

A True Romance: Reading Erich Segal's *Love Story*

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<b>Tiivistelmä – Abstract</b>			
<p>The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that Erich Segal's <i>Love Story</i> is a romance novel despite its unconventional use of romance elements. The study concentrates on two issues: the romance conventions and the portrayal of ethnicity. I begin with the conventions of romance. The presentation of these conventions is divided into two sections. First I discuss the history of the romance genre in order to show the conventions of romance that have characterized the genre from its beginning. Second I examine the formula of romance that is distinctive to more contemporary romance novels. In the third theory section of my thesis I address the portrayal of intercultural relationships in literature.</p> <p>The analysis of <i>Love Story</i> is divided into three sections. In the first section I concentrate on the romance elements that stem from the early form the Greek or Classic romances. I argue that despite the unconventional romance ending of <i>Love Story</i>, it contains plenty of other romance elements. I also argue that the ending of the novel is not significantly unconventional: while it is sad it is not without hope. In the second section I analyse <i>Love Story</i> based on the formula for popular romance. I analyse both its plot and its representation of the hero and the heroine. In the final section of my analysis I discuss the role of ethnicity in <i>Love Story</i>. The ethnic heroine of the novel seems to attain the American Dream when she marries the WASP hero, but in reality she disappears behind her husband's success.</p> <p>In the final chapter of my thesis I conclude with my findings as well as present further research topics such as the oedipal relationship between the novel's hero and his father.</p>			
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## 1. Introduction

Romance literature has for a long time been considered to be a 'low' genre. "Romantic fiction is so stigmatised at present that it has received very little academic attention" (Fowler 1). Although romance literature has since the 1990s attained more academic attention, it is still stigmatised as Jayne Ann Krentz's claim "[f]ew people realize how much courage it takes for a woman to open a romance novel on an airplane" shows (1). It can be argued that romance has this stigma since romance novels are entertainment by women for women. It is this connection that Strehle and Carden claim was done much earlier: "[b]y 1739, writing what some consider the first novel, Richardson [...] formed the dismissive connection between 'girls,' 'romances,' 'idle stuff,' and forms of behaviour in which men—sensible, worldly men—believed they had no part" (xv). "The impulse [...] to attach the romance derisively to women and women derisively to romance has led critics to denigrate the genre of romance" (Strehle and Carden xv). As Krentz claims, "[w]hen it comes to romance novels, society has always felt free to sit in judgment not only on the literature but on the reader herself" (1). Erich Segal, the author of *Love Story*, might have argued that it should include the author as well.

In this thesis I will analyse Erich Segal's *Love Story*. My aim is to demonstrate that *Love Story* is a romance novel as its title implies. I will discuss the romance genre and describe and analyse the generic conventions used in *Love Story*. The issue is important because *Love Story* has elements that are not typical for romances such as the novel continues after the couple marry and the heroine dies in the end. In order to analyse these elements I will firstly explain what the conventions of romance are. I will begin with the theory of romance and then apply it to my analysis of *Love Story*. I have divided the theory of romance into three sections: the history of romance literature, the formulaic nature of

popular romance novels, and the treatment of intercultural relationships in romance literature. Firstly, I will give a short account of the history of romance in order to show the conventions of romance that have characterized the genre for centuries. Secondly, I will discuss the formula that is distinctive for more contemporary popular romance novels. The formula includes two sides: a more universal plot type and stereotypical characters. Thirdly, I will discuss how intercultural relationships are portrayed in romances and what their function is.

After discussing the theory I will analyse Segal's *Love Story*. My analysis is also divided into three sections: I will first address the romance conventions in *Love Story*, second the formula of *Love Story*, and then the role of exotic ethnicity in *Love Story*. The thesis will close with a concluding chapter.

## 1.1 Erich Segal

*Love Story*, the first novel by Erich Segal, was initially written as a screenplay and later adapted into a novel and published on 4 February 1970. The novel became a best-seller before the movie was released later the same year. The movie became a success and “scor[ed] at the box-office, where it became the most profitable film since *Gone With the Wind*” (Pelzer 20).

Erich Segal was an academic who taught Greek and Latin literature at Yale, Harvard and Princeton Universities. As Linda C. Pelzer writes,

[i]n addition to his study of Plautus, Segal [...] edited a collection of critical essays on the Greek playwright Euripides and [...] translated three of Plautus's

comedies, earning praise for both his style and his interpretations. He [...] also edited books on Plato, Caesar Augustus, and Greek tragedy. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1968. (3)

The success of *Love Story* affected Segal's credibility as a scholar, and he "agreed to take a leave of absence from his teaching position at Yale" (Pelzer 6). *Love Story* was nominated for the 1971 National Book Award, "one of the most prestigious literary prizes in the United States," but "five judges on the award's fiction panel threatened to resign if it were not eliminated" (Pelzer 5). Pelzer claims that the novelist William Styron, who was one of the jurors, "justified the decision, noting that 'it is a banal book which simply doesn't qualify as literature'" (5). Before his death in January 2010, Segal had moved to England and was a teacher at Wolfson College in Oxford.

## 1.2 *Love Story*

Segal's novel *Love Story* depicts the first person story of Oliver Barrett IV, who comes from a family that has been wealthy and respected for generations. Oliver follows the family tradition of studying at Harvard and becoming a Harvard jock (i.e., someone who enjoys sports or is good at it). Since the Barretts are a conservative family, Oliver struggles to find his own identity and independence from his father.

Oliver meets and falls in love with Jennifer Cavilleri, a working-class Italian American girl, who is a music major at Radcliffe College. When they decide to get married, Oliver's father opposes and eventually ends his financing of Oliver's studies. Thus Jennifer, who has already graduated, becomes a teacher in order to support Oliver

while he studies at Harvard Law School. They struggle with money until after Oliver's graduation when he takes a well-paying position at a law firm. The financial troubles now in the past, the lovers decide to start a family. When Jennifer does not get pregnant, in spite of their attempts, the couple seeks medical help only to find out that Jennifer is seriously ill and bound to die. Jennifer has to begin a costly cancer therapy which Oliver eventually becomes unable to afford. His only choice is to seek assistance from his father who agrees to help although Oliver does not provide the real reason for his financial need. Oliver's father discovers later that Jennifer is ill and he goes to the hospital. What he discovers is that Jennifer has died only moments ago, and the novel ends with Oliver crying in his father's arms.

According to the American Legends Interviews, “[t]he reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times*, Ron Martinetti, wrote: ‘Although one can easily summarize the gist of Segal’s plot, his style presents a more difficult problem. What, for example, can one make of an author who has filled his book with page after page of the most tiresome clichés (‘You can dish it out, but you can’t take it’)?’” (online). Martinetti was not the only reviewer who critiqued Erich Segal’s use of clichés. In Erich Segal’s obituary, Margalit Fox quotes Oberbeck who wrote in the *Newsweek*: “The banality of ‘Love Story’ makes ‘Peyton Place’ look like ‘Swann’s Way’ as it skips from cliché to cliché with an abandon that would chill even the blood of a True Romance editor” (online).

Although most reviewers did not appreciate *Love Story* it was, according to the American Legends Interviews, “favorably reviewed in the *New York Times* by Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, and received a plug from Kurt Vonnegut, then a popular author among the young, who found the book ‘...as hard to put down as a chocolate éclair...’” (online).

Pelzer claims that “*Love Story* is [...] a tale of two loves,” but she continues by declaring that “[t]o his rather typical story of romantic love, Segal crafts a more

compelling tale of filial love that is ultimately the real story of *Love Story*” (19). Although the father and son relationship in *Love Story* deserves to be acknowledged, I am not convinced it is the novel’s ‘real story.’ I will discuss this in my analysis of *Love Story* but first I will begin with the theory of romance.



## 2. The Theory of Romance

The genre of romance has been the cause for much debate, since literary theorists have not been able to agree whether romance is a genre, formula, mode or strategy. As Barbara Fuchs writes in *Romance*, “[c]ritics disagree [...] about its origins and history, even about what it encompasses” (1). These difficulties of establishing romance as a genre stem from the changes romances have gone through: the male protagonist setting out on adventures has transformed into a modern heroine looking for true love. Heidi Hansson, the author of *Romance Revived*, presents another reason for the difficulty: the term ‘romance’ “is used to describe both a literary form and a literary quality” (11). As Jean Radford writes:

[i]t is possible to argue about ‘romance’ [...] that the only continuity is in the term: that there is no historical relationship between Greek ‘romances’, medieval romance, Gothic bourgeois romances of the 1840s, late nineteenth century women’s romances and mass-produced romance fiction now – except the generic term. (8)

Although Radford states this possibility, she does not agree with it herself and neither do I. I will examine the history of romance, its origins, and the differences and similarities in various forms of romance. I will do this in order to point out two important issues. Firstly, I want to indicate that although there are differences in the types of romance produced throughout the history of the genre, there are also similarities. Secondly, I want to make evident that romance has a history of referring back to older texts and repeating and rewriting them.

I will also discuss the formula for popular romance, i.e., “the structure of narrative or dramatic conventions employed in a great number of individual works” (Cawelti 5). In this section I will present in detail the structure and conventions used in popular romance novels as opposed to the use of such conventions in romance literature.

In the last section of this chapter I will discuss ethnicity and inter-ethnic relationships/marriages in romances and literature. I will begin by background information on the attitude towards ethnicity in the United States of America at the time *Love Story* was written. After that, I will discuss theories on ethnicity and how ethnicity is portrayed in literature. I shall also give examples of intercultural romantic relationships as displayed in literary narratives.

## 2.1 Origins of Romance

It is debated whether romance is a genre, a strategy or a mode but what is agreed upon is that romance has some typical conventions that have been characteristic to it since Homer’s *Odyssey*. Hubert McDermott claims that *Odyssey* is the first romance and “the archetype [...] of all great romance” (12). Not all agree that *Odyssey* is the first romance but the importance of *Odyssey* to romance literature is not questioned since, according to Fuchs, it “establishes some of the most enduring and recurring of romance strategies” (14).

It is the presence of these strategies, or conventions of romance, that can be found in *Odyssey*, which has led McDermott to claim that “[a]ny discussion of Greek romance must inevitably begin with Homer’s *Odyssey*” since it is “archetypal in that it sets the pattern for all subsequent romances, whether in the design of the narrative or the use of specific scenes and incidents to symbolise primary human experiences” (12). The conventions of

romance that have their origin in the *Odyssey* and continue in Greek romances are, according to McDermott, the following ones: the protagonists' "private story of domestic and adventurous life", the introduction of love and sexuality (although "the love presented is a mature love between a couple who have been married for a very long time"), and the happy ending which McDermott attests to be found in every Greek romance (13-14). Fuchs has a slightly different approach on romance as she points to the existence of the following romance elements of Greek (or what she calls the Classic) romances: "occluded and subsequently revealed identities, idealized protagonists, marvels and monsters, tasks and tests" (36). She mentions these elements in particular since in her view their "striking repetition [...] in medieval romance suggests that, regardless of its critical reception then and now, classical romance had a long and influential afterlife" (36).

Medieval romance as a term originally meant the transformation of Latin texts, such as Greek and Roman legends and certain classical texts, into romance languages (Fuchs 37, 39). What this means is that some or many of the medieval romances are older texts rewritten in French. They are not purely translated but also transformed to fit in a different time and place (Fuchs 50-51). Fuchs writes that the medieval romance

is conventionally defined as the group of narratives in the vernacular that emerge around 1150 in the court of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine in England [...] and tell stories of love and adventure. Although generally situated in a distant classical or Arthurian past, the stories feature all the trappings of contemporary court and chivalric culture, so that, for example, Greek and Roman "knights" skirmish in patently medieval tournaments. (39)

The court is such an important setting for romances of this era that they are often described as romances of courtly love (McDermott 100). Another important characteristic for medieval romances is idealization, which according to Fuchs, is accounted for by the above-mentioned courtly setting (40). Although the medieval romance does not differ much from the earlier form of romance, medieval writers like Malory and Chaucer did treat romantic love in a more realist way, as suggested by Lynne Pearce (35). She states in her book *Romance Writing* that

the trials and adventures that constitute a test of *chivalry* in early romance are refigured [in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (c. 1385) and in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* (1485)] as the psychological challenges of romantic love itself. Love, at last, becomes the true *object* of the romance genre, and the fantastical 'external' challenges facing earlier knights now re-shape themselves as the doubts and demons of the lover's interior consciousness. (Pearce 35; italics original)

This highlighting of the knights' experience of love in medieval romances is mentioned also by Fuchs, and she adds to the distinctive features of medieval romances that "there is a much greater emphasis on the private over the public [and] on the perspective of women" (39). Heidi Hansson discusses women's role in medieval romances in more detail. According to Hansson,

Medieval romances often elevate women to quite impossible status, and the image of the unattainable but always desirable woman provides the tension and propels the plot in romances from the Middle Ages onwards. The lady of the

courtly romance has a power unknown to most medieval women, even though this power resides almost exclusively in the emotional sphere. There is an inherent paradox in the romance: it is the literary genre which most clearly seems to restrict Woman by defining her place and identity, at the same time as it is the genre where women's power is acknowledged. (83)

The desirability of a woman makes her powerful because it makes her capable of seducing men. Hansson continues by stating that "Woman is frequently perceived as a threat to male bonding or to a man's honour, as when Lancelot betrays his lord Arthur by committing adultery with Guinevere, or as in the story of Tristan and Isolde. Women threaten the social order because they are desirable, and consequently dangerous" (84).

