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Romantisk komedie

(_sjanger, _skjønnlitteratur, _film) Om romantiske komedier i filmmediet brukes noen ganger forkortelsen “rom-com”. Filmene “deal in one way or another with issues of love, desire, intimacy and relationships [...] from a mostly comic perspective” (Oria 2018).

Det kan være et humoristisk skuespill om en eventyraktig verden der personene (framstilt med psykologiske nyanser) modnes og forvandles i løpet av stykkets handling. Brukes også som filmbetegnelse om filmer som blander romantikk og komedie.

I en ellers lys atmosfære i de romantiske komediene finner ikke den unge kvinnen og mannen straks hverandres hjerte. Avstanden mellom dem skyldes intriger og forstillelse, feiltolkninger og manglende selvforståelse (Friedrich 2003, innledningen).

“Betegnelse på en komedietype som siden Shakespeare (f.eks. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) spesielt vektlegger dumheter, misforståelser, feiltakelser og hindringer i forholdet mellom to (unge) som elsker hverandre. Historiene om kjærlighet og vennskap tenderer til å være lettbenete, sjarmerende og tilbakeholdende-humoristiske, uten dypere ironi eller satirisk brodd, og leder vanligvis til en lykkelig slutt. Komediene anklages ofte for å være overfladiske og glatte” (<http://filmlexikon.uni-kiel.de/>; lesedato 12.09.13). Et annet eksempel på et Shakespeare-skuespill som er en romantisk komedie, er *As You Like It*. Et filmeksempel er Ingmar Bergmans *Sommarnattens leende* (1955).

“Romantic comedy in its most general meaning includes all films that treat love, courtship, and marriage comically. Comic in this context refers more to the mood of the film and less to its plot. A film comedy need not have a happy ending, nor do all films that have happy endings qualify as comedies. Of course, the great majority of romantic comedies do have happy endings, usually meaning the marriage of one or more of the couples the plot has brought together. The humor of these films typically derives from various obstacles to this outcome, especially miscommunication or misunderstanding between partners or prospective partners. For this reason, most romantic comedies depend heavily on dialogue. While they

may also make use of physical humor and other visual gags, romantic film comedy remains close to its theatrical predecessors.” (http://www.pasadena.edu/files/syllabi/jxsierra_29476.pdf; lesedato 12.06.15)

For Celestino Deleyto er romantisk komedie en sjanger “which uses humour, laughter and the comic to tell stories about interpersonal affective and erotic relationships” (gjengitt fra Oria 2018).

I sentrum av en romantisk komedie står et relativt antagonistisk par. Fiendskapet mellom dem er ifølge Steve Neale “one of the genre’s commonest – and thus most characteristic – devices” (sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 60). Kvinnen og mannen har likevel et lekende forhold til hverandre (Kaufmann 2007 s. 33).

Romantiske komedier viser vanligvis “a very specific and relatively unchanged view of love, sexuality and marriage, a view which was already being put into circulation four hundred years ago.” (Evans og Deleyto sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 61). Helten og heltinnen i filmen må oppdage både sin lengsel etter “the whole romantic thing” og sin evne til å elske en annen (Kaufmann 2007 s. 19). Filmen kan ha melodramatiske trekk, men ikke melodramaets store dose sorg og lidelse. Snarere har romantiske komedier en lystig stemning, og ofte komiske opptrinn (Kaufmann 2007 s. 32). Det er “a film which has as its central narrative motor a quest for love, which portrays this quest in a light-hearted way and almost always to a successful conclusion.” (<http://www.neoamericanist.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ORIA.pdf>; lesedato 16.06.15)

“Romance Films: Romance films are love stories, or affairs of the heart that center on passion, emotion, and the romantic, affectionate involvement of the main characters (usually a leading man and lady), and the journey that their love takes through courtship or marriage. [...] Although melodramas-tearjerkers and romantic comedies may have some romance in their plots, they usually subordinate the love element to their primary goal – to provide humor or serious drama.” (Tim Dirks i <http://www.filmsite.org/romancefilms.html>; lesedato 09.08.13)

“Romantic comedy, aka “rom-com”, is a genre in which the development of a romance leads to comic situations. [...] The story may start with one character being dumped/divorced/widowed. His/her friends and family urge him/her to find someone. The protagonist may agree to go on several blind dates. At some point, they meet our second protagonist. Usually, the second character isn't an obvious match for the first; maybe she's wild and crazy and he's a CPA [= Certified Public Accountant]. Or he's rich and she's poor. A romantic comedy usually provides a victory of love against all odds. Every story needs a conflict, and since rom-coms are driven by the quest for love, the conflict derives from the obstacles to the quest. This could be the apparent incompatibility of the leads: mutual Love at First Sight is rare. The two characters will spend a good part of the movie fighting their obvious attraction. Eventually, they'll realize they're perfect for each other. Or,

something will pop up; maybe a Three's Company kind of misunderstanding [dvs. forviklingskomedie], or a revelation in the third act about one of them lying. [...] the conflict comes partially from different expectations and misunderstandings. The climax of a rom-com requires the satisfactory recognition of love: the other chases after the love interest and does something really romantic to win them back. The reconciliation scene ends with the two characters reunited in a romantic embrace. Often ends in a wedding.” (<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/RomanticComedy>; lesedato 29.08.13)

“Romantic comedy’s protagonists have always been presented as non-conventional. [...] a number of romantic comedy conventions, such as the protagonist’s learning process, the last-minute romantic gesture, the wrong partner or the happy ending. [...] The rom-com connoisseur knows that a final showdown between the two male rivals is required [...] generic clichés [...] one of the genre’s best-known tropes, the quasi-magic serendipity that connects the lovers, allowing them to find each other in their hiding place at the critical point” (Oria 2018).

“There are myriad screenplay writing manuals explaining the “compulsory” plot points that a rom-com should feature. The typical rom-com plot is generally considered to consist of the following: meet cute, initial antagonism, overcoming of obstacles, transformation, happy ending. [...] Of course, not every Hollywood romantic comedy falls into this pattern. Romantic comedy admits more variation than critics usually concede. However, the most representative examples of the genre do follow this structure, which is why the formula has become paradigmatic.” (Oria 2018).

Ifølge filmforskeren Billy Mernits bok *Writing the Romantic Comedy* (2001) “every rom-com shares the same seven beats:

- the chemical equation: setup
- the cute meet: catalyst
- a sexy complication: turning point
- the hook: midpoint
- swivel: second turning point
- dark moment: crisis climax
- joyful defeat: resolution

[...] adapted specifically for the “two lovers torn asunder” storyline of a romantic comedy. [...] If you want a thorough analysis of the 7 plot beats of a romantic comedy and how they specifically pertain to [Roger Michells film fra 1999] *Notting Hill*, read pages 107-119 of Mernit’s wonderful romantic comedy screenwriting guide. [...] Screenwriter Richard Curtis tweaked the rom-com formula a bit which made his movie feel a little different. First, instead of “boy meets girl,” he started with “boy meets movie star.” ” (<http://scribemeetsworld>.

com/2011/plot-points/screenwriting-structure-notting-hill/; lesedato 07.06.13)
Notting Hill snur om på kjønnsrollene i en askepotthistorie (Kaufmann 2007 s. 86).

I det første møtet – “cute meet” – kan den mannlige helten framstå som klønete og uattraktiv, men i løpet av handlingen kommer hans ekte egenskaper fram, og til slutt har han for den kvinnelige hovedpersonen blitt en “Prince Charming”.

