The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction

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The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction

Popular romance fiction constitutes the largest segment of the global book market. Bringing together an international group of scholars, *The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction* offers a ground-breaking exploration of this global genre and its remarkable readership. In recognition of the diversity of the form, the Companion provides a history of the genre, an overview of disciplinary approaches to studying romance fiction, and critical analyses of important subgenres, themes, and topics. It also highlights new and understudied avenues of inquiry for future research in this vibrant and still-emerging field. The first systematic, comprehensive resource on romance fiction, this Companion will be invaluable to students and scholars, and accessible to romance readers.

Jayashree Kamblé is an Associate Professor of English at LaGuardia Community College in the City University of New York. She is the author of *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction: An Epistemology* (2014) and a Vice-President of the International Association of the Study of Popular Romance.

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Edited by Jayashree Kamblé, Eric Murphy Selinger, and Hsu-Ming Teo

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Introduction

Jayashree Kamblé, Eric Murphy Selinger, and Hsu-Ming Teo

The romance novel is the most popular and bestselling genre of fiction produced and consumed in the world today. In North America alone, the romance industry generates more than 1 billion dollars of sales each year ("About the Romance Genre"), and this figure does not include the second-hand market, or romance novels borrowed from libraries or other readers. The biggest global imprint of romance novels, Harlequin, publishes more than 110 romance titles a month in print and digital format, in over 30 countries and 150 languages, drawing from a stable of over 200 authors in the U.K. and more than 1300 worldwide, including the U.S.A., Australia, and New Zealand ("About Harlequin"). But the romance genre is important for more than its impressive sales. Although the readers and writers of romance fiction have diversified significantly since the twenty-first century, with a male readership of around 18 percent ("About the Romance Genre"), it is still the most woman-centered form of popular culture in the western world today. Written and read by women globally, the romance novel provides a public platform for women not only to voice ideals about gender and family relationships, but also to articulate opinions about contemporary social, cultural, environmental, economic, and political issues. The romance novel puts women's needs and desires at the center of contemporary life and accounts of the past —and perhaps this accounts for the myths that have multiplied about this complex and colossal genre. Increasingly, in the twenty-first century, the genre also acts as a forum for authors from very diverse backgrounds to explore and express ideas about their intersectional experiences of sexual, gender, racial, ethnic, and cultural identities, and to do so in a narrative that does not give way to despair but to a utopian hope that a happily ever after ending is possible for everyone.

Popular misconceptions

Although many forms of popular culture meet with ridicule and skepticism—comics, games, fan fiction, heroic "sword and sorcery" fantasy—no genre receives as much sustained and widespread disapprobation as mass-market romance fiction. In the popular imagination, romance novels are narratives of sexual encounters meant to titillate the reader. They are (when thought of at all) considered lacking in intellectual merit, stylistic rigor, or innovation, and indistinguishable from each other. Non-readers often use the phrases "a Harlequin" or "bodice-ripper" or "trashy novels" as a catch-all that conflates the thousands of romance novels written over many decades of changing tides involving different trends and thematic preoccupations—novels of various

lengths, which span dozens of sub-genres, and contain a variety of literary styles and modes. Similarly, romance publishing, which has a global history and has experienced changes in the primary nationalities and ethnicities of its writers, and in its editorial hubs and distribution modes and mechanisms, remains largely invisible outside academic research (and under-theorized within it). Unsurprisingly then, romance readers are targets of ridicule and condescension, as are romance writers. Both groups are stereotyped in misogynistic, heteronormative, and often ageist terms.

Romance fiction, traditionally a straight cis-woman-centered form (though it has become more inclusive) is thus treated the same as a woman in public often is—as an "open person," a body that heterosexual patriarchy considers open to anyone's approach/acquisition/assault/definition (Gardner 333). The wide acceptance that this reductive ideology enjoys is further visible in the fact that romance fiction is rarely recognized as having a history, or of being shaped by historical forces, or of being created and read by people of varying socio-political and economic communities, sexualities, and gender identities. As a result, romance is constantly misrecognized, conflated with non-romance narratives based on minimal similarities, and equated with descriptions of sexual activity completely divorced from the concerns that "real literature" allegedly examines with care. The truth is far more complex.

Defining the genre

The largest professional organization of romance fiction, the Romance Writers of America, defines a romance novel as containing "a central love story and an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending" ("About the Romance Genre"). Critic Pamela Regis speaks of a romance novel as "a work of prose fiction that tells the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines" (14; since 2009 she has revised this to "one or more protagonists") and she lists eight structural elements that must be present for a work to be recognizable as a romance novel:

> [1] the initial state of society in which heroine and hero must court, [2] the meeting between heroine and hero, [3] the barrier to the union of heroine and hero, [4] the attraction between the heroine and hero, [5] the declaration of love between heroine and hero, [6] the point of ritual death, [7] the recognition by heroine and hero of the means to overcome the barrier, and [8] the betrothal.
>
> (30)

For the purposes of this collection, the romance genre refers to English-language novels that are written in various parts of the world, aim at a broad (mass-market) readership, and center around a love plot that holds the promise of a future with a unified emotional life for two or more protagonists. Romance novels may involve a plot set in the writer's own time (termed "a contemporary") or be a period piece (termed "historical romance"), be set in our familiar world, or one that includes elements of science fiction/fantasy/paranormal, may or may not include detailed scenes of sexual activity (vanilla or kink), and might foreground straight and/or queer partnerships. A romance novel may be 180 pages long or over 500, the former usually published under a numbered series or imprint (such as Harlequin Mills & Boon's many "lines") and termed a "category romance" and the latter referred to as a "stand-alone" or "single-title" with more room for the narrative to unfold and the author name

being given more prominence in the marketing and branding of the work. While the action in a romance novel may range from fighting in a war to solving a mystery, from raising a family to running a small business, and from saving a civilization to coping with trauma, the genre's primary drive is to imagine ways that romantic love and desire (erotic or asexual) might serve as a path to self-fulfillment and, increasingly, socio-political equality.

By and large, the contributors to this volume address the research on twentieth and twenty-first-century romance novels, since it is only in the twentieth century that the romance novel emerges as a distinct category of publishing and readership, marked both by textual features (the necessity of a "happy ending" of successful relationship formation) and by the array of paratextual features (cover art, gendered marketing practices, distinctive networks of distribution and reception) that distinguish it both in the public eye and in the eyes of potential readers. That said, inasmuch as the romance novel is a story of successful courtship, the genre has an old and complex history, and several of our chapters provide a historical genealogy of the genre going back into the eighteenth century or farther.

A brief history of romance

Romance novels have long and tangled roots. As a literary mode, romance can be traced as far back as the first century CE, when Greek prose romances began to be written, recounting stories of young men and women who meet, fall in love, are separated by numerous obstacles, undergo a series of journeys and adventures, and are eventually reunited by the gods to live happily ever after (Reardon 5). These conventions of love, adventure, journeys, and obstacles to the union of the lovers continued during the Middle Ages in chivalric romances such as the fourteenth-century *Bevis of Hampton* or the early fifteenth-century *Sir Degrevant*, but the plot emphasis in such quest romances was on the hero's life of adventure, rather than on courtship or the marriage plot. Pamela Regis suggests that the late sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century comedies of Shakespeare, including *As You Like It*, bring us closer to the modern incarnation of the romance novel because these plots work toward the freedom of the lovers to choose union with each other, thus creating the happy ending of the romance story (28, 56).

However, it was only with the publication of Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) in Britain that the romance novel as we recognize it today began to emerge. As jay Dixon observes in Chapter 1, Richardson built on the work of early eighteenth-century English women writers such as Elizabeth Rowe, Susannah Dobson, and Eliza Haywood, who pioneered epistolary novels about the complications of love and courtship. However, Regis argues that *Pamela* was the first prototype of the romance novel because of its focus on courtship and seduction, and the obstacles to be overcome in order for the hero, Mr. B, to marry the virtuous servant heroine Pamela (Chapter 7). As Regis shows in Chapter 2 of this volume, *Pamela* had a significant impact on the development of love and courtship stories in the United States after its publication there in 1742–3. It inaugurated the sentimental novel which, in the hands of women authors such as Sukey Vickery, Catherine Maria Sedgwick, Lydia Maria Child, and Louise May Alcott, gave rise to the romance novel in America.

In Britain, however, the influence of Richardson's novel on the romance genre was eclipsed by Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

(1847)—two classic novels that would become ur-texts for romance plots even if, in their own time, they were not originally read as romance novels and did not enjoy the status and popularity they would garner in the twentieth century. Both were variations of the broader British domestic novel of manners that was popular in the nineteenth century, and it was from this genre that British romantic fiction would develop from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, after the publication of Charlotte M. Yonge's bestselling *The Heir of Redclyffe* (1853) spawned a host of similar works by writers such as Rhoda Broughton and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The novels of these writers are certainly concerned with love and the obstacles to courtship and marriage, but while they are romantic fiction, they are not modern romance novels as the term is commonly understood today because the plots often ended tragically, with the lovers parted by death. As Rachel Anderson comments, for the Victorians, "the truest, purest romantic love is a fatal love" (26). It was not until the twentieth century that the happy ending, with the romantic protagonists united at the end of the love story, became a more regular feature of the British romantic novel. Even so, the ambivalence toward the Happily Ever After (HEA) ending can be seen in the British Romantic Novelists' Association broad ranging definition of romantic fiction that, until 2017, included tragic stories such as Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* or Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* as romantic fiction. Even today, the RNA (which is the equivalent of the American Romance Writers Association or the Romance Writers of Australia) keeps its remit broad, talking about "romantic fiction" that "explores and celebrates love in all its messy, unexpected, improbable, imperfection" (RNA website), rather than the narrower American and Australian definition of the "romance novel" that focuses on the development of a love relationship between two (or more) protagonists that ends optimistically in their union. Readers who seek a guaranteed happy ending in British romantic fiction associate this with the Mills & Boon "category romance" novel, rather than with romantic fiction as a genre in its own right.

Many British publishing houses produced romantic fiction in the early twentieth century but by the 1930s romance novel publishing had come to be dominated by Mills & Boon, which increasingly standardized the length and structure of their books during the 1950s, excised extraneous subplots to focus on the developing love relationship between the romantic protagonists, and invariably featured the HEA ending (McAleer 85). Mills and Boon drew their authors from all corners of the British Empire and Commonwealth, so it had a global reach from its inception, while also influencing the style of romance fiction that would be produced in these countries even though specifically national characteristics are still evident (Flesch *From Australia*; Teo "Imperial Affairs"). The nascent North American romance market began to be influenced by Mills & Boon too, after Canadian publishing firm Harlequin signed a deal in 1957 to distribute selected novels as paperback editions. But the influence went both ways, especially after Harlequin bought the British firm in 1971 to form the publishing powerhouse, Harlequin Mills & Boon. Although Harlequin dominated the global Anglophone romance market in the 1970s, it was challenged by New York-based American companies—such as the historical romance publisher Avon in the 1970s, and Silhouette and Dell in the 1980s—which saw a gap in the hitherto British-dominated market and began producing American-centered romances. It should be noted, however, that the United States had its own home-grown traditions of romance fiction, as Pamela Regis shows in Chapter 2 of this volume. Regis points out that this history of the American romance is only starting to be excavated

and constructed, but already the underlying associations of love and freedom in the American romance are evident (see also Gleason and Selinger).

Although Harlequin eventually absorbed Silhouette and Dell by the mid-1980s, the end of the twentieth century and the rise of digital publishing in the twenty-first century saw the romance genre diversifying with regard to the representation of gender and gender relations, race and ethnicity, sexuality, and different cultural traditions, as well as the emergence of new subgenres such as the paranormal and erotic, joining existing subgenres such as medical, historical, crime/thriller, and inspirational romances. Today, the romance industry is dominated by the "big five" transnational trade publishers—HarperCollins (which now owns Harlequin), Hachette, Macmillan, Penguin Random House, and Simon & Schuster—alongside a host of independent publishers and self-publishing authors at the forefront of new developments within the romance genre.

It is impossible to cover the various, complex trends within the romance genre throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in this introduction. Generally speaking, the genre has always placed value on the happiness of women and the opportunities for freedom and fulfillment offered them in terms of work and social inclusion, as well as through romantic love. Over time, the intense religiosity of the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century novels has waned and formed its own subgenre (the inspirational romance), giving way instead to a secularization and, from the 1970s onwards, a sexualization of romantic love. Ideals of femininity, masculinity, and gender relations have changed noticeably over the course of the twentieth century, as jay Dixon shows. By the 1980s, second-wave feminism had a notable impact on the portrayal of women's needs in social, economic, and romantic relationships, while the expansion of civil liberties to address the disadvantages of hitherto marginalized citizens began to impact the genre from the 1990s onwards. The advent of digital publishing and inexpensive e-book readers from 2007–8 onwards has allowed new subgenres to proliferate. A wider range of representation has thus entered the genre, not least because authors of color and LGBTQIA authors (among others) can now bypass the gatekeeping practices of mainstream publishing houses and the limited distribution practices of chain bookstores in order to reach interested readers.

The mass-market romance in the twenty-first century, then, is a genre whose ostensible sameness from book to book—every story centrally a love story; every central love story ending with some promise of romantic futurity—reveals, on inspection, a surprising variety of characters, desires, relationship structures, themes, and areas of ideological (and often immediate, practical) concern to its global writer and reader community. The genre includes progressive texts dedicated to expanding the universe of persons represented as worthy of romantic happiness, whether in terms of race, ethnicity, disability (mental, physical, and emotional), religion, age, size, or sexual and gender identity, but it also includes texts that are conservative and even unabashedly reactionary on all of these topics, and it is easy to find romance novels whose politics and representational practices are a hodgepodge of diverging or contradictory impulses. The same can be said of the genre's treatment of sexual consent, which runs the gamut from an explicit insistence on "exuberant consent" as the sine qua non of sexual activity to romance novels which not only contain scenes of "dubcon" (dubious consent) or nonconsensual sex between protagonists, but are tagged and marketed, mostly online, on this basis. This dynamic tension between convention/familiarity and variation/novelty may be found within all forms of genre fiction (see Roberts 162–72)

but only in the twenty-first century has scholarship on popular romance turned, by and large, from claims about the genre as a whole to the disaggregated analysis of texts, subgenres, local traditions, reader communities, and other sites of multiplicity.

Introducing popular romance scholarship

Scholarship on popular romance fiction begins considerably later than the serious consideration of other forms of genre fiction. Thoughtful essays on detective fiction, for example, can be found as early as the mid-1920s, with the first critical history of that genre, Howard Haycraft's *Murder for Pleasure*, published in 1941. By the end of the 1940s, a comparable history of science fiction had been published (Evans 48), and the first scholarly journal dedicated to SF/Fantasy, *Extrapolation*, made its debut in 1959.[1] By the mid-1970s there were monographs and essay collections on important texts and authors from these and other genres, and although prejudice against taking popular fiction seriously certainly still existed, both in print and in university classrooms scholars defended such fiction both on intellectual grounds—as they argued, significant socio-political and philosophical material might well be addressed in genre fiction—and on aesthetic grounds, as when John Cawelti calls Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler "significant artists" (4) and insists that what he calls "formula literature" is, first and foremost, "a kind of literary art" (8).

In principle, popular romance might have received the same sorts of attention and advocacy. In practice, it did not: a gap that is particularly vivid in Cawelti's groundbreaking study, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance: Formula Stories as Art and Popular Culture* (1976), which despite its title, as Cawelti himself would note a few years later, contains "almost nothing about romance" and indeed discusses not one female author ("Masculine Myths and Feminist Revisions" 123). The first critical history of popular romance did not appear until 30 years after the first such books on detective fiction and SF, and far from defending the genre or singling out authors for their unrecognized merit, Rachel Anderson's *The Purple Heart Throbs: The Subliterature of Love* (1974) describes its subject matter as a "branch of fiction consisting of lightweight, but full-length, novels of no great literary qualities" (14). Five years later, Ann Barr Snitow's "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different" likewise insists that "to analyze Harlequin romances is not to make any literary claims for them" (142); indeed, Snitow pauses to reassure her readers that she is "not concerned here with developing an admiration for their buried poetics" (143). Their interest lies elsewhere: for Anderson, in the genre's curious "vitality" (a term she borrows from Q. D. Leavis 14); for Snitow, in the way these novels illuminate—precisely *because* of their artlessness—the "pathological experience of sex difference" created by heteropatriarchy and the "particular nature of the satisfactions we are all led to seek by the conditions of our culture" (143).[2]

As Snitow's analysis suggests, the impulse to take romance seriously from was born out of second-wave feminism, both in its focus on recovering heretofore unexamined or trivialized aspects of women's history and culture (high art or popular) and in its terms of critical engagement, which often quite explicitly set aside the approaches favored by earlier scholars of other genres. In her foundational study *Loving with a Vengeance: Mass-Produced Fantasies for Women* (1982), for example, Tania Modleski begins by mocking the "aggrandized titles of certain classic studies of popular male genres ('The Gangster as Tragic Hero')" and the "inflated claims made for, say, the

detective novel which fill the pages of the *Journal of Popular Culture*" (1), and she dismisses as both silly and intellectually incoherent the idea of simply adapting such frameworks for female-focused texts (e.g., "The Scheming Little Adventuress as Tragic Hero" 2). Kay Mussell's *Fantasy and Reconciliation: Contemporary Formulas of Women's Romance Fiction*, published two years later, opens by acknowledging the impact of "the contemporary women's movement" on her project (xi) and by framing its analyses of authors, texts, and genre "formulas" in the context of a discord between second-wave feminism and the enduring, indeed *increasing* popularity of popular romance fiction across the 1970s and early 1980s. "How can such apparently conservative and traditional stories be especially popular today, when we see many women casting off old roles and values and choosing to live more instrumental lives in the world? This book addresses that paradox" (xii).

