

Questionnaire Participant Information Sheet

1. Research Project Title

Queering the Romance: an exploration of queerness in twenty-first century popular romance fiction

2. Invitation

You are being invited to take part in this research project. Before you decide to do so, it is important you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

3. What is the project's purpose?

This research project aims to investigate how romance novel have been queered in the twenty-first century, focusing in particular on the period 2010 to the present. For this project a queer romance novel is any romance that contains at least one LGBT+ main character. As part of this exploration of queerness the project is looking into the readership, authorship and production of queer romance novels.

4. Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you frequently read and/or write queer romance novels and as such have knowledge about queer romances in the twenty-first century.

5. Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be able to keep a copy of this information sheet and you should indicate your agreement via the questionnaire. You can still withdraw at any time and do not have to give a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

As readers of queer romances and writers of queer romances you will be asked to complete a web-based questionnaire which we estimate will take you 15 minutes. You will also be asked if you wish to participate in a focus-group with other readers or writers to discuss the topic in more detail which we estimate will take 90 – 120 minutes. This is completely optional.

7. What do I have to do?

Please answer the questions in the questionnaire. There are no other commitments or lifestyle restrictions associated with participating.

8. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

Participating in the research is not anticipated to cause you any disadvantages or discomfort. The potential physical and/or psychological harm or distress will be the same as any experienced in everyday life.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will have a beneficial impact on queer romance novels and the results will be shared with participants.

10. What if something goes wrong?

If you have any complaints about the project in the first instance you can contact Ms Lucy Hargrave. If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction you can contact the University of Birmingham research ethics team (see below).

11. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the questionnaire will be kept strictly confidential. Questionnaire participants will not be identified or identifiable in any reports or publications about the questionnaire. Any data collected about you in the online questionnaire will be stored online in a form protected by passwords and other relevant security processes and technologies.

12. Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

For the questionnaires you will not be recorded in any way other than your input to the questionnaire without separate permission being gained from you.

13. What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

The questionnaire will ask you about your opinions and current practices in relation to reading or writing queer romance novels. Your views and experience are what the project is interested in exploring.

14. What will happen to the results of the research project?

Results of the research will be published. You will not be identified in any report or publication. If you wish to be given a copy of any reports resulting from the research, please ask us to put you on our circulation list.

15. Who is organising and funding the research?

The project is being organised by Ms Lucy Hargrave with the University of Birmingham as part of her PhD thesis.

16. Who has ethically reviewed the project?

This project has been ethically approved by the University of Birmingham's ethics review procedure. The University of Birmingham's Research Ethics Committee monitors the application and delivery of the University's Ethics Review Procedure across the University.

17. Contacts for further information

Ms Lucy Hargrave, doctoral researcher in English Literature at the University of Birmingham. Email: LEH980@student.bham.ac.uk

Susan Cottam, Research Ethics Manager at the University of Birmingham, Tel: 0121 414 8825, Email: S.L.Cottam@bham.ac.uk

Thank you for taking part in this research.