

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Om leksikonet: [https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om\\_leksikonet.pdf](https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf)

## Leiebibliotek

Et bibliotek der låneren må betale en vanligvis lav sum for å låne bøker (i motsetning til gratis lån, som i folkebibliotek). Blir på ulike språk betegnet som “lending libraries”, “circulating libraries”, “cabinets littéraires” (på fransk), “Leihbibliotheken” (på tysk).

“A type of library established by booksellers and other businessmen in Britain in the early 18th century that provided popular reading material to the general public for a limited period of time in exchange for payment of a modest fee (usually no more than a shilling per month), comparable to a modern rental collection. Michael H. Harris states in *History of Libraries in the Western World* (Scarecrow Press, 1995) that by 1800, most of the larger towns in Britain had such libraries, some remaining profitable into the 20th century. According to Harris, William Lane of London was one of the most successful founders, establishing chains of bookstores that included circulating collections, and even publishing fiction and popular nonfiction to fill the shelves. Mudie’s *Circulating Libraries*, established in the 19th century by Charles E. Mudie, had over 25,000 subscribers in the London area alone. With the introduction of inexpensive paperback editions and the growth of public libraries in the early 20th century, interest in circulating libraries declined. Synonymous with two-penny library.” (Joan M. Reitz i [http://lu.com/odlis/odlis\\_c.cfm](http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm); lesedato 30.08.05)

Det første engelske leiebiblioteket skal ha blitt etablert i 1726 (Brackert og Lämmert 1976 s. 52). “Circulating libraries became an important cultural institution in Britain in the 1780s, doing much to enable the rising middle class to have access to a broad range of reading material, especially fiction. Circulating libraries were generally of three kinds – specialist libraries attached to, or owned by, literary and philosophical societies which were developing in most British towns and cities in the later eighteenth century; book clubs which flourished in lower middle-class and socially aspirant groups such as urban artisans who wished to better themselves; and commercial libraries which developed in London, the major cities, and such watering places as Bath to supply the reading of the lower gentry and rising middle class.” (<http://www.litencyc.com/>; lesedato 20.11.12)

“Surviving records from a twelfth-century Jewish bookseller in Cairo lists a copy of a book, *The Thousand and One Nights*, as having been out on loan. This may be the first mention of the title as we have it today, and we have it courtesy of a lending library, as it were, from the 1100s.” (Gregory Frost i <https://endicottstudio.typepad.com/articleslist/arabian-nights-the-tale-of-the-puzzle-of-the-ales-by-gregory-frost.html>; lesedato 15.08.23)

De første leiebibliotekene i Europa oppstod på 1700-tallet (f.eks. ble det åpnet et i London i 1740). I og med at betalingen for å leie bøker vanligvis var lav, hadde mange råd til å bruke bibliotekene. Mange av brukerne var kvinner, og de var spesielt interessert i romaner. En tysk forsker regnet ut at i Tyskland kunne en borger for summen av et årsabonnement i et leiebibliotek på begynnelsen av 1800-tallet kjøpe bare 2-7 nye bøker. Omfattende lesning ble derfor mulig for store befolkningsgrupper gjennom å bruke leiebibliotek (Faulstich 2002 s. 214).

“For the price of one novel, a family in Germany (like Britain) could afford to feed itself for two weeks. For this reason most people among the newly emerging reading public, including the ranks of the bourgeois middle classes, switched to the lending libraries and reading societies in order to satisfy their reading requirements” (Wittmann 1999 s. 303).

Leiebibliotekene kunne inngå ulike avtaler med kundene avhengig av hvilken pris en kunde ville betale: rett til å leie boka noen dager, leie den noen uker, rett til å låne boka bort til andre osv. (Franzmann, Hasemann og Löffler 1999 s. 42). En kunde som ikke ville vente på sin tur til å låne en bok i leiebiblioteket, kunne betale seg til å komme først i køen (Barbier 2000 s. 238).

Leiebibliotekene i viktoriatidens England er et eksempel på at distribusjonen av litteratur påvirker den litterære formen. Siden prisen for leie gjaldt per bok, var det i bibliotekeiernes interesse at tjukke romaner ble delt opp i flere bind, og dette er én av grunnene til den viktorianske “three-decker novel” (Sayre 2011 s. 92). Dessuten tenderte skrivestilen til å favorisere omskrivninger, digresjoner og andre grep som trakk teksten ut i lengde. En tilleggsfaktor her var at mange av historiene først ble publisert som føljetonger, og her kunne også stor lengde være lønnsomt (s. 92).

