

# 行政院國家科學委員會專題研究計畫 期末報告

當代美眉文學 Chick-Lit：消費文化和女性性慾(第3年)

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中文摘要：近年來在英美文壇蔚為風行的美眉文學 chick lit，和以往被女性主義學者批評為「父權體制麻醉糖衣」的傳統女性浪漫小說看似截然不同，這種廣受年輕女性（尤其是教育良好、事業成功女性）歡迎的新文類，似乎反映新一代強調個人至上、性慾自由、追求消費時尚和個人愉悅的自信主動女性自我，如果將其斥責為一味回歸父權異性戀主流架構和商品文化、重新將女性身體高度情慾化、商品化，似乎並未完全觸及其背後代表的更為複雜錯綜的論述議題。首先美眉文學看似疏離甚至 dismiss、取笑女性主義，聲稱女性主義作為社會運動已經過時，但是又處處接受並體現女性主義性別平等的號召，大量沿用女性主義的女性自強、主導、自立、主動的論述。文中的當代女性角色清一色事業有成、教育良好、在職場上和男性不分軒輊，同時在女性性慾上毫不壓抑、主動出擊、高度自信，迥異於傳統女性文類深受女性主義者詬病的被動、貞潔、壓抑、犧牲的女性形象。其次，美眉文學強調以文化層面(cultural)的消費者個人主動性和審美化的生活方式的追求，來代替政治層面(political)的社會運動和道德考量，其女性角色看似沈迷於商品崇拜、追求時尚亮麗，並將此視為其女性魅力的重要組成部分，但是同時又沿用後現代路論述中有關 femininity 為裝扮、表演、戲耍(play)的論點，強調女性在「扮美」過程中的正面快感(pleasure)以及不斷重新塑照流動自我的可能性，強調女性運用其消費力量進行意義建構、自由選擇、展現主動個人性的主導式的 consumerist self 的層面，而傳統父權論述中壓迫女性的女性必須美麗、柔弱論點(feminine beauty as entrapment)，反而搖身一變成為女性施展權力和主導性的所在(femininity as power)。這種女性新自我，和近二十年橫掃全球的晚期資本主義商品消費文化緊密相連，又似乎呼應文化研究學界對消費者使用層面、意義選擇、個人能動性的正視，因此這種種論點，使得美眉文學成為深蘊複雜論述、以及匯集流行文化和學院理論、社會運動等的中心場域。本文試圖以三年期多年計畫，分別解構和揭露其錯綜議題，前兩年以英美美眉文學文本為主，分別在第一年討論「美眉文學、女性性慾、女性主義」，第二年討論「時尚文化和消費自我」，第三年則試圖進一步指出美眉文學所體現的針對新女性自我和消費文化互動的論述，已日漸具有全球化傾向，並隨著美國消費文化和大眾文類的全球放送，影響到很多國家。本計畫第三年試圖以反映 90 年代末期上海年輕女性性慾和消費生活嶄新面目的《上海寶貝》為例，指出其和英美同時期的美眉文學在此兩議題上有高度相似性。《上海寶貝》既位於中國當代女性文學的脈絡中，又反映九十年

代末上海等中國大都市急速和國際商品消費文化接軌的特性，既有和英美美眉文學相似的意識型態和寫作模式，又有其在種族、階級、文化層面有別於後者的特殊性，也正是這特殊性，反而在最後提供解構美眉文學、揭露其隱藏的社會文化等級架構的最好切入點。

中文關鍵詞： 美眉文學 消費文化

英文摘要： Chick Lit for young, well-educated and usually urban professional women departing from traditional women's romance by featuring heroines who are often well-educated, professionally successful and economically independent, and are not afraid to voice their desires or take sexual initiatives. Success in the workplace and more power in love relationships are highlighted, as the women interact with a fashionable cosmopolitan scene and go through a succession of relationships in an active though often frustrated search for emotional satisfaction. As a product of the mid 1990s, chick lit reflects a response to the double influences of globalized consumer culture and of decades of feminist struggles for gender parity, while also making partial appropriation of feminist and postmodern discourses. Feminist terms of female empowerment, agency, and autonomy are appropriated extensively in the genre, and chick lit heroines take gender parity as a given value. But significantly they also remain distanced from and dismissive of feminism as a movement and embrace instead the rhetoric of individual choice and freedom, often measured in a consumerist discourse of commodity ownership. The ideas of popular postfeminism, reflecting a changed approach to feminism by a new generation of young women, and of consumer culture and its impact on the construction of subjectivity, are widely dispersed in the genre, while postmodern ideas of fluidity of self and of performative play are also partially borrowed. This three-year project proposes to do three things. The first year will focus on chick lit's preoccupation with an empowered and celebratory form of female sexuality. The second year focuses on its deep implication in consumer culture, and its celebration

of a new female subject predicated on consumerist terms of active choice and individual freedom. The project in its third year seeks to argue that this new consumerist female self has now global resonances that parallels the economic domination of neo-liberal market rationality worldwide. The 1999 published *Shanghai Baby* is an example in case. The Chinese novel does have its own historical, social, cultural and racial specificity, but this very specificity also works to cast a critical light on the chick lit genre and to expose the many limitations and hierarchical differences behind the transcendentary, equal-access, and universal claims of the genre and its ideological underpinnings.

英文關鍵詞： chick lit    consumer culture

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## 報告內容：

### 前言

本計畫為三年期，現已執行完畢，特此報告。

### 研究目的、文獻探討、研究方法

城市女性和消費文化是本人近年研究的一個重點，最近六年研究，除了其中兩年聚焦在英國當代倫敦文學的空間/自我議題，其餘都是以十九世紀末倫敦女性的馬路行走、逛覽百貨公司以及閱讀消費大眾女性刊物，以及當時「新女性」如何和都市現代性及商品文化之間種種互動議題為重點。本人 2007 年 11 月在國科會外國文學研習營上的演講，也是以倫敦女性和消費文化為主題。

本人自 5 年前在研究所開的碩博課「大眾文學和文化研究：浪漫小說和偵探小說的理論和實踐」裡，就開始探討 1990 年代中期以來在英美文壇蔚為流行的 chick lit（暫譯為「美眉文學」）女性文類（以小說為主、小說改編的電影和電視影集為輔）。美眉文學近年霸佔英美文壇，2002 年光是在美國的美眉文學書籍銷售值就達 \$71 million，真正成為書商口中的「商業海嘯」(commercial tsunami) (Ferriss and Young 3)。2002 年美國 Publishers Weekly 暢銷書榜單上就有 7 本美眉文學書上榜時間長達 90 週，而英國出的 *Bridget Jones's Diary* 截止 2001 年 4 月全球銷量四百萬冊（其中英文版一百五十萬冊）< <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/film/1260379.stm>>。如此驚人的銷量，也顯現出美眉文已超越傳統浪漫女性文類，似乎更能打動當今女性的心弦。

美眉文學這個名詞，其中 chick（俚語）是指單身年輕女生，lit 則是文學的縮寫，1996 年由 Cris Mazza and Jeffrey Deshell 在 1995 主編的 *Chick Lit: Postfeminist Fiction*，應是最早提出美眉文學這個名詞，書中收集了 90 年代以來一些女性小說，其共同特點是，其一，文體多用調侃、輕鬆、幽默甚或嘲諷的語氣，其二，文中女性角色多是在大都市里生活工作的律師、記者或作家等時髦成功又單身的年輕女性，她們既追求事業成功，又尋找愛情滿足，在女性性慾上坦白主動，對時髦美麗又汲汲不捨。這種小說迥異於傳統浪漫小說之處，在於其女性角色，大多受過良好教育、在事業上相當成功因而經濟獨立，同時又性感美麗、在兩性性關係上採取主導、獨立，展現主動、不再壓抑的女性性慾，並積極投入城市商品時尚文化、以主動消費者自居的姿態又是她們展現自信和性感的重要標誌。比起傳統浪漫女主角的貞潔、克制、依賴、自我犧牲，或是足不出戶耐心等待唯一的白馬王子來求婚，90

年代的美眉文學女主角則是自信穿梭於變換多端的都市空間（如紐約或倫敦），展現並積極追求個人慾望，在一段段不停變換的兩性關係中尋求性慾和情感（而不是婚姻）的滿足，消費商品和時尚慾望的滿足有時甚至起到替代性的作用。本人以此題目曾經做過『「慾望城市」：From Romance Fiction to Chick Lit』的校內演講，本人的博士生張墨菲也以上課筆記和報告寫成文章「徘徊於『慾望城市』內的維多利亞女性」，發表在『中外文學』93年11月期，本人自己也在『中外文學』2004年5月發表『共謀、抵抗或是幻想：快感和通俗浪漫小說』（英文版發表於 Cambridge Scholars Press 的書中），文中雖沒有討論最新的美眉文學，卻對總體浪漫文類的閱讀/消費過程徵的快感議題，作了詳細的文化研究（是否只是包裹意識型態的麻醉品或是體現抵抗、逾越、遊戲的正面概念）及心理分析的探討（運用 *fantasy*, *spectatorial position* 理論）。

本人在課上、以及張同學文章的相關重點，仍是聚焦在這些新女性看似性慾開放、實則仍無法全然擺脫傳統性別規範的矛盾上。唯隨著個人研究的深入，日漸對此文類所內涵的更深議題有所體認，並激發強烈的研究興趣。美眉文學及其背後所代表的思潮在當今流行文學/文化界影響廣大，但是其文化、社會及政治層面的錯綜性，在學術界卻只是近幾年才開始重視，使得這個題目亟需進一步探討。其中最重要的相關議題，包含（1）女性性慾及其所引出的美眉文學和女性主義/「後女性主義」(*postfeminism*)間的關係，（2）資本主義晚期消費文化及其對當代女性自我塑照的影響，將是本多年計畫的重點。這兩個議題，消費文化和女性性慾，分別在各自的文化研究學界和女性主義理論界成果豐碩，但將這兩個議題緊密結合、並在美眉文學的文本中找到結合這兩個議題的連結點、以及以此展現當代流行文化的特有特色的發酵點，將是本計畫的重要切入角度和特色。因此在今年所提的三年計畫裡，前兩年就試圖以這兩大點展開探討，討論文本除相關理論外，以近年來最為有名的 Candace Bushnell's *Sex and the City* (US novel 1996), *Four Blondes* (US novel 2000), *Trading Up* (US novel 2003), Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (UK novel 1996), *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (UK novel 2000), Amanda Brown's *Legally Blonde* (US novel 2001) 為主要文本，另外如 Sophie Kinsella's *Shopaholic Trilogy* (UK novels 2001, 2002, 2003) 在英美銷量不少、但在台灣較不熟悉的小說為輔。

