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Reading Asian-American Chick Lit: A Cross-Cultural Perspective

Near the turn of the twenty-first century, we have seen the appearance of a new genre—*Chick Lit*. Expanding both nationally and racially, Chick Lit has even birthed its own subgenres, such as Chica Lit and Sistah Lit. In response, Asian American women writers are also adapting Chick Lit to their experiences. They began publishing books that represent Asian American single women in their late twenties and early thirties. Like mainstream, white-dominated chick lit, Asian American Chick Lit tells stories about young women's individual empowerment, but the characters' engagements with femininity and gender are often articulated through questions of race, ethnicity, and class. Therefore, my paper aims to investigate whether Asian American Chick Lit expands or constrains the models and vocabularies of white Chick Lit by negotiating established formal and thematic conventions. It will ask: does it challenge or reinvent new formulas for Asian American women's literature? As mass market and trade publishers have been promoting a number of chick-lit titles written by Asian American authors, my paper will also examine whether Asian American women writers consciously choose to write Chick Lit as a subversive or as a complicit narrative act while navigating the demands of the global publishing market.