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UNIVERSITY of York

Review of Carol Dyhouse, *Love Lives: From* Cinderella *to* Frozen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021)

Navigating thoughtfully and wittily the changing worlds and forms of the fairytale, Carol Dyhouse's *Love Lives* is a fun read. Continuing her work on the changing romantic and sexual lives of women in Britain and to some extent North America, such as in her previous book *Heartthrobs: A History of Women and Desire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), *Love Lives* is the best kind of cultural history. Dyhouse navigates skilfully between analysing the transformation of the Disney princess, from Cinderella to Moana and Elsa, to considering Mass Observers' raw and honest, and often deeply affecting, directives about their sexual lives, via post-war romantic comics, *Spare Rib*, and *Sex and the City*.

The book will appeal to a wide audience. It's wonderfully written and highly accessible, and whilst being well rooted in a number of historiographical debates, is never heavy or hard-going. *Loves Lives* therefore is a great example of crossover academic/trade book done well. A chronological structure tells a story of growing sexual freedom and the increased availability of contraception, the rise of divorce and cohabitation over marriage, how women combined new opportunities in the world of work with their personal and love lives, and the rise of 'singles culture' in a twenty-first century world of online dating, the #MeToo campaigns and a renewed feminist movement. *Love Lives* moves through what feels like familiar territory for social historians of twentieth-century Britain, yet brings new insights too. The interweaving of analysis of the shifting happy-ever-after love story sold hard to girls and women throughout this period with the changes fought for by feminists, and the backlash the Women's Liberation Movement instigated, is particularly effective. The feminist movement and the sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, Dyhouse shows us, were 'rooted together even if the branches, as they matured, sometimes diverged' (p.97). Dyhouse's skill and expertise as a historian also reveals itself in her drawing together changes in women's lives and ambitions with the wider social, economic and political context, such as the 'deep division of the sexes' that were a result of men's National Service in post-war Britain (p.167). This results in a rich and wide-ranging history, of interest to all kinds of historians.

Dyhouse's focus on 'dreams' is revealing, providing a useful framework through which to explore the relationship between cultural representations and the realities of women's lives. Such a framework helps think through the continuities as well as changes of this period, such as the 'suffocatingly confining gender roles' of internet dating, as writer Oriana Asano puts it (p.231). The gulf between the dream fairytale endings and women's lived experiences is at times stark and moving. I found this a compelling way to think about women's lives in this period, as Dyhouse empathetically moves between a range of types of sources, from films to individual accounts of love and marriage.

Dyhouse acknowledges that this is a story mostly about white, middle-class, heterosexual women, the women who by and large were most represented in and catered for by the kinds of cultural forms she covers, such as mainstream British and American novels and films. I was a little surprised there wasn't much discussion of other media like the cheap romance fiction of Mills & Boon, Barbara Cartland and the like, which women of all backgrounds read in their millions throughout these decades, or the more varied genres of content consumed in vast numbers by growing migrant populations, such as Bollywood films. Yet, in such a wide-ranging book, coverage across all these media can never be even. Class and race do appear here in Dyhouse's analysis: she explores how it was young, white, middle-class women who could benefit from the newly felt freedoms of the 1970s, and who could take advantages of the broadening educational and career opportunities. But there is more to be researched and said on this topic, and the way that privilege intersected with the very ability to dream and fulfil those ambitions in particular warrants more attention. There was in the 1950s, and still remains today, a cavernous gulf between girls from different kinds of backgrounds who engage with these fairytales, particularly along the lines of race and socio-economic status. Whether girls and women dreamt of a big white wedding, a home they could make their own, or a career with prospects, the dreams of some were infinitely more achievable than others. More can and needs to be said here.

In summary, this is a book I thoroughly enjoyed. I laughed, felt deeply sad, and found myself rethinking my own dread of the inevitable pink and sparkly princess phase my nearly two-year-old daughter is bound to go through all too soon. It was truly a pleasure to read,

something we often don't value enough in academic history texts. *Love Lives* should most definitely reach a wide and varied audience.