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ISSN: 2159-4473



Published in partnership
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Chick Lit in Historical Settings by Frida Skybäck by Helene Ehriander

August 29th, 2015 |

Chick lit is a genre that usually depicts what life is like for young women in 19th-century England—on fashionable country estates. They pursue their careers, go to parties, and date a series of men in their hunt for the right one. They contemplate their future at once so that their life will be perfect. Being slim and fit, having flawless skin, working hard, and having a beautiful, well-kept home is a must for these women who read chick lit. Chick lit is usually associated with the present day, and tends to be regarded as a genre that reflects contemporary ideals and expectations. Most of the books classified in this genre

There are, however, several novels very close to chick lit that take place in a historical setting. The ingredients that we find in chick lit, but here it is grand balls instead of club parties, drawn coaches instead of sports cars, rustling silk and bobbing tulle from corsets instead of designer brands, and visits to the confectioner instead of a latte at the sidewalk café. The challenges that the protagonists have to confront are not very different from those occupying contemporary chick lit. It is difficult for the reader to recognize herself and identify with them (Ehriander, 2015).

“Chick lit in corsets” is written by women, read by women, has female heroes, and is basically the same throughout the ages, so that much is still as it was in the 19th century, and this is the type of book that attracts teenage girls and their mothers. In this article, I will provide examples from two novels by the Swedish author Frida Skybäck (born 1978): *Lady (Den vita frun)* (2012). I am particularly interested in these narratives because they are marketed by the publisher Frank Förlag as a genre primarily for teenage girls, and *Charlotte Hassel* has been offered to teenage girls by the publisher Bokklubb (Skybäck, interview).

Chick lit in historical settings

According to Rocío Montoro, “Chick Lit is sometimes seen as a revamped

renaming, of other more traditional forms of popular writing, namely r
corsets” can be regarded as a genre hybrid with some of its roots in older
what is usually called “romance” but they also have several typical features
“feel-good” novels, a designation that comes from the emotions they arc
article “Gender and Sexuality in Popular Fiction” about how chick lit has als
considered to have higher status and is treated with greater respect than ro
that the romance genre has something to gain from being influenced by cl
better-educated, more ambitious heroines (Mitchell 134). Chick lit has also
culture and more highly esteemed literature, and publishers tend to adver
two genres will attract readers from each other (Harzewski 2011, 32, 41). Th
other is the rule rather than the exception, and there are many reasons for
often regarded as innovative if they break one or more of the traditional s
express their personal authorial style by relating to the set framework of t
they can criticize the accepted norms and values of the genre. **[End Page 2]**

Maria Ehrenberg, in a book about present-day romance from Maeve Binch
into four categories:

1. The unique person. In this category we meet historical personages an
the perspective of one person’s actions.
2. Laborious everyday work. These books describe the misery and toil o
3. Recent history. The Second World War is a common topic here, a
present day.
4. The Miss Novel, also known as the governess novel or the manor-hou
thriller, as well as issues of class, money, and wealth. The historical bac
stories end with the by tradition dictated kiss (39-40).

Frida Skybäck’s novels do not fit into any of these four categories, altho
particular. Maria Nilson writes that it may seem strange to call historical pc
Anna Godbersen’s four-part suite *The Luxe*, which takes place in Manhatta
close to chick lit (40). Nilson writes that it is fairly unproblematic to call the
for young readers: “There are parties and clothes and shopping and intr
develops in a different direction, turning much darker, and it also becomes
own translation). Chick lit jr. is characterized by the inclusion of typi
considering matters such as reaching adulthood, identity, awakening s
customary elements in stories for adolescents and young adults (Johnson 14

The action of Frida Skybäck’s debut book *Charlotte Hassel* (2011) takes
Charlotte is a young woman from a well-off family who falls in love with a
short distance to her home, waiting for her parents, when an older man, inf
to assault her. Charlotte puts up a fight when he finds his way into her bedr
her letter opener in self-defense. When her parents arrive they help her ge
England, where she finds a good life with a male friend, to whom she becom
and extortion, and after thirteen years Charlotte decides to come back to St
also understands that a *coup d’état* is in the making. She meets once again th
engagement in England; it turns out that her fiancé is homosexual and that
remain even after Charlotte marries someone else. The kind, thoughtful hc
and interior decoration, is a common character in chick lit. The female ch
plays with the stereotypes of the whore and the Madonna when she allows
[End Page 3]

In this novel there is plenty of female culture and feminine attributes: Cl

pastries, and has exquisite dresses made for her. However, there is also a focus over her life and her situation. She gets involved in the game of politics, she averts the planned *coup d'état*. The reader follows Charlotte from the time when she is a young girl which makes it easier for younger readers to identify with her, up to the grown-up woman who takes her share of what life has to offer.

Romance

The term “romance” is one that embraces a wide variety of literature on the one hand. In the book *Romance* the analyses range from ancient Greece, through medieval and Renaissance, to end with Harlequin romances. Fuchs also underlines how contemporary romance literature is (124 ff.). Romances in the sense of romance usually have a similar construction, consisting of a number of set narrative elements that lead in a predictable way up to the happy ending when the heroine receives a kiss, a proposal, etc. The second novel, *The White Lady* (2012), contains less chick lit and more romance. It has a feminist message when it comes to emphasizing women's right to shape their own lives. The heroine is neither beautiful nor rich. This novel combines several literary motifs and genres, from chick lit and books for young adults: for example, the “ugly duckling”, “Cinderella”, etc. Most of the action takes place in the castle of Borgeby in Skåne. The story is about love and love across class boundaries: “love across the classes [is] an extremely common theme”. De Groot writes in his survey in *The Historical Novel* (58).

Janice A. Radway, who has written a study of female readings of romance novels, claims that reading works for readers “as the ritualistic repetition of a single, immutable theme”. She claims, albeit in a rather limited study, that the reading women display different purposes for a number of different purposes. This is interesting given that romance literature has been criticized in many quarters for being conservative, presenting a distorted picture of society, and for turning its readers into addicts and slaves since their real problems are never solved; instead they find relief through illusory solutions. This outlook on the reading of romantic literature is also reflected in the history. Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* (1856–57) has achieved a similar status. The heroine is a girl who through time loses contact with reality and as a young woman she is obsessed with eroticism, fashion, and shimmering pink dreams of romantic rendezvous, but she ends up with debts, and ends up seeing suicide by arsenic as the only way out. **[End Page**

Perhaps some romance literature over the years could be called escapist. It often reinforces stereotyped gender roles, with protagonists that are poor role models for young women. In chick lit there are interesting exceptions which actually use the genre and the formula to educate readers through playful, knowing hints and examples of energetic heroines. It is infrequent that the genre comments on itself in its portrayal of literature and its own role. It is subversive and to read against the text; instead of passivizing the reader, it encourages the female protagonists to be interested in literature, and using the wisdom of the past. *The White Lady* enjoys the castle library and immerses herself not only in classic literature but also in contemporary female poetry.

Diana Wallace, who has written a study titled *The Woman's Historical Novel*, claims that the historical novel was one of the most important forms for women's reading. She testifies to how she herself and many of the women she knows have read historical novels since childhood: “From an early age I read women's historical novels avidly, as I have since later discovered, of many of my female friends and colleagues, and of many

have been central to the development of feminist literary criticism” (ix). A tendency to associate female authors’ historical novels with romance and ‘popular’, women writers have thus been doubly excluded from the established canon. It is clear when one studies what has been written about the different genres that while historical novels are masculine (and “serious”).

Historical novels

Då som nu (“Then As Now”) by Hans O. Granlid from 1964 is still the standard text. Granlid does not write anything about children’s and young people’s literature. In the novels he analyses, only one is by a female author. The situation is another remarkable thing is that, when the origin of the historical novel is described, it is Walter Scott taking pride of place. Female authors and the genres they have written take a back seat as male authors set the pattern for how historical novels should be written.

In his introduction Granlid poses interesting and fundamental questions about how to characterize it. He is interested in the problems of analogy and archaization in the literary work, how the matter is presented and placed in a particular historical context, specifically is archaized in content and style. Closely linked to the problem of anachronism: that is, what happens when writing about something from a time that is not comprehensible to contemporary readers (Granlid 16 ff.). Archaization is “old-fashioned”: anachronisms are things or expressions that are out of place between our time and the historical time.

Historical books often incorporate a large amount of fact in the narrative. The dividing line between fact and fiction runs. A historical novel can never be written without. It has decided where history ends and the story begins: in other words, where the story is described we must remember that it is slanted in some way by the author.

Maria Nikolajeva, in her book *Barnbokens byggklossar* (“Building Blocks of the Children’s Book”) historical portrayal is, with examples from Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women*, the author’s experiences in a domestic setting during the American Civil War, a book that has been read by many generations of girls and has also been filmed:

Historical novels are set in the past. It is important to remember, however, that the reader’s, that determines whether a novel can be called historical. From *Tom Sawyer*, *Little Women*, *Nils Holgersson*, and *Elvis Karlsson* all depict contemporary accounts. This may seem unimportant, but it is crucial when writing about *Women* expressed its period’s view of the role of women in society. A modern historical period as *Little Women* would perhaps express our modern view.

With regard to values, which Nikolajeva finds important, a story thus cannot be called historical (49).

Ying Toijer-Nilsson writes that most historical novels for young readers have no doubt has something to do with the conventions of historical books for young readers. The topic, and girls have traditionally stayed at home while boys have been at the front and women learned early on to read texts where boys and men have prominent roles. Only about their own gender, since they are brought up to view anything

important. However, Maria Nikolajeva writes in *Children's Literature Com* discern a change in historical narrative as regards the leading characters: earlier historical novel has been challenged by contemporary writers in favor of it has often been considered important that the protagonist should be a boy and a girl, or a girl and a boy, often siblings, so that readers of both sexes can identify with the characters. The significance of the historical novel both for our present and for people:

Ever since the middle of the nineteenth century, the historical novel has been popular with children and young people take in [End Page 6] history. Novelists have provided new perspectives. Women, children, minorities, and war victims of bygone times have been included in literature, long before they were included in school history books.

It has even happened often that authors of young people's books have tackled what historians have tackled. There is nothing strange about that: both historians and novelists have the conviction that knowledge of the past can help us in our lives here and now.

Both use knowledge and imagination to explore people and phenomena. The novelist always reaches a limit where he or she must stop, and dividing lines between fact and what we have no idea about. The author has the freedom—or perhaps the duty—to cross that line, to give life to persons who never existed, to forge links, to invent.

Häggglund goes on to say: "Of course there are novelists who use a historical setting that could just as well have been enacted in the present." The concept of the historical novel is both an aspect but also a quality aspect. In research on literature and history there are two aspects that are closely related since all attempts to depict our past take some form of historical setting. There are and have been authors who have endeavored to do this in responsible ways. There are and have been authors who have endeavored to do this in those who have written what are somewhat condescendingly called "costume novels" in a historical setting. In costume novels the historical period is just a backdrop for the story; the people and relationships are not put into any factual historical context.

There are thus many levels to take into consideration as a reader when reading a historical novel and "correct". The details must be accurate in that the clothes, for example, should be no cars in a period before the car was invented. In Frida Skybäck's *En flicka i tiden* time where genuine historical figures are named and possible historical events are mentioned. In *En flicka i tiden* history and English, faithfully uses the vocabulary of the period and she is also very accurate. During the time she was working on *Charlotte Hassel*, one of the books she wrote, she read *Årstafruns dagbok 1793-1839*, and she learned how modern that lady was. Her thoughts did not differ noticeably from the way we think today. In both of these books how much of the narrative is fact and how much is fiction.

Historical events must be correctly depicted, but as a reader one also has to consider the angle, a particular angle, perhaps with a specific intention, and that it is often not only men but also accounts women, poor people, and children are portrayed less frequently. This is slowly changing (Brown and St. Clair 186). It is even more problematic when different people have thought and felt [End Page 7] through the ages. The material for men comes to men, but the material for women and children is very limited.

People are the same through the ages

“The problem for historians,” Karin Norman writes, “is that we have so little perspective on the situation and justified their actions. It is easy to resort to ascribing our own values to the people. It takes a balancing act between generalizing and relativizing: how similar are we to them today? Similar or different in what way?” (51, author’s own translation). As historians do. John Stephens, in his study *Language and Ideology in Children’s Literature*, points out, there lies a contradiction within historical fiction. While the text creates the illusion of an older literary discourse. The discourse constantly balances between a transhistorical perspective this is a matter of a transhistorical outlook versus cultural relativism. The question of either/or, but of where the discourse is positioned on different scales. In the portrayals of the past there must be more similarities than differences to be meaningful to readers. A text that is placed too far on the scale towards “difference” may not be perceived as plausible, and may even be incomprehensible. It is also a matter of interpretation. If you go straight into the text and look at the details, you may perceive difference, you tend to perceive the text as showing a high degree of cultural difference. If you abstract and raise the relations and emotions to a higher level, there is a general sense of what is common to all mankind. The foundation is similar but the constituent elements are different: time in which they exist and the culture and social class they reflect. The author wishes, and needs are the same through the ages, but that they find different expressions. To say that people are alike through the ages and that it is the stage on which they act is to say that people are steered by their environment and their culture, but they are based on a common exterior, the human core is constant. By emphasizing the similarities and the differences, we gain an understanding of both past and present.

This understanding is also used by Frida Skybäck. The distance from the historical to the present lives and their own problems in perspective, and it offers an opportunity to compare. She gets an idea of what it means to be a woman here and now in comparison with the women women read about women and the things that have occupied women’s time in a historical community. Family sagas tend to be popular, and by reading them, things that would not otherwise be visible. Women get their share of history and their own experiences. Frida Skybäck’s *The White Lady* depicts two generations of women. The daughter, and since she is growing increasingly weak from a terrible illness, she writes for her newborn daughter. The novel ends with the daughter reaching adulthood, and whom she starts writing a diary. Through her own mother’s notes she has learned of her mother who drowned herself to save her newborn daughter when she was just a child. In a genre, the historical novel has allowed women writers a license which the male writers have not. The most obviously true of sexuality where it has allowed coverage of normally excluded topics but also contraception, abortion, childbirth and homosexuality” (6).

In Frida Skybäck’s two books we find, beside the portrayal of the young woman who contracted syphilis from her husband, accounts of pregnancy before marriage, attempted rapes, a sexual relationship with a man who is not a poet, a man who teaches the young woman “the art of love”, and sexual relations across cultures. From a female perspective, and female concerns are visibly in focus. At the same time, today, an explanation for why we relate to these parts of life in a particular way is the exclusion and marginalization, and the author has the liberty here to write about them. What is depicted as universal human experience in a historical account can mean

our image of present-day reality (202 ff.). In Frida Skybäck's books this is ent reader to reflect on herself and her own life as she reads.

Role play in a historical setting

Diana Wallace writes in her preface how history lessons in school disappoint she sees this as one reason why so many girls and women have read an allowed to be central figures (ix). Wallace goes on to write:

The “woman’s historical novel”, then, encompasses both the “popular” spectrum, but one of my arguments here is that the two are intimately l and “popular” historical novels together and against each other if we w meanings that history and the historical novel have held for women rea

Eva Queckfeldt has written about “the historical novel without history” in **[End Page 9]**

To restrict the discussion solely to historical novels, these have been co knowledge and as an educational aid, not least by history teachers. The among other things, that they let the reader experience the past in a diff example, the reader meets figures from the past and it is, probably righ familiar with the people of bygone times, their context, their everyday li concerns the “good” historical novels: Per Anders Fogelström’s novels; emigration epic, Väinö Linna’s crofter trilogy, to name just a few exam who took pains to give as correct a picture as possible of the past. Often professional historians could object to.

The problem is that these good novels are just a small proportion of all also a whole undergrowth of novels that call themselves “historical.” (6)

The good historical novels mentioned by Queckfeldt are also all by male au novels” in which reality is doctored for the reader and the novels’ “conflicts the individual persons’ actions.” The plot “circles around LOVE for the fer These novels have such great defects in their language, the anachronism historical details are so vague that they could be used almost anywhere. thrown together and trivial in content, are “without history.” Frida Skybä female perspective, how history repeats itself and how today’s women are where they refuse to “take shit from anybody.” [2]

Frida Skybäck plays with historical depiction, with romance and chick lit, ar and the Madonna, in order to give scope to women’s thoughts and feeling for readers to read subversively, to try out new roles and lines, and to find t Skybäck, who works as a teacher at an international high school in Lund, is historical material is used than in the Swedish school. In Sweden, history as she thinks that it is important to arouse an interest in the source of power th move people. Diana Wallace writes about how women in Mussolini’s I university: “A knowledge of history, this suggests, has the potential to be d that in women’s hands the historical novel has often become a political toc

fate, this is the reverse way to view women's reading: either girls and women reach the point of madness, or else they are able to read with the brain connected to the rest of society.

Janice A. Radway has exposed the narrative structures in romances in the 19th century. She has identified the set narrative features of Russian folktales. Radway has found 13 functions, in romances: [End Page 10]

1. The heroine's social identity is destroyed.
2. The heroine reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male.
3. The aristocratic male responds ambiguously to the heroine.
4. The heroine interprets the hero's behavior as evidence of a pure heart.
5. The heroine responds to the hero's behavior with anger or coldness.
6. The hero retaliates by punishing the heroine.
7. The heroine and hero are physically and/or emotionally separated.
8. The hero treats the heroine tenderly.
9. The heroine responds warmly to the hero's act of tenderness.
10. The heroine reinterprets the hero's ambiguous behavior as the sign of a pure heart.
11. The hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his love for the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness.
12. The heroine responds sexually and emotionally.
13. The heroine's identity is restored. (134)

It is important to have knowledge of how narratives are built up, since this helps us to understand them. When we recognize the set form, we know what type of story we are reading. We soon detect when an author is going against the familiar pattern. In the 19th century, this can be obvious: for example, when an author with feminist ambitions breaks the set form. This also opens up for questions about how historical literature functions. The set form invites the reader to take the step into an alternative time, a kind of role play in history, about our own time, and about ourselves and the contexts to which we belong.

[1] "The term *romance* derives from the French and was first used exclusively for the medieval romances called 'chivalric romances' written in French and composed in verse. The set form of the medieval romance, whether in verse or prose, and regardless of country of origin, includes the elements of adventure, courtly love, and chivalric ideals, often set at the court of King Arthur.

[2] This idiomatic expression is often used by young women in Sweden to refer to the set form of the medieval romance, infringements of their integrity, outdated values, stupid comments, or lack of understanding.

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True Love's Kiss and Happily Ever After: the re film by Jyoti Raghu

August 29th, 2015 |

Introduction

In this article, I investigate romantic love in American film as a site for everyday experiences of love, marriage and family (Williams, *Dante* 6, 8, 40; this theme I focus on the “kiss” in romantic love scenes in American films. a theological event where divine grace may infuse itself on the lovers, making it can offer theological insight into how romantic love transforms into a window where divine light shines through the sacrament of love (Williams, *Outlines* 17, 29).

I shall draw theoretically upon several intellectual threads, including courtly love and theological aesthetics, and postmodern theory. Then, rather than looking at different genres and film series, the action-adventure Matrix trilogy, and the romance at these films because I am interested in popular films of different genres. Furthermore, the kiss is central to the love plot in both film series and to its functions romantically and theologically. I shall finally briefly visit two romance films, *Past* and *Something's Gotta Give*, to see how religious discourse plays out in them.

Before I begin, I note two qualifications. First, this article presupposes a Christian religious framework, though not adopting or espousing a Christian world view. This framework has left its legacy on modern and postmodern Western culture while also treating other religious traditions and other international film traditions. Unfortunately my own lack of expertise in either field limits me to a discussion of love in American film. I hope, however, that this article may spur those who wish to take on similar investigations.

Courtly Love, Christian mysticism, and romantic theology

In his now dated work *The Allegory of Love*, C.S. Lewis writes of a “religion of love” medieval genre then called courtly love literature, which, according to Lewis (18).[2] He notes that this religion of love, as well as other aspects of the medieval tradition, inform our conceptions of love and romance, particularly in art and literature of the past and present, would seem to validate Lewis’ idea. Not only is romantic courtly love seems to play its part in many American films. The search for true love, a search for the telos and summum bonum of life, seems to be an idea which dominates the preoccupation of many films. Moreover, this experience of love, in popular culture, has a salvific quality. [End Page 2]

According to Lewis and other noted scholars, courtly love literature, and the romance from the Western Christian tradition nor the mystical tradition, where mystics use their experiences of human, romantic love to describe divine encounters and the mystical (Lewis 18, 40). Courtly love and romantic literature from the medieval and modern periods and sentiments of Christian discourse for use in a completely different and modern context. The two literatures are not analogous, partly because they differ in the object of love, the other which is divine, and infinite (Boase 83-85, 109-11). Moreover, the courtly love promoting passion or romance within or outside marriage, while a staple of modern romance and desire (Lewis 13-17). Indeed, sometimes courtly love literature could be seen as both and erotic or sexual delight while mocking religious chastity and asceticism.

courtly love or the religion of love and the Christian religion run counter to (

No doubt there is truth to this thesis. We need only to glance at the plethora of good majority of them do seem to worship and venerate this ideal of romantic experience and fulfillment. Nevertheless, it would also do us good to question the connection and relevance to experiences and discourses that have taken place so, if they might not bear some theological meaning and value.

For example, there are striking similarities between courtly love and early Christian discourse (Perella 85, 268-69). In Christian mystical discourse, as stated above, and imagery, but also the sentiments and experience of human, sensual love, from the biblical Song of Songs to the ecstasies of Saint Theresa (Perella 38-40). The ecstatic union with the beloved, which is here God or Christ (Perella 34-36), is an ambiguity, where representations of divine love or the soul's relation to the divine (Perella 33). Since the two discourses existed side-by-side, and scholars have borrowed language and sentiments from Christian discourse, is it possible that the "secularized" within a human, romantic framework, that they might not be a tradition from which they have borrowed? Likewise, could Christian mystical discourse be an erotic experience as well, inasmuch as the two might appear more similar? Could influence not flow in both directions? Why could courtly and romantic love not become and why could it not become a bearer of actual religious meaning and experience?

Within the romantic love tradition itself some Christian writers do correlate the two to help to lead to or understand the other, and they are inseparable in meaning (Perella 41; Perella 86-90, 261). In the works of medieval authors such as Andreas Capellanus and ennobling discipline, whose end was grace bestowed by the lady, grace to the lover (Perella 100). But this [End Page 3] blessedness was not just in a secular sense, but a complement to Christianity: without Christian virtue and practice one could not attain it. The lady was also thought to develop Christian virtues, such as humility, faith, and charity.

The exemplum of the fusion of human romantic and divine love, however, is found in the English (Christian) writer and poet Charles Williams, there is a theological tradition present in poets and artists, of which Dante is the greatest figure (Williams, 1948). Due to the Incarnation of Christ in the world and in the flesh, all human experiences, due to Christ's presence, they become possibilities of divine manifestation and an extension of the divine (Williams this is particularly acute in romantic experience, including sexual love (Williams 7-9). The experience of this love-feeling has a sacred aura to it that leads to a union with the human beloved that facilitates not only divine encounter, transcendence, devotion, and holiness. Williams writes:

The heart is often so shaken by the mere contemplation of the beloved that it finds its own delight. The whole person of the lover is possessed by a new state of being. ...But in this state of love he sees and contemplates the beloved as if she were bestowed by her smile; she is its source and its mother. She appears to him as the omega of creation...the first-created of God. (Williams, *Outlines* 16)

Moving from Dante's experience of Beatrice and the medieval experience of romantic feeling, can be ennobled to a spiritual vision of beauty, the profane here is transformed and loves meld and mix into one.

Moreover, this vision has the capacity to see the human transformed to continues:

Not certainly of herself is she anything but as being glorious in the delight accompanies her, and yet is born of her; which created her and is helped other ways she may be full of error or deliberate evil, in the eyes of the recovers her glory, which is the glory that Love had with the Father before 17)

Just as in the Eucharist the material bread and wine come to bear the flesh and becomes a theophany or window to the divine, remaining what she is yet alive and becomes the locus of sanctification through an experience of divine beauty

This experience does at once, as it were, establish itself as the centre of life in relation to it; they take on a dignity [End Page 4] and seem to be worth which appears to be inherent in life itself—life being the medium by which his own body and its functions as beautiful and hallowed by contact with renewed and quickened in the same way. And—if Romantic Theology is new state, becoming conscious of that grace of God which is otherwise, (Williams, *Outlines* 17)

As in the Incarnation or God coming to the world and flesh through Christ marriage are the very site through which life can be experienced as having Incarnation or these divine hierophanies in the everyday, we would not religious spirit in love, to which poets, especially Dante, have borne witness writings, particularly *The New Life* and *The Comedy*, through the lens of possibility of romantic love experience as a means of Christian grace. He not a *caritas* and *agape* or Christian charity and love in him, and inspire a *Comedy*, she leads him not only to divine contemplation, but also to redemption and virtue within him, an in-Godding or taking of the self into God (Williams

The important things to note about Williams' romantic theology is that experience, here of romantic love, and finds this also to be a means of salvation writes that "holiness may be reached by the obvious ways as well as by the neglect the spiritual meaning of these experiences, then according to him, will Furthermore, since according to Christian tradition marriage is a sacrament bestowing grace, and of experiencing other sacraments, including the Eucharist life, a couple may experience not only Christ's manifestation and grace, but through their marriage (Williams, *Outlines* 14). However, while they experience also remains human and immanent. It is not an allegory, or meeting two human beings living together, as well as something more (Williams, *Dan*

This theme of romantic love and the intertwining of sacred and profane can 19th and early 20th century British literature in his work *Erotic Faith: Beyond Though I would disagree with Polhemus' thesis that erotic faith in the British love" at odds with and supplanting traditional Christian faith, Polhemus' work romantic love strain in literature, and also the inextricable links in this literature religious experience, and religious language (1-6, 22-24). For Polhemus the r*

faith (3). Though Polhemus characterizes this erotic faith in love as tenser, more intense, than the “happily ever after” trajectory of romantic love in American film. In the absence of redemption, nevertheless Polhemus’ work also attests to the power of [End] the power of love, particularly to redeem and save (or damn in its absence) the power of love, particularly to redeem and save (or damn in its absence) theological ideals such as salvation and martyrdom (1-6, 47, 169). Whether the erotic in Jane Austen (ch.2), the romantic passionate desire for ecstasy and the melding of the romantic, erotic and Christian in Charlotte Brontë (ch.5), the novelists such as Dickens (ch.6), the intertwining of the erotic with Christian interconnection of the vulgar and holy in Joyce (ch.10), or the proclamation of Lawrence (ch.11), Polhemus underlines the importance of erotic love and its and salvific (and sometimes dangerous) potential, particularly for the male, (10-12, 15, 47, 128, 249). Thus Polhemus’ work further supports and attests to the and erotic discourse, which carries over into romance in film.

We may ask at this point what all this has to do with romantic film. I draw upon the fact that there also has existed a Christian tradition from Dante onwards that distinguishes between the sacred and the profane, but as contradictory, but as part of the same continuum, or that may have fused the sacred imagery and love sentiments to describe divine encounters, but saw in the human the divine and a means of grace. This tradition, instead of disavowing passion, exalts the divine being, exalts this passion and eroticism within human relationships and also a part of the Christian way to salvation (Williams, *Dante* 111). Indeed, in his work *Christ and Culture*, within Christian history and tradition, the relationship between Christ and human culture and society. In these views, the goodness, where one sees within the human something of the divine, and where meaning and significance.

This deeper meaning to romantic love still exists as a remnant and possibility in romantic film. Though we exist in a secular or post-secular era, Christian literature. This deeper religious meaning in romantic literature is one legacy. Moreover, I think this becomes even more relevant in our (Western) postmodern everyday life and experience, sometimes to a sacred level, becomes possible (Christian, transcendent God), Western religious discourse has to be displaced by this courtly love tradition and its connection with Christian discourse, and through it, romantic love in our postmodern era, particularly in film, has been displaced. In reverse of the original situation, human, secular discourse describe religious experience and to engage in religious discourse. [End Page

A Theological Aesthetics of Popular Culture and Romanticism

Theological explorations of religion and film often treat issues such as alienation; or they often explore themes of larger relevance such as oppression. Treatments often deal with alienation and religious or spiritual experience (Coates 17-18). Often scholars hold the view that theologically relevant complacency and force us to confront the complexities, i.e. evils, in human culture. Films that provide entertainment and pleasure, or make us happy, are often fantasies, considered too “trivial,” escapist and illusory to warrant theological (31).

Yet, as is the case with the courtly love tradition, Christian mystical discourse

side to Christian theology, one that explores goodness and beauty, and expression of the divine in the human. According to this theology, to dismiss unimportant is to make life miserable, mean, and barren (Häring 338). This love in His relation to human beings and the universe.

Christian theological aesthetics delves more into this theme. It concerns beauty, and with God as perceived and experienced through beauty and art and is inseparable from God's beauty, and joy; glory is beautiful, the beautiful is impossible (Barth 316-19). Beauty points to fact that being is in essence joy also experienced with God's beauty (Moltmann 334). To believe in any Absolute, or God; otherwise, joy becomes groundless and illusory (Viladesau) which makes us miss God's glory here and now (Chittister 366). Indeed we beauty brings out that the best in life really possible (Chittister 367). Like Theologically speaking, divine beauty is often linked with truth and goodness is also good.

Gratitude is likewise integral to the enjoyment of this presence of beauty, Gratitude for beauty and openness to its message are of utmost importance. Anyone who allows the beautiful in knows that life is a meaningful, wonderful gifts of grace transform and enable us to see all things in light of beauty (Navone) we have not been freely and lovingly given, in all creation is a motive for gratitude which is God's love (Navone 357). Eros, a more intimate passionate love of God, religious life, and religious commitment, and also integral to God Without this passion and intimacy, love, human and divine, becomes cold and

Christian theological aesthetics often link art as the locus for experiencing (human) beauty and pleasure (in the work of art) [End Page 7] with the divine where the divine manifests itself; the art form thus remains itself yet beauty manifests as an event, an encounter in which the divine presence reveals representation in its finitude thus becomes a sign and symbol of something through art (Balthasar 320). The real and original experience of beauty and higher and more comprehensive experience of divine beauty and joy (Rahner)

Film can also be a very good medium for manifesting the divine. Experiences up to experiences of the beautiful, which lead to experiences of the good and total experience, operating on multiple levels. It works on us on a semi-embodied experience (Plate 59-60; Marsh 95-101). Emotion, sentiment and Frijda, 51-55; Marsh 87-95; G. Smith 111-117). It affects us through images and This emotional, immediate experience links it with all art in making it a more totalizing experience than other forms of art (T. Martin 46), which is which we are to experience in the totality of our being (Häring 338). Films are careful lens of the film experience (T. Martin 139; Plate 57), which may allow within them (Johnston, *Reel* n. pag.).[6]

When film becomes a site for divine manifestation, it shows us the divine presence everywhere in a world-affirming way, including in everyday life (Greeley) theologically because it shows us how people may be experiencing the holy (post-post), popular culture in embodied life is the medium with which most as Generation X are having religious experiences (Lynch, *After* 96-102, 112) images which a postmodern audience may perceive and understand as theological aesthetics of popular culture that relates it to everyday life in or

of the devotion, and could signify a bestowal of grace or benediction, this to exchange of hearts or souls in the kiss, and the kiss as an ecstatic moment in the Renaissance and Baroque periods (Perella 181, 184, 189).

The Matrix trilogy

The kiss is central to the Matrix films. This kiss theme is more than just romance. In the first movie of the trilogy, when it appears as if agent Smith has killed Neo,

I'm not afraid anymore. The oracle told me that I would fall in love and be the one. So you see, you can't be dead, you can't be, because I love you.

Then Trinity gives him a kiss, and his heart revives. Getting up again, Neo says, "I can stop bullets; as Morpheus says, 'He's beginning to believe' that he can defeat the agent by going into his body and causing the agent to implode.

It is love that gives Neo the power to be the One, love as expressed through Trinity confers a supernatural power. Moreover, Trinity's name, as a representation of the Holy Ghost, must be significant here, as it is Trinity's love that repeatedly resurrects Neo through which this resurrecting power of love occurs. The kiss is thus salvific.

This romantic love through the kiss develops further in the next film, *The Matrix Reloaded*. The love has already proven salvific, the erotic love scene between them shows desire, in romantic love, but also perhaps in something deeper, in our religiously necessary aspect of human and divine love (McFague 346, 347; Greeley 165). The Savior, is not just a human passion but perhaps also a divine one (Balthasar 198).

In *The Matrix Reloaded*, the Merovingian, the dastardly Frenchman, also acts out of love of life thus:

Causality—there is no escape from it. We are forever slaves to it. Our only way to understand the why... why is the only real source of power. Without me, you come to me...another link in the chain.

What the Merovingian represents is a mechanistic universe of necessity, of manipulation. It is not only without eros, but without joy, [End Page 10] the truth. Neo, contrariwise, acts out of love and passion, here exemplified by the savior. Persephone, the Merovingian's wife, and symbolic in her namesake, is willing to help Neo if he gives her a kiss, that is, if he brings that passion, love, to her. She explains:

You love her [Trinity]; she loves you. It's all over you both. A long time ago I remember it, I want to sample it. That's all.

She also tells Neo that he has "to make me believe I am her." The first kiss is a kiss as if she were Trinity, and she agrees to help them.

Neo then enters the Matrix and meets the architect. The architect also tells

created to be attached to humanity, but declares that “while the others experience is far more specific vis-à-vis love.” The architect refers to love as

an emotion, designed specifically to overwhelm logic and reason, an essential and simple and obvious truth—she is going to die and there is nothing you can

He also calls hope “the quintessential human delusion.” Yet Neo chooses to die and she catches her just in time. Though she appears to die, Neo says, “I’m not letting you go,” and time, he resurrects her. She says, “I guess this makes us even,” and they kiss.

The architect, similar to the Merovingian, is interested in logic and reason, efficiency. What is missing in this technological means-end world is beauty and joy; love. But Neo, as the sixth anomaly, is different, because he does love, and in a way that shows grace and passion in a way that shows how grace and love transcend this world of machines and lifting spirits (Häring 338, 341). Moreover, this love is once again salvific: code to resurrect Trinity from death through the power of love, this time again code.

In the last film of the trilogy, *The Matrix Revolutions*, the kiss does not place the discourse taking place in the name of romantic love, where this love bestows upon the human sphere, bestowing (Christian) religious virtues. Rama-Kandra, whose name at the beginning of the film, explains why he is trying to save his daughter Sati:

I love my daughter very much. I find her to be the most beautiful thing I have ever seen that is not enough. Every program that is created must have a purpose.

