

**COLLEEN HOOVER'S FORMULAS FOR BEST-SELLERS AS SEEN IN  
*REMINDERS OF HIM AND IT ENDS WITH US***

**ADELINA MICLEA**  
West University of Timișoara

**Abstract:** *Using John G. Cawelti's theory of formulas for understanding the relationship between a work and its culture, this article looks at two of Colleen Hoover's novels, Reminders of Him and It Ends with Us, in order to comprehend Hoover's appeal to the public. The popularity of romance novels formula indicates a high interest of the American public in the topic of romantic relationships, and it touches a sensitive nerve existent in American culture.*

**Keywords:** *American popular culture, best-sellers, Colleen Hoover, formulas, romance novels*

## **1. Introduction**

Love is ubiquitous and has always been a topic which interested artists and philosophers alike, who, over the centuries, have attempted to understand this form of pleasurable “madness” that determined people to behave irrationally. From the times of the Ancient Greeks until modern days, the great minds of humanity have left their fingerprint on the Western culture and have each added to the understanding of this mythical force of love. In contemporary American society, a whole genre is dedicated to happily ever afters, whose popularity is undeniable. Despite being considered cliché stories with simplified plots and predictable endings, romance novels are undoubtedly the most popular genre in the United States of America (Smailes 2020, Dalke 2016, Romance Writers of America 2022). This implies that love has not ceased to be a topic of interest and has not lost its appeal. On the contrary, it has never before been so popular because at no other time in history had the internet existed, which brought with itself broad access to information for the masses, an efficient advertising tool and a digital space for individuals with shared interests to interact. According to NPD, which provides data, prescriptive analysis and industry expertise for different fields, including the book industry, romance novels have conquered the book market for fiction, becoming the most significant book industry in the country, with sales that increased significantly in the pandemic context when isolation led to a more substantial need for escapism (Anderson 2022; Schwartz and Sullivan 2022).

Additionally, social media plays a significant role in the popularity of romance. Reader communities are created on Goodreads, a platform allowing users to add books to their virtual shelves, rate the books, comment on their strengths and weaknesses, and publicly share their reviews. Individuals can interact with authors and be updated about new stories, or they can receive suggestions for their subsequent reads. Books come with eye-catching cover illustrations, which should make the readers predict the kind of story they are about to read. On YouTube, content creators such as A Clockwork Reader, emmie, Hailey Pham Vlogs or Christy Anne Jones bring details concerning the plots and characters of books they have read and provide a personal analysis of the story, usually with other books displayed in the background, and sometimes with fairy lights attached to them, which create the idyllic ambience of the modern reader. On Instagram, the popular hashtag “bookstagram”, under which readers post aesthetically pleasant book covers in cosy backgrounds, is meant to invoke a sacred ritual of solitude and escapism with the help of the characters who live within the pages of a book. More recently, the “booktok” trend has emerged on the on-growing social media platform TikTok, primarily used by Gen Z, which encompasses a

combination of the cover aestheticism found on Instagram and shorter video reviews in the style of those initially found on YouTube. TikTok is a user-friendly platform with features that enable communication among users with similar interests, and its algorithm is centred on an individual's preferences when using the app. Booktok videos are shorter in length compared to those on YouTube; they generally seem more authentic even if the post is sponsored, and a book review is more likely to be considered trustworthy if emotions are being displayed (Miclea 2023, forthcoming), and on BookTok "crying is encouraged" (Merry 2022).

On bestselling lists provided by *The New York Times* and social media platforms, among the public's preferences, there is a recurrent name, Colleen Hoover, whose books stir the interest and the reaction of modern readers (*The New York Times* 2022a, *The New York Times* 2022b). Still, there is a gap in understanding why this occurs. I chose two of her best-selling novels to understand the reasons behind her popularity and success: *Reminders of Him*, published in January 2022, her latest book, and *It Ends with Us*, her best-sold book. This article uses John G. Cawelti's theory about literary formulas and culture (Cawelti 1972; Cawelti 1976) and argues that Hoover uses well-established formulas that function every time in the context of the consumerist American society. However, while *Reminders of Him* (Hoover 2022a) strictly follows the formula of romance novels, *It Ends with Us* (Hoover 2016) has become her most famous story and a best-selling phenomenon with sixty-five weeks on *The New York Times*' best-selling list at the moment of writing this article, notably because it departs from the formula and is added an autobiographical element grace to which the novel stands out (*The New York Times* 2022a, *The New York Times* 2022b). Following a formula is not enough for a story to be relevant, not even in the case of romance novels, which are widely criticised for being stereotypical and formulaic (Krentz 1992: 28).

