

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains about the methodology used in this study. It consists of the research design, research procedures, data presentation, data analysis, and the synopsis of the novel that is used as the data of the study.

#### 3.1. Research Design

In an attempt to answer the research question “How gossip is represented in the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing* by Lauren Weisberger?”, this research employs qualitative descriptive method that centers on the qualitative content analysis. Altheide (1987); Morgan (1993) as cited in Sandelowski (2000) states that qualitative content analysis is a dynamic form of analysis of verbal and visual data that is oriented toward summarizing the informational contents of that data (p.338). The qualitative descriptive method is suitable for this research because this method “does not require the researchers to move far from or into their data” in which the data in this research is in the form of novel (Sandelowski, 2000, p. 335).

Conducting a study about literary works, qualitative content analysis can be one of the options for the method that can be used in the study. In this area, researchers usually want to seek other essential meanings by describing and interpreting the data. In qualitative content analysis, the researcher plays a vital role in describing the data because the descriptions of the data rely on the “perceptions, inclinations, sensitivities and sensibilities of the describer” where in this case the describers are the researchers (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995; Giorgi, 1992; Wolcott, 1994 as cited in Sandelowski, 2000, p.335). Sandelowski (2000) further explains that qualitative content analysis is suitable for the study which wants to discover the what, when and who aspect of the data that has been collected.

Sandelowski's argument is in line with the tendency in the research about literary works where the research tends to produce new interpretation of the works that are analyzed in which the result can be used by the literary society.

In this study, the use of qualitative descriptive method is useful to gain the textual evidences from the novel which later are analyzed to generate a new interpretation. Since the data in this study is in the form of novel, this study also uses documents analysis where the document is one of the forms of data analysis in the qualitative descriptive research (Lambert and Lambert, 2012). Yin (2003) as cited in Radwan, Jones, and Minoli (2013) states that the use of document in the research is intended to support the basic knowledge and to increase the evidence from other sources. In line with Yin's statement, Corbetta (2003) as cited in Radwan, Jones, and Minoli (2013) also mentions the function of document analysis in the study which helps the researchers to gain solid information since the use of document analysis is considered as the non-reactive technique which avoids some kind of influences that the researchers might get if for example they use the interview for the data analysis. Document analysis is suitable for this study since the nature of the novel is a document which provides information that has been produced by the writers.

The qualitative descriptive method is chosen for this study because the main data that is analyzed is in the form of novel which entails the words, phrases, and sentences of the novel. The textual evidence from the novel is taken to support the interpretation in analyzing the data. Since this study uses the theory of representation and gossip in examining the data, several theories of representation and gossip are employed to produce the interpretation of the data.

### **3.2. Research Procedures**

There are three procedures that are performed in analyzing the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing* by Lauren Weisberger which focuses on the literary depictions and the issue of gossip in the novel.

The first step is doing the close reading to the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing*. The issue of gossip that appears in the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing* is the focus of the analysis. The result of the close reading of the novel is the data collection, in this case is the textual evidence from the novel, which centers on the issue of gossip that appears in the novel. The textual evidences are divided into two categories of gossip which are the primary gossip and secondary gossip. The primary gossip is the gossip that revolves around the relationship between Bette, the main character, and the guy named Philip. The secondary gossip covers the gossip outside Bette and Philip's relationship.

The second step is determining the literary representations that appear on the novel by applying the theory of representation that is proposed by Young (1999). Those representations that have been found are still limited into the area of the issue of gossip and celebrity in the novel.

The third step is connecting the literary representations that have been found with Lui's theory (2012) about celebrity gossip. The relation between the literary representations and the issue of gossip is used to help interpreting the data. It is in line with the purpose of this research which explores the issue of gossip that appears in the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing*.

Lastly, after the analysis is conducted, the conclusion is drawn to see how the issue of gossip is represented in the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing*. The conclusion is drawn based on the relation of the literary representations and the theory of gossip that is used as the main tools in analyzing the data.

