

**THE IMPACT OF CONSUMERISM IN “CONSUMER BY CELINE CHARCOAL, CONSUMER, MERELY ANOTHER GOD BY ROSS DIX PEEK, AND A SAD TALE OF CONSUMERISM BY MICHAEL SHEPHERD**

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**Abstrak**

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah (1) menganalisa sejauh mana ketiga puisi ini merefleksikan dampak dari consumerisme, (2) menunjukkan kontribusi elemen puisi (speker, tone, metafora) dalam mengungkap dampak consumerisme dala puisi ini. Data penelitian ini adalah teks tertulis yang dikutip dari ketiga puisi tersebut. Kutipan teks tersebut kemudian diinterpretasi dan dianalisa berdasarkan teori budaya consumer yang dikemukakan oleh Wilkie dan teori prilaku dari budaya consumer yang dirumuskan oleh Scihffman dan Kanuk . Hasil analisa menunjukkan bahwa budaya consumerisme tersebut memberikan dampak terhadap kehidupan manusia. Dampak tersebut yaitu mengubah pola pikir manusia dan mengubah gaya hidup manusia.

Key words: Konsumerisme, consumptive, budaya consumer.

**A. Introduction.**

Consumerism is the equating of personal happiness with the purchasing of material possessions and consumption. Specifically, it is the tendency of people to identify strongly with products or services they consume, especially those with commercial brand names and obvious status-enhancing appeal. It is beyond the necessities of life with things that are an important part of human needs. According to Rachel Dwyer (2007), consumerism is the belief that personal wellbeing and happiness depends to a very large extent on the level of personal consumption, particularly on the purchase of material goods. The consumerism itself, does not only gives an impact on the development of culture, but it is also brings an impact toward human mind and life style.

Actually, the consumerism causes some impact on people's lives and their communities, for those who follow that life style. However, the impact is not obvious around us like other phenomena. The impact of consumerism, it more attacking human mind. As a result, human may not understand the changes that occur in their life. It happened, because of this life style does not lead to the

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use of an object, but more emphasis on the human desire to have something without thinking about the usability and the purpose using it.

The consumerism brings the people become consumptive. It is known as consumer culture. The only thing that consumer culture known is always consume many things as a part of the activity of their life.

Moreover, the consumption becomes a central activity for the consumer culture. The consumption leads them changes their attitude and behavior. As Benson (2000) stated that:

Consumption, the buying of consumer products, has become central to the meaning full practice of our everyday life. People make their consumption choices based not only on a product's utility value, but from the personal symbolic meanings they invest in objects.

The impact of the consumerism does not only occur because of the attitude of the human that influenced easily, but also because of many aspect. The aspects are many things that exist around human life such as advertisement in magazine, television, and supermarket.

In real life, the consumerism occur because of the people cannot resist many temptation that coming to mind. According to Wisalo (1999) consumerism occurs because of human's insecurity in their hearts and minds. It means that being a consumer in the way for people to gain their comfort and save. People "under the influence of consumerism" never feel completely satisfied because owning something cannot help one meet the security of heart and mind, the deeper needs of humanity.

In daily life, the impact of consumerism can be found in two aspects. The first aspect is psychological. It means that the consumerism has the relation to the people. The select or buy things and use or dispose products and service, so that they can satisfy their needs of consumption. The second impact can be seen in economy aspect. The consumerism exists on economy world. Business tries to control the development of their business by forcing consumer to be consumptive. Nowadays, consumerism can be found in a new sense of fashion and taste, development of infrastructures, organizations, the rise of shopping, advertising, and marketing.

The case above is also reflected in literary works. The three poems, Consumer by Celine Charcoal, Consumerism, Merely Another God by Ross Dix-Peek, and A sad tale of consumerism by Michael Shepherd depicts the impacts of consumerism that attacking human mind and it also changes human life style.

The impacts could be understood in two ways. The first impact is changing human mind. It refers to the human who never think about the usability and the functionality of something that they used and bought. The second impact is changing human life style. It means that human become addicted on product, but they do not now the purpose of using it.