Although second-wave feminist thought provided the crucial context for taking romance seriously in the academy, a range of critical models and methodologies were deployed in the foundational works of romance scholarship. Modleski's study and Janice Radway's epochal *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature* (1984) drew on post-Freudian psychoanalysis, Frankfurt School cultural theory, structuralist and poststructuralist theoretical models, and, in Radway, the emerging disciplines of reader ethnography and publishing studies, what we would now think of as History of the Book. The more theoretical of these moves were not uncommon in studies of popular literature in the 1970s and 1980s. Most and Stowe's anthology *The Poetics of Murder: Detective Fiction and Literary Theory*, published in 1983 (just between Modleski's and Radway's studies) gathered nearly two dozen examples of such investigation by an impressive, international crew including Umberto Eco, F. R. Jameson, Frank Kermode, and Geoffrey Hartman; likewise, as the editor of *Science-Fiction Studies*, Darko Suvin had made the use of Marxist and Russian Formalist theory a staple of scholarship on this genre. The deployment of a sophisticated critical/theoretical apparatus to study popular romance, however, served not as a means to illuminate the complexity of subtly crafted artifacts, attributable to the compositional decisions of romance authors (as, often, in *The Poetics of Murder*), nor to demonstrate the cognitive processes instilled by the genre in its readers (the detective and reader as hermeneutic partners or rivals; the cognitive estrangement central to worldbuilding in SF), but rather to identify unconscious, otherwise invisible tensions, complexities, and ambivalences in popular romance novels and in readers' interactions with them.[3] As Radway memorably announces, romance reading is "a profoundly conflicted activity centered on a profoundly conflicted form" (14).

In their introduction to *New Approaches to Popular Romance Fiction: Critical Essays* (2012), Eric Murphy Selinger and Sarah S. G. Frantz note the personal contexts and professional exigencies behind the recurring tropes of "duality, conflict, ambivalence" that they observe in what they call the "first wave" of popular romance scholarship (4; for more on the difference in critical rhetoric between first wave and later "Millennial" scholarship, see Regis, "What Do Critics Owe the Romance?"). Running from 1979 (Snitow) through the end of the 1980s or perhaps the early 1990s (Jan Cohn's *Romance and the Erotics of Property* appears in 1988; Scottish sociologist Bridget Fowler's *The Alienated Reader: Women and Popular Romantic Literature in the Twentieth Century* in 1991), this first wave of romance scholarship is marked by a twofold effort to identify the appeal of romance to its readers and to *unmask* how this ostensibly optimistic and idealistic genre—and the pleasurable, sustaining act of reading it—in fact encodes any

number of real-world angers, anxieties, protests, and conflicts, often through the use of sophisticated critical theory. As the chapters of this Research Companion document, other, less visible modes of romance scholarship were seeded during this first wave and would blossom in the years after it, including structuralist and other formalist accounts of romance topoi (Barbara Bowman's "Victoria Holt's Gothic Romances: A Structuralist Inquiry" is an early instance), archivally-documented publishing history (Carol Thurston's *The Romance Revolution: Erotic Novels for Women and the Quest for a New Sexual Identity*), and the first stirrings of author-focused scholarship (A.S. Byatt's and Kathleen Bells' essays on Georgette Heyer [1991, 1995]), as well as work on the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century history of African American love stories which would be crucial to the study of African American popular romance in the decades to come (see Chapter 10 of this volume).

In the Selinger/Frantz account, a second wave of scholarship begins when popular romance novelists begin to publish as theorists and advocates of their own genre in the 1990s: first in the essays commissioned by Jayne Ann Krentz for the anthology *Dangerous Men, Adventurous Women* (1992), then in a special issue of the journal *Paradoxa* (1997) and a pair of conferences at Bowling Green State University (1997 and 2000), each of which presented romance authors and scholars as equal partners in the investigation of the genre (see Selinger and Gleason 11–13). As Selinger and Gleason document in their introduction to *Romance Fiction and American Culture*(2016), this "second-wave" emergence of romance authors as contributors to scholarship on the genre was part of a concerted effort led by romance novelist Jayne Ann Krentz to push back against what she and others saw as a condescending attitude toward romance authors and readers among first-wave scholars. The feedback loops are worth noting. Just as the ideas of Modleski, Radway, and other first-wave scholars prompted discussion in the romance community (see Selinger and Gleason 11–12), authors' political and aesthetic claims on behalf of the genre drew reaction from scholars. These range from Modleski's sometimes-scathing skepticism ("My Life as a Romance Reader") to Radway's frank curiosity ("Romance and the Work of Fantasy") to the matter-of-fact integration of authorial claims as a resource for further discussion by George Paizis, a British scholar of French literature working at a safe remove from the American fray (see *Love and the Novel: the Poetics and Politics of Romantic Fiction*).

The rhetoric and substance of this contretemps warrants future exploration, whether as an instance of fraught dialog between waves of white American feminism—none of the participants was a woman of color—or as a "ritual matricide" (Goris "Matricide in Romance Scholarship?"). That said, much of the most important scholarship on popular romance during the late 1990s and early 2000s played out in a separate, parallel universe where new topics of interest were introduced, including the first significant work on race and popular romance (Wardrop; Burley "Shadows and Silhouettes"; Caton; Dandridge; Foster), on queer romance and the curiously insistent construction of heterosexuality in the genre (Burley "What's a Nice Girl"; Fletcher *Historical Romance Fiction*); on romance publishing history and the genre's production and readership in diverse national contexts (McAleer; Dixon; Flesch; Puri; Parameswaran, "Reading Fictions"); on individual romance authors and novels (Westman; Hinnant; Fletcher, "Mere Costumery"); and on the relationships between popular romance fiction and fan fiction (Driscoll) and a range of resolutely canonical texts (Osborne "Romancing the Bard", "Sweet, Savage Shakespeare", and "Harlequin Presents"; Regis). In retrospect, this diversity is exciting; at the time, however, there was little

critical dialog among the various participants and approaches, as though many were unaware of what the others were up to. Popular romance lacked the academic infrastructure—a dedicated journal, a scholarly association, a regular conference meeting, a comprehensive bibliography, or research guide—that scholars at work on other popular genres had established decades before.

The establishment of this infrastructure marks the start of the current wave of popular romance scholarship and the emergence of "popular romance studies" as a field. The story is easy to trace. In 2005 the Romance Writers of America inaugurated an Academic Research Grant program designed to "develop and support academic research devoted to genre romance novels, writers, and readers" ("Academic Research Grant"). Jayashree Kamblé was the first recipient, using the grant to support her dissertation on romance at the University of Minnesota; the following year Eric Murphy Selinger received the grant and used it to support a series of infrastructure-building efforts, including a listserv (RomanceScholar), a collaborative academic blog on romance (Teach Me Tonight, now written by Laura Vivanco), a review-essay on the past decade in romance scholarship, published in *Contemporary Literature*, and a reboot of the Popular Culture Association's then-dormant PCA Romance Area. Each of these efforts, in turn, bore fruit. The listserv gave rise to a live-linked, steadily growing Wiki bibliography of essays, chapters, books, and dissertations on popular romance compiled by Kassia Krozier, Vivanco, and many others; through it and through Teach Me Tonight, Selinger and Darcy Martin recruited an array of presenters for the 2007 and 2008 PCA national conference, including emerging figures from Australia (Toni Johnson-Woods; Hsu-Ming Teo; Glen Thomas), the U.K. (Amy Burge) and the E.U. (An Goris), as well as established figures whose work he had encountered while writing the *Contemporary Literature* essay-review, notably Kamblé, Pamela Regis, Hsu-Ming Teo, and Sarah S. G. Frantz. With Frantz, Selinger founded the International Association for the Study of Popular Romance (IASPR) and the peer-reviewed *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* (*JPRS*); as Selinger collaborated with William Gleason on a major conference at Princeton (April, 2009) Frantz worked with Australian colleagues to organize the first IASPR conference in Brisbane (June, 2009); the following year Goris received a Fulbright fellowship to work on romance with Selinger in Chicago while she organized a second IASPR conference (Brussels 2010), during which the first issue of *JPRS* was published, with Goris soon joining as Managing Editor and Burge, a bit later, as Book Review editor. Almost all the contributors to this volume have presented at IASPR conferences; several have organized these or other IASPR-affiliated conferences at their home institutions in the E.U., U.K., and Australia; and more than a few have served or currently serve as masthead editors of *JPRS* or on its editorial board.

Although other romance conferences and research projects have emerged in the United States in the 2010s, notably at Bowling Green State University (home of an archive of popular romance texts and of the papers of the RWA), IASPR and the PCA Romance Area remain major hubs for romance scholarship in the United States, along with the ongoing RWA grant program. These have also served as incubators for scholars elsewhere. In the early 2010s, for example, Amy Burge and An Goris (a 2013 RWA grant recipient) led efforts to build a romance cohort at the European Popular Culture Association (EPCA), and Australian scholar Jodi McAlister (RWA 2019) has done the same for the Popular Culture Association of Australia and New Zealand (PopCAANZ). That said, it is important to note that Selinger attributes the creation

of IASPR and JPRS to his encounters, in 2007, with the global perspective on romance found in Australian scholarship, and that popular romance studies in the U. K., E.U., and Australia has its own set of institutional frameworks, including university courses and dissertations on the genre, affiliations between scholars and romance writer organizations (the Romance Writers of Australia and, in the U.K., the Romantic Novelists Association), a variety of national and international conferences, and, recently, a range of ambitious and well-staffed research projects, the likes of which have yet to appear in the U.S.A.

In the U.K., early British explorations of the romance genre took place in an ad hoc fashion by writers recounting the history of the British romance in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as Rachel Anderson's *The Purple Heart Throbs: The Sub-Literature of Love* (1974), or engaged in research related to Mills and Boon because of its dominance in the British romance industry. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, sociologist Peter H. Mann carried out a number of surveys on British Mills and Boon readers, publishing his findings in 1969, 1981, and 1985. In 1999, two books outlining the publishing history of Mills and Boon appeared: jay Dixon's *The Romance Fiction of Mills and Boon, 1909–1990s*, and Joseph McAleer's *Passion's Fortune: The Story of Mills and Boon*. More systematic studies on romance was largely carried out in the fields of Women's Studies and feminist literary studies. In 1991 Bridget Fowler published *The Alienated Reader: Women and Romantic Literature in the Twentieth Century*: a Marxist analysis of British romance novels grounding the rise of the genre in the transition to capitalism, Protestantism, and patriarchy, highlighting the agency of working-class readers in their critical responses to certain authors, and the limits of the genre in relation to female-centered fantasies. Stevi Jackson's work in cultural studies emerged in the early 1990s ("Even Sociologists Fall in Love") and in the same year a conference entitled "Romance Revisited" was hosted by the Centre for Women's Studies at Lancaster University with an aim to "put romance back on the feminist agenda": a collection of essays edited by Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey emerged from the event in 1995.

This interdisciplinary approach to the study of romance and love has been extended with the creation of the Love Research Network, founded by Michael Gratzke in 2011 (in 2017 Gratzke and Burge co-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* on critical love studies and popular romance scholarship). A number of U.K.-based scholars have undertaken funded research projects on romance topics: Ruth Deller and Clarissa Smith's 2012 survey examined the complex responses of "romance" and "casual" readers to E. L. James' *Fifty Shades of Grey* series; Mary Harrod's British Academy-funded project on romance and social bonding produced research events in 2019 and a forthcoming edited book; and Ria Cheyne won an RWA grant in 2017 to support the *DisRom* project on romance and disability. Significant monographs include Lynne Pearce's *Romance Writing* (2007), Laura Vivanco's *For Love and Money: The Literary Art of the Harlequin Mills & Boon Romance* (2011), Joseph Crawford's *The Twilight of the Gothic?: Vampire Fiction and the Rise of the Paranormal Romance* (2014), Amy Burge's *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance* (2016), and Ria Cheyne's *Disability, Literature, Genre: Representation and Affect in Contemporary Fiction* (2019).

A steady stream of research and networking events have demonstrated the strength of popular romance scholarship in the U.K., burgeoning connections between the academic community and the industry, and the developing expertise of postgraduate and

postdoctoral researchers. A number of these events have signaled the specific U. K. context and history of romantic fiction for romance research; a conference on Regency romance author Georgette Heyer took place at the University of Cambridge in 2009, followed by a further conference on Heyer and contemporary women's historical fiction at the University of London in 2018, while a symposium at the University of Birmingham in 2019 marked 100 years since E. M. Hull's *The Sheik* was published in Britain. Public engagement activities have included an Edinburgh Festival Fringe show on romance devised by Amy Burge, an editor-scholar panel at Sheffield Festival of the Mind in 2016 organized by Ph.D. student Val Derbyshire, and regular romance author events hosted by institutions in collaboration with the U.K.-based Romantic Novelists' Association. There is a growing institutional interest in teaching popular fiction and, correspondingly, romance; a number of institutions offer both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in popular fiction with a few offering romance-specific courses. A significant number of recent and ongoing Ph.D.s are working on romance-related topics in the U.K. (including twenty-first-century LGBTQIA romance, early twentieth-century Orientalist romance, recent romantic subgenres, and feminism and romance).

Romance scholarship in Europe has also expanded southwards to Spain. This is largely due to the efforts of two groups of scholars: the first organized by Maria-Isabel Gonzalez-Cruz from the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria; and the second led by Paloma Fresno-Calleja at the University of the Balearic Islands. Both groups focus on representations of exoticism in the romance genre, with *Love, Language, Place, and Identity in Popular Culture: Romancing the Other* (2020), edited by Maria Ramos-Garcia and Laura Vivanco, emerging from the first group. Meanwhile, Fresno-Calleja's group, which includes scholars from the universities of Oviedo and Granada, have embarked on a project exploring "The politics, aesthetics and marketing of literary formulae in popular women's fiction: History, Exoticism and Romance." This research, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (MINECO), the Agencia Estatal de Investigación (AEI) and the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) (see HER website), adopts postcolonial and gender approaches to analyzing Anglophone romances set in the past—especially the British Empire and war-torn Europe in the first half of the twentieth century—or in locations considered "exotic" by romance writers and readers. The aim is to engage critically with the patriarchal legacies in these texts, the use and misuse of historical material, including its neo-colonial and neo-orientalist implications, and to consider how these strategies frame the marketing and reception of the novels, whether deliberately or inadvertently. The novels examined come from western metropolitan centers as well as the Anglophone postcolonial world, and they constitute works that simultaneously appropriate and subvert some of the narrative formulae of historical fiction and popular romance, thereby de-exoticizing their settings and re-politicizing their content. Publications thus far range widely, examining related genres such as women's historical fiction, contemporary romance and chick lit, while topics explored include gender and national identities, and marketing strategies —among many other themes (see HER website).

Government funding has been important for spurring popular romance research in the twenty-first century. This is evident in the case of the Spanish HER research group, but also in the American National Endowment for the Humanities' support for Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Laurie Kahn's documentary *Love Between the Covers*

(2015) about the American romance community. Meanwhile, government funding through the Australia Research Council has supported Hsu-Ming Teo's research into the popular culture of romantic love in Australia, Glen Thomas's industry-based collaboration with Harlequin Mills and Boon Australia, researching romance as a creative industry (see Thomas; Thomas and James), and Lisa Fletcher, Beth Driscoll, and Kim Wilkins' exploration of the romance industry as a "genre world" that "recognises the multiple dimensionality of popular genres: as bodies of texts, collections of social formations that gather around and produce those texts, and sets of industrial practices with various national and transnational orientations."

