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MAD ABOUT THE BOY: THE PHENOMENON OF FICTIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Chick-lit has been subjected to accusations that it is too “realistic“, that the women who write autobiographical works about homely matters such as motherhood, relationship issues and family problems forget the fundamental imperative of writing fiction, “making stuff up“. It is to be found on the great divide between two “literatures“, “good“one which teaches and the “popular“one which “sells real life“. Instead of innocence and naiveté of traditional heroines, chick-lit describes the tales of singles: young, emancipated women who live and work in big Western centres. The protagonists are openly questioning traditional forms of feminine behaviour promoted by romance novels, such as affection for cooking, laundry and cleaning, and, more importantly, reject the passivity of women in relationships, which can be visible in active search of protagonists for a man. Traditional border between the private and public sphere is particularly blurred, while the protagonists enjoy and participate in all the aspects of modern city life. The usage of first-person narration and deliberately naive form of realism encourages the readers and critics to substitute these fictional characters for real-life personas, to consider novels as autobiographical works, which lead to the phenomenon of Bridget Jones as the everywoman. The penultimate *Bridget Jones* novel, *Mad about the Boy* (2013), placed in the literary context of fictional women’s diaries, attempts to convince readers of its authenticity using various devices, such as self-deprecation, allowing the reader to feel superior to the protagonist and offering the reader a direct feed of Bridget’s consciousness.

Key words: chick-lit; autobiography; diary; femininity; postfeminism

Poststructuralist and postmodernist literary theories are partially to blame for the blurring of the boundaries between autobiography and fiction, one which is especially visible in fictional autobiography. In fictional autobiography, the author adopts a persona in order to create an autobiography of someone who never existed or to reinterpret historical events. It differs from autobiographical fiction as it does not purport to be real at all, it merely uses many characteristics of the genre, one of the most obvious being the “autobiographical I”. Still, the readers need to believe in the implied contract between themselves and the author, one which guarantees the identity of the signers (Lejeune 1989: 14). Autobiography, archetypally a male genre, is reconstituted into a form closer to women.

Gusdorf claims that autobiography is the mirror in which the individual reflects his/her own image, one in which the self and reflection coincide (1980: 27). Shari Benstock added how this definition of autobiography overlooked in her opinion the most important aspect of the autobiographical; the impossibility of synchronising of “the self” and “self image”, especially in language (1988: 15). Autobiography prefers change and difference over identity and sameness, the writings follow the line of conscious/unconscious with boundaries between the internal and external self overlapping.

Instead of naiveté and innocence of traditional heroines, chick-lit describes the lives of single women: young, emancipated women who live and work in big Western cities. The protagonists are openly questioning traditional forms of feminine behaviour promoted by romance novels, such as preference for cooking, cleaning and doing laundry, and, more importantly, reject passivity of women in relationships, which can be noticed in active search of the protagonists for a partner. Traditional boundary between the private and public sphere is particularly blurred, while the protagonists enjoy and participate in all aspects of modern city life. The usage of first-person narration and quite naïve form of realism encourages the readers and critics to accept these fictional characters as real-life persons, understand the novels as autobiographical works, which has led to the phenomenon of Bridget Jones as everywoman and to a moral panic in the media.

The cultural context that enabled the appearance of chick-lit was marked by a sequence of political, social and cultural factors that have contributed to the appearance of the so-called postmodern lifestyle. The perspectives disseminated from various areas of social sciences indicate complex transformations shaping and changing the subject’s perception of the self and others. One of such changes is the medialisation of culture that is followed by proliferation of social and sexual identities as well as

cultural denial of consumer lifestyle combined with philosophical standpoints of disintegration, decentralisation of the subject and destabilisation of the confidence of *cogito*. The western culture that has been marked by processes of globalisation paradoxically accentuates and celebrates the difference and locality in the western world of monopolised brands and corporative control. Jean Baudrillard claimed that interest in popular culture, particularly for contemporary women's novels, is one of the many recent attempts to explore the practice of the "silent majority" (1983: 2-3). Chick-lit is also criticised for its particular relationship with popular culture which is traditionally considered as feminine.

Intertextual alliance of chick-lit novels with numerous popular romances is obvious, but chick-lit is also connected with contemporary novels and popular guidebooks, popular television series, women's magazines, video clips, videogames, in other words, a great number of modern artefacts of western culture that mediate between idiosyncratic models of femininity, romance and family relations. Therefore, it seems the status of the genre these novels achieved relies on mutual interaction and differences that are inseparable from continuous cultural changes. This social-cultural phenomenon is a medium through which discourses of personal and public identity and their relationship towards the wider social context are constructed.