This emphasis on women continues in the Renaissance period when "women increasingly took the title roles in prose romance" (Pearce 36). Although the romances of courtly love continued their success in the sixteenth century, the century was also marked by the rediscovery of the Greek romances, which were widely translated and imitated in Europe (McDermott 106, Fuchs 66). After the sixteenth century there also seems to be a shift from only male authors of romance to both male and female authors of romance. Female writers such as Madeleine de Scudéry, Margaret Cavendish, and Lady Mary Wroth are mentioned by Hubert McDermott and Lynne Pearce.

*Don Quixote*, the famous novel that affected the development of romance, was written in the early seventeenth century. Although it is not a romance, it is important for the history of romance literature since it parodies medieval romances and their popularity (McDermott 104, Fuchs 78). Virginia Brackett defines *Don Quixote* (1605) as an anti-romance in which Cervantes "simultaneously restructured the romance, offering new ways to adapt its elements" (xiii). Brackett continues that "Cervantes places [romance

conventions] in a different context, thereby redefining and renewing their usefulness in romantic writings” (288). Although literary scholars disagree on several points, they all claim the importance of *Don Quixote* for the romance in the seventeenth century as it marks the beginning of the critique of the genre. As Fuchs states:

[t]he trajectory of romance after the Renaissance is complex and often paradoxical. While Greek and chivalric romance, in particular, continued to prove hugely popular with readers, critical predilection for new kinds of narrative fiction led from an initial embrace of French “heroic” romance in the seventeenth century to the gradual marginalization of romance as a “low” genre in subsequent periods. (99)

McDermott claims that the French ‘heroic’ romance’s “most obvious difference [from the Greek romance] is the change in the handling of the theme of love”, and he mentions virtue, propriety, and duty as the innovations of the French romance (115–6). Virtue and propriety found in the French romance displace ‘passion’ from the center of romance: “the rhetorical admixture of the spiritual and the sexual that we find here [still in the seventeenth century] becomes increasingly polarized in the course of the next century, and the residual ideology of courtly love will bear the echo of a bygone age” (Pearce 55).

To use Fuchs’s words, “the trajectory of romance” persists on its complexity after the seventeenth century. Although the genre “breaks down into a number of quite distinguishable subgenres,” in Hansson’s view those subgenres “belong to a common tradition” (29). With the printing press and the novel’s ability to reach various people, the readership of romance expands rapidly. This leads to different demands for romance. On one hand, romance readers desire seduction and, on the other hand, they wish for more

virtuous heroines. These demands can be seen in Pearce's claim that the eighteenth century romances can be roughly divided into three types: the Gothic romance, the courtship romance, and the seduction romance (62). According to Fuchs, the Gothic romance is “[f]rom its beginnings [...] explicitly presented as a mixture of new and old” (119). The history of romance is full of repetition as one can once again notice with the continual of medieval elements in Gothic romances: “what makes the Gothic so popular is precisely its gallery of marvelous and otherworldly topoi” (Fuchs 121).

Although romance literature relies on its iterability, it also faces changes. The courtship romance “severs sex from love and sends it underground, and we have to wait until the end of [the eighteenth] century – and the beginning of the next – for [...] elusive ‘it’ to once again make its appearance” (Pearce 55). The Gothic and the courtship romances have obtained the attention in the eighteenth century to such an extent that the seduction romance is less known and it can come as a shock for those used to reading “the canonical texts of school and university syllabi” (Pearce 77). Pearce quotes Delarivière Manley, “one of the true ‘bad girls’ of eighteenth-century literature”, and “her blacklisted novel *The New Atalantis* (1709)”:

But the Duke's pursuing kisses overcame the thoughts of anything but the new and lazy poison stealing to her heart and spreading swiftly and imperceptibly through all her veins; she closed her eyes with languishing delight! delivered up the possession of her lips and breath to the amorous invader, returned his eager grasps and, in a word, gave her whole person into his arms in meltings of delight! (qtd in Pearce 77)

It is important to be aware that texts such as the above exist, in order “to fully understand the origins of twentieth-century Mills & Boon fiction” (Pearce 77).

Mills & Boon fiction or ‘Harlequin romances’ are terms often used when discussing popular romance novels. Their name comes from an extremely successful publishing house that produces romances in a steady supply. Their sale “make[s] up more than half of all sales in popular paperback fiction [...] in North America” (Fuchs 124). Pearce connects popular romance novels and the seduction romance because “it is clear that its [Mills & Boon fiction’s] bodice-ripping, soft-porn elements owe a very obvious debt to these subcultural prototypes” (77). Pearce goes on claiming that

[i]n terms both of erotic scenario and, even more importantly, of the control of the protagonists’/reader’s gaze, Manley’s story of the innocent – but infinitely corruptible – young virgin, Charlot, looks ahead to any number of Mills & Boon fantasies in which a fatherly rake eventually has his wicked way with his initially resistant, but then yielding, object of desire. (77)

While these popular romances, at first, seem to be far from the Greek and medieval romances, they are also considered to be romances in their own right. In Fuchs’s view the reason for this is that these narratives combine various elements found in the earlier forms: “they are often characterized by a nostalgic vision of the past, a relentlessly idealizing tone, and an emphasis on the female sphere, from a female protagonist to a view of the world organized around love” (125). Fuchs also states that “the female heroine is of central importance, as is the authorial voice implied in association’s assumption of a female writer” (125). She continues that “[m]en may well write romance novels pseudonymously, but they must be published under female names” (125).



Modleski points out that “[l]ike the Harlequins of the present day, the [sentimental] novels repeatedly insisted on the importance of the heroine’s virginity. In the classic formula, the heroine, who is often of lower social status than the hero, holds out against his attacks on her ‘virtue’ until he sees no other recourse than to marry her” (17). Fuchs also comments on this formula and by stating that “like chivalric romances, romance novels are remarkably iterable: their familiarity, as variations on a basic narrative, is a large part of what makes them so appealing to readers” (125). It is this “basic narrative” – the formula of the romance – that I will concentrate on in the following section.

## 2.2 The Formula for Popular Romance

In the previous section I discussed the conventions of romance literature that have been typical for it since the Greek romances. In this section, I will discuss the conventions or formulas that are typical for popular romance novels. According to Cawelti, “there are two common usages of the term formula” (5). I will discuss them both since “popular story type[s]...combine[...] these two sorts of literary phenomenon” (Cawelti 6). Thus they are rather two different sides of one single formula. I will, however, deal with the two sides separately in order to simplify matters.

Firstly, I will discuss the usage of the term formula that, according to Cawelti, “refers to larger plot types” (5). I will also examine the structure of popular romance narratives in order to show a more detailed ‘plot type’ that is typical for romances. Secondly, I will discuss the usage of the term formula that, according to Cawelti, “denotes a conventional way of treating some specific thing or person” (5). Cawelti extends this definition also to “any cultural stereotype found in literature” (5). I will relate this type of formula to popular

romance novels by discussing the conventional way in which the hero and heroine of romance are treated in those novels and the cultural stereotypes that they represent.

As I established above, the term formula refers to both the “conventional way of treating some specific thing or person” and “larger plot types” (Cawelti 5). In Cawelti’s view, the significant difference between these two definitions of a formula is that the first is used to refer “to patterns of conventions which are usually quite specific to a particular culture and period and do not mean the same outside this specific context” (5). The latter definition, on the other hand, refers to more universal plot patterns that “have certainly been popular in many different cultures at many different times” (Cawelti 6). The typical formula or plot pattern for the romance narrative is that a boy and a girl meet, they fall in love, the course of their relationship encounters obstacles but the couple eventually solves the problems, marry, and the narrative ends with the impression that they will live happily ever after. Ann Rosalind Jones also introduces “a summary of a typical romance plot” that, according to her, has “been stabilized in the genre and is still used by older writers” (198). According to Jones, it can be presented as follows:

The heroine, a virgin in her early twenties, is set in a social limbo: her family is dead or invisible, her friends are few or none, her occupational milieu is only vaguely filled in. As a result, her meeting with the hero occurs in the private realm which excludes all concerns but their mutual attraction; the rest of the world drops away except as a backdrop (often exotic and luxurious, defined through the hero’s wealth and taste). The hero, seven to ten years older than the heroine, is dazzlingly successful in the public world; in private life he is a rake or a mystery, saturnine in appearance, sexually expert, and relentlessly domineering. He takes the reins erotically, naming the heroine’s desires to her

(‘You know you want me, why resist?’); all she can do is submit or flee. She tries constantly to interpret his behavior, which alternates abruptly between tenderness and rejection. Finally, after a separation, the hero tracks the heroine down, explains his earlier motives and offers her love and marriage. They fall into a final embrace... (198–9)

Jones does not mention in her plot outline the heroine’s financial status but she is usually poor, while the hero, as Jones describes, is wealthy. In Modleski’s view this presents the main reason for the events that are about to follow:

While the novels are always about a poor girl finally marrying a rich man, preferably of the nobility, they must be careful to show that the girl never set out to get him and his goods. This is of course a simple reflection of the double bind imposed upon women in real life: their most important achievement is supposed to be finding a husband; their greatest fault is attempting to do so. (48)

According to Modleski, because women are supposed to have this ulterior motive of finding a rich husband, in romance narratives the heroine is often portrayed as immune to the hero’s charm: “the heroines are usually ‘determined to hate’ the hero for his impossible arrogance, a quality he possesses only because of his economic security—unlike the rest of us, he bows to no man” (49). Modleski continues that “[t]he woman’s determination to hate the hero at once absolves her of her mercenary motives and becomes the very means by which she obtains the hero’s love, and, consequently, his fortune” (49).

Janice A. Radway, the author of *Reading the Romance*, has a different approach to the formula of romance narrative. She interviewed for her book a group of women who are enthusiastic romance readers. The women all live in a place called Smithton – hence they are called the Smithton women. Radway discovered the Smithton women’s favourite novels and applied “Vladimir Propp’s method for determining the essential narrative structure of folktales” (133) to them. Thus Radway resulted in “a list of thirteen logically related functions”:

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 purely sexual interest in her.
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 the 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 behaviour as the product of previous hurt.
11. The hero proposes/openly declares his love for/demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness.
12. The heroine responds sexually and emotionally.
13. The heroine’s identity is restored. (134)

These thirteen functions provide a summary of “the narrative structure of the ideal romance” as well as describe “the heroine’s transformation from an isolated, asexual, insecure adolescent who is unsure of her own identity, into a mature sensual, and very married woman who has realized her full potential and identity as the partner of a man and as the implied mother of a child” (Radway 134). Pearce describes Radway’s study as a “ground-breaking ethnographic study of (female) popular romance readers” (12). Pearce goes as far as to claim that “there are very few Hollywood Romances that depart significantly from [...] Radway’s list of functions” (13).

The Smithton women allege that Erich Segal’s *Love Story* is not a romance, since “a romance is first and foremost, a story about a woman” (Radway 64). Radway continues that “[t]hat woman, however, may not figure in a larger plot simply as the hero’s prize, as Jenny Cavileri does, for instance in Erich Segal’s *Love Story*” (64). She also states that “[t]o qualify as a romance, the story must chronicle, not merely the events of a courtship but *what it feels like* to be the *object* of one” (Radway 64; emphasis original). *Love Story* is written from the hero’s point of view and as a first-person narrative and it thus fails the Smithton women’s requirement for romance. Nevertheless, it is the list of functions that in Radway’s view reveals the ideal romance, and as the functions on Radway’s list are collected from the novels the Smithton women enjoy the most, I feel it important to base one aspect of my analysis of *Love Story* on Radway’s categories. Thus I will note whether the Smithton women have any basis for their claim.

As the structure of romance narratives has now been covered, I shall turn to the other side of a formula: the treatment of specific things or persons as well as commonly used cultural stereotypes. Cawelti stresses that with this kind of usage of the term formula it is imperative to notice “that it refers to patterns of conventions which are usually quite specific to a particular culture and period and do not mean the same outside this specific

context” (5). Cawelti offers as an example the transformation of “the nineteenth-century formulaic relation between blondness and sexual purity [...] in the twentieth century to a very different formula for blondes” (5).

The formula for the hero and heroine has also changed in the course of time. Deborah Philips describes the period when *Love Story* was written as follows:

The period from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s saw the burgeoning of a genre of women’s writing which dated back to the early 1960s: the narrative of a young woman who leaves home to go to university, and who there encounters a wide world of intellectual and romantic opportunity. The ‘college girl narrative’ became a publishing phenomenon in both Britain and America, coinciding with a growth in higher education and with an increase in the numbers of women students. (Philips 55)

Thus during this period it was typical for the heroine to be a college girl. Philips also acknowledges that “[t]he fact that women were in the minority in higher education made for a particular kind of heroine in the campus novel: the intelligent achieving woman” (56). Though these narratives were popular in both Britain and America, there was a difference in style because

[t]he American student, however, was reliant on scholarships or family help to fund a college education. The issue of financial support and the difference that this can make to a choice of university is on the agenda in the American version of the college narrative, and families have a greater financial and emotional hold over the student. (Philips 64)

Philips also notes that “the woman undergraduate became a regular heroine for popular novels” (64). Philips describes *Love Story* as a “hugely successful novel of college life and inter-class romance” that “established the American college girl as a fashion and romantic icon” (64).

