



Cosmopolitan Culture and Consumerism in Chick Lit (Literary Criticism and Cultural Theory)

Caroline J. Smith

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Cosmopolitan Culture and Consumerism in Chick Lit focuses on the literary phenomenon popularly known as chick lit, and the way in which this genre interfaces with magazines, self-help books, romantic comedies, and domestic-advice publications. This recent trend in women's popular fiction, which began in 1996 with the publication of British author Helen Fielding's novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*, uses first person narration to chronicle the romantic tribulations of its young, single, white, heterosexual, urban heroines. Critics of the genre have failed to fully appreciate chick lit's complicated representations of women as both readers and consumers. In this study, Smith argues that chick lit questions the "consume and achieve promise" offered by advice manuals marketed toward women, subverting the consumer industry to which it is so closely linked and challenging cultural expectations of women as consumers, readers, and writers, and of popular fiction itself.

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