

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the research. In this chapter, the explanation regarding the method applied in the research can be found. This chapter discusses the research design, research question, research procedures, data presentation, and the synopsis of the novella.

3.1 Research Design

This research is done by using descriptive qualitative design in order to analyze and to describe the Hero's Journey of Coraline Jones throughout the course of the story. Qualitative data is suitable for this research since the design focuses more on interpretation, description, and data, which if using quantitative research, would be quite difficult to express (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2007). Furthermore, Creswell (2007) mentioned that qualitative data are in the form of words, sentences, and phrases that can be selected as textual evidence to be subjectively reported. For this research, the data are limited to verbal texts in the story.

It appears that qualitative research design is the best choice for this research since this research is projected to analyze the journey of a character based on texts, words, phrases, and sentences that are present in the story. Furthermore, this research is conducted by collecting, categorizing, and making meaning of the events that are signifying Coraline's journey in becoming the hero of the story.

3.2 Research Question

This research aims to describe the journey of Coraline Jones in becoming the hero of the story. Therefore, this research will uncover and analyze the events that contribute to the advancement of Coraline's journey, how these events affect the character, before finally categorizing the kind of hero Coraline is based on Vogler's (2007) Hero Archetype. The research question has been formulated as follows: What stages does Coraline go through as a hero of a dark fantasy children's novella?

3.3 Data Source and Synopsis

The data of this research is collected from the children's novella titled *Coraline* written by Neil Gaiman and published in 2002. Because of its unique settings and entertaining plot, *Coraline* was ranked #82 in *The Guardian's* 100 Best Books of the 21st Century. Furthermore, due to the novella's success, in 2009, a stop-motion animated film based on the novella was released in 2009, and received positive responses from both critics and movie lovers.

Coraline (2002) tells the story of a young girl who just moved to an old house that has been divided into flats. Coraline and her parents live in this house alongside other tenants which are: Miss Spink and Miss Forcible, two elderly women retired from the stage, and "the crazy old man upstairs," who claims to be training a mouse circus.

Coraline is a curious and lonely girl, she spent most of her time exploring or doing some mundane activities. But then one day, Coraline finds a tiny locked door that instantly arouses her curiosity. Coraline then asks her mother to open the door. When the door is opened, it is sealed by a brick wall, leaving Coraline a little bit disappointed. However, when Coraline is alone inside the house, the brick wall is gone and turns into a little hallway that leads to a flat identical to her own, called the Other World. Coraline then enters the portal.

When Coraline enters the Other World, she stumbles upon a tall, pale, button-eyed woman identical to her real mother. The woman calls herself the 'Other Mother'. Coraline finds the Other World more interesting than the Real World; the Other Mother cooks food that she actually enjoys, both of her Other Parents pay more attention to her, her toy box is filled with animate toys that can move and fly, the Other Miss Spink and Miss Forcible perform a never-ending act in their flat, and the Other Mr. Bobo performs a mouse circus. Coraline also finds the feral black cat who apparently can talk in the Other World.

The next time Coraline enters the Other World, she is presented with an opportunity to stay in the Other World forever. However, in order to do so, Coraline must let the Other Mother sew buttons into her eyes. Coraline is mortified by this

request and returns to the Real World. Coraline is relieved to be back home, however, her parents are nowhere to be found. The black cat guides Coraline to a mirror in the flat hallway, through which she can see her trapped parents. Her parents write “Help Us” on the glass mirror, signaling that they are being kidnapped by the Other Mother. Coraline tries to contact the police, but they do not take her seriously. She then decides to take matters into her own hands, and rescue her parents by herself, with the help of the black cat. She makes all the preparation and brings all the tools to confront the Other Mother. Coraline then crosses the portal to the Other World once again to embark on a quest to rescue her parents.

Coraline is prompted by the cat to challenge the Other Mother, as she appears to be fond of games. When meeting Coraline once again, the Other Mother tries to convince her to stay. Coraline denies this request and gets locked inside a small room behind a mirror. Inside this tiny room, Coraline meets three ghost children. They tell their stories to Coraline and advise her to leave this world immediately. They also state that their souls are trapped within the Other World, and in order to be free, their souls must be found.

