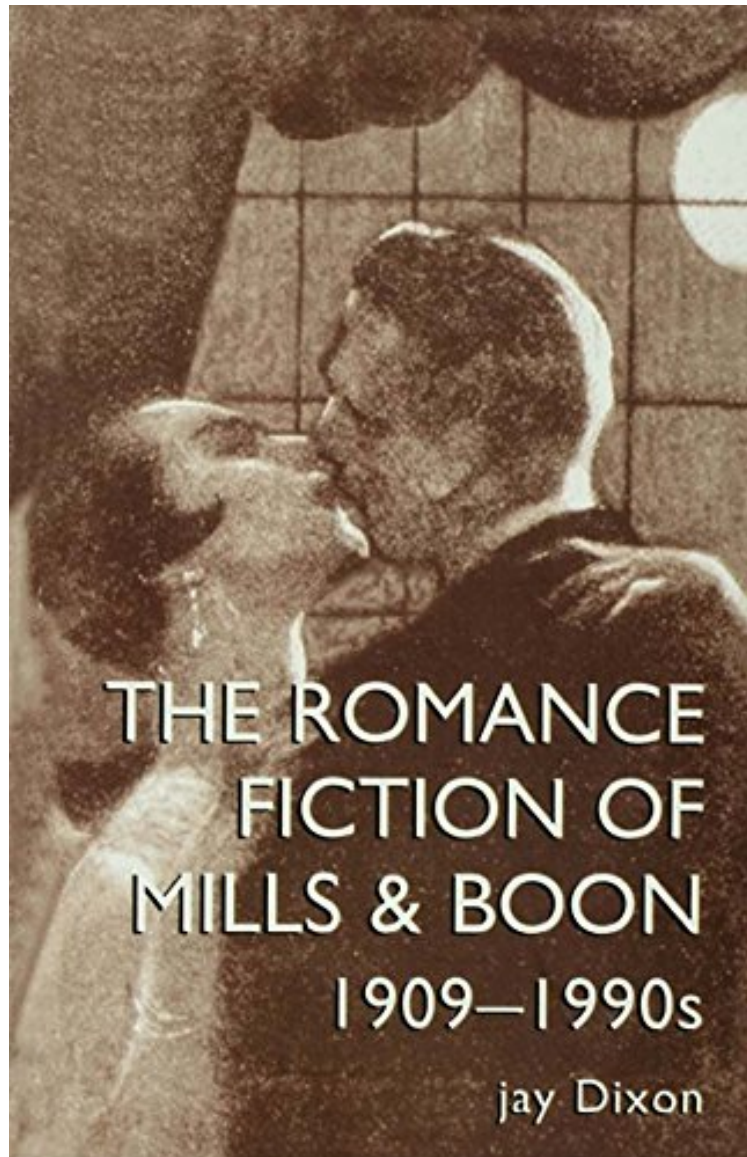


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The Romantic Fiction Of Mills Boon, 1909-1995 (Women's and Gender History)

Jay, Dixon, Jay Dixon.

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Jay, Dixon, Jay Dixon. : The Romantic Fiction Of Mills Boon, 1909-1995 (Women's and Gender History) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Romantic Fiction Of Mills Boon, 1909-1995 (Women's and Gender History):

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Ultimately disappointingBy Virginia E. DemarceMs. Dixon, who worked for some time (1985-1986) as an editor for Mills Boon and who remained a reader of the books the firm

produces at the time she was writing this book, set out to defend the hypothesis that the romances issued by the publisher can legitimately be considered "feminist." This defense fails, ultimately, because the book does not present a systematic analysis of the overall production of the firm to underpin the author's statements. The general organization is chronological, with topical references within the chronological chapters. The author states that while researching, she "read roughly 30 books from each decade up until the 1950s while continuing to read some of the contemporary monthly Mills Boon publications." (p. 28) The most useful aspect of the book is its demonstration that the earlier years of the press, between World War I and World War II, produced at least some books that argued for women's working outside the home, even in professional careers and after marriage, and in favor of divorce law reform, etc. However, there is no indication as to what proportion of all the books published at that time took these stances. Many of her generalizations, such as "Heroes are no longer aristocratic after the 1910s" (p. 6), are not supported by the author's own descriptions of later-published books. While it may be an impression only, the book does leave the reader with the impression that the author is deliberately down-playing the impact of plot lines favored by popular authors such as Sara Seale (the heroine as helpless orphan with no qualification to earn her own living, see p. 113) and Penny Jordan (the hero as arrogant and abusive, see pp. 35-36). While not ignoring their existence, the theme of the passages discussing them tends to be along the lines of, "but that isn't all that Mills Boon were doing in those years." The author argues that partnership with the Canadian firm of Harlequin since the 1970s has been disadvantageous: "Harlequin's authoritarian stance also negates the diversity in the storylines that has always been one of the strengths of Mills Boon which, under British management, was generally left to the author, which, according to Frances Whitehead, 'worked very well.'" (p. 24) There are two indexes--an "Index of Mills Boon Authors" including the titles discussed by Dixon, and a general index.

This study to analyzes romantic fiction's depiction of women as part of the broader history of ideas about women.; Given the success of the Mills Boon romance, their portrayal of subjects like sex, love, marriage, class, motherhood and femininity are important cultural barometers and make interesting study.; The author shows how all these themes have an historical trajectory and how these novels have come to reflect feminist concerns.; Based on a study of over 1000 Mills Boon romances the book provides analysis of plot types and shows how these have changed in response to women's own changing position within society.