

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

**JULIET SAMILLANO-TRUJILLO**

Carlos Hilado Memorial State College- Alijis Campus

Email: [julietstrujillo@gmail.com](mailto:julietstrujillo@gmail.com)

Tel: +9289796750

---

### *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 analyzed 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 this chick lit novels give space for women to celebrate their femininity and gain their power at the same time.*

**Keywords:** Chick lit, Female sleuth, Girl power, Postfeminist.

---

### **Introduction**

Women today always portray various roles in the media. They represent different characters, positions and responsibilities. This representation of women can be traced back from the period of feminism. Bieniek (2015) cited that "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, focus on equality and addressing violence against women; 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 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; women of today urge to seek their individualism (Prafitra, 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), post feminism is a contemporary feminism that empowers women to become independent, have individual choice and as well as to enjoy pleasure, fashion, hybridism, wit, 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 innate 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. As cited by Hains (2005), the girl power are "(1) the capacity to inspire others and the external environment through individuality, intellect, and action; and (2) having the mental and physical attributes that typically claims

by males. 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, a woman sleuth in P.D. James’ *The Private Patient*, was ambitious to become a successful career woman in the police force (Heilbrun, 2002). Another example a female detective protagonist in the *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 are 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 the two 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 pretends 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. She is a L.A. shoe designer who was abandoned by her father. Larry ran off to Las Vegas with a showgirl named Lola. Maddie went to Las Vegas when the voice of her father left an anxious plea for help and ending in a loud bang on her answering machine (Halliday, 2007).

Female readers will learn to love these stories because they are humorous and they talk about the 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). This chick lit novels create the impression to the readers on how the ordinary girls become perfect girl to get power in society.

## Literature Review

The concept of Girl Power more than a usual phrase that resonates among the young generation of girls and women of today. Girl Power is the most popular and pervasive term introduced by the “Spice Girls during 1990’s and claims as their slogan” (Hains, 2014) that “endorse the value of female friendships, even over and above the pressure to get boyfriends” (Griffin, 2004). According to Hains (2014), girl power claims the “mental toughness and physical strength into which males have been socialized”. It rejects the ideas that “feminism is necessarily anti-feminine and anti-popular and that femininity is always sexist and oppressive by reclaiming elements of femininity and girlishness in fashion and style” (Genz and Brabon, 2009). The discourse of Girl Power clearly rearticulates the equality between girls and boys or women and men. According to Martinescu (2016), the context of postfeminist is “complex and ambiguous in portraying the femaleness, femininity, and feminism”. The complexity in the context of post feminism provides multiple opportunities for female identification such as in her professional career and personal relationship. This is the era of post feminism where women of today “fight for what is vital to them, their liberty to choose what kind of life they want, either they are getting married and have a family or pursuing their chosen career” (Arnoddsdóttir, 2012). Isbister (2013) added that post feminism provides an avenue in “exploring the expressions of women’s experience struggle on gendered issues without equating it in political identification as a feminist”. Taft (2004) cited the argument of post feminism that “women’s undertakings are acceptable, and there is no need for feminism”. The assertion of feminism on the idea that women should be contented and satisfied with the present social status contradicts to the context of postfeminist discourses. According to Gill (2007), postfeminist discourse emphasizes that woman of today, “being empowered, having the individual choice make the big difference and paradigm swift upon consumerism”. Thus, in this paper, the concept of girl power and its aspect in the context of post-feminist help the researcher in analyzing the representation of female protagonists in chick lit novels. According to Genz and Brabon (2009) “chick lit focuses on the female kind of fiction which is a commercially successful literary phenomenon that captures the issues of Girl Power. Chick lit clearly depicts post feminism ideas about “empowered females as dominant characteristics of its protagonists’ pursuits on exploring the ebbs