### **3.3. Data Presentation**

The data is presented in the form of table to show the issue that becomes the focus of this study. The table is categorized into several categories which include the type of literary depiction that is found in the novel, the textual evidence from the novel, the description of the event, the relations between the literary depiction and the issue of gossip and celebrity, and the page number of the textual evidence. The design of the table is presented as it follows in the next page:

No.	Types of Literary Depictions	The Description of The Event	Textual Evidence	The Relations With The Issue of Gossip and Celebrity	Page
1.	Elisa's explanation about Philip to Bette after Bette's first encounter with Philip	Elisa's statement reveals what kind of person she is. It appears that she thinks that Bette should know who Philip is because of his status as the famous person who appears in the gossip column	<p>"Ohmigod, Bette, this is so humiliating for you. She began ticking things off on her fingers, one by one.</p> <p>"Graduate of Eton and Oxford, with a law degree from Yale? Youngest lawyer ever to be named partner at Simpson Thacher? Grandfather is a duke; father owns the majority of land between London and Manchester, with additional large chunk in Edinburgh? Trust fund large enough to rival the country's national debt? Ex-boyfriend of Gwyneth, current boy toy of multiple Victoria Secret's models, and crowned 'Nightlife Adonis' by none other than <i>Vanity Fair</i>. Any of this ringing ay bells?" she was almost panting at this point.</p>	Primary gossip	p. 115
2.	Verbal Depiction	When Uncle Will calls Bette to offer her a job in Kelly's company	<p>"Darling, she does a lot more than just plan parties. She chitchats with club owners and trades on gossip she has about other people's client to the columnist so they'll write good things about her clients and sends gifts to celebrities to convince them to attend her events so the press will as well."</p>	Uncle Will's explanation about Kelly's company show the cycle of gossip that happens in Kelly's company which shows that celebrity gossip is a reflection of modern human behaviour in culture	p. 69
3.	The Headline of the gossip column of Bette's first appearance	"MYSTERY GIRL CHECKS INTO WESTON'S HOTEL"	The headline suddenly brings Bette into the attention. Her coworkers believe the gossip even though they haven't heard directly from Bette. It represents the power of	Primary gossip	p. 118

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### Table 1 Types of Literary Depiction

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#### 3.4. Data Analysis

In this part, the example of the data that has been presented in the data presentation section before is analyzed by linking each type of representation that are found in the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing* with the theory of celebrity gossip that is proposed by Lui (2012). The relation between the representations and the theory of celebrity gossip is the main focus of the analysis. The result of the analysis is expected to produce a new understanding towards the issue of gossip that appears in the novel and the issue of gossip in general through the assist of Young's representation theory.

The formal depiction can be recognized by looking at the formal features of the novel. The formal features of the text include several elements such as the setting, imagery, diction, characters, narrator, tone, and theme. According to Young (1999), the formal depiction has similarity with the real condition of the thing that is being represented. Even though Young (1999) adds that the formal depiction is frequently found in the poetical text, this research tries to reveal the appearance of the formal depiction in the novel since it is already known that those formal features cannot only be discovered in poetical text. The content of the conversation when people do gossip reflects their perception about certain issues. The first evidence of formal depiction below shows certain perception is built and labeled as the thought belonging to certain group of people. Elisa's explanation about Philip's background when she finds out Bette just spend the night with Philip in first meeting portrays what kind of woman she is.

“Ohmigod, Bette, this is so humiliating for you. Are you serious? You have no idea who he is?” She began ticking things off on her fingers, one by one. “Graduate of Eton and Oxford, with a law degree from Yale? Youngest lawyer ever to be named partner at Simpson Thacher? Grandfather is a duke; father owns the majority of land between London and Manchester, with additional large chunk in Edinburgh? Trust fund large enough to rival the country's national debt? Ex-

boyfriend of Gwyneth, current boy toy of multiple Victoria Secret's models, and crowned 'Nightlife Adonis' by none other than *Vanity Fair*. Any of this ringing ay bells?" she was almost panting at this point. (p.115)

Elisa's explanation about Philip background indicates that Bette, who just spends a night with hottest the boy in the world according to Elisa, should have known who Philip is because of his social status. The diction in that statement by mentioning several words that have relevant properties with the reality such as the name of the campus like Oxford and Yale, and also the name of magazine *Vanity Fair*, gives certain meanings to Philip's background. Well known campuses such as Oxford and Yale, and the magazine *Vanity Fair* are considered important in real life. The explanation also shows what Elisa thinks that every girl in this whole world should know about a guy like Philip just because he is important for some women. This indicates certain convention found in the society. Recognizing the verbal depiction is considered as the easier one compared to other representations in the novel. The notion of how the literary depiction relates to the theory of celebrity gossip can be seen perfectly by looking at the statement that is recited by the character. The example that is given in the data presentation shows how the issue of gossip is maintained in the novel. It can be seen from Uncle Will's statement when he tries to convince Bette to work for Kelly & Co. below.

