



# The Romantic Movement: Sex, Shopping, and the Novel

*Alain de Botton*

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In *The Romantic Movement*, Alain de Botton explores the progress of a love affair from first meeting to breaking up, intercut with musings on the nature of art of love. The relationship between Alice, an advertising executive, and Eric, a banker, is examined at every stage, supplemented by quizzes and line drawings by the author and commentary by a chorus of great philosophers, from Descartes to Plato to Aretha Franklin. *The Romantic Movement* will charm readers and lovers alike with wit, insight, and intelligence.

## The Romantic Movement: Sex, Shopping, and the Novel Details

Date : Published May 15th 1996 by Picador (first published 1994)

ISBN : 9780312144036

Author : Alain de Botton

Format : Paperback 336 pages

Genre : Philosophy, Fiction, Relationships, Love, Psychology



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## From Reader Review The Romantic Movement: Sex, Shopping, and the Novel for online ebook

### E. Sezen says

Bay?ld?m! S?radan bir a?k hikayesi, çok keyifli sanatsal ve felsefik göndermelerle dolu psikolojik çözümlemelerle s?rad??? biçimde anlat?l?yor. Kendinizi ve kar??n?zdaki herkesi daha iyi anlamak için veya yaln?zca arada kikirdeyerek keyifli bir roman okumak için iyi bir seçim.

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### Spencer says

Fantastic! In case you can't tell, I love all of this guy's stuff. Fascinating, insightful, deliciously well-written. This guy GETS relationships. Their complexity, their imbalance, their transient natures. And this particular book, more than any of his others thus far, captures certain concepts that I have often experienced, and thought about, but felt certain were unique to me. He understands my (and probably many other people's) approach to feelings. Why we like who we like, though we often shouldn't. Why we're liked by who we're liked by, though we wish we weren't. And the whole time he is both FUNNY and BRILLIANT. I could not recommend it more highly!

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### Rach The Great says

Another insightful book by de Botton into the plight of the middle class (in the West) on the nature of relationships, in particular those with unequal power dynamics. The second half of the book picks up at a better pace, with lots of "aha I've noticed this but never analysed it to this extreme" moments as de Botton unpacks the thoughts of Alice/Eric/Phillip.

Recommended for those in a relationship rut, or anyone interested in relationship dynamics generally

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### ann says

After reading a few of De Botton's other books geared toward history and philosophy, I have to believe that this book was written on a dare or was a personal challenge to himself. Then again, De Botton specializes in exploring the mundane facets of life and rediscovering them for his reader's benefit... so perhaps modern romantic fling shouldn't be off limits for cultural analysis. The strength of this story is the fact that these characters and their relationship are so typical and common place.. Most urban women have likely have been through one of these relationships and will be able to relate easily to the protagonist, Alice. However, if Alice was your friend and was looking to you for a listening ear, you would probably find her boring and her naivety irritating. Everyone has heard a girl on her cell phone, bragging, complaining, or just relating to someone else about a relationship. I think my first instinct to this kind of narcissism is an embarrassment because I have been this woman at one point...but I react to other women who do this by rolling my eyes. De Botton take this sort of relationship seriously and manages to unpack the trivial and connect aspects of the relationship and these typical characters to our modern culture...that constitutes the "sex, shopping, and the

novel" part of the title.

That said, I have complaints too. He definitely borrows a lot from Milan Kundera for the structure of the novel. He mixes straight story telling with the voice of a narrator who analyzes the characters and events through historical and philosophical perspective. However, I think his structure failed here...Where Kundera's narrative and analytical voice creates rhythms with the story line, De Botton seems to interrupt his own story to lecture and over demonstrate. (Although I liked the analysis and appreciated the diagrams.) Details of the story line seem fabricated just to provide an excuse or segue in analysis...and at that point you aren't sure if he's writing to convince you or himself...The organic feeling you get while reading Kundera is not there.

...But, I liked it and I didn't expect De Botton to be much of a fiction writer. I might try reading some of his straight novels after this. I think this book was an experiment in mixing two genres. As a voice and as a lyrical read, the experiment was not successful. For the information it imparts and for the intermittent moments of brilliance, I liked it and have to respect it.

I think I'm going to reread *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* next though. I recommend this book to anyone who liked the Romantic Movement.

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### **Eva K says**

C'est après avoir entendu Maïwenn dire qu'elle s'était inspirée de ce livre pour réaliser le film "Mon roi" que j'ai eu envie de le lire. Et comme j'ai bien fait! Le roman raconte une histoire d'amour éclairée par une touche philosophique et analytique, du jamais (ou rarement) vu!

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### **Tu?çe says**

arada güzel tespitler yap?lm?? olsa da anlat?m ho?uma gitmedi.

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### **Stan Georgiana says**

Not his best.

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### **Aylin Kalebek says**

Yine tan?d?k bir hikaye, yine cuk oturan tespitler. Alain de Botton yazs?n, ben okuyum :)

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## **Paul Martin says**

I suppose this is sort of a prequel to *The Course of Love*, which I loved, but this felt far less insightful.

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## **Timea Iakab says**

Contragă ce se poate crede din titlu, nu e vb deloc despre sex, vhiar 0 erotism, nu face referiri la sex decat făcând. În schimb, face referire la o doamna și stilul de viață a ei despre care am mai citit recent în Elif Shafak - *Lapte negru*.