Neo remarks that he has never heard a program speak of love, and thinks
[End Page 11]

It is a word. What matters is the connection the word implies. I see that you would give to hold on to that connection?

Neo replies: “Anything.” Sati’s father also remarks that he is grateful for his life and that what is interesting here is the ability to appreciate everyday life and its beauty and in an almost sacrosanct way which almost seems to appreciate them as gifts in a technological, mechanical world of the Matrix.

Likewise, when Trinity is dying, she is grateful for the love Neo and she says: Trinity explains how much she loved him, and says:

How grateful I was for every moment I was with you, but by the time I realized it was too late, but you brought me back, you gave me my wish, one more chance.

She asks Neo to kiss her one last time, and dies. Gratitude, often an integral part of life in an almost sacramental way, infused with (divine) goodness. Thus, the discourse that bears the remnants of a religious discourse, of salvation, of grace. Moreover, this discourse becomes heightened in postmodernity. There are many elements including Christian ideas, concepts, and symbols, and these link together with the most clearly through the motif of the kiss.

The Shrek Quadrilogy

At first glance, the Shrek quadrilogy does not seem to merit theological romance, love, romance and the kiss in such a way that also evidences remnants of a romantic love story. In the first movie, *Shrek*, princess Fiona is waiting for “a spell that turns her into an ogre at night, and then she will take true love’s first kiss. When she is an ogre, they embrace and then comes their true love’s first kiss. Fiona is lifted down again in ogre form. She does not understand why she is not in love with Shrek. She is supposed to be beautiful,” but Shrek tells her: “But you are beautiful.” Then

Of course, this tale cleverly plays upon the fairy-tale ideal of romantic love. It shows the influence of the romantic love ideal and literature derived from the importance of the kiss. The kiss is not only the completion and attainment of love, but also inspiration, and gives a sanctity and blessedness to Shrek and Fiona’s love. Like the clergyman, and the sparks and lifting in the air show that there is something about the kiss that takes [End Page 12] place as the consummation of the marriage ceremony. Fiona and Shrek remain the same; what this signifies is that the grace that is transfigurative, is also something that can be found within their human lives.

In *Shrek* the music often helps to convey the mood and experience of falling in love. “I’m a Believer,” which starts with:

I thought love was
Only true in fairy tales
Meant for someone else
But not for me
Love was out to get me
That’s the way it seems
Disappointment haunted
All my dreams

And then I saw her face
Now I’m a believer
Not a trace
Of doubt in my mind
I’m in love
I’m a believer
I couldn’t leave her
If I tried.

We need only to think of Williams and Dante and their romantic theology of love, experience and makes ready an acceptance of the good. The language also “I’m a believer” or begins to have faith after this vision.

These themes, and the kiss motif, continue through the next three *Shrek* films. In the second movie, Shrek is trying to replace Shrek as Fiona’s rightful husband. In order to compete with Shrek, Prince Charming “Happily Ever After” which promises “beauty divine” to whoever drinks the magic potion. Prince Charming changed back into human form and Prince Charming pretends he is Shrek.

Charming's kiss to wed himself to Fiona is not effective. When Shrek finds human form if they kiss before midnight, Fiona prefers the old Shrek. After light, magic, and sparks. Fiona's parents also accept Shrek now and again we

Going back to the Christian theology of the kiss, we should remember that a and not full of faith cannot have effect, cannot bestow the holy spirit or con kissers; it becomes a Judas kiss instead. That is why Charming's kiss cannot mates," that kiss will always be effective in bestowing love and grace, and in

Shrek 2 continues a postmodern religious discourse through this legacy meaning within this romantic love tradition. For example, Shrek's potion "he But in the end it does not really work. The theological significance that discourse. Mystics cannot make a divine encounter happen, cannot transform divine union. God must "kiss" them, must do the initiating. The same holds bestows, not something we can attain by our effort. Romantic love often we happens and that we cannot control, and which transforms us unexpectedly Shrek's potion, but in the story of Prince Charming. He cannot make Fiona love and happiness through his own efforts. Here one cannot make love happen or truth happen. The theme song of *Shrek 2* is the Counting Crows' "Accidentally didn't mean to do it; but there's no escaping your love." It is thus not for happens to one as a gift of grace.

The religious discourse through the romantic love story also continues in Prince Charming gathers an army of disgruntled fairy-tale villains who cannot unsuccessfully try to make them happen. Yet here a young King Arthur comes reform, while Shrek tells Charming to seek his own happily ever after, after which tells them:

A: You're telling me you just want to be villains your whole lives?

V: But we are villains; it's the only thing we know

A: Didn't you ever wish you could be something else?

When they reply discouragingly, Arthur quotes Shrek's speech to him:

Just because people treat you like a villain, or an ogre, or just some loser that matters most is what you think of yourself. If there's something you to be, then the only person standing in your way is you.

The villains lay down their weapons and ponder other professions, such as they have seen the error of their ways, have repented, and are redeemed and

We also see in *Shrek the Third* the repeated theme of "happily ever after," film as a motif and desire. The "happily ever after" scenario in romantic comedy theologically, it could signify (Christian) hope in life and in divine redemption be experienced on a human as well as divine level. Bringing back Williams' the good, or even wondrous, in human experience with a divine goodness. Marriage that is constantly lost and must constantly be regained; read theological marriage, which constantly bestows a grace that renews the [End Page 14]

or experience of love (Williams, *Outlines* 53). It is likewise salvific or redemptive from evils and tribulations, and is sealed by the kiss (Williams, *Outlines* 47).

The last film, *Shrek Forever After*, ties everything together. Though Shrek is life dull and monotonous. Because he cannot be grateful for his life, he nears Fiona, he ends up in a dystopia. Yet again the answer is “true love’s kiss,” within this dystopia Fiona has no interest in love and dislikes Shrek, Shrek slowly returns to him again. Though true love’s kiss does not work the first time, it works in the end, normal. Shrek goes back to his children’s birthday celebration, grateful for a second chance after.

What stands out to me in this last movie as regards romantic discourse and redemption experience is the romantic theology of love, marriage and family as sources of redemption. Shrek lives in a state of ingratitude at the beginning of the film. After he has lost it all, Shrek realizes this. He states that “my life was perfect until what I had until it was gone.” He now sees all the good to be had in his even if it means “You’ve already done everything for me Fiona. You gave me a home and a chance to love.” Fiona: “You know what the best part of today was? I got the chance to fall in love with you.” In the story, he likewise remarks to Fiona: “I always thought that I rescued you from a life of misery.” Shrek then answers: “No, it was you that rescued me.” He thus has seen the light bestowed beauty and light upon it and has redeemed it and redeemed himself.

In this dystopia, we also see Fiona’s redemption from skepticism, and restoration to loveless. After Shrek kisses her and nothing happens, Shrek remarks:

S: I don’t understand. This doesn’t make any sense. True love’s kiss doesn’t work.

F: Yeah, you know that’s what they told me too. True love didn’t get you out of here. Don’t you get it? It’s all just a big fairy tale.

S: Fiona don’t say that. It does exist.

F: And how would you know? Did you grow up locked away in a dreary, miserable tower? Did you cry yourself to sleep every night waiting for a prince to come and rescue you?

S: But, but I’m your true love.

F: Then where were you when I needed you?

She has lost faith not just in love, but in the good and beautiful in life, especially in her own human effort and will against a cruel world. That is why the kiss doesn’t work.
[End Page 15]

Yet even here, there is still a ray of hope. After one of Shrek’s failed attempts to kiss Fiona:

S: I am not believing what I have just witnessed. Back there—you and Fiona were together. I thought your heart I thought was long extinguished. It was as if for one moment Fiona had come back to life.

It is thus up to Shrek to restore her belief and faith in love through love. Through his love for Fiona comes to believe in Shrek and the power of love again: in the power of love. When Shrek apologizes for not having been there for her, Fiona says that it does not matter. The past are beginning to be redeemed through this experience of love, and he

love's kiss, in which both Shrek and Fiona find redemption, and a renewal of love. Moreover, here true love's kiss transforms the world and restores it to love to renew the phenomenal world, exemplified in the married couple's world of cynicism, faithlessness, and disbelief, everything is a dystopia. With joyous again, showing how love repeatedly renews the world (Williams, *Outl*

In the last movie, we see clearly the analogous relation of romantic love : narrative and discourse could stand in for that of religious faith, showing theological themes into romantic discourse. We can read the love story again that through which in postmodernity, due to the historical relation of religion, God, and faith take place, albeit in a secularized, human form.

Love as Religious Discourse in Romantic Comedy

In postmodernity the genre of romantic comedy also becomes a site in which discourse about love can be read as discourse about religion. What these re the above films is how the love story in film acts as a foil to the modern scientific rationality, skepticism, cynicism, and disbelief. Romantic love acts by allowing for an experience of love which contains the possibility of a deep

For example, in the 2009 comedy *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past*, Connor Mead and marriage. When refusing to give the toast at his brother's wedding, he st

To me marriage is an archaic and oppressive institution that should hav

He goes on to say about love:

Love, it's magical comfort food for the weak and uneducated. Yeah, it n the end love leaves you weak, dependent, and fat.

Continuing on a little later, he says:

I wish I could believe in all this crap. I do. I also wish I could believe in t the world as it really is, and love, love is a myth.

We could substitute religion, faith, or God very easily here for the wor probably recognize this speech as the modern, secular, skeptical view of cynical, and shallow, enjoying the swinging bachelor's life. His moral reform Wayne visits him, warning him to repent of his ways. This movie is pla Ebenezer Scrooge is warned to repent of his life and ways. The connection the repentance and reformation of Connor. Connor does see the error of hi love.

Likewise, in the 2003 movie *Something's Gotta Give*, Harry Sanborn is a si enjoying the hedonistic single life. He meets Erica Barry, the divorced moth in her home from a heart attack, they develop a special romantic relations love, it is as if they have both experienced something new and wondrous i also passion and elation. That was the first night either of them had ever sle

desire, but something happens that also transforms their lives. Erica, repressing her feelings, weeping, which finally helps her overcome her writer's block and enables her to enter into a relationship with another younger man. She appears happier than ever, and she lets love in, even if it did not work out. Meanwhile Harry attempts to go back to his old life, but he is unhappy, and every time he sees Erica he has an anxiety attack which he fears. When he changes, he goes back, tries to find every woman he has ever wronged, and finds her with another man. Yet she returns to him. When Erica tells him she has changed, my life just got made." Harry then remarks: "I finally get what it's all about. I finally get my time in my life." And we have a happily ever after.

Erica and Harry's first night together was a transformative experience, and even if, for one or not, it brought something missing from their lives into it, love, passion, and commitment. They had to change their lives for the better: in Erica's case learning to let go of her past, and in Harry's case moral reformation and responsibility. Harry's comment that he is in love [E]ven if it doesn't work out, as the possibility of redemption at any age and stage, which has been a part of

Conclusion

The kiss and romantic love in film can operate religiously and theologically, and have a theological significance, but to offer an opportunity for divine encounter and the possibility of a religious discourse. This is due to the origins of medieval romantic love, where medieval courtly love borrowed the sentimentality of a particularly mystical discourse. Moreover, something of the humanly experience of romantic love, the descendent of courtly love, to contain the possibility of a religious experience within it. In postmodernity, where God is dead, and where transcendence and the divine onto the human, this dormant religious and theological possibility can sometimes be activated, and can become pregnant with meaning. This possibility of postmodernity romantic love in films can sometimes stand in for and represent a religious discourse. Therefore, I contend that romantic love in film can be one style, form, and experience and reflection are taking place in postmodernity. It thus shows the influence of popular culture and popular cultural manifestations.

Finally, I hope looking at romantic love in film in this light, in relation to theology and freeing theology and film studies, which seldom treats the theme of romantic love as pertinent. Theology and film studies should welcome more often these possibilities of religious and popular culture. To quote the Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf:

I see happiness as a right. I think that it is a human right to be joyful. The problem in India is wasting his time....Many things must yet change in India before we can say that should the people be depressed by movies like that? They must be allowed to be happy. A person who has had to sell his body for a morsel of food – you want to be happy. What is he supposed to do after seeing that film? (92)

Going on to speak about his profession, he says that "we filmmakers are here to show that is that, after seeing a film of mine, a person feels a little happier, and acts with more joy. Makhmalbaf, we can aim to take seriously those filmmakers who by treating happiness and joy to life and to the world, and consider such a goal a legitimate

appreciate films (and scholarly work) that reveal and point us toward this joy

I close with a discussion of the ending of *Cinema Paradiso*. At the end of the film, the filmmaker in Rome, watches the film his old friend and father-figure Alfredo made. The film is a composite of all the love and kissing scenes that Toto's hometown's youth made. The film brings tears to Toto's eyes, perhaps for the memories of his youth and the life he left behind. But it signifies something else as well: the kisses signal passion, work, and love, and love and romantic literature, but also having origins in Christian mystical discourse. I hope this kiss can begin to be understood as that which sometimes graces our everyday moments, and which may be read and understood as a symbol of hope, faith and belief in the good, the beautiful and the true, and perhaps even as a sign of Christian redemption. Let us hope that we, unlike the priest, do not censor this joy not out of life.

[1] Though Williams, as an Anglican, more clearly identifies the romantic as the Incarnation and the life of Christ, I translate that here also to mean a divine marriage.

[2] For readers not familiar with it, the courtly love literature and tradition of the Provence region of France, and was popular during the high Middle Ages. It was a love affair to a lady of superior social standing, usually married, and consisted not only of devotion, but also his service and humiliation to the lady. There existed also a code of conduct that govern this service.

[3] See for example Zwick, Graham, May, Deacy *Faith*, and Deacy and Ortiz.

[4] The idea of a hierophany stems from religion scholar Mircea Eliade; a hierophany is a sacred manifestation in a mundane or profane realm, where the sacred manifests itself into something ordinary and something more. A theophany is the same idea only with the eruption of the divine. For more information see Eliade, *Sacred*.

[5] French philosopher of religion Jean-Luc Marion has written extensively about a phenomenon sometimes called the saturated phenomenon, a revelation that gives itself more than can be grasped by human beings cannot control but are controlled by. The revelation can also be understood as an encounter; it entails the revelation through the work of art to a passive subject. For more information see Marion, *Being Given* may be of use in this regard.

[6] This is a Kindle edition of the book without pagination, but the citation is to section 3, entitled "Seeing life."

[7] For a discussion of the use of postmodern styles in relation to theology see Williams, *Page 19*

[8] This is a Kindle edition of the book without pagination, but the citation is to section 3, entitled "Cupitt and Bonhoeffer meet the Kranks."

[9] Again this is a Kindle edition of the book without pagination, but the citation is to section 2, entitled "The Subjective Turn in Modern Spirituality," and in particular to section 2, entitled "The Subjective Turn in the Context of the Subjective Turn."

[10] See Detweiler and Taylor.

[11] This is a Kindle edition of the book without pagination, but the citation is to section 3, entitled "Seeing life."

entitled “Finding God in the movies.”

[12] Though I reference the film, I actually have not seen *The Last Temptation of Christ*. I have heard about the film.

[13] See J. Smith and Taylor.

[14] Ben-Ze’ev and Goussinsky consider the “ideology of romantic love” as that under certain circumstances can lead to fanaticism and violence, much of which is related to religion, particularly fundamentalism (xii-xiv). [End Page 20]

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Creating a Popular Romance Collection in an A

[End Page 1]

Introduction

“Who will we be studying in 100 years?”

– question from the audience at the opening keynote panel presentation
Symposium (Princeton University, October 24, 2013)

Over the past few decades, there has been a growing critical mass of scholarly attention to the study of popular literary form in its own right. Scholars such as Pamela Regis, Laura Vivanti, and many others, have begun to publish scholarly and/or literary criticism of popular fiction. Other indications include the establishment of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, the Romance Project, and the fact that schools and universities such as the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and George Mason University have begun offering courses that focus on the study of popular novels (“Teaching Popular Romance”).

As Crystal Goldman argues in her 2012 article “Love in the Stacks: Popular Fiction in Academic Libraries,” access to research materials is vital for romance scholars and students.

With no cohesive vision for which materials to collect and little justification for the inclusion of romance studies materials, vital monographs, papers, and articles are not being preserved for researchers’ use and may, indeed be lost from the record entirely (2).

Although Goldman does mention primary sources, her main focus is on secondary sources and related fields, and the issues that have previously prevented many academics from studying them. Goldman also identified a list of 37 core secondary sources for popular fiction. While these materials are definitely important, but the systematic collection of primary sources, such as short stories themselves, is vital.

Identification of Need

Academic libraries have long had an uneven record of collecting so-called “leisure reading collections.” Academic libraries have long collected historical collections of items such as dime novels are not uncommon, but they are not collected until it is, so to speak, no longer contemporary. Academic libraries have long collected so-called “leisure reading collections.” As Pauline Dewan notes, leisure reading collections have been a recent years: [End Page 2]

Three recent trends in university and college libraries have prompted academic libraries to re-evaluate their collections about popular literature collections....Trend towards user-focused libraries, the emphasis on digital collections, and promotion of literacy and lifelong reading (45).

These are all worthy goals and purposes, but they do not necessarily align with the goal of collecting primary source materials. Leisure reading collections are often leased from commercial publishers, and do not fit the library’s desired profile, McNaughton sends a selection of books that the library

lease period. Materials retained from such collections can be a source for University Libraries' case, this often results in spotty collections – a title for one library, but not for another. Moreover, materials that might work best for a leisure reading collection are not necessarily be those desired by future researchers.

As more colleges and universities begin to offer popular literature courses, academic libraries are starting to change or adapt their practices. In a 2007 exploratory survey of academic literature librarians, respondents did collect some popular contemporary fiction for light reading, but respondents cited reasons such as supporting the curriculum (to support offered courses in popular fiction), faculty requests, and preserving primary sources. However, there were still many barriers, including “budgetary constraints, limited space, and the collection, and lack of demand,” as well as an expectation that public libraries should collect the ones collecting contemporary fiction (Alsop 583).

Lack of space and money are very real issues for many academic libraries. The amount of romance fiction that is published. According to the Romance Writers of America, the industry generated over 1 billion dollars in sales from over 9,000 titles in 2013 (“Industry Statistics”; Bosman 2014). Bosman suggested one way of dealing with the mass influx of popular contemporary fiction is to have a “Support” level:

Selection criteria are seldom based on the quality of the literature, so that libraries should collect a sample of romances, for example, which the industry produces at the rate of one title to buy those published on the first day of every month. They are alike, and the quality is statistical) (105).

Leaving aside the question of whether romance novels really are all alike, the question of whether a good result in good representation of the romance genre as a whole, would be to collect titles by individual authors or even subgenres such as paranormal romance since the genre is so diverse at publication.

However, leaving popular romance collecting to public libraries is not necessarily a very different mission than do academic libraries. Aside from public libraries like the New York Public Library, most public libraries do not collect for students, but instead, focus on the present reading interests of the population. The policies of public libraries should be guided by local reading tastes that may differ from others. In Amy Funderburk's 2004 Masters' paper reviewing the number of titles collected by Carolina public libraries, she found that the relatively small number of reviewed titles included winning popular romance novels resulted in a smaller number of titles by genre than other fiction genres (19). Many standard library review sources, such as *Library Journal*, review books on a quarterly basis. In 2008, the American Library Association publication *Reference Services Review* listed collecting romance genre fiction in public libraries, but it only listed five titles.

In public libraries, as titles become less popular or simply wear out, they are replaced by newer titles. Again, the role of most public libraries is not to preserve items for the future. In fact, the growing adoption of e book databases such as Overdrive makes it difficult to offer long term preservation of romance fiction since those e-book databases are not available in the early 1990s, collection development in public libraries underwent a significant change in philosophy of “give them what they want,” as articulated by Charles Robinson's public library system. Robinson's philosophy encouraged public libraries to purchase popular non-fiction, to meet the current reading needs of the county library's patrons.

they wore out or the library needed the space for the “next” hot titles. research-worthy collections of popular romance novels just is not realistic demand, and a now longstanding collection development philosophy (Baltin

There are a few academic libraries that do systematically collect popular romance collections. A prime example is the Browne Popular Culture Library at Brown University, which holds over 10,000 volumes of category romance series. Another is the University of Melbourne, which began collecting romance novels as early as 1997, with an emphasis on authorship. Arguments used for establishing the collection at the University of Melbourne were already collecting other genres of popular fiction (Flesch 120). Other libraries have focused on specific sub-genres such as nurse romances. These collections emphasize the preservation of these materials. However, all three of these collections are on-site Collections, which means that the materials can only be used on site. While this may be desirable from a preservation standpoint (especially in the case of rare books) and researcher access. Moreover, these collections are set apart from the “main” collections.

Circulating collections provide greater physical access for faculty and students at institutions who have Interlibrary Loan access. [End Page 4] They can also be accessed since most academic libraries in the United States use the LC (Library of Congress) call numbers, so books both by and about a given author being shelved together.

The authors of this article would argue that there is value in systematically creating academic library collections. As no established collection development model existed, the authors created a strategy using other genre collections such as science fiction. Liaison librarians in crafting the collection. Stevens’ long term experience and knowledge of the popular romance genre as both a reader and researcher (see *A Research Guide*, which focused on primary and secondary sources) was a key combination that allowed this collection to be created in a relatively short time. They established a popular romance collection at George Mason University after the challenges they were encountered.

Process of Creating the Collection

George Mason University is a highly diverse, state-funded, growing institution among universities in the state of Virginia. The University Libraries encompass four libraries: the Law Library, the Fenwick Library, the University Library, and the University Library. Two of the libraries are on the large Fairfax Campus while the other two serve the service needs of our distributed campuses. The Fenwick Library is the largest research library of the University. The majority of the 1.27 million volume collection of literary criticism books, is located in Fenwick Library.

Like many academic libraries, the University Libraries had sporadically collected books through the McNaughton collection, gifts, and faculty requests. It had also collected several books through the English Department and other programs, and had 78 per cent of the core collection (Goldman 17-18).

Sheehan and Stevens decided to begin systematically collecting popular romance novels in response to several campus developments. The first was an English department course, “Novels,” created by Professor Jessica Matthews. Matthews created the course in response to the engagement that she observed on web-based forums devoted to reader discussion. The course, first offered in 2011, it was successful enough to be offered again in 2012 (University). In addition, Professor Matthews regularly teaches a “Marriage

popular romance novels as part of the class' required readings.

The second was the creation of the Popular Romance Project web portal, hosted by the Center for Digital Learning and New Media at George Mason University with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media's mission is to "encourage the study, interpretation, presenting and preserving the past" in a digital environment (Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, *Love Between the Covers*, the Popular Romance Project included a symposium on *The Book*. Given that the Library of Congress is ready to highlight popular romance as a special collection, it was an opportunity to acquire resources that may have been previously considered

After learning about the Popular Romance Project, Sheehan contacted the Center for Digital Learning and New Media for the site. One of the faculty members involved with the Popular Romance Project was Professor Matthews. Over the summer of 2013, Sheehan met with Professor Matthews to discuss the project's goals, the current state of research and teaching and whether there were specific popular romance titles that would be of interest. As a result Sheehan asked Stevens to order several titles by Diana Gabaldon,

Based on these developments, Sheehan and Stevens began discussing how to build a collection of popular romance titles, with the goal of acquiring a representative sample of additional popular romance titles, with the goal of creating a comprehensive collection. They decided early on that they wanted it to be accessible to all students and faculty who could readily access and check out. Because of the way that Library of Congress (and most academic libraries) treats literary materials, both the primary and secondary collections (e.g., the Georgette Heyer) would be shelved together, which would facilitate access to the collection. Anthologies with items by multiple authors may be shelved separately, like the *Georgette Heyer* anthologies, which generally shelve literary works by single authors by language, historical period, or author (e.g., the *Georgette Heyer* name, with the aim of keeping all of the literary works by a given author together in the same collection (Library Classification). The Library of Congress classification does have a specific subject heading for popular romance (include romantic themes or stories, but that subject heading does not determine the information in the catalog.

Sheehan and Stevens also decided that the materials should be accessible via the library's website so that students and researchers at other institutions. Libraries can choose to limit access to certain materials to prevent loss; few if any Special Collection materials tend to be accessible via the library's website.

After Sheehan and Stevens had a preliminary discussion with the Head of the Center for Digital Learning and New Media, Sheehan submitted a formal proposal (see Appendix 1). This proposal included the following

- rationale (the academic programs, curricula, and faculty that would benefit from the collection)
- parameters (types of materials that would be collected)
- who would make the selections and have control of the funds
- the criteria used to select materials
- materials and formats that would be excluded.

The proposal was accepted and a temporary fund was created that would purchase popular romance novels for fiscal year 2013/2014. Although [End Page 6] Stevens was the primary authority after the first year, selections would continue to be made by both Sheehan and Stevens. The growth of the collection would not be dependent on one librarian. Instead, the collection would become a standard part of the collection development process for literary materials at George Mason University Libraries administration and Sheehan and Stevens were given a budget to purchase materials.

As with literature as a whole, the question of canon is a vexed one for popular culture. In response to Noah Berlatsky's *Salon* article about the need for a popular romance canon, Sheehan and Stevens found the difficulty of establishing a one-size fits all collection of popular romance novels. In a discussion that occurred well after the authors' initial proposal, it exemplifies the

in selecting in romance and other popular genres. Sheehan and Stevens determine a “single” group of “best” authors for researchers and students and research, they wanted a collection that would reflect the historical context. Judging the quality of writing or story can be very subjective. By using their development skills, they anticipated creating a collection that, while not an end to the ongoing discussion. Sheehan and Stevens also knew this was a long term project. A historical collection would take many years to accomplish.

Sheehan and Stevens were fortunate, however, to have something of a precedent. The development of *Authors: A Research Guide* had itself involved selecting a group of authors for research in the area. Updating the resources was easily accomplished and cases identified works that would help demonstrate the variety and change in the genre. An important source was Jessica Matthews’ “Why Women Read Romance” which Sheehan and Stevens had determined that the initial purchases for the first collection which they defined as winners of the RWA Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement award. These are the authors and works that made a long term impact on the genre and continue to be read. These are the authors that helped define the genre for the last 30 years. Like the *Authors: A Research Guide* made “notable lists” such as the *New York Times* Best Sellers list or *Library Journal*’s Best Books collected. In November 2013, the website All About Romance released a list of Top 100 Romance authors that helped identify popular titles and specific authors to purchase (Top 100 Romance Authors).

A number of authors overlapped on all the collecting criteria, which suggested that they decided to focus the collection on individual authors rather than publisher series (e.g., Special Edition series), which would help set Mason’s collection apart from other collections. The Culture Library was already doing.

As with almost all other collection development done by academic librarians, the role of the librarian was central in the decision making process of what to buy. Often times the review process involves reading RWA’s Librarian [End Page 7] of the Year winners, Kristin Ramsdell reviews on her own blog, The Misadventures of Super Librarian. Additionally, online resources such as Trashy Books, Read-A-Romance Month, and the long running All About Romance website (an academic librarian) resources for identifying upcoming authors and reviews.

Diversity of characters is an ongoing concern in what has historically been the popular romance genre. Recently, there have been several efforts, such as the Read-A-Romance Month websites, that strive to publicize diverse authors and works. As they collect, Sheehan and Stevens will continue to monitor the changing nature of the romance genre and collect accordingly. Faculty and students research interests at Mason University will be used to determine what diverse authors are being studied.

Considering the prolific nature of many popular romance novelists, Sheehan and Stevens set levels for various authors – for some authors, collecting would be limited to a few titles. For other authors, their entire body of work, as available, would be included on a pragmatic basis. For instance, authors such as Jayne Ann Krentz and Julia Quinn from a series of connected books, so Sheehan and Stevens decided to purchase Krentz’s *Arcane Society* and *Harmony* series titles have the added benefit of being used by Krentz – Jayne Ann Krentz, Amanda Quick, and Jayne Castle. This works across a wide variety of romance genres, i.e. romantic suspense, historical romance, within one author’s body of work.

Format is an ongoing issue. For the foreseeable future, Sheehan and Stevens

collection. Nine Kathleen Woodiwiss titles, all hardback, were donated as a gift from a former librarian.

During the period that Sheehan and Stevens were selecting these initial titles and also building a popular romance collection, the Hoover Library at McDaniel College and the George Mason University Libraries. As part of the establishment of the Nora Roberts Collection at the Hoover Library, the Hoover Library received funding to build a collection of popular romance novels. Hoover Library Director Jessame Ferguson, the authors decided to try to avoid duplication. Thus, during the first year of the project, they chose not to purchase materials that would focus in collecting Roberts' works. Although they do plan to eventually collect materials, they probably leave the more exhaustive Roberts collecting to McDaniel. As a result of the collaboration between the Hoover Library at McDaniel College and the George Mason University Libraries, academic libraries choose to collect romance novels, broader collaborative efforts are possible, and allowing libraries to collectively acquire a greater number of author titles. The number of titles collected by the George Mason University Libraries during the first year is available in the following table.

One issue that Sheehan and Stevens also wanted to address was bibliographic control. The Dewey Decimal Classification can enhance "browsable" access to related sections. The collection is generally shelved by nationality and chronological time period rather than by author. This is especially in larger collections. Unlike public libraries, there is no "romance" section. Romance authors may be scattered throughout the literature collection. In order to at least find items in the catalog, Sheehan and Stevens requested that the catalog be updated to include "Popular Romance Novel Collection" as part of the MARC field record, field 655, and to use it as a keyword search string in the catalog.

Future Considerations

Although it is too early to assess the results of the first year efforts via means of circulation statistics, reactions have been positive. Sheehan and Stevens also plan to monitor Interlibrary Loan requests. It had been previously purchased prior to establishing a systematic popular romance collection. The title was popular on the Interlibrary Loan circuit. In 2009, while writing *Romance Authorship*, Sheehan consulted Laura London's 1984 *The Windflower*, a title that had long since been purchased through Interlibrary Loan. Stevens ordered the title for the University Libraries collection. In 2013, *The Windflower* was requested 14 times through Interlibrary Loan, with 10 requests from university libraries. The University Libraries was actually unable to fulfill five requests because the title was already checked out. Demand for *The Windflower* may go down in the future (see Book Reviews). However, the large number of Interlibrary Loan requests for this title may indicate an interest in the popular romance collection outside of the boundaries of the University Libraries.

Future steps for the collection include **[End Page 10]**

- Developing a formal collection development policy for the romance collection and preferred formats as part of the overall literature collection development plan for the sake of continuity for future selectors.
- Outreach to faculty and students. This could include an InfoGuide, similar to the one that exists for the Juvenile Collection.
- Usage assessment via circulation records and Interlibrary Loan requests. To determine long term needs of future researchers and students, it may take some time.
- Discussion with the University Libraries' Special Collections regarding the possibility of acquiring materials from popular romance authors (i.e. manuscripts, correspondence, etc.).

For those who would like to start (or help their librarians start) an academic romance collection, here are some suggestions:

- Look at your curriculum and programs. What classes and programs are currently using romance novels?

and/or sub-genres are they focusing on?

- Assess what you already have. What can you build on? (The University collection with some scattered primary sources).
- Look at Interlibrary Loan requests data. Have many popular romance author or sub-genre patterns that you can identify?
- Identify colleagues and other allies that can help you make a case for
- Consider what the purpose of the collection would be. What special titles to be requested via Interlibrary Loan?
- How can you help patrons access the collection? Are there notations
- Look to see what other libraries in your area are doing (including past efforts might overlap, or, alternately, complement yours).

Conclusion

Many academic libraries are already starting to collect literary scholarship and its development. However, only purchasing the scholarship and not the primary texts for researchers and students studying the genre. Imagine a library, for instance, Eugene O'Neill, but not *The Iceman Cometh*. Such a situation is currently true for many libraries. Although there is a vital place for popular romance (Special Collections), circulating popular romance collections can also play a vital role in the development of scholarship. In effect, it would mean treating popular romance novels like literary collections. Popular romance would not be the first popular genre to be treated as such. Fiction and other popular genres have slowly become more readily available in academic libraries. The same should be true for popular romance.

Although it is unlikely that any one research library would have the funds, let alone the expertise, to collect the works of the popular romance authors that might be needed by future researchers, the purchase of authors based on their own curricular and faculty needs. Alternately, the University Library Groups of libraries could also work together in a complementary fashion. This would help to and enable future scholarship. [End Page 12]

Appendix 1: Popular Romance Novels Collection Development

To: Head, Collection Development & Preservation

From: Sarah E. Sheehan

Liaison Librarian, College of Health & Human Services

Re: Popular Romance Novels Collection Development Proposal

Date: October 30th, 2013

I propose that the University Libraries collect popular romance novels in a circulating format. In fiction, the study of popular romance novels has been increasingly recognized. This includes classes taught at multiple universities, consistent and ongoing research at a recent conference, a scholarly, peer reviewed, open access journal (*Journal of Popular Culture*), and scholarly symposia held in the last four years.

The English Department currently offers several classes on popular genres, including a first-level survey class on popular romance novels. Professor Jessica Mathews has an active scholar studying the popular romance novel genre. As more faculty research in this study, it becomes important that the University Libraries be able to support

In addition, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History & New Media in partnership with the American Library Association and others is sponsoring the Popular Romance Project (<http://popularromanceproject.org/>). The Popular Romance Project will receive funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Brandeis University and others, and the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History & New Media. In 2015, the Library of Congress Center for the Book and the Future of the Popular Romance Novel and the American Library Association are sponsoring a series of programs about the popular romance novel in conjunction with the

Scholarship on the popular romance genre is a growing field and providing important insights into the history and future of the genre. The English Department, the History & New Media, the Cultural Studies Department, and the Women & Gender Studies Department are supporting faculty and student research.

There is an overwhelming amount of popular romance novels published every year and they are highly prolific. Using a well-established criteria and focusing on faculty research, a collection that [End Page 13] provides a good representation of the genre. Stevens, Humanities Liaison Librarian, in creating collection development a collection of popular romance novels.