"Darling, she does a lot more than just plan parties. She chitchats with club owners and trades on gossip she has about other people's client to the columnist so they'll write good things about her clients and sends gifts to celebrities to convince them to attend her events so the press will as well." (p.69)

Uncle's Will explanation about what is Kelly actually doing with her company shows how the cycle of gossip runs in the society. It relates to the theory of gossip that is proposed by Lui (2012) which are "celebrity gossip is the reflection of modern human behavior in culture." Through Uncle Will's statement, it can be recognized that gossip has become a tool that is utilized by people to achieve a certain goal. Through that statement also, gossip nowadays cannot only be seen as the conversation but it should be regarded as the instrument in the working place that can help people to gain a benefit.

The last which is the descriptive depiction focuses on how an object is described through the use of example in the novel. The textual evidence that is taken to be presented in the data presentation section is the first headline of Bette's first appearance in the gossip column. The headline of the gossip, "MYSTERY GIRL CHECKS INTO WESTON'S HOTEL" (p.118) has indicated that there is something happening between Bette and Philip after their first encounter. Particularly, the headline of the gossip gives the image that Bette and Philip had sex when they actually did not do that. The power of gossip is sensed in this case when all Bette's coworkers think that she just had sex with Philip. The gossip has led its reader to the conclusion that a hot guy and a girl are having sex when they are spotted checking into the hotel together.

The use of literary depictions in analyzing the novel makes the process of collecting data becomes easier since it has been divided into several categories in the beginning. Through the use of literary depictions, the issue of gossip in the novel *Everyone Worth Knowing* can be examined more clearly since each literary depiction entails different features of the text which helps in highlighting the issue related to the celebrity gossip. In this research, the issue gossip is reconstructed from its origin or daily recognition. This research also provides another perspective in seeing the issue of gossip with the help from the literary depictions.

### **3.5. Synopsis of the Novel**

*Everyone Worth Knowing* is the second novel that Lauren Weisberger writes which was published in 2005. Lauren, who got a recognition after publishing her first novel that later become the mega best seller *The Devil Wears Prada*, cannot follow the success of her first novel. Many critics say her second novel, *Everyone Worth Knowing*, does not offer something new and it is considered as the follower of her first novel. *Everyone Worth Knowing* is regarded as the same novel as Lauren's first novel with only providing the new content which the issue of gossip. Although the reaction towards the release of Lauren's second book was not very satisfying, several magazines and reviews including *Booklist* still give the good review towards this

novel. The *Booklist* says that *Everyone Worth Knowing* will captivate the people who already become the fan of Weisberger's works since her first novel.

*Everyone Worth Knowing* tells a story about a woman named Bettina Robinson or she is familiar with the nickname Bette who works for Kelly & Company. Bette started working for Kelly & Company after she quit her job as a banker. When first time working for Kelly & Company, Bette does not know that her job will involve her in the cycle of celebrity life because she thinks that the company is only organizing an event or planning a party. Working for the Kelly & Co. becomes the first stage of Bette's life in entering the whole gossip world which later will affect her private life.

Later, Bette meets a guy named Philip Weston during her visit to the club after she and her coworkers celebrate the success of Candace Bushnell's event. Philip who is recognized as one of the hottest bachelor in New York and with his family status and also his job as a lawyer is considered as the "hot stuff" for the media, in this case the paparazzi and the gossip magazine. Philip's track record which shows that he has dated several celebrities figure adds his value of being the target of the media. Bette who did not know anything about Philip's reputation is somehow trapped in the situation where people start to think that that she and Philip is a couple just because she left the club together with Philip after their first meeting.

The condition now has forced Bette into the situation when Bette has to pretend that she actually is in the relationship with Philip. Bette's relationship with Philip is considered as the good promotion for the Kelly & Co. Bette's fake relationship is not only beneficial for the company she is working in but also for Philip since this media attention can be used by him to hold his status as the high class bachelor in New York. At first, Bette thinks that her fake relationship is simple thing that will have gone in a few moments but after her identity being mentioned in the gossip column, Bette started to consider that the line between her professional life and her private life now becomes invisible.