The intelligent and achieving American college woman coincides with the demands the Smithton women have for a heroine, since Radway observes that “the Smithton readers describe their favorite heroines as ‘intelligent,’ ‘spunky,’ and ‘independent’” (125). Radway translates this to mean that “the ideal heroine is differentiated from her more ordinary counterparts in other romance novels by unusual intelligence or by an extraordinarily fiery disposition” (123). Although the heroine is often spunky, she is nevertheless “always portrayed as unusually compassionate, kind and understanding” (Radway 127). Radway also highlights that the ideal heroine possesses extraordinary beauty as well as has a skill that differentiates her from other women (124). Radway also names many heroines who “exert their superiority by manipulating language” (124). Barlow and Krentz also describe the romance heroine’s way with words: “In modern stories heroines continue to charm, provoke, and challenge their lovers with their conversation” (23). Barlow and Krentz also remark that “[p]rovocative, confrontational dialogue has been the hallmark of the adversarial relationship that exists between the two major characters ever since the earliest days of romance narrative” (22).

Barlow and Krentz discuss further the manner of dialogue between hero and heroine and they emphasize that

[t]he reader knows that in the conflict between hero and heroine the heroine will never have to pull her punches. She won’t have to worry – as many

modern women do in their everyday lives – about being too assertive, too aggressive, too verbally direct because this hero is as strong as she is. He is a worthy opponent, a mythic beast who is her heroic complement. (19)

The reader knows this because of the formulaic nature of the popular romance narratives. The story is always already known (see e.g. Modleski). The reader can enjoy the “confrontational dialogue” since she or he knows that the hero of the romance is equal to the heroine.

An important part of romance literature is idealization, which can be seen in the way in which romances contain “fantasies of fulfilling relationships” and the “desire for ‘another’ ([who is] taller, richer, braver, more experienced than ourselves)” (Pearce and Stacey, 13). Cawelti discusses the latter type of idealization and claims that “[t]he protagonists of formulaic literature are typically better or more fortunate in some ways than ourselves” (18). He continues that “[t]hey are heroes who have the strength and courage to overcome great dangers, lovers who find perfectly suited partners, inquirers of exceptional brilliance who discover hidden truths, or good, sympathetic people whose difficulties are resolved by some superior figure” (Cawelti 18). The protagonists in romance narratives are not only better when it comes to finding a perfect match but they are also physically very attractive: just as the heroine is extremely beautiful, the hero has an unexceptionally masculine physique. As Radway claims, “[t]he hero of the romantic fantasy is always characterized by spectacular masculinity” and that “[a]lmost everything in him is hard, angular and dark” (128). Nevertheless, she also indicates that “the terrorizing effect of [the hero’s] exemplary masculinity is always tempered by the presence of a small feature that introduces an important element of softness into the overall picture” (128). Radway gives examples such as “wide, melting Oriental eyes” or “‘generous lips’



which have a ‘sensual curve to them’” that might soften the hero’s otherwise harsh appearance (128).

According to Cawelti, what differentiates the individual work of any quality or interest from other formulaic novels, is that it “must have some unique or special characteristics of its own” (10). In order to have these characteristics in the novel, the writer must have abilities to make them. Cawelti claims that there are “at least two special artistic skills that all good formulaic writers seem to possess to some degree: the ability to give new vitality to stereotypes and the capacity to invent new touches of plot or setting that are still within formulaic limits” (10-11). Cawelti mentions two ways in which the stereotypes can be vitalized: the first one is “the stereotypical character who also embodies qualities that seem contrary to the stereotypical traits”, and the second is “the addition of significant touches of human complexity or frailty to a stereotypical figure” (11–12).

Helen Hughes describes the change in the nature of the typical hero as follows:

The ‘manly’ hero of the adventure stories of the 1890s – a young and ingenious boy or man of action with few social graces – gave place, after 1926 [...] in the work of Heyer and her followers, to the man of the world who hides his sensitivity under a cynical, even brutal, exterior. Heroines changed less in character, but their function – of challenging the rules of society, in particular the gender roles allotted to men and women – became more important. Cunning and love of power, at first the property of the villain, became associated with the heroes of later romances. (17)

Hughes associates this change “with a change of perspective in which the hero moved from object of identification to desirable other” (17). The focus of the narratives changed from

the hero to the heroine, but, despite Hughes' claim, the readers still identify with the hero as well. As Kinsale claims, "it is myopic to believe that just because the reader is female she is confined to the heroine's character as the target of authentic reader identification" (32). Krentz follows on the same lines as she claims that "[s]ometimes the reader identifies with the heroine; sometimes [...] the heroine functions simply as a placeholder, and sometimes the reader identifies with the hero" (7).

Barlow and Krentz describe the hero as follows: "He is no weakling who will run away or turn to another woman when the conflict between himself and the heroine flares. Instead, he will be forced in the course of the plot to prove his commitment to the relationship, and, unlike many men in the real world, he will pass this test magnificently" (20). Although Hughes claims that the hero hides his sensitivity, Krentz underlines that "[t]he heroine will not accept the hero completely until she has seen some evidence of her own gentleness and compassion in him" (5). But before this happens, the hero treats women badly: he may use them sexually and does not commit himself to one woman. To use Radway's words,

In fact, in these romances, the heroine's innocence is often contrasted explicitly with the hero's previous promiscuity, behavior that is made tolerable to both the heroine and the reader because it is always attributed to his lack of love for his sexual partners. His exclusive preoccupation with them as tools for achieving sexual release is never blamed on his callousness or lack of respect for women, but rather on his virility and his fear of emotional involvement with calculating women. This rationalization conveniently transforms his sexual promiscuity from an arrogant proclamation of his adherence to the double standard to a sign representing an absence, that is, the nonpresence of love.

Perversely, it testifies, then, to his inescapable and intense need for the heroine. Once she can provide that love by persuading him to trust her, his promiscuous impulses are curbed. Sexual fidelity in the ideal romance is understood to be the natural partner of “true love.” (130)

Although the hero is promiscuous before falling in love, romance readers expect him to remain faithful to the heroine after falling in love. The aim of this is to show to the readers and the heroine that he is worthy of the heroine. According to Radway, romance readers expect this, as she remarks that

[t]hroughout [the Smithton women’s] discussions of particular books, they repeatedly insisted that what they remembered and liked most about favorite novels was the skill with which the author described the hero’s recognition of his own deep feelings for the heroine and his realization that he could not live without her. While the women want to feel that the heroine will be protected by the hero, they also seem to want to see her dependency balanced by its opposite, that is, by the hero’s dependence on her. (81)

Even though the hero is described as brutal, it is tenderness, compassion and the hero’s dependence on the heroine that truly characterize the hero of a romance. Since, as Modleski puts it, “[e]ven when he appears most indifferent to her, as he frequently does in Harlequin Romances, we can be sure he will eventually tell her how much the thought of her has obsessed him” (16).

In *Love Story* the protagonists have different ethnic backgrounds. Thus I will discuss ethnicity and intermarriage in the following section.

### 2.3 Intermarriage in Romance

In this section I will discuss the role of ethnicity and intercultural relationships in literature. Firstly I will discuss how Italian Americans were viewed by others and by themselves during the decades before *Love Story* was published. Secondly I will examine the role of names as ethnic markers. Thirdly I will discuss intercultural relationships portrayed in literature.

Not long after *Love Story* was published, John Ibson wrote an article on “white ethnicity”. He suggests that during the 1960s

the recognition grew that white ethnicity remained meaningful. Both the past and present experience of white ethnics began to be explored with new rigor and fresh questions. Revealingly, American novelists had never stopped writing about white ethnicity, but the sixties did witness increased attention to the topic in fictional works of considerable artistry and appeal. (289)

Ibson includes in the people who can be classified in the category of white ethnicity “the ‘PIGS’ (Poles, Italians, Greeks, and Slavs) [who] have cultures so incongruent with America’s dominant culture that they cannot reasonably be expected to adapt” (289). Ibson calls this the “failure of ‘WASPification’” (289).

Although Italian immigrants, according to Jennifer Guglielmo, “were in many of the most-critical ways ‘white on arrival’ in the United States: they could become citizens, own property, vote, represent themselves in a court of law, and marry whomever they chose” (126), they were not equal with the whites. In fact, according to Vecoli, Italians were “[c]lassified as ‘black’ labor” and as such they “were the object of loathing by American

union leaders and workers as well as by the upper classes” (51). Vecoli also states that “the nativist movement for immigration restriction made clear to Italian Americans that they were viewed as inferior and undesirable” (53). Vecoli continues that “[w]hen federal agents raided their neighborhoods and trashed their homes, they understood that the Eighteenth Amendment and the Volsted Act were aimed at their ‘un-American’ lifestyles” (53). Although immigrants from Europe were considered white, they were still considered to be ‘others’ because they had a different way of life. Friedman claims that “[t]he drive to coerce immigrants into assimilating coincided with a desire to expunge the difference and ‘otherness’ of ethnic newcomers, which culminated in the passage of the 1924 Immigrant Act” (181). In other words, it was a difficult time for the Italian Americans to develop an ethnic identity when they were considered to be white and black at the same time and they were pressured to assimilate into the American way of life.

According to Stefano Luconi, “the descendants of the European immigrants elaborated a common white self-image in the mid and late 1960s” (5). Fred Gardaphé claims that ‘lumping’ Italian immigrants and Italian Americans with whites, is “a practice that, although pleasing to those who wish to erase the immigrant past and thus pass as whites, not only distorts the social and political problems encountered by Italian Americans, but also shadows the contributions they have made to American culture” (“Follow” 266). What this means is that although the Italian Americans began to see themselves as white they still encountered problems because of their background. They were still considered as ‘others’.

The Italian American image is often linked with gangsters. The gangster figure emerged, according to Gardaphé, at “a time when immigration to the United States was at its highest and xenophobia was rampant” (*Wiseguys* 12). Gardaphé states that “negative portrayals [of Italian immigrants] appeared in the mainstream U.S media of the late

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (*Wiseguys* 12). Gardaphé describes the gangster figure as follows:

Based on the realities of 1920s and 1930s, crime scenes in films such as *Scarface* (1932), *Little Caesar* (1930), and *The Public Enemy* (1931) moved from ethnic ghettos to downtown commercial centers. This enabled the criminal to resemble more closely those in the rising business class rather than the dark, ethnic foreigners of earlier depictions. Thus, the criminal rose in class and assimilated to mainstream culture just as American urban white ghetto ethnics were trying to do the same. Easier access to stylish consumption through fancy dress and cars blurred the earlier lines that separated the social classes. As street criminals began associating with upper echelons of society, it became harder to tell the gangster from the corporate elite. The central ethnic figure in this first stage of representation, in spite of the fact that other ethnic groups were involved in organized crime, is the Italian – but not just any Italian.

The prototype for this gangster is Al Capone. (*Wiseguys* 12–13)

The Italian Americans were associated with the negative image of gangsters, and especially Al Capone, before the World War II. During the war, however, the attitude towards Italian Americans became worse. Luconi states that “after the beginning of World War II, ethnic intolerance became again a major concern for Italian Americans” (98). According to Luconi,

Following Italy's attack on France, *Fortune* warned against the presence of a pro-fascist 'fifth column' in America that was allegedly made up of individuals who were ready to take the field as 'enemy soldiers within our borders' in case of the outbreak of a war between Italy and the United States. This magazine also pointed to Philadelphia's Italian-language weekly *L'Osservatore* as an example of Mussolini's mouthpieces in the country. In addition, *Collier's* stressed the spread of growing hostility against Italian Americans and discrimination in employment. This attitude affected the hiring not only of unnaturalized Italians but also of American-born laborers who were identifiable as of Italian ancestry. (98-9)

Italian Americans were not only thought of as 'others,' but they were a possible enemy at war as well. Some of them were not necessarily identifiable as Italian Americans by anything other than their name, because they had been born and raised in the United States. Since Italian ancestry was not necessarily a visible feature in a person, names became important. According to Luconi,

[i]n April 1941, Harol B. Hoskins, a State Department investigator reported 'increasing restrictions, even in non-defense industries, on the employment of foreign born citizens by virtue of their foreign-born names.' He also highlighted 'a smoldering suspicion on the part of American-born citizens against all citizens with foreign-born names, particularly those of German, Italian, or Slavic origin.' (99)

Thus names were an important aspect in recognizing a person's ethnicity but not only to those who considered themselves as WASPs. Foreign-born names were an important factor for the people who had them as well. As Werner Sollors quotes the view of Daniel Bell, "[e]thnicity provides a tangible set of common identifications – in language, food, music, names – when other social roles become more abstract and impersonal" ("Theory" 263).

