



The Positive Impact Of Chick Lit On Women In Katsina State: An Analysis Of Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*

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ABSTRACT

Literature as creative and imaginative composition deals with diverse topics of interest beautifully composed through wonderful writings. These topics are in their individual senses, critical exploration of human ideals, history, timelines and many more. In this study, the focus is to explore one of such interests in literature. The research here is centered on the positive impact **Chick Lit** has on the Nigerian audience, particularly the female sect to whom the genre is initiated. It deals with the experiential and psychological aspect of the genre. Chick lit is a literature written by women, for women and about women typically focusing on the social lives and relationships of young professional women, and often aimed at readers with similar experiences. It is a literature that explains the woes and turmoil's encountered by career and financial independent women in a humourous manner and how they curtail their problems. Chick literature [lit] is a new genre that emerged in the United States in the late 90s which is yet to be familiarized in the African nations. The researcher uses this research to introduce it to some selected institutions and an organization citing two prominent texts of the genre: Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*. The light hearted mode of the genre makes it a curative dose on women to overcome depression which is why the researcher see it deem for introduction to Nigerian audience. The mainstream ideal is that chick lit works in the favor of women, it is a literature of contemporary women addressing issues of contemporary womanhood. In modern times, the discussion of beauty, fashion, career and relationship has been widened throughout the society and, almost on a daily basis, newer and more startling issues are being discussed or debated on social media. The research aims at extracting the positive impact this genre has on women via the studied texts. The untold and often disgraceful admission of women as to how their quest to become beautiful, successful in a career or maintain a love relationship has turned nasty and left them more bruised than those who went to a war zone is the thrust of this study. Signmond Frued's Psychoanalytical theory is adopted in this research.

Keywords: Chick lit, women, depression,

INTRODUCTION

The stories we read on pages of literary works are reflections about time, place, personalities, institutions and ideas that matter in the world. The ideas, coated in the narration are meant to help readers explore the possibilities, nuances, circumstances and phenomena that abound in the world. A literary text is a product of immense critical observation of the realities of its subject matter by the writer. To tell a story however, the writer is at the mercy of following the practice of literary writings and this is where aesthetics comes

into a work of art as a means of embedding a story with the qualities of wonderful expressions matched by in-depth meaning. A writer's subject matter, whatever it is, must be worked on delicately to showcase depth of knowledge and artistic ornaments and the readers that get to read the product of such writing do not only read to be informed but they read to be entertained as well. Hence, there are diverse topics of interest in literature beautifully composed through wonderful writings. These topics are in their individual sense critical exploration of human ideals, history, timelines and many more. In this study, the focus is to explore one of such interests in literature. The research here is centered on the positive impact **Chick Lit** has on the Nigerian audience, particularly the female sect, to whom the genre is initiated. Chick Lit. is a literature about the conditions of young, modern women in a world that is fraught with a lot of issues regarding fashion, love, marriage, career, beauty and other related The issues that attract the attention of writers on chick lit are diverse but they all point towards a definite aim and that is the attempt to unravel the miseries of modern women in the hands of modern concepts of social implications. Most of these issues are not even political as they are often borne out of mere societal underpinnings that have continued to influence what women think of how the world around them think about them (Harzewski, 2011). Chick literature is therefore at the heart of such issues that are first societal and which have now taken numerous forms, some of which are psychological and material as they involve the womenfolk. Chick lit may be offering women the prospect of connecting with characters who go through the same experiences, and the light tone of the books may even make it easier to digest the idea that women, like everyone else, are unavoidably persuaded by popular culture. "I think it had far more to do with zeitgeist than imitation." Helen Fielding, author of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, on chick lit. Helen Fielding, author of the original chick lit novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*, credits the popularity of her novel and its subsequent clones to the way chick lit tapped into the spirit of a generation. Indeed, most explanations of the genre attribute its success to a unique perspective of the issues facing today's generation of young women. Yet, this generation is never specifically defined, perhaps because the genre's accessibility spans several generations.

The original chick lit books of the late nineties captured the attention of young women in their twenties and early thirties – mostly of "Generation X." In the past decade, a younger group of women has begun to identify with the genre. Young teens of "Generation Y" have grown up reading "tween" versions of the genre in the form of the Gossip Girls and Princess Diaries series.