## 2.1. Formulas and the Romance Genre

When it comes to fictional genres, a work must function within the genre conventions, which include predictability and familiarity for romance novels. Additionally, the genre conventions imply that all romance novels must have a love story and must engage the reader emotionally. This love story must have a satisfactory ending (Ramsdell 1999:4). Although non-heterosexual relationships exist within the genre, the formula usually is "boy meets girl, they fall in love, and they live happily ever after". The American culture has always had a predisposition to liking literary clichés, a tendency first noticed by Tocqueville, who argued that Americans discovered a sense of boredom. They had a great need to be entertained to escape the monotony of daily life and a desire for something new. He predicted that this would make American writers want to appeal to the passions of the readers, writing books that are easily understood and which require little effort on the part of the reader (Tocqueville 2000:440-444), which is the case of romance novels with simplistic plots and vocabulary.

As art becomes commercial, it works with supply and demand after the laws of the market. Due to the great demand for entertainment, authors must rapidly develop something new, easily understood, that appeals to the readers and can make money. Despite the marketisation of these cliché stories, their predictability, or their lack of originality, romance novels should not be overlooked as a genre. The widespread appeal of happy endings in American society should be researched because the popularity of a story implies a high interest of the individuals of that culture in that direction, and it reveals where the needs and tensions within the culture lay.

## 2.2. Cawelti's Hypotheses about Formulas and Their Implications

John G. Cawelti discusses the case of popular culture and argues that there is a need to analyse it through different lenses than theme analysis, mediums and myths since all these viewpoints oversimplify the works that are being investigated and do not take into account the

total structure of the themes and their relationship to the story elements in the complete work (1972:116). Cawelti proposes a new way of analysis through formulas, which he defines as conventional systems for structuring cultural products (1972:119). Elsewhere, he describes formulas as being an “archetypal story pattern embodied in the images, symbols, themes and myths of a particular culture” (Cawelti 1976:16).

All cultural products, Cawelti adds, are formed of two elements: conventions and inventions (1972:118). Conventions are shared between the author and the readers, and they contain plot structure, stereotypical characters or ideas, metaphors or linguistic devices, which the readers expect to find in the story. On the other hand, inventions represent the element of originality, the author’s inventions, which are added to the conventions. He continues by saying that the conventions are the ones that maintain a culture’s stability, while inventions, on the other hand, help respond to the changing circumstances as they present new information which individuals assimilate to perceive the world (1972:118). In the context of popular culture, as conventions are shared between the author and a wider audience, intellectual elites have started emphasising the originality of a work (Cawelti 1972:119). Still, Cawelti believes looking at the relationship between the work and its culture is essential. Although romance novels are a convention shared with the public and may lack the originality that would make them valuable from an artistic point of view, they still are a part of the culture and show the ideas, needs and conflicts within that culture.

Cawelti develops hypotheses about the link between formulaic stories and culture and their mutual influence. Firstly, he believes that stories affirm the existing interests and attitudes of a particular culture (Cawelti 1976:35). Given the high number of sales and the popularity of the romance genre, it is evident that the American culture is highly interested in romantic relationships as portrayed within the conventions of the genre. Stephanie Merry (2022) questions whether Hoover’s books and the emotional reactions they trigger in the readers are “a generational thing” as Gen Z avidly consumes these stories, and we can safely assume this is the case because no prior generation had these marketing tools and the space for digital communities based on shared interest. Secondly, Cawelti believes that these formulas resolve tensions and ambiguities within a culture and between different groups and their conflicting attitudes regarding particular values (Cawelti 1972: 22). The high interest in love novels can be considered to be evidence that a conflict between the actors of romantic relationships still exists, as formula stories are a way through which individuals of a culture either repress their needs or express them symbolically because they cannot be openly addressed. Thirdly, in the realm of fiction, Cawelti argues, the boundaries and tensions that exist in the culture can be crossed in a controlled environment. In a fictional romance story, people can be happy in the end, and women can escape abusive relationships and get freedom over their bodies and actions. In real life, these actions may not happen: women have to take into account their children, their financial security, and social stigma before deciding to leave a relationship, and the ending may not be happy. Fourthly, these formulaic stories “assist in the process of assimilating changes in values to traditional imaginative constructs” (Cawelti 1976:35). This implies that storytelling is a means through which we understand the world around us, and stories within a particular culture help create the values and traditions of the culture or change the already existent ones.

