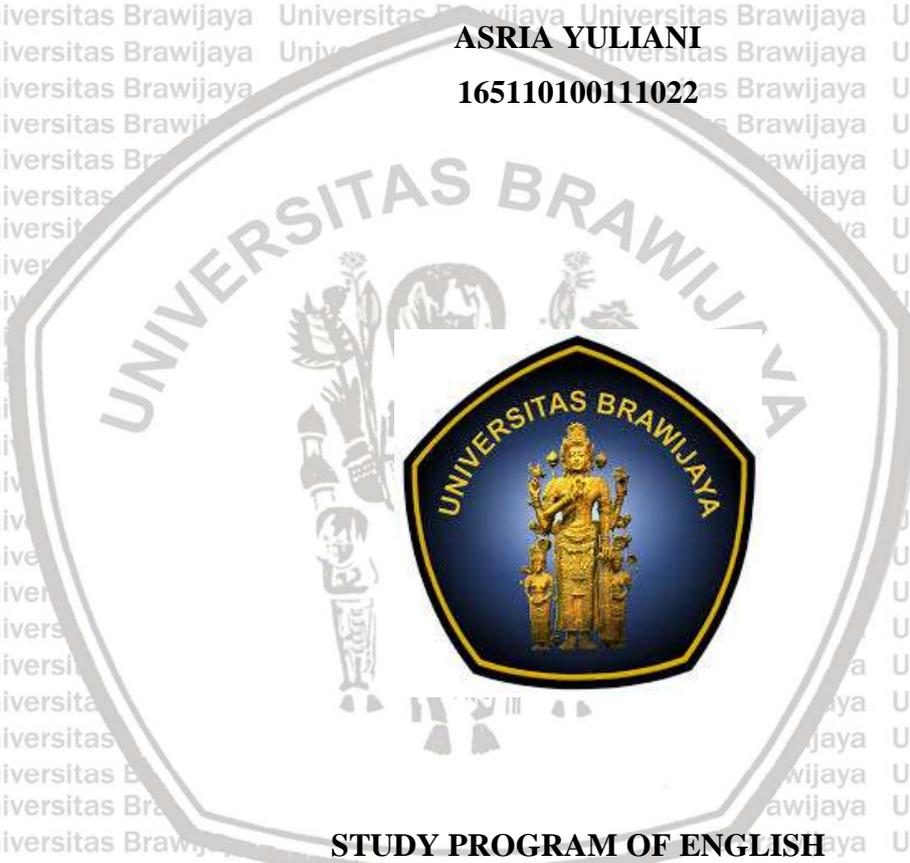


**THE PORTRAYAL OF CONSUMERISM AND DEFENSE MECHANISMS  
DEPICTED IN *THE BLING RING* MOVIE (2013)**

**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

**BY  
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**STUDY PROGRAM OF ENGLISH  
DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE  
FACULTY OF CULTURAL STUDIES  
UNIVERSITAS BRAWIJAYA**

**2020**



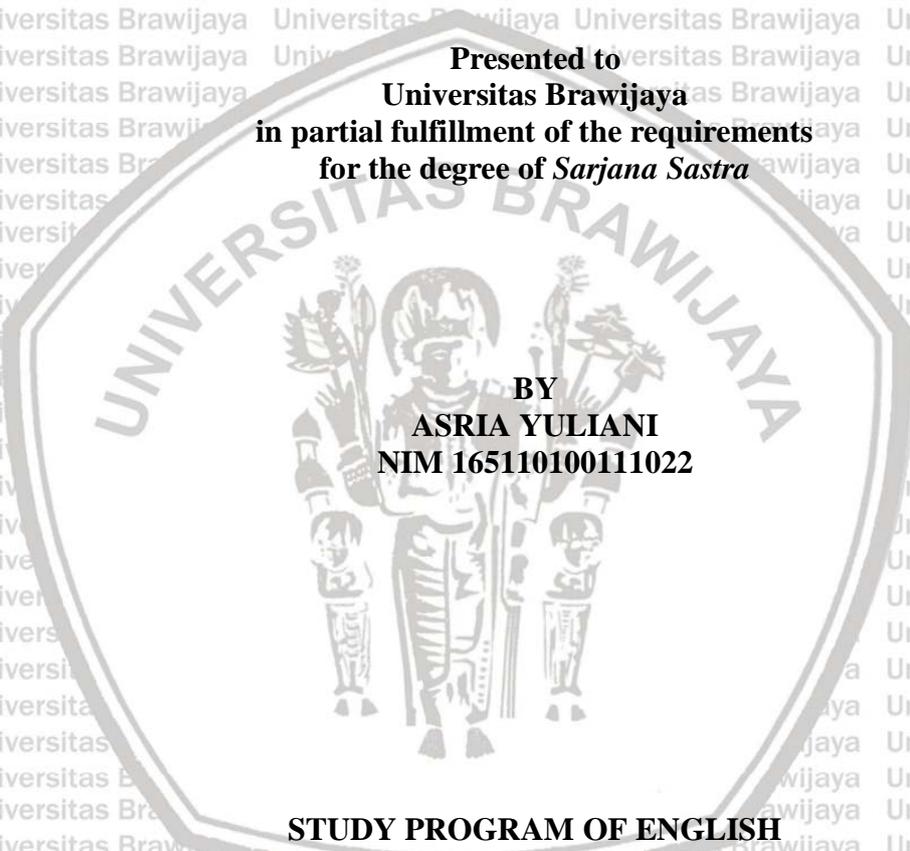
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**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

Presented to  
**Universitas Brawijaya**  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra*

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## ABSTRACT

Yuliani, Asria. 2020. The Portrayal of Consumerism and Defense Mechanisms Depicted in *The Bling Ring* Movie (2013). Study Program of English, Department of Language and Literature, Faculty of Cultural Studies, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang. Supervisor: Nurul Laili Nadhifah, S.S.,M.Hum.