Concepts:

As a canon within literary analysis, chick lit does on the micro level, what literature does on the larger level, and that is to comment on the conditions of women in modern societies while highlighting important issues that we may be taking for granted (Ferriss and Young, 2006). It deals with the experiential and psychological aspect of chick lit. The psychological experiences of the protagonists of the novels: Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* is what will be studied and analyzed on the positive impact to women. In this ensuing chapter, the researcher outlines, then explains the basic foundations of the research through the background of the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, significance and scope of the study,

Problem Statement

Gender works in literature attracts some of the most important and critical analysis. To fully dissect a discourse on particular interest of specific gender, literature works often go to lengths to unravel the etymology of the gender involved before a thorough understanding of what that gender stands to mean and what values or aspirations are of interest to that gender. In modern times, women have increasingly appear more distraught at their lives than before, and although the first and constant culprit of the despair of women remain patriarchy, it is quite interesting to begin to see that a new enemy of women in the form of their own quest to remain within the polemics of beauty and other womanly aspirations as what pose the most important of all recorded threats to women. The untold and often disgraceful admission of women as to how their quest to become beautiful, successful in a career or maintain a love relationship has turned nasty and left them more bruised than those who went to a war zone is the thrust of this study.

In essence, this study explores how women's weapon (the quest for beauty with a dash of fashion) is now like the proverbial person who is fully armed against themselves. This study therefore focuses on these novels interest of exploring what these terms that are the product of women's attempt to be exquisite women, do to such women in modern times and how chick lit comes to their aid via the protagonists' experiences in such novels.

Objectives Of The Study

The thrust of this research is to explore women and what they often go through from a modern bargain with fashion, beauty, relationship and career and how consequently the narrative regarding the place of women in societies is changing. This aim is intended to be achieved through the following objectives:

1. To explore what makes up the modern womenfolk in societies in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*.
2. To examine the polemic of fashion in the present realities regarding womenfolk in modern times as narrated in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*.
3. To analyse the discourse of beauty in the understanding of women and their aspirations in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*.
4. To discuss the relationship sacrifices as the epitome of the travails of modern women in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*.
5. To analyse career solace in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Across cultures of the world, the social designation of women is similar. From Africa to Asia, the Americas and the rest of the world, the mainstream notion about women often features a sort of inferiority complex that bears the hallmark of pushing women to want to strive to be better placed, better designated and better understood in societies. Thus, the notions of "fashion, beauty, relationship and career" have consistently featured in discourse about women and our world. Copious amount of critical commentaries from social critics, feminist critics, cultural critics and many more continue to explore and re-explore what constitutes the bulk of what women do, what triggers their behavior, what determines societal definition of women and who a woman is and many more, all in a bid to comment on the notion of women and their stake in defining themselves.

In this section, a review on critical commentaries by various scholars on the positive impact chick lit has on women is given. Furthermore, the chapter explores essays on *The Devil Wears Prada* and *Bridget Jones Diary*.

The famous French feminist Simone de Beauvoir mentioned women as the 'second sex' (Elliott 2009). In her masterpiece titled 'The Second Sex', she highlighted the issue of women's oppression. Bamberger (1974) in her anthropological work titled 'The Myth of Matriarchy: Why men rule in Primitive Society', by analysing the pre-historic myths prevailing among three different South American tribes, argued that gender discrimination is a historical phenomenon and 'women are still not free and equal to men' (Hossain 2013a: 116). Women face discrimination in both private and public arenas. The practice of discrimination and inequality is evident in families, schools, playgrounds, workplaces, media and also in some religions (Hossain 2013b). This discrimination, inequality and violence against women gave birth to a socio-political movement called 'feminism'.

