

Conference Paper

Female Sleuths in Chick Lit: Girl Power in Maya Calica's *Undercover TaiTai* and Gemma Halliday's *Killer in High Heels*

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Abstract

The representation of women in the waves of feminism swifts into more empowered women in the era of post feminism. Chick lit as subgenre of postfeminist fiction depicts female protagonists who enjoy freedom and femininity. It is a genre that highlighted girl power. This paper analysed the represented identity of female sleuths and the aspect of girl power portrayed in the chick lit novels of Maya Calica's *Undercover TaiTai* and Gemma Halliday's *Killer in High Heels*. It was found out that female protagonists represent women who are tough, wear social masquerade, amateur sleuths, and celebrate femininity to influence others. They used their individual power, beauty and sexual attractiveness power to achieve their goals in life personally and professionally. The representations of girl power in these chick lit novels give space for women to celebrate their femininity and gain their power at the same time.

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1. Introduction

Women today always portray various role in media. They represent different characters, positions and responsibilities. This representation of women can be traced back from the period of feminism. According to Bieniek [2015] "feminism is defined as happening in waves". The first wave of feminism tackles about women's liberation; the second wave focuses on women's rights movements in pursuing their careers, addressing violence against women and pay equality; the third wave focuses on the marginalization of women of color and lesbians; lastly the fourth wave feminism focuses on 21st century women's contribution in the service of the world through the use of technology and digital culture [Bieniek p.13-18]. These evolutions of women representation also change their framework of thinking. If the second wave feminists play with their femininity such as passivity, disempowerment, and dependence;

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women of today urge to seek their individualism [Prafirra, 2013]. This paradigm shift makes women enjoy freedom to choose their own way of life. Brooks [1997] called this process of ongoing change within feminist theory as post feminism. According to Adriaens [2009], a post feminism is a contemporary feminism that empowers women to have "independence, individual choice and enjoy (sexual) pleasure, consumer culture, fashion, hybridism, humour, and the renewed focus on the female body". One of the issues brought by the emergence of post feminism is Girl Power. Girl Power claims about female empowerment from the "get-go, needing only to use their inherent power to effect change" [Hains, 2009]. Thus, it denotes the notion that girls and women have freedom of choice of their lives. In popular culture, there are two main views of Girl Power: "(1) the ability to influence others and the surrounding world through independence, intelligence, and agency; and (2) the mental and physical strength that males typically claim" [Hains, 2005]. These concepts are commonly present in female detective fiction especially with the female sleuth as protagonist. Female sleuths in the new millennium are "strong, intelligent and exciting women who managed to balance their professional (masculine) and personal (feminine) lives" [Gates, 2011]. The representation of Kate Miskin, woman sleuth in P.D. James' *The Private Patient*, was ambitious to create a career for herself that gave her power what she wanted in the police force [Heilbrun, 2002]. Another example a female detective protagonist in Castle, Kate Beckett is portrayed as a "smart, strong and independent woman, hard-working and devoted to her job, beautiful and classy" [Rico, 2014]. The characteristics they possessed is the example of female protagonists in chick lit. According to Chen (2010) chick lit female characters are "often sexually assertive, well-educated, professionally successful young women who are not afraid to voice their desires and embrace the rhetoric of individual choice and freedom". These phenomena are mostly similar to women in the novel of Maya Calica's *Undercover TaiTai* and Gemma Halliday's *Killer in High Heels*. *The Undercover Tai Tai* is a hilarious journey of Amanda Tay, a young woman who pretend to be someone else, makes connections with her past and discovers parts of herself that she never thought existed [Goodread, 2017]. Gemma Halliday's *Killer in High Heels* focuses on the female protagonist Maddie Springer, the L.A. shoe designer who have not seen her father since he ran off to Las Vegas with a showgirl named Lola. Maddie went to Las Vegas when the voice of her father left a desperate plea for help on her answering machine - ending in a loud bang [Halliday, 2007]. Together with her trigger-happy best friend, Maddie straps on her stiletto, makes tracks for Sin City in search of her dad.

