

Editor's Note: Issue 5.2

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Just over a year ago, the *Journal of Popular Romance Studies* was approached by an academic publisher interested in adding us to their stable of scholarly journals. This inquiry sparked a conflicted discussion here at JPRS. Should we shift to a more traditional publishing format and subscription model? Would this attract more submissions, raise our profile, our ranking, our impact level? Would affiliation with a publisher give more credibility, not just to us, but to the field of popular romance studies more generally? How could we retain our commitment to Open Access publishing and to scholarly outreach across both national and professional boundaries? Would we have the flexibility to float new special issue Calls for Papers whenever a topic seized us—and, when needed, the ability to fold a proposed special issue silently into the regular run of the journal?

Emails flew. Scholars were Skyped. Advisory boards got advisory (and sometime adversarial). A web of debate linked Virginia to Tasmania, New York City to New South Wales, Manitoba to Brunei. It was heady stuff: a reminder of how far-flung we are, as a field, but also how fragile, how new.

In the end, our collective sense is that scholarship in popular romance studies needs to be *more* accessible, not less. With budgets cut around the world, especially in the Humanities, new subscriptions can be a hard sell to university libraries, especially on emerging topics like popular romance. Graduate students, independent scholars, and contingent faculty find it difficult to afford the Open Access fees, often in the hundreds of dollars, that some traditional journals now ask. (A message just landed in my inbox explaining that \$400 was a perfectly reasonable “processing charge” for an aspiring scholarly author—or their department—to kick in for an essay.) Likewise, even as more and more dissertations are being written in popular romance studies—the list at the **Romance Scholarship Wiki** is a good place to keep up to date with these, as with new essays and monographs—much of the most interesting thinking and debate goes on in blogs and review sites and Tumblr and Twitter. What we do as a peer reviewed journal is different in genre from what goes on in these venues, but we want our essays, interviews, book reviews, and pedagogical pieces to be a part of that free-ranging, and free, discussion, not tucked away behind what is, effectively, a paywall.

With help from our esteemed patroness, the **International Association for the Study of Popular Romance**, we will, therefore, continue to be a self-published journal: available without charge to readers *and* to our contributors. Your membership in IASPR will help to support us, but so too will your simple act of reading these pieces and talking about them, whether in your own new scholarship, in a classroom setting, or in private conversation. Indeed, after this issue, we will begin publishing on a rolling basis throughout the year, with new material appearing online as it is ready: a shift that takes advantage of our online-only status, and which we hope will keep the study of popular romance media in both the academic and the public eye. (It will certainly help us avoid the backlogs that bedevil scholars eager to see their work reach an audience!)

As you will see from the **Table of Contents**, issue 5.2 of JPRS is an expansive gathering of new scholarship and commentary on popular romance fiction and the logics, institutions, and social practices of romantic love in global popular culture. We have a groundbreaking special issue on Queering Popular Romance guest edited by Jonathan A. Allan and Andrea Wood: five essays that address this crucial topic in fiction, film, and TV, from a variety of theoretical approaches, along with a substantive **guest editors' introduction**. We have a study of early 20th-century **eugenic love theory** (and practice) in the United States, new pieces on **Twilight** and on **Viking romance**, and a capacious review section that covers not only books, this time—new monographs and collections on love, masculinity, romance fiction, desert romance, and “bromance” in film, a bumper crop!—but also the award-winning documentary film on popular romance fiction authors, readers, and publishing: Laurie Kahn's *Love Between the Covers*. (Disclaimer: I was a scholarly advisor to the film, and curated the **resource guide** that accompanies it for classroom and community use; other members of the JPRS editorial board were also interviewed for the film. It's a small world, popular romance studies—hence our turn to an Australian media scholar as a reviewer.)

In the coming weeks and months IASPR / JPRS will announce a number of new initiatives, including an essay prize in memory of our colleague Conseula Francis, whose essay on Zane as a romance novelist appears in the major new anthology **Romance Fiction and American Culture: Love as the Practice of Freedom?** and whose interview with **Joanna Russ** was featured in issue 1.2 of JPRS. To stay up to date on this and other announcements, and to learn about our new pieces as they appear, please follow us on Twitter (@JPRStudies), follow our sponsoring organization (@IASPR), join the **IASPR group** on Facebook or the **RomanceScholar** listserv, and keep an eye on the IASPR **homepage**, where we will soon announce the venue (*cough* *Sydney* *cough*) and the timing for the Seventh International Conference on Popular Romance.