Keywords: *Consumerism, Defense Mechanisms, Celebrities, Adolescents, Luxury Lifestyles.*

People have their own lifestyle based on their ability to afford it. Celebrities have a luxury lifestyle among the ordinary people, also their action often influences many people especially the adolescents who still search and explore their identities. The adolescents who got blinded by celebrities' life might be pushover to be like them. This kind of case is depicted in a movie called *The Bling Ring* Movie (2013).

To analyze the data of the material object of the study, the researcher used the psychosocial approach to literature. The essential data sources are the dialogues, monologues, narratives, or other description taken from the *The Bling Ring* movie. The chosen subjects are the main characters of *The Bling Ring* members as the representation of the consumerist.

The findings of this research reveal that there are several causes of consumerism among these characters. First, the set of goals that they have to be a rich and famous person that were inspired by Hollywood's Celebrities. Second, all the branded things and luxury lifestyles are always shown on the television or internet which triggers them to have what all the celebrities have. Therefore, there will be following of acts to show the consumerism and defense mechanism in this movie and will be explained thoroughly in this research. This research can be adopted as a reference to conduct other studies in the psychosocial approach and using the same theory, therefore with a different object such as a song.

## ABSTRAK

Yuliani, Asria. 2020. Penggambaran konsumerisme dan mekanisme pertahanan yang di gambarkan dalam film *The Bling Ring* 2013. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Brawijaya, Malang.

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Kata Kunci: *Konsumerisme, Mekanisme pertahanan diri, Selebritas, Remaja, Gaya hidup mewah.*

Orang-orang memiliki gaya hidup mereka sendiri berdasarkan pada kemampuan mereka untuk mendapatkannya. Selebritas memiliki gaya hidup mewah di antara orang-orang biasa, tindakan mereka juga sering mempengaruhi banyak orang terutama remaja yang masih mencari dan mengeksplorasi identitas mereka. Para remaja yang dibutakan oleh kehidupan selebritas mungkin akan menjadi seperti mereka. Kasus seperti ini digambarkan didalam film berjudul *The Bling Ring Movie* (2013).

Untuk menganalisis data objek material penelitian, peneliti menggunakan pendekatan psikososial pada literatur. Sumber data yang penting adalah dialog, monolog, narasi, atau deskripsi lain yang diambil dari film *The Bling Ring*. Subjek yang dipilih merupakan karakter utama anggota *The Bling Ring* sebagai representasi konsumerisme.

Hasil dari penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa ada beberapa penyebab konsumerisme diantara karakter-karakter ini. Tujuan mereka adalah mereka harus menjadi orang kaya dan terkenal terinspirasi oleh Selebritas Hollywood. Semua barang yang bermerek dan gaya hidup mewah selalu ditampilkan ditelevisi atau internet. Itu memicu mereka untuk memiliki apa yang dimiliki oleh selebritas. Oleh karena itu, akan ada tindakan yang lain untuk menunjukkan konsumerisme dan mekanisme pertahanan diri dalam film ini dan akan dijelaskan secara menyeluruh dalam penelitian ini. Penelitian ini dapat digunakan sebagai panduan untuk melakukan studi psikososial lainnya dan menggunakan teori yang sama, tetapi dengan objek yang berbeda seperti lagu.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, some main parts will be discussed which are background of study, problems of study, significance of study and objective of study.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

In this modern era, there are so many lifestyles that make people being a consumer and a hedonist. Buying expensive stuff or often going out for social life to increase their pride and status. People who have the privilege to get what they wanted would make them more consuming and wasting money, things, energy, and time. On the other hand, not all people are lucky enough to have the opportunity to afford that lifestyle. This problem is genuinely real and happening in this world.

Consumerism is one of the main forces in the modern world influencing our life. The word 'consumerism' refers not only to instant variables in our daily life but to anything linked with the overarching concept in our contemporary culture that we need to have more things to be happier, better and more prosperous individuals.

Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2007:28) describes this phenomenon in his book, *Consuming Life* :

“We may say that ‘consumerism’ is a type of social arrangement that results from recycling mundane, permanent and so to speak ‘regime-neutral’ human wants, desires and longings into the principal propelling force of society, a force that coordinates systemic reproduction, social integration, social stratification and the formation of human individuals, as well as playing a major role in the processes of individual and group self-policies.”

It means that consumerism will occur when people are starving for the move of consumer products in society. People are motivated by consumption, the dominant view of the world, culture and values of society, and recreate it. Consumerism forms our attitudes, desires, and longings in such a way that we do not necessarily want to purchase things because they are valuable, but rather of because what they mean about us. This kind of problems, consumerism is also depicted in many artworks such as a movie named *The Bling Ring* (2013).

Movie is about a story or event recorded by a camera as a set of moving images and shown in a theater or on television; a motion picture. It is created for entertainment and also a business. Somehow, some people do not get the message from the movie, what they understand is just how they get entertained. Movie is one of the communication tools to give a piece of information to the people. Carrer View (2011, p.1) said that "Movie is an art of audio-visual storytelling, film is a medium of communication-rich with social implications, created within different social, historical, and, cultural context." Therefore, movie has an important role in spreads information and also influences people in the world.

Movie also reflects what condition or problem happens at a certain time. By watching a movie, people can relate what is in the movie to real life because they can learn about the problem of the phenomenon in a movie and take a value or a lesson from it. Movie is similar to a novel or short story in that they tell a story.

They include the same genres: romantic, historical, detective, thriller, adventure, horror, and science fiction. However, movies may also include sub-groups such as action, comedy, tragedy, westerns, war, and crime. Even though the movie is simply

a visual representation of a written work, there some meanings or has a moral value in it.

According to *The Numbers'* market charts for the famous genre based on The Domestic Market is defined as the North American movie territory (consisting of the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and Guam) from 1995 until 2019 showed what genres people are interested in and react to overtime. There are fourteen famous genres, three of the top lists are an adventure, action, and drama. The movies that have genre drama are 5,202 movies higher than action, and total box office \$36,542,716,633. One of the drama movies is *The Bling Ring* (2013) and this movie also wrapped up with another genre, crimes.