Feminism is a women-centered socio-political movement and ideology that is based on the idea that 'women should share equality in society's opportunities and scarce resources' (Delaney 2005: 202). According to Hartmann (1998: 41), feminism is 'a recognition and critique of male supremacy combined with efforts to change it'. Feminism is 'critical and activist on behalf of women, seeking to produce a better world for women' (Ritzer & Goodman 2004: 436). Over the years, feminist theory became an important perspective in the sociology literature. Delaney (2005: 202) mentions: Feminist theory is an outgrowth of the general movement to empower women worldwide. The term "chick lit" is derived from two entirely not associated words "chick", standing for "young woman", and "lit" which is the short form of the word "literature". At this point it should be marked that "lit" usually signifies frivolity or pettiness,

which implies what kind of literature we have to deal with. “The Concise Oxford Dictionary” gives basic definition of the term “chick lit’, chick lit (occas. depreciative), literature by, for, or about women; esp. a type of fiction, typically focusing on the social lives and relationships of young professional women, and often aimed at readers with similar experiences (Baldick 2001) The genre gained its popularity especially after the publication of Helen Fielding’s “Bridget Jones’s Diary” in 1996. The same year, the book “Sex and the City” by Candace Bombshell appeared. Both of the novels were originally created as the newspaper columns, and after some time and gaining certain amount of popularity among women evolved into book forms. The demand for genre was so huge that later the books became the basis for best- selling films and the most popular TV series. There is no doubt that before Fielding’s success there had been great novels that would have fit into this particular niche, but undeniably she is considered to be the mother of chick literature, and still, her work is thought to be precursor to the others. Fielding has inspired many young and budding writers, which has resulted with popularisation and diversification of the genre, but also helped to define the genre and to develop its own style and characteristics.

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METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study. Qualitative research design is a model that aids a conceptual analysis. According to Greenhaugh (2000), “qualitative research comes from an interpretivist perspective and is therefore concerned with the interpreting and understanding phenomena through the meanings that people attach to them.” Qualitative research takes an inductive approach in which theory is generated from research as opposed to the deductive approach in quantitative research, in which research is used to test the theory. Qualitative research gathers data about lived experiences, emotions or behaviors, and the meanings individuals attach to them. It assists in enabling researchers to gain a better understanding of complex concept, social interactions or cultural phenomena. This study which is focused on exploring the modern conditions of women in the modern time of Chick Lit with connection to fashion, beauty, relationship [love life] and career, is meant to analyse the positive impact gained by women from the genre. The primary texts and source of references are: Helen Fielding’s *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger’s *The Devil Wears Prada*. The study is also open to any literary, sociological, psychological, fashion-industry-themed and career-oriented-themed materials or titles that are related to the concern and thrust of the study. The study adopts Sigmund Freud Psychoanalytic theory.

As a new genre being introduced to Nigerian literary youths [women], the researcher chooses Katsina state, a state in the northwestern geographical zone of Nigeria as the study area and selects four institutions and a private readers’ organization as her study sites: Isa Kaita College of ‘Education, Dutsin- ma, Umaru Musa Yar’adua University, Hassan Usman Katsina Polytechnic, Federal College Of Education, Katsina and Readers Hub a private organization in the state.

At the completion of studying the texts, Helen Fieldings’ *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weishergers’ *The Devil Wears Prada* by the selected youths. The data being collected via questionnaires by the research assistants and later analyzed together with the researcher found out that, the anticipated objectives are attained.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychoanalytical Literary Theory

Psychoanalysis is the study of human nature and personality. This theory is developed by Sigmund Freud. Every human has personality traits. It is not only one trait, but diverse traits of personality. Humans have three mental system that are id (pleasure), ego (act, behaviour) and super-ego (moral, ethical, values, parental). It can be assumed that the nature and behaviour of people is carried out on the basis of motives without being aware or on the basis of thoughts, feelings which are conscious or not. The essential importance of studying psychoanalytic science is to find out what accounts for human behavior. Jatman in Gisela (1985:57) explains that literary works and psychology have a close relationship. The relationship between literary works and psychology is treatment or a form of therapy aimed at understanding what

informs human actions. If psychology is something done real and can be seen in terms of behaviour, a literary work is something done through an imagination. Barry in Rahayu (1995: 96) stated that psychoanalysis itself form of therapy which aims to cure mental disorders. Psychoanalysis was developed by Sigmund Freud as a psychiatrist. Freud adduces that psychic life contains two parts that are conscious and unconscious. The part of unconsciousness os likened to the part of the iceberg which is on the sea surface. The unconscious part, which is much larger, is below sea level, and contains instincts that encourage all human behaviour. Afterwards, Freud developed his theory into a structural manner. According to Freud, the structural personality are id, ego and super-ego.

