

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROTAGONIST IN *ALMOST HEAVEN* BY JUDITH MCNAUGHT: A NARRATOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

This chapter contains answers to the research problems mentioned in the first chapter. This chapter consists of two sub-chapters. The first is to describe the structure of the story in *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught. The second is to analyze the protagonist's development throughout the narrative structure in *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught.

2.1. The Structure of the Story in *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught

The breakdown of the plot of *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught, in chronological order:

2.1.1 Agent

Agents refer to a person or character that appears in the story. X, Y, and Z refer to dominant agents in the plot or story. While A, B, C, and so on refers to the supporting characters who are noted in the order of their appearance in the plot. The following are the agents in *Almost Heaven* by Judith McNaught:

1. X is Elizabeth Cameron
2. Y is Ian Thornton
3. Z is Julius Cameron
4. A is Lord John Marchman

5. B is Sir Francis Belhaven
6. C is 15 servants
7. D is 15 gentlemen
8. E is Eloise
9. F is Peters
10. G is Charles
11. H is Lucinda Throckmorton-Jones
12. I is Bentner
13. J is Alexandra Lawrence
14. K is Robert
15. L is Berta
16. M is Aaron
17. N is Oliver
18. O is Viscount Mondevale
19. P is Penelope
20. Q is Valerie
21. R is Georgina
22. S is Lord Howard
23. T is Lord Everly
24. U is Cherise
25. V is Duncan MacTavish
26. W is Jake
27. XA is Jonathon
28. YA is Caroline

2.2.2 Action

An Action is the predicates can function as adjectives and verbs that refers to a situation. The following are the actions in *Almost Heaven* which are qualified based on the 5 narrative stages: Equilibrium1, Force1, Disequilibrium, Force2, Equilibrium2, by Todorov in table form:

Table 2.1 Equilibrium1

Equilibrium1 (1-34)

1.	C left Havenhurst at the bottom, carrying Z's messages to deliver at fifteen homes.	Financially strapped Uncle Julius sends letters to 15 noblemen seeking a husband for his niece, Lady Elizabeth Cameron. Due to his secretary's negligence, Ian Thornton, a wealthy Scottish man known for his gambling habits is accidentally listed as one of the suitors. Meanwhile, Elizabeth lives in poverty on the Havenhurst, which is threatened with foreclosure, until her best friend, Alexandra, visits and invites her back into London's social circle. However, Uncle Julius arrives and forcefully demands that Elizabeth choose one of the three suitors who respond, sending Elizabeth into a panic upon hearing Ian Thornton's name.
2.	D read the messages, twelve of them declined, and three of them reacted differently.	
3.	A read the message that Z wants to see X married.	
4.	A accepted Z's offer and will come to Z's home next month.	
5.	B read the message while sitting in bed with E.	
6.	E asked B about the message, but B avoided it.	
7.	B told the waiter to tell B's secretary to give an affirmative answer.	
8.	Y read the last message from Z.	

9.	Y read it while busy handling various letters with his secretary.	The story then flashes back to two years ago when Elizabeth first met Ian at a ball, the result of a bet she made with her friends. Although initially reluctant, Ian gradually becomes attracted to Elizabeth, and their relationship grows secretly closer. Unfortunately, Robert (Elizabeth's half-brother), who is deeply in debt, exploits the situation by trapping Ian and Elizabeth in a gazebo and blackmailing Ian for his sister's honor. The incident escalates into a duel in which Robert fatally wounds Ian before fleeing. The scandal destroys Elizabeth's reputation, shunning London society and leaving her in debt. Returning to the present, Elizabeth ultimately has no choice but to agree to her uncle's plan to meet the suitors in order to save Havenhurst.
10.	Y chose not to reply to the letter.	
11.	Y's secretary dropped the letters on the table, causing the letters to fall apart.	
12.	The new secretary finally replied to the letters randomly.	
13.	X dismounted with G's help.	
14.	X hands the shopping basket to G and runs up the stairs.	
15.	I arrives and informs X that a guest has arrived.	
16.	X is surprised and asks who the guest is.	
17.	X runs when she learns it's X's old friend, J.	
18.	X and J reminisce after a long absence.	
19.	X and J have a conversation, reminiscing about their childhood together.	
20.	J accidentally asks about the missing K, but X chooses not to discuss it.	

21.	I tells X that Z has arrived and wants to meet X.	
22.	X leaves to meet Z.	
23.	Z informs X about X's wedding plans.	
24.	X is shocked and incredulous, especially when X hears Y's name agree to Z's offer.	
25.	Z insists that X meet the three candidates to get to know each other better.	
26.	X returns in disbelief.	
27.	Leaning against the wall, X reminisces about her past with X's half-brother, K.	
28.	X reminisces about her childhood, knowing Havenhurst so well that X was made a countess of Havenhurst	
29.	X remembers when X's half-brother persuaded her to marry him to escape the debts left by her father.	
30.	X remembers how she first became close to H before X's debut.	

