

!0%#, ('8'3('.\$!0!6:MG;)'3%(",\$#7%-#8!. \$#!.4/0\$3%*8/4('0\$%#7%3/1%
6\$!-\$3%#H\$-#('9%)'3(#-'*49%, *-!*#-8*49%NOP; QR9%'13, '-*(#!*49%"#/!6%*0/4(9%
!0%8!"%8#-\$K9&').)%*4(#6\$())\$-%*..#/(%7#-%LE%, \$-\$! (%7%())\$%S!'(\$0%
States fction market.%P\$.*/3\$%#7%())\$%5*-'\$0%3/16\$!-\$3%*!0%1-\$*0()%#7%
authors and readers, it can be deceptively difficult to nail down similarities
()*(% /!('\$%*44%-#8*!. \$#!#5\$439%1/(%#!\$%)'!6%()*(% '3%.#!3'3(\$!(*. -#33%())\$%
-#8*!. \$!6\$!-\$%3%())\$%)*, "%\$!0!6:??3%*O\$3.\$!0\$!(%#7%())\$%O-\$2\$. #8\$0"9%
-#8*!. \$!\$!03%&'())%*%&\$00!69%#-%*(%4\$*3%())\$%, -#8'3\$%#7%3#8\$2!0%#7%
. #88'(\$%!(%1\$(&\$!%)\$%)\$-#!\$%*!0%\$-%)\$-#%;)'3%. #88#!%0\$!#8!'*(#-%
has been the target of criticism since feminist critique of the genre began,
1/(%T*8\$4%*U\$6'39%*/()#-%#7%/+0)\$.()1+2-3\$"(*+ "4\$5%+6"&)#7%+0"8%19%
-6/\$3%()(%7#-%-#8*!. \$!-\$*0\$-39%3\$3\$!6%())\$%)\$-#!\$%#5\$-.#8\$%()\$%1*--'\$-%
'3%())\$%-\$*40-*&%#7%())\$%3(#-\$39%!(%)\$%&\$00!6%*(%)\$%\$!0:<)\$%*33\$-(3%)(%
“the heroine of the romance novel...overcomes the barrier and is freed
from all encumbrances to her union with the hero,” and “her choice to
8*--"(%\$%)\$-#%'3%1/3(%#!\$%8*!'7\$3(*('#!%#7%)\$-%7-\$0#8:ME%U\$*0\$-3%5*4/\$%
the freedom of their heroine, not just a ring on her finger.

So where did the negative attitude toward these happy tales begin?
W#-%()*(%&\$%. *!%14*8\$%())\$%P-'('3)%6#5\$-!8\$!(; ;)\$%-'3\$%#7%())\$%#5\$4%. *8\$%
'!%\$!6)(\$!())\$. \$!(/-"%D!64*!0%*3%*-\$3/4(%#7%3\$5\$-\$4%7*.(#-3%*!*!'!.-\$*3\$%
'!%4('\$-*. "9%()!*!23%(#%())\$%T/-'(*!3%&)#%5*4/\$0%*!0%, -#8#(\$0%())\$%*1'4'("%#7%*%
, \$-3#!%(#-\$*0%())\$%-#&!%1'14\$Y%())\$%*1'4'("%(#, -#0/.\$%*!0%0'3(-1/(\$1##23%
3%%-\$3/4(%#7%())\$%. #88\$-.'*4%, -#3,\$-('"%&).')%*44#&\$0%())\$%, /14'3)!6%

identification.”^F

“()’3(’ 8 9\$’6)(\$\$!()b.\$!(/-“%#!5\$4%8 #3(4“%(##2%)\$3)*,\$#7%&)*(%
&#/40%(#0*“%1\$*\$3’4“%-\$.#6!=\$0%3%*%,#,#/4%-#8*!.\$7%*!%77*’-1\$(&\$!%
3(*-b.-#33\$0%#5\$-3&’())3\$\$8’!64““!\$3.*,*14\$#13(*.4\$3%&)#%8’-*/4#/34“%
7#/#!0%*%)*,“%\$!0’!6%&*3%*%.4*33’.%!#5\$4%,4#(:`%;)’3%(",\$#7%-\$4*(’#!3)’,%
*!0%#7(\$!%.4*33b1*3\$0%0-*8*%,#3\$0%*%()-\$*(9%’!%)\$6#5\$-!8\$!(c3%\$"\$39%
(#%())\$&\$41\$’!6%#7%())\$#/#!(-"c3%.’(=\$!39%,*-(’/4*-4“())\$\$!%&)#%
8*0\$%/,%8#3(%#7%())\$-\$*0\$-3)’,-%;)’3%.#!.\$-!%7#-%\$!c3%&\$4b1\$’!6%
led to the equivocation of libraries with brothels and a condemnation of
()\$-\$*0\$-3%&)#%.)#3\$%(#, *-(*2\$’!%)\$8 :c#5\$4-\$*0’!6%&*3%*33#.’*(\$0%
with moral shortcomings: “Their regard for such low literature was seen
to reflect their own bad taste and dubious personal traits: they were said
to be fanciful and superficial, indolent and hasty, incapable of any serious