Elements of the criteria will include,

- Novels published by American and International romance novel authors
- Select novels from all the RWA Nora Roberts Lifetime Achievement Awards
- Collecting influential novels listed on the *All About Romance* and *The*
- A limited number of category novels. Category novels are the short novels. For example is the Harlequin Romantic Suspense novels will focus much on Harlequin lines.
- Hardback or trade paper formats are preferred, but novels that are also be added to the collection. [End Page 14]

Appendix 2: Popular Romance Novels Purchased for 20

Author	Title
Amanda Quick	Second Sight
Jayne Ann Krentz	White Lies
Jayne Ann Krentz	Sizzle and Burn
Amanda Quick	The Third Circle
Jayne Ann Krentz	Running Hot
Amanda Quick	The Perfect Poison
Jayne Ann Krentz	Fired Up
Amanda Quick	Burning Lamp
Jayne Castle	Midnight Crystal
Jayne Ann Krentz	In Too Deep
Amanda Quick	Quicksilver
Jayne Castle	Canyons of the Night
Jayne Ann Krentz	Wildest Dreams

Balogh, Mary	At Last Comes Love
	First Comes Marriage
	Secret Affair
	Seducing an Angel
	Simply Love
	Simply Magic
	Simply Perfect
	Simply Unforgettable
	The Arrangement
	The Escape
	The Proposal
	Then Comes Seduction
Brown, Sandra	Deadline
	Led Astray
	Low Pressure
	Standoff
	Crush
	Envy
	Fat Tuesday
	French Silk
	Not Even for Love
	Where There's Smoke

[End Page 15]

Chase, Loretta	Captives of the Night
	Last Hellion
	Lion's Daughter
	Lord of Scoundrels
	Scandal Wears Satin
	Silk is for Seduction
Crusie, Jennifer	Agnes and The Hitman
	Anyone But You
	Bet Me
	Charlie All Night
	Crazy for You
	Dogs and Goddesses
	Don't Look Down
	Faking It

	Fast Women
	Getting Rid of Bradley
	Manhunting
	Maybe This Time
	Strange Bedpersons
	Tell Me Lies
	The Cinderella Deal
	The Unfortunate Miss Fortunes
	Trust Me On This
	Welcome to Temptation
	What the Lady Wants
	Wild Ride
Dare, Tessa	Any Duchess Will Do
	Lady by Midnight
	Romancing the Duke: Castles Ever After
	Scandalous, Dissolute, No-Good Mr. Wright
	Twice Tempted by a Rogue
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	Mrs. Drew Plays Her Hand
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	Death Echo
	Enchanted
	Forbidden
	Innocent as Sin

	Only His
	Only Love
	Only Mine
	Only You
	Pearl Cove
	Untamed
	Winter Fire
Macomber, Debbie	Blossom Street Brides
	Back on Blossom Street
	Christmas Letters
	Christmas Wishes
	Good Yarn
	Hannah's List
	Knitting Diaries
	Shop on Blossom Street
	Starting Now: A Blossom Street Novel
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	McKettrick's Luck

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	McKettricks of Texas: Austin
	McKettricks of Texas: Garrett
	McKettricks of Texas: Tate
	McKettrick's Pride
	Secondhand Bride
	Sierra's Homecoming
	Shotgun Bride
	The McKettrick Way
	Women of Primrose Creek (anthology)
Phillips, Susan Elizabeth	Ain't She Sweet

	Breathing Room
	Call Me Irresistible
	Dream a Little Dream
	Fancy Pants
	First Lady
	Glitter Baby
	Great Escape
	Heaven, Texas
	Honey Moon
	Hot Shot
	It Had to be You
	Just Imagine
	Kiss an Angel
	Lady Be Good
	Match Me If You Can
	Natural Born Charmer
	Nobody's Baby But Mine
	This Heart of Mind
	What I Did for Love
Putney, Mary Jo	Angel Rogue
	Dancing on the Wind
	One Perfect Rose
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	River of Fire
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	Thunder and Roses
Quinn, Julia	The Sum of All Kisses

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	Savage Desire
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	Sweet Savage Love
	Wicked Loving Lies

Singh, Nalini	Angel's Flight
	Kiss of Snow
	Tangle of Need
Stewart, Mary	Airs Above the Ground
	Madam Will You Talk?
	My Brother Michael
	Nine Coaches Waiting
	Rose Cottage
	The Gabriel Hounds
	The Ivy Tree
	The Moon-Spinners
	The Prince and the Pilgrim
	The Stormy Petrel
	Thornyhold
	Thunder on the Right
	Wildfire at Midnight
	Wind off the Small Isles
Stuart, Anne	Black Ice
	Breathless
	Chain of Love
	Cold as Ice
	Fire and Ice
	Heart's Ease
	Ice Blue
	Ice Storm
	Nightfall
	On Thin Ice
	Reckless
	Ruthless
	Shameless

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	Lover Avenged
	Lover Awakened

	Lover Enshrined
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	Lover Revealed
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	Domino
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	Woman Without a Past
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Closed

Love in the Digital Library: A Search for Racial by Renee Bennett-Kapusniak and Adriana Mc

August 29th, 2015 |

[End Page 1]

Introduction and Background

The romance genre is one of the bestselling genres in the United States |
(electronic book) format in the consumer market (RWA). An *e-book form*
Adobe PDF, Mobipocket, Adobe EPUB, OverDrive Read and Kindle libra
books and the growth of e-reading is rapidly increasing as more materi
different technological devices. With this growth in e-reading, the demand
increasing. OverDrive, a global digital system that distributes e-books and c

e-book library downloads. The Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) provides a digital library of electronic materials for Wisconsin residents.

This exploratory case study examines how Wisconsin public libraries' digital collections of romance genre e-book title records in the WPLC digital library. Within this study, the following questions are asked: Do public libraries' digital collections present a diversity of racial and ethnic demographics of their distinct service communities? What is the current state of the system? This study analyzes the *availability* (number of titles, copies and digital formats) (language selection and classification of titles) within the WPLC digital library and the potential for supplying racially and ethnically diverse romance titles in e-book format to potential users. The study also examines whether the DL is increasing the awareness of romance in the demand for the popular romance genre.

Romance Fiction and Multicultural Romance Fiction

Romance fiction has developed and expanded as a genre since its early beginnings. It is a story that presents a fictional or legendary love story, tale, or prose narrative, with elements of mystery and/or supernatural elements (Merriam-Webster). Romance has been a popular activity for centuries. Subgenres include historical, contemporary, inspirational/religious, fantasy, and young adult romance (RWA). Romance may contain varying sensuality degrees, from sweet to extremely hot (Bourne 2008). It is an emotional level with the story's characters, experiencing a journey to a "Happy Ending" at the end (Radway 61; Wendell 8). [End Page 2] Romance fiction has traditionally been written by White, non-Hispanic characters, cultural traditions, and social values.

Multicultural romance fiction includes works written by authors who identify themselves as African American, American Indian or Alaska native, and/or Asian. It also includes works that feature or indigenous characters and culturally diverse narratives, either by authors of color or indigenous authors (Bostic 214). The representations of characters of color or indigenous characters in romance fiction (other genre fiction), ranging from one-dimensional, stereotypical characters to complex and realistic characteristics. The range contains problematic stereotyping of characters as hypersexual, sexually aggressive, violent, or submissive sex objects in contrast to the characteristics of less educated people or those from lower socioeconomic status. It ranges from "flavor" to stories (Forster paragraph 10). Narratives that interrupt and challenge traditional relevant representations, highlighting culture, empowerment of families and communities. Multicultural romance encompasses a variety of cultures, with the most frequent being African American (Ramsdell 290).

Authors of color and indigenous authors have been writing and publishing romance fiction. It has been within the past twenty years that they have benefited professionally. In the past, publishing companies did not publish African American authors' romance fiction. In the 1990s, publications representing African American characters in the 1990s (White 2008). African American and American Indian characters were rare (Osborne; Gregor 2008). Multicultural romance publications, with major publishing companies established in the 1990s. Ballantine was the first major publishing company to establish an imprint focusing on "African-American, Asian, Latin, and Native American interest" (One World 2008). "Books," an imprint focusing on African American romances (Osborne; White 2008). contemporary romances." The "Arabesque" imprint was sold to B.E.T.

publishing competing books. After this limitation was lifted, Kensington launched the African descent” (Publishers Weekly, “Kensington Returns to African Corp.). Furthermore, Harlequin developed Kimani Press, a division publishing African American characters, in 2005. Kimani now includes five distinct imprints. Spanish translations in their “Bianca” and “Deseo” lines, which are popular authors, featuring White, non-Hispanic characters (Engberg 237). Indie Publishers is committed to the publication of multicultural romance novels. Genesis Publishers is an owned African American publishing company in the US. It has expanded to publish new books that are translated into Kiswahili. Parker Publishing is a small publisher since 2005 to create literature for “Black and multi-ethnic readers,” including African American Publishing). [End Page 3]

Encounters with literature that reflects one’s own experience, familiar settings, and validating. Encounters with literature that portrays a diverse range of individuals’ worldviews. Librarians have the opportunity and the responsibility to build collections that portray diverse perspectives and representations, regardless of race. In 2003, a study addressed the lack of diversity in popular fiction library collections and the impact of literature’s impact on social and personal validation (70). Library materials should represent communities and present a diversity of ideas. These goals can be fulfilled through e-book DL.

E-Books in Public Libraries

E-books range in format variety and are downloaded on an e-reader or other device. The first e-book became available in 1971 via the Internet DL Project Gutenberg. The rise of e-books was a turning point for their current ubiquity and popularity (Galbraith). The rise of e-books helped spur librarians’ interest in providing access to e-books in public libraries. OverDrive is an e-book lending platform for libraries in 1998 (Galbraith), while current libraries use OverDrive, 360, EBSCO eBooks, Gale Virtual Reference Library, Ingram MyiLibrary, OverDrive, and (Blackwell et al. “ReadersFirst” 4). OverDrive is the highest ranked vendor for libraries. A group of 292 library systems working to improve e-book access and service. OverDrive offers the most e-book format options for libraries (Pawlowski 61). Adobe EPUB is the industry standard for e-books as developed by the International Digital Publishing Consortium. E-books are accessible via e-readers, computers, handheld mobile devices, and tablets.

E-book popularity has been increasing in the last few years. There was a significant increase in online readers due to the expanding use of digital devices and consumer demand. Overall demand have stabilized, yet a 2013 public library survey reported that e-book usage is expected to rise (Enis, “Library E-book Usage,” 3). Keeping note of item usage can show trends over a period of time (Wolfram 169). A 2012 Pew study of e-book usage among the adult population has read an e-book (Rainie et al.). The most popular genre read in 2011, OverDrive’s data from over five million users indicated romance was the most popular (Reid). Libraries need to understand user habits to connect them to digital collections.

Library development and maintenance of digital and print collections provide services for all users. Results from a 2013 PEW study indicates more than half of Americans use e-books offered as a library service (Zickuhr, Rainie and Purcell). With the increasing use of e-books, library collection practices have changed to include print and digital [End Page 3]. A study showed that 89 percent of public libraries offer e-books to their patrons.

e-book circulation to increase within the next year (Enis, “E-book Usage from 2004-2010 at the New York Public Library (NYPL) depicts an increase disproportionately higher. A 2009-2010 NYPL e-book study showed that users who are book users read digital content repeatedly (Platt 252). Libraries need to address community interests and needs. Public libraries provide collections of popular digital content rather than through a direct relationship with publishers (Pawlowski 56), which is supported by Blackwell et al. “ReadersFirst” 3). A PEW survey comparing e-book and print book borrowers feel there are long waiting lists and a lack of novel titles in e-book format. Researchers have examined public libraries’ e-book services (Platt; Rainie and Duggan 2010) and analyze racial and ethnic diversity within a public library’s e-book collection in the romance genre.

Library Policies and Philosophies

The Wisconsin state legislature’s policy for libraries states that libraries should provide a diversity of ideas, and knowledge, as well as providing electronic delivery of materials. The state aid (Wisconsin Public Library Legislation and Funding Task Force; Wisconsin Statutes 43.24(f-m)). Local policies and professional ethics drive public librarians’ decisions to community interests and needs, including racial, ethnic, and linguistic relevance.

The American Library Association Code of Ethics provides normative guidance for library professionals, beginning with, “We provide the highest level of service to all users using organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate responses to requests” (“Code of Ethics”). This principle recognizes the profession’s commitment to equitable access, without distinction based on race or ethnicity. Librarians provide encounters with e-books that reflect their diverse communities and their narratives with the potential to expand their worldviews.

E-book collection development

The WPLC mission is to provide Wisconsin residents with access to a broad range of published materials in a wide range of subjects and formats (Gold et al. “WPLC Library Steering Committee manages the WPLC digital library, including recommendations approved by the Board, decision-making for daily operations, and management of a Selection Committee tasked with selecting materials for the collection. The membership is [End Page 5] comprised of one Board representative and community members based on annual investment (Gold et al., “Members,” 2012).

The WPLC has a Digital Media Vendor/Product Selection Committee of eight members, including individual libraries, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, and the WPLC. The committee surveys the marketplace for products to support digital media material distribution. The WPLC vendor selection and contracts, and recommends a purchasing strategy (Gold et al. “Digital Media Vendor”). In 2011, the Vendor Selection Committee recommended the WPLC E-Book collection to cope with current demand” and a commitment to “Provide E-Books to public library patrons” (Bend et al. “Vendor Selection Committee Report to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Division for Libraries, Technology, and Community Learning” 2011). This spurred WPLC organization of a statewide initiative to pool funds and purchase e-books (Gold et al. “Collection Development Policy” 2). As of 26 April 2014, the WPLC dig

book items, which has steadily increased by 505 items over the past two mor

Methods

The researchers in this study investigated how the WPLC digital library perspectives and reflects the racial and ethnic demographics of their service case study with targeted searches for multicultural romance e-book authors. A case study method was chosen to examine and better understand (Stake “Case study: first phase of a longitudinal examination (Glesne 22). Future phases will include to validate findings (Stake “The Art of Case Study Research” 45).

Wisconsin Demographics

Out of the 5.6 million residents of Wisconsin, 878,000, or 15.5 percent are Hispanic or Latina/o (of any race), Asian, and/or American Indian or Alaska Native. Within this group, 6.3 percent of Wisconsin Census respondents identified as Hispanic or Latina/o (of any race), 2.3 percent identified as Asian or Alaska Native (see *Fig. 1*). Additionally, 2.4 percent self-identified as some other more races. **[End Page 6]**

Over 878,000, or 15.5%, of Wisconsin residents identified as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latina/o (of any race), Asian, and/or American Indian or Alaska native (United States Census Bureau, 2010).

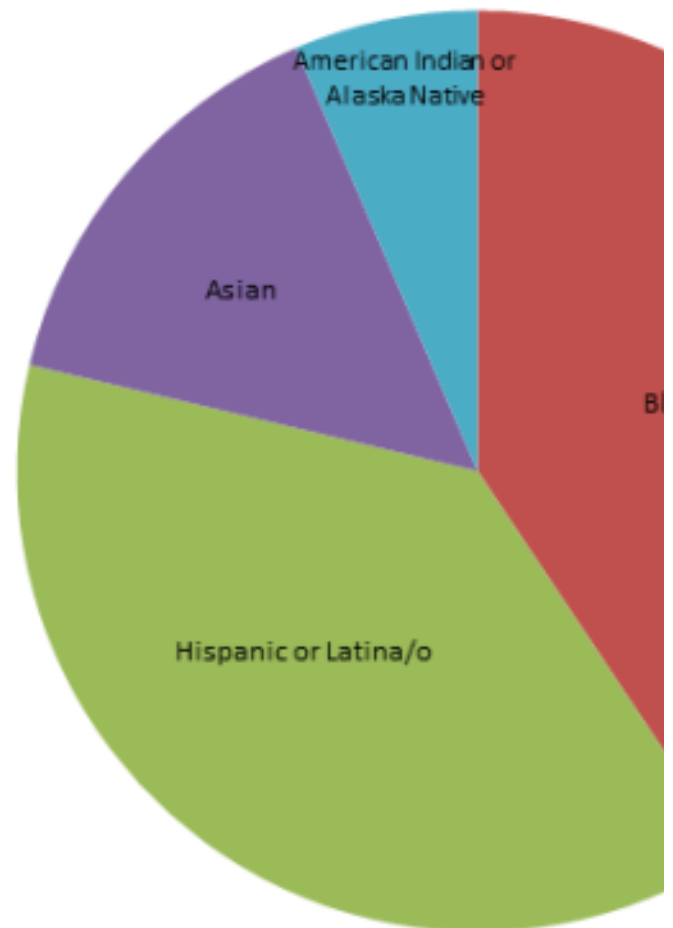


Figure 1: Wisconsin residents, by race and ethnicity, 2010.

Wisconsin Public Library Consortium

The WPLC was formed in 2000 as a partnership of eight library systems and almost all public libraries within the state (Gold et al. “For Patrons”; “Memberships”; “Member Services”; “Member Resources”; “Member Information”; “Member to information technology and digital materials through research, development and implementation of public library cooperation (Gold et al. “About”). Advantages of consortium include larger breadth of titles, and less local spending on bestsellers that may not be widely read (Wisconsin State Library and Funding Task Force; Schwartz, “OverDrive Data,” 6). The intention to “portray different viewpoints, values, philosophies, cultures, and traditions of the community” (Gold et al. “Collection Development Policy” 2).

Selection Process

The general descriptors for race and ethnicity by the US Census Bureau multicultural romance e-books within the WPLC digital library are Black or and/or American Indian or Alaska native. The researchers use the term *multicultural* ethnic groups throughout this paper. The researchers explored a [End Page 8] books to select a range of racially and ethnically diverse authors and book titles.

The Reader's Advisor Online website is based on the "Genreflecting Adv Linworth Libraries Unlimited which is designed to help library staff with development in various fiction genres (Maas et al. "About"). The model recommendation list for basic romance collections, which includes a section of titles organized under headings of "African American," "Asian," "Latino," and "in the trade)" (Maas et al. "Sample Core Collection"). The listing includes 31 titles to be adapted and expanded to respond to the libraries' specific needs. The website also includes information on romance publishing and provides detailed information about various publishers: Ballantine, Fawcett, One World, Genesis, Arabesque and Kensington (Maas et al. website is based on the RT Book Reviews Magazine that feature reviews of romance awards, upcoming releases and themed booklists (Romance, "RT Book Reviews Native American) titles and a list of titles by author as recommended reads (Themes: "Asian"; "Native American"). The All About Romance website contains information for readers and romance writers. The website offers a compiled list of Native American ("American Indian Romances"). The Goodreads website includes options for users to create an account to keep track of personal books wanted or read (Chand et al. "American Romance, consisting of *Most read this week titles tagged African American romance books* ("African American Romance"). These book titles are reviewed by contributors who review books and place information on the website. The Romance Wikipedia, where anyone can contribute to the website. Booksquare.com, which contains a range of information, featuring romance history and today's romance books, publishers, authors, and articles of the romance genre (Simpson). The website provides information on titles, authors and publishers under the different categories: African American, Chica Lit, Cuban-American Authors, Interracial Fiction ("Romance Sub-Genres"). The authors and book titles from these resources

Results

Study results were analyzed by examining the history (Huberman and Miles) and accessibility of titles within the WPLC. Data was then scrutinized for unique and meaningful groups (Creswell 101). [End Page 8]

Availability

A total of 151 individual authors in the study identified as Black or African American Indian or Alaska native; or as authors who write multicultural romance. The authors were identified as Black or African American romance book titles, Hispanic romance book titles with settings in China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and contemporary American Indian romance book titles. The researchers searched the WPLC digital library between 12 February 2014 and 26 April 2014. Keywords used were authors and book titles. Search results were limited to e-books, excluding some available

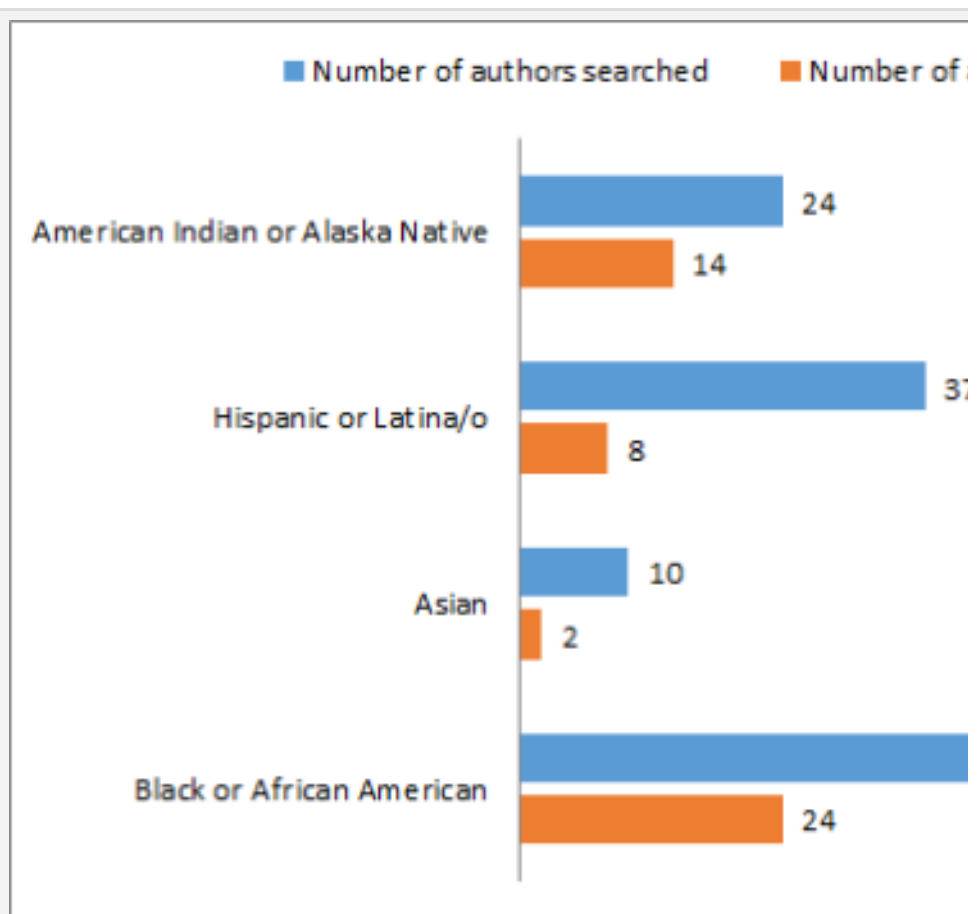


Figure 2: Authors searched and findings in WPLC, February 2014.

The results of these searches returned records for individual author titles. In some cases, the catalog had multiple records of the same title, such as when WPLC partner libraries purchased additional copies of the same title for exc. Additionally, 29.8 percent of the authors had e-book titles (see Fig. 2) and were available in e-book format within the WPLC digital library (see Fig. 3). [End]

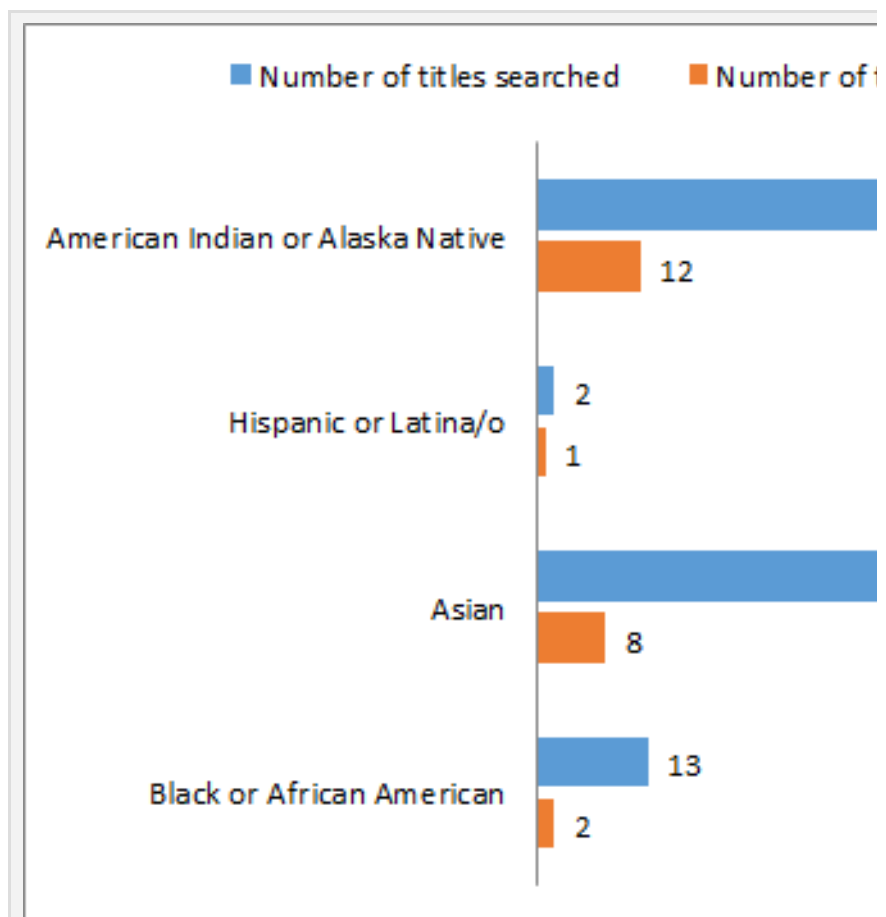


Figure 3: Titles searched and findings in WPLC, February 2014.

Data for each search includes the number of e-book titles present in the WPLC digital library, the number of holds on each title, and the number of available copies of each title (e.g., Kindle, Overdrive, Adobe EPUB, Adobe PDF).

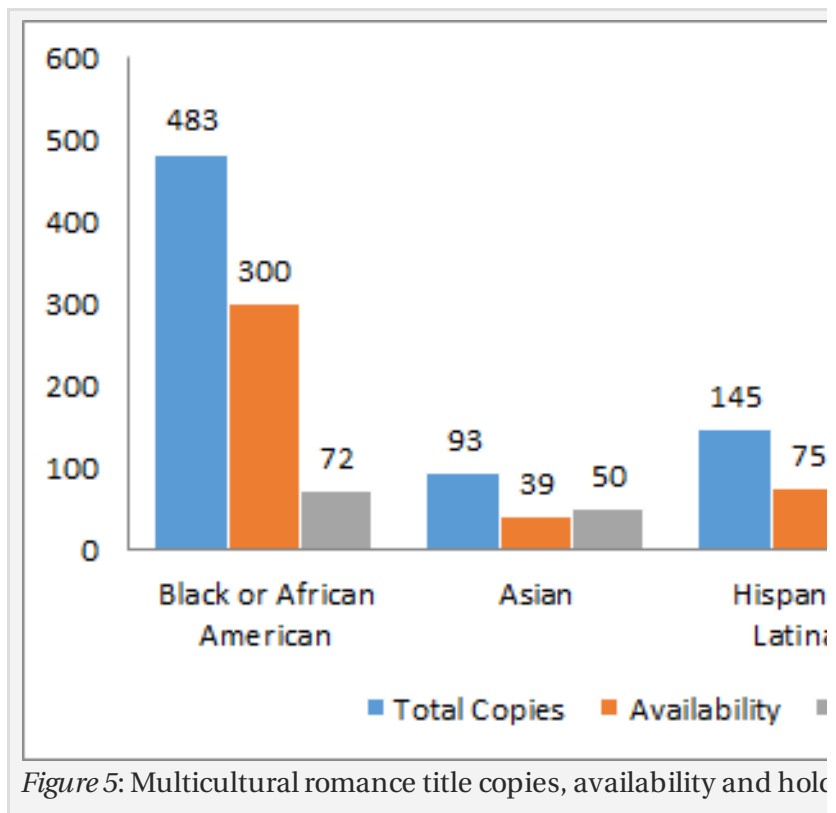
Racial or ethnic group	Author	Number of titles	Number of copies of each title	Number of holds on each title
Black or African American	Alers, Rochelle	18	2	0
			2	0
			2	0
		

Figure 4: Example of monthly data collection.

Additionally, the researchers found that in February 2014, at least 10.3 percent of the total multicultural romance e-books, and in April 2014, 10.2 percent of the total multicultural romance e-books. The total of multicultural romance e-book records (i.e., individual authors) in the collection in February 2014 was 430 items and 926 copies, which is a significant increase from the two-month study period. There [End Page 10] were likely additional multicultural romance e-books in the digital library that were not found in this study because of the limited selection of titles.

The WPLC digital library provides a range of formats for the multicultural romance e-books. The researchers presented four different formats, Kindle, Overdrive READ, Adobe EPUB, and Adobe PDF. The researchers presented balanced numbers, while the lowest availability was in Adobe PDF format. Adobe PDF format is widely used among individuals, so e-books presented in this format are more available to the population. However, there can be limitations with Adobe PDF because the file size is large. The WPLC digital library provides a balanced number of options, facilitating access to multicultural romance e-books for current and potential users.

The researchers found that there were an adequate number of copies of multicultural romance e-books available to respond to user interest and appeal to potential users. Most of the multicultural romance e-books were available a time. One person may check out a copy of the title for seven to twenty-one days. The researchers found that the average number of available copies for at least seven days and Kindle, Adobe EPUB, and Adobe PDF format was twenty-one days (WPLC). If an item is not available, users may place a hold on the item. The researchers found that the highest holds were one (6.2 percent) and two (2.1 percent). The highest hold was for one month. This outlier might have affected the results, which show that 7 percent of the records (see Fig. 5).



Data in February 2014 (see Fig. 5) depicted that the majority of the multicultural romance e-books. This aligns with Ramsdell's point that there are more multicultural romances over other [End Page 11] racial or ethnic representations (290) book titles are Black or African American, which is not proportionate to the population of Wisconsin. Further, each racial/ethnic category is diverse (e.g., nationality and ethnicity) and may not be represented within the findings. For example, the majority of Hispanic/Latina also identify as Mexican (72.8 percent), followed by Puerto Rican. These findings do not reveal the specific representation of distinct racial and ethnic groups.

Item availability and holds influence the other, meaning if there are holds on an item, the WPLC, the availability and hold status for each item is quite fluid and can change. The consortium of 17 libraries with library cardholders accessing the system 24/7. The difference between the relatively low number and availability of American Indian titles in this category. This may be because of the mainstream popularity of authors like Louise Erdrich, whose characters, and happen to have one or more books with characters who are American Indian. Because American Indian stories were particularly popular at the time of the study, users may want to read everything by their favorite author (Bouricius 29) or might pick up a new title to read at that particular time. This data is a snapshot of the multicultural romance e-books. When comparing the three total data sets with the same totals compiled for the same time found there was not a significant increase or decrease in the percentage of holds with the number of holds with the percentage range of 5 percent or less for all of the categories. Needs to be undertaken to explore the data sets over a longer period to determine the impact of racial and ethnic category.

Accessibility

Digital library materials need to be accessible to users with a range of information needs, interests, and information seeking behavior can vary (e.g., literacy, socioeconomic status, education, level of acculturation and value). To assess the *availability* of multicultural romance e-books, the researchers conducted a

of multicultural romance e-books. These searches were for all romance e-books and all romance e-books under the subject headings, “Multi-Cultural” and “Multi-Cultural” and were limited to e-books, excluding some available audiobooks.

The WPLC digital library collection offers a minimal selection of romance e-books. The DL interface does not accommodate users that speak languages other than English. The collection contained 11 Spanish romance e-book title records, which increased by 10 records in February. A German language romance e-book was added in March. While the WPLC collection includes Chinese, Czech, French, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Japanese, Romanian, Russian, and Vietnamese e-book titles [End Page 12] found in those respective languages. The DL interface offers options to change the interface to any other language. The advanced search options do not allow for materials in languages other than English, yet access to this search tool is not available. The records that contain words or names in languages other than English are not presented. For example, the Latina author Caridad Piñero, a.k.a. Caridad Piñero and “Caridad Piñero,” neither record accurately representing the ñ in her name. The DL interface does not accommodate users that speak languages other than English or records for materials containing words or names in languages other than English. At the February 2014 WPLC Digital Library Steering Committee Meeting, the item “Multi language interface: Selecting titles in languages other than English” was discussed. Improvement in this area might make the multilingual materials accessible to users that speak languages other than English.

The limited subject headings to classify materials within the WPLC digital library collection limited the discovery of ethnically diverse romance e-books. The researchers found an advanced search for “Romance” and “Romance” returned zero titles between February and April 2014. The subject heading “Fiction,” was used to identify racial or ethnic subjects within romance e-books. The subject heading, “Multi-Cultural”, was not attached to any of the romance e-books within a particular section of the library, while digital materials such as e-books and e-audiobooks subject headings might increase the accessibility of digital materials. For example, the subject headings were limited to Fiction, Romance, Suspense, Short Stories, and Non-Fiction. There is an invisibility of the range of racial and ethnic diversity represented in the collection. The limited accessibility of multicultural romance e-books.

Implications

Access and general issues

System usability is important in the discovery of and access to e-books. If a user is unable to search, it can lead to unsuccessful interactions with the system, leaving the user unable to access information from a DL can be challenging for users since some users are unable to find books on shelves to browse titles (Lesk 204). This poses challenges for librarians and users alike as there are many complexities to making digital items available and readily accessible (Downes 244). Further research is needed to examine if the design of the system creates potential users’ barriers to e-book access.

There can be additional accessibility issues that hinder users’ interactions with the system, but are explained briefly [End Page 13] here. Beyond the scope of this study, the success a user experiences when searching in an online system. Users can be hindered from accessing information if they have less experience with the system. In addition, a user’s ability to determine how well the user accesses materials within an online system. The

use a system, the less successful the interaction. Another possible issue is access at home due to lack of infrastructure or affordability. Internet access to online systems. If users have limited access to the Internet at home, they may need to provide the access they need to find information.

Relationships between libraries and vendors

Publishers' licensing agreements and commercial vendors' policies limit the selection of titles. The big six publishers did not allow their e-books to be licensed by public libraries until 2013. OverDrive began licensing e-books to OverDrive" (Enis, "Library E-book Usage," 5). The selection criteria is based on the availability of titles from vendors. The selection of titles for acquisition as a result of publishers' limitations on digital editions of titles on OverDrive might unexpectedly pull other titles from the collection (3). There are also commercial vendors. OverDrive allows independent authors to submit titles to the collection. Ten titles are available. If authors have fewer books, it is recommended they work with other independent authors as a collective. WPLC digital library contracts with OverDrive. If a vendor wishes to add an e-book to the collection, it must be made available to all OverDrive users since Zickuhr et al. explained that 41 percent of users who read a book read the most recent e-book. However, OverDrive's policies present independent authors with a barrier. The option for libraries to increase their collections with items from independent authors is not satisfying the demand for more titles, user-requested titles, and more titles not represented by large publishing companies.

Commercial vendors hold the control over DL interface design and subject heading system management. The vendors determine the options for e-book content and subject heading optional adoption by the contracted libraries. For example, in 2013, OverDrive added French Canadian, Simplified Chinese, and Spanish with plans to develop other language options. It was not possible for individual libraries to provide subject headings through OverDrive. Additionally, libraries cannot customize the subject heading options to add or remove subject headings for specific titles through OverDrive. Libraries must wait to receive multiple recommendations for subject heading changes before they can be implemented (OverDrive Partners). Collective groups of librarians, like ReadersFirst, work to improve library services by addressing barriers to access to [End Page 14] e-books from independent authors, companies and commercial vendors.

