

Jaakko Suominen, PhD, Professor of Digital Culture, Director
University of Turku
School of Cultural Production and Landscape Studies
P.O. Box 124
28101 Pori, Finland
jaakko.suominen(at)utu.fi
<http://www.tuug.fi/~jaakko/>

Visiting Scholar (1.4.–30.6.2009)
Institute for Advanced Studies on Science, Technology and Society (IAS-STSS)
Kopernikusgasse 9
8010 Graz, Austria
<http://www.sts.tugraz.at>
suominen(at)sts.tugraz.at

Computer as a Tool for Love – A Cultural History of Technology

1. Introduction

The Finnish Information Processing Association, FIPA, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2003. For honouring the past decades, *IT-Viikko (IT-week)*, a professional newspaper, published memoirs of the Finnish computer pioneers. Arno Soisalo, who had a long IT-career in the Post-Savings Bank of Finland, described the variety and requirements of computer work in the bank. Finland's first digital computer was introduced there in 1958. Soisalo's text had a title, "ENSI-rakkaus", FIRST-love (*IT Viikko* 23.10.2003).

While reading the text, I paid attention to that particular rubric, due to its specific emotional reference. During my studies of the cultural history of computing (see e.g. Suominen 2000;2003a), I had mainly discovered mentions of love and computers in texts produced by female writers, or in texts focused on female characters. Therefore, the article written by a male computer pioneer caught my attention, and the aim of this paper is to locate *technological romances*, stories of computer love in the cultural history of (Finnish) computing. Is the title of Soisalo's text only an exception—or is it a sign about a more general alliance between information technology and love? How the romantic relationship between a computer and a man or a woman has been represented in popular media and biographical texts?

The empirical base of this article is on qualitative content analysis of Finnish popular magazine articles from the 1950s to the 1960s. Some films, film reviews, and other articles related to computing, from the 1930s to the 1970s, are used as well. I have also utilized some technobiographies, which are autobiographical writings about own computer memoirs (Kennedy 2003), collected in Finland in the late 1990s.

This paper is divided into seven sections, starting with a literary review on cultural and sociological studies of (technological) love, continuing to content analysis of the primary sources and the presentation of four specific themes: 1) Hidden love and emotionless computer, 2) Computer as a seductress, 3) Caring love, and 4) Nostalgic (teenage) heartthrob. As a conclusion, I discuss about the role of love within technological domestication as well as in narration processes.

2. Falling in Love—Review of Some Earlier Studies

Soisalo's title refers to the nickname of the IBM 650 installation in the Post-Savings Bank, Ensi (or ENSI), which underlines the fact that the machine was interpreted to be the first computer in Finland.¹ Ensi was also a rare name, given typically for first-born girls (Lempiäinen 1989). Love, which refers to “an intense emotion of affection, warmth, fondness, and regard towards a person or thing” (*MOT Collins English Dictionary 2.0*) is most likely one of the common words, where the preposition ‘first’ can be added. Therefore, the connection of these two words might be obvious, when one would like to galvanize the reader.

However, the title is used quite bravely. The word ‘love’ brings a very strong emotional tune to the whole text and to the technological context. It tells that the usage of the computer and its introduction did not only mean rational transfer from one technique to another. It was not only an *innovation junction* (Schwarz Cowan 1987) or a matter of choice, where economical efficiency or the need for progress urged the change in technological environments and work practises. For the writer, introduction of computing technology and its first use seems to be a very moving experience, which has left its marks to the person's character. The experience has been a kick-start for a relationship, which has lasted for decades, and therefore Soisalo recalls his technical first love with yearning 45 years later. The first encounter or first love has led to a successful long-lasting association.

Although human love affairs (and representations of them) with computers have been analyzed or at least touched upon in several sociological, cultural and psychological studies of technology particularly from a user personality perspective (See e.g. Turkle 1984; Corneliussen 2005;2007), it would also be fruitful to look at studies or definitions of love in general. However, those studies interpret typically, love as an emotion, related only to human-to-human or human to God relations.

