

The author explains a new idea that has stood the test of time.

boychik : boy, young man. (English boy + Yiddish diminutive suffix -tshik)
– *wikipedia.org*

Boychik lit is—

—a counterpoint, alternative to, and parody of the hugely popular female-oriented fiction genre *chick lit*. Moreover, boychik lit defies the widely held notion that today's young men won't or can't read, presumably because they've been conquered, co-opted, and rendered brain-dead by the video game industry and excessive masturbation.

As to the population at large, even if they are not rabid fans of chick lit, the woman-on-the-street and her cowlicked male companion will both know something of *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *The Devil Wears Prada*. An even larger audience of TV viewers will have eagerly anticipated episode after bodice-gripping (if not ripping) episode of *Sex and the City*.

One need not stray beyond the lush pastures of HBO to find the demographic home of boychik lit. *Entourage* is a series about young men on the make in Hollywood. However predictably repetitive the subject of scoring in Babe-alon, not only young men but also men of a certain age who fantasize about being young never seem to tire of *Entourage*.

The godfather of boychik was Peter De Vries, longtime *New Yorker* editor and (today) the lamentably deceased and mostly unsung master of the male-centered comic novel. For example, never one to shy away from topics in questionable taste, De Vries wrote *Slouching Towards Kalamazoo* (about a confused young man who elopes with his teacher) and *Forever Panting* (about a struggling actor who divorces his wife to marry his mother-in-law).

In the boychik-lit story:

- The male main character is looking for sex and is bewildered by emotional entanglements.
- He is a slacker and a hacker (a *shlacker*). He is clever and resourceful but chronically lazy.
- He's a dropout who can't hold a steady job.
- Far from being the hero with a single tragic flaw, the boychik is riddled with worrisome flaws, with one or two possibly redeeming qualities.
- The tone is observational and witty, sometimes sarcastic.
- The boychik tells his story in a confessional, first-person narrative.
- At the end of the novel, the hero has almost managed to undo the complicated mess he's made in the course of the story and thinks he has learned important lessons, which may or may not be valid.

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Oh, and one more crucial distinction:

- The chick-lit novel is typically set in New York City, ironically where many people readily understand what a *boychik* is.
- The boychik novel is set in Los Angeles, where many people will mistakenly assume that boychiks wear wigs and stiletto heels and hang out in certain bars in West Hollywood.

My Inflatable Friend: The Confessions of Rollo Hemphill by Gerald Everett Jones will be released in hardcover by LaPuerta on April Fool's Day, 2007.