

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Historical romance is a genre of literature that combines elements of romance with a historical background that is rich in cultural and social values. Ficke states in her book *The Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction* (2020) that this genre is one of the oldest genres of popular romance fiction. Romantic love stories set in historical periods can be traced back to antiquity through the Greek story. Popular historical romances are most simply defined as “love stories with historical settings” (Ramsdell, 2012). These are novels where the author is consciously setting their plot during a period that feels historically distant from the one in which it is published. Ramsdell observes in *Romance Fiction: A Guide to the Genre* (2012) that “Most people are not likely to consider as ‘historical’ a time period they can actually remember, nor are they likely to remember the difficult realities of those times as ‘romantic’”. Generally speaking, historical romances tend to take place at least 45–50 years before their date of publication. Ramsdell (2012) notes that historical romances written in the early twenty-first century tend to be set before the end of World War II.

Historical romance flourished in the mid-twentieth century with Georgette Heyer as the author. The modern story of the popular historical romance begins with Georgette Heyer’s novel *The Black Moth* (1921), which is set during the Georgian period (the mid-late 1700s) in England. *The Black Moth* was published in 1921. Ficke in her book *The*

Routledge Research Companion to Popular Romance Fiction (2020) states that Heyer's style emerged from an existing tradition of historical fiction that was romantic in the sense that it contained elements of improbable adventure in a stylized, rather than completely realistic, historical setting. Heyer also pioneered several plot motifs that have become standards in historical romance, particularly cross-dressing, which has been the subject of much scholarly attention. Studies of cross-dressing in Heyer's work highlight the many potentially complex relationships that exist between a book's historical setting and its period of publication.

History is one of the important elements in building a historical romance genre story. In literature, history refers to a form of depiction or representation of historical events in literary works. History in this context is not only about real events recorded in historical records but also how historical events are explained, interpreted, or processed in literary works. This can include historical settings, historical figures, or real events that are processed into fictional stories or literary reflections. Literary works are often set in a certain period in history, which influences the characters and events in the story. For example, novels set during World War II or the colonial period. Writers integrate history into literary works through narratives that combine historical facts with their imagination or interpretation. History can be depicted directly through stories or characters, or indirectly through symbols, themes, and conflicts raised in literary works. Literature uses history to provide a deeper understanding of the past, to criticize social or political conditions, or to convey moral or cultural messages. Writers often want to show the impact of history on human life and to create reflections on these events. History in literature can take place in a variety of settings, both in the real world and in fictional

contexts. Writers often choose settings that are associated with specific historical events, such as battlefields, historic cities, or villages involved in social change. History in literature can occur at any time, depending on the historical period the writer is discussing. Typically, it relates to a specific era or period that is the setting for the story, such as war, social change, or the glory days of a kingdom, such as the Victorian and Regency eras in England.

Another important element in the historical romance genre is romance. Romance is not always about a love story. In the context of the historical romance genre, the characters could face challenges, quests, or battles in order to be with the person they love. Romance in literature is developed through a narrative that describes the emotional and physical interactions between the two main characters. The author creates a storyline with various obstacles or conflicts that the couple must face, which can be social differences, class, culture, or their internal conflicts. These conflicts often lead to growth or change in the main characters and ultimately lead to a resolution in the form of happiness or tragedy. The main characters in a romance are usually two individuals involved in a love relationship. These characters can come from different backgrounds, with personal characters and conflicts that affect their relationship. Romance in literature exists because of the many human interests in deep emotional relationships. The theme of love has universal appeal and is often used to depict the beauty, challenges, and depth of human relationships. Romance can also be used to convey moral messages or social criticism regarding relationships between individuals.