and does not rely on downplaying or redefining the domestic betrothal \$!0!6*3%.\$!(-*4%(#())\$%3(#-":%g\$39()(\$%)\$-#!\$%6\$(3%*)/31*!0%*(())\$%\$!09% and no, that doesn't make her a disempowered woman. "Domesticity is not the necessary equivalent of oppression, either externalized or internal, *!0%(#0'38'33%'(%*3%3/.)%'3%(#%/!0\$-8'!\$%*%5*4'0%*3, '-(*#!%#-%4'7\$.)#'. \$%7#-% \$! :M>F% f /3(1\$. * /3\$(())\$-#!\$%3*8 *--'\$0%*!0%) * , "%*1#/(%#0\$3!C(% mean that she is brainwashed or stifed. It means that she values that form #7%-\$4*('#!3)',9%&)' .)%'3%*7#-8%*!0%-(/ *4% . \$4\$1-(*#!%())*(%) *3%1\$!\$!%5*4/\$0% 7#-% . \$!(/-\$3:%a7%'*8 *--'\$6\$%*(())\$%\$!0%-!7#-. \$3(())\$%5*4/\$%#7%*0#8\$3(' . %)#'. \$%7#-%-\$*0\$-39%(\$!)%*(%)3!#(#!)\$-\$!(4"%-\$!7#-. !6%, *(-*-.) *4% . #!(-#4% #5\$-%())#3\$3*8\$%-*\$0\$-3%U*(())\$-9%'(%'3'8'--#!6(())\$-%&!% , '-#!'\$3%*!0% 4#5\$1* . 2%(#())\$8%'!%*%-\$, -\$3\$!(*(#!*4%*!0%\$8 , *)\$'(%&*": ;#%0\$7\$!0(())\$%)\$-#!\$9%*(/)#-%f\$!!'7\$-%d-/3'\$% . '\$3(())\$%-#8*! . \$%)\$-#!\$%3\$3\$47b0\$(\$-8'!\$0%5*4/\$%* , *-(%7-#8(())\$%)\$-#!\$(-4"%<)%3*(3%3 that her heroine "doesn't have to earn her hero's love; she gets it as a 7-\$1\$9%/! . #!0'(#! *44"9%1\$. * /3\$3%)\$3%*!(-'!3' . *44"%&#-() "%#7%1\$!6%4#5\$09% *!0%)\$-%&#-(%)3%0\$8#!3(-*(\$0%(#())\$-\$*0\$-%1"(%\$%&*"%3)\$% . #!0/ . (3%)\$-% quest."?> % ;)'3%&#-()& '4%)\$-#!\$%3% . * , *14\$%#7%#5\$- . #8'!6(())\$%#13(* . 4\$3% ()*(%*-\$% , /(%!'7-#!(%#7%)\$-9%*!0%&)\$!3%)\$0#3%#5\$- . #8\$%()\$8%3)\$6\$3% ()\$%-\$&* -03%#7% , \$-3#!*4%6-#&()&'()*%*1#! /3%#7%*%4#5'!6%8*!%*)\$-3'0\$%(#% .)\$%)\$-%##!% ;)'3%4#5\$0%*!0%4#5'!6%)\$-#!\$%3%*-\$% , -\$3\$!(*(#!#7%5' . (#-"% #5\$-% .) *44\$!6\$39%&)' .)%'3%*43#%4##2\$0%0#&!% / , #!'3%1\$!6%'0\$*4'3' . %*!0% 14'!0%(#())\$% * -3%)\$-\$*4'(\$3%#7%\$!3%4'5\$0%\$+ , -\$'\$! . \$3% d-/3'\$%*-6/\$39%)\$-9(%)*(%*) * , "%\$!0!6'3!#(#!*5\$X

Romance fiction places women at the center of the story by -7/3'!6%(## , *%4' , %3\$-5' . \$%#(())\$% , #3(b8#0\$-!3(5'\$&#()*(4'7\$'3% hopeless and we're all victims. Instead, romance fiction almost /!5\$-3*44""-\$!7#- . \$3(())\$%)\$*4()%" / 8*!% , \$- . \$, ('#!%())*(())\$% &#-40%'3!#(%*%5' . #/3(-*6' . % , 4* . \$9%\$3 , \$. '44"%7#-%\$!-% ;)'3% has often been cited as evidence that romance fiction does '!0\$0%0&\$44%'!7*!(*3"%4*!09%1/(%3)#&!6%\$!3%5' . (#-'\$3% '3!#(% /!-\$*4'3' . 9% !#-%'3(-*6\$0"%!)\$-\$!(4"%3/ , \$-#-%#-%8#-\$% -\$*4'3' . %)()!% . #8\$0"-%6!