### 計畫第一年：美眉文學中的後女性主義和女性性慾

美眉文學和傳統浪漫女性文類最大的區別是，後者在六七十年代即被女性主義者(Millett, Firestone, Greer) 嚴詞批判為一味宣揚父權體制的性別意識型態，以幻想逃避式的快感來哄騙女性接受貞潔、忍耐和被動的父權價值，灌輸女性讀者「迷戀囚禁她們的枷鎖」(Firestone 180)。但是 1990 年代中期興起的美眉文學，則是女性角色不再貞潔、不再忍耐、不再被動，美眉文學的女性角色，事業和愛情各半，兩者之間找尋平衡，這樣的內容比例，已經和傳統浪漫文類中愛情為尊、浪漫獨大的內容有相當差異。也正是這種比例上的不同，顯示美眉文學反應的當代女性生活，已經體現出女性主義在兩性平等上長期奮鬥的成果，因此美眉文學中，女性主義的

影子和影響，就有相當的存在。文中女主角（往往是律師、記者、作家）不但事業有成，經濟獨立，和男性平起平坐，體現女性主義要求性別平等的追求，同時她們早就拋棄貞操觀念，一再變換性關係伴侶，在兩性關係中扮演主導角色，毫不掩飾並大方談論自己的性慾喜好，主動求愛不是難事，一不滿意就立刻走人。這樣的主動自信展現，是否在經濟和女性性慾兩個方面都呼應了女性主義所強調的 **female empowerment and agency** 的籲求呢？

但是另一方面，美眉文學文中和女性主義間明白表彰的關係卻又是錯綜複雜甚至是相當敵對的。美眉文學弘揚主動、坦白的女性性慾，但卻又將之不可分割地放置在（而不是挑戰）父權文化現狀下異性戀主流文化框架裡，女性角色也許不再追求婚姻，卻仍是不停渴望尋找 **Mr. Right**。儘管這些女性擁抱不加克制的所有的性慾（包括偶爾的同性戀實驗），但異性戀的中心位置從來被視為理所當然。與此相關的是，女性角色雖在性慾和經濟事業上展現主導自性，但其在外表面容、個性及情感上仍舊非常強調女性化，熱愛高跟鞋、緊身裙等傳統父權價值所讚許的女性外表，並視其為女性魅力的重要部分。美眉文學所反映的，其實就是近年流行文化領域普遍盛行的所謂「後女性主義」的觀念（「後女性主義有時和第三波女性主義通用，但是後者更指多元的 **feminist activist work**，包括黑人女性主義及勞工階級女性主義」，「後女性主義」的定義相當捉摩不定，學術界直到近一兩年才開始重視，尤以對大眾文化著墨甚多的英國女性主義文化研究學者為領航。後女性主義的基本觀點就是認為兩性平等已經達到，女性主義已經過時，女性應該拋棄（尤其是六七十年代）女性主義有關 **women as victim in patriarchy** 的論點，轉而擁抱強調個人至上、自由選擇、主動展現的女性新自我，無須視父權異性戀文化和消費文化為壓迫女性的所在，反而應以積極消費者之姿參與並展現女性力量。這種觀點以 **Naomi Wolf** 和 **Kate Roife** 等新一代女性為代表，再經流行文化和大眾媒體強力放送，儼然成為當今流行文化中無所不見的現象。

美眉文學的這種後女性主義觀念，和女性主義間的關係既複雜又矛盾。一方面，美眉文學和傳統浪漫文類最大不同就在於其強調的女性獨立主導的內容，這部分甚至挪用了女性主義的部分論述，似乎體現女性主義的成功和廣大影響；但另一方面，它又聲稱女性主義已成功，兩性平等已達到，女性主義可以退場，把舞台讓給標榜個人至上的新一代。因此美眉文學的女主角既享受女性主義運動的成果，又一再聲稱自己不是女性主義者，和女性主義的社會改變主張刻意保持距離，女性主義者也常常以可笑、穿著過時、大聲嚷嚷、仇視男人的刻板形象出現。

在這種矛盾關係中，最為爭議的是女性性慾的議題。美眉文學中的女性角色，在嘲笑女性主義、深怕自己被誤認是其中一員之餘，背後體現的，就是認定女性主義反對異性戀，視其為父權架構壓迫女性的觀念，也因此，女性主義和性禁欲、反對性生活、仇視男人劃上等號。這種觀念，當然是美眉文學和許多流行文化文類對女性主義的一再渲染的偏見，但值得注意的是，在眾多聲音的女性主義陣營本身，也有這種有關性慾的爭論，事實上，這種被稱為「女性主義的性戰爭」的爭論，已成為近年來分裂女性主義陣營、尤其是不同年代女性主義者劃分代溝的導火線，爭

議的焦點在於性關係到底是「正面快感或是負面危險」(sex as pleasure or danger)，以及到底要正面擁抱或是警告躲避。其實在女性主義運動的發展史上，就一直存在這種爭議，近年來則因有兩個重要發展使得這種爭議日漸白熱化。其一是學院派女性主義理論家發展出來的酷兒理論，試圖解構男性/女性、異性戀/同性戀等固定自我範疇，指出性慾範疇非先設本質、而是論述的產物，強調自我塑造的不停流動、展演、戲耍可能；其二是隨著 80 年代文化研究的興起，有關權力或是快感、宰制或是個人能動性的爭議愈演愈烈。這些發展，投射到女性主義有關性慾的爭論上，集中體現在 1982 年在紐約 Barnard College 舉辦的會議上，女性主義學者分裂成所謂的 pro-sex 和 anti-sex 兩派，前者擁護者較為年輕，鼓吹女性完全性自由和個人能動，包括參與享受色情及施/受虐性關係，後者較為年長，警告性暴力的危險，強調異性戀已體制化，性關係和色情一樣都是替父權架構服務 (Maglin and Perry xiv)。

這些學院潮流和爭論，投射到美眉文學及其他流行文化所反映的後女性主義觀念上，卻是被稀釋、部分誇大、和個別挪用。其中對女性主義社會運動者，後女性主義者片面強調其憤怒、好戰、批判異性戀、鼓吹集體行動和社會革命的激進形象，從而加以嘲笑並將其擴展至所有女性主義者。而對近年女性主義理論，則一方面批評其語言艱澀、脫離現實、菁英等級，並以完全不懂理論為自傲 (Naomi Wolf 就曾聲稱學院派女性主義理論是對普通女性生活毫無關連的”insider feminism,” 並以不用女性主義理論這種”pig Latin”為榮)，一方面卻又片面挪用相關理論中有關展演、裝扮、流動自我、主動快感、個人能動性的觀點，直接套用並以此合理化女性沿用父權價值，卻不對此價值或這種沿用展開不停的質疑和提出問題。

這種流行文化中的新主張，當然反映出某些後女性主義者如 Naomi Watts 一再結合大眾媒體誇大偏見以打擊女性主義、擴大自己的勢力(hooks 64)，但同時我們對此現象，也並不是以膚淺、庸俗、愚昧、被收編就能一筆勾消或是一笑斥之了事的。一方面，它也確實反映出廣大年輕一代女性日漸普遍的對女性主義的態度/偏見，其日漸廣泛的影響和勢力非常值得仔細探討和批判。美眉文學中的年輕女性角色雖享受女性主義在兩性平等上的奮鬥成果， 但又不斷排斥和疏遠女性主義，正如 Kathleen Karlyn 所言，女性主義在年輕中產階級女性中已越來越有「結構缺席」的問題，如何正視、接受並迎戰這種「代溝」的挑戰，是一個關鍵議題。另一方面，這種新論述對後現代理論的部分挪用，又增加其錯綜複雜性，也使得評論、分析進而批評的難度增加。譬如其也強調女性氣質 femininity 為流動、非固定的建構，是一種不停的展演、裝扮或是戲耍，因此女性沿用父權架構下的傳統女性化嫵媚氣質或服裝（如迷你裙、高跟鞋或緊身馬甲），甚或是參與色情或是施/受虐，亦不過是戲耍或是多重角色扮演，也因此，美眉文學中女性角色擁抱異性戀性關係，甚至嘗試施/受虐或是 soft porn，皆強調其戲耍 play、或是主動選擇/嘗試的快感，其中的危險、暴力也被粉飾，女性仍可將其反轉而展現正面力量、享受個人快感，女性也就不再是性奴或性物，轉身一變為性主體 sex subject。值得注意的是，隨著女性從性物變成性主體，女性性慾大解放，同時時尚文化和大眾傳媒中的女性形象也重新極度 sexualized 或 eroticized，傳統上被女性主義批評為物化女性的再現方式（如

裸露)又捲土重來,只不過這次扭身而變為展現女性力量的主動性感。

但是美眉文學所宣揚的,是否真的意味著女性主義所頌揚的社會變革已不再需要、可以退場?是否這些女性角色已獲得真正平等、自由和主動?在美眉文學一派女性經濟自立及性慾主導的表面聲音之下,文中又充斥難以抹去的焦慮、挫折、無法滿足、不停渴望的潛流聲音,這使得文本一再號稱的女性力量和自信被不斷解構、不斷妥協,也形成美眉文學矛盾又錯綜的多重聲音。這期中牽涉的種種相關議題,值得深入探討,也將是本計畫第一年的重心。

這一年的相關文獻,分為如下幾部分:

1. 此部分為早期女性主義者對女性浪漫愛情文類的批評,以及在女性主義「性戰爭」中對女性和父權異性戀性關係架構間互動持批判態度的學者的觀點:

Cameron, Deborah and Elizabeth Frazer. *The Lust to Kill*. Polity, 1987.  
Faludi, Susan. *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against Women*. London: Chatoo & Windus, 1992.  
Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex*. New York: Morrow, 1970.  
French, Marilyn. *The War Against Women*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992.  
Greer, Germaine. *The Female Eunuch*. London: Paladin, 1971.  
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Kelly, Liz. "It's Everywhere: Sexual Violence as a Continuum." Jackson and Scott, 207-15.  
Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New York: Ballantine, 1969.  
Modleski, Tania. *Feminism without Women: Culture and Criticism in a Postfeminist Age*. New York: Routledge, 1991.  
Rowe-Finkbeiner, Kristin. *The F-Word: Feminism in Jeopardy: Women, Politics, and the Future*. Emeryville: Seal, 2004.  
Stan, Adele M, ed. *Debating Sexual Correctness: Pornography, Sexual Harassment, Date Rape, and the Politics of Sexual Equality*. New York: Delta, 1995.

