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## **The cinema film of Romance has been classified by the BBFC as '18' without cuts, for adult audiences.**

This is a French-language film with subtitles, directed by Catherine Breillat. It concerns a woman who is physically rejected by the man she loves and who looks for fulfilment elsewhere. In the process, she exchanges what has become emotional subservience for a degree of personal independence. By the end of the film, her best hope of happiness appears to be motherhood.

Within this structure, the film offers insights about the female condition, about the difficulty of separating sex from love and about the ties of fidelity. No doubt there will be a range of opinion as to its depth and quality. With its overlay of philosophical commentary, it is a particularly French piece. It is also very French in the frank way it addresses sexual issues.

The BBFC is in no doubt that Romance is a serious work. It contains, however, a few scenes which include quite explicit sexual imagery. The Board's relevant test of acceptability for '18' certification is set out in its published Guidelines: "Images of real sex will usually be brief and must be justified by context". In Romance, the most explicit portrayal of sexual intercourse is avoided. But there are occasional strong images of male genitalia of which the strongest is set within a 'safe sex' context. Other shots are generally brief; no content in this film is as problematic as the hard-core porn sequence in another recent French film *Seul Contre Tous* which the Board required be made less explicit. The BBFC was also concerned about scenes of bondage in Romance. The sequences, however, avoid any violence or non-consensual element and are notable for the sensitivity and concern of the principal male character. As with the other sexual imagery, the scenes did not breach the limits set by the Guidelines for classification for adult audiences only.

Andreas Whittam Smith - President  
Robin Duval - Director

29th July 1999