Love and particularly the first love are very strong expressions. According to Ronald Barthes (2000, 74–75), the person in love is in hypnos and “enchanted by an image”, and love “electrifies”,

“changes” and “turns over” the person. In starting example the computer, or “electric brain”, has been enchanted and electrified its user. Before the technology, there has been emptiness, primitive punch card technologies or mechanical calculators have not been able to arouse stronger emotions. In spite of its emotional freshness, scholars refer to the event of falling in love for the first time as some sort of learned experience, based on various sources and affects of media culture (Soikkeli 1998, 62, 258; Paasonen 2004, 23). A person who experiences his/her first love, experience something s/he had heard of or saw before, and might include his/her own experience later in new romance stories.

It is typical that first love is contemplated in retrospect as an example of a starting point of some development. The reminiscent has passed by first love’s “pure phase” and socialised. In Arno Soisalo’s case, he has become a part of a new technological environment and culture. At the same time, the reminiscent still takes her/his gaze to where it all began. Sociologist Kaarina Määttä explains that the birth of love, also compared to enchantment and assimilation, will be followed by institutionalisation and habituation of the love affair, although (falling in) love as a process is individual. The relationship transforms, at least partially, into safe practises and routines. (Määttä 1999, 37. See also Alberoni 1993, 16.)

Ungovernability, discontinuity and the specific nature of falling in love, link quite well to information technological change, often described as revolution. Francisco Alberoni (1993) defines that to fall in love means the birth of a mass movement between two persons. Alberoni seeks parallels for falling in love even from the French and Russian revolutions. For Alberoni, to fall in love is “the simplest form of mass movement”, although revolution is not a sum of many incidents of falling in love. By adapting Alberoni, one can argue that the individual cases of falling in love with a computer can be connected to computer revolution and mass movement, which was already in the 1940s described as a new industrial revolution (Suominen 2003a).

Emotional load of the title “FIRST-love” is not, however, maintained strongly during the whole text by Arno Soisalo, except for couple of mentions of the computers disciplined personality. How can one explain, in a larger context, Soisalo’s reference to love and quite quickly move to descriptions of specific computing work? In what kind of situations is the highly emotional relationship between men/women and the machine approved or disapproved? How is this machine romance evolved and gendered during the period from the 1950s to the 2000s?

3. Love in Disguise

It is not rare that strong emotions are connected to computers. This is reasonable due to our social and emotional nature. Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass (1996) have noted that we look media technological objects, such as radio, television and computers as parts of the social sphere. We can talk to those artefacts, give them personal characterizations, curse them, or even touch them gently—or aggressively. We seek similarities between humans and machines. Inanimate machines are a part of the social environment as much as plants and animals. Comparing it to other machines, the computer is even special in this sense, due to its partly “human nature”: computer “reasons”, “calculates”, “observes like humans” and controls other machines as a some sort of metamachine. Specifically in science fiction and comic strips, computers, or “electronic brains” were described as human-like figures since the 1940s. Making the technology social or emotional has been the key expedient to introduce and popularise it (Suominen 2003a; 2003b; Suominen & Parikka 2010, forthcoming).

In addition, the designers of new technology have intentionally tried to add human features to computers and software solutions. During the recent decades, this has meant not only machine reasoning but also capabilities to represent emotions due to the fact that a real intelligent machine cannot be emotionless. *Affective computing* means hardware and software solutions, which create illusory feelings of emotional responses (Picard 1997; Kangas 2004. See also Norman 2005).

Computers and information technology received increasingly variable attention in Finland and other countries during the period from the 1940s onwards (Aspray & Beaver 1986; Cortada 1993; 2001). However, mentions of computer love seem to be marginal, even an *anomaly*, which as such suits well to the nature of falling in love. Francesco Alberoni (1993, e.g. 9–11) suggests that falling in love belongs to “the area of unconventional”. Its intensity is deviant when comparing it to other behaviour. This unconventionality has not restrained the flood of the romance stories.

My primary material, which includes hundreds of press clippings and comic strips from the 1930s to 1970s, has only about twenty direct or indirect descriptions of romantic affairs between a human and a computer or a robot. One explanation for the rarity of human-computer romances is that the lack of emotions was an advantage to machines and users both. The ideal machine did not have emotions, or other human weaknesses: “They don’t go on strikes, get sick, flirt, or go to have a cigarette”, testified an employee from an elevator company in 1956 according to the *Valitut Palat* (9/1956, 71), when he compared the benefits of automatic elevators to human lift operators. This

discourse was related to (research of) such tradition, which emphasised emotional control in measuring quality of work and organisation (Ilmonen 1999, 303–304).

