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Kjærlighetsroman

Engelsk: “romance”. På fransk også kalt “rosevann-roman” (“romans à l’eau de rose”).

De fleste romaner inneholder en kjærlighetshistorie (minst én), men trenger ikke å være kjærlighetsromaner av den grunn. Kjærlighetsforholdet må være det sentrale. I romanen framstår kjærlighet som det største, viktigste og sterkeste i verden. Leserne får oppleve “the beauty and nobility of Love triumphant over all adverse factors and conditions that may come into the lives of your hero and heroine” (James Knapp Reeve sitert fra *Fugate og Fugate* 1980 s. 89). Det er en “a love story in which the central focus is on the development and satisfactory resolution of the love relationship between the two main characters, written in such a way as to provide the reader with some degree of vicarious emotional participation in the courtship process.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 5)

Romanene handler om “the development of deep emotional connection between two individuals. [...] the evolving relationship between a single couple composed of a beautiful, defiant, and sexually immature woman and a brooding, handsome man who is also curiously capable of soft, gentle gestures. [...] a good romance involves an unusually bright and determined woman and a man who is spectacularly masculine, but at the same time capable of remarkable empathy and tenderness.” (Radway 1983)

Kjærlighetsromaner kan tilhøre den vestlige kanon (f.eks. Brontë-søstrenes romaner). De kan samtidig som de er kjærlighetsromaner, også være f.eks. feministisk litteratur. Men de fleste kjærlighetsromaner er formellitteratur, og selges blant annet i kiosker og dagligvarebutikker.

“There is the mouthwatering anticipation of a familiar gratification; two people meet, fall in love, overcome the many obstacles that life hurls at them and, in the final chapter, declare their undying passion. You can indulge your curiosity about other people’s relationships, in depth, perhaps picking up a few tips along the way. There is an irrepressible optimism at the root of all romance – love can happen to anybody at any time, even me. Romance is not just hearts and flowers; it is any gesture, especially the unexpected, which singles somebody out and makes them

feel special and attractive. When you read a romantic book, that's the buzz you get. And if the love story teaches us anything, it is that everybody is lovable." (Riel og Fowler 1996 s. 37) "These books [romances] offer a vast reassurance that the world will come out right." (sosiologen Gaye Tuchman sitert fra Ramsdell 1999 s. 17)

"In a romance the central (and occasionally the only) focus of the plot is the love relationship between the two main characters. Of course, there are usually other complications and problems, such as mysteries to be solved, career goals or social successes to be achieved, and daring escapes to be made. But these are always secondary to the love interest (from the reader's point of view, not necessarily from the character's), although they are often instrumental in seeing that the love interest succeeds. [...] unless it is the resolution of romantic entanglements that ultimately sustains the reader's interest in the story, the book is probably not a romance. But it is not only subject matter and focus that determine a romance; a romance must also attempt to engage the reader's feelings. To put it simply, a romance must have a quality whether through character development, plot structure, point of view, or style that allows, almost demands, a certain emotional involvement on the part of the reader. In other words, a book cannot simply describe a love relationship; it must allow the reader to participate in it. As Janice Radway states, "To qualify as a romance, the story must chronicle not merely the events of a courtship but *what it feels like* to the *object* of one." [...] Another criterion for romance fiction is the *Satisfactory Ending*. Usually, but not always, this is the traditional happy one, with the two protagonists forming some kind of committed relationship (usually marriage) by the book's conclusion. Other refinements, of course, may be added (e.g., no rape, no hero-against-heroine violence, honorable characters, monogamous relationships, heroines who "win")." (Ramsdell 1999 s. 4)

"All romance novels contain eight narrative elements:

a *definition of society*, always corrupt, that the romance novel will reform;

the *meeting* between the heroine and the hero;

an account of their *attraction* for each other;

the *barrier* between them;

the *point of ritual death*;

the *recognition* that fells the barrier;

the *declaration* of heroine and hero that they love each other;

and their *betrothal*." (Regis 2003 s. 14) Den "rituelle døden" er fasen der forening mellom henne og han synes å være helt umulig. En stor krise virker fatal for

relasjonen mellom dem, men krisen overvinnes og slutten viser triumferende kjærlighet.

“Although there are numerous variations, the typical plot introduces an attractive, independent, usually unconventional heroine to a strong, purposeful (often wealthy, successful, or titled) hero; places them in extreme opposition to each other; and then spends the rest of the book making sure that they fall in love and are altar-bound by the end. Of course, between their initial fiery meeting and their final embrace, any number of things can happen to keep the two main characters apart.” (Kristin Ramsdell i *Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre*; her sitert fra <https://silo.pub/romance-fiction-a-guide-to-the-genre.html>; lesedato 20.04.22)

“The story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines, is, finally, about freedom and joy. In the twentieth century, for the most part, romances are stories written by women and read by women. They feature women who have achieved the ends fostered by affective individualism, control over their own property, and companionate marriage. In other words, romance heroines make their own decisions, make their own livings, and choose their own husbands.” (Regis 2003 s. 207)

Hun og han er “characters who overcome these hardships and courting couples who find not just a resolution to the troubles that beset them, but joy and love.” (Regis 2003 s. 204) Romanene vil vise at kjærligheten er det viktigste i livet, og den overvinner alt, og sann kjærlighet er monogam og varer livet ut. Kjærligheten “adler” mennesket.

Forelskelse og kjærlighet er en drivkraft i fortellingen som får hun og han til etter hvert å finne sammen i harmoni og lykke.

“The crucial defining characteristic of romance is not that it stars a female but that its organizing action is the development of a love relationship, usually between a man and a woman. ... The moral fantasy of the romance is that of love triumphant and permanent, overcoming all obstacles and difficulties” (John Cawelti sitert fra Regis 2003 s. 21). “[W]omen not only *enjoy* romance reading, but feel replenished and reconstituted by it as well.” (Radway 1983)

“To be considered a “romance,” a novel must meet two criteria: A love story must be the central focus, and it must have what writers call an “HEA”: Happily Ever After.” (Jennifer Lois og Joanna Gregson i <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243215584603>; lesedato 12.12.22) En annen avslutning kan være “happy for now” (forkortet til HFN).

“A scene or series of scenes scattered throughout the novel establishes for the reader the reason that this couple must marry. The attraction keeps the heroine and hero involved long enough to surmount the barrier. Attraction can be based on a

combination of sexual chemistry, friendship, shared goals or feelings, society's expectations, and economic issues." (Regis 2003 s. 32-33)

"The romance novel is a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines. All romance novels contain eight narrative elements: a *definition of society*, always corrupt, that the romance novel will reform; the *meeting* between the heroine and hero; an account of their *attraction* for each other; the *barrier* between them; the *point of ritual death*; the *recognition* that fells the barrier; the *declaration* of heroine and hero that they love each other; and their *betrothal*. [...] The "barrier" is the conflict in a romance novel; it is anything that keeps the union of heroine and hero from taking place. The "point of ritual death" is that moment in a romance novel when the union of heroine and hero seems completely impossible. It is marked by death or its simulacrum (for example fainting or illness); by the risk of death; or by any number of images or events that suggest death, however metaphorically (for example, darkness, sadness, despair, or winter). [...] In overcoming the barrier, the heroine moves from a state of bondage or constraint to a state of freedom. [...] the heroine symbolically overcomes death. [...] She cheats ritual death, symbolically or actually, and is freed to live. Her freedom is a large part of what readers celebrate at the end of the romance. Her choice to marry the hero is just one manifestation of her freedom." (Regis 2003 s. 14-15) Heltinnen "is freed from the immediate encumbrances that prevent her union with the hero. When the heroine achieves freedom, she chooses the hero. The happy ending celebrates this." (Regis 2003 s. 16) "The eight essential elements of the romance novel represent the core of the genre." (Regis 2003 s. 47)

"A series of scenes often scattered throughout the novel establishes for the reader the reasons that this heroine and hero cannot marry. The romance novel's conflict often consists entirely of this barrier between the heroine and hero. The elements of the barrier can be external, a circumstance that exists outside of a heroine or a hero's mind, or internal, a circumstance that comes from within either or both. [...] Many recent romance novels have barriers that are entirely internal – they grow out of the psychology or subjective state of the heroine and hero. The barrier drives the romance novel. It is spread throughout most instances of this literary type, and it encompasses a wide variety of issues. Through this element a writer can examine any situation within the heroine's mind or in the world itself. Literally any psychological vice, virtue, or problem, any circumstance of life, whether economic, geographical, or familial can be made a part of the barrier and investigated at whatever length the writer sees fit." (Regis 2003 s. 32) "The barrier's fall is a liberation for the heroine. It is a moment of rejoicing for the reader, whose response to the heroine's freedom is joy. [...] Multiple heroines mean multiple barriers which the writer can array so as to intersect, comment on each other, echo, contradict, and so on." (Regis 2003 s. 33)

Spanjolen Diego de San Pedro skrev sentimentale kjærlighetsromaner på 1400-tallet (Wittschier 1993 s. 77). Den italienske munken Francesco Colonnas

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (engelsk tittel *Poliphilo's Strife of Love in a Dream*) fra ca. 1499 har blitt kalt en "allegorisk-mystisk kjærlighetsroman" (Rehm 1991 s. 66). Portugiseren Bernardim Ribeiros bok *Barndom og ungdom (Menina e Moça; 1554)* har av en forsker blitt karakterisert som en psykologisk kjærlighetsroman (Wittschier 1993 s. 85). Den franske forfatteren Antoine de Nervèze skrev kjærlighetsromaner på begynnelsen av 1600-tallet.

I den franske forfatteren Marie Madeleine de La Fayette's roman *Prinsessen av Clèves* (1678; på norsk 2000) er kjærlighet en uforutsigbar lidenskap utenfor viljens kontroll og som gjør mennesker moralsk blinde (Garapon 1988 s. 40). Kjærligheten fungerer avslørende, den viser et menneskes sanne ansikt. Derfor prøver mange å skjule sin lidenskap, for å skjule sitt indre, men lidenskapen øker når den blir tvunget til å være taus og usynlig (Garapon 1988 s. 50). For La Fayette har ikke kjærlighet noe med frihet å gjøre, men med tvang, som en sykdom som plutselig rammer en person (Garapon 1988 s. 57). I romanen blir den kalt en "gift" som umerkelig kommer inn i kroppen og etter hvert fører til store lidelser. Den fører dessuten til moralske brister. I La Fayette's tekst er det implisitte budskapet at lidenskapelig kjærlighet bør avvises før det er for sent, før den som elsker blir fremmedgjort fra seg selv, mister selvkontrollen og havner i en uverdigg situasjon (Garapon 1988 s. 57). Prinsesse de Clèves tenker dette i romanen: "Jeg har bare voldsomme og omskiftelige følelser som jeg ikke er herre over [...] Jeg er beseiret og overvunnet av en tilbøyelighet som fører meg med seg mot min vilje." Boka er en "analyse-roman" ("roman d'analyse") der leseren kommer tett på hovedpersonens bevissthet og følelser, hennes indre liv (Garapon 1988 s. 62-63). Dette ønsket om klar analyse av bevisstheten har en parallell i René Descartes' filosofi. Analysen styres av et sterkt ønske om frihet, upåvirket av ukontrollerbare følelser. Målet er personlig autonomi, selvkontroll og egen dømmekraft ledet av fornuften (Garapon 1988 s. 63). Prinsessen søker sin egen sannhet (Garapon 1988 s. 66). Hun er gift, men forelsket i en annen mann.

" 'Love' is the key figure in defining the feminine romance: the romance narrative represents the feminine subject's quest to identify and secure 'true' love. But romance is a difficult term to inherit, connoting a number of now quite discrete objects, which are related but treated differently in most definitions:

- Medieval fantasy literature
- Chivalrous stories [...]
- Feminised story-telling (women's stories, women's films, not serious, degraded wish-fulfilment, feminine escapist pulp)
- Not realism – stories involving implausible outcomes and dodgy causality

- Ur-text for individual and historical processes of engendering the subject (Freud's 'Family Romance')
- Sentimentalised or slushy Love
- A dangerous myth constructed and perpetuated by Institutional Heterosexuality (evidencing feminine false consciousness and tending towards rape fantasy)
- 'Category literature' feeding constructed appetite for the above – unreflexively ideological and critically despised.

The remarkable refraction of the concept of 'romance', particularly between its ancient (heroic-mythic) senses and its contemporary (feminised-sexualised-commercialised) senses, can be overcome when both forms are recognised as centred on the narrative quest, focalised differently through a masculine or feminine imaginary. Taken together, we can understand romance as a narrative expression of a desire for salvation, the end of evil, or the achievement of freedom out of necessity in the more materialist register." (Tauchert 2005 s. 17-18)

"Susanna Haswell Rowson's classic seduction novel, *Charlotte Temple: A Tale of Truth*, first published in England in 1791 and in America in 1794 [...] [is] considered by most to be America's first popular romance novel." (Ramsdell 1999 s. 6)

Kjærlighetsromaner fra 1700-tallet og framover hadde ofte en mannlig forfører som en sentral person i plottet, en person som fungerte som en trussel og symboliserte ondskap (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 15). "[D]en unge kvinnen møter, i sin verste nød, en pervers forfører eller en lysten, gammel riking, men hun kan alltid motstå dem og kan gi seg selv, ren, til den Utvalgte." (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 215) For at heltinnens og heltens følelser skal virke overbevisende, må handlingen ofte foregå utenfor den av publikum kjente hverdagsvirkeligheten (Esquenazi 2007 s. 186).

"The romance quest at its most abstract is a narrative of finding one's lost object without a map, or a clear sense of what that object might be in reality. The trick is to recognise it when it stands before you, and that recognition demands a kind of knowledge now as thoroughly debased as the feminine romance form in which it makes most sense." (Tauchert 2005 s. 145)

Undersjangerer som i større eller mindre grad overlapper med kjærlighetsromaner, kan betegnes etter "hvilket miljø kjærlighetshistorien finner sted: legeromaner, herregårdsromaner, teater- og sigøynnerromaner, historiske romaner og adelsromaner er begreper for klart avgrensede undergenrer i trivillitteraturen for kvinner." (Vibe 1984 s. 5) Jeanne Bourin er en kvinnelig fransk middelalder-ekspert som har skrevet kjærlighetsromaner lagt til middelalderens Paris (Raimond 2002 s. 37).

“Some readers find domination titillating while others find rebellion titillating; some readers want more “realistic” heroines who are independent with careers; others want young, virginal (and infantile) heroines; while still others want the heroine, whether independent or dependent, to be a historical figure rather than a contemporary one; some readers seek masterful, dominating heroes, and others want sensitive yet strong ones. And some want to be able to identify with a heroine from their own ethnic group rather than the conventional Anglo-Saxon one. Even violence, which is ideologically produced as a signifier of passion, power, and masculinity, is a variable trait that appeals to some readers while offending others” (Ebert 1988).

Kjærlighetsromaner er blant de mest leste sjangrer i verden, og mange av sjangerens forfattere skriver for et internasjonalt marked. Den engelske forfatteren Barbara Cartland er trolig verdens mest solgte forfatter gjennom tidene og hun hadde en enorm produksjon av kjærlighetsromaner. Hun skrev over 700 romaner som til sammen er solgt i over en milliard eksemplarer (<http://www.livresse.com/Nouvelles/000522-cartland.htm>; lesedato 07.09.05). Og hennes gjennomsnittlige produksjon var to romaner per måned.

Amerikanske Janet Daily “is extremely popular. There are 300 million copies of her books in print, making her the third best-selling author of all time; her novels have been translated into nineteen languages [...] Dailey’s contribution to the romance novel is her exploration of the quintessential American setting: the West.” (Regis 2003 s. 159-160) “Dailey, who started by writing formulas for Harlequin, became so popular that Simon and Schuster lured her away with a two million dollar advance for 28 books.” (Palmer 1996)

Til tross for denne sjanger-populariteten, er det en tendens til at kvinner ikke vil innrømme at de leser denne typen litteratur. Kjærlighetsromaner (romantisk litteratur, dameromaner) har et “kulturelt stigma”: Leserne er ofte brydd over å innrømme at de leser tekstene og liker dem. Bøkene er “guilty pleasures”, altså litteratur som noen elsker, men også skammer seg over å lese.

“Women admit that they cover a romance novel if they are going to be reading in public – on an airplane or subway. They would not feel the need if the book were, say, a mystery. [...] the widespread disdain for and condemnation of this literary genre [...] the usual lack of respect accorded to this genre in the larger culture” (Regis 2003 s. xi).

“Princess Diana (1961-1997) loved to read romantic fiction. She devoured novels by British author Barbara Cartland, of which there was an endless and steady supply. In her lifetime, Cartland (1901-2000) is credited with having written 723 books. In 1983 alone, she wrote 23 of them. She holds *The Guinness Book of World Records* for writing the most books in a single year. Reclining on a chaise lounge at

her home, Cartland dictated her hundreds of stories to her secretary. [...] Cartland's novels provided young Diana Spencer with an escape into a fantasy dream world. Diana came to believe in the magical rescue power of princes, waiting for her prince to ride up and take her away to her own happy ending. Her life view was shaped by this unreality and it would pitch her into a cold marriage to a man whose heart already belonged to another. [...] [Cartland] learned of Diana's love for her books and sent them to Diana by the cartload. [...] In 1993, Barbara Cartland remarked: "The only books Diana ever read were mine, and they weren't terribly good for her." " (Lisa W. Rogers i <https://lisawallerrogers.com/tag/princess-diana-and-barbara-cartland/>; lesedato 15.02.21)

"Do you know which book genres make the most money [i USA i 2016]? [...] We usually focus on which books do well, or what the top books of the year were, but we never really consider which genre is the one bringing in the bucks. Well, here are the top 5 genres that earn the most money.

1) Romance/Erotica – \$1.44 billion

From the success of the *Fifty Shades of Grey* trilogy and the number of novels written by people like Danielle Steele, there's no surprise that romance and erotica are #1.

2) Crime/Mystery – \$728.2 million [...] 3) Religious/Inspirational – \$720 million [...] 4) Science Fiction/Fantasy – \$590.2 million [...] 5) Horror – \$79.6 million" (Mahogany Turner-Francis i <https://bookstr.com/article/book-genres-that-make-the-most-money/>; lesedato 26.10.20).

"I'm totally guilty of reading too many romance novels, although I don't like when people refer to them as a 'guilty pleasure', after all, it is one of the most popular genres for a reason. [...] 1. Pro: It inspires you to feel a little more passionate [...] 2. Pro: These stories can help us better understand ourselves and what we really want [...] 3. Pro: They provide the perfect escape from reality" (Francesca Contreras i <https://bookstr.com/list/the-pros-and-cons-of-reading-a-lot-of-romance-novels/>; lesedato 06.11.20). "Perhaps romance novels allow women to escape boring routines, and present a guideline for "ideal" romantic behavior." (Helen Leedy i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40968918>; lesedato 14.03.24)

"A woman could curl up and say to herself, 'This is my own special enjoyment'." (Nancy Coffey sitert fra Palmer 1996)

Kjærlighetsromaner er vanligvis skrevet av kvinner, har kvinnelig hovedperson, og er skrevet for kvinnelige lesere. Den kvinnelige hovedpersonen kan være fortelleren ("jeg") eller omtales i tredjeperson ("hun"). Romanene handler om den kvinnelige hovedpersonens liv og lengsler, som forutsettes å være eller ligne også leserens drømmer og lengsler. Leseren ønsker at fortelleren skal si at "ditt [leserens] mest hemmelige begjær" er realiserbart (Guisse og Neuschäfer 1986 s.

208). Romanene innbyr til det som har blitt kalt “dreamy moments” (Colangelo 2023 s. 38). Bøkene gir fiktiv ønskeoppfyllelse ved at hovedpersonen opplever eller oppnår forelskelse, lidenskap, kjærlighet og meningsfullt liv (gjerne også med rikdom og glamour). “Romance offers a literary mode peculiarly suited to represent feminine wish-fulfilment in narrative.” (Tauchert 2005 s. 22) Den appellerer til ønsket om emosjonell og kroppslig nærhet, omtanke, ømhet, og ikke minst altoppslukende kjærlighet.

“All these interactions, ins and outs, complications, and even routine daily activities are accompanied by enormously heightened sensual awareness. *Everything* is a thrill: a glance, a touch, a thought, angry or kind words, not to mention closer contact become one thrill after another. The heroine is portrayed in an almost constant state of emotional arousal often erotic, though, as we have seen anger and resentment feature as well.” (Miles 1988)

En kjærlighetsroman må “ikke bare fortelle om beiling og begjær, den må også få leseren til å føle seg beilet og begjært.” (Janice Radway gjengitt fra Naper 2007 s. 67) Dette skjer gjennom at leseren identifiserer seg med hovedpersonen, eller snarere (dag-) drømmer seg inn i rollen som heltinnen i boka. Kvinnene som Radway intervjuet “chose to ignore the events and actions in the narrative that contradicted their reading of the heroine as strong and independent.” (Stokes og Maltby 1999 s. 195)

“In contrast to my own understanding of the romance fantasy as essentially a psychological fantasy of mothering, Radway sees it as an expression of women’s struggle “toward individuation and actualization of self ... embodied within the language and forms of patriarchy ... [that is] a particular kind of female self, the self-in-relation demanded by patriarchal parenting arrangements” (147). Therefore, she notices the reader’s “wish to be protected by an all-powerful parent” (254), only in passing, and deals with it as one part of her fantasy reliving of “a woman’s journey to female personhood as *that particular psychic configuration is constructed and realized within patriarchal culture*” (138, emphasis in the original)” (Miles 1988).

Den moralske fordømmelsen av kjærlighetsromaner har vært langvarig. “Romances were deemed “dangerous fictions” and “instruments of debauchery” by Oliver Goldsmith in 1761” (Ferriss og Young 2006 s. 31). Slike advarsler har på ingen måte utryddet sjangeren.

“During the first half of the 1980s romantic fiction production soared; nearly 50 percent of all mass-market paperback books published and sold in the United States were formulaic love stories [...] More than one thousand new romance titles were released in 1984 alone, in print runs of between three and five hundred thousand copies. This is double the number of 1980 titles and a sixfold increase from 1970 when 180 titles debuted (Markert, 1985). [...] between 1949 and 1978, Harlequin

published more than two thousand titles” (John Markert i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/2071405.pdf>; lesedato 02.02.23). “John Markert estimates that “women spend \$ 1.5 million a day on romance novels ... and read on the average 20 books a month” (“Romance Publishing and the Production of Culture,” [...] 1985” (Ebert 1988).

“The Canadian publisher, Harlequin Enterprises, alone claims to have sold 168 million romances throughout the world in the single year of 1979. In addition, at least twelve other paperback publishing houses currently issue from two to six romantic novels every month” (Radway 1983).

“Since formula romances sold for Harlequin, the U.S. firms began to publish their own monthly series. Dell put out “Candlelight Romances.” Jove sold the “Camfield” romances, prolifically written by Barbara Cartland. In one year, 1980, she wrote 24 historical formula novels. Fawcett debuted the “Coventry” line, and Bantam, “The Circle of Love.” All of these series were just like the original Harlequins. Harlequin saw that sexier romances attracted more readers than did their “Disney” romances. In order to capture some of the more sophisticated readers and to remain the top seller of clean love, Harlequin introduced a separate, spicier line of monthly formulas called “Harlequin Presents ...” When sex showed a profit for Harlequin, Dell created an “Ecstasy” series. Simon and Schuster eventually lost the U.S. distribution rights to the Harlequins. They instantly produced their own romances – “Silhouette” (clean) and “Desire” (sexy). Simon and Schuster believed their new formulas to be so profitable that they spent fifteen million dollars to advertise their new lines. At one point, Dell bought commercial spots on prime-time national television to plug their lucrative “Candlelight Romances.” In 1981, Ross Claborne, Vice President for Dell, told *Time* magazine that publishing paperback romances is like having “a license to make money.” In 1982, over 100 new formula titles appeared every month. In 1982, romance fiction earned 20 million dollars in profit, not sales, for the mass market paperback industry. According to *Forbes*, the romance market was growing at a rate of 10 % while the other paperback category markets grew 3 %.” (Palmer 1996) I 1995 rapporterte det amerikanske tidsskriftet *Forbes* at “romances brought in 46 % of all mass market paperback sales.” (Palmer 1996)

“In the year 2000, 2,289 romances were released. In that same year, 55.9 percent of popular paperback fiction sold in North America was popular romance. In 1999, 41.4 million people (including 3.5 million men), 18 percent of the reading-age population in America, read a romance novel (Romance Writers of America/ Statistics).” (Regis 2003 s. 108)

Det engelske forlaget Mills & Boon “selger en romansebok i Storbritannia hvert sjette sekund” (*Morgenbladet* 1.–7. februar 2008 s. 34). På nettsida “Romance writers of America” ble det i 2011 oppgitt disse tallene fra en undersøkelse i 2008:

- 74.8 million people [i USA] read at least one romance novel in 2008.
 - The core of the romance fiction market is 29 million regular readers.
 - 24.6 percent of all American read a romance novel in 2008, versus 21.8 percent in 2005.
 - 29 percent of Americans over the age of 13 read a romance novel in 2008.
 - Women make up 90.5 percent of the romance readership, and men make up 9.5 percent.
 - The heart of the U.S. romance novel readership is women aged 31-49 who are currently in a romantic relationship.
 - [...]
 - The most popular places romance novels are read are at home or while traveling or on vacation.
 - 29 percent of romance readers usually carry a romance novel with them.
 - Romance readers typically begin and finish a romance novel within 7 days.
 - Mass-market paperbacks are currently the most preferred romance novel format.
 - [...]
 - 50 percent of romance readers are somewhat or extremely likely to try a new subgenre in the next 24 months.
 - [...]
 - 70 percent are likely to follow an author they like into a new subgenre
 - Half have favorite romance authors
 - 91 percent are likely to seek out an author's previously published titles after reading a novel from an author they like
 - 88 percent are open to trying new authors
 - What makes readers try new authors? Recommendations from friends or acquaintances and seeing the book on the retail or library shelf.”
- (http://www.rwa.org/cs/readership_stats; lesedato 28.10.11) Tallene er basert på en undersøkelse som det ikke gis mange detaljer om (“The 2009 RWA Reader Survey was a Web-based survey of romance fiction readers.”)

En medieundersøkelse gjennomført i Tyskland i 1994 viste at 35 % av kvinnene hadde kjærlighetsromaner som sin favorittlitteratur, mens bare 2 % av mennene hadde det samme (Kaufmann 2007 s. 45). En amerikansk undersøkelse viste at for ca. 20 millioner amerikanere hadde lesing av kjærlighetsromaner blitt en “avhengighetsskapende vane” (Feige 2003 s. 249). “In 2002, 93 per cent of popular romance consumers in the United States were women, and this readership accounts for approximately 48.6 per cent of the multi-million dollar paperback book market.” (Tauchert 2005 s. 19)

“It is difficult to explain the appeal of romance novels to people who don't read them. Outsiders tend to be unable to interpret the conventional language of the genre or to recognize in that language the symbols, images, and allusions that are the fundamental stuff of romance. Moreover, romance writers are consistently attacked for their use of this language by critics who fail to fathom its complexities. In a sense, romance writers are writing in a code dearly understood by readers but

opaque to others. The author of a romance novel and her audience enter into a pact with one another. The reader trusts the writer to create and recreate for her a vision of a fictional world that is free of moral ambiguity, a larger-than-life domain in which such ideals as courage, justice, honor, loyalty, and love are challenged and upheld. It is an active, dynamic realm of conflict and resolution, evil and goodness, darkness and light, heroes and heroines, and it is a familiar world in which the roads are well-traveled and the rules are clear.” (Linda Barlow og Jayne Ann Krentz i <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/ENGL618/readings/theory/Krentz&BarlowRomanceCodes.pdf>; lesedato 23.08.13)

“Everyone loves a love story. But this apparently simple tale may be the most difficult form to write well, for a number of reasons. First, love is the only genre where you need not one, but two equally well-defined main characters. [...] the love story has a plot where surprise must come out of intimacy. This is different from almost every other major genre. [...] deep down they are afraid to love. Both know they will lose some freedom and some of themselves, and they will experience pain if they fall to this attraction. But they keep coming back to it because, down the road, they may get something back through this unique other person that is far more valuable. Be sure you show this fear of love for both of your lead characters. If you believe love is the most important thing in life, if you believe that learning to love is how we live a good life, then you should write this form. [...] A good love story is among the most powerful of all genres because it shows the audience what love could mean in their own lives.” (John Truby i <https://www.writersstore.com/writing-the-blockbuster-love-story/>; lesedato 03.09.18)

Sarah Wendells bok *Everything I Know About Love I Learned From Romance Novels* (2011) er “a book that emphasizes everything good about romance novels, from empowering women to take charge of their own lives and destinies, to helping women understand what they do and don’t want in a romantic partner. There are so many myths out there about romance books – that they raise women’s expectations in an unrealistic manner [...], that they’re so formulaic and predictable ANYONE could write them (the people who say this never seem to have author credits to their name, nor can they name any romance novels that they’ve read), etc, but Ms. Wendell blasts these myths out of the water with real-life examples from both readers and authors. [...] sections where the readers chimed in with the things they learned from the books they read: “That kind of hero makes for a good read, but I wouldn’t be able to stand him in real life,” “When the heroine was acting like that, I realized I do that too, and I immediately began to change my behavior,” and “It helped me to understand that I’m worthy of being treated better than I had been in my previous relationships” are all epiphanies that dawned on romance readers while they had their noses buried in a book. Who says you can’t learn anything from romance? [...] a genre that has been demeaned since its inception but still marches on strong and never backs down.” (<https://shesprobablyatthelibrary.home.blog/2019/05/30/everything-i-know-about-love-i-learned-from-romance-novels-sarah-wendell/>; lesedato 10.03.21)

Sarah Wendell og Candy Tans *Beyond Heaving Bosoms: The Smart Bitches' Guide to Romance Novels* (2000) inneholder bl.a. en "in-depth discussion of romance cover art through the ages [...] what are the driving forces behind the popularity of romance novels? How have the plots changed? Is an alpha male still the way to booklist success? How can those familiar plot devices (e.g. the secret baby, women dressed as men and vice versa) be kept fresh? [...] Big Misunderstandings (you know, the part when the heroine sees the hero with another woman who turns out to be his sister/mother/boss but decides to break it off in a huff)." (<https://samstillreading.wordpress.com/2013/11/16/beyond-heaving-bosoms-the-smart-bitches-guide-to-romance-novels-by-sarah-wendell-and-candy-tan/>; lesedato 10.03.21)

I en kjærlighetsroman "the focus is on a hero and heroine's courtship at the expense of other characters and other experiences" (Deborah Kaplan sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 99). Både hun og han må gjennomgå en læringsprosess for å innse både sine egne svakheter og sin framtidige partners styrker (Kaufmann 2007 s. 308). Kjærlighetsromaner skal framstå som "kloke" gjennom at de viser innsikt i menneskehjertet, i menneskers dypeste følelsesliv (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 201). Målet er "å finne frem til den ene personen som kan bekrefte en individuell egenverdi [...] Ifølge den tyske filosofen Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998) inngår vi en uskreven avtale om at vi skal se hverandre på den måten vi ønsker å bli sett. [...] en stor lengsel etter kjærligheten. Man ser på kjærligheten som livets høyeste mening." (Christian Refsum i *Morgenbladet* 11.–17. november 2016 s. 47)

Det første møtet mellom han og henne er ofte avgjørende, med beskrivelser som dette: "She jumped, her eyes going wide and startled. Then as her gaze flashed to his, she saw his control shatter in an explosion of raw need that stunned every sense she possessed. His face went hard, his eyes fierce, blazing, almost savage in their passionate hunger. He looked primitive, as if polite society had barely touched him. Fear, sheer primal female fear, streaked through her, urging flight, but at the same time she was paralysed, completely and helplessly fascinated." (Tauchert 2005 s. xiii) Den forelskede personen trekkes mellom ønsket om å skjule sine følelser overfor den personen hun eller han elsker, og ønsket om å vise lidenskapen (Alladaye 2006 s. 135).

