

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

Research designs are styles of inquiry that give explicit guidelines for the steps of a research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Research designs are generally categorized into qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology. The obvious difference between qualitative and quantitative research is how the data is collected, analyzed, and presented either through words or numbers. Qualitative research is generally described as research that uses words rather than figures or numbers as in quantitative, and the use of closed-ended questions and replies or open-ended questions and responses. Moreover, according to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the fundamental and philosophical presuppositions that researchers bring to the study, the categories of research strategies used in the research, and the particular methodologies employed in performing these strategies all provide a more comprehensive perspective of the gradations and distinctions between them.

The design of this research is qualitative since it uses the method for comprehending and investigating the meaning that individuals or groups assign in society through words and not numbers. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the researcher who engages in qualitative research advocates an approach to research that values an inductive approach, an emphasis on personal significance, and the significance of accurately describing the complexity of a situation. This suits the approach of this research of sociological literary criticism which evidently

investigates the social problem in literary works. The process of data collection, analysis, and presentation is in the form of words, phrases, and sentences. The data are described qualitatively to form a conclusion of the research result.

3.2. Object of the Research

As a literary study, the researcher analyses the sociology of literature in the novel “Absent in the Spring”. The novel was published in 1944 by the Collins publisher, written by Agatha Christie under the alias of Mary Westmacott. It is among Agatha Christie's most unexpected and illuminating works since it is distinctive from most of her works which generally are about traditional mystery. The novel consists of 166 pages and has been praised by The Times Literary Supplement's and The Guardian in 1944. Though the novel “Absent in the Spring” is not among her famous traditional mystery novels, she describes the book as “*the one book that has satisfied me completely - the book I always wanted to write.*”

The object of the research is the aspects of social exchange as portrayed in “Absent in the Spring” (1944) novel written by Agatha Christie. The aspects of social exchange are divided into the aspects of its context, process, and outcome. The object of the research is based on the data taken from the novel as a work of literature through which the author of the novel implements her ideas and creativity in it. This includes social phenomena that are analyzed through the sociology of literature within literary criticism. The researcher takes a deeper analysis of the social exchange phenomena which is framed into the theory of emotion, and how those emotion roles sociologically affect the characters, plot, themes, and other intrinsic elements of the novel.

3.3. Method of Collecting Data

To ensure a well-structured research approach, the researcher employed a data collection method. In this study, the researcher employs a non-participatory observation technique mentioned by Fraenkel et al. (2012), wherein the researcher observes the data source without actively participating in the observed activities, neither involving any participant as an object of the research. Moreover, the researcher utilizes the library research method by George (2011), involving thorough reading and comprehension of information, to observe the data. In qualitative data collection, the method of collecting data is specified in the distinguishment between primary data and secondary data through an observation method. The collected primary data were taken from the text in a literary work, which is the novel “Absent in the Spring” by Agatha Christie. The researcher sourced secondary data from articles and books that encompassed the theory of sociology of literature by Laurenson & Swingewood (1972), social exchange theory by Homans (1958) regarding social exchange, and how social exchange is affected by emotions as the theory from Lawler & Thye (1999). Some steps taken by the researcher in collecting the data based on the needs and essential issues of this study were:

1. The first step that the researcher took to collect the data was to read the whole novel. The researcher took a deep analysis of the novel, for which the novel needed to be read several times. The researcher analyzed the text in the novel to find everything related to the object of the research, which is to be continued in the next step.

2. After carefully reading the novel several times, the researcher took the next step to highlight the points in text, narration, or conversation in the novel, related to the object of the research. The highlighted texts became the collected data that the researcher took to be analyzed based on the theory.

3.4. Method of Analyzing Data

According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the method of analyzing data in qualitative research is used as a process of bringing order, structures, and meaning to the mass of collected data. According to Fraenkel et al. (2012), data analysis should incorporate content analysis. Content analysis is an indirect technique focused on analyzing communication to study human behavior. It can be used in literary studies. Steps that were taken in conducting this research were:

1. The researcher analyzed the intrinsic elements of the novel. Through this, the researcher analyzed the elements of fiction which are plot, setting, point of view, theme, and characters. The novel was read multiple times in order to identify the elements of fiction. These elements of fiction were crucial in analyzing the extrinsic element of the novel as a second step.
2. The researcher analyzed the extrinsic elements of the novel which were correlated with the novel's intrinsic elements. The extrinsic elements were identified by applying the sociology of literature theory by Laersonson & Swingewood (1972), and supported with the social exchange theory by Homans (1958) regarding its correlation with emotions by Lawler & Thye (1999) to be applied to "Absent in the Spring" novel by Agatha Christie.

3.5. Method of Presenting Research Result

After the method of analyzing data was completed, the researcher utilized a method to present the research result. Given the research's focus on literary work, a descriptive qualitative approach was employed to present the research results. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the study findings would be presented utilizing words, phrases, and sentences in qualitative research methods. Descriptive refers to the researcher's use of paragraphs to explain the outcome of the result. Therefore, by using a descriptive qualitative method to present the research result, the researcher used words and sentences in paragraphs to present the results found in the novel based on the theories implemented to it.