

BECKY'S CONSUMERISM AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN SOPHIE KINSELLA'S CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC

Wahyu Eka Putri

English Literature, Faculty of Language and Arts, States University of Surabaya
wahyuputri@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Abstrak

Skripsi ini menganalisis novel yang berjudul *Confessions of a Shopaholic* karya Sophie Kinsella. Dalam novel tersebut bercerita tentang seorang wanita yang kecanduan belanja. Penelitian ini ditulis dengan berfokus pada dua pertanyaan: (1) Bagaimana konsumerisme digambarkan pada karakter Becky? Dan (2) Bagaimana pengaruh merek-merek fashion terhadap konstruksi identitas wanita yang digambarkan dalam konsumerisme Becky?. Untuk menganalisis pertanyaan-pertanyaan itu, penelitian ini menggunakan konsep budaya konsumerisme dan tiga teori lainnya, seperti Marxis Feminis, teori ChickLit sebagai genre novel, dan teori Postfeminisme. Temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa karakter Becky terpicat pada konsumerisme karena dia hidup dalam masyarakat kapitalis dan matrealistik. Masyarakat matrealistik menuntut wanita untuk menjadi cantik, sedangkan dunia kapitalis menawarkan dan secara cerdas memasarkan berbagai produk kepada orang-orang, termasuk wanita. Metode ini menggunakan interpretasi kritis sebagai analisis data. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah, pertama adalah godaan kegiatan konsumsi yang digambarkan pada karakter Becky dan yang kedua adalah hidup dalam masyarakat matrealistik dapat mempengaruhi Becky untuk menggunakan banyak merek fashion untuk membangun identitasnya.

Kata Kunci: konsumerisme, belanja, konstruksi identitas, merek-merek fashion.

Abstract

This study analyze the novel entitled *Confessions of a Shopaholic* by Sophie Kinsella. In the novel tells about a woman who is addicted to shopping. This study is written by focusing on two questions: (1) How is consumerism portrayed on Becky's character? And (2) How does the fashion brands affect on women's identity construction depicted in Becky's consumerism?. To analyze those questions, this study using the concept of consumerism and three other theories, such as Marxist Feminist, ChickLit theory as the genre of the novel, and Postfeminism theory. The findings reveal that Becky's character was lured to consumerism because she lived in capitalist and matrealistic society. Matrealistic society requires woman to be beautiful, whereas a capitalist world offers and cleverly markets various products to people, including woman. This method uses critical interpretation as data analysis. The result of this study are, first is the temptation of consumption activity portrayed on Becky's character and the second is live in matrealistic society can affect Becky to using many fashion brands to construct her identity.

Keywords: consumerism, shopping, identity construction, fashion brands.

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the last decade of the 20th century, a new variety of genres novel began to appear in the book stores, one of the them is Chick Literature or chicklit genre. The chicklit novel written by female authors, for women readers and covers with a special new look. Sophie Kinsella's *Confessions of a Shopaholic* is one of those chicklit genre that targeted young-adult-woman readers. The cover of the novel shows that the novel itself has

specific readers. This novel tells about a modern young adult woman, Rebecca Bloomwood (Becky) who became shopaholic because of her obsession in shopping for the perfect fashion. Shopaholic is kind of addictive disorder. Being addictive to things becomes one of the most significant problems that modern people (especially shopaholic woman) facing today. In the idea of Joanne Knowles argued that typical chicklit character is always young adult woman who is "seeking fulfilment in a romantic-consumer-comedic-vein" (2004:2). Consumerism can

not be avoided by main female character of chicklit in the discussion of this study, because between shopping and using fashion brands for physical appearance is a relationship with modern woman culture. Consuming things is part of human needs which based on the idea of happiness (Baudrillard 30). It simply means that consuming is an activity that brings people happiness. Consumerism becomes one of the significant topic of discussion in chick literature.

In this modern era, one of the most prominent of the capitalist projects to control resources and means of production is to deliberately create new "needs" in people's lives, especially people who live in materialistic lifestyles. Elite Capitalists always encourage the materialistic lifestyle to consume more. Capitalism seeks to create the image that successful people are people who have many goods and occupy a respectable position. The fruit of the project then has created changes in behavior patterns, created hedonistic humans, to arrive at the phenomenon of consumptive behavior beyond the reasonable limits that characterizes the lives of modern women. This study focus on Becky's consumerism and identity construction by using fashion brands in *Confessions of a Shopaholic*.