“Meet cute” er “[t]he convention, usually in romantic comedy, whereby the male and female leads meet in a cute or clever way, usually by chance [...] The classic Meet Cute involves the hero and heroine crashing into each other outside a department store, while all of their Christmas shopping falls to the ground. He helps her pick up her packages, they start to talk, and [the] rest is history – or formula comedy, anyway.” (Ebert m.fl. sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 103-104)
“Meet cute” egner seg til å få to fremmede personer til å møte hverandre raskt og tilfeldig, uten en lang introduksjon av personene, og i en situasjon der de blir nødt til å snakke med hverandre.

For å vise at de forelsker seg i hverandre (en indre prosess i hver av personene) fokuserer filmen ofte på deres blikk rettet mot den andre og musikalsk emfase: Han ser henne, hun ser han, og musikken understreker det romantiske (Kaufmann 2007 s. 104). Ofte forteller kvinnen om sine følelser til en venninne og mannen om sine følelser til en venn, slik at seerne tydeligere skal kunne vite hva de faktisk føler (Kaufmann 2007 s. 137). Betroelser avslører deres indre. Venninnen og vennen prøver deretter å hjelpe ved å gi råd.

Den kvinnelige hovedpersonen kan gjennomgå en metamorfose som forvandler henne fra en stygg andunge til en vakker svane (Kaufmann 2007 s. 136). Et eksempel finnes i den amerikanske regissøren Stanley Donens filmmusikal *Funny Face* (1957), der hovedpersonen Jo Stockton forvandler seg fra en lite påfallende bokhandler til en glamorøs fotomodell. En tilsvarende forvandling bort fra en “grå mus-look” (Kaufmann 2007 s. 137) finner sted med den portugisiske hushjelpen Aurélie i *Love Actually* (2003; regissert av Richard Curtis).

“Julia Roberts må skjønne at hun, selv om hun er verdensberømt filmstjerne og alltingen, egentlig bare er “a girl standing in front of a boy” (“Notting Hill”). Hvor mange kvinner som har latt seg bevege av disse romantiske fablene og fått fornyet tro på at det er mulig å forandre mannen de er sammen med, vites ikke.” (Inger Merete Hobbestad i *Dagbladet* 26. februar 2009 s. 37) “I’m just a girl standing in front of a boy asking him to love her” sier Roberts i rollen som filmstjernen Anna Scott. (Thomas Kaisers film *Mirakel* fra 2006 har mange likhetstrekk med *Notting Hill*, med en styrtrik forretningskvinne som forelsker seg i en kaféservitør.)

Det komiske blir ekstra tydelig hvis hun og han er et usannsynlig par, dvs. når de likesom kommer fra hver sin planet (Kaufmann 2007 s. 59). Ofte er det en trekant-konstellasjoner der de to hovedpersonene begge er i ferd med å bli bundet til en

annen partner, men de to uvedkommende personene utgjør ingen alvorlig trussel (Kaufmann 2007 s. 61). Slike trekantrelasjoner øker spenningen i historien. “The Wrong Man” og “The Wrong Woman” er standardfigurer. Et forestående bryllup med Mr. Wrong kan fungere som en tikkende tidsbombe (Kaufmann 2007 s. 333). I mange nye filmer har den kvinnelige hovedpersonen levd et promiskuøst singelliv (Kaufmann 2007 s. 37). Men ingen av de tidligere mennene i hennes liv har vist seg ikke å være Mr. Right, men ulike versjoner av Mr. Wrong. På slutten av filmen har både kvinnen og Mr. Right funnet fram til monogam tosomhet.

“Skuespilleren Ralph Bellamy har gitt navnet sitt et ord som betegner den litt kjedelige fyren i en romantisk komedie – han som heltinnen først forelsker seg i. Nå finnes det en betegnelse for den hyggelige, men litt kjedelige jenta eller gutten som hovedpersonen i en romantisk komedie forelsker seg i først, før de kommer på bedre tanker og vender blikket mot filmens helt. Billy Mernit, som underviser manusforfattere ved UCLA og har skrevet boka “Writing The Romantic Comedy”, kaller en slik menneskelig blindgate for en “Bellamy”, etter skuespilleren Ralph Bellamy.” (*Dagbladet* 26. februar 2009 s. 36)

Et viktig tema er *mot til å elske*, dvs. at personene må gi den gryende forelskelsen og kjærlighetsrelasjonen prioritet i sine liv. De må dessuten lære å stole mer på sine følelser enn på fornuften (Kaufmann 2007 s. 86). For ikke å virke priprne når de nøler eller ikke tør satse på den nye kjærligheten, blir mange av personene utstyrt med vonde minner fra tidligere forhold som holder dem tilbake.

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. Romantic movies often feature this ideal. An early example can be found in the 1953 movie, *How to Marry a Millionaire*. [...] More recently, in *(500) Days of Summer* (2009), the main character describes his girlfriend in the following way: “I love her smile. I love her hair. I love her knees. I love how one eye is higher up on her face than the other eye. I love the scar on her neck from this operation she had as a kid. I love how she looks in my Clash T-shirt. I love how she looks when she’s sleeping. I love the sound of her laugh. I love how she makes me feel. Like anything’s possible. Like, I don’t know...like life is worth it.” This example demonstrates the emphatic feelings a character can express when idealizing a partner.” (Hefner 2011 s. 22-23)

“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). There are several good examples of this ideal in popular romance films. In *Jerry Maguire* (1996), the main male character says to the female character at a pivotal moment when he is trying to win her back: “You complete me.” The suggestion is that no one else could be capable of being the appropriately perfect fit for her. Another film, *Return to Me* (2000), features a man whose beloved wife dies in an automobile crash at the beginning of the film. Throughout the course of the plot, he falls in love with another woman who coincidentally is alive only because she received a heart transplant from his deceased wife. The film reinforces the idea that there is only one “heart” or person for this man, and he is destined to love the woman who provides the bodily home for that heart. Each of these examples demonstrates how movies can perpetuate the ideal that there is just one perfect partner that each person is supposed to love.” (Hefner 2011 s. 23-24)

“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. Movies often feature the love-at-first-sight romantic ideal. In fact, a recent content analysis revealed that nearly 80% the romantic relationships portrayed in animated Disney films have love-at-first-sight beginnings and are depicted as easily maintained (Tanner, Haddock, Zimmerman, & Lund, 2003). This theme also can be found in romantic comedies. In *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), the two main characters are strangers until they finally meet at the end of the film, at which point they look at each other once and instantly fall in love before ever speaking a word. In another film, *Imagine Me & You* (2005), a lesbian and a straight woman are portrayed as immediately and unexpectedly connected to one another by sharing intimate glances and emotional undertones at their initial meeting and during subsequent conversations. One character muses about love: “I think you know immediately. As soon as your eyes [meet]...then everything that happens from then on just proves that you have been right in that first moment.” This ideal is reinforced at the conclusion of the film when one character reassures her parents that she has known the other woman long enough to feel true love, saying, “I knew after three seconds.” Each of these examples illustrates the ways in which the ideal of love at first sight can be featured in films.” (Hefner 2011 s. 24-25)

