CATFISHING AND ITS IMPLICATION TO CYBERCRIMES
REFLECTED IN SIERRA BURGESS IS A LOSER: A SOCIOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVE CATFISHING REFLECTED IN SIERRA BURGESS IS A
LOSER MOVIE

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Getting Bachelor
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APPROVAL

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CATFISHING AND ITS IMPLICATION TO CYBERCRIMES REFLECTED IN SIERRA BURGESS IS A LOSER: A SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE CATFISHING REFLECTED IN SIERRA BURGESS IS A LOSER MOVIE

Abstrak

Kata kunci: Catfishing, Sierra Burgess Is a Loser, Sosiologi Sastra.

Abstract
Catfishing is one of the cybercrimes where the perpetrators of catfishing fake their identity in cyberspace to communicate with other people with a specific purpose. Sierra Burgess Is a Loser by Ian Samuels is a movie that contains catfishing action. The technique used in this research is literature study. The purpose of this study is to analyze the indicators and actions of catfishing and their implications for cybercrime. This study uses Rene Wellek and Austin Warren's theory of sociology of literature. Two sources of data used are primary data from the film itself and secondary data consisting of previous research, websites, journals, and theses related to this research. The results found from this study are the catfishing indicators contained in this film and the implications of the catfishing actions contained in this film on cybercrime.

Keywords: Catfishing, Sierra Burgess Is a Loser, Sociology of Literature.

1. Introduction
The phenomenon of catfishing in everyday life describes cases of fraud in cyberspace carried out by people who pretend to show interest in other people,
but have hidden intentions. They don't show up with real identities. *Catfishers* mostly steal other people's identities or lie about their origins. People who do catfishing can be based on different motives. There are those who are just playing games, lack self-confidence, take personal revenge or others who want to extort the property of the people they have managed to deceive. Catfishing is not only the attention of information technology experts, but also the author's attention. The author's concerns about this phenomenon there are many people do catfishing for various things and reasons, from positive things to negative things. Whatever the purpose of catfishing cannot be justified, because catfishing is a cybercrime. The main element in the act of catfishing is counterfeiting, and counterfeiting is a bad act against the existing norms. Nolan (2015) Catfish, like Modernists, are individuals who write with alternate personalities and also frequently adapt their written dialects accordingly. However, these written performances differ greatly from previous printed portraits of themselves. Catfish operates online where most people these days usually create their identities through many social networking sites. These sites are designed with editable profiles that make it easy to instantly tailor personalities to specific regular audiences. *Catfisher* is a term for perpetrators of catfish and *catfishes* are victims of catfishing. Most *catfisher* appear to pretend to be someone else because non-conforming to social standards online, and their written performances have an element of truth. After all, they are the ones who use letters to implement emotions, and their words and emotional expressions come from them, regardless of the person they invented.

A lot of researchers already study about ‘catfishing’ as the object of their study using various theories as the approach. There are 9 previous studies on catfishing the author obtained, and these studies were used as material for previous research in this research. Here are 9 previous research about catfishing:

From this previous studies divided into 2 focus of the study. Dewi and Irwansyah (2021) in thesis entitled *Regulasi terhadap penipuan identitas: studi fenomena ‘catfish’ pada social networking sites* (sns); Williams (2020) entitled *Catfishing and identity online management*.; Nolan (2015) *Learning to
Circumvent the Limitations of the Written Self: The Rhetorical Benefits of Poetic Fragmentation and Internet “Catfishing”; Arfini et al. (2021) Online Identity Crisis Identity Issues in Online Communities; Nurdin (2021) False Identity in Online Media Dating (Phenomenology of Catfishing Players in Online Media Dating Tinder); Rusmana (2015) Penipuan Dalam Interaksi Dalam Media Sosial; Smith, Smith, and Blazka (2017) Follow Me, What’s the Harm? Considerations of Catfishing and Utilizing Fake Online Personas on Social Media; Noah (2021) in Privacy and Security Consideration for Cyberpsychology in Catfishing examined the act of catfishing with field data, and the results of the study found that catfishing is an act of online identity falsification carried out by someone with a specific purpose. The act of catfishing is a cybercrime. Whereas Kotteman (2015) in The Rhetoric of Deliberate Deception: What Catfishing Can Teach Us study about the composition of catfish, how catfish moments can occur on social media, how to progress online deception, how to avoid catfish and how to avenge the actions of catfish. This thesis uses data from various field data, movies and books and then the author summarizes the results the act of catfishing.