Den skotske forfatteren Walter Scott “bidro til å skape en ny standard for romanutgivelser i 3 bind, noe som var svært lukrativt for leiebibliotekene. Denne formen dominerte på 1880-tallet. Den moderne enbindsromanen satte seg mer mot slutten av 1800-tallet.” (professor Tore Rem i *Klassekampen* 8. desember 2009 s. 18)

I Tyskland begynte leiebibliotek å bli vanlig i siste halvdel av 1700-tallet. I Tyskland i årene 1780-90 hadde hver stor eller halvstor by minst et leiebibliotek (Gilmont 2003 s. 83). Midt på 1800-tallet fantes det ca. 1500-2000 til sammen

(Franzmann, Hasemann og Löffler 1999 s. 42). Deretter begynte en nedgangsperiode. Noen tyske leiebibliotek spesialiserte seg på engelsk eller fransk litteratur.

I første halvdel av 1830-tallet var det 300-500 leiebibliotek i Paris (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 29). De parisiske leiebibliotekene var svært mye brukt fram til ca. 1840, da billige, masseproduserte bøker kom på markedet (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 29).

“[T]he heyday of the lending library everywhere in Europe began in 1750. In Britain, their number increased to ‘not less than one thousand’ by 1801, according to *Monthly Magazine*. In 1761 the bookseller Quillan founded the first French lending library in the Parisian rue Christine. The *loueurs de livres* multiplied very rapidly during the 1770s and 1780s. Following several precursors in Berlin, there is evidence in the German-speaking area that the first lending libraries were established in Frankfurt-am-Main and Karlsruhe in the 1750s. In the majority of towns and markets, even the smaller ones, there was at least one lending library in operation by the 1780s and 1790s. Around 1800 Leipzig had nine such establishments, Bremen ten and Frankfurt-am-Main as many as eighteen. But even in a small town like Prussian Oranienburg the postmaster lent more than 12,000 volumes, and allowed readers to consult around 100 newspapers for a charge. The lending libraries were the ideal partners for the extensive consumption of reading material that was spreading among the middle classes.” (Wittmann 1999 s. 306-307)

I franske leiebibliotek i første halvdel av 1800-tallet var dette populære forfattere: Paul de Kock, Victor Ducange, Madame de Genlis, Sophie Cottin, Isabelle de Montolieu, François Guillaume Ducray-Duminil, Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni og Charles-Antoine-Guillaume Pigault-Lebrun (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 31). Blant bøkene til leie var gotiske romaner fulle av urettferdighet, vold og grusomhet, komiske romaner, kjærlighetsromaner, krimromaner og grovkornete romaner (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 31). Når en ny roman av Paul de Kock ble lansert, kjøpte parisiske leiebibliotek opptil ti eksemplarer av hver av hans bøker, og annonserte med plakater i sine vinduer når et nytt verk var til låns (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 48).

På 1830- og 40-tallet kom det mange angrep på litteraturen som fantes i de parisiske leiebibliotekene. Bøkene der ble anklaget for å være umoralske og for å gi leserne dårlig smak (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 30). En person i den franske romanen *Leiebiblioteket* av Joseph Brisset (1843; fransk tittel *Le cabinet de lecture*), en prest ved navn Vaudemont, anklager denne litteraturen for å være samfunnsoppløsende. Det var til og med noen som mente at det fantes en egen, foraktelig romansjanger: “leiebibliotekroman” (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 30).

Fram til ca. 1815 var det sakprosa som dominerte i tyske leiebibliotek, deretter ble skjønnlitteratur stadig vanligere, særlig romaner (Franzmann, Hasemann og Löffler 1999 s. 42). I noen leiebibliotek fra 1700-tallet fantes det skjulte kataloger og skjulte rom med bøker som myndighetene hadde forbudt. Eiere av leiebibliotek

anga av og til hverandre når de oppdaget av konkurrenten fikk større kundekrets og dermed høstet økonomiske fordeler av dette (Plachta 2006 s. 84).

“The same contemporary voices that were raised against the fatal reading epidemic began to attack the lending libraries that they considered to be the main breeding grounds of this vice. They were regarded as ‘brothels and houses of moral perdition’ that infected everyone – the young and the old, the upper classes and the lower – with their ‘spiritual poison’. Lending libraries with a stock of predominantly *belles-lettres*, including chivalric romances, stories of brigands or ghosts, along with sentimental love stories and family novels, were often disparagingly called *Winkeltablissements* (‘backstreet establishments’). Often their stocks were outdated, and ranged from a few dozen titles to over a thousand volumes. This early type of purely entertaining consumer library was frequently run by antiquarian booksellers, bookbinders or complete newcomers to the trade; but many serious booksellers in the smaller towns felt the need to bring their supplies into line with the prevailing taste. In Württemberg in 1809, nine-tenths of all lending libraries in the small market towns were this kind of humble establishment, with stocks of between 100 and 600 volumes. But even in the larger towns, reading tastes were by no means superior.” (Wittmann 1999 s. 307)

“Around 1800, in all the German states, either a total ban was enforced on all lending libraries (as happened in Austria between 1799 and 1811), or at least a set of strict controls (the Wöllner Edict of 1788 in Prussia, and of 1803 in Bavaria). From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, the lending libraries overtook the reading societies everywhere. This development testifies to the individualization and simultaneous anonymity of literary reception. Literary discussions conducted within a familiar circles of friends were succeeded by an individual form of reading practiced in isolation, partly escapist and partly devoted to social climbing, that required commercial mediation.” (Wittmann 1999 s. 308)

“Det första kommersiella lånbiblioteket i Sverige öppnades 1757 i Stockholm av bokhandelsreformatorn Lars Salvius.” (Björkman i Leffler 1993 s. 14) “Vid sekelskiftet 1800 var det framför allt de kommersiella lånbiblioteken som försåg den nöjesläsande publiken med läsning.” (Björkman i Leffler 1993 s. 13). Svensken Carl Conrad Behn eide et leiebibliotek i Stockholm på denne tiden.