“*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. There are examples of this theme in romantic comedies as well. In the film *Before Sunrise* (1995), the two main characters live in different countries – the man is from the United States and the woman is from France. The couple meets on a train and spends one night together. Yet the film concludes with the lovers believing that their passion will win out over the fact that they live in opposite hemispheres. In *Pretty Woman* (1990), the main character is a wealthy businessman who is too busy for relationships. He meets a Los Angeles prostitute and hires her to be his companion for a week. Despite their obvious differences in background, the movie ends with the partners ignoring their social status issues and choosing to love one another as they forge ahead with their relationship. *Notting Hill* (1999) features a famous American actress who accidentally ends up in the home of a British bookshop owner after he spills orange juice on her. As they struggle to figure out their challenging relationship, she says in one scene, “I’m just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to love her.” In her mind, none of the social status or location issues matter; instead, she believes their love will overcome all concerns and conflicts. Romantic comedies often use this insurmountable-odds motif in order to heighten the entertainment aspect and prolong the romantic adventure.” (Hefner 2011 s. 25-26)

“Filmene balanserer hårfint mellom det forutsigbare og det uforutsigbare. Romantiske komedier handler egentlig ikke om to som forelsker seg, de handler om kjærligheten som seirer og som forvandler dem som blir rammet av den. To som møtes på byen og bestemmer seg for å hooke opp, vil neppe få sin historie festet til lerretet. I den romantiske komedien er kjærligheten noe du må slåss for, noe du først oppnår når du har overvunnet motstanden i deg selv eller andre. Og det å balansere motstand mot medgang i denne formelpregede tradisjonen er noe av det som gjør romantiske komedier til en krevende sjanger, og som gjør at mange av dem blir høyst middelmådige. Hvis motstanden blir for konstruert, hvis forelskelsen virker påtatt, faller filmen. Se “The Wedding Planner” og gråt. [...] Mens den som er forelsket i feil person må lære å kjenne seg selv og sine egentlige

behov, må forføreren bekjenne sine synder og komme den andre i møte som et bedre og ærligere menneske. [...] helten og heltinnen møter hverandre med en skepsis som grenser til ren fiendtlighet. Å la hovedpersonene mentalt og verbalt trekke blankt mot hverandre, tjener flere hensikter. Det særmerker dem som uavhengige og uredde. Det blir både noe mer individuelt og noe mer jevnbyrdig over tiltrekningen dem imellom. Men det viktigste som oppnås er at det skapes en uuttalt, men umiskjennelig erotisk spenning mellom dem.” (Inger Merete Hobbestad i *Dagbladet* 26. februar 2009 s. 36-37)

“Romantic movies are often referred to by the colloquial phrase, “chick flicks”, in part because these films seem to target females. Indeed, statistics indicate that the movie-going audience for romantic comedies is made up primarily of females (Nielsen, 2008). Scholarly research also reveals that females report a significantly greater consumption of romantic media content than males do (e.g., Segrin & Nabi, 2002). [...] In fact, some men actually report liking romantic comedies, particularly because these movies often are viewed during dates (Harris et al., 2004). [...] One common argument for why viewers are drawn to these romantic comedy movies is because they depict relationships as relatively easy and full of possibilities (Galician, 2004). Consequently, these movies can foster hope about real-life romance. For example, Galician (2004), author of a critical analysis of romantic media, argues that people seek romantic content in the media in order to see relationships that appear to work despite all obstacles. Similarly, Harvey (1998), author of a historical critique of romantic comedy films, asserts that these movies demonstrate that there are no limits to how love may manifest itself. In short, both of these authors argue that the appeal of the romantic genre is that it gives viewers a sense of optimism about love because it features examples of relationships that survive the difficulties. Another reason individuals may be attracted to romantic media is because they provide lessons about love and intimacy. [...] adolescents seek out romantic content in television and other media in order to better understand how romantic relationships work.” (Hefner 2011 s. 1-2)

Celestino Deleytos bok *The Secret Life of Romantic Comedy* (2009) framstiller sjangeren “not so much about the happy ending, but about the emotional and sexual vicissitudes the characters undergo during the central section of the narrative. It is in this part that contemporary discourses about love, sex and marriage are articulated, not in the (frequently conventional) conclusion. [...] The presence of a magic space of transformation which shelters the lovers from the dangers that the social space represents is a paramount requisite of romantic comedy. In this erotic utopia, humour is an integral element, not a by-product of our experience of the genre. Likewise, this space of transformation created by the text is ideology-free. This does not mean that individual films cannot endorse specific ideological discourses – particular instances of the genre may choose to align with certain ideological stands – but the magical space that frames romantic comedy is “an empty formal concept, not an ideologically charged one” (36). In this way, Deleyto provides a revised definition of the genre, which he describes as the intersection of

three elements: the articulation of culturally specific discourses on relationships between the sexes, a space of transformation in which this articulation takes place, and a comic perspective which filters the whole narrative. However, this definition does not imply that all the films featuring these characteristics are romantic comedies, because for him, “films as texts are not romantic comedies but, rather, use the conventions of romantic comedy in specific ways” (46). His theory of romantic comedy is an all-encompassing one which regards genres as fluid categories.” (Beatriz O. Gómez i http://www.misclaneajournal.net/images/stories/articulos/vol40/111_misc40_.pdf; lesedato 19.06.09)

I *The Secret Life of Romantic Comedy* argumenterer Deleyto for at *Kiss Me, Stupid* (1964; regissert av Billy Wilder) “mixes satire and romantic comedy until it concludes with an innovative use of comic transformation, in which female desire is fulfilled through an exchange of social roles – Polly masquerades as a wife and Zelda as a prostitute – that allows the two female characters to realize their sexual fantasies. He finds that the film, rather than treating sex as degrading, promotes the imaginary as healthy means of thwarting repression and embracing the erotic; and he contends that one should look to these “secret” sites to find evocative mediations between the forms of cinema and the shifting culture of intimacy. So he labels his textual analyses “comic negotiations,” in which the love triangle, the flirtatious conversation, or the space of romance play off the rhetoric of the thriller, the satire, or an excursion into realism, finding a new voice as a result of the exchange. [...] Deleyto argues that the romantic comedy essentially involves three key constituents: a narrative about love, gender, and sexual relationships; a space of magical transformation that frees the characters from inhibitions so they can explore their desire; and humor which establishes a benevolent perspective. These fundamentals are antecedent to conventions, such as the dual protagonist or the “meet-cute,” which evolve over time as a result of changing social conditions. Deleyto contests the view that romantic comedies require a happy ending and as a result are politically backward because they offer a naive endorsement of “one true love” and “living happily ever after.” On the contrary, he notes the wide range of endings at play within the genre and explains that the resolution is flexible: “The genre’s central theme is not so much that conventional union (of the heterosexual couple), as the vicissitudes of the emotional and sexual relationships between the characters” (29).” (<https://fq.ucpress.edu/content/63/4/82.full.pdf+html>; lesedato 20.06.19)

Mark D. Rubinfeld har publisert boka *Bound to Bond: Gender, Genre and Hollywood Romantic Comedy* (2001), der han skiller mellom fire grunn-plott: I et “Pursuit Plot” må helten vinne den motvillige heltinnen. I et “Redemption Plot” må en kaldt eller knust hjerte bli varmt og helt igjen. I et “Foil Plot” gjelder det å bytte ut en falsk partner med en ekte partner. Og i et “Permission Plot” dreier det som om å overvinne foreldrenes forbud mot kjærlighetsrelasjonen. “Permission Plot” er i ferd med å bli en anakronisme. “Rubinfeld asserts that the permission plot played a vital role in *The Graduate*, produced in 1967, which according to box office

statistics, is the most popular romantic comedy in history (as of 1999). Despite the widespread success and popularity of *The Graduate*, only ten of the “top” 155 Hollywood romantic comedies produced from 1970-1999 utilize a permission plot. Rubinfeld attributes this decline to the notion that parents no longer have control over who their children marry. Rubinfeld considers the potential extinction of one of the four integral love story plots to be a grave concern.” (http://tags.library.upenn.edu/project/4343/romantic_comedy; lesedato 11.09.13)

