

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The Devil Wears Prada is a New York Times bestseller novel written by Lauren Weisberger that was published in 2003 by Broadway Books. The novel revolves around the story of Andrea and her ruthless boss, Miranda. Miranda's character, despite being the antagonist, remains a character who leaves a lasting impression on readers because of her cruel image as a boss. Miranda is known as the formidable editor-in-chief of the high-end fashion magazine *Runway*, making her a respected and influential figure in the fashion world. Knowing herself to be important, her character embodies the cruelty of a superior boss who mistreats their employees by acting arbitrarily with a tendency to do as they please due to their higher status.

The novel is written from Andrea's point of view, the protagonist of the story who works as Miranda's junior assistant. The difficulties Andrea faces as Miranda's assistant make it easier to sympathize with her character, but this study is compelled to take a closer look at Miranda's character because it raises the question of why she acts the way she does. Her haughty personality and bad treatment of others, particularly her assistants, display behavior that demonstrates a superiority complex, which motivated this study to examine her character.

This study is carried out with a psychological approach, and uses a library research method to collect the data. Alfred Adler's concept of superiority complex in his Individual Psychology theory is used in this study to analyze Miranda's character since her traits resemble superiority complex behaviors. The main source

for applying Adler's theory is the book written by Heinz L. Ansbacher and Rowena R. Ansbacher entitled *The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler* which contains a collection of Adler's teachings from his previous books.

By analyzing the causes, signs, and impacts, Miranda's superiority complex are revealed through this study. To support the analysis of Miranda's superiority complex, how Miranda is characterized through the intrinsic elements of literature also analyzed in this study by using Holman's concepts of character, characterization, setting, and conflict from his book entitled *A Handbook to Literature*. This study expected to be beneficial for any student in the English Department, as well as the general reader of English novels, specifically *The Devil Wears Prada* since it will provide them with fresh perspectives.

1.2. Research Problems

Derived from the background of the study above, the writer formulates two problems to be discussed in this research, which are:

1. How is Miranda characterized in Lauren Weisberger's novel *The Devil Wears Prada*?
2. What are the causes, signs, and impacts of Miranda's superiority complex in Lauren Weisberger's novel *The Devil Wears Prada*?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

Related to the research problems, the objectives of the study presented as follows.

1. To analyze how Miranda is characterized in Lauren Weisberger's novel *The Devil Wears Prada*.
2. To analyze the causes, signs, and impacts of Miranda's superiority complex in Lauren Weisberger's novel *The Devil Wears Prada*.

1.4. Scope of the Study

The study examines both the intrinsic and the extrinsic elements depicted in Lauren Weisberger's novel titled *The Devil Wears Prada*. To analyze Miranda's character, the intrinsic elements consist of character, characterization, setting, and conflict. Meanwhile, the extrinsic elements focus on the causes, signs, and impacts of Miranda's superiority complex. By using Alfred Adler's concept of superiority complex, the study reveals that Miranda develops a superiority complex when she strives for success inaccurately without the admixture of a good social interest due to her feelings of inferiority and the neglect she experiences from her family. Miranda's superiority complex makes her a challenging boss, ultimately leading to her difficulty in empathizing with those around her.

1.5. Previous Study

There have been several previous studies with *The Devil Wears Prada* as the object of the study. The first previous study is a master thesis titled *Fashion and Physical Beauty as Means of Empowerment: A Feminist Study of Lauren Weisberger's The Devil Wears Prada and Julie Murphy's If The Shoe Fits*, written by Fatima S. Jamal (2023). By using Judith Butler's theory of performativity, Jamal found a woman's fashion choices can assert independence and influence workplace

dynamics; Miranda uses her style to convey authority, while Andrea transforms from an outsider to an empowered individual through her evolving wardrobe.

The second previous study is “Gender Performance by Miranda Priestly as the Main Character in Weisberger’s *The Devil Wears Prada*”, a journal article written by Baety Murtazikoh and Fatma Hetami (2022) which uses Judith Butler’s postmodernism feminist theory to analyze Miranda’s gender performances in the story. Miranda’s gender performance is evident in both her general description as an influential and successful chief editor of *Runway* magazine, and in her gender reconstruction, which challenges the gender stereotypes toward women’s characterizations and exhibits masculine characteristics.

The third previous study is “Metaphor and Simile as Expressions of Emotion Portrayed in the Novel *The Devil Wears Prada*”, a journal article written by Kevin Jie (2021). By using semantic theory from Geoffrey Leech about figurative language and the expression of emotion theory from Kovecses, Jie found metaphor and simile as the types of figurative language within the novel. Each of the figurative language conveys an emotion, including happiness, angry, fear, and love.

The fourth previous study is “The Image of Wise Woman in a Literary Text (Based on the Novel *The Devil Wears Prada* by Lauren Weisberger)”, a journal article written by Oksana Babelyuk and Andrii Galaidin (2019). By looking at the lexical means and stylistic devices in the novel, the article presented the image of a wise woman who devotes a lot of her interests to their education and holding professional positions in society.