The female readers will learn to love these stories because it is humorous and it is about glamorous fashion world. The Copoeira-fighting loner Amanda transformed undercover operative wearing “designer outfits, false eyelashes and high heels” [Calica, 2010], while Maddie, a down-to-earth blonde with her “bold comical voice and knack for thinking fast on her strappy sling backs, will elicit cheers from fans of the growing chick mystery field” [Editorials Reviews, 2006]. These chick lit novels create an impression to the readers on how the ordinary girls become perfect girl to get power in society. Thus, in this study, the researcher will analyze the represented identity of the Amanda Tay and Maddie Springer, female sleuths in the chick lit novels and the aspects of girl power portrayed by these protagonists.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze representation of female sleuths and the aspects of girl power in Maya Calica’s *Undercover TaiTai* and Gemma Halliday’s *Killer in High Heels* chick lit novels. Specifically, it aims to answer the following questions: [1.] What are the represented identity of the female sleuths in the chick lit? [2.] What aspects of girl power portrayed by the female sleuths in the novels?

3. Materials and Methods

The study used critical literary analysis A critical analysis is one of the two most common types of research papers in literature, the arts, and the other humanities (Jewell, 2016). In this study, the researcher critically analyse and examine the aspects of girl power in the in Maya Calica’s *Undercover TaiTai* and Gemma Halliday’s *Killer in High Heels* chick lit novels.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The female sleuths representation and girl power in chick lit novels

Chick lit is a subgenre of postfeminist fiction that has been commercially popular over the years. It characterizes the overwhelming swift of “representation of single women in literature by portraying not figures of pity, illness, or derision, but a cast of funny,

usually capable women not looking to settle" (Harzewski,2006). According to Prafitra (2013) reading novels with powerful, confident, strong, independent and well-educated women protagonists inspires women readers and gives positive impact to redefine the women image and identity as passive, voiceless, disempowerment, and dependent that are attached since long time ago.

Representation of Female Protagonists in Chick Lit Novels

The paradigm swift on the representation of women was notoriously found in popular culture. The wild popularity of chick lit genre won the status of a feminist bestseller as literature "for the new woman, the contemporary reader of our postfeminist culture, and a new woman's fiction, a form of popular literature written by women for a female audience," (Ferriss & Young, 2006) invites us to investigate the newly discovered images of women –for us to reflect on their representations. In this sense, chick lit novels with female sleuth protagonists is one of the genres to examine and discuss the women's developing conventions about this paradigm swift of representations. In examining the representations of female characters, the researcher come up with these four themes: celebrating femininity, tough women, social masquerade and amateur sleuth by analyzing the text with the context of it. In this textual analysis, I started off by looking at the representation of the female characters, their attributes and personalities which common based on postfeminist point of view.

4.1.1. Celebrating femininity

The discursive theme of celebrating femininity is "reclaiming feminine stereotypes, dealing with paradoxes that underlie the construction of postfeminist feminine identities, and the presentation of the desiring feminine subject" (Lazar, 2009). In Maya Calica's *Undercover TaiTai*, Amanda Tay shows her femininity in wearing fashionable wardrobe.

"Amanda was wearing the blush pink Dior dress, which came with a matching scarf, and four-inch satin Christian Louboutins with Hermis Berkin (Calica p 97) when she attended The Tea Chalet. She fidgeted in her white Stella McCartney dress and slightly above the knee as she stood on the decks of M/V Jouvence attending Beauty and the Boat with Dr C.K. Khoo, Jasmin Wong's aesthetician (Calica p.141).

This is similar with the female protagonist, Maddie Springer in Gemma Halliday's *Killer in High Heels*. Maddie as L.A shoe designer always wear fashionable jeans and

shoes. The short excerpt from the novel indicated below shows the femininity side of Maddie.

"I threw on a pair of jeans, a sparkly pink wrap top with little silver sequins, and brand new, totally kickin Ferragamo pumps (Halliday, p.5). I pulled on a comfortable pair of navy blue gaucho pants, paired with a tank top, navy shrug and knee-high brown calfskin boots. (Halliday, p.11).

The quotations above strengthen the claim that the two female protagonists understand the fashionable wardrobes around them. They love fashion. Wearing the branded outfit proves that they are fashionable women. This supports the claim Naugle (2008) chick lit authors rely on referring to what is trendy (shoes, designers, drinks, and city nightlife hotspots) to detail their narrative and create their characters' possessions that would only belong to an elite society.