Since ethnicity, as quoted above, translates to common identifications, it is a quality that some have as opposed to others. It is this otherness that leads the 'Yankees' to wonder: "'Are we ethnic?'—as the *New Yorker* put it in a cartoon of 1972 [...] depicting a white middle-class family in an elegant dining room" (Sollors, *Beyond* 24). According to Sollors it "is the question Yankees or WASPs have had to ask themselves many times since then, and without getting just one universally accepted answer" (*Beyond* 24). Sollors highlights that although

[i]t may be absurd, [...] to except white Anglo-Saxon Protestant Americans from the category of ethnicity [...] and yet it is a widespread practice to define ethnicity as otherness. The contrastive terminology of ethnicity thus reveals a point of view which changes according to the speaker who uses it: for example, for some Americans eating turkey and reading Hawthorne appear to be more "ethnic" than eating lasagna and reading Puzo. (*Beyond* 25)

Although ethnicity is in many ways a matter of point of view, it seems to possess a threat to people since it is not easy to determine who is ethnic and who is not. Those boundaries between the familiar and the other are easily broken and fused. Love relationships between people with different ethnic backgrounds disrupt the boundaries between ethnic groups and cause resentment in some people. According to Sollors, "[t]he code phrase 'second



generation' also evokes the animosities that 'melting pot' and 'intermarriage' sometimes receive as threats to 'ethnic purity' and human identity over more than one lifetime" (*Beyond* 224). Fear often causes animosities and in Sollors's view "[t]he fear that lurks behind the aggressive response to the famous question 'But would you like your daughter to marry one?' is the fear of 'losing' the children to a further progeny that bears only a little resemblance to the addressee of the question" (*Beyond* 224). Janet Dean claims that "Lévi-Strauss remarks that incest 'combines in some countries with its direct opposite, inter-racial sexual relations...as the two most powerful inducements to horror and collective vengeance'" (47).

The fear of 'losing' the children because they look different from you can be difficult to understand today, but for purists it was considered a real threat. Sollors elaborates on to what the threat of 'second generation' led to:

Unable to recognize themselves in their necessarily mixed progeny, purists have preferred to develop elaborate fictions of an 'inky curse' [...] upon their descendants. The purists' own unwillingness to accept the mixed after-generations as theirs is seen as the 'loss' of the children, and the projection of this self-constructed loss upon the descendants of mixed marriages is the cultural belief—widespread in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century America—that 'mixed bloods,' 'mulattoes,' and 'half-breeds' were sterile. (*Beyond* 224)

What Sollors emphasizes is that the love relationships between people with different ethnic backgrounds have been thought to disrupt the natural order of things. Romances with their formula affirm the patriarchal order which is similarly thought to be disrupted by

interracial relationships. According to Sollors, “[m]ixed marriages of all sorts, and especially marital unions between whites and Indians or whites and Afro-Americans, often appeared dangerous in American literature, the offspring of such unions doomed” (*Beyond* 224). Thus in romances a mixed marriage is uncommon since it implies a tragedy instead of a happy ending. Sollors continues that “[t]he mulatto and half-breed themes were inevitably tragic or horrifying” (*Beyond* 224). Janet Dean discusses the role of race in J. F. Cooper’s *The Last of the Mohicans*, a novel that provides an example of a tragic mixed race relationship. In *The Last of the Mohicans*, Cora, one of the two main female characters, has a “legacy of mixed blood” (47). Her potential romance with the Mohican Uncas “ends in a scene of bloody interracial violence; their ‘marriage’ can take place only in death” (Dean 47). Dean claims that

Cora becomes a spectacle of female victimization as she succumbs to the knife of one of Magua’s men in dramatic cliff-top struggle. Still, because she exhibits an agency denied her as a female and a non-white, because her body presents so profound a challenge to the white patriarchal scopic regime, Cora’s disruptive presence must be brought under control not by making her a spectacle for the white male gaze, but by removing her from the visual field altogether. (64)

Dean concludes that when “[d]ead, Cora ceases to be a threat to the boundaries drawn between races and cultures” (64). She also indicates that Cora’s “death also clears the way for Munro’s surviving child to marry Heyward, thus insuring the racial integrity of his bloodline” (64). In other words, ethnic mixing appears as dangerous and will inevitably lead to a tragic end.

Pearce writes about romances and race that “the mass-market end of popular romance [...] has remained resolutely silent on issues of homosexuality and race” (142). She nevertheless indicates that

it should be noted that although all the heroes and heroines ultimately ‘prove themselves’ to be white, Mills & Boon/Harlequin have enjoyed a long tradition of exotic ‘dark-skinned’ male lovers who might at first *appear* to be black or mixed-race but who ultimately turn out to be no ‘blacker’ than Mediterranean (for example, the hero of the infamous best-seller *The Sheik* (1919), who is ultimately revealed to be not an Arab but half-Scottish and half-Spanish). (143, emphasis original)

This idea of a hero that proves himself to be white continues the tradition of obscured identities in romance literature. In the case of *The Sheik* and other ‘dark-skinned’ lovers, it also brings an element of exotic to the narrative. This long tradition of exotic lovers is in Amira Jarmakani’s view “a relatively small but nevertheless significant subgenre of romance novels” (895). The qualifying element for this subgenre is that there is “a seemingly unlikely object of erotic attachment, a sheikh, sultan, or desert prince hero who almost always couples with a white western woman” (Jarmakani 895). Regardless of the existence of this subgenre, also Jarmakani comments on the “lack of ‘minorities’ in romance and, in particular, of multiracial romances” (896).

While ethnicity is not portrayed in many romances, in immigrant fiction it plays a major role. Since immigrant fiction contains romance elements in it, thus, I will discuss it here. Natalie Friedman writes in her article “Marriage and the Immigrant Narrative” that “[t]he desire for the ‘American Dream’ is not the province of only men; however women

have been systematically shut out of that Dream, even in their own narratives, through marriage” (177). The female characters become shut out “because of the belief that a man is the head of the household” (Friedman, 177). According to “*Time* [Magazine], [freedom for women is a] release from patriarchal family constraints, such that the free choice of love object is the pure image of freedom itself” (Friedman, 177). This freedom is, according to Friedman, a fantasy that the United States offers (177). The reality for the immigrant women is actually “quite the opposite of the American fantasy” as a “marriage in America can be just as patriarchal an institution as it was in the homeland” (Friedman, 177). Friedman argues that “marriage is a form of assimilation that does not always work in the woman’s favor” (177).

Friedman claims that “[m]arriage – especially if it is exogamous – is not a means to assimilate and achieve; rather, it becomes a metaphor for the invisibility of certain immigrants, namely women, who effectively ‘disappear’ behind their husbands, especially in cultures that cling to traditional social and sexual hierarchies” (177). Friedman continues that “[i]n women’s immigrant fiction, then, female characters sometimes become invisible because of the belief that a man is the head of the house-hold. Conversely, in most masculine immigrant fictions women characters often disappear behind the narrative of the man’s ultimate success” (177). Since marriage is a way to shut out women of the American Dream, Friedman “predicts a narrative trend [...] in which the drive to Americanize comes at the cost of romantic happiness” (177).

It is a marriage to an American that should Americanize the immigrant woman and thus give her the American Dream but instead she either disappears behind her successful husband or she becomes invisible as the husband decides for her. These both scenarios have one thing in common: the immigrant woman stays out of sight. Friedman provides an alternative to marriage: work that, according to her, “might be a far more important social

ritual” than marriage and as such an “option for the immigrant woman’s survival in America” (Friedman, 176). In other words, the immigrant woman’s means to attain visibility is to work and thus be involved in the public sphere.

### 3. Analysing *Love Story*

In my analysis of *Love Story* I will concentrate on two topics: its use of romance conventions and the portrayal of ethnicity in the novel. The first topic is discussed in two sections. First I will discuss the elements that are typical for romance genre in general in. Then I will analyse *Love Story* based on Radway's functions in order to show that the novel follows the formula for the ideal popular romance. The second topic I will address in the third section in which I will examine the role of the intercultural relationship as represented in the novel.

#### 3.1 Origins of *Love Story*

*Love Story* is quite different from such modern romances in which the stories are mostly about women falling in love and getting married in the end. Yet these romances are only a part of a very varied genre and do not portray all of its characteristics. Romance literature has changed, but as I pointed out in the section 2.1, one of the defining aspects of the genre is that the narratives keep referring back to previous texts, repeating and rewriting them. On the basis of my discussion of the history of the genre, in this chapter I will show that *Love Story* has elements that stem from older romances.

I listed in the chapter 2.1 three romance conventions that McDermott claims to have originated from *Odyssey*. Two of them can be found in *Love Story*. Firstly, *Love Story* is the private story of Oliver and Jennifer's "domestic and adventurous life". Although in *Love Story* it is the relationship and its development which is Oliver and Jennifer's adventure. Secondly, *Love Story* introduces love and sexuality. Modern romances usually

end in the marriage of the hero and heroine, but the love presented in earlier romances was between married couples. In *Love Story*, the love matures during the novel. At first Oliver and Jennifer meet and fall in love and eventually marry, but the reader learns that their love story continues after the marriage. The third convention is the happy ending.

The ending for the romance between the protagonists is not a happy one in *Love Story*. The character Jennifer dies in the end which leaves Oliver heartbroken and alone. Although the ending is sad, it is not a hopeless one. As John G. Cawelti writes: “[t]hrough the usual outcome is a permanently happy marriage, more sophisticated types of love story sometimes end in the death of one or both the lovers, but always in such a way as to suggest that the love relation has been of lasting and permanent impact” (41-42). I will show that this is the case in *Love Story*.

*Love Story's* reader feels that the love between Jennifer and Oliver still exists in Oliver's heart and memories, as Oliver relives their story in the novel:

I began to think about God [...] Like when I woke up in the morning and Jenny was there. Still there. I'm sorry, embarrassed even, but I hoped there was God I could say thank you to. Thank you for letting me wake up and see Jennifer.  
(108)

From the *Love Story's* first sentence “What can I say about a 25-year-old girl who died?” (11) the reader learns that even after Jennifer's death, Oliver still reflects on their relationship. The novel continues by Oliver wondering the order of things dear to Jennifer. She is dead but Oliver still thinks about whether she loved Bach more than him. The novel consists of Oliver's memories as he is telling their love story. Thus the ending of the novel with Jennifer's death brings the reader back to the beginning. Although Jennifer dies in the

end, to quote Cawelti, “[i]t is not the inability of love to triumph over obstacles that brings about the death of Jenny, but a biological accident” as she dies of leukaemia (41). Their love triumphs over obstacles, but it cannot keep Jennifer alive.

Another reason for the untraditional ending of the romance may be, as Elizabeth Long writes of best sellers from the years 1969 to 1975, that “[h]appy endings become less common indicating that the familiar formulaic resolutions may have lost plausibility” (119). Thus the ending of *Love Story* is not necessarily a flaw in the story’s characteristics of romance but an indication of the time it was written in and the general atmosphere of the time period’s popular literature.

Though Jennifer dies at the end of the novel, the ending is not completely hopeless. The tragic impact of the death is decreased since the love between Oliver and his father is reaffirmed by showing their reconnection. This is seen in the novel when Oliver’s father arrives at the hospital after Jennifer has died:

“Oliver,” said my father urgently, “I want to help.”

“Jenny’s dead,” I told him.

“I’m sorry,” he said in a stunned whisper.

Not knowing why, I repeated what I had long ago learned from the beautiful girl now dead.

“Love means not ever having to say you’re sorry.”

And then I did what I had never done in his presence, much less in his arms. I cried. (127)

In other words, Jennifer’s death brings the father and son closer than they have ever been, and it is a new beginning for their relationship.



Fuchs has, on the other hand, pointed out different characteristics than McDermott. The first characteristic she draws attention to is hidden identities that are later revealed. Oliver's identity in the beginning of the novel is partly occluded since he is at the university and the university is no longer a place intended for the wealthy alone. He meets people with different backgrounds in a more equal setting. In the novel when Oliver meets Jennifer he tries to hide his identity himself by not telling his whole name to her:

“My name is Oliver,” I said.

“First or last?” she asked.

“First,” I answered, and then confessed that my entire name was Oliver Barrett. (I mean that's most of it.) (13)

He is reluctant to tell his surname, which is seen in the way the narrator describes it as a ‘confession.’ As if Oliver were revealing a sin, and yet he still withholds the significant numeral. Thus he withholds the ‘sin’ of being the fourth Oliver Barrett instead of the first. This emphasizes not only Oliver's ambition to be number one, but also his strained relationship with his father. He denies his background and the long tradition of his family as if trying to escape the role planned for him. Oliver subsequently reveals his identity when Jennifer is not impressed by him:

“Hey, don't you know who I am?”

“Yeah,” she answered with kind of disdain. “You're the guy that owns Barrett Hall.”

She didn't know who I was.

“I don’t own Barrett Hall,” I quibbled. “My great-grandfather happened to give it to Harvard.” (14)

While Oliver despises his father and his family, at the same time he expects respect and admiration from others because of his family background. Oliver is used to receiving respect, and when Jennifer treats him like anybody he uses his family name to show that he deserves respect. He is at the same time trying to hide his background and expecting admiration because of it. He wants to escape the demands of his family tradition but remains a believer in the system and its values.

The protagonists’ identities are occluded at first since they are at the university where their different backgrounds do not stand out as much as they would in other circumstances. As Jennifer says in the novel:

“Harvard is like Santa’s Christmas bag. You can stuff any crazy kind of toy into it. But when the holiday’s over, they shake you out...” She hesitated. “...and you gotta go back where you belong.” (46)

Jennifer’s comment shows that she understands that they have different social statuses but she still does not know the extent of the difference. The true identities are revealed when Oliver and Jennifer meet each other’s parents. Jennifer sees how wealthy Oliver’s family really is when they are driving to the Barrett house:

Anyway, I drove slowly once we were on Barrett soil. It’s at least a half mile in from Groton Street to Dover House proper. En route you pass other...well, buildings. I guess it’s fairly impressive when you see it for the first time.