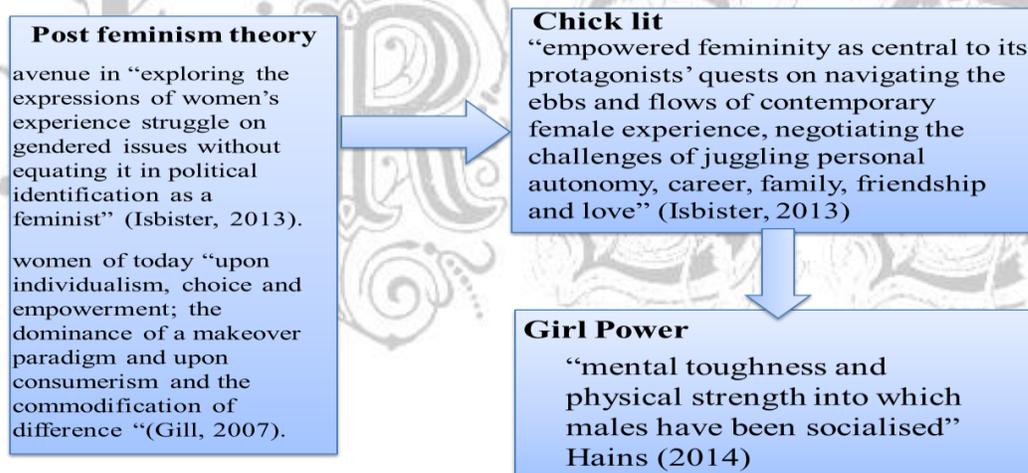
and flows of modern female experience, negotiating the trials of manipulating personal independence, career, family, friendship and love” (Isbister, 2013). Mazza (2006) quoted Pamela Caughie that Chick lit as postfeminist fiction, the characters are perceived to have “self-confident, self-governed, even courageous in taking accountability for who and what they acting out based on the encoded gender norms of our society”. It is in this premise that this paper is undertaken. The concept of Girl Power that is under the umbrella of post feminism theory is used to analyze representation of female sleuths and aspects of girl power in Maya Calica’s *Undercover TaiTai* and Gemma Halliday’s *Killer in High Heels* chick lit novels.

## Research Questions

The main purpose of this paper is to analyze the 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 purposes to address the succeeding queries: (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?

## Theoretical Framework

This paper used the post feminism theory in exploring the women of today in chick lit novels of Maya Calica and Gemma Halliday as well as uncovering the kind of power portrayed by the female characters. The Figure below depicts the framework of the study.



## Analysis and Discussion

### 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 the chick lit genre gained the rank of a feminist blockbuster as fiction about a “new woman’s novel written by women for the innovative, the modern reader and the female audience of our postfeminist culture” (Ferriss & Young, 2006). This chick lit 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 are 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 the postfeminist point of view.

### **Celebrating Femininity**

The discursive theme of celebrating femininity is “regaining feminine labels, dealing with ironies that underlie the edifice of postfeminist feminine characteristics and the presentation of the desiring feminine issue” (Lazar, 2009). In Maya Calica’s *Undercover TaiTai*, Amanda Tay shows her femininity in wearing the 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.*

This is similar to 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. *“Maddie wore a sparkly pink wrap top with little silver sequins paired with jeans, and with a brand new, Ferragamo pumps (Halliday, p.5).*

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 support the claim Naugle (2008) chick lit authors depend on what is fashionable (shoes, designers, drinks, and city nightlife hotspots) to feature their story and make their characters’ assets that suit to the 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 spends two hours of hair and makeup” (Calica, p98) before attending The Tea Chalet; Maddie Springer always wears 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).*

According to Lazar (2009) , “femininity as to the domineering upon women, is the contrast view to the idea of the celebrating femininity as to regains and celebrates 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 feminine things that includes wearing fashionable wardrobes, and seeing make up as an important need in their professional and personal lives.

### **Tough Women**

Images of tough women can be found anywhere especially in popular media such as in films, TV-series, graphic books, digital games and fiction. According to Brown (2011) portrayals of tough women/ girls can be seen in” children’s animated programming such as “The Power Puff Girls, 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 being strong, tough, and clever women 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 to 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. Agent was too distracted to evade her attack and he 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. Like in "contemporary Western society the action heroine, Angelina Jolie in Tomb Raider (2003 and 2005) shooting, slicing, and kicking their way" (Brown, 2011, p. 5), she shows toughness just to survive in this male-dominated sphere.