Id

The id is one of the formations of human personality to give a pleasure to humans. In short, id only tilts towards enjoyment and pleasure. Basically, id has appeared right from human infancy. Id is also called as Primary Process or can be interpreted as the working of unconscious process. Freud in Calvin (1954:22) asserts that the aim of pleasure principles is to rid the person of tension. It is often assumed that every people want happiness.

Ego

Ego is personality system that acts as an individual director to reality. It functions based on reality. Ego as the executive apparatus of personality, regulates and controls the Id and Super-ego and also builds relationships with the outside world for the sake of the overall personality along with its long-term needs. Lapsey (2012) believes that ego describes the impersonal apparatus of personality whose function is to de-tension the biological strivings of the organism or as a device for mastering excitation. Also, development in Freud's hypothesis suggests that ego development entails the renunciation of narcissistic self-love in favour of the idealization or aggrandisement of cultural and ethical ideals, which is represented to the child by the influence of the parents.

Super Ego

The Super-ego is about value, rules, ethical and morality of personality system. It also involves good or bad things of what people want or what people do. The super-ego works in reverse. Super-ego is the moral aspect of personality because it is specific something true or false, appropriate or not, in an attempt to guide someone to the moral of a society. According to Freud in Calvin (1954: 81) fear of punishment and desire for approval make children identify themselves with parents' moral advises. In a similar vain, human actions are guided by the motivation to win approvals in most cases.

Fielding's *The Bridget Jone's Diary* and Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* are psychological works which delve into the depth of impulses that guide the decisions of their female protagonists. The novels are feminist accounts of women driven by fashion, chased by beauty, disturbed by love and confused by what the fashion-crazy world and time push them to do. *Bridget Jones Diary* is written in 1996 and it focuses on the life of a thirty-something single working woman and her resolution for the coming year. The diary explores career, self-image, vices, family, friend, and romantic relationship. *The Devil Wears Prada* is a controversial, semi autobiography novel about the position of a young woman as a personal assistant to the boss in one of the most popular fashion houses. The story chronicles the nightmarish demands that comes with the job and the toll it takes on the protagonist. In the two novels, the writers exposes so much about women, beauty, and the fashion industry.

BACKGROUND OF THE AUTHORS

Helen Fielding

Helen Fielding, was born 19 February, 1958 is an English novelist and screenwriter, best known as the creator of the fictional character Bridget Jones. Fielding grew up in Morley, West Yorkshire, a textile town on the outskirts of Leeds in the north of England. Her father was managing director of a textile factory, next door to the family home that produced cloth for miners's donkey jackets. He died in 1982 and her mother, Nellie, remained in Yorkshire, passing away in September 2021. Fielding attended Wakefield Girls' High School, one of the Grammar School in the Wakefield Grammar School Foundation. She has three siblings, Jane, David and Richard.

From 1990-1999 she worked as a journalist and columnist on several national newspapers, including The Sunday Times, The Independent and The Telegraph. Her best-known work, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, began its life as an unattributed column in The Independent in 1995. The success of the column led to four novels and three film adaptations. Fielding was part of the screenwriting team for all three.

Lauren Weisberger

Lauren Weisberger, born March 28, 1977 is an American novelist and author of the 2003 bestseller *The Devil Wears Prada*, a roman a clef of her experience as an assistant to vogue editor-in-chief Anna Wintour. Weisberger was born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, to a school teacher mother and a department store president turned mortgage broker father. Her family is Jewish; Weisberger was raised in Conservative Judaism and later Reform Judaism. She spent her early youth in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, a small town outside Scranton. At 11, her parents divorced and she her younger sister, Dana, moved to Allentown, Pennsylvania, in the Lehigh Valley region of the state, with their mother.