“Holy shit!” Jenny said.

“What’s the matter, Jen?”

“Pull over, Oliver. No kidding. Stop the car.”

I stopped the car. She was clutching.

Hey, I didn’t think it would be like this.”

“Like what?”

“Like this rich. I mean, I bet you have *serfs* living here.” (49-50; emphasis original)

Jennifer’s reaction highlights the protagonists’ class difference. She expected the Barrett family to be wealthy but is quite intimidated with the reality. Jennifer’s comment on serfs suggests that the difference is such that it is as if she had been taken to another time. It also insinuates that the Barretts are the equivalent of the mean landowner profiting from the work of his slaves.

The contrast between these two backgrounds is further emphasized when it is Oliver’s turn to meet Jennifer’s father. Oliver has a reaction similar to hers when he sees what a tight knit community it is where Jennifer grew up:

Jenny lived on a street called Hamilton Avenue, a long line of wooden houses with many children in front of them, and a few scraggly trees. Merely driving down it, looking for a parking space, I felt like in another country. To begin with there were so many people. Besides the children playing, there were entire families sitting on their porches with apparently nothing better to do this Sunday afternoon than to watch me park my MG. (65)

Oliver's reaction reveals that he had not anticipated Jennifer's neighbourhood to be so involved in each other's lives. He feels the neighbourhood watching him and especially his car, which is an English sport car. Most likely such cars are rarely seen there. According to the narrative, Oliver feels like he is in another country which highlights the cultural clash.

The protagonists of *Love Story* are also idealized, which is another characteristic that Fuchs mentions. Whereas Oliver is wealthy, good-looking, athletic, confident and smart, Jennifer, although she is poor, is a talented musician, witty, smart and beautiful. The third convention Fuchs points out concerns the marvels and monsters of Classic romances. In *Love Story* these are the power of Oliver and Jennifer's love and Jennifer's leukaemia. Their tasks and tests in the novel are overcoming the obstacles that their relationship faces and those obstacles: Oliver's parents' disapproval of their marriage, the infertility and struggling with money. Much like the medieval romances that are older texts rewritten in French, *Love Story* is also transformed to fit in the different time and place. Thus *Love Story* does not have the kind of monsters found in Classical romances. The romance has transformed in a new context. As Radford describes the change:

the 'magic' which in earlier romances rescues the hero from false Grails becomes in *Jane Eyre* a supernatural voice which unites her with her 'true' destiny [...] that magical/supernatural/Providential force is in today's romance represented as coming from *within*: as the magic and omnipotent power of sexual desire. (10; emphasis original)

In medieval romances the hero's experience of love was emphasized. Similarly in *Love Story* it is the hero's experience of love that the reader learns. *Love Story* is the story of Oliver Barrett IV, who is a modern version of a knight/an aristocratic male. He comes

from a family of wealth that has been passed on and increased through generations. The Barretts have a long tradition of athleticism and studying in Harvard, one of the most respected universities in the United States of America. In *Love Story* this is highlighted by Jennifer's reaction when she learns the Barrett family tree from portraits:

Jenny was taken aback by some of the portraits we passed. Not just that some were by John Singer Sargent (notably Oliver Barrett II, sometimes displayed in the Boston Museum), but the new realization that not all of my forebears were named Barrett. There had been solid Barrett *women* who had mated well and bred such creatures as Barrett Winthrop, Richard Barrett Sewall and even Abbott Lawrence Lyman, who had the temerity to go through life (and Harvard, its implicit analogue), becoming a prize-winning chemist, without so much as a Barrett in his middle name!

[...]

At the end of the long row of portraits, and just before one turns in the library, stands a glass case. In the case are trophies. Athletic trophies.

"They're gorgeous," Jenny said. "I've never seen ones that look like real gold and silver."

"They are." (50-51; emphasis original)

The family's wealth and long traditions are appreciated by Oliver's parents as they have the portraits of their ancestors hanging on the wall and the trophies on the show. Oliver has grown up with the constant reminder of the achievements of his relatives. Because of the tradition Oliver's parents expect him to succeed in his studies and in life so that he will continue the Barrett way of life: earning money and respect.

Although the hero's experience of love was stressed in medieval romances, so was the women's perspective. Hansson mentions that the heroine of medieval romances had power: the power to seduce men (83). She was also a threat to male bonding and the social order (Hansson 84). In *Love Story*, Jennifer is seen as threat by Oliver's father. What he sees is not a music student, but a poor woman with ethnic background taking advantage of his WASP son. Jennifer is powerful, getting the womanizer Oliver feel insecure:

After that, she was pretty quiet. Could we have run out of conversation so quickly? Had I turned her off by not being related to the poet? What? She simply sat there, semi-smiling at me. For something to do, I checked out her notebooks. (14)

Oliver does not know what to do when Jennifer just sits silently. He needs to keep himself busy by checking her notebooks. He is trying to take control of the situation, but he fails and gets frustrated:

“Jenny, if you're so convinced that I'm a loser, why did you bulldoze me into buying you coffee?”

She looked me straight in the eye and smiled.

“I like your body,” she said. (14)

As Jennifer answers, she reveals how she is in control of the situation by looking Oliver straight in the eye and boldly commenting her motives to be purely physical attraction.

Although *Love Story* does not have all the conventional romance elements, it does have many of the characteristics that have their origins in older romances. Of the romance

conventions I have discussed *Love Story* contains all but one: the happy ending. As I have suggested, it is not a flaw in the novel's generic conventions but an indication of the time it was written in and as a result the novel still provides a sentiment of everlasting love.

### 3.2 The Formula for *Love Story*

Although *Love Story* has many of the romance elements which stem from older romances, it is a popular romance novel published in 1970. Thus, in this section, I will analyse *Love Story* based on the formula for more modern popular romance. As I suggested in section 2.2, there are two sides to a formula: a plot type and "a conventional way of treating some specific thing or person" (Cawelti 5). In this section I will examine the plot of *Love Story* and show that it follows the formula of popular romances. I will also analyse the hero and heroine of *Love Story* in order to show that they fit in the latter usage of the formula.

The typical formula for the romance narrative is that a boy and a girl meet, they fall in love, the course of their relationship encounters obstacles but the couple eventually solves the problems, marry, and the narrative ends with the impression that they will live happily ever after. *Love Story* breaks the illusion of a happily ending story right at the beginning with its very first sentence. The reader discovers right from the beginning that the heroine is dead. Nevertheless, *Love Story* has some elements of the larger plot type called romance: Oliver and Jennifer meet, there are obstacles on the course of their relationship but the couple eventually solves their issues and marries. The obstacles that Jennifer and Oliver have in the path of their relationship are both social and psychological which is what most romantic formulas centre on (Cawelti 42). Jennifer's and Oliver's major obstacle is that Jennifer is a poor girl who falls in love with a rich man. It is "a

favourite formulaic plot [...] which might be called the Cinderella formula” (Cawelti 42). The most recognizable difference is that the story of Jennifer and Oliver does not end here. They continue to face obstacles but get through them until Jennifer dies of leukaemia.

Jones’s view on the romance plot differs from Cawelti’s, but as she stated it is “still used by older writers” (198). Thus it is not a plot summary that describes all romances but some of them. *Love Story* differs significantly from Jones’s description: The hero and heroine of *Love Story* are also equal in age, the heroine is not a virgin, the hero is hinted to being ‘sexually expert’ but he is not domineering nor does he “take[...] the reins erotically” (Jones 198). In *Love Story* it is the heroine who is in control of the situation even when matters become erotic:

“Jenny, for Christ’s sake, how can I read John Stuart Mill when every single second I’m dying to make love to you?”

She screwed up her brow and frowned.

“Oh, Oliver, wouldja please?”

I was crouching by her chair. She looked back into her book.

“Jenny—”

She closed her book softly, put it down, then placed her hands on the sides of my neck.

“Oliver—wouldja please.”

It all happened at once. Everything. (40)

Jennifer is not the typical virgin heroine who fights of the hero until they are married. Jones’s description is accurate, but only of certain types of romance. She does not take into consideration in her summary the changeability of romance. As Stephanie Burley claims:



Trends in popular romance signal a move towards queerer economies of representation, especially with respect to the “typical” hero. The replacement of 1970s-style bodice-rippers with virginal men and sexually experienced women (a replacement that occurred in response to readers’ preferences) suggests a taste for more fluid erotic affiliations in women’s popular culture. (146)

Although *Love Story* was published in 1970 and the 1970s still had those ‘bodice-rippers,’ the popularity of *Love Story* shows that the readers of romance were already ready for change: the change that transforms not only the typical hero but also the typical heroine. The 1970s is a time when women’s roles were changing as women were fighting for equality and it is also seen as a time for women’s sexual liberation. This change is reflected in 1970s to 1980s romance literature, as “in a last neat twist of romance conventions, Judith Krantz even makes her latest heroine the initiator of sexual action, possessing the secret knowledge of arousing desire, formerly the prerogative of the experienced male” (Fowler 105).

As Jones’s summary of a romance plot is quite rigid I shall emphasize Radway’s functions in analysing *Love Story*. Radway listed functions that should be found in an ideal romance (134). Since, as discussed earlier, one does not find all the conventional elements of romance in *Love Story*, it is not surprising that it does not include all of Radway’s 13 functions in its storyline. Furthermore, the functions in the list cannot be found in *Love Story* as such, since the novels read by the Smithton women are mainly written from the female perspective. In contrast, *Love Story* is written from the hero’s perspective, and its hero and heroine are not a typical romance couple. In fact, their roles are often reversed: as

I pointed earlier, it is often the heroine of *Love Story* who is in control, not the hero and in their first meeting the heroine is indifferent towards the hero. As Modleski claims: “typically in the first meeting between hero and heroine, the man’s indifference, contempt, or amusement is emphasized (40), not the heroine’s as is the case in *Love Story*. Hence it has been necessary for me to modify the functions, so that some of the events are seen from the hero’s point of view.

According to Radway, the first function in the ideal romance is that the heroine is removed from her familiar setting and she is feeling a loss (134–135). *Love Story* begins with Oliver, the hero, telling the reader of Jennifer’s, the heroine’s, death. Although one could argue that death is the ultimate removal from the familiar, it is not Jennifer in *Love Story* who is feeling the loss, but the hero:

What can you say about a twenty-five-year-old girl who died?

That she was beautiful. And brilliant. That she loved Mozart and Bach. And the Beatles. And me. (11)

In *Love Story* it is not the heroine who is feeling the loss in the beginning, and thus it will not be the heroine’s transformation that the narrative describes. Rather, it focuses on the hero’s transformation from an insecure adolescent, who is in a way isolated from his parents: Oliver feels distant to both his mother and father and is slightly intimidated by the latter. He is unsure of his own identity since he feels that he is mere a copy of his father, similar but not as good. As the novel puts it, Oliver has “grown up with notion that [he] always had to be number one” (11). Yet Oliver feels second best, because his mother loves his father more than her son. When Oliver brings Jennifer to see his parents, the reader finds out that Oliver’s relationship with his mother is a complicated one. When Oliver and

his father debate and the latter is triumphant, Oliver's thoughts are described as follows: "My mother smiled at this, apparently satisfied that *her* Oliver had taken that set" (55; emphasis original).

The second function is that the hero reacts antagonistically to an aristocratic male. There is no aristocratic male in *Love Story*, but there is a wealthy and powerful bourgeois man, Oliver's father, who can be seen as the representative of the aristocratic male. Oliver reacts to his father defiantly when he asks Oliver to wait a while before marrying Jennifer:

"Define 'while,' please."

"Finish law school. If this is real, it can stand the test of time."

"It *is* real, but why in hell should I subject it to some arbitrary test?" My implication was clear I think. I was standing up to him. To his arbitrariness. To his compulsion to dominate and control my life.

"Oliver." He began a new round. "You're a minor –"

"A minor *what*?" I was losing my temper, goddammit.

"You are not yet twenty-one. Not legally an adult."

"Screw the legal nitpicking, dammit!" (62; emphasis original)

The conversation between Oliver and his father continues to the next function: The aristocratic male responds ambiguously to the hero. Oliver's father says to him "in a biting whisper: 'Marry her now, and I will not give you the time of day'" (62). With this remark Oliver's father isolates Oliver from his family. While earlier Oliver only felt distant from his parents, now he also has to provide for himself.

The fourth function cannot be found in *Love Story*. The hero never interprets the heroine's behaviour as evidence of a purely sexual interest in him or if he does, he is not

unhappy about this. In the beginning of the novel, Jennifer tells Oliver that she went for coffee with him because she liked his body (14). Nevertheless, even this does not lead Oliver to worry over whether Jennifer's interest in him is purely sexual. If Jennifer feels that Oliver's interest to her is only sexual, it is not told in the text. Jennifer appears to be sure of herself and in control of the situation, unlike Oliver.

The fifth function is that the hero responds to the heroine's behaviour with anger or coldness. In *Love Story*, Oliver responds to Jennifer's behaviour by showing with emotions of both anger and coldness. Jennifer is upset because Oliver no longer has any contact with his family so when Oliver's parents invite them over to celebrate the birthday of Oliver's father Jennifer replies to the invitation. She telephones Oliver's father and during their conversation asks Oliver to talk to him too. Oliver first responds with coldness: "I will never talk to him. Ever,' I said with perfect calm" (87). Jennifer tries further, but Oliver is adamant and refuses to converse with his father. Jennifer then gives Oliver's father a message that she claims to originate from Oliver:

"Mr. Barrett, Oliver does want you to know that in his own special way..."