In order to analyse the issue of consumerism and identity construction of Becky Blomwood's character, this study using concept of consumerism and three other theories. First theory is Marxist Feminism theory which is emphasizing on the oppression over women actually as a result of politic, economic construction that exist in the society. In self-explanatory fashion, feminism Marxist theory focuses on the revealing of a capitalism as a way to Liberate women from the oppression and the discrimination. Shopping and fashion relate in the life of a modern woman who has a jobs or career. This issue of consumerism brings women to the analysis of political debates within both Marxist and Feminist circles. Through the marxist feminism get through into woman's new freedom of political, social role, and gender. In these modernity empowerment and authority are the main factor for the women to feel freedom in modern era such as shopping that lead women to consumptive. Consumerism is becoming a modern life movement that portray a freedom of society in society and how it becomes a characteristic of modernity for women

workers. This case of middle-class women can be as much as the perpetrators of class inequalities as their female counterparts. The social position is privileges that will be inevitably manifest in those spheres in which they play a key role which also means "the possibility of economic independence". Second theory is Chick Literature which is the genre of the novel, It typically portrays female protagonists in their late teens, their twenties and thirties who succeed in their lives and tackle the obstacles in their own way. It usually focuses on various concepts and issues in the lives of women such as love, marriage, fashion, beauty, relationship, friendship, roommates, weight control, consumerism and much more. And third theory is Postfeminism theory which represents modern women's lives and focus on new forms of empowerment, and independence, individual choice (sexual) pleasure, consumer culture, hedonism, fashion, hybridism, humor, and renewed focus on the female body can be considered fundamental for this contemporary feminism. It is a new critical way of changing relations between feminism, popular culture and femininity.

The novel has the good story about Rebecca Blomwood/Becky that successfully attracts the readers with her story because of her behaviour as shopaholic. Having behaviour as a shopaholic addict makes Rebecca have consumerism habit. Then in the title itself "*Confessions of a Shopaholic*" represent a woman who became consumptive of her fashion to make more confident with the branded ones, because from the fashion branded stuffs give the girl power confident. Becky works as a journalist at Successful Saving Magazine in New York. She feels if the salary in her job is too low for fulfill her life style. By using many credit Becky goes shopping almost compulsively on a daily basis, and tries to live the life style like someone who does not think about finances, then she leads into big financial problem.

Based on the background above, this study would like to focus on Becky's Consumerism and Her Identity Construction. There are two problems that emerge as significant concern, as follows:

1. How is consumerism portrayed on Becky's character?
2. How do the fashion brands affect on women's identity construction in Becky's consumerism

Purpose of The Study

Based on the statements of the problem above, the objectives of the Study are the followings:

1. To reveals how the consumerism portrayed on Becky's character.
2. To explain how the fashion brands affect on women's identity construction in Becky's consumerism.

Significances of the Study

The significance of this analysis is to enrich literary studies, especially in chick literature through novel as a genre. This analysis also benefits the knowledge on the representation of young adult woman, consumerism and identity construction through fashion brands.

Limitation of the Study

This study would like to focus on the discussion of consumerism in young adult female character namely Rebecca Bloomwood and her keen on fashion brand that later construct her identity in Sophie Kinsella's *Confessions of a Shopaholic*. It further questions the relationship of fashion, shopping, consumerism and woman's identity construction by concept of consumerism and the perspective of marxist feminist, chick literature and postfeminism.

METODE

The main data of this study is a novel entitled *Confessions of a Shopaholic* also known as *The Secret Dreamworld of a Shopaholic* written by Sophie Kinsella. It first published from Black Swan Press (London) in 2000. This study use qualitative research. Bogdan and Taylor as cited in Moleong, state that qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of words written or spoken of the people and observed behaviour (Moleong, 2010: 3). In this study the data is taken from the novel in the form of quotation on the novel, by analyses the description and the dialogue between characters which concerning about consumerism and identity construction by using fashion brands.

The first step of this research is close reading for collecting the required data from the novel. To analyze the problem, this study begin with deep reading and classifying the data based on the

relevance, then learning that classification data and find the appropriate approach. Reading the text is not just once, it had to be read for many times repeatedly and comprehensively to get the information clearly. Then the title will be choosed and analyse is started on. For the next step the writer making an outline for statement of the problems that this study wants to analyse. The process of writing this study also under the supervision of the thesis supervisor. The last step is making a conclusion, offering the suggestions and critics of the description of this analysis result of the research.

Concept of Consumerism

Basic of the consumerism is consume, consumerism is the pattern of the life style then consume is the basic behaviour that trigger the way itself. Consumer is a viewed as person who prefer to possess things than money. It is proven with the fact that nowadays having credit card is preferable than having cash. Credit card make the people easier to get anything and make unstoppable to get what they want and what they need. By doing that, people can consume more expensive products and afford higher life style.

According to Featherstone, there are three main perspectives of things that influenced consumer. The first is influenced by the increasing production of commodity in the form of things and place to shop it means that the massive production lure people to buy some more, especially when the thing becomes a trend and everybody is using it. Commodity can make consumer to keep consuming they may or may not know about the special application or the condition. Featherstone also stated that the increasing supply is equal with the demand and that condition makes the person in power have bigger chance to manipulated the culture and create new symbol (2007: 44).

The second is that consumer culture exist because of the satisfaction that consumers get after consuming things. The satisfaction include social class status shown the product they purchase and use. Products are used as the justifier of people's social relation. The object's function is for prestige by exchanging the high price with the symbolic goods. E.g.: owning Hermes bag that is so expensive, it means we are financially accomplished. So people keep consuming it. The products become the one

that classify our social status. Larger commodity causes a non-stable status and hierarchy (Feathersone, 45)

The third is that consumer culture exist because of the support of various consumption sites which bring pleasure to the buyer or consumer. The department store collects our dreams and imagination and reflects it as an industrial object (Feathersone, 54). In the department store every dreams seems to be coming true. A store looks nice, inviting people to come inside and finally buy the product. Not only stores, products like credit makes our world easier. We can buy things without actually having cash money.

Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminism theory is focusing on the role of capitalism within the oppression of women. Feminism is often defined as the way women interpret themselves; how women define themselves. In the current era of neoliberal capitalism, what is defined is determined by 'market tastes'. In consumerism feminism, emancipation means the extent to which women can buy more things which she wants. Femme-capital, namely the emancipation of feminism is determined by the extent to which women can consume. In the book of *One Dimensional Woman* by Nina Power (2009) explain that women are inspired by consumerism where the happiness of women as human beings who have the right to choose as championed by feminism is also very limited and determined by the ideology of consumerism. In this case, women's happiness is determined by how capable she is of buying and accessing what is a key marker in contemporary femininity: buying more things, going to the movies, eating chocolate, and doing other strange things from the theology of romanticism offered by capitalism (27-28).

Between production and consumption are the system of economic capitalists. Both are related with other. The consumer engages in this process as he or she feels if need to consume by buying something whether compulsively and excessively or not. According to Baudrillard, the need to consume is a "product of the system of production" (Baudrillard, 1988: 42).

Feminist feminism is organized around the principal conflicts between capitalism and

patriarchy. Marxist feminism combines the study between classes and analysis of gender. Capitalism is seen as a sexual and economic exploitation; patriarchal capitalist is the source of women's oppression: its exclusion from the workplace, patriarchal ownership of production and reproduction, the construction of women as a class of passive consumers, and the exploitation of women's work. Tong clarifies that Marxist Feminism theory is to reveal about a class society, based on the common own property which includes production, distribution, and private property (Tong, 1998: 140). Marxist Feminism focuses on dismantling the social judgment about women. Marxist Feminism theory contemporary gender is in quality as determined ultimately by the capitalist mode of production. Marxist Feminism theory has extended traditional Marxist analysis by looking at domestic labor as well as work in order to support their position. (Tong, 1998:140)

Chick Literature

Chick lit has the representative of modern young woman's lives. As Ferris and Young states that the single women in this this genre is around their twenties and thirties age, about their balancing career with personal relationships (2006:3). The definition of chick lit serve to representation of the female protagonist in her society and conflict between career and personal life as the formation of urban lifestyles in consumer culture. Women as the main character usually live and work in a big city.

The background of chick lit genre is about fashion, shopping and embrace the power of consumer culture. According to Smith defines that chick lit themes as eating, shopping, and female sexuality, and several of its. (2007: 5). Chick Lit heroines are often presented as fashionists who define themselves by the clothes and fashion brands which always desperately trying to prove their individuality and to confirm their identity.

Consumer Culture in Postfeminism's view

Post-feminist reaction theory is also illustrated in chick lit novels. In Popular culture the novel seems to be the message that women are free: free from the constraints of feminism, tradition, objectivity, and stereotypes. They are free and choose everything they want and they are happy about this. As McRobbie emphasize, "For woman, shopping and

fashion is a media to create their identity, as way to show their personality, the more they are good at dress up, the more easier the society recognize them or it can called as a form of beauty show off." (McRobbie, 1999:216)

The most term that most showing in postfeminism genre in chick lit is obsession with her (female) body, because for Becky fashion is her identity. "Postfeminism perpetuates woman as pinup, the enduring linchpin of commercial beauty culture" (Tasker and Negra, 2007:3). Ghosh also state if femininity in this era seen as a position of having a perfect body that seems to be considered as a perfect body every female think that she must pay attention to her apperance intensively and upgrade her fashion (Ghosh, 2013: 12-13).

The media of postfeminism is presented as a modern alternative to out-of-date feminism, which makes it closely related to the consumer society and, what is more, it can be assumed that postfeminist rules and models are dictated by consumer culture. All of the characteristics of postmodernism are individualism. As McRobbie emphasizes, the feminine consumer culture play has three pillars: career achievement, glamor, and sexuality (McRobbie, 2009: 28).

McRobbie states that "Shopping, such as fashion is a feminine things (1999:41) which review about consumerism is a symbol of a struggle through the fashion circles or just a portray ideal body for women. Fashion is a part of women that alive, it can not be separated from woman need's and every woman really love it.

ANALYSIS

Consumerism potrayed on Becky's character

As the main character, Becky mostly depicted to show how consumerism has affected her. Her sorrounding is also influential toward her fondness of shopping. Becky working in Successful Saving magazine as a financial jurnalist who faces financial problem because her extaravagant shopping. Having career and become consumer on her physical appearance can configured between femininity with commodity consumption in postfeminism. Based on the statement of Yvonne Tasker and Diane Negra, "postfeminist culture ... works to commodify feminism via the figure of woman as empowered consumer" (2007:2). Empowered and independent

woman means defending feminist convictions (such as the need for equal pay) and having the ability to shop and consume. Generally, all chicklit women are financially independent because they all have jobs. Becky's daily routine is closely related to high class branded stuffs which potrays that fashion and shopping can not be separated from women's life. She feels free in using money, she is described as fond of shopping for branded products in shopping centers, without being accountable to anyone except herself. When feeling bored or free, shopping and visiting a cafe with her friends is a choice of her lifestyle.