2. 此部分為近十幾年來從正面、頌揚角度看待女性性慾、鼓吹參與父權主流文化、批評早期女性主義的觀點,此部分多展現「後女性主義」的觀點,但以某種流行化、非問題化(unproblematic)的論調和角度切入,較缺深層分析和理論探討(眾多網路資料不列在內):

Akass, Kim and Janet McCabe, eds. *Reading Sex and the City*. New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004.  
Adelman, Kim. *The Ultimate Guide to Chick Flicks: The Romance, the Glamor, the Tears and More!* New York: Random House-Broadway, 2005.  
Baumgardner, Jennifer and Amy Richards. *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*. New York: Knopf, 2000.  
Bruzzi, Stella. *Undressing Cinema: Clothing and Identity in the Movies*. New York:

- Routledge, 1997.
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- Ferriss, Suzanne and Mallory Young, eds. *Chick Lit: The New Woman's Fiction*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- , eds. *Chick Flicks: Contemporary Women at the Movies*. London: Routledge, 2008.
- Henry, Astrid. *Not My Mother's Sister: Generational Conflict and Third-Wave Feminism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004.
- Heywood, Leslie and Jennifer Drake, eds. *Third Wave Agenda: Being Feminist, Doing Feminism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
- Holmlund, Chris. "Postfeminism from A to G." *Cinema Journal*. 44.2 (2005): 116-21.
- Johnson, Merri Lisa, ed. *Jane Sexes it up: True Confessions of Feminist Desire*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2002.
- . *Third Wave Feminism and Television: Jane Puts it in a Box*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2007.
- Kamen, Paula. *Feminist Fatale: Voices from the "Twentysomething" Generation Explore the Future of the "Women's Movement."* New York: Fine, 1991.
- Karlyn, Kathleen Rowe. "Scream, Popular Culture, and Feminism's Third Wave: 'Im Not My Mother.'" *Genders Online Journal*. 38 (2003).  
[http://www.genders.org/g38/g38\\_rowe\\_karlyn.html](http://www.genders.org/g38/g38_rowe_karlyn.html).
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- Levy, Ariel. *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*. New York: Free Press, 2005.
- Roife, Kate. *The Morning After: Sex, Fear, and Feminism on Campus*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1993.
- Walker, Rebecca. *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.
- Wolf, Naomi. *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. New York: Random, 1993.

3. 此部分包含，（一）：近年從學術界出發、尤其是英國女性主義文化研究學者為主力的較具學術性和批判性的觀點，分別從女性大眾文類的觀看、閱讀、消費、使用等角度，討論文本宰制和讀/觀者能動性、以及快感做為負面或是正面、其文化政治或是心理層面等的各種討論。這種討論，推翻了傳統強調意識型態宰制的觀點，但是對過於弘揚大眾能動性/主動性也有所警告。唯其多數並未直接討論美眉文學，也對近年才流行的「後女性主義」思潮著墨不多。

（二）。最新為數不多的研究，和本計畫切入的觀點比較接近，也成為本計畫的重要奠基石。本計畫將進一步深入推動這些最新研究，既承認美眉文學及流行文化中後女性主義論點的重要影響力及錯綜複雜性、以及其對早期女性主義的某些批評的正當性，但是又對這股思潮背後進行深入分析和解構，並指出其潛在的危險。

（三）。其他相關研究。

（四）。本計畫美眉文學文本

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## 計畫第二年：資本主義晚期消費文化和美眉文學的女性自我

美眉文學宣揚女性性慾自由、主動選擇，是展現女性權力和女性主導性，而這種自由、主動選擇，又幾乎必定以某種消費論述的口吻闡述，女性力量不光展現在兩性關係、也同時以參與父權架構下資本主義商品文化的消費實力來展現，強調主動選擇、個人自由、獨立負責的女性新自我又是以積極消費者的姿態出現。這部分內容，體現了美眉文學作為 90 年代中期產物的特有性質，它所反映的，就是近十幾年來不斷推進的資本主義晚期消費文化橫掃全球、以及背後的新自由主義市場機制滲透至經濟層面以外的文化社會等個個層面的結果。在另一方面，它也顯示後現代文化論述、尤其是文化研究中有關消費者主動性、角色扮演、以及日常生活美學化的部分觀點，被多少表面地挪用到流行文類中。美眉文學中的時髦女性，擁抱傳統父權架構所讚許的女性化美麗外表和女性氣質，但比起傳統浪漫文類，這些美麗和

氣質又都是經和商品、名牌連結，唯有不斷的購物消費、選擇正確的品牌商品進行搭配組合，才能展現女主角令人羨慕的美麗外表和性感形象，理想化的女性氣質和外表也包裝成可經過購物、商品擁有而擁有、套上、不斷改進和演變。

美眉文學中的女性角色對時尚和商品著迷狂熱，經濟獨立帶來的實力使得她們買起名牌毫不手軟，而其所標榜的性自信和性魅力，很大程度也來自於她們自信優遊於商品文化之中、隨心所欲藉最新時尚裝扮自己的能力。對於美眉文學的讀者來說，這些女性角色的吸引力更在於她們所體現的建立在自由消費之上的美學化了的理想生活方式，這種生活方式訴求超越地理、文化或政治等任何界線，也毫無道德考量，在看似民主消費、自由選擇之下提供拼命模仿的普通讀者以某種烏托邦式的理想滿足。還有一點，就是美眉文學中的故事場景，總是和全球大都市如紐約、倫敦密不可分，這些大都市引領全球消費時尚最新趨勢，集中所有最奢華品牌和商品，同時也是全球最有身價男性的萃集地，美眉文學的女性角色則活躍在這些大都市高度慾望化、魅力化的都市商品空間之中（如高級餐廳、精品店、咖啡館、夜店、派對），享受最佳、最大程度的商品、時尚和約會對象選擇，體現自由消費者無拘無束的生活方式。

這種以商品消費為理想化的生活方式，反映近年來流行文化中日常生活審美化的趨勢，正如社會學者(Featherstone)所指出，這種趨勢在二十世紀末達到高潮。這裡「審美化」的概念，不是指某種審美藝術觀，而是指日常生活中，意象、外表、表面、表演日漸重要，它們並不是以傳統所說的欺騙性或虛假性來掩蓋實質，而是完全代替實質，破除了傳統表面/實質的二元對立，也代替了傳統的道德考量(Baudrillard; Chaney; Featherstone)。個人將自己的生活方式審美化，強調表演、組合和裝扮，以此代替傳統的社會臍帶，而自我表達、愉悅快感遂成為自足自立的最終標準。這種思維在世紀末的流行文化中，尤其表現為追求時尚生活方式、享受購物和打扮愉悅、強調個人自我為終極價值，將原本的政治、社經不同/區分轉化為可消費、可模仿的生活方式。而值得指出的是，美眉文學反映出的這種觀念，和二十世紀九十年代新自由主義高度物質化、經濟化、個人化的政經文化息息相關（如下文）。

這種以顯著消費、個人主義和物質生活方式為號召的價值觀，隨著美國文化通過連鎖書店、好萊塢電影、HBO 電視頻道以及跨國商品及廣告在全球的日益擴張，在文化、社會層面呼應跨國資本和自由貿易在全球經濟領域的全面擴張，展現二十一世紀末特有的晚期資本主義消費文化特色。在這種架構下，個人一方面被塑造成具有眾多選擇的自由的消費者，在無窮無盡的商品中優遊，同時又似乎有各種可能性利用商品來進行自我點綴甚至多種扮演、嘗試、組合，從中獲得無窮的快感和滿足。另一方面，消費者的理性、主導形象，又體現在其能夠在眾多選擇中權衡利弊，評估得失，一旦做出選擇，也一肩擔起自我負責的責任，也因此，任何道德層面的考量，也淹沒在強調自由、自我負責的聲浪之中。也因此，像是「慾望城市」中 Samantha 喜歡變換不同性伴侶，包括異性、男同性、女同性等等，都只不過是一個現代女性的個人品味展現和自由選擇結果，她就如消費者選擇不同商品的嘗試，隨時可以退

換、轉換而不失其主動性，沒什麼值得大驚小怪；而 Charlotte 面對要不要婚後辭職這個本應極為嚴肅的議題，也只是強調一個自我負責的現代女性應該有完全的自由，在權衡利弊後做出符合個人願望的個人選擇，完全不必考量其他人的意見(it's your life, your choice.)，也不必牽扯到女性主義一再呼籲提醒的社會經濟層面的各種限制、以及改變這種限制的社會運動的必要性。

美眉文學的這種觀念，其實部分挪用了文化研究論述中有關消費者能動性的觀點。消費者到底是飛蛾撲火一樣的完全受商品文化操縱、或是能展現抵抗的主動性，向來是學者爭論的焦點。傳統消費研究以強調消費者被動性的商品拜物為主，這部分又以馬克斯學派的經典理論影響最為深遠、貫穿在消費者被動性和主動性的長期爭論中。首先，馬克斯指出商品的交換價值掩蓋了其真正的使用價值，而消費和商品崇拜看似能滿足工人在生產過程中因疏離而產生的不滿足/渴求，但實際上卻是對意識的欺騙和幻覺，掩蓋了生產過程的經濟剝削本質；其次，商品拜物又使人類將情慾投射在無生命的物體上，反映出性慾的扭曲 (Marx 77, 361；Amariglio and Callar, 204-208)。在隨後法蘭克福學派的理論中(Adorno and Horkheimer 38)，消費者更進一步被視為毫無辨識能力的被動愚昧角色，儘管消費的範圍擴及到涵蓋休閒工業和文化體育消費，但大眾消費被視為是維持資本主義價值觀的宣傳手段和掩蓋社會掌控的麻醉劑。