The fifth previous study is “Feminist Perspective in Lauren Weisberger’s *The Devil Wears Prada*”, a journal article written by Bayu A. Prasatyo (2018). Prasatyo uses feminist approach to analyze the characteristics of Miranda, and these traits of Miranda include being Jewish, fashionable, hectic, demanding, powerful, influential, discriminatory, intelligent, and caring.

The sixth previous study is a journal article titled “Power and Gender Oppression in Lauren Weisberger’s *The Devil Wears Prada* and Seth Graham Smith’s *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*”, written by Erliska (2017). This previous study uses a Marxist-Feminist approach to analyze the data. It applies F. Engels' theory of power, I. Young’s theory of gender oppression, and the theories of liberation by Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Erliska discovered that the signs of power by the ruling class and almost all elements of women's liberation appear in both novels. As for the gender oppression, the female character in *The Devil Wears Prada* suffers from exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, and cultural imperialism in the workplace.

The seventh previous study is an article by Abang Hendra Narizwana and Diana Budi Darma (2016) titled “Defense Mechanism of Miranda Priestly in Lauren Weisberger’s *The Devil Wears Prada*”. Based on the type of defense mechanism according to Sigmund Freud’s theory, it is found that Miranda performed four types of defense mechanisms; intellectualization, acting out, denial, and projection. Meanwhile, the reasons of Miranda’s defense mechanism are because of her anxiety and the conflicts that she faces.

The eighth previous study, *Fashion Discourse and Power in Twenty-First Century in Lauren Weisberger's The Devil Wears Prada: A Genealogy Analysis*, is an undergraduate thesis written by R.A.J Safina Adam (2016). This previous study employs Foucault's discourse theory by utilizing genealogical analysis along with the concepts of power and knowledge as supporting factors. The findings suggest that Andrea's fashion discourse challenges the regime of truth associated with Miranda's fashion discourse while positively representing American fashion.

The ninth previous study is a journal article written by Rinaldo Cesar, Kurnia Ningsih, and Delvi Wahyuni (2013) titled "Material Inclination to Indicate Social Status in Lauren Weisberger's Novel *The Devil Wears Prada* (2003)". By using the consumerism concept by Zygmunt Baumann, the hedonism concept by Ruut Veenhoven, and postmodern theory by Jean Baudrillard, it is found that material inclination in the novel is portrayed through two characteristics; consumerism and hedonism, which are displayed by Miranda's character. Consumerism can be seen in Miranda's life habits, and hedonism can be seen in Miranda's lifestyle.

The tenth previous study is an undergraduate thesis written by Nora R. Surahman (2011) titled *Andrea Sach's Struggles Against Exploitation and Alienation in Lauren Weisberger's The Devil Wears Prada*. Surahman uses a sociological approach and the definition of exploitation and alienation by several experts in order to analyze the exploitation faced by Andrea that makes her alienated. Surahman found that the exploitation done by Andrea's boss, Miranda, causes alienation among Andrea and the other staff. Eventually, working as Miranda's

personal assistant put Andrea under so much pressure because of the demanding job and it made Andrea distanced from her closest ones.

The ten previous studies above appear to have used the same object as this study, namely the novel by Lauren Weisberger titled *The Devil Wears Prada* with each study focusing on a different topic. The first previous study focuses on fashion through feminist perspective, the second previous study focuses on gender performances, the third previous study focuses on metaphor and simile, the fourth previous study focuses on lexical means and stylistic devices, the fifth previous study focuses on Miranda's characteristics using feminist approach, the sixth previous study focuses on power and gender oppression, the seventh previous study focuses on defense mechanisms, the eighth previous study focuses on fashion discourse through genealogy analysis, the ninth previous study focuses on material inclination, and the tenth previous study focuses on exploitation and alienation. Although several previous studies above have also analyzed Miranda, none have specifically discussed Miranda's superiority complex. Therefore, by using Alfred Adler's concept of superiority complex in his Individual Psychology theory, this study focuses on Miranda's superiority complex which consists of the causes, signs, and the impacts of her superiority complex.

1.6. Writing Organization

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this study consists of the background of the study, research problems, objectives of the study, scope of the study, previous study, and writing organization.

CHAPTER II: THEORY AND METHOD

The second chapter consists of the theories and methods that are used to analyze the novel. Both intrinsic and extrinsic theories are applied in this study. The intrinsic elements use Holman's concept, and the extrinsic elements use Alfred Adler's concept of a superiority complex in his Individual Psychology theory. Meanwhile, the research approach for this study is psychological approach, and the method of data collection is a library research method.

CHAPTER III: ANALYSIS

The third chapter contains an analysis of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of the novel. The intrinsic elements analyze the character and characterization, the setting, and the conflict faced by Miranda in the novel, whereas the extrinsic elements analyze the development of Miranda's superiority complex by looking at the causes, signs, and impacts of her superiority complex.

CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

This chapter consists of summary of the main points from the analysis of this study.

REFERENCES

This chapter contains all of the sources that are used to support this study.