*The Bling Ring* (2013) is one of the movies that portrayed a life lesson or moral value about the effects of consumerism that could change teenagers' life. The movie is about five teenagers obsessed with luxury and branded things. They do some ways to get those luxury things by stealing or robbing Hollywood's celebrity houses like money, bags, clothes, or even accessories. It is because they become so obsessed with having expensive things and a high standard of living. Marc Hall, one of the characters arrives as a new student at Indian Hills High School and after that, he is soon befriended by the famous-obsessed Rebecca Ahn. He got invited to come to Rebecca's party in her house, when the party is still going on, they go to some cars on the street. Looking for unlocked cars and then they took some cash and credit card on the unlocked cars. Furthermore, they become so close and be a best friend. Next, he told Rebecca about his wealthy friend that leaving the town for a week. Rebecca seems excited and asks him to break his wealthy friend, they

steal a handbag, some cash, and a key to a Porsche. They go shopping with the money which they stole and enjoy a luxury lifestyle that they just had.

Later, they know that one of the famous Hollywood celebrity, Paris Hilton is out of town. They find her address and rob some stuff such as jewelry and money.

The other friends Nicki, Sam, and Chloe know about that and ask them to go back to Paris Hilton's again. They all enjoyed the crime that they did. Stealing and robbing. The entire group also robbing the other Hollywood celebrities like Audrina

Partridge, Megan Fox, Orlando Bloom and his wife Miranda Kerr. Until that day a news report releases CCTV footage from Partridge's house. Marc freaks out, but Rebecca still calms and chooses to continue this robbing into Rachel Bilson's house.

On the other hand, they also upload some pictures of the stolen stuff on social media to show off their lifestyle. In contrast to the information on social media, CCTV helps the authorities to identify the group. And then, the media named them "The Bling Ring".

Police arrest Rebecca, Nicki, Marc, Chloe, Rob, and Ricky, but Sam is not identified in the video and escapes arrest. Marc cooperates with the police, informing them about the details of the crime, much to the grief of Rebecca, who was identified as the ringleader. The team spends their time in prison, and Marc and Rebecca both go into isolation and never see or talk to each other again, both of them steadfastly blame each other for the robbery. In the final scene, filmed a few months later, Nicki is on a talk show talking about her time in jail, revealing that her cell was next to Lohan's and tell the audience to visit her now-popular website documenting her life after "The Bling Ring."

From the story, those teenagers like to be a consumer by stealing luxury things from the celebrity. When they got caught, they pretend never doing the crime. They defend themselves because feeling not safe or anxious. It related to defense mechanisms theory, where people using defense mechanisms to protect from anxiety, guilt or any unacceptable impulses which come from feeling threatened. Anna Freud said that "Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings." (1936, p. 42). When they become a suspect, they are denying the reality and explain later their crime with the rational reasons such as want the lifestyles that Hollywood celebrity's houses.

Those theories are depicted in this movie. Those two become the main concern among the group of teenagers that love to have some fun and addicted to money or fame. In this study, the researcher will analyze the problems portrayed in the movie by using a psychosocial approach.

### **1.1.1 Significance of the study**

This study focuses to give awareness about consumerism and how defense mechanisms occurs in the situation in *The Bling Ring* Movie (2013). It also gives information about the causes and effects of consumerism itself and this research can be a reference for the readers who want to conduct similar research by using a psychosocial approach. The researcher chooses this movie as an object instead of a new one because this movie portrays the consumerism by the teenagers itself.

Another similar movie such as *Spring Breakers* (2013) and *The Riot Club* (2014) describes the consumerism are quite different from *The Bling Ring* (2013). *Spring*

*Breakers* (2013) is about the teenagers commit a crime to get money controlled by a drug-dealing rapper, on the other hand, *The Riot Club* (2014) tells about class struggle and societal oppression that happen in an exclusive club called The Riot Club.

### 1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the problems of the study will discuss:

1. How consumerism portrayed by the main characters of *The Bling Ring* movie?
2. How consumerism and defense mechanisms affects the five main characters in *The Bling Ring* Movie (2013).

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

Based on the problem of the study, this study aims to explain more about how consumerism and defense mechanisms that happen and affect in teenagers' society that is depicted in *The Bling Ring* Movie (2013) and try to elaborate on the theories.

## CHAPTER II

# REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

In this chapter, the researcher describes some theories which related to the study that will be discussed. The object of this study is a movie. The researcher will used psychosocial approach to explore the conflict that occurs. This chapter also will used some theories such as consumerism, defense mechanisms and movie studies as supporting tools to analyse this study. Previous study and research method will be included in this chapter.

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study will use psychosocial approach. The researcher chooses this approach because there are individual and group behavior within society happens in this movie. To help the analysis, the researcher will use consumerism, defense mechanisms, and movie studies theory.

#### 2.1.1 Psychosocial approach

In Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages, it maintained that personality develops in a predetermined order through eight stages of psychosocial development, from infancy to adulthood. During each stage, the person experiences a psychosocial crisis which could have a positive or negative outcome for personality development.

Erikson (1958) stated that these crises are of a psychosocial nature because they involve psychological needs of the individual (i.e., psycho) conflicting with the needs of society (i.e., social). According to the theory, that stage is successfully completed and the learning of essential values leads to a healthy person. Essential virtues are characteristics that ego can use in overcoming subsequent crises.

The stage in this movie is the third stage (Identity and Role Confusion) range from 12-18 years. Erickson (1963-245) said “The adolescent mind is essentially a mind or moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult.” Therefore, through a major exploration of the values, principles and goals, teenagers search for their identities in this point. The time has come for young people to explore their identities and try various lifestyles. In this stage, the push for an identity by someone might also lead to rebellion in the form of a negative identity.