The purpose of this study is to fill the gap between the previous studies used in this study. This study focuses on examining the catfishing action contained in Sierra Burgess Is a Loser movie by using a sociological perspective to find out the relation between literature and the society context where the literary work was produced discover. Those materials will be studied using sociological perspective. There is some of studies that raised catfishing issues and this research aims to complement the previous studies. This study using sociological perspective based on Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1956) in Theory of Literature offer there are three types of sociology of literature, namely the sociology of writers, sociology of literary works, and sociology of the readers. Sociology of literature can be defined as the study of the relationship between literary works and society. This relationship can be two-way, namely how the social context influences literary writers in building their imaginations and how the implications of their work for social life. Wiyatmi (2013:p. 9–10) said that
in the perspective of the sociology of literature, among other things, literary works can be seen as a product of society, as a means of re-illustrating (representing) reality in society. Literature can also be a document of socio-cultural and political realities that occur in society at a certain time.

2. Method
This research uses qualitative method that suitable with literature research. Qualitative research is a research procedure that utilizes descriptive data, in the form of written or spoken words from observable people and actors. Cresswell (2003 p.181) stated that qualitative research look for involvement of their participants in information assortment and try to assemble compatibility and validity with the object in the study. There are 6 steps to collect the data: the author watched the movie several times; capturing scenes and taking the dialogue that related to the topic; collect the data from articles, journals, and read books; arranging data that have been collected; analysing the data from sociological perspective; and drawing conclusions.

3. Finding and Discussion
3.1 Finding
3.1.1 Indicators of catfishing
Catfishing has a great impact especially on the victim. After watching this movie, the researcher found the catfishing indicator contained in this movie, explained as follow:

3.1.1.1 Faking identity in cyberspace
Falsifying identity by pretending to be someone else is a leading indicator of catfishing. Victims of catfishing themselves will recognize the perpetrator as a figure created by the perpetrator.

3.1.1.2 Using words as the implementation of emotions
The figure they created is just a mask, but behind the figure the words and emotions they express to the victim come from the real person behind the fake identity. It happens because
the perpetrators of catfishing have a specific purpose and they only hide behind the false identity they created.

3.1.1.3 Depiction of catfishing

Catfishing addressed by the author for creating three depictions. They are character, setting, and events.

3.1.2 Character

Character categories are divided into 3 namely; catfisher, the person whose her identity is being used and victim of catfishing (catfishees).

3.1.2.1 Catfisher

In this movie the catfisher is represented by the main character Sierra Burgess. Sierra Burgess was a smart and ambitious kid, but she wasn't physically attractive and unpopular. She is often criticized and insulted by her popular classmate Veronica. Sierra always responds to Veronica's taunts with charms, Sierra is not a physically charming, but her brain is.

3.1.2.2 The person whose her identity is being used

The person whose her identity is being used in this movie is represented by Veronica. Veronica is a popular kid in school, she is a cheerleader, physically she is beautiful and attractive but not very smart. Veronica is a mean girl, she knows that she is attractive so she often put other people down.

3.1.2.3 Victim of catfishing (catfishees)

The victim of catfishing in this movie represented by Jamey. Jamey is a handsome football player from another high school. Jamey could be a victim of catfishing because Veronica gave Sierra's number to him on purpose.
3.1.3 Setting

*Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* is a modern retelling of the 1897 play *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand. Viewed from the technology used and the year of production, the setting of this movie is in 2017, but Samuels still carries the 80’s standard. The movie is set in the United States. The setting of this movie are in cafe, school, Sierra's bedroom, Jamey’s bedroom, Veronica’s house, theatre, parking lot, and stadium.