Rubinfelds *Bound to Bond: Gender, Genre and the Hollywood Romantic Comedy* “looks at gender roles in a unique way – by examining what the last thirty years of romantic comedy films have argued, reflected, and implied. Mark Rubinfeld contends that, essentially, we are what we see, and by identifying four basic plots of the genre, representing four basic love stories, he studies the implications of filmic depictions of male/female relationships. Cultural changes that have transformed our society since 1970 are seen here as we see them on the silver screen, and the author analyzes notable examples of the genre with a rigorous sociological perspective. What he reveals may be surprising: during the seventies and, to an extent, the early eighties, the plot conventions of Hollywood romantic comedy seemed to challenge, rather than reinforce, existing gender stereotypes. Later, however – during what should have been a more enlightened time – the genre reversed course, reverting to more traditional types for men and women alike.” (<https://www.abc-clio.com/ABC-CLIOCorporate/product.aspx?pc=C3071C>; lesedato 20.06.19)

Den amerikanske regissøren Joel Zwicks *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* (2002) “revolves around the obstacles they [en gresk kvinne og en amerikansk mann] face in uniting their two cultures because each of their families has different conceptions of love and marriage. Ultimately, the two marry for love and Western cultural ideals win out over Eastern tradition.” (Hefner 2011 s. 22)

Den danske prinsen og kronarvingen Frederik giftet seg i 2004 med den australske juristen Mary Donaldson. Samme år som dette “eventyrbryllupet” fant sted i København, regisserte amerikanske Martha Coolidge den romantiske komedien *The Prince & Me*. Her er en fiktiv og inkognito dansk prins ved navn Edvard på frierfotter i USA. På tyske kinoer ble denne filmen vist en uke etter det danske bryllupet (Kaufmann 2007 s. 85).

“Romantic comedy is a genre traditionally neglected by critics: generally considered to be predictable, trivial and lowbrow, it has been systematically devalued and frequently deemed as undeserving of critical analysis.” (Beatriz O. Gómez i http://www.miscelaneajournal.net/images/stories/articulos/vol40/111_misc40_.pdf; lesedato 08.09.09)

Romantiske komedier og andre filmer “do not have to be confined to a specific genre, but that they may “belong” to different categories at the same time by virtue

of their specific use of generic conventions. In this analysis, Deleyto shows how romantic comedy frequently becomes “invisible” to critics when mixed with other genres. However, this “phenomenon” is even more acute when combined with more “serious” genres like the thriller or melodrama.” (Beatriz O. Gómez i http://www.misclaneajournal.net/images/stories/articulos/vol40/111_misc40_.pdf; lesedato 19.06.09)

“The assumption of cultural lowliness that has traditionally accompanied the genre has lead most to treat romance and romantic comedy as a guilty pleasure for the public, an “unworthy” object of analysis for academics who generally belittled it either by omission (the amount of critical work published on this genre is significantly smaller than on other, more “serious” ones) or simply through plain derision, regarding it as simplistic, predictable and hopelessly associated with a conservative view of love and marriage.” (<http://www.neoamericanist.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ORIA.pdf>; lesedato 16.06.15)

Den amerikanske regissøren Rob Reiners film *When Harry Met Sally...* (1989) har blitt “et yndet objekt å parodierte. For eksempel har Harrys sluttspurt gjennom et nattlig New York blitt for en sjangerkonvensjon å regne: den kjærlighetssyke mannen som løper det han makter gjennom byens – noen ganger så stille, andre ganger så travle – gater. Han har hatt en åpenbaring: Han elsker henne, og det haster med å få sagt det, at fra nå av og til evig tid, i hvert fall til døden skiller dem ad, er det dem.” (*Dagbladet* 5. mars 2013 s. 48)

Kvinnene ønsker seg en mandig mann, men blant denne mannens egenskaper må det være stor empati og medfølelse med kvinner (Kaufmann 2007 s. 51). Blant bevisene på innlevelsesevne, sensibilitet og kultiverthet er at mannen leser skjønnlitteratur, gjerne dikt, eventuelt også har en kunstnerisk begavelse (Kaufmann 2007 s. 53).

Den amerikanske regissøren Nancy Meyers’ film *What Women Want* (2000) handler om en machomann som etter et elektrisk støt i badekaret på mirakuløst vist klarer å høre hva enhver kvinne han møter tenker. Dette gir han kommersiell suksess, fordi han jobber i reklamebransjen, men også privat lykke fordi kvinner vil ha en mann som vet hva de ønsker og lengter etter. Han blir både et bedre menneske og en drømmepartner. “Somehow, thru the power of electricity, he's been granted the gift of finding the answer to that very question. For a male chauvinist like Nick, this special gift begins as more of a curse than a blessing. The majority of the film follows Nick as he learns from his mind-reading skills, and grows from being an insensitive schmuck to becoming one of the girls. Nick's life-altering ability allows him the golden opportunity to reach out to his daughter, to stop taking women at his office for granted, and to discover that monogamy and love are for real.” (<http://movies.about.com/library/weekly/aa050801a.htm>; lesedato 09.09.13) Den overnaturlige hendelsen gjør at *What Women Want* ikke er en vanlig romantisk komedie.

“Du har knapt kunnet skru på TVen uten å dumpe borti en søt historie om han som møter henne. Derfor arrangerte vi en uhøytidelig kåring, der vi ba leserne stemme på den filmen de likte best. Vi har fått inn 7275 stemmer, og har ingen problemer med å kåre vinneren. “Love Actually” fra 2003 [regissert av Richard Curtis] har fått hele 53 prosent av stemmene. [...] For det er ingen tvil om at romantiske komedier ofte er bygget over samme lest: To rake motsetninger møtes og ender opp sammen til slutt. Tidligere denne måneden skrev Dagbladet.no om skotske forskere, som hadde funnet ut at slike filmer kan ødelegge kjærlighetslivet til seerne. Dette fordi de får et urealistisk bilde av kjærligheten. Eirik Alver er ikke like negativ til sjangeren. - Jeg liker å bli manipulert, så lenge det er overbevisende gjort. Dette er filmer som appellerer mye mer til hjertet enn til hjernen. Hvis du blir følelsesmessig engasjert og koser deg, så fungerer det, sier han. [...] Men ikke alle er like begeistret for virkelighetsflukt. NRKs filmguru Pål Bang-Hansen hadde følgende å si om “Pretty Woman” [regissert av Garry Marshall i 1990], da Dagbladet.no intervjuet ham i forbindelse med kåringen: - I disse dager, hvor nigerianske kvinner går gatelangs i Oslo for å livnære en fattig familie hjemme, og vi ser vi har problemer med trafficking, er “Pretty Woman” noe av det aller mest virkelighetsfjerne. Jeg kan like komedier, jeg – “Singing in the Rain” er favoritten – men de bør ha noe med virkeligheten å gjøre, sa Bang-Hansen.” (http://www.dagbladet.no/2008/12/31/kultur/film/love_actually/romantiske_komedier/4208126/; lesedato 27.08.13)

En filmkritiker hevdet at “a surprising number of women with feminist backgrounds or sensibility, knowing they should know better, still have greatly – if guilty – enjoyed *Pretty Woman*.” (Harvey Greenberg sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 23) Etter kassasuksessen med *Pretty Woman* “producers are said to be rushing to make similar pictures, hoping to cash in on the trend” (Jane Caputi sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 27). (Den engelske regissøren Ken Russells film *Whore* (1991) har blitt oppfattet som et satirisk svar til *Pretty Woman*; Krohn og Strank 2012 s. 198.)