Aside from wearing fashionable wardrobes, another way in celebrating femininity is by seeing make up as an important need in their professional and personal lives. "Amanda Tay spend two hours of hair and makeup" (Calica, p98) before attending The Tea Chalet. While Maddie Springer always wear makeup. She did a "smoky number on her eyes with lots of shadow and mascara with a little blow-dry and a lot of mousse" (Halliday p.76). When she attended a funeral, she put her "shortest skirt, highest heels, and more eye makeup than her mother" (Halliday, p82).

According to Lazar (2009) in contrast to the view of "femininity as oppressive upon women, celebrating femininity reclaims and rejoices feminine stereotypes". The women of today can enjoy full equality and become women's world if they really want to. They have choice in celebrating all things feminine that includes wearing fashionable wardrobes, and seeing make up as an important need in their professional and personal lives.

4.1.2. Tough women

Images of tough women can be found anywhere especially in popular media such as in movies, TV-series, comic books, computer games and literature. According to Brown (2011) portrayals of tough women/ girls can be seen in" children's animated programming such as "The Power puff Girls, Kim Possible, My Life as a Teenage Robot, and Atomic Betty as well as in the world of computer games like phenomenal popularity of Lara Croft in the Tomb Raider series and even in contemporary literary heroines such as Sara Paretsky's V. I. Warshawski, Sue Grafton's Cordelia Gray, and Amanda Cross's

Kate Fansler remain popular with adults. This only shows that the image of tough, smart and strong females is not new. In the chick lit novels of Calica and Halliday, Amanda Tay and Maddie Springer possessed this kind of representation. Amanda knocked off six-footer Agent Brian with her four and half feet during the Capoeira sparring. She even fought back Tony's Wong strong grip with her sex pistol.

"As Brian turned his head towards the direction of his ringing phone, in slow motion, Amanda in the midst of doing the back flip she had been trying to perfect for so many months dealt her opponent a mighty kick. But unfortunately for Agent Brian, he was too distracted to evade her attack. And just like that, officer Brian was out, stone cold on the floor." (Calica, p.37)

The statement above proves Amanda Tay's toughness in fighting. She can move like an action hero in the film. Just like in "contemporary Western society the action heroines likes Uma Thurman, Milla Jovovich, Kate Beckinsale Kill Bill (2003 and 2004), and Angelina Jolie Tomb Raider (2003 and 2005) shooting, slicing, and kicking their way (Brown, 2011, p. 5) were tough enough to survive in this male-dominated sphere.

In Halliday's Killer the High Heels novel, Maddie Springer showed her toughness in decision making. Despite of her mother's unwillingness and Ramirez' opposition to see her father in Las Vegas, still Maddie and her friends went to the Sin City. The passage below shows her firmness in seeing and helping her father Larry.

"No! No, no, no, no. Ramirez stood up, shaking his head. You are staying right here. I am sorry; did you just say you forbid me from going to Vegas? Well, I'd say that since the message is on my machine, it is my father who called, and last time I checked it wasn't illegal to visit one's own father, I can pretty well decide if I'm going to Vegas or not all by myself." (Halliday, p21).

The characterization of Maddie's toughness is linked to the quality capability and do-it-yourself girl power as postfeminist attributes. According to Aapola, Gonick, & Harris (2004) "do-it-yourself girl power is new feminism that see young women as powerful in engaging on specific issues that affect their own personal and community as a whole". Since Maddie was so affected with the issue of his father's calling for help and the refusal of her mother and Detective Jack Ramirez for the support, together with her friends, they explore Las Vegas with the mission of locating and helping Larry to be out in trouble.

The Tough women representation of two female protagonists support the claim of Inness (2004) that "tough women are appearing in the popular media" such as in chick lit. Furthermore, Inness quoted Gerard Jones who believes that rather than being just

the latest fashion trend, these images reflect the fact that women are challenging the male monopoly on power and aggression, a shift that has broad ramifications for how gender is constructed." (Inness, p. 5). Lastly Inness posits that "female characters are tough because they adopt roles and behaviors associated with men" (Inness, p18). Thus, the female protagonists in chick lit novels perform the toughness in fighting and decision making which is masculine in nature, they "place themselves as outsiders in relation to a culture that assumes that women should strive to act and appear feminine" (Inness, p19).