"This is my Shopping Pancake Day...With a surge of excitement I hurry toward th Barkers Centre... I've already got my cardigan—so no clothes... and I bought some new kitten heels the other day—so not that... although there are some nice Prada-type shoes in Hobbs..." (Kinsella,2000:71).

The quotation examines if Becky as middle-class society and her lifestyle that is capable and knows how to enjoy the facilities offered by big cities in London. Living in a flat is only for taking a rest at night. Mall or department store has become a "home" for the metropolitan community. Becky's life reflects that consumerism encourage her to prove herself as a succes and powerful finance independent woman. This situation depicts of postfeminism society as a second wafe feminism which gives women more choice. Gamble state that female character in chick lit can using their own money, buy their own drinks, and live in their own flats. (2006: 5)

In fact, Becky is less satisfied with her work. financial article is a boring things. If she has a chance, she wants to work in fashion magazines that are more in line with her interests and talents, namely shopping. Becky can't restrain herself from the obsession of the consumer marketplace. Her crowded closet overflows with designer clothing and for her depicts of success women. Becky is so steeped in consumer culture that she considers the Financial Times the "best accessory a girl can have" (Kinsella, 2000: 20). As a faithful follower of women magazine, Becky cultivates the affluent lifestyle and forgets her financial problems. Ellen McCracken notes if the consumer ideology is often conveyed by

women magazines, which capitalizes upon consumers' desire for upward mobility by encouraging them to purchase products that give them the appearance of affluence (1993: 15).

Becky prefer to shop the branded stuffs, such as Denny and George, La Senza (sexy underwear), Whistles and other branded items are Becky's collections. The femininities of these protagonists character in chick lit implicate an emphasis on independence, career, fashion and beauty. According to Bullen, the protagonists in chicklit women are increasingly organized into individual models of choices and the consumption of fashion brand names (2011: 505).

Becky implies that the function of credit card is to help people to consume things without actually having cash. she can buy fashionable brand items without having to worry about the cash she brings, until she overspends and has big monetary problem she has not a single credit card left to use. Because of that problem, In the opening novel opens with Becky's panic attack "OK. Don't panic. Don't panic" (Kinsella, 2000: 13), Becky being panic because she receives her VISA bill containing many items she has bought in a month. The opening line can describe Becky's anxiety on the subject of the capitalist world of commerce from her financial problems.

The novel begins with a three letter credit invitation from her bank manager that establish her debt. It can invite and facilitate Becky to become a shopaholic. In Becky's first letter, dated on July 6 1997, shows that Becky is eligible for "a free extended overdraft facility of £2,000" (Kinsella, 2000: 9). Becky's second letter, dated on September 1999, tells Becky that she exceeded the £2,000 limit (Kinsella, 2000: 10). Becky exerts various responses to the letters. Mostly, she rejects the invitation for many reasons for the reason that she has broken the payment she owed them.

The exchange of letters between Rebecca and her bank is the beginning of a series of similar exchanges to avoid paying her overwhelming debt. She sent unsigned check to Octagon (her "favorite shop in the whole world") where she owes £ 235.76, then she tells to Endwich bank if her dog has turned out to be the way to divert the bank's attention away from her outstanding debt, and tries to bribe PGNI's free subscription to Successful Saving magazine and a

dinner invitation (Kinsella, 2000: 143). The exchange of letters between Rebecca and the various institutions which she owes money is big problematic in Becky's live. According to Jessica Lyn Van Slooten in *Chick Lit: The New of Woman Fiction*:

"The letters in Shopaholic is "create mixed messages about financial responsibility, at once admonishing and encouraging Becky's [Rebecca] compulsive, credit-driven spending sprees" since they "inquire about overdue payments ... and offer credit extensions with the same polite tone." She adds, "the well-mannered and at times ridiculous double speak of these letters keep you from worrying too much about Becky's financial scrapes" (2006: 220).

The message of the letters seems to calming the reader, that "don't worry if you are in debt, your bank will give you money so you can pay." From that statement can make someone who has been in debt, this is the beginning of a vicious cycle of borrowing and owing. Becky is caught up in this cycle of stress and anxiety.

Becky lives in a flat with Suze, her glamorous socialite from upper class family who loves everything about fashion, shopping and has overspending habit with Becky. Suze always supports and respects Becky in everything, include Becky's hobby, shopping. Featherstone (1995) state that names this symptom (Becky and Suze friendship) as "neo-tribalism", collective solidarity that occurs in metropolitan cities where individuals have a strong bond between one another due to feelings of common sense. The friendship network does not question differences and diversity accepted as part of life. Togetherness and emotional bonding are considered to replace the role of the family. (46-7)

One day, arriving at her flat, Suze looks surprise with what Becky bought.

"I walk through the door of our flat, Suze looks up - and the first thing she says is, 'Denny and George! Becky, you're not serious ... see your new scarf! Show me!'"