"The romantic conception of love focuses our attention on the opening moments of a relationship. It regards falling in love as the essence of love. [...] We want love to last. But romantic vision concentrates only on the opening stages of encounter with another person. [...] The later part of the relationship is just the after-glow of the genuine period of love." (John Armstrong i boka *Conditions of Love*; her sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 103). " 'Not all love stories are romances.' Some are simply novels about love. [...] a romance is, first and foremost, a story about a woman. [...] To qualify as a romance, the story must chronicle not merely the events of a courtship but *what it feels like* to be the *object* of one." (Janice Radway sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 59)

Noen motiver går igjen i kjærlighetsromanene, f.eks. askepott-motivet og kvinnen som “frelser” mannen. Bøkene har en “courtship story”. “Every woman wants instinctively to tame a devil through the purity of her love” sa Barbara Cartland om kvinners behov for å forløse kjærlighetsevnen i “kalde” menn. Mange kjærlighetsromaner handler om kvinner som vinner menns kjærlighet og respekt fra et utgangspunkt der mannen er fortvilet, kynisk og har mistet all livsglede. Kvinnen er frelseren for både seg selv og mannen, og kjærligheten er selve frelsen. I disse romanene inngår kjærligheten i en slags skapelsesmyte. Det er kjærligheten som er betingelsen for at mennesket skal finne tilværelsen meningsfull. Kjærlighet (eros i åndelig forstand) har siden den greske filosofen Platon vært forbundet med dyp erkjennelse, livsinnsikt, kunnskap og visdom. Kjærligheten kan altså oppfattes som kjernen i livets egentlige, dypeste verdier. Romanene kan gi leserne “affirmation for the worth not just of women but also of the “womanly” values of love and relationship” (Long 2003 s. 29).

Motivet “å kysse våken” er sentralt i noen historier (Kaufmann 2007 s. 98), dvs. at kvinnen gjennom erotisk tilnærming oppdager sin sterke evne til kjærlighet, hengivenhet osv. “The final kiss” markerer at to halvsirkler er forent til en helhet, og peker samtidig framover som en markør for “happily ever after” (Kaufmann 2007 s. 118). Målet for romanen er at hun og han skal bli en “evig og hellig monogam enhet” (Didier Coste i Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 198).

Hun og han når fram til “du-er-alt-for-meg-øyeblikket” (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 204), som f.eks. kan komme til uttrykk slik: “All my life I’ve been searching for something, I didn’t know what. I’ve undertaken dangerous assignments in strange places, and still this inexplicable urge drove me on, but now my quest is ended.” (Elizabeth Ashtons *Moonlight on the Nile*, 1979, s. 188)

“Romance novels are often criticized for certain plot elements that occur over and over in the genre [...] the books that hit the bestseller lists are invariably those with plots that place an innocent young woman at risk with a powerful, enigmatic male. Her future happiness and *his* depend upon her ability to teach him how to love. Writers in the genre know that the plot elements that lend themselves to such clashes are those which force the hero and heroine into a highly charged emotional situation which neither can escape without sacrificing his or her agenda: forced marriage, vengeance, kidnapping, and so forth. Such situations effectively ensure intimacy while establishing clear battle lines. They produce conflicts with stakes that are particularly important to women. They promise the possibility of a victory that romance readers find deeply satisfying: a victory that is an affirmation of life, a victory that fuses male and female.” (Linda Barlow og Jayne Ann Krentz i <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/ENGL618/readings/theory/Krentz&BarlowRomanceCodes.pdf>; lesedato 23.08.13)

Den unge kvinnen befinner seg vanligvis i en mellomfase, “that short but turbulent interval between a young woman’s identification as ‘daughter-of-the-father’ and as ‘wife-of-the-husband’.” (Tauchert 2005 s. 21)

Heltinnen kan i begynnelsen av romanen være ensom og ulykkelig, men hun er vakker og klok (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 211-212). Hun kan være en såkalt ingenue, dvs. en uskyldig, naiv og lengtende ung kvinne (“uskyldsren”). Ulykke underveis i romanhandlingen er aldri irreversibel/uopprettelig for heltinnen (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 215). Kvinnen kan gi mannen en ny sjanse slik at han kan vise seg fra en bedre side.

Noen kjærlighetsromaner viser at motsetninger tiltrekker hverandre, slik at en kvinne og en mann som er svært forskjellige og kanskje misliker hverandre til å begynne med, forelsker seg.

“In short, a trope is a plot structure, theme, storyline, character trait, motif, or plot device that is commonly used in storytelling. [...] there are certain tropes that are expected in certain genres (happily ever after in romance stories, for example). [...] With so many romance subgenres, there are plenty of popular tropes to choose from. Most romance novels have several of the following tropes in them.

Happy Ending – The most popular and important romance trope on the list!

The Love Triangle – Three characters, one choice, and some unavoidable hurt feelings. Love triangles make for plenty of tension.

Forced Proximity – Two characters who find love when they’re forced to spend time together.

Forbidden Love – Romeo and Juliet, but without the tragic ending and made with the modern romance reader in mind.

The Enemies to Lovers Trope – The characters start out hating each other. But true love prevails. (Often combined with the Forced Proximity trope).

Fake Relationship – One character ropes [catch, fasten] another into posing as their partner – often to get a nagging relative off their back. But what starts out as pretend soon turns serious in this popular trope.

The Other Woman/Man – Be careful with this one. No one likes a cheater, which is why there’s often some “legitimate” reason for being unfaithful to the partner.

Incapable of Love – That character who has been hurt so bad they’ve given up on love. Until ...

Love Is the Answer – It doesn't matter what the question is.

The Pure and the Promiscuous – One character (often a female) is inexperienced in the ways of love. The other (often a male) is overly experienced. You know the rest. Perhaps a trope that's antiquated and certainly problematic in today's culture.

Love at First Glimpse (Instalove) – The characters don't need to get to know each other to see if they're compatible. They fall in love without even talking. The rest of the story is usually a "will they won't they" plotline.

Marriage of Convenience – There's no love between this couple. At least, not at first. But as the two get to know each other, they soon discover the sparks.

Unexpected Love Interest – While the protagonist goes on date after date with the wrong people, their friend is always there for support. Pretty soon, the main character realizes that the "friend" is the one they've loved all along.

Fated Mates – In the paranormal romance genre, the fated mates trope is where two soulmates [...] find each other and things soon get steamy.

The Misunderstanding – It's not all sunshine and rainbows in romance stories. There needs to be a conflict that comes to a head near the end of the book. This conflict is often predicated on a simple misunderstanding. This is one trope that many romance readers feel is overused." (Dave Chesson i <https://kindlepreneur.com/book-tropes/>; lesedato 21.01.25)

Kvinnen lengter etter en idealmann og mannen etter en idealkvinne, og når de finner hverandre, finner de også den som ligger nærmest idealet. Dette kan forstås ut fra det som psykologen Carl Gustav Jung kalte arketyper anima (mannens indre kvinnelige dimensjon) og arketyper animus (kvinnens indre mannlige dimensjon). Anima og animus trenger hverandre for å utgjøre en helhet.

I kjærlighetsromaner er gjensidig forelskelse en betingelse for lykke. Kjærligheten settes på prøve og kan virke utsiktsløs, men den seirer til slutt over all motstand. Kjærligheten er en drivkraft og naturkraft som alltid triumferer i denne litteraturen.

En amerikansk lesesirkel for kvinner valgte kjærlighetsromaner til å lese sammen og snakke om i gruppa. De ville ha "books that speak to the emotions, not the intellect. They defend authors from criticism by stating that the books come from their hearts. Indeed, these readers identify with romance writers as "kindred souls," call them by their first names, and compare their own growth as readers with romance authors' ambition as writers (Griffin 1999, 168). Seeking a mode of reading that gives effortless access to a moving fictional experience, they describe the pleasures of "gliding" through the books, or just "skimming" them, and they account for their "love affair" with romances by asserting that they find in them

something that “engages their hearts” or even lets them “cry over it a little bit” (294, 253, 344). Most of them so desire a happy ending that they read the end first, and they defend themselves against the pain of an unsatisfactory resolution by keeping their emotional distance as they read: “If I do read a book that hurts, I want to know in advance that it’s gonna hurt and then I don’t let myself get into it so deeply that my heart is hurt” (354). Group members also support each other in reading for escape, a mode of reading that is one reason romances are so stigmatized. Members in the suburban group recognize that they are seeking escape and feel entirely justified in this wish because of the difficulties that they face in everyday life. As one member says: “I don’t want to read a book that has a painful ending. That is escape. You know, all of us live our lives in very real, I do, in very realistic ways. I recognize there are things I’m never going to do. There are things I look back on with wonder and joy. But to read something to escape and be kind of rewarded – to read something that is going to end with people getting together, I mean that is important to me.” (Griffin 1999, 296)” (Long 2003 s. 160)

“[T]he suburban women also find romance novels deeply true, because for them the novels affirm the significance of loving and nurturing relationships in general and of heterosexual love in particular. This set of values or way of being in the world is the very bedrock of their subjectivity; and both their reading and their meetings validate its paramount importance. In their view, building a permanent heterosexual relationship that can successfully survive conflict is central to the genre, and this value is reiterated every time they read a romance. This is what satisfies, reassures, and makes them feel good at the end of a book. “I like to see a man and a woman work through their problems, you know, and then wind up together.” [...] A romantic attachment between a man and a woman is the linchpin for a broader ideology that celebrates love and nurture as the central organizing force for human life. [...] Members of the group valued romance novels so highly because they felt the books demonstrated the supreme significance of loving relationships in general.” (Long 2003 s. 160-161)

Den franske forfatteren Stendhal skrev i *Om kjærlighet* (1822) at “from the first novel a woman surreptitiously opens at fifteen, she secretly awaits the arrival of passion-love” (sitert fra Gay 1986 s. 138). ““In love,” Stendhal writes in *De l’Amour*, “everything is a *sign*.” And he lends this terse assertion, too, as is his habit, concrete form. “The greatest happiness love can offer,” he notes, “is the first pressure of the hand by the woman one loves.”” (Gay 1986 s. 67)

På 1800-tallet “[I]ending libraries, railway stalls, readers’ circles, and book clubs, the stable suppliers of the bourgeois appetite for novels, specialized in predictable romances and melodramas. All aimed at the happy ending and were systematically committed to trivializing the instability and disenchantment that bedevil real love.” (Gay 1986 s. 145)

“[M]iddle class women and men after 1830 took for granted that a lengthy, passionate courtship would lead to a love-match. Novels, the main carriers of the romantic discourse during the 19th century, dealt with courtship. Even though most of the popular works of American literature had to dispense with adulterous love as a plot device, obstacles of every other kind could prevent lovers from realizing their passion until the novel ended. But these novels of romance ended with marriage – they were never about marriage.” (John C. Spurlock i <https://watermark.silverchair.com/39-1-287.pdf>; lesedato 14.12.19)

Amalia (1851) av den argentinske forfattere José Mármol “is one of the most popular Latin American novels and, until recently, was required reading in Argentina’s schools. It was written to protest the dictatorship of Juan Manuel de Rosas and to provide a picture of the political events during his regime, but the book’s popularity stemmed from the love story that fuels the plot. Originally published in 1851 in serial form, Marmol’s novel recounts the story of Eduardo and Amalia, who fall in love while he is hiding in her home. Amalia and her cousin Daniel protect him from Rosist persecution, but before the couple and the cousin can escape to safety, they are discovered by the death squad and the young men die. [...] *Amalia* provides a detailed picture of life under a dictatorship combined with lively dialogue, drama, and a tragic love story.” (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/1015969.Amalia>; lesedato 05.04.23)

På begynnelsen av 1800-tallet “a group of women writers who would eventually become known as the Domestic Sentimentalists began to make their presence felt. Picking up the threads of both the earlier sentimental romance and the sentimental Gothic, these writers produced a wide variety of romances, some of which tended toward the Gothic, complete with adventure, suspense, and danger, and others which were of a more domestic and conventionally romantic bent. Many of these novels also used historical settings, and some incorporated religious themes. The unifying factor in these works was one common to all romances: they dealt with the relationships between men and women. From about the 1820s on, the influence of the Domestic Sentimentalists increased until their works completely dominated the market in the 1850s. Among the more popular Domestic Sentimentalists were Catharine Maria Sedgwick, E.D.E.N. Southworth, Elizabeth Wetherell (Susan Warner), Mary Jane Holmes, Caroline Lee Hentz, Maria Susanna Cummins, and Augusta Jane Evans Wilson. [...] these novelists maintained their popularity [i USA] until well after the Civil War. [...] Although a number of the novels written during the “Golden Age of the Sentimental Domestic Romance” had religious or inspirational aspects, during and just after the Civil War (perhaps somewhat predictably), novels that emphasized these principles were particularly popular. Augusta Jane Evans’ *St. Elmo* (1867) and *The Gates Ajar* (1868) by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps are two especially popular examples of this type.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 6-7)

“[D]omestic romances by English women writers were also popular in America during this period. One of the best known is *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) by Charlotte M. Yonge. Considered by some to be the book to which the beginnings of popular romantic fiction can be traced, according to Rachel Anderson this book differs from the “ ‘didactic’ novels of the times... [in] its combination of the important message [religious, in this case] with the author’s own emotional involvement with her hero, her heroine, her theme, and her readers.” It is this increased emotional involvement that Anderson feels makes this the forerunner of today’s romance novels. It also is interesting to note that *The Heir of Redclyffe* makes the point that love solves all problems, an underlying tenet of most romances today. Following the Civil War, the works of the Domestic Sentimentalists continued to be popular, although romances of other types and in other formats were beginning to appear. Especially popular were the weekly story papers, which published serialized romance novels by many, now largely unremembered, writers. One of the most prolific and popular of these authors was Laura Jean Libbey. All of her more than 80 “working girl” novels, published from the mid-1880s to the mid-1920s, center around the plights of poor, virtuous girls forced to fend for themselves in the “wicked city.” Eventually they are rescued from danger and drudgery by financially secure, upstanding heroes who whisk them off to futures of domestic wedded bliss.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 52)

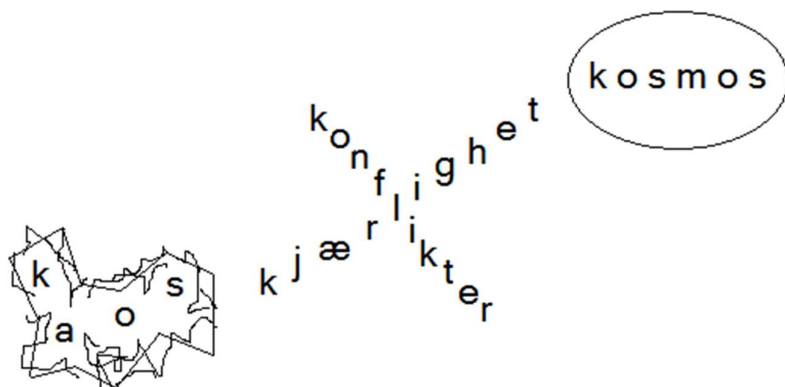
“Frances E. W. Harper publishes *Iola Leroy, or Shadows Uplifted*, one of the first novels published by a Black woman, in 1892. While the novel covers many topics, it includes the relationship between Iola Leroy and Dr. Frank Latimer, making it the first novel by a Black author to portray the love story (with a happy ending!) of two Black protagonists.” (Steve Ammidown i <https://romancehistory.com/2021/02/16/a-black-romance-timeline/>; lesedato 09.06.23)

“[T]he function of Romance in female British working-class fiction of the early 1900s is to express the desire for “an individual subjectivity that is posed against an inescapable collectivity”: “The romance plot comes into play not only to convey a longing for relations based in tenderness, rather than exploitation, but also to represent a utopian private arena in which one is valued for one’s gendered ‘self’ alone” (p. 142).” (Pamela Fox gjengitt og sitert fra Auken, Lauridsen og Rasmussen 2015 s. 311)

“During the early decades of the twentieth century in Britain, it was predominantly middle-class women who felt the daily strictures of (and protested against) romantic codes of behavior. Working-class women were more typically denied access to those codes by their own cultural experience. Romance functioned as an emblem of privilege [and] was reserved for others. While the cinema and popular novels encouraged their diverse female audiences to identify with an array of romance heroines, working-class mothers made sure their daughters understood that romance was purely a fantasy with little relevance to their lives and that marriage was primarily an economic relation, rather than fulfillment of love (Lewis

11). Unlike their middle and upper-class counterparts, who frequently suffocated at the hands of fathers, brothers, guardians and mothers while playing out the real-life role of romance heroine, working-class women suffered chastisement or ridicule within their communities if they merely made attempts to try the role on.” (Pamela Fox i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/1345818.pdf>; lesedato 27.01.23)

Kvinnen i romanene kan oppleve livet som tomt uten en mann, uansett hvor mange plikter og aktiviteter kvinnen måtte fylle tilværelsen med. Noe av spenningen er knyttet til *når* Kvinnen og Mannen vil innse at de er som skapt for hverandre og elsker hverandre. Denne erkjennelsen kan komme langsomt og etter mange hindringer, skuffelser og misforståelser de to imellom. Den gradvise eller sprangvise utviklingen i handlingen går fra ensomhet til tosomhet, fra tomhet til fylde, fra Kaos til Kosmos. Den kvinnelige hovedpersonen føler seg ensom og er kjærlighets- og opplevelshungrende. Kaoset kan være der før hun og han blir kjent med hverandre, men ofte vil det være de gryende følelsene som skaper kaos, forvirring, usikkerhet og utrygghet.



Kaoset er altså primært et indre kaos i heltinnen og eventuelt i den mannen hun har møtt. Det blir vanskelig for heltinnen å forstå hva hun egentlig føler. Hun opplever uro og tvil, men alt dette vil til slutt fordufte, og hun og han finner harmonisk ro (den kosmiske følelsen av perfekt lykke – i hvert fall for en periode, før og kanskje etter at de gifter seg). Det kan være psykiske hindringer, f.eks. at kvinnen eller mannen ikke klarer å innrømme følelsene sine.

Kaos innebærer en mangel. Kvinnen i tradisjonelle kjærlighetsromaner “is incomplete until she has a man to love her. [...] Women should rely on their men to bring meaning to their lives.” (Helen Leedy i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40968918>; lesedato 14.03.24)

“Near the beginning of the novel, the society that the heroine and hero will confront in their courtship is defined for the reader. This society is in some way flawed; it may be incomplete, superannuated, or corrupt. It always oppresses the heroine and hero. [...] The scene or scenes defining the society establishes the status quo which

the heroine and hero must confront in their attempt to court and marry and which, by their union, they symbolically remake.” (Regis 2003 s. 31)

“Conflict is by far more interesting to read and vicariously experience than quiet contentment. If the hero wrenched control from the heroine by, say, forcing her to sit and relax with a good book while he vacuumed and did the dishes, there wouldn’t be much of a story there, even if these sorts of partners are highly valued in real life. [...] Romance novel heroes often show how much they care in big, showy gestures, like saving the heroine from certain death; small domestic gestures that might come across as womanish, such as cleaning the house after she’s had a difficult day, will rarely show themselves. Additionally, power and an edge of danger are always sexy – but they’re especially sexy when attached to the security of a happy ending. The happy ending allows readers to relax fully into the story and to trust that no matter how badly things are going, events will eventually turn out for the best.” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 74)

Samfunnet kan fungere undertrykkende både for heltinnen og mannen. Barrierene kan være ytre og samfunnsbestemte (sosiale) og indre (psykologiske, subjektive) i heltinnen og/eller helten. Hvis hindringene er interne hos heltinnen, må hun lære seg selv bedre å kjenne og innse hva som er best for henne. Begge de sentrale personene er bundet av sin fortid, men kan frigjøre seg. Heltinnen må overskride hindringene og finne sitt “sanne selv”.

“Eventually, they fall in love. Inevitably, conflicts arise, and the lovers spend a large portion of the book trying to work things out. The conflict can be external (e.g., other people or situations keep the protagonists apart) or internal (e.g., the feelings, values, and past histories of the hero and heroine cause problems), and misunderstandings, both real and imagined, play a large part in keeping the pair at odds. However, by the end of the story, all differences are resolved, the hero and heroine reconcile, and their happy future is generally assured. Although the main plot in all romances is the love story line dealing with the protagonists, subplots of various kinds appear in many of the longer romance works. These subplots are rarely as well developed as is the main story line, but they do add interest and depth to the story as a whole.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 44)

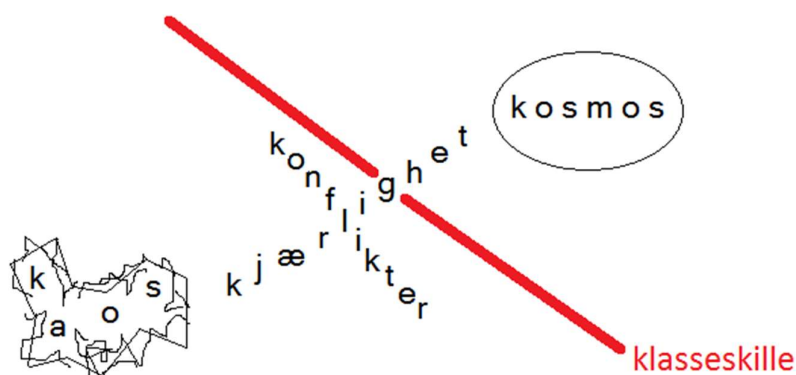
“[T]he interpersonal elements of courtship – the chemistry of the interactions between heroine and hero – are not only thought over and analyzed by the heroine, they are dramatized – made into scenes – and become the subject of the romance, whatever other incidents and issues might be going on in subplots (178). [...] Whether the novel has an alpha hero or a sentimental one (or a combination of the two), whether the heroine is engaged upon taming or healing (or, again, a combination of the two), these reactions, this foregrounded emotionality, is the stuff of the barrier of the book. It is what the heroine and hero have to argue over, discuss, act upon, research, think about, talk to their friends about, avoid, seek out, and otherwise confront each other about. [...] the expression of the societal

disorder (with which all comedies begin) is largely within the heroine and hero themselves, and the twentieth-century hero makes the largest new contribution to this kind of disorder and to its being made orderly by the betrothal at the end of the work.” (Regis 2003 s. 114)

“At the novel’s beginning, his family, both at work and domestically, is in disarray” gjelder for en roman av Nora Roberts, *Hidden Riches* (1994) (Regis 2003 s. 189).

Gjennom disse fortellingene lærer kvinner at “autentisk” kjærlighet er full av motstand før lykken oppnås til slutt (Miriam J. Johnson i <https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/file/9582ffc4-6fd4-4075-9350-a545959b55cb/>; lesedato 09.12.22).

Kjærligheten er veien til harmoni og lykke, men konfliktene, prøvelsene og påkjenningene legger seg på tvers og blir et midlertidig hinder for å nå det kosmos som utgjøres av familien med kvinne, mann og (framtidige) barn. Det kan være forviklinger snarere enn konflikter. Kaoset i begynnelsen er ikke alltid like tydelig, det kan være en rolig, men likevel litt tom tilstand. Blant konfliktene i eldre romaner er ofte klasseskillet det tydeligste – et skille som kan gjøre det nesten umulig for de to unge å få hverandre:

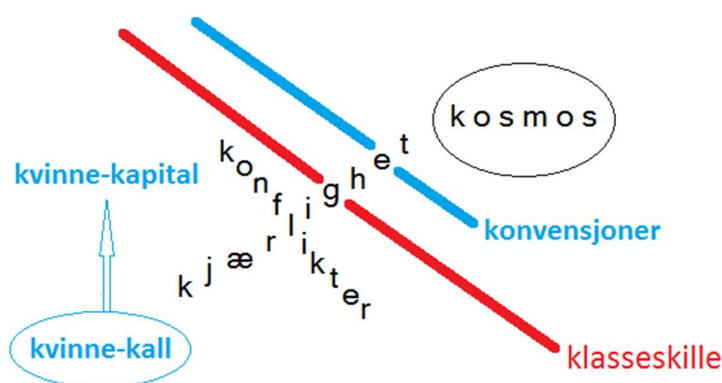


“If the barrier has been external, these impediments are removed or disregarded. Far more common in contemporary romance novels is an interior barrier, in which case the recognition scene consists of the heroine understanding her own psyche better. In the course of the book she has learned to know herself and to distinguish sound perceptions from unsound. She sees the hero clearly and realizes her love for him.” (Regis 2003 s. 36-37)

Engelske Jane Austen har blitt oppfattet som “the godmother of twenty-first-century romance” (Kathryn Sutherland sitert fra <https://journals.openedition.org/interfaces/4858>; lesedato 28.12.24). I noen romaner, f.eks. av Austen, er den ugifte kvinnens liv preget av rolig, ventende lengsel – etter å oppleve forelskelse og

kjærlighet, få en mann og sin egen familie. Den franske forfatteren Stendhal skriver i det lange essayet *Om kjærlighet* (1822, på norsk i 1995) om “*crystallization*, according to which one is already disposed to fall in love, as one might be disposed to catch a disease, without having any particular person in view. An ‘object of love’ appears, upon whom are deposited, like crystals on a branch left in a salt-mine, all the qualities already prepared in the mind of the lover.” (Brereton 1976b s. 221)

For å være attraktiv på “ekteskapsmarkedet” må kvinnen skape seg en “kapital” av kunnskaper og ferdigheter (i Austens romaner er det bl.a. å være god i håndarbeid som syng og brodering, å kunne spille piano og å være relativt belest). Hennes viktigste kapital er likevel hennes skjønnhet. En kvinnes kall i disse eldre romanene er å bli gift og få barn, ikke å ha et yrke. Austens bøker er sederomaner (“novels of manners”) der svært strenge konvensjoner for hvordan kvinner og menn skal oppføre seg (“manners”) hindrer åpen kommunikasjon, og dette vanskeliggjør en kjærlighets-relasjon. Brudd på konvensjonene bringer skam over mannen og særlig kvinnen.



Med parforholdet og ekteskapet blir ensomheten brutt. Hun og han får små smakebiter av kosmos underveis i handlingen: den første berøring, det første kyss osv. Når hun og han gifter seg, er det som om selvet og samfunnet også gifter seg. De to blir en ny familie, som forener to slekter og ikke minst skaper en ny generasjon ved å få barn.

En fase i utviklingen av deres parforhold setter dem på prøve om de fortjener den store kjærligheten. Fasene i fortellingen er ofte forelskelse, atskillelse og ekteskap. “Gjennom konflikter og atskillelse har de vist at de har den rette kjærlighetsevnen som ikke er forstyrret av utøylelige drifter, pengebegjær eller andre uhumskheter. De har fortjent hverandre” (Vibe 1984 s. 6). Den avsluttende lykken kan komme på grunn av såkalt poetisk rettferdighet (lesernes behov for at de gode skal få sin belønning), ikke fordi den er sannsynlig. Det at heltinnen opplever den store kjærligheten og oppnår lykke, kan fungere som en slags “hevning” over de som har begått henne urett. Den store Kjærligheten er også den store Rettferdighet (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 214).

Annick Houels bok *Kjærlighetsromanen og dens kvinnelige leser: En veldig lang pasjon* (1997; på fransk) handler om Harlequin-romaner, og tilskriver dem samme funksjon som psykologen Bruno Bettelheim gir folkeeventyr: Tekstene viser fram og bidrar til å bearbeide konflikter.