In this study, the impact of consumerism can be seen by the changes of human life. The human ability refers to the ability of human to think about the

usability and the functionality of something that they used and bought. This situation leads the human become a consumer culture. According to Yiannis Gabriel and Tim Lang (1995) consumer culture is a social arrangement in which the buying and selling of goods and services is not only a predominant activity of everyday life but also an important arbiter of social organization, significance, and meaning. It is emphasizing that as a consumer, consuming is not only as way to get their happiness and satisfy. In other word, consuming become a important part of human act which done every time and give other meaning to their life.

This analysis is intended to disclose the issue of the impact of consumerism in three poems. The poems are Consumer, Consumerism, Merely Another God, and A sad tale of consumerism. This study is also going to investigate to what extend the elements of poetry such as speaker, tone, and metaphor give contribution in disclosing the causes of the impact of consumerism.

She was born in South Africa, has lived in New York since 1963; holder of prestigious literary awards, including of African Prize for Literature (1999). A noted anthologist, translator and educator as well as a poet and novelis Writer of poetry, short fiction, articles, reviews of literature and art; Founding member and past chairperson of the African Association of Writers in English

Ross Dix-Peek was born in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe), in July 1970 and subsequently grew up and was educated in South Africa, matriculating at the Hill College in Port Elizabeth. A fifth-generation Southern African (of British and Dutch descent), he now resides in Swords, Dublin, Ireland. He came late to poetry and his other interests include sport, history and military history, the English language and writing. He nominate for National Magazine Award winner for his work in 1997.

Michael Shepherd was born in New York City in 1963 and grew up in the Bronx. He interested in English Literature and had a some jobs; bookshop assistant; art journalist; book reviewer; small book on Barbara Hepworth, 1984 art critic for national newspapers and magazines 20 years. He earned a BA from Bennington College and studied at Brown University and the Iowa Writers' Workshop. His first collection, *Some Are Drowning* (1994), won the Associated Writing Program's Award in Poetry; his fourth, *Otherhood* (2003), was a finalist for the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize; and his last book, *Fata Morgana* (2007), won a Silver Medal in the Florida Book Awards. Shepherd's work is known for its elegance, beauty, and critical argument.

The three poems, Consumer, Consumerism, Merely Another God, and A sad tale of consumerism depicts the impact of consumerism in human life. According to S.E. Smith (2003) consumerism refers to a way of life in which people place a high value on material possessions, and in which people tend to consume more than they need. This concept gives impacts toward human life. The impacts are changing human mind and human life style.

The first impact is changing human mind. It means that consumerism cause a people became addicted on anything. Human do not think about the

usability and the functionality of something that they used and bought. This impact can be found in the first and second poem. In the first poem, it describes a human who become addicted on products without knowing the purpose. In the second poem, it describes a human who have been affected because of the insecurity of human heart and mind.

The second impact of consumerism is changing the human life style. It leads to a pattern of life that should be developed because the human mind is being changed due to the influence of the product. It emphasizes on the loss of the human ability in choosing the right way for determining the real way of their life. The last poem described the loss of the ability of human to choose the life that is affected by consumerism.

There are some studies that have given contribution and inspiration in analyzing this poems through the impact of consumerism issue.

The first analysis is written by *Subhashini Kaul* entitled *Consumerism and Mindless Consumption Sustaining in "the New Age" Urban Indian's Identity*. This study analyzes the Abhishek 's novel "the New Age" (2007). This article analyzes the impact of consumerism toward urban Indian society. In this analysis, Kaul focused on revaling the novel as a symbol of Urban Indian society that joined in the life of consumerism. The impact can be seen in two points. The first point is the consumerism leads the society to the "Individual Self". In her article, she explains the "Individual Self" refers to the goal of the society. It means that the standart of life is based on the act of society to bough much product in their life. The second point is The consumerim leads the society to "the Erosian of identity. She stated that the erosian of identity refers to the proces creating the new identity. The new identity means to the new culture that they must use in their life as a standart of post modren development.

