

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, the statement of the research questions, the objective of the study, the significance of the study, and the scope and limitations.

1.1 Background

In this digital era, it is impossible to live without coexistence with the internet. The use of the internet is increasing rapidly due to various facilities that provide automation in human work. During the 2019-2021 pandemic, internet users experienced an increase of up to 90%, this figure almost touched the maximum (McClain et al., 2021). The existence of the internet has a positive and negative impact on all ages. With the internet, humans can access any website, including social media.

Based on the survey results of a survey written on the PEW Research page, 84% of adults aged 18-29 years of the total correspondent admit that they have used any social media (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). Social media is no longer a tool for communication and socializing but has penetrated the economic and political fields. A variety of activities may be carried out through social media, ranging from small talk and virtual group meetings to disseminating information in a matter of seconds. The increase in the use of social media creates a variety of impacts.

Teenagers are the highest social media users. Applications for sharing photos and videos are popular among teenagers. The majority of teens aged 18-24 reported using Instagram (76%), Snapchat (75%), and TikTok (55%) more often than adults (Auxier & Anderson, 2021). The distribution of photo and video media has an impact on the spread of information that is extremely fast and evenly distributed throughout the world in a short time. However, unfortunately, teenagers make not only good contributions but also have bad consequences.

Many cases of bullying are found in the cyber world, and both the perpetrators and victims are teenagers. This phenomenon is known as cyberbullying.

Quoted from Sharrif (2008), in the case of cyberspace, because the range of possibilities the fluidity with which it is possible if the form of bullying turns to technology. There are many methods used in cyberbullying including sending degrading and harassing messages or emails. With the help of technology, these messages can be forwarded and read by many people and invite many people to participate in bullying. Even though the use of force is not possible online, the threats can be perceived by the victim as being as realistic as a face-to-face situation. The more diverse type of social media and the ease of accessing them, the more violent acts are carried out virtually. Sharrif (2008) also stated that the majority of perpetrators of cyberbullying are men, while the majority of women are victims. However, even so, teenage girls are also active in being investigators of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying leaves a digital footprint – a record that can prove useful and provide evidence to help stop the abuse.

One example of cyberbullying against women is represented in a young adult contemporary novel entitled *Blood Moon* written by Lucy Cuthew. It was first published in September (2020), *Blood Moon* was nominated for the 2021 CILIP Carnegie Medal, shortlisted for the 2021 Amazing Book Award, and featured on the Reading Agency's #WomenWonderBooklist. In addition, *Blood Moon* was also included in the shortlist for the Bath Child's Novel Award in 2019. *Blood Moon* tells the story of a teenage girl who gets inappropriate treatment or bullying on social media.

Lucy Cuthew's writing style is also unique, not full narration but verse with light and slang style. Because the narrative uses a verse, Lucy Cuthew uses the first point of view, making this novel immediately touch the reader's mind even though the description is simple. There is the use of slang typical of teenagers and new terms used only on social media. Apart from being in the form of a verse, the way of writing also seems unique and free. Lucy Cuthew uses hashtags in several narratives to convey if the narrative tells a memorable moment for the character.

Writing in capital letters and bold indicates a strong emphasis and emotion. The narration is fascinating to read and offers a new air in youth novels.

This novel tells the story of Frankie, who is bullied after the news spread that she was having menstruation while fingering with her boyfriend for the first time. Her picture became a MEME on social media when it was first circulated as a rumor. It also influences her actual life, academics, and her relationship with Harriet – her closest friend. Frankie tries to ignore her surroundings and bad gossip from her friends at school until the school calls her parents. Frankie, who was initially desperate, now has confidence and courage after getting help from her parents and best friend. She ran a campaign at school and on social media to show that what she had gone through was nothing to be ashamed of, and she used hashtags to do so.