In Australia, the scholarship of romantic fiction began as an offshoot of the second-wave feminist project to recover marginalized or forgotten Australian women writers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Alison Alexander was among the first to focus on women romance writers in her monograph *A Mortal Flame: Marie Bjelke Petersen. Australian Romance Writer* (1994). Fiona Giles soon followed with *Too Far Everywhere: The Romantic Heroine in Nineteenth-Century Australia* (1998): her exploration of the Australian tradition of romantic literary fiction. This focus on nineteenth century women writers who produced romantic fiction among their literary output continued with author studies such as Patricia Clark's *Rosa! Rosa! A Life of Rosa Praed, Novelist and Spiritualist* (1999).

However, the focus on Australian women writers' romance novels as a specific genre undoubtedly begins with Juliet Flesch's pioneering work in the 1990s identifying and recovering Australian romance novels. Flesch's *Love Brought to Book: A Bio-Bibliography of Australian Romance Novels* (1995), together with Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver's *Anthology of Colonial Australian Romance Fiction* (2010), have been invaluable references for twenty-first-century romance scholars, for they did the work of digging through the archives and locating the often ephemeral Australian primary sources on romance fiction that Pamela Regis has just started to do for the American romance novel. Because of its origins in feminist interventions in the Australian literary tradition, the specifically Australian focus of Flesch's and Gelder and Weaver's works, and government support for Australian-focused research projects, the Australian scholarship on the romance genre is strongly characterized by the contextualization of this genre within the broader Australian literary tradition, and the desire to distinguish what is particularly "Australian" about the love stories produced by this nation's authors—something Lauren O'Mahony discusses at length in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, Australian romance scholars such as Lisa Fletcher, Jodi McAlister, and Hsu-Ming Teo have also engaged in broader, transnational studies of historical fiction, sexuality and virginity, and Orientalism, imperialism and postcolonialism in romance novels, respectively.

Introducing this volume

Given the 40-year history and twenty-first-century proliferation of popular romance scholarship, the need has emerged for a systematic, comprehensive resource for scholars and graduate students researching the genre, as well as for undergraduate teaching purposes. A course on popular romance fiction whose scholarly framework comes from the 1980s would be as misleading as a course on television centered on scholarship that predates cable and digital streaming; likewise, new research on the texts, reception, distribution, publishing, and readership of popular romance cannot

constantly return to the same few foundational studies—Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance* (1982); Radway's *Reading the Romance* (1984); Regis's *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (2003)—as definitive descriptions of the genre. This volume presents the first overview of popular romance fiction studies as it has evolved and currently stands. It is designed to provide a history of the genre, an overview of various disciplinary approaches to studying popular romance fiction, and an analysis and critical evaluation of important subgenres and themes or topics. Each chapter also highlights new and still-needed avenues of inquiry for future research.

The first part of this volume offers an introduction to the history of popular romance fiction and some of its most enduring subgenres. Jay Dixon's "History of English Romance Novels 1621–1975" (Chapter 1 in this volume) traces the emergence of modern popular romance fiction—first for contemporary romance novels (that is, works set in the time when they were written) and then for historical romances—from a matrix of other, related genres, such as amatory fiction, the domestic novel of manners, and sensation fiction, and it documents the contested reception of romance by critics, literary historians, and novelists from other, competing traditions. In "The Evolution of the American Romance Novel" (Chapter 2 in this volume) Pamela Regis explores the conceptual and archival challenges of identifying American romance novels before the middle of the twentieth century, offers an outline of American romance from the start of the nineteenth century to just after the Second World War, and presents an overview of major critical works which either aid or, in some cases, actively *impede* the recognition and understanding of these texts. Our third chapter, "Australian Romance Fiction," overlaps chronologically with the first two, as it covers writings from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twenty-first, but unlike Dixon and Regis, contributor Lauren O'Mahony is able to draw on the substantial body of scholarship devoted to the national specificities of Australian romance —the "beetroot in the burger," in Juliet Flesch's memorable metaphor—which have distinguished it from other Anglophone romance traditions and which have enabled it, in the past and now, to serve an "outward facing ambassadorial function" (O'Mahony, 73) in presenting Australia and Australianness to readers elsewhere. (Scholarship devoted to other global Anglophone and non-Anglophone popular romance traditions, with particular attention to India, Malaysia, Japan, and Nigeria, can be found in Chapter 24 of this volume.)

Having introduced the general histories of English, American, and Australian romance, the next part turns to more focused investigations of scholarship on seven enduring subgenres of popular romance fiction and on African American romance, a category whose publishing history is defined by its authorship and characters rather than by setting or other plot conventions. Angela Toscano's chapter (Chapter 4) on Gothic romance explores what was, in the 1960s, the most popular version of the romance novel. Drawing on important early work on the Gothic popular romance by Joanna Russ, Toscano details the conventions of this subgenre, documents the history of Gothic romance criticism during its heyday and after, and makes the case that scholars of the Gothic tradition in literature can benefit from the study of this now-neglected corpus, even as popular romance scholarship can learn from the robust and theoretically-sophisticated world of scholarship on Gothic. A comparable case is made by Sarah Ficke in her chapter (Chapter 5) on historical romance fiction. As she moves chronologically from the foundational Regency and Georgian-set works of Georgette Heyer and Barbara Cartland to the more highly sexualized American historical

romances of the 1970s and 1980s to the diverse innovations found in twenty-first-century historical romance, Ficke outlines recurring and emerging themes in scholarship on this work: its treatment of sexualities and desires; its function as a form of alternative (queer, feminist, etc.) historiography; its history of othering Black, Asian, Arab, and Native characters and corresponding efforts by authors of color to resist this practice; and its confrontations with the question of whether some historical periods and contexts cannot or should not feature in the happy-ending context of the romance novel.

In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries four romance subgenres experienced significant growth, transforming both the romance marketplace and public perceptions of the genre. Chapter 6, on Paranormal Romance, details the emergence of paranormal romance (and its affiliate genre, urban fantasy), its critical reception, and its contributions to a change in popular romance aesthetics from the centrality of a stand-alone volume which ends with a decisive HEA for its protagonists to a series aesthetic in which what An Goris calls the "post-HEA" life of romance protagonists—sometimes contented, often vexed—appears as a secondary or even central feature of subsequent novels. As Maria Ramos-Garcia shows in this chapter, the popularity of paranormal romance in the 2000s has been linked by many critics to the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the United States and the subsequent Global War on Terror; likewise the racial and gender politics of paranormal romance have drawn substantial attention, whether focused on particular texts (the *Twilight* novels; the *Black Dagger Brotherhood* books; *Nalini Singh's Psy-Changeling* series) or on distinct paranormal creatures (werewolves, vampires, shape-shifters, etc.).

Although the popularity of the *Twilight* franchise in the early twenty-first century brought Young Adult (YA) Romance to public attention, Amanda Allen's chapter (Chapter 7) on this subgenre demonstrates that critical debates over fiction written for young readers—especially young women—have existed for many decades. Allen divides her history into three periods: work from the 1940s–60s, when it focused on the socialization of young women through what were called "junior novels" (tales of young love set mostly in American high schools); scholarship from the 1980s, which often including feminist critiques of the same socialization practices lauded some decades before; and scholarship since 2000, which addresses paranormal YA romance, queer and otherwise diverse YA romance, and non-traditional forms of YA romance publishing, including fan fiction and romance in visual media (e.g., graphic novels and manga).

The question of whether YA romances are, to put it crudely, good or bad for their readers has also marked critical debates about Christian Inspirational Romance, the topic of Chapter 8, but this has not been the only question addressed in scholarship on this subgenre. As Rebecca Barrett-Fox and Kristen Donnelly demonstrate, the unabashed sentimentality, religiosity, and cultural conservatism of Christian romance fiction has long made it the target of both aesthetic and political critique, but it has also been investigated and defended, often with considerable nuance, by scholars interested in its deployment of Biblical allusion, its perhaps-unexpectedly complicated construction of romantic masculinity, and its place in the devotional and communal lives of its readers. Although most of this scholarship has focused on white Evangelical romances in the United States, this chapter also surveys important work on non-Protestant Christian romances, Black and Hispanic Christian romances, Amish romances (a popular sub-sub-genre in the United States), and the emerging genre worlds of

Muslim and Jewish romance, both of which are also discussed in Chapter 22 ("Romance and/as religion").

Jodi McAlister's chapter on erotic romance (Chapter 9) begins by framing it in an "industrial context": that is, by looking at how the term is defined and deployed by authors, editors, and publishers, as well as in guides for aspiring authors. She documents the modern publishing history of erotic romance, which long predates its twenty-first-century global visibility, and she clarifies its relationship to fanfiction, with particular attention to the writing, distribution, and impact of E. L. James's *Fifty Shades* trilogy, the erotic romance series that has, to date, received the most sustained and widespread scholarly attention.

A similar attention to publishing history marks Chapter 10, Julie Moody-Freeman's survey of African American romance and its reception, both in academic contexts and in the often-overlooked journalism, much of it from Black publications, which documents its history. Although this history is deeply intertwined with the story of American romance publishing more generally—for example, the author and editor who founded the Romance Writers of America, Vivian Stephens, was a Black woman—it cannot be reduced to a subset of that story, not least because of the long, ongoing, racially-specific struggle to have Black love and marriage recognized, let alone considered "romantic," by white Americans. The scholarship Moody-Freeman surveys thus begins with work on love stories and marriage plots in the first decades of Black fiction after Emancipation—work whose negotiations with the politics of middle-class respectability sets the stage for comparable concerns in twentieth and twenty-first-century Black romance novels—and continues through modern intersectional analyses of race, gender, class, and disability not only in Black romance novels. This chapter also addresses work that has been done to document racism and anti-racist resistance in American romance institutions, in particular the RWA and its RITA awards program.

Few romance subgenres have drawn as much sustained critical attention—including attention to race—as the "desert" romance: books which, as Amira Jarmakani explains, "feature a sheik, sultan, or desert prince as their hero" and which deploy a desert setting as the framework for narratives featuring "gender fluidity, racial anxiety, and the realities of war and terrorism" filtered through "masculine/feminine, black/white, and fantasy/reality dichotomies" (252). Scholarship on this subgenre begins with work on E. M. Hull's epochal bestseller *The Sheik* (1919) and continues with studies of the contemporary desert romance, which surged in popularity in the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Analyses of the racial status of the desert romance hero feature prominently in this critical corpus—at times, like Hull's Sheikh Ahmed ben Hassan, he is a racially ambiguous figure; at times he is unambiguously Arab—along with studies of how these texts represent gender and sexuality and of the relationship between all of these topics to the artistic and narrative traditions of orientalism. Like McAlister's account of erotic romance, Jarmakani's chapter (Chapter 11) attends to the place of desert romances in the romance industry, and it discusses scholarship on the explanations that desert romance authors give for their attraction to this subgenre and for why, in their view, readers continue to purchase and enjoy them.

The methodologies that critics (academic and popular) of romance novels have used span the humanities and the social sciences. In the second part of this volume, some authors have provided a model of how new scholars could engage with the genre (such as through historicizing mass media criticism in Jayashree Kamblé's chapter

(Chapter 12), literary approaches in Eric Murphy Selinger's chapter, and author studies in Kecia Ali's) while others have surveyed existing methodological practices, outlined their strengths and suggested new lines of inquiry within them. Kamblé's chapter performs a metacriticism of the popular pillorying of romance through a survey of articles on the genre in popular print and other media. It documents how these fluff pieces create an image of the genre as lacking substance, focused on thoughtless sex, and written and read by silly women. She terms this journalism phenomenon a genre in itself, one that endlessly produces the "media romance." Selinger's chapter (Chapter 13) reviews critiques of romance fiction that find it lacking in artistry and identifies the instances within the field that do the opposite, often by challenging the notion that working within genre conventions necessarily limits (or dumbs-down) a novel. He includes cases of the application of techniques from the literature classroom that identify and critique formal elements of a romance novel or an individual romance author's corpus. The chapter thus models how romance novels may be analyzed using the same tools as used in the analysis of canonical works, and it highlights scholarship on the playful, critically self-aware metafictional gestures often found in the novels themselves.

Kecia Ali's chapter (Chapter 14) defines author studies, including both traditional studies of a literary oeuvre by a named individual and studies of the "author function" which emphasize collective elements of production and reception. It explores gendered reasons for the relative scarcity of author studies for popular romance and surveys the extant literature (monographs, journal special issues, as well as dissertations), using Nora Roberts as the primary example. It concludes with a discussion of promising avenues for future research which, by taking account of popular romance writing, could help reimagine the field of author studies.

Sociologists Joanna Gregson and Jen Lois review the existing social scientific research on romance novels, readers, and authors from the last four decades (Chapter 15). They tap into the significant contributions made by social scientists and social science methodology to romance criticism while noting lacunae and calling attention to the need for research that is more attentive to the specificities of the genre. They observe that while content analyses of romance novels reveal conformity to traditional gender roles and sexual scripts, studies of romance readers show that these books serve important functions in women's lives, that they are read critically, and that their take-away messages are both positive and progressive. The chapter also notes that research with authors reveals how and why they became romance authors, how they experience the stigma of writing in a disparaged genre, and how they forge community with other authors.

Chapter 16, John Markert's survey of international romance publishing history (twentieth and twenty-first century), provides a bird's eye view of the production forces that power the genre's development. Markert calls attention to the role of upper management as "gatekeepers" in the field and the rise and fall of different romance "lines" while he recounts previous studies of the industry-side of the genre. He shows how different publishing houses launched or altered their romance offerings in response to each other's successes, focusing mainly on print but with a brief look at the digital/e-book landscape. It is a concrete narrative that is a needed corrective to the often-abstract understanding of romance as a mass commodity.

Apart from readers, authors, and publishers, another key component of the romance matrix is libraries and librarians. In Chapter 17, Kristin Ramsdell discusses the

scholarship on the role played by libraries in disseminating the genre, with the three main foci being public libraries, university libraries, and K-12 libraries, mainly in the United States and Australia. She touches on the varied methodologies and objects of analysis (including readership) in these studies and summarizes their findings on the structural and ideological factors that affect romance collections development, particularly in academic libraries, as well as the potential impact of these factors on the study and long-term preservation of romance novels. The chapter also mentions some studies that reference libraries with relation to Gothic and romance-adjacent works in previous centuries. It ends with a list of several lines of inquiry that remain to be pursued and would broaden this sub-field of romance research.,

The final part of this volume focuses on thematic issues that characterize romance novels or frequently arise in discussions of the genre: class, wealth, materialism, gender, sexuality, romantic love, romance as it overlaps with and articulates a new form of religion, and race and ethnicity. The overwhelming majority of romance novels and the scholarship on it originates from the Anglophone world. However, variations of the genre are emerging in non-Anglophone and non-western markets, and this book concludes with a consideration of this emerging market.

The thematic part opens with Amy Burge's consideration of the scholarship on class, wealth, and materialism in romance novels—a body of work that spans over 30 years, largely emerging from Britain and America (Chapter 18). Burge begins by considering what "class" means in relation to the romance novel, whether it is defined in terms of a materialist relation to property, or a culturalist performance of class identity. After providing a brief overview of portrayals of wealth, class, and social mobility in romance novels since the nineteenth century, in both contemporary and historical modes of the genre, Burge turns her attention to the frameworks scholars employ to analyze class, arguing persuasively that all investigations into class and romance novels are necessarily intersectional, for it is impossible to consider class without simultaneously considering gender and race—specifically, whiteness and white privilege. The chapter ends with a critical discussion of whether feminist scholars' characterization of the genre as middle-class propaganda that generates stultifying and crippling escapist fantasies for working-class women can be sustained.

Chapters 19 and 20 then examine representations of sex, gender, and sexuality in contemporary romance novels. Focusing primarily on heterosexuality in the genre, Hannah McCann and Catherine M. Roach argue that popular romance novels center on fulfilling women's sexual desires and pleasures in sex-positive ways, creating a fantasy space in which to explore the conundrum of women's sexuality and sexual experiences in a male-dominated world (Chapter 19). Romance novels, they suggest, offer women a "reparative reading" of sexuality that allows them to reformulate sexual and gender ideas, consider the principles and limits of sexual consent, and to celebrate sexual and sensuous pleasures, yet the genre is only beginning to embrace representations of more diverse, non-binary, non-heterosexual identities, and more scholarly analysis of these LGBTQIA novels is needed. This call is answered by Jonathan A. Allan in his incisive investigation of the complex social construction and performance of gender and sexuality in romance novels (Chapter 20). Allan begins with a discussion of how foundational works of popular romance scholarship by Snitow, Modleski, and Radway theorized and critiqued gender and sexuality in ways that essentialized gender. He argues that Snitow's "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different" marked out the terms in which gender and sexuality in

romance novels is discussed by establishing the language of critique, creating a binary between romance and pornography that dominated subsequent discussions and defenses of gender and sexuality in romance. However, the twenty-first century has seen a move toward more diversified methods of analyzing romance novels, influenced by queer approaches, as well as more scholarly interest in gender and sexuality in LGBTQIA novels. His chapter ends with the observation that scholars are only beginning to study constructions of men and masculinities, not only in the genre but also in the romance industry, and that much more work is needed in this emerging field.