She paused for breath. She had been sobbing, so it wasn't easy. I was much too astonished to do anything but await the end of my alleged 'message.'

"Oliver loves you very much," she said, and hung up very quickly. (88)

Oliver responds to this with anger: "God damn you, Jenny! Why don't you get the hell out of my life!" (88).

Jennifer leaves before Oliver's comment, when Oliver 'rippes' the telephone from her hand. Thus the sixth function is that the heroine retaliates by punishing the hero. Jennifer does this by leaving. This is followed by the seventh function which is the

physical separation of the hero and heroine. Jennifer leaves and Oliver does not know where she has gone. Oliver searches Jennifer for hours but is not able to find her until he returns to their house and finds her sitting on the stairs.

The eighth and the ninth function, the hero treating the heroine tenderly and the heroine responding warmly to this, take place between the functions one and two in the narrative structure of *Love Story*. This is understandable as they are events that in an ideal romance usually happen before the proposal, which in this narrative is not one of the ending functions. These functions, then, do not lead to the tenth function. The tenth function implicates that the hero had been the aristocratic male who treated the heroine ambiguously. As I have interpreted the third function to be in *Love Story* that Oliver's father responds to Oliver ambiguously, the tenth function is in *Love Story* Oliver's reinterpretation of his father's ambiguous behaviour as a product of previous hurt. However, there is no such event in *Love Story*. There is no need for this since it was not Oliver who treated Jennifer ambiguously, nor is there any need for them to get over this function. Oliver and his father, on the other hand, will mend their relationship without this function.

The eleventh function can be found in the form in which Radway wrote it, that is, "[t]he hero proposes to the heroine" (134). As such this function would be simple enough, but Radway continues it "with supreme act of tenderness" (134). The proposal does not relate to the above mentioned functions logically in the manner as Radway suggests. In the novel the proposal has already taken place after the first function and with no "supreme act of tenderness":

"What about our marriage?"

It was I who spoke those words, although for a split second I wasn't sure I really had.

"Who said anything about marriage?"

"Me. I'm saying it now."

"You want to marry me?"

"Yes."

She tilted her head, did not smile, but merely inquired: "Why?"

I looked her straight in the eye.

"Because," I said.

"Oh," she said. "That's a very good reason."

She took my arm (not my sleeve this time), and we walked along the river.

There was nothing more to say, really. (47)

Jennifer does not answer 'yes' to the proposal which was a sudden one even to Oliver who did the proposing. *Love Story* does not end in the proposal or the marriage which explains why Oliver's proposal is not the right interpretation for this function. Radway has other suggestions since the function needs not always take the form of a proposal. One of them is that the "hero demonstrates his unwavering commitment to the heroine with a supreme act of tenderness" (134). Oliver shows his commitment to Jennifer throughout the novel, but especially after he has proposed. First he defies his father, who does not approve the marriage, then he searches Jennifer for hours when they have argued, and finally he tries his best to act normally when the doctor tells him that Jennifer will die soon. He does so in order to let Jennifer lead a normal life as long as possible, since there is nothing that the doctors can do apart from easing her pain. Although Oliver indicates his commitment in several ways, the event that qualifies for the eleventh function is when he goes to his father

to ask for money. At the time he is already earning quite well, but the treatment for Jennifer's illness costs more than he can afford to himself. The act itself is not tender, since it is asking for his financial assistance. However, because Oliver had earlier adamantly refused even to talk to his father, the act becomes a demonstration of Oliver's deep feelings towards Jennifer. He would not have gone to see his father for any other reason than his love for Jennifer.

The twelfth function is that the heroine responds sexually and emotionally. This is not found in the narrative of *Love Story* between the functions eleventh and thirteenth; at this point in the narrative the heroine is in the hospital about to die thus it is understandable that she does not respond sexually. Nevertheless, the heroine does act emotionally: "'It's nobody's fault, you preppie bastard,' she was saying. 'Would you please *stop* blaming yourself!'" (124; emphasis original). Jennifer knows that Oliver feels guilty because Jennifer has sacrificed her career to marry him, but she also wants him to know that for her it was not a sacrifice. Rather, it was what she wanted:

"Screw Paris," she said suddenly.

"Huh?"

"Screw Paris and music and all that crap you think you stole from me. I don't care, you sonovabitch. Can't you believe that?"

"No," I answered truthfully.

"Then get the hell out of here," she said. "I don't want you at my goddamn deathbed." (124)

The heroine almost forces the hero to believe her as she feels so strongly on the subject. Jennifer is so adamant that she lets Oliver stay only after Oliver has confirmed that he believes her.

The thirteenth and the final function is that “[t]he heroine’s identity is restored,” but in *Love Story* it is the hero’s identity that is restored (Radway 134). This happens after Jennifer dies and Oliver walks out of the hospital. Oliver’s father, who has found out why Oliver borrowed the money and rushed immediately to the hospital, learns from Oliver that Jennifer has passed away. As the novel puts it: “And then I did what I had never done in his presence, much less in his arms. I cried” (127). Oliver is thus reunited with his father. His identity as the son of the Barrett family is restored. The restoration of his identity also affirms his WASP identity and the patriarchal order.

The Smithton women claim that Erich Segal’s *Love Story* is not a romance, since “[t]o qualify as a romance, the story must chronicle, not merely the events of a courtship but *what it feels like* to be the *object* of one” (Radway 64; emphasis original). Nevertheless, *Love Story* includes several of the functions that Radway lists as elements of an ideal romance and it is categorized as romance by Cawelti. In her discussion, Laura Kinsale claims that Radway would have been right if she had stopped her sentence after “*what it feels like*.” Kinsale argues that:

If Radway had stopped there, she would have been close to the heart of the matter, but she goes on to say “*what it feels like* to be the *object* of one, though this need not be accomplished by telling the story solely from the heroine’s point of view.” Radway’s own italics in this second quote highlight where it is that she falls victim to the belief that the female reader is identifying only with



the heroine, whether or not in the heroine's point of view. (36; emphasis original)

Kinsale continues her critique by claiming that “[w]hen Radway says, ‘The focus never shifts for these readers away from the woman at the center of the romance,’ I think she is wrong. One hundred percent dead blind wrong. I flatly believe that *the man carries the book*” (36; emphasis in original). This is, indeed, the case with *Love Story*.

In *Love Story*, the stereotypes that Cawelti mentions are found in the characters of Oliver and Jennifer. Oliver's character embodies the stereotypes of the ‘jock’ and the successful WASP: he is good looking, sure of himself, wealthy, has many friends, is intelligent, and has a reputation among the ladies. Jennifer, on the other hand, is stereotypical of the poor and smart college girl. She wears glasses, is smart and talented enough to get a grant, since her father who is a single parent could not otherwise have afforded sending her to Radcliffe.

As I discussed in the section 2.2, Cawelti points out two ways in which the stereotypes can be vitalized. Eric Segal has performed at least the second vitalization of adding “touches of human complexity” to the character of Oliver. Despite his reputation and the way he categorises girls: “There were two girls working there. One a tall tennis-anyone type, the other a bespectacled mouse type. I opted for Minnie Four-Eyes” (12), the novel shows that Oliver has a sensitive side as well. The character of Oliver changes from this stereotypical portrayal when he meets Jennifer. He is suddenly nervous and unsure of himself when he falls in love with her. Oliver acts in a manner that indicates the difference in his feelings for this particular girl:

By now Jennifer had read my bio in the program. I made triple sure that Vic Claman, the manager, saw that she got one.

*“For Christ’s sake, Barrett, is this your first date?”*

*“Shut up, Vic, or you’ll be chewing your teeth.”* (16; emphasis original)

Vic, who is the manager of the hockey team that Oliver plays in, notices that it seems as if Oliver were on his first date when Jennifer comes to see him play hockey. Oliver acts so since in reality he is rather experienced in dating women but inexperienced in loving someone. Nevertheless, according to Radway “they [the readers] prefer to see the heroine desired, needed, and loved by a man who is strong and masculine, but equally capable of unusual tenderness, gentleness, and concern for her pleasure” (81). Oliver’s character combines these characteristics when he falls in love with Jennifer. As Daphne Clair states:

[the heroines] may be in their thirties or forties, older than most heroines of twenty years ago, while the typical hero is often younger and less sure of himself than formerly. Yet the classic elements of romance still hold the imagination of vast numbers of readers. Beneath the faultlessly cut suit or designer jeans of many a civilised, seemingly liberal modern hero lurks the untamed savage, Heathcliff. But no matter how he struggles and fumes, in the end he is tamed and domesticated by a woman’s gentle strength. (70)

Although the Smithton women do not qualify *Love Story* as a romance, many of the details they want from a romance can be found in it. Oliver is clearly described recognizing his feelings for Jennifer. “What I am fumbling to say is that I felt different about Jennifer, and didn’t know what to say or even who to ask about it. (‘You should have asked me,’ she

said later.) I just knew I had these feelings. For her. For all of her” (40). To sum up, *Love Story* seems to contain plenty of the elements the Smithton women want in an ideal romance: not only does it follow the functions of an ideal romance but it contains the way in which the hero realizes his own profound feelings for the heroine.

### 3.3 Intermarriage in *Love Story*

In the section 3.1 I brought up the role of ethnic difference in the backgrounds of Jennifer and Oliver. In this section I will discuss the issue in more detail by concentrating on the aspects of intermarriage and ethnicity and their portrayal in *Love Story*.

Jennifer’s ethnicity plays a role in *Love Story* since as a working-class ethnic heroine she is not an ideal love object “for the heir to the Barrett name and fortune” (Pelzer 21). Although she is portrayed in the novel to be proud of her roots she also has feelings of inferiority as she studies in the prestigious Radcliffe College on a scholarship amongst students whose family can afford the tuition fees. Jennifer’s feelings of inferiority show in the novel as she is about to meet Oliver’s parents and sees the driveway to their house for the first time. It is a moment when Jennifer finally realizes the contrast between her and Oliver’s backgrounds. Although Jennifer has known before that she and Oliver have different social statuses, it is when she sees the “half mile drive in from Groton Street to Dover House proper” (49) and the buildings alongside the road that she begins to feel that she should be someone else in order to qualify to marry in to the family. She asks Oliver: “why is it I suddenly wish my name was Abigail Adams, or Wendy WASP?” (50). It shows that Jennifer is aware of the importance of name. What this means is that Jennifer’s last name is one of the first features that reveals her lower social status to Oliver’s parents.

Jennifer's reaction reveals that she feels that if her name sounded less ethnic, it would be more acceptable. Jennifer herself is not an immigrant nor does she even speak Italian; it is thus her name Cavilleri that tells unquestionably of her ethnic background. In the beginning of the narrative, Jennifer is proud of her ethnicity, as can be noticed from how she introduces herself to Oliver: "'I'm Jennifer Cavilleri,'... 'an American of Italian descent'" (13). She emphasizes her background although it became clear from her last name. In the novel this is contrasted with Oliver's introduction where he "confesses" that his "entire name" is Oliver Barrett, but it is not his entire name since he leaves the numeral out. The initial setting is quite different. Oliver is embarrassed or self-conscious of his background whereas Jennifer is proud of hers. It seems as if the roles should be reversed. Oliver's name awakens positive connotations whereas Jennifer's Italian name evokes memories of gangsters and an enemy at war. Jennifer is an Italian American character, which makes her classifiable in the category of 'PIGS'. Regardless her whiteness, she still lacks something. As Guglielmo and Vecoli suggest, Italian American identity is a complex one. To use the words of Gardaphé:

If not totally black, Italians have certainly complicated the notion of whiteness in America so that they are neither totally white, and it is this in between status that makes them likely candidates for assisting in the abolition of whiteness in the United States. For those who can naïvely say we are not black, others counter with the truth, that we were not always white. (*Leaving* 135)

In contrast to Jennifer's, Oliver's name has a different impact. As Oliver puts it in the novel: "[m]y illustrious name enabled us to establish a charge account at a grocery store

which would otherwise have denied credit to students” (81). Oliver’s name also makes him more desirable for law firms after he graduates and receives employment offers:

I was the only one who wasn’t Jewish. (And anyone who says it doesn’t matter is full of it.) Christ, there are dozens of firms who will kiss the ass of a WASP who can merely pass the bar. Consider the case of yours truly: Law Review, all-Ivy, Harvard and you know what else. Hordes of people were fighting to get my name and numeral onto their stationery. I felt like a bonus baby—and I loved every minute of it. (97–98)

It is the name that evokes the notion of financial affluence as Jennifer realises when applying for an employment:

“Of course, Shady Lane isn’t able to match the public school salaries,” Miss Anne Miller Whitman, the principal, told my wife, adding something to the effect that Barretts wouldn’t be concerned with “that aspect” anyway. Jenny tried to dispel her illusions, but all she could get in addition to the already offered thirty-five hundred for the year was about two minutes of “ho ho ho”s. Miss Whitman thought Jenny was being so witty in her remarks about Barretts having to pay the rent just like other people. (81)

As the Barrett name symbolizes wealth and respect, people assume that Jennifer and Oliver are wealthy. The name actually works for their disadvantage in the above mentioned situation as they are not believed to need money. Miss Whitman sees Jennifer Barrett as someone from the Barrett family, not as a person with Italian American background.