“Ifølge en australsk undersøkelse kan romantiske komedier ødelegge for parforholdet. [...] Skal vi tro de 1000 australiere som har deltatt i en undersøkelse, påvirker romantiske komedier parforholdet. Og ofte på en negativ måte. Nesten halvparten av de spurte mente at romantiske filmer, med sine lykkelige slutter, har ødelagt deres syn på et ideelt forhold, skriver NY Daily News. [...] Psykolog Frode Thuen tror det ligger mye sant i undersøkelsen. - Jeg tenker at det er riktig på mange måter. Ved å se romantiske komedier får publikum høye forventninger til hva et forhold skal bestå av, sier han. - Men jeg tror ikke man skal overvurdere betydningen av filmene. Jeg tror de fleste klarer å justere seg, selv om deres eget forhold kanskje kan virke litt grått like etter at man har sett filmen. I tillegg til forventningen om idealforholdet portrettert på film, kommer det også fram i undersøkelsen at en av fem har kjæresten som forventer å få gaver og blomster. Ikke til bursdag eller jul, men rett og slett “bare fordi”. [...] - Vår kjærlighet til

romantiske komedier gjør oss til en nasjon full av “lykkelig-i-alle-sine-dager-avhengige”, sier den australske parterapeuten Gabrielle Morrissey ifølge NY Daily News. Omtrent det samme resultatet kom et universitet i Edinburgh fram til i 2008. - Problemet er at selv om de fleste av oss vet at ideen om det perfekte forhold er urealistisk, så blir noen av oss mer påvirket av medias framstilling enn vi er klar over, sa dr. Bjarne Holmes ved Heriot Watt University til BBC” (*Dagbladet* 25. juli 2010 s. 33).

“Clearly, women are bigger fans of romantic screen media than are men (Fischhoff et al., 1997; Harris et al., 2004; Segrin & Nabi, 2002), and also believe more strongly that love, faithfulness, and lifelong commitment are important elements of relationships (Meier et al., 2009; Rose & Frieze, 1993). It stands to reason that they may be influenced more by such movie content. However, Study 1 demonstrated that male characters in these films are more likely to express idealistic statements than female characters are. In addition, previous research suggests that men are influenced more than women by the content of reality dating television shows (Ferris, Smith, Greenberg, & Smith, 2007), and that men hold significantly stronger romantic ideals than do females (Sharp & Ganong, 2000; Sprecher & Metts, 1999; Weaver & Ganong, 2004).” (Hefner 2011 s. 122)

“[T]he messages in romantic comedy films may be more salient for female viewers. In support of this idea, Eggermont (2004) found that exposure to romantic themes on television predicted girls’ romantic beliefs more strongly than boys’ beliefs. In short, women may pay more attention to and be more involved with these films. On the other hand [...] male characters in these films were more likely to express idealistic statements than female characters were. Given this pattern, it may be that young men will be more strongly impacted than young women by the romantic messages in these films. After all, young men are the most likely to identify with the male characters that are the most consistently romantic and unrealistic in the plotlines.” (Hefner 2011 s. 88-89) “That is, male characters expressed ideals, but were the targets of challenges, whereas female characters expressed challenges but were the targets of ideals. From a cultivation perspective, the potential viewing implication is that a woman might anticipate that a man will express idealistic statements about love and romance when he interacts with her, a man might expect a woman to be the pragmatist who thinks about the harsh realities of a romantic relationship. Furthermore, from a social cognitive perspective (Bandura, 1986), men may be more likely than women to develop idealistic beliefs after viewing, simply because men are more likely to express these ideal statements in romantic comedies.” (Hefner 2011 s. 81-82)

“[M]ale characters express ideals, but are the targets of challenges, whereas female characters express challenges but are the targets of ideals. From a cultivation perspective (Gerbner et al., 2002), this formula could have ramifications for how male and female viewers conceptualize normal interactions within romantic relationships. That is, women who view these movies on a regular basis might

develop expectations that their male partner should be the torchbearer for idealistic sentiments. For example, in *The Holiday* (2006), the male character who lives in England tells his paramour who lives in Los Angeles: “Long distance relationships can work.” Conversely, male viewers might develop expectations that women will be the more realistic in relationships or that they frequently will downplay any type of idealistic overture. [...] Whereas a woman might anticipate that a man will express idealistic statements about love and romance when he interacts with her, a man might expect a woman to be the pragmatist who thinks about the harsh realities of a romantic relationship.” (Hefner 2011 s. 76-77)

“In one study, Murray et al. (1996) surveyed 360 partnered and married people and discovered that idealization in romantic relationships was linked with higher levels of relational satisfaction. As a way of explaining this association, the researchers found evidence that individuals often projected their idealistic beliefs onto their current relationships. If that is the case, then repeated viewing of romantic comedies that promote the idealization of the other could encourage viewers to think of their own relational partners as wonderful and perfect. In other words, my findings support the notion that viewing romantic comedies might be helpful for relational partners. Alternatively, such films could remind people of the shortcomings of their own relationships, particularly in those cases in which the partner is already perceived as less than ideal.” (Hefner 2011 s. 123-124)

“In fact, research demonstrates that young girls focus more on friendship issues than do young boys (Youniss & Haynie, 1992), and as they grow older, women generally rate romantic relationships as more important than do men (e.g., Johnston, Bachman, & O’Malley, 2007). However, in the romantic comedy genre, both sexes discuss relationships and make statements about romance in about equal proportions. Interestingly, research also demonstrates that women generally wish that men would talk more about relational issues during courtship and in marriages (Riessman, 1993; Tannen, 1999). It may be that because the romantic comedy genre attracts a large female audience (Fischhoff, Antonio, & Lewis, 1997), filmmakers are intentionally featuring the types of relationships that women want most – those in which both partners are discussing the nature of the relationship. Although both male and female characters talked about relationships equally in these films, there was a difference in what they said. That is, female characters more often expressed challenges, whereas male characters more often expressed ideals. Again, this pattern seems somewhat counterintuitive given that women seem to value relationships so much in the real world. Indeed, research indicates that women rate faithfulness, love, and lifelong commitment as more important than do men (e.g., Meier, Hull, & Ortyl, 2009). However, it may take hard work to achieve these levels of relational functioning. That is, women may believe faithfulness to be important, but also realize that maintaining faithfulness in a relationship takes a great deal of effort and does not magically happen. Men may disagree. In fact, research indicates that in general men tend to be more romantically idealistic than women in their belief structures (e.g., Sprecher & Metts, 1989). Likewise, movies

are representing men as the characters who express the most ideals. Taken together, these results – women express challenges, men express ideals – suggest that character expressions in these films may mirror sex differences observed in the real world.” (Hefner 2011 s. 74-75)