這種經典理論大多強調生產過程而相對貶低消費過程，但晚進的後現代理論則批評前者過於強調經濟決定因素而忽視文化層次，也批評「虛假意識」、「真正需求」、「表面幻覺」、「真相」等舊有觀念的正確性，推翻表象實質、虛假/真實等的二元對立。晚近論點 (Featherstone, Lury, Nava, Shields) 受到 Baudrillard 的醒想，轉而強調消費和商品符號通過新型媒介在社會中佔據日益的重要性，強調消費者的主體性，突出消費的正面可能，尤其指出消費能建構和創造消費者個人和社會身份的新空間。在女性消費者議題上，有學者提出(Dowling, Nava, Radner)，消費提供女性運用知識和權力的機會，也促進她們對消費者權益的意識，通過掌控家庭費用和練習理性經濟能力，確實有既滿足視覺樂趣又訓練自我控制、建構和發覺自我的可能。這些學者承認女性消費者處於諸多限制之中，但將關注點轉向這些傳統上的被動角色抵抗限制、編織主動軌道的層面，也因此，De Certeau 的理論成為這些學者引以為據的重要參照體系。瑟多在談到日常生活層面的消費行為時，摒棄經典理論以商品為主軸的消費論點，轉而強調商品和服務的使用行為，消費者使用商品和服務，本質上和行走一樣可以類似寫作行為，寫作時的語言系統雖已被主流價值佔用，但讀者可以此「湊合」(“make do”)，「寫出」自己的語言和「偷渡」(“poach”)自己的文本，同樣消費者儘管常常處於弱勢，但仍能通過各種「策略突襲」走出抵抗的「軌道」和空間。因此消費者個人也不再只是一味的被大眾流行而同化，仍是有空間對各種規範進行挪用甚或逆反，變成自己的風格，也因此，消費過程也有機會變成「另一種主動的生產過程」，通過「偷渡」，台面下持續不斷但並不醒目的抵抗，生產出另一種如何「使用」商品的「藝術」，以及新的自我(31, 166)。以瑟多的看法，消費過程也如同馬路行走一樣，變成了某種戲劇舞臺，消費者似可跳脫日常生活角色的

限制，通過角色扮演和面具裝扮嘗試新角色、新自我的建構。

不難看出，美眉文學的消費者式自我，顯然挪用了這些理論的部分論述，但是又只片面頌揚消費者的個人能動性，故意隱去文化學者指出仍居強勢的各種政經架構的限制作用，這種頌揚而不探索/解構的態度，無疑起到了合理化資本主義商品文化現狀的效果，也抹平了政治、社經上的不同等級區分。近來有學者開始指出，美眉文學的這種觀念，其實和其身處九十年代席捲歐美的所謂「新經濟」和「市場基本教義」息息相關（Tasker and Negra; Negra）。如果我們進一步用 Foucault 有關 subject formation 的觀點，其實這也是新自由主義市場機制在經濟領域全面擴張之外的文化、社經和自我塑照層面的滲透，市場經濟價值貫穿生活所有層面，個人也被召喚成自力，自由選擇，汲汲經營、權衡得失並自我負責的消費者形象，道德責任被抹平為自負責任，而消費者自我雖看似自由自主，但也因自負責任而促成一種新的、自我管理體制 governmentality。在美眉文學中，常出現一種特有的調侃和自我嘲諷的口吻，以這種調侃的運用，似乎避免了某種嚴肅的道德層面的反思，其結果就是文中的女性角色既能享受物質慾望的滿足，又不需因此而感到某種罪惡或道德責任。但顯然這種追求物質的自由、主動選擇，其背後隱藏著眾多經濟、階級、種族、文化的差異等級。到底這些等級疆域是什麼，美眉文學是否真能達成其所宣揚的消費者主動能動性、達到它所一再標榜的自由選擇、超越疆域、民主式的選擇自由？美眉文學女性角色所熱切投入的資本主義晚期消費文化，是否真如其所宣稱的，能提供女性展現力量、建構主動自我？這種消費文化和紐約、倫敦等大都市代表的全球化都市消費空間又有什麼關連？這些將是第二年的重點討論議題。

書目部分（和第一年重複部分不再列出）

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### 第三年計畫：美眉文學的全球視野：《上海寶貝》和女性消費新自我

美眉文學體現的 90 年代中後期的個人至上、主動選擇、物質主義的新女性形象，及其所鼓吹的消費擁有、時尚生活方式的某種超越地理、社經、文化各種疆域的普及性(universality and equality in access)，這種浸透商品化和市場機制的價值觀及

自我塑照機制，隨著美國流行文化的全球放送，以及新自由主義市場經濟的全球擴張，已有全球化的趨勢。近年美眉文學研究者，已有研究匈牙利和東歐美眉文學、以及印度美眉文學的文章，本計畫第三年試圖探索的是，在 90 年代末期經過改革開放、引進外資二十年的中國，尤其是沿海大都市之首的上海，也已日漸受到西方消費文化的影響，加上中國政府積極擁抱的「發展是硬道理」的市場至上、跨國資本的經濟政策，使得 90 年代末期的中國大都市，也出現呼應美國 90 年代文化經濟價值的趨勢。而 1999 年出版的《上海寶貝》，文中弘揚的毫無羈絆的女性自由主動性慾、以及以消費「跨國」商品、追求時尚生活方式和個人享樂的當代中國新女性形象，也在多個層面呼應了英美當代美眉文學的基本價值。同時本計畫試圖指出，《上海寶貝》仍有其強烈的、處於後社會主義 postsocialist 第三世界中國的歷史文化特殊性，而這種特殊性，也反而更好地揭露出美眉文學價值觀在其舉世性、全面性、自由化的號稱之下，其實具有強烈的階級、種族、文化、年齡等的差異等級，更能提供反省和批評的可能。

David Harvey 在其經典著作 *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* 中的一個章節，專門討論中國作為新自由主義全球擴張的一環，雖然 Harvey 也指出中國並不是一個完全的新自由政體，後社會主義階段的政府政治干預仍然時時存在，但是這種以資本的最大利潤實現、最有效率運用為準則的經濟法則，在鄧小平的改革開放、市場經濟政策下一直都是主軸。而上海在鄧小平 1990 年南巡談話後，開始蛻變成一舉超越廣東、成為全國吸收跨國資本最多、摩天大樓最炫、國際化最深的時尚消費金融之都，浦東金融新區的打造、全市舊區的改建、大上海的不斷擴張，使得上海市府當局以曼哈頓為樣版的都市藍圖，日益趨向實現。政府的新自由經濟政策，也滲透到經濟以外的社會文化之中，在政府日益縮減社會福利措施、鼓勵人民成為自我負責、個人謀利的公民之下，也可以看到這種藉由公民自我制約、負責而代替政府直接控制的新一種 governmentality 的運作。

《上海寶貝》1999 年出版後狂銷幾百萬冊，不久被政府以色情、頹廢、接受西方墮落文化影響等理由而成為禁書，反映了後社會主義時代國家力量仍然有時直接干預，但是盜版、地下黑市的活躍，使得此書反而因此更為暢銷，作者衛慧後來也得到政府允許到歐美巡迴打書（打的就是被共產黨政府禁書的號召），引起相當轟動，2008 年更是引進好萊塢資金拍成電影（女主角為同樣善搏八卦版面的白靈），反映出中國政府和市場商業文化間互為利用、共謀的曖昧關係。此書最為有趣的兩面，就是文中大肆宣揚自由、放縱又充滿自信主動的女性性慾，同時又以消費者口吻、宣導上海時髦女性時尚生活、和國際接軌的理想生活方式。文中的女主角 Coco 是復旦畢業的記者兼作家，每天周旋在酒吧、咖啡店、夜店、出版派對等時尚圈子，和幾個同樣是經濟獨立、自信美麗的女性朋友成天談論情人和時尚，比較個人的情史（Coco 周旋在中國男朋友和德國跨國經理人男友之間），情節架構和美眉文學的代表作《慾望城市》相當近似，兩個女性朋也是一個如 Charlotte 一樣端莊淑女，工作於跨國銀行，一個叫 Madonna，則如 Samantha 一樣是性慾豪放女，換男伴就像換衣服一樣頻繁。這部作品也使用美眉文學無一例外的第一人稱，用親密、輕鬆、調侃的口文描述當代上海灘上情慾、商品、身體共織的潮流。

《上海寶貝》中女主角同樣表現出對女性主義的矛盾態度，雖然男女平等是社會主義政府自上而下的政策，但真正對女性意識的覺醒和強調，反而是在改革開放、西方思想（包括西方女性主義）大量湧入之後方為開始，這點在九十年代中期出現的女性「身體寫作」裡顯現無疑。九十年代末期的《上海寶貝》延續了這種對女性身體和情慾的注重，但不同於中期作品對性別對抗的強調，《上海寶貝》則完全擁抱異性戀架構下的性慾。雖然女主角顯然深受女性主義影響，頭腦中時時出現女性主義警告男性壓迫的聲音，但女性主義時時又被女主角視為亟欲擺脫、說教又過時的對象，女主角一再宣稱她不是女性主義者，認定女性主義是女性享受性慾的障礙。但另一方面，這本小說又和商業文化中日益氾濫的色情化趨勢不同，強調以女性主體、女性自信、甚至男性化了的女性性慾方式表現，似乎又顯示女性主義的影響。文中強調這一代受過良好教育、獨立主動、享受性別平等的新一代女性，不會將情慾和愛情混為一談，「她們比五十年前的女性多了自由，比三十年前的女性多了美貌，比十年前的女性多了不同類別的性高潮」（118）。這種享樂、主動、個人至上的新女性自我，又以顯著消費、追求時尚的主動消費者形象出現，文中一再以跨國商品廣告比擬新一代上海女信的美貌和自信，強調上海擠身於國際消費文化的大都市形象，顯示出九十年代末期上海深受全球消費文化影響的特別一面。

但是《上海寶貝》同時也暴露許多矛盾，不管是在文中宣稱的女性主體一面，或是在性別互動、女性身體和商品間、女性消費者和商品文化之間、上海的本土和跨國資本拉鋸而造成的多種不平衡空間、以及這種不平衡在性慾關係上表現出來的上海女人和外國資本家男人之間、上海女人和中國外地人之間、和本地女工之間的種種複雜錯綜關係，都提供了解構、批評美眉文學背後的價值觀的很好切入點，也將是本計畫第三年深入討論的重點。

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## 成果評估

本人將研究成果以期刊論文發表，附上文章如下。

## **Shanghai(ed) Babies: Geopolitics, Biopolitics and the Global Chick Lit**

**Eva Chen**

### **Abstract**

Chick lit's emphasis on choice, agency and conspicuous consumption has been linked to the impact of Anglo-American neoliberalism. This paper argues that the similarly themed global chick lit, springing up in developing countries and ex-communist countries in recent years, works in tandem with the economic policies of global capitalism that breaks down national/geographical borders and promises a desirable world order of universalized choice and freedom. More than just the Western commodities and Western-defined and locally endorsed values of beauty and femininity, the global chick lit propagates the idea of a neoliberal, global sisterhood of chic, empowered, consumerist and individualistically minded women, who find freedom through consumption and progress in following Western commodities and values. Here geopolitics and biopolitics combine together to aid the expansion of Anglo-American neoliberal ideas.