I 1850 var det ca. 2.000 leiebibliotek i Tyskland, i 1880 ca. 4.000. Omtrent halvparten av de fire tusen var små utleiehjørner hos grønnsakhandlere, i bakerbutikker og lignende (Schneider 2004 s. 202). På begynnelsen av 1900-tallet fantes det i Frankrike tobakksbutikker som hadde et lite leiebibliotek som tilleggstilbud til kunder (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 29).

Den unge Charles Dickens “joined a circulating library at 24 Fetter Lane which was kept by a printer and curio-dealer, a certain Mr Haines. A peculiar place, this, filled

with ancient silver, foxed engravings, cracked paintings, old china and a supply of books to be borrowed at a small price.” (Ackroyd 1991 s. 137)

Et berømt engelsk leiebibliotek fra 1800-tallet er London Library i St. James's Square. Grunnleggingen i 1841 ble foretatt med kjente menn som Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, John Stuart Mill og William Gladstone som støttespillere for biblioteket. Disse brukte selv biblioteket. Da Dickens trengte bakgrunnsstoff til sin roman *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), sendte Carlyle to pakker med bøker om den franske revolusjon fra London Library. Adelige som brukte leiebiblioteket, kunne få sendt bokpakker til sine landsteder. Det finnes også litterære innslag som viser biblioteket i bruk: Arthur Conan Doyles litterære figur doktor Watson klarer ved hjelp av London Library i løpet av 24 timer å skaffe seg nok kunnskap om kinesisk keramikk til å hjelpe Sherlock Holmes med å løse en kriminalsak (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 11. desember 2007 s. 44).

Engelskmannen Charles Edward Mudie oppfant systemet med årsabonnement på leiebibliotek. Hans landsmann Henry Walton Smith utviklet en jernbane-bokhandelkjede, der det både ble solgt og leid ut bøker. I hvilken som helst av Smiths jernbanekiosker kunne en kunde både leie og levere inn en leid bok. Nettverket gjorde det unødvendig å leie og levere inn på samme kiosk. Små bokhandler drev et lignende system med utleie av bøker i tillegg til salg (Barbier 2000 s. 238).

“Mudie's Select Library in London operated from 1842 until the 1930s, and at its height of popularity boasted an inventory of over 1 million titles. At the same time, Mudie's Catalogue of New and Standard Works reassured patrons of its sound moral values by refusing to stock “Novels of objectionable character or inferior quality.” (Nancy Spiegel i <http://news.lib.uchicago.edu/blog/2011/05/05/circulating-libraries/>; lesedato 20.11.12)

“In 1894 Mudie's Select Library, in conjunction with booksellers W.H. Smith, shifted its longstanding preference for three volume novels to ‘cheaper formats’. Mudie's was the pre-eminent circulating library in Britain, ‘at one point ... the largest purchaser of novels in the world’, and its preference for the three volume system and conservative fiction maintained these as norms throughout most of the nineteenth century. [...] The rapid shift away from the three-volume novel (from 184 published in 1894 to 4 in 1897) suggests that the change in form was adopted with alacrity.” (Hall 2008 s. 53)

I tyskeren Ludwig Hamanns bok *Omgangen med bøker og selvkulturen* (1898; *Selbstkultur* er det tyske ordet i tittelen) skrev forfatteren om leiebibliotek: “Det passer seg ikke å lukte av Patschouli og andre eaux de mille fleurs [dvs. parfymer] og lese skitne leiebibliotekbøker.” (siteret fra Rosebrock 1995 s. 160)

“The increase and spread of popular literature – magazines, newspapers and novels – in the late 18th and early 19th centuries led to the development of circulating, or rental libraries. These were established by booksellers looking to augment their retail sales activities, but were also found in stationery and candy stores or even barber shops. In contrast to the content of subscription libraries of the same era, which focused on scholarly materials intended mainly for the upper classes, circulating libraries served the general reading interests of ordinary people. Readers in a circulating library could, for a small fee, access a wide selection of popular reading materials. Printed catalogs and newspaper ads often served as marketing tools to pique readers’ interests. By the mid-19th century, circulating libraries were present in most large cities in Europe and the United States. [...] Circulating libraries began to decline in the early 20th century as public libraries devoted more shelf space to popular fiction and offered service for free. The paperback book, introduced in the 1930s, offered readers another attractive and inexpensive alternative.” (Nancy Spiegel i <http://news.lib.uchicago.edu/blog/2011/05/05/circulating-libraries/>; lesedato 20.11.12)