3.1.3.1 Café

At this cafe, Jamey first met Veronica and asked for her number. Veronica doesn't like Jamey and gives Sierra's number to Jamey as if it were her number.

3.1.3.2 2) Sierra’s bedroom.

Sierra replied to Jamey's message and continued to communicate hiding her real identity and acting like she is Veronica. Catfishing action done from Sierra’s bedroom.

3.1.3.3 Jamey’s bedroom

Jamey often communicated with Sierra in her room. What Jamey knows, he communicates with Veronica not Sierra, from here he is a victim of catfishing (catfishees).

3.1.3.4 School

At school, Sierra ask Veronica to work together to respond Jamey. Sierra wants to keep in touch with Jamey, and Sierra helps Veronica to look smarter by teach her literature, so Veronica can be more attractive to Spencer which Veronica's boyfriend who is a college student. Sierra and Veronica eventually became close friends and often met at school.

3.1.3.5 Veronica’s house

Veronica learns with Sierra, and in return Veronica is willing to help Sierra by sending her selfie to Jamey or video calls
with Jamey, so that Jamey stays in touch with Sierra and doesn't suspect anything.

3.1.3.6 Park
Sierra and Daniel accidentally meet Jamey and his brother. Daniel introduces Sierra and Sierra pretends to be deaf. All this time Jamey and Sierra only communicated via text and voice call, so Sierra was afraid that Jamey would recognize her voice so she pretended to be deaf.

3.1.3.7 Theatre
After Sierra and Jamey met at the park, Sierra wants to confess to Jamey. Veronica and Sierra make a plan that Veronica and Jamey go on a date to the theatre but later Sierra will confess that she has been communicating with Jamey online all this time. When Jamey arrived Sierra suddenly stated that she was not ready to reveal her real identity. And finally Veronica and Jamey still dating.

3.1.3.8 Parking lot
Sierra stalks Veronica and Jamey after their date all the way to the parking lot. During Veronica's talk with Jamey, Sierra always dictated what Veronica had to say and when Jamey wanted to kiss Veronica Jamey was asked to close his eyes and then Sierra switched positions with Veronica so that Sierra was kissing Jamey but Jamey didn't know that.

3.1.3.9 Stadium
The longer the act of catfish continues, the more problems there are. In the end, Sierra's catfishing action, assisted by Veronica, is exposed during an inter-school football match. things got complicated and Jamey was very disappointed.

3.1.3.10 Events
It started with Veronica giving Jamey Sierra's number as if it was her number. Sierra finally has a crush on Jamey
and stays hidden behind Veronica's identity to stay in touch with Jamey. Until finally Sierra's catfishing action which was assisted by Veronica was finally exposed. In Sierra Burgess Is a Loser movie is depicted catfishing action carried out by Sierra, assisted by Veronica and the victim is Jamey. It can be said that the action of catfishing because the actions taken by Sierra are in accordance with the catfishing indicators, namely identity falsification and using words as implementation of emotions.

3.1.4 The Reason Ian Samuels specifically address catfishing that carried out by Sierra in Sierra Burgess Is a Loser Movie.

Ian Samuels is a director based in Los Angeles. His hybrid work has screened internationally at festivals and venues Sundance, SXSW, Telluride and Slamdance. He received his MFA from California Institute of the Arts in film directing and a BFA from Bard College in film / video. He is a 2014 Film Independent Project: Involve fellow.

In an interview released by the ET website Ian Samuels admits that Sierra threatens his position as a redeemable character, especially during one crucial climactic moment in a football match that reveals everything. “Sierra did some pretty terrible things. She's the kind of person, but everyone has the capacity to do some very cruel things, maybe even more cruel than bad girls do. All of that keeps the film satisfying because it meets certain expectations but also keeps you on your toes.”

From this interview, we can see that Ian specifically addresses catfishing in this movie because he wants to illustrate that every human being has their own evil side and we got the moral message that being honest is better, there is no need to be someone else to be
loved and appreciated by others, because besides the evil side human has their own superiority and good side.