“[H]eavy viewing of romantic comedies does seem to predict stronger endorsement of one ideal in particular – the idealization of the romantic interest. [...] Individuals who are highly satisfied with their current relationship may perceive the content to be consistent with real life and hence more believable. However, individuals who are dissatisfied with their romantic relationships may find the idealistic content of romantic comedies to be a poor representation of reality. [...] Romantic comedies as a genre have weathered criticism for being unrealistic and predictable. Yet it may be that such messages in the media have the potential to encourage positive conceptions of relationships and to help people weather occasional relational storms in their own lives.” (Hefner 2011 s. 118 og 133-134)

Tradisjonelle ideer om romantikk, tosomhet og lykke må tilpasses nye, endrete og emansiperte roller og relasjonsmåter (Kaufmann 2007 s. 19). På 1980-tallet ble det produsert relativt få kjærlighetsfilmer i Hollywood. “Så lenge kjønnskampen raste åpent våget knapt én regissør å fortelle kjærlighetshistorier utslørt på kino. De gamle mønstrene ble ansett for å være avlegs, nye var ikke i sikte.” (Verena Lueken sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 10) Woody Allen lagde kjærlighetsfilmer på 1970- og 80-tallet, men disse ble betegnet som “nervous romances”: “nervous romances betray a wistful nostalgia for the the ‘whole romantic thing’ while acknowledging its impossibility” (Frank Krutnik sitert fra Kaufmann 2007 s. 10).

“The sex comedy cycle includes most romantic comedies released between 1954 and the mid-1960s, and had in Doris Day and Rock Hudson its most popular screen couple, with films like *Pillow Talk* (1959) or *Lover Come Back* (1961). This type of comedy is characterised by the recurrence of disguise and masquerade, a humorous inversion of the “natural order” and the establishment of a hierarchy of knowledge in which the man – who frequently masquerades as someone else – knows more than the innocent woman, but the viewer knows more than both of them. The sex comedy sub-genre came to an end in the mid-1960s, when the advent of the contraceptive pill rendered it outdated.” (<http://www.neoamericanist.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ORIA.pdf>; lesedato 16.06.15)

En annen undersjanger er “the radical romantic comedy, a sub-genre born in the late 1960s which abandons the focus on the final union of the couple in favour of an interrogation of the ideology of romance. Following from the profound social changes of the sixties including the evolution of feminist, black and gay rights movements, a changing social landscape in which divorce rates rocketed, single women living in cities outnumbered men, and the rise of abortion as a publicly-debated issue, the new reality of romantic relationships was faithfully portrayed by the genre through an increase of divorce and break-up comedies devoted to the

exploration of single life. The main feature of the radical romantic comedy is its self-consciousness, Jeffers-McDonald argues [i boka *Romantic Comedy: Boy Meets Girl Meets Genre* (2007)], connecting the genre to a decade characterized by introspection and self-absorption and best exhibited by films such as *Annie Hall* (1977), *The Goodbye Girl* (1977), or *Starting Over* (1979). As such, this sub-genre of romantic comedy exhibits a conspicuous self-reflexivity in three different areas: self-reflexivity about the romantic relationship, self-reflexivity as a film text, and self-reflexivity as a modern and more realistic form of romantic comedy.” (<http://www.neoamericanist.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ORIA.pdf>; lesedato 16.06.15)

Woody Allens *Annie Hall* (1977) kjennetegnes av “playfulness with the conventions of romantic comedy [...] In the film, Allen jumps out of character to address the audience, not an unknown convention of screen comedy [...] He meditates aloud on his problem, the raised problem of the film: What does it mean to have a relationship? [...] While adhering to the formula of romantic comedy – man wins woman, woman expresses dissatisfaction with being dominated and leaves man, man undergoes series of trials to win woman back – Allen ends his film with a modernist twist: in the end he doesn't get Annie back. The problem with this age-of-feminism, realistic conclusion, Allen is saying, is that while that's the way life really is, it doesn't make him happy. In this way *Annie Hall* critiques the escapist formula of romantic comedy while at the same time telling a realistic tale that conforms to the lives of sophisticated urbanites in the 1970s.” (Gehring 1988)

“[T]he neo-traditional romantic comedy constitutes the dominant form today, and it extends from the late 1980s up to the present day, featuring films like *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993), *You've Got Mail* (1998), *The Wedding Planner* (2001), *How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days* (2003) or *Kate and Leopold* (2003). Unlike its predecessors, this new trend of romantic comedy does not seem especially concerned with establishing a connection with its specific social context. Instead, it prefers to reference popular culture and consumer products rather than political or historical events [...] three main themes which seem to be emerging and infusing new life into the genre: a re-emphasis on the importance of sex; a willingness to parody rather than re-use the tropes of the genre; and the emergence of a new kind of malecentred comedy. [...] the recent success of male-centred comedies like *Knocked Up* (2007), *Dan in Real Life* (2007), *Forgetting Sarah Marshall* (2008), *Role Models* (2008) or *I Love You, Man* (2009) have breathed new life into the genre. This new kind of romantic comedy, addressed to male spectators, mixes elements from slapstick and gross-out comedy is today the most successful and innovative trend within the romantic comedy genre.” (<http://www.neoamericanist.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/ORIA.pdf>; lesedato 18.06.15)

“Among the most fundamental obligations of romantic comedy is that there must be an obstacle to nuptial bliss for the budding couple to overcome. And, put simply, such obstacles are getting harder and harder to come by. They used to lie thick on the ground: parental disapproval, difference in social class, a promise made to

another. But society has spent decades busily uprooting any impediment to the marriage of true minds. Love is increasingly presumed – perhaps in Hollywood most of all – to transcend class, profession, faith, age, race, gender, and (on occasion) marital status. [...] Perhaps the most obvious social constraint that’s fallen by the wayside is also the most significant: the taboo against premarital sex. There was a time when carnal knowledge was the (implied) endpoint of the romantic comedy; today, it’s just as likely to be the opening premise. In 2005’s *A Lot Like Love* – a dull, joyless rip-off of *When Harry Met Sally* – Amanda Peet and Ashton Kutcher meet cute by having sex in an airplane lavatory before they’ve spoken a single word to each other. Where’s a film to go when the “happy ending” takes place at the beginning? Serious obstacles to romantic fulfillment can still be found – illness, war, injury, imprisonment – but they have a tendency to be just that: serious. There aren’t likely to be many laughs, after all, in the story of a love that might be torn asunder by an IED [= improvised explosive device]. [...] The premises grow more and more esoteric: She’s a hooker. He’s a stalker. She’s in a coma. He’s telepathic. She’s a mermaid. He’s a zombie. She’s pregnant. He’s the president. And if worst comes to worst – as it does, all too often – there’s the ever-accommodating fallback that one partner is uptight and the other is a free spirit (if a woman) or a slob (if a man), requiring the two to work in tandem to respectively unwind and domesticate. Happily, the cinematic landscape is still dotted with exceptions, experiments in romantic chemistry that in many cases benefit from steering wide of the usual tropes. There’s a case to be made that the two best romantic comedies of 2012 succeeded in large part because they weren’t really framed as romantic comedies at all. David O. Russell’s *Silver Linings Playbook* may have had a rom-com structure, but it was darker and more idiosyncratic, with a premise at once novel and true to life: two lovers thwarted by mental illness. Better still was Wes Anderson’s *Moonrise Kingdom*, which offered as its obstacle an ironic update of the old parental-disapproval plot: young Sam and Suzy can’t run off together and get married because *they’re 12 years old*. (It’s an obstacle that, incidentally, is not presented as insurmountable.) One could argue that the easy profitability of the past decade was the worst thing to happen to the romantic comedy – an invitation to stale formulas and ridiculous conceits alike” (Christopher Orr in <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/why-are-romantic-comedies-so-bad/309236/>; lesedato 17.06.20).