Through her marriage, Jennifer has lost her ethnic identity in the eyes of others. Gardaphé claims that:

There is much that the many peoples who have come to America agree is wonderful about living in this land, but the first lesson any immigrant group learns is that ‘making it’ in this country happens at the expense ‘unmaking’ ethnic identity and allegiance to Old World customs and behavior. This holds true for intracultural institutions as well. When ‘making it’ means moving from working class, to middle class, to upper class, sooner or later we must understand that upward mobility means ascribing to the cultural values that belong to each class and to the category of whiteness; ancestral traditions become ancillary side shows that we can foster only in our spare time. (*Leaving* 124–5)

Jennifer has ‘unmade’ her ethnic identity upon marrying Oliver. The transformation of her ethnic identity shows not only in her change of her name, but also because of her religion as well. Even before she met Oliver, she had not been a practising Catholic, but her family were not aware of this. This however becomes evident for them upon Jennifer marrying Oliver since they were not invited to the wedding. Oliver states that their “reason for excluding Jenny’s relatives was out of genuine concern that [their] omission of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost would make the occasion far too trying for unlapsed Catholics” (74). It is very uncommon for the Italian culture to have a woman support her husband financially. The stereotypical Italian woman is married, she keeps the house tidy and cooks big meals for her husband and children. Although Jennifer’s ethnic identity is ‘unmade’ after their marriage, she finds it again when her and Oliver’s roles switch: Oliver takes the

financial responsibility and Jennifer stays at home. Oliver describes the situation after Jennifer illness had been known for a month: “She was still doing the cooking; she insisted on it. I had finally persuaded her to allow me to clean up (though she gave me heat about it not being ‘man’s work’)” (114). Thus she resorts back to the traditional roles for the husband and wife after first having the man’s role of earning the money.

Oliver’s parents can be seen as the purists that Sollors discusses, as they fear that their grandchildren will not resemble them. In this novel we can see the conventional ending for intermarriage which Sollors emphasizes is often tragic in literature (*Beyond* 224). In *Love Story* the heroine, who has an ethnic background, is unable to conceive. In fact after the couple start planning children the heroine is found out to be ill. As she dies before she has ‘mixed blood’ children, the Barrett name stays ‘pure.’

Jarmakani claims that the romance “authors sometimes use exotic tropes to give the hero his hard edges” (896). As examples she mentions the Latin and Native American heroes. She claims that “In constructing the figure of the Latin lover [...] authors can mobilize mainstream assumptions about machismo to signify alpha maleness. In Native American heroes, romance authors can mobilize the fierce warrior stereotype” (Jarmakani 896). Jarmakani calls these types of heroes “exoticized romance heroes” (896). In *Love Story* the ‘roles’ of the heroine and the hero are sometimes reversed, and it is not the hero but the heroine who is exoticized. This can be seen when Oliver describes Jennifer’s background when he is about to meet her father for the first time:

I mean, here I would be bucking that lotsa love Italian-Mediterranean syndrome, compounded by the fact that Jenny was an only child, compounded by the fact that she had no mother, which meant abnormally close ties to her

father. I would be up against all those emotional forces the psych books describe. (63)

In *Love Story*, Jennifer is about to achieve the American Dream: she has studied at a prestigious university and she has been accepted to study abroad with a famous music teacher. If Jennifer went there, she could become a famous musician, be independent, and have a good income on her own. As a result, her social status would improve. Her reality in the novel, however, is “quite the opposite of the American fantasy” (Friedman, 177). Although Jennifer has a free choice of her love object, i.e., her family lets her choose whom she loves, she is not ‘free’ to marry him. The objection comes from Oliver’s side, which is the Anglo-American side. She marries Oliver but he no longer receives financial support from his family and it is Jennifer who has to support him. She takes on a job as a teacher in order to do so and thus sacrifices her future as a musician. In Friedman’s words, Jennifer is “shut out of that [American] Dream [...] through marriage” (177).

*Love Story* also shows that Jennifer has the destiny of the invisible immigrants Friedman discusses. She was more assimilated and achieved more before her marriage. Jennifer loses her own ambition after she marries Oliver. At first she supports Oliver while he still studies, but after he graduates and begins working at a well-paying law firm, Jennifer moves with him to New York and becomes a housewife. She becomes invisible without her active role in the public. When Oliver’s ‘friends’ invite them over, Jennifer says: “‘Fuck ‘em, Oliver. I don’t want to waste two days bullshitting with a bunch of vapid preppies” (101). Unlike Oliver, who plays squash with a friend several times a week, Jennifer has no social life after their move to New York. She “disappears” behind her husband as she remains in the domestic sphere, and in addition to this, her invisibility takes on another meaning when she begins to fade away physically. First, she loses weight as her



illness progresses and thus becomes less visible; second, she dies and becomes truly invisible. Much like Cora's death in *The Last of the Mohicans* after Jennifer dies she no longer threatens "the boundaries drawn between races and cultures" (Dean 64). Similarly to Heyward, Oliver is now free to marry a WASP, thus protecting the racial integrity of the Barrett bloodline.

Oliver is very competitive and winning appeals to him. As he thrives to be successful, Jennifer's career and hopes are less important. It is not mentioned in the novel why Jennifer has to choose between her marriage to Oliver and going to Paris to study. It is taken for granted that Jennifer is the one who sacrifices her career and "becomes invisible". Oliver is thus already conforming to the values of his status.

In *Love Story*, Jennifer does not achieve success by her marriage to a successful man. In fact she makes him successful and independent by acting as the incentive for Oliver to break free from his family. Jennifer does not do this actively but she becomes the means to Oliver to find his independence. Oliver uses her, although unintentionally, to gain independence and after she has fulfilled that role, she has no purpose in the mostly WASP society.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this thesis my aim was to demonstrate that Erich Segal's *Love Story* is a romance novel despite its unconventional romance elements. In the introductory chapter of my thesis, I gave a brief description of Erich Segal and his career. I also pointed out the criticism *Love Story* received after its publication while providing a short summary of the novel's plot.

The theory chapter of my thesis consists of three sections. The section 2.1 discusses the history of romance genre, from its origins to more contemporary popular romance novels. As the genre has been through several changes, it was important to examine what the true elements of romance are that characterize the whole genre. It became evident that despite these changes there are elements that stem from the older romances. One of the characterizing elements of the genre is its iterability: romance novels have elements that refer back to older texts that are repeated and rewritten.

Since *Love Story* is a popular novel from 1970, it was important to concentrate in detail on the more modern popular romance novels. In the section 2.2 of my thesis, I discussed the formula of popular romance novels. Since the term formula refers to both plot types and cultural stereotypes I examined first the plot type of romance and then the conventional way in which the hero and heroine are treated in romance novels. Although there are different summaries that describe the typical romance novel plot, I found Radway's list of functions to be the most useful. Those functions provide a summary of the narrative structure of the ideal romance. As the second usage of the term formula, I discovered that during the period of late 1960s to 1970s, the conventional stereotype for the heroine was the intelligent and achieving college girl. It is also conventional for the hero and heroine to be ideal people.

In the last theory section of my thesis, I discussed the role of intermarriage in romance literature. I began by providing a brief description of the attitude towards ethnicity during the decades before *Love Story* was published in order to show that the Italian American identity is a complex one and significantly different as opposed to the majority of Americans. I gave examples of the portrayal of ethnicity in academic publications as well as in the texts of Italian Americans themselves. In the latter part of the section I discussed the role of intercultural relationships in literature. I discovered that the mixed marriages often appeared hazardous in American literature, and the ending of such unions were typically tragic.

I concentrated in my analysis of *Love Story* to the conventions of romance. In the section 3.1 I analyzed the romance elements that stem from the older romances. One of the important aspects of this section was to discover the significance of the untraditional romance ending of *Love Story*. As I hope to have shown, the ending of *Love Story* is sad but not a hopeless one. The love between the protagonists does not end in the death of the heroine, but it continues in the memories of the hero. Another love story also begins, as the father and son are reunited. The return of the prodigal son back to his family also validates the love story between the protagonists as the father realizes the depth of his son's feelings towards the heroine. He learns that the relationship between Oliver and Jennifer was not merely an act of rebellion against him but it was true love. The father can now be convinced of it as the poor ethnic heroine did not gain anything from the marriage.

In the section 3.2 of my thesis I analysed *Love Story* on the basis of Radway's thirteen functions. Since *Love Story* contains unconventional romance elements I needed to modify the functions: the roles of the hero and heroine are often reversed so I needed to reverse them in some of the functions as well. After the modification most of the functions

were found from *Love Story*, despite the Smithton women's claim that *Love Story* is not a true romance.

In the final part of my analysis I concentrated on the role of ethnicity in *Love Story*. As the heroine of the novel is a poor Italian American girl, she is not considered a suitable bride to the hero. The hero's WASP background is contrasted to the heroine's Catholicism and ethnicity. At first it seems that the heroine achieves the American Dream as she marries the hero despite his family's refusal to accept the union. She has 'unmade' her ethnic identity working as Jennifer Barrett in the WASP society, while the hero continues his studies. However, when Oliver graduates and is employed, Jennifer loses her role in the American society. She also loses her American Dream as she disappears behind Oliver's success. She begins to fade away because of her illness and finally is out of sight altogether as she dies. When dead, she is no longer a threat to the Barrett family as she can no longer benefit from their wealth. Similarly, Oliver's father no longer needs to fear that the relationship will produce mixed-race children. The reason for the son's and father's disparity is gone. The vivacity of the Italian American girl has taught the cold Anglo-Saxons how to love with her words of wisdom: "[l]ove means not ever having to say you're sorry" (127). As the love between the couple continues despite the heroine's death, the novel is still capable of continuing the tradition of tragic endings for interracial couples while keeping its status as a romance novel.

A possible future research topic is the oedipal relationship between Oliver and his father as Oliver's inability to express his love for his father suggests. The role of ethnicity in *Love Story* can still be examined further as well as the role of the dialogue between Jennifer and Oliver.

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## Finnish Summary

Romanssikirjallisuutta on pitkään pidetty ala-arvoisena kirjallisuuden lajina. Harva tietää kuinka paljon rohkeutta vaatii naiselta avata romanssi lentokoneessa, sillä yhteiskunta on aina tuomitsemassa kirjallisuuden lisäksi lukijankin. Erich Segal olisi voinut lisätä tähän että yhteiskunta tuomitsee myös kirjailijan.

Tutkielmassani analysoin Erich Segalin romaania *Love Story* (Rakkaustarina). Aikomukseni on osoittaa että *Love Story* on romanssi kuten sen nimi vihjaa. Tämä on kyseenalaistettu, sillä nimestään huolimatta *Love Story* sisältää romanssille epätyypillisiä konventioita, kuten esimerkiksi, että tarina ei lopu päähenkilöiden naimisiinmenon jälkeen vaan vasta myöhemmin kun toinen päähenkilöistä kuolee.

*Love Story* on Erich Segalin ensimmäinen romaani. Hän kirjoitti sen ensin elokuvan käsikirjoitukseksi ja muokkasi romaaniksi. *Love Story* julkaistiin helmikuussa 1970 ja siitä tuli vielä samana vuonna best-seller. Erich Segal oli yliopisto-opettaja joka opetti kreikan- ja latinankielistä kirjallisuutta Yalen, Harvardin ja Princetonin yliopistoissa. *Love Storyn* suosio kuitenkin vähensi Erich Segalin akateemista arvostusta ja hän suostui jäämään virkavapaalle virastaan Yalen yliopistosta. 1971 *Love Story* nimettiin ehdolle National Book Awardin saajaksi, mutta ehdokkuus peruttiin tuomariston viiden jäsenen uhatessa erollaan. Erich Segal kuoli vuonna 2010 Englannissa, jonne hän oli muuttanut aiemmin.

*Love Story* on kertomus Oliver Barrett IV:n ja Jennifer Cavillerin rakkaudesta. Oliverin perhe on jo vuosia ollut rikas ja arvostettu ja perheen perinteenä on jo pitkään ollut opiskelu Harvardissa. Jennifer taasen on Italian amerikkalaisen työläisperheen tytär, joka opiskelee musiikkia Radcliffen Collegessa. Oliver ja Jennifer rakastuvat ja päättävät mennä naimisiin Oliverin perheen vastustuksesta huolimatta. Oliverin perhe ei tämän takia enää anna taloudellista tukea Oliverin opiskelua varten, joten Jennifer menee töihin

elättääkseen Oliveria tämän jatkaessa opintojaan. Lopulta Oliver valmistuu ja saa hyväpalkkaisen työn asianajajana, jolloin pariskunta alkaa toivoa perheenisäystä. Koska sitä ei ala kuulua, he menevät lääkäriin jossa selviääkin että Jenniferillä on parantumaton sairaus. Jennifer joutuu sairaalaan kalliisiin syöpähoitoihin kunnes lopulta kuolee. *Love Story* sai paljon negatiivista kritiikkiä osakseen, vaikka teos olikin lukijoiden arvostama. Kriitikot eivät pitäneet muun muassa kliseiden runsaudesta.