Studies on *Bridget Jones's Diary*

The mainstream media have inundated readers with comments Fielding and her very successful novel. Marsh (2004) opines that "Helen Fielding has been praised for the authentic narrative voice in *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, but critics argue that the novels are anti-feminist because of Bridget's failure to remake herself and to control her life and her narrative. This argument rests on questionable premises: that the self can be remade, and that control is achievable. Bridget interrogates these assumptions, which she identifies as particularly American, recalls Jane Austen, who treats self-improvement ironically, and ultimately rejects the American dream of a perfected self and embraces the Blair-era British communitarianism that facilitates her success and the success of her narrative. Bridget's voice is authentic because it insists that the experience of being out of control and being forced into mutually dependent relationships is unavoidable. Fielding's preoccupation with these issues is echoed in the work of contemporary British novelists A. S. Byatt and Anita Brookner."(21). The novel is praised as one of the best chick lit works that address the concerns of modern women. Most importantly, it is the quest to re-invent oneself from a culture of trying to please the world by going to terrible lengths.

In addition. Collins (2020) submits that "Bridget Jones presents the rare message that you do not need to change for the person that you love, and perhaps that's why the book sits squarely in the rom-com canon. While its characterization is perfection, its plot utterly gripping, and its comedy modern and quirky, most important is the message of self-acceptance, as delivered by one of the most famous quotes from Mark Darcy: "I like you very much—just as you are." (17) The novel brings to the fore the decision to hold on to a sane ideal in a world that seems insane. The woman protagonist in the novel seeks to rewrite the usual narrative where women are put on the receiving end in terms of beauty, fashion and relationship.

Furthermore, Henderson (2019) opines that "being an avant-garde is what ultimately makes Bridget Jones so relatable. She suffers her singleness, like many of us do or have done, and sees it for what it is. One woman wrote in 2001 that, as a feminist, she was a bit embarrassed of her love for Bridget Jones, but it was not until she went to a book signing and there saw scores of all different types and ages of women that she became proud of her love of Bridget and was able to somehow reconcile it with her feminism.(5)" And that is because Bridget's experience—an experience of singleness, but also an experience of being loved and discovering and accepting oneself—corresponds with the experience of other women from all walks of life. But Bridget knows that simply "getting rid" of the suffering of her singleness by either getting together with anyone who will take her, or denying its existence, isn't a true solution. Instead, she wrestles with it, accepts it, makes the best of it, and holds out hope for something extraordinary, precisely because she has the experience of being loved, imperfect as she is. This is what makes Bridget a character of depth and one that makes her so relatable and, in the end, admirable."(6). It is quite easy to admire the guile of Fielding in the novel as she questions the organized status quo in a society that is daily becoming insensitive to the plight of women. The values that women are pushed to hold in fashion and relationship are awkward but they are not been criticized enough. This is where Bridget Jones comes to appear to us as a champion of the cause that affect all women.

Similarly, Ali (2019) sheds light on the "allusion of women's emancipation in Helen Fielding's novel *Bridget Jones's Diary*. The novel has inter-textual connections to Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice*

as both of them share identical thematic and structural principles. Fielding's novel is written in the form of a diary and it belongs to the Chick Lit genre which has increasingly attracted the attention of several literary figures over the past few years. This genre tackles feminist issues and is targeted towards contemporary young women. It obviously considers the status of women in the contemporary society. In point of fact, Chick Lit writers break the restriction of the conventional literature by reinventing traditional literary works as in the case of Bridget Jones' Diary which resembles Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* respectfully in many aspects. Ultimately, the article falls into several viewpoints explicated profoundly to manifest such an entity."(22). It is indeed logical to see a semblance in the ideals of Fielding and Austen. Both are not mere feminists, rather they are important opinion formers and holders who bring to the table, critical issues regarding women which society often overlooks. Gleick (1998) advances that "Bridget Jones Dairy is fun and realistic at the same time. It follows the life of a woman whose experience resonates amongst modern women in terms of the zeal to be a perfect women as defined by societal standards. Fortunately, the novel comes from a feminist who clearly shows that she is in tune not only with the times but also with the constantly overlooked stress women are made to go through."(37). It is through Fielding that we are invited to rethink our notion of what beauty really constitutes and what chasing it does to women in the world.