The plot in historical romance generally follows a pattern rooted in the norms, social structures, and manners of a particular era, such as the Regency, Victorian, or

Medieval eras. The narrative's central conflict is often driven by the clash between the characters' personal desires and the constraints of social class, family traditions, and gender expectations of the time. This creates a distinctive plot formula that focuses on both internal and external obstacles: from misunderstandings resulting from adherence to social etiquette, to contractual marriages (marriages of convenience), even differences in social status that threaten the union of the two main characters. Unlike pure historical fiction, which focuses on large-scale political or military events, historical romance plots use these historical events as a backdrop that enhances the tension of the emotional drama between the characters.

This unique plot interacts simultaneously with character development. The constraints of social norms force characters to undergo profound emotional and psychological transformations throughout the story. Main characters often begin the narrative with a worldview distorted by past trauma, blind adherence to norms, or social prejudice. As the plot progresses, intimate interactions and conflicts experienced with their partners become catalysts for internal change. Character development in this subgenre is marked by the achievement of self-autonomy, the courage to break conventional boundaries for the sake of love, and the redefinition of personal happiness within a restrictive society. Thus, historical romance is not simply a love story set in the past, but rather a narrative of maturation and self-discovery, manifested through the dynamics of the plot and the movements of the characters.

One of the most popular historical romance right now is *Bridgerton* series. It is a series of novels written by Julia Quinn. The series consist of eight novels which are: *The duke and I* (2000), *The Viscount Who Loved Me* (2000), *An Offer from a Gentleman*

(2001), *Romancing Mister Bridgerton* (2002), *To Sir Philip, With Love* (2003), *When He Was Wicked* (2004), *It's In His Kiss* (2005), and *On the Way to the Wedding* (2006). The story focuses on eight siblings from a noble Bridgerton family who explore high society in London, looking for love, adventure, and happiness (Ellis, 2022). Twenty years later, this series was adapted into a Netflix series with the same title and gained popularity.

When it comes to the writer of historical romance, Judith McNaught is one of the most influential writers in this genre. She is a celebrated American author known for her captivating historical and contemporary romance novels. With a writing career spanning over four decades, McNaught's works are renowned for their compelling characters, intricate plots, and passionate love stories. McNaught's writing style, marked by meticulous research, vivid descriptions, and emotional depth, has endeared her to millions of readers worldwide, solidifying her position as a beloved figure in the romance genre. Her debut novel, *Whitney, My Love* (1985), launched her successful career, followed by bestselling titles like *Almost Heaven* (1989), *Once and Always* (1987), *Something Wonderful* (1988), *Paradise* (1991), *Perfect* (1993), and *Night Whispers* (1998).

One of Judith McNaught's best-selling historical romance novels is *Almost Heaven* (1989). This novel is published in 1989. *Almost Heaven* (1989) became one of McNaught's most popular works which is part of Judith's sequels series along with two other titles, namely *Something Wonderful* (1988) and *Once and Always* (1987). *Almost Heaven* has a more complex character than the other two novels, with deeper romance and emotions accompanied by sharp dialogue and a more realistic plot. It is a love story between Elizabeth Cameron and Ian Thornton that explores themes such as forbidden

love, family dynamics, class differences, and personal growth. Elizabeth, as the protagonist character, experiences ups and downs in her life. All the things she faces in this story shape her into a different character so that she gets a happy ending. Therefore, based on the reasons above, the writer is interested in discussing the study with the title ***The Development of the Protagonist in Almost Heaven by Judith McNaught: A Narratological Analysis.***

1.2 Problems of the Study

Based on the explanation above, the research questions sought to be answered in this study are:

1. What is the narrative structure of the story in *Almost Heaven* (1989) by Judith McNaught?
2. How does the protagonist develop throughout the narrative structure in *Almost Heaven* (1989) by Judith McNaught?

1.3 Purposes of the Study

Based on the problems of the study, the purposes of this study are to explore:

1. To describe the structure of the story in *Almost Heaven* (1989) by Judith McNaught.
2. To find out the development of the protagonist in *Almost Heaven* (1989) by Judith McNaught.

1.4 Hypothesis

Elizabeth Cameron, the protagonist in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven* (1989), undergoes personal development.