This paper uses Shanghai Baby (1999) as an example of the global chick lit in China, a hitherto unexplored market. Set in China's most Westernized city, this novel portrays a new generation of young, urban, professional Chinese women who celebrate material pleasure and increased sexual agency in the context of China's market liberalization and the influx of global capital. While reflecting the impact of neoliberalism, the global chick

lit also hints at the gaps between the local and the Western and the uneven nature of economic development, thus setting into greater relief the inherent race and class hierarchies and exclusions behind the neoliberal rhetoric of universalized choice and freedom.

**KEYWORDS** chick lit; neoliberalism; transnationalism

“Today’s young women are different and emancipated. They belong to a new generation that has more freedom than women of fifty years ago, more beauty than women of thirty years ago, and a greater variety of sexual orgasm than women of ten years ago.”

----- Shanghai Baby

Much critical attention has been paid in recent years to chick lit<sup>1</sup> and its role in fostering popular postfeminist ideas<sup>2</sup> as well as a neoliberal form of governmentality (Gill 2006, 2007; Genz & Barbon 2009). This article seeks to point out that the chick lit genre has now gone global, and that its influence has expanded beyond the borders of the UK and the US into similar women’s writings in other corners of the world. In these new types of women’s romance, the neoliberal subjectivity constructed and exemplified in contemporary Western chick lit has taken on transnational traits, and works in tandem with the concomitant expansion of global capitalism in developing and ex-communist countries, so that the increasing dominance of Anglo-American neoliberal economic and

social values is fortified.

These global chick lit works, springing up in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe<sup>3</sup>, generally feature young urban women who pursue Western-style, individualistic pleasure and greater degrees of sexual freedom in an expanding urban commodity culture, often against a more constraining local tradition. More than just the Western brand-name commodities and Western-defined and locally endorsed values of beauty and femininity, these global chick lit novels also propagate the idea of a neoliberal, global sisterhood of chic, empowered, consumerist and individualistically minded women, who find freedom through consumption and progress in following Western commodities and values. This article argues that chick lit has also been exerting its impact on China, a hitherto unexplored market. Using the example of the 1999 bestseller Shanghai Baby by Weihui, whose huge success has since spawned a number of copycat series including Canton Baby, Chengdu Baby, and the “Pink-collared Beauty” novels featuring glamorous working girls in other Chinese cities<sup>4</sup>, this paper points out that these novels reflect changes in China’s gender politics two decades into the country’s embrace of a market economy, changes that showcase the increasing influence of global commodity capitalism in China and particularly of a neoliberal market rationality that touts the values of individual freedom and active choice.

In his seminal A Brief History of Neoliberalism (2005), David Harvey cites China along with the US and UK as the first economies in the 1980s to adopt neoliberalism as a social and economic policy.<sup>5</sup> China’s localized version of neoliberalism, exemplified in its “Open Door” reform policy of economic development at all costs since the early 1980s and its gradual scaling back of welfare and state intervention, marked the country

as the first economy in the socialist block to embrace market liberalization, which helped trigger the later 1989 collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. Though China has since stuck to a nominal form of socialism, and state intervention is never entirely absent from the scene, the country's embrace of market capitalism has been ruthless and determined. China's developing status and its long, pre-communist tradition of female subjugation also means that the chick lit genre there may contain elements that showcase not just similar ones from ex-communist countries but also from other developing countries. An examination of chick lit in China thus offers a good starting point to understand the representation of neoliberal governmentality and of feminism and postfeminism in the global chick lit.

### **Chick Lit and Neoliberal Consumerist Agency**

In his 1978-1979 lectures entitled The Birth of Biopolitics, Foucault discusses the postwar rise of neoliberalism as a new form of political governance that expands market rationality beyond economic dimensions into all social and cultural areas of human life.<sup>6</sup> Neoliberalism entails a form of subject construction whereby the individual as homo economicus freely deliberates every action based on a rational and cost-benefit calculation. Morality or ethics is now seen to reside in the responsibility which the individual must shoulder for his/her own marketized choices. Instead of direct disciplinary power from the state, the individual is interpellated as the actively choosing and self-responsible consumer/entrepreneur who is motivated by economic self-interest to ceaselessly build up human capital<sup>7</sup> and to willingly engage in self-improvement and self-governance (Foucault 2008, p. 12, 139, 226.)

Neoliberalism reached its apotheosis as the hegemonic economic, political and social policy of the West with the election of Margaret Thatcher in the UK in 1979 and Ronald Reagan in the US in 1980. Privatization, deregulation, globalization of markets and capital and the scaling back of social welfare and state power became the hallmarks of policies in these countries and increasingly elsewhere, as aggressive tides of global capitalism and free trade swept the world and broke down national borders in the last decades of the twentieth century. In commenting on the spread of neoliberalism into social and cultural spheres and particularly across a variety of contemporary Western popular cultural forms, critics like Rosalind Gill, Yvonne Tasker, Diane Negra and Angela McRobbie have linked the neoliberal emphasis on an actively choosing individual of marketized rationality with similar celebrations of the empowered, pleasure-seeking, “have-it-all” women of sexual and financial agency widely seen in a number of popular, postfeminist women’s genres like chick lit, TV sit-coms, advertizing and makeover shows. Though each genre has its own distinct conventions, the women characters presented largely share a similar trait in that their rhetoric of choice, power and freedom is predominantly measured in terms of consumerist pleasure and solipsistic individualism, rather than the feminist ideal of collective action and social change.

Arising in the mid 1990s in the UK and the US, chick lit as one such neoliberal-inflected genre carries on the preoccupation with heterosexual romance in traditional women’s romance but also marks a departure by stressing its heroines’ sexual and professional independence. Unlike the passive, virginal and domesticated heroines of traditional romance who are fixated on their own private romance and wait patiently for marriage with the one dominant male (Modleski p. 21)<sup>8</sup>, chick lit protagonists actively go

through a succession of relationships in a fashionable cosmopolitan scene and try to find a balance between love and career. Helen Fielding's Bridget Jones' Diary (1996) is often credited as having inaugurated the genre, closely followed by Candace Bushnell's Sex and the City (1996), both then adapted into hugely popular movies.

The consumerist pleasure and individual choice celebrated in chick lit and in its many TV and movie adaptations helped to spread its influence around the world as global commodity capitalism increasingly infiltrates to ever more corners. Aided by globe-straddling Anglo-American media conglomerations, chick lit novels like Bridget Jones's Diary and its sequel Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason (2000), for instance, were published in forty countries and sold over 15 million copies by 2003,<sup>9</sup> and the TV series of Sex and the City,<sup>10</sup> first aired on HBO on 6 June 1998 and subsequently regularly repeated, proved wildly popular among HBO subscribers in Asia, Australia and New Zealand, the whole of Europe and Canada (Akass & McCabe 2004, p. 2). As Rachel Donadio claims in her New York Times article, chick lit has now become a “pandemic,” and there are global chick lit pieces like Piece of Cake and Girl Alone in India, The Diary of Luisa Lozhkina in Moscow, Stop, Mamma Teresa! in Hungary, and Never to Paris in Poland (2006, p. 13).<sup>11</sup> As diverse as their locations are, these global chick lit novels especially flourish in countries that have newly opened their markets to global capitalism<sup>12</sup> and, with it, the neoliberal values of consumerist freedom. The economic boom has brought more channels for employment and consumption for certain groups of young, educated women in emerging big cities, and allows them to aspire toward love and career prospects drastically different from other local women or from women of earlier generations. There are, of course, important differences from the Anglo-American

chick lit. Sexual explicitness, for instance, is drastically played down in favor of an approach that emphasizes a girl's own choice of love rather than the traditional family arrangement. The force of tradition is much stronger and family ties are more emphasized upon. Yet still, local traditional standards on gender roles tend to be seen as constraining and increasingly obsolete, from which the young women recoil to embrace a Western-style cosmopolitan lifestyle coded as progress, empowerment and freedom.

It is not new for countries around the world to be exposed to US-led values and influences. But whereas in the Cold War years such influences tended to focus on the areas of democracy and political/social freedom, in the global chick lit novels of the late 1990s and early years of the new millennium, to be more Westernized and to stand on the side of perceived progress and modernity is particularly linked with material consumption and with one's ability to participate in the expanding urban commodity culture. A new female biopolitical subjectivity of agency, of pleasure and of the ability of active choice is being advocated here that amounts to a localized version of the neoliberal homo economicus, who is responsible for producing their own individual pleasure and own human capital. By touting such a new female subjectivity celebrated for its affinity to the Western model, the global chick lit works in tandem with the economic policies of global neoliberal capitalism to construct a desirable world order where the values of materialistic individualism reigns supreme. It is thus an ideal medium where the biopolitical dimensions of neoliberalism combine closely with its geopolitical dimensions.

### **The Neoliberal Female Subject in China**

In the late 1990s, two decades into China's Open Door reform policy, a new school of urban female writing emerged that differs drastically from earlier female literature in its distinctly cosmopolitan ambience and its depiction of young professional women who pursue an active, empowering form of material and sexual pleasure. Dubbed "body writing" by some local critics unhappy over its preoccupation with female bodily and sexual experiences, this new type of women's literature nevertheless proved hugely popular with readers, especially young, educated, urban women.<sup>13</sup> Chinese literature of the pre-Reform communist era focused heavily on a rural life of material hardship and political consciousness-raising. Chinese women, perceived to have been liberated from the pre-communist, feudal forms of female subjugation which included ancient practices of female foot-binding, were emphasized for their collectivist, social and political participation and for a puritanical, almost "androgynized" image (Evans 1997, p. 134-136) that erased all signs of individual female sexuality. By the late 1990s, however, with the escalating influx of Western capital and the metamorphosis of a few Chinese coastal cities, particularly Shanghai, into emerging global megacities, a booming urban commodity culture provided unprecedented opportunities of material consumption for an increasing number of the Chinese population. Among them, a young generation of educated professional women celebrating this new-found material pleasure and individualistic aspirations begins to figure prominently in women's literature. This new type of financially successful and sexually confident, "me-first" Chinese woman departs radically from the socialist-era gender-neutral "androgyne" as well as the traditional, submissive Chinese women of the pre-communist era. The 1999 semi-autobiographical novel Shanghai Baby by Weihui is a good example of this emerging new genre, which

bears remarkable similarities with Anglo-American chick lit.