The intellectuality, calculation skills and indefatigability of the “electronic brain” were qualities, which repelled emotions such as love. Computer was a disciplinary machine, an instrument in the maximization of the employees’ productivity. The popular media, like the scientific perspective to information processing, had a general top-down perspective from the 1940s to the early 1970s. Information processing technologies were the makers of the future, which did not appear at the personal or intimate level. Professionals (typically male), who were connected to science, technology or business, could not represent emotions such as enthusiasm, love or fear, towards new information technology, at least not publicly in Finland. Strong emotions were not suitable for a professional, and when the computer was an “electronic brain” or a “giant brain”, how could it be lovable. On the other hand, early computers received personal nicknames, and this meant that they were made as individual characters, because of that they were probable lovable figures as well (Suominen 2003a; Suominen & Parikka 2010, forthcoming).



Image 1. Cover of the early Finnish robot novel *Atorox Venuksessa* (*Atorox in Venus*, 1947) presented robot in a seducing role.

In addition, for popular media, computers and robots were not clearly separable in the 1950s. A computer could be called as a robot itself, even as “love robot” when a popular article dealt with early computer-aided partner-seeking (*Apu* 28/1957, 36–37). Robots, which were shown in popular exhibitions or fiction, were equipped with stereotypical gender features or figures, such as male drinking habits, yearning for female partner, chest hair (electric wires), and skirt, fear of mice, cleaning or nagging. Thus, a popular and fictional robot was some sort of “personal computer” of the 1950s. It was

represented as resembling human, it had personal characteristics and individuals often used it. Therefore, a robot might have been an object or subject of romantic affairs. Still, a famous fictional robot from the *Forbidden Planet* movie (1956), Robby, was described in the *Apu* magazine that Robby “does everything but confessions of love” (*Apu* 31/1955, 36) At least it danced waltz with the actor Anne Francis (from the film) in a photo published in the magazine.

Rationing of emotions and love were like scripted in computing technology and its popular representations. That however, did not inhibit episodic bursts of passion. Extreme emotions, such as rage and lust represented in popular media, could be examples of possible counter-strategies and oppositions towards dominant computing discourses. Love and romance on their part, were more conservative themes. Love had—and still has—standardised norms in popular discourses. In the particular contexts, there could have been more intimate relationships between humans and machines.

4. Computer as a Seductress

Experienced Hollywood couple Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn starred in a popular romantic comedy, *Desk Set* in 1957. The movie's Finnish premiere was about six months before the introduction of the first IBM 650 computer in the Post-Savings Bank. The ways of representing computing in the movie's reviews and the news concerning, the real computer, Ensi, were surprisingly similar (Suominen 2000). Due to its love theme and its international popularity, *Desk Set* is a fruitful example considering computer love, not only bearing in mind its role in reflecting the automation discourse in the 1950s (On historical context of *Desk Set*, see Malone 2002, 20-21; Bourne & Hahn 2003, prologue; Friedman 2005; Suominen 2000).

Desk Set can even be seen as a triangle drama, where technician Richard Sumner (Spencer Tracy) has to choose between supercomputer Emerac (aka Miss Emmy) and full-blooded red-head Bunny Watson (Katherine Hepburn). Even though the supercomputer has a nickname, some special features and is treated something like a genius child or a pet, Emmy does not much resemble a human being. Sumner chooses Watson, but does not totally forget Miss Emmy. In fact, Sumner uses Emmy and "her" problems as an excuse to beat off his rival suitor. According to Sumner, Emmy needs Watson's attention just about the same time when another man is about to ask Watson's hand.

Bunny Watson has to compete against a computer to keep her professional honour and concrete job. At the same time, she has to rival against it to catch the attention of a man. The latter theme has been used variably since its introduction, and for example since the 1980s the term "computer widow" has been used when describing such situations. Computer has typically taken the man away from his female partner. The same theme was developed in former hacker movies in the 1980s and the 1990s, which in the end testifies how (male) computer enthusiasts still need other people, friends and loved ones (Sihvonen 2004, 234). Hilde Corneliussen (2005, 234) points out that men's relationship to technology is often referred as intimacy and love in psychological and sociological

studies, and this *pleasure* has been identified as a barrier for women. In order to “preserve” their femininity, girls and women reject the intimacy with the computer.