The third wave of romance scholarship in the twenty-first century has seen innovations, not only with regard to gender and sexuality, but also in relation to the representation and meaning of love and romance itself—themes that are explored in Chapters 21 and 22. Melding romance scholarship to the historical, sociological and literary scholarship about romantic love in Europe and America, Hsu-Ming Teo's chapter (Chapter 21) begins with a description of how ideas about romantic love developed and changed from the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries, and how these ideas have influenced the portrayal of love in romance novels—particularly who is worthy of being loved and, consequently, who can enjoy the role of romantic protagonist. Teo argues that by the mid-twentieth century, the markers of love had become secularized and sexualized, but that love in late twentieth- and twenty-first-century romance novels began to emphasize the importance of developing and maintaining intimacy—a problematic concept in itself, as the work of David Shumway shows. The chapter then reviews the extant scholarship on the romance novel, charting changing approaches from the early feminist writings arguing that love was precisely the problem for romantic heroines, for it disempowered them individually, economically, and politically, and made them submissive to or accepting of the patriarchal order of society. However, more recent third-wave scholarship on love moves away from the "empowerment versus oppression" (Goade) binary to ask instead how love functions in individual novels, and how these representations of love develop over time and across different cultures.

Eric Murphy Selinger and Laura Vivanco's chapter (Chapter 22) then extends the exploration of love and romance to consider how these representations of these entities overlap with religion and are themselves invested with the structure, purpose, and practice of religion. Chapter 22 begins with a consideration of how religion—especially Protestant Christianity—can be read as a discourse of romance: a redemptive and ennobling relational experience that ends in a happily ever after. Rather than a secularization of the romance novel occurring throughout the twentieth century, Selinger and Vivanco argue that the romance itself took on religious qualities, representing romantic love as unconditional, omnipotent, and eternal, and therefore redemptive or salvific. It is an act of faith. Love as religion is something that romantic characters must learn to "believe in," so that lasting happiness may be achieved. The chapter ends with a call for the connections between romance novels and other forms of religion—such as Islam or Buddhism—to be explored, especially in light of the diversification of the genre with regard to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity in the twenty-first century.

Where Chapters 19 and 20 examine diversity in gender and sexuality, the last two chapters of this volume explore the diversification of the romance genre in relation to the latter themes. Erin S. Young's chapter on "Race, ethnicity, and whiteness" (Chapter 23) begins with a review of the romance scholarship analyzing and critiquing

representations of race, blackness, and whiteness in romance fiction. Young observes that extant studies emphasize the role of romance in shoring up white privilege and supremacy, before navigating her way through the fraught problem of how non-white characters and cultures have often been caricatured and (mis)represented in the genre. Romance, she notes, has a race problem. However, this is not only a problem of misrepresentation, but a problem of racial politics as well, evident in the debates over Black authors who feature the "taboo" of Black/White interracial romance. Young's chapter ends with a summary of current concerns among academics working in this field, as well as an optimistic hope that representations of racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in romance novels are improving because readers are demanding change, as shown in the conversations taking place among the romance community in online venues.

This volume by necessity focuses overwhelmingly on Anglophone romance novels coming out of Britain, the United States, and Australia, simply because these are the countries that have developed the genre and the scholarship. It is with great pleasure, therefore, that we can end with a snapshot of what is happening to the genre globally in the twenty-first century. Kathrina Mohd Daud concludes this volume with a chapter (Chapter 24) considering how romance novels—especially category romances—translate into non-western cultures, focusing specifically on India, Japan, Nigeria, and Malaysia. Daud describes local romance publishing initiatives responding to the success of Harlequin in these markets, with the emergence of local romance lines such as the francophone *Adoras* series (known as the "African Harlequin") in Cote d'Ivoire in 1998, the romance genre called *Littattafan Soyayya* (books of love) in Nigeria, the *Sanrio New Romance* series of Japanese-authored romances, and a more variegated Malay-language romance market in Malaysia. However, Daud notes that local initiatives to imitate the success of Harlequin have not always been successful, as evidenced in the failure of Rupa & Co.'s line of local romances in India because part of the appeal of Harlequin romances was the foreignness of the romantic protagonists. Clearly, much more work needs to be done on non-western traditions of romance but, as Daud argues, a foreign form of fiction that was introduced through the global dominance of Harlequin does not remain a homogenized product when it becomes indigenized. Rather, local variations of the popular romance draw on the authors' own culture and traditions to produce new forms of the genre that can reflect resistance to cultural colonization.

Scholarship on romance novels has been around for more than half a century now. Yet in many ways we are still just beginning to develop new approaches to understand and analyze this complex, heterogeneous and endlessly diversifying genre. It is our hope that this volume, Janus-faced, casts a backward look to what has been written, as well as a forward look to the work still to come.

Notes

1 For these and other relevant details about the history of Science Fiction studies see Latham, 1–6.

2 Two essays on Gothic romance predate Snitow's influential study of (non-Gothic) Harlequin romance novels: Joanna Russ's "Somebody's Trying to Kill Me And I Think It's My Husband", and "Beautiful and Damned: The Sexual Woman in Gothic Fiction" by Kay Mussell. Although Angela Toscano's chapter for this volume says that Russ "engages with romance as

literature, naming titles and describing plots" (108), neither she nor Mussell makes any stronger claim on the texts' behalf than we find in Anderson or Snitow.

3 Exceptions to this general rule are discussed in Chapter 13, "Literary approaches."

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Notes

Introduction

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2 Two essays on Gothic romance predate Snitow's influential study of (non-Gothic) Harlequin romance novels: Joanna Russ's "Somebody's Trying to Kill Me And I Think It's My Husband", and "Beautiful and Damned: The Sexual Woman in Gothic Fiction" by Kay Mussell. Although Angela Toscano's chapter for this volume says that Russ "engages with romance as literature, naming titles and describing plots" (108), neither she nor Mussell makes any stronger claim on the texts' behalf than we find in Anderson or Snitow.
3 Exceptions to this general rule are discussed in Chapter 13, "Literary approaches."

Chapter 1

1 The scholarly bibliography on Romance, broadly construed, is vast and potentially daunting. Foundational studies include Frye (86–205), Jameson, and Mikhail Bakhtin. For a useful history of how medieval Romance evolves into more modern versions, see Crawford (11–59); for discussion of how classical "Greek romances" influenced Renaissance fiction and drama and the subsequent history of the novel, see Doody; for a helpful discussion of the term in its broadest sense, with application to global literatures, see Goyal (1–24).
2 For Behn as a model and resource for modern popular romance, see the encomium by Roach (142–3); Lutz, citing Ballaster 1998, refers to Behn's "amatory fiction" as "the early modern equivalent of the contemporary [that is, 20th-twenty-first century] mass-market romance" (2): a connection elaborated upon by Baldus in her essay on American romance author Jennifer Crusie, "Gossip, Liminality, and Erotic Display: Jennifer Crusie's Links to Eighteenth-Century Amatory Fiction." See also Toscano.
3 Radway's is the first of several attempts to codify the essential structure or defining elements of the romance novel. For others, see Regis (30–9), discussed below, and Roach (21–7).
4 For an extended, historicist analysis of Philander's "Whiggish and libertine antinomianism" (McKeon, 508) and Silvia's measured, undeceived response, see McKeon (506–13).
5 For an extended discussion of cross-dressing by heroines in popular romance (albeit historical romance rather than contemporary-set novels) see Fletcher, 49–92.
6 For a partial list of twentieth-century romances featuring the "hero-as-brother" motif, from a variety of decades, see Dixon, 79; for more on the feminization of the hero, see Beauman; Light; Miller; Showalter. Talia Schaffer's *Romance's Rival: Familiar Marriage in Victorian Fiction* does not focus on feminization—her categories include "neighbour marriage," "cousin marriage,"

"disability marriage," and "vocational marriage"—but she offers a useful, historically detailed discussion of marriage plots in which the male suitor who offers "security, kindness, safety, care" is preferable to a more erotically compelling rival (x).

7 For a discussion of Jane West's domestic novel *A Gossip's Story* as an inspiration for Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*—with attention in both texts to the phenomenon of gossip, a topic of ongoing interest in popular romance scholarship (e.g., Baldus)—see Goss.

8 Austen's place as a romance pioneer has not always been so assured. As many literary historians have noted, Charlotte Brontë believed that Austen was either unwilling or unable to write about women's passions and desires ("what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through" as Brontë calls it in a letter [qtd. in Armstrong, 53]; see Weisser, 35–8).

9 Both Heathcliff, from Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and Rochester, from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, have been described as the precursor of many twentieth-century heroes (Jensen; Modleski).

10 For an extended discussion of religion and popular romance fiction, including nineteenth-century works, see Chapter 21 of this volume.

11 After many years of derision, Corelli began to receive serious scholarly attention in the late 1970s, and the pace of publication on her work has quickened in the twenty-first century. For useful discussions, see Federico, Hipsky, Masters, Ransom, and Waller.

12 Both Ouida's novels and Dell's romances can be read as part of a subgenre of romantic imperial or colonial fiction that flourished in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. For an account of this subgenre, especially in terms of its treatments of colonialism and race, see Teo.

13 Although Berta Ruck lived in London for much of her life and wrote romance novels set in England, the author herself was born in the town of Murree in what is now Pakistan and was raised in her paternal grandparents' home in Wales, leaving her with "a strong sense of Welsh identity" (Lloyd-Morgan).

14 The modern "sexualization of love" is discussed at length in Chapter 21 of this collection ("Love and Romance Novels"); it is a staple of today's contemporary romances.

15 In *The Romance Fiction of Mills & Boon, 1909–1990s* I cover this period in chapters on the evolution of the Mills & Boon romance hero (Chapter 4), the Mills & Boon heroine (Chapter 5), and the representations of sex and desire (Chapter 8).

16 For an extended discussion of "War and Aftermath" in Mills & Boon romances, including both the First and Second World Wars, see Dixon (97–112).

17 For an extended discussion of Leavis and popular romance, see Chapter 13 of this volume, "Literary Approaches."

18 See Chapter 5 for a sustained discussion of the post-1970s historical romance.

19 For more on popular historical romance as revisionist historiography, see Teo, "Bertrice Teaches You History."

20 Heyer has been the subject of considerably more scholarship than most popular romance authors. See Chapter 5 for an extended discussion of her historical romances, Chapter 13 for a discussion of her status as a more "literary" author of popular romance, Chapter 14 for consideration of single-author studies devoted to her work, and Chapter 21 for analysis of her treatment of romantic love

Chapter 2

1 There are other views of freedom in the romance. In the Introduction to *Romance and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom*, editors William A. Gleason and Eric Murphy Selinger assert

that in assembling the volume they "maintain an inquisitive posture toward the matter of love's relationship to freedom" (10).

2 Silhouette Romance #1 *Payment in Full* by Anne Hampson, #2 *Shadow and Sun* by Mary Carroll, #3 *Affairs of the Heart* by Nora Powers, #4 *Stormy Masquerade* by Anne Hampson, #5 *Path of Desire* by Ellen Goforth, #6 *Golden Tide* by Sheila Stanford, #7 *Midsummer Bride* by Mary Lewis, #8 *Captive Heart* by Patti Beckman, #9 *Where Mountains Wait* by Fran Wilson, #10 *Bridge of Love* by Leslie Caine.

3 Defined at the blog "All About Romance" (https://allaboutromance.com/can-you-hear-me-now-an-open-letter-to-romance-authors): "The hero or heroine witnesses something or overhears something or is told something that leads him or her to a wrong conclusion about his/her love interest. Rather than confront the potentially wayward lover as soon as possible to ask her/him to explain the situation, the discussion never happens and the romance grinds to a complete halt."

4 A "stereotype" is a solid plate of type, created by molding a letterpress galley using paper mâché or plaster, and then casting from that mold a plate that can be used for printing. A single letterpress galley, then, could be stereotyped as many times as needed. The painstaking letter-by-letter sliding of type onto a composing stick need be done only once for each page. Mass production was thus made possible.

5 Chapters 8 and 21 of this Companion also discuss religion and romance.

6 For more on African American romance see Chapter 10.

Chapter 3

1 Flesch draws her "beetroot in the burger" analogy from an Australian inspired hamburger, the McOz Burger, previously found at the McDonald's burger chain. The McOz Burger included a slice of cooked beetroot. The burger has since been discontinued and replaced with a range of Angus Beef burgers, only one of which (the "Gourmet homestyle Angus" burger) contains beetroot.

2 It must also be remembered that the term "Australia" is, as Tanya Dalziell explains, "caught up in the vocabularies of colonial discourse" (16). To use the term "Australia" implies a straightforward application to describe a place, however as Dalziell draws attention to, the term is one deployed to serve a colonial purpose. It does not necessarily speak to all the peoples that call Australia the continent as a place home.

3 ARRA draws their basic definition of a romance novel from the Romance Writers of America (RWA).

4 *The Thorn Birds* is reportedly the highest selling novel from Australia with 30 million copies sold globally.

5 Flesch discovered that teen romance writers of Dolly fiction seemed reluctant to identify themselves as writers of teenage romances, more so than adult romance writers (*Love Brought to Book* xii). The *Dolly Fiction* series has a detailed listing in the *Australian Children's Books* bibliography inclusive of more than 100 novels. Dolly fiction novels were mainly published between 1988 and 1993 by Greenhouse Publications and in association with Dolly Magazine Australian Consolidated Press (White).

6 Flesch argues that between the 1930s and 1950s male writers were more common in Australian romance publishing ("Women Talk" 420). One male author, Frank Brennan, wrote novels with his wife Wendy under the pseudonym "Emma Darcy." Frank Brennan died in 1995; however, his wife Wendy still writes under the "Emma Darcy" pen-name. Shane Douglas (real name Richard Wilkes Hunter) is another male romance author listed in the bio-bibliography (15). Flesch also mentions Gordon Aalborg in "Feminists Talk" as a male writer of Australian romance

fiction under the pseudonym "Victoria Gordon" (420). It is unclear how many other male romance writers may use a feminine pseudonym; it seems less likely that a female author would employ a male pseudonym to write romance fiction.

7 Sarah Mayberry is an Australian author published by Harlequin. She writes across imprints including "Blaze" and "Super romance." She has also been recognized by the Romance Writers of Australia in the RUBY Awards.

8 For academic inquiries focused on Marie Bjelke Peterson see Alexander; Taylor; Haynes "Marie"; Haynes "Romanticism" and Delamoir. For discussions of Emma Darcy see Thomas "And I Deliver"; Thomas "The Best Australian" and Moran. Analyses of Rosa Praed include those by Platt and Clarke. Lucy Walker has been examined by Flesch in "Blushing Bride" while author Edwina Shore has been discussed by Curthoys and Docker.

9 Lennox won the RITA Award in 2004 and 2006 for two of her traditional romance novels.

10 The selection of a research methodology is often tied to how the researcher may view romance readers. Some may assume a passive reader and direct media effects. Such an approach may reflect the approach taken by some feminist scholars who, as Bronwyn Levy notes, "saw romance readers as like empty signifiers, waiting to be filled with stories of love." Other researchers may alternatively assume readers play a more active role in romance reading whereby the act of reading may be subversive or that readers will interpret texts through negotiated or privileged subject positions.

11 Flesch noted a large readership of rural women, this fact gleaned from the large numbers of romance novels for sale in country second-hand bookshops (*From Australia* 111). Flesch also found that translated Australian romance novels are popular with Japanese readers (*From Australia* 114).

12 Juliet Flesch outlines quantitative and qualitative studies undertaken by Harlequin Enterprises in 1998. The survey involved 1800 respondents and asked demographic questions as well as the frequency of romance novel buying (*From Australia* 59). This was followed up by qualitative focus groups of romance novel buyers aged between 14 and 65 in October of the same year to investigate book selection, reading processes and the evaluation of texts (Flesch *From Australia* 60). As Flesch emphasizes, the commissioning of these studies demonstrates a keen interest in the views and opinions of readers (*From Australia* 61).

13 Surveys between 2009 to the present are listed and available separately on the ARRA's "About" webpage.

14 In the ARRA 2009 survey, 42.5 percent of respondents always carried a romance novel with them. In 2018, the survey asked if readers always carried a romance novel with them and offered an answer option that incorporated the mobility of e-books. In the 2018 survey, 73 percent of respondents always carried a romance novel, 43 percent of those usually carried e-books. Despite this portability of romance texts, between 2009 and 2018 there has only been a slight decline in where reading occurs with 89 percent choosing "at home" in 2009 compared to 83 percent in 2018. "Travelling and commuting" as the site where most reading occurred remained stable at about 10 percent between 2009 and 2018.

15 See Brackett for "facework strategies" of romance readers. She noted that concealment of reading material was a "first line" defense to avoid judgement or disapproval.