When audiences hear a story, they are interested in familiar tales that become myths that retell the human experience. To support this argument, Cawelti gives the example of children who often reject a new tale because they want to listen to a familiar story they have already heard multiple times before. This attitude remains a characteristic of humans in their teenage years and adulthood (1976:6-7). According to Cawelti, the familiar stories which people find pleasure in have both an artistic and cultural importance, as they can and have been used in the past as tools of political ideologies, psychological stratagems and opiates for the masses (Cawelti 1976:8). The familiarity of a story and the desire for escaping reality by creating fictional realities where we

enjoy momentarily pleasures are central to the human experience (Cawelti 1976:13), no matter how much criticism the romance genre receives for this aspect. While it is true that contemporary love stories generally follow a stereotypical pattern, they are predictable and, from an aesthetic point of view, represent the main interest of the American readership at the same time. Although the formula for romance novels is important, an element of novelty is also necessary. Cawelti argues that the artist can stand out while following the formulas if only he or she manages to effectively combine the need for novelty with the need for familiarity. The efficient author uses stereotypical formulas but adds original elements to it to the extent to which the conventions of the genre permit it (Cawelti 1976:20). When it comes to romance novels, they are popular because of the always-existing interest of women and men in the topic of love and in a desire for finding happiness in a romantic relationship, but not all romance novels on the market succeed in standing out.

The challenge of contemporary writers is to talk about the human condition in a relevant way, to rewrite the stories in a manner that appeals to modern-day readers by addressing both the need for novelty and the need for familiarity. When it comes to contemporary romance novels, stories generally follow strict formulaic patterns. While the predictability of a formula might sell well, it will soon be forgotten if it is only conventional and lacks the author's "invention". The artist can become significant if only a revitalised stereotype is successfully created and some degree of originality is added within the boundaries of the formula. In the case of American romance novels, we have the formula's popularity. They use the same formulas as before; they become popular due to the popularity of the genre conventions, but will be forgotten unless there is an element of the author's "invention". Romance writers can use the established formulas to gain popularity and profit if they adhere to genre conventions because of the public's high demand for this type of literature.

### **2.3. Colleen Hoover's novels: A Brief Plot Summary of *Reminders of Him* and *It Ends with Us***

Colleen Hoover, "professional make believer", as her official website (see colleenhoover.com, Hoover 2022b) describes her, was initially writing for herself, nights after work, as a means to escape reality, and had no intention of getting published (Merschel 2019). Her personal story is a typical embodiment of the American Dream. Starting from the bottom, she is now a writer of over twenty novels and a *The New York Times* best-selling author. In what follows, this article will look at two of her novels, *Reminders of Him* and *It Ends with Us* to see where her novel's popularity lies.

*Reminders of Him* is a redemption story of a woman named Kenna. Coming from a broken environment, she meets a boy from a good family with whom she falls in love. But a tragedy happens a car accident in which Scotty, her boyfriend, loses his life. As she was driving, Kenna is sentenced to prison. The shock and the guilt of driving her lover to death made her not plead innocent. To add to this tragedy, she would later find out that she was pregnant with Scotty's child. While still in prison, she gave birth to a girl, who was sent to live with Scotty's parents, and, as a convict, Kenna was deprived of her parental rights. After being set free from prison and having paid for her mistake in front of the law, she returns to the town where her daughter lives in an attempt to reconnect with her daughter. But in the face of Scotty's friends and family, the woman was still guilty, and they did not want her near the child. Arriving in the town, she meets Ledger, Scotty's best friend, whom she never met before. Initially, they do not recognise each other, and predictably, they fall in love at first sight. There is a lot of denial and guilt in their mutual attraction. Still, Ledger soon decides to stop fighting his feelings for her and helps her gain the trust of Scotty's parents, after he realises how much she has loved Scotty and how much she regrets having drunk that night. The story ends with Kenna, Ledger, and the daughter, who predictably live happily ever after (Hoover 2022a).