Ifølge en forsker ble tre fjerdedeler av all tysk skjønnlitteratur i perioden 1815–48 kjøpt av tyske leiebibliotek, dvs. tilsiktet kommersielt utlån (Franzmann, Hasemann og Löffler 1999 s. 42). Men i Tyskland sank bokprisene sterkt i siste halvdel av 1800-tallet, og en større del av befolkningen dermed råd til å kjøpe bøker. Det ble etter hvert oppfattet som sosialt “nedverdiggende” for borgerskapet å leie bøker i leiebibliotekene, som dermed ble brukt primært av økonomisk fattige lesere (Franzmann, Hasemann og Löffler 1999 s. 41). Noen forlag krevde høyere pris når de solgte bøker til leiebibliotek fordi så mange kom til å lese hvert eksemplar av boka (Barbier 2000 s. 237). Men leiebibliotekromaner ble av mange oppfattet som en slags motevare som raskt gikk av moten og som det ikke var verdt å kjøpe for å eie (Günter 2008 s. 179).

Det største leiebiblioteket i Berlin i år 1900 hadde en samling på ca. 600.000 bøker (Neuhaus 2009 s. 38). Men noen av de mest populære bøkene fantes i mange eksemplarer. Gustav Freytags roman *Debet og kredit* (1855) fantes i dette enorme leiebiblioteket i Berlin i hele 2315 eksemplarer, og noen andre romaner fantes også i over 1000 eksemplarer.

“Circulating and subscription libraries overlapped and frequently shared many characteristics, so the distinction between them is often rather arbitrary. Indeed, occasionally circulating libraries referred to themselves as ‘subscription’ libraries, and vice versa. Nevertheless, most subscription libraries had a different origin from circulating libraries. Many evolved out of small, private book clubs during the eighteenth century and shared many of their characteristics. They tended to have rather high annual subscriptions, they sometimes required subscribers to take a share in the library and they frequently concentrated on ‘serious’ subjects (theology, philosophy, history, biography, travel, etc.) to the exclusion or underrepresentation of fiction. However, with the growing production and

consumption of fiction – particularly in the form of the novel – such libraries were never going to satisfy what many would have regarded as a vulgar demand. This was left to commerce, and commerce was what circulating libraries were all about. The circulating library was certainly a success in its time: the Library History Database to 1850 currently lists 5,481 circulating libraries [i Storbritannia og Irland] or 44.5% of all the institutions recorded. It is no coincidence that circulating libraries and the novel rose together. As commercial organisations, their subscription rates were closely tailored to their market. One might subscribe on a yearly, quarterly or monthly basis. Some libraries allowed shorter subscription periods offering a weekly or even a daily rate; these shorter subscriptions could be frequently found in small circulating libraries serving poorer areas or in libraries with a distinctly seasonal trade (such as spa towns and seaside resorts). Some circulating libraries charged by the volume borrowed (with or without a security deposit).” (Simon Eliot i <http://histories.cambridge.org/>; lesedato 20.11.12)

“Circulating libraries in the 18th and 19th century were associated with leisure, and were found in cities and towns with a population of 2,000 and upward. They were as much of an attraction in wealthy resorts, where people came to relax and look after their health, as in cities and small towns, like Basingstoke, where Jane Austen subscribed to Mrs. Martin’s circulating library. In 1801, it was said that there were 1,000 circulating libraries in Britain. Book shops abounded as well, but in 1815 a 3-volume novel cost the equivalent of \$100 today. Such a price placed a novel beyond the reach of most people. Worried about a second edition for Mansfield Park, Jane Austen wrote in 1814: “People are more ready to borrow and praise, than to buy – which I cannot wonder at.” ” (<http://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2010/08/30/the-circulating-library-in-regency-times/>; lesedato 21.11.12)

“Circulating libraries made books accessible to many more people at an affordable price. For two guineas a year [i England på begynnelsen av 1800-tallet], a patron could check out two volumes. Which meant that for the price of one book, a patron could read up to 26 volumes per year. “By 1800, most copies of a novel’s edition were sold to the libraries, which were flourishing businesses to be found in every major English city and town, and which promoted the sale of books during a period when their price rose relative to the cost of living. The libraries created a market for the publishers’ product and encouraged readers to read more by charging them an annual subscription fee that would entitle them to check out a specified number of volumes at one time.” – Lee Ericson, *The Economy of Novel Reading*. [...] The practice of borrowing books was not a new concept in the Regency era. Records from the 17th century show that people were borrowing books from booksellers. As early as 1735, Samuel Fancourt advertised a circulating library in Salisbury for his religious books and pamphlets.” (<http://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2010/08/30/the-circulating-library-in-regency-times/>; lesedato 21.11.12)

“Circulating libraries attracted many patrons, even those who did not necessarily come to borrow or book or read, for they were also places for fashionable people to