1.5 Previous Studies

There have been several studies that have analyzed Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven* before. The first study is written by Usmonova and Barnoyeva in their journal article entitled *Stylistic Analysis of Judith McNaught's Novel "Almost Heaven" and Abdullah Qodiriy's Novel "Days Gone By"* (2024). They investigate the stylistic features of the novels with linguistic nuances and expressive tools. By using this approach, the writer reveals intercultural connections in the literary context from diverse cultural and historical traditions. The result of this study is the emergence of contrasting depictions of social, cultural, and individual realities.

The second study is written by Ameliya, entitled *The Representation of Social Inequality in The Victorian Era in Judith McNaught's Almost Heaven* (2023). This study uses the theory of representation. From the results of the discussion, this study concludes that the inequality conflicts presented in *Almost Heaven* (1989) are caused by different class conditions. Apart from that, the different class conditions that appear in the novel are also caused by issues of income, occupational prestige, and education level. In this case, the social inequality that occurs in the novel causes people who are considered from the lower class to be considered inappropriate for respect.

In addition, there have been several studies that use Structuralism to analyze literary works. The first study is written by Nuril Hidayati, entitled *Analysis Structuralism of the Novel Dream Launch Project by Renita Nozaria: Robert Stanton's Theory* (2024). This study looks at how the plot of story, the characters, the events that happen, and the struggles in Renita Nozaria's *Dream Launch Project* novel. The approach taken is a descriptive qualitative method that uses literary structural analysis. The writer uses

Robert Stanton's idea of looking at the key parts of a story, like the characters, what happens, and the problems they face. The study concludes that the main character, Tertius Senandika, is a male protagonist who is determined to complete the tasks given to him. He has a personality that doesn't give up easily, is really good at music, is skilled with his hands, and loves being alone and staying loyal. The novel *Dream Launch Project* focuses on both personal struggles and conflicts with the outside world. The story keeps switching between different times because the novel has a lot of flashbacks that start when the characters, Jeni, Nana, and Injun, are first introduced.

The second study is written by Andi Aminayani Puspitasari, entitled *The Expectation Problem of Main Characters in Andersen's Selected Short Story* (2021). This study looks at the issues related to expectations that the main characters face in the stories *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Butterfly*, and *The Puppet-Show Man*, all written by Hans Christian Andersen. This thesis also aims to discover the answer to the problem of expectations that the main character faces in the chosen short story. The thesis uses Structuralism as its approach, focusing on analyzing the basic parts of literary works such as characters, plot, setting, and theme. After looking at the three chosen short stories, the writer noticed that the main characters in each story face a problem with their expectations. Expectation problems can influence how people act and impact their daily lives. However, the problem of expectations can be solved with a good response and a wise attitude shown by the three main characters in *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Butterfly*, and *The Puppet-Show Man*.

Not only that, there have been several studies that use the same theory, namely Tzvetan Todorov's Narratology, to analyze the research objects. The first study is written

by Tzya Asradha, entitled *Narrative Pattern of Survival Games: From The Most Dangerous Game to The Hunger Games* (2023). This study looks at how survival games are told in Connell's *The Most Dangerous Game* and Collin's *The Hunger Games*. It focuses on the way the stories are structured and how they present the idea of survival. The writer uses Tzvetan Todorov's Narratology approach through qualitative research methods. This study found that *The Most Dangerous Game* is made up of 18 propositions, and *The Hunger Games* has 42 propositions. The stories all follow the same pattern. They start with X, the main character, living a normal life. X stays alive because they are able to survive. X wins the games. In the end, X becomes someone else, turning into the person they had vowed to destroy. In addition, the writer noted from the discussion about meaning that both *The Most Dangerous Game* and *The Hunger Games* deal with similar main themes: power and fear. Power is the means used by those in authority to control and suppress. It is thought that this reason leads to the creation of rules to address the fear that rulers might have.

