

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the research methodology which includes the explanation regarding the method applied in the study. It revolves around the research question, research procedures, data presentation, and synopsis of the novel.

3.1 Research Design

This study was intended particularly to examine the conflicts between the male and female central characters that influenced the versions of reality constructed in the novel. In conducting the analysis, the study employed a qualitative descriptive method. Sandelowski (2000) described qualitative descriptive designs as a typically eclectic but reasonable combination of sampling, and data collection, analysis, and representation techniques. Qualitative descriptive study was the method of choice when straight descriptions of phenomena are desired. It offers a comprehensive summary of an event in the everyday terms of those events (Sandelowski, 2000). The qualitative descriptive method was employed by collecting the data from the novel that were considered significant, conducting document analysis, and re-presenting the result of the analysis. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen in this study since it was the most suitable method to serve the purpose of revealing the conflicts that occurred in detail and how it related to the construction of reality in the novel.

3.2 Research Question

This study focused on the issue of reality constructed by the male and female central characters, Nick Dunne and Amy Elliot Dunne, in *Gone Girl* to answer the following question:

- How do the male and female central characters construct their versions of reality through conflicts in the novel?

3.3 Research Procedure

The procedure of the analysis of reality construction in *Gone Girl* consisted of at least three steps.

The first step was doing an intensive close reading. Then, the most relevant textual evidence was highlighted with regard to some considerations: (1) from whose point of view a conflict was narrated; and (2) the setting in which a particular conflict occurred.

This textual evidence was later on categorized into the table consisting of conflicts based on Bartley, Blanton, and Gilliard's (2005) three aspects of marital relationship: (1) decision making; (2) gender roles attitude; and (3) division of household labor. However, due to the close relation on the idea of gender role attitude and division of household labor, the current study combined these two aspects into one category which was the attitude towards gender roles and stereotypes.

Next, the collected data were analyzed by focusing on the conflicts that occurred in the novel particularly in the process of decision-making and their attitude towards gender. Later on, this analysis on conflicts was used to reveal how the male and female central characters constructed the versions of reality in the novel.

Lastly, the conclusion was drawn to see the meaning behind the different versions of reality constructed in the novel.

3.4 Data Presentation

The data were presented in the form of table to show the marital issues related to the construction of reality in the novel. The table consisted of the views of male and female central characters towards a particular issue in the marriage, the background event in which a particular issue occurred, textual evidence to support the views, the setting where a certain event occurred, and lastly the analysis of the issue.

3.5 Synopsis of *Gone Girl*

The novel was divided into three parts; *boy loses girl, boy meets girl, and boy gets girl back (or vice versa)*. The male and female main characters, a married couple named Nick Dunne and Amy Elliot Dunne, took turn in narrating the story. The story started on the day of their fifth wedding anniversary when Amy was suddenly gone, leaving suspicious marks at their house. The first part centered on the investigation towards Nick that was suspected of killing his wife and the search of Amy. The second part revealed that Amy was still alive and was hiding while watching her plans of getting his husband imprisoned and executed for the accusation of killing her from afar. The third part was when Amy finally came back home. The third part also revealed a series of conflicts between the couple and how ugly their relationship actually was.

Gone Girl was chosen because of its unique male and female central characters that possessed different views towards certain issues within the marriage, and therefore created different versions of reality. Both of the central characters were unreliable which made it more interesting to analyze. They lied, manipulated, and made up stories to other characters. However, they also revealed what they actually had in mind. Thus, it was important to see how the main characters, representing two genders in real life, constructed their views that could be considered as reality in the novel.