Better Off Alone Anyway
- Independent Women in Two Marian Keyes Novels
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Introduction

Novels that belong to the chick-lit genre are everywhere these days. They can be seen in the grocery-store, in the pocket-book store, on the beach, or in the lap of the woman sitting next to you on the train. With their bright coloured book covers with pictures of women in beautiful dresses, shopping bags or fancy cocktail glasses they are hard to miss. However, the chick-lit genre has received a great deal of criticism over the years. Critics believe that these books are too unrealistic and too frivolous. They claim that these novels are written by women for women, and are nothing more than that (Baratz-Logsted, 7). The editor of the book *This is not chick-lit: original stories by America’s best women writers*, Elizabeth Merrick, writes in the introduction that chick-lit is about “The protagonist's relentless pursuit of money, a makeover and Mr Right” (Merrick, 8). She believes that it is hard for women to find literary fiction these days and that her anthology shows a different, more serious side, to women’s writing. She also claims that the chick-lit formula is numbing the sense of the reader (Merrick, “This is not chick-lit: What’s in a Title”). Chick-lit author Marian Keyes argues that it is an important genre:

> I think it’s actually a very important genre, because it’s about the conflicts and confusions of our post-feminist world, where we’re told we’re equal, but we know we’re not. After the first wave, an awful lot of crappy people who missed the point and thought it was about romance and pinkness came along. I have no problem with romance and pinkness, so long as it’s balanced with something worthwhile. (Lavery, “Interview the subtle sisterhood”)

I would say that the critics do not see chick-lit from a broad perspective and I aim to dispel these myths about the genre. Most chick-lit novels are not only about twenty-something women chasing after the perfect handbag or the perfect boyfriend. Chick-lit also takes up the problems that exist for women in the 21st century. Thus, the main characters in the novels can provide role-models for readers who may be facing similar problems. In my essay I have chosen to analyse the novels *Watermelon* (1995) and *Angels* (2002) by chick-lit author Marian Keyes.

Aim and approach

The aim of this essay is to argue that the literary genre of chick-lit plays an important role as a genre since it presents descriptions of independent women who deal with the problems of unfair and unequal treatment of women. The women in the novels I have chosen are able to
stand on their own in a society which is still somewhat dependent on a woman having to have a man by her side to be able to have a good life. The main-characters, Claire in *Watermelon* and Maggie in *Angels*, are either left by, or leave their respective husbands. Claire and Maggie are sisters and I have chosen to look at their mother’s reaction toward their respective situations to be able to illustrate the view that the older generation may have. I will also look at Claire and Maggie’s ability to stand up for their choices and deal with their situation in their own way, despite the reactions that they receive from their mother. As my method I will be using close reading and analysis of quotations. The approach that I will be using is feminist literary theory. I will begin by giving a brief historical background of feminist literary theory and then indicate how I will use it in my analysis. Thereafter, I will divide the main body of the essay into two sections. The first section will deal with the analysis of *Watermelon* and the second with the analysis of *Angels*. For each section a short paragraph with the context of the novel will be provided and then I will move on to the analysis of the material. My analysis has been divided into smaller sections. I will describe different situations in the novels that support my claims and use quotations as a central part of my analysis. I will then summarize the results I have found in my conclusion.

**Theoretical background**

Feminists have used literary discourse in order to expose and undermine the cultural assumptions made about gender (Waugh, 337). Feminism history can be divided into three waves. Among the first wave critics, Virginia Woolf is an important name. Her essay *A Room of One’s Own* showed how women were unequally treated when they looked for options to motherhood and marriage (Barry, 121). Feminist literary criticism emerged out of discussions of second wave feminism (Waugh, 319), and tried to find reasons why there were so few woman writers. How women were represented in literature was important since it gave men and women an idea of what goals and aspirations were realistic for women. In 1970s criticism, critics tried to expose patriarchy. Books by male authors that had typical constructions of women were criticised. In the 1980s feminist criticism began to bring use of what other kinds of criticisms had found. It also began to look at the nature of the female world. Women writers that had previously been neglected became more prominent due to the rewriting of the history of novel and poetry (Barry, 122 – 123). The third wave, sometimes called post-feminism, was a response to the second wave (Waugh, 338).

