

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter consists of research methods and the data presentation of the research. It covers the research questions, the research subject and the context, the research procedure, the data collection, and the data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research Questions

The study addressed this following question:

- How are androgynous characters presented by the narrator?

#### 3.2 Research Subject and Context

*The Left Hand of Darkness* is a science fiction novel written by Ursula K. Le Guin. Le Guin is well known for her contribution in literature with her science fiction works. The novel is first published in 1969, and it is re-published in 1976 with the addition of author's introduction. The main theme of the novel is about androgynous society in Gethen planet in Hainish universe. The novel is chosen for the study because of its main theme which portrays the experience of a man from Terran who encounters the androgynous society. Androgynous is one of gender identities that is still evolving which is continually raised as a theme in literary works. Thus, androgynous as one of gender identities can be understood better and ultimately be accepted in the society. Furthermore, as Le Guin (1976) states in introduction of the novel, she claims that the novel is a "thought experiment" in order to see the world without gender or permanent sex.

The story is about an envoy from Terran, named Genly Ai. He has a mission to persuade the government of Gethen to join Ekumen (an organization for uniting planets in the universe). Genly Ai finds difficulties in running his mission because the society of Gethen is androgynous so that he has to learn and adapt to the gender identity of the society. Since he comes from the society which recognizes masculine and feminine as gender, gender differences lead to

differences in the social identity construction which constrained his mission. Thus, gender identity is one of the elements of social identity construction. As the result, he needs to understand the people of Gethen, especially the people who work in the government, in order to communicate and to persuade them in a suitable way. The process of Ai in understanding the society of Gethen is the material for the study. In the end of the study, the presentation of Ai in describing the major androgynous characters can be used as the findings of the study.

### **3.3 Research Procedure**

The study employed gender criticism approach proposed by Bressler (2007). It challenges the established gender identity and the attribution of masculinity and femininity for male and female. He states that the attribution of gender is a social construction and it limits the true identity of oneself. He further states that gender is not absolute and is not static which suggests that gender is flexible and possible for both male and female. Based on the approach, the study analyzed two elements: the characterization of main character and major androgynous characters in the novel. It examines the main character which is assumed as a male with the traits associated with masculinity while the other characters are assumed as androgynous characters who possess masculine and feminine traits. Thus, it is presumed that most description in the story comes from the perspective of a male towards the androgynous. Therefore, the study was conducted to explore the concept of androgyny which portrayed in the novel as a gender identity.

#### **3.3.1 Data Collection**

The data are in the form of words, utterances, and descriptions from the main character, which is also the narrator named Genly Ai, in the story which are collected from the novel *The Left Hand of Darkness*. The words, utterances, and descriptions represent the perspective of the main character towards the major androgynous characters.

There are also descriptions about the history and the setting of the story are selected and they are used as textual evidences in order to support the answer for the research question of the study.

### 3.3.2 Data Analysis

Gender criticism approach proposed by Bressler (2007) was made possible through the analysis of characterization of the main character and major androgynous characters. The study was conducted with the following steps:

1. From *The Left Hand of Darkness*, the major androgynous characters are divided into two categories or types to see how the androgynous characters are constructed.
2. The descriptions of major androgynous characters by the narrator were selected. The descriptions consisted of the description about physical appearances, verbal communication/ speaking manner, behavior, and general gender description from each major androgynous character.
3. The categorization and the selection of types and descriptions of major androgynous characters were analyzed to see how the major androgynous characters presented by the narrator.
4. The gathered data were outlined and were analyzed to discover the findings of the study.
5. The findings of the study were discussed using the concept of androgyny by Carlson (1995), gender presentation in Young Adult Fiction by Hinton (2010), and Performativity theory by Butler (1990), to answer the research question and to make conclusion of the conducted study.