Barriers

The greatest barrier to developing or expanding e-book collections has been the lack of interest in some cases (Enis, "E-book Usage Survey" 3). Ashcroft notes that this will continue to be a problem in regards to library e-books (405). While financial barriers to multicultural fiction might not be considered a "special" acquisition, since budget cuts (Bostic 210). Multicultural fiction might be a constant component of a library's collection and maintenance. A 2013 survey of public libraries reports that 42 percent purchase e-books, but it was not a priority (Enis, "E-book Usage Survey" 3) in regards to e-book collection development.

Selecting materials for a library collection involves the library, the library's budget, and the materials available (Van Fleet 78). The WPLC Selection Committee is comprised of

libraries, divided into 24 selectors for adult materials and 10 selectors for young adult materials (the “Selection Committee”). According to the 2014 collection development journals, lists of recommended or award-winning titles, and other selection criteria (the “Collection Development Policy” 3). Similar to recommending books to libraries, librarians need to know the literature and know what appeals to the patrons. Talking to the patrons and turning their input into a policy guides the policy and procedures in acquiring the content for the collection (the “Collection Development Policy” 73). George Watson Cole points out that “the library is in existence because it serves *all* the classes that go towards making up the community in which it is original). Community interest, anticipated interest, individual requests and needs, and subjects, are considered important to the WPLC selectors (Gold et al. “Collection Development Policy” 73). To focus more attention on collaborative community assessments rather than individual assessments to improve library services for racially and ethnically diverse communities (Bouricius 47) for libraries to make an informed choice about collection development with the users (Ashcroft 399). Continued research needs to explore how to use community assessments and analyses to inform their collection development.

With the popularity of the romance genre, more attention needs to be given to multicultural romance e-books. According to PEW in 2012, 56 percent of users do not have the e-book they wanted to borrow, which might be because the library does not have it (Zickuhr et al. “Libraries, Patrons and E-books.”). Moyer states libraries need more options to readers’ varied interests (230). Most romance readers enjoy contemporary romance (Bouricius 47), so [End Page 15] varieties of romance novels are important. Due to limited availability and limited funds for multicultural romance fiction, acquisition of titles that present accurate representations of the diverse realities of individual communities is important. Taking care to recognize materials with subtle and overtly racist or discriminatory content and limitations relate to users and systems that are compounded by external factors. More multicultural romance e-books.

Future Research

This study reveals the current multicultural romance e-book titles’ availability in the digital library. Some of the challenges to diminishing availability and accessibility in the digital library. However, there are challenges presented by external sources: for example, limited by the OverDrive system and publishing companies can limit the availability in the digital library for the African American independent publishing house Geometric Publishing. Limited availability can be a barrier for all romance e-books and for e-books in general. Identifying sources for such challenges as well as opportunities for improvement. Selection Committee members, might provide further insight to the barriers to the availability of romance e-books for the DL.

The racially and ethnically diverse authors and book titles selected for this study are available on websites, wikis, and books. Data analysis illustrates that some of the titles might have only one or two titles that include characters of color or indigenous characters. In the various websites, wikis, and book resources for multicultural romance fiction, the selection process by removing these outliers from the data sets. The book titles by individual authors’ comprehensive offerings in the DL. The selection in this study is limited to female authors. Future studies need to add male authors, such as African American author Tyree, Eric Jerome Dickey, Jerve Tervalon, E. Lynn Harris, Franklin White, and others. Lesbian romance novels appeal not only to the homosexual reader but can also

et al. "Gay and Lesbian Romance"). A search for "Gay/Lesbian" and "Romance" in the WPLC collection. Future studies need to specifically include the accessibility of romance e-books. Another search refinement needs to focus on how we (e.g., Brenda Jackson's "Bachelors in Demand" series contains three out of ten

An advanced search limited to the subject heading "Urban Fiction" resulted in 20 titles over the following two months. Urban Fiction, also known as "Street Lit," is a genre of fiction that plots delving into the realities and culture of the characters. It is traditionally associated with African American fiction, but it is branching out into other ethnicities. For urban fiction narrowed by the [End Page 16] subject heading "Romance," 20 titles were found over the following two months. While some of these 20 titles were Black or African American romance, most were categorized as multicultural romance. Further research needs to focus on the

Further studies of multicultural romance e-book accessibility needs to focus on user experience and browsing. In 2012, OverDrive reported that nearly 60 percent of readers browse for books instead of searching for specific titles, and romance is the most popular genre. Several items were added to the data sets because of the researchers' browsing. This was not an intentional research method. A study designed around browsing for multicultural romance e-book availability and accessibility.

This exploratory study provides a snapshot of the multicultural romance e-book collection. Expanding studies in this DL can give area libraries a more comprehensive multicultural romance e-book collection and identify specific areas that need attention. The results of this exploratory study to include data over an entire year will establish a baseline for multicultural romance e-books over a significant period. This data will be beneficial to libraries serving distinct racial and ethnic groups.

Conclusion

This exploratory study finds that the WPLC digital library provides a foundation for multicultural romance books, which presents a range of racial and ethnic perspectives and provides a reflection of the ethnic demographics of Wisconsin. In 2010, a total of 15.5 percent of Wisconsin residents were African American, Hispanic or Latina/o, Asian, and/or American Indian or Alaska Native. The multicultural romance e-book collection aligns with the specific racial and ethnic demographics of Wisconsin. The multicultural romance e-book library presents an adequate number and range of formats, which is beneficial to the community. The barriers to the accessibility of these items are related to language, search, and format. Further research will explore the source of these barriers and opportunities for reform. The WPLC provides a foundation for fulfilling their mission to provide Wisconsin residents with access to a wide range of electronically published materials in a wide range of subjects and formats. The multicultural romance e-book collection will enhance their public library services to all residents with an interest in romance fiction. [End Page 17]

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A Matter of Meta: Category Romance Fiction and Library Metadata by Vassiliki Veros

August 29th, 2015 |

Authors of romance fiction create vast economic capital but this does not mean they are collectors and endorsers of cultural capital evident through the selection of metadata and metatexts to connect the cultural product to their user. [End of paragraph]

In this article, I will be focusing on print/physical book collections and I will use “Romance” or “Mills & Boon” as the catalogue title for books on paperback metadata which in turn prevents the interplay between cultural capital and metadata. In examining Australian cultural institutions, the readers’ advisory process and the tools in cataloguing processes so as to facilitate the reader.

Matching a reader to a book is recognised as a core practice of public libraries and readers’ advisory. “Every book has its reader” (Ranganathan 75) is the idea that libraries are user-centered. Joyce Saricks defines readers’ advisory as “patron-oriented service. A successful readers’ advisory service is one in which knowledgeable, nonjudgmental staff work to match reading needs” (Saricks and ebrary 2005, 1). Readers’ advisory staff work

suggestions but also in developing programs and marketing collateral such as posters and displays as well as taking part in staff training in understanding collection delivery. Amongst the various tools that readers' advisory staff use to deliver services, librarians to access the fiction that will deliver a satisfying service to the reader is reading material. The catalogue, more so than any other reading aggregation tool, is held within the collection. If a book does not have a record in the catalogue, librarians can use. E-books remain outside of the scope of this paper as they are not in collections.

Conceptual Framework

Bourdieu explores the interrelationship between social, economic and cultural capital in relation to the influence of power (Bourdieu 126). Cultural capital can be obtained through cultural capital is found in cultural objects and goods such as art, music, literature, knowledge, tastes and dispositions that are acquired through experience and socialization within a community and society. Institutional capital is the capital that is recognised and valued by institutions. The bestowing of meaning on cultural objects is embodied through practices that is created and promoted through educational and cultural institutions. Librarians and library capital through their practices of selection, cataloguing and promotion of books. Authors of romance fiction create economic capital through the sales of their books. Romance fiction surpass all other fiction genres (Romance Writers of America 2010).

Bourdieu writes about the interdependency between the capitals: economic capital can be converted into cultural capital to economic capital, but they are not fixed, rather they shift and change (Bourdieu 80). For example, "literary" fiction is bestowed cultural capital through institutions and library collections, thus leading to economic capital. Romance fiction is not as commercially successful, yet it lacks cultural capital evidenced through the lack of collection (Curthoys and Docker 35; Flesch 12; Selinger 308; Ramsdell 1998). Library use "is accepted as a sign of cultural participation and an indicator of status" and is regarded as sites for the production, dissemination and appropriation of cultural capital. Various roles in society and are institutions of cultural capital. I will explore the relationship that exists and intersects in relation to libraries and romance fiction.

Romance fiction and libraries

Despite the significance of romance fiction in contemporary culture, as evidenced by its popularity of all genres, writers and readers alike are routinely marginalized and excluded from extends to public libraries, with incomplete catalogue records and unplanne

In this paper, romance fiction refers specifically to category romance fiction (Vivanco 11). Juliet Flesch in *From Australia with Love* also limits her research to that is, books published under a series imprint. In Australia, this has predominated. A problem with the study of Australian popular romance, even if one excludes category romances and longer contemporary novels, is the sheer volume of material

Romance novels have yet to receive critical acceptance, which perhaps will change through cultural institutions. There have been positive changes in the perception of romance writing, as well as the emergence of dedicated librarians who devote themselves to reading, programs, selection guides and scholarship, through to the esta

library trade publications (Ramsdell 2012; Adkins et al.; Charles and Linz; Mc

In libraries, as Kristin Ramsdell has noted,

Romances tend to be haphazardly acquired (often through gifts), minimally catalogued, randomly tossed onto revolving paperback racks, and weeded without ceremony (Ramsdell 2012, 34).

This suggests that these books are not considered to possess cultural capital. For example, in 2012 on the blog of Library Journal, a leading industry publication, a reviewer commented about readers, stating, “it’s also hard to feel sorry for customers who bought a novel by a good review. After all, they’re all bad books. It’s not like people who buy a bad novel (Annoyed Librarian). To be clear, there was [End Page 3] substantial backlash against the blog post, but the authority remains with the industry-endorsed blogger. A recent post regarding their Mills & Boon legal deposit collection is headed with “Who’s the Librarian,” carrying a tone of incredulity rather than a tone of “here is an interesting collection.” They are afforded in their description on the Behind the Scenes blog (Maguire). For example, a post on library spaces and the reader-centred approach, states that,

Most readers who like literary fiction are not primarily concerned with the quality of their tastes, therefore, the first category, ‘Literary Fiction’, overrides the second. The selection of books by the reader the converse is also largely true. By definition, Romance novels usually has a narrower reading range) (175).

In libraries, cultural capital is recognized through practices such as cataloguing. Cataloguing involves the description of a book or other item by its author and title and classification. In Bourdieu’s terms (471) these practices have become “doxa”. In other words, they are taken for granted practices within the field of librarianship. Joyce Saricks identifies and discusses the problem of not catalogued other than with an accession date and barcode item. She states,

Why would you have a collection that you have no access to? The cost of having a collection less than the staff time spent trying to find them, day after day, for patrons who cannot find which may or may not be on the shelf, is exceedingly frustrating for both staff and patrons. It becomes less useful. Unfortunately, many administrators fail to calculate the cost of not to put items in the database (Saricks 422).

Paperback romance fiction in the past was commonly added to library collections through a thoughtful, deliberated selection process. Though this is no longer the case, it is still in place. Romance fiction is not afforded full catalogue records through library service to the reader yet romance fiction should be afforded the same level of service.

Cataloguing and the Interplay between Paratexts and Metadata

To understand the basis of library cataloguing practices and the creation of metadata, it is necessary to explore the levels of access to a cultural object, in particular, paratexts. *Thresholds of Interpretation* describes paratext as the material that is at the threshold of the text: acknowledgements, prefaces, covers, advertising, distribution and intertextuality.

team (publisher, author, designer) of a text. Genette says that without the p (Genette and Maclean 261). Paratext has two elements. Epitext are the item the cover art, blurbs, title, author and publisher information, index and promotes the text, that is, author interviews, marketing and publicity ma conventions, both within and outside the book, form part of the complex r reader.

A text also has metatextualities: that is, the metatext, which is the data and text by users outside of the text's creative team. "All literary critics, for ce knowing" (Genette xix). Metatext is created by people such as literary cri criticism, for example, is metatext; it cannot be controlled by the creato threshold. This is not to say that there is no communication between the p: Publishers send information to national libraries to consult on the Catalog send reviewers and critics copies of their books. CIP is a catalogue record th receive title pages, author names, blurbs and a synopsis of the book sent by the metatext can be hard to disregard as it carries authority (Genette 339). I all part of a novel's metatexts as is a library catalogue record which is a Metadata is structured data that supports the function of its object or text (C

Here, the concern is with the creation of a cataloguing record as metatext database administrators make high-level decisions on the information t (readers) and the intermediary (librarian), helping the reader access the t upon by third parties (cataloguers), unlike metadata that is generated by th creator tags their work with subject headings that are either preset or c Metadata is an instrumental part of a reader and a librarian accessing the ite data acts as a resource description and discovery tool. Institutions use inter in catalogues, which subsequently are used in readers' advisory and refe *Paratextuality and Classification*, describes the cataloguing process as b precisely, cataloguers, are not part of the creative process. Instead they are assigned to a book (Paling 134). In this process, they create access to the cult

Cataloguers are professional metadata creators because they make ' decisions" so as to classify and give value laden attributions to content o Raymond Williams in his discussion of culture notes that, "we need to co whole attention; for we do not know the future, we can never be certain c true for cataloguers who are creating the attachments that bring the reader since the [End Page 5] late nineteenth century has been based on Cutter convenience of the user must be put before the ease of the cataloguer" (Ca with the ability to decide upon interests and values that need to be attache legal deposit requirements or through the CIP scheme available to authors Third-party metadata is also created for items that have been selected fo example, by library suppliers and not by the library staff themselves—thou cataloguing instructions to the supplier (Edmonds 125). This metadata nee service provisions, particularly in reference and readers' advisory services whether it is in a local council, district, county or shire, differ greatly from library, which may indeed have a more open line of communication with (Genette 32; Paling 140). Using CIP data, cataloguers select suitable subject h for inclusion in the books' paratext, i.e. on the verso of the title page. Occas subject headings but this depends on the awareness of the author and/or pu created (Intner and Weihs 6).

Catalogue records exist on national bibliographic databases for published books. The connection between publishers and national libraries including CIP, legal deposit records, and ISBN Number requests which assign a unique number to books. This core level of metadata is used by libraries to download through copy cataloguing practices and for reader services in public libraries or through World Cat—a collaborative database allowing a federated search across the world through the one portal. Many libraries rely heavily on copy cataloguing. Metadata can be obtained and local modifications can then be made to the record (Ca

The catalogue record not only contributes to the creation of cultural capital but also to the creation of economic capital. The metadata entered into a local library management system allows a reader to a text and for staff to create resource lists, displays and programs but, just as importantly, it is used as a system for administering and managing lending schemes and payment schemes such as the public lending right. The Australian Public Lending Rights (and Educational Lending Rights) as:

Cultural programs which make payments to eligible Australian creators for the loss of income that is lost through the free multiple use of their books in public and educational libraries. These programs support the enrichment of Australian culture by encouraging the growth of new cultural works. (Public Lending Right Committee).

Public Lending Right is a program with which authors receive economic compensation for the loss of income through the free multiple use of their books in public and educational borrowings of that item. That endorsement comes from the [Economic] value of the book through the borrowings of that item. Thus, it can be seen that it is not just the cultural or economic capital of the author but also the cultural and economic capitals. As Pecoskie states, although the book itself is a cultural capital, it is also a “cultural sphere”, following Genette and Bourdieu, it is other elements including the author, the publisher, the readers and “cultural agents (including libraries)” and consequently between the author and the library (Desrochers 232).

It is the metadata connected to books that is instrumental in connecting cultural and economic capital. The catalogue record is the form of metadata that connects the author and endorse the text that is waiting to be discovered. In the absence of any metadata, the text cannot be discovered if the metadata does not exist. Publishers and libraries have an informational purpose as they are the access point for information (Pecoskie and Desrochers 236). But that text cannot be discovered if the metadata does not exist. Publishers and libraries have an informational purpose as they are the access point for information (Pecoskie and Desrochers 236). These are reader appeal factors that are used to promote books across genres. Pecoskie writes, “Libraries can capitalize on the cultural capital of books through nominations and prizes won [...] in order to bring together titles that make a cultural contribution. In cultural terms, have been deemed worthy by the application of similar criteria. For example, in romance fiction, there is no starting point for adding other elements of paratext. If libraries do not produce metadata for romance fiction, books cannot be discovered. They remain invisible to the readers’ advisory team and to readers. Thus, within the cultural institution of the library, their cultural capital does not increase. When books are borrowed, the lack of cataloguing records means that the borrowing is recorded only as a generic item. This in turn, through Public Lending Right, means that payments to these authors will not be made because there is no evidence on which to base payments to these authors will

Evidence of practice

Cataloguing records are used as the basis for recording loans of books. As all paperbacks are often not catalogued with a full author and title entry. Instead “Paperbacks” and then an accession number is given for each item that is found in every public library, has grown out of the resistance to paperbacks (Mosher 3). Paperbacks were seen as quick reads, disposable and many libraries moved them from their hardback fiction collections as well as giving them base level access.

This practice, then, identifies each book only by a number. It is no longer a book becomes detached from its creator. It is also detached from its title. By removing all other paratextual and metatextual elements that connect the book with its author and the reader cease to exist (Barthes 55). Romance fiction is a genre that is often read (Proctor 16) as readers often read an author’s oeuvre rather than a single book. This practice is acknowledged as it is often the most authoritative and effective way of accessing a book. Australian authors of romance fiction are aware that this practice is impacting their work.

Evidenced below are library catalogue records which show this practice. Each record shows only the title, author, and the number of copies.



Fig 1. 'Mills and Boon 2013': Catalogue record/retrieved 13 April, 2014

A detailed display of the items in this record shows only the collection, shelf

Main Title:	Mills and Boon 2013
Language:	English
Average Rating:	No reviews available as yet Add your review
BRN:	255005

Location	Collection	Call Number	
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Or
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Or
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Or
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Or
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Or
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Or
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Re
Library	Paperback - Romance	PB ROMANCE	• Av

Fig 2. Detailed display: Catalogue record/retrieved 13 April, 2014

[End Page 8] This practice is not confined simply to romance fiction, but also includes Science Fiction as well, as the following example shows:

11	XXGeneral XXFantasy XXPaperbacks	
PBACKS	BROWSING PBKS	2010

12	xxGeneral xxRomance xxPaperbacks	
PBACKS	BROWSING PBKS	2010

13	XXGeneral XXPaperbacks	
PBACKS	BROWSING PBKS	2010

14	XXGeneral XXFamily Saga XXPaperbacks	
PBACKS	BROWSING PBKS	2010

Fig 3. Catalogue record/retrieved 13 April, 2014

These collections are rendered even more unsearchable through the use of terms like xxRomance, xxPaperbacks are terms that readers will not search for when they

This practice, however, sometimes leads to unexpected consequences. Publishers being updated to include features which promote the most popular items in a collection shows how the practices which were intended to show that an item was not actually led unintentionally to the creation of cultural capital in a different way

When we installed a new LMS in 2010 it had a few new features that we liked. One was the box on the main catalogue search screen called 'What are other popular titles?' with Hottest Title, Hottest Author and Hottest Subject as a teaser for readers. A single title was established – Mills & Boon. It made the list and stayed there for months. Our manager, as they would have preferred to see 'real' books listed (personal communication).

The letter went on to explain that the IT team discovered that the one title had many items attached to the one record.

Since they weren't 'real' books that also meant they didn't need a title, a single Mills & Boon we received was added to that single record – for discovery certainly couldn't search for them as we had no idea what titles we actually had. People did – Mills & Boon books are one of our highest turnover items (personal communication). It was a clear winner in terms of loans (personal communication).

The concern of the manager and other staff was that they didn't want their highest loaned item as they wanted a variety of titles showing up on the display.

The issue was finally resolved by 'blocking' that record from the display. There was (and still is) great resistance to actually cataloguing individual titles (personal communication).

This example shows clearly that library practices are intended to minimise the loss of cultural capital from category romance fiction. The consequent impact on economic capital is not considered.

Conclusion and implications

This paper has shown that the cataloguing practices in some Australian public libraries can diminish the case that public libraries can make for the use of cultural capital and economic capital. The impacts of cataloguing practices on economic capital, a cost-saving measure within the library, can be costly in terms of loss of cultural capital. Practices can diminish the case that public libraries can make for the use of cultural capital, often used as a justification for funding from their parent organisations and government. Collections of paperback category romance fiction are highly borrowed and even a partial author/title entry into a library catalogue remain invisible. Discovering collections by being physically present in the library and discovering them may have been suitable in the twentieth century when the only access to public library catalogues have for many years been accessible through the internet. Browsing the catalogue thus necessitating the Library of Congress to experiment with online catalogues (Saricks and ebrary 2005, 8).

As Intner and Weihs indicate, when a library makes a decision to diverge from traditional practices to the agency will ensue" (Intner and Weihs 11). However, changes to library practices tend to be formulated through a mixture of "peer pressure, institutional culture" (Adkins et al. 65). While peer pressure is slowly bringing about a common form of catalogue entry, which is one record with many attached items, category romance is rendered unsearchable through the library catalogue. This

in institutional collections for scholars and archivists and the public to Australian society. [End Page 10] Cataloguing of literary fiction, which comprehensive, yet romance fiction is not catalogued to the same level (Ver institutional payments such as Public Lending Rights: books that remain withhold payment from eligible authors. In other words, these items do not their authors. Aside from any economic impact, romance fiction authors with institutional recognition from libraries for their institutional role as publishe:

“[A] group’s presence or absence in the official classification depends on noticed and admitted, and so to win a place in the social order” (Bourdieu 4 category romance fiction do not yet have a place in the social order r implications for practice and suggests the need for further research. From metadata for certain types of cultural objects in a public library borders on to those cultural objects becoming invisible within the constraints of the ir censorship, because readers’ advisors are unable to meet the reading need use alternative places to find the reading they enjoy, for in their use of the (hidden from them. Further, the lack of metadata for paperbacks in generat may be assigned to the same cultural objects now available in electronic form

This analysis of the role of cataloguing records in the interplay between cultu there is a need for further research, at least in two areas. The first is the creation of cultural capital in other forms of popular fiction, including u second is the importance in economic and cultural terms of the inadverten to authors of category romance and other categories of cultural objects wh libraries. [End Page 11]

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Teaching an Old Dog New Tricks?: Romance, Relationships in a Rural Australian Novel by Lauren O'Mahony

October 24th, 2014 |

If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practise kindness towards his fellow-creatures. It becomes hard also in his dealings with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his kindness to his dog.
-Immanuel Kant

In the Australian cultural imagination, men have been the dominant participants in the rural landscape. While men have "battled" against the land "as an object to be mastered and tamed," women have slid into the recesses of country life and its representation; either they have been boxed into stereotypical roles such as that of "farm wife".[1] A short story by Lawson goes so far as to state, "They blamed me, but I didn't want her to come; [the boy] was a girl" (Schaffer 194).[2] While Lawson may be read as being glib for trying to rhyme "a woman", his quote reflects a common historical assumption that women were not part of the rural from Australia's rural environment.[3] Although such a sentiment stains the recent flurry of representations of women as active participants and contributors to the rural and in print. The television program *McLeod's Daughters* (2001-2009) is perhaps the most prominent of women running farming properties and working the land, however the genre of fiction is where some of the most exciting and progressive representations of women in the rural have emerged.

The contemporary rural romance is a publishing phenomenon of the new millennium. The appeal of the genre is strong enough for some readers that, "By the end of the century, the wide open spaces" (As quoted in Dunbabin 4). The genre arguably emerged in the late 19th century, but it was not until the 1980s that it became a significant part of the publishing industry.

Jillaroo (2002) which has reportedly sold more than 100,000 copies (“Steam short story collections and two e-books up to 2013, Treasure is now romance,[6] a genre that now includes authors such as Nicole Alexander, The genre’s success is evidenced in the dramatic growth in book sales from Up” 39). The rural romance’s appeal to readers must be partly attributed to it is at times gritty and others romanticised. While other sub-genres of romance companions, the rural romance is bound to its context where animals appear as products for meat, fleece and breeding or to assist in the day to day as *Jillaroo*, reflect on what it means to live, act and love in a context where animals and the environment are vital to financial success, [End Page 2] so rural romances are also interesting in their use of romance plots to represent

This essay textually analyses Rachael Treasure’s novel *Jillaroo* (2002) with romance narrative, human-dog relationships (especially between heroine and her understandings of ethical behaviour. I argue that dogs play an intrinsic role in the development and delay of the romance with her hero, Charlie Lewis, and ultimately Regis’s theory of the romance novel including her definition, three social heroines and the essential romantic elements. I do so to understand *Jillaroo*’s freedom. More than just the heroine’s freedom is at stake because the construction of the stakeholders, depend on the heroine overcoming impediments to her quest for a happy ending. Secondly, I examine the role of kelpies in the construction of the heroine to navigate highly masculine spaces in the rural setting and subsequently her breeding and training to men. Rebecca and her dogs challenge the hermetic sites where hegemonic masculinity is cultivated and reinforced. Thirdly, I analyse the male characters and dogs. Symbolically, dogs are employed to indicate the (Fudge 11) of central male characters, namely the hero Charlie and Rebecca. Their relationships reflect Kant’s admonition that how a man treats animals determines that *Jillaroo* emphasises certain ethical behaviours to readers via its romance plot. The competence between rural men and women and reflects on “interspecies relationships particularly through the heroine’s quest and her relationship with working dogs

Dogs, Romance, Ethics and the Rural

In *Jillaroo*, the elements of romance, the presence of dogs and notions of vocation are firmly bound together. *Jillaroo*, the quintessential Australian contemporary novel, follows its heroine, her family and their farm, Waters Meeting. Eighteen year old Rebecca inherits the property from her father and restore it to its former glory via sustainable farming practices including those she has used to train her dogs. However her father, Harry, a woman’s place in rural Australia is as a wife, mother and worker in an off-farm job. Harry, farms are controlled by men through patrilineal inheritance[8] from a terrifyingly common, view of rural women.[9] However, Rebecca grew up with children while working full-time as a vet and a grandfather who taught her to work *with* animals rather than only *working* them. Thus, Rebecca grew up with farming abilities or in developing her ‘natural’ instinct with animals and the land [3] and her mother fleeing her marriage, children and property to work in the city affects the land, the family and himself, the hubristic patriarch. Determined to succeed, Rebecca needs experience and qualifications to convince Harry of her capabilities and to restore the farm. The narrative spans her quest to restore Waters Meeting alongside her

Charlie Lewis. Through her quest, Rebecca, with the help of her kelpies, cha subsequently becoming a heroine for every country girl who dreamed of d the men.

Jillaroo is a novel primarily about the pursuit of freedom at a narrative and following Pamela Regis's approach to romance in *A Natural History of th* overcome various obstacles that eventually enable their union. Regis define the story of the courtship and betrothal of one or more heroines" (Regis defined, meeting, declaration, attraction, barriers, point of ritual death, recc The eight elements form part of Regis's defence of the genre against critic prolongs the enslavement and bondage of women (Regis 3-4). Instead, R heroine's freedom, the primary stimulus for reader's enjoyment. Indeed, a conveys the pain, uplift, and joy that freedom brings" (Regis xiii). To dem readers experience joy, Regis proposes the eight essential elements which impossible to analyse every narrative detail, Regis's key elements support th for the better, by novel's end. Her theory enables a reading position tha heroines and issues over a narrative rather than isolated in single scenes. l Charlie's romance is central to the story, three key elements, the society d much about the gender, animal and environmental rights in this context. function of romance; the novel emphasises the heroine's pursuit of equality her search for positive change and the ethical treatment of others in her fan

Before examining the role of working dogs in the essential romance elemen narrative in relation to what Regis describes as the three dominant social t romance novel" (Regis 55). Regis names these, "the rise of affective in marriage, and English Law as it applied to married women" (Regis 56). W appear prominently in English romances from the eighteenth and nineteent represented in *Jillaroo*, especially to understand the treatment of women at three social trends should be automatically in place for Rebecca Saund patriarchal understandings of gender still shape men and women's actions who is self-driven, motivated and longs to run her family's farm. Legally sh believes that women, especially his daughter, [End Page 4] have no right Margaret Alston argues is men's historically entrenched view across the agri Australian Rural Community Life" 152-4). Rejecting her offer to run W; Rebecca to "do a teaching or nursing course, then...marry a nice farmer w out of a bloody divorce" (Treasure 7). While no legal impediment prevents l by social and cultural mores. For the third social trend, Rebecca believes i will find a partner who shares her love for the land, animals, commun alongside her. While a contemporary heroine should automatically have particularly represented by her patriarchal father, restricts her appropriation to run Waters Meeting and the outdated understandings of women's "pl elements and their progression towards freedom.

The relationship between the heroine and her dogs plays a key role in both h and the novel's wider meditation on the ethical treatment of others. I now of romance to determine the role her "crew" of dogs play in the progressi rural gender inequality. Regis's first romantic element, the "society de "superannuated" or "corrupt" attributes of the context in which the courts humans and dogs symbolically assists in defining this society, one dominate chapter, dogs establish a binary between Rebecca and her father, Harry. F

sheep with her “little kelpie”, Mossy (3). To manoeuvre Mossy, Rebecca “wh (3) emphasising an economy in communication and the exertion of little effort almost “motionless” (3). Even a reader with little first-hand experience of keeping and working dog results from extensive training and a strong mutual rapport in a pen, this scene is broken by an “outburst of barking and the rush of hooves” “[h]is crew of motley dogs [who] were working in a pack, singling out a sheep that went” (5). Rebecca’s Mossy struggles to keep the sheep together while Harry pulls up one of his dogs by the collar to discipline him where, “The young pup lolled to the side of his mouth as he panted. So keen to work, Mardy was obvious action indicates Harry’s excessive force alongside the dog’s inadequate training. The sheep it is ignorant of being strangled. These initial human-dog relationships is clearly more capable and knowledgeable in this context and disidentify with Michel Foucault’s understanding of governance in *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* the “exercise of power” where, “One cannot govern others, one cannot govern one’s privileges into political action on others, in rational action, if one is not capable of inability to control his dogs or his own [End Page 5] actions suggests lack of knowledge while implying his inability to govern or run the farm effectively.

The narrative further demonstrates the “flawed” and “corrupt” aspects of the land and human-human interactions. The scene with the dogs foreshadows a moment where she expresses her wish to devote herself to sorting out the “mismanagement. Flashbacks from Rebecca’s point of view reveal that she had taught her about “the world around her, about the animals and the trust in the dog” (9). The memory contrasts her relationships with her father and grandfather “being there” (9) or teaching her farming practices. She traces his withdrawal from the land that he never seemed to grasp even after years of farming” (10). In the “world of her dogs”:

She trained them, loved them, talked to them, studied them. She peered into their souls. Her dogs were a way of escaping her father’s seething under her love” (10-11).

This play on presence and absence in her relationships with male authority of the land and dogs assists in positioning the reader’s sympathies while emotion to stem from historically entrenched gender inequality represented through the land immediately rejects Rebecca’s offer to help restore the land telling her that “injury, he cruelly tells her he never wanted her as a child, particularly as a girl” (10) dogs unless she immediately leaves. Rebecca warns him that he risks “losing against her dogs can be read as a metaphor for the status of women in this construction of a history of animals, links discussions of animal rights to the land who think about animal welfare can be seen as considering “their own dog as a representation of the human; it is not, paradoxically, a dog” (7). Fudge’s offer to prevent Harry physically hurting Rebecca, the close relationship she has with the dogs almost a part or extension of her, means that the threat to the dogs is literal. Rebecca faces locally as well as the context’s larger structural inequalities, much like the romantic relationship with Charlie Lewis. Once Rebecca departs from Water

a jillaroo and she later meets Charlie. It is important to note that dogs are Rebecca meet. *Jillaroo's* meeting, attraction and declaration scenes extr through Regis's optional romantic [End Page 6] element, the wedding celebration, "inclusion" and community engagement (Regis 38) removing Rebecca and Charlie meet on a rare weekend away from their families and and sometimes feral, event.[11] They meet late that evening after Rebecca across a naked Charlie Lewis who is performing a daring, drunken stunt. The viewpoint:

Bec looked up and saw in a halo of light against the night sky a naked young man with a bucket on his head and standing on top of the guttering. The light cast shadows on the wall behind him. He had been there, Bec thought, she would've said out loud, 'He's got a big body through her. He had a damn good body (80).

Charlie then launches himself from the roof in a shopping trolley, crashing through the window and shouting "I think I love you" (81) before introducing himself. Charlie's friends carry him to the hospital and speak properly. In this single scene, Rebecca and Charlie meet, express their mutual attraction and Charlie drunkenly declares his love. The next day they have a fleeting romantic moment. The intense combination of these three romantic elements (meeting, attraction, and declaration) before they must return to their normal lives. The absence of Rebecca's dogs allows her to experience her attraction to Charlie alone, unimpeded.

While her dogs are absent from the initial meeting scene, they play a much larger role in the novel. The narrator reinforces the couple's mutual attraction once they separate by describing Rebecca's barrier as Rebecca returns to jillarooing on Blue Plains station and Charlie to her. The intensity, progress towards a longer term relationship is slow and complicated. A close-up view reveals Rebecca's fantasies where she "dreamed of the river kiss" (92) and "a big John Deere [tractor]. Naked" (92) or how Charlie remembers Rebecca's attraction occurs when Rebecca believes herself to be "in *lev*" (originally "in *lev*" a girl with blonde hair, the bluest of eyes and a cheeky grin" (209). The similarity between their mutual and companionate. Rebecca's work on Blue Plains sees her travelling to the station. These trips enable Rebecca to enter her young kelpie "Dags" in dog trials. Dags is instructed by its owner via voice and body language to herd sheep into a pen. Dog trialling requires a dog with "keenness tempered with pliability [and] obedience while still retaining the desire to work" (Parsons 74-75). Similar to the novel's focus on herding the sheep, Rebecca's participation in the dog trials demonstrates the dog's role. In many dog trials, Rebecca's first trophy win happens the day Charlie Lewis wins. Charlie's congratulatory comments to Rebecca reinforce their mutual attraction as while simultaneously enabling Dags to meet and respond to Charlie. Although Dags will "make a good dunny-roll holder" (154), Dags "relishes the attention" from Charlie. Charlie's interaction with his ears, leading the dog to "lean...his body against Charlie's leg, wagging his tail" (154) and her own attraction to Charlie by saying, "He likes you. He only comes out when he's enthusiastic interaction with Dags serves as a foil to Harry's earlier treatment of the dog. The encounter between Rebecca and Charlie is brief, it indicates his suitability as a partner. Together in the future. Because dogs are so important in Rebecca's life, it is important to have a non-violent relationship to them also.

