

### **(Ethnic) Chick lit – a comparative distant reading of a so-called global genre**

Lately, there has been a lot of controversy about comparative literature in the global era, especially with regard to world literature. If it is understood as the sum total of the world's literatures rather than as a canon, distant, more descriptive approaches to literature are of interest. One of these „new sociologies of literature“, as Heather Love (2010, p. 373) calls them, is Franco Moretti's *distant reading*. According to him transnational research on a greater scale allows „to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes – or genres and systems“ (Moretti, 2000, p. 57).

In this paper *Chick lit* as genre or rather label of contemporary women's fiction serves as such a large unit of analysis. Originally defined as Anglo-American phenomenon, starting with the bestseller *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996), it has spread rapidly across various linguistic and cultural markets. There is a broad consensus about this being a transfer from the centre to the periphery, from the original genre to numerous adapted subgenres. For the latter the problematic term *Ethnic Chick lit* has been established, which in the broadest sense includes all *Chick lit* by authors with “non-western“ sociocultural backgrounds.

The marginalisation and homogenisation of contemporary women's fiction through the *Ethnic Chick lit* label shall be analysed with the help of selected examples from the global north as well as from the global south. My aim is to question the predominantly Anglocentric perspective in theory-driven research and to illustrate local peculiarities behind the global labelling. As methodological framework I use Franco Moretti's *distant reading* approach in combination with the four comparative strategies – Re-Vision, Recovery, Circulation and Collage – suggested by Susan Stanford Friedman in “World Modernisms, World Literature, and Comparativity” (2012) for research on a global scale.

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Friedman, Susan Stanford: World Modernisms, World Literature, and Comparativity, in: The Oxford handbook of global modernisms, ed. by Mark A. Wollaeger, New York et al. 2012, pp. 499-525.

Love, Heather: Close but not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn, in: New Literary History, 41,2, 2010, pp. 371-391.

Moretti, Franco: Conjectures on World Literature, in: New Left Review, 1, 2000, pp. 54-68.