“A British Canadian venture, Harlequins sold 14,000 copies in 1966 and somewhere over 50 million in 1979. Once addicted, you will be maintained in your habit; you can buy them at supermarkets and drugstores and airports and train stations; you can even become a Harlequin member and receive 12 Harlequins a month for wonderfully little money. The timing of the Harlequins’ prodigious success has coincided exactly with the appearance and spread of the women’s movement, and much of its increasingly anti-feminist content reflects this symbolic relationship. [...] The Harlequin heroine is a young girl; on rare occasions she may be as old as 25 or 26, but she has seldom enjoyed more than a few kisses from the opposite sex. She is not a beauty, nor is she talented, nor invariably good-tempered. She is a candidate for subduing, and for gratitude. If she is good-looking and competent, her gifts are but provocations, we quickly learn, to brutal destiny. [...] The Harlequins – and herein lies their power – crudely elaborate the physiological and psychological condition of girls in love, dilated and contracted by the uncertainties of passion. [...] The hero is an arrogant, glamorous figure who travels alone. Some woman, a first wife or his mother, has hurt him, and for this he holds the opposite sex in permanent suspicion. The Harlequin girl must love her Harlequin man no matter how viciously he treats her; he can despise and abuse her (and other women) on the grounds that one woman once ill-treated him. The logic is startling, the fantasy obvious: women need men pitifully more than men need them; they can’t afford such sweeping judgments nor stand such sexual exile. In this totally anti-feminist world, the Harlequin heroine is fighting for the status of an exception; she neither wins nor wants the vindication of her sex: clearly a lost cause.” (Ann Douglas i essayet “Soft-Porn Culture”, 1980; <https://people.uleth.ca/~daniel.odonnell/files/Douglas1980.pdf>; lesedato 26.08.23)

“Passivity, it seems, is at the heart of the romance-reading experience in the sense that the final goal of the most valued romances is the creation of perfect union in which the ideal male, who is masculine and strong, yet nurturant, finally admits his recognition of the intrinsic worth of the heroine. Thereafter, she is required to do nothing more than exist as the center of this paragon’s attention.” (Radway 1983)

Harlequin-heltens “proximity alone can send the blood pounding through her veins, make her hands tremble, deprive her of speech and reason. His touch devastates. She can only cling, like a drowning woman to a spar, to the notion that she must not “give in” to the hero until he says he loves her. [...] She is at heart “old-fashioned” in every way, often a fine little cook, a plucky apprentice (but of course no more) to masculine sports and interests, the product of a traditional home, someone who usually longs for children above all else. The encouragement to take sex more freely, more casually, that “Women’s Lib” (as it is always called in the

Harlequins) seems to offer women, the Harlequin imply, may strip an unsuspecting girl of her surest source of power.” (Ann Douglas i <https://people.uleth.ca/~daniel.odonnell/files/Douglas1980.pdf>; lesedato 26.08.23)

Margaret Jensens bok *Love's Sweet Return: The Harlequin Story* (1984) “examines the phenomenon of romance fiction, focusing specifically on one of the most successful book publishers in the world, the Canadian-based Harlequin Enterprises. Margaret Jensen details the rise of the company, examines the Harlequin formula, and evaluates the growth and impact of both Harlequin and its competition. She also assesses recent shifts in the content of Harlequins, particularly as they pertain to women’s changing roles in society.” (<https://uwpress.wisc.edu/books/0740.htm> ; lesedato 19.08.24)

Harlequin Enterprises’ “marketing strategy includes free distribution of Harlequins to new mothers in hospital” (Miles 1988).

Noen romaner inneholder de følgende “three distinct stages: (1) the people involved in a love story either do or do not want each other, (2) do or do not get each other, and (3) do or do not keep each other. Moreover, in instances of all of the above classes of love stories there are interesting causes and consequences of (not) wanting, (not) getting, and (not) keeping each other. *Pride and Prejudice* is a novel (and several films) entitled by the two major causes preventing the two potential lovers from even wanting each other, at least for a while.” (Gerard Steen i https://www.researchgate.net/publication/300471617_Genre_between_the_humanities_and_the_sciences; lesedato 07.01.19)

Den utvalgte mannen kan gjerne være rik, men det må gå tydelig fram at rikdom ikke er nok, på langt nær tilstrekkelig. Penger er uten verdi hvis forholdet ikke er bygd på kjærlighet (Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 216). Pengene er en verdi som kommer uten å være oppsøkt, uten å være kalkulert av heltinnen (s. 217). Hjertet og fornuften forenes (s. 218).

De to må passe til hverandre, utfylle hverandre for å bli lykkelig som par. I *Pride and Prejudice* tenker Elizabeth Bennet slik: “She began now to comprehend that he was exactly the man, who, in disposition and talents, would most suit her. His understanding and temper, though unlike her own, would have answered all her wishes. It was an union that must have been to the advantage of both; by her ease and liveliness, his mind might have been softened, his manners improved, and from his judgment, information, and knowledge of the world, she must have received benefit of greater importance.”

Den feministiske forskeren Angela Miles har “read one or two Harlequins over the years when nothing else was available. All I saw, at first, were sexist, predictable, often poorly written stories with boorish heroes and embarrassingly childish heroines. They have a rigid formula which, unlike many other aspects, has

remained unchanged over the years. In fact, the guide sheet for aspiring authors warns that the plot must not interfere with the romance and asks them to make their manuscript approximately (!) 188 pages in length. As one romance writer succinctly put it : “In the *Roman rose* the plot is always the same: attraction followed by repulsion; despair at the hero’s indifference; jealousy; reconciliation on the last page.” That means the last page, literally. Never earlier.” (Miles 1988). Romanen kan avsluttes med et storslått bryllup, og brud og brudgom som stråler av av lykke. Teksten følger eventyrformelen “så levde de lykkelig alle sine dager” (“they lived happily ever after”). Mye skal hende i ekteskapet, men fortellingen strekker seg ikke til dette muligens “rolige” stadiet.

“Perhaps we still read and care about [Jane] Austen because she [...] allows us at least temporarily to suspend our belief in the inevitability of suffering.” (Tauchert 2005 s. xv) “Før et publikum som vil føle noe holder det ikke å se noen forelske seg, vi vil se hovedpersoner som blir satt på prøve og foredlet av kjærligheten. Vi vil se folk ønske så sterkt å redde noe eller beskytte noe at de trosser hindringer og overvinner seg selv.” (Inger Merete Hobbeldstad i http://ingermerete.blogg.no/1313795392_pomp_and_circumstance.html; lesedato 18.01.16) Heltinnen er tildelt rollen som “øverste dommer” over personenes hjarter og følelser (Marcel Graner i Guise og Neuschäfer 1986 s. 211). Hun har innsikt i hva som er ekte kjærlighet og kan (etter hvert) vurdere hva som er verdt å satse på og hva som ikke er det.

“[E]very Austen heroine [...] learns that she can only expect joy when she has accepted who she really is. She must throw off the false expectations and wrong ideas that have combined to obscure her true nature and prevented her from what makes her happy. Only when she undergoes this evolution does she have a chance at finding fulfillment; only then does she have the clarity to recognize her partner when he presents himself – and only at that moment is she genuinely worthy of love.” (Marena Galluccio i [https://mediagalreads.com/2020/04/07/logic-versus-emotion-spoiler-review-of-the-other-bennet-sister-by-janice-hadlow/2/#:~:text=Being%20so%20focused%20on%20logic,Mrs.](https://mediagalreads.com/2020/04/07/logic-versus-emotion-spoiler-review-of-the-other-bennet-sister-by-janice-hadlow/2/#:~:text=Being%20so%20focused%20on%20logic,Mrs.;); lesedato 05.04.22)

“One of the things that makes Austen so astonishingly successful as a writer is also the thing that associates her work with the basest of feminine fantasies: she narrates the daydream of the heroine’s persistent desire to be *somehow* saved by an ideal gentleman: a common desire to be rescued from ‘all this’, and to live ‘happily ever after’. The ‘somehow’ seems to involve a feminine power to transform an animalistic masculine desire into civility, or gentlemanly action.” (Tauchert 2005 s. xiii) “The ‘form’ of romance, taken as an ‘axial system’, expresses a very human desire for salvation.” (Tauchert 2005 s. xiv)

“Marriage in Austen’s novels is not only the ‘career’ most real women of the time had to look forward to. Rather it is a way of grounding in familiar reality a powerful old romantic and religious symbol. In romance it is not only the heroine and hero who marry, but ... self and society. In Austen’s novels many other

seemingly opposed principles are wed as well, including humanity and God.”
(Deborah Ross sitert fra Tauchert 2005 s. 48)

“The Period Romance is basically a love story with a historical setting. It differs from the Romantic Historical and the Historical Novel in that, except for providing a few incidental historical characters and a backdrop for a traditional love story, the historical people and events of the period rarely affect the story line. The social history and customs of the time, however, have tremendous impact. Characteristically, a Period Romance recreates in great detail a romanticized version of a bygone era in which readers can immerse themselves, experiencing along with the heroine (or hero) the everyday life of that particular time in history. Therefore, the details of daily existence are of critical importance to the overall atmosphere of the story. There is a heavy emphasis on the description of clothes, food, houses and estates, and manners. It is not unusual, for example, to be given exact descriptions of the clothes of all the important characters (male and female) in attendance at a particular ball, of the refreshments that were served, and of the dishes the late evening supper included.”
(Kristin Ramsdell i *Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre*; her sitert fra <https://silo.pub/romance-fiction-a-guide-to-the-genre.html>; lesedato 20.04.22)

Forfatteren Donna Hatch liker kjærlighetsromaner som foregår i Regency-perioden, dvs. Austens historiske periode: Personene i disse bøkene er “very cultured. From a young age they were taught to dance, play musical instruments, sing, paint, and recite poetry. Even many of those of the working classes were receiving an education at that time, an unprecedented movement in England. I love the way people in Regency England spoke so eloquently. The upper classes didn’t maul the language – they used correct grammar and had an enormous vocabulary. They prized wit and excelled in using the famous British understatement. I love their dry humor. They also spoke and wrote beautifully and spent a great deal of time writing stories, poems, letters, and journaling. Jane Austen’s novels are almost like poetry. She carefully chose each word for its wording, imagery, and rhythm to deliver the exact nuance she wanted. Gentlemen were civilized and treated ladies with courtesy in a hundred little ways. They stood when a lady entered the room, doffed their hats, bowed, curtailed their language, offered an arm, and more. They were also athletic; they hunted, raced, fenced, boxed, rode horses. They were manly. Strong. Noble. Resolute. Honorable. I love that about them! All of this is what makes them perfect heroes for both historical fiction and Regency romance novels. By the Regency Era, ladies and gentlemen had gotten rid of those powdered wigs of the past few centuries, toned down previously excessive manner of dress which once included excessive ruffles and lace, and even – my personal favorite – bathed daily. Men’s three-piece suits worn today are patterned after Regency gentlemen’s clothing. Another aspect of the Regency that draws me is that it landed in the middle of the Napoleonic Wars, which creates a natural backdrop for tension and conflict. Men and boys went off to war. Some didn’t come home; others came home but were forever changed. This darkness in history creates what’s known as the tortured hero, and I love helping my fictional tortured heroes find peace and

healing, and matching them up with ladies who understand and love them.” (<http://donna-hatch.com/why-regency-is-my-passion/>; lesedato 11.05.17) Hatch har selv skrevet Regency-romaner.

Den amerikanske forfatteren Kathleen E. Woodiwiss “is credited with pioneering the historical romance genre with her 1972 novel, *The Flame and the Flower*. [...] *The Flame and the Flower* was ground-breaking because it featured a strong heroine and actual sex scenes. It sold over 2.3 million copies.” (<https://www.fictiondb.com/author/kathleen-e-woodiwiss~7989.htm>; lesedato 14.09.22) “Woodiwiss, a best-selling genre novelist widely credited with having founded the historical romance in its modern – carnal – incarnation [...] If Mrs. Woodiwiss’s books did not always find favor with reviewers, they were hugely popular with readers. Her 13 novels have together sold more than 36 million copies [...] The periods and settings for her stories ranged from the Norman Conquest through Elizabethan England to the American Civil War. Her characters had names like Adriana, Arabella, Beauregard and Colton. Her men had rugged exteriors that belied meltingly soft centers. Her women tended toward the virginal, a condition usually remedied by novel’s end. [...] Some feminist critics condemned Mrs. Woodiwiss for perpetuating the stereotype of women as submissive objects of male desire. (Her heroines, always ravishing, are sometimes also ravished; some later choose to marry their ravishers and live happily ever after.) Others, however, saw her work as celebrating women’s sexual power and capacity for self-determination. The plots of Mrs. Woodiwiss’s novels may include, but are not limited to, many of the following: dark and stormy nights; poisonings and stolen inheritances; waistcoats, buskins and dispensable bodices; switched babies, penniless orphans and heartless relatives; forced marriages, mistaken identity and family secrets; mortal peril, daring rescues and a generous assortment of titled noblemen. [...] “I’m insulted when my books are called erotic,” she told Publishers Weekly in 1977. “I don’t think people who say that have read my books. I believe I write love stories. With a little spice.”” (Margalit Fox i <https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/12/arts/12woodiwiss.html>; lesedato 16.09.22)

Ifølge en studie av sjangeren er “the clearest predecessor we can find for the modern romance novel: *The Flame and the Flower* by Kathleen E. Woodiwiss. [...] It was a runaway bestseller and spawned countless books that followed, with various degrees of success, that particular formula, such as Rosemary Rogers’s infamous *Sweet Savage Love* (which, if nothing else, is probably the most-parodied romance novel title of all time).” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 11)

Helen Hughes’ *The Historical Romance* (2003) “explores the ways in which romance authors seek to represent our fantasies of life in the past. Examining how the cut-and-thrust swashbucklers of the 1930s gave way to female-orientated romances, Helen Hughes takes a comprehensive look at how romance authors have dealt with the turbulent question of female independence, and how traditional attitudes towards love, marriage and women’s sexuality have been approached in

more recent texts. Hughes also charts the ways in which the marketing of romance has developed, with the eventual explosion of the mass market and the blockbusting family sagas of the eighties. The Historical Romance unravels the formulaic and mythical nature of historical romance to provide a fascinating study of this highly popular genre.” (https://books.google.no/books/about/The_Historical_Romance.html; lesedato 22.03.24)

Mange romaner og romanserier handler om *forbudt* kjærlighet, f.eks. den amerikanske forfatteren Stephenie Meyers *Twilight*-serie (2005 og senere) om kjærlighet mellom et menneske og en vampyr.

“Registeret over konfliktskapende forhold er bemerkelsesverdig lite [i legeromaner]: misforståelser, uoppgjorte kjærlighetsforhold i fortiden, nye rivaler/rivalinner, arbeids- og familieforpliktelser er blant de vanligste.” (Vibe 1984 s. 5) Problemene kan ta overhånd, slik at romanen ender ulykkelig. Det gjelder for eksempel Knut Hamsuns lyriske kjærlighetsroman *Victoria* (1898), der den kvinnelige hovedpersonen dør av sykdom og sorg. *Victoria* er også en kunstnerroman, der kunsten synes å gå på bekostning av erotikk og ekteskap.

“A rival for the hero’s love is another constant in the romance formula. Ninety-eight percent of the Harlequins that Margaret Jensen surveyed had a female rival for the hero’s love. In earlier Harlequins, these are a whole species of extremely beautiful, manipulative women who pretend to be all heart and warmth to men but don’t bother to hide their coldness, indifference, and cunning from other women.” (Miles 1988).

“In more recent Harlequins, the other woman is much less likely to be a nasty, male-identified, woman-hating manipulator. She may be kind and friendly, warm, generous, and gifted, but still breath-takingly beautiful and a feared potential rival for the hero’s love: “It would have been so much easier to feel right about her feelings for Travis if Miranda was a witch. But she wasn’t. She was nice and sweet and offered the hand of friendship” (*Wonderers Dream*, Rita Clay, Silhouette, 1981 [...]). This, like other significant recent changes in Harlequin’s content (such as heroines who are older, are not virgins, and will keep their careers after marriage) is an interesting sign of the impact of feminism in this unlikely arena. More important for my argument, however, is the fact that none of these changes alter the basic dynamics of the Harlequin read. The unwitting, innocent, and even likable rival, is still a rival. Her presence and the hero’s suspected love for her still puts the heroine through the tortures of the damned and allows the reader to relive her sibling rivalry in the security of a happy ending: “The pain of unrequited love was all the more unbearable because she loved him so desperately, and there was nothing she could do” (*The Man on the Peak*, Katerina Britt, 2305: 139-140). For we readers know all the time that, whether the heroine or even the hero know it or not, the hero is, or very soon will be, madly in love with the heroine: “His gaze went past the

glittering figure [of the rival] to the girl in a simple flame colored dress who stood in the shadows” (*The Hills of Maketu*, Gloria Bevan, 1309: 164).” (Miles 1988)

Kvinnen lengter etter en mann, men velger egentlig ikke hvilken mann det skal være. Skjebnen velger for henne. Og for å få denne mannen, må hun ha bestemte egenskaper. I noen romaner er hun primært passiv, men med en godhet som virker som en åndelig kraft i det stille: “[T]he heroine of a Harlequin novel sits patiently and devotedly waiting for her hidden virtues to be rewarded” (Naper 1999 s. 127). Mannen har derimot dårlige egenskaper, men han forandrer seg: “Initially he is depicted as distant, cold, cynical, even brutal. By the final page, however, he has become protective, close and sensitive. [...] this aspect of the genre can function as a kind of prop or substitute for the reality of the reader’s own love life. Provided the heroine is patient enough to wait meekly and lovingly, the day will dawn when love conquers all, at least in the world of romances.” (Naper 1999 s. 127) Samtidig som det er noe skjebnebestemt ved at de to får hverandre, er det også tilfeldigheter som er på kvinnen og mannens side (hvis ikke han hadde vært akkurat der på det tidspunktet ..., hvis ikke hun hadde ... osv.). Romanenes “controlling idea” er at “love conquers all” (Matthews og Moody 2007 s. 32).

“The heroine is confused by the hero’s behaviour since, though he is obviously interested in her, he is mocking, cynical, contemptuous, often hostile, and even somewhat brutal. By the end, however, all misunderstandings are cleared away, and the hero reveals his love for the heroine, who reciprocates.” (Tania Modleski sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 52)

“Janet Patterson has argued that, through the hero’s love, the heroine/reader gains access to the male world in the only way open to her. Tania Modleski and others have also noted the satisfaction for women in vicariously winning power over the male dominator. This is no doubt true but it’s not the whole truth. The Harlequin world is a female world, not a male world. There is no male world in a Harlequin. The hero’s world is one of beautiful furniture, comfortable beds, magnificent views, delicious and plentiful food, and fine weather; not competition, business, or public power. He, of course, has considerable power and stature in the public world but that is not what he represents in the Harlequins. What the heroine gains access to through him is beauty, ease, and luxury-creature comforts and, above all, security and a home for ever and ever. Her concern is not to impress the hero or to use him in her career; she is appreciative of women’s skills and activities, and supportive of other women who support her in return, and her woman-identification may be explicitly contrasted to the male identification of the heroine’s rival who uses and betrays women in her pursuit of the hero. The heroine, for one reason or another, usually lives in the hero’s beautiful and luxurious home. This, of course, provides lots of opportunity for contretemps [= uheldige hendelser], misunderstanding, tension, mutual awareness, and excitement. It also dramatizes the homelessness of the heroine who unfailingly finds herself strongly, even violently attached to this place. The pain of having to leave this home often rivals

the pain of losing the hero. The heroine will become totally lost and without a place in the world. The hero's home is her only home, she must be there; it is this home the hero represents, not the male world." (Miles 1988)

Mange kvinner verdsetter en romanheltinne som er energisk, utholdende og som "endures and survives cruelty and coldness from the hero, but who constantly fight against this victimization and never succumbs to it. One of the effects of this is that the hero becomes "feminized", he softens towards her and starts to treat her with care and sensitivity, and only when he has been sufficiently feminized can she consider him fit to marry. In her reading the housewife finds and validates feminine values in opposition to patriarchal ones. These values are shown to be morally and socially superior to the more politically powerful patriarchal ones, which have the power to make the heroine suffer, but not to subjugate her entirely." (Fiske 2010 s. 45)

I noen verk er kvinnen påfallende sterk. "The heroine's unique combination of innate femininity and uncompromising strength enables her either to "heal" the flaws in her hero, thus revealing the gentle personality beneath the hard surface or to transform the deceitful and weak hero into a complete and whole person. Out of an admittedly courteous, but weak, unreliable, rejected, even accursed "beast", she conjures by the end of a novel a "beauty", a tender, considerate lover, sensitive to his woman and her every impulse. Obstacles, however, are not confined to the psychological level. The lovers also face massive opposition from society. [...] Unlike those around her she [= romanheltingen] can see through the social stigma attached to her hero and into the genuine heart of things. She stands by her chosen one with uncompromising honesty, loyalty and burning love in spite of threats of sanctions and social dishonour. [...] She pursues her aims regardless of all obstacles, but without any detriment to either her femininity or her subject status. [...] The ambiguous, almost androgynous portrayal of the heroine allows room for different kinds of reaction and identification depending upon the various readers' horizons of understanding and general "cultural baggage". It can also offer one and the same reader the opportunity to identify and react on several levels." (Naper 1999 s. 128-129)

"Amber Botts, who wrote "Cavewoman Impulses: The Jungian Shadow Archetype in Popular Romantic Fiction" for the anthology *Romantic Conventions* [...] In romance novels, the heroine heals, tames, or conquers the hero. As Botts writes, heroes "represent the shadow impulses which society frowns upon as inappropriate for women ... [and] the integration of impulses for blatant sexuality, anger/aggression, and danger are represented by the shadow hero's taming." If the hero is the shadow self of the heroine, and the reader, then her conquest represents that same integration of selves, and that integration is what makes the hero so crucially important, and also what makes the happy ending so satisfying." (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 76)

Mannen kan være “strong, virile, manly (“a lion among men”), but he is wounded physically, psychically, or emotionally.” (Regis 2003 s. 113) “It would be up to the heroine to mine the gold from him” står det i en roman av Nora Roberts (sitert fra Regis 2003 s. 187).

“Then there’s the theory first explained in detail by Laura Kinsale in “The Androgynous Reader: Point of View in the Romance,” collected in *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women*, which posits that it’s not just the heroine whom the reader is interacting with, but the hero as well. It’s not a question of gender switching, in which the female reader envisions herself in the hero’s masterful, possibly lordly pants. It’s more a question of using the hero to embrace the more “masculine” elements of her own personality – the strength, domination, aggression, and power which identify the alpha hero, and which aren’t always so welcome in women. The reader can embrace and identify with the hero because she “can experience the sensation of living ... with masculine power and grace ... can explore anger and ruthlessness and passion and pride and honor and gentleness and vulnerability.” ” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 74-75)

Sjangeren appellerer med “the theme of female empowerment. Contrary to popular misconceptions, romances are not about submissive heroines who give up everything for the hero. In fact, they are not about women giving up at all. They are stories of women who win, who get what they want, and who tame the hero in the process. As [Jayne Ann] Krentz says, “With courage, intelligence, and gentleness she brings the most dangerous creature on earth, the human male, to his knees. More than that, she forces him to acknowledge her power as a woman.” This aspect of the romance makes the genre one of the most subversive genres of all literatures, because in affirming the empowerment of women, romances invert the traditional patriarchal, male-dominated order and allow women to be “heroes” in their own right. [...] Romances are also appealing because they promote the importance of moral values. Strong interpersonal relationships, family, fidelity, caring, and similar themes are all well represented within the genre, and in a time when literature rarely advocates such ideas and often dismisses or denigrates them, romances have an obvious appeal. Closely linked to this moral advocacy is the fact that romances are increasingly dealing with serious social issues such as spousal or child abuse, alcoholism, racism, and mental and physical illness. While this aspect might not seem to be appealing on the surface, it speaks to the needs of many readers as it allows them not only to confront real-life problems through fiction, but also to envision healthy, hopeful, and successful solutions to them. Finally, one of the most basic reasons for the enduring appeal of the romance is simply that it is the most optimistic and hopeful of all the fiction genres. It celebrates life and love with abandon and reaffirms one of the most basic of all fantasies, the triumph of true love against all odds.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 20)

“The largest and possibly the most inclusive of all romance subgenres, the Contemporary Romance, is what most people have in mind when they refer to the

genetic romance novel. Essentially love stories with contemporary settings, these novels usually focus on the attempts of a woman to find success and happiness both professionally and romantically. Usually by the end of the book, she has attained both. A committed, permanent, monogamous relationship, one that usually includes marriage and often a family, is still the ultimate goal for this type of romance. However, many recent heroines, in line with current social trends, do not retire to hearth and home but continue in their careers, not only after marriage, but after childbirth as well. Novels written prior to 1970 do not feature this trend, and the heroine of those written during the early part of this century is typically not employed. Rather, these early heroines are likely doing volunteer work, helping their families at home, or pursuing some other properly genteel pastime.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 43)

“The *New York Times* reported that, because many working women have or want children, “heroines of contemporary romance novels are no longer content with Mr. Right. He must also be Mr. Mom.” ” (Palmer 1996)

Mariam Darce Freniers bok *Good-bye Heathcliffe* (1988) handler om sjangeren i et historisk perspektiv. “Virginal Heroines, young and naive but seething with passion, change sardonic heroes into loving, monogamous husbands. Such romance novel characters and themes have been transformed by the women’s movement, argues history professor Frenier in this convincing, well-researched study. Frenier surveys earlier feminist studies of women’s romances and traces the evolution of the romance industry, focusing on the competition between Harlequin’s more traditional British writers and the American authors of Silhouette. She finds undertones of rape and violence in late 1970s novels giving way to more explicit and equal sexuality, to gentler, more nurturing heroes matched with stronger, more experienced heroines. By the late 1980s, premarital sex and women’s careers are assumed in many novels, but the heroines greatest power remains her ability to inspire her hero to addictive, obsessive love ... [...] Frenier looks at developments in this literary genre in light of feminist issues and the pervasive social changes that continue to affect women in the post-World War II decades. Exploring traditional and more contemporary depictions of romantic heroines, as well as changing approaches to sexuality, she assesses the degree to which the values of the sexual revolution and women’s movement have penetrated this form of popular culture.” (<http://www.ebay.com.au/itm/NEW-Goodbye-Heathcliffe-by-Mariam-Darce-Frenier-BOOK-Hardback-/181555635254>; lesedato 16.03.15)

“[B]y the early 1980s, almost all romance novels, no matter how modest, depicted women who had active careers, and who kept them after they married.” (Regis 2003 s. 12) Unntakene gjelder primært historiske kjærlighetsromaner.

Den engelske forfatteren Ethel M. Dell skrev en lang rekke kjærlighetsromaner i årene fra før 1. verdenskrig og gjennom mellomkrigstida, og bøkene er typisk formellitteratur: “Her stories are always romantic and drippily sentimental. They

revolve around a young woman who comes in two flavours, Perky and Painfully Shy. The hero also comes in two flavours: Happy-Go-Lucky and Brooding. Sometimes both flavours will be present at once, and either the Brooding Hero will save the heroine from the licentious intentions of a Happy-Go-Lucky villain, or will chivalrously surrender his claim to the heroine to the Happy-Go-Lucky hero because he loves her so much, and will then go off to the desert to shoot big game and try to forget. [...] To begin with, she uses stock characters. While they are capably drawn, they never vary beyond the basic shape of her mould. After three or four stories, one begins to see the same characters playing out slightly different situations again and again. The characters exist for just one purpose: to create romantic thrills. Second, her stories revolve around romance. It's there from the first sentence to the last and is obviously the only topic she's interested in, although she'll try others if the story is sappy enough. Her aim was probably to make her public cry over every single story and she followed this aim religiously. Everything she wrote was aimed solely at instant, shallow emotional gratification for the reader. Third, Ethel M Dell's stories usually don't depict healthy romantic relationships: they are characterised by passion and fear and don't have any apparent foundation. What made these characters fall in love? What shared views, visions, or faith do they have? Who knows? Just accept that they are, and enjoy the ride." (<http://www.vintagenovels.com/2011/04/bad-novels-complete-works-of-ethel-m.html>; lesedato 07.10.13)

To amerikanske forskere skriver om Harlequin-bøkene: "The prevailing stereotype that Harlequin authors use a formal template to write is not true (Harlequin Enterprises Ltd., Personal Communication, April 2010). Instead, at least since the advent of the Internet, readers provide direct feedback to authors about the sorts of books that they want to read. Subsequently, authors respond to any received feedback and adapt their writing with respect to reader's requests and comments. This said, the plots of these romance novels are noticeably homogeneous. Within the first few pages, the heroine always meets the hero. [...] usually he is aloof, rude, or in some way undesirable to her. This perception could stem from the heroine's misinterpretation of the situation, the hero's lack of social skills, or simply because the hero is not an overall "nice guy." Readers know, however, that he will transform within the remaining 180 or so pages (in our experience the typical length of a Harlequin series romance is 180-189 pages). He will become a charming, devout, loving man by the end of the book. The transformation might be caused by the influence of the heroine in that she causes him to see the error in his ways. That is, "her future happiness and his depends on her ability to teach him to love" (Barlow & Krentz, 1992, p.17). Alternatively, he might have been a kind-hearted person all along, but hides this side of his personality (under the cover of being aloof or rude) so as to avoid being taken advantage of or thought of as less masculine. Somewhere in the middle of the book, though, he begins to more openly express these positive traits, or else the heroine inadvertently discovers them. Thus, the transformation might partially be in terms of the heroine's ability to recognize that the hero has some positive attributes that he did not initially express. However,

almost always, the transformative change is focused on the hero, not the heroine.” (Maryanne Fisher og Anthony Cox i http://www.maryannefisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Fisher_Cox_Neeps2010.pdf; lesedato 15.08.13)

Mannens “transformation from enemy to lover [...] is the substance of the ideal romance” (Radway gjengitt fra Biressi 2001 s. 134). “The reader of the ideal romance closes her book, finally, purged of her discontent and reassured that men can indeed learn how to satisfy a woman’s basic need for emotional intensity and nurturant care within traditional marriage. The reassurance is never wholly successful, however. That reader almost inevitably picks up another romance as soon as she puts her last one down. If we can learn to recognize, then, that the need for this repeated reassurance about the success of patriarchal gender arrangement springs from nagging doubt and continuing resentment, we will have developed a better picture of the complex and contradictory state of mind that characterizes many women who, on the surface, appear to be opposed to any kind of change in female-male relations. Strengthened by such comprehension, we might more successfully formulate explanations, arguments, and appeals that will enable at least some women to understand that their need for romances is a function of their dependent status as women and of their acceptance of love and marriage as the only routes to female fulfillment. If they can be persuaded of this, they may find it within themselves to seek their fulfillment elsewhere, to develop a more varied array of their abilities, and to demand the right to use them in the public sphere ordinarily controlled by men.” (Radway 1983)

“The 1990s have also seen increased interest in the romance genre in diverse areas, including universities, libraries, and on the Internet. The academic community was forced to take notice when *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance*, edited by Jayne Ann Krentz, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 1992. It subsequently became one of the press’s bestsellers, was reissued as a mass market paperback in 1996, and received the American Popular Culture Association’s Susan Brownmiller Award.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 14)

“In her *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of the Romance* (1992), Jayne Ann Krentz makes the “dangerous hero” a cornerstone of her criticism on the romance novel. As a very successful romance novelist, such heroes feature prominently in her novels as well. Krentz describes the romance novel hero as a “source of emotional and ... sometimes physical risk. ... He is an ‘alpha male,’ not the sensitive, understanding, right-thinking, ‘modern’ man who is part therapist, part best friend, and thoroughly tamed from the start.” Instead he is one of “the tough, hard-edged, tormented heroes that are at the heart of the vast majority of best-selling romance novels. ... These are the heroes who carry off the heroines in historical romances. These are the heroes feminist critics despise.” This hero, Krentz asserts, “is not only the hero, he is also the villain” (“Trying to Tame” 107-9). He is “the most dangerous creature on earth, the human

male,” and he must be conquered. The heroine must “force him to acknowledge her power as a woman” (“Introduction” 5). As the villain, the hero provides the heroine with the primary source of conflict. She must tame him in order to complete the courtship. In the terms developed in the definition in Part II, this kind of romance hero is himself the barrier.” (Regis 2003 s. 112-113)

Mannen i Jayne Ann Krentz’ romaner “is the “dangerous” hero, “He is not only the hero, he is also the villain. ... the romance heroine must face a man who is a genuine challenge” (“Trying to Tame” 108, 109). [...] In response, the heroine must be “adventurous.” “With courage, intelligence, and gentleness she brings the most dangerous creature on earth, the human male, to his knees. More than that, she forces him to acknowledge her power as a woman” ” (Regis 2003 s. 170-171). “Krentz’s women are headstrong. They win the war of words.” (Regis 2003 s. 173) “Like each of the heroes in the trilogy, Gideon has a woman in his past who hurt him. Her betrayal of him with a close friend has wounded him, adding the need to be healed to the need to be tamed.” (Regis 2003 s. 176)

“The novel chronicles the heroine’s taming of the dangerous hero or her healing of the injured hero, or both. Taming and healing can work the other way as well. Heroines can need taming and healing, too. [...] Heroines in twentieth-century romance novels are not wispy, ephemeral girls sitting around waiting for the hero so that their lives can begin. They are intelligent and strong. They have to be. They have to tame the hero. They have to heal him. Or they have to do both.” (Regis 2003 s. 206)

Krentz’ *Shield’s Lady* (1989) is set on a lost colony of Earth, inhabited by humans whose social institutions are different from those of a twentieth-century Western society on Earth. Krentz calls this book and others like it that she has written a “futuristic.” In classic science-fiction fashion (she cites both Andre Norton and Robert Heinlein as part of her early reading), Krentz invents a new planet, Windarra, and peoples it with a society of humans who are “lost” to their colonial forebears (Mussell, “Interview with Krentz” 6). Whereas science fiction and fantasy writers typically invent new forms of politics, war, alternate mythological systems, or material culture, Krentz invents new forms of courtship and marriage. In so doing, she makes intimacy more intimate than it is on twentieth-century Earth.” (Regis 2003 s. 179)

“Heroes are always described in considerable detail (e.g., appearance, resources, and career status), while heroines are rarely described in these terms, or in this depth. These descriptions of men are congruent with the evolutionary psychology literature on women’s mate preferences. We found that heroes undergo noteworthy changes within the books, such that they often start as ‘cads’ who are often rude, independent, and aggressive, but by the end of the book they are loyal, devoted men who are in love with the heroine. In contrast, the heroine undergoes only minimal transformation. This desire for a mate who encompasses both a ‘cad’ and a

‘dad’ mating strategy is beneficial to women, evolutionarily speaking, because cads may have high gene quality and dads may provide high paternal investment.” (Maryanne Fisher og Anthony Cox i http://www.maryannefisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Fisher_Cox_Neeps2010.pdf; lesedato 15.08.13) “A cad is a man who is aware of the codes of conduct which separate a gentleman from a ruffian, but finds himself unable to quite live up to them”; “a rogue-type character unworthy of the heroine’s affections; he may be rude, gruff, aggressive, surly, but always handsome and financially sound” (Fischer og Cox).