In *The Bling Ring* movie, every character experience a psychosocial crisis that could have a positive or negative result for the development of personality. They will go to the outside and try new things to fulfill their curiosity. The characters also try a new different lifestyle that they never do before. It turns out will be negative or positive depends on what they choose.

### 2.1.2 Consumerism

Consumerism is one of the main forces in the modern world influencing our life. The word 'consumerism' refers not only to instant variables in our daily life but to anything linked with the overarching concept in our contemporary culture that we need to have more things to be happier, better and more prosperous individuals. Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman describes this phenomenon in his book, *Consuming Life* (2007:28) stated that:

“We may say that ‘consumerism’ is a type of social arrangement that results from recycling mundane, permanent and so to speak ‘regime-neutral’ human wants, desires and longings into the principal propelling force of society, a force that coordinates systemic reproduction, social integration, social stratification and the formation of human individuals, as well as playing a major role in the processes of individual and group self-policies.”

It means that consumerism will occur when people are starving for move of consumer products in society. People are motivated by consumption, the dominant view of the world, culture and values of society, and recreate it. Consumerism forms our attitudes, desires, and longings in such a way that we do not necessarily want to purchase things because they are valuable, but rather of because what they mean about us.

Consumerism shapes our interests, our needs and our longings to the level that we do not want to purchase goods because they are beneficial. In aspects of consumerism, there is a special branding of a 'Celebrities' Culture' and the brand and image symbols for young people looking for identity structures in *The Bling Ring* movie, which consumerism gives them however, that these formations are totally vacuous of meaning.

The Bling Ring was made in 2013 but this movie based on actual event in beginning of 2008 and ending 2009. The real Bling Ring stole high-end purses, watches, designers clothes, accessories, fragrances, and underwear. The famous, mode-obsessed adolescents used the internet to know when the stars were going to be home, like Facebook, TMZ and Twitter accounts. They will make a move to robbing their house quickly because they were really fascinated with fashion and celebrities.

Also, the situation around that time, the adolescents are influenced by celebrities lifestyles that aired in television. Such as Paris Hilton's *My New BBF* is about how Paris Hilton is looking for her new best friends and also another show called *My Super Sweet 16* feature the luxurious parties provided by parents for their spoiled children. These shows taught young people who rule supreme wealth and consumerism. Not all the people have the control to filter what they have seen and especially the adolescents.

### 2.1.3 Defense Mechanisms

Anna Freud (1936) developed her father's (Sigmund Freud) ideas about defense mechanisms and elaborated on them, adding ten of her own. Several psychoanalysts have also developed additional forms of ego defenses. Defense mechanisms are psychological techniques unconsciously utilized to shield a person from fear arising from unwanted thoughts or feelings.

Using defense mechanisms to protect from anxiety, guilt or any unacceptable impulses which comes from feeling threatened. There are a large

number of defense mechanisms; the main ones are repression, regression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against one's own person, reversal into the opposite, and sublimation or displacement. There are some units of defense mechanisms, but the researcher focuses only on denial and rationalization in this movie because these two are more relatable with this movie.

Denial is a defense mechanism that proposed by Anna Freud, she implies that external phenomena are excluded from perception and refusal to accept reality.

On the other hand, rationalization is also a defense mechanism that Anna Freud proposes to distort the cognitive "faiths" to less threaten an event or impulsion.

Simply, when a person finds it difficult to accept a situation, they must provide a logical reason why it happened. They do often sufficiently at a fairly conscious level when they apologize. This allows to feel comfortable with the wrong choice even it is not on the level of right. Both of the points help the researcher to get how the characters react and try to defend themselves when their case already caught by the police and their parents.

#### 2.1.4 Movie Studies

The object of the study is a movie. Therefore, the researcher has to know what the meaning of the movie before do this study. According to Cambridge Dictionary that "film is a series of moving pictures, usually shown in a cinema or on television and often telling a story". Movie is one of entertainment media that everyone likes and movie is known as an art form. To interpret the movie, we need to know the aspects of the movie. There are intrinsic elements such as theme,

settings, character, and plot and *Mise En Scene*. Therefore, the researcher will choose *Mise En Scene* and dialogue.

#### 2.1.4.1 *Mise En Scene*

According to Bordwell and Thompson, "What possibilities for selection and control does mise-en-scene offer the filmmaker? We can mark out four general areas: setting, costumes, and makeup, lighting, and staging. (2008, p.115). *Mise en scene* is an arrangement of scenery, and properties to represent the place where a movie is enacted, it is about the visuals and the elements of the film and to evoke emotions throughout the film. Therefore, the viewers enchanted by the cinematography in this movie. *Mise en scene* helps create a sense of place, a sense of character, and a sense of a mood and helps communicate a lot to the viewers.

From the explanation above, the researcher will choose costumes, makeup, and lighting only to show an illustration of all the main characters living with their luxury lifestyles. Costume is a style of dress, hairstyle, and accessories on a character. It determines the most effective way to express the personality of the character to the audience. For the function of makeup, it helps to create the desired look, to create the character to be more believable and helps the actors immerse themselves in the character.

Costumes and makeup show the details of character's personality and habit to the audience, and help the actor transform into a different person. Both of them support to feel the character's appearance and personality. Therefore, costumes and makeup in this movie are used to convey specific features about the character which

is a representation of their identity as a teenager who has luxury lifestyles and fancy things, therefore what they all have is the result of being robbers.

David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson quotes Director Feredico Fellini in their book when he said "Light is everything. It expresses ideology, emotion, colour, depth, style. It can efface, narrate, describe. With the right lighting, the ugliest face, the most idiotic expression can radiate with beauty or intelligence." (2013, p.124). He clearly explains how light can influence specific things from the scene like style or the emotion. Also, there are two terms which mean different lighting intensities. Low-key lighting brings most of the set in shadow; the subject is identified by a few highlights only. This form of lighting increases suspense and induces a dark mood; furthermore, it is also used in films of mystery and horror.