As Rebecca and Charlie's relationship develops, dogs play a more central role. Rebecca and Charlie depart from Blue Plains to attend agricultural college. She manages to arrange

rents a house with her friends where she is also allowed to keep the dogs. V relationship, Charlie conspires to attend the college and shows up at a Rebecca's delight. After they dance at the party, Rebecca introduces Charlie the reader in a moment of youthful exuberance, "If Dags reacted the same person, and in this drunken moment she'd give her whole soul to him" implied, Rebecca's attraction to Charlie continues through the party, im reveals to Rebecca that his decision to study at the college was purposely would coincide with hers. The night ends with Rebecca offering to show C keep in her bedroom, a euphemism for "let's go to bed". They do not con drunkenness however the next morning when they wake up feeling "crook be interrupted by Rebecca's roommate letting her dogs into the room play it doggy style" (248). The interruption enables Rebecca to again introduc response, again a favourable one. Rebecca suggests that they go out to "gra dogs out to the river" (248). There they frolic in the water, the dogs "[sw properly consummate their attraction on the river bank. The dog's ongc creates a tension because at times they delay the relationship's progressio progression. Nevertheless, the dogs' positive engagement with Charlie sugge

Dogs become a point of conflict and a comfort as new barriers emerge to they are together mid-way through the novel, of course Rebecca still has no Meeting from Harry, start the much needed restoration and exert an ethical change their behaviour for the better. Charlie and Rebecca's fairly carefree and external barriers emerge that stymie their romance. When college finis an external barrier to their relationship. Although Rebecca now has the exp Waters Meeting, her father still blocks her return. With no other choice, cropping farm. Rebecca is horrified to discover it is flat, animalless, river sinister" artificial waterways (340). There the romantic relationship frays un parents. Charlie's father refuses to employ Rebecca, believing similarly to h or work off-farm in a pink-collar job. As well, Charlie refuses to confront working on the farm. His inability to speak his mind becomes his own inter: the independently minded Rebecca. Charlie also promises to build Rebecc does not have to keep them tied up all day in the skillion shed (328). Howe and machines first (328). During the time on the Lewis farm, Charlie and R inability to build the dogs a serious home or obtain sheep for Rebecca to dogs become a confidante (310) and a comfort, Dags, "push[ing] a wet n barrier becomes her need to be honest about her relationship with Charlie a kissed in the river not the muted man incapable of speaking up around his f Waters Meeting also build against the relationship. Until they are resolved, together, the society cannot be reformed and the reader cannot feel the relie

The internal and external barriers eventually accumulate in "the point moment...when the union between the heroine and hero, the hoped-for : 35). This element includes mainly figurative or symbolic death, but can provide loyal companionship and reliable working partners to numerous ch ritual death scene. Symbolic and actual deaths build from the beginning Rebecca's parents Harry and Frankie, Rebecca's exile from her home and envelops Waters Meeting. The farm's ongoing failure and increasingly stra Mick and his wife Trudy also flee the property. Like Rebecca and Frankie be away from the "now-stooping" (231) Harry. The day they leave, Hari

emotionally onto Tom (Rebecca's brother), the only human member of the leads Tom to move from the family homestead with his horse and dog Bessie. Harry only has sparse communication with Tom at this time, telling him she has a message. The sense of death intensifies as Harry turns to alcohol and suffers a "black cloud" (254). The family's departure and Harry's alcoholism sees Tom "leave the outside world" (254). Tom journeys from hut to farmhouse leaving food and paying the bills; the narrator observes that the farm, "now in the dry, [...] attends his mother's city wedding, another optional romantic element ; on this occasion, Rebecca observes, "how his shoulders sloped downwards and [his] frame" (278). Drunkenly, Tom creates a scene, telling Rebecca:

The waters haven't met in over a year—both rivers have run dry! There's a lonely old horse, and Dad's shot all the dogs. Didn't even bury the bastards to rot (281).

In Tom's desperate words, readers sense the encirclement of death around the ritual death scene. Tom's words reveal the life ebbing from the river just as "starving stock", the animals bearing the burden of human and natural folly. Tom's addled mind is eclipsed by the murder of his dogs that is made worse by Tom's death and denied even a hasty burial. Again, dogs become literal and figurative symbols of ill-health of his heart. Figuratively their deaths symbolise the deeper social and the quickening rush towards the hopeless point where resolution, harmony and reader is positioned to think that Harry's ignorant crimes against the land and his own narrative death, the invocation of death alongside deep suffering instead of

While Regis argues that symbolic or literal representations of death are essential to existential realities including real death is perhaps best explained by the ritual. Christoph Armbruster notes how some Australian literature turns to the metaphorical to existential realities such as death, despair, meaninglessness, denial of life. Armbruster's comments particularly resonate with Tom and Harry's situation. Tom's farm's deterioration, his father's alcoholism and his own mental decline, Tom writes and scrawls a message in "red rattle" (287): "Will this make you see, dad?" Tom kills a meat carcass. Tom's dog Bessie alerts Harry to Tom's suicide by first walking over the gate [and] disappearing into the garage" (286). Bessie then sits nearby, noticing that Tom has left him a box of groceries, a last desperate gesture. Harry kills a lamb from the beams. Criticising Tom in a drunken slur for not using the "knife" a closer inspection reveals it is not a side of lamb, but Tom's body. Harry can be seen screaming and fleeing the garage into the house. Yet, it is Tom's loyal animal Bessie sits at Tom's feet and his horse Hank strolls into the garage then also witnesses the immediate horrors of Tom's death, Bessie and Hank stay nearby, mourning by the inert body. Tom's death is the extreme point of ritual death where a resolution. Rebecca is strong, she, like most romance heroines, as Regis suggests, "Rebecca's grief creates uncertainty that she can ever be free to complete her journey with Charlie.

While Tom's death sends Rebecca into a deep depression initially, it also leads to a romantic resolution. Although Regis argues that heroines [End Page 10] and *Jillaroo* Harry begins the series of recognitions that ultimately lead to the ritual death. A breaker for Harry to transform himself and his world view. He swears c

seeking help from Landcare to better manage the river vegetation and reach cattle (335) thereby indicating a changed attitude to the environment, the author even recognises Rebecca for who she really is: someone capable of healing them before he has a chance to ask her, he loses an arm in a machinery accident, a chance to speak to her when she visits him in hospital. Harry apologises and Harry's accident and changed attitude is perfectly timed for Rebecca who does "of the mountains" at Waters Meeting (340). When she and Charlie arrive the love is immediately apparent. From Rebecca's perspective the whole farm appears determined to stay and put her new experience and knowledge into action, but pessimistically telling her "It'll take a lifetime to fix this mess" (393). Rebecca dismisses the idea of helping her because he refuses to "drop everything" "Charlie, you don't have *anything* at home. Your dad controls it all and you can't" Rebecca defends her decision to stay at Waters Meeting and never leave again.

You're just like all the other bastards! You think I don't have a right to work on the land you do! You're entitled to your bit of flat, chemical-and-salt-infected dirt and a destocked bit of mountain country. Don't you stand there and tell me that I don't have a chance to fight for this place...I'm entitled to it! (396).

Rebecca's determination to stay at Waters Meeting is threatened by Charlie who singlehandedly and accuses her of choosing her father and farm over him. In his intention to ask her to marry him; yet the cost of his love is that he works for her. Rebecca rejects his proposal which subsequently causes Charlie's departure to momentarily end, an elongation of the ritual death element. Her dogs again "growl at her face" (397) in her moment of devastated rage. Furious at the situation she despises that surround the Waters Meeting homestead. The dogs, normally calm, "run away and sat at the back door looking fearful" (398). The romance and happiness between Rebecca and her crew of dogs have returned home.

The novel delays the full romantic resolution by first emphasising Rebecca's need for some help from her family, Rebecca exerts most of the effort needed to rebuild the farm "the bank...would crush her" (439) until eventually she turns the farm's debt into a romance, the narrative must resolve her tumultuous relationships. "betrotal." As Rebecca repairs the farm through sustainable management, her view remains with her revealing her and Charlie's mutual longing for each other "and then suddenly stopped" (440). Rebecca assumes he has met someone else "her rural advisor urges her to hire an irrigation and plant-cropping manager to take time to rest. Coincidentally, Charlie has become desperate to leave his job "miss[ing] her dogs" (461). He sees an article about Rebecca in a glossy magazine "dogs. After absorbing the article and pictures recounting her successes, he returns to Waters Meeting. When he applies for the job, it creates the opportunity for a romance between Rebecca in a cropping and irrigation role creates the recognition that Charlie is at Waters Meeting.

The presence of animals is sustained into the final idyllic images of the novel as Rebecca and Charlie are swimming in the Rebecca River, playing and splashing together in the paddock with its new irrigator and lucerne crop. Charlie turns the image of them together, "[t]hen Rebecca pulled Charlie down into a soft foot of the mountains. Waters Meeting. Their place" (468). While dogs

unwavering presence throughout the novel leads readers to assume their in-
dicate, like Rebecca and Charlie's original meeting, the sense that a focus
Although Rebecca and Charlie do not marry, readers are positioned to be
certainties of resolution.[12] What is important in this final chapter is the e
Through the successful completion of her quest and her "betrothal", the
between humans, animals and the environment, particularly those that ar
endorsement of such values and the positioning of the reader to identify
imparts a powerful lesson about the ethical treatment of others.

Gender, Dogs and "The Health of Man's Heart"

While dogs are integral to Rebecca and Charlie's romantic story, the relati
important part in allowing her to navigate the patriarchal rural context ar
Rebecca has stereotypical feminine qualities including her prettiness and
traditionally associated with men and masculinity that assist her entry and
regarded as for men only. I argue that Rebecca exemplifies the characteristi
their toughness in four main ways: body, action, attitude and authority (In
her toughness enabling her to enter male spaces and usurp male [End Page
her gender construction, subsequently challenging stereotypes about what r

Before I describe how Rebecca's toughness, with the help of her working dc
in the setting, it is worth outlining Sherrie Inness's theory of tough wom
toughness is usually associated with men and masculinity where the histo
encourages the perception of men as the 'real' heroes and leaders in our
asserts, that lacks tough heroines continues the stereotypes of what c
behaviour while leaving stereotypes and domains of male privilege unchaller

Because they adopt some characteristics that are coded as masculine in
division, which is central to how members of society think about gender
imaginary between men and women (Inness 15).

While Inness resists confining toughness to a single definition, she sugges
body, attitude, action and authority. In *Jillaroo*, Rebecca's toughness, helpe
in each of these characteristics thereby seeing her transgress gender stereoty

The narrative demonstrates Rebecca's toughness via descriptions of what
goes. According to Inness, the *body* houses obvious signs of toughness
suggests, are symbolic of "overcoming even the most overwhelming odds" ;
Rebecca shows her toughness through her *body* and her muscles where h
"golden brown" (71) arms, shoulders with "lean muscles" (72) and "cracked
testify to her ability to undertake dirty physical work such as mustering
mineral blocks.[13] Indeed, the first scene of the novel, mustering sheep, d
body to direct the working dog whereas other moments show her w
muscularity and physical ability invite the reader's trust that she can su
romance and her quest to restore the farm.

Rebecca's dogs enable her to demonstrate toughness especially in her a
women show their intelligence through what they do, particularly using the
when to wait (Inness 26). In relation to attitude, Rebecca, is similar to tough

or no fear, even in the most dangerous circumstances; if she does show fear, Inness' tough woman also "appear[s] competent and in control" (Inness striking when she retreats from Waters Meeting after fighting with her father with only fifty dollars in the bank, encounters a stock sale knowing it is her struggling to move a herd of sheep with a tired dog. Although she knows the she offers to use her own dog to help move their mob. The men are wary, sheep, she must pay for it, telling her "I hope you've got some cash on you" she replies, "Well. Actually I don't...I'm flat broke, unemployed and homeless." Confident in her ability and in her dog, she easily moves the sheep and is Station. Even in the thick of a "male" space and under enormous pressure trust in herself and her dog.

Rebecca demonstrates her toughness in action and attitude by also not acting that tough women must know when to act, when to wait and when to reflect. She shows her tough action and attitude when she rejects her father's farming and reproductively challenged ram (8), pitying his untrained dogs and declaring. Although she argues with her father, Rebecca realises the futility of confronting violence. She also knows the time is not right for her to assume control of the farm to gain knowledge and skills so when the right time comes, she is ready. In *Pastoral*, not acting or retreating have positive implications; however, Dianna's narrative trope of "retreatism" in postfeminist media texts, where heroines reject feminine roles (Negra). In *Jillaroo*, Rebecca retreats away from her home in the rural context. Her retreat demonstrates that there are different kinds of tough woman she retreats because of bad timing or the need to prepare herself because of her father's threat to murder her dogs. Later when Harry loses violence has dissolved and she has the experience and knowledge to ensure Rebecca's journey back to Waters Meeting therefore shifts her initial retreat to her good judgement.

Rebecca constantly demonstrates the fourth main characteristic of tough her dogs. Inness, quoting Richard Sennett, argues that authority relates to "the ability to impose discipline, the capacity to inspire fear" (Sennett as quoted). A tough woman must have authority because she often acts as a leader, and leading, especially in times of great stress" (Inness 26). Rebecca develops an capable in ways they understand and by performing tasks they respect. For hard, if not harder, than the jackaroos, which goes against the expectation. In Blue Plains, readers learn about the reluctance to hire women in this traditional manager, had reservations about hiring Rebecca because he worried about gradually earns respect. She was "expected to do everything Dave [her role] blocks for the sheep onto the ute, to banging steel droppers into the rock. Rebecca "Never once [leant] on a broom. The shearers noticed this and strength and tasks of the men, as well as the advantage her well trained dog respect. On [End Page 14] at least two occasions, Rebecca "talks dogs" (95, men and masculinity. Through such discussions, she demonstrates her autonomy on human-canine partnerships and communion, and transmits that knowledge that her gentle but disciplined approach to dog training will reach a greater audience as that enacted by Harry, will become a thing of the past. The examples of she considers, disrupt gender certainty and the binaries traditionally associated with shows that gender is not determined by sex; indeed women can have stereo

associated with toughness.

While Rebecca's toughness is enhanced by her partnership with her dogs in conjunction with her interest in dogs. Like her toughness, which disrupts symbolically her dogs are repeatedly called upon to disrupt her femininity. Rebecca engages in a rare evening of feminine adornment including painting her nails. The narrator pre-empts all this by stating that, "Rebecca wasn't the kind of woman who would even bother. But she had the feeling tonight would be special" (63). Rebecca's effort, making fun of her nail polish, suggesting, "You're keen to get a bit, just like the drought tonight?" (71). These markers of femininity are disturbed by Rebecca's relationship to the fairytale *Cinderella*. Rebecca's chores include riding a four-wheel bicycle with her dogs, all of which must be completed before she departs for the ball. The narrator's nail polish yet juxtaposes it against the reality of Rebecca's jillaroo work and

Bec's nails looked so out of place on the handlebars...They reminded her that she'd ever bothered to read one [preferring] kelpie training manual over a guide to building better sheep yards (67).

The narrative interplay between Rebecca's dressing up with her Jackie Collin and her introspective revelation that she prefers reading about dog training over her gender certainty, showing the fluidity of gender as she moves in and out of these performances.[14] Just as the narrative establishes one gender stereotype, she quickly shifts to the reality of farm life. In another related example, when Rebecca whistles (72). This example reinforces Rebecca's ability to "dress up" and does not leave this image unchallenged, undercutting her attractiveness by saying, "Cheers, buddy," as she opens a can of beer to drink (72). Both her interactions with men. In another scene Rebecca travels to the city to attend her mother's shop for an outfit to wear to the ceremony. The narrative reveals her "looking at the shoppers as though she wasn't there at all" (129). The shop assistant asks her however [End Page 15] Rebecca has two issues here. Firstly, the omniscient narrator secondly, she is distracted by her worry for her "good-looking" dogs chained and stolen easily" (129). Through the fluid narrative movement between gender and Rebecca's character, "reveal[s] the artificiality of femininity as the "norm" and her interest in dog training and breeding, stereotypically the domain of men, and rituals such as shopping, reinforces the fluidity and unfixed movement of gender. Rebecca's gender qualities challenge stereotypical understandings of what "male" spaces and engages in processes and practices normally associated with men. "Gender Perspectives in Australian Rural Community Life" 141). While suspicious of her presence, Rebecca's toughness enables her to enter sites typically dominated by men: livestock saleyards, pubs, and farm organisations. According to Alston (2000) knowledge is constructed, particular truths "become privileged" and in "male" spaces "dominates" (Alston "Gender Perspectives in Australian Rural Community Life" production of hegemonic masculinity is "constantly open to challenge" "Gender Perspectives in Australian Rural Community Life" 144). Rebecca's complex appropriation of masculine and feminine characteristics depending on the situation she shows that these sites as domains of male hegemony are in fact challenged and changed. Indeed the partnership between Rebecca and her dogs in stockyards, but to remain there and demonstrate her ethical behaviour to

knowledge. The representation of a heroine capable of entering these lo better than men, challenges the conventional understanding of women in treatment and knowledge of working dogs as well as her adherence to s motivate others.

The relationship between Rebecca and her kelpies, a sign of impressive mediates any reading of her as a romantic and tough heroine. Howev development of human-animal relationships in other characters. Dogs : assessing the “health of a man’s heart” as Kant suggests. Indeed, Charlie ha they approve of him as a romantic suitor to their owner. Harry however ha where he clearly enacts his vitriol on his untrained dogs for much of the no already, part of the novel’s romantic resolution is another of Regis’s roma converted”. Regis describes this as “a scene or scenes [where] one or more acceptance of it and incorporated into the society formed by the union at death and Harry’s accident, Rebecca is invited to return to Waters Meeting with Charlie. More importantly, Tom’s suicide causes Harry to change so m despite his disability, and they begin to build their father-daughter [End Pa of Harry’s ultimate transformation is his request to buy a puppy from Rek with one arm, I’d better learn how to work one of your fancy dogs...I’d be l dog” (434). Rebecca’s response is that Harry should start by reading a Ton said you couldn’t teach an old dog new tricks?” (434) Once he starts to tra Rebecca “marvell[ed] at how much her father had changed...[having] at las working dogs” (442). Harry’s behavioural and attitudinal transformation be Regis’s elements of romance with a focus on the symbolic value of dogs v training is the ultimate sign of his now positive participation in the new successful quest and her restored relationship with Charlie. Harry’s trans reader’s enjoyment of this novel’s ending suggesting that the romance plot a

Conclusion

In Regis’s defence of the romance novel, she emphasises the way that heroi relationship through the ‘barriers’ and point of ritual death. In overcoming t free, “she chooses the hero” (Regis 16). Regis names the freedom of heroi surmounting barriers enables them to unite with their hero and through (Regis 15). In *Jillaroo*, Rebecca prevails against the literal and symbolic r brother Tom, the disintegration of her relationship with Charlie and mismanagement by her father. Choosing to be with Charlie is therefore or concludes; having survived everything else, she is now “free” to “choose her However, her freedom also springs from overcoming the external family ba farm, and the wider traditional expectations of rural women that attempt knowledge. In contesting the expectations of women in rural culture by ente usually perform with the help of her kelpies, Rebecca challenges the gender violent behaviour towards others (humans, animals and the environm momentarily) to run her farm and subsequently the reader “rejoices.” Th novel, can be read as a metaphor for the treatment of women, as Erica Fu humans if we look at the animals” (Fudge 8). While it is no secret in cont gender issues shape life in rural Australia, *Jillaroo* assists in communicating fictional role models for rural women.

Dogs play a vital role at various textual levels of *Jillaroo*. While references “been on my tail” (450) and “dog eared” (459) frequently appear in this novel they are not [End Page 17] active participants in a scene, it is through the ideas of communion between humans, dogs and ultimately non-human life as a breeder and trainer of working kelpies is unique in representing a representation of a human-dog relationship disrupts any dominant discourses masters in rural life and reflects Rachael Treasure’s own life as a dog breeder not need animals, rural romance, with its focus on agriculture and farm especially those who toil for our food and wares. The representation of the touchstone for gender and ecological issues in a time when there is much engaging with each other, the world and other species.

[1] Margaret Alston argues that “it appears that women’s work is being recorded. Economic historians still appear to see men as the norm and women as the exception” (Alston 1995: 4-6). *Heart of Rural Australia* 4-6).

[2] In her study of national character in relation to women and rural Australia she suggests is also a ‘common refrain’) to the title of a short story of an accretion collection *Short Stories and Sketches: 1888-1922* (Schaffer 194).

[3] See Schaffer (1989) and MacKellar (2004) for discussions of representation of women in rural Australia.

[4] Juliet Flesch in *From Australia with Love: A History of Modern Australia* discusses the expectations of rural romances by Lucy Walker published during the 1950s and 1960s. They include women who run large properties or who are the sole providers (Flesch).

[5] An overview of ‘chook lit’ novels by the Library News journal notes that the 1953 and 1977 with their “suntanned, laconic Australians and huge outback settings” are a part of rural romance. See “Chook Lit” .

[6] Treasure’s five books are *Jillaroo* (2002), *The Stockman* (2004), *The Rous* and *The Farmer’s Wife* (2013). Treasure has also written a screen play *Albatross* book about dog training called *Dog Speak* and a collection of short stories, awarded the title of Tasmanian Rural Woman of the Year in December 2006 to write *Dog Speak* and create a DVD. She has also published *Fifty Bales of Wool* bestselling *Fifty Shades of Grey* novels.

[7] Dogs appear in novels by Janet Evanovich, Jennifer Crusie and Jayne Ann Krentz with Anne Stuart and Lani Diane Rich called *Dogs and Goddesses*.

[8] Margaret Alston uses the term “patrilineal inheritance” to describe the practice of passing land to fathers, a practice she describes as “ensur[ing] that farms [End Page 18] are passed on to the next generation” (Alston 1995: 7). *Women: The Hidden Heart of Rural Australia* 7.

[9] See Alston (1995) for a detailed exploration of the traditional roles of men in rural Australia.

[10] This refrain of “losing the lot” in the novel parallels Harry’s futile attempt to hold onto a farm is more than losing a job. It is a way of life or a vocation...for a farmer it is a way of life for many previous generations livelihood and very sense of self.” (Mayer as cited in Treasure 2002: 10).

[11] The B and S ball (otherwise known as the Bachelor and Spinster’s Ball) is a social event where women gather to dance, drink and socialise away from the sometimes stressful world of the farm for community benefit as they bring income to host towns. Most importantly it is a way of life for many previous generations livelihood and very sense of self.” (Mayer as cited in Treasure 2002: 10).

meet a potential partner. See “Balls in the Bush” and “Bachelor and Spinsters Balls.”

[12]It is important to note that in 2013, Rachael Treasure released *The Farm* got her fairytale ending—but life had other plans...” (book cover). *The Farm* Charlie and again battling to save her beloved farm from environmental des

[13] Rebecca stands in contrast to other contemporary romance heroines that Michele Hammers has noted in television show *Ally McBeal* as a “b professional spheres.” See Hammers for a more detailed discussion of conte

[14] See Taylor for a more detailed discussion of gendered performances in new.”

[15]Treasure has written a non-fiction e-book about dog training called *Dog Rural Woman of the Year* in December 2006 which included a \$10,000 bursa DVD (See Brennan). [End Page 19]

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After Happy Ever: Tender Extremities and Tan Australasian Bluebeard Tales by Lucy Butler

October 24th, 2014 |

Introduction: Tending the Bluebeard Tale

"We must tend the myths [...] only in that way shall we survive." Janet Frow

The Bluebeard tales of Margaret Mahy, Sarah Quigley and Marion Campbell have been read and taught actively, if not often critically or consciously enough, to negotiate our relationship with the past. This is what makes reprising the familiar romantic scripts, particularly the fairy tale, a vital undertaking. Narrative is not the bearer of ideology in an obvious way, and the meanings of even so seemingly transparent a text as the fairy tale prove themselves to be complex. In relatively recent works by female writers in Australasia, Bluebeard's key tropes are remobilised to challenge the fiction of romantic sufficiency and to construct a space for love as a site of self-realisation. These writers are not working in a purely critical

partake of the pleasures and seductions of narrative and visual representation and mythological motifs. If these postmodern Bluebeard tales are riddled with unresolved contradictions, and yet still central position of romantic love in an apparently

The Bluebeard fairy tale, written by Charles Perrault in 1697,[1] has many a lends itself to a critique of popular romance. As several commentators have noted, it is an anomaly in the fairy tale canon in that it begins where most tales end: with the heroine, seen as a repository of “the detritus of his failed romances” (Haslem 2003), here, amounts to *prising open* the paradoxes in popular representations of romance. As narratives tend to finish, unlocking the door of “happily ever after” to reveal the complications concealed behind the rather glib final phrase of

Bluebeard is a story that female characters in contemporary film and fiction have found in narrative were submerged in contemporary culture. The mute adolescent heroine in *The Other Side of Silence* (1995), for instance, suddenly realises that she has been trapped in the tale of a bride who was allowed to go anywhere in a house except for the forbidden room. In Francesca Lia Block's Bluebeard story, “Bones” (2000), the diminutive narrator is a photographer Derrick Blue: “He took a key from his pocket. I wasn't afraid to go in. With this forgetting in mind, I will briefly summarise the plot of Perrault's Bluebeard.”

Bluebeard is a very wealthy, mysterious nobleman who wants a wife but has a difficult time finding one despite his great fortune. He finally convinces a young woman to marry him. At the wedding, Bluebeard announces that he has business to attend to elsewhere and tells her that she can roam freely as long as she doesn't open the forbidden door. However, the young wife cannot contain her curiosity and soon finds herself in a chamber where she makes the grisly discovery of the mutilated corpses of Bluebeard's previous wives. In shock, she sees the key that betrays his wife's disobedience. As punishment, she must marry him. Bluebeard prepares to decapitate his wife but her brothers appear with swords and slay the tyrant. The heroine inherits her husband's riches and marries a more worthy man.

Bluebeard is a fundamentally ambivalent tale; it cannot be summed up by a single moral but requires two: the first warns wives not to pry, while the second tells husbands not to longer assume quite the same authority. Fairy tale scholar Marina Warner notes the porousness of stories to their tellers' temper and beliefs” (1995, 255). Bluebeard is a tale of contemporary writers, open to different and even contradictory moral standards.

In her recent study of the Bluebeard tale in the English tradition, Casie Herrington examines the Grimms' Bluebeard variants “Fitcher's Bird” and “The Robber Bridegroom” and their revisions of the tale (170). In “Fitcher's Bird” the wily heroine rescues herself and her sisters from the corpses of her sisters in the process. Poetically, she leaves a grinning skull behind her in the castle disguised as a bird. It is not surprising that this version of the tale has been embraced by writers and artists challenging the classic fairy tale tropes of feminine passivity. In a better-known tale that is explicitly referenced in the works in this article, the heroine, with spirit and, like the Grimms' heroine, enact various rescues and “re-membering” of the past.

With its vivid images of domestic violence and relative lack of magical elements, Bluebeard is more comfortable or comforting tales, Bluebeard remains a powerful narrative that confronts us with the dark past and the compulsively curious woman determined to go to the end of the theme. While the early tale had little to do with love and romance in its current

gain and physical survival, Bluebeard has been used to signify the redemptive power of knowledge, the cure for blindness, and contemporary authors are putting yet another spin on the revelation. The qualities of secrecy and curiosity, while they continue to be used to describe the Bluebeard tale, are instead used to investigate broader problems of knowledge and self-definition.

Postmodern Bluebeard tales foreground the act of storytelling and its role in the construction of the self. Protagonists are acutely aware of the power at stake in their storydom and are unable to slip seamlessly into the romance narratives of their youth. (anti)heroines are unable to slip seamlessly into the romance narratives of their youth nonetheless. Instead, they must negotiate a constant tension between competition and love. Genuine empathy and embodied compassion grow in the cracks of the self, most often found in moments of collision with sister selves, the other women in the story. Protagonists inevitably share aspects of their stories and identities. The revelation of the self is the key to breaking with romantic delusion in the works considered here. In the Bluebeard tale, as experienced as a succession of monogamous relationships, the Bluebeard tale is the key to breaking with romantic delusion in the works considered here. Lurie suggests (129). The substitutions of love unsettle a romantic myth of perfect romantic sufficiency, fracturing the self-enclosed world of the love story.

Several commentators have pointed to the prevalence of a doubled, ironic structure in contemporary Bluebeard tales. Warner, for instance, notes the tendency for narrators of contemporary Bluebeard tales to employ a "voice of a child who is not a child, whose voice is at the fore in the works of Mahy, Quigley and Camp" (1995,193). Voice is at the fore in the works of Mahy, Quigley and Camp. Contemporary Bluebeard tales are highly artful accounts disguised as first-person accounts of intimacy with the reader that questions the power inherent in any act of appropriation. As Lurie suggests (2004), "the quest for intimacy through knowledge" (2004), these authors to play the fine line between knowledge and disavowal. Contemporary Bluebeard tales are highly artful accounts disguised as first-person accounts of intimacy with the reader that questions the power inherent in any act of appropriation. submerged tension between the supposedly private, unmediated emotional and the public, cultural nature of the love story.

Much has been written on Australasian Filmmaker Jane Campion's acclaimed film *The Piano*. The following section will focus on another mute protagonist of New Zealand fiction, the silent heroine of New Zealand writer Margaret Mahy's young adult novel *The Piano*. In the course of her passage through the Bluebeard tale. As in *The Piano*, Hero is a character of competing stories and truth claims; its surfacing requires learning to balance the self in the pursuit of love and self-definition. Like Campion, the late Mahy is one of the most creative practitioners but her work, written for children and young adults, is a rich and nuanced portrayal of the power of story to shape human relations is rich and nuanced.

Refusing to sing in the cage of story: Margaret Mahy's *The Piano*

As in many postmodern Bluebeard tales, voice (and voicelessness) is at the center of the story. Hero, who died in 2012, produced some of New Zealand's most popular and influential films. *Silence* is a Bluebeard story dealing with the problematic nexus of love, story, and self. It is a first-person narrative voice characteristic of contemporary fairy tales. It is a story of the self in the thicket of love and family life, amidst a disorienting swirl of competing stories. Hero, the third child in a large family of loud talkers and powerful thinkers, is the central character of the novel begins. Electively mute, Hero wields the power of *withholding*

eloquence and endless argument. Hermansson points out that now, “[r]eflexivity is the norm” (159); Hero’s very name suggests the novel’s self-story to shape identity. The novel celebrates the power of stories, from the transform even as it warns that this power can equally circumscribe and withhold her words; yet she remains, in the heart of her silence, “a word terms. These terms change abruptly, however, when she falls from her twisted that only her schooling in *Old Fairy Tales* could have prepared her f

Eva Illouz asserts that the postmodern romantic condition is characterised *real and its representation*” (1997, 15, emphasis in original). This blurring, k article, is treated most explicitly in Mahy’s novel. Hero imagines being turned *Jungle Book*, “I would probably have been turned into *Old Fairy Tales*, whi small” (8). She uses this book for “divination” and her familiarity with it lend She remarks of the Credence house and garden into which she tumbles: towards it from the very first time anyone ever told me a story” (14).

All of the female characters in this tale are intoxicated by the power of sto out for, but an invented life, lived truly, can be just as dangerous” (3), Hero mother Annie is a successful academic and best-selling author of books on b Ginerva, for many years a poster-girl for her mother’s theories, ran away novel battered almost beyond recognition by her new career as a stunt car Miss Credence, the “deeply strange” neighbour into whose story Hero f haunting his huge, decrepit estate. Like all Bluebeard figures, Miss Credence Hero’s silence that she offers her a job clearing her neglected house and gar Vice Chancellor of the University, “a world figure in the field of symbolic log whose power she can never inhabit, though she wears his academic gown, s hunting rifle.

Under the spell of her dead father’s disdain for anything but the highest ord his reputation, Miss Credence has secretly locked her “substandard” ille Chained to her bed, the unspeakable secret at the heart of her mother’s tale Hero’s abject symbolic sister. Incarcerated for all of her eighteen years, Rin “dreadful, silent screams” (159). It is only by passing through Bluebeard’s cl light that Hero can rescue herself (assisted by Sam, her love interest) and rec

Hero immediately recognises the inevitability of what she finds in the forbi tale, by a security system rather than a key): “As soon as I actually saw Rinda: it was she who was up there, waiting for me like a terrible kind of twin” (14 tales, as noted, recognising the suffering of one’s sisters is critical to break enables the heroine to view her predicament in broader, cultural terms, th **[End Page 5]** terms. Rinda Credence has been rendered silent and invisibl intellectual brilliance. Underlining this sisterly doubling, Miss Credence has Ginerva, Hero’s sister, from a photograph in a newspaper article lauding Gi free from *her* mother’s story of intellectual brilliance. It is this painting that Hero, well-versed as she is in the old tales, and sends her on the search for t

Acutely and ambivalently aware of the shaping power of story, the sisters in circumscribed by the stories of those around them. Hero opts for self-imp physical extremes that keep her in the body and the moment, free from powerful, but it is not monolithic, Hero discovers. Crucial to her survival of that the bars on the windows where she and Rinda are held are not steel but

idea of a cage, rather than a real one" (156). It is a symbolic cage, a cage of such conceptual prisons can be real enough.

Hermansson observes of contemporary Bluebeard: "[t]he story is not only and in Mahy's novel, the trap is the tale itself. When Hero falls into Miss Credence's trap, Hero a new fairy tale name, which is also her daughter's: *Jorinda*, from the classic Bluebeard tale, "the leash that could be used to twitch me into place," Hero realizes (23). Hero turned against her: "I don't belong in this story, I kept thinking over and over later: "my secret story had somehow broken free, and was twisting back or control her story, then nor can her captor: "Miss Credence was still a storyteller, she can't control the story any more. The story was in charge of her" (85). Stories are never static, Mahy suggests, and they can turn from comfortingly familiar to oppressive in the way Mahy suggests, "tend the myths" (as Frame puts it), pay attention to the old myths, especially, if they are operating just beneath the surface of our consciousness. Hero, who has been handed down from her parents through her siblings to her, "I would say to me over and over again. *Make me true*" (30). But if narrative offers a chance, it lies opportunity, Hero discovers. Once she gets her fictional bearings and her own voice, she becomes an assertive call to action. Hero, who has been passively[3]: "it wasn't enough just to *be* something magical. I must *do* some

Houses in Bluebeard tales are often symbolic extensions of their occupant's lives. The forest-shrouded Credence mansion is in stark contrast to the transparent house under renovation and wide open to the world. The Credence mansion is a mirror that intuitively the way his intellectual arrogance undermined his relationships. She is now by his daughter, as a kind of defence against the *uncertainty* of intimacy. The house of long, black [End Page 6] folds" (89). In typical Bluebeard fashion, the house and his wife—despised as an intellectual inferior—dies, the house becomes lifeless.