The other study that gives contribution to this study is written by Ian Woodward (2011) in *Journal of Consumer Culture* November 2011 vol. 11 " *Toward an object-relatios theory of consumerism; The aesthetics of desire and the unfolding materiality of social life*". This journal shows other impact that coming to the society caused by consumerism. The consumerism gives an impact human pyshyclogy,especially to the society. The first impact is gives a high desire in order to get their goal. The impact focuses on the process of increasing the society' s desire in a way to consuming the products. The second impact shows the addiction of society as a consumer society. The development of consumerism, it is accompaniying by the product of consumerism. The product known as food, health, fashion, and technology. It also leads the society comes to the gate of materialism.

Wilkie (1994) stated that cosumer culture defined as the mental, emotional, and physycal activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, disposing of product and service to satisfy their needs and their desire. In this case, the impact of consumerism leads the society as consumer in development of consumerism.

The other point that supported the development of consumerism is the behavior of the consumer culture. Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) argued that the behavior that consumers display in searching for, purchasing, using, evaluating,

and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs. It leads the people that become consumer culture addiction on product. In fact, they cannot find other way to get their satisfaction except addicting on products.

### **B. Methodology.**

This analysis is supported by text-based interpretation which examines the interrelation between elements of poetry. The elements of poetry are speaker, tone and methapor. These elements are inseparable since they support each other. This analysis is going to reveal the issue of impacts of consumerism. These elements are analyzed based on the concept of consumer culture by Wilkie, and the behavior of consumer culture by Schiffman and Kanuk.

### **C. Analysis.**

The impact of consumerism can be found in two points. The first is the consumerism leads the society changes their mind, and the second is changing the human life style.

#### **A Consumer by Celine Carchoal**

The poem is talking about the impact of consumerism in human life. The speaker on this poem is a representative of people that use a consumerism as part of his live. The speaker shows his awareness that was trapped in consumerism. It can be seen in this quotation;

I consume  
all I got  
preciously, with my own hands,  
can consume,  
all that's not  
somebody else's purchased  
self,

The quotation above shows that how the speaker show of his awareness toward the consumerism which become a part of his life. The awareness of the speaker teach us how the work of consumerism could control the victim of consumerism have been influenced. The influencing of the consumerism is not announced the time when the consumerism begins. It means that the consumerism catches the mind of the victims very fast.

The increasing of consumerism leads the victim lost their own purpose of their life. It happened, because consumerism changes their mind with the purpose that never known. The purpose itself refers to the entire needed in human live, such as finding a job, get education, etc. The word "*I consume all I got preciously with my own hands*" refers to the false consciousness of the speaker. The false consciousness means the time when the speaker act to consume. When the speaker doing his act, at the same time the speaker would never realize the purpose for what he has done. It happened because of the consumerism have changed the victims mind.

For the victim of consumerism, everything that they know is just consuming anything. The next reason, the word "*preciously*" emphasize the product that they consume, it bring a happiness to them. It means that their

happiness will come to their life when they get a thing. It also related to the consumerism definition, because the human happiness is applied when they using and got something that gives a high prestige.

Another point that supported the change of human mind is the consumerism leads the victim become a great competitor on their society. It means that consuming become a way to show they effort to catch a high places in their community. The word "*can consume, all that's not somebody purchased self*" means the act of consuming is give another satisfying to the victim of the consumerism. The act of consuming is also shows the great effort of the victim to get a high places in their community. As result, the strong idea of the victim to get a high status in their community leads them to be consumptive. Extremely, the strong desire of consumption leads them to the lost of their natural ability. The ability means to the capability of human to think the functionality and the usability of something.

Another impact is also found from the case above. The high consumption leads the victim to the gate of life style changing. The life style is the way of the victim of consumerism become consumptive in their life. That case makes them to get anything that they want without thinking the advantages of it.