During the second wave, Simone De Beauvoir was an important person. She viewed marriage as an oppressive institution that reinforced sexual inequality. She also thought that a
woman’s destiny was presumed to be the role of a passive mother (Waugh, 321 - 322). De Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949) is concerned with how women view themselves. In her book she argues that there is no reason why women should be inferior to men. Despite this, she claims that throughout history, women have been treated as second-class citizens. Due to women’s ability to reproduce, they are associated with their body and hence animals and nature. Since man considers himself to be above nature, he is also above women (Waugh, 320 -321). The book focuses on how women have been defined as “the other” and therefore they have no ability to define themselves (Rooney, 155). Thus, women have been in a subordinate position and exposed to oppression (Kittang et al., 9). The term “man” has always been positive, standing for the norm. Because of this, women are ascribed whatever the dominant group is not. Thus, they are considered to be frail, emotional and yielding (Morris, 14). By using this theory of how women view themselves, and are viewed by others, I will analyse how Claire, Maggie and their mother react to and deal with their divorce and lack of a man by their side. I will also look at how Claire and Maggie, through their way of dealing with their respective situation, move on and learn how to become more independent.

*Previous research and material*

The novels that I have chosen as my primary sources were published some time before the chick-lit genre became more popular and more criticised. Because of this, there has not been any similar research done on those particular novels that I am familiar with. The novel *Watermelon* was first published in 1995. The version that I am using was printed in 2006. The novel *Angels* was published in 2002. The version that I am using was printed in 2003. My secondary sources will mainly be Simone De Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, Peter Barry’s *Beginning Theory* and *Literary Theory and Criticism: an Oxford Guide* by Patricia Waugh.
**Watermelon: context**

The main character in the novel is Claire Walsh. She is twenty-nine years old and has everything that she wants in her life, a good job, a nice apartment and a great husband. However, on the day that she gives birth to her first child, her husband, James, comes to the hospital and announces that he is leaving her. Claire is now on her own with her new-born daughter and a broken heart. She decides to move home to her family in Dublin in order to recover with the help from them (Official Marian Keyes website).

**Mother’s reaction to the divorce**

Claire’s mother is very supportive of her and explains to her that she can stay with her family as long as she needs to. She is the one who helps take care of Claire’s baby, Kate, when Claire cannot bear to go outside the house. Her mother’s reaction toward the situation is calm when she finds out. She is very supportive and assures her daughter that these things happen and that she is just going to have to live through it. The main concern about the divorce for Claire’s mother seems to be Kate. According to her, it is unfair for Kate not to have her father. Thus, after a few weeks at her parent’s house, her mother is the one who encourages her to go back to her husband for Kate’s sake: “Claire, she said, don’t make the mistake of letting pride get in the way of forgiveness” (Keyes, *Watermelon* 404). Claire’s mother is thinking of the best for the child and seems to think that it is very important for her granddaughter to have a father:

But don’t let the anger blind you to everything else. After all this is the father of your child we’re talking about. If you can’t swallow the anger on your behalf, think about Kate. Do it for her. Are you going to deprive your child of her father just because your angry? (---. *Watermelon* 405)

Her mother makes it clear that a child needs to have a father figure. She is under the impression that the child needs both of her parents. As her mother comes from a different generation she is more conservative. She thinks that Claire needs to have James by her side to be able to take care of the baby.

In *The Second Sex*, De Beauvoir claims that the concept of a woman’s role as a passive maternal one is presumed to be her natural destiny (Waugh, 321). After Claire has first given birth, she feels that she must do anything for her child: “I knew that I wouldn’t be able to call my soul my own now that I was a mother” (Keyes, *Watermelon* 25). She is first and foremost a mother and feels that she is expected to do certain things, such as always see to what is best
for her child, even though it might not agree with what is best for her. She feels as though she should give James another chance for Kate’s sake (---. Watermelon 415). To Claire, it is not only about putting her anger aside because of her child’s right to have a father. By giving her relationship with James another try, she realizes that she also puts her own happiness aside:”What James was offering me wasn’t worth the paper it wasn’t written on. It was only a sham of a relationship and it would have been entirely on his terms and it wouldn’t have lasted a week. And if it had lasted, it would have been at the expense of my happiness” (---. Watermelon 467). Claire is able to see that going back with James would only be to please him and would not give her anything. The relationship would be built on his terms and his presumed right to tell Claire how she should and should not behave. Claire realizes that she deserves a better relationship than that; she does not need to put up with James’ oppression for Kate’s sake. For once she is putting herself first, trusting her own instincts and feelings. Despite her mother telling her that it would be for the best for Kate to have her father in her life, Claire puts her own happiness first. By showing her mother that even though she takes care of Kate without her husband, she thinks of herself too and does not let her motherhood define her.