Like the typical big-city settings of the Anglo-American chick lit, Shanghai Baby is set in the most cosmopolitan Chinese city of Shanghai, which boasts “the most fashionable and Westernized lifestyle” (Shanghai Baby p. 3) by Chinese standards. Written in a first-person, diary-like, confessional format and covering the fashionable sectors (media, fashion, and movie) of metropolitan Shanghai, it features the love and professional life of a Shanghai journalist/writer Coco, who is a graduate of a prestigious university in Shanghai and is currently writing her second book, after her first, rather risque book on the Shanghai dating scene made her famous among young urban women readers. Coco views herself as the new woman, whose generational differences from Chinese women of the past are predicated on two key points, financial success and sexual confidence. As if modeled on the American work Sex and the City,<sup>14</sup> Coco converses daily with her female friends while commenting wryly on their love life as well as her own. One friend, a cousin, is a Charlotte-type, straight-laced bank executive named Zhu Sha, and the other a Samantha-type, sexually assertive young widow named Madonna who is “not at all lagging behind men in the way she quickly changes sex partners and is always desiring after new flames” (Shanghai Baby p. 300). All three are well-off and economically independent, and none desires marriage or finds it working. Still, the three women go through relationships in search of sexual satisfaction on a par with the material pleasure they parade as privileged participants in Shanghai’s booming commodity culture.

The novel’s title and content centralize the role of Shanghai in the late 1990s when its participation in the sweeping tide of transnational globalization and cultural

interaction reaches a new pinnacle. In its colonial, pre-socialist heyday in the 1930s, Shanghai was dubbed the “Paris of the East” and was the most internationalized city of the Far East (Chen 1999, p. 34), but it languished as an industrial production center tightly controlled by the state during the socialist era. The city was only given a new lease of life in 1990 when the central government announced the development of Pudong New Area specifically for Western investment on favorable terms. Enormous influx of foreign capital poured into the city’s infrastructure and real estate development, triggering a process of re-globalization and turning the city, which municipal leaders consciously model after such global cities like New York, Tokyo and Hong Kong, into a window for China’s open policy, a Manhattanized cityscape of skyscrapers, shop-lined streets and billboards for multinational products.<sup>15</sup>

In the same way that Shanghai leads other Chinese cities in its “westernized” image and its integration with the global economy, Shanghai women are also constructed to have a unique sense of glamour, sexiness, fashion and sophistication derived from their knowledge of and exposure to Western lifestyle and commodities. References to Shanghai women’s superiority over other Chinese women litter the pages. Coco, for instance, prides herself on her ability to wear her make-up without at all showing it, the ability to be both classy yet also crushingly sexy, a “skill full of delicate nuances that only a Shanghai woman could master to the perfect pitch” (*Shanghai Baby* p. 129). This clearly sets her apart from the more “masculine” women of the North and from the “vulgar” and flashy women of the South (p. 162).

The difference of the modern Shanghai women is primarily seen in their economic and sexual confidence. All the three women characters in the novel are emphasized to

depend on themselves for their love of consumption. Of course Chinese women in the communist era have always enjoyed much wider prospects of employment than in the pre-communist, feudal era, yet in this novel the emphasis is particularly on these women's much greater ability of material consumption as a result of their capacity to respond to and participate in Shanghai's recent exposure to global capitalism. Zhu Sha, a model-student-turned-yuppie, is a member of the local elite because her high-paying job at a multinational bank entitles her to a condominium, an expensive wardrobe and exotic holidays abroad. Coco, who leads a bourgeois life of parties, boutique shops and visits to the shrink, writes bestsellers of a lucratively transgressive nature and is currently finishing a novel for which several publishers are trying to outbid each other. She also successfully goes "global" by targeting the Western market interested in anything transgressive in China<sup>16</sup> -- a German reporter has already promised to arrange a book tour for her in Germany the next year. Even Madonna, who doesn't have to work but holds lavish parties for local elites and foreign expatriates, accrues her wealth by her own efforts, albeit in a morally suspect fashion, by working as a high-class consort in her early days in the southern province of Guangdong, the first Chinese province to benefit from the reform policy and from the influx of overseas capital and investment mostly from nearby Hong Kong.

All three women live by themselves or only with their current partners, away from traditional family ties, a situation that was inconceivable two decades ago. In the communist era, the state acted as the employer for everyone, covering also such areas like housing and health care. General social regimentation and traditional Chinese emphasis on family values also discouraged social mobility, and extended families often lived

under the same roof. But with the waning of state influence and the acceleration of the market economy since the 1980s, rising employment prospects on the basis of merit in the expanding private sector led to great social mobility and influx of professionals as well as migrant workers to the coastal regions. The booming market culture has made it possible for young, single women to live alone in the city and become economically independent. Though the female protagonists in Shanghai Baby are among the privileged few with their moneyed access to the consumerist pleasures of an increasingly Westernized commodity culture, the novel's construction of such a new type of what Angela McRobbie, quoting from Anthony Giddens, calls the "disembedded women" of the chick lit genre (2007, p. 35), who are alone in the city and away from traditional family or community ties where gender roles are more fixed, still appeals to a wide local female audience including even the vast number of female migrant workers from the inland who are now living alone in Shanghai or other coastal cities. The idea of the single, independent woman who is active, enterprising, self-sufficient, free from traditional cultural or familial pressure, and working to maximize her own capital and pleasure, taps well into the aspirations of a new generation of young Chinese women.

This emphasis on greater freedom as a result of female participation in a Western-style market economy is also seen in other global chick lit. The Hungarian version, for instance, describes a similar post-communist phenomenon of the unmarried single woman paying for her own city flat away from family, a phenomenon accredited to the economic "earthquake" (Sellei 2006 p. 184) brought by the collapse of communism. In the Indian context where family and community values are much more entrenched, the heroines may not be living away from home but are already turning away from tradition

as a result of their new economic independence. One heroine has a job in a five-star international hotel and dates an Indian who works for McKinsey & Co in New York. The others are all twenty-something working women in the city who put their careers first and ridicule arranged marriage, still a predominant practice in India (Lakshmi 2007). Calling sari the “strangling folds,” these women wear Reeboks and stilettos underneath, Western commodities they buy with their own money. They all desire to be “a liberated Indian woman” (ibid), and such “liberation” is generally coded in market terms of consumerist pleasure and choice.

It must be noted that in such global chick lit the emphasis is not just on the women’s enhanced economic ability. What is more important is that a new female subjectivity of agency, of pleasure and of the ability of active choice is being advocated. The women protagonists find empowerment and consumerist pleasure by participating in an increasingly Westernized commodity culture, and they are emphasized for demonstrating a sense of cleverness, confidence, knowledge and of active control. In Shanghai Baby, for instance, the modern Shanghai women stand out in their competition with other Chinese women because they can better manage the Western commodities and better utilize knowledge to produce their own distinct look, distinct style and hence distinct identity. This is achieved not just because of their greater exposure to Western commodities and greater ability toward conspicuous consumption, but more because they are able to construct a more agentic female subjectivity expressed in consumerist terms of choice and empowerment.

Describing her cousin Zhu Sha’s beauty, Coco compares her to a “model stepping forward from a Paris Printemps billboard” (Shanghai Baby 133). In another scene, Coco

equates her own confident beauty to “a credit card with a high credit limit that can be used for a very long time without having to worry about the bill” (p. 253). She commands unrivaled sexiness, for “none of the dazzling street neon lights could outshine me;” “nor is the ATM machine as rich as me” (ibid). Beneath the surface of blatant commodification, a sense of me-first, assertive individualism is clearly detectible. As Coco describes the new generation of Shanghai women,

[T]hey demand perfection and the highest standards in their career, but have also high expectations in their private life. They strive hard toward the ideal of the modern, independent new woman, a woman who is confident, well-off and sexually attractive. They have much greater freedom in independently choosing how to live their own life, and they love the words in the new Ericsson cell-phone ad – “everything is under control”. The diamond-ring-flashing, confidently smiling, professional woman in the De Beers ads speaks to their hearts, and so does the ad message- “shining with confidence and sexual attraction” (Shanghai Baby p. 256; emphasis added).

Here we could obviously detect the working of the neoliberal ideology not just in the economic but also the social and cultural dimensions of subject-making, as Wendy Brown and Rosalind Gill have so eloquently argued (Brown 2003; Gill 2007). Since the embrace by the Chinese state in the 1980s of the neoliberal economic policy of development at all costs, the Chinese economy, with its vast supply of cheap and trained labor, has benefitted enormously from international circulation of capital and distribution of labor.

Yet at the same time, social justice and welfare considerations are consistently scaled back, and the Chinese citizen is urged by the state to be self-responsible and self-caring and to take his/her own wellbeing into his/her own hands (Rofel 2007). Rather than direct state discipline, individuals are now subject to a new form of self-govermentality and self-discipline.

In Shanghai Baby, the new Shanghai woman of empowerment is not just able to pay her own way but is also endowed with active “freedom,” making her own “independent” choices about “how to live their lives.” As self-reliant and confident consumers/navigators in Shanghai’s commodified cityscape, Coco and her female friends are thus constructed as a biopolitical subject of knowledge, agency and individual choice that particularly resonates with the Anglo-American pop women’s genres, through a shared reflection of the neoliberal subject-making. The comparison with the De Beers woman suggests that this consumerist discourse of female empowerment seems able to transcend national borders and address, as it were, a global sisterhood of financially and sexually confident cosmopolitan women who are increasingly conforming to Western defined standards of what it means to be a liberated, confident and sexually attractive woman, a meaning predicated on a seemingly pervasive and universally shared consumerist discourse of freedom of choice and individual consumption.