Computers or robots did not only enchant men that were represented in popular media. Although Susanna Paasonen has noticed that robot/android/male cyborg is rarely the object of romance, there are few exceptions where a male robot is the object or an active subject in such romances. In 1935, a Finnish magazine *Seura* (“Company”, targeted to families like the magazine *Apu*) already introduced mechanical men called “Alpha”, built by a professor Harry May from London, England. In the popular article, Alpha was presented as the ideal future soldier that had “human figures in his face” and “fine permanent in his metallic hair.” This robot was able to speak and answer questions. It liked “obviously, blond women”, to whom it stared shamelessly. (*Seura* 20/1935, 20.) In addition, Aarne Haapakoski’s space opera pulp-science fiction novels had a more or less romantic robot figure in the late 1940s. Atorox-robot was reprogrammable with brain cassettes, and one of the cassettes consisted of the personality of a famous Finnish Casanova figure, Ruben Auervaara (who was arrested in the 1940s). The cassette turned the robot into a salon smoothie. (Suominen 2003a.)

In 1965, *Apu* magazine published Sirkka Selja’s short story which had a male charmer robot (*Apu* 7/1965, 58-59). The female key character of the story visits an exhibition of “young modernists” with her boyfriend at the Helsinki Kunsthalle. There is a gadget sculpture, constructed with tin plates and wires, which starts to follow the women. Eventually, a “man-sized robot”, named Esko (like the early Finnish computer in the 1950s) comes off from the sculpture, bows gently to a woman and asks: “Can I escort you to your home?” Woman agrees, because her boyfriend has disappeared somewhere. After the escorting and a techno-scientific discussion, partners agree that Esko will call her next the day. In spite of the agreement, he does not call, and it is revealed that the robot, which ought to be only intelligent and non-emotional, has disappeared to chase a pretty blonde, who had “high heels, mincing walk and big white fur collar.” Woman states: “Of course, I said. This had to happen, because it was a very well made robot.”

The article is an example of an earlier popular vision, where the illusion of artificial emotion is based on both corporeal and mental connection between a woman and a machine. In addition, robot’s capacity for communication is essential in its human nature. Moody behaviour of the robot Esko proves its humanity at the end. However, one can only think if Esko is unpredictable, or is it only programmed to seek for an ideal partner, based on external measurements.

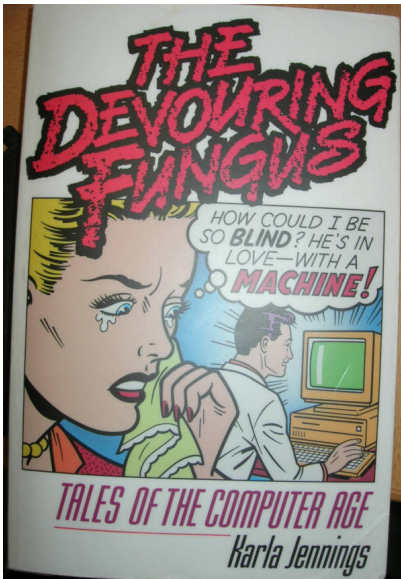


Image 2. The term "computer widow" was introduced during the 1980s at the latest. Here the theme on computer widow is represented in the cover of Karla Jennings book *The Devouring Fungus* (1990).

Regardless of the gendered variations, love and romance are used for underlining the difference between human and non-human. There is typically a moral lesson to be learned from the stories in the popular media: At the end, machines do not replace humans. Obsession towards machines is freakish, sick and condemnable; either the question is about the orientation of masculine work, or making of a "mechanical bride", or being as a feminine object of seductive acts. The relationship between humans and machines do

not fit to the hetero-normative ideal, where a man and a woman join as completing halves and where the relationship is anchored to mating institutions, such as dates, engagement, and weddings (Paasonen 2004, 23, 26). The relationship between a human and a machine is represented as maniac and connected to an addiction.