By comparison, high-key lighting results in more luminous areas than shadows, and objects are seen in middle grays and highlights, with much less comparison. High-key lighting matches comic and light moods like in a musical. In general, high-contrast scenes, with a wide range of variations between light and dark areas, produce more powerful and dramatic pictures than equally illuminated scenes

Boggs and Petrie tells that "The tremendous expense involved in producing motion pictures reminds us that movie is both industry and an art. Movie employs the compositional elements of the visual arts: line, form, mass, volume, and texture." It means that movie is something that easy to understand because it delievers the story in a easy way with interesting form in it such as images and

sounds. Movie also give the meaning of the the movie itself. It could be shown in the movie or the viewers have to interpret the hidden meaning.

#### 2.1.4.2 Dialogues

Dialogue is concentrated conversation among equals, and offers helpful ways to work together cooperatively, encourages mutual understanding between diverse perspectives, and leads to stable, resilient outcomes (Winston, 2011). In addition, dialogue is also one of the proofs to support data. *The Bling Ring* Movie (2013) is from the actual event, about a bunch of teenagers influenced by celebrity's luxury lifestyles and find a way to afford them by robbing the celebrity's houses.

The researcher will analyze the dialogue between the characters that are relevant to this research, verify the dialogue with the related theory in this research and interpreting the data from the dialogue.

## 2.2 Previous Study

The first study is using the same object as this research was done by Agung Permana Setya (2016) entitled *Representasi Hedonisme Dalam Film The Bling Ring (Analisis Semiotika John Fiske Mengenai Hedonisme Dalam Film The Bling Ring Karya Sofia Coppola)*. This study concerned about hedonism represented in *The Bling Ring* movie by using semiotics' John Fiske and the second study was done by *Defense Mechanisms Employed by Greg Heffley in Diary of A Wimpy Kid Film* written by Ilmia Hidayatul Insani Primastuty. This study concerned about the main character tries to defend himself from anxiety especially when the gets troubles while he communicates with another character.

The differences between those two studies are the object and the theories.

However, those studies help the researcher to arrange this study. On the other hand, this study discusses the problem of the study, how the characters get into consumerism and defend themselves after doing some crimes.

## 2.3 Research Method

There are four steps to conducting this research:

### 2.3.1 Deciding the Object Material

The writer decide to choose *The Bling Ring (2013)* as the object material of the study. This movie describes about a group of teenagers are having fun with their life by consuming luxury things and commit a crime to always get what they wanted. These people are robbing a celebrity house, also wearing their stolen things such as clothes, bags, or jewelry.

### 2.3.2 Collecting the Data

The researcher collects the data by watching the movie more than once to know the plot and understand more about the meaning of the story. Next step is do a retroactive reading, the researcher will read the movie script to get more data from the dialogue, monologue, and narration between the characters and also to know what causes and effects from consumerism on the characters.

### 2.3.3 Analyzing and Interpretating the Data

To analyze the data, the researcher will focus on their luxury lifestyle showed in the movie. How they are got their way of life which is rarely common teenagers have. The researcher will use consumerism, defense mechanisms and movie studies to identify and interpret the problem of the study. Consumerism and defense mechanisms theory are chosen to elaborate the phenomenon that occur in this movie, when a group of teenagers commit a crime to get luxury things that Hollywood celebrity's house because they could not afford what they wanted. Movie Studies will be analyze the Mise En Scene and the intrinsic element in the movie such as setting, theme, characters, and plot to support the object of the study.

### 2.3.4 Drawing the Conclusion

The final step of this study is to draw the conclusion. based on the conclusion will be drawn from the discussion from the data analysis that will be explained thoroughly in the next chapter of this study.

## CHAPTER III

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher focuses on the findings obtained from *The Bling Ring* (2013) movie to analyze the consumerism and defense mechanisms that depicted in the movie *The Bling Ring* (2013). This discussion is categorized into several following sub-chapters that portrays. Furthermore, the dialogue and *mise-en-scene* from movie studies also become the basic element to analyze the conversation and scenes from the perspective of the audience.

#### 3.1 The Picture of Consumerism in The Bling Ring

The act of consumption is what consumerism standardizes. Stress on consumption, in this case, young men, constantly nurturing their appetites for image and status, buying picture and brand name (status), products that are always posed as a means to this status and image purpose, forms part of consumptionism's messaging process.

Many teenagers trapped in a desire of having a wealthy life. It portrayed in celebrity lifestyles or how the way they live every day. Young people looking up from their figure because that is all that everybody wants in their life. They are be surrounded by money, fame, fancy foods, luxury clothes, jewelry, and the other great things that usually the celebrity has.



**Figure 1**  
**All The Bling Ring walking together with their fashion that stolen from celebrities' closet (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 00:52:46)**

Celebrity is one of the biggest influencers when it comes to consumerism.

All the characters are looking up to Hollywood's celebrities. Hollywood is one of the biggest entertainment industries in the world. There are so many talented people in that industry, to survive you have to work hard. Being a Hollywood celebrity is everyone's dream, especially their lifestyles. People want their lifestyles so much and include this bunch of people. One effective way to be their favorite celebrities is robbing their things. Therefore, they like to robbing to their house to get some stuff and even the money to spending with.

Consumerism occurs when people want to control what happens in community or even form our entire social structure with the consumer goods.

Rebecca is one of the characters obsessed with luxury things and celebrity' lifestyles. She is not from a wealthy family yet she likes to going shopping, clubbing, and doing drugs. Stealing is the only thing she can do to afford all those

things. For the other characters, they are obsessed with material things too because it portrayed in daily life especially from the entertainment world. Celebrities are just a new form of idols, much like money and material possessions. People are idolatrous to brands especially in terms of luxury.