16 Purchases from discount stores remain stable. These changes may relate to changes in the formats available; mass market paperback purchases have fallen from 69 to 20 percent between 2009 and 2018 while e-books have increased from 10 percent in 2009 to 60 percent in 2018. The popularity of e-book purchases may explain the falling interest in library borrowing for respondents with 33 percent in 2009 stating they never borrow romances from the library rising to 54 percent of respondents in the 2018 survey.

17 Veros notes that Sydney University Library is a legal deposit library similar to the National Library of Australia. However, Veros found that the Sydney Library appears to have only a small proportion of novels that should be collected under legal deposit (303).
18 Legal deposit is defined in Veros as "a statutory provision which obliges publishers to deposit copies of their publications in libraries in the region in which they are published" (National Library of Australia as cited in "Romance Reader" 302).
19 The library decided that the collection would focus primarily on Australian and New Zealand authors or texts set in Australia or New Zealand (Flesch "Not Just Housewives").
20 A number of novels translated into Japanese can also be found in the collection; Flesch notes that Japanese language students frequently borrow them (*From Australia with Love* 120).
21 The novels were collected as part of her doctoral research and later publication of *From Australia With Love* (2004).
22 The library provides a very useful Excel spreadsheet of the novels in the collection so that researchers can reorganize the list by author, year, or title according to their interests ("Mills and Boon Collection").
23 McAlister and Teo in their review of Aboriginal protagonists in romance fiction explain that only one Harlequin Mills & Boon novel featured an Aboriginal heroine (216) though a small number of novels had an Aboriginal hero. Beyond Harlequin Mills & Boon novels, McAlister and Teo find a small number of Aboriginal heroes though as they emphasize, they are "extremely rare" (217).
24 Treasure's publisher Penguin gambled on this innovative debut novel. There was no established market for rural romance fiction. To sell more than 260,000 copies of her first three novels represents success in many ways. Valerie Parv, a bestselling category romance author, refers to a romance editor who claims that "an Australian paperback novel can expect to sell between 3000 and 5000 copies" (*The Art* 3).
25 Harlequin's Rural Romance webpage shows the cover image and purchase options. The 20 covers previewed in August 2017 predominantly show an image of a woman, usually her face with varying expressions from serious to contemplative to smiling. Some novels showed a woman's back from the waist up against a rural landscape. A small number of the novels displayed a man's face, presumably the hero. One novel stood out for the chiseled naked upper body of a man against green rolling hills.

Chapter 4

1 For examples of contemporary distinctions between the romance and the novel can be found in Ioan Williams, ed., *Novel and Romance 1700–1800: A Documentary Record*.
2 Walpole uses the word "romance" to refer to an older form of the novel as well as previous long, prose forms of Chivalric and adventurous fiction. He uses it more broadly than the modern usage. Significantly, his use of romance points to the ongoing conflation in the eighteenth century among romances, novels, and histories, which were terms often used interchangeably by publishers and authors.
3 It is interesting to note that what engenders this suspicion of the literary feminine is connected to the availability and abundance of such texts in the marketplace. Indeed, the Gothic dominated the book market during late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This is most readily exemplified by Montague Summer's massive *Gothic Bibliography*, which lists works by European as well as English authors. A more succinct version of this can be found in Frederick S. Frank's *The First Gothics: A Critical Guide to the English Gothic Novel,* which lists just over 500 works published between 1764 and 1820.

4 Anne Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis are the most famous of the eighteenth-century Gothic novelists. Their works are often cited as expressing connected, but opposing versions of the Gothic. Radcliffe was the first to distinguish herself from Lewis, calling her stories gothics of terror, and the other, gothics of horror in her essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry." She writes, "Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (149). Twentieth-century critics have made similar distinctions between Radcliffe and Lewis. For example, Eileen Moers identifies Radcliffe as originating the tradition "in which the central figure is a young woman who is simultaneously persecuted victim and courageous heroine." She defines the Female Gothic simply as "the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic" (123–4). Later critics would trouble and tweak this definition. As Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace noted in their introduction to a 2004 special issue of *Gothic Studies*, "partly as a result of poststructuralism's destabilizing of the categories of gender, the term was increasingly being qualified and there has been an ongoing debate as to whether the Female Gothic constitutes a separate literary genre." However, as the collected essays in the issue indicate, it is "still a flexible and recognizable term for an area which is if anything gaining in vigor and complexity" (1, 6). I would add that both the term and its description of devices, figures, themes, and contexts on which the Gothic converges is particularly useful for understanding the relationship of twentieth-century Gothic romances to the history of the Gothic largely. As such, it is a term worth retaining as the field expands to include these texts.

5 For general information on romance novel cover art see Jennifer McKnight-Trontz's *The Look of Love: the Art of the Romance Novel*, as well as Joanna Bowring and Margaret O'Brien's book *The Art of Romance: Mills & Boon and Harlequin Cover Designs*. Additionally, the article from Washington University Libraries archivist, Andrea Degener, "An Eerie Sense of Deja-Vu: 1960s Gothic Romance Paperback Covers" details the work of Louis Marchetti, who created many Gothic romance covers.

6 For further information on horror as a genre, see Noël Carroll's *Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart*.

7 While some may argue Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* is the first piece of scholarly criticism on the popular romance, I would contend that she paints it with such broad strokes in addressing larger feminist cultural and political concerns as to render the genre invisible in its universal application to these issues.

8 This table lists most of the major criticism on the modern popular Gothic romance published to 1997 when, as Selinger and Frantz argue in their introduction to *New Approaches to Popular Romance Fiction*, a third-wave of popular romance begins with the publication of the 1997 special issue of Parathe year 2001, approaches to modern popular Gothic romance novels also shift. As such, I have chosen not to include those titles in this chart. However, this table represents almost all of the criticism that addresses the modern popular Gothic romance previous to the twenty-first century, with only a few exceptions. I have also chosen not to list all of the titles in Fleenor's edited collection separately.

9 During the final proofing of this chapter, one such example of this kind of scholarship was published. In Lori A. Paige's *The Gothic Romance Wave: A Critical History of the Mass Market Novels, 1960–1993,* she argues that these texts present the heroine as an agent of liberation, while also presenting a history of the genre.

Chapter 5

1 Anthea Trodd addresses the similarity in her book *Women's Writing in English: Britain 1900–1945* (Trodd). Essays further exploring the connections between Heyer and Austen by A. S. Byatt, Barbara Bywaters, Kay Mussell, and Lillian S. Robinson can be found in Mary Fahnestock-Thomas's compendium of writing by and about Heyer: *Georgette Heyer: A Critical Retrospective*. For Austen's influence on Regency romance more generally, see Susan M. Kroeg.

2 Heyer is also one of the most frequently studied historical romance authors. Readers interested in Heyer's writing in the context of her personal life and literary influences should see essays by Elizabeth Barr, Elizabeth K. Spillman, and Laura Vivanco, and *Georgette Heyer: Biography of a Bestseller* by Jennifer Kloester.

3 There has been less scholarship on Cartland than on Heyer. For an overview of Cartland's career and writing see Rosalind Brunt. See Mary Ellen Ryder for a linguistic analysis of action in Cartland's novels, and Roger Sales for analysis of Byronic hero in Cartland.

4 A note on terminology: these books were collectively known as "erotic historical" "sensual historical" or "sweet savage romance" novels, and later as "bodice rippers." See Lyons and Selinger 92–3.

5 For more information on these critics and major scholarship on romance overall, see the introduction to this book.

6 The readers of evangelical historical romance that Lynn Neal interviewed for her study *Romancing God* also mentioned the educational aspect of the books as a draw (174–5).

7 For more scholarly perspectives on rape in historical romance fiction, see Diane M. Calhoun-French, Dawn Heinecken, and Angela Toscano. An informative, though less scholarly take, can be found in "Chapter Bad Sex" from *Beyond Heaving Bosoms* by Wendell and Tan. For an interesting alternative look at *The Flame and the Flower*, see Charles Hinnant's analysis of gendered economics in the novel.

8 Examples of this type of novel include *Dawn of Fire* by Susannah Leigh (set in French Indochina in the 1840s), *Rangoon* by Christine Monson (set in British colonial Burma), and *Sea Flame* by Katharine Kincaid (set in colonial Macao).

9 Whether these challenges were a result of poor marketing decisions by Harlequin, the increasingly cramped historical romance print market, or readers' reluctance to purchase a romance with non-white characters was a subject of online commentary, but as yet there has been no formal research on the subject. See Lin's article "Jeannie Lin Tells Us: How My Worst Seller Became a Bestseller and What It Means to Write 'Different'" and Courtney Milan's blog post "A Note on Historical Romance Sales in Print."

10 Laura Vivanco published an article "Links: India, Covers and Romance" addressing these novels on the academic romance blog *Teach Me Tonight* in February of 2010.

11 For examples see "The Quadroons" by Lydia Maria Child, *Clotel* by William Wells Brown, *The Quadroon* by Mayne Reid, *The Octoroon or Life in Louisiana* by Dion Boucicault, and *The Octoroon; or, The Lily of Louisiana* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Academic studies addressing this topic include Jules Zanger "The 'Tragic Octoroon' In Pre-Civil War Fiction," Werner Sollors *Neither Black Nor White Yet Both*, and Eve Allegra Raimon *The "Tragic Mulatta" Revisited*.

12 Romance novels of any subgenre written by Caribbean authors for a Caribbean audience are still rare. Bryce and Morgan also examine contemporary Caribbean romance novels and theorize about the challenges of writing more realistic romances set in a location that serves as the exotic Other for so many American and British romance novels.

13 According to the authors of *Shape-Shifting: Images of Native Americans in Recent Popular Fiction*, "The romance genre includes more Native American stories than any other genre except the Western" (114).

14 I am only aware of one indigenous author writing romantic historical fiction, Evangeline Parsons Yazzie, whose series set during the forced removal of the Navajo from their lands begins with the book *Her Land, Her Love*.

15 Bunkley's novel is based on the real story behind the song "The Yellow Rose of Texas" (Harris).

16 For further work on intersection of love and politics, see Dandridge, "Love Prevailed Despite What American History Said: Agape and Eros in Beverly Jenkins's *Night Song* and *Through the Storm*."

17 Vivian Stephens, the agent Jenkins worked with for *Night Song*, was one of the first African American romance editors and a co-founder of the Romance Writers of America (Drew; "RWA's Origin Story").

18 The shifting and somewhat unpredictable publishing scene for romances by and about women of color can be observed by reading Julie Naughton's *Publisher's Weekly* article "In Loving Color: Diversity in Romance Publishing, 2014" and comparing it to the 2017 landscape. Samhain, one of the publishers that she mentions, closed in 2017 (Wendell "GO GET YOUR BOOKS"), and Kimani, Harlequin's African American line, which Naughton discusses at length, is now set to be discontinued (Rea). Among the authors I mentioned, Kianna Alexander published several of her historical romances with Ellora's Cave, which closed in 2016. Piper Huguley initially published with Samhain, but also publishes independently. Alyssa Cole publishes independently through CreateSpace, but her 2017 novel *An Extraordinary Union* was published by Kensington. Blogs can be a useful resource for finding romances by authors of color. See, for example, *Romance Novels in Color* and *WOC in Romance*.

19 There is an ongoing discussion in the American romance industry about diversity in writing and publishing romance. For more information see the RWA's "RWA Report on Diversity and Inclusion" and Bea and Leah Koch's "The State of Racial Diversity in Romance Publishing Report."

20 Isabel Miller (the pen name for Alma Routsong) first self-published the novel in 1969 as *A Place for Us*. It was retitled *Patience and Sarah* and published by McGraw-Hill in 1972.

21 Although *Phyllida and the Brotherhood of Philander* is indisputably a romance, Herendeen explains that HarperCollins picked it up for its "literary" qualities and published it as a trade paperback, not a mass market novel as is typical with romance fiction (406).

22 Not all m/m historical romance looks back to Heyer. For example, *False Colors* by Alex Beecroft, features two British naval officers and the setting and plot has more in common with Victorian adventure novels by authors like Frederick Marryat or W.H.G. Kingston—and with Patrick O'Brian's *Master and Commander*—than with Georgette Heyer's books.

23 Many m/m romance authors, including K.J. Charles and Cat Sebastian, are women, as are their readers, which has led to an ongoing conversation about the appropriation or fetishization of queer sexuality, particularly gay male sexuality, in the romance genre. The conversation is not limited to historical romance and is too extensive to recap here. Interested readers can see Alimurung, Wilson, Brownworth, Thornton, Fessenden, and Meeker to get a sense of the discussion.

24 For example, in her essay, Barot references ManLoveRomance Press, Dreamspinner Press, and her own company Bold Strokes Books. John Markert includes those publishers as well as Torquere Press and Riptide in his section on GLBTQ publishers (234). Online articles recommending LGBTQIA romances are also a useful way to identify queer romance publishers. See, for

example, Christine Grimaldi's 2015 article on *Slate* that references Bold Strokes Books and Riptide Publishing, or Jessica Pryde's 2017 post on *Book Riot* that mentions those two presses, as well as Dreamspinner Press and Bella Books. Like African American romance authors, some LGBTQIA authors had published with now-closed companies like Amber Quill Press, Ellora's Cave, and Samhain.

25 For example, in my reading, I've found few historical romances by or about Latinx people, and no scholarly work on the presence or absence of Latinx characters in the genre (recently published Latinx historical romance authors include Liana De la Rosa, Lydia San Andres, and Mimi Milan).

26 Schiffman and Schnaars published a consumer analysis of historical romance in 1981; a similar study done today would likely provide interesting results.

27 The Spring/Summer 2008 issue of *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice* featured biographical and bibliographic information on selected American romance authors, including Anita Bunkley, Beverly Jenkins, LaVyrle Spencer, and Rosemary Rogers. Scholars interested in those writers would find it a useful source to build on.

Chapter 6

1 For a humorous but accurate description of both genres and their covers see Regina TV "WTF . . . Is Paranormal Romance?"

2 It is difficult to find a single source to substantiate this claim. The first urban fantasy with strong romantic elements that became a success, judging by the number of ratings and the lists in which it is included in Goodreads, is *PsyCop* (2006–ongoing) by Jordan Castillo Price. However, there seems to have been some gay and lesbian paranormal romance in the mid 2000—the Lambda awards, which include PNR and UF in the category of Horror, Fantasy and SF, not in romance, began to feature a scattering M/M paranormal romances written by women among their finalists in 2006, and the number expands rapidly around 2009. This is also the year that Bold Strokes Books began to publish paranormal romance, adding several new books every year after that. Len Barot, the publisher of Bold Strokes Books, commenced her paranormal *Midnight Hunters* series in 2010, under the pen name L.L. Raand, and most of the internet articles providing lists or reading suggestions of gay and lesbian paranormal romance date from the early 2010s as well, with 2013 being the most prolific year in terms of both books published and internet articles.

3 It is interesting how even the author herself admits her debt to paranormal romance but considers her work as "*Harry Potter* for adults," refusing the acknowledge the undeniable commonalities with PNR and UF, as can be seen in her interview with Peter Haldeman for the *New York Times* when the TV series based on the trilogy went on air, titled precisely "All Souls Trilogy: Harry Potter for Grown-Ups?" www.nytimes.com/2019/01/17/books/deborah-harkness-discovery-of-witches-all-souls-trilogy.html?login=smartlock&auth=login-smartlock

4 Sweet Rocket. "The End of a Very Gothic Week—What Happened to the Gothic Revival?" April 26, 2012 https://sweetrocket.wordpress.com/tag/silhouette-dreamscapes/Retrieved December 13, 2016. After Dreamscapes, Harlequin published for a few years LUNA, and currently Nocturne. The category paranormal romance does not seem to enjoy the success of the single-title novels. The Super-Walmart in my Upper Midwest town only started to carry Harlequin Nocturne in 2018, and not regularly, although they always have the latest installments of the most popular paranormal romance series.

5 Her relationships tend to be more traditional, especially after the couples are formed, and, in Crawford's words, "for all their obvious earnestness, the repetitive and stylistic naivety of her novels compares poorly to" other paranormal romance and urban fantasy authors (145).