“hang out” and meet others. “In the resorts the circulating libraries became fashionable daytime lounges where ladies could see others and be seen, where raffles were held and games were played, and where expensive merchandise could be purchased.” – Lee Ericson, *The Economy of Novel Reading*.”  
(<http://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2010/08/30/the-circulating-library-in-regency-times/>; lesedato 21.11.12)

“Jane Austen well knew the attractions of libraries at sea side resorts. Mrs. Whitby’s Circulating Library operated in Sanditon, and Lydia visited one in Brighton. In her letters to Cassandra, Jane frequently mentioned circulating libraries, in particular visiting one in Southampton. Circulating libraries tended to be located in a convenient location in the center of a resort. Newcomers would find out about them from guide books, such as the one in Brighton. [...] In 1836, Cassandra Austen would have been familiar with the costs associated with the Royal Colonade Library’s terms of subscriptions” (<http://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2010/08/30/the-circulating-library-in-regency-times/>; lesedato 21.11.12).

“By the end of the 18th century, Scarborough, a resort located in the county of North Yorkshire, boasted several circulating libraries. The town’s population had risen to 7,067 by 1811, and one can imagine that, with the many leisurely hours available to tourists and visitors, these libraries managed a booming business. [...] The Poetical Sketches of Scarborough, first published in 1813, features twenty-one illustrations of humorous subjects about the many features available in the resort, including a satiric poem about the Circulating Library:

As in life’s tide by careful fate  
The mind is made to circulate  
Just so each watering place supplies  
It’s CIRCULATING LIBRARIES:

Where charming volumes may be had  
Of good indifferent and bad  
And some small towns on Britain’s shore  
Can boast of book shops half a score  
Scarbro and with much truth may boast  
Her’s good as any on our coast  
AINSWORTH’S or SCAUM’S no matter which  
Or WHITING’S all in learning rich  
Afford a more than common measure  
Of pleasant intellectual treasure”

(<http://janeaustensworld.wordpress.com/2010/08/30/the-circulating-library-in-regency-times/>; lesedato 21.11.12)



“A circulating library was a private business that rented books. There are records of booksellers renting books in the late seventeenth century, and the practice of renting out books goes back to medieval times in university towns. But the circulating library as a separate establishment run by a bookseller or entrepreneur does not make its appearance until the early eighteenth century. In 1740 Dr. Samuel Fancourt, a dissenting divine, was among the first to use the term when he advertized a circulating library in Salisbury that had begun in 1735 and that consisted primarily of religious books and pamphlets. In 1742 he moved his enterprise to London where it flourished until his death. There were apparently established booksellers in London already renting books who took Fancourt's business as a model and soon were calling their firms circulating libraries. By 1775 many such libraries were doing business in Bath and London, while others were to be found in the larger towns and in all the watering places and seaside resorts where the wealthy and fashionable congregated. In 1801 there were said to be 1,000 circulating libraries in England. The circulating libraries were at first natural outgrowths of bookselling, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century had often become enterprises in their own right. They were ultimately driven out by the rise of public libraries in England, but they dominated the market for fiction throughout the nineteenth century and were important until the 1930s when Mudie's, the largest and most famous, closed.” (Erickson 1990)

“Since it was the custom to subscribe to the libraries immediately upon arrival in the watering places and resorts, their subscription books became a useful guide to who was in town. In [Jane Austen's unpublished roman] Sanditon the subscription book is used this way. Mr. Parker and Charlotte Heywood go to Mrs. Whitby's circulating library after dinner to examine the subscription book. When they look into it, Mr. Parker “could not but feel that the List was not only without Distinction, but less numerous than he had hoped.” The subsequent reference in Sanditon to Fanny Burney's *Camilla* recalls the fashionable circulating libraries in that novel: Camilla and Edgar go to a raffle for a locket at the library in Northwick; and later Camilla and Mrs. Arblay visit the bookseller's shop in Tunbridge Wells to subscribe to its circulating library in order to announce that they are in town. While they are there, Sir Sedley asks for the shop's subscription books which are seized from him by Lord Newford, and, as the narrator acidly comments, “with some right, as they were the only books in the shop he ever read.” In many respects, then, books and an apparent interest in them were signs of gentility and often displayed only for their social utility.” (Erickson 1990)

I Austen's roman *Mansfield Park* (1814) “Fanny Price, for instance, after returning home to Portsmouth from Mansfield Park, immediately notices the lack of books in her father's house and subscribes to a circulating library [...] As Austen suggests, circulating libraries could ideally be, and certainly were in Fanny's eyes, a means for the intellectual liberation of women of small means. In practice the circulating libraries provided women with entertainment in the form of novels. Some men, of course, read novels. But although Henry Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* declares that

“the person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid” and says that he has “read all Mrs. Radcliffe's works,” his views and knowledge of circulating library fiction seem to have been unusual for a man (5:106). More usual apparently is Mr. Thorpe, who, when asked if he has read *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, replies “I never read novels; I have something else to do” and asserts that “there has not been a tolerably decent one come out since Tom Jones, except *The Monk*” (5:48).” (Erickson 1990)