When people do not have the ability to get that attention in "natural" ways. They will get it whatever they can, by doing stupid things, or doing things that are genuinely illegal or unethical, or even dangerous. Part of the nature of this consumerist creation is that young people see celebrities as being worshiped and admired by others. Their representation is a reflection in itself, a quite troubling scenario where young people begin to develop their self-absorption. What shows on the television or the internet cannot be filtered in every detail, therefore people need to be wise and know which one is good or bad for them. All the members of the group seem not aware of the effects that they got from the celebrities' luxury lifestyles.

The previous chapter the researcher had been explained about the situation when the crime happened around 2008-2009. There are so many reality shows aired on the tv showing the lifestyles that celebrities or rich people had. Many people compare themselves to all these people on the television and they started to set their own goal of success. This kind of influencers drive consumption to afford the ability what other people have and access to every privilege that the rich people has.

In his book called *Consuming Life*, Zygmunt Bauman says that the consumerism itself has a huge role in every elements of people. Bauman (2007:28) tells that "We may say that 'consumerism' is a type of social arrangement that

results from recycling mundane, permanent and so to speak 'regime-neutral' human wants.....as well as playing a major role in the processes of individual and group self-policies." He recognizes that consumerism includes and is a dominant Modern society construct that shapes our beliefs, values, interactions, identities and behaviour. Consumerism pushes us through mindless consumption to achieve happiness and fulfilment and serves as a necessary component of capitalist system, which demands mass production and endless sales growth.

Moreover, the character who most describes the upsetting creation of this consumerist identity formation is Rebecca. She is the leader of The Bling Ring and she always made the plan to robbing. Every time she succeeded broke into a celebrities' houses, everyone will know because they have been told by her. Unfortunately, everyone thought it was cool and great when you can get into a famous celebrity's house whenever she wants. It makes her proud because she is a fame-obsessed. Having branded-clothes, going to the club every night, do drugs, and being famous are her dreams.

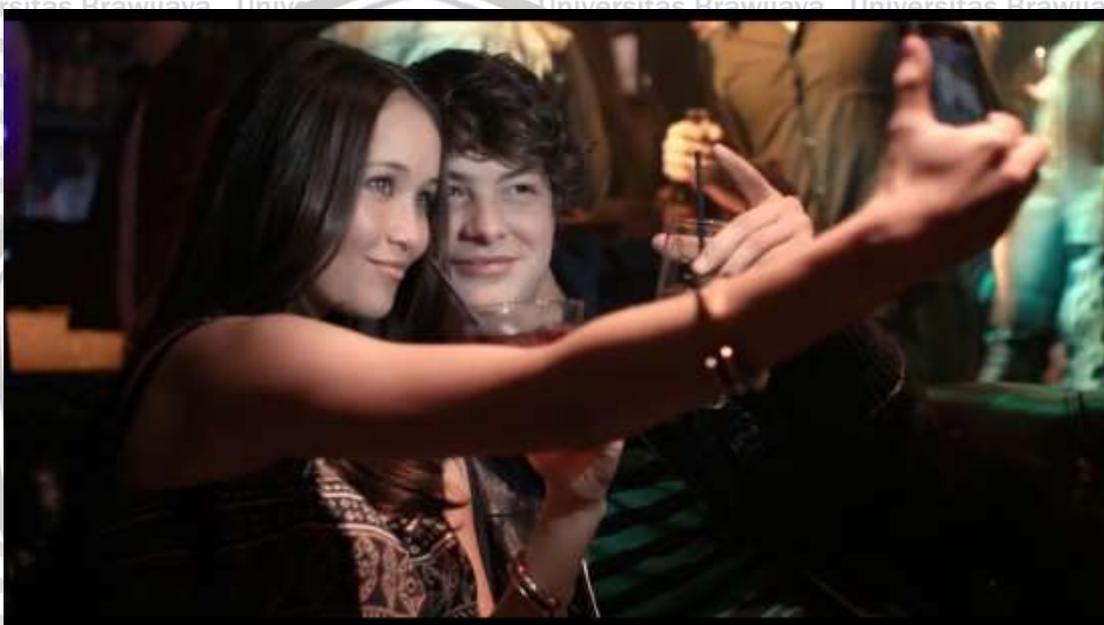
Lindsay is a role model for Rebecca; she practically praises the field on which Lindsay goes, as we can see towards the end of the film, as Rebecca is more enlightened than worried about their serious situation by hearing what Lindsay had to say about her breaking into her house from this scene below:

**Rebecca** : Did you speak to any of the victims?

**Investigator** : I've spoken to all the victims.

**Rebecca** : Really? What did Lindsay say?

She concerns what Lindsay's reaction towards her crime instead of worrying about her punishment later. When she is in Lindsay's home and exclusively her bedroom, she is using Lindsay's perfume, her looking at herself in Lindsay's mirror, and even stole Lindsay's nude Polaroids. On the other side, Rebecca was aware of Marc's feelings about having a friend then she took the benefits of him for her own selfish needs, beginning the process of exploiting his "weaknesses" for her gain.



**Figure 2**  
**Rebecca is enjoying clubbing with her friends (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 00:19:43)**

This scene shows Rebecca and Marc are taking a picture together in the club. The situation in the club as usual as the regular club is, there are lack of lights or quite dark. Therefore, their face is kind of bright because of the phone's flashlight. It also emphasizes how they are like to be center of the attention. The obsession is getting bigger as they got everything they wanted since so long. Space representation influences the reading of a movie.

The depth, distance, size and proportion of the locations and objects in the movie can be controlled by camera positioning and lenses, lighting, set design, and the successful determination of mood or interaction between characters in the movie. It also shows in that scene where Rebecca and Marc are captured in the center to bring up the mood of those two while taking picture together and also makes the viewers more focus on them.



**Figure 3**

**Rebecca looks impressed by Paris Hilton's closet (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 00:27:40)**

This scene is one of the important scenes in the movie because it is like a key to many doors when they are already successfully got into Paris's closet. When Rebecca walked in, she is being amazed by all those shoes collections. The shoes collection seems clearer than Rebecca and the lighting focuses on the closet to shows all the luxury stuff that she has been hoping for. It also makes the audiences pay attention to the collections to feel what Rebecca feels in the scene.



