CHAPTER III

RESEARCH OBJECT AND METHOD

3.1. Research Object

The object of this research is the precursory authorship occurring in Pottersworld role playing game forum, a forum containing of *Harry Potter* readers who experience the shift from readership to authorship as they play.

The role playing game forum was chosen due to the issues emerging from the shift itself; how readers can play the role as the author, conduct their own characters that live in *Harry Potter* universe, and create their own stories in the universe according to their imagination. The issues will be analysed using the ideas of Viires on cyberliterature and Iser, Love and Neitzel on authorship in computer games.

3.2. Research Method

The data will be collected using qualitative descriptive method. According to Trochim (2006), qualitative method is a method of gathering data through observation, in this case it is through observation of the precursory authorship issues in Pottersworld RPG forum. The data are classified according to the levels of narrative representation in the game, namely world design, visual design, plot design and chronological design. The classifications are pictures (screen shoots) and narratives. As a descriptive method is used to describe the data, with the

purpose to observe, describe and document (Polit and Hungler, 1999), the data in this research is described thoroughly to obtain the levels of narrative representation and precursory authorship contained in the data.

3.2.1. Data Collection

In order to analyse the dominant level of representation in the process of precursory authorship it is necessary to do a close analysis on Pottersworld's designs as the data. However, in collecting the data, there is a limitation in viewing the characters' every post and analysing their development starting from them being 11-year-old student in Hogwarts, graduating Hogwarts, then continuing their stories as adult wizards/witches. Therefore, in order to analyse the narratives in the forum, not only student and adult characters are chosen, the forum's basic information are also analysed in order to see the overall designs contained in the post. The characters are analysed according to their development of the provided designs described through narratives, and the basic information is analysed according to its construction interpretive to the players.

The data in form of narratives are classified according to its representation on the levels of narrative representation (world design, visual design, plot design, and chronological design). However, as the narratives are posted into the forum thus enclosing some attributes or features as information of the characters, the stories are not merely printed out as words but as screen shoots to help describe the characters' background and correlations to the stories.

3.2.1. Data Analysis

The data are several posts of both creators and characters of Pottersworld forum that carry the attributes relating to *Harry Potter* universe, which embark on authorship issues. The data are not in a form of traditional literature; they are in a form of post-modern literature which is cyber-literature, thus also raising issues. Viires's ideas of cyber-literature are related with the authorship in computer game consisting of Iser's ideas of reader-response, Love's ideas of precursory authorship and Neitzel's ideas on levels of narration in computer games in order to analyse the issues. Viires ideas of cyber-literature is used to help analyse the cybertext, the form used by the authors to deliver their narratives. After that, reader response theory by Iser is used in order to analyse the shift from readership to authorship of the author and to analyse the dynamic of the narratives that create interactivity of the players. Thirdly, after the first and second analysis are done, Love's ideas on precursory authorship are used to determine its application used by the players in the game. Finally, Neitzel's ideas on levels of narrative representation in computer games are used in order to classify the data and analyse the dominant level of narrative representation chosen to create the alternate universe of Pottersworld RPG and the impact of it towards the contribution of the players.

3.3. Data Sources

The sources will be taken from Pottersworld RPG completed topics made or contributed by the chosen characters, and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* books.

Pottersworld is a role playing game forum which uses the form of play-by-post. The form means that characters interact through taking turns in fabricating a narrative in which their character speaks, thinks, and has any internal or external emotions and reactions to any situation. The narrative needs to be uploaded (posted) to the internet first before it can be seen by other players. After the narrative is posted, it can be replied by other characters by simply doing the same thing. The term of a posted narrative is also known as a post.

Pottersworld adapts the generic premise of the books, which tells a magical world where the player is a student who starts their first year in Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, just like the opening story of *Harry Potter* itself. However, it takes place after the *Harry Potter* books, approximately 3 generations after the events. Moreover, canon characters such as Harry Potter himself only "live" in the background stories, but Pottersworld do not allow the names of the canon characters to be used by players. These adaptations are attempted in order to distance the forum from the universe of the canon.

As Pottersworld is an active forum, players who are not logged in to their accounts for more than 60 days will be deleted without notice. Therefore, the players are required to be active. However, although the players are allowed to be as active and creative as possible, they are also limited to conduct vulgar stories as the forum is a family friendly forum which is rated 12+. Other than Pottersworld, journals and articles related to the issues are used to be the supporting theories or data.