

Editor's Note: Volume 6

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Volume 6 of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* marks a shift in our publication schedule. Rather than publish twice a year, on the model of a print journal, we have shifted to publishing our regular run of essays, book reviews, and other material on a rolling basis, as material makes its way through peer review and copyediting. The exception to this rule will be our run of guest-edited special issues, like the special issue on Critical Love Studies that is the centerpiece of **this volume**: six essays on love in media, real life, and virtual spaces by scholars from Germany, Hungary, Spain, the UK, the United States, an **introduction** by guest editors Michael Gratzke and Amy Burge, and—in a first for the journal—a **multi-media art installation** documented through text, photography, and online audio. As Gratzke and Burge note in their introduction, we here at JPRS have a longstanding interest in any field of inquiry related to romantic love; indeed, four years ago, in my **Note for Issue 4.1**, I averred that “We have, I think, a great deal to learn from the new field of Love Studies—and also a great deal to contribute,” and this special issue marks a new and very welcome moment in that dialogue.

Alongside the Critical Love Studies contributions, we have three quite disparate essays on popular romance media—its history, its social effects, and its political implications—and two thoughtful, substantial book reviews which, by coincidence, speak to issues raised in the essays.

In “**Marble Under a Strange Spell: St. John Rivers’ ‘Long-Cherished Scheme’ to Wed Jane Eyre,**” Michelle Thurlow uses both biographical and textual analyses to explore the “false hero” of Charlotte Brontë’s iconic novel—and, in the process, to present St. John Rivers as an early instance of the Other Man: the romantic rival or false suitor who threatens to separate the protagonists in later popular romance fiction. Christina Vogels’ “**Is Edward Cullen a ‘good’ boyfriend? Young men talk about *Twilight*, masculinity and the rules of (hetero)romance**” uses the film version of this international phenomenon as the “springboard” for a conversation with twenty-two young men at an Aotearoa/New Zealand high school about what it means to be a good (or clingy, or otherwise not-good) boyfriend. Finally, in a signal contribution to the study of popular romance and the War on Terror, Religious Studies scholar Kecia Ali gives **nuanced close readings** of two novels from the

bestselling Troubleshooters series by Suzanne Brockmann, *Into the Night* (2002) and *Gone Too Far* (2003). Distinguishing Brockmann's work from that of "sheikh" and "desert romance" novelists—novelists like those studied by **Stacy Holden** in Issue 5.1 of JPRS, for example—Ali adds not only to the burgeoning body of scholarship on Orientalism and popular romance, but also to the study of individual romance authors as artists and thinkers, and of the subtle, dialogic differences between novels within a given author's body of work.

The first of our book reviews, by Maria Nilson, offers a detailed commentary on the twelve essays gathered in *Women and Erotic Fiction. Critical Essays on Genres, Markets and Readers*, edited by Kristen Phillips. As you might expect, there is considerable overlap between the topics explored in this anthology and those we discuss at JPRS, and Nilson's review points out both the areas of contiguity between our interests—romance novels, the *Fifty Shades* trilogy, yaoi and boy's love comics, etc.—and between the defensive / apologetic rhetorical gestures that seem to recur whenever the topic turns to women and sexual pleasure.

The second review, by Laura Vivanco, explores a groundbreaking monograph by Amy Burge: *Representing Difference in the Medieval and Modern Orientalist Romance*. Burge is one of several scholars working on Orientalist romance, and Vivanco's review documents how it differs in focus and approach from Hsu-Ming Teo's *Desert Passions: Orientalism and Romance Novels* (2012) and Amira Jarmakani's *An Imperialist Love Story: Desert Romances and the War on Terror* (2015), and she suggests other pairings—with a monograph by Catherine Roach and the essay collection *Romance Fiction and American Culture*—that might be as useful for students and teachers as they are to future scholars.

With this Editor's Note, we bring Volume 6 of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* to a close. Work is already underway on new essays, new reviews, and new special issues for Volume 7, and they will appear as they are peer-reviewed (double-blind, as always), accepted, and polished across the year to come.