6 It is almost impossible to find reliable information on book sales. The RWA used to include the percentage of romance readers who read a specific subgenre. In 2014, among romance readers paranormal romance was read by 19 per cent of print readers and 30 per cent of ebook readers. The current statistics in the site do not include this information, although they point out that younger readers tend to read more paranormal romance. Numbers for urban fantasy are even more elusive, since the genre is sold under different categories.
7 See Chapter 7 on Young Adult romance for more on the reactions to *Twilight*.
8 Gregory Kirschling, "Interview with Vampire Writer Stephenie Meyer." *Entertainment Weekly* July 5, 2008, https://ew.com/article/2008/07/05/interview-vampire-writer-stephenie-meyer/. Retrieved January 19, 2019
9 Merry Gentry, the heroine of another urban fantasy series by Hamilton (2000–ongoing) does become a mother of triplets, all by different fathers, and she is not in an exclusive relationship. For an analysis of sexuality in this series see: Lennard, John. "Of Sex and Faerie: Meredith Gentry's Improbable Code of Orgasm and Other Paranormal Romance" In *Of Sex and Faerie: Further Essays on Genre Fiction*. To the contrary, in the new urban fantasies the relationship model has a lot more in common with another successful and ongoing series that started in the 1990s, the futuristic/science fiction *In Death* series by Nora Roberts/J.D. Robb (1995–ongoing). Her protagonist, Eve, met her partner in the first novel, and their relationship is an integral part of series since then (43-novel-long and counting). Eve is still the main character and the story is consistently narrated from her exclusive point of view. The mysteries she encounters as a police detective are hers to solve, even if sometimes her husband plays a supportive role. While these novels depict an unstable, menacing, and violent society, they compensate with strong, stable, emotional ties as those in Robb/Robert's series. First of all through coupledom, but also through the social networks that are built throughout the series by the accumulation of interconnected couples and/or the friendship and loyalty ties developed by the heroine. The instability of the world is balanced by the stability of the community created by family and friendship.
10 Although outside of the purview of this chapter, the success of the dystopian worlds of The Hunger Games (2008–10) and Divergent (2011–13) young adult trilogies—among many others—confirms the tendency.
11 This trend was already predicted by Sarah Wendell and Candy Tan in *Beyond Heaving Bosoms* (2009).
12 Kamblé draws on Richard Dyer's argument that whiteness has been constructed as a group of traits, such as intellectual prowess and control over sexual desire, which allegedly are absent in people of color and present more often in men than women.

Chapter 7

1 Whether or not young adult literature falls under the umbrella term of "children's literature" is an additional site of contestation within the field/s. In this essay, I will use the traditional structure of situating young adult literature as an aspect within the larger field of children's literature.
2 In many ways, Rose's *The Case for Peter Pan* became to children's literature studies what Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance* became to popular romance studies: a seminal text that helped to codify the field around a specific way of thinking about the genre, but which has become, as An Goris notes of Radway's text, "subjected to quite harsh and even unforgiving critiques which seem to create and perpetuate a stereotypical image and too simplistic interpretation of this complex and theoretically sophisticated study" ("Matricide in Romance Scholarship").
3 The ease of access to contemporary fanfiction may provide a possible counterexample to Zipes's claim.

4 For examples of texts about young adult literature that cite Hinton's 1967 novel, *The Outsiders*, as heralding the rise of realistic YA, see Herz and Gallo, 10; Hill, 1; and Short, Tomlinson, Lynch-Brown, and Johnson, 6. The longest-published and best-known textbook on YA, Alleen Pace Nilsen and Kenneth L. Donelson's *Literature for Today's Young Adults*, is more nuanced in providing an excellent historical overview of the socio-cultural elements that impacted earlier YA from 1800–1966, but ultimately still establishes 1967 as the "milestone year" in the turn to realistic YA (11).

5 The Young Adult Services Division was not, however, the first group within the ALA dedicated to teen reading. In 1930 the ALA formed the Young People's Reading Round Table (encompassing both children's and what-would-become young adult literature), and in 1941 that group became part of the ALA Division of Libraries for Children and Young People.

6 Of course, there exist many earlier texts that could be categorized as young adult romance, notably Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (1868), Susan Coolidge's *What Katy Did Next*, and various series novels by Lucy Maud Montgomery (1908–39). While young people certainly read these novels, most scholars categorize them as "family stories" (or a similar term) because the texts predate both the construction of adolescence as a psychological "separate state" (not officially sanctioned until G. Stanley Hall's work in 1904), and the rise of the teenager as a distinct consumer demographic in the 1930s and 1940s.

7 I must note that the junior novels (and their scholarship) were not the first romance novels for a younger audience. Once again I am confronted with the problem of delimiting the field, and thus I claim the 1940s through the 1960s as the "first period" of scholarship on YA romance because it occurs during the rise of the teenager as both a developmental *and* a commodified life stage (thus separating it from the slightly earlier "adolescent," which focused on biological stages). The first period therefore coincides with the rise of the teenager not only as a developmental stage, but as a specific economic demographic of its own—one that directly led to and maintained the junior novel.

8 Similarly, in "The Junior Novel—Pro and Con" Anne Emery and James L. Summers took the "pro" position, noting that:

> Most of these young readers, from 11 to 15 or so, are not ready for the subtleties and intricacies of adult fiction . . . They are trying to find values, firm beliefs and philosophies and understand people and life, beginning with themselves ... Intense experience with immature books, are valuable in themselves, but they also furnish links with more significant literary experiences later. (qtd. in Magaliff 18)

9 Havighurst defines a developmental task as "a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks" (qtd. in Alm "Study" 27).

10 Richard Alm's view of the junior novel is not wholly negative; indeed, the majority of his article is actually spent in reviewing junior novels "of real stature" (317). Ultimately, Alm provides a methodology for distinguishing between excellent, mediocre, and inferior junior novels.

11 Burton was one of the few scholars to write against the concept of the single, monolithic adolescent reader:

> when we speak of "adolescent readers" we may feel that we are talking about a very limited audience, but actually the "adolescent" or "the adolescent reader" is something only theoretical and amorphous, for, as every high school teacher knows, the quantitative and qualitative differences in reactions to literature are as great among adolescent readers as among the general reading population. (Burton "Novel" 363)

12 These three articles are Ruth S. Meyer's "Does Reading Pulp Lead to Reading Literature?" Barbara Ann Porte's "In Turning Children on to Reading, Quality Counts," and Wigutoff's "A Short Course on Answering Those Who Defend Romance Series."

13 For the middle section, Christian-Smith administered a reading survey to 75 girls, and performed extensive interviews with 29 girls. Although this approach suggests a methodology derived from Education, that section is dominated by the textual analysis, suggesting an English-disciplinary focus. Obviously, no methodology belongs to a discipline, but it is important to recognize that part of what made Christian-Smith's arguments new and different was that she combined multiple methodologies—traditionally representing different fields—within a single scholarly text. Indeed, this cross-disciplinary methodology would be used in future criticism, most notably in Amy Pattee's 2011 *Reading the Adolescent Romance*.

14 Christian-Smith's analysis of readers' responses proves to be as disheartening. Within a schoolroom setting, the interviewees—categorized as "reluctant readers"—read romances as a site of resistance against such categorization, and against schooling that failed to recognize their interests. Their resistance, however, "perpetuated and reinforced these girls' identities as students that would not finish school or would graduate with skills that would qualify them only for low-skill exploitative jobs" (116). Ultimately, as Christian-Smith suggests:

> Romance fiction's universe of conspicuous consumption meshes with the girls' longing for a life of comfort and affluence. The school identities of these 29 girls as reluctant readers, and the work undertaken to buy commodities, help to consolidate their class identities around low-paying service-sector work (135).

15 This problem may be partially attributed to the time period in which the text was published: although Christian-Smith's book was published in 1990, she stops her analysis with texts published in 1982, at which point young adult series romance had only be around for two years.

16 Cart himself provides examples of scholars' removal of romance fiction from the canon of young adult literature. He points out, for example, that G. Robert Carlsen's *Books and the Teen-Age Reader* (1967), a highly influential text from the first period of scholarship, divided YA into ten categories, but that "Romance, amazingly, is not on Carlsen's list of categories, although he does append a lengthy list of what he calls 'girls' stories'" (Cart 32).

17 Caplan's text is aimed primarily at librarians working with teenagers. It is organized by type (classic romance, contemporary romance, contemporary romance series, issues romance, alternative reality romance, romantic suspense, historical romance, and Christian romance) which mostly holds today, but may be somewhat dated in its inclusion of "Gay, Lesbian, and Bisexual Romance" as a subtopic of "Issue Romance."

18 Additional scholarship focused on historical contextualization includes the following: Mills; Thompson; Allen, "Charm", "The Cinderella-Makers").

19 Anne B. Thompson similarly calls us to complicate this history. In "Rereading Fifties Teen Romance: Reflections on Janet Lambert," she contextualizes Lambert's junior novels against Francine Pascal's *Sweet Valley* series. In reviewing scholarship on Lambert's texts, she recognizes that "no one ... cites much from the novels themselves, or subjects them to detailed commentary with regard to their content and style" (374). The thesis of her article, then, is to "hold the books up to our gaze to see properly what is there and to explain why I think they need to be discussed with a bit more care and interest" (374).

20 See Day et al. and Basu et al.

Chapter 9

1 It is also worth noting that erotic romances often incorporate other plot structures to support the erotic/romantic narrative, perhaps to keep the narrative moving after the work of the romance narrative has been resolved and the text has moved into the post-HEA space. Lisa Renee Jones' *Inside Out* series, for instance, includes a suspense plot that drives the novels even after the romantic relationship between protagonists Sara and Chris is solidified.
2 Specifically, Mudge is referring to the work of female authors like Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, and Delarivier Manley.
3 These four writers were identified by Kate Duffy as "four of the great writers of erotic romance of all time," and she went on to recruit all four to write for Kensington Brava. (Duffy "Note from Editorial Director.")
4 While this shift in publishing mode for erotic romance is certainly not the only reason for the recent closure of Ellora's Cave, it should not be discounted as a factor.

Chapter 10

1 The research and writing of this chapter were supported by the following grants: a DePaul University Academic Initiative Grant and a Faculty Research and Development Summer Research Grant from the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences at DePaul University.
2 For more on Vivian Stephens's contributions see Chapter 16.

Chapter 11

1 Melissa August, "Sheikhs and the Serious Blogger," *Time*, Monday, August 22, 2005 http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1096809,00.html; Patrick T. Reardon, "The Mystery of Sheik Romance Novels," *Chicago Tribune*, April 24, 2006 http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-04-24/features/0604240223_1_romance-readers-romance-novel-sheik; Dave Gilson, "Lust in the Dust," *Mother Jones*, March/April 2006 http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2006/03/lust-dust; Brian Whitaker, "Those Sexy Arabs," *The Guardian*, March 23, 2006 http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2006/mar/23/thosesexyarabs.

Chapter 12

1 The collection ends with an essay that draws a through line from the successive reprintings of the work of a late nineteenth-century American romance author to 1980s romance and Jayne Anne Krentz's novel covers.
2 Davis provides a comprehensive look at the controversy surrounding paperbacking and reveals how it contributed to the disapprobation directed at the romance genre as well.
3 For a review of romance novel dust jackets and covers, see my chapter "Branding a Genre: A Brief Transatlantic History of Romance Novel Cover Art" in the essay collection *Romance Fiction and American Culture*.
4 As paperback sales rose, there was a book-banning wave across the United States, beginning with the hearings of the House of Representatives Select Committee on Current Pornographic Materials in 1952. The committee declared its intent to investigate "filthy sex books" with their "lurid and daring illustrations of voluptuous young women on the covers" (Davis 220). There were other legal hurdles in some cases, such as in Texas, which imposed fines not only on the authors of supposedly obscene books but also on cover artists.

5 See my "Branding a Genre: A Brief Transatlantic History of Romance Novel Cover Art" for more on bodice-rippers and the association of romance fiction with the normalization of sexual violence.
6 Oddly enough, this has less to do with what the sign meant to readers and more to do with romance publishers' belief that it would be easier for male salesmen to sell novels that featured undressed women to male booksellers. Consequently, novels with such covers (especially the paperbacks that were sold in airports and grocery and drug stores) dominated the marketplace. While as early as 1981, in the *New York Times* column "Paperback Talk," Ray Waiters reported that per an industry insider, "bodice-rippers, those stories of rape and violence that crowded the best-seller list not long ago, are definitely out," they appeared to be everywhere.
7 This is not to suggest that the sign does not have such a meaning for many romance readers. I have tracked online discussions in which readers express a preference for just such a sign (see *Uncovering and Recovering the Popular Romance Novel*). But the covers are polyvalent signs and the Media Romance grew by ignoring the other meanings and fixing on the one that would be most derogatory.
8 See Philip K. Dougherty's 1980 *New York Times* article "Selling Books Like Tide" or Waiters's abovementioned column, which reports on the first RWA conference and says that romance novels are "marketed like brands of cornflakes."
9 Collins's oeuvre falls far outside the romance novel genre; it edges toward soaps like *Dynasty*, a genre more rightly called glam or vamp fiction for its focus on the promiscuous rich.
10 This apprehensiveness has been an undercurrent in much anti-novel discourse. William Warner notes that "The figure of the woman reader eroticizes reading through the presumption of an automatic relay: if a reader reads erotic novels, then she will act out by having sex" (141).
11 That women readers cannot distinguish between fiction and reality, lose aesthetic distance, and overidentify with characters is an old critique, going back to the rise of the novel as a form and evident in romance criticism. I have noted this in Chapters 4 and 5 of *Uncovering and Recovering the Popular Romance Novel*; see also, in particular, Aliaga-Buchenau, Davis, Jensen, Leavis, and Warner.
12 Several romances now acknowledge that sexuality covers a spectrum and have characters that participate in kink (such as having a partner's hands restrained) or identify as kinky but BDSM/kink is a genre in its own right.

Chapter 13

1 For digital humanities scholarship on popular romance fiction, see Jack Elliott's "Patterns and Trends in Harlequin Category Romance," "Vocabulary Decay in Category Romance," and "Whole Genre Sequencing."
2 By "born literary" Eagleton would seem to mean that some texts are written and disseminated in ways that invite us to talk about the artfulness and insight of the author, the complexity and patterning of the text, the nuance or depth of its characters, the beauty of its language, and so on. A text that "achieves literariness" would be one that was written with some other set of hopes and expectations—to teach, to save souls, to entertain, to shape a debate–but which comes in time to be treated as literature in some ongoing fashion, not only because of what people say about it, but in terms of who does that saying and where it takes place: in the academy, in publications aimed at educated readers, in the conversation of poets, novelists, playwrights, etc., and in critical and canonical editions, but *not* in entertainment magazines, at church book groups, on Oprah's book club, or in paperback reprints with covers from film adaptations. As for texts' having literariness "thrust upon them," it is perhaps worth recalling the source of Eagleton's

allusion. In it, Shakespeare's Malvolio reads with delight about having greatness thrust upon him in a letter purporting to be a declaration of Olivia's love—but which in fact advises him to behave in ways that will incur her displeasure. The scholar who "thrusts literariness" on a romance novel may not, in fact, be doing it a favor, at least if it leaves the text looking smug, self-important, and cross-gartered (*Twelfth Night* 2:5, 155).

3 The term "doxa" was popularized in literary studies by Roland Barthes. For a useful introduction to the term, its meanings, and its use in literary and rhetorical studies, see Amossy.

4 For more on popular romance as a signifier—both in its Mills & Boon and single-title historical varieties—see Jayashree Kamblé's chapter (Chapter 12) in this volume on media romance.

5 To be sure, not all romance novels flaunt the lushness of their prose. Jayashree Kamblé notes, for example, the "staccato prose" of Nora Roberts, which "lends her work a spartan charm, an unromantic kind of romantic storytelling" ("What's Love" 23): a quick, qualitative, memorable description that is rare in both the scholarship and reviewing of the genre.

6 For more on genre fiction as a technology that facilitates "thinking with tired brains" about substantive topics see Roberts (127–149); for SF as the site of "cognitive estrangement" see Suvin (7–12). The bibliography on mystery/detective fiction and moral issues is extensive; for a good introduction, see Berges.

7 Vivanco's account of how romance fiction uses these overarching metaphors draws on the scholarship of psychologist Robert Sternberg, whose *Love is a Story: a New Theory of Relationships* explores the range of metaphors through which individuals and couples articulate their expectations and understandings of love. Although this is a volume for the general public, Sternberg's discussion of metaphor as a mode of cognition seems a promising and under-studied resource for Popular Romance Studies.

8 Vendler distinguishes such "aesthetic criticism," the core of her own practice, from "ideological criticism," which "is not interested in the uniqueness of the work of art, wishing always to conflate it with other works sharing its values" (2). She also notes in passing that, from her perspective, "one cannot write properly, or even meaningfully, on an art work to which one has not responded aesthetically" (5): a useful challenge for the romance scholar to keep in mind.

9 For a discussion of this reading method as a classroom practice, see Selinger, "Use Heart in Your (Re)Search."

10 For accounts of the "Media Romance" see Kamblé's *Making Meaning* (21), "Branding a Genre," and Chapter 12 in this volume.