Chick-lit is considered as being primarily attractive for young women – female readers from an urban environment, which is visible in persistence of the publishers on authorship of equally young women, in the assumed realism of the plot, focus on the lives of young single or almost married women and their friends, as well as in stylistic and structural characteristics of the genre. Feminine images are often analysed in the context of what Natasha Walter terms "new feminism" and Ann Brooks defines as the plurality of "postfeminism". However, despite the celebratory tone in which she particularly defines the feeling of freedom young western women experience in the areas of their lives, what chick-lit presents are numerous limitations and contradictions determining their condition (Brooks 1997: 67).

The novels recycle these conflicts on different levels, from love life and family relations to lifestyle and professional possibilities. The professional sphere is presented as a disruption between a desperate need for intimacy and constant fear of rejection, while the characters' need for independence is confronted with their desires for romance. The protagonists' social life includes another problematic sphere: consumption, where the desire of the character for consumption is obligatorily incompatible with limitations encouraged by the dietary regimes enforced by the society as well as financial limitations.

Chick-lit has adapted the discursive ambiguity of the popular versions of post-feminism. Unquestionably, it provides explanation for the existence of a certain similarity between chick-lit and numerous icons of contemporary popular culture. Conceptual products such as performer Beyoncé represent a classic postmodern example of simultaneous acceptance and resistance towards normative cultural discourse and have great influence on young women who feel more powerful and successful than ever before. Profound transformation of gender-power relations, visible in the public sphere and popular representations, includes media accentuation of the creation of “girl” culture, to which the iconic though multifaceted image of Spice Girls belongs (Whelehan 2000: 37). The approach to cultural perceptions of gender differences connected to the popularisation of the concept of “feminisation of culture” during the 1980s and 1990s mediated in “masculinisation” of powerful, demanding, professionally successful women and “feminised” men who are confused by their new role.

In an interview on BBC radio’s *Bookworm* program, Helen Fielding, Bridget Jones’s “mother”, claimed that today single women in their thirties are a new type of women who do not have their identity, which she considers very worrying. She added that women have confided in her that *Bridget Jones’s Diary* makes them feel like they are part of the club, seeing they are not the only ones being so dumb (Whelehan 2002: 26). Such an acknowledgement of an identity crisis presents a longing for a female sphere of experience and wider communication among women. *Bridget Jones’s Diary* accentuates a more common practice of delaying or rejecting marriage, as well as the dangers of contemporary life. The freedom offered to the single women is corrupted by the public opinion of naturalness of marriage, as well as attaching single life with loneliness or, moreover, social unacceptability or unattractiveness. Single or unmarried characters of chick-lit novels never consider their future as predetermined; however, they do long for being paired up. Bridget Jones is confronting such opinions and questioning them when she describes the dissatisfaction of “smug married couples” she knows, but she would truly be the happiest if she could be half of such a happy couple, which is a paradox most readers can identify with.

THE FLAWED SELF

Opening with the declarative proclamation “I WIIL NOT!” written in boldface capital letters, *Bridget Jones’s Diary* introduces the protagonist’s list of New Year’s resolu-

tions, the hopeful intentions that include the usual vows not to “drink more than fourteen alcohol units per week” to refusing to “bitch about anyone behind their backs” (Fielding 1996: 2). The readers are immediately introduced to the protagonist who desires to perfect what she sees as her profoundly flawed self. As idealist as they must be, these goals highlight the hope for self-improvement as well as the inevitability of failure. Bridget Jones echoes numerous fictional autobiographies which portray characters unable to control the trajectories of their lives, being merely witnesses to the narrative. Likewise, the form of the fictional autobiography discourages the protagonist’s self-control.