Romance heroines reflect the reader's world back to them through complex,

d/4(-\$9%Convergence%GF9%#:%L%h>`ZK9%J>bJJ:

% 18 Janet, "Romance Is Not a Feminist Genre – And That's Okay." >%) (+/. \$5"(f * !/*-" [9%G!>Z%0\$*-* /)#- . #8]7\$*(-\$3)\$(\$-3b#7b# , '#!]-#8*! . \$b'3b!#(b*b7\$8'!3(b6\$!-\$b*!0b)*(3b#2*"):

% 19 Jenny Crusie Smith, "This Is Not Your Mother's Cinderella: The Romance Novel *3%W\$8'!3(%W*"- "% ; *4\$9%W'!%6")&#-7+! "#8%#-\$#3%0%?!!\$%h:h*4\$-%!0%U#3\$8*-"%D: f#) !3#!bh/-\$2%HP#&4'!6%O-\$!%P#&4'!6%O-\$!%<(*\$S!5\$-3'("%T# , /4*-%T-\$339%>` `K9%ZZ:

% 20 "Romancing Reality: The Power of Romance Fiction to Reinforce and Re-Vision the U\$*49%Paradoxa: Studies in World Literary Genres% !#:%>bG%h>` JK%`>b`G:

liberation. A common critique is that romance novels don't give women readers instructions or a "comprehensive program" for reinventing their by asking: which novels do? standard of social revolution for which no other genre is held responsible?

'3% 3(44% (*1##9% #, \$!4" * .2!#&!\$06'!6% ()\$ 3\$+ / *4% ()\$ 8\$3% #7% 3#8\$ 1##23% 3\$5\$83% (#5\$-3) *0#&%()\$-\$3(%#7% ()\$ 5*4 / \$%#7% ()\$ 6\$!-\$:

% B\$3, '(# ()\$ 3\$ 3 / -7* . \$b\$5\$4% 8'3 / !0\$-3(*!0'!639% *!0% , *-('44" 1\$. * / 3\$ ()\$ " .) 44\$!6\$ * 3(/ 0\$! ((# & #-2% , *3(8'3-\$, -\$3\$! (*('#!9% -#8 * !. \$! #5\$43% 3) # / 40% 1\$ 1-# / 6) (' ! (#) ' 6) \$- \$ 0 / . * ('#! 4' (\$- (/ -\$. / --' . / 4 / 83% 1\$. * / 3\$ ()\$ " & # / 40% 7 / - ()\$- * * , '8 * -" 6# * 4% #7% 4'1\$- * 4% * - (3% education: empathy. Empathy, or "the ability to understand and share the 7\$4'!63%#7% * !#()\$-9W% *4#&3% , #, 4\$ (# . # ! ! \$. (% & ' () % # ! \$ * ! # ()\$-0\$3, '(\$ 0'77\$-\$! . \$3% ! ()\$ ' -%4'5\$0\$+, \$-\$! . \$3%#-1\$4'739%*!0% ()'3%*1'4' (" (# #' 8 * 6' ! \$ # ()\$-3% . # 8 , 4\$+4" '3% * 7# / ! 0 * (# ! * 4%32'44% (# & * -0' ! (\$- , -\$3# ! * 4% . #44 * 1#- * (# ! * ! 0% -\$3, \$. :L% @#8\$! * -\$ (* / 6) (# ' 0\$! (' 7" H#- \$ 8 , * () = \$K% & () % 8\$! % because, as Jane Tompkins points out, "stories about men...function as stories about all people," so "women learn at an early age to identify with 8 * 4\$))\$-#3:ML The same kind of practice in empathy is rarely required or 5\$5!\$! . # / - * 6\$0' ! % 8\$! (# & * -0' 7\$ 8 * 4\$.) * - . (\$-39% * ! 0% () ' 3% ' 8'1 * 4' ! . \$. # ! (- 1 / (\$3% (#) \$ % , \$- . \$, (' # ! () * (% 8\$! * - \$ 3 (* ! 0 * -0% * ! 0% & # 8\$! * - \$ % , \$- ,) \$-4% 0'5\$! () * (% & # 8\$! * - \$ % ! # (9' ! 7 * . (9' 3' 0\$.) * - . (\$-3% ! () \$ %) / 8 * ! % 3(# - " * ! 0% () \$ % . # ! (' ! / * (' # ! # 7% () \$ %) / 8 * ! % & # -409% 4' (\$- (/ - \$ &) ' .) % \$ + , 4#-\$3% 3#8\$%#7% () \$ ' - % \$ + , \$-\$! . \$3% . # / 40% , -#5'0\$%# , # - (/ ! ' \$ 3% 7#- * 44% 3(/ 0\$! (3% (# 3\$5\$7\$8 * 4\$.) * - . (\$-3% , 4 * . \$ 0% 7-# ! (% * ! 0% . \$! (\$- * ! 0% 3, \$! 0% (' 8\$% / ! , * . 2' ! 6% their stories, encouraging identification with and appreciation for women's \$+ , \$-\$! . \$3% ?% . - ' (. * 4% * . * 0\$8' . % . # ! 3' 0\$- * (' # ! # 7% -# 8 * ! . \$ % ! # 5\$43% & # / 40% help the situation by encouraging a female-centric identification outside #7% () \$ 3\$47% ! () \$ % . 4 * 33-## 8% 7-# 8% * % & # 8\$! b & - ((\$! 9% & # 8\$! b . \$! (- . % * - \$ * % # 7% 4' (\$- * (/ - \$- < / - \$ 4" * ! * - \$ * % # 7% 4' (\$- (/ - \$ % () * (% 7# . / 3\$3% # ! () \$ % \$ 8 , # & \$- 8\$! (% # 7% () \$ % \$ 8 # (' # ! * 4% 4' 5\$3% # 7% & # 8\$! . # / 40% 6\$! \$- * (\$ 5 * 4 / * 14\$ 0' 3 . / 33% # ! % (# * ! % \$ 0 / . * (' # ! * 4% 3\$ (' ! 69% 3, \$. ' 44" % &) \$ - \$. / --' . / 4 * 3 (' 44% 7# . / 3% , - \$ 0# 8' ! * ! (4" % # ! % & #-2% 1 " * ! 0% * 1# / (0\$ * 0% 8\$! : % @) ' 4\$ 4 * . 2% # 7% 0' 5\$-3 (" ' ! () \$ % . * ! # ! %) * 3% 34#&4" % 1\$ \$! * 00-\$33\$0% & ' () % 6- * 0 / * 4% * 0# , (' # ! % # 7% (\$ + (3% & - ((\$! 1 " % & # 8\$! * ! 0% , # , 4\$ # 7% . # 4#-9% () \$ % * 00' (' # ! % # 7% -# 8 * ! . \$ 9% &) ' .) %) * 3% * 4% -6\$ 4" % 6' ! #-\$0% 4' (\$- - ") ' 3(# - 9% & # / 40%) \$ 4 , 0' 5\$-3' 7" () \$ % . * ! # ! % ! % * 8\$ * ! ! 67 / 4% & * - %

? . #-0'!6% (# % * G I > J 3 / -5" % 1 " () \$ U # 8 * ! . \$ @ - (\$-3% # 7% ? 8\$- ' . * 9% () \$ % * 5\$- * 6\$-\$ * 0\$-3) ' , # 7% -# 8 * ! . \$ % ! # 5\$43% * - \$ % F G , \$- . \$! (% 7\$ 8 * 4\$ 9% L Z b L ` % "\$ * -3% # 409% J L , \$- . \$! (% &) ' (9% * ! 0% F [% , \$- . \$! (%) (\$ - # 3\$ + / * 4: L E ;) \$ 3 (* (' 3 (. 3% immediately raise the question: can a genre with such a homogenous

1"% , \$# , 4\$% #7% . #4#-% &'()% .) * - * . (\$-3% #7% . #4#-9% * !0% NOP ; QR% -# 8 * ! . \$%) *3%
1\$\$!% #!\$% #7% ()\$% 8#3(3(\$*0'4"% 6-#&'!6% 3/16\$!-\$3% 3'! . \$% ()\$% >` J13:LZ

those influences. The inner lives of women deserve to be explored and
5*4/\$0%'!%*. *0\$8'-%@)'4\$-#8*!. \$%!#5\$43%*-\$%.\$-(**!4"%!#(%())\$%#!4"%
5\$)' .4\$%7#-%()*(%\$+,4#-*(#!9%())\$"%0#%#77\$-%*%5*-\$0%*!0%!('8*(\$4##2%*(%
women writers' and readers' interests and passions, and a prolific genre
&'())%3/.)%*-'.)%'3(#-"%*!0%)\$*4(" "%8#0\$-!%0\$1*(\$%3)#/40%1\$%!.4/0\$0%!*
*!%\$0/. *(#!%()*(%5*4/\$3%4'(\$-(/-\$%*!0%())\$%8/4('8\$!3#!*4('"%#7%)/8*!%
\$+, \$-\$!.\$:%%