“Essentially then, a Harlequin plot can be summarized as follows: boy meets girl, boy has to do something to live up to girl’s expectations, girl falls for boy, and they live happily ever after. This formulaic plot in itself reflects women’s evolved mating interests, in that women are actively selecting a mate of good quality for a long-term relationship. The same plot could be written more explicitly in evolutionary psychological terms, which reads as follows: Female meets potential mate and assesses him with respect to gene quality, earning potential, parental investment, personality characteristics (including kindness, honesty, sociality) and emotional loyalty. Being the one to undertake the majority of parental investment, the female is very selective about her potential mates and decides that he needs to improve in certain aspects before he will be a viable choice. She also needs to determine with some certainty that he is interested in a long-term relationship with her. She must also figure out whether or not he has children with other females whom he will be required to invest in, and if so, she requires assurance that he will still care for her and her children. She also needs proof that he has positive relationships with those around him, such as his family, friends, co-workers, all of which reflects a soundness of character.” (Maryanne Fisher og Anthony Cox i http://www.maryannefisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Fisher_Cox_Neeps2010.pdf; lesedato 15.08.13)

“The male ascertains that the female is not interested in a short-term mating strategy, and she seeks a mate with certain characteristics that he should express if he wants to engage in a sexually exclusive relationship with paternity certainty. In some instances, he engages in intrasexual competition to fend off potential rivals, which thus indicates to the female that he is interested in her, as well as displaying characteristics that might be desirable, such as physical strength. Any necessary competition, though, must not be overly violent, and is rarely initiated by the male so that the perception of his positive personality characteristics (e.g., kindness) remains intact. The female, at some point in their interactions, notices that he has these traits and decides that he is, after all, a viable mate, at which point she expresses her acceptance. The two of them then proceed and initiate a monogamous, committed relationship. As this example of a plot demonstrates, the focus is on the woman choosing a mate, thus placing the heroine within an active role in the mating process.” (Maryanne Fisher og Anthony Cox i http://www.maryannefisher.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Fisher_Cox_Neeps2010.pdf; lesedato 15.08.13)

“[F]or most women the word *man* reverberates with thousands of years of connotative meanings which touch upon everything from sexual prowess, to the capacity for honor and loyalty, to the ability to protect and defend the family unit. He is no weakling who will run away or turn to another woman when the conflict between himself and the heroine flares. Instead, he will be forced in the course of the plot to prove his commitment to the relationship, and, unlike many men in the real world, he will pass this test magnificently. Should the book fail to deliver on its implied promise, should the writer be unable to create the fantasy satisfactorily, make it accessible, and achieve the integration of opposites that results in a happy ending, the reader will consider herself cheated. The happy ending in a romance novel is far more significant than it might appear to those who do not understand the codes. It requires that the final union of male and female be a fusing of contrasting elements: heroes who are gentled by love yet who lose none of their warrior qualities in the process and heroines who conquer devils without sacrificing their femininity. It requires a quintessentially female kind of victory, one in which neither side loses, one which produces a whole that is stronger than either of its parts. It requires that the hero acknowledge the heroine's heroic qualities in both masculine and feminine terms. He must recognize and admire her sense of honor, courage, and determination as well as her traditionally female qualities of gentleness and compassion. And it requires a sexual bonding that transcends the physical, a bond that reader and writer know can never be broken.” (Linda Barlow og Jayne Ann Krentz i <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/ENGL618/readings/theory/Krentz&BarlowRomanceCodes.pdf>; lesedato 23.08.13)

Jane Austen regnes som “mother of the popular ‘feminine romance’ ” (Tauchert 2005 s. x) og “tends to be credited by contemporary popular ‘Romance’ readers as the ‘founder’ of the sub-genre of ‘Regencies’ (or ‘Historicals’)” (Tauchert 2005 s. 19). Austens kjærlighetsromaner (*Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* og andre) bruker et “courtship plot”, der kvinnen enten nekter å la seg erobre, vil erobres av en tvilende mann (han vet ikke om han vil ha henne eller kan få henne) eller til slutt lar seg erobre nesten mot sin rasjonelle vilje av en mann som begjærer henne. Det hender at den samme mannen frir to ganger, og det er kvinnens utvikling mellom å si nei til det første frieriet og ja til det andre vi som lesere følger med spenning.

Jane Austens heltinner bærer sine kjærlighetssorger med verdighet, og vil helst ikke at uinnvidde skal merke noe. Den følelsesmessige ensomheten blant kvinnene innen land-adelen kan være stor, og leseren blir berørt gjennom å være den eneste som vet “hva hun egentlig føler” (overfor en potensiell frier og andre). Det oppleves som episk rettferdighet at Elizabeth (Lizzy) i *Pride and Prejudice* får den mannen hun elsker til slutt. Hun framstår alltid som edel og god, og viser bl.a. et beundringsverdige storsinn overfor søsteren Jane som forlover seg med en mann på et tidspunkt da Elizabeth tror at hun selv vil være uten mann livet ut. Elizabeth og andre heltinner i kjærlighetsromaner forener det gode, det sanne og det skjønne.

Den edle og vakre kvinnen både vet hva som gjør livet verdt å leve (dvs. sannheten), og oppnår lykken som en konsekvens av å ville oppnå dette målet. Kjærligheten i kvinnehjertet forener godhet, skjønnhet og sannhet.

“The comedic resolution of harmonious marriage, redolent of the spring/summer quarter of cyclical myth, becomes the object of feminine desire, and is achieved through specifically feminine modes of heroic agency or ‘virtue’ (modesty, passivity, restraint, negativity). [...] ‘awakening’ to the ‘truth’ [...] This experience of feminine enlightenment tends to be represented as a profound crisis of judgement:

‘Till this moment, I never knew myself ...’

‘The truth rushed on her’

‘she found every doubt, every solicitude removed’

‘The revolution which one instant had made in Anne, was almost beyond expression’

‘Emma’s mind was most busy, and, with all the wonderful velocity of thought, had been able – and yet without losing a word – to catch and comprehend the exact truth of the whole’. [eksemplene er fra Jane Austens forfatterskap]

[...] These moments become crucial points of conversion which produce, or reflect, a new relationship between the heroine’s desire and its object. The synthesis which follows seems to radiate out from the central dyad into the social world that remains its context.” (Tauchert 2005 s. 16-17)

Historiene i mange kjærlighetsromaner minner oss om historiene i gamle og i sin tid nyskapende tekster (Askepott, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*). Noen av de litterære klassikerne har imidlertid en tragisk, ulykkelig slutt, mens “happy ending” er en sterk konvensjon i formellitteraturen. Historiene kan handle om kjærlighet som overvinner selv de vanskeligste hindringer. Kjærligheten fører til tapt selvkontroll og etter hvert et nytt og bedre selv. Mens forholdet utvikler seg kan personene oppleve usikkerhet, bitterhet, sjalusi, til og med hat overfor den andre. En formel er “boy meets girl – boy loses girl – boy gets girl” (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 16).

“Most of these Old Skool [sic] romances were written solely or mostly from the heroine’s viewpoint, though a few early authors started including the hero’s point of view, too. This was sometimes a good thing, because it allowed us to experience the process of falling in love from both perspectives (and trust us, sometimes the readers needed all the explanation they could get about why and how the constantly warring factions could find enough time to fall in love). [...] Scholars have differing views as to why the viewpoints stayed so faithfully with the heroine for so long. Pamela Regis, in *A Natural History of the Romance Novel*, offers an analysis of how Old Skool romances followed the heroines partially because they had much more development to undergo than the hero, and the heroine’s achievement of autonomy and self-actualization was the point of the narrative. This is borne out by

the thirteen-item plot summary for the ideal Old Skool romance formulated by Janice Radway in *Reading the Romance*, published in 1982:

1. The heroine's social identity is destroyed.
2. The heroine reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male.
3. The aristocratic male responds ambiguously to the heroine.
4. The heroine interprets the hero's behavior as evidence of a purely sexual interest in her.
5. The heroine responds to the hero's behavior with anger or coldness.
6. The hero retaliates by punishing the heroine.
7. The heroine and hero are physically and/or emotionally separated.
8. The hero treats the heroine tenderly.
9. The heroine responds warmly to the hero's act of tenderness.
10. The heroine reinterprets the hero's ambiguous behavior as the product of previous hurt.
11. The hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness.
12. The heroine responds sexually and emotionally.
13. The heroine's identity is restored." (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 19-20)

Jane Eyre (1847) av Charlotte Brontë har blitt kalt "a paradigm" for "popular romance" (Stoneman 1996 s. 140). "*Jane Eyre* is a love story. Probably *the* love story. It is so archetypal as to have made fortunes for women novelists, like Victoria Holt and Mary Stewart, who have used it as source." (Wagner 1975 s. 244) Jane gjennomgår mange prøvelser før hun "blir seg selv" til slutt (Claire Merias i <https://epi-revel.univ-cotedazur.fr/cycnos/309.pdf>; lesedato 16.08.22). Et sted forteller hun at "in the interval I had undergone a transforming process" (kap. 10) og et annet sted at "I impressed it on my heart, that it might remain there to serve me as aid in the time of trial" (kap. 27).

Den dystre Rochester i *Jane Eyre* "can be shown as 'incurably romantic' inside" (Stoneman 1996 s. 141). Også en annen mann ønsker å gifte seg med Jane, men

“Jane Eyre had to reject a marriage whose suitor argued that it would please God” (Regis 2003 s. 110).

“Provocative, confrontational dialogue has been the hallmark of the adversarial relationship that exists between the two major characters ever since the earliest days of romance narrative. It is Jane Eyre’s verbal impertinence that calls her to the attention of her employer, Mr. Rochester, who notes in one of their first conversations, “Ah! By my word! There is something singular about you . . . when one asks you a question, or makes a remark to which you are obliged to reply, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque.” She is not his equal in terms of fortune or circumstance, but Jane proves early on that she is very much his equal in verbal acuity and assertiveness. Such is also the case in *Pride and Prejudice*, in which Elizabeth Bennet’s growing attraction for Mr. Darcy is based not only upon her “fine eyes,” but also upon her ready wit. The opportunity to engage in verbal sparring is rarely declined by the heroines of romance since it is far more likely to be her words than her beauty that win her the love she most desires. Romances are full of heroes who eschew the company of beautiful but insipid women who would rather fawn than fight. Indeed, heroes of romance enjoy the duel of wits. Frequently they take the heroine’s words to heart, changing in response to her stated criticisms. The heroine’s words are her most potent weapon. It is Elizabeth’s scathing refusal of his marriage proposal that forces Darcy to reevaluate his own behavior and relinquish the worst aspects of his pride” (Linda Barlow og Jayne Ann Krentz i <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/ENGL618/readings/theory/Krentz&BarlowRomanceCodes.pdf>; lesedato 23.08.13).

“The abiding desire for a ‘Mr Darcy’ seems to evidence both Austen’s own neo-conservative dream of being *somehow* rescued from the ‘real’ contradictions structuring women’s lives under capitalism, and the persistence of this day-dream in the reading and viewing tastes of her contemporary mass audience.” (Tauchert 2005 s. 24)

“A housewife regularly buys romance novels and finds some pleasure in her husband’s disapproval – buying a romance is both spending money on herself instead of on the family (an indulgent evasion of the ideology of the housewife) and buying a cultural place of her own. The act of reading is evasive: she “looses” herself in the book in an evasion of the ideology of femininity which disciplines women to find themselves only in relation to other people, particularly within the family. This loss is characteristic of *jouissance* and enables her to avoid the forces that subjugate her, which in turn produces a sense of empowerment and an energy otherwise repressed. These evasive pleasures are not text-specific: any book will produce them provided it can take her out of the social self. It is the act of reading rather than the specific text that is the producer of this form of evasive pleasure. But only certain books *can* do this, books with a relevance to her social situation.” (Fiske 2010 s. 44-45)

“The lack of resources, time, and money for leisure away from home; the lack of social and personal acceptance of women’s visibly leisure; the nature of many women’s lives in which work and responsibility are a constant 24 hour reality, where there is no private place away from these; and the emotional deprivation almost all women suffer in a heterosexually structure society where women are care providers, rarely receivers, and where most women can expect no mothering or nurture after early adolescence, all combine to explain why the fantasy of mothering in the guise of a romantic hero is the predominant form of escape for women.” (Miles 1988)

Radway skiller i *Reading the Romance* (1984 og 1991) mellom på den ene siden *lesehandlingen* som fungerer som en kvinnelig “declaration of independence”, og på den andre siden det relativt trivielle *innholdet* i romanene. Det å ordne seg med tid til å lese var en “uavhengighetserklæring”. “[W]hen the act of romance reading is viewed as it is by the readers themselves, from within the belief system that accepts as given the institutions of heterosexuality and monogamous marriage, it can be conceived as an activity of mild protest and longing for reform necessitated by those institutions’ failure to satisfy the emotional needs of women. Reading therefore functions for them as an act of recognition and contestation whereby that failure is first admitted and then partially reversed. [...] At the same time, however, when viewed from the vantage point of a feminism that would like to see the women’s oppositional impulse lead to a real social change, romance reading can also be seen as an activity that could potentially disarm that impulse. It might do so because it supplies vicariously those needs and requirements that might otherwise be formulated as demands in the real world and lead to the potential restructuring of sexual relations.” (Radway 1991 s. 213) Leserne er – uansett hvor “virkelighetsfjerne” romanene kan være – gryende feminister (“embryonic feminists”; Ang 1996 s. 103). Gjennom lesingen tilfredsstilte de egne behov og økte sin følelse av “selvverdi” (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 201). Og de skapte seg et frirom utenfor forpliktende hverdagsstrev.

“Romance reading, as Dot herself puts it, constitutes a temporary “declaration of independence” from the social roles of wife and mother. By placing the barrier of the book between themselves and their families, these women reserve a special space and time for themselves alone. As a consequence, they momentarily allow themselves to abandon the attitude of total self-abnegation in the interest of family welfare which they have so dutifully learned is the proper stance for a good wife and mother. Romance reading is both an assertion of deeply felt psychological needs and a means for satisfying those needs.” (Radway 1983)

Radway hevder at kjærlighetsromanene bekrefter gjennom sin slutt et syn på kvinners rolle som er grunnlaget for den misnøyen med sitt liv som leserne føler og som i sin tur er grunnen til at de leser kjærlighetsromaner.

“Strangely missing in Radway’s interpretative framework, I would say, is any careful account of the *pleasurableness* of the pleasure of romance reading. The absence of pleasure *as* pleasure in *Reading the Romance* is made apparent in Radway’s frequent, downplaying qualifications of the enjoyment that the Smithton women [dvs. hennes informanter] have claimed to derive from their favourite genre: that it is a form of *vicarious* pleasure, that it is *only temporarily* satisfying because it is *compensatory* literature; that even though it does create ‘a kind of female community’, through it ‘women join forces only symbolically and in a mediated way in the privacy of their homes and in the devalued sphere of leisure activity’ (Radway 1984: 212). [...] [Radways forklaring på] repetitive romance reading is a case in point. She analyses this in terms of romance reading’s ultimate inadequacy when it comes to the satisfaction of psychic needs for which the readers cannot find an outlet in their actual social lives. In her view, romance reading is inadequate precisely because it gives these women the *illusion* of pleasure while it leaves their ‘real’ situation unchanged.” (Ang 1996 s. 104)

“Although they enjoy the usual chronicle of misunderstandings and mistakes which inevitably leads to the heroine’s belief that the hero intends to harm her, the Smithton readers prefer stories that combine a much-understated version of this continuing antagonism with a picture of a gradually developing love. They most wish to participate in the slow process by which two people become acquainted, explore each other’s foibles, wonder about the other’s feelings, and eventually “discover” that they are loved by the other.” (Radway 1983)

“Both *The Proud Breed* by Celeste DeBlasis and *The Fulfillment* by LaVyrle Spencer detail the involvement of the principal characters with other individuals. Their treatment of the subject, however, is decidedly different from that typically found in the bad romances. Both of these books are highly unusual in that they begin by detailing the extraordinary depth of the love shared by hero and heroine, who marry early in the story. The rest of each book chronicles the misunderstandings that arise between heroine and hero. In both books the third person narrative always indicates very clearly to the reader that the two are still deeply in love with each other and are acting out of anger, distrust, and insecurity. [...] In the romances considered awful by the Smithton readers, this reinterpretation takes place much later in the story than in the ideal romances. In addition, the behavior that is explained away is more violent, aggressively cruel, and obviously vicious.” (Radway 1983)

Rival-personer i romanene “are employed mainly as contrasts to the more likable and proper central pair or as purely temporary obstacles to the pair’s delayed union because one or the other mistakenly suspects the partner of having an affair with the rival. However, because the reader is never permitted to share this mistaken assumption in the ideal romance, she knows all along that the relationship is not as precarious as its participants think it to be. The rest of the narrative in the twenty romances [i en leserundersøkelse] chronicles the gradual crumbling of barriers

between these two individuals who are fearful of being used by the other. As their defenses against emotional response fall away and their sexual passion rises inexorably, the typical narrative plunges on until the climactic point at which the hero treats the heroine to some supreme act of tenderness, and she realizes that his apparent emotional indifference was only the mark of his hesitancy about revealing the extent of his love for and dependence upon her. The Smithton women especially like romances that commence with the early marriage of the hero and heroine for reasons of convenience. Apparently, they do so because they delight in the subsequent, necessary chronicle of the pair's growing awareness that what each took to be indifference or hate is, in reality, unexpressed love and suppressed passion. In such favorite romances as *The Flame and the Flower*, *The Black Lion*, *Shanna*, and *Made For Each Other*, the heroine begins marriage thinking that she detests and is detested by her spouse. She is thrown into a quandary, however, because her partner's behavior vacillates from indifference, occasional brusqueness, and even cruelty to tenderness and passion. Consequently, the heroine spends most of her time in these romances, as well as in the others comprising this sample, trying to read the hero's behavior as a set of signs expressing his true feelings toward her." (Radway 1983) Menn i romanene kan være "men who at least temporarily abuse and hurt the women they purportedly love" (Radway 1983).

I noen romaner "a feisty, spunky heroine endures and survives cruelty and coldness from the hero, but who constantly fights against this victimization and never succumbs to it. One effect of this is that the hero becomes "feminized," he softens toward her and starts to treat her with care and sensitivity, and only when he has been sufficiently feminized can she consider him fit to marry. In her reading the housewife finds and validates feminine values in opposition to patriarchal ones. These values are shown to be morally and socially superior to the more politically powerful patriarchal ones, which have the power to make the heroine suffer, but not to subjugate her entirely." (Fiske 2010 s. 44-45; basert på Radway 1984)

"[R]omance reading may not function as a purely conservative force. In fact, it appears to be a complex form of behavior that allows incremental change in social beliefs at the same time that it restores the claim of traditional institutions to satisfy a woman's most basic needs. It is true, certainly, that the romantic story itself reaffirms the perfection of romance and marriage. But it is equally clear that the constant need for such an assertion derives not from a sense of security and complete faith in the status quo, but from deep dissatisfaction with the meager benefits apportioned to women by the very institutions legitimated in the narrative. When romances are used to deny temporarily the demands of a family, when they are understood as the signs of a woman's ability to do something for herself alone, when they are valued because they provide her with the opportunity to indulge in positive feelings about a heroine and women in general, then their popularity ought to be seen as evidence of an unvoiced protest that important needs are not being properly met. It is the *act* or *event* of romance reading that permits the Smithton woman [i en leserundersøkelse] to reject those extremely taxing duties and

expectations she normally shoulders with equanimity. In picking up her book, she asserts her independence from her role, affirms that she has a right to be self-interested for a while, and declares that she deserves pleasure as much as anyone else. To be sure, this kind of defiance is relatively mild, because the woman need not pit herself against her husband and family over the crucial issues of food preparation, childcare, financial decisions, and so on. But for women who have lived their lives quiescently believing that female self-interest is exactly coterminous with the interest of a husband and children, the ability to reserve time for the self, even if it is to read a romance, is a significant and positive step away from the institutional prison that demands denial and sublimation of female identity. It is unfortunate, of course, that this temporary assertion of independence is made possible only because the manifest content of the novels holds out the promise of eventual satisfaction and fulfillment in the most conventional of terms.” (Radway 1983)

“[T]he Smithton women materially express their discontent with their restricted social world by indulging in a fantasy that vicariously supplies the pleasure and attention they need, and thereby effectively staves off the necessity of presenting those needs as demands in the real world. Simultaneously, the romance short-circuits the impulse to connect the desire to escape with the institution of marriage or with male intolerance precisely because it demonstrates that a woman like the heroine can admit the truth of the feminist discovery that women *are* intelligent and independent and yet continue to be protected paternally by a man. At this particular historical moment, then, romance reading seems to permit American women to adopt some of the changing attitudes about gender roles by affirming that those attitudes are compatible with the social institution of marriage as it is presently constituted.” (Radway 1983)

“Radway combines a reader-response analysis of romance texts with a critical account of romance publishing and interviews with women readers. She offers a measured view on the potential of romance reading: on one hand, it may have a liberating function, allowing women to identify with aspects of sexual experience that are ‘normally prohibited to them’ [...] while on the other hand, reading romance fiction may reinforce for its readers the sense that society is naturally patriarchal (Radway 1991: 210).” (Peplow, Swann m.fl. i 2016 s. 10)

Radway tenker seg en slags “idealthistorie” for sine lesende informanter: Først blir en ung kvinne utsatt for en krenkelse av en mann som er altfor full av begjær. Kvinnen avviser mannen, men kontakten mellom dem blir opprettholdt. I romanens lengste fase prøver kvinnen å “oppdra” den altfor “ville” mannen til siviliserte måter å tilnærme seg en kvinne på. Mannen begynner å betrakte kvinnen som en likeverdige person, og dette åpner for kjærligheten. Forelskelsen er deretter et faktum, og denne kan virke nesten mirakuløs for begge partene.

“Radway finds the ending of romance novels troublesome. For her the “ending of the romance undercuts the realism of its novelistic rendering of an individual woman’s story” and so “reaffirms its founding culture’s belief that women are valuable not for their unique personal qualities but for their biological sameness and their ability to perform that essential role of maintaining and reconstituting others” (208). [...] Its ending destroys the independent, questing woman depicted in the rest of the story. In depicting a heroine thus destroyed, the romance novel sends a message to readers that independent, questing women are actually better off destroyed. When the novel destroys its heroine, it urges its readers to become imprisoned – it urges them to marry – or it locks them ever more securely in the prison of the marriage they are already in.” (Regis 2003 s. 10-11)

Romanene “continues to justify the social placement of women that has led to the very discontent that is the source of their desire to read romances” (Radway sitert fra Regis 2003 s. 25).

Romanene kan også sies å romme “en slags feminin utopi for forholdet mellom kjønnene.” (Esquenazi 2009 s. 93) “[M]arriage demands, in return for its spiritual consolations, a sacrifice of the hero’s image (which is the American folk image) of maleness. He must give up his aggressiveness, his promiscuity, his bravado, his contempt for soft virtues, and his narcissistic pride in his body and attainments, and admit that he is lost in the world and needs help.” (Robert Brustein sitert fra <http://revel.unice.fr/cyenos/index.html?id=1252>; lesedato 19.09.19)

“In real life women often complain about the reluctance of their male partners to engage in meaningful dialogue, but in the world of romantic fantasy heroes willingly participate in verbal discussions. They fence, they flirt, they express their anger, they talk out the confounding details of their relationships with the heroine. No hero of romance will ever respond to the eternal feminine query, “What’s wrong?” with the word, “Nothing.” He will tell her what’s wrong; they will argue about it, perhaps, but they will be communicating, and eventually, as they resolve their various conflicts, the war of words will end. One of the most significant victories the heroine achieves at the close of the novel is that the hero is able to express his love for her *not only physically but also verbally*. Don’t just show me, tell me, is one of the prime messages that every romance hero must learn. Romance heroines, like women the world over, need to hear the words, and the dialogue of romance provides them with this welcome opportunity.” (Linda Barlow og Jayne Ann Krentz i <http://faculty.winthrop.edu/kosterj/ENGL618/readings/theory/Krentz&BarlowRomanceCodes.pdf>; lesedato 23.08.13)

De fleste kjærlighetsromaner gir nyanserte beskrivelser av sosiale relasjoner og har et språk for et repertoar av følelser. Det har blitt hevdet at lesingen er spesiell betydningsfull eller “nyttig” for kvinnen (moren) i huset, som vanligvis er “the manager of personal relationships” i familien (Fiske 2010 s. 122).

“[D]en litteratur som är mest föraktad, den som kvinnor läser mest, handlar mycket om relationer och om att det högsta värdet i livet är att vara tillsammans med andra och att agera för andra. En livshållning som de flesta kvinnor står för och känner sig stärkta i [...] Trots att samhället utvecklas är utvecklingen i litteraturen ganska liten. Här kämpar kvinnor fortfarande med samma problem för att få ett värdigt liv med en anständig man. [...] Mycket av den här litteraturen är en slags populärfeminism och det är den litteratur kvinnor läser. Medan kvinnor i den fina litteraturen ofta skildras som väldigt mycket mer utsatta, och det kan man ju säga är en mer realistisk skildring [...] den så kallade dåliga kvinnolitteraturen till så stor del handlar om att man ska ta hand om varandra” (litteraturprofessor Lisbeth Larsson i <http://www.noll27.se/2014/07/tantsnusk-popularfeminism-och-kvalitetslitteratur/>; lesedato 28.01.22).