The second study is written by Doni Apriliadi, entitled *Analysis of Narrative in The Lighthouse Film through Todorov's Narrative Theory* (2023). This study discusses the narrative in the film *The Lighthouse* (2019) and the values contained in each storyline. The object of study lies in the narrative and dialogue of the film. As a result, this study shows that the beginning of the story is calm, where the characters get along as friends. The middle of the story shows a split where the characters start the conflict. The ending of the story shows sadness where both characters kill each other, and it ends in tragedy.

To provide a more concise and systematic overview of the position of this research among previous studies, the following is a summary of the six studies in tabular form:

Table 1.1 Summary of Previous Study

No.	Title	Material Object	Theoretical Framework	Methodology	Findings
1.	<i>Stylistic Analysis of Judith McNaught's Novel "Almost Heaven" and Abdullah Qodiriy's Novel "Days Gone By"</i>	Almost Heaven and Days Bone By	Comparative literary stylistics, lexical-semantic analysis, and psychoanalytical/psychological criticism.	Qualitative Method	The writer reveals intercultural connections in the literary context from diverse cultural and historical traditions. The result of this study is the emergence of contrasting depictions of social, cultural, and individual realities.
2.	<i>The Representation of Social Inequality in The Victorian Era in Judith McNaught's Almost Heaven</i>	Almost Heaven	Representation	Qualitative Method	This study concludes that the inequality conflicts presented in <i>Almost Heaven</i> (1989) are caused by different class conditions. Apart from that, the different class conditions that appear in the novel are also caused by issues of income, occupational prestige, and education level. In this case, the social inequality that occurs in the novel causes people who are considered from the lower class to be considered inappropriate for respect.
3.	<i>Analysis Structuralism of the Novel Dream Launch Project by Renita Nozaria: Robert Stanton's Theory</i>	Dream Launch Project	Robert Stanton's Structuralism	Descriptive Qualitative Method	The conclusion of this study are, the characterization of the main character Tertius Senandika is the main character as a male protagonist and persistent in completing what has been entrusted to him. He has a character that does not give up easily, is an expert in music, dexterous

					but a lover of solitude and loyalty. The conflicts studied in the novel Dream Launch Project are internal conflicts and external conflicts. The plot goes back and forth because the story in the novel is densely packed with flashbacks from the introduction of the characters, Jeno, Nana, and Injun.
4.	<i>The Expectation Problem of Main Characters in Andersen's Selected Short Story</i>	The Ugly Duckling, The Butterfly, and The Puppet-Show Man	Structuralism	Qualitative Method	The writer found that the main characters in the selected short stories experience an expectation problem. Expectation problems can affect the behavior and lives of individuals who experience it. However, the expectation problem can be solved with a good response and wise attitude reflected by the three main characters in <i>The Ugly Duckling</i> , <i>The Butterfly</i> , and <i>The Puppet-Show Man</i> .
5.	<i>Narrative Pattern of Survival Games: From The Most Dangerous Game to The Hunger Games</i>	The Most Dangerous Game and The Hunger Games	Todorov's Narrative Theory	Qualitative Method	The result of this study shows that two works are constructed by 18 propositions for <i>The Most Dangerous Game</i> and 42 Propositions for <i>The Hunger Games</i> . The Sequences are the same where stories begin with the normal living conditions of X (main character), X survives to be alive, X wins the games, and stories end up with X transforming characters becoming the one they swore to destroy. Furthermore, the writer concluded from

					the semantic aspect discussion that <i>The Most Dangerous Game</i> and <i>The Hunger Games</i> have similar main issues: power and fear. Power refers to the tools used by the authorities to oppress. It is believed to be a reason that leads to rules to cover the fear of those rulers.
6.	<i>Analysis of Narrative in The Lighthouse Film through Todorov's Narrative Theory</i>	The Lighthouse	Todorov's Narrative Theory	Qualitative Method	As a result, this study shows that the beginning of the story is calm, where the characters get along as friends. The middle of the story shows a split where the characters start the conflict. The ending of the story shows sadness where both characters kill each other, and it ends in tragedy.

