



Editor's Note: Volume 7

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Looking back at Volume 7 of the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies*, I am struck not only by how capacious the field of popular romance studies can be, but by how much work still needs to be done.

On the one hand, this issue includes three essays introducing new, largely unexplored areas related to popular romance fiction, each of which could serve as an invitation to future work. Layla Abdullah-Poulos's Francis-Award-winning essay "**The Stable Muslim Love Triangle – Triangular Desire in African American Muslim Romance Fiction**" is the first essay anywhere, to my knowledge, to explore this growing corpus, much of which is independently published, and it lays the groundwork for future comparative research on Muslim popular romance from a transnational and / or multicultural perspective, and on Muslim popular romance alongside Christian inspirational and other religiously-inflected subgenres. In "**Rewriting the Romance: Emotion Work and Consent in Arranged Marriage Fanfiction**," Milena Popova uses conceptual models from popular romance fiction scholarship and the sociological paradigm of "emotion work" to explore another independently published archive—arranged-marriage Loki / Thor slash fanfiction housed at Archive of Our Own—as a textual space in which cultural norms surrounding marriage and sexual consent can be investigated and revised. This piece suggests that there are many possibilities for cross-fertilization between fan studies (and fanfic studies) and popular romance studies: the archive of primary texts not only exists, but is so vast that it could produce fresh scholarship for many years to come. Finally, we have Kecia Ali's **report from the Romance Writers of America's archives** at Bowling Green State University: another vast, largely untapped resource which includes correspondence, RWA internal communication (newsletters, board meeting minutes, etc.), conference programs, and recordings of conference sessions from 1980-2008. I hope that readers of *JPRS* will follow Ali's lead in seeking out and analyzing this material, and I know that the research library staff at BGSU are eager to see us put it to use.

Volume 7 of *JPRS* did not, however, focus exclusively on written texts. In a pair of firsts for the journal, we have published a bilingual special issue—its essays in English and French—devoted to love and popular music. This "**Love and Rock**" issue attends to music

and amatory traditions from France, the Iberian peninsula, and what editors Claude Chastagner and Mark Duffett call “the geographically and culturally intermediate space of Occitanie,” the wellspring of ideas about love that were richly deployed and remixed by Leonard Cohen. Several of these pieces grow out of a multinational symposium organized by Chastagner and Duffett; others, like Tosha Taylor’s article on *The Killers*, were freshly composed in response to our Call for Papers on the topic. The interwoven histories of love and song go back, in Europe, to Sappho, and the cultural politics and poetics of love songs have been studied from any number of angles: text-based, performance-based, in terms of audience / reception, and more. We are eager to see more submissions on love in popular music of all forms, from any era, from anywhere in the world.

Perhaps the most striking feature of Volume 7, however, is its array of ten book reviews: not quite a record for us (Volume 5, which came out in two issues, had a couple more), but an impressive introduction, nonetheless, to the range of topics and scholarly approaches that make up popular romance studies. The books reviewed include **Kecia Ali’s** groundbreaking monograph on the *In Death* series by J. D. Robb (Nora Roberts), new work on the popular culture of romantic love in the **United States** and **Australia**, an **anthology of personal essays** on love by American Muslim men (itself a rich resource for new scholarly investigation), a study of **“heartthrobs,”** past and present, and new collections devoted to **multiple genres of popular fiction** and to **feminized popular media culture** (including **digital culture and social media**).

To read these reviews is to glimpse not only the vitality and diversity of popular romance studies, but also its increasing acceptance as an interdisciplinary field—albeit one that sometimes does not speak (or know) its name. We look forward to more evidence of this energy and excitement in Volume 8, and we encourage our readers to spread the word about *JPRS* and our latest special issue Call for Papers, **“Sexting, Romance, and Intimacy,”** in the year to come!