Claire’s reaction to the divorce

When Claire first finds out that James is leaving her, she is devastated. Her initial reaction is that she needs James by her side:”’But what about the baby?’ I asked, stunned. He couldn’t possibly leave me now that we had had a baby together. ‘You’ve got to take care of the two of us’’” (---. Watermelon 14). Claire is scared that she will not be able to take care of the baby herself. In her marriage she has always relied on her husband to be there for her and help her. She feels that she has lost her ability to make her own decisions through her marriage (---. Watermelon 4). She is also worried about the financial situation. She wonders how she will be able to provide for her baby on her own, as James has always been the one to provide for the both of them: “I was just this faceless woman afloat in a big hostile universe with absolutely nothing to anchor me to anything. Loath as I am to admit it, I felt less of a human being without my husband and his fat salary” (---. Watermelon 168). Claire thinks that her husband should be the primary care-taker of the family.

James has been the strong one in their marriage (---. Watermelon 384). Claire would then be, according to De Beauvoir’s theory of the woman being defined as what a man is not (Morris, 14), the weak one. We can find evidence in this theory as Claire is so reliant on James for both emotional and financial support. It seems at first as if Claire is completely
helpless without him. However, when James decides to leave her, she is all of a sudden forced to manage on her own.

While at her parents’ house, Claire is depressed. After going through various mood-swings, Claire comes to a realization. She is upset about the lack of interest that James shows for his child. He is the father, but does not seem to have much interest in checking up on her at all (Keyes, *Watermelon* 166). By not showing any interest in his child, it seems that James believes that since Claire is the mother, it is her responsibility to take care of the child. In James’ way of looking at Claire we can see a connection to De Beauvoir’s theory that it is presumed to be the woman’s destiny to be in the role of a passive mother. Claire is the one who has to take the primary responsibility for the child. She realizes that she cannot only think about herself when she has someone else to take care of (---. *Watermelon* 159). She has a responsibility as a mother. Because her child has nobody else, Claire is forced to take charge and make the best out of the situation.

Moving on

Claire is becoming more aware of that she has no need of James in her life. She starts to think about the more concrete things regarding the divorce, such as the custody of the baby, selling the apartment and dividing up the furniture. She is taking charge of the things that need to be done; she does not just sit around the house and cry anymore. She is no longer the passive woman that she once was. The things that her husband had been responsible for prior to the divorce, Claire now has to do herself. She tries to get a hold of James in order to schedule a meeting with him to discuss the divorce. She contacts solicitors and tries to sort out the divorce papers. Claire’s ability to take care of things seems to surprise James a great deal (---. *Watermelon* 362). As he has been primarily in charge of paying the bills and taking care of the paperwork in the household, he is possibly threatened by Claire’s sudden change. By doing things by herself, Claire shows that she is changing from being passive into being more active and independent.

Claire feels that she has to get back together with James for Kate’s sake. She makes a decision to let him have another chance, thinking that it is for the best. She has dinner with James, who tells her that him having an affair was her fault, that she drove him into it. He says that she had been too demanding during the relationship and that she was not independent enough. James feels that he was the one taking all the responsibility for Claire, that she could never do anything on her own. He tells her that he was always the one dealing with the bills and mortgage papers. Claire is surprised at his reaction:
He was right. I had let him worry about threatening letters and disconnection notices and all that. But I’d really thought he wanted to do it. (…) I thought he liked being in control. That it would be less haphazard if only one of us was involved. (---. Watermelon 386)

Claire is under the impression that James liked to take care of things. To be able to give their marriage another try, James wants to take charge and tell Claire how she should change for the better. However, when Claire tries to argue against him, he is not willing to listen (---. Watermelon 388). Claire promises to change herself and try and be better, thinking that she was the cause of the affair to begin with. She turns into the passive, quiet woman that James wants her to be. She feels that she has no right to try and challenge his way of looking at things: “I was not finding this blame-acceptance thing easy. (…) A little voice reminded me that I had tried to tell James about it and he’d said it was further proof of my childishness. Well, he was probably right. He usually was” (---. Watermelon 392 – 393). Thus, Claire is oppressed by her husband, allowing him to take charge and change her into what he wants her to be. At first she does not reflect much over that he might have been wrong. She is used to the idea of him always being right, that she should not even try and argue with him (---. Watermelon 406). In this situation, Claire shows evidence of believing in De Beauvoir’s theory that “a man is in the right in being a man; it is the woman who is in the wrong” (De Beauvoir). Claire does not want to say what she thinks because she is afraid that James will leave her again.