“It has become a cliché in romantic comedy scholarship to begin an article by recalling Brian Henderson’s famous diagnosis of the death of the genre in 1978. Since then there have been numerous further attempts to “kill” the rom-com. More than three decades later, academics and popular culture writers are proclaiming, once more, the downfall of the genre. Critics’ lack of faith in contemporary rom-com’s viability is evident, as suggested by titles such as “R.I.P. Romantic Comedies: Why Harry Wouldn’t Meet Sally in 2013” (Siegel 2013), “Who Killed the Romantic Comedy?” (Nicholson 2014) and “The Rom-Com is Dead. Good” (Yahr 2016). To justify their claims, these commentators appeal mainly to the genre’s current lack of commercial potential. Indeed, the 2010s have witnessed a

significant number of box-office flops. The disappointing figures obtained by films like *The Big Wedding* (Zackham 2013), *The Five-Year Engagement* (Stoller 2012) and *What to Expect When You're Expecting* (Jones 2012) marked 2012-2013 as especially critical years in the downward slide of the genre, with not a single rom-com in the top 100 box office performers (Nicholson 2014, n.p.). In 2015 the genre seemed to hit bottom: while the average annual US rom-com market share between 1995 and 2004 was 6.4 per cent (the highest point being at 9.9 per cent), in 2015 it plummeted to an all-time low 0.6 per cent (The Numbers 1997-2018, n.p.). The year 2016 was not much better, as the only rom-com to be found on the list of the year's fifty biggest movies was the breakout hit *La La Land* (Chazelle 2016). In 2017, the highest-grossing rom-com, the indie sleeper *The Big Sick* (Showalter 2017) did not even make it into the top 50 (Box Office Mojo, n.p.). These figures have severely affected the studios' appetite for projects within the genre, which has in turn reduced the number of rom-coms that actually get made." (Oria 2018)

"Indie rom-com plots are prone to a looser narrative structure [enn "rom-coms" fra Hollywood]. This is the case of *The Dish and the Spoon* (Bagnall 2011), *2 Days in New York* (Delpy 2012), *Before Midnight* (Linklater 2013), *Drinking Buddies* (Swanberg 2013) and *Maggie's Plan* (Miller 2015). These films tend to eschew "important" plot points, such as climactic endings, as happens in *Your Sister's Sister* (Shelton 2011), *Save the Date* (Mohan 2012), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014) and *Top Five* (Rock 2014). The "unconventionality" plot-wise of these movies is also apparent in the frequent subversion of other typical tropes of the genre, such as the obstacles that the couple has to overcome to reach their happily ever after: in mainstream rom-coms obstacles are often of an external nature, at least the more ostensible ones. While there are many exceptions to this, the romantic quest in Hollywood rom-coms is more often than not hindered by straightforward impediments: she is married to someone else, he lives miles away, the father of the heroine hates the chosen partner. Obstacles in indie rom-coms, on the other hand, are more often internal, that is, related to the characters' mental lives. *Lola Versus* (Wein 2012), for instance, suggests that its protagonist is single because she needs to get over her ex first. The inability to get over a past relationship is a recurrent "obstacle" in these films: Rose (Greta Gerwig) and the nameless homeless boy (Olly Alexander) with whom she spends time in *The Dish and the Spoon* (Bagnall 2011) never actually get to be romantically involved due to her obsession – bordering on mental illness – with her husband's infidelity." (Oria 2018)

Noen "independent rom-coms" dreier seg om "finding one's self-identity – *It's Kind of a Funny Story* (Boden and Fleck 2010), *Hello I Must Be Going* (Louiso 2012), *Lola Versus* (Wein 2012), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014). This is a particularly popular "category," where the romantic relationship is not an end in itself, but rather a vehicle for self-discovery which is presented as a higher aim than the union with the opposite sex." (Oria 2018)

“Indie rom-coms purport to search for more “authentic” representations of romantic relationships. This may include the deflation of romantic ideals and myths like the soul mate or the “One,” so crucial in earlier approaches. They often focus on the transitory nature of romantic love, on the seriality and provisionality of relationships, on infidelity, divorce, instability, uncertainty, and the role of luck and coincidence in the formation and dissolution of attachments. Apart from movies depicting new love, the penchant of these films for realism is also apparent in their focus on already formed couples, and not only on the courtship process, as is often the case in Hollywood. These movies show a wide variety in their representation of love, often depicting tumultuous, dull, awkward or unhappy relationships. The couples featured in these films often require “work” to stay afloat, something rarely explored by mainstream cinema, which is reluctant to show us what happens after the couple’s final kiss. This is the case of films like *Friends with Kids* (Westfeldt 2011), *Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *2 Days in New York* (Delpy 2012), *Celeste and Jesse Forever* (Toland Krieger 2012), *Before Midnight* (Linklater 2013), *The One I Love* (McDowell 2014), *Maggie’s Plan* (Miller 2015) and *I Do... Until I Don’t* (Bell 2017), all of which feature slightly older characters than the average mainstream rom-com and the everyday reality of quotidian, non-idealized love. [...] Indie rom-coms are frequently “relationship stories,” their focus often lying in the interrogation and problematization of the actual workings of romantic relationships, exploring their constructed nature and conventionality in the process. This “thematization” of relationships is apparent, for example, in *Ruby Sparks* (Dayton and Faris 2012), *An Oversimplification of her Beauty* (Nance 2012), *Celeste and Jesse Forever* (Toland Krieger 2012), *Her* (Jonze 2013), *What If* (Dowse 2013), *Appropriate Behavior* (Akhavan 2014), *Comet* (Esmail 2014), *Two Night Stand* (Nichols 2014), *Life Partners* (Fogel 2014) and *Sleeping with Other People* (Headland 2015). In these films dialogue often fulfills purposes other than the advancement of the plot, as the characters obsess and over-analyze their relationships without necessarily getting anywhere or drawing any conclusions.” (Oria 2018)

“[V]iewers may come to think that romance cannot happen after the age of 35. Heavy viewers may also overestimate the amount of time that white heterosexual people in the real world spend talking about intimate relationships. [...] for specific subgroups of viewers, romantic comedy viewing could be very discouraging. Indeed, a young person who is just discovering his or her homosexuality will not see very many characters in the romantic comedy genre that are similar to the self. Similarly, a young African American couple that wants to go see a romantic comedy will find that most of the depictions and conversations are among White characters. Even the elderly, a growing segment in the United States’ population, will not see very many examples of older characters talking about romance or falling in love in these films.” (Hefner 2011 s. 73)

Noen få amerikanske romantiske komedier “feature primary characters that are not White. In each of the movies *Down To Earth* (2001), *Bringing Down the House*

(2003), *Hitch* (2005), and *Norbit* (2007), one of the primary characters is African-American. In *Maid in Manhattan* (2002), the primary female character, played by Jennifer Lopez, is described as Latina. In terms of age, the movie *Something's Gotta Give* (2003) features a love story between Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton, both of whom are well into their 60s. The plot follows their courtship in a mostly realistic way, detailing the issues and concerns that an older couple might face when beginning a new relationship.” (Hefner 2011 s. 73-74)