In a similar manner, Bethman (2011) examines Helen Fielding's, Marlene Streeruwitz's, and Karen Duve's novels in the context of the literarisches Fräuleinwunder, the generic conventions of chick lit, and post-feminism, relating all three to the globalization of the book publishing industry and its effects on German-language fiction. The scholar argues that "Duve's and Streeruwitz's texts can be understood as responses to the Anglo-American chick lit that flooded the German-language book market in the 1990s, of which Fielding's novel is one of the best-known. Close readings situate both German-language novels firmly within the generic conventions of chick lit, and then look at the ways the texts relate to postfeminism, as well as second- and third-wave feminism. The scholar concludes by arguing that our concept of Frauenliteratur should be expanded to include chick lit as well as more overtly political feminist texts." (1). Fielding is hailed as one of the women writers who see keenly into the many foibles of modern day idea of beauty and fashion as they relate to women.

Studies on *the Devil Wears Prada*

The story about one of fashions top women and her worker becomes the hottest gist in the fashion world with the publication of Weisberger's novel. Mcquay (2003) opines that *The Devil Wears Prada* is "packed full of references to designers, models, clothes and glamour, thus *The Devil Wears Prada* would certainly be interesting to anyone who is a part of or who wants to become a part of the high fashion industry."(2) The novel truly uses as the non-fictional involvement of Lauren to produce a vantage point exposé on the issues that go on within the fashion industry. Though very witty as well, the important import of the novel is to lampoon a culture of pushing women to the brink of breaking down all in the name of being in vogue.

Also, Brock (2017) believes that "*The Devil Wears Prada* gives a rich and hilarious new meaning to complaints about "The Boss from Hell." Narrated in Andrea's smart, refreshingly disarming voice, it traces a deep, dark, devilish view of life at the top only hinted at in gossip columns and over *Cosmopolitans* at the trendiest cocktail parties. It delves into the hellish nature of pressure working in a fashion industry "(3). The novel showcases all that can be said about women who are most motivated by the desire to always appear ahead of their peers in the fashion debate. It particularly explores the downsides of looking to remain the talk of the town in terms of glamour and looks. As a satire, the book clearly opens up the debate about the evil sides of the beauty brands around us.

Furthermore, Sullivan (2019) contends that " the novel is cruel and narcissistic in nature, and since half of the fun is our knowledge that this is a fictionalized version of the author's own experience working as an editorial assistant for the "real" Runway, readers are given a pure analogy of what it seems to be within the fashion world"(5). Indeed, it is an unashamed account of what is really obtainable behind those beautiful faces of women in places and most especially in the fashion industry. Setoodeh (2016) submits that "Like many instant classics, "Prada" benefited from perfect timing. It marked the beginning of the democratization of the fashion industry—when the masses started to pay attention to the business of what

they wore"(20). The novel is praised to have come at the precise time given the sky-high quest to remain beautiful by women of the modern era. What also gravitates readers towards this novel is its ability to offer an unequivocal view about the problems that lie at the heart of the fashion industry.

In addition, Zacharek (2016) asserts that:

Even though *The Devil Wears Prada* is set at a fashion magazine, and hits hard at the foibles of fashion people, it isn't really a fashion movie—if anything, it's a movie that hates fashion. Over and over again, Andy laments that what she really wants to be is a journalist—the subtext, so ham-fisted it barely qualifies as a subtext—is that she's too good for fashion, with all its idiocy and frivolity. In the end, this movie is the ultimate fuel for people who think that not caring about fashion automatically grants them superior intelligence.(7)

The novel is an account against the very topic which serves as its subject matter. It lampoons certain ideals in the fashion industry thereby making it sufficiently obvious that our opinion about fashion is not altogether flawless

Justification Of The Study

Literature, as T.S Eliot defines it as, “a mirror reflecting the society”, this is a fact that has been widely acknowledged. Literature indeed reflects the society, its good values and ills. What writers of literature do is to transport the real life events in their society into fiction and present it to the society as a mirror with which people can look at themselves and make amends where necessary, It is impossible to find a work of literature that excludes the attitudes, morales, and values of society, Therefore, literature is didactic as well as therapeutic. Going by these functions of literature, this research adopts the new genre of literature [**chick lit**] which is humorous in nature and specifically feminine to tackle the feminine invented woes.