On first entering Credence mansion, Hero encounters a photograph of "a stag which was stretched out at his feet" (82). His daughter copies his posturing. Miss Credence's expression more closely resembles the stag's. Mahy critiques the messy aliveness of the world to something *dead* certain, something pinned down. Hero very often seeks a kind of fixing rationality that oppresses the other. American Bluebeard, in instance, kills because the unruly bodies of his wives debase the romantic ideal. Hero, a puritan, an aesthete, a collector, or an obsessive in popular culture, as Warnock suggests, this in the serial killer genre, most famously perhaps *The Silence of the Lambs*. The other can be fixed only in death in these contemporary takes on the Bluebeard tale. The quest for the other in the name of love is figured in images of physical suffering and psychic fragility.

In *The Other Side of Silence*, Miss Credence is so deeply entrenched in her fiction that all else that she can escape only by shooting herself in the head. And the head is the heart. Mahy depicts the attachment to rigid categorical knowledge or excessive control over relationships. If, as Tatar suggests, the Bluebeard tale turns on "the quest for the other," Mahy's fictional world some ways of knowing are more apt for intimacy than others.

In true fairy tale fashion, Hero falls in love with the teenager who helps to liberate her. She remains the hero of the story rather than Sam. There is more power in the quest for the other, though, as Hero recognises. The majority of the novel is told in the first person. Hero doesn't say to the people around her. But the novel's brief fifth part tells the main action of the novel. The now fifteen year old Hero has just completed her quest for Bluebeard's chamber. In the continuing tussle between concealment and

Hero's hidden novel draft is discovered and read by her parents against her will, labeling her "a writer" and prepares to send the book to a publisher. Hero is not so sure of herself, and turns to *Tales* once more: "Tell your sorrows to the old stove in the corner" (181). She writes several copies, and goes running with Sam, who reminds her gently that there's more to life than can transform herself not only through flights of fantasy and intellectual brilliance but also through the wily third sister of "Fitcher's Bird," Hero finds freedom in a winning combination of wit and physical action.

Hero is suitably ambivalent about the power she assumes in authoring *Refracted*. Her voice is rehabilitated to speak, under the fascinated academic eye of Hero's mother. Her story, keeping with the disingenuous narrative style Warner cites, the tale we have supposedly destroyed. And so the irresistible lure of story wins out, but only through a combination of empathy, compassionate engagement and critical awareness.

The Other Side of Silence explores the need to balance privacy with transparency, to reconcile inner and outer worlds. The power of stories to shape relationships is central to the novel, but it is profound. Opening these relationships to transformation is not only an imaginative knowledge for empirical or vice versa. The Bluebeard trope of repression and disclosure bring to light the hidden stories at the hearts of things, and up that they may be better "re-membered" in respect of the physical world.

Love's double-trouble: substitution and successive selves in 'The Lights'

In New Zealand author Sarah Quigley's Bluebeard story "North of the Lights," the doubling of husband and wife in pursuit of knowledge, and a playful, self-aware wisdom of staking one's sense of self in fairy tale romance plots.

'He kept his ex-wife in a teapot above the stove' (8). The opening line of *having words with you*, signals its play on the Bluebeard tale. It is a *photograph* of the female narrator Greta from the imagined certainties of her marital life, an illustrator of children's books who spends her days in the world of fairy tales, and himself on his hard-nosed rationality. Alec is arrogant and indifferent, but with his first wife Isobel, nor has a horrific fate befallen her. In fact, the plot is about the nature of her own identity, the aspects of herself that she has repressed in order to survive.

The past that I had buried ten fathoms deep, hastily, furtively, wiping my eyes, I saw the remains of clay beneath my fingernails: she, with her sharp and

In this Bluebeard tale, both husband and wife have a "secret" past, and a surface and secretive interior. Cristina Bacchilega emphasises the double nature of the *Postmodern Fairy Tales* (111). Bluebeard seeks to test his wife's loyalty and is forbidden to use, and reveals her to be the treacherous creature he suspected in his secret chamber because she likewise suspects him of concealing his true self from her. Both are rewarded, in a sense, by having their worst suspicions confirmed. Quigley's depict a romantic mythology that diminishes the other to a prop, a means to assuage an imagined lack, or an aspect of the anticipated fulfilment of the self. Hermansson notes that in contemporary renditions, "Bluebeard's wife insists

now to include her husband's own mind" (158). In Quigley's story, the problem is not just a valid and vital curiosity, a pragmatic approach to love and marriage. It is also a desire to know the other's inner world, as the compulsion to investigate and scrutinise the other reveals (in the Bluebeard story, first wife notwithstanding, this is quite literal). Greta is not *completely* driven by the need to shore up one's own identity, reliability, or romantic sufficiency. In "North of the Lights", Greta has attempted to enter a world of her own after the revelation of Isobel, Greta can no longer pretend that either she or

I was a fraud. My partnership with Alec was one in which my weaknesses were hidden, and they would vanish. And for a time it worked. Even I believed I was one of those girls with reckless eyes. I pruned my past without compassion, severed my ties to my chosen slipper. (12).

Ann Snitow (1979/1996) observed in her seminal study of popular romance that the fairy tale narrative, and indeed of the fairy tale, that the privileged couple be removed from all other social bonds, existing in pristine isolation (195-7). There are only two characters in Isobel, but she exists primarily as a symbol in their relationship. Greta's "happily ever after" is an absence of history and social context. When Isobel finally appears in person, the game is finally up for Greta, who is forced to confront the fact that the real problem is Greta, and all the relationships she has "negated" in order to make herself "self" (12). Isobel, bearer of history, context and materiality, ruins the romance for herself.

In another aspect of the doubling of Bluebeard and his wife, the revelation of Isobel is Greta's own. "Isobel" unleashes all the messiness and complication that Greta sustained the fiction of romantic sufficiency through the very fairy tale images that are now turning on her, undermining her romantic assumptions. Like the fairy tale images that are her bread-and-butter are volatile, open to difference, and are never entirely contained by the intentions of their creator, but may speak for his part, seeks control, or "absolute mastery," as Greta puts it, of a self-contained framework of rigid rationality that is untouched by his wife's increasingly biz-

The destabilizing effect that the discovery of Isobel has on Greta's identity is that she has staked her identity entirely in her marriage, severing anything that does not fit her opaque and [End Page 9] impenetrable, much like Ed in Atwood's "Bluebeard". This is especially problematic because, having stripped herself of history, fate is now contingent on her husband:

Through the mating of our possessions, my new identity had been born from myself, with fragments chipped from my lover's side.

Biblical overtones? Perhaps. My trade, as I have said, is with legends, my world is in itself, had I stopped for one moment in my brave new directionless search for an illustrator, a gingerbread villa in Thorndon: highly suitable, happy ever after, and sophisticated endings. (9)

Along with a self-reflexive nod to the reader, whose complicity is first established in Hermansson notes (160), in the marriage of Greta and Alec we again see a variation on the Bluebeard tale. Greta's husband, like most postmodern Bluebeards, deals

indeed his own marriage to his will, wilfully blind to anything that doesn't f
worrying about Isobel and what she means, Greta observes of Alec:

In sleep he lost the absolute mastery he had over the physical world. Hi
in the long slow evenings when they wielded a pen with the ruthlessness
twitch loosely on my skin. (8)

The image of a surgeon ruthlessly cutting resonates with images used by Ma
of definitive truth claims and the violence of categorical language. Hero ob
"I came to imagine the poor fact lying there, panting and helpless, and Athol
with the point of his pen as with a skewer of words" (27). Quigley's "ruth
opaque heart surgeon husband of "Bluebeard's Egg", and the famously s
Barthes[4] and Angela Carter[5] both also depict a lover performing a figur
and knowledge.

As noted, in contemporary Bluebeard tales, the lover's quest for knowledge
seek not to *discover* the other but to confirm pre-existing romantic expecta
An inquisitional approach to romantic relations is both necessitated and th
one's own identity, as is clearly the case for Quigley's narrator. The attemp
one's own desire or identity is Bluebeard's death-dealing quest and a trap t
to doubling her husband by demanding the assurances on which her self-ide
their attempts to lay definitive claim to [End Page 10] one another. If Alec h
could I plant my stake in his heart without seeming insecure, possessive, a gr

Contemporary Bluebeard tales such as Quigley's playfully expose the episte
undermines romantic aspirations of unity and transparency. They may us
reduce, contain the potential complexities of their relationship, and so the
photo of an ex-wife to render it untenable. The story ends with Greta o
husband, returning to the muddy roots of her own history. Greta "confesse
"Margaret McArdle from Palmerston North. [...] There, I've said it. My sec
create a disingenuous intimacy that mocks our expectations of transparenc
the dark". In keeping with the theme of confounding certainty, Quigley con
to, her protagonist, just as Greta herself is denied access to her husband's in
Bluebeard's wife doubles not only her husband's secret past and his aggre
also impersonates his impenetrability. "I was equally pleased at the convicti
and reflected back his self-sufficiency" (10). This "hardness" is a perform
doesn't matter much to Alec, as long as she remains installed in his "ginge
with her structural *secondness*:

"Isobel used to say that too. Old Isobel. Christ, we had some fights." Hi
a lighthouse, picked out the golden teapot. I wonder now why I had no]
extracted the curling photo. Curiosity was all I felt as I stood at Bluebea

At this moment of revelation, Greta's marriage, her very sense of self, is
circular prison and my own incarceration began" (1998:10). Like "the Se
Rebecca (1938), whose earnest efforts to create a loving marriage are i
irreverence and unruliness represents all that has been repressed to crea
"[N]ow that Isobel had seen the outside world, she was no longer content to

In his seminal treatise on romantic love, *A Lover's Discourse* (1978/2002) himself with some person (or character) who occupies the same position ; power of a mere *photograph* of the first wife to undermine Greta's own idea of the dominant humanist model of integral selfhood and current romantic address. Cultural theorist Dominic Pettman calls this problem "the trauma of destruction and reformulation of the romantic couple, Bluebeard rendering challenging the romantic ideal of the singular merging of souls. The sheer fact, much as their dismembered state, threatens the sense of a unique and intimate bond. The dead wives also marks their anonymity, their interchangeability, the failure of the self. The serial aspect of the Bluebeard tale, in more recent renditions, highlights the fragility and beloved when confronted with love's tendency to *repeat*. No matter how close to a romantic partner, this suggests that it is ultimately impossible to avoid the fact of the romantic narrative. Pettman continues:

It is this *inherent interchangeability* which lies at the brutal heart of the tale. The text produced in its name insists otherwise only serves to highlight the price of knowledge at bay. (27)

We are confronted with this fact more frequently than ever in contemporary culture, even if we are lucky enough to be the last, and a culture of successive monogamy and renewed interest in the Bluebeard tale in recent decades (Lurie 129).[6]

In Quigley's story, Greta lacks the necessary "power of denial" to sustain the fiction. "Exposed me there didn't seem much point in going on with my life" (12). Confronted with her persona and the losses she has sustained to maintain the fiction, Greta is cut off from her characters for her illustrations: "How could they live when their identities were destroyed" (12). She is also divorced from her embodied self: "Barefoot, I could not feel the ground": "Invalid in both senses of the word" (13). In true Bluebeard fashion, she finds her wife's languishing. She feels his "casual kisses" (13) robbing her last vestige of self.

As observed, in Bluebeard tales both old and contemporary, a traumatic encounter with former wives is key to breaking the spell of a suspect marriage or ending a period of stasis. Indeed Isobel herself who breaks the stasis and sets Greta free, sends her romantic idealisation into material reality that Isobel's visit represents turning the symbolic presence was incapacitating, her physical presence has precisely the effect of "senses", in both senses of the word. Isobel's "thick ankles" humorously suggest a groundedness, a refreshing contrast to the narrator's capacity for fantasy. Isobel's presence, and to her own body; as she watches Isobel leave she feels "the hot boards s

The substitutions of love, particularly unsettling in the context of a conventional narrative of subjective uniqueness, helps to explain how the Bluebeard tale retain their power. In contemporary versions of the tale the trope of repetition undermines the ability to guarantee the self's uniqueness. Confronting Isobel, Greta has to re-examine her perfect romantic sufficiency, and recognise that she is, quite literally, an "oth

Tender Extremities: unravelling romantic love as self-identity *Being Miriam*

Slipping between first and third person narration, between genuine disclosure

between different versions of the self, Mahy and Quigley challenge roman problematize the search for definitive knowledge in the name of love by pre by many overlapping and competing stories. Australian writer Marion Cam takes the Bluebeard themes of fragmentation, repetition and revelation play short story and adds further layers of complexity, crafting a compelling ex subjective affirmation in and through romantic union.

As in “North of the Lights,” a photograph of an idealised first wife is pivotal of the doubling of Bluebeard and his wife, Elsie dismembers a huge photogr abusive and sentimental husband keeps in the closet. She wraps the strip making literal the way she has been brutalised by the image of an idealise overlapping lives and identities of Bess, Lydia and Elsie, three Australian v economic situations. It charts their struggles for distinction, recognition and entrenched mythologies of their romantic relationships, relationships that considerable talents and desires, continue to be their main point of referenc

Campbell’s quite radical and political novel suggests, even more strongly th plots, while they are always gendered, have a complex and unstable relation whom we first encounter as a young girl in Campbell’s novel, initially passionate relationship with her younger sister Cassandra. Bess wants to be in the supporting roles her older sister assigns her. While Cass grows up to teaching drama. But she is always acting, and her identity is self-consciously

Throughout the novel, Bess’s, Lydia’s and Elsie’s identities shift and merge, c the fictional, mythological and historical women with whom they identify. Bess discovers the Classical Adriadne at a young age, in a rage at her roman who prefers the blonde, pretty Cass. “This is who Bess can be. Ariadne who thread. Who knew” (15). But if Ariadne knows, then Cassandra does too. An who is peripheral, an object traded between sisters. Cass is self-contained at her own identity. Expressing the constant tension between disclosure and se to dissect Cass, to “ransack her sister for her secret” (23). **[End Page 13]**

It is Cass, and later Lydia and Elsie, who have the crucial relation to Bess’s wives and sister selves are key in Quigley’s and Mahy’s stories. Yet it is the rc and a ubiquitous romantic mythology that turns the wheels of story. Whi deeper in *Not Being Miriam*, it is the love relation that is the lynch pin of ide her identification with Ariadne, who is in the *Dictionary of Classical Mythc* abandonment by Theseus, and so she barely exists.

Bess’s identity is informed by the feminist politics of her era and educatio obsessive iteration of one particular classic love story. This is the story of 1 every day after school for years. This story turns out to be a fabrication, a flattered into a Bluebeard marriage with a very wealthy, controlling and s story is enduring, and the end of the novel finds her re-enacting it in her r through the lines she used to assign to her nieces. But, unlike Bess, Mamie k

Highlighting the fact of one’s contingent place in the love story, the charac chairs within the romantic narrative. And, as Bess, Elsie and Lydia in their d left standing when the music stops. Bess’s identification with her role as th young Aunt Mamie off her feet in Florence is intensely passionate; “sick,” h abandons her and takes their son, and so Bess switches places within the rc

with Ariadne. Bess is also the Other Woman: for Lydia, with whose husband's beloved first wife she uncannily resembles. Structurally speaking, the next door neighbour whose pain she inhabits through a radically destabilising becoming-other that she has never achieved in her romantic relationships, which we encounter first as child's play in *Not Being Miriam*, become consequences.

In Bess's connection to Elsie, empathy is a kind of contagion. Bess comes to her specificity she is a genuine stranger, but Elsie's conflicted place in the romance finds Elsie anyhow, embodies her. Her veins become knotted, tumescent self.[7] Lying on her couch next door, she feels her loss of boundaries mirrored in her job on a burns victim, she feels the house as if it's her own tissue stretched and is charged with significance in Bluebeard tales. Like Quigley's Greta and Malina's house that was once a place of pride and union but falls into sickly stasis, our Bess becomes Elsie becomes Miriam. Bess becomes Miriam through Elsie's

The poster-sized photo of his Poor Late Beautiful Wife is still there all right. Elsie winces with recognition. She hasn't refused from Elsie the mixture of a faded and foggy enlargement could be Bess. Spitting or bloody splitting image do not tracing out these features. Hers. The Other Woman's. Bess loses herself and contracts back to something like a reclining hologram of Miriam, the Late

If Ariadne is Bess's mythological forebear, it is the second Mrs de Winter who hasn't read the novel, but she watched the film again and again as a girl. Romantic dependence and material security are intertwined: in Hitchcock's film, as in Aunt Maud's figure and the material security he offers propels the romantic plot and drives her to work despite so many misgivings.[8] But even as a girl, Elsie intuits that not Married to a man who abuses her children, Elsie's mother pleads:

Else, for all our sakes, I've got to make a go of it this time. Otherwise we

Else could have said it for her. She can answer it too. What you do is you don't be trapped. She's not going to be forced to stick with a man if he turns out to go nasty? He was young and happy in the marriage photo. (95)

You get a job. And Elsie does. But Elsie's mother is dependent on Stan's dependence that her mother cannot relinquish and that compels her to marry Elsie, despite her youthful insight and defiance, ends up playing out her mother's dream around in Elsie's head – "Love was just a glance away. A warm embracing dream." "Slut, she says to the dressing-table mirror. Bleeding fat cow" (132).

Elsie's husband Roger, like Stan, cruelly disregards both Elsie and her child. Intolerable is his continued romantic devotion to his first wife, so jarringly daily reminders that she is not the "real" wife of Roger Miller, and in a world where this means she is nothing at all. Elsie lives in the shadow of the idealised wife concealed in the closet behind Roger's trousers. Like all of Bluebeard's wives, Elsie is looking at Miriam.

Miriam had the finest skin, not a flaw, not a single flaw. Always says even the notice in the In Memoriam column every year [...] **[End Page 15]**

And I've made a home with another,
Deep at heart, I'm still your lover.

[...]

How suddenly, that's what she was: *another*. *And I've made my home with* himself like that too. Well. Now the scissor traces out loops on the skin [...] As an old woman she probably would've got a profile like Punch, not

But Roger's romantic idealisation is perfectly maintained by Miriam's absence. Miriam robs Elsie of her rightful place in the romantic narrative, and thus tries the famous line from *Rebecca* on her husband – "I'm Mrs Miller now" (in effect. "My bloody arsehole you are!" Roger rages (133).

Elsie's lack of identity, a fact published by Roger in the newspaper every year inhabits her pain, which is also of course Bess's own. To stop Roger beating Eiffel tower, a relic from his first marriage that he keeps on the dresser against his hypocritical romanticism. Despite the myriad material problems in their relationship between Miriam, and Roger's consequent rage, that destroys their marriage and ends

In this penultimate scene the three women finally come together. Lydia sits at Elsie's house and seeing Bess run next door to intervene. Imaginatively, Lydia and Elsie's unbidden sisters haunt each other in and through their unhappy marriages. Lydia's invasive vine through the romantic framework, disturbing the love story, the meaning to their lives. In a final slippage of identity, after Bess goes to prison and returns to her house and resumes the (condescending but quite successful) project of

If Mahy and Quigley critique a grasping, fixing knowledge of the other, and the certainty, then Campbell questions "the quest for intimacy" through knowledge. Bess discovers, that the empathetic, merging knowledge sought as perfect knowledge (432).[9] The failure of perfect knowledge or communion is not the failure of knowledge. Emmanuel Levinas asserts, "precisely what nurtures love" (103). A gifted person (115), and that there is "no matter only tendencies" (113). The increasingly jaded novel progresses evokes more open, multivalent and fluid ways of approaching knowledge. The sound the lisp as a way of saying, whisper monstrosities[...]" (137).

The punning on "tender", in particular, playfully critiques demands for perfect relations. "Tender" insists on meaning more than one thing at once, in a way that deconstructs the complex deconstruction of romantic mythology. Love is legal tender in *No* **Page 16]** taxi, things are "only tending to happen" (113), Elsie knows that the body is worth something: "Somewhere the things she knows will count. The things in her hands. Her fingers practically think" (96). A *certain* kind of love is associated with Elsie asks the butcher if his meat is tender. "Tender love? he says. Tender, tender is a woman's heart. On pay day" (131).

Bess like/as Ariadne is stranded at the novel's end, "beached in the sway of uncertainty and several selves is preferable to being "mythaken, fixed in categorical knowledge is associated with sight, while tentative and truly tentative connection that respects difference and distance and leaves space for

extremities are the feet of Quigley's Greta, anchoring her to the earth and to of muddy history and connectedness. They are the "blind fingers" (181) c sense of sight and its association with unequivocal truth. *Not Being Miria* her body and her roots: "I found the fissures with my fingers, I was sightless conventional romantic coupling, self-realisation in these tales is never a sol sisters and shadow selves.

Conclusion

There is an opera written by Maurice Maeterlinck (*Ariane et Barbe-bleue*, 1 which Ariadne attempts to rescue Bluebeard's wives. The rescue fails bec castle of mythology, but the story suggests the malleability of myth and the of Mahy, Quigley and Campbell propose not a rejection of fictionalised ron unmediated embodied experience of love, but rather recognise the limiti (although never entirely condition or contain) our expectations and exper stories up to both critical scrutiny and creative reconfiguration.

New Zealand writer Janet Frame observes: "we must tend the myths, [...] or these renewed Bluebeard tales, however, the less-than-tender myths o tenderised. The relentless repetition that marks both romance and violence this tale's perpetual retelling, implies the importance of re-entering and experience. These Australasian writers treat romantic myth and fairy tale as many possible re-entry points into the labyrinth of human intimacy. [End P

[1] Marina Warner (1995) discusses the way in which literary fairy tales e origins and primarily female tellers.

[2] Both Maria Tatar (2004) and Cristina Bacchilega (1997) write on *The Piar*

[3] In Stephen Benson's terms: 'narrative itself is always a remembering or a the repetition is passive. It is only by drawing out other submerged, partially the conflict and tension that lie beneath the surface, to repeat actively ra (1996:109).

[4] 'To scrutinize means to search: I am searching the other's body, as i mechanical cause of my desire were in the adverse body (I am like those chi what time is). This operation is conducted in a cold and astonished fashion; i strange insect of which I am suddenly no longer afraid' (2002:71).

[5] 'When I'd first loved him, I wanted to take him apart, as a child dis inscrutable mechanics of its interior. I wanted to see him far more naked enough to strip him bare and then I picked up my scalpel and set to work dissection, I only discovered what I was able to recognise already, from past new to me, I steadfastly ignored it. I was so absorbed in this work that it (1996:72).

[6] Like other fairy tales, Bluebeard's fortunes wax and wane depend circumstances. Tatar identifies a spate of Bluebeard-themed films in the 19 era, she suggests, to play out the anxieties provoked by husbands returning and unspeakable pasts in the course of their war service which made them s

[7] The Bluebeard tale, Tatar notes, is particularly apt for showing us how

(2004:10).

[8] Even Hero, in Mahy's novel, reflects: 'I was trapped by my own silence ar

[9] 'In the very moment the knower merges with that which is known, b
imaginary knowledge undercuts all other forms of knowledge, blurring all
way' (Moi, 1999:432). [End Page 18]

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Marriage, Romance and Mourning Movement *God He Met Lizzie* by Mark Nicholls

October 24th, 2014 |

Thank God He Met Lizzie (1997) stands out as an extremely rare example of most romantic comedies, this film is really about the negotiation of an ob generically atypical [End Page 1] about the film, and the source of its dra marriage is solemnized and in the form of nothing more concrete than wha last few shots of the film present the eponymous “He”, Guy (Richard Ro children, “slip, slop, slapping” (an eighties promotional slogan for liberal su wagon in a Sydney beachside car park. Within the span of less than a mir tilting up and left, fractionally, framing the actors in a medium shot that wi credit sequence rolls. This final shot is a freeze-frame, the highpoint of a almost imperceptibly at first, ten seconds into the sequence and continues, s reaching its final point of stasis. The image presented is picture-perfect and probably end up on the family piano. Whatever substantial doubts over th raised both by his voiced-over letter to his sponsor-child and Martin Arn itself is one that many spectators understandably associate with desire. Th the blessings of children and family togetherness all add up to an idea th beneath and relies upon the expression of divine gratitude explicit in the fil the crushing feelings of domestic ambivalence implied by this final image n the marriage that lead to it have such an impact on us because they are s over the question of desire and its relationship to romantic love, marriage, c about this ambivalence – it reminds us.

Given what we know about the ups and downs of marriage and divorce rates such as Irving Singer have highlighted in the vast historiography of romanti love and marriage should be a truism of modern life. At the very least we considered it in its paradoxical postmodern form, as “ceaselessly suspected Belsey we understand love in postmodernity as “naïve”, defined by opposite transformations, commodification and social surveillance. The fundament desire’s fragility. The interventions of Law are the mark of its absurdity. through the media and cultural expression. Love is considered silent in its e Barthes has pointed out, (what it packaged up as) love is endlessly loqu expression of nightly paraded clichés. Stories and narratives thus place

uncharacteristic behaviour, thus becoming victims of this very fundamental *Thank God He Met Lizzie* as just such a banal expression. But the terms of practicality and a sense of inevitable doom linked to a relentlessly enduring essence of Belsey's portrait and its critique.

There is, of course, an array of theoretical treatments and methodologies which might be employed in relation to *Thank God He Met Lizzie*. In this **Page 2**] melancholia as highly useful in reading the film, but I do not advocate the exclusion of others. Accordingly, I find it extremely useful Campbell, if only briefly, to provide a summary position on romantic love. I have found enduringly communicative of romantic love's essential divide at the beginnings of romantic love in the troubadour context was about the power of the family, the church and the state. Romantic love in radical distinction to that power. A personal expression, romantic love stands to one's own pattern. Jealously opposed by established authorities, however, damnation. As a prime example, Campbell looks to the romance of *Tristan* reaction to the news that he and Isolde have drunk the love potion that will dilemma. Once Isolde's nurse tells him, "You have drunk your death." Tristan:

By my death, do you mean this pain of love? . . . If by my death, you mean my death, you mean the punishment that we are to suffer if discovered. I mean eternal punishment in the fires of hell, I accept that, too. (Campbell)

The ever-increasing commodification of what used to be called "courtly love" and impossible material expectations of middle-class lifestyles after marriage contemporary mono-myth of romance – nice boy meets nice girl and they keep the whole thing going. The simplicity of *Thank God He Met Lizzie's* romance/marriage disconnect obvious. Even in its most practical and companionship, the viability of love and the prospects for intimacy in relation chillingly impossible. In *Seminar XX Encore* Jacques Lacan invokes the not insight into the drama of the unconscious underpinning this incompatibility of courtly love are a performance of desire that stand in for consummation giving cause and excuse for the obstacles and blockages that pile up against forms of perversion, such acts of courtly culture are a potent metaphor for speaking being the relation between the sexes does not take place" (Lacan contemporary forms of courtly culture, ritual and commodity concern in *The* role. In Freud's useful phrase to account for perversion, we may read Guy's social and commodity fundamentalism that support it, as a sophisticated performance of "intermediate relations" (Freud 1991, 62). What we see in the final freeze-frame general and logical reluctance to do anything about their perversion. In this simple, perhaps even banal deconstruction of the love and marriage relation:

I will begin here by outlining the film's general themes. Given the narrative structure the way in which the film relies heavily on Guy's agency, his fantasy of loss and of the great cinematic perversions – for its emotional impact. Despite this, however, cannot account for this impact alone. By beginning this article with the stasis sequence, I wish to highlight that the sadness, and perhaps even grief, experienced watching the film are not solely reliant upon the *who* of loss expressed by Guy, but experienced by both characters and spectators more generally. I argue that

film, in its obvious advancement towards stillness, is not merely Guy's loss of his girlfriend Jenny (Frances O'Connor), but the loss of the palpable sense of movement in his life. It was this capacity for movement that also gave Guy and Jenny the joy and the gift of movement that it implies. As Laura Mulvey has written of ideology and her primary form of "delayed cinema", "the actual act of slowing down time in the final scene. This last minute retardation acts in the service of one party who considers, creates a "desire for the end, elongating the road down which leads to an inevitable conclusion" (2006: 144). Mulvey's "two grand conventions of narrative: return to stasis: death or marriage" have merged in *Thank God He Met Lizzy*. The advancement towards stillness, Freud's death instinct as a kind of "no fault"

"The trouble with happiness is . . . you remember it."

Alexandra Long's screenplay begins with Guy's awkward failure to meet Lizzy, a scene designed for the purpose. He then continues his misfortune on two blind encounters involving a pregnant cat. We see Lizzy and Guy only once together before the wedding plans are in full swing. A priest is brought in; Guy informs Lizzy a professionally wrapped engagement present which seems to seal the deal. In discussion and it takes the particular probing of the Catholic priest to raise the issue which she features at passionate moments in their past relationship. The wedding ceremony takes place off screen, and the major part of the film, a wedding reception, can then proceed.

The wedding reception is regularly punctuated by expressions of the fake happiness which provide the cues for extended flashbacks of Guy's life with Jenny; their meetings at pubs and parties, embarrassing family get-togethers, the ups and downs of their travel, their fights and, finally, the growing irreconcilability of their difference in their relationship. Before these [End Page 4] flashbacks are done, the function is served when Lizzy's mother Poppy (Linden Wilkinson) produces a forged letter purporting to be a blessing and moving blessing on their nuptials. Knowing it to be a fake, the letter causes Guy to lose his sense of decorum and continues with his duties at the reception. Late in the evening, obligations by a tired and emotional bride, that terror is magnified by a speech which expresses a desire for what used to be known as an "open marriage". Shocked that Lizzy's mother Margaret Smith has observed (Smith, 48), Guy does not argue the point. The film ends with Guy seeing a vision of Jenny in Martin Place. He approaches her with enthusiasm in a crowd of cold and wintry spirits rushing to work, and then become occluded by the rain above. "The trouble with happiness", Guy writes (and narrates) to Fong, "is that you remember it."

"Like a horse and carriage"

Something about *Thank God He Met Lizzy* that stands out immediately, for its banal, unselfconscious and middle-class it seems in its milieu and subject matter, its "first world problems." As a film about the basic disconnect between romance and reality, can it be otherwise? And yet what could be stranger in the context of Australian cinema than this straightforward picture of the persistently questioned, but ultimately unresolvable, which it is intended? In this sense, "the melodrama of one bourgeois address" (91), which is present here, relies on a certain sense of the mundane to e

emotional dilemmas are usually those closest to home. The greatest strangeness, however, like Noel Coward and David Lean's timelessly affecting *Brief Encounter*, the theme relies on its very simplicity of expression. Any extraordinary emotion is represented, such as Matthews observes as central to the types of love stories thought generally (Matthews, 37-50), runs the risk of clouding the already disconnected disconnect between romantic love and marriage seems so lost in our culture so tenacious, that *Thank God He Met Lizzie* impresses upon its audience the fear of supporting that very tenacity. Placing this affair amongst the guns of *Veronica's Closet* (*Juliet*, 1996), the mentally ill characters jumping off Melbourne's Westgate Bridge, Henry James (*Portrait of a Lady*, 1997) or even simply making it happen between intellectuals (*What I Have Written*, 1995), threatens to portray it as something of understatement and lack of hyperbole, in its very middle-class context, a staple of Australian cinema, *Thank God He Met Lizzie* demonstrates that the romantic is not "their" problem but "ours".

Marriage, as represented in *Thank God He Met Lizzie*, is a department store of emotions. In the plot description and brief visual analysis I have already presented, we can see the manipulation, deception, convenience, emotional entrapment, fear, isolation, community involvement and expectation, nostalgia and compromise that surround these characteristics really has the potential to shock any adult who has ever had a settled domestic relationship is an important point. As a summary of arguments, we might well, at different times in our lives, argue for both the need and the value of these relationships. The film itself does not totally shun this point of view. In this sense, the film that these "abominations" do appear shocking and detestable how they are. Beyond what it presents as familiar and practical, however, it is in the way that it explores the desire for intimacy in relationships that we see the real source of its conclusion. The same may be said for the film's rendering of even something so basic as the need for companionship.

In their only real moment together as a couple, before they become caught in a routine lounging by the water and talking about how her father, a surgeon, once told her "a piece of shit". Once assured that his own occupational status, or relative wealth, would not make him admire Lizzie's once fair hair. Lizzie embarks on a deconstruction of the value of marriage to stop her by saying, "Don't tell me about it. We've got the rest of our lives to live before you tell me now". In this playful moment, Lizzie presses on, in an intimacy that is her history and her first sexual encounter, before Guy stops her mouth with a kiss. A medium shot framing their headless bodies rolling on-top of each other, a union which seems to trump all other threatening complications. The film's relationship with Jenny, and Lizzie's "married by thirty and then have affairs" is their discourse soon enough. The essential fear and mistrust of genuine intimacy and Lizzie's shocking frankness, as part of their marriage is the most disturbing. As Cate Blanchett says of the couple, "They sort of don't want to know about it." Somewhere between the need to be kept in ignorance and the need to be honest, the representation of the fear of the line between intimacy, true partnership and the film does not restrict to its portrait of marriage, but one that is also an acknowledgment of how we know this fear as much in his relationship with Jenny as with Lizzie. The film does not express it and explore its implications, however bleak they may be. **[End Paragraph]**

Lizzie is the frankness expert in the film and she knows how to use that frankness. Guy (Jacek Koman) is teasing her about her pre-ordained vision of a marriage

“you couldn’t expect me to make a commitment like that to someone I knew it is Jenny, from the safety of a presumptively directionless, one night pub and the information/ignorance/intimacy triad. When Guy explains to Jenny that involved, Jenny replies, “Oh, see, you are taking a big risk there . . . you might and then you’ll miss out on a fantastic root.” Of course, nothing about the potential for intimacy. The point made, however, is that deep knowledge of emotional intimacy is presented in the film as not only a threat to good marriage of this kind of intimacy may be desirable within a twenty-something relationship thirty-something marriage. Just where it leaves the obvious search for intimacy dilemma.