In this study, the writer chooses Lucy Cuthew's *Blood Moon* to be analyzed because Frankie's character represents a woman nowadays, who is under pressure from the internet. Postfeminism is considered suitable to analyze the novel because it discusses misogyny and sexism in new environments in recent years, media and cyberspace, especially social media. The efforts made by women to deal with and fight these things. The use of postfeminism theory will focus more on cyberfeminism, which discusses if cyberspace is not only a campaign tool to uphold equality and speak aloud in public but also as a threat to women in some circles. This thesis will describe Frankie's oppression caused by cyberbullying and analyze Frankie's struggles against that oppression reflected in Lucy Cuthew's *Blood Moon* through a postfeminism perspective. This study is needed to make the readers aware of the ruthlessness of the internet if it is not used wisely. This study is considered important because now, to show that in this era everything information can be reached easily with the internet.

No one has examined Lucy Cuthew's *Blood Moon* as a data source. Since there have been no prior studies that have used a novel as a primary source of data, so this study will be the first. However, there are several studies that use postfeminism theory. The first previous study was conducted by Susanto Kurnianingtiyas (2017) with a thesis entitled "*The Construction of Women*

Identity in Beloved by Toni Morrison.” In this thesis, the researcher uses postfeminism theory to analyze the subjectivity of Afro-American women.

The second is the thesis by Amanda Resy Prafitra (2013). The thesis title is “*An Analysis on Andrea Sachs' Girl Power Aspect and Women Dis/Empowerment in Weisberger's Chick Lit the Devil Wears Prada.*” The researcher uses postfeminism theory and focuses on the issue of Girl power to examine the portrayal of Andrea Sachs' character.

The third is the journal article by Nurliana Fitri and Erni Suparti (2017). The title is “*Analyzing the Portrayal of Patriarchal Oppression towards the Female Characters in J.K. Rowling's The Casual Vacancy: A Reflective Post-Feminist Critics.*” The researcher reveals and shows the reflection of patriarchy experienced by society and women in the novel using postfeminism theory.

Finally, a journal article by Alina Ilief-Martinescus (2016) with the title “*Postfeminist Fiction in Chick Lit Novels.*” In this article, the researcher compares three popular chick Lit novels: Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary*, Sophie Kinsella's *The Secret Dreamworld of a Shopaholic*, and Lauren Weisberger's *The Devil Wears Prada*. Then, the researcher compared and discussed the relationship between chick lit and postfeminism.

Of all the previous studies described, there are significant differences between the previous studies and this study. This study uses postfeminism theory as a reference but focuses more on the issue of bullying on social media or cyberbullying. The subject of this study is a woman who is bullied because of a typical female problem, period. The acts of bullying experienced by characters are not only in the real world but also in cyberspace. The female character in this study gets bad treatment in cyberspace because she is a woman. Besides, the way the characters in this novel defend themselves and fight for their rights through cyberspace. Therefore, the writer uses the theory of cyberfeminism and cyberbullying to analyze the bullying experienced by the main character and the way the main character survives and responds to the injustice she receives. In addition, this study also uses different data sources. This study does not compare several data sources but only focuses on one, Lucy Cuthew's *Blood Moon*.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study, the research questions are formulated as follow:

1. What kind of cyberbullying experienced by Frankie?
2. How does Frankies' struggle to deal with the pressures of cyberbullying?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the questions above, the purpose of this study is divided into two answers, those are:

1. Showing and elaborating the kind of cyberbullying experienced by Frankie and why it happen to her
2. Revealing and analyzing actions taken by Frankie to deal with cyberbullying using the power of women and the internet

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the acts of cyberbullying experienced by Frankie, what kind of pressure she experienced both in cyberspace and in real life, and what actions she took to fight the bullying. The theory used in this study is postfeminism, explained by Stephanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon (2009). The issue of cyberbullying experienced by the main character, Frankie, is reviewed more deeply through cyberfeminism. Because Lucy Cuthew uses the first point of view, the limitation of this study is Frankie's character utterance and narration, which shows the type and impact of cyberbullying, the pressure, and actions to deal with cyberbullying carried out by the main character.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study applies the postfeminism theory explained by Stephanie Genz and Benjamin A. Brabon (2009). Two significances are expected from this study:

1. Theoretically, this study can enrich the reader's understanding of postfeminism and cyberfeminism and get to know more about the field of feminism in the era of modernism.

2. Practically, this study is expected to be used as a reference for further research, especially in the English Study Program that raises the issue of violence against women in the cyber world in contemporary literary works.