"This is why I love sharing a flat with Suze. Julia, my old flatmate, would have wrinkled her brow and said, 'Denny and who?' or 'That's

a lot of money for a scarf.' But Suze completely and utterly understands. If anything, she's worse than me." (Kinsella, 2000: 37)

That quotation shows the reader how Becky becomes consumptive because of her environment (Kaur, 2018: 173). Becky have good interaction with Suze. What ever Becky bought, Suze is never being jealous with Becky. This situation also makes Becky more motivated to do shopping. As Mochtar said that all of woman in chick lit have groups of fellow singles who have the same lifestyle, they often spend time together, discussing, sharing and pouring out their hearts. Friendship are one of the main elements in the daily lives of single women.(Mochtar, 2008:158)

Shopping activity looks like an escapade for Becky. almost the whole of page of the story about the purchase done by Becky. therefore, she describe shopping as a "cardiovascular activity" (Kinsella,2000:34). Cardiovascular is Becky's condition when she go to shop and purchase many fashion stuffs then her heart start to beat panic. She feels happy the moment she purchase clothes, bags, and shoes. However, this feeling quickly develops into a kind of euphoria that she gets when she buys something, not just clother, bags, and shoes. She is addicted to the sensation that she feels when she pays for what she buy.

"I count out the money in tens and twenties and wait, almost shivering as she ducks behind the counter and produces the green box. she slides it into a thick glossy bag with dark green cord handles and hands it to me, and I almost want to cry out loud, the moment is so wonderful." (Kinsella, 2000:34)

Every time Becky feels angry, disappointed, stressful or sad, she turns to shopping. She does this because she feels that the place where she can find peace is in the stores

"I want to get out there so desperately, i'm actually larning forward in my chair, like a plant toward the light. I'm craving the bright lights and warm air, the racks of merchandise, even the bleep of the cash registers." (Kinsella, 2000:78)

Becky loves bright lights, racks of merchandise, and the sound of the cash registers. By she can forget he problems, although it will not last long because after she gets out from the store the excitement and solace are gone. She gets the feeling that she feels before she gets into the store, and because of this she feels that she needs to go shopping again.

When in the shop of Denny and George having a sale, she wants to own a scarf then she stare at it, she can feel little invisible strings, silently tugging me toward it. She have to touch it. She have to wear it. It's the most beautiful thing that she have ever seen (Kinsella, 2000:22). It becomes a chronic impulse whenever she sees something. Becky will do anything to get the thing that she wants. She cannot control her desire to buy the things that she sees in a stores. A daring and dangerous act she ignores it because because she buys without thinking and just think that she has to have it.

Becky has tried to improve the status of her finances because she was in debt due to her ability to pay, but she never succeeds be frugarity. For example, listening to Becky's father's advice to C.B or Cut Back. Typically, shopaholic though instead of cutting back, Becky starts the C.B. process by more spending money. Then, Becky tries to start to buy the self-help book called Controlling Your Cash. "I must ignore the shops. I must practice frugality (Kinsella,2000:71). Becky realize if her shopping beviour is wrong for her life. From her tries to be frugarity instead of cutting back and reducing her spending, she goes shopping and buys more. She wants to shop for anything, then after she avoid her feeling to shop from any store for several days, she walks into a museum shop and feels genuinely happy and renewed. Becky rejoices "suddenly my steps have more spring in them; my energy has miraculously returned" (Kinsella, 2000: 103). She gravitates towards the stores, in her own words, like plants do towards light. Like a true shopaholic, Becky feels like drawings after not shopping for any prolonged length of time. Becky says "I crave the bright lights and warm water, the racks of merchandise, the bleep of the cash registers" (Kinsella, 2000: 81).

On Becky's consuming activities she realize how much money that she has spent or the importance of the functional the items which she has bought, it is always too late, but she often tolerates every remorse

in her shopping activities. For example after she bought Samsara perfume but she don't much like the perfume then said "i didn't realize that until i go home. Still never mind" (Kinsella, 2000:67).

From the description above the novel shows that Becky fails to differentiate what she needs and what she wants because of her consumptive habits. For example when actually Becky needs clothes as a primary need which can protect her body, not the brand of the clothes, but since Becky lives in society which the trend of purchasing famous brand products grows stronger and this kind of trend causes a tendency of people to identify which products they consume especially brands and status enhancing products. This analysis shows Becky has intorelable shopping habit and gives the depiction of how Becky and consumerism can not be separated.

The fashion brands affect on women's identity constnution depicted on Becky's consumerism.

Becky lives in the trendiest area in London, which people call "Trendy Fulham". London is one of the big cities in the world. The people who live in London live in materialistic lifestyle. Materialistic society value people firstly from their appearance such as what they wear. Becky has big interest in fashion brands which further define her ideology. Her fascination in fashion influences her obsession to physical appearance. From Becky's fashion brands she can get her social recognition. As Slater explains in the book of Consumer Culture and Modernity that "We become what we consume because in consuming we also say who we are, our taste, values and social membership" (1997: 4).

Consumerism is Becky's tool to show her lack of financial security. Her obsession buying branded stuff makes her confident when face society around her because actually Becky is not galmorous socialite person. Becky's performance a is camouflage to prove herself as a succesfully and powerfully finance independent woman, it can be shown from her daily routine that has close related with high class products, such as Denny and George, French Connection, Knickerbox, M&S, Hobbs, and etc. which totally impressed Becky. The point is those certain brand product also covers the status of women that buy or use it indirectly. This phenomenon changes the whole aspect of the

women itself, and they are able to create the identity which they want from based on their fashion.