“Outsiders often expressed their disapproval of romance novels by referring to the books as “porn for women” and describing them as “dirty,” “smutty,” and “trashy.” [...] a bestselling romance author who also worked as a professor of English literature defended the genre in an op-ed to the *New York Times* (2005), writing, “Clearly the genre’s struggle for respect is part of a larger cultural battle to define and control female sexuality.” Other authors also believed that the denigration of romance is connected to the culture’s suppression of women’s – but not men’s – sexual desire. [...] Understanding that romance’s sexual stigma came from deep-seated, patriarchal values helped writers contest the shame they felt outsiders tried to impose on them and fight the sneering disapproval.” (Jennifer Lois og Joanna Gregson i <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0891243215584603>; lesedato 12.12.22)

“The practical critics of prevailing high culture ignore romances. Academic critics, as we have seen, also condemn romances. [...] To attack this very old genre, so stable in its form, so joyful in its celebration of freedom, is to discount, and perhaps even to deny, the most personal hopes of millions of women around the world.” (Regis 2003 s. 207)

“Not surprisingly feminists find deeply negative messages in these books. The plots often seem to legitimize general male boorishness and lack of respect for women, to reinforce the sexual double standard, and to infantilize women who are usually younger, more innocent, lower in status, less well established, less sure of themselves, and more vulnerable than the hero. They tend to perpetuate the myth of women’s powerlessness and necessary dependence on men. Their central presumption (with a few notable recent exceptions) is that contentment and meaning in life not only can but must be found in love and marriage.” (Miles 1988)

Romanene har ofte blitt kritisert, og leserne latterliggjort. “The stereotype of the romance reader as a fluffy escapist drives many women as well as most men to distance themselves from this sort of reading.” (Riel og Fowler 1996 s. 37) Amerikaneren Rudolph Bold skrev i en artikkel i tidsskriftet *Library Journal* i 1980

om den typiske leser av romantiske dameromaner: “She’s a 200-pound lady with a bad complexion, a husband who philanders, and kids who never shut up. She didn’t graduate from high school, had to get married and can’t afford a psychiatrist, and so she must continue to live in a world she never made and doesn’t much like. For her there is the escape of reading, not best sellers or popular biographies, but those paper-backed romantic nirvanas that sell themselves in supermarkets and bus terminals. And along with other house-bound housewives, maiden aunts, retired telephone operators ... she escapes for an hour or two each day into a delicate world where romance warms the heart and perversion dare not enter.” (siteret fra <http://www.allbusiness.com/humanities-social-science/>; lesedato 07.06.11) Den kanadiske litteraturprofessoren Catherine S. Ross innvender: “Who is this 200-pound high school dropout and where did she come from? Not, certainly from actual data on romance readers. Readership surveys have consistently found that romance readers resemble a normal cross-section of the female population, apart from having attained, on average, a higher level of education.” (samme nettside)

“For some reason, the sight of another person reading a romance gives passersby permission to take complete leave of their manners. Sarah’s been approached by total strangers on the New York City subway who snidely comment on her reading material.” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 120) (Sarah er Sarah Wendell, en av forfatterne av boka det siteres fra her.)

“[T]he average romance reader is not the undereducated, uninformed, frustrated housewife of recent mythology. [...] Romance’s specific appeal is more complex. It attracts readers for diverse reasons that include emotional involvement, female empowerment, the promotion of moral values, the celebration of life, the ultimate triumph of love, and a sense of unflagging optimism.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 18)

“In 1996 the genre generated approximately one billion dollars in sales of 182 million books. More than two thousand titles were released that year (Romance Writers of America, Welcome). These are astonishing figures. No other popular form – not mysteries, Westerns, science fiction, fantasy, thrillers, horror, or spy novels – is as popular. Nor is so-called “literary” fiction. Nor is nonfiction. Romances are the most popular books in the United States.” (Regis 2003 s. xi)

“64.6 million Americans read at least one romance in the past year [2008]. [...] of those readers, 42 percent of us have bachelor’s degrees, with an additional 15 percent having acquired postgraduate education as well. And how much are we educated romance readers spending? \$1.37 billion dollars on romance. [...] And if someone hands you the “Why do you read those books” question, a handy short answer may be, “Because I enjoy them. And so do 64 million other really smart women who, incidentally, won’t like that question, either.” So Why Do Smart Women Love Romance? We know that:

- Romance is better than folks believe it is.

- Anything written for an audience of mostly women by a community of mostly women is subversive, reflective of the current sexual, emotional, and political status, and actively embraces and undermines that status simultaneously.

- Happiness is good.” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 128)

“So what’s the best defense against anyone who sneers at your reading material, who asks why a smart person could read romance, wasting brain cells with wanton, thoughtless abandon? Ignoring them works for us much of the time, and really, is there a ruder thing to do than put someone down based on what she reads? It’s a classist, obnoxious, and utterly grotesque use of energy. [...] Let’s be real – titles like *The Sheikh’s Virgin Mistress* do not help anyone who wants to defend romance, but neither do any of the clinch-laden historical covers, or the high-heeled cartoon legs of impossible thinness that so often adorn contemporary romances, either. But the posse of people inside the genre – the ones who write it and the ones who know how much you love it – they know how good it is.” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 129)

Lesernes behov for stadig nye fiktive kjærlighetshistorier som ender lykkelig har blitt sammenlignet med et rusmiddel (Anne Besson i <https://books.openedition.org/editions-cnrs/8785>; lesedato 01.06.24).

“For å kartlegge forskjellene mellom lesere av bibliotekbøker og lesere av kiosklitteratur gjennomførte [Cecilie] Naper blant annet intervjuer med 150 kiosklitteraturlesere. [...] På tross av forskjellene, har Naper funnet én likhet: både bibliotekleserne og kioskleserne er enige om at det livslange ekteskap ikke er noen gammeldags institusjon. Dette begrunner hun med at innstillingen gjenspeiles i begge lesergruppernes favorittlitteratur, nemlig kjærlighetsromanen, med dens underliggende budskap om at kjærligheten overvinner alt. [...] det var én type romaner som ble mye lest både i biblioteket og i kiosken, nemlig store norske kjærlighetsromaner med kvinnelig forfatter og med en sterk og mestrende kvinnelig heltinne, sier Naper.” (<https://forskning.no/kunst-og-litteratur-boker-hogskolen-i-oslo/kvinner-og-kiosklitteratur/992346>; lesedato 15.06.22)

“Readers of westerns are not commonly supposed to live in expectation of a stage coach at the door but Harlequin readers are presumed to believe in the Harlequin world and to live in daily expectation of the hero’s arrival. In fact, Harlequin readers are as diverse a group and have as good a grasp on reality as any other formulae reader. [...] The presumptions that Harlequin romances are 1) power fantasies for people so crushed that they can’t even fantasize power, or 2) sex fantasies for people so repressed they can’t even fantasize sex, or 3) substitutes for fantasies about individual success of people so limited that they cannot even imagine personal achievement, are insulting.” (Miles 1988)

“The 1980s saw the romance movement expand and change directions, somewhat. Although Historicals were still published and read, interest was shifting away from them and toward Contemporary Romances particularly those of the Category or Series variety. But the Category Romances themselves were changing. To be sure, the original innocent Harlequins and Silhouettes were still being published, but a number of new series were joining them. These new lines, reflecting the changing lifestyles and sexual mores of society, featured more aggressive and independent heroines and were much more sensual in nature; and soon series with names like Ecstasy, Desire, Rapture, Loveswept, and Temptation were appearing in the paperback racks. (Silhouette’s Desire and Harlequin’s Temptation are two of these early series [...] Bantam’s Loveswept series was discontinued at the end of 1998.) At the same time, other series, generally those of the innocent variety, were disappearing from the racks. One new series, Bantam’s Circle of Love, a sweet, innocent series, was obsolete before it was even released, largely because of the rapidly changing tastes in romance fiction. And this was not an isolated incident. Sensual series proliferated and the market exploded and eventually, after a somewhat bloody battle, Silhouette and Harlequin merged and today are part of the same company. But society’s more contemporary attitudes were not reflected exclusively in the Category Romances. Single title romances were also becoming more realistic in their approaches, and although the traditional romances of the more innocent variety were still read (and written by some), many of the new stories featured independent, career-minded heroines; high-powered settings; and more casual, but not necessarily promiscuous, attitudes toward sex.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 10)

“[B]y the early 1980s,, almost all romance novels, no matter how modest, depicted women who had active careers, and who kept them after they married. Heroines in even the most modest popular romance novels are social workers, linguists, journalists, caterers, entrepreneurs, public relations people, horse trainers, ranchers, screenwriters, veterinarians, teachers, detectives, and so on.” (Regis 2003 s. 12)

“The Harlequins are porn softened to fit the needs of female emotionality. [...] in the soft-porn fantasies of the Harlequins, woman’s independence is made horrifically unattractive and unrewarding, her dependence presented as synonymous with excitement.” (Ann Douglas i <https://people.uleth.ca/~daniel.odonnell/files/Douglas1980.pdf>; lesedato 26.08.23)

“Because of its all-inclusive character, the Basic Contemporary [romances] incorporates a wide variety of settings, plots, and characters. For example, the settings for Basic Contemporaries can vary from small town to big city, from the United States to all parts of the world, and from dingy tenement to posh estate; situations range from suburban domesticity to the high-powered business world. Plot patterns also can differ tremendously, from the young-girl-in-search-of-a-suitable-husband to the single-minded-career-woman-who-finds-love-by-accident. In general, although these are all basically love stories, because they do not adhere

to a preset pattern, the plots of Basic Contemporaries can take unexpected twists and turns, and the endings are often unpredictable. The degree of sensuality in these novels can also vary greatly. However, in general, novels written since the 1970s are likely to be more sensual than those written earlier. Characters, too, come in many shapes and flavors. Heroines may be innocent or experienced, beautiful or plain, aggressive or retiring. They all, however, tend to have “character,” determination, common sense, and a sense of humor. Likewise, heroes can be reserved or outgoing, sophisticated or less than perfectly polished, handsome or charmingly homely. They are, however, most often successful, strong, purposeful, and honorable.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 54)

“Situations and issues that were once seen as either taboo or too serious for romance (e.g., alcoholism, abuse, illness, homosexuality, prostitution, and impotence) are now not uncommon, and characters who were considered unacceptable for the genre (e.g., the ex-convict hero or the unwed mother heroine) are appearing. This trend toward more contemporary relevance, as well as more complex plotting and realistic characters, may be one reason that the lines between Romance and more mainstream Women’s Fiction are beginning to blur. The boundaries between the two are increasingly fluid and, while this makes it more difficult to neatly categorize the genres, it also indicates a maturing of the genre and is not at all a bad thing. Characters in Contemporaries are as varied as the settings and the plots. Nevertheless, most protagonists have several characteristics in common, whatever the romance style. Key among these are self-motivation, resilience, honesty, and above all, a highly developed sense of honor. The protagonists’ actions may be suspect, but they are always performed for the “right” reasons that usually are selfless and have to do with helping or saving others (e.g., the hero kills his father because he was molesting his sister, the heroine lies about her job qualifications so she can support her younger siblings). Approval of these characters is critical for reader identification, and while they have imperfections, they must be able to generate enough respect and admiration (along with likability, if possible) for the reader to care.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 44-45)

“[T]he Contemporary heroine often displays a high degree of independence, intelligence, initiative, and determination, relying more on herself to solve her problems than on the hero. Usually, the more dating heroines are found in the more sensual romances, and the less adventuresome women appear in romances of the Innocent (or Sweet) variety; however, this is not a hard and fast rule, and there are numerous exceptions. Heroines are also no longer necessarily pure and virginal. Changing societal patterns have paved the way for an older, more sexually experienced heroine, often one who has been widowed or divorced, but more recently, one who has simply had an earlier serious relationship that didn’t work out (usually through no fault of her own). Of course, the innocent heroine still exists and is, in fact, practically mandatory in most traditional Regencies and Inspirational and in the Innocent category lines. However, in recent years, the

trend in both publishing and in reader demand has been toward heroines of the more modern variety.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 45)

Av og til er kritikken av sjangeren og verk basert på et mer eller mindre “vitenskapelig” grunnlag. “Kärleksromaner av Harlekin-typen är en fara för sina läsares verkliga relationer och sexuella hälsa. Det står att läsa i det senaste numret av det brittiska vetenskapliga magasinet *Journal of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Care*. [...] Bakom rapporten står relationspsykologen Susan Quilliam, som bland annat skriver att “en oerhörd mängd” av de ärenden som är föremål för terapi hos Quilliam och hennes kollegor kan härledas till kärleksromaner. Quilliam gör en distinktion mellan *chick lit* av Bridget Jones-typen och den genre hon ser som ett problem – *romantisk fiktion*. I det senare fallet följer romanerna en given formel: Flicka möter Pojke redan inom de första sidorna, och därefter är deras gryende kärleksrelation romanens enda fokus. I sista kapitlet lovar så Flickan och Pojken varandra evig kärlek. Enligt rapporten utgör den här typen av böcker nästan hälften av all såld skönlitteratur i vissa länder. Vissa inbitna fans kan läsa 30 böcker i månaden. Quilliam jämför det med de få timmar av sexualundervisning som läsarna kan ha fått under sin livstid. Den här obalansen bäddar för förvridna förväntningar för de kvinnor – för det handlar om en nästintill uteslutande kvinnlig läsekrets – som konsumerar böckerna i fråga. Även om genren har utvecklats och moderniserats under årens lopp så framställs de kvinnliga huvudrollsinnehavarna fortfarande som helt beroende av att hjälten ska “väcka” deras sexuella insikt. [...] “Vi försöker lära ut att sex kan vara underbart och förhållanden kärleksfulla, men de är aldrig perfekta. Att idealisera dem leder till brustna hjärtan”, skriver Susan Quilliam.” (<http://www.dn.se/nyheter/vetenskap/nyforskning-karleksromaner-skadar-verkliga-relationer>; lesedato 04.09.12)

“The way in which sex is handled also varies greatly in these stories, ranging from the innocent to the erotic, and there are even some contemporary romances that display sweet/savage characteristics (e.g., certain titles by Rosemary Rogers). As might be expected, older novels, especially those written prior to the 1970s, are generally of the more innocent variety, while many of those written within the past few decades can contain much more sexually explicit material. Recently, there has been an increasing interest in erotica that runs across all romance subgenres, including some of the category lines, and publishers focusing on erotic romance have begun to emerge (e.g., Red Sage Publishing, which specializes in “sensuous, bold, spicy, untamed, hot, and sometimes politically incorrect” romances, both contemporary and historical). These more sensual contributions to the subgenre enjoyed a surge in popularity during the mid 1980s, and the entire Basic Contemporary Romance subgenre is currently attracting a fair amount of attention. This category is exemplified by the works of writers such as Nora Roberts, Barbara Freethy, Susan Elizabeth Phillips, and Janet Dailey.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 46)

“Like heroines, heroes in Contemporaries come in all shapes and sizes. Often they are strong, take-charge men, handsome, and possibly wealthy, who have already

achieved success in their business or professional fields. Recently, however, another breed of hero, one with a softer, more sensitive side, has begun to emerge, and the classic, dominant, alpha-male type is no longer the only hero choice available. Although “pure” heroes of both types exist, there has been a trend toward the blending of these characteristics, and in reality, the most successful heroes combine elements of both. However, whatever their type, heroes typically appear to be aloof, mysterious, and unwilling to become emotionally involved with anyone. Nevertheless, they are attracted to the heroine “in spite of themselves,” and eventually they must come to terms with the reasons for their feelings. (Typically, they have been hurt by a woman at some time in the past and assume that “women are all alike.” Of course, the insightful, perceptive, caring heroine changes all that.) Finally, in keeping with the recent changes in issues and topics dealt with in today’s romances, a new type of protagonist has surfaced: the wounded hero or heroine. These characters have suffered severely in the past and need the healing touch of love to become whole. These characters have not suffered a mere jilting or similar romantic heartbreak; their problems are usually much deeper and darker. Physical, sexual, or emotional abuse; mental illness; the murder of one’s family; the total destruction of a way of life; the ravages of war; or something equally devastating is often at their core.” (Ramsdell 1999 s. 45)

“The reader of Harlequins, although intellectually unchallenged, even passive, is enormously active emotionally.” (Miles 1988)

“ “Harlequin understands how you feel about love,” a woman assures us in an inviting, confidential tone on television commercials for the paperback romances. The phenomenal success enjoyed by Harlequin Enterprises certainly validates such a claim. [...] popular culture for women, which has been routinely dismissed as simple-minded and excessively emotional [...] Harlequins employ conventions of the romance and the melodrama, with the heroine in a central, if powerless, position in the narrative. Like female Gothics, they deal with “the mystery of masculine motives,” (p. 39) according to [Tania] Modleski, following the invariable rule that all hostile, aggressive behavior on the part of the hero is caused by his ardent love for the heroine.” (Ellen Seiter i <https://fq.ucpress.edu/content/ucpfq/37/1/47.2.full.pdf>; lesedato 26.03.20)

Harlequin-forlaget nedsatte i en periode et “panel for kvinnelige lesere” som skulle komme med anbefalinger om hvordan forlagets bøker burde skrives (Sayre 2011 s. 60). På 1980-tallet hadde forlaget Harlequin en panel av kvinnelige lesere som hver tredje måned svarte på en rekke spørsmål forlaget ville ha svar på. Hvis disse leserne f.eks. ønsket mer detaljer om heltinnens klær, fikk forlagets forfattere beskjed om å ta med mer beskrivelse av klærne (Myriam Katz i Canvat 1999 s. 161). Forlagssjefen i Harlequin uttalte at han aldri hadde tatt en beslutning om bøkene som ikke stammet fra slike innspill og “tester”.

“[W]omen not only choose to buy millions of these books, but have a large and direct input into their shape and content through Harlequin reader panels, survey research, and newsletters.” (Miles 1988)

“[T]he hero in Harlequin Romances may be supercilious, arrogant, and patronizing but he is also and above all independent and self-sufficient. This point is often made in detailed contrast to “the other man” who is a common feature of Harlequins. These “other men” are weak, childish, dependent, sullen, and needy. They whine and pout and constantly demand attention and mothering from the heroine:

“Sullenly he pushed her hand away. Briefly Kelly was reminded of a little boy who had been thwarted in a game” (*Kelly’s Man*, Rosemary Carter, HP362: 5).

“This wasn’t the Roger she knew – this man was a stranger, a petulant spoilt boy. Her own anger rising, she said the unforgivable thing. She said, “Roger darling, do grow up!” ” (*A Very Special Man*, Marjorie Lewty, 2282: 11).

“ “You’re so relaxing Kate,” he said happily once. “The one person in the world that I can always rely on completely to look after me. I don’t know where I’d be without you” ” (*Dark Encounter*, Suzanna Firth, 2307: 7).

“ “Men like me can be lonely, they can sometimes long for a prop – someone near and dear to lean upon. I need you, so please don’t be too long in agreeing to marry me.” ” (Needless to say she didn’t marry him. *Harbour of Love*, Anne Hampson, 2230.)

The refusal and revolt is sometimes explicit:

“The first night ever he had stayed [at her apartment] Gavin had flaked out, with Elizabeth tucking him in like a baby. It even occurred to her then, that a large part of her affection for him was maternal. In many ways Gavin was a huge child, and he would probably require a lot of mothering. “I can’t do it!” she said aloud in piteous resignation.” (And she breaks off the engagement. *Broken Rhapsody*, Margaret Way, HP549: 102.)

The implicit contrast between these men and the hero is often made explicitly:

“Ian was gentle, idealistic, a bit of a dreamer, with one foot in the past like herself. He needed someone practical and hardheaded to look after him; to see that he ate the right food at the right time and didn’t spend too many hours bending over his work. Whereas Tearlach was tough and realistic and didn’t need anyone to look after him” (*Beyond the Sunset*, Flora Kidd, 1732: 131) .

“Nicholas was all the things she most detested – arrogant, conceited, domineering. She guessed he was self-sufficient and ruthless But he was not childish” (*Kelly’s Man*, Rosemary Carter, HP362: 66).

Harlequins are also about not to having to mother men, and I think this strikes a strong and pleasurable chord with women who do so much of this. Not only are Harlequin heroes grown up (rare birds in women’s experience), they are sensitive and considerate and take care of the heroine – something so unexpected that the heroine frequently marvels about it: “What a strange man he was, she thought as she sipped her tea. She had just witnessed in him an unexpected sensitivity. Many men wouldn’t even have noticed she was upset” (*The Icicle Heart*, Jessica Steele, 2297:106). Whether remarked upon or not, Harlequin Romances are full of heroes who take care of heroines” (Miles 1988).

“The male, for instance, is represented as hard while the female is soft; he is strong, she is weak. The signifier “maleness” is presented as a tangible physical presence. It is described, for example, in Janet Dailey’s *That Boston Man* as a “hard male vitality [that] seemed to reach out and ensnare her,” causing the heroine to capitulate as “surrender quivered through her limbs” when his “strong hands ... forced her softer shape to fit the contours of his male form.” [...] In Harlequin Romances, the problem of the heroine not being sufficiently female, which is resolved by the imperatives of desire, is represented in two basic themes. The first characterizes the heroine, regardless of age, as not *yet* a woman, as “a child,” an asexual innocent, usually a virgin, who engages in infantile and ineffectual defiance of the hero and the phallic injunctions of desire. The hero is masterful, dominating, privileged, wealthy, and propertied, and usually in a position of authority with economic control over the heroine. His “over-powering virility,” in Dailey’s words, compels the heroine to acknowledge his masculinity, to accept her place as female sexual mate. In the other thematic form, the heroine is presented as a working woman who *denies* both her femaleness and the imperatives of desire in the interests of traditionally masculine concerns for independence, assertiveness, commitment to a career, and so on. In other words, this form deals with the problems of bigendering, with the shifting of subject positions under the contradictory pressures of the economic exigencies of capitalism and the patriarchal reassertion of gender oppositions. The working heroine, while not necessarily more sexually experienced than the child-woman heroines, is usually financially self-sufficient, although rarely wealthy, and thus more independent and resourceful than the dependent child-woman. At the same time, the working heroine is just as adamant (although not as infantile) as the child-woman in resisting desire and refusing to be made the gendered other. Often decisive, committed, competent, educated, and having some authority, the working heroine attempts to suppress her femaleness and do her work as if she were a man, or, in Dailey’s words, as “one of the boys.” Above all, she tries to relate to the hero in an efficient, detached, professional manner – in other words, from a bigendered position. [...] These two thematic types inform nearly all romance narratives, including historicals. While

the child-woman is readily identifiable, as in Kathleen Woodiwiss's *The Flame and the Flower* (New York: Avon, 1972), the working-woman or bigendered heroine, who takes on masculine traits and roles, is modified, as in the "highwayman" heroine of Laurie McBain's *Moonstruck Madness* (New York: Avon, 1977) or the warrior-huntress of Johanna Lindsey's *Fires of Winter* (New York: Avon, 1980)." (Ebert 1988)

"For the most part, these working heroines are like the bigendered heroine of Sarah James's *Public Affair* [1984], a university secretary and feminist, whom the hero accuses of being "so determined to be judged a person that you forget you're also a woman." But James's hero (like all romance heroes) refuses to treat her as an equal – that is, the same as himself, as another man – since he desires her, and in patriarchy the object of desire is inevitably constructed as the gendered other. The romance hero, in other words, imposes himself as male, as representative of the phallus, on the heroine, perceiving her not in the asexual, bigendered way she tries to construct herself but as woman and sexual mate. The workplace – where the hero is still often the boss or, at the very least, a powerful client or investor – is often the site of this sexualization of the bigendered woman whose efforts to assume traditionally male practices and behavior are treated as more titillating than threatening. In *Public Affair*, for instance, the professor-hero responds to the secretary-heroine's efforts to order him out of her office by gazing "up at her ... She was magnificent in her fury. A passionate, intelligent, opinionated woman. He wondered how she would be in bed?" After working hours, in these as well as other working-woman romances, even greater pressure is exerted on the heroine to leave her somewhat masculine traits at work and assume her position as female sexual mate: just as there is pressure on any working woman, including the reader, to shift subject positions when she returns home to become lover, wife, or mother." (Ebert 1988)

"Whether the hero is dominating and opposes the heroine's work, independence, and assertiveness or whether he is tolerant, sensitive, and supportive of her bigendered traits and activities, at some point in the story he asserts his "utter masculinity" – his power as representative of the phallus – and imposes the patriarchal imperative of desire on the heroine who finally submits to it, as does the feminist heroine of *Public Affair*, for example, who now "wanted only to please him with her body, to be all the woman he would ever need." At the hero's mere presence, touch, or kiss, the heroine's bigender is overwhelmed by the masculinity represented by his body, and the previously independent heroine is firmly located back in the place of the not-male and is represented as soft, vulnerable, and weak – as the naturalized female other signaled by her body. Thus, ideology operates in bigendered romances as well as in child-woman romances to naturalize the gendered opposition of the signifiers masculinity and femininity as innate, physiological traits rooted in genital differences." (Ebert 1988)

“The heroine, however, does not readily succumb to her recuperation back into the gendered other. Her resistance is an important element of the plot dynamic of any romance and a way of diffusing the reader’s own anxiety or protest over the narrative’s concerted effort to locate the subject in the patriarchal order, but ideology must disarm this resistance in order to forestall any serious challenge to its hegemony. It does so by trivializing and eroticizing the heroine’s defiance of the hero’s desire, turning her resistance into just another form of titillation and a further means of recuperation. The heroine’s efforts to resist the hero’s patriarchal authority are frequently reduced to hysterical fits, trivial role-reversals (such as taking the hero out to dinner (Dailey, *That Boston Man*) or proposing marriage (James, *Public Affair*)), and trifling demands that the hero consider her opinion. All occur at the sufferance of the hero who is secure enough in his power to indulge the heroine. Never is the issue of the dissemination of power or the distribution of wealth raised; the hero is the unquestioned beneficiary and arbiter of patriarchy, and the fundamental gender discrepancies in wealth and power necessary to patriarchy are always maintained.” (Ebert 1988)

“The most sustained form of resistance to the heroine’s ideological recuperation is her demand for monogamous sexual commitment (and usually marriage) from the hero, as well as her refusal to assume her place fully until her demands are met. The heroine objects not to male power but to male promiscuity: the hero’s supposed sexual relations with a rival female or his “philandering,” as heroines commonly call it (see Dailey’s *That Boston Man* and James’s *Public Affair*). The heroine must give up other possibilities of subjectivity and occupy the site of not-male, that is, of female other, in order to fulfill her desires and complete her inevitable lack in the (imaginary) complementary unity of a sexual relation. She thus insists that the hero permanently take up the place of her sexual partner in order to guarantee that relation. Such a demand is represented in the narrative as female power over the male, when in fact it reproduces female subjugation to the patriarchal order. By representing female resistance, power, and desire in terms of the demand for male commitment as a reliable sexual mate, patriarchal ideology locks women – and their precarious female subjectivity – into permanent monogamous sexual relations, thereby securing them in the position of not-male for life and subverting any bigendered slippage. Of course, under pressure of capitalism and the displacement of kinship structures, few relationships actually last a lifetime. But the ideological representation of romance in terms of lasting monogamous relationships pervades the patriarchal symbolic order, and individuals continually seek to live their lives in terms of this imaginary relation. As a result, they repeatedly enter into successive series of seemingly permanent pseudo-monogamous sexual relationships.” (Ebert 1988)

“Reflections on my own Harlequin reading, combined with a close textual study, leads me to believe that the emotional power of the romance fantasy in general, and the Harlequin formula in particular, largely results from the hero who, in fact, is a mother figure for women. When we read “good” Harlequins we are re-enacting the

emotionally demanding ambivalence of our relationship with an unpredictable, tender, threatening, all-powerful mother. 'True Love,' as an unconditional love which comes unsought and unearned, that is, without the heroine actively seeking it and regardless of what she does to antagonize the hero, is like our dream of mother-love. The hero's nurturing and domineering behaviour, two aspects of the childhood experience of mothering, are presented as two constant and interacting themes, often evoked with symbols of mother and child in scenes which echo mother/child images, and involve explicit references to the male as caretaker/mother and the female as a motherless child. The heroine is usually an orphan or someone who has been neglected as a child. Margaret Jensen, in a survey of 200 Harlequins, found that at least one-third of the heroines are orphans. Most of the others only have a father or an uncaring and selfish mother or stepmother. The few heroines who have an intact family are thousands of miles away from them." (Miles 1988).

"The resolution of the separation from the mother, the rediscovery of original, sensual and complete fusion is the climax of the romance. The heroine will live happily ever after in the womb, provided by the hero. In romantic fantasy loving is mothering; to be loved is to find a mother. The powerful presence of the lover evokes the mother who is everything to the child and the reader's regression to this emotional state is what gives the image of the hero power." (Miles 1988).

"Ann Snitow notes that what Joanna Russ observed about the heroines of gothic romances – that "they are loved as babies are loved, simply because they exist" – is true of Harlequin heroines as well. Janice Radway also notes that "[B]y emphasizing the intensity of the hero's uninterrupted gaze and the tenderness of his caress at the moment he encompasses his beloved in his still always 'masculine' arms the fantasy ... evokes a period in the reader's life when she was the center of a profoundly nurturant individual's attention." The idea that the Harlequin hero is a mother figure has almost without exception "clicked" with women readers in public talks I gave. They respond far more often than not with an excited "Ah, yes!" or "Of Course!" People who don't know the books but read a few to check out the idea have been convinced." (Miles 1988)

"[I]n a patriarchy only men have enough social power to represent the powerful mother figure. Paradoxically, female figures other than mythical ones, do not have the necessary power and resources to stand for the mother. Also, it may be less threatening psychologically to lose oneself in the other sex where persisting difference from the heroine makes the loss of self in fusion less absolute. The maleness of the hero/mother makes him different, also from the feared mother in a way that may further attenuate the threat of fusion. Both these factors may make it easier for women to play with that fusion psychologically. The erotic aspect of the desire for and experience of fusion with the mother is also much more acceptable in a heterosexually defined and enforced culture when she becomes a male figure. The masculinizing of the mother thus decreases the threat of her attraction for

vulnerable women in a patriarchal society. Needless to say it also masks and tames powerful female focused desires in a way that transforms them into a male focused mythical mainstay of patriarchy – the myth of male mothering.” (Miles 1988)

“[T]he charges that Harlequin Romances deliberately infantilizes the heroine to reinforce the sexist message that women are childlike, vulnerable, and dependent [...] is a damaging message that is no doubt conveyed by the books, but it does not explain why a childlike heroine is an unfailing feature of the Harlequin formula and why it is appealing to women. In fact, the emotional power of the “Harlequin experience” requires that the reader regress to childhood in order to relive the vicissitudes of the intense fear and love relationship with the mother. The heroine of a Harlequin usually does not know until the last page that the hero loves her. The other 187 pages take the heroine and reader for an emotional roller coaster ride focused intensely on:

- the heroine’s losing fight against inevitable unconditional love for and dependence on the hero/mother;
- her deep ambivalence toward the hero/mother with sharp swings between love and hate, admiration, and resentment;
- the thrilling highs when she is noticed and nurtured by the hero/mother;
- the terrible loss when she is not, and fears of loss and separation from him/her;
- the searing pain and jealousy of her sibling rivalry, a woman whom she thinks is preferred by the hero/mother;
- the constant and intense desire for comfort and security through loss of self and fusion with the hero/mother;
- the final ecstatic fulfillment of that wish.

All these components of the Harlequin formula are essential parts of the myth/fantasy of fusion with the mother. The emotional power of the tussles and antagonisms, tenderness and rivalry, closeness and distance of the protagonists come from the reader’s reliving of the conflicted mother/child relationship in the secure knowledge of its eventual resolution. For some, the addictive aspect of this reading may come because it provides only a false resolution. The resolution/fusion is always left to the last page of the book because it is the aim of the reading process, but the comfort is tantalizingly brief, gone as soon as the book is closed. Continued release/comfort can only be gained by picking up another book.” (Miles 1988).