In Halliday's *Killer the High Heels* novel, Maddie Springer showed her toughness in decision making. She and her friends went to Vegas despite of her mother's unwillingness and Ramirez' opposition to see her father. The passage below shows her firmness in seeing and helping her father Larry. Ramirez stood up, while shaking his head and strongly said No! But Maddie said, "I am sorry; did you just say you forbid me from going to Vegas? 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".

The tough women representation of two female protagonists supports the claim of Inness (2004) that "in popular culture, especially in chick lit, tough women are evident. Furthermore, 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.

### Social Masquerade

The representation of social masquerade of female protagonists in Calica and Halliday chick lit novels reveal the use of masquerade and cover their real identity as a mask in their status in society. Rende (2008) social masquerading definition refers to "hiding the physical and emotional self apart from the reality for the sake social class and status in attaining the goal". 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 wears 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 modeled 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 her true identity was divulged at the end.

*"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. Chowanec, Phillips & Rytönen (2008), quoted Irigaray that the context of masquerade is in the tacit of what women do in order to improve some element of desire, to participate in man's desire, but at the price of leaving 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 a coward.

Maddie's social masquerading happens when she tracks down her father in Las Vegas. She and her friends explore the Sin city. They went to Victoria Club. This is the place where her father, Larry a.k.a Lola works as a dancer. While her friends were having a good time with 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”*(Halliday, p52).

Maddie’s masquerade as a 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 the 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 masquerade in post-feminist point of view refers to “a way that women may adopt to aid them to explore the territory of hegemonic masculinity without risking their sexual identity”.

### **Amateur Female Sleuth**

The creation of fictional female sleuth started during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The female detectives described as “independent, confident, and smart women. They have knowledge and keen observation of internal situations and human behavior in solving crimes” (Gavin, 2010). These characteristics of lady detectives are not only present in the crime fiction as a genre but also in the chick lit. The female protagonists Amanda Tay and Maddie Springer portrayed amateur female sleuths. Agent Bryan hired Amanda 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. 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. “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! In the story, last summer mishaps and the popped boob, then went on to say that Maddie was investigating another suspicious death, this time involving 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). Maddie is gifted of keen observation of things which is one of the characteristics of a detective. The statements above support passages below.

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. He wasn’t there, so I thought I’d have a little look around. 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. They’re framing Larry; don’t you see? Who’s framing him, Maddie? Monaldo and Unibrow!”* (Halliday,p 105).

Amanda 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.

## Girl Power in the Chick Lit Novels

Girl power in the context of popular culture is often discussed by scholars as "allowing girls to be empowered through the models on how to enact empowered femininity or by providing them with helpful depictions that make them realize what is the best about themselves as girls" (Sibielski, 2010). Chick lit as a 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.

### Individual Power

Individual power as the 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. The personality of Amy Lau as portrayed by Amanda greatly influences Amanda's personality. She learned to face the reality, establish rapport to the people and discover her hidden power. The power within her such as being a tough, strong, sociable and independent woman was uncovered. 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- 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. Maddie, unlike Amanda has this innate individual power. She has these attributes of being sleuth, independent, confident and decisive. Maddie lives independently at her "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 the top-selling shoe at Payless last season where Spiderman flip-flops" (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. 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 had a stalker follow me, my wig-wearing dad run from me, and both the mafia and the LVMPD threaten me.* (Halliday, p 1).

The individual power as the 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.

### **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). Beulayque (2012) quoted Webster and Driskell that beauty contributes to “social status” where the helpful values 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 various occasions. Amanda was spotted by Dr Khoo- aesthetic doctor of the rich and famous woman in society during Beauty and the Boat cruise, 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).

The passage explains 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 with 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.

### **Sexual Attractiveness Power**

Sexual attractiveness is the second element of erotic capital popularized by Hakim. According to Hakim (2010) sexual attractiveness refers to “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. “*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 due to painful experience. 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 finds 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 the dangerous case they are involved with but Maddie pursued in every scene of his investigation. He was surprised to see Maddie during the funeral of Larry’s best friend, Hank, (Halliday, p93). He confronted Maddie angrily that she was supposed to be on her way back to Los Angeles. He grabbed Maddie in 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. Maddie, pushed him away, both hands flat against his chest. And shouted him that they were at the funeral (Halliday, p.94).