11 The keynote for this scholarly tradition was struck by Tania Modleski's *Loving with a Vengeance* (1982), which addresses the issue of standardization briefly, in a clipped, disapproving discussion of the "strict set of rules" that Harlequin novelists must follow, which "even dictates the point of view from which the narrative must be told" (32). In the opening chapter of *Reading the Romance* (1984) Janice Radway seems more impressed, not only by "the effectiveness of commodity packaging and advertising" (20) in this segment of the publishing industry but also by the market research, focus group interviews, and other forms of "consumer testing" that stand behind it (42). If this leads to "authorial initiative and decision-making power [being] curtailed," Radway writes, this is simply the logical consequence of a shift by publishers from "locating or even creating an audience for an existing manuscript" to "locating or even creating a manuscript for an already-constituted reading public" (43). For more recent work on what romance publishers have told authors and how those guidelines have developed, see John Markert's chapter (Chapter 16) in this volume.

12 Madeline Hunter, in a book review, thus describes the "common wisdom" among authors that historical novels set outside the U.K. "don't sell" (Hunter). More research is needed on the impact of self-publishing on where and when romance novels are set in the twenty-first century.

13 "The popular imagination holds that sword and sorcery is the paradise of arrested male adolescence," Mark Scroggins explains: a genre where "broad-thewed and dim-witted barbarians stride across pseudo-medieval landscapes, fighting wizards and giant snakes, rescuing (and bedding) grateful but sketchily characterized young women—all for the entertainment and titillation of socially maladapted teenaged boys" (23).

14 Although Bly does not mention her foundational essay "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different," Ann Barr Snitow is another early romance scholar indebted to this critical tradition, as we can see when Snitow avers that "to analyze Harlequin romances is not to make any literary claims for them," because "they are not art but rather what Lillian Robinson has called 'leisure activities that take the place of art'" (142).

15 Accusations of sameness often enter critical discourse with a whiff of superiority, as though they were trying to establish and defend the primacy of academic training or critical taste over the interest and expertise of those "millions." (In the case of Modleski, who grew up as a romance reader, the distinction is between the younger self, "an addict," and the adult investigating and resisting that addiction ("My Life,"53).) Often, however, a nervous recognition of the superior knowledge of pleasure readers reasserts itself. Thus, for example, in the very sentence where Radway refers to romance novels as "factory-produced commodities" she offers a contrasting view of these texts: the Smithton readers "understood themselves to be reading particular and individual authors, whose special marks of style they could recount in detail, *rather than* identical, factory-produced commodities" (11, my emphasis).

16 Scholars adjacent to popular romance studies have persuasively recast much of the romantic fiction of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—the same material that Rachel Anderson dismissed as the "subliterature of love"—as a "low modern" literary form. Martin Hipsky reads romantic fiction by Mary Ward, Marie Corelli, Emma Orczy, Florence Barclay, and Elinor Glyn alongside Woolf and Lawrence in order to explore their common interests in love, desire, ecstasy, and "the imperative to loft us [as readers] ... into a refashioned symbolic order that would bridge us across the pain of the historical Real" (Hipsky, xxi). Laura Frost's work on "The Romance of Cliché" explores how Lawrence approaches, appropriates, and disavows the depictions of female desire and erotic transcendence espoused in bestselling love stories by female authors, notably E.M. Hull's *The Sheik*.

17 For a contrasting account of genre as a given of all textuality, see Derrida, "The Law of Genre," especially his assertion that "there is no genreless text, there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging" (230).

18 As Cawelti ruefully noted in the early 1990s, *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* supplied extended discussions of exemplary figures from the Western, detective fiction, and social melodrama, but none of the authors discussed was a woman, and despite its title, the book contains "almost nothing about romance" ("Masculine Myths and Feminist Revisions," 123).

19 Radway presents *Green Lady* as an outlier text, and she distinguishes the authorial team writing as "Leigh Ellis," Anne and Louisa Rudeen, for their university educations (the latter went to Yale, she notes) and for what she sees as their atypical awareness of "literary history and generic conventions" (152). These gestures *ought* to have inspired the scholars who followed her in the 1980s to seek out other, equally savvy authors and novels. That few were, in fact, inspired to do so says a good deal about the academic reputation of popular romance and the hurdles faced by popular romance studies, but many such authors exist, and it is never too late to start.

20 That genre-incompetence and the *refusal* of such competence are two different issues can be seen in Robyn R. Warhol's discussion of the film *Pretty Woman* in *Having a Good Cry: Effeminate Feelings and Pop-Culture Forms*. Warhol has clear mastery of the genre-systems to which the film belongs, but she confesses herself ashamed of her own pleasurable reaction to the film, and when

she notices wit, insight, complexity, intelligence, or nuance in it, she attributes these to the activity of a "perverse" and "self-conscious" viewer, rather than to the film or its makers (67; see Selinger, "When I Paint," 297–299).

21 For examples of such metacritical research, see Frantz and Selinger ("Introduction"), Regis ("What Do Critics Owe the Romance"), and Goris ("Matricide)

22 For a discussion of the power of communal expectations to shape interpretive activity, see Stanley Fish's essay "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One" (Fish, 322–327).

23 Of particular note in *Doubled Plots* are groundbreaking essays on race in romance—pieces on *Miss Numè of Japan by* Onoto Watanna [Winnifred Eaton] (Ouyang), on race in E. M. Hull's *The Sheik* (Blake), and on African American women's historical romances (Dandridge)—on the queerness or queer potential of heterosexual romance (Burley), and on the economic ideology underpinning Kathleen Woodiwiss's *The Flame and the Flower* (Hinnant).

24 I paraphrase Sumita Chakravaty's essay "Teaching Indian Cinema," which closes with the statement that "a Bollywood film is something to think *with* even more than something to think *about*" (108, emph. Chakravaty's). For more on the notion of aesthetic criticism treating a text's ideas as functional and structural rather than ideological features, see Vendler (4).

25 For more on Shakespeare in popular romance see Osborne and Whyte; for more on Austen and popular romance see Frantz ("Darcy's Vampiric Descendents"), Gillis ("Manners"), Kroeg, and Tyler. The relationships between poetry and popular romance have yet to be studied in published scholarship.

26 The Library of America, which "champions our nation's cultural heritage by publishing America's greatest writing," thus includes handsome hardcover editions of Hammett, H.P. Lovecraft, Philip K. Dick, Ursula LeGuin, and an anthology of Crime Novels from the 1930s and 1940s ("Library of America").

27 Despite Paizis's assertion that "the criteria used to judge 'high' literature make little sense when applied to products of mass culture" (35), a review like this one makes it clear that the invocation of those "higher" criteria remains a crucial strategy in claiming literary value for authors and works of popular fiction.

28 As Lionel Trilling points out in "The Fate of Pleasure," to the young Keats, the chief end of poetry was "to soothe the cares, and lift the thoughts of man" ("Sleep and Poetry"), but since the late nineteenth century this aspiration has struck critics and sophisticated readers as "the essence of philistinism" (435). For an extended discussion of Trilling's essay and the emergence of "doxa of difficulty" see Frost (*Problem* 3–12). Andreas Huyssen's account of modernism as "an aesthetic based on the uncompromising repudiation of what Emma Bovary loved to read" is relevant to this history (45), as is John Guillory's discussion of how the foundational New Critics taught their acolytes to flinch at sentiment, encouragement, emotional identification with characters, and other traits routinely marked as feminine or effeminate (173).

Chapter 14

1 Goris' dissertation, including the abstract from which this quotation is drawn, is publicly accessible at https://limo.libis.be/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=LIRIAS1808825&context=L&vid=Lirias&search_scope=Lirias&tab=default_tab&lang=en_US&fromSitemap=1. Accessed August 21, 2018.

2 For information about the collection, see https://lib.hoover.mcdaniel.edu/arc.

3 This characterization appears on Alexander's website. "The life of Marie Bjelke-Petersen." www.alisonalexander.com.au/books/mortal-flame, dated 2013, accessed February 14, 2019.

4 www.genreworlds.com/about.

5 https://www.rwa.org/p/cm/ld/fid=554%20-%20Driscoll#Driscoll.
6 https://www.rwa.org/p/bl/et/blogid=20&blogaid=1415.
7 https://digitalgallery.bgsu.edu/exhibits/show/romance_in_color.
8 She maintains a list of publications at www.beverlyjenkins.net/web/. For an overview, consult www.salon.com/2017/06/25/uncommon-ground-beverly-jenkins-diverse-romance-and-american-history-the-way-it-really-happened/.
9 http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8gt5rhv/admin/.
10 The page devoted to Barot at an earlier iteration of the Popular Romance Project website http://popularromanceproject.org/barot/ appears to be defunct. As of June 2018, the project has a new website, which includes a page on *Love Between the Covers* www.blueberryhillproductions.com/prp.
11 https://www.princeton.edu/prcw/.

Chapter 15

1 We exclude Jayne Ann Krentz's (1992) *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women* from our analysis for this reason. While the book examines many of the issues of interest to social scientists, the work represents literary criticism and analysis, not social science.
2 Contemporary romance is the subgenre of novels "set from 1950 to the present that focus primarily on the romantic relationship" (www.rwa.org).
3 The Romance Writers of America is the leading professional trade organization for romance authors; the RITA award for excellence is given annually to one book in each of 12 subgenres within romance (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RITA_Award).

Chapter 16

1 Grescoe is much less critical of Hickey's tenure than I. The disparate views are largely the result of the time frame: Grescoe was immersed in developments at Harlequin under Hickey during the first few years of his tenure while I looked back at some of the issues that arose later in his career.
2 McAleer ends the story of Mills & Boon in 1972 before the London publisher was purchased by Harlequin. His contribution is to show the struggle to establish Mills & Boon as a major romance publisher in the United Kingdom.
3 See Chapter 24, "In response to Harlequin: global legacy, local agency," by Kathrina Mohd Daud for a discussion of the international development of the romance industry in the twenty-first century.
4 Palmer's attempt to link the contemporary romance industry with developments in mass-market publishing is filled with errors which undermine her connections. Two glaring ones is her statement that "the romance [novel] was born in 1972, and no sooner" (122) and shortly thereafter contradicting this statement by negating any contribution by others in the United States to the production of romances in her assessment that in 1970, "Harlequin held 100% of the romance market" (124).
5 The history of Harlequin is traced in the three books that detail developments at Harlequin that were discussed at the beginning of this article, regardless of the years that are the focal point of the analysis: Jensen, Grescoe, and Markert. Most of the historical critique in these works, as well as Dixon's and McAleer's on Mills & Boon, are based, in part, on extant articles in popular newspapers and magazines accounts, such as *Publishers Weekly*, and on authorial interviews with those in the industry. The historical information in this section is based on my earlier works,

unless otherwise cited (Markert "Publishing Decision"; "Romance Publishing"; *Publishing Romance*; see also *Thirty Years of Harlequin*).

6 I have chosen to use the term "fifties" romances for these novels produced in the 1960s to avoid confusion. The term "sixties" often connotes changes in attitudes taking place on college campuses during this period; "fifties" more adequately reflects the content of these early, sweet romances. Betty Friedan, writing for *TV Guide* in 1964, takes the television shows of the 1960s (*The Donna Reed Show*, 1958–66; *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet*, 1952–66; and *Leave It to Beaver*, 1957–63) to task for promoting dated "fifties" values. Her lengthy commentary is just as applicable to the romance novel as it is the television shows of the period.

7 Information in this section is based on extant articles in popular newspapers and magazines accounts, such as *Publishers Weekly*, and on authorial interviews with those in the industry, unless otherwise cited (Markert "Publishing Decision"; "Romance Publishing"; *Publishing Romance*).

8 Despite the sensuality of the so-called bodice-rippers, the sexual escapades were rather quickly glossed over and not dwelt on. Roger's first sexual tryst is over in a few sentences: "She felt her body bending backward, felt the length of his hard body against her, and then somehow, they had almost fallen on the rough, dirty stone floor together still kissing. Their hands found and uncovered each other, and then, without preliminaries, he was over her, penetrating her roughly and deeply and, after her first cry of despair completely satisfying" (*Sweet Savage Love* 14). See also the discussion of these early sensual historicals by Thurston as well as Lyons and Selinger.

9 Information in this section is based on extant articles in popular newspapers and magazines accounts, such as *Publishers Weekly*, and on authorial interviews with those in the industry, unless otherwise cited (Markert "Publishing Decision"; "Romance Publishing"; *Publishing Romance*).

10 Heisey, who was responsible for the break with Simon & Shuster, was promoted to the honorary position of chairman when Galloway took over the reins to become president and CEO of Harlequin in 1983. Galloway faced a formable task: recapturing Harlequin's dominant market position. He accomplished this in fairly short order: by the time he was promoted to president and CEO of Harlequin's parent, Torstar, in 1988, he had shepherded to fruition the purchase of its major rival, Silhouette, and moved sales from a low point of $11 million to $52 million (Kearns "David Galloway").

11 A loss leader is when a product (e.g., Janet Dailey) actually loses money because the cost (royalties) outweighs the sales. Loss leaders, however, are widely used because they bring in consumers who might purchase other products. In the case of Dailey, her name would generate interest in the Silhouette line because of her fans, and once familiar with Silhouette, her fans were likely to buy other Silhouette novels.

12 For more on Vivian Stephens see Chapter 10.

13 Time-Life put out a number of nonfiction series books on a range of subjects from cooking to the Civil War. Stephens was one of a number of individuals who researched background information used in the books. Her Time-Life position was her first job in publishing.

14 The hero lost an arm in Vietnam. He is 28, not perfect, not extraordinarily handsome, but with a keen sense of humor. The heroine is the widow of a Marine killed in combat. The heroine's relationship with her deceased husband had been less than ideal: he was a wife abuser.

15 Management's attitude was still condescending, but they were beginning to realize how lucrative the market was. The launch of Silhouette also showed others in the field that Harlequin was vulnerable to direct competition in the contemporary market.

16 Both the hero and the heroine have more scars, both physically and mentally, than marked the contemporary pre-1980 pining-for-love heroine and the perfect (handsome and often wealthy) hero. See endnote 14.

17 This is my conclusion after interviewing editors and senior management at most of the major romance houses in the first half of the 1980s (Markert "Publishing Decision"; "Romance Publishing"). Support for the growing disenchantment of readers about the quality of books was remarked on by Vivian Jennings in her romance newsletter, *Boy Meets Girl* 1984.

18 Loveswept was one of the few houses to regularly release a series of noncategory romances. It is interesting to observe that Carolyn Nicholas was responsible for the first successful category challenge to Dell's Ecstasy line with Second Chance at Love (1982); she was also one of the first to realize category romances in the style of Second Chance were "dead" and introduced Loveswept as the "author's line" in 1983 (Nicholas; Edwards; Guiley 177–8).

19 Despite the wide range of houses, most are owned by one of five conglomerates: Bertelsmann (Germany) owns 34 houses in the United States; Hachette (France), owns 17; Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation (British) controls 25, if its recent acquisition of Harlequin is added to the mix. Rounding out the Big Five are and Holzbrinck (Germany) with 19 houses and Simon & Schuster (U.S.A.) with ten.

20 For African American romance, see Chapter 10 of this collection; for Young Adult, see Chapter 7; for Christian/Inspirational romance, see Chapter 8; for erotic romance, see Chapter 9; for paranormal romance, see Chapter 6. LGBTQIA romance is discussed in Chapter 18; a useful history of LGBTQIA romance publishing can be found in Barot.

21 Romance e-book sales have imploded since 2010 because of at least two interrelated issues, which could prove a fertile ground for study by those working in the digital humanities. The first revolves around Ellora's Cave, whose sales appear to have dropped from $6.7 million in 2006 to $5 million in 2010 ("Curious"). EC has garnered most of the attention because of a public spat between EC and Dear Author blogger Jane Little (the pen name of Jennifer Gerrish-Lampe), who suggested the EC's falling sales meant they would soon be out of business. The real problem affecting sales is one that I suspect is facing all the early small digital presses, who initially had the field to themselves. The internet is simply awash today with romance titles on sites like Amazon (Robinson; Reilly). One reason for the abundance of romance titles on internet sites since 2010 is that mainstream publishers have since entered the digital era. The outpouring of romances on internet sites is compounded by the growing problem of piracy, which is thriving today because a bevy of romance "authors" are rewriting, often minimally, books that have succeeded in print, and while legitimate sites like Amazon have a policy of reimbursing royalties if the author can prove plagiarism, it is a difficult (and laborious) process to prove (Lanzendorfer).

22 I am referring to those legitimate, often struggling, self-publishing romance authors and not the pirates mentioned in endnote 21.

23 I am indebted to Beverly Kendall for allowing me to discuss, often verbatim, her findings.

24 Kensington (formerly Zebra) is one of the few major houses outside the "Big Five" (see endnote 19) that is not owned by a conglomerate, which, less bureaucratically encumbered, gives it more freedom to respond to changing market conditions, and always being a maverick publisher, they are not afraid to delve into erotica (Markert, *Publishing Romance* 165, 167, 200, 202–3, 243–5, 247–8, 295, 297).

25 Dreamspinner Press also releases male/male romances largely written by heterosexual woman but their novels are marketed to gay men even though Elizabeth North at Dreamspinner recognizes that women devotees of m/m romances are a strong secondary market.