Fictional women’s diaries do not only reinscribe traditional roles designated to women, they contain subversive elements that usually are not obvious to the readers. Benstock claims that autobiographical writings, which, according to her opinion, include diaries and journals, illustrate Jacques Lacan’s contention that language “is a defence against unconscious knowledge”, but also that language “is not an altogether successful defence network, punctuated as it is by messages from the unconscious, messages that attempt to defeat this ‘fencing-off’ mechanism” (Benstock 1988: 16). What can be read in Benstock’s observation is that autobiographies can be read as capitulation to social pressures, an imitation of the life expected for the writer, reader and the protagonist, but further analysis may reveal subversive elements that are not immediately obvious nor in accordance with the official agenda of the work. Bridget Jones can be connected to the long line of female narrators whose role is that of a witness to their lives and who have no control of their lives. The readers identify with or feel superior to them, they feel they understand the protagonists’ lives in a way the characters cannot. There are numerous instances in which Bridget appears to lack control over her narrative and its ironies. For example, at many points in the three novels (*Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1996), *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2000) and *Mad About the Boy* (2013)) the diary form gives way to minute-by-minute account of Bridget’s actions, which we can identify as a kind of direct feed from Bridget’s consciousness, rather than a self-consciously produced written record. As well, Bridget appears unable to read the trajectory of her own life: in *Mad About the Boy* she is surprised to discover that MrWallaker is the man she has been looking for, although the reader has predicted this, and although Bridget herself, when she first sees him, comments in her diary that he looks like Daniel Craig.

Not until the ending of the fictional autobiography is she punished by the plot for attempting to manage her life, while rewarding her for being out of control. Her inability to remake herself in another image is what constitutes the attractiveness to the

other sex. Bridget's lack of narrative control is reflected in her lack of control over her own life, and Bridget Jones belongs to a long tradition of novels that cater to readers' expectations of a feminine narrator. The popularity of Bridget Jones in spite of her manifest failures bodes ill for contemporary feminism. Further analysis reveals that the novels transcend the limitations imposed on them by this perspective, but, first, this perspective itself requires some scrutiny. Just what would it mean for Bridget to "manage her life" and "remake herself in another image"? What is it that she fails to do? She fails to control herself on any level, for example when she joins Twitter and has no immediate followers; she indulges in food to overcome the dissatisfaction:

Still no followers. Have eaten the following things:

- * 2 chocolate croissants
- * 7 Babybel cheeses (but one was half eaten)
- * ½ bag of grated mozzarella
- * 2 Diet Cokes
- * 1.5 leftover sausages from kids' breakfast
- * ½ a McDonald's cheeseburger from fridge
- * 3 Tunnock's Tea Cakes
- * 1 bar Cadbury's Dairy Milk (large) (Fielding 2013: 60)

What makes this narrative comic is that Bridget, though she feels she has sinned, has no desire to reform. Her confessions are celebrations of the self, not attempts to strive for perfection. According to Rita Felski, autobiography, even though it develops out of the genre of religious confession, has since the eighteenth century departed from the admission of guilt and appeal to higher authority to the affirmation and exploration of free subjectivity (Felski 1998: 87).

Following her success at losing weight and achieving target dress size, instead of being pleased with her accomplishments, Bridget instantly confesses relapsing and agonises over her "sins":

Why are bodies so difficult to manage? Why? 'Oh, oh, look at me, I'm a body, I'm going to splurge fat unless you, like, STARVE yourself and go to undignified TORTURE CENTRES and don't eat anything nice or get drunk.' Hate diet. Is all fault of SOCIETY. Am just going to be old and fat and eat whatever I like and NEVER HAVE SEX AGAIN and WHEEL MY FAT AROUND ON A TROLLEY (Fielding 2013: 70).

Bridget herself recalls the roots of confession in religious contexts: when she finally gains followers on Twitter and is pleased with herself she writes: “102 now. Feel overwhelmed by responsibility: like am leader of a cult and they will all jump into a lake or something if I tell them to (Fielding 2013: 79)”. When pleased with her accomplishments, Bridget is confident: “Am perfect mother and sensual woman with sensual possibilities” (Fielding 2013: 110).

Chick-lit is using first person narration which includes confessional modes such as diary, letters, e-mails, SMS messages as well as status updates on popular social networks to establish communication with the readers. Short sentences without the subject, abbreviations, shopping lists, as well as statistic data on calorie intake and alcohol units are often used. Although some of these means have become clichéd within the structure of the genre itself, they are very efficient because they offer close connection with the protagonists and insight into their intimate lives. This genre offers a small piece of authentic female voice that is being confused by the contradictory demands and baffling messages of romantic love and feminist emancipation, while chick-lit’s relying on the protagonist’s narration is connected to the postfeminist revival of the experience of consciousness-raising from the second-wave of feminism.

In the novel *Mad About the Boy*, the third novel about Bridget Jones, the protagonist decides to join Twitter not to feel old and neglected, but becomes jealous of her friend who, unlike her, has many followers:

9.45 p.m. Tom just tweeted me Talitha’s Twitter address.

