

Gender, Language and Body: Literary Representations in Popular Culture Narratives

Authors : Eirini Arvanitaki

Abstract : Romance has incrementally grown in popularity over the last century. The first Mills & Boon romance novel was published in 1909 and since then romance has not only survived but it has become a long standing genre. There are several reasons behind its durability and success. First, its ability to please and appeal to a mass audience. Romance novels are products of commercial success situated in large scale production, especially if one takes into account the high volume of romance novels published, translated and distributed all around the world every month. Second, what has also contributed to keeping the romance genre alive is the content of the books and their effect on the reader. These are stories of two heterosexual individuals who meet, fall in love, face obstacles and successfully overcome them. Through the love plots, the books address anxieties, concerns and everyday troubles that the average reader can identify with. Additionally, the romance novel is a means of escapism from everyday life and responsibilities as well as a short-lived opportunity to enjoy personal time/space and focus on one's self. Third, the genre's ability to adapt to the periods and societies in which it is published has also assisted in prolonging its longevity. This paper discusses the ways in which popular romance authors write and engage with the body. Despite the claim that popular romance narratives adjust their contents in accordance with different time periods and social phenomena, the paper highlights the dissimilarities between writing the female and male body and suggests that women romance writers are yet to break free from phallogocentric law. The examination of the projections of the body and the language used to describe it indicates that these narratives are flexible enough to adjust to twenty-first century but only within the limits of their own conventionality.

Keywords : body, gender, language, literary representations, popular romance narratives, taboo

Conference Title : ICWGSS 2021 : International Conference on Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Conference Location : Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Conference Dates : March 22-23, 2021