Popular media representations, described above, are fantasies, which criticized other fantasies, extravagant visions of technological possibilities. Love, seduction and lust have their own repetitive place in popular discourses concerning computing technology. Especially in recent decades, there has been descriptions, which go even further and transform the presenting technological eroticism and perverse relations (Springer 1996; Strengell 2004; Eerikäinen 2004; Parikka 2004).

5. Platonic Love, Side by Side

Finnish researchers of Indian, Arabic and Persian Cultures, Virpi and Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila (2005, 23) explain in their book, *Rakkauden Atlas (Atlas of Love)* that love can be a little bit sick when it is connected to strong passions, and it seems that loyalty or devotion always balances love.² We can also find some descriptions of such symmetrical human-computer relations, when we are dealing with the relationship between the nurturer and the cherished. Francesco Alberoni (1993, 16) points out, that falling in love is not only a personal need or whim. It is "an orderly power, which creates institutions."

Tuulikki Alkio presented some computer experts and professionals in the Finnish IBM customer publication, *IBM Katsaus* (the *IBM Review*) in 1969 (2/1969, 45–47). She wrote about Mrs. Kuorinka and Ms. Laakso, whose relationship with the computers they used was peculiar:

During the early years, fear of computer's possible human [!] errors made me lose sleep over this matter, but soon we got to know each other. First love never gets rusty [Finnish phrase] probably it does not in the Computer Age either, and Ms. Laakso recalls almost tenderly the first computer, which remembered 10 000 instructions and was more controllable than the current computer installations... 'You can call Mrs. Kuorinka anytime', reads at the Folk-Pension Institute's computer centre. You can find her whenever during the day or night from the side of computer -- relationship with the computer is 'warm' and the job exciting.



Both of these female computer experts are represented as very committed to their work. Particularly intimacy, touch, devotion and commitment are themes, which are related to definitions of love. This love is not that romantic but it is also friendly and non-selfish.

Image 3. In the *IBM Katsaus* -article, Mrs. Kuorinka poses beside the computer.

Few articles, published in the late 1960s such as Alkio's text, reveal the change, which was happening in the computing branch. Women had earlier worked mainly in the routine punch card secretarial works and as computer operators, but only few of them had been represented in popular media, or they rarely wrote to professional journals. Female professionals' role started to be more visible during the late 1960s and onwards, more ordinary computer use situations were presented publicly when it started to have longer traditions. One motif, for introducing female experts and workers, was to present the change in work life but also to give modern career examples, suitable for both sexes (see e.g. *Valitut Palat* 8/1961, 57).

Still the female role was often to be an object of male desire and admiration, because popular media representations typically emphasized women's accuracy, trustworthy and their pretty outlook.³ One could even claim that the represented pretty female worker acted as a manly user interface to

computers. Women were the cushioning middle piece, or the binary equivalent compared to the “dehumanized” computer world. A woman also represented some sort of continuity at the moment of computer revolution, as a reporter in a Finnish filmed news flash put it in the early 1960s: “There is a new age in the Statistic Office as well, and shelved abacuses are introduced only to pressmen and news film camera men. Work is very technical nowadays, but still, women have maintained their cute supremacy in the organization.”

Like in the earlier examples, the representations and narratives were gendered, but there were also descriptions of devotional male workers, who love their computer without obsessions and had “love at first sight” (*Valitut Palat* 8/1961, 57). Comparing to female examples, these emphasize the leader position of the key figure, as well as the importance of developing one’s own work and career. Although meeting the computer could have been “love at first sight”, the male examples do not concentrate on reminiscence. However, these examples are comparable to some newer technobiographies or personal “computing histories”, where users describe their own relationship with computers.

6. Heartthrob from the Teen Years

Teemu (b. 1974) portrayed his earlier devotion to information technology in his writing from 1999: “I don’t know if I have ever been so proud like then [in the 1980s], after a long time and many attempts I managed to get a sprite to obey joystick-control. I could even compare, during these nostalgic recollections, it to a first kiss, but I suppose it is better not to mix that kind of issues together.”(Cit. Uotinen 2003, 241.)