**Figure 4**

All the characters are having fun in the Paris Hilton's private club (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 00:32:32)



**Figure 5**

Nikki and Sam's gathering with their mom and little sister to do a morning prayer (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 00:05:45)

Those scenes have a quite different lighting because it emphasizes meaning. On figure 4 the lighting seems dark and dim, therefore on figure 5 looks really natural and luminous. The scene has bright sunshine from its windows that makes the rooms look warm, simple and welcoming. The lighting on the figure 4 is dim in the scene where all the characters are together. Even though it is just night time and in

the private club, but the researcher leading to believe that if this is a regular occurrence, bad lighting must mean something. The artificial lighting could reflect how they felt about their behavior. They claim to lead such luxurious lifestyles, but they can do it only behind closed doors, and they can only take the things at night to avoid being caught.

**Rebecca:** Would this be good on me? This would look so good on you. What do you think about this? Oh, my God. That looks so cute.

**INTERVIEWER:** Why do you think Rebecca was so obsessed with these women and their clothes enough to steal?

**Marc:** I just think she wanted to be a part of, like, the lifestyle. Like, the lifestyle that everybody kind of wants. Rebecca's, like, biggest conquest was Lindsay Lohan. She was her ultimate fashion icon.

**FEMALE NEWSCASTER:** Lindsay Lohan is fighting back against accusations... she stole a \$2, 500 necklace from a Southern California jewelry store.

The dialogue above shows that she was influenced by a celebrity that has a luxury lifestyle yet she could not afford it. As we see in the whole movie, the crew of the "bling ring" won't only relate to the culture of "celebrity". Yet they can't avoid but do an irresponsible thing. Robbing. Once charged because of the crime, it's another means of harnessing their current fame, of taking advantage of it and of being "celebrities."

Nikki is a fan of luxury things, social status and especially freedom because her mother doesn't provide it in their home. Her mother taught her to be kind, positive, and being a spiritual person which she does not want to be. Her friends are the same type as her, they have the same desires with their own stories. Therefore, she becomes what she wants, a consumerist. Perhaps most shocking is that not only has Nicki not been held responsible for her cheating, but she has also actually

benefited from this experience: it has made her famous; it has made her a "celebrity," even if only for a brief moment.

For some reason, parenting skills are needed to treat their children right.

However, the parents in this movie seem only to be concerned with the material needs of their children, while neglecting the fact that their children need their love and support more than anything. Nikki's parents and also Sam's adoptive parents only give them about 'How to be a spiritual human being'. It makes them feel bored and looking out something fun and they would like.

**Nikki and Sam's Mother:** Well, let's do our morning prayer, okay? And then, at 8:00, we'll meet in the living room for today's lesson. Okay? Does that sound good?

Marc is the only character who seems to enjoy the crime but also being anxious about it. He enjoys the crime that he did with Rebecca because he likes all those kinds of stuff and can be together with his best friend. He also appears to be the only person guided by his lack of personal worth. He wants to be famous too but I think his ambition is more measured, more balanced than the others. Yet he stills love the money or things that he got from his robbery with all The Bling Ring's members.

**Marc:** "We were acting insane, but it all felt so glamorous and wonderful."  
 People – particularly young people who still try to figure out stuff like images and status symbols to feel good, recognition, acknowledgment. He still thinks of those stuff. Therefore, he is trying what makes him feel good and proud of himself. He thought perhaps when he follows Rebecca, he will get the recognition that he has been looking for. In the end, he still follows what Rebecca says.

**Marc:** I loved her. I really did. She was the first person I felt like was my best friend. I loved her almost like a sister. That's what made this situation so hard.

**Marc:** I think the biggest problem was after the Audrina thing, nothing happened. It gave Rebecca that self-boost that, "Oh, this is okay. I can get away with this." And I think her projecting that onto me made me think that it was gonna be okay.

Chloe is known as a consumerist-bad girl. Chloe is going into a serious car accident because she was "out of the box", but it seems that she did not learn anything after being arrested. She's ready to go to another club, drinking again and have sex with another man. This self-destructive behavior has always been a component of the celebrity lifestyle. Then it is what they look from such famous persons as Lindsay Lohan, who (self) commit violent things, throw themselves into jail, and then go back directly to their bad behavior, a comfortable way of life that makes them reckless.

In a car accident, Chloe nearly kills herself, but instead of such an incident that changes her course for the better, she considers the entire event funny and is ready to robbing and partying again. She did not feel regret at all. This reckless behaviour will make her still do something stupid or illegal again. Also, the behaviour that she had will support her lifestyles with her friends.



**Figure 6**

**Chloe's mugshot after driving while she drunk (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 00:32:08)**

The picture of this mugshot shows the make-up on her face looks really strong and fierce which fits with her personality as a bad girl. She puts a smokey eyeshadow, a black eyeliner, and mascara on her eyes. People usually do not put all those combinations in one time yet she loves to show she is different from other people.

Her hair also has a layer cut that usually teenager favorite haircut and lastly, she is wearing a black cardigan that she loves so much. According to David Howell and Kristin Thompson in their book called *Film Art An Introduction* stated that "Film actors rely on their eyes to a very great extent, and makeup artists can often enhance eye behavior. Eyeliner and mascara can draw attention to the eyes and emphasize the direction of a glance. (2012, p. 122)." This scene also has the low-key lighting, it makes deeper and sharper contrasts. The combination of the makeup and the lack of lighting around her creates the shadow under her eyes to emphasizes her

character and emotions in this scene. She looks so miserable and regretful by only looking at her messy makeup and hair because of the accident. The audience might be implying she got arrested after partying and driving while drunk.

Yo, Chloe, what's up?

**Chloe:** Yo, bitch.

Going to, uh, Carly's later?