9.50 p.m. @Talithaluckybitch has 146,000 followers. Hate Talitha. Hate Twitter. Feel like eating cheese again, or Talitha.

9.52 p.m. Just tweeted Tom: <@JoneseyBJ@TomKat37 Talitha has 146,000 followers.>

<@TomKat37 @JoneseyBJ Don’t worry dear, they’re mostly people she’s slept with or been married to.>

10.00 p.m. Talitha tweeted back.

<@Talithaluckybitch@TomKat37 @JoneseyBJ Darling it’s really TERRIBLY vulgar to display the green-eyed monster on Twitter.> (Fielding 2013: 43)

After several years of avoiding social currents, during which, circumstantially, she became a widow and a single mother, Bridget is trying to blend in contemporary social trends, and meet a new emotional partner. However, she needs time to learn the new rules of behaviour for contemporary *singles*.

We've been texting for weeks. Surely it's rather like in Jane Austen's day when they did letter-writing for months and months and then just, like, immediately got married?'

'Bridget. Sleeping with a twenty-nine-year-old off Twitter on the second date is not "rather like in Jane Austen's day"'. (Fielding 2013: 120)

Chick-lit is reworking the prejudice towards women that have persevered through centuries, especially towards women who remain single after a certain age; spinsters are always portrayed more repulsively than bachelors. Unlike the bachelors who are always presented as carefree, experienced and most importantly, persons who have consciously made a decision to remain single, spinsters are always portrayed as unhappy and insufficiently suited for marriage. Chick-lit is positioned on acknowledging the failures of feminism, which leads to the need of empowered women to find a suitable partner to placate their families and society.

Erica Jong has noticed that in the beginning of the second wave of feminist movement there has been such an abundance of blood and gut in women's writing that the question whether the writers do anything but menstruating and raging had to be asked (Jong 1999: 4). In times marked by a wide range of period products, the only thing the chick-lit protagonists do not do is neither menstruate nor rage. Rage is a motif of second-wave of feminism writing, while what is characteristic of chick-lit is self-ridicule. The authors are trying to avoid forthrightness connected to the second-wave of feminism, however what remains is a debate initiated in the second wave, the one concerning the (im)possibility of harmonising feminist ideal and attraction towards men. Chick-lit does not illuminate the areas of sexuality, however, the impression is made, in earlier representatives of the genre, of everything being ideal in that field, or, in more recent examples, that there are more important issues than sexual pleasures. For example, even though her significantly younger partner is ideal for Bridget Jones, he does not provide emotional security she needs and will never embody the fatherly figure her children need.

I stared at him. I did really heart Roxster, I hearted that he was so beautiful and young and sexy, but more than that hearted who he was and what he stood for. He was funny, and together, and light, and kind, and practical, and emotional but contained. But he was also born when I was twenty-one. And if we'd both been born at the same time – how could we know what would have happened? What I did know as I looked at him, was that I didn't want to ruin Roxster's life. And my kids were absolutely without a shadow of a doubt the best

thing that I had in my life. I didn't want to deprive him of doing all that for himself. (Fielding 2013: 209)

Chick-lit is aware of the power of radical feminist rhetoric; nevertheless, it rather opts for the everyday life of single women who postpone marriage and testing post-feminist heterosexual relationships. Young women have profited from the successes of feminism, however they owe it only not to fall into the trap of accusing feminism for their problems because they have been left with the burden of choice. Femininity is very successfully deconstructed to the point where no one need be a "woman" if they do not want to.

The fact that many protagonists of the novels as well as the authors are employed in publishing and media means that the genre is offering metadiscourse on contemporary literary production. Employment in media industry that is characteristic of protagonists of chick-lit novels represents a frame for the ethnography of gender politics of the genre; the protagonists of the novels indirectly generate social commentary of contemporary life. The authors' biographies, located on the covers for easier access and which include the author's photography, contain numerous parallels (from education, occupation, marriage status, number of children, location) to the protagonists of the novels. On one side, this thin line created between the authors and their characters gives credibility to the characters which makes them more accessible to the readers, but, on the other, it opens up the possibility for negative criticism of the genre that has been accused of having no literary value – presenting only confessions on the paper.