4.1.3. Social masquerade

The representation of social masquerade of female protagonists in Calica and Halliday chick lit novels reveals the use of disguise and masking of social status of their real identity. Rende (2008) defines social masquerading as "a physical and emotional masking of the body, social class and status for the goal of perpetuating an improved image of oneself that is unlike the reality". In the Undercover Tai Tai, Amanda Tay introduced in the elite society as of Amy Lau, heir of George Lau, a prominent tycoon. She became a tai tai member. Tai Tai is the term used "to describe a woman living in Asia, or of Asian origin, who has the luxury of both time and money "(Calica, 2010). As Amy Lau, she enjoys wearing branded and fashionable wardrobe. She mingles to the species called tai tai who always wear their "over-the-top style and even more ostentatiously priced clothes, shoes and bags" (Calica, p 101). Her social masquerading appoints her to become a star tai tai. She modelled the one million dollars couture bridal gown of Bibi Bu designer which to be auctioned to the highest bidder who could fetch at least four million dollars for Jasmin Wong Foundation during the Annual Charity Catwalk Gala. But at the end of the story, her true identity was divulged.

"I know you're not who you claim to be, and if you don't reveal your true identity to me, then you leave me no choice but find out and tell everyone, said Bijou, an elderly socialite" (Calica, p. 166).

The discovery of Amanda's true identity as undercover agent not a tai tai unearthed that real status of Jasmin Wong and her husband, Tony. This is the positive result of Amanda's masquerade. Chowaniec, Phillips & Rytönen (2008), quoted Irigaray that masquerade has to be understood as what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in man's desire, but at the price of renouncing their own. When Agent Brian debriefed Amanda after her first undercover mission as tai tai,

he challenged her to fight back with all her eyes and heart her present identity and abandon her old self - loner, anti-social and coward.

Maddie's social masquerading happens when she tracks down her father in Las Vegas. She and her friends explore the Sin city. Her friends enjoy the casino, clubs and shows but she was casing the area to gather the information about her father. They went to Victoria Club. This is the place where her father, Larry a.k.a Lola works as dancer. While her friends were having a good time with the music and shows, Maddie slinked out and skittered down the hall to investigate and find something to give her the clue about her father who work with the mob. She went to the office of the owner, Monaldo to check some files and found one piece of paper that looked like a computer printout of an eBay auction in the trash can. She was "trying to figure out why Monaldo would be in the market for a pair of pink pumps, when she heard the sound of footsteps outside the door" (Halliday p.50).

"What in the hell are you doing? Monaldo. Who the fuck are you. I'm, with the L.A. Informer. A reporter. Yep, that's me, reporter gal. Like Mary Tyler Moore. Well, I mean, some women can pull it off, but I'm more of a Sarah Jessica Parker-style girl. You know all about the shoes? Which is why I'm doing a story on. Shoes! Footwear fashions for transvestites. It is such an overlooked market, don't you think?" (Halliday, p52).

Maddie's masquerade as reporter at that moment ended up when Ramirez a.k.a Bruno held her out from the club. She was surprised when she learned that her dating boyfriend for past six weeks was working with the Monaldo. Like her, Ramirez also investigates Victoria club as front of Monaldo's illegal business where in Maddie's father is involved. This explains that masquerade here refers to Maddie's real intention of gathering evidence to free her father from trouble. She engaged in clandestine operation by herself alone. This linked to a post-feminist masquerade as popularized by McRobbie According to McRobbie (2009), the post-feminist masquerade defines as "a style that may be adopted by women to help them navigate the terrain of hegemonic masculinity without jeopardizing their sexual identity' aiding their navigation of undesirable subject positions". Maddie possessed the male character of spying the mob in Las Vegas.