**Chloe:** Uh, maybe.

**Chloe:** Yo, sluts!

Her mindset about being a bad girl that she can consume and be everything that she wanted. Doing the crime, driving while drunk, do drugs, and free sex look alike something that full of adrenaline. This self-destructive might be dangerous if she took it too far. The ingredients for (self) destructive actions are inherently toxic: a sense of entitlement, the imitation of the 'bad girl' way of life and the lack of investment in children by parents.

### 3.2 Defend mechanisms of The Bling Ring

There are a large number of defense mechanisms that created by Anna Freud (1936); the main ones are repression, regression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against one's own person, reversal into the opposite, and sublimation or displacement. There are some units of defense mechanisms, but the researcher focuses only on denial and rationalization in this movie.

#### 3.2.1 The Bling Ring's denial

When their crime got caught by police, one by one they had to deal with it. Mark emerges weeping out of his house and says sorry to his mom. He is being investigated by the police. Police then go to the house of Nicki and charge her too.

Nikki cries for her mom and mourns that she is humiliated by the detectives. They charge Chloe, Rob, and Ricky too. Mark realizes that Rebecca decided to leave Los Angeles intentionally because she thought she could avoid prosecution and blame him for the crimes. Rebecca denies at first that she has nothing to do with stolen items, but she breaks down when officers find her stolen items in a closet and Paris's Polaroid photos. She is being denial because she wants to defend herself.

**Nikki:** "Come on. Let's go to Paris. I want to rob."

And the next scene, Nikki tells about her feelings to the interviewer that she felt betrayed because all of her friends put her in a dangerous situation. In fact, she is volunteered to be part of The Bling Ring. She wanted to rob celebrity's houses to stole some bags, clothes, or money.

**Nikki:** "I didn't know what they were doing. I thought they were my friends. It all comes back to, like, bad choices who you have as your friends. And I know the truth will come out."

### 3.2.2 Rationalization on Nikki and Rebecca's characters.

When Nikki was saying that she just thinks of a logical reason why it happened. She purposes to convinced all the viewers that it is not her fault in the first place. Because she was put in the wrong situation with her friends. It is called rationalization. People with vulnerable egos make excuses so simple that they are never really conscious of it. She had to deal with the punishment in the court, therefore she blames all of her friends to make her look less 'bad' because she is afraid of people accusing her too.



**Figure 7**

**Nikki got arrested at her home (Source: *The Bling Ring*, 01:05:12)**

**Nikki:** I need to speak to my mom. Mom? Call the lawyer. Call a lawyer! You're hurting me. You're really hurting me. Mom. Can you call the... Ow! Ow. I want to talk to my mom. Ow. [SOBS] Ow.

Nikki did not accept the situation when she got arrested. On the other hand, she should have known what she has done. Therefore, she asked for help to her mom, still pretending do not know what is her fault. Now, all the members of The Bling Ring are full of regret for what they have done after they were enjoying the crimes without knowing their consequences. They have to face punishment after doing crimes many times. For various reasons, people rationalize — occasionally, when they thought they knew themselves better than they do.

For example, build a barrier against inner feelings of guilt or shame, as Rebecca does after being arrested in her dad's house. She is trying to denied and lying about all the stolen stuff that she had. Next, when she showed up in the court and sitting next to her best friend Marc yet she was so cold and did not say one

word to him. Rebecca was pretending to be fine and do not express her guilty feelings at all.

Young people coming of age are always looking for something new, exciting and full of adrenaline. They cannot distinguish what is good and bad for them, because the only thing they see is just all the satisfaction they have. Being consumerist when the situation is not capable to afford the luxury things is really dangerous. People can get so much pressure and do some stupid things. All the members of the group did not realize it yet until they got caught and finally try to something to help or defend themselves. However, it doesn't help that much because they have to face their responsibility in the court.

Consumerism semblance our interest, wants, desire, and longings. The characters in this movie experience in the third stage of Erik Erikson's psychosocial stage when the transition from childhood into the adolescent period and it is moment adolescent explored their identities and tried different lifestyles. At this point, they tried to a new lifestyle but unfortunately, it brings them into a different world that full of luxurious stuff. The role of parents and all the people around them are really matters for their development, therefore they will not face the impacts of choosing the wrong path during their transition life.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter will contain the conclusion of all the findings and discussion presented within the previous chapter, as well as the suggestion for the next researchers who will use the theory or the object of this study.

#### 4.1 Conclusion

After analyzing inside the third chapter, the researcher concludes from all the scenes and the characters of *The Bling Ring*. All the characters are being-consumerist because they have their factors. During their age or in Erik-Erikson's psychosocial stages (the third stage) between childhood and adulthood. They explore the opportunities and start forming their own identity depend on the results of their adventure, also trying to belong to a society and fit in.. Failure to establish a sense of identity in society could lead to role confusion. Also, it makes them experience something that they not really sure about the bad impacts. Consumerism took all of their value of life and only concerning about material things or famous people's life.

When it comes to defending themselves, the characters justify their crimes by denial and rationalization. It was impossible not to accept their fault if it only by refusing the fact and provide a logical reason behind their action. Whoever they are, they must be responsible for what they have done. However, on this day, technology is easier to get and used every day, especially the internet and social media are one of the indicators in this era. Someone's lifestyle could have seen by the internet or

social media, some people will find it amusing or exciting. Money, fame, or luxury things might accommodate someone to be a consumerist if they do not have an effective way to control them. In the worst condition, if they could not afford those things, people had to manage or put some values on themselves that in life is not all about the material things they always see in every part of the world.

#### 4.2 Suggestion

This research can be adopted as a reference to conduct other studies in the psychosocial approach and using the same theory. However, the researcher suggests the next researchers who may analyze a different object such as song or an album with other aspects that make consumerism or the other phenomenon appears. For example, a song by Travis Scott called *Money, Power, Respect* or the other rap songs that the lyrics contain about wasting money, luxury life, or doing drugs.

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