In a postmodern world where grand narratives are no longer secure, postfeminism is becoming a pluralist epistemology dedicated to disturbing the universal stream of thought (Gamble 1998: 41), while the role of chick-lit in this process is dedicated to enabling as well as disabling the same. The fact that many of the representatives of the genre are confessional or semi-confessional, written in first-person, with an unreliable narrator, positions this genre in a long tradition of such texts. In a time when women's movements have reached the surface and endowed the protagonists to tell tales of their lives, inviting the readers to recognise themselves, these texts become more noticeable. Thereby, the demand for narratives about "real" woman and their everyday life experience has been fulfilled.

In many chick-lit novels understanding or knowing the self of the protagonist is focused on sexual experience, love, marriage or divorce. Especially in more recent novels of the genre, open confessions of women's sexual life became the main char-

acteristic; however, unlike traditional romances, sex scenes are rarely erotic and more often are concerned with disrupted or unsatisfactory sex. Similar to other genres, not all chick-lit novels contain permanent literary or other values, and the form that is exploited too quickly becomes tedious and loses its value. Themes and characteristics that are used too many times have led to the criticism of the genre that had been accused of banality and unoriginality.

However, the manner in which chick-lit is using certain literary techniques is not evidence of the authors' lack of talent or impossibility of usage of a sophisticated and modern writing style, but these are deliberate strategies of indicating the unwritten truth of the lives of contemporary women.

Remarkable popularity of chick-lit relies on the imperative to "write it as it is", with which most of the readers are introduced. Popular literature, family sagas, self-help books, as well as autobiographies of famous women are examples of other literary works women enjoy in that also pertain to the image of truthfulness. Chick-lit is an accessible literary genre with proven appeal for women, one that asks questions of subversiveness, class and gender politics and continues to attract our attention, as well as has potential to connect personal experiences with wider questions of historical and social change. Not an obsolete genre, it still has great strategic importance for feminism.

As Imelda Whelehan notices, the most successful are those chick-lit novels that are well written and have a slightly different narrative formula from other novels of the same genre (Whelehan 2005: 66). Everyday life in a society that is rapidly changing presupposes constant questioning of the meaning of feminism. Deborah Siegel claims that contemporary feminism is an extension of earlier feminism, in describing lives of contemporary women, it seeks "realism", speaking the truth and represents part of the collective voice of the new generation of feminists (Siegel 1997: 51). Identical arguments have been used in chick-lit novels that, as authors claim, presentshe "truth" of the lives of many "real" contemporary women.

Chick-lit's "realism" consists of multiplication and spreading discourse of a specific interpretative community. The characterisation of thematic and stylistic aspects of the novels confirms their addiction to cultural contexts they are a product of. Therefore, the experiences of the protagonists become experiences of all the women through descriptions of the dilemmas the targeted readers deal with. Problems with emotional lives, diets, child care, social pressures and double standards at the work place are very common in these narratives. They are connected with elements of feminist discourse which is reflected in the critic of the contemporary cult of slim female

body, impossibility of reconciliation of the roles of working woman and housewife and many other issues.

Many readers identify with Bridget's inability to separate herself from the Cosmopolitan culture, she feels she must take control of her body and life and find an ideal partner. She represents a social product, profoundly connected with the cultural and ideological system which constructs it. Felski recognises this pattern in feminist confession. In an attempt to affirm themselves the protagonists revert into anxiety and punish themselves for their imperfections. She claims that instead of providing an ideal of autonomy, feminism accentuates the guilt. (Felski 1998: 88)

When Bridget attempts to use Botox to attract men she is afraid they will find her old and wrinkly, Mr. Wallaker's reaction is, "I wouldn't do that again if I were you. You looked all right in the first place (Fielding 2013: 62)." This revelation came as a shock to her, as she is fully invested in this particular kind of self-improvement. Still, her more objective attitude about other kinds of self-improvement demonstrates that Bridget is, more or less, happy as she is. For example, she takes pride in being a professional author, writing an adaptation of Hedda Gebler, even negotiating production of a film with a production company, when she is informed that it is not Anton Chekov who authored the work, as she believed and even wrote in her film script, but Henrik Ibsen. These details as many others about her reveal that Bridget's diary is less an attempt to gain control over her behaviour and perfect herself than it is an attempt to justify herself as she is. As well, the readers are encouraged not to perfect themselves but to accept their flaws for what they are. Even when given the chance for self-improvement on any field of her life, including child rearing, as she is a single mother, Bridget fails amazingly and glorifies her flawed self.