The next point that supported the impact of consumerism is the consumerism brings the new life style the victim's life. The life style means the habit of the victim to consume any product to get their happiness and satisfy. It can be found in following quotation:

is what I consume,  
not me,  
but a good  
thing in itself

The quotation above shows the tone of the speaker toward the consumerism. The speaker shows his sadness in his life. The sadness means to the situation of his life that cannot past that life. He realize that everything that he done cannot give a satisfying in facing his life. It happened because everything that he has done just to follow his desire. That desire do not coming from his heart, but the thing that he always buys, purchased, and using are the way to get his satisfy. In other word, their satisfying is on product that they get.

#### **Consumerism, merely another God by Ross Dix Peek**

This poetry is showing the impact of consumerism in human life. This impact can be seen from the speaker that tries to show how the consumerism changes in human life as an important part of human life. The speaker shows the consumerism become a high believe in live. In can be seen from following quotation;

We don't ask why, we just buy  
Seduced by yet another lie,  
Told we need,  
The subliminal bleed,  
Spend, spend, spend  
The madness knows no end,

This quotation shows the victim of consumerism do many things that support them as a consumer culture. The central point of this problem is the consumerism leads the victim lost their ability to think about something in their life. The lost of their ability is supported by the first line. The sentence "We don't ask why, we just buy" depicts the situation of victims mind. In their act, they do not think why they have to consume any product on their life. This case leads the victim of consumerism more consumptive. Their act is controlled by desire which is a part of human needed. The victim desire becomes a reason why the act of consuming increases very fast. It happened because the consumerism attacks and control the part of human life such as food, fashion and other aspect. As result, the victim lost their awareness for what they have done.

The sentences "*Seduced by yet another lie, told we need, the subliminal bleed*" emphasize the consumerism influenced the victims strongly. It means that the victim of consumerism lost their mind in determining the important part of their live. In other word, the consumerism has stayed as a high way of life that must be fulfilled. It also shows us that there is no reason for the victim of consumerism doing anything except being a high consumer in life.

The next sentence "Spend, spend, spend" explains the habit of the victim of consumerism. The victim habits means the daily act that always they always consume and spend anything is just to get their happiness in their life. Extremely, consumerism can be understood as a mind control in the victim's life. As a mind control, consumerism erase the basic mindset of people to fulfill other's needed. As result, it leads the victim to the one purpose in their life. The purpose is just being consumptive entire of their life. It is emphasize by the sentence "*The madness knows no end*". This sentence clearly evoke the habits of the victim of consumerism would not face the end of consuming. It happened because in the victim's mind is just to consume as strong as they could in way to get their happiness and satisfy.

The lost of human ability to think entire of life aspect also found in this stanza:

Consumerism, merely another God  
And still transfixed, onward we plod,  
Desire and possession,  
Money the obsession,  
Man's maniacal law,  
The fiscal flaw,

Based on this quotation, the speaker evoke the how the consumerism become a great sadness on his life. The speaker cannot reject a great believe that have been adopted by many people largely. It makes the victim's life controlled by their own desire. They cannot separate the real life or the other life that they followed. For their needed, they would not know which one that they have to fulfill or other needed that is become a second in their life.

The last point of impact consumerism is how the consumerism leads the victim to the lost of their sensitiveness in their life. It can be found in this stanza:

And meek, do we genuflect  
Before the invisible architect,  
Told what to wear, and what to eat  
What to buy, the ultimate deceit,  
And when in debt, spend they say

This line shows the victim of consumerism cannot use their sensitiveness in life. The lost of their sensitiveness means they would not realize that the changes that coming to the entire of life. The victim's life is a life that construct by the new believe, and it also changes into the basic idea that they followed. Finally, that problem becomes a habit for the victim, and they would never realize for the changes in their life.