3.2 Discussion
According to Sociological theory by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren, *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* is related to Sociology as the study of the relationship between literary works and society, especially about how the social context influences literary writers in building their imaginations and how the implications of their work for social life. The story of *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie is very likely to happen in the society. Even though Franssen and Kuipers (2015) said that “As it has evolved into an ever more in-depth exploration of increasingly diverse, fluid, transnational, and decentralized literary fields, the reader and the broader public role of literature have all too often been forgotten” but, Ian Samuels as the director raises this issue because it’s relate with reality because he wants to show that every human being has good and bad sides. Good people can't always do good, and bad people don't always do bad things.

From the result, the writer found some indicators that displayed the act of catfishing. There are faking identity in cyberspace and using words as implementations of emotion. First, faking identity in cyberspace is falsifying identity by pretending to be someone else, so the victim will recognize the catfisher as their false identity. Second, catfisher using words as implementations of emotion eventhough catfisher using fake identity in cyberspace but behind that figure the words and emotions they express to the victim come from the real person behind the fake identity. It happens because the perpetrators of catfishing have their own purpose.

To depict catfishing in this research, the writer found theory from Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1956) based on sociological perspective there are sociology of writers, sociology of literature, and sociology of readers and the social influence of literary works. Here the author depicted catfishing addressed by the director for creating three depictions. They are character, setting, and events. Character categories are divided into 3
namely; catfisher, the person whose her identity is being used, and the victim of catfishing. There is also setting and events that shows the act of catfishing in this movie.

The act of catfishing in this movie started when it started with Veronica giving Jamey Sierra's number as if it was her number. Sierra finally has a crush on Jamey and stays hidden behind Veronica's identity to stay in touch with Jamey. Until finally Sierra's catfishing action which was assisted by Veronica was finally exposed. In *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie is depicted catfishing action carried out by Sierra, assisted by Veronica and the victim is Jamey. It can be said as catfishing action because Sierra already knew that Jamey recognized her as Veronica, Sierra could told Jamey from the start that she was Sierra and not Veronica, but Sierra chose to do catfishing.

In this study the author found out the reason why Ian Samuels as the director specifically addressed the act of catfishing in this movie because he wants to illustrate that every human being has their own evil side and we got the moral message that being honest is better, there is no need to be someone else to be loved and appreciated by others, because besides the evil side human has their own superiority and good side.

This study deals with the actions of catfish aims to complement previous research. The research that has existed so far is research on catfish actions based on field data, research from the previous study that uses a combination of field data and literature is *The Rhetoric of Deliberate Deception: What Catfishing Can Teach Us* by Kathrin L. Kotteman. The difference with this research is this research based on literature using data taken from *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie. Previous studies on catfishing was used as a guide by the author to write this thesis.

4. CLOSING

The conclusion of this research is consisting of three problem statements. They are: the indicators of catfishing in *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie, depiction of catfishing in *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie, and the reason
of Ian Samuels address catfishing specifically in *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie.

First, indicators of catfishing in *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie are divided into two: First, faking identity in cyberspace is falsifying identity by pretending to be someone else, so the victim will recognize the catfisher as their false identity. Second, catfisher using words as implementations of emotion eventhough catfisher using fake identity in cyberspace but behind that figure the words and emotions they express to the victim come from the real person behind the fake identity.

Second, the author depicted catfishing addressed by the director for creating three depictions. They are character, setting, and events. Character categories are divided into 3 namely; catfisher, the person whose her identity is being used, and the victim of catfishing. There is also setting and events that shows the act of catfishing in *Sierra Burgess Is a Loser* movie.

Third, the author found out the reason why Ian Samuels as the director specifically addressed the act of catfishing in this movie because he wants to illustrate that every human being has their own evil side and we got the moral message that being honest is better, there is no need to be someone else to be loved and appreciated by others, because besides the evil side human has their own superiority and good side.

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