As the world turns out to be a global village, with the new invention of technological gadgets daily and accessibility to E-libraries to all ages, this research feels the need to use this technological era in a positive therapeutic manner for women undergoing anxiety and depression due to women's own invention and the usage of these technological gadgets in a positive way. Therefore, two texts were selected: Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones Diary* and Lauren Weiberger's *The Devil Wears Prada* for how the main characters were psychologically tortured due to women owned invention of perfectionist in all aspects of life, class deference amongst themselves and how they humorously came to terms with the fact of being real and attaining peace.

RESULTS

According to the Labor Force Female Data, 43.89% of the Nigerian women are working class, 'chick lit' would therefore, be a rescuing ship to the career women in distress. A total number of 250 questionnaires were distributed 50 students from the 4 sampled institutions and the remaining 50 from Readers Hub, Katsina. At the end of the research, 204 questionnaires were retrieved. The respondents results shows that, 100% of the respondents are adults. 80% are females while the remaining 20% are males. The educational background indicates that 80% of the respondents are undergraduates and 20% graduates. 75% of the respondents enjoyed reading Chick Lit. The stance of the characters, particularly 'Andy' of *The Devil Wears Prada* is what appeases 70% of the respondents. Also, from the respondents responses, the versatility of Andy in handling the unending demands of Miranda makes Andy an Inspiring Female Character. In the aspect of criticisms, the pressing issue is that of body shaming towards 'Bridget' the protagonist in *Bridget Jones Diary*.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction:

This questionnaire aims to explore the positive influence of Chick Lit (women's fiction) on women's lives, attitudes, and well-being. Your honest responses will contribute to a better understanding of how this genre affects women's empowerment, self-image, and overall happiness.

Demographics:

- Age: _____

- Gender: _____
- Educational Background: _____
- Employment Status (if any) : _____
- How often do you read Chick Lit? (Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Rarely)

Chick Lit Preferences:

- Do you enjoy reading Chick Lit? (Yes/No)
- How do you usually choose Chick Lit books to read? Please specify: _____
- What themes or characteristics in Chick Lit do you find most appealing or relatable? _____

Positive Impact:

- In what ways have reading Chick Lit positively impacted your life, if at all? _____
- Have you found Chick Lit to be empowering? Please share: _____
- Do you think Chick Lit has influenced your views on women's role and empowerment in society? If so, how? _____
- Has Chick Lit influenced your interpersonal relationships or the way you perceive female friendships? Please explain: _____
- Has Chick Lit contributed to your overall happiness and well-being? _____
- Share any personal experiences or feelings: _____

Role Models:

- Have you encountered an inspiring female characters in Chick Lit books? _____
- If so, who are your favorites? _____
- How have these characters influenced your own aspirations and outlook on life? _____

Challenges and Criticisms:

- Have you ever encountered aspects of Chick Lit that you found problematic? _____
- Do you think Chick Lit perpetuates stereotypes or unrealistic expectations for women? _____
- What improvements or changes do you think could enhance the positive impact of Chick Lit on women? _____

Reading Habits:

- How often do you recommend Chick Lit to your friends? _____
- Do you discuss Chick Lit with others? _____
- What kind of conversations do you have? _____

Additional Comments:

- Is there anything else you'd like to share? _____

Conclusion:

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input is valuable in understanding the positive influence of Chick Lit on women's lives. Your responses will contribute to a better appreciation of the genre and its role in empowering and inspiring women.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommended strategies in attaining the positive impact of chick lit in women of Katsina state are

- Creating awareness: chick lit being a new and unpopular genre in the literary field, there needs to be an awareness campaign for its introduction and acceptance to the audience.
- Provision of texts: the genre originated from the west, makes it a trying task for the audience to get access to hard copies of the texts. This research recommends that a special corner be created in the institutional libraries with provision of the texts genre.
- Book club: the interactional sessions during these research proves that, a sort of book club in the institutions will harness the reading culture of the students.
- Counselling: chick lit, being a genre for women, about women and by women, is in a way a therapy that most women need to heal. Therefore, this research recommends a counselling unit in the higher institutions that may serve the purpose.

CONCLUSION

Today as majority of the world adult population are battling with depression, Chick Lit came as a messiah to its readers. It is a literary genre that entertains, educate and criticizes in humourous and subtle ways. This research introduces the audience to the genre and makes it an eye opener for them to realize that in any given phenomena, there is a positivity and negativity found. This research is an opening to the general public to expatiate the genre.

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