From the previous studies above, the differences between the previous studies and this study are in the focus and the object. This study focuses on the plot of the story in the novel and how the plot shows the development of the protagonist in the novel. The writer used the Structuralism Approach and Narratology theory by Tzvetan Todorov to discuss this study.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Structuralism is a method of analysis that examines the relations and functions of elements in various systems. The essence of Structuralism is that it does not highlight the causal mechanism of a phenomenon but is interested in the concept that a complex totality can be understood as a series of interrelated elements. Structuralism is not only focused on the existence of certain elements but sees how these elements relate to each other. Jean Piaget describes in his book *Structuralism (Psychological Revivals)* (2015) structuralism as a cohesive structure. While in the book *Structuralism & Semiotics* by Terence Hawkes (1977) also describes that Jean Piaget argued structure can be observed in an arrangement of entities which embodies the following fundamental ideas.

Structuralism was developed as a theoretical framework in linguistics by Ferdinand de Saussure in the late 1920s and early 1930s. In the book *Literary Theory an Introduction* by Terry Eagleton (2008), Ferdinand de Saussure viewed language as a system of signs, which was to be studied Synchronically that studied as a complete system at a given point in time rather than Diachronically, in its historical development. Each sign was to be seen as being made up of a Signifier which is a sound-image, or its graphic equivalent, and a Signified for the concept or meaning. The relation between signifier and signified is an arbitrary.

Structuralism is also used in studying and understanding a literary work. It views literary works as a structure consisting of interrelated elements. This approach aims to understand literary works objectively and comprehensively. According to Roland Barthes (1967), a French literary theorist, Structuralism is a method of analysis that focuses on the internal structure of literary works. It is an attempt to reveal the sign system contained in literary works, so that the meaning contained therein can be understood. He also emphasized the importance of studying language as a sign system that has its own rules and structures. In his literary analysis, Barthes uses Structuralism to reveal the internal structure of literary works, such as narrative structure, character structure, and language structure. Thus, Barthes attempts to reveal the meaning contained in literary works and understand how that meaning is formed and negotiated in literary texts.

Applying a linguistic model to literature might seem repetitive since literature is already made of words, but language and literature do not share the exact same structure. Literature uses language as a medium, yet its underlying rules, such as plot and character development, operate on a broader level. Structuralists like Tzvetan Todorov suggest that literature has its own "grammar" or system of rules. Furthermore, literary works often draw special attention to how language itself functions, linking structuralism closely to the ideas of Formalism.

According to Selden, Widdowson & Brooker in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (2005), to analyze stories, structuralist narrative theory uses basic sentence structure (syntax) as a model. A standard sentence splits into a subject and a predicate, such as "The knight (subject) slew the dragon (predicate)." You

can swap out the names or weapons, but the core narrative framework stays the same. Russian scholar Vladimir Propp built on this concept by comparing subjects to character types (like heroes or villains) and predicates to core story actions, which he called "functions."

Propp discovered that despite the endless details in different fairy tales, they all rely on a set sequence drawn from thirty-one standard functions. Even if a story skips a few functions, the remaining ones always appear in the exact same logical order. Ultimately, this approach shows how complex storytelling relies on a shared, predictable blueprint similar to the fundamental rules of grammar.

Todorov (1969) also developed a theory of Narratology that studies the structure of stories and how meaning is formed in a narrative. Narratology is the study of narrative, in this case, how narrative structure parts fit together to make a whole. Narratology comes from the Latin words ‘*Narratio*’ and ‘*Logos*’. ‘*Narratio*’ means a narrative, words, story, saga, and ‘*Logos*’ means science. Todorov defines narrative as a form of communication used by writers to convey stories and messages to readers. According to Todorov, Narratology is a discipline that focuses on the analysis of the internal structure of literary works, especially on narrative structures. Todorov distinguishes between two types of narrative structures, namely, Diachronic structures and Synchronic structures. Diachronic structure refers to the sequence of events that form a story, while Synchronic structure refers to the relationship between the elements that form a literary work at a certain point in time.