4.1.4. Amateur female sleuth

The creation of fictional female sleuth started in the nineteenth century. These women detectives "are independent, confident, clever women who variously use knowledge

and observation of domestic environments and human behavior, female intuition, and their capacity for going unnoticed or being underestimated in solving crimes" (Gavin, 2010). These characteristics of lady detectives are not only present in crime fiction genre but also in the chick lit genre. The female protagonists Amanda Tay and Maddie Springer portrayed amateur female sleuths. Amanda was hired by Agent Bryan to be an undercover operative to investigate the missing tai tai Jasmin Wong while Maddie went to Las Vegas to investigate what happened to her father, Larry. Both the female protagonists possessed skills in detecting and solving cases and mysteries. The passages below described the ideal female sleuth for Amanda as "excellent fighter, independent, fearless, and had naturally inquisitive mind and blessed with an intuition as sharp as razor blades" as described by Agent Brian (Calica, p45).

"Good morning! In today's headlines, famous socialite Jasmine Wong was reported missing this morning at around 2:30 am. The wife of late tycoon Tony Wong was on board the yacht M/Y Jouvence, as one of the guests of eminent aesthetic doctor, Dr CK Khoo. "So who do you think did it?" asked Lucille. "the husband, definitely," Diana offered. "It can't be," said Amanda pensively. "they called her a widow. He's already dead. Someone else did it. Daina and Lucille turned to Amanda, "so super sleuth, do you think it was suicide, or was she murdered?" (Calica,p25).

Amanda's personality is not far from Maddie Springer's character. Although Maddie is not a law enforcer, she performs undercover work/investigation by herself. She is known as amateur sleuth in Los Angeles as reporter Felix Dunn made her a headline in the newspaper that "Local Sleuth Snoops into Mysterious Drag Death ! with the story about last summer mishaps and the popped boob, then went on to say that Maddie was investigating another suspicious death, this time involving an alleged suicide off a Vegas nightclub roof. Beside the story they printed two pictures, Maddie outside the nightclub and a second of Dana and her at Maurice's condo" (Halliday, p84). Her stalker reporter, knows Maddie for many years in solving cases and follow her in Las Vegas to get the biggest scoop needed in his career. In fact, his judgement, about Maddie's intention on going to Las Vegas is true. Maddie is gifted of keen observation of things which is one of the characteristics of a detective. The passage below supports this claim. Maddie was arrested of murder because of the evidence of her latent prints and master card found in the crime scene.

"I just went to the house to talk to Larry. Only he wasn't there so I thought I'd have a little look around, so I tried to get in the back door, but picking a

lock with a credit card is a lot harder than it looks on TV, and it broke. So, I tried the side door and that one was open, so I went in and looked around. That's how my prints got there. It wasn't me, I said again for good measure. They're framing Larry; don't you see? Who's framing him, Maddie? Monaldo and Unibrow!"(Halliday,p 105).

Amanda's and Maddie's personality traits discussed earlier show qualities of amateur sleuths. According to Morgan (2017), a female detective has to be witty and clever, using her brilliance to sort all kinds of clues and suspects in a case, using her sharp intellect to consider all possible solutions. Furthermore, she added that female sleuth possesses special skills such as being rational, courageous, independent and daring; has that power of intuition, inquisitive and sneaky; lastly with inborn sense of justice and fairness.

4.2. Girl power in the chick lit novels

Girl power in the context of popular culture are often discussed by scholars as "images to empower girls, either by providing them with models on how to enact empowered femininity or by providing them with positive representations that make them feel good about themselves as girls" (Sibielski, 2010). Chick lit as one of the popular genre, portrays female protagonists that possess this girl power. The power "to balance the professional and personal satisfaction (Bentock, 2006) is the most common theme in chick lit. In this paper, the researcher analyzed the girl power in Calica's *Undercover Tai Tai* and Halliday's *Killer in High Heels* into three aspects such as individual power, beauty power, and sexual attractiveness power.

4.2.1. Individual power

Individual power as aspect of girl power means "individual achievements through a combination of looks, work, and support" (Taft, 2004). The female protagonists, Amanda Tay and Maddie Springer have that individual power. Amanda achieved her power with the support of Agent Brian. From being a loner, invisible, and no identity to being a tai tai star in the elite society. Amanda's personality was greatly influenced by Amy Lau as what she pretended to be. She learned to face the reality, establish rapport to the people and discover her hidden power. The power that with in her, being tough, strong, sociable and independent woman. She discovered this individual power when Agent Brian "meandered into her personal territory as tactic intimidation

which he believed could only be the way to break through the fear and get to what lay deep within her core- a dormant reservoir of strength waiting to be tapped" (Calica, p136).