"I put on my new gray cardigan over a short black shirt, and my new Hobbs boots - dark gray suede - and I have to say, I look bloody good in them. God, I love new clothes. If everyone could just wear new clothes every day, I reckon depression wouldn't exist anymore." (Kinsella, 2000:177-178)

From the quotation above, fashion or new clothes is an escape from her depression of the debt. When Becky shops, the world gets better for her. Becky Bloomwood depicts oncapitalistic society's acquisitive materialism. She is truly consumer with a fashion, enthralled by the Marxian mysterious powers of the high-fashion brand designer articles she purchases.

Becky judges women's beauty from who can decorate themselves with expensive / branded products. As she states when perfectly satisfied with her appearance. According to Rende said that Chicklit novels are idealistically emphasize beauty, and the length to which one will go to achieve such perfection (2008: 14). Becky check [her] appearance in the mirror (Top: River Island, Skirt: French Connection, Tights: Pretty Polly Velvets, Shoes: Ravel) and reach for [her] coat (Coat: House of Fraser sale). "(Kinsella, 2000: 145). The brand names of Becky's outfit are quite expensive. The items granted to her power to tackle the day. The list of brands will help her to project her ideal self: elegant, upper middle-class, independent, working young woman. They will aid in re-defining themselves and facing the world confidently. It is not only about spending money on those outfits, but also it emphasizes on women's attitudes to care for her bodies, each detail of their bodies. This practice indicates a reflection of self-esteem and a way of indulging the woman's body, is supported by Featherstone, the state is declared as a vehicle of pleasure and self expression. Image of the body beautiful, open sexual and associated with hedonism, leisure and display, emphasizes the importance of appearance and the 'look' ... for more marketable self that is closer to the actual body of approximation to the images of youth, health, and beauty. The higher position for exchange value (1982: 170) In a consumer culture, these commodities

are also placed in social hierarchy, where the high price can exclusivity in the highest position.

Becky is perfectly satisfied with her appearance. She has detailing habit of her, itemizing all things she wears, even though for a fashion page. She imagines that Just Seventeen will stop her clothes and list all her clothes.

"I don't look bad, I think. I'm wearing my black skirt from French Connection, and a plain white T-shirt from Knickerbox, and a little angora Cardigan which I got from M&S but looks like it might be Agnes b. and my new square-toed shoes from Hobbs. Even better, although no one can see them, I know that underneath I'm wearing my gorgeous new matching knickers and bra with embroidered yellow rosebuds. They're the best bit of my entire outfit. In fact, I almost wish I could be run over so that the world would see them." (Kinsella, 2000:20)

Her sentence of "I don't look bad, I think. I'm wearing my black skirt from French Connection, ..." reflects Becky's high self-confidence as she wear branded stuffs that are attached to her entire body. For Becky, a beautiful body is identical to a beautiful product that causes feelings of happiness and confidence. This shows that the identity of a woman according to her is largely determined by the expensive items she wears. She also confirms through "I almost wish I could run over so that the world would see them (Kinsella,2000:20)" that by showing her branded stuff she would be recognized as a high class woman. For female characters in chick lit, fashion and trends, go hand in hand to produce modern personalities when seeking identities through new and trendy clothes, looks, attitudes, and behavior. They are fearful of being out of date or unfashionable (Ferris and Young 2006: 224)

As a fashionable woman, Becky has high taste in fashion and she really pays much attention in her physical appearance from head to toe. She really concerns about the dress she wears.

"and i have to say, i agree, i'm wearing all black ... but expensive black. the kind of deep, soft black you fall into. a sleeveless dress from Whistles, the highest of Jimmy Choos, a pair of

stunning uncut amethyst earring. and please don't ask how much it all cost, because that's irrelevant. this is investment shopping. the biggest investments of my life". (Kinsella, 2000: 194)

From the quotation above, Becky has mentioned fashions brands such as French Connection, Knickerbox, Whistles and Jimmy Choos. Those are the fashion brands which are listed in the top fashion brands in London (http://www.apparelsearch.com/Wholesale_Clothing/popular_brands_names_clothes.htm). Beside giving comment to her own outfit, she shows that fashion is something very important which she concerns fully.

In the book of *Consumer Behavior* (1978), Schiffman and Kanuk explain that the products that are offered in the market have several brand names and identity to influence people to become more consume. Consumers purchase these products because other people, especially the upper-class people, prefer to purchase the products from this particular brand. On the other hand, they will avoid the products which they perceive as the lower class products (376). The character of Becky is full of evidence where personal and social ideology influences the character's act of consumerism. The reason Becky's buying of the fashion brand name is for pleasure. The pleasure itself appears from the personal and social judgement. They (social judgement) appreciate the famous branded more than unknown one. People create an opinion of a person according to what she wears and brings. In order to get the good impression from people around her, Becky completes herself with those stuff. She thought that brand name or label is important because she always proud when she brings an expensive shopping bag, she has many other prestige carrier bags, as example after she gets the syal of Denny and George.