“[P]eople were quite willing to rent a novel they were unwilling to buy. Thus publishers of novels found that rental libraries were purchasing a large and gradually increasing part of an edition. As early as 1770 Richard Griffith observes that of 1,000 copies of a novel, 400 would be sold to circulating libraries. When book prices rose, this became true for almost all books. In *Letters from England* (1809) Robert Southey states that the demand for books largely comes from “the main libraries, or from private societies instituted to supply their place, books being now so inordinately expensive that they are chiefly purchased as furniture by the rich. It is not a mere antithesis to say they who buy books do not read them, and that they who read them do not buy them.” ” (Erickson 1990)

“Austen herself was a subscriber to Mrs. Martin’s circulating library in Basingstoke and later lamented its demise. [...] By 1814 one would typically subscribe to a circulating library like Mrs. Martin's for two guineas a year and be entitled to have two volumes out and by paying more could have more volumes. Assuming a moderate reader and three volumes per novel, this would mean that one could read twenty-six novels a year for a little more than the price of one. In *The Use of Circulating Libraries Considered; With Instructions for Opening and Conducting a Library* (1797), Thomas Wilson hyperbolically claims that “the yearly subscriber may read as many books for one guinea, which, to purchase, would cost ONE HUNDRED.” The natural consequence of this economics of reading was that by Austen’s time most copies of a novel's first edition were sold not to individuals but to circulating libraries. Since the libraries found that the vogue for a novel was usually limited to a few months, they bound their books in cheap marbled-colored bindings [...] How they speak of the thousand thumbs that have turned over their pages with delight! [...] This hard use has meant that, with the exception of novels which were particularly valued and purchased by their readers, surviving copies of the period’s novels are very rare.” (Erickson 1990)

“By contemporary accounts the largest circulating library of the period, and the largest from which a catalogue survives, was John Lane's library in London. Lane's catalogue advertizes more than 20,000 titles, while the smallest surviving catalogue from James Sanders's library in Derby (circa 1770) lists just over 200 titles. The average circulating library issuing a catalogue had around 5,000 titles of which about 1,000 were fiction, or roughly twenty percent. This figure probably understates somewhat the libraries' emphasis upon novels, since large enterprises would stock multiple copies of recent fiction. John Lane, for example, advertized

that he had as many as twenty-five copies of a popular novel. Further, since it is probable that catalogues have tended to survive from the larger and longer-lived businesses and that small libraries often may not have issued printed catalogues for their subscribers, one perhaps gets a better view of the great demand for novels by examining the figures from the catalogues of the small circulating libraries. These libraries averaged 430 titles of which seventy percent were fiction. The libraries' short lending period of two to six days for new books and their heavy fines (which required one to buy the book) also point to the concentrated demand for the latest publications. In rural areas circulating libraries did not exist, since a bookseller needed an urban population of about 2,000 to make a living." (Erickson 1990)

"Most circulating libraries evidently had such a small stock that they could not rely solely upon renting books to support their proprietors and so usually sold a supplementary line of luxury items or offered some other form of entertainment in addition to their reading rooms. In *The Use of Circulating Libraries* Thomas Wilson remarks that not one Circulating Library in twenty is, by its profits enabled to give support to a family, or even pay for the trouble and expence attending it; therefore the bookselling and stationary business should always be annexed, and in country towns, some other may be added, the following in particular, are suitable for this purpose. Haberdashery, Hosiery, Hats, Tea, Tobacco and Snuffs; or Perfumery, and the sale of Patent Medicines. [...] In one of Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts*, *The Two Wealthy Farmers; or the History of Mr. Bragwell* (1796), the local circulating library is said to "sell paper with all manner of colours on the edges, and gim-cracks, and powder-puffs, and wash-balls, and cards without any pips, and every thing in the world that's genteel and of no use." (Erickson 1990)

Hannah More (1745-1833) var en kristen engelsk forfatter. "More and her allies also infiltrated conduct novels into the circulating libraries." (Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 226)

"John Lane, the proprietor of the Minerva Press, was both the leading publisher of gothic fiction in England and the principal wholesaler of complete, packaged circulating libraries to new entrepreneurs. [...] Mrs. Eliza Parsons's *Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793) and her *Mysterious Warning* (1796), Regina Maria Roche's *Clermont* (1798), Peter Teuthold's translation of Lawrence Flammenberg's *Necromancer of the Black Forest* (1794), Francis Lathom's *Midnight Bell* (1798), Eleanor Sleath's *Orphan of the Rhine* (1798), and Peter Will's translation of the Marquis of Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* (1796). The Minerva Press issued all of them with the exception of the novel by Lathom, who later published several novels with the press. [...] Many people opposed circulating libraries and especially their encouragement of young women in reading novels. In *Northanger Abbey*, Austen notes that even novelists had joined "with their greatest enemies in bestowing the harshest epithets on such works, and scarcely ever permitting them to be read by their own heroine, who, if she accidentally take up a novel, is sure to turn over its