According to Johanna Uotinen (2005), who has studied Teemu’s and others’ technobiographies, computer related stories by young males consist of at least three different elements: opinions, descriptions of technical skills as well as emotional expressions. The opinions refer to general information of societal development or to conceptions of quality of certain machines, software or technical practises. Descriptions of technical skills are related to writers’ own user experiences of his learning process. In addition to these, there are also descriptions of personal positive or negative emotional states and feelings. According to Uotinen, this emotional imagery consists mostly of reminiscent matter. The emotions are typically connected to writers’ boyhood in the 1980s, and the descriptions of emotions are rarer when coming towards the present time. The emotional descriptions are related to, among other things, to the joy of receiving a new long time expected computer, or success in programming or installing software or hardware components. The writers

also tell about shame and disappointment, but particularly the relation with the early period of computer usage is an essential element. Teemu, for instance, becomes much enthusiastic during his own reminiscence, but he tries to make a difference between human (first kiss) and human-computer excitement (programming). While doing this, Teemu emphasizes his own normality, ability to divide humans and technology.

Ethnologist Pirjo Korhonen (1999) says that nostalgia refers to memories that are coloured by melancholic yearning or pleasure enjoying the past. Remembering and writing down computer memories seem to be a pleasure for Teemu, although one cannot know from the citation whether the yearning is also plangent. Teemu is also moving towards *reflective nostalgization*, where reminiscence means that he has to question his own positive memories. At the same time, one can see Teemu's story as a description of the socialization in information technology, as well as a representation of the domestication of emotional relationship with the machine.

Susanna Sallinen (2004) has argued that present people check from time to time how he or she has developed towards the present. With reminiscing, s/he is able to harmonize segments of her/his life story to the entity, which progresses naturally. It is done with computer-related autobiographies, for example. Some of these stories are clearly technological romances, which are attached to first experiences with computers, certain turning points, as well as to success and disappointments. However, it appears that particularly in writings done by male authors, like in the newspaper and magazine articles which are related to male experts, there is a quite rapid shift from romance to descriptions of technical details, progress and own expertise. The change, happening to the author or his/her object, is essential.

The first experience with computers is typically desirable, hoped and expected, and a natural part of the personal history of the male authors. That is not often the case with female writers. At first, they have regarded computers as suspicious, and the possible love for a computer has emerged slowly. It has not been love at first sight, but it has resembled the taming of the shrew (Different question is who is the shrew and who is the tamer). In addition, the slow romance has meant that the object of the information processing has become an active subject within the particular technology.

7. Conclusion: Loved and Domesticated?

In 1995, the Finnish Literacy Society and the Educational Association for Clerical Employees organized a writing contest with the title "Tietokone – isäntä vai renki?" (Computer—master or

servant? (or Lord or farmhand?)). The material was archived for researchers to study. Potential writers were instructed with several questions, for example: “How did you regard your new tool? Did you fall in love with it immediately or did some fears arise? Is your relationship with a computer changed since then? What did you expect from the machine? Alternatively, has it made your work easier, frustrating, or physically and mentally grinding?”

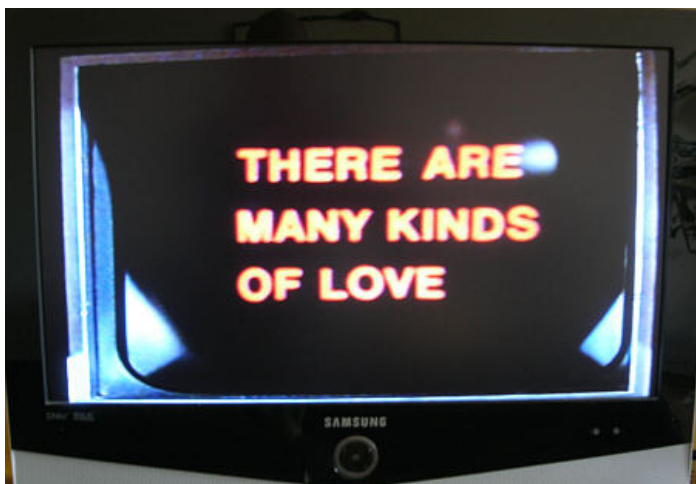
Participants, who submitted to the contest, were mainly female. A repetitive theme can be found in the stories, and the theme is how the suspiciousness towards computers changed into excitement and heartthrob during the daily use (mainly at work). The stories were often equipped with romantic titles, such as “On love to Mac”, “My love - PC”, or “Computer my beloved”. Writers have also used nicknames such as “Love and affection” and “Computer mon amour”. They have clearly touched upon the question of computer love, posed in the contest brochure. They have experienced it as reasonable in the sense of their own computer affairs.