“If it is true that women turn to reading romance because our lives are so often barren of nurture and so pressured that we need to feel mothered and we need a quick and guaranteed escape; and if it is true that romance serves both these needs because the romantic hero is a mother figure – what can feminists learn from all this? First, it shows how important it is to fight the double standards of a culture that devalues women and all that is female if we are to successfully analyze and transform our culture.” (Miles 1988).

“Gutter liker ikke så godt å lese om og identifisere seg med ei jente i en kjærlighetsroman, det blir kanskje litt for “klissete” for dem. [...] Vi drømmer om den store, altopplukende kjærligheten og lengter etter den. Men som helt unge har vi kanskje ikke opplevd å være forelsket ennå, men er veldig nysgjerrig på hvordan det er, hvordan det føles. Når vi leser en kjærlighetsroman, kan vi på en måte oppleve det gjennom hovedpersonen. Man leser om en jente som blir forelsket og det er nesten så en blir forelsket selv. Gode, varme, pirrende følelser oppstår – vi kjenner dem i magen når vi leser. Og det er nok grunnen til at vi leser kjærlighetsromaner: De får oss til å føle oss godt, det gir en positiv leseropplevelse. Vi vet at denne type bøker gir oss en god følelse, og oppsøker dem når det er det vi er ute etter. Det er også noe trygt ved det at kjærlighetsromaner alltid ender lykkelig, selv om vi vet at det ikke alltid er slik i virkeligheten. [...] I vår tid kan det hende at en kjærlighetsroman ikke handler om en jente som ønsker seg en gutt, men en jente som ønsker seg en jentekjæreste eller en gutt som drømmer om en guttekjæreste. Så lenge hovedhistorien i boken handler om et kjærestepar som får hverandre til slutt, kan vi kalle det en kjærlighetsroman. Du har kanskje lest andre typer bøker som også handler om kjærlighet? En romantisk intrige er ofte med i andre sjangre som en slags bihistorie eller for å gjøre handlingen enda mer spennende.” (Anonyme Vibeke i <http://www.txt.no/>; lesedato 28.10.11)

“Romance novels are a subgenre of comedy.” (Regis 2003 s. 16) “Romance seems to be established as the prose equivalent of the romantic comedy of theatre and film.” (Sørbø 2008 s. 97) “Both heroine and hero come to understand their pasts and how those pasts have made them behave. With this understanding they recognize their true selves just as if they had been disguised, which, of course, was a common form of recognition in earlier comedies.” (Regis 2003 s. 44)

Det finnes mange undersjangrer av kjærlighetsromaner, f.eks. chick lit-romaner. Rosalind Gill og Elena Herdieckerhoff skriver i artikkelen “Rewriting the Romance” (2006): “In traditional romantic novels, heroines are not normally seen as particularly career driven despite their spirited nature and intelligence. Rather, they see advancement and power through romantic alliance with a man. In this respect, the female characters in chick lit novels seem markedly different, as they are invariably portrayed as employed and committed to the idea of career. Chick lit unmistakably portrays postfeminist ideals of empowered femininity as central to its protagonist’s experiences. Protagonists’ quests are concerned with navigating the ebbs and flows of contemporary female experience, negotiating the challenges of juggling personal autonomy, career, family, friendship and love. Chick lit particularly invokes the experiences of single, mid-twenty to thirty year old women negotiating the complexities, contradictions and anxieties of feminist ideals during their peak years of independence.” (sitert fra Isbister 2009)

Den kanadiske forfatteren Janette Oke “more or less created the Christian romance genre in 1979 with *Love Comes Softly*. [...] Oke sensed a need in the romance

genre for morally uplifting stories about faith and family. [...] The demand for the *Love Comes Softly* series mushroomed into an eight-book series. Oke pulls from her wealth of family experiences, her love of history, and the family legacy regarding the pioneer life. But most importantly, her love for God and sharing the truth of God's Word shines forth from every book she has written." (<https://www.christianity.com/wiki/people/janette-oke.html>; lesedato 03.08.23)

Rachel Van Riel og Olive Fowler skiller mellom to romantyper: de før-ekteskapelige og de både før- og etterekteskapelige. Dette kan i mange tilfeller også sies å være et skille mellom romantiske romaner (der vi følger paret fram til ekteskapet) og psykologiske romaner (der vi opplever et parforhold også etter ekteskapet, når paret må bryne seg på hverandre i hverdagen). "There is strength to be drawn from seeing how characters work out their problems and being reassured that there is no such thing as the perfect relationship. Post-consummation novels, which follow the couple after they are wedded or bedded, will have very different shapes; there is no underlying pattern. Disillusion may set in; characters have to compromise; external pressures lead to quarrelling; they are unable to meet each other's needs. They fall out of love or fall for other people; the focus shifts to the affair or the adultery. Sometimes they come through and the novelist explores how love changes and develops as they grow older. Pre-consummation novels always have happy endings – they stop before it can go wrong. [...] Some people want the pleasure of repeated gratification and don't want to suffer the uncertainties of the relationship maybe breaking down. Others find the pre-consummation novel too far from the real experience and are frustrated that it stops just at the point where it gets really interesting – what happens to Darcy and Elizabeth [i Jane Austens roman] after the first bloom has worn off? And what did they do about having Lizzie's mother at Christmas?" (Van Riel og Fowler 1996 s. 41). Van Riel og Fowler legger ved sin distinksjon lite vekt på alle de problemene som kan stå i veien for at to unge blir et par, altså at de førektekapelige romanene sjelden beskriver en dans på roser. Både "pre-" og "post-consummation novels" kan være kjærlighetsromaner.

"I slutningen af det 20. århundrede begyndte der på ny at dukke store fortællinger om romantisk kærlighed op i litterært ambitiøse forfatterskaber. Det er karakteristisk for disse værker, at de både gennemspiller en bærende, romantisk kærlighedshistorie og gennem en encyklopædisk, satirisk og selvbevidst form søger at reflektere nutidens informations- og vidensorienterede samfund. Der er således i værkerne tale om en sjælden sameksistens af to traditionelt modstillede litteraturformer, romancen og encyklopædien. Heraf hybridgenren *encyklopædiske kærlighedsromaner* [...] romanernes encyklopædiske, ironisk-refleksive modus ikke er vendt mod selve kærlighedshistorien, men tværtimod forlener denne med en større grad af troværdighed og aktualitet for en veluddannet, nutidig læser end en traditionel romance. Mens kærlighedshistorien netop får lov til at fremstå som et bud på en sammenhængsskabende faktor i dén komplekse, uoverskuelige verden, læseren måske genkender som sin egen. [...] Det første forfatterskab er

nordmanden Jan Kjærstads. Her analyseres seks romaner: *Det store eventyret* (1987), de tre bind i Wergeland-trilogien, *Forføreren* (1993), *Erobreren* (1996) og *Oppdageren* (1999), *Tegn til kjærlighet* (2002) og endelig *Kongen av Europa* (2005). Det andet forfatterskab er englænderen A.S. Byatts; her fokuseres der særligt på *Possession – A Romance* (1990), men også hendes mindre kendte roman *The Biographer's Tale* (2000) inddrages. Og det tredje forfatterskab er amerikaneren Richard Powers', hvor der fokuseres på en enkelt roman, *The Gold Bug Variations* (1991)." (Tine Engel Mogensen i <http://www.kærlighedshistorier.dk/assets/Tekster/DanskResume.pdf>; lesedato 07.06.12)

Den kanadiske sosiologen John Alan Lee har lagd en oversikt over ulike typer kjærlighet, og disse kan gjenfinnes i mange kjærlighetsromaner. Hver type betegnes med et latinsk ord:

- Eros: "represents passionate love. It focuses strongly on physical attraction and sensual satisfaction. Erotic lovers look for rapidly developing, emotionally intense, intimate relationships. They tend to idealize their lovers and are willing to take risks."
- Ludus: "is love practiced as a game or pleasant pastime for mutual enjoyment. Love is a series of challenges and puzzles to be solved. This type of lover dates several partners and moves in and out of love affairs quickly and easily. He or she refuses to make long-range plans. Ludus is wary of emotional intensity from others."
- Storge: "is a caring, concerned friendship that is based on similar interests and pursuits. The love is evolutionary and may take time to develop. Lovers desire a long-term relationship based on mutual trust. For those who practice this love, the most appealing aspect of the relationship consists in making a home and raising a family together."
- Pragma: "is a love that goes shopping for a suitable mate. All it asks is that the relationship work well, that the two partners be compatible and satisfy each other's basic or practical needs. Relationships are based on satisfactory rewards rather than romantic attraction."
- Mania: "is possessive, dependent love. Lovers are insecure and are fearful of being rejected. Mania is associated with high emotional expressiveness and disclosure, but low self-esteem. The typical manic lover yearns for love, yet anticipates that the relationship will be painful. He or she tries to force the partner into greater expressions of affection."
- Agape: "is all-giving, selfless, non-demanding love. Lovers sacrifice their own interests in favor of their partner's and give without expecting a reward. They are

not happy unless the partner is also happy. Prepared to share all they have, they are vulnerable to exploitation.”

(http://faculty.frostburg.edu/ncat-psyc/chapter15/15_loveattitudesscale.htm; lesedato 07.06.13) “Storge” er et gresk ord for “naturlig kjærlighet” slik det f.eks. er mellom foreldre og barn.

Lee teori om ulike typer kjærlighet kan sammenfattes slik (her fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 43-44):

- romantisk kjærlighet (“eros”): umiddelbar tiltrekning til en annen person, forbundet med seksuell interesse
- lidenskapelig og eiendomsbegjærende kjærlighet (“mania”): en person vil eie en annen person, og både gir og krever udelt hengivenhet inntil det besatte, ofte forbundet med sjalusi
- vennskapelig kjærlighet (“storge”): vokser fram av et langt vennskap, der felles interesser og aktiviteter dominerer relasjonen
- lekende kjærlighet (“ludus”): fokuserer på her og nå, på forførelse, seksuell frihet og felles, eventyrlige opplevelser
- pragmatisk kjærlighet (“pragma”): oppstår ut fra ønsket om en passende partner, med personer som gjensidig tilpasser seg hverandre for å ha et solid grunnlag for sin relasjon
- altruistisk kjærlighet (“agape”): den andres behov og velferd er det viktigste

Eros-kjærligheten i Lees kategorisering begynner med en intens følelse, en sterk fysisk tiltrekning og oppleves som “kjærlighet ved første blick”. Mania er karakterisert ved besettelse og angst, og partnerne opplever det som både skremmende og betryggende at de er i stand til å elske en annen så intenst. Ludus-kjærligheten er ikke like intens som eros-kjærligheten, og mannen og kvinnen lar ikke kjærligheten dominere deres liv fullstendig. Storge-elskere har ofte vært venner i årevis før de finner ut at de passer sammen som partnere. Lee beskriver den pragmatiske elskereren som en kombinasjon av ludus og storge. Agape er ifølge Lee en kombinasjon av eros og storge, og er en altruistisk kjærlighet.

Lees kategorier er forskjellige “kjærlighetsstiler” (Kaufmann 2007 s. 44) som kan kombineres, og som genererer ulike plott i kjærlighetsromaner og -filmer. Mania og ludus genererer et besettelses-plott. Agape genererer et rednings- og offer-plott. Storge og pragma genererer et våg-å-satse-på-kjærligheten-plott.

“[M]any people believe in romantic ideals and these beliefs do seem to predict facets of real-life relationships.” (Hefner 2011 s. 32) Veronica Hefner beskriver

“four main themes that comprise the romantic ideal in western societies: Idealization of partner, soul mate/one and only, love at first sight, and love conquers all [...] *Idealization of partner*. When a person believes that his/her romantic partner is perfect, this individual is said to have idealized his/her romantic interest (Bell, 1975). Idealizing a partner means that an individual typically chooses to focus only on the good qualities, often exaggerating those characteristics, and ignores the parts that make a partner human (Bell, 1975). An individual who embraces this ideal typically feels adoration, fondness, liking, tenderness, and intense sentimentality toward a partner (Aron & Aron, 1986). Consequently, this person believes the partner is flawless. [...] *Soul mate/one and only*. This theme of the romantic ideal refers to the notion that there is only one perfect love for each individual (Franiuk, Cohen, & Pomerantz, 2002). It is the idea that real love comes only once, can only be experienced with one person, and that fate and destiny work in tandem to connect true lovers (Bell, 1975; Peplau & Gordon, 1985; Sprecher & Metts, 1989). It is a reassuring belief for those feeling “in love” because it rules out other potential possibilities and reinforces the thought that nobody else could make them as happy as their soul mate (Bell, 1975).” (Hefner 2011 s. 22-23)

“*Love at first sight*. The third major theme of the romantic ideal construct is a belief that a romantic relationship can blossom after a one-time meeting (Bell, 1975). According to this theme, it can take just a mere glance or a short conversation for individuals to fall into love. Consequently, this type of love is characterized by flamboyant passion and fast-paced relational movement (Sprecher & Metts, 1989). People who believe in this ideal think that it is perfectly acceptable for physical intimacy and long-term commitment to happen sooner than what might be considered socially normative or appropriate. [...] *Love conquers all*. The fourth theme of the romantic ideal is that love will overcome everything. According to this ideal, different values and interests are not pertinent, and financial, social, and geographical concerns are irrelevant. Indeed, conflict in the relationship does not matter for this ideal, because it is the belief that love will somehow find a way (Bell, 1975; Peplau & Gordon, 1985). The key to this theme, however, is the way in which partners believe conflicts are resolved. Instead of working through the issues and developing real solutions, the belief is that a couple ultimately can ignore problems and instead resort only to love as the mechanism for overcoming obstacles. This theme is the foundation of many of the storylines in many romance novels (e.g., Lee, 2008). For example, one content analysis of these books revealed that most of the stories trivialize the importance of safe sex to the point that the characters often explicitly tell each other that true love means never having to be careful (Diekman, McDonald, & Gardner, 2000). In other words, their love alone is expected to overcome the issues and concerns that arise from practicing unsafe sex.” (Hefner 2011 s. 24-25)

Forlaget Avon “prospered by selling single-title romances. Avon was also the first to publish the “bodice-ripper.” This is a romance in which the hero and possibly others rape the heroine early on in the story. In 1974, Nancy Coffey published the

now classic bodice-ripper, *Sweet Savage Love*, by Rosemary Rogers. [...] Bodice-rippers usurped the Gothics of the 1960s. [...] Jude Devereaux, a best-selling romance writer, recalls that her publisher almost refused to print her first manuscript because Devereaux would not include a rape scene.” (Palmer 1996)

“Women talk about desire, but they also talk about the difficulties of building a new partnership with an old friend, or negotiating the shoals of a fragile marriage. [...] Romances are sometimes stories of courtship, but also stories of marriage and consequences. Many of my own books, in fact, have been about failing marriages: they are my footnotes to that particular conversation. So let’s quit this out-of-date mockery of the genre. Focusing solely on the sensual content of romances and deriding them as bodice-rippers leads to the assumption that America is full of women gobbling up romance novels because they’re sexually frustrated and want to be overpowered by a strong man. These days, however, a romance heroine is likely to toss her own bra, and if buttons are skittering on the floor, they’re quite possibly shirt studs. We all long for stories with narrative drive, stories that talk about relationships, and stories that aren’t riddled with violence or death. Romances reflect no more than what most of us hope for in daily life – and that includes being lucky enough to experience shared desire. I’ve a good notion that many Americans, no matter their reading preference, are hoping for a Valentine’s Day that involves a bit of flying lingerie.” (Mary Bly i <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/12/opinion/a-fine-romance.html>; lesedato 28.05.19)

“[M]en are more likely to idealize their partner and relationship, and to believe that love can overcome obstacles and can happen at first sight (Sprecher & Metts, 1989). At first glance, these sex differences appear to be at odds with the popular notion that females are more interested in romance than males are. Yet there is evidence that men are also more likely to behave in accord with such ideals. When compared to women, for example, men are more likely to end a relationship that appears ill fated (Rubin, Peplau, & Hill, 1981) and more likely to sacrifice a career in order to have a romantic relationship (Mosher & Danoff-Burg, 2007). Several scholars have proposed an evolutionary perspective for these sex differences (Ellis, 1995). They argue that men endorse ideals more strongly than women do because men historically have not had to worry about practical matters in relationships, whereas women traditionally have relied on men to provide food and shelter (Sharp & Ganong, 2000). As a result, women have had to base relationship decisions on logistical concerns rather than on ideals about love. [...] men put a greater emphasis on romantic qualities than do women, who tend to be more realistic and pragmatic than men are. Thus, romanticism often precedes feelings of commitment for men.” (Hefner 2011 s. 27 og 30)

Den amerikanske psykologen Robert J. Sternberg har beskrevet det han kaller “The triangular theory of love”. Han hevder at “love can be understood in terms of three components [...] These three components are intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Each component manifests a different aspect of love.

Intimacy. Intimacy refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships. It thus includes within its purview those feelings that give rise, essentially, to the experience of warmth in a loving relationship.

Passion. Passion refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships. The passion component includes within its purview those sources of motivational and other forms of arousal that lead to the experience of passion in a loving relationship.

Decision/commitment. Decision/commitment refers, in the short-term, to the decision that one loves a certain other, and in the long-term, to one's commitment to maintain that love. These two aspects of the decision/commitment component do not necessarily go together, in that one can decide to love someone without being committed to the love in the long-term, or one can be committed to a relationship without acknowledging that one loves the other person in the relationship.

[...] The three components of love interact with each other: For example, greater intimacy may lead to greater passion or commitment, just as greater commitment may lead to greater intimacy, or with lesser likelihood, greater passion. In general, then, the components are separable, but interactive with each other. Although all three components are important parts of loving relationships, their importance may differ from one relationship to another, or over time within a given relationship. Indeed, different kinds of love can be generated by limiting cases of different combinations of the components.

The three components of love generate eight possible kinds of love when considered in combination. It is important to realize that these kinds of love are, in fact, limiting cases: No relationship is likely to be a pure case of any of them.

Nonlove refers simply to the absence of all three components of love. Liking results when one experiences only the intimacy component of love in the absence of the passion and decision/commitment components. Infatuated love results from the experiencing of the passion component in the absence of the other components of love. Empty love emanates from the decision that one loves another and is committed to that love in the absence of both the intimacy and passion components of love. Romantic love derives from a combination of the intimacy and passion components. Companionate love derives from a combination of the intimacy and decision/commitment components of love. Fatuous love results from the combination of the passion and decision/commitment components in the absence of the intimacy component. Consummate, or complete love, results from the full combination of all three components. [...] Almost all of us are exposed to large numbers of diverse stories that convey different conceptions of how love can be understood. Some of these stories may be explicitly intended as love stories; others may have love stories embedded in the context of larger stories. [...] Although the number of possible stories is probably infinite, certain genres of stories seem to

keep emerging again and again in pilot analyses we have done of literature, film, and people's oral descriptions of relationships. [...]

Stories we have found to be particularly useful in conceptualizing people's notions of love are

1. *Addiction*. Strong anxious attachment; clinging behavior; anxiety at thought of losing partner.
2. *Art*. Love of partner for physical attractiveness; importance to person of partner's always looking good.
3. *Business*. Relationships as business propositions; money is power; partners in close relationships as business partners.
4. *Collection*. Partner viewed as "fitting in" to some overall scheme; partner viewed in a detached way.
5. *Cookbook*. Doing things a certain way (recipe) results in relationship being more likely to work out; departure from recipe for success leads to increased likelihood of failure.
6. *Fantasy*. Often expects to be saved by a knight in shining armor or to marry a princess and live happily ever after.
7. *Game*. Love as a game or sport.
8. *Gardening*. Relationships need to be continually nurtured and tended to.
9. *Government*. (a) Autocratic. One partner dominates or even controls other. (b) Democratic. Two partners equally share power.
10. *History*. Events of relationship form an indelible record; keep a lot of records – mental or physical.
11. *Horror*. Relationships become interesting when you terrorize or are terrorized by your partner.
12. *House and Home*. Relationships have their core in the home, through its development and maintenance.
13. *Humor*. Love is strange and funny.
14. *Mystery*. Love is a mystery and you shouldn't let too much of yourself be known.

15. *Police*. You've got to keep close tabs on your partner to make sure he/she toes the line, or you need to be under surveillance to make sure you behave.
16. *Pornography*. Love is dirty, and to love is to degrade or be degraded.
17. *Recovery*. Survivor mentality; view that after past trauma, person can get through practically anything.
18. *Religion*. Either views love as a religion, or love as a set of feelings and activities dictated by religion.
19. *Sacrifice*. To love is to give of oneself or for someone to give of him or herself to you.
20. *Science*. Love can be understood, analyzed, and dissected, just like any other natural phenomenon.
21. *Science Fiction*. Feeling that partner is like an alien – incomprehensible and very strange.
22. *Sewing*. Love is whatever you make it.
23. *Theater*. Love is scripted, with predictable acts, scenes, and lines.
24. *Travel*. Love is a journey.
25. *War*. Love is a series of battles in a devastating but continuing war.
26. *Student-teacher*. Love is a relationship between a student and a teacher.” (Sternberg i <http://www.robertjsternberg.com/love>; lesedato 08.05.20)

Den italienske kultursosiologen Francesco Alberonis bok *Eg elsker deg* (på norsk 1997) “gjev ein heildekkande og fullstendig teori om dei talrike formene for kjærleik: mors kjærleik, søsken kjærleik, kjærleik mellom venner, fedrelands- kjærleik, og den erotiske og ekteskapelege kjærleiken. Han dreg på underhaldande vis opp dei skarpe skillelinjene mellom den genuine forelskinga og svermeriet for eit idol, og han går systematisk gjennom krisene som oppstår i eit parforhold. Eksempla er henta frå litteratur, film og det verkelege livet.” (forlagetts beskrivelse)

Sosiologen Eva Illouz har utgitt boka *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation* (2012). “The organised marital relationships of Jane Austen’s day, and the model of love as pure emotionality that followed, are both long gone, she says. Instead, the search for love today, while it looks like free choice, “entails engagement with a complex affective and cognitive market apparatus to evaluate partners”. Yet despite this complexity, we (women) need to understand it more than ever because it is the way we constitute our self-worth. [...] Conversations (what Illouz calls “thick

talk”) with friends are a key part of the choice process. With friends we spend a great deal of time reflecting on relationships, agonising over mistakes and hoping new relationships will avoid past errors. Partner choices are frequently framed within well-trodden narrative formulas and visual cliches from Hollywood films, novels and women’s magazines. The media promote the view that we will know “the right man” when we see him: we will look across a crowded room and recognise our soulmate, we will “click”. Illouz says it is too simple to call these beliefs false consciousness. She cites Simon Blackburn that love is not blind. You see each other’s faults. But you forgive them and, through forgiveness, the self-esteem of the loved one increases. Through love we become who we imagine ourselves to be. Love validates us and gives us a sense of self-worth.” (Jean Duncombe i <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/419788.article>; lesedato 05.06.13)

Boka *The Popular Romance Heroine’s Journey to Selfhood and Self-Presentation* av Jayashree Kamblé (2023) “examines the romance genre, with its sensible flexibility in retaining what audiences find desirable and discarding what is not, by asking an important question: “Who is the romance heroine, and what does she want?” To find the answer, Kamblé explores how heroines in ten novels reject societal labels and instead remake themselves on their own terms with their own agency.” (<https://iupress.org/9780253065704/creating-identity/>; lesedato 10.10.24) “Kamblé allows readers to see the archetype of the romantic heroine anew. Kamblé makes a compelling case for the heroine’s complexity, depth, and ultimately heroism, as she confronts societal constraints and expectations to define her life and HEA [Happily Ever After] on her own terms.” (<https://www.oakleafbooks.se/index.php>; lesedato 10.10.24)

“Some analysts read the Harlequin hero’s involvement in domestic and nurturing tasks as a symbolic domestication of the male that is satisfying to women. Others have suggested that it symbolizes a power that women have won through love. There are surely elements of truth in both of these related points” (Miles 1988).

“However, despite our continuing search for Mr Right, today there is an added problem in achieving romantic perfection. Integral to modernity is irony. Illouz cites David Halperin that true sexual passion requires the elimination of irony. This irony, uncertainty and sometimes cynicism about “real love” leads to another new dimension of the choice process, which Illouz calls “emotional interiority”. When seeking a relationship we engage constantly in self-scrutiny. What sort of person am I really? What sort of person do I really desire? When I am in a relationship, how do I really feel? How long will this love last? It is a modern belief, she argues, that such reflexive self-understanding will help us to better understand ourselves and our choices. But again, Illouz draws our attention to the drawbacks of introspection. Choices are harder. Modern introspection creates ambivalence, a sense of dissatisfaction about never fully knowing what our “true” feelings are. [...] She draws out the contradictions between our endless idealisation of love set alongside

irony and ambivalence. There is acknowledgement that relationships, whether marriage, remarriage or cohabitation, frequently break down. Optimistic searches for a new romantic partner therefore carry within them an inbuilt expectation of disappointment.” (Jean Duncombe i <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/419788.article>; lesedato 05.06.13)

Ellen Fein og Sherrie Schneiders selvhjelpsbok *The Rules: Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr. Right* (1995) anbefaler hva kvinner bør gjøre for å tiltrekke seg og gifte seg med sin drømme-mann. Et av rådene er at kvinnen bør være “easy to be with but hard to get”. Kvinnen bør ifølge Fein og Schneider få mannen til å ville ha henne, men ikke framstå som om hun vil ha han.

For en mann betyr ekteskapet med en svært vakker kvinne vanligvis en status-økning, uansett om hun er fattig, mens valget av en mann for en kvinne alltid bør innebære en forbedret sosial og økonomisk livssituasjon (Kaufmann 2007 s. 98).

Angela Miles ønsker å forstå “the undeniably negative and unpleasant behaviour of the hero which is often also a prominent theme. He can be domineering, patronizing, dismissive, arrogant, unpredictable, highhanded, bossy, incommunicative, bullying, aggressive, and he even occasionally uses force. There is also the even more unpleasant infantilization of the heroine. She often finds herself needing help, and she often reacts to the hero in silly and childish ways. Why is that an apparently necessary part of the formula? When I first began to read Harlequins I couldn’t understand the foolishness of it all. Both hero and heroine behave in unbelievably ridiculous ways, misunderstand each other all the time, and do things that in any other context would jeopardize any respect, and therefore concern, the reader might have. I thought I had solved the problem when I realized that it was quite a feat to keep two people who are meant to be together, who are deeply and madly in love, apart for 188 pages. The authors must have to resort to boorishness on the part of the hero and silliness on the part of the heroine to do this. But this is not the full explanation. Ann Snitow and others read the hero’s bullying and the heroine’s infantilization as a part of the general patriarchal message that women are not full people, are not to be taken seriously, are not responsible and are necessarily dependent on men. What, however, is in this for women? Some have suggested that portraying negative male behaviour helps women live with this behaviour in their own lives because in Harlequins there is always an explanation for the hero’s coldness. Usually it has to do with his love for the heroine. He thinks she is in love with someone else, or is too young for him, or he has been deeply hurt by a woman in the past and is frightened of this dawning love. It has also been suggested that the uppity, reactive, foot-stamping behaviour of the heroine may give women readers pleasure because they like to see heroines who can talk back to men and give them a hard time. Readers like heroines who do not try to please and impress men, who are, at least at first, indifferent to male opinion.” (Miles 1988)

“It is important to the reader, who knows that men are easy prey to feminine wiles, that the hero’s interest in the heroine cannot be manipulated, that he is one of the rare men who is immune to the temptation of the surface appeal of even a stunningly beautiful woman. There is something very satisfying for the reader in a hero’ love for an ordinary (though appealing) looking heroine when she has not set out to trap him while another, much more beautiful and sophisticated woman has. This classic Harlequin scenario signals to the reader that we are seeing “true love.” The heroine is loved for herself, warts, tantrums and all.” (Miles 1988)

“Harlequins are about lion taming: if you can’t be a lion yourself you can at least domesticate one ... Harlequins are, among other things, how-to books on the fantasy level, for women who experience daily their own lack of power.” (Margaret Atwood sitert fra Miles 1988) Hun må omforme han til “husband material” (Kaufmann 2007 s. 53). Mannen må lære seg “gentleness”, dvs. å bli mer sensitiv overfor kvinnen (Kaufmann 2007 s. 49). “In the love story, the male undergoes a kind of feminization by contamination” (Mary Ann Doane sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 50), blant annet med en ny evne til å vise følelser og reflektere over sin egen oppførsel. Den amerikansk-tyske professoren og feministen Shere Hites bok *Women and Love: A Cultural Revolution in Progress* (1987) refererer til en undersøkelse blant flere tusen kvinner. Hele 98 % av dem ønsket seg mer “verbal nærhet til mennene som de elsker [...] de vil at mennene skal snakke mer om sine personlige tanker, følelser, planer og bekymringer og spørre kvinnene om deres” (sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 46). For kvinner var mangel på kommunikasjon en av de viktigste grunnene når de ville ha skilsmisse (s. 46).

“[M]any of the women explained in the interviews that despite their disappointments, they feel refreshed and strengthened by their vicarious participation in a fantasy relationship where the heroine is frequently treated as they themselves would most like to be loved. [...] The romance reader in effect is permitted the experience of feeling cared for, the sense of having been affectively reconstituted, even if both are lived only vicariously. [...] the ideal romance may thus enable a woman to satisfy vicariously those psychological needs created in her by a patriarchal culture unable to fulfill them” (Radway 1983).