insipid pages with disgust” (5:37). The objections to novels and novel reading ranged from their dignifying idleness to their encouragement of immorality. Although Coleridge had been made a free member of a circulating library in King Street, Cheapside, at age eight and claimed that he read every book in the catalogue, he says in *Biographia Literaria* (1815) “For as to the devotees of the circulating libraries, I dare not compliment their pass-time, or rather kill-time with the name of reading”; he declares that novel reading reconciles “indulgence of sloth and hatred of vacancy,” and he considers it no better than “gaming, swinging or swaying on a chair or gate; spitting over a bridge; smoking; snuff-taking; [and] conning word by word all the advertisements of the daily advertizer in a public house on a rainy day.” In George Colman’s *Polly Honeycombe* (1760), the father, having just rescued his daughter from a disastrous engagement with the son of his maid, exclaims “a man might as well turn his Daughter loose in Coventgarden, as trust the cultivation of her mind to A CIRCULATING LIBRARY.” (Erickson 1990)

“Unfortunately, only one such subscription book from the period has survived, that of James Marshall in Bath from 1793 to 1799, but one notes that the signatures of the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Piozzi grace its pages. [...] Philip Kaufman has argued that the subscription list of James Marshall’s library in Bath, seventy percent of which were men, “decisively dispels the traditional belief that women were the main support of the nefarious traffic in flashy novels” (“In Defense of Fair Readers,” *Review of English Literature* 8 [1967]:75). But it is hard to see how this is so, based on the evidence. He fails to take into account that James Marshall’s library had a relatively small percentage of fiction in its stock compared to other such establishments in Bath, and so was less likely to have women subscribers, given the competitive market. In 1808 the library (then run by his son, C.H. Marshall) had only eight percent fiction versus the average library’s twenty percent (“The Community Library,” p. 12; Varma, pp. 173-74). Further, since the records of individual borrowings have not survived, one cannot assume that the men were borrowing the library’s fiction.” (Erickson 1990)

Den irske forfatteren George Moores roman *A Mummer’s Wife* (1884) “is generally considered the first Naturalist novel in English literature. It recounts the fate of Kate Ede, a seamstress, who deserts her asthmatic husband Ralph, and elopes with the manager of a travelling opéra bouffe. She becomes his mistress and then wife, who plays lead roles in operas, but gradually deteriorates and dies as a miserable alcoholic in a London slum. The novel raised the topical issue of men’s victimisation of women. The circulating libraries also put the book on their black list because of its frank presentation of a woman’s sexuality. In protest, Moore published a pamphlet, *Literature At Nurse* (1885), in which he ridiculed the prudery and self-imposed censorship of the circulating libraries. Moore objected to the belief that realist novels might exert a harmful influence on young female readers.” (<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/mooreg/1.html>; lesedato 24.06.16)

Ifølge David Kasers bok *A Book for a Sixpence: The Circulating Library in America* (1980) leiebibliotek i USA “seems to have originated in America in 1762 when William Rind added a rental collection to his Annapolis bookstore. Patterned on agencies known in Britain and on the Continent for at least a half century and soon joined by others in America, Rind’s circulating library was evidently a response to a widespread need rather than the consequence of a unique idea. [...] Kaser reminds us that the circulating library was by no means replaced by the free public library, and he carries the story up to modern times when, he shows, the virtual deathblow was delivered, not by other libraries but rather by the advent of the paperback and, most importantly, television. [...] The typical scheme of treatment is a long passage of detailed description of individual circulating libraries followed by a summary that seeks to extract generalizations.” ([https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/40024/crl\\_41\\_05\\_472\\_opt.pdf](https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/bitstream/handle/2142/40024/crl_41_05_472_opt.pdf); lesedato 27.09.13)

I tyske spiritisme-foreninger på begynnelsen av 1900-tallet var det noen steder innredet leiebiblioteker med spiritistisk litteratur, som hovedsakelig ble lest av nye medlemmer (Lehmstedt og Herzog 1999 s. 222).

“Idéen med leiebiblioteker der man for en liten avgift kunne abonnere på bøker, kom til Norge fra Danmark på slutten av 1700-tallet. Det første bokleiebiblioteket i Norge ble åpnet i Trondheim 1770. Bibliotekene ble raskt populære, ikke bare fordi det var billigere å leie enn å kjøpe, men også fordi publikum nå fikk tilgang til annen litteratur enn den overveiende religiøse som de allerede kjente. Utover 1800-tallet dukket det opp bokleiebibliotek i mange norske byer. Vi kjenner til over hundre slike samlinger – halvparten i Christiania. Størrelsen varierte sterkt, dog var de fleste på 2-3000 bind (eller nummer, benevnelsene dekker det samme). Fra begynnelsen var det først og fremst bokhandlerne som drev leiebibliotek – slik kunne de bedre sikre seg å tjene penger på sitt lager av bøker, men senere kom det mange private til, ikke minst enslige kvinner. Leiebibliotekene spilte en stor rolle som litteraturformidlere for borgerskapet – de andre befolkningsgruppene benyttet seg bare i liten utstrekning av tilbudet.” (Kari Michelsen i [http://www.hf.uio.no/imv/forskning/prosjekter/norgesmusikk/musikkhistarkiv/notetrykk/KariM\\_bok/04\\_Kari\\_M\\_kap4\\_5.pdf](http://www.hf.uio.no/imv/forskning/prosjekter/norgesmusikk/musikkhistarkiv/notetrykk/KariM_bok/04_Kari_M_kap4_5.pdf); lesedato 25.01.13)