Chapter 17

1 A fourth type of library, the special library, is not included because it is a library, usually within a corporation or non-profit organization, that focuses exclusively on the needs of that entity. Since popular romance fiction would likely be out of its scope, it is not a common choice for studies of this kind.
2 In Australia the program Public Lending Rights provides a small compensation to authors when books are borrowed; a similar program does not currently exist in the United States.
3 For more on these studies and on the status of popular romance in Australia, see Chapter 3 of this volume.
4 Adkins and her fellow researchers received the Romance Writers of America Academic Research Grant in 2006 to help support the research for the national study; I should perhaps acknowledge that in 1996 I received a Librarian of the Year award from the RWA for my work in support of the genre and its readers.
5 Bourdieu's idea of cultural capital is also important to Veros ("A Matter of Meta," "The Romance Reader and the Public Library") discussed above.
6 For more on YA romance see Chapter 7 of this volume.

Chapter 18

1 Phyllis M. Betz has explored class in lesbian romance novels. She notes that very few lesbian characters are working-class but where they are, novels make use of class conflict to provide a barrier to the relationship and to have the wealthy character provide comfort and luxury to allow the romance to happen, similar to the way it functions in heterosexual romance (see esp. 14, 86–96).
2 In a study of romance novel titles, Cox and Fisher (2009) found that words associated with wealth and resources (millionaire, billionaire, tycoon, fortune, wealth, money, diamond, dollar, inheritance, heir, gift, treasure, rich, and gold) appeared a total of 796 times in 15,019 Harlequin romance titles published from 1949–2009, suggesting that wealthy heroes continue to be present (although the authors do not indicate change over time nor do they analyze this data in any detail).
3 For examples of class as represented in the romance comic, popular in 1940s and 1950s America see Barson 153–203.
4 Ann Herendeen's article on her bisexual Regency romances offers an interesting corollary to these romances, with "the combination of high economic, social, and sexual status as desirable ingredients in the romantic hero" (n.p.) persistent in these non-heteronormative novels.
5 Weisser pays some attention to class in her examination of African American romance readers, where she notes that Black romances are as homogenous as Anglo romances in their representation of class.
6 An interesting perspective is offered by Jean Radford in her analysis of Susan Howatch's *Penmarric* (1971). Radford argues that the historical text presents class relations in a visceral, brutal fashion, but is cushioned by its historical distance: "at no point ... is the reader invited to make connections between then and now; it is precisely because of such historical distancing that the text can summon up such an *exposé* while still securely endorsing the contemporary status quo" (180).

Chapter 19

1 In another example, Pamela Regis argues strongly that romance novels are about women's freedom and not their enslavement (xiii). She suggests that the genre requires its heroines to overcome

one or more significant barriers on their path to love and that the happy ending is a celebration of that overcoming and of the heroine's freedom (15). Regis emphasizes the agency of the women depicted in romance: "Romance heroines make their own decisions, make their own livings, and choose their own husbands" (207).

2 As Sedgwick writes, "The desire of a reparative impulse ... is additive and accretive. Its fear, a realistic one, is that the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nurture; it wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self" ("Paranoid and Reparative" 25).

Chapter 20

1 I thank Sophie Been for her assistance with this chapter. The phrase "Harlequin Formula" appears in a range of articles on romance (Carroll; Darbyshire; Holmes; Kipnis; Mulhern; Taylor) as does the phrase "Harlequin Romance Formula" (Dolan; Roy).

2 For critiques of this idea see Ruti.

3 See Illouz.

4 Although Roach discusses the romance/pornography nexus throughout her book, her most explicit treatments of the topic can be found in the chapter "Good Girls Do" (78–103). More on Roach's thought and related scholarship can be found in Chapter 19 (which she co-authored) of this Research Companion.

5 Kinsale's argument has been given greater philosophical (Heideggerian) elaboration in Deborah Lutz's monograph *The Dangerous Lover: Gothic Villains, Byronism, and the Nineteenth-Century Seduction Narrative* (2006).

6 Scholarship on modern popular Gothic romance antedates and overlaps with these pieces by Snitow and Modleski (who has a separate chapter on the Gothic in *Loving With a Vengeance*), and it often addresses issues of gender and sexuality. This scholarship and its legacy are explored in detail in Chapter 4 of this Research Companion.

7 Raewyn Connell, for instance, had not yet published *Masculinities* and had only begun to develop an account of something akin to what we now call "hegemonic masculinity."

8 "The longing for reunion for the mother overrides taboos on homosexuality," Radway explains, and this in turn sometimes provokes romance authors to other and abject lesbian characters, in order "to demonstrate otherwise, to assert, in effect, that mother has nothing to do with lesbianism!" (154).

9 Radway would later describe these novels as documenting an "anxiety about gender construction" that is "widespread in the culture" ("Romance and the Work of Fantasy" 409). For an extended discussion of the hero's heterosexual masculinity in the 1970s–80s as an anxious or defensive reaction to alternative masculinities at the time, including the rise of gay rights, see Kamblé (87–130).

10 In addition to Illouz's monograph *Hard-Core Romance: Fifty Shades of Grey, Best-Sellers, and Society*, discussed below, I would point readers to Claire Trevenen's "Fifty Shades of 'Mommy Porn': A Post-GFC Renegotiation of Paternal Law" (2014).

11 For more on Australian romances, including from a gender/sexuality perspective, see Bellanta (2014) and the scholarship reviewed in Chapter 3 of this Research Guide; for more on African American romance, see Chapter 10.

12 Kamblé, too, sees the genre's insistence on heterosexuality as betraying a fundamental anxiety, with attention to cross-dressing as a motif. See in particular her chapters on "Heterosexuality: Negotiating Normative Romance Novel Desire" and "White Protestantism: Race and Religious Ethos in Romance Novels," both in *Making Meaning in Popular Romance Fiction*.

13 For accounts of lesbian pulp romance, on its own and in dialogue with more recent romance fiction, see Lynch, Sternglantz, and Barot (2012), Matelski (2016), and Gunn and Harker (2013). For curated samples of these texts, see: Bronski (2013); Slide (2013); and Forrest (2005).
14 The shorthand "F/F" is used to indicate that the protagonists of a text are both women; this category overlaps with lesbian romance, but may also include novels where either one or both of the women is bisexual or pansexual, rather than lesbian.
15 Lynch is also an established lesbian romance author, under the name Nell Stark. The relationship between "Queering the Romantic Heroine" and Stark's novels has yet to be explored.
16 For some first steps along these lines, see Greenfeld-Benovitz, "The Interactive Romance Community: The Case of 'Covers Gone Wild.'"
17 It is, perhaps, worth noting that the genre did not exclusively offer the heroine's perspective before the turn that Frantz describes. E.M. Hull's *The Sheik*, for example, spends a good deal of time in Sheik Ahmed's point of view.
18 Kamblé's insistence on a rigorously historicist approach to popular romance aligns her with the arguments of Mary Bly in "On Popular Romance, J. R. Ward, and the Limits of Genre Study." For more on Bly and historicist readings of romance, see Chapter 13 of this Research Companion.
19 For a larger consideration of Black queer studies, see: Ferguson's *Aberrations in Black: A Queer of Color Critique* (2003); Johnson and Henderson's edited collection *Black Queer Studies: A Critical Anthology* (2005); Johnson's edited collection *No Tea, No Shade: New Writings in Black Queer Studies* (2016).

Chapter 21

1 See Eric M. Selinger and Laura Vivanco's chapter "Romance and/as religion" in this volume for a more detailed discussion of Reddy's thesis and how it relates to romance novels.
2 Some parts of this section have appeared in Teo "The Romance Novel."
3 For a more in-depth discussion of love in Austen's novels see Polhemus and Weisser.
4 This secularization, however, is a superficial phenomenon relating specifically to the effacement of overt aspects of Christianity in modern romance novels. As Selinger and Vivanco's chapter shows, love in romance novels remains pervasively and persistently religious. Catherine Roach, too, argues that romance novels continue to promulgate a "religion of love" (22–3).
5 See Sarah Frantz Lyons and Eric Murphy Selinger's discussion of the crucial differences between *The Flame and the Flower* and *Sweet Savage Love* in their 2016 chapter, "Strange Stirrings, Strange Yearnings: *The Flame and the Flower*, *Sweet Savage Love*, and the Lost Diversities of Blockbuster Historical Romance."

Chapter 22

1 Romance author Judi McCoy quoted in *Romance Today: An A-to-Z Guide to Contemporary American Romance Writers* (Charles and Mosley 266).
2 See, for example, Crusie Smith ("Romancing Reality"); Jensen makes a comparable argument in *Love's $weet Return: The Harlequin Story* (64).
3 For a discussion of how romance fiction depicts social issues and practical responses to them, see Vivanco, 54–60). For an extended discussion of modern popular romance novels from a religious perspective, see Vivanco's online work-in-progress, *Faith, Love, Hope and Popular Romance Fiction*.
4 For more on the emergence of Muslim romance fiction in online platforms, see Parnell.

5 For a useful overview of this history, see Lazar; a recent in-depth discussion of possible Muslim influence can be found in Menocal.

6 For an extended treatment of how nineteenth- and twentieth-century Catholic and Protestant theologians and public figures brought this re-evaluation of heterosexual sexuality into mainline Christian thought, see Gardella.

7 We have elided here Kamblé's assertion that this is specifically a "*white* Protestant ethos" (131) not least because both Huguley and her characters are African American, which may complicate Kamblé's claim. Kamblé's chapter on "Race and Religious Ethos in Romance Novels" focuses on a particular construction of the relationship between (racialized) body and spirit in white-authored texts, drawn in large part from Richard Dyer's *White: Essays on Race and Culture*; although she discusses South Asian romance author Nalini Singh in this chapter, she does not take up African American romance fiction—nor, indeed, texts by white authors whose representations of body and spirit might not fit Dyer's conceptual model, from John Donne to Alex Beecroft.

8 Pamela Regis argues that Richardson "brings the courtship plot, which is to say the romance novel, into more than prominence. He makes it famous" (63).

9 "The novel is shaped by a religious dualism between soul and body, transcended by the effects of prayer and by the supernatural power of religious-erotic music," they explain, and "[i]t is this religiosity, with its unequivocal representation of divine intervention in the love affair, which distances *The Rosary* most clearly from contemporary romance" (Batsleer et al. 90).

10 Quaker characters (who may or may not be accurately portrayed) feature prominently in Laura Kinsale's *Flowers from the Storm* and in *False Colors* by Alex Beecroft. A Russian Orthodox icon is of central importance in *Lord of Scoundrels* by Loretta Chase. So-called "Amish romances"—that is, romances with ostensibly Amish characters—have received extended scholarly treatment by Weaver-Zercher.

11 For Selinger on Thomas, see "Use Heart in Your Search"; for Lin as someone who grew up Buddhist, see Lin, "On Core Themes" and "Jeannie Lin Tells Us."

12 The subject of Wicca comes up in several interviews with Joey Hill, often as part of the context for her work in the erotic romance subgenre: e.g., in answer to the question "What brought about the incorporation of more explicit erotic elements, and why are they integral to your work?" Hill notes that one crucial step was when she "embraced the Wiccan faith in my mid-twenties," in part because she "loved the idea of sex being used to raise spiritual energy in the Great Rite" ("An Interview"). On a related note, in "Medieval Magic and Witchcraft in the Popular Romance Novel," Carol Ann Breslin observes that the heroines of many romances set in the Middle Ages, "Through their magic, their potions, and their spells ... seek to restore, heal, and promote peace and love for their own hearths and their nations" (78) and, moreover, that although in such settings one might "expect the Church to be at the center, pursuing and condemning the practitioners of witchcraft and magic," generally "there are no interventions by Church officials" (84). While Breslin speculates that this absence perhaps reflects "the modern de-emphasis on religion and church" or could be the result of the authors' decision "to create a landscape where women of special gifts and powers can work out their destinies unencumbered by the structures of patriarchy" (84), Breslin does not go as far as to suggest that they could be expressions of faith in an alternative belief system such as Wicca.

13 It should be noted that this development is not entirely without precedent given that "medieval courtly love borrowed the sentiments and language of Christian discourse, particularly mystical discourse. Moreover, something of the humanly erotic also remained within sublimated mystical discourse, fusing the two experiences and making it more difficult to distinguish one from the

other. This paved the way for romantic love, the descendent of courtly love, to contain the possibility of this deeper theological meaning and religious experience within it" (Raghu 18).

14 For arguments concerning whether "unconditional love" is a Biblically-grounded concept, see May (95–118). In popular culture, the equation of unconditional love with God's love for humankind was given memorable (and, indeed, danceable) articulation in Donna Summer's reggae-inflected 1983 hit "Unconditional Love," whose lyrics glossed "unconditional love" as the way to love "just like Ja do": a "non-reacting, everlasting" enactment of what the song calls "*agape* love."

15 Fromm's distinction between unconditional and conditional love might fruitfully be compared to the the binary of "ecstatic" and "legalistic" modes of faith (including faith in love) deployed in Vivanco's *Faith*, *Love*, *Hope*. For a definition of these terms, see "The Ecstatic and Legalistic Modes of Faith" (https://www.vivanco.me.uk/node/424); for their deployment in analyzing a particular novel, see "Ecstatic and Legalistic Literary Traditions: Rose Lerner's *In for a Penny*" (https://www.vivanco.me.uk/node/452)

16 "For a conceptual framework that addresses the competing claims of romantic love and legal, social, and moral rules, see Vivanco's discussion of "Rules and Emotion," (*Faith, Love, Hope*, https://www.vivanco.me.uk/node/448).

17 For an introduction to Jónasdóttir's work and some of its implications, see the essays gathered in *Love: A Question for Feminism in the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Jónasdóttir and Ann Ferguson.

18 See Bloom, *Love and Friendship*, and Gornick, *The End of the Novel of Love*.

19 For a comparison of romance heroines to virgin martyrs, see Wogan-Browne (95-99). For an extended discussion of Shumway, see Hsu-Ming Teo's chapter in this collection.

20 Goris, An. "Happily Ever After ... And After: Serialization and the Popular Romance Novel." *Americana: The Journal of American Popular Culture (1900–present)* 12.1 (2013). www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/spring_2013/goris.htm

21 Künne, Regina. *Eternally Yours: Challenge and Response: Contemporary US American Romance Novels by Jayne Ann Krentz and Barbara Delinsky*. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2015. Another religious parallel has been suggested by Roslynn Voaden, who sees similarities between the romance genre's "focus on a woman's brief moment on the threshold" and medieval women mystics' "unitative visions, where the visionary yearned to be united with" Christ and is "eternally positioned in that moment of consummation" (79–80).

Chapter 23

1 It's also worth noting that Tompkins' *Sensational Designs* has long been acknowledged as a significant progenitor to the first-wave of popular romance criticism for recognizing that formulaic features in fiction perform "cultural work," and thus serve an important function in a nation's literature.

2 Lois Beckett's 2019 article from *The Guardian*, "Fifty Shades of White: The Long Fight Against Racism in Romance Novels," is an excellent example of para-academic reporting on popular romance: www.theguardian.com/books/2019/apr/04/fifty-shades-of-white-romance-novels-racism-ritas-rwa.

3 Dyer 4.

4 See *Romance Fiction and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom?* (eds. Gleason and Selinger 2016).

5 Morrison's use of "romance" here refers to the American sentimental romance, rather than the popular romance novel specifically.

6 In internet parlance, these are typically coded as Black Woman White Man (BWWM) or Black Man White Woman (BMWW).
7 Medawar, to be clear, is not a popular romance novelist, but rather a mystery author who integrates strong romantic plots in her novels. Native American authors of romance fiction include Kari Lynn Dell, V.S. Nelson, Pamela Sanderson (Karuk), and Evangeline Parsons Yazzie (Navajo).

Chapter 24

1 See Chapter 1 and Chapter 16 in this volume for more on the history of Mills & Boon and Harlequin.
2 I have chosen these four countries because of the richness and range of scholarship available, but they are not the only places where local popular romance traditions (including chick-lit) have drawn scholarly attention. More limited or preliminary work has been done on popular romance fiction in France (Holmes; see also Capelle), Sweden (Ehriander), Italy (Balducci), Portugal and Spain (Bazenga, Pérez-Gil, González-Cruz, Vera-Carzola), The Caribbean (Soto-Crespo), Guam (Rodríguez), Hong Kong (Lee), China (Feng), Uganda (Spencer), and South Africa (Spencer; Vitackova; Frenkel; Gupta and Frenkel). In 2019 the Romance Writers of America awarded research funding to two Australian scholars, Jodi McAllister, and Claire Parnell, to document and analyze the "genre world" of #RomanceClass, a transnational community of Filipino authors, publishers, and readers of English-language Filipino romance founded by author Mina Esguerra.

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