“For Jeanne Dubino, readers of these books use them to fill an emptiness in their lives: “Not finding what they want in ‘real’ life, millions of women turn to romances in a vicarious attempt to compensate for the lack of attention and validation they get in their own lives” (107).” (Regis 2003 s. 5)

“Romance reading, it would seem, can function as a kind of training for the all-too-common task of reinterpreting a spouse’s unsettling actions as the signs of passion, devotion, and love.” (Radway 1983) Kvinnene i en leserundersøkelse “insisted indignantly that *they* could never forgive the hero’s early transgressions and they see no reason why they should be asked to believe that the heroine can. What they are suggesting, then, is that certain kinds of male behavior associated with the

stereotype of male machismo can never be forgiven or reread as the signs of love. They are thus not interested *only* in the romance's happy ending. They want to involve themselves in a story that will permit them to enjoy the hero's tenderness *and* to reinterpret his momentary blindness and cool indifference as the marks of a love so intense that he is wary of admitting it. Their delight in both these aspects of the process of romance reading and their deliberate attempt to select books that will include "a gentle hero" and "a slight misunderstanding" suggest that deeply felt needs are the source of their interest in both components of the genre. On the one hand, they long for emotional attention and tender care; on the other, they wish to rehearse the discovery that a man's distance can be explained and excused as his way of expressing love." (Radway 1983)

Nancy Chodorow "maintains that women often continue to experience a desire for intense affective nurturance and relationality well into adulthood as a result of an unresolved separation from their primary caretaker. [...] because male children are also reared by women, they tend to separate more completely from their mothers by suppressing their own emotionality and capacities for tenderness which they associate with mothers and femininity. [...] Because they are encouraged to be aggressive, competitive, self-sufficient, and unemotional, men often find sustained attention to the emotional needs of others both unfamiliar and difficult." (Radway 1983)

Leseren "may well turn to romance reading in an effort to construct a fantasy-world where she is attended, as the heroine is, by a man who reassures her of her special status and unique identity. The value of the romance may have something to do, then, with the fact that women find it especially difficult to indulge in the restorative experience of visceral regression to an infantile state where the self is cared for perfectly by another. [...] they enjoy imagining themselves being tenderly cared for and solicitously protected by a fictive character who inevitably proves to be spectacularly masculine and unusually nurturant as well. [...] when they are reading a romance, they feel happy and content. Several commented that they particularly relish moments when they are home alone and can relax in a hot tub or in a favorite chair with a good book. Others admitted that they most like to read in a warm bed late at night. Their association of romances with contentment, pleasure, and good feelings is apparently not unique, for in conducting a market research study, Fawcett discovered that when asked to draw a woman reading a romance, romance readers inevitably depict someone who is exaggeratedly happy. [...] the experience of reading the novels gives them hope, provides pleasure, and causes contentment" (Radway 1983).

Det kan være et problem å finne en betegnelse på romaner der kjærlighet (og lett underholdning) er hovedsaken, uten at de nødvendigvis (kun) er kjærlighetsromaner. I 2007 kommenterte en bibliotekar ved et norsk folkebibliotek navnevanskene slik: "[V]i ønsker å samle Frid Ingulstad, Danielle Steel, Margit Sandemo og de [på samme hylle]. Dette fordi vi tror det vil være til hjelp for brukere som

liker en forfatter/bok og som leter etter andre som likner. Problemet er hva man skal kalle samlingen/kategorien – Det vi har kommet på sitter ikke helt. Vi har prøvd “Serier” (noe for eksempel Steel ikke er). Vi har tenkt på “Underholdning” (er noe subjektivt). “Lett underholdning” (denne er heller ikke god – den antyder at det som er å finne her er av dårlig kvalitet (om så noe mildere enn “husmor-porno”).” (e-postlista Biblioteknorge, 17.08.07) En annen bibliotekar svarte at “Vi kaller samlingen: Kjærlighet. Dette fungerer bra = fornøyde kunder”.

“Harlequin romances are essentially pornography for people [read women] ashamed to read pornography” (Peter Parisi sitert fra Miles 1988). “Romance Novels: Legitimate Laughingstock or Ultimate Girl Power? [...] They’ve been called [...] dirty, bawdy, glorified pornography, traditionalistic, irrelevant, silly, predictable and formulaic, etc., etc. ad nauseum. I say the naysayers are completely missing the point – not to mention that they clearly haven’t picked up a romance novel (or perhaps any other book for that matter) in the last 25 years. [...] Bestselling author Nora Roberts perhaps sums it up best: “The books are about the celebration of falling in love and emotion and commitment, and all of those things we really want.”” (Keyren Gerlach i <http://harlequinblog.com/>; lesedato 07.02.12) Den tyske sosiologen Niklas Luhmann har prøvd å beskrive kjærlighetsromanenes betydning for kvinners psyke i sin bok *Kjærlighet som lidenskap: Om koding av intimitet* (1982; oversatt til engelsk med tittelen *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy*).

Tania Modleskis bok *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (1982) prøver å forklare de letteste kjærlighetsromanenes popularitet. “Their enormous and continuing popularity, I assume, suggests that they speak to very real problems and tensions in women's lives. The narrative strategies that have evolved for smoothing over these tensions can tell us much about how women have managed not only to live in oppressive circumstances but to invest their situations with some degree of dignity” (Modleski sitert fra <http://www.ejumpcut.org/>; lesedato 29.02.12).

Modleski argumenterer mot “the view taken by Ann Douglas that Harlequins appeal in a purely escapist fashion to feminine masochism [...] For what Modleski discovers by examining the dynamics of the reading process for Harlequins is that the selfless “disappearing act” seemingly required of both heroine and reader has beneath it an outlet for feminine (if not feminist) rage. Popular culture texts tend to be elusive not in their complexity but rather in their simplicity. Their complexity lies not in the deciphering of the meaning of the text but rather in the deciphering of the psycho-cultural dynamics of the reading process. [...] Modleski relates this to John Berger's ideas that a woman's way of seeing in our culture must be schizoid. At the same time that she exists as an object of sight for men, she must continually survey herself from a male point of view. Evidence of this doubled perspective is also apparent in Modleski's approach to the overall reading dynamics. In the Harlequin formula, a young, innocent woman becomes involved

with a handsome older man whose behavior towards her — contemptuous and often brutal – confuses her. Yet it does not confuse the reader because the reader has “retrospective illumination” from her knowledge of the Harlequin formula. Unlike the heroine, the reader is able to read back from the formula ending in which all misunderstandings are cleared away and the hero reveals he has loved the girl all along. The reader may identify emotionally with the heroine without suffering her confusion.” (Jane Feuer i <http://www.ejumpcut.org/>; lesedato 29.02.12)

“Modleski finds, in this distancing the potential for expressing strong revenge fantasies upon men for the way they treat women (the heroine exhibits quite a bit of hostility toward the hero for the way he treats her) while at the same time easing women's guilt at their anger (we know he loved her all along), Modleski relates this reader response to psychoanalytical theories of hysteria and feminine masochism. [...] Modleski concludes that rather than condemning Harlequins, we should condemn the social conditions that have made them necessary.” (Jane Feuer i <http://www.ejumpcut.org/>; lesedato 29.02.12)

Den franske sosiologen Bruno Péquignots bok *Kjærlighetsrelasjonen: Sosiologisk analyse av den moderne sentimentale roman* (1991; på fransk) hevder at kvinnene søker etter sannsynlige historier som kunne ha skjedd, og dermed fortellinger som kunne vært selvopplevde for dem selv. Romanene utformer en ideell kjærlighetsrelasjon i lesernes bevissthet. Den plutselige forelskelsen er nødvendig, men ikke nok. Kjærlighetsforholdet må gjøres solid og permanent, og dette går ikke av seg selv. Oppbyggingen av en solid relasjon skjer gjennom kjennskap til hverandre, og ved å overkomme en serie av utfordringer eller “prøvelser”. Péquignot viser dessuten at overraskende mange menn leser Harlequin-bøker, som det på slutten av 1980-tallet ble solgt 30 millioner årlig av i Frankrike (<http://www.cnrs.fr/Cnrspresse/n381a4.htm>; lesedato 03.05.13). “In 1982 Harlequin Enterprises sold 218 million books in twelve languages in 98 countries. In Canada twenty eight percent of the paperbacks sold were Harlequins. Romances of all kinds, taken together made up fifty percent of paperback sales in the U.S.” (Miles 1988).

Kvinnene “gjemmer seg” for å lese “sentimentale romaner”, og er særlig motvillige til å vise fremmede hvilke bøker de liker (Péquignot gjengitt fra Bourgatte 2008 s. 120).

De franske forfatterne som skrev under navnet Delly (pseudonym for søskenparet Jeanne-Marie og Frédéric Petitjean de La Rosière), har utgitt nesten hundre romaner, der heltinnene vanligvis tilhører de mest velstående i samfunnet og er svært kultiverte, men kan også være Askepott-skikkelser (en av deres bøker heter *Askepotts arv*). Kvinnene driver ikke med husarbeid, men spiller musikk, synger, tegner, broderer, og er meget dyktige i dette. De er også svært vakre, med en skjønnhet som overvelder menn. Hos Delly er mannen oftest adelig, f.eks. en baron eller greve. Både hos kvinnene og mennene er det kun det sjelelige som teller, aldri

erotisk tiltrekning. Det hender at mannen er misogyn, inntil han må gi tapt og innse at han elsker heltinnen på grunn av hennes gode egenskaper: skjønnhet, renhet, beskjedenhet. Personene i Dellys romaner er enten gode eller slemme, med edle hjerter eller skurker. Noen av Dellys romaner foregår på Balkan eller andre land i Øst-Europa, med folkløriske innslag. Handlingen finner f.eks. sted på slott der tjenerne går kledd i folkedrakt (Yveline Baticle i https://www.persee.fr/doc/colan_0336-1500_1984_num_61_1_1634; lesedato 14.04.20).

Carolina Invernizio var en av “Italy’s most popular writers around the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the twentieth” (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/94840105/carolina-invernizio>; lesedato 24.04.20). Hun skrev over hundre romaner, den første med tittelen *Rina, eller Alpenes engel* (1877).

Den spanske forfatteren Rafael Pérez y Pérez skrev svært mange romantiske romaner. Han var “was a popular Spanish writer of over 160 romantic novels from 1909 to 1971. He was one of the first writers to publish romance novels written in Spanish language. His novels have been translated into 22 languages, and had sold over 5 million copies by the year 1977, and some of his novels were adapted to film.” (<https://peoplepill.com/people/rafael-perez-y-perez/>; lesedato 26.10.20)

Den britiske forfatteren Florence Louisa Barclay er mest kjent for romanen *The rosary* (1909): “Jane Champion is a talented, good-natured and independent woman, but she’s very aware that she’s no beauty. In fact, she’s too tall, very plain, and expects she’ll spend her life as a spinster. Garth Dalmain is a painter who is vibrant, wealthy, extraordinarily handsome, and well known as a lover of great beauty. When Garth hears Jane sing the popular song, The Rosary, at a performance, he sees the great beauty of her soul and is immediately smitten. He wants to marry Jane, and declares his undying love for her. But certain that such an incredible man could never be happy spending the rest of his life with a plain-looking woman, Jane turns him down. Broken-hearted, the two part ways, until a tragedy reunites them.” (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n87112390/>; lesedato 06.05.20) “The story of a young artist who is reputed to love beauty above all else in the world, but who, when blinded through an accident, gains life’s greatest happiness. A rare story of the great passion of two real people superbly capable of love, its sacrifices and its exceeding reward.” (https://manybooks.net/titles/barclay_fetext03rosry11.html; lesedato 24.04.20)

“In the charming romance novel *Through the Postern Gate* [1911], author Florence Barclay pulls off a seemingly unimaginable feat, combining the intense emotions and roiling passions of a classic love story with unconventional, sharply drawn characters and a pair of unlikely sweethearts. If you’re weary of modern cookie-cutter romance novels, give this refreshingly innovative take on the genre a try.” (<http://worldcat.org/identities/lccn-n87112390/>; lesedato 06.05.20)

Det britiske forlaget Mills & Boon ble etablert i 1908. "Mills & Boon wasn't all about lust and amour at first – when the company initially launched, it was a general fiction publisher, turning out books about everything from travel to craft. The first book it ever published was prophetically a romance book – *Arrows From The Dark*, by Sophie Cole. Critics gave it a glowing report and by 1914, 1,394 women had bought a copy. The writer went on to pen another 65 thrilling titles for the publisher during her fruitful career. [...] Whilst still targeting librarians and book buyers, Mills & Boon also started to establish a direct mail catalogue operation. Twice a year, the 'Happy Reading' catalogue did the rounds of its regular readers. Alan Boon linked the company up with magazines such as *Women's Weekly* and other popular publications. Editors of these magazines helped to shape the editorial direction of the company's output. The magazine industry was thriving and thus served as an excellent vehicle for Mills & Boon – whose serials appeared weekly. Readers would have a taste of a story and go and buy or borrow the book. An important name at the time was Winifred 'Biddy' Johnson, who edited *Woman's Weekly* for over 20 years. Alan Boon described the publisher and *Woman's Weekly* as being "sort of brother and sister" during the period – and Biddy often demanded changes and dictated policy to the authors during her reign. During this time, one of the company's biggest stars was also discovered. Lilian Warren, who wrote under three names – Rosalind Brett, Kathryn Blair and Celine Conway – established a new style, capturing the imagination of her readers with erotic, sometimes violent stories, set on foreign shores. "She had an immense influence on the romance novel, by the way she portrayed these handsome heroes, the sunshine backgrounds, and her skills in dialogue," Alan Boon noted." (<http://www.millsandboon.co.uk/history.asp>; lesedato 11.04.13)

Forlaget Harlequin Enterprise har sin base i Canada, Mills & Boon i London, Silhoutte i New York og Cora i Hamburg (Kaufmann 2007 s. 99).

"British house Mills and Boon, established in 1908; the Canadian reprint house Harlequin Books, established in 1949; and American publishing's first response to Harlequin, Silhouette Books, established in 1980." (Davis 2003 s. 156)

"Mills and Boon also recognized two very popular conventions of romance in the twentieth century: what they called Lubbock's Law and the Alphaman. Lubbock refers to Percy Lubbock, a literary critic (*Craft of Fiction*, 1921), who claimed that the best fiction was written from the heroine's point of view because it intensifies, emotionally, whatever is being told. The Alphaman is Alan Boon's description of what a romance hero ought to be – in accord with the "law of nature," he ought to be the "strongest male of the species" in order to attract females (McAlier 149-50). This, of course, is the forerunner of Jayne Ann Krentz's "dangerous man" who must be tamed." (Regis 2003 s. 157-158)

"By the late 1950s, Harlequin Books was publishing and distributing a Mills and Boon reprint every few months (McAlier 117). By 1971, Harlequin's efficient

distribution and marketing system, including, by this time, direct mail, was getting the kind of book that readers wanted – romance novels – to them in record numbers. On October 1, 1971 Harlequin acquired Mills and Boon (McAlier 139). By 1980, Harlequin had grown complaisant; Simon and Schuster seized the opportunity to publish in the lucrative paperback romance market when it formed Silhouette Books. From 1980 through 1984, Silhouette made huge inroads into a market that Harlequin had regarded as its own (Grescoe 157). In 1984, Harlequin bought Silhouette. Both Harlequin and Silhouette, however, continued publishing, each under its own imprint and with its own editorial staff. Each split, in turn, into different “lines” of paperback romance. Lines vary in length, in the presence and kind of sex, the presence or absence of a suspense plot, in their chronological setting (for example, Regencies) or their geographic setting (for example, Westerns) and other elements that some readers look for in a romance novel.” (Regis 2003 s. 156-157)

“By 1985 Harlequin and Silhouette had been joined by lines from many other publishers: by this time there were eighty romance titles per month in sixteen different lines (Thurston 62-65). [...] To publish and distribute eighty titles a month, publishers needed more than nine hundred titles a year.” (Davis 2003 s. 157)

Paul Grescoes *Merchants of Venus: Inside Harlequin and the Empire of Romance* (1996) “shows the growth of Harlequin in volumes, business methods, authors, printing contracts, distribution deals, sorties into such things as science fiction, and more. [...] He also points out that several of Harlequin’s diversifications – romantic cinema, for example – were flops. Throughout the book, Grescoe tries to come to terms with Dick Bonnycastle. Yet the Harlequin founder remains a \$100-million mystery.” (Paul Grescoe i <https://quillandquire.com/review/the-merchants-of-venus-inside-harlequin-and-the-empire-of-romance/>; lesedato 11.06.21)

“100 years of Mills & Boon. The publisher, now a subsidiary of Harlequin Enterprises Ltd., has grown to become the UK’s undisputed market leader in romance fiction publishing, entrenched in the hearts and minds of its avid readership. Since two dashing young entrepreneurs – Gerald Mills and Charles Boon – launched the company in 1908 with just a modest £1,000, millions of women across the globe have been entranced by their books, reaching into their handbags or to their bookshelves to spend a few hours transported into a fantasy world of intrigue, danger, passion and romance. [...] Mills & Boon’s army of dedicated readers know that once they pick a brightly coloured paperback, they will be taken on an easy, thrilling read – with a guaranteed happy ending. Alan Boon, one of the masterminds behind the stylised romances, once declared that the books “could take the place of Valium” – because they are so well known for their restorative quality. [...] One of the most notable developments occurred in the 1950s when Mills & Boon caught the attention of the Canadian firm, Harlequin Books. Set up in 1949 by Richard and Mary Bonnycastle, the company had begun

to publish reprints of Western novels, mysteries and thrillers. In 1957, they published their first Mills & Boon – Anne Vinton’s medical romance, *The Hospital In Buwambo*. In 1958, Harlequin published 16 Mills & Boon titles, all Doctor-Nurse romances. The companies then started to publish each other’s books in their respective countries” (<http://www.millsandboon.co.uk/history.asp>; lesedato 11.04.13).

“Harlequin’s current policy is that all their writers use a pen name, a name which Harlequin owns. If the writers leave for another publisher, Harlequin retains the money-making pen name.” (Palmer 1996)

“By 1966, paperbacks represented 50 per cent of Mills & Boon’s turnover and by 1968 they were turning out 130 hardback and 72 paperback romances a year. Paperback publishing also encouraged standardisation – and book length was enforced at 188 to 192 pages and glamorous heroines became the central element of covers. [...] More new authors signed up – one of the most popular of which, was Violet Winspear. Influenced by the likes of Lilian Warren, she set her novels in Hollywood with a brooding hero and young tortured heroine. She became Mills & Boon’s top-selling writer – and shocked the older readers with her erotic tales. In 20 years, she wrote 37 titles, most of which were set abroad. As society was changing, along with attitudes to family, love, sex and marriage, Mills & Boon’s authors started to reflect these developments in their writing. The traditional boundaries still remained firm – but the occasional thriller fantasy became more commonplace. The traditionally submissive heroine became more assertive undertaking solo journeys, following their heroes to foreign countries, for example. [...] In the 2000s, they maintain the title of the world’s leading publisher of romance fiction. Each month, Mills & Boon publish 50 new titles, with manuscripts from 200 authors living in the UK and a further 1,300 worldwide. Every five seconds there is a new Mills & Boon book sold within the UK.” (<http://www.millsandboon.co.uk/history.asp>; lesedato 11.04.13)

“There are currently 10 products in the Mills & Boon series:

Modern: This is one romance you’ll never want to end! Glamorous and sophisticated, these passionate romance titles feature international affairs, seduction and passion.

Modern Extra: Sizzling, stylish and sensual – the ultimate temptation. Titles feature intense relationships, reflecting shared feelings, desires and dreams.

Romance: Dare to dream... Warm and emotionally fulfilling, this series captures the magic of falling in love. They are sparkling, fresh and tender love stories.

Blaze: Hot and Sexy, couples in contemporary romantic relationships embark on sexual adventures and fantasy journeys. There is a promise of intimate experiences and total scorching satisfaction.

Medical: The best medicine of all for healing any sort of ailment. These delightful contemporary romances set against the background of the medical profession with glamorous young nurses and doctors to make your heart race.

Historical: Love and passion bring the past to life! From medieval sagas to the roaring twenties, rich and vivid, these novels capture the essence of times gone by.

Desire 2-in-1: Two passionate, daring and provocative love stories in every book, for the ultimate extended read.

Special Edition: Compelling romances packed with emotion. These books tackle sensitive issues while embracing the romantic ideal that love can conquer all.

Superromance: Realistic and passionate, these contemporary novels are longer and more involved – a bigger, action-packed read, so when you just can't put that book down, you won't have to!

Intrigue: Romance suspense at its best: Danger, deception and desire are at the forefront of these gripping mysteries.” (<http://www.millsandboon.co.uk/history.asp>; lesedato 11.04.13)

Den britiske filmregissøren Dan Zeffs romantiske komedie *Consuming Passion* (2008) handler om tre kvinners jakt på en lidenskapelig mann, og er samtidig historien om forlaget Mills & Boon. En av kvinnene i filmen skrev flere hundre romaner som gis ut på forlaget. Franskmannen François Ozons film *Angel* (2007) er basert på en roman av den britiske forfatteren Elizabeth Taylor. *Angel Deverell* skriver romaner med titler som *Hearts in Venice* og *Diana in Delphi*. “We realize that *Angel*'s writing is not brilliant about twenty minutes into the film, when she's watching a play that has been adapted from one of her novels. That scene was invented to visually illustrate the essence of her writing. But I tried to temper the ridicule and the clear absence of literary merit with *Angel*'s emotional reaction to her success. [...] If I'd followed the book, the whole movie would have been like the scene where *Angel* dines with her publisher, where she behaves like a hysterical, manipulative monster. I could have continued playing with this rather farcical caricature, but I also wanted to explore *Angel*'s complexities, discover her fragility behind the protective shield of her image as a strong woman who has rapidly climbed the social ladder. Her rise is all the more spectacular because she's a woman. She's her own boss, she chooses her husband, buys her own house and controls her career. Essentially she has broken free of her Edwardian shackles. She's sort of an early feminist. Women today can relate to her. But I wanted to show all sides of that coin, and reveal her multiple facets. *Angel* has built her life

on lies and suppressed emotions. She is often in situations where she's playing a role, acting. But I also included scenes where she has no other choice than to be herself, like when she's humiliated at school, or when her mother dies." (Ozon sitert fra <http://www.francois-ozon.com/en/interviews-angel>; lesedato 15.09.15)

"Elinor Glyn, E. M. Hull and Ethel M. Dell were all British writers whose books were immensely popular in their time. [...] Elinor Glyn was the most flamboyant of these writers. [...] *Three Weeks* [av Glyn] is the story of Englishman Paul Verdayne, who is sent abroad by his aristocratic parents to break up an unsuitable love affair (he has fallen for a parson's daughter). In Lucerne, he meets a mysterious woman dressed all in black who exudes an hypnotic fascination. Paul and the Lady, who is a Balkan queen on the run from her degenerate and cruel husband, begin a passionate affair. She and Paul spend three weeks together where they make love on tiger skins amid masses of exotic flowers. When the three weeks are up and the Lady leaves Paul, he faints and is ill for a time. [...] Elinor received gifts of tiger skins from several admirers. She was bewildered by the fuss the critics raised about the "immorality" of *Three Weeks*. Elinor, despite her passionate purple-prose writing style, was not really interested in sex. She thought sex too earthy and animalistic – downright unromantic in fact. There is lots of kissing, caressing and writhing around on the tiger skin in the book, but there are no descriptions of sex. A large part of the book is devoted to the Lady's lectures to Paul to be true to his race and heritage, but according to most critics, an adulterous affair, especially one the author seemed to condone, was not acceptable subject matter for a novel in 1907." (Ellen Micheletti i <http://www.likesbooks.com/hist1.html>; lesedato 21.10.14)

"Glyn coined the term 'It' in her novel *The Man and the Moment* (1914) a 1920s euphemism for sex appeal of which the actress Clara Bow was the 'It' girl. Glyn herself was a vivacious green-eyed red-head who wrote high-spirited romances that dealt with aristocracy and issues of morality in society. [...] *Three Weeks* [...] scandalized Edwardian aristocrats and jeopardized Glyn's status. The Headmaster of Eton deemed it immoral and banned it from the premises, but ultimately the furore ensured her meteoric rise to fame. [...] The *doggerel*

Would you like to sin
With Elinor Glyn
On a tiger skin?
Or would you prefer
To err
With her
On some other fur

was inspired by a detailed scene in *Three Weeks*." (<http://www.online-literature.com/elinor-glyn/>; lesedato 22.10.14)

“Ethel May Dell was born in a suburb of London, England in 1881. [...] Beneath her shy exterior, Ethel had a passionate heart and most of her stories were stories of passion and love set in India and other British colonial possessions. They were considered to be very racy and her cousins would pull out pencils to try and count up the number of times she used the words; passion, tremble, pant and thrill. [...] Ethel Dell’s book, titled *The Way of an Eagle*, was published in 1912 and by 1915 it had gone through twenty seven printings. *The Way of an Eagle* is still in print and is very characteristic of Ethel Dell’s novels. There is a very feminine woman, an alpha male to rival any of Linda Howard’s heroes, a setting in India, passion galore liberally mixed with some surprisingly shocking violence and religious sentiments sprinkled throughout. The book opens in a fort under siege on the frontier in India. Muriel Roscoe is the fort commander’s daughter. The constant stress of being under seige has caused her to take refuge in opium. Muriel’s father has chosen Nick Ratcliffe to take care of her and Muriel does not like him. Nick is big and strong and overpoweringly masculine. They are forced to flee the fort, have adventures in the desert where Nick kills a man, and when they reach the garrison town and safety, Nick proposes to Muriel (they have spent a lot of time together unchaperoned). Muriel agrees to the marriage, but changes her mind and becomes engaged to another man who is smooth, suave and polite but lacks Nick’s sheer sexual magnetism. Muriel is not happy and when she sees Nick again she realizes that he is “the one,” but her pride prevents her from telling him. Muriel does break her engagement and goes back to India where she languishes around missing Nick dreadfully. Back in India, Nick has seemingly vanished, but he has disguised himself as a beggar and has been hanging around so he can keep watch on Muriel. Nick reveals himself when, still disguised as a beggar, he foils an assassination attempt on a high ranking officer. All of Muriel’s doubts are swept away: “The tumult of her emotions swelled to sudden uproar, thunderous, all-possessing, overwhelming, so that she gasped and gasped again for breath. And then all in a moment she knew the conflict was over. She was as a diver, hurling with headlong velocity from dizzy height into deep waters, and she rejoiced – she exulted – in that mad rush into depth. With a quivering laugh she moved. She loosened her convulsive clasp upon his hand, turned it upwards, and stooping low, she pressed her lips closely, passionately, lingeringly upon his open palm.” Readers adored Ethel M. Dell’s novels, critics hated them with a passion, but she did not care what the critics thought. She considered herself a good storyteller – nothing more and nothing less. Ethel M. Dell continued to write novels along the same lines as *The Way of an Eagle* for a number of years.” (Ellen Micheletti i <http://www.likesbooks.com/hist1.html>; lesedato 21.10.14)

Den engelske forfatteren Edith Maud Hulls *The Sheik* (1919) “involves abduction, assault, and the imprisonment of the heroine. If this were not bad enough, it also involves rape. And not just any rape, but the rape of the heroine by the hero. [...] The sheik misunderstood himself: he thought he did not know love and was impervious to it; Diana, at the end of the book, has him crying: “a hard sob,” but a sob nonetheless (296). This is her power. [...] *The Sheik* was extremely popular.