“Gikk en av byens 9000 borgere [i Christiania på 1700-tallet] til bokhandler Andreas Diurendahls leiebibliotek, var det litt å ta med seg hjem: “Et liderlig Levnet”, “En fransk Dames Hendelser i Venedig”, “Ridder Robbert og hans tandløse Brud” og “Anviisning hvorledes man bør forholde sig efter et Samleje. Medicinsk Brudegave for Nyegifte”. Men også: Rousseau, Holberg, Luther og Rahbek.” (Odd Winger i *Dagbladet* 27. februar 1985)

“Leiebibliotekene virket imidlertid også som en skarp konkurrent til bokhandlerne. Dette forhold gis en fargerik beskrivelse i H.T. Winthers månedsskrift *Bien* i 1837; i fortellingen “En Bogs Historie” står: “Du finner mig [boken] nu i alle

Leiebibliotheker. For Folk som eie saadanne har jeg en hellig Frygt. Min Papa [forfatteren, sier denne boken – det er nok egentlig bokhandleren!] kalder dem Boghandelens Vampyrer, Litteraturens Drabsmænd. ‘Disse Mennesker er det’, siger min Papa ‘som lamme Boghandelens Vinger, suge dem Marven af Benene og grave Litteraturens Grav. Saadan en Leiebibliothekar kjøber, med Rabat, eet Exemplar af en Bog, som gjør Opsigt, og føder dermed tre til fire hundrede Læsere, som igjen udlaane Bogen til tre til fire hundrede Andre. Deraf kommer det, at der selv af den interessanteste Bog sjelden bliver solgt mer en sex til ottehundrede Exemplarer; deraf kommer det at Boghandelen, denne ædleste Gren af menneskelige Industri, dør af Kræft. De fordømte Leiebibliotheker!’ ”

Noteleiebibliotekene – de musikalske leiebibliotek som samtiden kalte dem – hadde tilsvarende posisjon. Det var i første rekke musikkhandlerne som drev dem og den første annonse finner vi i august 1822, undertegnet J[ohan] Michelsen [...] En direkte opptelling av antall noteleiebiblioteknehavere gir tallet 47.” (Kari Michelsen i [http://www.hf.uio.no/imv/forskning/prosjekter/norgesmusikk/musikkhistarkiv/notetrykk/KariM\\_bok/04\\_Kari\\_M\\_kap4\\_5.pdf](http://www.hf.uio.no/imv/forskning/prosjekter/norgesmusikk/musikkhistarkiv/notetrykk/KariM_bok/04_Kari_M_kap4_5.pdf); lesedato 25.01.13).

Den irske naturalistiske forfatteren George Moores “second novel, *A Mummer’s Wife* (1884, dated 1885) [...] recounts the fate of Kate Ede, a seamstress, who deserts her asthmatic husband Ralph, and elopes with the manager of a travelling opéra bouffe. She becomes his mistress and then wife, who plays lead roles in operas, but gradually deteriorates and dies as a miserable alcoholic in a London slum. The novel raised the topical issue of men’s victimisation of women. The circulating libraries also put the book on their black list because of its frank presentation of a woman’s sexuality. In protest, Moore published a pamphlet, *Literature At Nurse* (1885), in which he ridiculed the prudery and self-imposed censorship of the circulating libraries. Moore objected to the belief that realist novels might exert a harmful influence on young female readers.” (<http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/mooreg/1.html>; lesedato 24.06.16)

Det britiske forlaget Mills & Boon leverte fram til 2. verdenskrig store mengder kjærlighetsromaner til leiebibliotek: “By the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, Mills & Boon’s name as a ‘library house’ – supplying wholesome romantic fiction to circulating libraries – was set in stone. [...] The once-resilient libraries slipped into decline when inexpensive magazines and paperbacks became increasingly popular. Television started to become more common and some women would pass up their weekly trip to the library for an hour behind the black and white set.” (<http://www.millsandboon.co.uk/history.asp>; lesedato 11.04.13)

Tyskerne Georg Jäger og Jörg Schönert har redigert den tyske boka *Leiebiblioteket som institusjon i det litterære livet i det 18. og 19. århundre: Organiseringsformer, samlinger, publikum* (1980).

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