#### **A sad tale of consumerism by Michael Shepherd**

This poetry is also supported the central issues in this analysis. The impact of consumerism is founded in this poetry. The speaker on this poem tries to show the sadness of the victim that has been trapped in that life style. The sadness means to the felling for the life that started with new believe. It can be seen in quotation:

I was born poor uneducated trailer trash;  
worked myself up by my own efforts;  
now I'm rich; but still inside, feel poor

The first line describes the felling of the speaker toward the consumerism. The sentence "*I was poor uneducated trailer trash*" emphasize the his sadness that also leads the speaker to his disappointments. This disappointment means to the situation o the speaker life that has been influenced by the consumerism. The word "poor" and "uneducated" means to the situation of the victim that start his life as consumer . It also gives the understanding that the speaker will never feel happy for his life, and it also show the weakness of the victim of consumerism. The word" uneducated" means the lost of ability to think about his life and they always follow the life without knowing it. In other word, it emphasize that the victim of consumerism lost their mind and they always being a consumer.

The next sentence" *worked myself up by my own efforts*" means the effort of the victims just a kind of useless thing for their life. Everything that they do, it will keep continue until the end of their life. It also reveal the daily activity of the victim to keep consume many things that would brings the happiness for their life. It can be conclude that the life of the victim will not found other activity except buying and consuming the products. The next line" *now I'm rich, but still inside, feel poor* "supports the sadness of the victim. The victim realizes that his life is full with many things that he got, but it will never give a real happiness for their life. It happened because of the victim just consume as much as they could.

The next stanza shows that how the consumerism comes into the entire of human life and it also influenced into small place in human life. It found in this following quotation:

so last week, I celebrated wealth -  
bought my first \$20,000 Cartier watch



This line depicts the consumerism as a part of human life, and the victim will never realize that their life is an effect of the new belief. It means that the victim will always use this life style to their life into their specific time and activity. There is no way for the victims to escape from it.

In conclusion, the consumerism has a big impact to human life. The impact of consumerism can be understood in two points. The first is the consumerism changes human mind. It happened because of the consumerism changes the human happiness to consume material things. As the result, the consumerism is not only as the new culture, but it also as the mind control and belief that will never go out from human life. It is done by attacking the entire aspect of human life. The second impact of consumerism leads the society changes their life style. They become addicted on the product without knowing the purpose of buying the things.

#### **D. Conclusion.**

The three poems, *Consumer* by Celine Charcoal, *Consumerism, merely another God* by Ross Dix- peek, and *A sad tale of consumerism* by Michael Shepherd depicts the impacts of consumerism. It is exposed through text based interpretation by focusing on analyzing the elements of poem such as speaker, tone, and metaphor. The impacts of consumerism can be understood in two points. The impacts are changing human mind and changing human life style.

In the first poem, *Consumer* by Celine Charcoal depicts the impact of consumerism. It is done by showing the work of consumerism could control the victim of consumerism have been influenced. The influencing of the consumerism is not announced the time when the consumerism begins. It means that the consumerism catches the mind of the victims very fast

Next, the second poem” *Consumerism, merely another God* “ by Ross Dix- peek also illustrated the impact of the consumerism. This impact can be seen from the situation of victims mind. In their act, they do not think why they have to consume any product on their life. This case leads the victim of consumerism more consumptive. Their act is controlled by desire which is a part of human needed

In the third poems, *A sad tale of consumerism* by Michael Shepherd depicts the impact of consumerism. The Impact can be seen by the effort of the victims just a kind of useless thing for their life. Everything that they do, it will keep continue until the end of their life. It also reveal the daily activity of the victim to keep consume many things that would brings the happiness for their life.

In short, the development of culture in this era would bring the new impacts in their life. It happened because of the loss of human awareness in adapting in the changes of culture. The work of culture itself, it is not only brings the new agreement in society to create the new life. Sometimes, culture also gives other impact that understood in negative side. Specifically, the consumerism has a big negative effect for human life. The first is consumerism changes the human mind. In other word, it can be understood that consumerism is used for people as mind control. The second point consumerism changes the

human life style. Extremely, the consumerism leads all the victims of consumerism to the gate of hesitation in life.

**Note:** This article is written based on the writer's paper supervised by Dra.An Fauzia Rozani Syafei,M.A

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