



“I Am So NOT a Princess”: A Third-wave ‘Girly’ Feminist Reading of *The Princess Diaries*

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Abstract

Chick lit emerged in the mid-1990s as a popular literary genre featuring witty and independent female protagonists navigating careers, romance, friendships, and self-discovery. Although often criticised for its seemingly trivial portrayal of women’s lives and its associations with postfeminism, the genre has expanded into other media and literary forms, including young adult (YA) fiction. Teen chick lit generally falls into two categories: humorous novels modelled on bestselling adult chick lit, and more risqué narratives depicting the lives of wealthy urban teenagers. Like their adult counterparts, these novels have been criticised for promoting postfeminist values through consumer culture, materialism, and overt sexualisation of the teenage body. This paper challenges such readings by examining Meg Cabot’s *The Princess Diaries* (2000) through the lens of third-wave ‘Girly’ feminism. It argues that such humorous teen chick lit novels embrace the contradictions central to third-wave and ‘Girly’ feminism by presenting traditional feminine girly aesthetics not as indicators of female oppression but as potential sites of agency and empowerment.

Keywords: Chick Lit, Young Adult Literature, Feminism, Postfeminism, Third-wave Feminism.