If the scenes with Lizzie provide us a view of the film’s cynicism about marriage love in its romantic mode. The flashback scenes of Guy’s relationship with them they are not nostalgic or rose-coloured in content. Certainly they are warm above all, full of movement. In their isolation from community interest and decorum, these moments stand in high contrast to Guy’s experience of the preparations. For all their relative warmth and colour, however, these moments are a sweet sort of pain, an affair that is fleeting, potentially fatal (when they are ultimately lost without the benefit of hindsight. As Guy makes clear in the last happiness that is not known but only remembered. Like *Brief Encounter* relationship holds over the spectator is the fact that it is represented in a separate and distinct way from the sequences of the main plot. Most importantly the relationship is located in time past and that, for all its potency in the present with. As is the case with *Brief Encounter*, the “probably” gives the narrative grounded in the armed camp-like detention of the protagonists’ present life little more than fantasy.

Just over an hour into the film, as Lizzie’s “married by thirty” plan is outed up with Jenny. The scene is typical of all Guy’s reminiscences throughout directness and honesty with which the decision is arrived at give the scene scene of the film and, in many ways, the most expressive of any real form together is the movement of Kathryn Milliss’ hand-held camera, never uncertainty and high energy in the spectator. As in the moment in this photos of Fong Hu, this off-balance movement, like their relationship its feature of all their scenes together, in contrast to [End Page 7] the shades of explosion of colour about them. Whatever mood is portrayed, and in this and horror, the richness and variety of colours provides a depth of feeling scenes together. This colour is matched by their Hepburn/Tracy-like, screen here, when they squabble over Jenny’s annoying habit of leaving her clothes the plural form of cactus and “other related succulents”, in light of her extreme odious to Guy.

Where the break up scene turns away from the expected levity, however, is Guy’s sponsored child in Vietnam. In all their years together, we discover Jenny. Challenged over this, Guy babbles on for a moment about Fong Hu question of why he and Jenny are not married. What he does not say or understand and what Jenny’s challenge implies, is that it is a model of the structure emotional intimacy with Jenny, the distance, cultural estrangement and age an ideal relationship. Ultimately he sidesteps that emotional conundrum, as his melancholic “crypt” of solitude (Abraham and Torok, 135-6), by intr

their separation. This sidestepping is an act of resistance that demonstrates clearly unwilling, or unable, to cross. That resistance, however, does manage a degree of honesty about their states of mind, which makes the scene ever cryptic, but Jenny counters by pointing out the emptiness and untouchability of her feelings “you can’t touch”, but Jenny does not want to hear about his feelings. Her reaction to this admission is genuinely empathetic, but like a true realist she cannot see why. In many ways this is a confused, illogical and, in terms of emotional logic, but not incompatible with the truth of the moment as we might expect it to be. The clueless moment of “what do we do now?” that they find the “end of the road” in tears as Guy holds her with an expression of exhaustion and sadness.

Jenny and Guy’s last and final scene together in the film, in which they are seen as parents, simply underlines the trauma of the previous scene. The substance at the heart of their relationship: that is, the inevitable incompatibility between their individual social context of their lives. With Jenny’s mind and body moving towards a move that implies the move towards permanent union. This is the very announcement of what they are expecting. But such external expectations of permanent union and grandchild expectations fail to acknowledge, in their push towards the altar, is the biological imperative and male emotional inexperience. Guy’s isolationist environment and counselling contexts as “men in sheds”, and his protection of his family may look like a sit-com joke. That very reticence is, however, an [End Paragraph] that plays a role, similar to Jenny’s desire for children, in breaking up the relationship. In the scenes in the film, the most strikingly consistent element in the break up scene is the scene of their union. If *Thank God He Met Lizzie* shows its portrait of marriage as persistent and unbreakable, the film shows romance as brutally true – honest and hopelessly lost in the empty and intangible space of the past.

Man Melancholy

As to Guy’s “men in sheds” emotional obstructions, it is worth nothing that the same year as Adrian Lyne’s *Lolita*, this co-incidence suggesting the usefulness of the film. Given the dynamics of male impairment and loss, most notably represented in the work of James Cameron and James Cameron, which highlighted a continuing strain of cinematic male melodrama in the work of James Cameron in reading Guy’s lament (Nicholls 2004; 2012). This approach relies heavily on the film and constructs both Lizzie and Jenny as objects of an emotional empowerment and male melancholic discourse since *Hamlet* (Schiesari, pp. 5-6).

The scene of Jenny’s final appearance in the film might have easily been lifted from the scenes of mournful parting in films from *Taxi Driver* (1976) to *Shutter Island* (2010). The sense of horror when, on their wedding night, Lizzie suggests they pursue a life of drab and grey working day morning in Martin Place. Guy is on his way to work and only real colour in the sequence, walking towards him. Guy smiles enthusiastically as he appears to see him her expression moves gently from a contented air to one of surprise. The string concerto pauses for seven seconds as the camera is over-cranked, and then comes to a halt. As the music track resumes and a very brief piano accompaniment starts, Jenny is staring towards Guy. Although Jenny seems frozen, other city dwellers pass by, obscuring our view of Jenny, and then the shot goes to black as if one of the characters had stepped back to the scene of action, Jenny has gone. Guy’s point of view shot (although in slow motion for a few seconds more, before standard cranking returns to the

Guy's close-up is held for an excruciating twenty seconds while his confusion goes on and what happened. The sequence then ends with a high, extreme long shot of Guy in his state of confusion, while his fellow workers cross his path from every direction to work.

The reading of *Thank God He Met Lizzie* as an expression of male melancholia demonstrates its key tendencies: a sense of separateness from a conservative world (the world of the film's setting), the trauma of loss (his life and separation from Jenny), a tendency to melancholia (his inescapable reminiscences of that life), an outward show of grief (his refusal to go through with the marriage when he knows it is a fake), and a display of authority through melancholic display (the attraction of the spectator's presence). Guy duly performs all these tendencies throughout the film and they take up the same space as the other elements also summarised in the Martin Place scene where, as the man in the grey flannel suit, he performs his Lizzie lifestyle-supporting job to perform his desire, his radicalism, his loss, and his sympathy as the great bourgeois of sorrows. In the years following *Da Vinci Code* (1997) and Jeremy Irons' performance as Humbert Humbert, Richard Gere's performance in *Love and Other Drugs* is a performance of emotional "sad man candy" that is too similar to show.

Implying an unrevised Mulvian representation of visual, and emotional, pleasure (see Mulvey, 1989: 14-28 & 29-38), however, the celebration of male loss in narrative cinema is not limited to male spectators across the spectrum of gender and sexual identity. But this is the nature of the expression of loss that multiple perspectives leak out. In the case of the film, the nature of Jenny's actual presence in the scene, as opposed to being there as a memory, is a question to consider whether she was, in fact, in that or in any of her scenes. Could Jenny be Guy in the face of the intolerable realities of his present situation? Is the film a recognisable version of Lizzie when young, before she got old and serious? In the face of male melancholia, I am not willing to dismiss it as an utterly suitable reading. Looking at the film some fifteen years later, however, what struck me was its ambivalence. Fifteen years later, older and hopefully wiser and at a distance from the art house cinema, the reading of moral and emotional objectification of Lizzie is now questionable. In the secondary form of Mulvey's notion of "delayed cinematic effect" or concept of deferred action (*nachtraglichkeit*), the way the unconscious pre-emptive effect might only be realized by another, later but associated event." As in the film that considered above, in a contemporary reading of *Thank God He Met Lizzie*, Lizzie is now be "noticed" (2006: 8). In this context and in an updated reading, Lizzie's desires, but no more so than they all merge together with Guy's similar desire for a "no fault" marriage. Such a re-evaluation may not leave us feeling any more at ease with destiny with Lizzie, but the film's exposure of the past as equally prone to melancholia in the present, leaves both it and Jenny as in no way looking like a fantasy or the ideal of male melancholic perversion in the context, therefore, is inadequate. The film's reading of *Thank God He Met Lizzie* is that it threatens to limit the extent of what is made of at Guy's story, but the sadness of Jenny, her family, their friends and, in the end, Lizzie's character, echo a more profound and general sense of loss and sadness for the audience watching the film. It is an experience of loss that goes well beyond the "poor Guy", "horrible Lizzie" and "I just really miss Jenny".

"A relationship is like a shark"

Woody Allen is one of the greatest expressionists of the cinema of male melancholia.

character and relationship studies however, we can see that he is committed that I am interested in here. Allen specialises in the charms of the type of *Met Lizzie*. In his *Husbands and Wives* (1992), Gabe (Allen himself) and sequence with a final scene of lyrical reminiscence of their life together which is a sad but sweet moment, typical of Allen's films since *Annie Hall* (1977), which is due to the sadness and trauma of romantic separation. The reason these films work in the middle of any relationship turmoil, is that they advocate the virtues of the characters. In *Annie Hall*, Annie (Diane Keaton) is considering breaking up with Alvy, but he constantly moves forward or it dies. And I think what we got on our hands is the role of the humour in these so-called Romantic Comedies is central to the 1928 essay, humour is about assuaging fear and pain, reminding us, "Look, it amounts to. Child's play – the very thing to jest about." (Freud, 1950, 220). It is away from psychological insight, not to mention the many physical acts of the film. It also relates directly to the privileging of mobility over stasis that I have explored in my film so far. It is, therefore, a humorous line of dialogue that helps us understand a gender-wide sense and beyond the perversions of male melancholia, as we

Central to the work of melancholia in classical Freudian terms is the subject's withdrawal from loss and the past. This "inhibition of all activity" is read by Freud (Freud, 1984, 252, 263). In the work of Julia Kristeva, we read the logical, mourning in the ultimate stupor, stasis and immobility of the death drive drawn to these ideas of movement, and the lack thereof, by considering what is brought to the foreground by a 2011 exhibition at the Dax Centre in Melbourne. In the exhibition book of essays, child psychiatrist Pia Brous looks at the intersection of neuroscience and highlights the work of Australian biological psychiatrist, who "conceptualises the "core" of melancholia as a disorder of movement and conceptualisation has it that "psychomotor retardation or agitation is the essential

As we have observed in *Thank God He Met Lizzie*, it is exactly this type of instability at stake. Through the apparently simple strategy of contrasting the Jenny's movement with the creamy, Steadicam and stable diegesis of the Lizzie's stasis, the point of stasis and freeze-frame, we locate the true centre of despair in the paradoxical relation between movement and stillness", as Laura Mulvey has argued in her idea of death and destruction (2006, 71 & 104). What is mourned in the film is the loss of youth and lack of responsibility that, from one perspective and in contrast to what Freud says of the "magic" that Guy wants to get back, "why would we want to do that? we want to go back to what was before?" What Guy mourns, however, is the loss of movement. The symptoms of melancholia in the film are its predominant feature, present with Lizzie. At the very point when the worst possible expression of melancholia cannot resist the incredible propulsion towards this stability, a death-drive to

The scenes with Jenny threaded throughout the wedding reception may be seen as an experiment in experimentation, but the break up scene is not only extremely sad, but the film impresses such a response on us because it implies the greatest of all acts demonstrates that, however dead inside Jenny and Guy have become, however at that point in their lives they still have the ability to move on, to change, to experience. This break up is so moving because it is the ultimate sign of love and acceptance. As Guy says, "I love you so much that I am willing to set you free and to spare you from immobility." This is the very immobility to which not only the final snail-like perhaps fantastically perverted, vision of Jenny in Martin Place rests, before

[1] Since the early 1970s, divorce in Australian law is all “no fault”. I am using the term “no fault” because the film’s discourse of marriage is essentially perverse but that the film’s protagonists are not part of the legal grounds for divorce in Australia.

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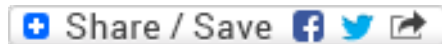
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A Masculine Romance: The Sentimental Bloke the War- and Early Interwar Years by Melissa Bellanta

October 24th, 2014 |

In 1915, the Australian poet and journalist C. J. Dennis published a book of verse. When read in sequence, the verse told a love story about an uncultivated young man who worked in a [End Page 1] Melbourne pickle factory. Though written in verse, it is a romantic comedy. Its humor sprang from the fact that Bill was the antithesis of the hopeless romantic just the same. In the parlance of the day, Bill was an Australian city boy who spent most of his time fighting, gambling, drinking and street-living. After the war, he transformed into a loving husband and family man. Told in the first person, the book sold prodigiously during the First World War, prompting Dennis to write a play. Over that period, the currency of *The Sentimental Bloke* (as it became known) became a media phenomenon, comprising a silent film and travelling stage musicals in concert halls.

Crucial to the success of *The Sentimental Bloke* was the fact that it was a masculine heterosexual romantic feeling from a male point of view and in a self-conscious cultural nerve. The war and early interwar years were rife with confusion about what Australian men had been expected to be warriors during the war, but upon returning home, their spouses (Garton). Romantic Hollywood leads such as Rudolph Valentino were admired for their sophistication and charm (Matthews 4; Teo 2012: 1). At the same time, the bohemian artist and writer, Norman Lindsay, decried romantic love as effeminate (Forsyth 59). *The Bloke* helped audiences to navigate these conflicting messages by showing an Australian man to be romantic without compromising his masculinity, in a proper manner and steered clear of “Yankee” suavity.

The content and reception of *The Sentimental Bloke* requires us to think about Australian masculinity and romantic sentimentality across the early decades of the 20th century. It lends credence to Australian men’s interest in certain forms of romantic popular culture, and to a romantic feeling, than most previous scholars have allowed. Yet Australian scholars have been contemplating *The Sentimental Bloke*. In the field of romance studies at the turn of the century, “feminized love,” to borrow Anthony Giddens’ phrase (43). As things have changed, “masculine sentimentality” function almost as oxymorons within romance studies. This article discusses discussions of homosexual romance (eg. Shuggart and Waggoner 26–7). It calls for romance scholars to take more interest in masculine romance, and to consider the war and early interwar years.

The multi-media phenomenon of *The Sentimental Bloke*

Almost as soon as it hit the bookstores in late 1915, it was apparent that *The Sentimental Bloke* held a powerful popular appeal. Dennis had enjoyed in preceding years, [End Page 2] publishing a few poems about Bill in an earlier collection, but the publicity paid off because by 1920 approximately 110,000 copies of the book had been sold (McLaren 92). That was an astonishing figure for any Australian work given the population of a million at the time. Yet it hardly represented the total number of those far more who read aloud in workplaces, performed on recital stages, borrowed from the library and handed around among Australian servicemen indicate that it reached a much wider audience (Lyons and Taksa 67; Laugesen 51).

In 1919, the Australian film-maker Raymond Longford released a cinematic adaptation of the book which was also a commercial success. It broke box-office records for a feature film in Melbourne that October (Bertrand; Pike and Cooper 120). A theatrical version of the film opened at Melbourne's King's Theatre in September 1922. It starred Walter Cornock, who became years afterwards as the "Original Sentimental Bloke" ("Walter Cornock Comes to the Stage" twelve weeks in Melbourne before touring Australia and New Zealand and then touring the world). It continued to be performed throughout Australasia for the rest of the decade. The film was also broadcast on radio and performed on the elocution stage (e.g. 'The Sentimental Bloke': A Triumph of Elocution").

Inspired by the success of *The Sentimental Bloke*, Dennis wrote four loose-leaf collections in 1924. These were *The Moods of Ginger Mick* (1916), *Doreen* (1917), *Digger* (1918) and *Moods of Ginger Mick* was also narrated by Bill and became a best-seller in Australia. The story of larrikin friend Ginger Mick to enlist in the Australian Imperial Forces and the story of Mick's tragic death in battle, it had sold over 70,000 copies by 1920 (McLaren 92). Raymond Longford in 1920 (Pike and Cooper 129). Although beyond the scope of this study, *The Bloke* continued to appear throughout the rest of the century. These included a 1932 (poorly executed and unpopular, and thus omitted here), a ballet by Vivian Stammers and recordings of the verse by the country music singer Tex Morton in the 1950s and a rendition in dance by the Australian Ballet in 1985 (Boyd; Dermody; McLaren 92). It continued to sell: indeed, it is still the highest-selling work of poetry in Australia.

The larrikin everyman

When *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke* first appeared, some critics hailed Bill as a new type of hero. According to a writer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Dennis had broken new ground: "never been written about such an unpoetic individual as Bill" ("The Sentimental Bloke" was inaccurate. Dennis was not the first Australian writer to use a rough man as a hero. Earlier, in fact, the Sydney-based writer Louis Stone had published *Jonah*, a story of a man in love with a poor-but-genteel woman and struggled to win her regard. The story included a romantic larrikin as a supplementary character in his collection of poems (1906).

Back in the 1890s, the romantic larrikin had been sent up in the odd vaudeville act on the circuit. These were modelled on English offerings about romantic Cockney characters, such as the song, "My Old Dutch" (Bellanta *Larrikins* 35). The use of Cockney figures and language was indeed a feature of British popular culture from the last years of the nineteenth century.

songs such as “I’ve Chucked Up the Push for My Donah” (meaning “I sweetheart”) had a mocking rather than celebratory air. Created in 1892 for Lonnen, this act ridiculed the very concept of larrikin romance (Bellanta *Larrikins* 86–91).

Though the idea of writing about a romantic larrikin was not original, the bushman had long been presented sympathetically in Australian culture: a the essence of the Australian character. The same could not be said for the efforts and the occasional story by Henry Lawson (e.g. “Elder Man’s Lane”), vulgar or frightening before Dennis published his work. Back in the 1880s, in panic about a “larrikin menace” in the colonial capitals after a number of inner-industrial Sydney. News reporters had written sensational stories of the larrikin “brutes” and “fiends.” (Bellanta *Larrikins* 86–91). By the turn of the century, creating mocking caricatures of larrikins – the vaudeville routine just not obviously different from these earlier representations in that he was often identified.

The fact that Bill was offered to audiences as a subject of affectionate moments of *The Sentimental Bloke*. He was depicted in the throes of disapproval something more uplifting, though he scarcely knew what it might be:

... As the poit sez, me ‘eart ’as got

The pip wiv yearning for ... I dunno wot.

The preface, written by Henry Lawson, an iconic literary figure in Australian literature, gave him the status of everyman. “Take the first poem”, he wrote. “How many more something better – to be something better?” Bill was thus presented as an unrefined, brutish underworld. Though his quaint vernacular and lack of guile, he was a decent man, rough around the edges or otherwise. [End Page 4]

The romantic properties of *The Sentimental Bloke*

Bill might have appeared alone and vaguely yearning in the opening stanzas of the next poem that the narrative concerned romantic love. From that moment Pamela Regis’ hard-line definition of romantic fiction in her *Natural History of the Novel*, one can tick off each of her “eight essential elements” of romantic narrative: a description of “the initial state of society in which heroine and hero must meet”; about his larrikin life (30). It then proceeded to the meeting between hero and heroine in spite of their mutual attraction; and came to a point of what Regis called the “impossible” that Bill would prove himself capable of true romance. As one being reborn, ending with the pair joyfully united against the odds.

The first obstacle to Bill’s romantic union with Doreen was in the form of a “at coot” (47–52). Unable to help himself, he challenged this socially-suppressed Doreen, displeased by this show of roughness that she quarreled and split from Bill. He heard her singing a plaintive love-ballad at a neighborhood “beano” (party) where an obstacle arose after the pair was wed. This took place after Bill was tempted by Ginger Mick. Nursing his hangover in bed the next day, he was painfully reunited with Doreen. “Eight weeks uv married bliss / Wiv my Doreen, an’ now it’s

was soon turned to new life, however, when the couple left the city for a sm
and Doreen appeared blissfully ensconced in their own cottage, mutually de

The illustrations accompanying the print version of *The Sentimental Bloke*
Dennis' friend Hal Gye, they portrayed Bill as a "Cupid" or "chivalric in
chubby thighs and stubbily diaphanous wings. On a dust-jacket for an earl
and Juliet, with a cherub-like Bill playing a concertina at the foot of a balcon
Advertisements for the silent film similarly highlighted its romantic char
franchise broke down the narrative into its key romantic elements. It com
and Doreen's love-story. In the first, Bill appeared, sad and lonely before he
snubbing Bill after their quarrel; in the third, the pair were tearfully reconcil

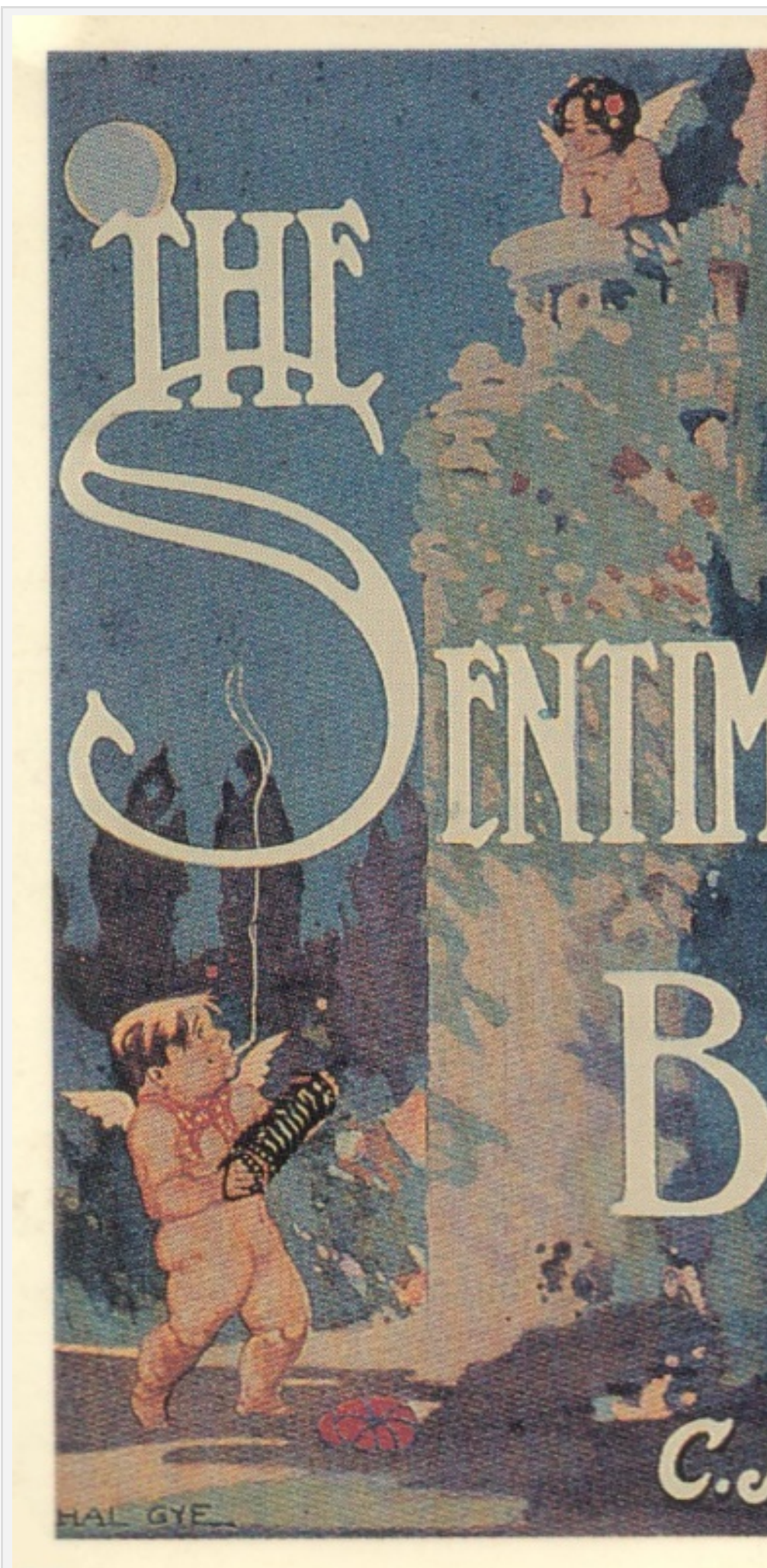


Figure 1: Cover image by Hal Gye for a 1919 edition of Dennis' work

...the man the occasional bloke. Its human appeal
Bloke's love story is everybody's love story."

THIS IS BILL BEFORE HE KNEE



I'm crook; me name is Mud,
I've done me dash.



But strike, th
Yeh'd thind
A bloke was
Queen.
'Er name's Do

And This is What Happens to



"Ah, Kid," she sobs, "yeh nearly broke
me 'cart!"



In Addition to the Great P
Harry Morey in "Silent S
AN AMAZING MYSTERY ROM

Figure 2. *Brisbane Courier* 26 December 1919

[End Page 7]

Australian masculinity and the “open secret” of romance

Since *The Sentimental Bloke* was so obviously presented as a romance, one of its protagonist would have been ridiculed in the Australia of its day. A great and masculinity in this period emphasizes the dry-witted bushmen as a key “roller” (“Anzac Types” cited in Caesar 150). Much has also been written about the humorous returned serviceman in 1920s Australia (e.g. Seal; Caesar; W. Richard Waterhouse has argued that opposition to Victorian-era piety and popular culture by the end of the First World War (176), while Peter Kirkpatrick members of interwar Sydney’s bohemian scene regarded marriage and domesticity these bohemians *did* ridicule the Bloke for his romantic sentimentality. The Lindsay, burnt a copy of *The Sentimental Bloke* on a crucifix and described (2009: 16; 2005: 118).

Fascinatingly, though, mocking reactions of this kind were rare. Even *Hand* produced glowing reviews (“The Sentimental Bloke” *Bulletin*; “The So vast majority of critics responded to Bill much as he was presented to them when the film was released, for example, a reviewer for the *Green Room* suggested that Tauchert, the actor playing Bill, would do the justice to the character. “Neither and we all had a hazy mental vision of the gentleman who loved Doreen to be acquitted himself admirably: “Tauchert’s Bloke is the Bloke of Blokes” (“C. a country Victorian critic waxed rapturous about *The Sentimental Bloke* much and say it is the greatest of all” (“The Sentimental Bloke” *Horsham Times*).

Reports of audiences laughing and noisily applauding recitations of *The Bloke* responded warmly to Bill (e.g. “Lawrence Campbell”; “The Sentimental Bloke” Chisholm, would later recall the enthusiasm he and his colleagues at a comedy career. Even the most “hard-bitten” of composers used to beg him to read the book knew in particular ‘The Introduction’, that delicate tale ... of the initial meeting [Doreen]” (58). Another middle-class reader recalled that even though she had known her childhood in the 1920s, “*The Sentimental Bloke* was a great favorite of Doreen”.

Because *The Sentimental Bloke* relied so heavily on colloquialisms, it was never fully Lucy Taksa observe, the work never received “official sanction” (67). It was ignored by most academics until the late twentieth century. Yet this lack of official was regarded so affectionately. One of the reasons he was so widely favored was “unofficial” knowledge about men and romance that had long existed on the part of the presented masculine tenderness as what Eve Sedgwick would call an “open secret” from the suggestion that *all* men had the capacity for romantic feeling, even the hard-bitten or laconic exterior. Everyone knew that men could be sentimental and that it could be true.

One of the ways that *The Bloke* gestured at an ordinary belief in male sentimentality was *The Sentimental Bloke*. By this means it likened its fourteen poems to romantic songs and vocalists sang romantic ballads such as “Annie Laurie” and “Belle Mahone

vaudeville shows in the years before, during and immediately after the war (fans missed the allusion, the sequel *Ginger Mick* made explicit reference to Bill from a military camp in Egypt, Ginger Mick declared that ballads such as “the West” were dear to Australian servicemen’s hearts. Laced with memoir songs helped to sustain Australia’s soldiers as they coped with battle far from rifle on me knees”, Mick began:

An’ a yowlin’, ‘owlin’ chorus comes a-floatin’ up the breeze,
Jist a bit o’ “Bonnie Mary” or “Long Way to Tipperary” –
Then I know I’m in Australia, took an’ planted overseas.
... O, it’s “On the Mississippi” or “Me Grey ‘Ome in the West”.
If it’s death an’ ’ell nex’ minute they must git it orf their chest.
’Ere’s a snatch o’ “When yer Roamin” – “When yer Roamin’ in the Gloa
’Struth! The first time that I ’eard it, wiv me ’ead on Rosie’s breast.
We wus comin’ frum a picnic in a Ferntree Gully train...
But the shrapnel made the music when I ’eard it sung again (61).

In her rich study of Australian servicemen’s reading habits and entertainment considerable interest in romantic and otherwise sentimental cultural form Australian soldiers mentioned the works of Gene Stratton Porter, “a [female with a strong moral message and whose works sold in the millions” (62). Other Corelli, Jean Webster, Hall Caine and Charles Garvice (who also wrote under many of whose works were made into films in the 1910s. Laugesen also notes strong sentimentality focused on home and family” (61), and that served romantic songs of the sort referred to in *Ginger Mick* (79–104; Bellanta “Aus

In pointing to a significant cross-gender interest in romantic ballads and n was able to appeal to folk knowledge about masculine sentimentality in *The* that we need to revisit the standard scholarly accounts of male cultural p Those accounts tell us plenty about adventure novels and sporting [End Pa 1992). Some also tell us about “galloping rhymes” and stories about stoic silent on the topic of a male investment in popular romance. As *The* , representations of galloping adventurers nor of laconic bushmen amount about Australian masculinity. Nor did men confine themselves to cultural fi of masculinity in the early 1900s. Their cultural consumption was always mo

A plain approach to romance

If *The Sentimental Bloke* tapped a vein of unofficial knowledge about mas touched a cultural nerve. The work’s combination of comedy and sentiment was indeed edgy territory in the war- and early interwar years. It is true that performed and cherished in the 1920s and even beyond. They *were* starting with their quaveringly tender choruses and address of the beloved as “the Mary... / Bonnie Mary of Argyle”). Earnest songs of this kind were made t

by men who were embarrassed by their emotional impact and wanted to de-
57–9; Bellanta “Australian Masculinities” 426–7). Similar things may be sa
family among Australian servicemen during the war. That sentimentality ha
from detracting from military solidarity, hedged about by jokes and the cele
7).

Contending claims made about the relationship between men and romant
the armistice, when servicemen were being repatriated *en masse* into the
period, the allure of marriage and domesticity on the one hand, and of caro
for a degree of ambivalence about both sets of ideals (Garton). It was in this
that all men were romantic in spite of their hard exteriors (and friendship w
went a lot further than gesturing at the “open secret” of men’s roman
distinctively masculine approach to romantic sentimentality that any man r
hallmarks of which were plainness and straightforwardness. These were
romantic tendencies from a woman’s, and distinguished him from effemina

The key way in which *The Sentimental Bloke* constructed a masculine
exemplary Bill with two other male characters, both of whom were portr
men was the parson who conducted Bill’s marriage to Doreen. The seco
Doreen’s hand. Of these, the parson was the most effeminate. In both Der
was dressed in flowing vestments and comically labelled “’is nibs” or “the
scene, Bill mocked [End Page 10] his mincing manner, mimicking his rea
sing-song voice: “An’-wilt-yeh-take-this-woman-fer-to-be / Yer-wedded-

O, strike me! Will I wot?

Take ’er? Doreen? ’E stan’s there *arstin*’ me!

As if ’e thort per’aps I’d rather not!

Take ’er? ’E seemed to think ’er kind was got

Like cigarette-cards, fer the arstin’.

Still, I does me stunt in this ’ere hitchin’ rot,

An’ speaks me piece: “Righto!” I sez, “I will.” (77)

As the ceremony proceeded, Bill became steadily more frustrated with its “s

... Ar, strike! No more swell marridges fer me!

It seems a blinded year afore ’e’s done.

We could ’a’ fixed it in the registree

Twice over ’fore this cove ’ad ’arf begun.

I s’pose the wimmin git some sorter fun

Wiv all this guyver, an ’is nibs’s shirt.

But, seems to me, it takes the bloomin’ bun,

This stylish splicin’ uv a bloke an’ skirt. (79)

This scene was instrumental to *The Bloke's* message that plainness and approach to romance. There was no doubting that Bill was powerfully in *arstin' me! / As if 'e thort per'aps I'd rather not!*") Unlike the parson or the "stood for themselves without need for elaborate packaging.

The idea that Bill's stance on romance was solidly masculine was reinforced "coot" was full of simpering smiles and "tork" about his office job in D incapable of glib eloquence: "No, I ain't jealous – but – Ar, I dunno!" (39). H sign of the genuineness of his romantic intentions: a cause for laughter, p straightforwardness. The "coot" also dressed in what Bill contemptuously while Bill himself preferred ordinary street attire. The film made this disti weedy Harry Young to play the "coot". His slender physique was an obvious [End Page 11]



Figure 3. A still from the Longford film showing Bill's confrontation with the 's and Sound Archive, Canberra, Australia.

Australian masculinity and the Americanized culture c

Preserved in the subtitles to the film, Dennis' description of the coot's dress representation of Bill's masculinity in *The Sentimental Bloke*. In the eyes of was seen as quintessentially Australian, a refreshing change from the Ameri

prominent in Australian popular culture. As early as 1916, in fact, a writer *Bloke's* use of an Australian vernacular as a welcome break from the “Y audiences in “comedies and in plays dealing with the American criminal Comments of this kind were also made in relation to Longford’s film. One F ambience, pleased that it moved “right away from the rather hard and artific

The idea that Bill represented a specifically Australian masculinity was part identity that accompanied Australia’s effort in the First World War (Se consciousness of the [End Page 12] growing clout of American popular cu us, all manner of mass-produced American commodities began making included “technology, machines and gadgets, business methods, fashions & “Yankee” commodities was even more apparent in the 1920s, a dec entertainment companies vigorously expanded their international reach (C Australian public was manifestly enthusiastic about American culture and been a market for them otherwise. Even so, a niggling concern about Ar populace. This was apparent in a defensive insistence on the Australiann vaunted as a “True Australian Film.” After the premiere of Longford’s *E commended him for marshaling a team “as great in their particular sph assembled”, attempting to place him on a par with the great American filmn*

In press interviews about his films in the early interwar period, Longford e settings and characters (“C. J. Dennis’ Characters”; “The Man Behind ‘Ru would speak bitterly of the early troubles he had experienced trying to con Australian film distributors and cinema owners had been so much under been forced to hold the premiere for the film in Melbourne Town Hall, I reinforced the fact that the Bloke came to be regarded as “intensely Austral a normative power through his association with Australian national identity see also “The Sentimental Bloke” *Brisbane Courier*). More pertinently, romance was understood as an Australian alternative to the American cultu

As Hsu-Ming Teo tells us, Australia’s culture of romantic love was underg (2006). By this, she means that a more commodified approach to courtshij on developments that had already taken place in the United States. For dec gifts and paid outings as the key means for a man to express romantic feelir popular culture also celebrated men who made declarations of love with a : “You Made Me Love You” (1913), or the alluring heroes of romantic film (1925). In addition, American advertisers promoted commodities such as so that they would enhance their chances of romance with glamorous men. evident in Australia at the end of the First World War.