Falling in Love Again: Romantic Comedy in Contemporary Cinema (2009) er en antologi redigert av Stacey Abbott og Deborah Jermyn. “Romantic comedy has long been a mainstay of the movies, from the classic screwballs of the 1930s, through Woody Allen’s ‘nervous comedies’ of the 1970s, to the current great Hollywood revival, featuring such movies as “Maid in Manhattan” and “Lost in Translation”; yet rom-coms have often struggled to be taken seriously. [...] the films and issues that illustrate the breathtaking diversity of the genre, from the queer pleasures of “Miss Congeniality” and the rom-com persona of J-Lo and Bill Murray, to high school prom-coms and indie romantic comedies. It also explores the new male-centred romances like “Wedding Crashers” and looks further afield into the healing power of romantic love in the Bollywood hit “Raji Hindustani”.” (<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/falling-in-love-again-9781845117719/>; lesedato 20.06.19)

Filmene kan ifølge noen kritikere lede til “a set of expectations for how a model relationship should form, develop, function, and be maintained. Examples of such beliefs include the following: love can overlook flaws; love can seek out that one perfect mate; love can happen instantaneously; and love can overcome all obstacles” (Hefner 2011 s. 21). I mange av filmene er det “presence of two romantic ideal themes – “love at first sight” and “one and only soul mate” [...] these larger themes may be the important “take-away” message for viewers.” (Hefner 2011 s. 3)

“Før jul kunne BBC melde at forskning ved Heriot Watt University viste at romantiske komedier skapte urealistiske forventninger til kjærlighet i det virkelige liv. Forskerne fortalte at kjærlighetshistoriene i populærkulturen skapte forestillinger hos par med samlivsproblemer om at sex alltid skulle være vellykket, og at to som er skjebnebestemt for hverandre instinktivt burde forstå hva den andre ville uten å få det forklart. Når det viser seg ikke å skje, blir de forvirrede og ulykkelige. Det de kanskje heller burde lære av de romantiske komediene er at kjærligheten er en kamp, om enn ofte mer prosaisk i virkeligheten enn på filmlerretet.” (Inger Merete Hobbeldstad i *Dagbladet* 26. februar 2009 s. 37)

“Valentine’s Day, for instance, is among the best dates for new release, re-promotion or re-pricing of romantic comedies.” (Pavel Skopal i <http://www.ejumpcut.org/archive/jc48.2006/DVDMktg/index.html>; lesedato 05.12.14)

“Carl I. og Eli Hagen ser romantiske komedier sammen. [...] - Det høres kanskje tåpelig ut, men søtladete filmer er en veldig fin måte for oss å avreagere på, sier hun. “Pretty Woman” eller “Notting Hill”, slike filmer ser de. Julia Roberts som står i bokhandelen i Notting Hill og ser med store blanke øyne på innehaveren Hugh Grant mens hun stotrer fram all sin sårbarhet “I’m also just a girl, standing in front of a boy, asking him to love her”. Da renner tårene i stua på Ullern i Oslo, slik de har rent til de samme filmscenene i flere tiår allerede. - Sitte og gråte sammen ..., sier Carl og humrer. Det er åpenbart at han synes det er fint. [...] filmatiske tåreperser som kjærlighetsvane.” (*Dagbladets Magasinet* 11. mars 2017 s. 29-30)

Dokumentarfilmen *Romantic Comedy* (2019), regissert av Elizabeth Sankey er “comprised of clips from romantic comedies – there is no original footage. Director Elizabeth Sankey structures the entire thing around her own relationship with romantic comedies over the years and, along with some friends, provides voiceover narration that gives the film plenty of structure and insight. [...] We are bombarded with images of people kissing, running after each other in the rain, and declaring their undying love. [...] Along the way, we’re given a brief history of the genre and an overview of some common tropes, like the clumsy career woman, the two people who hate each other but fall in love anyway, and the woman who is “so cool” because she likes every stereotypical thing that men like (beer, eating steak, sports). It would be easy for this criticism to veer into deeply negative territory, but Sankey reminds us that despite all of the bullshit, it’s nice to watch two people fall in love.” (Lindsay Pugh i <https://www.womaninrevolt.com/romantic-comedy-by-elizabeth-sankey/>; lesedato 17.06.20)

“Det finnes uendelig mange semre romantiske komedier. De er dumme og dvaske sukkertøyslott der en personlighetsløs prins og prinsesse kan møtes, utveksle liksomorsomheter og gifte seg.” (*Dagbladet* 27. februar 2009 s. 36)

“Directed by Marc Webb for Fox Searchlight Pictures, *(500) Days of Summer* was promoted with the tagline ‘Boy meets girl. Boy falls in love. Girl doesn’t’. This presents the film as an unconventional romantic comedy in at least three ways: Firstly, it suggests that these two characters will not actually end up together, which challenges the idea of the romcom couple as ‘meant to be’. Secondly, it presents the possibility that audiences might not get the happy ending we usually expect from comedy. And finally, the tagline casts the boy, rather than the girl, in the role as yearning romantic, thereby challenging the traditional gender roles of heterosexual relationships.” (Inger-Lise K. Bore i <https://www.participations.org/08-02-09-bore.pdf>; lesedato 31.03.23)

“De siste årene har man jevnlig kunnet høre amerikanske filmkritikere beklage seg over marginaliseringen av den romantiske komedien. Og det er unektelig påfallende at sjangeren som frem til et stykke ut på 2000-tallet var en pålitelig leverandør av innbringende (og i enkelte tilfeller epokegjørende) publikumsfavoritter, i dag langt på vei oppfattes som kulturelt irrelevant. Det er flere årsaker

til dette, men en av de viktigste er at samfunnet i dag har et langt mer kritisk blikk på kjønnsroller og romantiske idealer enn hva som var tilfelle i sjangerens velmaktsdager. Den romantiske komedien står og faller på sin evne til å sjarmere, og i dag er publikum vel så tilbøyelige til å stille spørsmål ved fremstillinger av menn, kvinner og heteronormativitet som til å kapitulere for sommerfuglene i hovedpersonenes mager. Det sosiokulturelle bakteppet sjangeren uunngåelig leses opp mot, har blitt kraftig politisert, og skaperne av slike filmer har dermed valget mellom å omfavne denne utviklingen, late som om ingenting har skjedd siden 1990-tallet eller ikke lage dem i det hele tatt. [...] Kinoaktuelle *Bros* [2022; regissert av Nicholas Stoller] er den første romantiske komedien om et homofilt par som noensinne er produsert og lansert av et av de store amerikanske filmstudioene, og går dermed imot flere trender på én gang. [...] Etter de første keitete møtene går det som det går i slike filmer; motsetningene tiltrekker hverandre, men gir også opphav til konflikter som de to, etter å ha gått i seg selv og innsett hva som er viktig i livet, klarer å overvinne. [...] Den viktigste trenden blant amerikanske mainstreamkomedier dette århundret har vært en storstilt dreining i retning av en selvbevisst og ironisk tone som reduserer karakterskildringer og plott til skjeletter å henge vitser på. Det er vanskelig å engasjere seg emosjonelt i disse filmene, og det er da heller ikke poenget. For inspirert av amerikansk tv-humor har de målrettet beveget seg bort fra troverdige figurer og spennende intriger i retning av umiddelbart gjenkjennelige arketyper og påklistret sentimentalitet.” (Aksel Kielland i *Morgenbladet* 28. oktober–3. november 2022 s. 39)

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