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The appearance of chick-lit was by no means not unnoticeable; the novels are sold (and translated) very successfully. As with any other commercial success, there are many critics directed at this genre. It has been called superficial and anti-feminist, as well as celebrated for a realist representation of women's lives and its humour. Instead of directly addressing feminism, chick-lit represents concrete examples of oppression of women as well as how feminism has helped them in their lives, which demonstrates how chick-lit, and popular culture overall, are more successful at presenting political questions to the wider audience than plain theory would be, and in a form more acceptable to the general public. Mimetic narration instead of diegetic presentation of these issues enables the readers to sympathise with existentialist, experienced conse-

quences of these problems. Chick-lit is capable of simplifying complex questions for the audience that would not be aware or interested in these issues. The value of chick-lit overcomes glossy covers, and the novels are more than carefree narratives of relationships, they are concerned with serious social and personal issues troubling the readers too.

The usage of the form of diary, letters and electronic mail has connected chick-lit with the epistolary tradition as well as with the novel rising out of intimate forms of writing usually connected with “female” literary tradition. The confessional narrative model in first-person, used by chick-lit, helps the readers identify with the protagonists, however, it also enables division between the “real literature” written by men and women’s writing. To many it means that men write about that what is important, while women write about what is important for women. Therefore, any narrative prioritising women’s experience has been ridiculed and criticised. Virginia Woolf noticed how to the critics any work thematically connected with war is more important than a work dealing with women’s feelings (1929), and, even though many decades have passed since this was written, little has changed in relation to women’s experience.

Chick-lit writing has, in part, developed as a reaction against non-inclusion of the altered terrain of women’s lives in the late twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century. It offers personal accounts of individual experiences as a way to explain, first-hand, women’s new realities. We can recognise the importance of the autobiographical mode in the literary genre through the usage of the “autobiographical I” and confessions. Nevertheless, it also opened the door of harsh criticism focused on the proliferation of the genre which led to displacement of women’s personal narrative with a few instances of the pronoun “I” used. Though chick-lit never claims to occupy the same category as autobiography, its reception is marked by an implied contract between the author and the readers according to which the readers assume that the protagonists present the authors themselves. It is interesting here to note that the majority of chick-lit novels thrive on this implied contract. Namely, the biographies of the authors, positioned on the back cover for easy access and including the photography of the author, contain numerous parallels (from education, occupation, residence, marriage status, number of children) to the protagonists of their novels. This fine line created between the authors and their characters on one hand gives the characters credibility that makes them so readily identifiable to their readers but, on the other hand, encourages negative criticism directed against the genre which is accused of having no literary value at all – as if it is simply confessional outpourings on to the page.

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LUDA ZA NJIM: FENOMEN FIKTIVNE AUTOBIOGRAFIJE

Sažetak:

Chick-lit je često bio optuživan zbog pretjerane „realističnosti”, kao i zbog spisateljica koje, dok pišu autobiografska dela o majčinstvu, vezama i porodičnim problemima, zaboravljaju ključni imperativ pisanja fikcije – „izmišljanje”. Ovaj se žanr može smjestiti između dvaju „književnosti”, „dobre” koja podučava i „popularne” koja „prodaje stvarni život”. Umjesto nevinosti i naivnosti tradicionalnih junakinja, chick-lit opisuje živote solerki: mladih, emancipiranih žena koje rade i žive u velikim centrima na Zapadu. Protagonistkinje otvoreno preispituju tradicionalne oblike ženstvenog ponašanja koje promoviraju ljubavni romani, kao što su sklonost prema kuhanju i čišćenju, i, još važnije, odbacuju pasivnost žena u romantičnim vezama, a što se može primijetiti u aktivnoj potrazi protagonistkinja za muškarcem. Tradicionalna granica između javnog i privatnog je očito zamagljena, dok protagonistkinje uživaju i sudjeluju u svim aspektima modernog gradskog života. Korištenjem pripovijedanja u prvom licu i namjerno naivnog oblika realizma čitatelje i kritičare se potiče na zamjenu fiktivnih likova za stvarne osobe, te prihvaćanje romana kao autobiografskih dela, a što je dovelo do fenomena Bridget Jones kao svatkovičke. Pretposljednji Bridget Jones roman, Luda za njim (2013), smješten u književni kontekst fiktivnih ženskih dnevnika, pokušava uvjeriti čitatelje u svoju autentičnost korištenjem različitih sredstava, poput samoobmane, omogućavajući čitateljima da se osjećaju superiorno u odnosu na protagonistkinje i nudeći direktan uvid u Bridgetinu svest.

Ključne riječi: chick-lit; autobiografija; dnevnik; ženstvenost; postfeminizam

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