The statements above, indicates how women sexual attractiveness turns on the male species. These only support the claim of Hakim (2010) "sexual attractiveness can also be about personality, style, and femininity" and 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.

## Conclusion

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 the 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 chick lit novels gave space for women to celebrate their femininity and gain their power at the same time.

## References

- Aapola, S., & Gonick, M. &. (2004). *Young Femininity: Girlhood, Power and Social Change*. Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Adriaens, Fien. 2009. *Post-Feminism in Popular Culture: A Potential for Critical Resistance?* "Politics and Culture 4 (November): online. <http://politicsandculture.org/2009/11/09/post-feminism-in-popular-culture-a-potential-for-critical-resistance/>
- Arnoddsdóttir, G. E. (2012). *The Girl Instinct. A Post Feminist Look at the Relationship Between Foil and Hero in the Plum Novels* by Janet Evanovich. <http://hdl.handle.net/1946/11462>, 5.
- Bentock, S. (2006). *Afterword: The New Woman's Fiction*. In S. F. Young, *Chick Lit (The New Woman's Fiction)* (pp. 253-254). Madison, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Beulaygue, I.-C. (2012). *Flirting With Erotic Capital: Erotic Capital and Labor Market Earnings Among Women*. [http://scholarly repository.miami.edu/oa\\_theses](http://scholarly.repository.miami.edu/oa_theses), 9.
- Bieniek, Adrienne Trier (2015). *Feminist Theory and Pop Culture Sense Publishers, 3001 AW Rotterdam*, The Netherlands retrieved from <https://www.sensepublishers.com/>
- Brooks, A. (1997). *Post feminisms: Feminism, Cultural Theory and Cultural Forms*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Brown, Jeffrey.A. (2011). *Dangerous Curves: Action heroines, Gender, Fetishism, and Popular Culture*. University Press of Mississippi.
- Calica, M. (2010). *Undercover Tai Tai*. Pasig City, Philippines: Anvil Publishing Inc.
- Chen, E. Y. 2010. *Neoliberal Self-Governance and Popular Postfeminism in Contemporary Anglo-American Chick Lit*. Retrieved on April 4, 2017. Available: <http://www.concentric-literature.ur.tw/issues>.
- Chowaniec, U. &. (2008). *Masquerade and Femininity*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing , 2-3.
- Editorial Reviews (2006). Barnes & Noble. retrieved from [barnesandnoble.com:](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/)  
<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/killer-in-high-heels-gemma-halliday/1100125226>
- Ferriss, S. & Young, A. (2006). *Chick Lit (The New Women Fiction)*. New York & London : Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