"Are you going to be woman enough to fight back, Agent A, or are you going to stay inside that safe little shell of yours where nothing and no one can ever touch you? I Want to Fight," she said. "Don't tell me," Agent B grunted. "Show me you mean it." Within that same breath, Amanda's legs deftly twisted from beneath Agent Brian's hold, flipping him over onto his back on the mat." (Calica, p134).

This is the scenario in the novels that transformed Amanda into a new person. She realized that being an undercover agent will help her uncover the real her- the strength, the grit, the rhythm, the sensuality and most especially the power to bounce back- that had been lurking underneath the withdrawn, introverted exterior that everyone else saw. She continued her journey as undercover operative bringing the individual power within her. In Gemma Halliday's *Killer in High Heels*, Maddie also possessed this individual power. But unlike Amanda, Maddie has this innate individual power. She has these attributes of being sleuth, independent, confident and decisive. Maddie lives independently at "second-story studio in Santa Monica, two blocks away from the beach" (Halliday, p74). She works to fund herself as a freelance L.A shoe designer. Her Spiderman flip-flops were the top-selling shoe at Payless last season" (Halliday, p74). One of the best attributes of Maddie is to solve problems in her own and asserts herself in many things even this will jeopardize her relationship with her mother or in any situations. This is her innate power that helps Maddie overcome all the odds in life she encountered. Despite of her difficulties and hardship in finding and helping her dad, Maddie looks the positive side of life. The passages below support the claim that linked to this innate individual power she had.

"In the past twenty-four hours I'd been to a biker bar, a drag funeral, and a prison. I'd been lied to, photographed, and arrested. I'd had a stalker follow me, my wig-wearing dad run from me, and both the mafia and the LVMPD threaten me. And now Mom and Mrs. Rosenblatt were on a plane to Vegas. I dropped my head into my hands, wondering what else this day could possibly throw at me" (Halliday, p 1).

The individual power as aspect of girl power portrayed by the female protagonists only shows that achievement lies on the shoulder of each individual. According to

Taft (2004) that individual power encourages girls to try new things and believe in themselves to become potentially powerful people.

4.2.2. Beauty power

The concept of beauty has a long, complex and contradictory meanings and connotations. In Hakim book entitled *Erotic Capital: The Power of Attraction in the Boardroom and the Bedroom*, beauty is one of the “first components of erotic capital” (Beulaygue, 2012). Beulaygue (2012) quoted Webster and Driskell that beauty contributes to “social status” where the positive consequences of it are listed in their work as to “increase persuasiveness, increase ability and competence, influence over others, increase happiness, and success in the workplace”. In the chick lit novels, Amanda and Maddie possessed this kind of beauty power. Both female protagonists, show their physical attractiveness as they investigate the cases. Amanda shows her beauty power in many occasions. During the Beauty and the Boat cruise, Amanda was spotted by Dr Khoo-plastic surgeon-cum-aesthetic doctor as the rich and famous woman in society. Dr Khoo described “her refreshing face was one he had never seen-nor worked on- before. And the fact that his hands, scapel or syringe had never touched her was enough to intrigue him. He looked away, popped a breath mint into his mouth before leaning in to introduce himself” (Calica p.147). Another important event where Amanda used her beauty power was during The Annual Charity Catwalk Gala. As “she squinted from the glare of the spotlight with the runway dressed in the jewel-encrusted wedding gown, the cameras of photographers exploded like comets in the dark night sky. The crowd collectively gasped as Amada sashayed down the catwalk wearing BiBi Bus daiamond-festooned creation, with Alexis nestled in her arms” (Calica, 200).

The passages explain how Amanda captured the attention of people around her with beauty and charm. In the case of Maddie she possessed the beauty or “physical attractiveness that is closely linked to social attractiveness, social skills and social competence – the soft skills” (Hakim, 2013). During her investigation, Maddie encountered different personalities in the Las Vegas casino, clubs and residences. When Maddie went to Victoria club together with her friends, Dana and Marco, she uses these soft skills in getting information. *Madonna, the waiter welcomes them in Victoria club. Maddie asked if Lola is working tonight. But Madonna replied that the go-go number is only on Mondays and Fridays (Halliday p.49)*. Through her elicitation skill, she was able to identify the contacts of her father. She learned that the owner of the club is Monaldo, and Larry a.k.a Lola works as a go- go dancer with his friend Harriet and Bobbi.