During the first nine months after its release, Small, Maynard and Company reprinted the book thirty-two times (Hull ii). [...] The film starring Rudolf Valentino in the title role was made the same year (1921) as the novel's release in the United States. It propelled him to stardom. [...] The novel, in brief, is the story of Diana Mayo, a flapper and independent British aristocrat who is bored with her life in society and who travels the world seeking diversion. She arranges a horseback trek into the desert of Algeria where Sheik Ahmed Ben Hassan kidnaps her and holds her prisoner. Although he rapes her, she refuses to submit her will to him. She fights him with a courage and dignity that win his respect and, finally, his love. At first Diana hates Ahmed, but living in his camp she observes his courage, strength, and dignity. He risks his life for her and almost dies. These are qualities she has not been able to find among her suitors, whom she regards with amusement or contempt. They are the qualities that she has in abundance herself and which win, first, her respect and then her love. At the book's climax, she is kidnapped again by a rival sheik. Ahmed comes to her rescue, is stabbed, and almost dies. Upon his recovery he regrets his harsh treatment of her and decides that she must be returned to her own people. But Diana has fallen in love with him and would rather die than leave him. She tries to commit suicide. As she fires the revolver that she is aiming at her temple, Ahmed lunges at her, just managing to spoil her aim and save her life. He admits that he has fallen in love with her too. Their betrothal is a warning: "you will have a devil for a husband" (296). [...] Diana lives for affective individualism. [...] She risks everything to tame him and wins. Diana feels determination; Ahmed, finally, love. [...] Diana and Ahmed have a series of encounters charged with rage, incredulity, fear, desperation, fascination, passion, mockery, coldness, anguish, suffering, and love." (Regis 2003 s. 115-118 og 123)

"E. M. (Edith Maude) Hull, was so shy and retiring that no picture exists of her. [...] During World War I, she began to write to amuse herself and produced a book that is still in print and has influenced romances ever since. *The Sheik* is the story of a spoiled English girl, Diana Mayo, who will not listen to anyone. She refuses offers of marriage and wanders out on her own in the Egyptian desert. While she is out in the desert, Diana is kidnapped by Sheik Ali Ben Hassan and is ravished again and again and again and again (you get the picture). She puts up a token protest at first, but later learns to love her ravisher (who turns out to be the long-lost son of an English nobleman). Here's a passage from *The Sheik*: "The flaming light of desire burning in his eyes turned her sick and faint. Her body throbbed with the consciousness of a knowledge that appalled her. She understood his purpose with a horror that made each separate nerve in her system shrink against the understanding that had come to her under the consuming fire of his ardent gaze, and in the fierce embrace that was drawing her shaking limbs closer and closer to the man's own pulsating body. "Oh you brute! You brute!", she wailed, until his kisses silenced her." Talk about purple prose! Critic's jaws dropped and they quickly proclaimed the book pornography. Readers bought it by the cartload and Mrs. Hull went on to write several more books, all set in Egypt and all featuring masterful men and masochistic women. Some of her other titles were *The Sons of the Sheik* and *The*

Desert Healer. The movie version of *The Sheik* starring Rudolph Valentino was a world-wide smash and made the desert sheik the number one sex-symbol of the day. Sheiks have gone in out of favor ever since, but have never totally faded away.” (Ellen Micheletti i <http://www.likesbooks.com/hist1.html>; lesedato 21.10.14)

“The big growth in the publishing of romantic novels started in the mid-60’s when Victoria Holt and Dorothy Eden began writing books targeted towards women.” (Helen Leedy i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40968918>; lesedato 14.03.24)

Victoria Holt var ett av flere psevdonym som den engelske forfatteren Eleanor Hibbert brukte. “Hibbert’s first book as Victoria Holt was *Mistress of Mellyn* [1960]. I was enthralled when I encountered the book’s heroine, young governess, Martha Leigh; its powerful, enigmatic hero, Con TreMellyn; the great, haunted mansion; and the suggestions of scandal and betrayal. [...] I read all of the more than thirty books that followed *Mistress of Mellyn*, all the way through *The Black Opal* published posthumously in 1993. [...] The Holt books were translated into twenty languages and sold more than 75 million copies. Hibbert had started a revival of the gothic romance that persists into the 21st century. [...] Her afternoons were devoted to answering the letters she received from fans all over the world. [...] She had sold more than 100 million copies of her two hundred books written over a career that spanned more than half a century. She wrote Gothic romance, historical fiction, mystery, children’s books, and non-fiction. She won praise from critics and loyalty from untold numbers of fans. Her particular focus, she said, was “women of integrity and strong character” who were “struggling for liberation, fighting for their own survival.”” (den anonyme kvinnen Janga i <http://www.heroesandheartbreakers.com/blogs/2012/11/the-many-facets-of-victoria-holt>; lesedato 04.03.15)

“In 1984, Los Angeles publisher Holloway House, who specialized in books and magazines aimed at the Black community, announced the start of their Heartline Romances books, their attempt to capitalize on the Romance Wars raging among all of the major publishers at the time. [...] most of the Heartline writers were Holloway House’s male staff writers writing under women’s names. [...] two of the credited authors – Yolande Bertrand and Felicia Woods – may have been Black women, but the biographical information on both is scant. [...] In 1984, Sandra Kitt became one of the few known Black writers for Harlequin. Her second book for the company, *Adam and Eva*, was published in 1985 and was the first title by the publisher to feature a Black couple. [...] Doubleday’s Starlight Romance line featured contemporary romances by several Black authors over the course of the 1980s, including Barbara Stephens, Sandra Kitt, Valerie Flournoy, Rochelle Alers, and Angela Vivian (Angela Dews and Vivian Stephens). [...] In 1996, [Patricia] Vaughn published *Murmur of Rain* with Pocket, a historical romance featuring Black characters, set in Paris in the 1890s. Vaughn would write another historical

for Pocket, *Shadows on the Bayou*, in 1998.” (Steve Ammidown i <https://romancehistory.com/2021/02/16/a-black-romance-timeline/>; lesedato 09.06.23)

Den afroamerikanske forfatteren Beverly Jenkins har skrevet mange historiske kjærlighetsromaner der de sentrale personene er afroamerikanske. “If you’ve picked up a book with very fit, very attractive Black people dressed in 19th century clothing on the cover, there’s a good chance it’s by Beverly Jenkins. Jenkins is the undisputed queen of the Black 19th century romance. She writes about Freedmen’s towns that were founded by the formerly enslaved after the civil war, about teachers teaching children and adults to read (something that was forbidden for the enslaved). [...] And her books are deeply, meticulously researched; many of them include bibliographies of the history books from which she’s drawn. “I cover most of the 19th century because it was vibrant and bittersweet,” Jenkins says. Jenkins has written some 40 books; they focus on intelligent, determined Black women who insist on making their way through a world that mostly isn’t ready for careerists in skirts. And despite the fact that Jenkins’ historicals take place at a time that was constricting and dangerous for African-descended people (not unlike today), there are swaths of great joy and some sizzling sexual attraction. Her most recent book, *Wild Rain*, was published this week. Its heroine? A young Black woman who insists she will run her own ranch in the Western Territories – an idea that thrills almost no one. *Almost*. [...] When I started the market was basically closed to African American romance writers. I received enough rejections to probably paper my house and yours! And most of the letters said “Great writing, but...” [...] I had to put a very, very detailed bib list in the backs of my earlier books to answer the questions that I was getting in the run up to publication: *Did black people really do this?* And to also give my readers a place to start if they wanted to delve further into the history. I mean, shared history is good, but if you don’t share it with everybody, there’s not much value in that. [...] If you look at the history right after slavery – the Black men who walked for months for miles across states and plantations looking for their wives – that love was real.” (Karen Grigsby Bates i <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2021/02/11/966404855/the-queen-of-black-historical-romance-talks-race-love-and-history>; lesedato 10.10.24)

“Black-authored historical romance novels share several traits [...] common in the black historical romance subgenre. First, they deliver on the joy and promise of true love and happy endings for all that form the heart of the romance genre. Second, they center Black history and Black people in solidarity with each other. Third, they embrace the values of Dr. King’s ideal of the beloved community, one based on justice and love of one’s fellow human beings. [...] The majority of these books also center Black love, a designation reserved for love stories in which all the parties in the relationship are Black. That’s both representative of the historical context and an important symbolic distinction. While interracial relationships are often associated with multiculturalism, for many readers celebrating Black love is an important form of self-affirmation, one that recognizes the beauty of Blackness in its own right. Black love stories are especially meaningful in an industry which

often fails to recognize black humanity unless accompanied and approved by the White majority.” (Carole V. Bell i <https://bookriot.com/black-authored-historical-romance-novels/>; lesedato 10.10.24)

“From 2002-2003, Shirley Hailstock served as the first Black president of the Romance Writers of America. Hailstock was one of the original Kensington Arabesque authors, with her first novel, *Whispers of Love*, appearing in September 1994. Hailstock’s 1995 book *Clara’s Promise* was the first historical romance published in the Arabesque line.” (Steve Ammidown i <https://romancehistory.com/2021/02/16/a-black-romance-timeline/>; lesedato 09.06.23)

Régina Yaou fra Elfenbenskysten har i sitt hjemland publisert en rekke kjærlighetsromaner (“des romans sentimentaux”), skrevet på fransk. Den første ble utgitt i 1998, med tittelen *Opprørske hjerter*. Blant romanene er *Symfoni og lys* (1998) og *Jenta fra lagunen* (2000). Yaou observerte at mange i Elfenbenskysten så på importerte brasilianske TV-serier med romantiske historier, og ville gi kvinnelige lesere i hjemlandet noe tilsvarende. Bøkene skulle ikke bare være romantiske, men gi kunnskaper om blant annet historie og geografi, og de skulle være relativt korte og lettleste (Dehon 2014 s. 284). Den første av Yaous romaner ble skrevet under psevdonymet Joëlle Anskey, det samme gjaldt *Symfoni og lys*, mens *Jenta fra lagunen* ble utgitt med psevdonymet Ruth Owoth.

En kvinne finner i Yaous bøker til slutt sin drømmemann, men før den lykkelige slutten har det vært en rekke utfordringer: sjalusi, uhell, halvløgner osv. Både mannen og kvinnen har utdannelse i disse historiene. Hun kan f.eks. være en maler, pianist eller forretningskvinne, og kan reise rundt i verden på grunn av sin jobb. Hun har penger nok til å kjøpe seg vakre og dyre klær, og til å bo på flotte hoteller (Dehon 2014 s. 284). Disse kvinnene ønsker seg ikke en mann for å få penger og luksus, men primært for å ha en elsket partner å dele gleder, sorger og ansvar med. Ekteskapet krever vennskap og kjærlighet, der begge har rett til å være individer, ikke bare sosiale funksjoner. Men også i Elfenbenskysten blir den typen kjærlighetsromaner som Yaou skriver, ofte latterliggjort. Kritikeren Tiburce Koffi kalte den “rosa litteraturen” for “en enkel vei for blekksmørere uten kunstnerisk talent ... på jakt etter overflatisk tilfredsstillelse av forfengeligheit, og småpenger” (sitert fra Dehon 2014 s. 284).

På det nordnigerianske språket hausa betyr “Littattafan Soyayya” “Books of Love”. “Soyayya novels are little paper booklets sold in high-foot-traffic areas in northern Nigeria, and according to an AP article published May 1, 2008, they are sought by women readers and set on fire by male religious leaders. Why? Because the books, written in the local Hausa language, “extoll the values of true love based on feelings, rather than family or other social pressures.” In a conservative community in which most marriages are arranged and may involve multiple wives and forced obedience or seclusion, Soyayya novels explore themes of marital choice and female education through tiny paper-bound romance narratives. They’re part fiction

and part instructional assistance for uneducated women on navigating conservative culture.” (Wendell og Tan 2009 s. 131)

“The bestselling pioneer of romantic-suspense novels Mary Stewart has died at the age of 97, her publisher has said. Known for much-loved novels including *Touch Not the Cat*, *This Rough Magic* and *Nine Coaches Waiting*, Stewart among the first novelists to integrate mystery and romance. She made the archetype of the determined, intelligent heroine her own, thrusting her into daring adventures from which she would emerge intact and happily romantically involved. Stewart was spotted after sending the manuscript of her first novel, *Madam, Will You Talk?*, to Hodder & Stoughton in 1953. It hit the bestseller lists the following year, and she went on to pen a series of novels in a similar vein. [...] ‘We must love and imitate the beautiful and the good.’ [Stewart said]” (<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/may/15/romance-suspense-novelist-mary-stewart-dies>; lesedato 12.03.15)

“Mary Stewart (1916-) is the mother of twentieth-century romantic suspense. Between 1955 and 1967 Stewart produced, at the rate of about one per year, ten novels in this subgenre.” (Regis 2003 s. 143) Hun skrev blant annet *Thunder on the Right* (1957), *Nine Coaches Waiting* (1958), *The Ivy Tree* (1961) og *Airs Above the Ground* (1965).

Lesingen av kjærlighetsromaner som “litterær fastfood”, fører med seg “idealiserende tankeskjemaer, som ikke lar seg omsette i virkeligheten, og kan føre til alvorlige problemer i parforhold og i taklingen av hverdagens utfordringer” (Feige 2003 s. 249). (Jamfør fenomenet bovarisme.) En mann som ble skilt fra sin kone, bebreidet forfatteren Jane Austen for å ha bidratt til bruddet: “Like so many women who do not know how to cope with an unhappy relationship, she retreated to a fantasy world, which only compounded her existing unhappiness by providing a contrast between this ideal world of Darcy and company, and the less happy world of ‘real life,’ ” (siteret fra Yaffe 2013 s. 88).

En kvinne som heter Kristin Bird skrev i 2012 på en katolsk nettside: “[T]here has been a seedy underbelly to my reading habits as well: authors whose books are found in the checkout line at the grocery store instead of the college bookstore. Authors who aren’t really a part of the classic lit canon: Nora Roberts, Stephanie Laurens, Jude Devereaux, and Johanna Lindsey. Yes, it’s true – I have a history as a voracious romance novel reader. Harlequin romance novels. You know the ones: with the cover featuring a scantily clad lady and a Greek god slowly tearing her dress off her shoulder. At one point, I had 2 whole bookshelves (not 2 shelves of a bookshelf, 2 whole bookshelves) filled with romance novels. [...] The male leads in these books are everything a man should be. That’s not to say they’re perfect – there’s usually a sordid past or some emotional (or physical) scarring going on – after all, we want these characters to be believable! Usually they have a problem being a little too demanding, bossy, heavy handed, etc with the leading lady as well. And then BAM! They fall in love, and suddenly this guy is falling all over

himself to change all the negative parts of his personality to accommodate his beloved. If he was domineering, he's suddenly trying to loosen up and let out the reins a little. If he was a workaholic, he's trying to spend less time at work and more time with his lady. If he hated everything that the word "family" stood for, he's reaching out and rebuilding broken family relationships." (<http://thecatholicrealist.com/2012/07/26/how-romance-novels-almost-ruined-my-marriage/>; lesedato 02.12.13)

Kristin Bird sympatiserer med sin ektemann som ikke lever opp til romanenes standard: "The problem is that when I'm escaping into worlds where the men are constantly trying to prove their love by trying to change, I end up looking at my own husband and wondering why he isn't quite so malleable. Suddenly, my unconditional love and acceptance of him as a man created in the image and likeness of God slowly shifts into frustration that he's not the man I've created in the image and likeness of the romance novel character. [...] These changes in thought process were gradual and it took me a really long time to even notice them, but they were there. Every time I finished a romance novel I found myself a little irritated with my husband – even if he hadn't done anything wrong. I found myself thinking of all the things I wish he would do or be that he wasn't instead of appreciating the things he does and the person he is. So, I gave up romance novels – or at least seriously, seriously cut back – so that I could learn to appreciate the man my husband is instead wishing (even subconsciously) that he would be more like the men I was reading about in the romance novels. These unrealistic expectations followed me right into the bedroom...leading to my second huge problem with romance novels...but that's a blog for another day." (<http://thecatholicrealist.com/2012/07/26/how-romance-novels-almost-ruined-my-marriage/>; lesedato 02.12.13)

En amerikansk "1985 study reported that "women who read romance novels make love with their partners 74 % *more often* than do nonreaders." " (Palmer 1996)

"Ebøker gir oppsving for romantikken [...] Romantisk underholdningslitteratur, også kjent som husmorporno eller kiosklitteratur, kan ofte vise til opplagstall andre skjønnlitterære forfattere bare kan drømme om. Likevel er det sjelden du ser noen sitte på T-banen med en slik bok i handa. Dette er kanskje i ferd med å endre seg, takket være ulike elektroniske lesebrett. Med en Ipad i handa kan ingen se hva du leser. [...] de erotiske forfatterne tjente på diskresjonen Ipad og andre lesebrett tilbyr. - Hvis det er på Ipaden din, kan ingen se hva du leser. Du kunne lest Platon, sa han [en redaktør i et britisk bransjeblad]." (*Dagbladet* 10. desember 2010 s. 62)

Noen kjærlighetsromaner har et éntydelig erotisk eller seksuelt innhold, og det er særlig disse som på norsk kalles "husmorporno". På svensk finnes det to like nedsettende betegnelser på disse bøkene: "Därför gillar kvinnor att läsa "tantsnusk" [...] En del kallar det tantsnusk eller mammaporr. [...] Erotik slår brett på flera fronter. Harlequin, som främst är känt för sina kärleksromaner, är ett av världens

mest framgångsrika förlag. I snitt ger de ut 27 titlar i månaden i Sverige och säljer omkring 3,5 miljoner böcker per år i Norden. En tredjedel säljs via bokklubbar. - Sedan 2001 har vi ökat vår försäljning med 260 procent. Vi har ett brett utbud med allt från relationsromaner till thriller och deckare, säger Anette Ekström vd för Harlequin i Norden. Enligt Ann Steiner, docent i litteraturvetenskap på Lunds universitet, finns i dag en erotisk marknad som riktar sig mot kvinnor – en marknad som inte fanns för fem år sedan. E-boksutvecklingen kan ha bidragit till den ökande populariteten. - Numera behöver du inte skylta med vad du läser och du kan läsa många böcker utan att betala stora pengar.” (<http://www.expressen.se/halsoliv/darfor-gillar-kvinnor-att-lasatantsnusk/>; lesedato 24.11.16)

Carol Thurston viser i studien *The Romance Revolution: Erotic Novels for Women and the Quest for a New Sexual Identity* (1987) “the transformation of the erotic romance over time and particularly the development of the genre in the 1970s and 1980s with a strong heroine who is both good and sexual.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 53) Boka har kapitler som “The romance novel as popular culture: Traditional verities or a new synthesis?”, “Virtue and sexuality in women: And never the twain shall meet?”, “New relationships: Between heroines and heroes, readers and publishers”, “Sweet savagery and flaming feminism: Another perspective on the erotic historical romance”, “The reality fantasy: Challenging the power structure in the sensuous contemporary romance”, “Gatekeepers on romance: Central characters in the drama of change” og “The ever-present future of the popular romance: The moving target moves on”.

“In *The Romance Revolution* (1987), Carol Thurston argues that the popular romance of the 1970s divided into two basic types – ‘the sweet romance and the erotic romance – with the fundamental difference being the presence or absence of specific sexual behavioural norms and explicit sexual activities’ (1987, 7). As Thurston sees it, the ‘erotic historical’ sparked the romance revolution by developing a new, independent, and adventurous heroine, who combines the chaste heroine and sexual Other Woman of previous texts (1987, 8). Although the ‘erotic historical’ clearly influenced the British market, it seems to have been a particularly American phenomenon.” (Diana Wallace i https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9780230505940_7; lesedato 15.09.22)

“Selv om den primære målgruppa for Harlequin er kvinner fra 40 til 60 år, er halvparten av de kvinnelige leserne [i Frankrike] mellom 25 og 50 år og leser et tredvetalls verk i året. Som digitale tekster er verkene lettere å oppbevare og lese diskre. Og i tillegg er prisen, som er svært lav for papirbøkene, enda lavere for de digitale utgavene.” (Emmanuel Paquette i https://www.lexpress.fr/culture/livre/l-histoire-d-amour-entre-les-liseuses-numeriques-et-harlequin_1093957.html; lesedato 28.05.19)

På nettsida “Romance writers of America” stod det i 2011: “The good news for the romance community is that romance book market revenue is estimated to grow to

\$1.368 billion [i USA] by the end of 2011. No matter the format, readers will want the happily ever after that can only be found between the pages of a romance novel.” (http://www.rwa.org/cs/readership_stats; lesedato 28.10.11)

Det tyskspråklige forlaget Bastei-Lübbe hadde fram til 2010 publisert hefteromaner i et samlet opplag på over to milliarder eksemplarer, og de fleste av disse romanene var kjærlighetsromaner. Kelter Verlag publiserte månedlig 55 hefteromaner med et samlet opplag på 3,3 millioner eksemplarer (Lüdeke 2011 s. 273).

“Recession Fuels Readers’ Escapist Urges [...] At a time when booksellers are struggling to lure readers, sales of romance novels are outstripping most other categories of books and giving some buoyancy to an otherwise sluggish market. [...] Like the Depression-era readers who fueled blockbuster sales of Margaret Mitchell’s “Gone With the Wind,” today’s readers are looking for an escape from the grim realities of layoffs [...] “Given the general dismay and gloominess,” said Jennifer Lampe, a lawyer in Des Moines and avid romance reader who runs a book blog under the pseudonym Jane Litte at dearauthor.com, “reading something like a romance with a happy ending is really kind of a relief.” [...] Romance readers are considered among the most loyal fans, sticking to a series or an author once they have grown attached to one.” said Liate Stehlik, publisher of William Morrow and Avon, imprints of HarperCollins Publishers. [...] “I would give up something else if money was tight,” said Annmarie Anderson, a district manager in Atlanta for a national retail chain, who said she still spent about \$100 on romance novels each month. “I would give up my manicure and pedicure. I have my priority list, and books are pretty high on my priority list.” ” (Motoko Rich i 2009; <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/books/08roma.html?ref=books>; lesedato 28.05.19)

“The romance genre may also be especially attractive to consumers during difficult economic times because so many of the books are sold in the mass-market format, smaller paperbacks often found on racks at the grocery store or in airport bookshops. These books sell for \$7.99 or less, compared with \$12 to \$15 on larger trade paperbacks. Romance novels also often appear in discount chains like Wal-Mart or Kmart, where shoppers make impulse buys. [...] Several retailers including Kmart, Wal-Mart and Kroger have been running three-for-\$10 or two-for-\$5 specials on Harlequin’s new titles. Romance readers have always tended to buy in much higher volumes than people who read other genres like literary fiction. So even though some romance readers may be cutting back – Sue Grimshaw, the romance buyer at Borders, says people are buying four or five instead of five or six books a week – they are still buying more than readers of other book categories. Some publishers have seen such strong sales on particular authors that they are willing to test hardcover editions for the first time, even in this market.” (Motoko Rich i 2009; <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/books/08roma.html?ref=books>; lesedato 28.05.19)

The Ripped Bodice er en bokhandel i Los Angeles som kun selger kjærlighetsromaner (romances), og som ble etablert av to kvinner i 2016.

“Romance novels have also captured a larger proportion of the electronic book market than other categories. Whereas most publishers say that about 1 percent of sales come from e-books, Harlequin says that digital editions make up about 3.4 percent of its sales. At Fictionwise, the e-book seller recently acquired by Barnes & Noble, about 50 percent of sales are romance books, said Steve Pendergrast, chief technology officer. “Romance readers tend to be voracious readers,” Mr. Pendergrast said. “The ability to instantly download and start reading is potentially more important to that audience than any other audience.” The growing market for digital romance novels has attracted several newcomers, including tiny independent publishers like Ellora’s Cave, Samhain Publishing and Ravenous Romance. Because they have no distribution or warehousing costs, they can sell books even cheaper than paperback editions – Ravenous Romance, which specializes in erotic fiction, sells e-books for \$4.99 each.” (Motoko Rich i <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/08/books/08roma.html?ref=books>; lesedato 28.05.19)

Den amerikanske forfatteren Alyson Noëls romaner “tilhører sjangeren paranormal romantikk, som har fått et voldsomt oppsving” (*Dagbladet* 30. november 2010 s. 52). En annen forfatter som har skrevet innen samme undersjanger er Abbie Zanders.

“The Oscar Wilde Bookshop in New York City tells me that gay romance, a genre quite apart from erotica, sells well to both male and female readers. We are all interested in talking and reading about that difficult process of living with another person.” (Mary Bly i <https://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/12/opinion/a-fine-romance.html>; lesedato 28.05.19)

“Steamies” er “eskapistiske kjærlighetsromaner der unge, kvinnelige hovedpersoner for første gang utforsker sin seksualitet” (*Klassekampens* bokmagasin 29. desember 2012 s. 2) “The rise of ‘steamies’: British publishers get wise to American craze for teen erotic fiction [...] *Irresistible* by Liz Banks, the story of a 16-year old girl torn between caring Dan and wealthy bad boy James, was released as an ebook earlier this month, the first British book of the new genre. [...] The bandwagon has already started rolling in America with titles including *The Vincent Boys*, by Abbi Glines, and *Nightshade* by Andrea Cremer proving popular. [...] Simon and Schuster UK has picked up titles by Glines, Nicole Williams and Steph Campbell for a series of “hot romances set at college or university” aimed at young adults. Banks, 26, said her book was the kind “I would have wanted to read as a teenager: full of gossip, some rude bits and sequences that would fade to black if they were in a movie. For me a steamy is all about the emotional connection of first love, and the sheer excitement of first lust.” Judy Blume’s *Forever*, published in 1975, was one of the first young adult novels to deal frankly with teenage sexuality. The subject matter meant it was banned in many

schools and faced censorship. Ms Gardner said the steamy was a new genre although admitted it did draw heavily on Blume's novels. "There are parallels, it's a much more contemporary look at the issues of being a teenager. Bringing it up to date there's more danger." The publisher said [a steamy] offers young people a sexually charged story where one partner was not a vampire or a werewolf. "Recently everyone went to the paranormal. There was a dearth of contemporary love stories." " (<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/news/the-rise-of-steamies-british-publishers-get-wise-to-american-craze-for-teen-erotic-fiction-8417926.html>; lesedato 24.01.14)

Den columbianske forfatteren Gabriel García Márquez' roman *Kjærlighet i koleraens tid* (1985; på norsk i 1986) skal være basert på historien om García Márquez' foreldre og handler om forholdet mellom dikteren og forretningsmannen Florentino Ariza og hans elskede Fermina Daza. Hun blir gift med legen som redder landet fra kolera. Florentino venter i over 50 år på at hun skal bli enke.

Possession: A Romance (1990) av britiske A. S. Byatt er en "novel of wit and romance, at once an intellectual mystery and a triumphant love story. It is the tale of a pair of young scholars researching the lives of two Victorian poets. As they uncover their letters, journals and poems, and track their movements from London to Yorkshire – from spiritualist séances to the fairy-haunted far west of Brittany – what emerges is an extraordinary counterpoint of passions and ideas." (<https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/41219.Possession>; lesedato 21.12.22) "The two academics fall for each other as did the two Victorian poets in the central story, while hundreds of other points of light spread from them, like crystals on a chandelier, showing various reflections on ideas about ownership and loss, attitudes to sexuality and celibacy, reactions to the compromises of cohabitation and living alone, notions of privacy, personal autonomy and public good, mythologies and counter-mythologies ..." (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2009/jun/18/book-club-possession-as-byatt>; lesedato 21.12.22)

Amerikaneren Anna Todds *After* (2014) har blitt kritisert for å framstille en ung kvinne som elsker en mann som påfører henne lidelse. Romanen "is a young adult romance novel that combines the emotionality of hate-romance and the strive to love a person with cold affection and a haunted past. The novel projects the life of Tessa, an eighteen-year-old girl who has no clue about the world of romance, sex, and college. For Tessa, meeting Hardin, a cold, bratty, emotionally broken yet mysterious boy, is an experience she never forgets. Tessa finds herself falling for Hardin and wanting to explore more about the world of romance with him, but a haunted childhood and an estranged father make Hardin unreachable and cold. Hardin's character makes it difficult for Tessa to admit to having strong affection towards him as he keeps hurting her, making her feel unwanted. Their hate-romance relationship blossoms, and each passing moment only draws them together. Though Tessa senses danger ahead in their relationship, she keeps making terrible choices and coming back even after Hardin hurts and humiliates her.

Having had enough, Tessa tries to cut it all off but finds herself doing the exact opposite. In the end, Tessa faces the harsh reality of falling for a person like Hardin.” (<https://bookanalysis.com/anna-todd/after/>; lesedato 03.11.23)

“Anna Todd began a chapter by chapter release of ‘After’ on Wattpad in April 2013 [...] Though created as a fanfiction novel on Wattpad, ‘After’ was adapted and published by Gallery Books on October 21, 2014 [...] From the hot-cold attitude of Hardin towards Tessa to the hate-love feeling of Tessa towards Hardin, the book perfectly creates a contradiction in itself that leads to an intense romantic-toxic relationship between both characters. The book’s climax creates the perfect contradiction in Tessa’s perceived emotions and reveals what she feels about the boy who hurt her the most. Though a foreign observer would already notice the intense feeling of affection Tessa has towards Hardin, Tessa herself seems to be the only one oblivious of that very fact, and the climax finds the perfect way to fit the picture into her emotions. The end of the book converges on an ending that seemed inevitable throughout the entire novel, an ending Tessa dreaded, one she always knew was always possible but never quite admitted to it. Anna Todd’s ending of the book creates a want, a want for a conclusion. A want that is satisfied by a series of books followed later. [...] In the story of ‘After,’ Tessa faces different forms of cruelty from Hardin, from emotional to psychological torture, yet she still goes back to him every time. This act by Tessa marks the characteristic behavior of people in toxic or abusive relationships. Though gaining massive popularity, ‘After’ has been subjected to harsh criticism; the book faced a lot of backlash for its vague character descriptions, glorification of an abusive relationship, and the fact it was written as a fanfiction novel. The book stirred massive comments from professional writers worldwide who felt the book was an overhyped piece of terrible literature. Though ‘After’ appears to be a typical young adult romance novel, the book comes with a barrage of dark elements, from making an abusive relationship look like a burning romance to the emotional trauma Tessa faces and the bad choices she makes.” (<https://bookanalysis.com/anna-todd/after/>; lesedato 03.11.23)

Amerikanske Colleen Hoovers romaner ble anbefalt av mange på det sosiale nettstedet TikTok. “In 2022 alone, Hoover’s novels sold 14.3 million copies and in total, more than 24 million copies to date. Time magazine named Hoover one of the most influential people of 2023. Like several other successful 21st-century novelists, she began her career by self-publishing. But Hoover’s innovation was to capitalize on the nascent world of BookTok, a literary community on TikTok where legions of her followers (self-appointed “CoHorts”) pour out emojis over her posts and generate their own videos extolling the weepy pleasures of her fiction, vastly expanding the audience for “It Ends With Us” and “It Starts With Us” and the other 22 novels that constitute Hoover’s oeuvre. [...] Certain patterns quickly emerge. Poor white strivers with trauma in their pasts and the cards stacked against them (impossible parents, failed romances, familial abuse) typically move away from home and then work their way toward career success, emotional recovery,

spellbinding love and superlative sex. [...] Parents often die within the first few pages. A mother's meth overdose in "Heart Bones." An abusive father's funeral in "It Ends With Us." A long-suffering mother's death from cancer in "Verity." The adult child then enters the real world. [...] Every emotion trembles at the surface. ("I. Was. Taken. By. Him. Addicted to him.") Emotions tend to be described rather than evoked. ("My mind begins to spin with worry, sadness, fear.") All feelings are big feelings. ("I cry so hard, I don't even make a noise.") Passions ricochet with the I-hate-you-but-I-love-you intensity of texts exchanged during a couple's first big smartphone-based fight. ("I wonder what color his eyes are. No. I don't wonder. I don't care.") [...] In these novels what matters more than anything else is hardship: Hardship is everywhere, women must suffer, women can heal, and those who make it through all this have the capacity to find themselves/love/happiness. [...] Her stories aren't about attaining worldly power on a grand scale, but about finding power within. Through her characters' personal growth and interpersonal relationships, Hoover offers readers an emotional road map to recovery from imposter syndrome, domestic abuse, betrayal, victimization." (Pamela Paul i <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/06/opinion/columnists/colleen-hoover.html>; lesedato 03.11.23)

Kathrine Nedrejords *Trengsel* (2014) er en kjærlighetsroman der "[a]mbivalens og sjalusi dirrer [...] Nedrejord dekonstruerer all romantikk i en spennende kjærlighetsfortelling [...] I sentrum står den om lag 25-årige kvinnelige forfatteren som er i Paris for å skrive og studere, snart møter hun Han, en fransktalende, vakker ingeniør. De forelsker seg og blir kjærester. Men kan det vare? Og vil kvinnen at det skal vare? Hun er ambisiøs, men skjødesløs, "flink pike", men ikke fremmed for å bryte med andres forventninger. Ladet med både selvhøyt og selvsikkerhet blir hun en kompleks karakter [...] Nedrejords "Han" har algeriske røtter, mens kvinnen er delvis samisk. [...] Paradokser ligger lagvis, som at kjæresten elsker kvinnen og hele tida ønsker å vise henne fram, bli ett med henne, samtidig som han plukker hennes lyse hårstrå i leiligheten for å skjule henne fra foreldrene." (*Klassekampens* bokmagasin 1. februar 2014 s. 10)

Det blir utgitt en *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*. Det er "a peer-reviewed interdisciplinary journal publishing concise and well-written contributions to the study of popular romance media (e.g., love songs; romantic fiction and chick-lit; romance in film and TV, in comics and graphic novels, in memoir and life-writing, in fanfic and other forms of transformative culture, etc.). We also publish articles on the logics, institutions, and social practices of romantic love in global popular culture. In addition, *JPRS* publishes book reviews, notes and queries, special issues, and reports from the classroom that outline techniques and tools, syllabus models, and practical pieces on the teaching of popular romance media and culture." (<https://www.jprstudies.org/>; lesedato 19.08.24)

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