*It Ends with Us*, her most famous novel, published in 2016, has been on best-selling lists ever since. It is the story of Lily Bloom, who, at the beginning of the book, is found on a rooftop late at night, after her father's funeral, contemplating suicide and thinking about her life. On the rooftop, with a clear night sky and a perfect view of the city, as she is close to the edge, she hears a saving voice, and we have a cliché encounter between Lily and Ryle, a young, good-looking, wealthy neurosurgeon, with anger issues, which she chooses to overlook. There is a mutual attraction between them, but because she is a woman of principles, she can resist his temptation, much to Ryle's disappointment. After this encounter, they do not meet each other for six months, a period during which she reads through her journals that she took from home, where we find about Atlas, her former boyfriend (Hoover 2016).

There are two narrative lines in the novel, each dedicated to a male character from Lily's life, and there is a tension of not knowing who the one Lily will end up with is. Atlas was a homeless teenager living in the abandoned house behind Lily's, whom Lily had helped survive. They fall in love with each other, but as their relationship gets discovered, Lily's father, with a history of domestic abuse, brutally beats Atlas and accuses Lily of bringing shame to the family. After graduation, he left to join the army, and years went by, but he never returned. In the meantime, she meets Ryle, the neurosurgeon with anger issues. From a physical and social standpoint, this attractive man does not want a relationship with anyone but Lily changes him with her inner qualities and physical beauty. Based on the formula of a romance, the reader would think a happily ever after follows. However, this is where the predictability ends, and her love story turns into a nightmare when, one night, her now husband, with whom she was madly in love, hit her, repeating the pattern of domestic abuse she saw in her parents. What she thought could never happen to her had just happened. She denies the abuse and forgives her husband while feeling guilty and angry at herself for repeating her mother's mistakes. She finds the power to leave the abusive relationship when Ryle hits her while she is pregnant because she wants to have a better future for her daughter. She divorces Ryle, and the story of domestic abuse in her family ends with her. She chooses to live happily ever after with Atlas, whom she is reunited with, a self-made man with a successful business, a former soldier who served his country, an individual with a good heart and her protector. The novel's happy ending, not what the readers expected, makes this story stand out.

#### 2.4. Formulas Present in Hoover's Two Novels

There is not much to be said about *Reminders of Him* because the story brings nothing new: it follows the formula of a romance novel by slightly changing a few nuances. Besides the names of the characters and the modern setting, all the elements of this story evoke a sense of familiarity. Like Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, *Reminders of Him* presents the type of strong individual woman versus the society. It follows the well-established pattern of a woman accused by the society she lived in, which did not know her character and her intentions. Hoover's Kenna, just like Hester, is sent to prison, gives birth to a girl, and tries to redeem her reputation to fulfil her role as a mother (see Hoover 2022a: 56-64).

Additionally, we come to the pattern where physical appearance reflects the purity of the soul, and the reader is made aware of the kindness of Kenna's heart, of her virtue, and the conflict between her and society is solved as she manages to win Ledger on her side. Then, there is a male character who is inherently good but makes an error of judgement in what the female character is concerned about and has prejudices against her without giving her a chance to prove herself. Readers are told in the story that Ledger is the possessor of good fortune (he has a house and a business). As we know from Jane Austen, it is universally acknowledged that a man like him must be seeking a relationship (Austen 2010:1). There is even an episode of Ledger showing Kenna his estate (Hoover 2022a:158-159), a house that he has yet to move into, but which he has been building with his own hands, adding an American twist, the myth of the male provider and

protector, to the initial formula established by Jane Austen. The story is predictable and does not depart from the stereotypes in any way. The reputation of the beautiful and strong female character is redeemed, and she lives a happy life with her male protector and provider and her daughter. Due to the strict following of the genre formulas, the novel is a mere imitation of stories that have been previously told without bringing an element of novelty.