- Gates, P. (2011). *Detecting Women (Gender and Hollywood Detective Film)*. Albany, NY, United States: State University of New York Press.
- Gavin, A. E. (2010). *Feminist Crime Fiction and Female Sleuths*. In C. J. HORSLEY, *A Companion for Crime Fiction* (p. 256). United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Genz, S., and B. A. Brabon. 2009. *Postfeminism Cultural Texts and Theories*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gill, Rosalind (2007) Postfeminist media culture: elements of a sensibility. *European journal of cultural studies*, 10 (2). pp. 147-166. DOI: 10.1177/1367549407075898
- Griffin, C. (2004). Good Girls, Bad Girls:Anglocentrism and Diversity in the Constitution of Contemporary Girlhood. In A. Harris, *All about the Girl (Culture, Power, and Identity)* (pp. 29-35). New York and London: Routledge.
- Goodread (April 5, 2017). *Undercover Tai Tai*. retrieved from <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/7709094-undercover-tai-tai>
- Hains, R. (2009). Power Feminism, Mediated: Girl Power and the Commercial Politics of Change. *Women's Studies in Communication* Volume 32, Number 1, 89-95.
- Hains, R. (September 10, 2014). *ShowStudio*. retrieved from [http://showstudio.com/project/girly/essay\\_girl\\_power](http://showstudio.com/project/girly/essay_girl_power)
- Hakim, C. (March 4, 2010). *Have you got erotic capital? Prospect Magazine* retrieved from: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/have-you-got-erotic-capital#>
- Hakim, C. (2013). *Beauty, intelligence and height: the black holes of sociology*. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1027.6586&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, 5.
- Hains, R. 2005. "The Problematics of Reclaiming the Girlish: The Powerpuff Girls and Girl Power". *Journal Femspec Perkins Library*, Vol. 5, Issue 2, May 2005, pp. 1-39. Ohio: Cleveland State University Press.
- Halliday, G. (2007). *Killer in High Heels*. New York: Dorchester Publishing Co., Inc.
- Harzewski, Stephanie, (2006). "The new novel of manners: Chick lit and postfeminist sexual politics" Dissertations available from ProQuest. AAI3225468. <http://repository.upenn.edu/dissertations/AAI3225468>
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. (2002) "The New Female Detective," *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism*: Vol. 14: Iss. 2, Article 18. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.law.yale.edu/yjlf/vol14/iss2/18>
- Inness, S.A. (2004). *Introduction: "Boxing Gloves and Bustiers": New Images of Tough Women*. In S.A. Inness (Ed.), *Action Chicks* (pp. 1-17). New York: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
- Isbister, G. C. (October 18, 2013). *Working Paper on the Web*.retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/4794460/Chick\\_lit\\_A\\_postfeminist\\_fairy\\_tale](http://www.academia.edu/4794460/Chick_lit_A_postfeminist_fairy_tale)
- Lazar, M.M. 2009. *Postfeminist Femininity and Culture of Post-Critique* Retrieved on May 3rd, 2013.Available:[http://www.sagepub.com/upmdata/40463\\_11a.pdf](http://www.sagepub.com/upmdata/40463_11a.pdf).
- Martinescu, A. (2016). *Postfeminist Fiction In Chick Lit Novels*. degruyter DOI: 10.1515/genst -2016-0008, 119-122.
- Mazza, C. (2006). *Who's Laughing Now? A Short History of Chick Lit and the Perversion of a Genre*. In S. F. Young, *Chick Lit (The New Women Fiction)* (pp. 17-19). Madison ,New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- McRobbie, Angela. 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change*. London: Sage
- Morgan, R. (april 4, 2017). *Female Detective - Personality Traits of Female*. retrieved from [WritersReign.co.uk](http://writersreign.co.uk): <http://writersreign.co.uk/FemaleDetective.pdf>
- Naugle, B. N. (2008). *Nobody Does It Better:How Cecily Von Ziegesar's Controversial Novel Series "Gossip Girl"*. [https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws\\_etd/document/get/bgsu1205333187/inline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/bgsu1205333187/inline), 13.
- Prafitra, A. R. (2013). *An Analysis On Andrea Sachs' Girl Power Aspects And Women's Dis/Empowerment In Weisberger's Chick Lit The Devil Wears Prada*. <http://journal.student.uny.ac.id/jurnal/terbaru/23/10/2013/10>, 4-8.
- Rende, N. (2008). *Bridget Jones, Prince Charming, and Happily Ever Afters:Chick Lit as an Extension of the Fairy Tale in a Postfeminist*. <http://hdl.handle.net/2142/5439>, 7.
- Rico, A. C. (2014). *The Female Detective through Popular Culture: Kate Beckett in Castle*. <https://repositori.udl.cat/bitstream/handle/10459.1/48048/aca%C3%B1adasr.pdf>, 4-10.

- Sibielski, R. (2010). *What Are Little (Empowered) Girls Made Of? The Discourse Of Girl Power In Contemporary U.S. Popular Culture*.  
[https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws\\_etd/document/get/bgsu1277091634/inline](https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/bgsu1277091634/inline), 171-173.
- Taft, J. (2004). Girl Power Politics: Pop-Culture Barriers and Organizational Resistance. In A. HARRIS, *All About the Girl (Culture, Power and Identity)* (pp. 69-73). New York & London: Routledge.