Romanul nu se axează pe acțiune, pe descriere peisaj sau chestii de genul, ci arată relația de la început până la sfârșitul ei într-un cuplu, într-o manieră total interesantă și captivantă, filozofică. Cărțul a fost mai greoi, tocmai din cauza asta - te pune pe gânduri, iar stilul este de multe ori întortocheat. Ce mi-au placut înca mult sunt ilustrările din carte.

4,5\*

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## **Beth says**

This writer is BRILLIANT!! So insightful, funny, erudite. He analyzes the complete cycle of a relationship from lust to bitter breakup. He is SO emphatically on the woman's side, which I liked ;) Oh, and he also uses diagrams and drawings to make his points - very original.

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## **Rebecca says**

I read this book in one sitting, and it reminds me of spending a day with a particularly insightful friend, who casually sizes up the motives at play between people of a particular character, throwing light on common experiences in the process. Similar to Milan Kundera, Alain de Botton uses fiction in order to build on his ideas. Only for de Botton, the narrator muffles the life between the characters with his more pressing need to dissect their psychological motives. The storyline mainly concerns the protagonist Alice's love life, (although it tries to shift the camera to other characters that, in protection of Alice's point of view, it doesn't portray with respect) but this is really a backdrop for de Botton's aptitude for defining the factors at play in a typical 24 year old's romantic scenario. I particularly enjoyed the interplay of brief symbolic images into the text, which meshed well with the way in which de Botton writes in order to catalogue and unpack the motives at play in people. Despite the perhaps ill-suited form which the book took, every other sentence gave an "ah hah" moment, and reminded me of something de Botton wrote about Stendhal:

"Stendhal once compared introducing ideas into a novel to letting a gun go off in a concert hall, and even outside the genteel world of the concert hall-novel, it is still thought best to cloak advice as other things - to render it abstract enough to become Sartrean philosophy, Symbolist poetry or a Scandinavian motion picture."

Other quotes I enjoyed from the book, chosen from a hundred other options:

"To have a sexual history did not only imply one had made love to a succession of people, it also suggested one had either rejected or been rejected by these same bedroom companions. A more melancholy way of looking at the history of sexual technique was to read in it a history of disappointment."

"What is good fiscal policy may be bad amorous policy - for part of love is to fall into debt and yet tolerate the uncertainty arising from owing someone something, trusting them with the ensuing power, the choice it gives them of how and when to claim their dues....The word power typically signifies a capacity for action...But in love, the issue appears to depend on a far more passive, negative definition; instead of looking at power as a capacity to do something, one may come to think of it as the capacity to do nothing...power in love arises from the ability not to give a damn."

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### **Xinyu says**

A simple, clearly written book. This is the kind of book that makes me complain my reading speed.. I guess the reason I am not a big fan of this kind of books any more is that there is nothing to contemplate on, I read it once and get the idea and that's it.

Alain de Botton in this book tried to philosophize and rationalize the feelings of love. He reads well - this book is full of quotes from other philosophers and writers, and has some witty comments. But the affectionate feeling between man and women, to me, is nothing special but delusions and hormone-driven passions. It only becomes something more meaningful with conscious effort and mutual awareness and willingness to grow within it.

I witness my own feelings evolving while reading this book. It rationalizes a lot of my seemingly "out-of-nowhere" feelings, the crush, the desire to be in a relationship, the doubts, and finally a clearer view of why I have those doubts and what I really want in a relationship. Ehhh, "why would anyone would wish to exchange a 'peaceful' life for the emotional turbulence of a relationship?" Ha, maybe there will be less emotional turbulent ones.

Let me answer this question using another book's review "...it is the fear of uncertainty to our life that make us a living organism with heart. What's amazing to me is no matter how uncertain or fearful we are, sometimes we are still brave enough to step our toes in the ocean of uncertainties and discover that it is beautiful."

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### **Tusam D.Clide says**

Well, the only reason I bestow somewhat poor rating for The Romantic Movement is that it was not fitting for my personal taste. It is a fine book. It is an amazing demonstration of how inner spectrum of love from two opposite sides work. It's vast- how much the book offers. I see why Alain de Botton is praised as one of the most intellectual minds of this era.

But the problem is that all he does is lecturing. He explains every tiny move that is made within a relationship between Alice and Eric. It's exhausting after awhile- de Botton speaks as he shall present this eureka-like truth beneath the countless philosophical demonstrations, but really all he does is analyzing, nothing more. After reading, there is this discomfort..like something is not resolved when It had been

promised to me.

It was quite marvelous how he fluently guided a journey of ever-changing Alice's attitude. But the book stayed way too long on the 'ah I love him - I love him more than he loves me - but he loves me too so it's alright' part. de Button literally vexed me so much that I almost gave up reading twice.

As an analysis of love - , I guess the book is phenomenal. As a novel, as a work of literature - it was a bit of torture. There was no ambiguity. There was no abstract about it. There is no romance because endless analysis killed it. There was no love in this book, because love was extinguished by sharp and detailed reasoning. There were only these tiny movements that happened on each page that tested my tolerance over and over.

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### **Duygu Öksünlü Beytur says**

Lütfen bir daha roman yazmaya kalk??ma Say?n Botton.

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