A difference could be noticed regarding *It Ends with Us* (Hoover 2016), which adheres to the romance genre by using some formulas and clichés, but adds something original and plays with the readers' expectations. The setting of their first meeting is idyllic: the novel opens with the protagonists being on a tall rooftop in Boston, at night-time, with the city lights and the endlessness of the night sky, which foretells that this will be a romantic love story. When Ryle first sees Lily that night on the rooftop, he takes a picture of her, which he later turns into a large painting that he places in his living room (Hoover 2016: 25, 85-87). This desire to transform the loved one into art sends back to the Shakespearean idea of giving immortality to the lover by putting them into art that lives eternally. Additionally, the characters are stereotypical. Ryle is a rich, arrogant man, a modern-day beast, who has neither been in a serious relationship nor does he want one, but who eventually is tamed by the beauty and character of Lily and falls in love with her. Lily, the beautiful, witty girl who does not care about conventions, is strong, independent, and creative but also kind and loving, individual attributes that make her valuable. Atlas, protector and provider of Lily, a man with a good soul, served in the army and returned, started a business, and became prosperous with his business, an American Dream story. These character types are familiar to the reader because they have been discovered before in other stories.

The plot of *It Ends with Us* goes back to what is considered the first American novel and the best-selling romance novel, Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*. Just like Pamela, who values her chastity more than anything else, Lily resists Ryle's advances. Both stories bring into discussion the idea of domestic violence, as both women are abused by men who claim to love them. But *It Ends with Us* is adapted to the modern American society. The moral codes and the opportunities for women are better than in Richardson's novel, although they tell the same story of male dominance and abuse. The novel ends with Lily choosing what is best for her daughter and leaving the abusive relationship she was in (Hoover 2016: 361). Hoover's book wants to teach a lesson to its readers, that if the woman is abused in the relationship she is in, the right thing for her to do is to leave and not to try to come up with excuses for the abuse. In modern-day America, women can be their own providers and start their own businesses, and there is no need for them to stay in abusive relationships, which will affect both the woman and the children. These teachings are relevant to the present cultural beliefs about relationships. Hoover's *It Ends with Us* manages to break from genre conventions and write within the genre conventions but also rewrite the formula. She answers the question of what is next after the curtains usually close in the story and shows that there is not always a happy ending but that women have the power to find happiness elsewhere and leave the abusive relationship. Judging by the high interest in this novel, this idea has touched a sensitive chord in American culture.

### 3. Conclusions

It is undeniable that the stories we hear influence the culture in which they are told and that public expectations also influence the stories, which is why it is important to analyse romance novels in the context of popular culture. The fact that romance is the most sold genre in America affirms that the American public wants love stories with a happy ending more than any other type of story. It shows that there are a lot of tensions regarding gender roles and sexuality, and romance novels create a space for these tensions to be satisfactorily resolved by allowing women to explore a world in which they are empowered and where everything ends well. Thus, they represent a convention between authors and readers, and the formulaic conventions show a deep desire for love and happy endings in American culture.

However, in the oversaturated book market, writing after the formula is insufficient for the story to stand out. A touch of novelty is necessary as humans have conflicting needs and desire both familiarity and novelty. The examples of the two novels written after formulas show that simply writing after a formula is not enough; when the story becomes too predictable, it does not have the power to stand out. Paradoxically, besides a mythised love story and an expected happy ending, the American public also desires a plot twist, the element of surprise, which Hoover successfully brings in *It Ends with Us*. Still, it fails to do so with *Reminders of Him*. *It Ends with Us* is still a best-seller because the public liked the unpredictable, and the originality of the autobiographical element added to the formula. The American public that feeds upon happy endings is not used to a marriage that fails or to the reality of domestic abuse. The market is overly saturated with happy endings, and in her novel, Hoover brought something new, departing from the formula. She did not manage to do so with the other book, *Reminders of Him*, which is going to sell just because the public expects a good story from a writer who wrote a good book in the past but does not have the power to stand out, as it brings only the familiar and not the new. The ideas present in this article need further development, as it dealt with only two of Hoover's novels, which represent her writing style but do not encompass her work in its entirety. Additionally, the interest in romantic love and happy endings of the American readership is deeper than the popularity of a story or a formula, and it should be further researched from other points of view, to better understand the cultural need for love and for escaping reality through the aid of romance novels. Based on Cawelti's formula hypotheses, this article argued that the popularity of Hoover's novels should be taken in relationship with the American culture, as it reveals the values and tensions within the culture, which need further study.