... She slides it into a thick glossy bag with dark green cord handles and hands it to me. I almost want to close my eyes, the feeling is so wonderful ... That instant when your fingers curl round the handles of a shiny, uncreased bag - and all the new things inside it become yours." (Kinsella, 2000: 34)

It would be embraced for Becky she wears an unbranded thing "if [she] bought something from a shop that's an uncool bit, [she] cut the label out. So that if you have stopped in the street, you can pretend if she doesn't know where it is from (Kinsella, 2000: 21) For a shopaholic likes Becky feels obsessed with the expensive bag because fashion brands is not only about the quality and feel of the items themselves but also, most importantly for the socially recognized which can valued brand names that they carry on their tags. Actually Becky hates the shop that printed the writing of "sale" on the paper bag, because she thinks that "what's the point of having a posh bag with 'Sale' splashed all over it? You might as well splash 'Cheapskate'." (Kinsella,2000:37) but Denny and George didn't print the word of sale in the bag. Becky feels embarrassed when the word "sale" is attached to her body of fashion because Becky's dependency translates into obsession with fashion branded labels, which are famous and expensive price without the word of sale.

The branded stuff can also project her perceived personal identity. Becky relies on fashion brand names to gain social acceptance and recognition. For example, she believes that a gray-blue Denny and George scarf will define her and make her stand out from the rest of the population.

"There is no question. I have to have this scarf. I have to have it. It makes my eyes look bigger, it makes my haircut look more expensive, it makes me look like a different person. I'll be able to wear it with everything. People will refer to me as the Girl in the Denny and George Scarf." (Kinsella, 2000:22)

Becky states that the expensive shawl makes her beautiful and others will know herself by linking her to her shawl brand rather than to her face or body shape. According to Becky, the body becomes worth depends on the value of the product used. For Becky, beautiful body is synonymous with and beautiful product that causes feelings of happiness and confidence.

The cultural value of the brand's can enable Becky to transcend her current ordinary identity and elevate it to a higher level, one of ultimate elegance and physical attractiveness. The word of "people will refer me as the the Girl in the Denny and George

Scarf" (Kinsella,2000:22) reflect people (especially women) try to be fashionable to be respected by other people. This is the reason why Becky's shopping for fashion branded products "as investment" (Kinsella,2000:67). She buys the famous branded things so that other people will notice it, therefore, she will be respected. Becky also said "people will call me the Girl in the Gray Cardigan. I'll be able to live in it." (Kinsella, 2000:67) and "people will start calling me the Girl in the White Coat." (Kinsella, 2000:160). Both of Becky's quotation reflects Becky as a part of society, also want to be acknowledged and respected. It grows from a need to be accepted to a need to be highly admired. Therefore, it is noticeably that the society in which she lives also takes part in shaping her confidence with her appearance.

Related items about her identity are "dove gray angora cardigan" when she after shopping at Benetton, she sees "people will call me the Girl in the Gray Cardigan" (Kinsella, 2000: 67) here she imagines people noticing and defining her by the cardigan that she wears. For Becky, the cardigan will elevate her status, because people will notice her "Girl in the Gray Cardigan". She believes that fashion brands which mentioned will enable her to re-define and re-invent herself and are most important to improve her self-identity to others. In Van Slooten's words, "fashion becomes Becky's vehicle for creating a self" (2006: 227). The "sense of identity is intrinsically linked to what she wears" because she depends on her clothes to define and project her desires of ideal self (2006: 224).

Becky's dependence on branded things into self-definition translates into obsession with high-end designer labels, which are famous with expensive prices. She purchases the scarf from Denny and George and the Benetton cardigan, both items is not only about the quality and feel of the items themselves but also, the most important thing is that it is a valued brand that they carry on their tags. Becky's hyper-awareness of name brands goes to such an extent that he keeps a record of everything he wears at any given moment. She mirrored her self-checks before on the top: River Island, Skirt: French Connection, Tights: Pretty Polly Velets, Shoes: Ravel ... Coat : House of Fraser sale, "as if these items are granted her the power to tackle the day (Kinsella, 2000: 145). This is not only a list of brands. It is the ideal, self-help, ideal, and middle-

class, independent, working young woman. Becky is truly obsessed with world high class fashion brands because she feels prestigious by wearing world high fashion brands of outfits. To mention those items by saying brands. She will aid her in defining herself and facing the world confidently. Thus, these her not only shape objects are outwardly but inwardly as well.

The story of the novel describes that Becky always wears impeccably outfit when she goes to office or everywhere because she imagines how people will be impressed by the branded fashions which she wears. Becky feels prestigious by wearing world-class brand of fashions, therefore she consumes world-class brand fashions. From the explanation above, shows that Becky consumes the meaning of fashion brands as the way she expresses her status. Becky no longer consumes the real function of a dress, but she wants to make other people get impressed by wearing the branded brands, meeting or everywhere, wears world class fashion brands, shopping in the high class shopping place and eats in exclusive places are also Becky's daily routine.