When James instructs Claire how to behave, she is fine with it and accepts what he says (Keyes, Watermelon 408). However, when she tries to explain that she needs to think about giving the marriage another try, James is condescending to her and tries to convince her by making her seem selfish: “‘Oh dear’, he sighed. ‘We’re back to ‘poor Claire’ all over again. I thought you’d changed. What about the ways you hurt and humiliated me?’” (---. Watermelon 401). James makes sure that Claire knows that she has done something wrong, not him. By allowing their marriage another chance, he is the one who is doing her a favour. James makes himself the subject of the situation in order to take control over it. Here, he is acting in accordance with De Beauvoir’s theory that man, the subject, “sets himself up as the essential” (De Beauvoir). By accepting that James blames her for the affair, Claire has given him the possibility of an advantage of her which she has a difficult time to get out of. When James puts her in the position of being the one who has done something wrong, she feels guilty for even voicing her own opinion.
After a while Claire becomes suspicious. She feels that she has no desire to get together with James again: “I don’t need a man like that. Right?” (Keyes, *Watermelon* 436), Claire asks her friend over the phone. She needs someone to confirm that she is doing the right thing; she seems to be insecure of her own ability to make a decision. However, it is at this moment she understands that she needs to stand up to James. He has no right to make her feel like the affair was her fault, when he was the one who had the affair. Even though she feels like she does not want to go back to James, she feels that Kate needs her father (---. *Watermelon* 407). After hearing the truth from her friends, that James blamed her for the affair only because he was afraid she was not going to come back to him (---. *Watermelon* 427), Claire becomes angry with James and flies back to London to have a talk with him. James does not understand what he has done wrong, he is determined that he is right and says that what Claire has heard from her friends is wrong (---. *Watermelon* 455). This time, instead of just going along with what James says, Claire really stands up for herself and lets him know what he has done wrong:

If you loved me, you wouldn’t have wanted me to change into some wimpy woman who was afraid of you. If you loved me you wouldn’t have tried to manipulate me or to control me. And, most of all, if you loved me, you wouldn’t be afraid to admit that you’re in the wrong. If you loved me you could rise above yourself and your ego and apologise to me. (---. *Watermelon* 462)

Claire realizes her worth as a human being here. She has allowed herself to be manipulated by James and he has tried to destroy her and who she is. She now understands that under no circumstances is it okay for someone to treat her the way that he did. To try and let a man change her in order for him to feel less guilty about something that he has done is completely wrong.

Claire is no longer the frail, emotional, silent woman who allows herself to be pushed around by a man: “I’ll always be true to what I know I am”, I continued. “I’m going to be me, whether it’s good or bad. And if any man (…) tries to change me, I’ll get rid of them so fast they’ll be dizzy” (---. *Watermelon* 463 – 464). Even though she goes back to James for a while, Claire has learned something important from the mistake. If she has to be with a man who does not listen to her and tries to change who she is, it is better to not be with anyone at all. She has learned that instead of blaming herself, and letting herself be blamed by others, she needs to believe in herself and stand on her own.
Angels: context
The novel is about Maggie Walsh who has always been considered the good girl in her
family. She has never done anything wrong; she has a stable job and a husband who adores
her. Her perfectly organized life takes a turn when she finds out that her husband, Garv, is
having an affair and that she is about to get fired from her job. She decides to run for shelter
in Los Angeles where her best friend, Emily, lives. In Los Angeles she hopes to be able to feel
better and decide what she wants to do next in her life (Official Marian Keyes Website).