In the book *Detection and Literary Fiction* (2003) by Laura Marcus describes that Todorov also developed the concepts of Sjužet and Fabula to explain narrative

structure. Sjužet refers to the sequence of events that form a story, while Fabula refers to the content or substance of the story. Todorov distinguishes between Sjužet and Fabula because Sjužet can change depending on how the story is presented, while Fabula remains the same. For example, a story can be presented in chronological or achronological order, but the content or substance of the story remains the same.

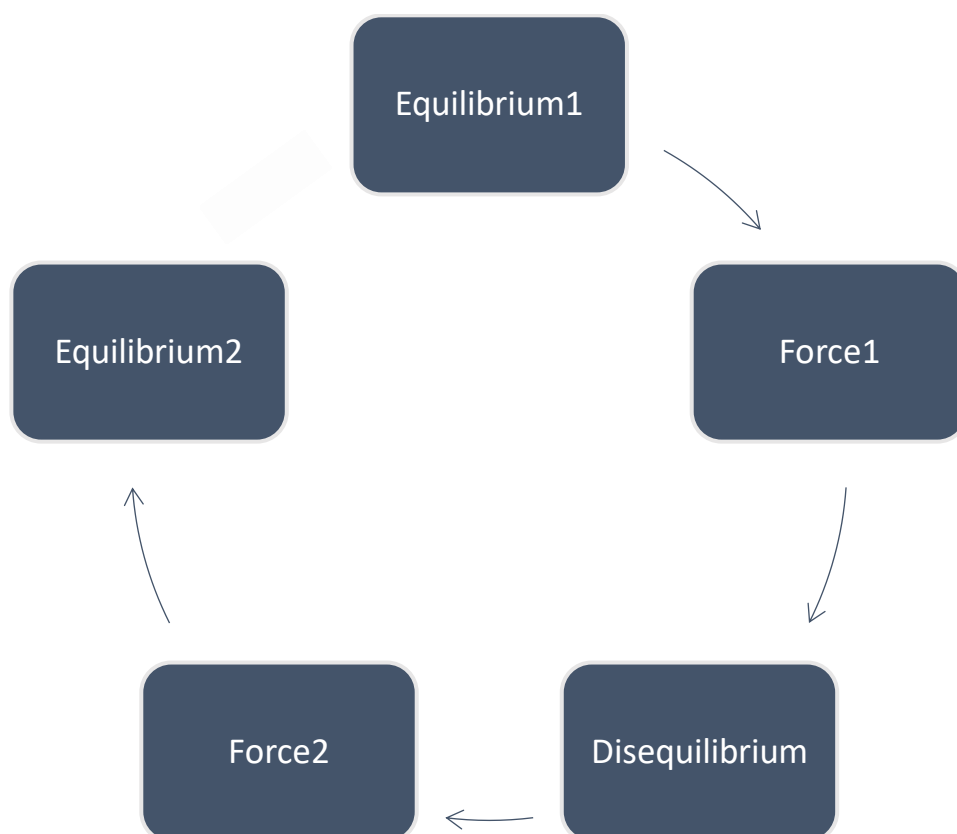
According to Selden, Widdowson & Broker in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* (2005), Todorov describes the Syntax Rules of Narrative: there are agency, predicate, adjectival, verbal function, and aspect. Todorov also describes the minimal unit of narrative. The first one is the Proposition, which can be either an agent or the variable elements often represented by X, Y, or Z that refer to the dominant agent (a person or character) and the dominant predicate (an action). Predicates can function as adjectives and verbs that refer to a situation. Todorov gives an example from *Oedipus the King* for agent and predicate (Selden, Widdowson & Broker, 2005):

Agent:	Predicate or action:
X is king	X marries Y
Y is X's mother	X kills Z
Z is X's father	A provokes X
A is X's brother	
B is X's friend	

The following are several propositions that constitute the narrative of the Oedipus myth. Substitute X with Oedipus, Y with Jocasta, and Z with Laius. The initial three propositions identify the agents, while the first and last two include predicates (to

be a king, to marry, to kill) (Selden, Widdowson & Broker, 2005). In this study, variables X, Y, and Z represent the 3 main characters, while variables A, B, C, and so on are supporting characters whose writing is ordered based on their appearance in the plot.