Why won't the pleasure stay?" At the end of the novel, in the midst of a binge shopping. Why don't I feel happier? "(Kinsella, 2000: 217). Then, she is aware of the number of credit cards that are declining. She must solve the problem with a stroke of luck: she receives a liberal job offer to regularly appear on a morning television program This moves Becky's work as a financial journalist at Successful Savings to Social, the public presence at Morning Coffee. This is another reward for Becky, because she will receive a higher salary with which to consume, plus a wardrobe. furnished by the studio, plus public recognition as a television personality.

CONCLUSION

Rebecca Blomwood or Becky is depicted as shopaholic, independent, high lifestyle woman who lives in a trendiest flat in London and fashionable. Becky consumes in many famous fashion brand for her identity construction. This study answers two questions of the problems of how is consumerism portrayed on Becky's character and how does the fashion brands affect on women's identity construction depicted in Becky's consumerism. There are two points that can be concluded in this study.

Firstly, it focuses on how the consumerism portrayed on Becky's character. Becky's consumerism is depicted as pleasurable and meaningful activity as seen in her character. Becky has uncontrol feeling to shopping everywhere she meets a shop and spends lots of money just for the things that she doesn't really need. She just buys them (things that Becky's buy for her appearance) without thinking very much by using many credit cards. Shopping as consumption activity is used by Becky to improve her mood, she gets a pleasure in shopping because she gets both satisfaction sense and fresh mind. Many things that motivate Becky to consume, because she lives with her glamorous socialite friend in fabulous flat in Fulham, one of the expensive area in London. Becky's character is truly obsession in having something, she just thinks that she has to have it. Because of her overspends, she leads her into some financial problem. Actually Becky is aware of her bad habit but she can't get out of that situation. In order to solve the problem, she tries to buy a self-help book called Controlling Your Cash. But then she failed, because it makes her to buys more and more.

The second one is concern with the fashion brands can affect on Becky's identity in her consumerism. Becky lives in Fulham which is the trendiest area in London (one of the big cities in the world). People who live in London life in materealistic lifestyle. It can value people firstly from their appearance on what they wear. Because of her environment in London, this novel Becky depicts as woman who always itemizing her physical appearance by using several fashion brand names. Becky tries to be fashionable to be respected by other people. She buys the famous branded things so that other people will notice it, therefore, they will respected to her. Becky has big interest with fashion brands which further create her identity by using famous fashion brand. Many branded things that Becky potrays is how to keep the glamour reputation around the society, especially women social intercourse through fashion. The point is those certain fashion brand product also covers the status of women that buy or use it indirectly. This phenomenon changes the whole aspect of the women itself, they are able to create the identity that they want from their fashion. Consumption in many fashion brand names is

important for Becky to her self-conception and identity who she is in society around her.

DAFTAR PUSTAKA

- Baudrillard, Jean. *Consumer Society. Selected Writings*. Ed. Mark Poster. Standford: Standford UP.1998. 29-56
- Bullen, Elizabeth, Toffoletti, Kim and Parsons, July 2011. *Doing What Your Big Sister Does: Sex, Postfeminism and the YA Chick Lit Series. Gender and education*. Vol. 23. 497-511.
- Ferris, Suzanne and Mallory Young. 2006. *Chick Lit: The New Woman's Fiction*. NY: Routledge.
- Kaur, Harpreet. March, 2018. *Obsessions With Shopping in Chick Lit: A Study of Sophie Kinsella's Shopaholic*. Vol. 3, no. 1. Series PhD Research Sholar Panjab University, Chandigarh. Email happykaur059@gmail.com
- Knowles, Joanne. *Chick Lit. Spesial Issue of Diegesis: Journal of the Association for Research in Popular Fictions*. No. 8 Winter 2004.
- Kinsella, Sophie. 2000. *The Secret Dreamworl of a Shopaholic*. Black Swan Press, London.
- McCracken, Ellen. 1993. *Decoding Women's Magazines: From Mademoiselle to Ms*. New York: St. Martin;s Press.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism*. London: SAGE Publications.
- McRobbie, Angel. 1999. *Bridging the Gap: Feminsim, Fashion, Consumption*. Lonson and New York: Routlege.
- Meleong, Lexi J. 2010. *Methodology Penelitian Kualitatif*, Bandung. PT Remaja Rosdakarya, Print.
- Mochtar, Jenny, 2008. *Membaca Ideologi Gender Dalam Chick Lit Inggris dan Indonesia*. Disertasi. Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya. Univertas Indonesia.
- Power, Nina, 2009. *One Dimensional Woman*. Zero Books.
- Rende, Natalie, 2008. *Bridget Jones, Prince Charming, and Happily Ever After Chick Lit as an Extension of Fairy Tale in Postfeminist Society*. Senior Thesis.
- Slater, Don. 1997. *Consumer Cluture and Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Tasker, Yvonne and Diane Negra. 2007. *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke UP, Print.
- Tong, Rosemarie Putnam. 1998. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, second edition. Colorado: Stview Press.
- Van Slooten, Jessica Lyn. 2006. *Fashionable Indebted Conspicuous Consumption, Fashion, Romance in Sophie Kinsella's Shopaholic Series Chick Lit of The New Woman's Fiction*. Ed. Suzanne Ferris and Mallory Young. New York: routledge. 219-52

Online Reference

http://www.apparesearch.com/Wholesale_Clothin_g/popular_brands_names_clothes.htm