Mother’s reaction to the divorce
Maggie goes home to her parents in Dublin after making the decision to leave her husband.
Her parents and sisters have always seen her as a very good, responsible girl and she has been
constantly praised by her parents for her good behaviour: “I’m the one who married her first
boyfriend, and they’ve been so heartbreakingly proud of me and the ticks beside almost every
item on the check-list the marriage, the house, the car, the job, the pension plan, the robust
mental health” (Keyes, Angels 28). Her parents are proud of her as she is the one daughter
who has always lived up to their expectations. Many of the things that make them proud are
linked to her husband, such as the job, the house and the marriage. Thus, she is very much
defined in relation to him, which can be connected to De Beauvoir’s theory.

Maggie is unsure of how her parents will react to her news; she is scared that they will
think that she has failed them. She is especially worried about her mother: “I hated doing this
to her, especially because I was the second of her daughters to have a failed marriage” (---.
Angels 31). Her mother becomes upset by the news: “My poor mother… She looked as
though she’d been hit on the head by a flying brick. Stunned and stricken and shocked beyond
belief” (---. Angels 31). Her mother has a hard time accepting that Maggie has left her
husband. It seems that she is more upset with the idea that none of her daughters can stay
married for any longer period of time than she is actually concerned for Maggie’s happiness
or well-being. Maggie’s mother is trying to do what she can to keep Maggie and her husband
together by suggesting counselling and insisting on that “love conquers all” (---. Angels 35).
She tries to get Maggie to realize that getting a divorce is not the right thing to do.

Maggie tries to avoid her mother, so that she will not have to feel guilty about letting her
down: “With no job to show up at, my time was spent mostly in my bedroom, keeping out of
Mum’s way. Even though she was very vocal about how this was just a phase I was going
through and that I’d be back with Garv in no time, my popularity with her was enjoying an all
time low” (---. Angels 37). It is clear that Maggie is very considerate of her mother’s feelings.
She understands that her mother is upset and that she too will be affected by the decision that she had made. As her mother has always been telling people proudly about how Maggie married her first boyfriend and did not sleep around, she feels that she has somehow let her mother down as well: “Mum was still vacillating between sharper-than-a-serpent’s-tooth-it-is-to-have-a-thankless-child chilliness and would-you-not-cop-on-and-go-home-to-your-husband cajolery” (---. Angels 41). Maggie is sure about the decision she has made. Despite feeling the pressure to be the “good one” and being coldly treated by her mother, she knows what she wants.

**Maggie’s reaction to the divorce**

It takes a while for Maggie to realize the consequences of her decision to leave her husband. It is when she watches him walk away from her parent’s house that she realizes that she is about to be on her own:

> And then it hit me: I was single. I was a single woman in my thirties. I’d spent my twenties in the safe cocoon of marriage and I had no idea what it was like to be on my own. Of course I knew about singletons, about the culture of the thirty-something single person. (…) I had no man now. I was no different from Emily or Sinead or anyone. Although, in fairness, I didn’t want a man. I no longer wanted to be with Garv, but I was blocked. I couldn’t make the necessary leap of imagination to being with anyone else. (---. Angels 69)

Since Maggie married when she was young she knows nothing about what it is like to be on her own. She has felt very safe in her marriage, and has been protected by it in many ways. She is very much attached to and associated with her husband. This could be interpreted in line with De Beauvoir’s theory that a woman “is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her” (De Beauvoir). Maggie seems to view herself as someone who belongs together with her husband and not by herself. This is confirmed by her mother’s view of her, as she tries to convince Maggie to stay with her husband.

Maggie keeps thinking about the end of her marriage as the end of her life. She has connected so much of herself and who she is to her marriage that she does not know anything else. Her marriage is her identity and she is afraid that there will be nothing left of her without it:

> I was carrying the full weight of a lost language and all the rituals that would mean nothing to anyone else, but were part of whatever had bound Garv and me together. Trying to explain why that was funny or comforting would be like trying to describe
Many memories that Maggie has are linked to Garv and their life together and so, she is linked to him. Because of her set ways of thinking about herself and her marriage it is difficult for her to see that she can actually live a life without Garv. She has been reliant on him for certain things, such as explaining thriller movies and exchange rates. Thus, she is afraid that she will have to spend the rest of her life not understanding them.

Maggie is interested in the marital status of every person that she meets while she is in Los Angeles, she needs to know if they are married or single (---. *Angels* 70, 87, 93). She feels as if she is the only person in the entire world that is divorced (---. *Angels* 150). It is as if she defines people by their marital status, that it is all that matters about them. Just like she feels that it is all that matters about her. She finds herself miserable when she finds out that one of Emily’s friends, Connie, is getting married. Connie had her “happy future ahead of her, while my happy future was far behind me” (---. *Angels* 191). Maggie is determined that she will end up alone for the rest of her life, living with her parents until she is old (---. *Angels* 147).