After the Other Mother releases Coraline, Coraline challenges her to a game; if Coraline is able to find the three ghost children souls and her parents, then she, the three ghosts, and her parents would be allowed to go. The Other Mother proposes that if Coraline lost the game, she would have to stay in The Other World.

Coraline is able to find all three souls and overcome all the obstacles by using her wits and Miss Spink’s lucky stone. She believes that her parents are imprisoned inside a snow globe. Coraline then confronts the Other Mother and says that her parents are inside the portal to the Real World. The Other Mother smirks and opens the portal. However, Coraline already planned this, therefore, she throws the cat at the Other Mother, dashes and grabs the snow globe, then escapes to the Real World with the Black Cat. As Coraline closes the portal door, the Other Mother’s hand is stuck between the door. Back in her home, Coraline falls asleep on the couch. She is then awoken by her parents who are oblivious to the whole event.

During the night, Coraline dreams about the three ghost children. They warn her that the Other Mother will never stop and it is up to her to put an end to the terrors of the Other Mother. In order to lock the portal door forever, Coraline goes to an old well to get rid of the key. She pretends to have a picnic, with the picnic blanket laid over the entrance to the well. The Other Mother's severed hand attempts to seize the key, but steps on the blanket and falls into the well. Coraline returns to the house, greeting her neighbors (who finally get her name right), and gets ready for school the next day.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The first step of analyzing Coraline's journey was doing a close reading of *Coraline* (2002) by Neil Gaiman, paying attention to the events that marked the journey of Coraline. Afterward, the results of the close reading were divided into segments and referred to as a single event. The primary focus of the close reading is to analyze the events that have a significant impact on Coraline's journey in becoming the hero, and how those events fit into the 12 stages of Hero's Journey. It should be noted that even though the novella contains illustrations, this research only focuses on the verbal texts. Then, the collected data were categorized into the phases of Hero's Journey by using tables.

Further into the analysis, Vogler's (2007) Hero's Journey and Hero Archetype theories were utilized. The data was analyzed by using The Hero's Journey theory by Vogler (2007) in order to describe the journey and transformation of Coraline Jones in becoming the hero of the story. Every phase of The Hero's Journey is used to define each of the segmented events that have significance in Coraline's journey. Afterward, after analyzing the events and Coraline's traits, characteristics, actions, and decisions over the course of the story, Vogler's (2007) Hero Archetype theory was employed in order to determine what kind of hero Coraline is. These findings were then discussed in order to determine whether Coraline's journey fits The Hero's Journey or not, what kind of hero archetype fits her as a character, and the significance of her hero status in balancing the dark fantasy elements of the story. The discussions mainly focused on Coraline's

character elements, and other literary elements that contribute to Coraline’s journey, such as setting, dialogues, and plot.

3.5 Data Presentation

Below is an example that perhaps can illustrate how the analysis is carried out.

Act 1

Hero’s Journey Phase	Description	Textual Evidence
Ordinary World	Coraline moves to her new house with her family. She starts to get to know the neighbors, the surroundings, and the house.	<p>It was a very old house—it had an attic under the roof and a cellar under the ground and an overgrown garden with huge old trees in it. (p. 1, par. 2)</p> <p>Coraline's family didn't own all of the house—it was too big for that. Instead, they owned part of it. (p. 1, par. 3)</p> <p>There were other people who lived in the old house. (p. 1, par. 4)</p>

In the table, the **Ordinary World** is the stage in which Coraline is introduced to the reader. This is also the stage in which the readers start to get to know the characters, the settings, and circumstances. In this stage, Coraline is introduced as an innocent, lonely, and a bit mischievous girl. She does not seem to be able to

relate to anyone –her parents are busy and a bit uncaring towards her and the people around her seem to be too distant. From this, the writer feels that Coraline is just a normal little girl craving attention from the people around her.