### **Greater Sexual Freedom**

Such a new agentic female subjectivity is emphasized for its emancipating potential, and for its generational contrast with and departure from women of the past who are dismissed as inhibited and passive. Coco, for instance, proudly and self-consciously

claims that “today’s [Shanghai] women are different and emancipated”; they are “confident, financially successful and sexually attractive” (Shanghai Baby p. 256). Compared with their grandmothers’ generation who lived in the pre-socialist, feudal China, they have “more freedom than women of fifty years ago;” compared with their mothers, they have “more beauty than women of thirty years ago,” and compared with their elder sisters they have “a greater variety of sexual orgasm than women of ten years ago” (p. 118).

Though portrayals of sexual experiences are much tamer by comparison with the Anglo-American model (like Sex and the City, for instance), in the global chick lit greater sexual freedom is definitely another area where this new empowered female subjectivity demonstrates itself. In the Hungarian version, for instance, the freedom the new singleton is having in entering and leaving relationships and particularly in choosing not to marry is ruffling many conservative feathers and leading to accusations of decadence and of the dangerous invasion of evil, “imported” ideas (Sellei 2006, p. 184). In Indian chick lit, the increasingly confident young urban women enjoy the heterosocial scene of “rock bands, bar-hopping and bed-hopping” (Raaj 2008), often against disapproval from their mothers. The restraining influence of traditional taboos especially in areas of sex and gender is still powerfully felt in the global chick lit, something that the Anglo-American heroines do not usually have to deal with, but its presentation and treatment is already very candid by local standards, and helps to give legitimacy and a voice to the sexual desires of the female characters.

In the Chinese context, Shanghai Baby is notorious for its sexual explicitness which leads to its nominal ban by the government in 1999 on grounds of its “unhealthy and

obscene contents” (Tan 2000).<sup>17</sup> The publisher Chunfeng Art Publishing was ordered to suspend its publishing activity for three months and its manager relieved of his duties. However, rampant pirating ensured that the nominal ban only boosted its sales to several million, while millions of visits were paid to the book’s Internet website. A high-profile controversy involving plagiarism charges by another young female writer against Weihui was gleefully headlined in the popular press, generally boosting the fame and marketability of both writers. Weihui herself came out unscathed and even more prosperous, as the ban and skyrocketing black-market sales made her an instant tabloid celebrity. She was allowed to pay several overseas visits to promote her book in America and Europe and to write regular columns on love and sex for a Hong-Kong tabloid. More than 30 countries bought the copyright to publish the book one year into the ban, making Weihui one of the richest Chinese writers ((Shao 2005, p. 20-21). This certainly suggests the increasing trend of commodification in Chinese society in the 1990s, even where it concerns subjects which used to guarantee political controversy and persecution. The explicitness of Shanghai Baby must thus be contextualized in what is seen as the general eroticization and commodification of the female body in popular commercials and the mass media in China in that decade (Yang 1999, p. 57). In the communist era, the sexualized woman had been suppressed to advance an androgynous image of the female peasant or worker on a par with men, but she came back with a vengeance in the post-communist market economy, as waning state influence led to a recurrence of traditional gender standards and increased commodification of the female body.

Shanghai Baby seems to have self-consciously sought this market commodification to maximize its sales.<sup>18</sup> Yet the novel is also more than that, particularly as it utilizes a

quasi-feminist rhetoric of female sexual empowerment and active agency. Coco is portrayed as a modern woman not afraid to explore her sexual desire or to take initiatives in sexual relationships, thereby reversing the gender roles traditionally attributed to male and female characters. This highlighting of an uninhibited, almost masculinized, “bad girl” sexuality is probably the biggest reason for its great popularity among women readers, particularly “university-educated professional women”(Shanghai Baby p. 251). The novel mentions that many female colleagues in Zhu Sha’s multinational bank who have read one of Coco’s earlier love stories complain to her about the story’s rather tame ending. That story features a man and a woman who travel always on the same metro train on their way to work; though they secretly like each other, neither dare to make the first move and both end up in their respective apartments, languishing alone. Zhu Sha’s female colleagues profess extreme disappointment and want “complete uninhibited passion” as a better conclusion (pp. 251-256).

Coco herself may not be as unconventional as her friend Madonna, but she is stressed to be drastically different from her mother, who embodies a curious mixture of both socialist, gender-erasing puritanism and traditional, pre-communist female subordination. Coco’s mother disapproves of her daughter’s rebelliousness, could not countenance pre-marital sex, and is especially condemning of young girls wearing tight T-shirts without bras. On the other hand she is also rather traditional, and not known to have a job. “Soft and haggard-looking” and always taking the second seat in the family, she has “spent her whole life ironing shirts for her husband and finding happiness for her daughter” (p. 25).

The metamorphosis of Coco's cousin Zhu Sha is even more telling. Tired of her sexless marriage, the straight-laced Zhu Sha astonishes everyone by divorcing her husband and moving in with an artist lover ten years her junior. Whether the relationship, "extremely satisfying sexually" (p. 175), will end in future marriage or even last a while no longer concerns her; "she has given it a good thought and is quite at ease; she'll just take whatever comes. She doesn't have to rely on anyone; she has a good job and good brains. There is just a new generation of mentally and materially independent and well-educated women like herself in this city" (p. 175).

This emphasis on women's refusal of traditional roles of sexual passivity seems to point to affinities with feminist concerns, but in Shanghai Baby as well as in many other global chick lit novels the credit is unmistakably due to Western-style commodity culture and its emphasis on individual pleasure through gratification of personal desires. Where the local tradition is coded as backward and conservative and the Westernized lifestyle as progressive and liberating, it is significant that feminism does not come into the picture, or where it does, only in a negative light. In developing countries like India, for instance, feminist work to improve women's political and legal rights has been conducted mostly on the grassroots level and by charities and local organizations that lack the national focus and impact of Anglo-American feminist activism. Consequently, participation in Western-style commodity culture of the late 1990s, even by a small number of urban middle-class women, seems to allow them to bypass feminism altogether and enjoy what Mallory Young calls the post-feminist joys of consumerism and sexual independence directly (qtd. in Donadio 2006).

In ex-communists countries, feminism faces a different approach. With the collapse

of communism, feminism as part of the communist state policy is considered as one of the repressive, collectivist forces of the past that erases the individual and needs thus to be discarded (Yang 1999, p. 58; Sellei 2006, p. 184). In the case of Shanghai Baby, for instance, Coco as a university literature graduate is familiar with feminist ideas and professes no patience with men who treat women like “a brainless Barbie doll” (p. 236). But both she and her friends always hasten to add that they are not feminists themselves (p. 164), just like the Anglo-American chick lit heroines. More often feminism is experienced as a forbidding, moralizing force that Coco views with indifference, a tired sense of boredom and even criticism and resentment. This is especially obvious in the area of female sexual pleasure, where Coco, in the midst of her orgasm while together with her German lover, mentally dares feminism to explain this “crack” in women, this inability to resist the “mesmerizing power of sex” (pp. 326-27).

It is thus significant that in the global chick lit, the promised consumerist freedom and individual agency seems to offer a more genuine means of progress and liberation for its global women readers. Participation in Western-style commodity culture and enjoyment of the solipsistic pleasures of consumption and sexuality is the new way forward for contemporary women worldwide. So in the end, a message of women’s economic and sexual independence, which could have directed energy toward feminist social action for women as a whole and to change the status quo, is instead appropriated to fortify the economic and cultural values of Western capitalism.

### **Something More...**

Yet despite this picture of the global chick lit as an ideal medium for the geopolitical

expansion of Western values, the genre still has something new to offer and helps shed light on its Anglo-American model. Though it promises a global sisterhood of like-minded women following Western standards of consumerist freedom that transcends national borders, a promise that echoes the similar rhetoric of universalized democracy and freedom in Anglo-American chick lit, the global chick lit contains a distinct transnational setting and an added dimension of race (and also class) that better reveals the many exclusions and hierarchical differences behind that promise.

The fact that only a small section of the local women with privileged access are emphasized to have that agentic pleasure exposes the very unequal paces of development and prosperity in these countries after their exposure to global capitalism, a situation that has dire class consequences. In Shanghai Baby, even among Shanghai women, a not so subtle hierarchy opens up based on one's ability (or lack of) to adapt to the changed, market-oriented world of the new, global Shanghai. The novel mentions in passing the laid-off female workers of Shanghai's inefficient state-owned textile factories who are displaced by multi-national corporations and real estate developments and forced to move to the outlying suburbs where they make do with what little they still have (p. 75-6). These women are "rejected by the young and fashionable" (p. 76) and certainly excluded from the type of freely choosing, active women Coco and her friends celebrate.

Even with the chic Coco and her two friends, a further hierarchy opens up between them and the more privileged Western women who have greater purchasing power and thus greater "freedom." This is seen when Coco and her chic friends, young and smartly dressed and representing the success of New Shanghai, are driven away from an expensively-maintained lawn in an up-town area by an American old lady, tenant of a

villa nearby who complains that the picnicking young people have violated the tranquility and exclusivity she pays US\$ 25,000 for every month (pp. 113-14). Humiliation and resentment plague the young people as memories of Shanghai's old colonial days come back and they realize that the same hegemonic forces of Western power are behind the prosperity of today's Shanghai (p. 114). Coco and her friends may flaunt their ability to move with ease in the glamorized and globalized cityscape of the New Shanghai, but she is also forcefully reminded that such a cityscape buttressed by Western capital and frequented by Westerners does not really belong to the locals.

This added race and class dimension is set to greater relief by the transnational setting of the global chick lit wherein an inherent awareness of distance from the Anglo-American model is never far off. It may direct the global chick lit reader into greater awareness of social inequality, something that the usually light-toned and humorous Anglo-American chick lit glosses over. The global chick lit may thus allow a stronger potential of debunking the neoliberal rhetoric of equality, universal access and freedom of choice, and of revealing the working of unequal power relations.

## NOTES

1. For a discussion of the distinguishing traits of chick lit and its portrayal of a new type of femininity, see the special issue of Feminist Media Studies edited by Rosalind Gill and Jane Arthurs, vol.6, no.4, 2006. Imelda Whelehan writes that chick lit readers, trying to balance career and love, regard themselves as more sophisticated than readers of traditional romance. Chick lit provides a "post-feminist narrative of heterosex and romance for those who feel that they're too savvy to be

duped by the most conventional romance narrative” (2005, p. 186). Feminists criticize the genre as commodifying and trivializing feminism, and as glossing over real social and political problems. See McRobbie (2006, p. 30) and Whelehan (2000, p. 11).