Aloitan romanssin teorian käsittelyn tutkimalla romanttisen kirjallisuuden alkuperää ja niitä romansseille tunnusomaisia piirteitä, jotka ovat luonnehtineet genreä alusta lähtien. Näitä piirteitä ovat ensiksi se, että aiheena on yhden ihmisen tarina kansakunnan tarinan sijaan, toiseksi se, että seikkailujen lisäksi kerrotaan rakkaudesta ja seksuaalisuudesta, ja lopuksi se, että tarina loppuu onnellisesti. Muita romanssille tunnusomaisia piirteitä tuli esiin Odysseian jälkeen kirjoitetuista romansseista: niissä on mm. juonenkäänteitä, joissa hahmon henkilöllisyys on ensin epäselvä ja totuus selviää tarinan edetessä: niiden päähenkilöt ovat ihanteellisia ihmisiä: he ovat kauniita, viisaita tai molempia, ja juoneen liittyy olennaisesti ihmeitä, hirviöitä, tehtäviä ja koetuksia.

Romanssien kirjoittajat ovat toistaneet samoja aiheita romaaneissaan ja kirjoittaneet suosituimpia tarinoita yhä uudelleen. Varsinkin kreikkalaiset ja roomalaiset legendat olivat suosittuja tarinoita, jotka ensin kirjoitettiin latinaksi ja myöhemmin käännettiin ranskaksi. Samalla niitä muokattiin sopimaan eri aikaan ja paikkaan. Näin tarinoihin, jotka sijoituivat menneisyyteen, tulivat näkyviin 1100-luvun hovin ja ritarikulttuurin ulkoiset merkit.

Alun perin romanssit eivät olleet tarinoita rakkaudesta vaan seikkailuista, mutta keskiajalla tämä muuttui. Ne koetukset ja seikkailut, jotka olivat aiemmissa romansseissa olleet ritarin haasteena, olivat Chaucerin ja Maloryn romansseissa romanttisen rakkauden aiheuttamia. Rakkaudesta tuli täten keskiajalla romanssin aihe, ja aiempien romanssien

uskomattomat ulkoapäin tulevat haasteet muokkautuivat rakastuneen ihmisen sisäisiksi haasteiksi: epäilyiksi ja mustasukkaisuudeksi.

Samalla kun romanssin kirjoittajat alkoivat kirjoittaa rakkaudesta, he alkoivat enenevässä määrin keskittyä kirjoituksessaan naisten näkökulmaan. Naisnäkökulmaan siirtyminen johtui myös siitä, että 1500-luvun jälkeen myös naiset alkoivat kirjoittaa romansseja eikä kirjoittaminen ollut enää vain miesten alaa. Romanssien aihe vaihtui kreikkalaisten legendojen seikkailevista miehistä tosirakkautta etsiviksi naisiksi, mutta samalla kreikkalaisia ja roomalaisia legendoja kirjoitettiin yhä vain uudelleen. 1700-luvulla romanssi koki lisää muutoksia, sillä yhä useampi ihminen pystyi ostamaan romaaneja painokoneen keksimisen vuoksi: kirjoista tuli kasvaneen tarjonnan myötä edullisempia.

Lukijakunnan määrän kasvaessa myös kysyntä kasvoi ja siitä tuli monimuotoisempaa. Toisaalta lukijat halusivat lukea viettelyksestä kertovia tarinoita, ja toisaalta he halusivat hyveellisempiä sankarittaria. Eräs kirjallisuuden tutkija jaottelee 1700-luvun romanssit kolmeen osaan: goottilaisiin romansseihin, kosiskeluromansseihin ja viettelyromansseihin. Viettelyromanssien olemassaolo voi tulla yllätyksenä niille, jotka ovat tottuneet lukemaan mm. Jane Austenin ja Brontën sisarusten teoksia. On kuitenkin tärkeää olla tietoinen näiden viettelystä ja seksuaalisuudesta kertovien romaanien olemassaolosta, sillä ne ovat varhaisimpia versioita suosituista 1970-luvulta alkaen tehdyistä romansseista, joista käytetään nimeä harlekiiniromanssit. Näissä harlekiiniromansseissa, kuten kosiskeluromansseissakin, tärkeää on sankarittaren hyveellisyys. Klassisen kaavan mukaan hän taistelee ylemmän luokkataustan omaavaan sankarin lähentelyjä vastaan, kunnes tälle ei jää muuta mahdollisuutta kuin kosia. Tämä romanssien kaavamaisuus on osa niiden suosiota: ne ovat muunnelmia peruskaavasta ja siksi entuudestaan jo tuttuja lukijoille.

Osiassa 2.2 käsittelen tarkemmin romanssin kaavaa, joka on käsitteenä kaksitahoinen: se kuvaa sekä universaalia juonikuviota, että henkilöhahmojen stereotyyppistä kuvausta, joka on sidoksissa aikaan ja kulttuuriin. Tärkeä romanssin juonikuvion kaava on Radwayn 13 funktiota, jotka kuvaavat sankarittaren kasvua epävarmasta nuoresta itsevarmaksi aikuiseksi naiseksi. Radwayn lista pohjautuu Smithtonin naisten, jotka ovat ryhmä innokkaita romanssikirjallisuuden lukijoita, valitsemiin romansseihin. Nämä naiset väittävät, että *Love Story* ei täytä romanssin tunnuspiirteitä ja siksi käytänkin tätä kaavaa analyysini pohjana.

Kaava tyypillisille romanssin sankarille ja sankarittarelle on kokenut muutoksia ajan myötä. Samalla kun yliopistoissa opiskelevien naisten määrä kasvoi, yleistyi kirjallisuudessa opiskelemaan lähtevä nuoren naisen tarina. Koska naiset olivat edelleen vähemmistönä yliopistoissa, näiden tarinoiden tyypillinen opiskelijatyttö oli älykäs suorittaja. Romanssin sankaritar on älykkyyden lisäksi usein myös verbaalisesti lahjakas: hän hurmaa ja haastaa rakastajansa sanailullaan. Sankarittarien ei tarvitse olla huolissaan suorudestaan sillä romanssien sankarit ovat yhtä vahvoja kuin hekin. Nämä sankarit ja sankarittaret ovat muullakin tavoin 'parempia ihmisiä:' he ovat onnekkaampia, vahvempia ja rohkeampia sekä osaavat löytää täydellisen kumppanin itselleen. He ovat lisäksi fyysisesti muita viehättävämpiä.

Viimeisessä teoria osiossa tarkastelen etnisyyden ja kulttuurien välisten ihmissuhteiden merkitystä kirjallisuudessa. Aloitan pohtimalla millainen amerikanitalialaisten minäkuva oli 1900-luvulla ja mitkä asiat siihen vaikuttivat. Näitä asioita ovat mm. amerikanitalialaisuuden yhdistäminen mafiaan ja gangstereihin, sekä sodan aikana viholliseen. Pohdin myös nimen merkitystä etnisenä tunnuksena, sitä miten se on tunnuksena konkreettinen ja luo siten yhteenkuuluvuutta etnisen ryhmän sisällä, mutta erottaa samalla muista. Lopuksi käsittelen sitä miten kulttuurien välisiä ihmissuhteita

kuvataan kirjallisuudessa. Usein näiden ihmissuhteiden kohtalot kuvataan traagisiksi sillä niiden katsotaan uhmaavan asioiden luonnollista järjestystä. Tämän takia tällaiset ihmissuhteet ovat harvoin romanssin aiheena sillä sellainen antaisi ymmärtää että tarinalla on traaginen loppu tyypillisen onnellisen lopun sijaan. *Viimeisessä Mohikaanissa* kuvataan kulttuurien välistä ihmissuhdetta. Siinä Cora, jonka annetaan ymmärtää olevan vain puoliksi valkoinen, rakastuu mohikaaniin nimeltä Uncas, mutta heidän tarinansa päättyy verisesti. Kuollessaan Cora ei enää uhkaa rotujen ja kulttuurien välisiä rajoja eikä haasta kauaksi ulottuvaa valkoista patriarkaalista hallintojärjestelmää. Vaikka romansseissa harvoin käsitellään kulttuurien välisiä rakkaustarinoita, ovat ne yleisiä maahanmuuttajien teksteissä. Friedman ehdottaa artikkelissaan, että maahanmuuttajanaisen sopeutuminen Yhdysvaltoihin onnistuu paremmin työn kuin avioliiton avulla. Mennessään naimisiin maahanmuuttajanainen on vaarassa muuttua näkymättömäksi, sillä usein avioliitto Yhdysvalloissa on yhtä patriarkaalinen instituutio kuin alkuperäisessä kotimaassakin.

*Love Storyn* analyysissä keskityn kahteen aiheeseen: siihen miten romaanissa hyödynnetään romanssin käytäntöjä ja sen tapaan kuvata etnisyyttä. Ensimmäinen aihe on jaettu kahteen osaan. Käsitelen ensin mitä romanssille alkujaan tunnusomaisia piirteitä *Love Storyssa* esiintyy ja sen jälkeen tutkin *Love Storyä* Radwayn 13 funktion pohjalta. Analyysini mukaan *Love Story* sisältää monia romanssin tunnusomaisia piirteitä, mutta ei sille ominaista onnellista loppua. *Love Storyn* loppu on kuitenkin surullisuudestaan huolimatta toiveikas, sillä päähenkilö ei lakkaa rakastamasta kirjan sankaritarta. Heidän välinen rakkautensa säilyy päähenkilön muistoissa sankarittaren kuoleman jälkeenkin, mikä vihjaa että heidän rakkautensa on jättänyt pysyvän vaikutuksen. Se että *Love Story* ei loppu onnellisesti voi osittain johtua siitä aikakaudesta milloin se on kirjoitettu. Vuosien 1969 ja 1975 välisen ajan menestyskirjoissa onnelliset loput olivat tavallista harvinaisempia. *Love Story* loppuu siihen, että Jenniferin kuoleman jälkeen Oliver haluaa

isäänsä ja he unohtavat erimielisyytensä. Täten lopun toiveikkuutta lisää myös Oliverin paluu perheensä pariin.

*Love Storyn* kaava seuraa enimmäkseen Radwayn 13:a funktiota, mutta koska romaanissa on kyse Oliverin, eikä Jenniferin, kasvusta itsenäiseksi aikuiseksi tutkimuksessa oli tarpeen muokata joitakin funktioita. *Love Storyssä* sankari kokee menetyksen, reagoi vihamielisesti yläluokkaista miestä edustavaan hahmoon eli isäänsä, joka sen jälkeen lakkaa tukemasta Oliveria taloudellisesti. Nämä ovat ensimmäiset kolme funktiota muokattuina niin, että sankaritar on vaihtunut sankariksi. Tällä tavoin *Love Storystä* löytyy myös viimeinen funktio Oliverin halatessa isäänsä romaanin lopussa: sankarin identiteetti palaa ennalleen hänen löytäessään jälleen yhteys perheeseensä. Muut funktiot ovat *Love Storyssä* sellaisenaan paitsi neljäs ja kymmenes, joita ei löydy ollenkaan. Analyysini mukaan *Love Story* sisältää 11 Radwayn 13:sta funktiosta, jotka määrittelevät ihanteellisen romanssin kaavan.

Viimeisessä osiossa keskityn kuvaamaan etnisyyden merkitystä *Love Storyssä*. Jennifer ei ole köyhän etnisen taustansa takia Oliverin perheen mielestä sopiva kumppani Oliverille. Jennifer on taustastaan ylpeä, mutta tuntee myös alemmuutta mikä selviää hänen toiveestaan olla nimeltään Wendy WASP, kun Oliver vie hänet ensimmäistä kertaa tapaamaan vanhempiaan. Tämä myös osoittaa Jenniferin ymmärtävän nimen merkityksen etnisenä tunnuksena. Kun Jenniferin nimi muuttuu avioliiton myötä Jennifer Barretiksi, on tilanne erilainen: sillä Jenniferiä ei enää pidetä köyhänä amerikanitalialaisena vaan rikkaana Barretin perheen jäsenenä. Hän on täten saavuttanut amerikkalaisen unelman avioliiton myötä, mutta vain näennäisesti. Todellisuudessa hän katoaa aviomiehensä menestyksen taakse, sillä samalla kun Oliver valmistuu ja pääsee töihin, Jennifer jää kotiin, pois näkyvistä. Tämä katoaminen korostuu *Love Storyssä* Jenniferin sairastuessa, jolloin hän alkaa laihtuessaan konkreettisesti kadota. Lopulta hän katoaa täysin kuollessaan, kuten

Cora *Viimeisessä mohikaanissa*. Jenniferin kuolema poistaa uhan Barrettien verilinjaa 'puhtautta' kohtaan, sillä Oliver on sen jälkeen vapaa löytämään itselleen 'sopivamman' kumppanin.

Tavoitteenani oli osoittaa että *Love Story* on romanssi ja omasta mielestäni onnistuinkin. Tähän on kolme syytä. Ensiksi *Love Storyn* päähenkilöiden välinen rakkaus jatkuu Oliverin muistoissa Jenniferin kuoleman jälkeen. Toiseksi *Love Storyn* juoni mukailee suurimmaksi osaksi ihanteellisen romanssin kaavaa. Kolmas syy on se, että vaikka romanssin tunnusmerkkeihin ei yleensä kuulu sankarittaren kuolema, *Love Story* yhdistää perinteisen kulttuurien rajat ylittävän ihmissuhteen traagisen kohtalon romanssiin, joka kuvaa täydellistä rakkautta, jota ulkoiset seikat eivät pysty tuhoamaan.