Moreover, Maggie is thinking about how Garv feels about the divorce: “How was Garv getting on with the single life? (…) was he miserable too? Probably not: he was a man, they always seem to find this sort of thing easier” (---. *Angels* 289). Maggie believes that she is the one who is more miserable of the two of them. We can find a parallel between Maggie’s thoughts and Benda’s comments in *Rapport d’Uriel*: “Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man” (quoted in De Beauvoir). Maggie is scared that she will not be able to move on with her life and she sees herself as the weaker person.

**Moving on**

With a new environment in Los Angeles, Maggie spends her days meeting new people and trying to forget about Garv. In her marriage, Maggie has allowed Garv to make decisions for her. This agrees with De Beauvoir’s interpretation of how women were viewed, as someone who is not an autonomous being. It may have been unnoticeable to Maggie, but as she lives on her own in Los Angeles it becomes evident that her husband has had power over her in some situations: “One of the features of this strange post-Garv time was that I seemed to have no power to resist doing things I didn’t want to do” (Keyes, *Angels* 223). Instead of being caught up in doing the right thing all the time, Maggie is able to try new things. She finds herself worrying about how Garv would feel if she did something new to her hair, as he did
not like when she changed it: “Garv would kill me. Then I remembered he wouldn’t. He couldn’t” (---, *Angels* 166). By preventing Maggie from making this decision on her own, Garv has compelled her to “assume the status of the Other” (De Beauvoir). Maggie has learned to be more self-sufficient during her stay in Los Angeles. To not have someone by her side to consult or ask for permission to do things is a good thing for her. She stands up for what she, at the moment, believes is the right thing to do and is able to make her own decisions. She has been caught up in married life and seen herself more as an entity than a single person with her own mind and ability to make decisions.

The experiences that Maggie has while she is in Los Angeles help her gain perspective on her relationship with Garv. She has shown herself that she is able to be someone that she, and everyone else, thought she was not, an independent woman without her husband by her side to tell her what choices to make. Eventually, Maggie makes the decision to talk things over with her husband. She explains to him how she has been hurt by the way that he has acted, but she also admits to making a few mistakes herself. Her husband apologizes for what he has done, and they decide to sort out their problems and try to make their marriage work again.

**Conclusion**

From the evidence found in these two novels, I have shown that the main characters manage to stand up for themselves despite their mother’s reaction to their situations. Through their different experiences they discover things about themselves which expands their views and opens up new ways for them to see themselves. They manage to be less dependent on their husbands and take care of things on their own. They are able to put their own happiness and needs first, instead of listening to what someone else says that they should do. Claire manages to stand on her own. Instead of allowing her husband to exercise control over her, she has learned the importance of never letting someone else tell you what to do and how you should behave. Contrary to what her husband tried to tell her, Claire is self-sufficient and is able to take care of both herself and her baby without the help of a man.

Maggie on the other hand goes back to her husband and stays with him. However, she has still learned something during the time she was away from him and thought she was going to divorce him. Not only has she shown herself that she can stand on her own, but also those who did not believe that she could. Her initial view of marriage and that she could not be by herself has been challenged. In the position that she was, where her family saw her as someone who would never do such a thing as leave her husband, she felt that she needed to
prove them wrong. In the process of standing up for herself and what she then believed in, she learned something. Her conception of herself as a whole person while only in a marriage is proven to be wrong. She may prefer to be in a marriage, but she is also aware of the fact that she can stand on her own. When she feels like she has nothing left without her husband she finds out that she actually does. She is not completely lost or helpless without a man. On her own she has just as many possibilities as she does with her husband.

As seen through the examples in the novels, women still struggle with problems in our male dominated society. Novels such as these shine a light on the problems and show how women deal with them. The problems of being oppressed by their husbands and forced into a position as “the other” where they have no ability to make their own decisions, are dealt with and overcome by the women in these novels. The first step toward changing a society where women are still treated differently than men is to acknowledge that the problem does exist. By bringing it up in a genre which also involves much of everyday life experiences for women, it becomes easier to relate to. Therefore, the chick-lit genre plays an important role in the continued work for equal rights for men and women.


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