Three propositions on the left denominate agents, and two on the right contain predicates. Predicates may work like adjectives, or they may operate dynamically like verbs to indicate transgressions of law. Todorov also describes two higher levels of organization, the sequence and the text. A sequence can be formed from a group of propositions. The basic sequence is made up of five propositions. Todorov designed the five propositions, which are (Selden, Widdowson & Broker, 2005):



- Equilibrium1: The beginning of the storyline starts with the main character's normal living conditions going through their daily routine.
- Force1: The phase where the character faces an unstable condition, and it triggers disturbance.
- Disequilibrium: A condition of the story structure entering a phase in which chaos occurs.
- Force2: The time to restore the disturbance.
- Equilibrium2: It refers to a new beginning at the end of the story.

In the end, a succession of sequences forms a text. The sequences may be organized in a variety of ways: by embedding (story within a story), by linking (a string of sequences), by alternation (interlacing of sequences), or by a mixture of these (Selden, Widdowson & Broker, 2005).

Based on the statement above, the writer uses Todorov's Narratology theory to analyze the narrative structure of the novel *Almost Heaven*. Todorov's theory provides a systematic analytical framework that can be used to analyze the development of protagonist in novels. By using Narratology, the writer can analyze how the character develops through the plot of the story.

1.7 Research Methods

According to Sam Goundar (2012) in the book *Research Methodology and Research Method*, research methods are the various procedures, schemes, and algorithms used in research. They include theoretical procedures, experimental studies, numerical, and statistical approaches. Research methods help the writer to collect sample data and find a solution to a problem. Research methods can be said to aim at finding solutions to research problems. In this study, the writer used qualitative

methods. Creswell (2013) defined qualitative research as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. In a very simplistic form, Punch (1998) states that qualitative research is an empirical research where the data are not in the form of numbers. According to Gall and Borg (2007), qualitative research makes little use of numbers or statistics but instead rely heavily on verbal data and subjective analysis. Becker (1971) states that qualitative research can help researchers develop new variables or theoretical concepts. The main purpose is to describe, study, and explain phenomena other than that, namely to analyze the observed in order to obtain information about their behavior, feelings, beliefs, ideas, and forms of thought and can produce a theory.

1.7.1 Data Collection Method

Data collection methods are the first step in this study because that aims to collect the data. In collecting the data, this study uses the observation technique. This can be done by doing a close reading of the novels. According to Creswell (2018), observation is a data collection activity that is carried out directly to observe the current phenomenon.

To get the data, the writer has two data sources, primary and secondary data. Primary data is a data source that provides information directly to the data collector. Secondary data is a data source that does not directly provide information to the data collectors, such as documents or other people. The primary data are narrative elements found in the novel *Almost Heaven* (1989) by Judith McNaught. The said elements are characters, plot, settings, narrator, and themes of the novel. Meanwhile, secondary data

in this study are journals, websites, books, theses, and articles on the internet that are relevant to answering the problems.

1.7.2 Data Analysis Method

In this study, the technique used to analyze data is observation, namely reading novels. The first step is to read and understand the story in the novel *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught. Next, the analysis will begin by classifying the plot of the story based on Tzvetan Todorov's Narratology starting from Equilibrium1, Force1, Disequilibrium, Force2, and Equilibrium2. The analysis will continue by analyzing the character development of the protagonist through the plots that have been classified with the Narratology theory.