Maddie's ability to charm people through her soft skills helped solve the case under investigation. It is clear in the discussion that beauty empowered women to achieve their goals. According to McRobbie (2009) beauty is synonymous with individual choice and girl power, by arguing that self-presentation is tied to neo-liberal consumerist and objectification practices masquerading as forms of empowerment.

4.2.3. Sexual attractiveness power

Sexual attractiveness is second element of erotic capital popularized by Hakim. According to Hakim (2010) sexual attractiveness is "about a sexy body, about the way someone moves, talks, and behaves., a way of being in the world, a characteristic of social interaction". These attributes possessed by the female protagonists, Amanda and Maddie. During the duration of training, Agent Brian keeps an eye to Amanda. He saw her vulnerability, her strength, her inner beauty and he couldn't help to like her that even in his dreams his sexual desire was very visible. He dreamt of gazing downward to Amanda. *"He knew that right at that moment, as he held her, it was a moment of weakness because he had always prided himself for being a man of great control-one who could quell his feelings. But having watched Amanda from that first day in copoeira class- he had seen her change into someone so strong yet fragile and so beautifully real. His heart beat wildly in his chest as he studied her face. The almond eyes, the soft pink lips, and he wanted so badly to kiss her."* (Calica, p138). The lines are clear indication of sexual attractiveness power of Amanda to the opposite sex, especially to a man, Agent Brian who vowed never to trust a woman again, after her girlfriend Chloe betrayed him. In the case of Maddie, despite of her stubbornness and frequent arguments with Detective Jack Ramirez, the latter can't help falling in love with her. In the duration of his undercover operative, Ramirez always find time to be with Maddie. His anger and passion are very visible every time Maddie is near. He wanted Maddie to go back to Los Angeles because of dangerous case they are involved with. And yet Maddie pursued in every scene of his investigation. He was surprised to see Maddie during the funeral of Hank, Larry's best friend. (Halliday, p93). He confronted Maddie angrily that she was supposed to be on her way back to Los Angeles, he grabbed Maddie by the arm and pulled her down the hill and into the back of Monaldo's Lincoln. Maddie started to reason out but she didn't finish it because as soon as he had the door shut behind them, Ramirez grabbed her by the shoulders and planted his lips on hers (Halliday, p93). Maddie shuddered from the impact and she felt the volcanic heat when she heard Ramirez that *"God, you look sexy in black, it's been six weeks. You'd look sexy in*

anything." He slid his hand up her shirt, his fingers closing around the clasp of my bra. But then Maddie, pushed him away, both hands flat against his chest. And shouted him that they were at funeral (Halliday, p.94).

The statements above, indicates how women sexual attractiveness turns on the male species. This only support the claim of Hakim (2010) "sexual attractiveness can also be about personality, style, and femininity". That which is often referred to as "sex appeal is a good way of describing sexual attractiveness in everyday life" (Beulayque, 2012). The sexual attractiveness power of the female protagonists helps them get the man they desire.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Chick lit is a subgenre of postfeminist fiction that highlighted the Girl Power. The portrayals of women in the waves of feminism swift into more empowered women in the era of post feminism. The female sleuth protagonists in chick lit novels represent various roles that depicted their ability to influence others using their femininity, toughness, social representation, independence, intelligence, and agency. They used their innate power, beauty and sexual attractiveness to achieve their goals in life personally and professionally. The representations of girl power in these chick lit novels gave space for women to celebrate their femininity and gain their power at the same time.

Author's Note

Juliet S. Trujillo is the faculty member of Carlos Hilado Memorial State College- Alijis Campus. This paper was not able to conceptualize without the help Dr. Andrea Soluta, whose expertise in the field of Literature gives the great improvement on the author's writing.

The analyses of the chick lit novels are only based on the in depth understanding of the author and the interpretation of these were anchored on the reviewed theory of literature.

If there are some questions and recommendations, the author can be contacted on her email address julietstrujillo@gmail.com or delarosajuliet76@yahoo.com.

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