Folkloristic Jyrki Pöysä (2003), who has studied the Master and Servant -writings notices that “dictum [master and servant] which utilised control metaphor suited very well as a pattern for structuring writers’ personal experiences: computer was experienced both as uncontrolled and controlled fact. [--] More intimate way of speaking [in the brochure] directs the contestant to a more personal and confessional way of writing.” Also, according to Pöysä, some writings are labeled with so-called *intimacy duality*, which is a playful way to describe the use of a machine as a social relationship between two counterparts. Those stories are, however, varying and personal, but some of them seem to be descriptions of intimate human-computer affairs, where there are moments of having a crush, love and power battles between the counterparts represented by the human side of the story. Even though some female users want downplay their fascination with computers (Corneliussen 2005, 238), this power-battling narrative seemed to be suitable for describing computer-related emotions.⁴

Nevertheless, cultural appropriation of technology is not only a linear process, where “feminine” taming (such as household applications, aestheticism, user friendliness, relationship analysing, and name giving) follows after a “sublime masculine shock” (introduction of new, revolutionary technology) (Nye 1994). As badly, the introduction of new technology can be condensed every time as romances, where institutionalizing or habituation is followed by a stormy falling in love. Mika Pantzar (1996; 2000) writes that the domestication of technology is a process with many phases and variations. It is a process, where natural resources become part of the material and immaterial

culture of our everyday lives. According to Pantzar, we have learned and grown to be technological consumers during the last hundred years. During this process, we have learned to use machines—and they have learned to use us.

Image 4. Here is the answer from Colossus-supercomputer to doctor Forbin (its designer), Colossus tells Forbin that he has some emotional needs (for women). *Colossus—the Forbin Project* movie (1970)



In the context of this paper, the domestication of technology is partly a societal project, where machine love and romantic tales have clear places and situated forms: they act as tools in moral technological education. It is a question about communal process, where people are not only taught to use technology, but also to learn, behave and act correctly with

technological artefacts. When we try to “behave” with machines, there are always emotions—and attempts to control them.

Table 2. Four explicit romantic roles of computer in popular media and autobiographies.

	More active computer	More passive computer
More present or future-oriented discourse	Computer as a seducer or seductress	Computer as cared or owned
Retrospection discourse	Computer as tamed or domesticated	Computer as a (teen-age) heart-throb

The domestication of computer technology is not only a human-human or human-computer social process. It has also happened as a construction of personal identity, as a kind of selfhood-project where one negotiates with his/her own user relation as well as with general and dominant

information technological discourses. Recollection is a part of this personal identity project. When technology is domesticated, one makes a set of trials, which do not necessarily lead to a certain result or proceed in a particular order (Lehtonen 2003). They can even result in a technological denial or opposition, or hate instead of love—or typically a relationship that escapes from these dichotomies.

Which this paper I have wanted to argue that when we "love computer", we commit ourselves in many levels, what is technology's role in our own life and social sphere. A loved computer is situated as a part of social reality, which is explained with a some sort of retrospect love story or a cautionary description of the dangers for the too deep desire. Love requires a story, which gives technological experiences both a general and a personal character. The technological romance does not only tell about the relationship between people and technology. Through love, one can also enlighten something else, about practises how to be and act as a part of the technocultural sphere. These emotional stories deal with bonds to other people, work, and institutions, past, present and the future.

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¹ This is controversial due to construction of the first Finnish mathematical computer, ESKO, which took place 1955–1960 (On ESKO, see Paju 2005; Paju 2008).

² Psychologist John Lee divides romantic, friendly, playful, unselfish, practical and maniac love (Hämeen-Anttila&Hämeen-Anttila 2005, 21; Määttä 1999, 38).

³ Women was represented as part of a machine, its slave or on the other hand as seductresses of technological environment already in descriptions of 19th century industry or in advertising in the late 19th century and the early 20th century (Wosk 2001, 17–37).

⁴ Georg Simmel (2005, 214–215) compares love affair to economical ownership or business, in where more powerful or controllale is that partner who loves less.