The Americanizing influences on Australia’s culture of romantic love were Advertisers did not begin inducting Australian men into romanticized cons personal or leisure consumption for men” – products such as Berger P: General Motors-Holden cars – were advertised through images of factories romantic desires (Teo 2006: 181–86). This [End Page 13] made for a dis women’s approach to the culture of romantic love that became increasing was strikingly evident by the time American servicemen arrived in Austral War. Young Australian women tended to regard these “Yanks” as romar Americans’ success with “their” women and superior access to consumer g: Knowing what we do about the representation of Bill in *The Sentimental B*

approach to romantic love tended to be so different from Australian womanly suavity as a boon; proof not just of the genuineness of his romantic intentions suggested that Australian men risked compromising their masculinity by adopting an Americanized culture of romantic consumerism. “Intensely Australian” types did not have a romantic “tork” nor trouble over their appearance if they wanted to avoid it, nor to regard being plain and unadorned as a good thing, even in their dealings with women. Australian men did not care about romance, however, but rather because such things were not their thing.

The gender of romantic love

With all this talk of Australianness, it would be easy to assume that non-American sentimentalism was the *Sentimental Bloke*. This is not the case. Admittedly, the fact that plainness was a characteristic of “intensely Australian types” suggests that an unusual degree of sentimentality was “Down Under.” Yet Australia was not the only place in which one could find a sentimental culture, or of an Americanized culture of romantic love, in the wake of the *Americanization of Britain*, for example, Mark Glancy discusses divisive American influences on Rudolph Valentino, whose glamorous masculinity was regarded as suspicious. In *The Decline of Sentiment*, American film scholar Lea Jacobs also speaks of a decline in sentimentality in the United States if not also Anglophone society more broadly, beginning in the 1910s. This shift was away from the “genteel” conventions of Victorian sentimentalism towards a more informal and understated aesthetics. Its predominantly male advocates were part of a movement away from feminine standards of taste towards something simultaneously more masculine (1–24).

As Jacobs sees it, the movement away from elaborate or genteel sentimentalism was part of a broader cultural shift. Some were modernist cultural producers. Others included the naturalist writers of the United States and New York in the 1910s. Both the naturalist novelist Theodor Dreiser and the playwright Eugene O’Neill were interested in experimenting with vernacular speech. They believed in a more honest and forcefully than the polished language of Literature (11–12). Like Longford, America’s naturalist film-makers rejected glamorous characters in favor of realism in the 1910s and 1920s (29).

While there *was* a wide-ranging reaction against Victorian-era sentimentalism, *Bloke* suggests that scholars such as Jacobs go too far. It reminds us that the rejection of sentimentality *per se*. An analogous point may be made about the American culture of romantic love. It was possible for a critic to take umbrage at the Americanized popular culture without spurning romantic love in its entirety. The phrase “decline in sentiment” is misleading because of this, for it implies a wholesale rejection of sentimentality and a movement away from a certain sentimental style among certain cultural arbiters.

Another reason that the concept of a “decline in sentiment” is misleading is that sentimental forms continued to be consumed and enjoyed in Anglophone societies. Sentimental ballads were criticized as old-fashioned or embarrassing. A continued interest in romance was evident. In Britain, at any rate, regular performances of such ballads by male vocalists were common (Hoggart 53–66). More pertinently, the concept of a wholesale feminization of sentimentality on the basis of its connections to femininity – overlooks the likelihood that a new form of sentimentality developed in the early twentieth century. I have explored only

noting that Australia's first examples of romantic larrikins were influenced by the Cockney vernacular and romantic love in British culture in the early 1900s, as well as to investigate elsewhere. The multi-media character and enormous popularity of *The Sentimental Bloke* that examples of masculine romance might fruitfully identified and explored.

The persistence of masculine sentimentality in Anglo- or American culture has attracted attention from a number of scholars in recent years. International scholars (131–46) have indeed grappled with similar issues to those discussed in an earlier work (Hendler; Shamir and Travis.) Sedgwick in particular has highlighted the fact that feeling remained an “open secret” in American culture and everyday life long after it have become incompatible with sentimentality. At the very least, this work should take the relationship between heterosexual masculinity and romantic sentimentality. Scholars should give more [End Page 15] thought to the complex relationship between twentieth-century culture instead of treating romantic love as “feminized” or elaborate expressions of romantic feeling or the consumerist culture associated with the 1920s. Demeaning romance as feminine was not the only response to the construction of avowedly masculine articulations of romantic sentimentality.

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“We have to learn to love imperially”: Love in Australian Romance Novels

by Hsu-Ming Teo

October 24th, 2014 |

[End Page 1] In Mary Bradford Whiting’s *A Daughter of the Empire* (1919), a young Australian woman returns to England after her father’s death to live with his cousin, Lady Agatha Strafford. The young Australian woman describes Australia as “a little fussed-up place where you can’t so much as turn round and look at the stars” and England as “a place where people brood over petty problems and imagine things in their lives and too much time to spend on the little things” (Whiting 1919, 10). The young woman, Christina Strafford, falls in love with her English cousin, Desmond, who has dealt resourcefully with floods, fires and other natural and human disasters in Australia. Desmond is banished from the manor because of a silly misunderstanding, but she turns her energy to helping a neighbor run a hospital for wounded men. Desmond saves the Straffords from death during a Zeppelin bombing raid that Lady Agatha survives. In this romance novel, the war has claimed the life of Lady Agatha’s adored son, Desmond, an amputee, but it has also left Desmond heir to the ancient baronial estate and the family slowly succumbing to senescence as a result of its sclerotic beliefs. The young woman, Christina, is of Australian blood. Romance revives an English family, with far-reaching colonial ideological affirmation not just of Australia’s ties and loyalty to Britain, but of the British Empire. Desmond declares to Christina:

I have thought sometimes that you and I have been brought together not by ourselves alone, but for some special end. I am a typical son of the old world, of the past, and you are a typical daughter of the new world, vivid and vigorous in the present, and from those two points of view will spring the hope of the future.

Whiting’s novel draws together a number of themes that had developed in the late colonial period – to the decades immediately following Federation: the self-governing British colonies on the southern continent federated to form a new nation at the dawn of a new century (Lee 129-132). However, Christina Strafford exemplifies the superiority of the so-called “Australian young nation – over her English counterparts whose gender ideals, social mores, and Motherland is tempered by a simultaneous recognition of, and cultural dependence on, the Motherland, even as this is gently critiqued by Whiting. The success of the “Australian landed gentry, and the man she falls in love with exemplifies that class and Australia, the death of her father launches her on a quest for her family’s colonial quest that will bring her the fulfilment of romantic love and a new family.

This article explores romance fiction from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century women writers conceptualized romantic love, gender [End Page 2] relations within the nation and British Empire. I suggest that the difficulties of achieving romantic love in colonial society were due to the vulnerability of immigrant women in a misogynistic masculinity in a frontier society; the instability of identity in a frontier society and the threat of interracial relationships between English immigrants and

Unhappy love stories dominated colonial romances in the period leading up to the First World War. A burst of patriotic sentiment and a deliberate attempt in romance novels to celebrate British loyalty with Britain, while simultaneously emphasizing the superiority of the British, led to a new type of romance to suggest the cultural and racial benefits brought by former colonial subjects. The hero who achieves a happy ending in post-Federation romances primarily because he is a British gentleman, as others have argued (Giles 1988 and 1998, Jones, 2000). The model of new Australian masculinity was the power of the mythical Australian Outback or Bush; the settler colonial work of the heroines; and the radical redefinition of Australian “mateship” – traditionally a male bond of egalitarian romantic partnership. The rewards of successful romantic partnerships contributed to the building of the young Australian nation and revived the British dream of a new world.

Unhappy endings and other obstacles to romantic love

As Ken Gelder and Rachael Weaver's *Anthology of Colonial Australian Romance* shows, the romances of the 1880s to the 1920s have been concerned as much with the failure of romance as with the success of stories of successful courtship, love and marriage.[1] Among the earliest stories in the anthology is Weaver's “Hal's” “The Desolate Homestead” (1866, Gelder and Weaver 13-14). The story follows Mrs. Stanford's wife (never named) as she emigrates to Australia. The sexual vulnerability of women is well documented, and it was not uncommon for these women to become pregnant in the colonies. For this reason, Richard White observed, the “attitude to female immigration was often harsh, since it embodied Victorian attitudes to sex as well as class. J.D. Lang, who led the first contingent of New South Wales into ‘a sink of prostitution’ was a common one among the early settlers. There was a concerted effort by immigration programs such as the Female Emigration Society to send middle-class women out to the colonies. In “Hal's” story, Mrs. Stanford falls in love with Headleigh, a degenerate son of a wealthy squatter (that is, a pastoralist expropriating huge tracts of land from European authorized by British legal processes to settle that land). Headleigh is a man who is to be educated and civilized, but the vices and pleasures of the imperial project are too strong a sexual attraction would be a marker of “true love” in twentieth century romance. Mrs. Stanford suspiciously by nineteenth-century romance writers who constructed it as a test of true love. Mrs. Stanford is persuaded to abandon her husband and to live with Headleigh as his wife. When Headleigh betrays her and abandons her, Mark Stanford, who still loves his wife, arranges for Headleigh to be educated and civilized. His infidelity has not only broken Mark; it has also deprived the colony of a valuable asset. Headleigh's betrayal of the nation because she undermines his nation-building efforts. If Headleigh's love is a sharp contrast with Headleigh's fleeting passion, it is too weak to enable him to overcome the social conventions of the time to countenance living with his adulterous wife. Headleigh's death does he realize that since he loved her, he might well have made other arrangements.

Mrs. Stanford falls in love with Headleigh because he is handsome and charming. Headleigh's love for her. In an immigrant society so geographically remote from the Mother Country, where communication were slow, fraudsters could quite easily assume false identities. Headleigh's economic advantages, as Kirsten McKenzie (2010) has shown in the case of the impostor who impersonated Viscount Lascelles, eldest son of the Earl of Harewood, in New South Wales. The uncertainty of identity in settler colonial society could thus form an obstacle to romantic love.

marriage, especially in colonial romances. In Mrs. Mannington Caffyn's she (Weaver 59-91), a very fashionable, sophisticated lady turns up in an Aust together they charm people in the town. She proceeds to infatuate sever "woman of the world" turns out not to be a lady but an actress, and her scenario of duplicity, Rosa Praed's romance novel *The Maid of the River: An* story of a country girl seduced by the Englishman Alex Stewart who promise birth to their child because, he later reveals, he already has a wife (261). In trusted. These women are inclined to fall for the deceptions of sophisticate social status or moral character they do not actually possess, who woo the cause them to overlook the true "salt of the earth" types of men whose love honest Australian bushmen such as Mark Stanford in "The Desolate Home Chase in Praed's *The Maid of the River*.

While the Australian romance novel is clearly an English import, there was an impediment to love in the colonies. Romantic protagonists who fell in love were thwarted by the ties of the English past, while English values and moral standards, emotional dishonesty and a consequent lack of authenticity or genuineness in the story, "A Romance of Coma" (1878, in Gelder and Weaver 28-36), exemplified love in the colonies. Leigh recounts the story of Mary Guthrie, a pretty post office girl in love with Hugh Douglas, a new squatter lately arrived from England. The sister and her husband visit the colonies, they bring with them Hugh's fiancée and mild affection. In England, he had believed this to be a sufficient basis for marriage but finally realises what love and passion might be. In the end, however, the obligation to his love for Mary; he proceeds with an unhappy marriage while Mary becomes a resident in the town.

Yet colonial Australian society was by no means regarded as naturally superior to British society. One of the main reasons why love in the nineteenth century is because of the misogynistic and irresponsible male ideal of masculinity antithetical to the notion of the domesticated husband with a frontier/outback/bush experience has often been eulogized as the essence of the Australian spirit. Ward's *The Australian Legend* (1958) famously contended that Australia's independence, anti-authoritarianism and spirit of mateship developed in the frontier values it fosters ignores the threat of white men to Aboriginal people, and also

In frontier societies white men roamed free, but men's mobility seemed to be a double-edged sword. In the frontier discourse, mobile men were dangerous men and the wandering members of the frontier — the swagmen, the men on the track — became a bunch of marauding white men.

The danger the mobility of itinerant white men posed to romantic love is illustrated in "Miles Broad" (1885, in Gelder and Weaver), where the romantic hero visits a frontier town. The hero visits Gretchen Fallon, a German wine-maker, on a very hot Christmas Day. Their Christmas dinner is interrupted by a stranger who wants to join them for a meal. When he is offered money to buy himself out of the town, the hero who offers the hospitality and company he wants, he takes his leave but avenges himself by burning down Gretchen Fallon's property. The narrator manages to save Gretchen but her father dies on Christmas Day.

In many Australian romance novels, masculine frontier culture leads to problems for women. In *Dave's Sweetheart* (1894). Of all the romance novels produced during this period,

Victoria, considers love at greatest length and is particularly bleak in its assessment of marriage as a degrading, soul-destroying option for women. This would be true for famous early twentieth century Australian women writers such as Miles Handley [End Page 5] Richardson (*The Getting of Wisdom*, 1910; see Bird 2001). Jenny, the daughter of a publican, is in love with the dissolute miner Black Dave. She holds high ideals about love. For Jenny, love is not merely an emotion; it is self-sacrificing, and unconditional – a conventionally Victorian understanding. As Seidman (1991) have shown. Love is, in many ways, blind to reason, but it can help to distinguish Jenny's life from the dozens of worn-out women around her. Love must demand nothing in return. Before her the lives of the only two women in the dreary hopeless length, and dumbly, with all her strength, her soul protested. In such a society is dangerous because it makes women vulnerable to exploitation. To understand “her own value in a land where women of any sort were seen as a commodity” (Gaunt 7), she allows Dave to manipulate her into marrying a publican. A miner killed a German on the gold fields. Jenny eventually abandons her relationship with him, enduring his physical violence and verbal abuse, until Dave turns up. Australian frontier culture could thus form an impediment to women's opportunities. “For white men, the frontier was a fantasy of freedom; for white feminists, it was their ken, where undomesticated men turned feral threatened, rather than domesticated. If these romance novelists did not identify themselves as feminists, they nevertheless recognized the dangers women encountered in frontier regions.

For the heroines of colonial romances, the frontier is also characterized by its isolation. It puts their daughters in untenable situations where it is difficult for them to escape. In *Girl* (1917), Marion Pike, the “selector” (homesteader) girl of the title, has endured the abusive treatment of her mother. She tells one of her suitors that a “dear man” is “something I could never be with any man, not – not now. I've seen so many men kick Mum's shoes for just five minutes now and then so that I could flatten him” (Pike 1917). In *The Wild Moth* (1924), fares even worse initially; she meets the hero when he is in a rage, and the hero is forced to shoot him. Both novels end happily with the heroines finding “wholesome” men who are notably different from other men on the frontier. The main problem overcome is the heroines' aversion to marriage and their belief that a happy marriage is impossible. As of what Marilyn Lake (1986) calls the misogynistic “masculinism” of colonial Australia.

One of the things that made men so dangerous on the frontier was the rampant alcoholism and the concomitant rejection of domesticity, either in the form of desertion or abandonment of wives and children (Lake 1986, Spearritt, and Grimshaw et al. 2000). The Australian feminist movement of the late nineteenth century developed in part through the Christian Temperance Union, which originated in the United States and spread to Australia (Grimshaw [End Page 6] 200). This issue was not emphasized as much in Federation romance novels the hero's propensity towards alcoholism contrasted with courtship and marriage. Justin, the hero of Marie Bjelke Petersen's *The Drunkard* (1917), is a “drunkard” who has ruined his life and squandered his privileges and opportunities through alcohol. Only after he emigrated to Tasmania was he able to live a “clean” life and earn respect, but he fears that if he ever leaves Tasmania and returns to reclaim his property he will be tempted to temptation and revert to alcoholism again. This, he feels, forms an obstacle to his happiness. “Worthy of such a gift” despite Iris's assurances that her love for him remains constant. In Justin's alcoholic past (until God miraculously cures him through prayer) is a warning. Forrest's *Hibiscus Heart* (1927) finds it much harder to disregard the hero's

bush girls, she could not take what they called the state of 'being potted' in bound, deprecatingly, in her soul she shuddered" (178). The greatest transf she realizes that if she wants to be married to Ted, she has to force herself drinking with the boys.

The final obstacle to romantic love in love stories from this period was the nineteenth century, the threat consisted of Aboriginal attacks on settlers i create the opportunity for strengthening romantic ties if the couple survi Station" (1866, in Gelder and Weaver 202-214) features a "plucky", "pretty head to foot almost as much like a man as a woman" and disdains men, e error of her misanthropy when a "new chum" – an English immigrant – s station in "the Never Never country". The attack was a revenge massacre fo man. In return, the white men massacred the Aborigines. At the end of the less of the fast-disappearing aborigines of Australia" (212), but in the a successful conclusion of the Englishman's courtship. The racial threat to t from the possibility of miscegenation, especially in post-Federation novels. I Aboriginal woman referred to in the novel only as "the handsome half-cas Dell Ferris and the hero Tom Resoult, because she is in love with Tom. No Because she is not a pure white woman, she does not understand love, no writes that "only one thing looked out of men's eyes at her. It was Lust, n caste" makes plans to kill Dell, but the heroine is saved by another Aborig her cousin. When her racial heritage is discovered, the "half-caste" gives thinking that: "Had she been Eurasian, half Maori, Samoan, it would hav Australia! It was like negro blood in America. And it was 'no good'" (192). hero Tom) might desire her, they would never marry her. In the end, she r river and drowns. It seems that the colonial or Federation love story could o

Clearly, the obstacles arising specifically from the Australian colonial conte these issues continue into the post-Federation period. What, then, makes lo romance novels of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century?

Happy endings and reasons why love succeeds

The Australian colonial romance novel began to take shape in the 1880s "Australian" gripped the collective imagination and intercolonial talks p underway. Australian literary culture of the *fin-de-siècle* was dominated *Bulletin* magazine which championed the mythical ideals of the Australi agenda summarized in its masthead slogan, "Australia for the White Man' days ran a "women's page" and published the work of women writers, masculinism. The cluster of male writers who became associated with the had little time for women, the romance genre or Britain. Yet Australian subscribed to its nationalist, bush-celebrating ethos while striving to insert w were excluded (see Bird's discussion of Miles Franklin), and being consciou as serial publications in Australian weekly periodicals (Sheridan 1986, 51), F biggest market. Indeed, some Australian women writers including romanc Rosman resided in London and wrote many of their Australian novels in th result was an attempt to write love stories which foregrounded the distinct environment, while weaving these stories back into the fabric of the British F

That romance novelists in the far-flung outposts of Empire should be “written for London was the center of Anglophone book-publishing and the Publisher’s Club the main mechanism of publication and distribution of books throughout the Empire (Teo 2012). In the early 20th-century novels involving British and Australian protagonists, romantic love succeeded in part because of the Australianness of the characters, environment, gender relations, or cultural differences. The Australian ingredient in the romance novel made a happy ending more palatable than the British condescension as to nascent feelings of truculent nationalism. In the ways in which the British misperceived and did not bother to understand Australia, the Australian “Victims of Circe” (1891, Gelder and Weaver 59-91) summed up Australian romance in a few words: **[End Page 8]**

To the well-constituted British mind Australia is invariably connected either to the tropics or to the desert. When an Australian goes home and dispenses his coin as befits him, we give him a good word; when he is not quite rich enough, or sticks to his gettings, we make a wild effort to suggest that his remote ancestor was sent out for. (60)

Against such stereotypes of Australians, Australian romance novelists consciously wrote for the English upper classes. Cold, snobbish, ignorant, condescending, overly formal, and fairly ineffectual in the modern age, they needed to be shaken out of their complacency by enterprise. In Alice Grant Rosman’s post-Federation romance, *Miss Bryde* (1901), Helen Bryde is considered by her relatives to be on the shelf and cannot support herself. When her Australian cousin Katherine visits, Helen is shocked by her knowledge about Australia, thinks of it “as a wild and desert country, full of impossible things, and a Supreme Court of South Australia, “distributing justice to dark ladies and gentlemen.” She tries to understand a neighbor that “Colonials are always so delightful” (15-16). She tries to understand Katherine’s knowledge of the world, cultural richness and experience through Katherine that Helen gradually realizes how unsatisfactory her own life is. Katherine humbles her, changes her attitude towards others and makes it possible for her to see the world differently.

Katherine is, of course, an example of the “Australian Girl” that so many scholars (e.g., Dalziell, Gelder and Weaver) have discussed in relation to the colonial romance. The Australian womanhood that distinguished Australians from Britons, and made it possible for them to be happy. The Australian Girl developed as a national type towards the end of the 19th century on the dubious science of the day that tried to descry physical, psychological, and racial “types” or “races” (White 64). As Richard White has observed,

when visitors commented on the Australian girl, they praised her fresh and unaffected affectation. The colonial Miss was the salvation of English visitors trapped at parties. What delighted most observers was what they called her independence.

Much of the extant Australian scholarship (Giles 1988 and 1998, Sheridan 1998) on the romance novel has focused on the Australian Girl because colonial women were part of a masculine narrative of nationhood and national identity that deliberately repressed the feminine (Giles and 1995). Giles argues that colonial romance novels contributed to the creation of the Australian Girl (223) because romantic heroines were exemplified by the “Australian Girl” – a figure symbolic of the new nation. This figure has been the subject of Tanya Dalziel’s study of Australian women romance writers in furthering the objectives of capital

Rachel Weaver's (2010) suggestion that the colonial romance "provided a model of womanhood should mean: "social restraint and maturity", sublimating her responsibilities as a subject engaged in the nation-building process, or resonated with the emerging nation as it tried to assert its independence. The heroine contended "with the idea of being Australian, in either the national identity that intersects with her quest for love and the process of her formation as a heroine being an antiquated colonial product of British culture, as contemporary models dismissively (Giles 1988, 226-227), Australian women's romances actively contributed to the nation-state.

Giles has traced the development of the Australian Girl as romantic heroine in Rosa Praed's *An Australian Heroine* (1880, published under Praed's maiden name Haggart as the eponymous heroine, "a daughter of the bush with a special relationship with her "outstanding moral integrity and stamina ... fortified by her experiences would go on to develop an impossibly idealistic image of the Australian Girl in "The Girl's Story" (1909, Gelder and Weaver, 251-269). In this short story set in London, the heroine Theodora Swifte who is currently making her mark in London society.

just my model of what a woman ought to be: can talk and laugh and dance and step to *her* tune. ... Whoever else goes under, *she* will always come out for what she supposes are her rights. She don't care about rights. She can do nothing she can't do – ride as well as any stockman, sit a buckjumper and she can cook a dinner that you'd enjoy eating, and make her frocks – and her brains. Why, she's taken her M.A. degree in Sydney University, and now she's the Woman Question. (256)

Gelder and Weaver (5) have observed that there is a measure of ambivalence but also differentiated from the New Woman by the fact that although she has casually achieved what British women are still struggling to do, how to deal with the Woman Question, "she don't care about rights".

Other Australian Girls in post-Federation romance novels share a similar quality as a result of Australia being the second country in the world (after New Zealand) upon Federation. The English feminist governess in Mary Bradford Whiting's *The Australian Achievement* when she tells Christina Strafford: "I was forgotten and asserted herself more [End Page 10] successfully there than we have been here" (106). For Christina, that day is already here and she sees no need to go on and on. In *An Australian Girl's Love Story* (1905), Marion Pike in Broda Reynold's *The Australian Girl*, Whiting's *A Daughter of the Empire*, and Miranda Garry in Mabel Forrest's *The Australian Girl* are beautiful, intelligent, practical, resourceful, independent, and they do not need to court them, pining for love. Their lives are already full and fulfilling, and this is why they are in love with them. These love stories succeed because the fortitude of the heroine (see below) enables the romantic couple to overcome all kinds of barriers: cultural.

The counterpart to the Australian Girl is the Australian hero, patterned after the "Coming Man", a new racial type of masculinity forged by the environment, characterized by "independence, manliness, a fondness for sport, egalitarianism, and a certain disrespect for authority" (White 76-77). These were characteri

eulogized by the *Bulletin* magazine: a highly influential anti-imperial, natic *siècle* Australian culture with so many of its masculine stereotypes, and which or culturally deficient” (Giles 1988, 226). But in the hands of romance novelists the bushman were substituted with characteristics that were shared by Emu wilderness and made domestic life possible in frontier regions (Teo 2004). *Girl's Love Story* featured just such a hero in Willy Chase, the “superintendent many another young Australian, bred in the backblocks, ... was a splen common sense, but not remarkable for the finer qualities of intellect or en lacks the glib charm and flattering words of a visiting Englishman who sedu with child. Willy, however, shows his sterling qualities in that he continues to the ground around her alcoholic father's home, “civilizing” the bush and ma surprisingly for a romance novel during this period, Willy's love for Nuni Englishman and he marries Nuni regardless of her illegitimate child. Such England at this time, where virginal heroines who are seduced are fit for litt however, the qualities of the Coming Man and the Australian Girl, and th physical and environmental hardship, are sometimes enough to defy the c grant Nuni and Willy a happy ending.

Romantic love also succeeds in the colonial and Federation romance n Australian bush, and in this regard, women's romance novels differ in impo literature of the period. Where colonial literature had represented women frontier regions (an echo of the adage that “the Empire was no place for a v physical absence of women in the bush [End Page 11] does not mean the al Interior, the outback, the red centre, the dead heart, the desert, a waste unforgiving mother (Schaffer 23). In most colonial representations the l conquered and tamed”, but it is “also a loathed and feared plain of exile wh metaphorically, resides here” (Schaffer 23). Not so, however, in colonial and

In romance novels of this period, the Australian bush purifies, transforms, love to succeed. Broda Reynolds' *The Heart of the Bush* (1910) and Praed's *M* (1886) and *The Maid of the River* (1905) all feature love stories where th character of the Australian Girl or the Coming Man, uniting the lovers and harsh, frightening and destructive – the hero and heroine of Reynolds' *The* eight days, getting caught in a bush fire and nearly dying of exposure – bu environs are a superior species to all others and more likely than most to n Praed's “The Bushman's Love Story” (1909) has had her character mold droughts, floods, agrarian recession and other difficulties to redeem the h bush also permits women certain latitude in gender roles. Because Miranda lives in the bush, she is able to take on many tasks or roles considered “ma and makes a home in it, rather than her stepbrother to whom the bush *Jewelled Nights* (1923), the heroine cross-dresses as a young man in orde mining activities in Tasmania, where she proves to be a far more successfu (2003) has argued that Bjelke Petersen subverts gender expectations throug the end, gender is irrelevant to the formation of the couple” (123), but this c space of the bush.

Bjelke Petersen, a Danish immigrant, was among the most ardent promoter the Australian landscape (Alexander). Her Tasmanian romance novels publ earliest literary eulogies of the State's wild and sublime landscapes” (Hay power of wilderness” (Haynes 2010, 43). Bjelke Petersen's *The Captive Sing*

bush, where the alcoholic English hero finds the lost English heroine, finds C allowing him to marry the heroine in good conscience and to resume his p the novel, an American woman comments that “they are the real thing; or the reader knows that without their transforming experience in the Tasm their calling in life.

In Australian mythology, the homosocial bonds of “mateship” – more p enduring for men than the ties of heterosexual romantic love and the nucle of men along the frontier. However, Australian romance writers transform heterosexual companionate partnership, often held together by the hero’s These qualities bind them together to ensure a [End Page 12] successful discussion of work was very much in the air from the 1880s through t workingman’s paradise” (White 41) and this was confirmed by the landma Higgins held that employers must pay their male employees a “fair and rea normal needs of an average employee, regarded as a human being in a civi In Australian love stories of this period, Australian industriousness and ente characters who, because of their class privilege, were not used to working surprising since the Harvester Judgment enshrined a “living wage” that wo But the Australian Girl too possessed a remarkable work ethic, one ba especially frontier life. As Bernice McPherson observed, Australian coloniz models, but Australian women did not accept the middle-class English not woman to work in paid employment outside the home” (12). Persistent became acceptable, indeed desirable, for middle-class women to take on And it became a model for the daughters of the household to take on respon

As McPherson has suggested, Ada Cambridge’s short story “A Sweet Day” example of the Australian Girl’s work ethic. Lord Thomas de Bohun, twice-r womenkind” comes out to Australia because “He thought a year or two trammels of civilization, would give him a rest” (150). He is rich, idle, bored country he was all right. Clad in moleskins and a Crimean shirt, with a soft fe galloped about at kangaroo hunts and cattle musters, a simple bushman daughter of his country host, and is fascinated by her because she isn’t inte is entirely absorbed by her bee-keeping and she works incredibly hard “ person of her sex and years” (155). He is intrigued because she understand honey business. He falls in love with her because she teaches him to be “us makes “an excellent duchess” because she manages “great households”, re in honey to the wives of her husband’s tenants”, teaching them to become fi

Alice Grant Rosman made the same point about hard-working, entreprene counterparts in two of her novels. In *Miss Bryde of England* (1915), Katl English propensity for idleness. She tells her English cousin Helen that her cl

had been brought up to do nothing, because no one ever imagined they That is the general rule among your leisured classes The girls are br inherit the property; then when some unexpected calamity happens, th world without the slightest preparation [End Page 13] or equipment. E girls don’t marry, and there is very little money. Then, I suppose, they b by and by. (133)

When Helen is accidentally embroiled in a silly and baseless scandal involving her competent and capable Australian cousin. Under Katherine's tutelage living, changes to become a more considerate and humble person, and thus of Australians' work ethic is especially emphasized in Rosman's *The Back Street Affection* develop more naturally among Australians because they are used to. Constance looks down on Australians and scorns their preoccupation with commerce. Bill Trevor, who has been wounded in the First World War and as a result of inanition" (23). Constance sees little wrong with Bill's attitude and lacks sympathy until Bill meets his Australian friend and fellow war veteran, Dick, who is wasting his life and opportunities, Dick has been busily getting on with building

The Australian had his Government behind him as well as important connections with the Air Force during the war and his pioneering work at civil aviation since he was at the least overawed by the magnitude of his task, and obviously looked forward to

The capacity and willingness of the Australian Girl to work qualifies her as a companionate marriage and partnership. In Rosman's *Miss Bryde of England* in London, she deals with all practical matters such as finding accommodation

belonged to a nation that out of its very youth, out of the significance of its means of gallantly shared labour and effort, had evolved a saner attitude, recognizing that in the fitness and equipment of its women, no less than in its strength and prosperity. (25)

Rosa Praed's *Lady Bridget in the Never-Never Land* (1915) emphasizes the imperialist who wants to be a Cecil Rhodes in Australia, pioneering a state for an aristocratic Lady Bridget to be his "Mate" as well as his "Ideal" woman. "You tell her, where they work "shoulder to shoulder, back to back — no getting in the way for you mate, if it comes to a pinch" (97). After many trials in the bush, Bridget finally learns what it means to be "a thorough-going "mate" to her Irish peer, has to learn what the [End Page 14] Australian Girl Theodora Swain's "Love Story". Theodora is one of those

true women who are spiritually advanced enough to *know* that love is the only meaning in the universe, and that it may not be given to any but the God-ordained mate. The one perfect whole, and there can be no question of injustice to the one who is not equal. (264)

In this way, the masculinist "Bush ideal" of Australian mateship, which emphasizes the heterosexual meaning of a partner or spouse. These romance novelists insist that a woman could be found in a relationship with a heterosexual mate; that mateship is a marriage and a gender equality in rights that depended not on legislation but on

In the end, the success of romantic relationships between Australians or British and American simultaneously anxious claims about the superiority of Australian culture. The work ethic which produces the Australian Girl and the Coming Man also produces a sense of authentic, and which makes a display of passion "pure". This "purity", this "pure"

either artificially repressed and inhibited, or decadent and corrupted. The emotions among the English arises in Rosman's *The Back Seat Driver* embraces and public displays of affection as "merely an eccentric integral part of her in public, admonishes him: "Don't, Bill. Somebody might see" (43). In *Bush* she visits Australia, Iris Dearn waxes lyrical about the land and its people: "It has something of the same grand force about it as their immense tangled bush Nature that they have retained a wonderful, natural integrity. I should imagine it is a type" (152). Her friend Mrs Henderson adds: "Natural integrity has almost everywhere artificial culture has taken its place" (152); artificial, and also materialist aristocrat Lady Maud scoffs that love and "its servant, passion" are "hopeless in the modern age for "the kind of love which would lay down life itself for the sake of affection died with Romeo. In these days," says Lady Maud, "we flirt with our own ones" (3). By contrast, gender relations in Australia were ostensibly more straightforward, game-playing, petty proprieties or constant fear of scandal and shame. They come to Australia to be transformed by its bush-inflected culture before their passion is purified by the bush. In *Miss Bryde of England* Australian Katharine Helen because she [End Page 15]

like other Australian girls, grew up in the unrestricted, sane, healthy atmosphere in which ignorance was never paraded as virtue, nor evil given a name. She always had plenty of friends of both sexes, who were little less the friends of her father, always welcome there. ... The result was natural. She was pure-minded and her friends and women are not. Sordid things had no attraction for her (89).

Being "purer", Australian characters in these novels are quicker to recognize and pursue the pursuit or protection of it.

Short stories about love and romance novels prior to Federation tended to focus on romantic love in the colonies; both male and female writers of love stories were women in the colonies, especially along the frontier. After Federation, non-colonial romance persisted, but in an access of post-Federation nationalist character and culture were ultimately sufficient to overcome such obstacles. They are more likely to have happy endings than the colonial romances. As Giles (1998) nineteenth and early twentieth century Australian love stories provided work for the story of the nation at a time when the "*Bulletin* school" was intent on creating a xenophobic masculinist Australian culture and identity. Australian women transformed the bushman into a romantic hero, matched in quality and character to the bush of Australian culture and character was dwelled upon almost obsessively in the

However, because women novelists were aware that their primary market was published in Britain first before being imported to Australia, as was Bjelke-Petersen reconcile arrogant assertions of Australian superiority with obsequious assent. Eriksson (2012, ch. 3) has shown, British travelers to Australia from the 1840s with the question of how the issue of independence could coexist with continued Australian romance novelists' solution to this problem was to knit British and Australian for the advancement of Empire. The imagined debilitation of English culture and weakening of the English economy would be reinvigorated by Australian imperial loyalty and commerce is exemplified in Australian Dick Dumaresq in Rosman's *The Backseat Driver*. Staunchly Australian, Dick nevertheless aff

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