husband. What I wanted to know was why Lucie wasn't at the prison talking with a judge, member of parliament, or someone with control to free her husband. If she truly loved Charles, she should have pleaded day and night for his release, instead of letting him rot away in his cell for one year.

It seems to me that Dickens had somewhat of an inconsistancy when writing this scene. By merely having Lucie visit the window of Charles Darnay, she exhibits some sort of love and loyalty, but I think it would
have made Charles, and I as well, much happier, and instill much more hope in our souls if we knew we had our loved one fighting tooth and nail for us.

It doesn't identify with what I would invision my father doing if I were unjustly imprisoned, or if our roles were reversed. No man, mountain, or weapon could keep us from setting the other free, not to mention what my mother would do.

So for me, Lucie did not truly embody the loving, loyal wife of Charles Darnay, rather a passive little pussy cat, who would rather waste time talking a leasurely promenade than fight for the life of her husband.

Journal Entry #9 - What A Pill To Swallow

Alexander Manette. Upon his return to Paris among cheers and uplifting roars in the courtroom, caused a few goosebumps and lump in my throat; but that all changed within a few more pages.

As the President began reading the letters he scribbled down while in prison, my emotions took a major one hundred and eighty degree turn. For Charles Dickens to expect someone as critical a reader as I am, to swallow such a huge pill as the one he tried to hand us is insulting. Maybe
I’m wrong, but I can in no way envision a man taking the time to write a letter the length of fourteen pages in the novel, with exact quotes, settings, emotions, and actions engaged in a situation which had occurred years before. For a man to remember how he felt seeing someone pushed aside, remember what he and others said, how a small avenue looked, and the location of a specific tool and his reaction over such a long period of time is ridiculous.

I think Dickens attempted to glorify the persona of Alexander Manette, but went way over the edge with a letter that would have held more dramatic flare with me, had it been written at a time nearer to the event.

The pages 297-311 were the most difficult fourteen pages of a novel to read through than any so far in my lifetime, lacking much of the realism for which the book has so far included constantly, and lowering the memorial value of Alexandre Manette.

Before reading this letter I would have thought him to be a man who would write a passionate letter pertaining to his struggle, his dying hope, or the bloody Revolution, not the pointless dribble he churned out. As a result, my respect for the novel which was already at a low, was pushed down yet another level, as Dickens’s attempt to glorify Alexander Manette
Journal Entry #10 - Sydney Carton: Death of a Poet

In short, the novel “A Tale of Two Cities” has been rather disappointing, filled with excessive detail, characters who embody nothing of what I consider to be true human nature, and an outstanding plot.

But the last few pages were not only moving, heartwarming, and touching, but quite possibly the greatest read of my life. Never has a book moved me to tears, possibly because television has desensitized me. So when an author is able to move me in that way, I take notice.

Dickens moved me through an outlet named Sydney Carton, a man just moments away from death. As he comforts Lucie who praises him as an angel, he assures her of the wonder that is Heaven, and with his final act of gallantry, kisses her lips softly.

If I ever have the need to comfort a female in as dire a situation as the one Sydney faced, I will be sure to consult the words of this Romeo of the Revolution though my intentions would surely be different. He spoke so affectionately and sincerely that I felt that I should wish him farewell.
When a character such as Sydney makes you sad enough to wish you had never finished a novel you have thoroughly disliked, he possesses a magic which is, and was able to tug at my heartstrings.

I can't remember how I put this book down when I first read it three years ago, but as I finish today, I feel as if I should read this novel again, to be tortured and tormented by three hundred and fifty pages of filth, only to relish in the gallantry of Sydney Carton's poetic last moments.

"It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."
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