#### References:

- Anderson, Porter. 2022. "NPD Bookscan: US Print Book Market Shows a 'Strong August Performance' ". *Publishing Perspectives*. online: <https://publishingperspectives.com/2022/09/npd-bookscan-us-print-book-market-shows-a-strong-august-performance/> [2022, September 25].
- Austen, Jane. 2010. *Pride and Prejudice*. Great Britain: Collins Classics.
- Cawelti, John. G. 1972. "The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature" in *The Bulletin of the Midwest Modern Language Association*, Vol. 5, no. 2., pp. 115-123.
- Cawelti, John. G. 1976. *Adventure, Mystery and Romance: Formula Stories as Art on Popular Culture*, Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Dalke, Rachel. 2016. *The Business of Romance Novels: Presentation*, online: <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/6/17036/files/2016/04/The-Business-of-Romance-Novels-Presentation-1t5341d.pdf>. [2022, February 8].
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel. 2010. *The Scarlet Letter*. Great Britain: Collins Classics.
- Hoover, Colleen. 2016. *It Ends with Us*. New York: Atria.
- Hoover, Colleen. 2022a. *Reminders of Him*. Seattle: Montlake.
- Hoover, Colleen. 2022b. *About Colleen Hoover*, online: <https://www.colleenhoover.com/about-coho/> [2022, September 17].
- Krentz, Jayne Ann. 1992. *Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women. Romance writers or the Appeal of Romance*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Merry, Stephanie. 2022. "On TikTok, crying is encouraged. Colleen Hoover's books get the job done". *Washington Post*. online: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2022/01/20/colleen-hoover-tiktok/> [2022, September 17].
- Merschel, Michael. 2019. "Colleen Hoover discusses her astonishing accidental literary success and what it's led to". *Dallas News*. online: <https://www.dallasnews.com/arts-entertainment/books/2018/07/19/colleen-hoover-discusses-her-astonishing-accidental-literary-success-and-what-it-s-led-to/> [2022, September 17].
- Miclea, Adelina. (2023). *Booktok and the appeal to emotions: a powerful marketing tool in Colleen Hoover's bestselling novels*, in Cristina Chevereșan (Ed.), *American Studies Series – student essays*, Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, Forthcoming.
- The New York Times*. 2022a. *The New York Times Best Sellers- February 13, 2022*, online: <https://www.nytimes.com/books/best-sellers/2022/02/13/> [2022, February 13].
- The New York Times*. 2022b. *The New York Times Best Sellers-September 25, 2022*, online: <https://www.nytimes.com/books/best-sellers/2022/09/25/> [2022, September 27].

**ROMANIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES**  
**RJES 20 /2023**

- NPD. 2022. "Top Selling Books-August 2022". online: <https://www.npd.com/news/entertainment-top-10/2022/top-10-books/> [2022, September 27].
- Ramsdell, Kristin. 1999. *Romance fiction. A guide to the genre*. United States of America: Libraries Unlimited.
- Richardson, Samuel. 2003. *Pamela*. London: Penguin Classics.
- Romance Writers of America. 2022. *About Romance Genre*, online: [https://www.rwa.org/Online/Romance\\_Genre/About\\_Romance\\_Genre.aspx](https://www.rwa.org/Online/Romance_Genre/About_Romance_Genre.aspx). [2022, February 8].
- Schwartz, Deanna; Sullivan, Meghan Collins. 2022. "Gen Z is driving sales of romance books to the top of bestseller lists". *NPR*. online: <https://www.npr.org/2022/08/29/1119886246/gen-z-is-driving-sales-of-romance-books-to-the-top-of-bestseller-lists> [2022, September 25].
- Smailes, Gary. 2020. "Which genre is the most popular in 2021?" *Proactive Writer*. online: <https://proactivewriter.com/blog/how-to-pick-a-genre-for-your-book-what-is-the-most-popular-best-selling-book-genre>. [2022, February 13].
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. 2000. *Democracy in America*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, pp. 440-444.

**Notes on the author**

**Adelina Miclea** is a third-year Ph.D. researcher at the West University of Timișoara. She has a Master's Degree in American Studies from the same university. Her current area of interest is contemporary romance novels, and she aims to study their popularity within the American culture and their appeal to the public.