2. Popular postfeminism as reflected in mainstream pop culture is different from academic postfeminism that uses a postmodern, poststructuralist approach to question the conventional definition of woman as an identity and subject. It appropriates the feminist terms of parity but views feminist activism as obsolete, advocating instead for individual gratification and empowerment through heterosexual and consumerist pleasure. See Wolf 1994. Also Gillis, Howie and Munford (p. xxvii-xxviii).
3. For studies on chick lit in India, see Lakshmi (2007) and Raaj (2008). For an analysis of the genre in ex-communist East European countries like Hungary, see Sellei (2006). While these studies have importantly pointed out chick lit’s role in reflecting changing attitudes toward gender and commodity culture in these countries, they have not linked such changes to the global spread of neoliberalism as both an economic and socio-cultural ideology.
4. See Linghan (2006) and Xue (2008) for the “Pink-collar Beauty Series” and Taotanglangji (2009) for the Baby series.
5. Harvey devotes a special chapter “Neoliberalism with Chinese Characteristics” to China as a representative third-world subscriber to the neoliberal ideology. The dissemination of market rationality to the political sphere and social policy, the pursuit of economic development at all costs and the increasing emphasis on the

citizen as self-responsible, enterprising individuals are hallmarks of China's market reform policies initiated in the early 1980s, under the slogan "Development is everything."

6. This does not mean that the economic principle, or the Marxian economic base, now determines everything including the superstructure, but rather that the economic principle is itself changed to take on the role of a mentality and a process of subjectification, so that the dichotomy between the economic base and the superstructure is more or less collapsed. As Jason Read points out (26), neoliberalism is not just a transformation in ideology that results in a new ideology, but also a transformation of ideology, which situates the ideological and the material on the same plane of immanence. Foucault's lectures target two groups of neoliberal economists: the Ordo-liberal school in postwar Germany and the Chicago School arising at mid-century in the US.
7. The neoliberal process of subject-making effaces the old Marxian conflict between labor and capital, or between consumer and entrepreneur. As the subject is now seen as being constituted as his/her own producer and investor, his/her labor becomes an activity and capital becomes the effect of that activity and of self-calculating investment. Every action (including consumption) in life becomes an act of labor and investment. For more, see Read 31.
8. It must be noted that since Modleski's analysis, "traditional" romance has itself been considerably changed to include greater sexual explicitness partly as a response to the rise of chick lit and to the sexualization of popular culture in general.
9. "Helen Fielding: Beyond Bridget". The Independent (London). 2003-10-05.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/helen-fielding-beyond-bridget-582224.html>. Retrieved 2010-05-04.

10. Sex and the City first appeared as a series of columns by Bushnell in the New York Observer in 1994, and retained its short column format when published as a book in 1996. Various generic shifts may have occurred when it appeared respectively as newspaper columns, then a book, then the TV series and finally the movie version, but this paper deals primarily with the ideological underpinnings which inform all its various forms.
11. See New York Times' Sunday Book Review (March 19, 2006): section I, p.31. The Washington Post also publishes an article by Rama Lakshmi entitled "India's Cheeky 'Chick Lit' Finds an Audience" (November 23, 2007), which lists additional chick lit novels like Almost Single. This novel features the American-educated Kala, who works as a job trainer for a big hotel group in India and is witty, outspoken and enjoying her single status. Kala deals with an overbearing mother and traditional pressure to marry the family choice in a skillful and humorous way and manages to have fun and material enjoyment.
12. India may long boast grassroots-level democracy, but it is only in recent years that the country is moving away from protectionist policies and embracing market liberalization. See Grewal 2005, p. 83.
13. This new literature, also dubbed "70s and after" literature, is mostly penned by female writers born in and after the 1970s who are seen to be apolitical, materialistically oriented and preoccupied with individual desires and gratification. See Shao (2005, p. 2-4).

14. Sex and the City as a novel has never been officially translated in China, nor has the TV series been broadcast on mainland Chinese TV or legally distributed on DVD, but pirated DVDs and online copies are very popular among China's college students and young professionals. The TV show has even inspired a 32-episode Chinese series called 'Really Really Want to be in Love' that appeared from 2004 to 2006, featuring four single, independent professional Chinese girls who yearn for romance. An indication of the popularity of the American show is seen in the fact that a number of magazine columnists and bloggers modeled themselves on Carrie Bradshaw, and that there was at least one bar in Beijing named after the show. See "Sex and the City Shanghai-Style," "Sex and the City Meme Will Not Die," and "Chinese Views of "Sex and the City"" listed in the reference section.
15. Wu (2000, p. 1359) writes that direct Western capital, including that from Hong Kong and overseas Chinese origin, totaling over US\$15.96 billion by 1996, spilled over from Pudong into other urban areas of Shanghai, leading to massive redevelopment and expansion of the city. Urban governance and planning by the municipal government was geared in line with international practice, and aggressively sought Western expertise and media publicity in the designing and promotion of financial areas and high-end real estate. As pointed out by Wei, Leung and Luo (2006), by 2002, 299 out of 500 global corporations had headquarters, offices or factories in Shanghai, making it the most heavily invested city in China.
16. This is seen, for instance, in the marketing process of Shanghai Baby in the US. The book's US version cover-page blares the words "deliciously naughty," "intoxicating cocktail of sex and love," "a shocking, sensual book" about a dark,

“unacknowledged” China and a “people determined to break free” that “the Chinese Government does not want Westerners to read.”

17. This is an example of what David Harvey calls China’s localized version of neoliberalism, where state subscription to neoliberal market rationality is dominant but not complete. Direct state power is still seen in the several campaigns in the 1990s waged by the state against ‘Western decadence and corruption’, campaigns that stressed Chinese ‘spiritual values’ and aimed to limit the Western influence to the material level. But overall the campaigns have proved not very effective. See Rofel 2007.
18. The author Weihui designed herself the book’s cover which featured a revealing picture of herself as a Shanghai babe with the words “an alternative erotic novel set in the secret garden of Shanghai” pasted on her naked shoulders. Her nationwide book tour successfully grabbed tabloid attention when she was accused of using her own sexualized image to boost the sales. See Shao, p. 20.

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### 赴國外移地研究心得報告：

本計畫三年期，其中編列第三年暑假去英國倫敦大英圖書館移地研究蒐集資料。於第三年八月下旬去倫敦兩週，資料重點為英國美眉文學如「BJ 單身日記」發表後的報刊雜誌回應，以及在廣義流行女性文化上的餘波盪漾，並結合如辣妹合唱團、女性美容改造節目、女性美食節目等文類之資料蒐集。

### 赴大陸上海移地研究心得報告：

本計畫三年期，其中編列去上海移地研究費用。於第一年 2010 年 7 月 7 日到 21 日到上海復旦大學圖書館，找到不少當代中國女性主義的理論與當代女性小說的資料。

回來後在論文之寫作過程中，遭遇到一些新的問題，在隨後論文送審過程中，也有評審提出一些需詳加解釋之問題，因此發現第一次移地研究資料蒐集不夠，需要再次去上海蒐集。

隨後在第三年暑假的 7 月，再次去上海，尤其對上海城市文學的淵源有很多瞭解，也幫助論文寫作更為完善，算是圓滿達成目標。

出席國際會報告：

本計畫三年期，前面兩年陸續參加國際會議，第三年因教學繁忙，沒有參加國際會議，經費用做移地研究。

# 國科會補助計畫衍生研發成果推廣資料表

日期:2012/10/01

國科會補助計畫	計畫名稱：當代美眉文學 Chick-Lit：消費文化和女性性慾	
	計畫主持人：陳音頤	
	計畫編號：98-2410-H-004-169-MY3	學門領域：英國文學
無研發成果推廣資料		

98 年度專題研究計畫研究成果彙整表

計畫主持人：陳音頤			計畫編號：98-2410-H-004-169-MY3				
計畫名稱：當代美眉文學 Chick-Lit：消費文化和女性性慾							
成果項目			量化			單位	備註（質化說明：如數個計畫共同成果、成果列為該期刊之封面故事...等）
			實際已達成數（被接受或已發表）	預期總達成數(含實際已達成數)	本計畫實際貢獻百分比		
國內	論文著作	期刊論文	0	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	0	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%		
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（本國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		
國外	論文著作	期刊論文	1	0	100%	篇	
		研究報告/技術報告	0	0	100%		
		研討會論文	0	0	100%		
		專書	0	0	100%	章/本	
	專利	申請中件數	0	0	100%	件	
		已獲得件數	0	0	100%		
	技術移轉	件數	0	0	100%	件	
		權利金	0	0	100%	千元	
	參與計畫人力（外國籍）	碩士生	0	0	100%	人次	
		博士生	0	0	100%		
		博士後研究員	0	0	100%		
		專任助理	0	0	100%		

<p>其他成果</p> <p>(無法以量化表達之成果如辦理學術活動、獲得獎項、重要國際合作、研究成果國際影響力及其他協助產業技術發展之具體效益事項等，請以文字敘述填列。)</p>	無
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	成果項目	量化	名稱或內容性質簡述
<div>           科 教 處 計 畫 加 填 項 目         </div>	測驗工具(含質性與量性)	0	
	課程/模組	0	
	電腦及網路系統或工具	0	
	教材	0	
	舉辦之活動/競賽	0	
	研討會/工作坊	0	
	電子報、網站	0	
	計畫成果推廣之參與（閱聽）人數	0	

# 國科會補助專題研究計畫成果報告自評表

請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況、研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）、是否適合在學術期刊發表或申請專利、主要發現或其他有關價值等，作一綜合評估。

1. 請就研究內容與原計畫相符程度、達成預期目標情況作一綜合評估

☒ 達成目標

☐ 未達成目標（請說明，以 100 字為限）

☐ 實驗失敗

☐ 因故實驗中斷

☐ 其他原因

說明：

2. 研究成果在學術期刊發表或申請專利等情形：

論文：☒ 已發表 ☐ 未發表之文稿 ☐ 撰寫中 ☐ 無

專利：☐ 已獲得 ☐ 申請中 ☒ 無

技轉：☐ 已技轉 ☐ 洽談中 ☒ 無

其他：（以 100 字為限）

3. 請依學術成就、技術創新、社會影響等方面，評估研究成果之學術或應用價值（簡要敘述成果所代表之意義、價值、影響或進一步發展之可能性）（以 500 字為限）

已在 SSCI 期刊發表論文。