31.	K rejected many suitors after X's debut.	
32.	K agreed to marry O.	
33.	X met and had a casual conversation with O.	
34.	X doubted their compatibility.	

1. Equilibrium1

Equilibrium1 occurs from action 1 until 34. Based on the narratology theory proposed by Todorov, this section is about the beginning of the story, where conditions of characters are still normal by introducing the main characters and also shows how the conditions are at the beginning of the story, which are still stable.

This novel tells how the initial conditions of the Cameron family are still calm even though they are in debt. Elizabeth's uncle, Julius, who is thinking hard about how to pay off the debt, finally decides to marry Elizabeth to one of the people who is thought to be able to help pay off the debt. Julius sent letters to 15 people of his choice, and only 3 people replied to the letter and agreed to Julius's offer to marry Elizabeth. Ian was one of the 3 people who responded.

Table 2.2 Force1

Force1 (35-115)

35.	X attended a weekend party where X met Y.	Elizabeth attends her first social event in London.
36.	Q, P, and R told X about Y's background.	There, she meets Ian Thornton, who harbors

37.	They persuaded X to attract Y's attention and dance with Y.	suspicious and prejudices stemming from past rumors. Elizabeth's friends try to encourage Elizabeth to get to know Ian and ask him to dance, but Ian refuses. Afterward, Ian gets into an argument in another room, and Elizabeth tries to mediate. The next day, Ian and Elizabeth meet in a hut in the forest. Ian tries to seduce Elizabeth, but she comes to her senses and quickly leaves the forest. That night, Elizabeth is framed by her friends for Ian, instantly destroying her reputation, causing heartache and misunderstandings for Ian about Elizabeth, who is only using him. Tensions between Elizabeth and Ian escalate as their interactions at the ball are marred by misunderstandings and hidden attraction. Ian and Elizabeth find themselves in a compromising situation in a gazebo during the ball. This incident, witnessed by the nobility, severely damages Elizabeth's reputation.
38.	X and Y became acquainted and had an awkward conversation.	
39.	X tried to ask Y to dance, but Y declined.	
40.	X was surprised by the response and went inside.	
41.	X changed and prepared for the ball.	
42.	X descended the stairs and was greeted by S and T.	
43.	X's friends gossiped about their plan to trap X with Y.	
44.	S offers X a dance.	
45.	T offers to accompany X to the village picnic the next day.	
46.	X accepts both offers.	
47.	X's friends persuade S and X to go to the card room.	
48.	X watches a card game involving Y and T.	
49.	Y and T play a high-stakes, heated game.	
50.	T loses the final bet and challenges Y to a duel.	
51.	X tries to stop T by seducing T.	
52.	X returns to the ballroom accompanied by S.	

53.	S advises X not to interfere in men's affairs again.	
54.	X goes to the garden to be alone and calm herself.	
55.	Y arrives and invites X to dance with Y.	
56.	X danced with Y while discussing the incident in the card room.	
57.	Y flirted with X and offered to go to a cottage in the woods the next day.	
58.	X declined the offer.	
59.	Y kissed X.	
60.	X regained consciousness and advised Y to return to the room before the others noticed they were missing.	
61.	X joined Q and P in heading to the hall.	
62.	X had dinner with S.	
63.	S offered to replace T and accompany X to the village tomorrow.	
64.	X saw Y and U, who were very well-suited.	
65.	X returned to her room to rest.	
66.	L asked X about the incident in the card room.	
67.	X told L about the incident.	

68.	X rested, hoping that tomorrow's village picnic would go smoothly.	
69.	X woke up late because X didn't want to get up when L woke her up.	
70.	X scolded and argued with L for waking up late.	
71.	X planned to join the group for a village picnic.	
72.	X rode alone and got caught in the rain on X's way to the village.	
73.	X took shelter on a path leading to the forest.	
74.	X remembered Y's offer to be alone in a forest hut.	
75.	X headed for the forest hut, hoping Y wouldn't be waiting for X there.	
76.	X opened the hut door and met Y.	
77.	Y had been waiting for X for over two hours.	
78.	X was surprised to see Y had prepared lunch for X.	
79.	X warmed herself by the fire.	
80.	X and Y enjoyed lunch while chatting.	
81.	They talked about inequality and injustice, gender, and status.	

82.	X felt she had been there too long and needed to leave.	
83.	Y held X back by confessing his feelings.	
84.	Y seduced and kissed X.	
85.	X was captivated by Y's passionate kiss.	
86.	X came to her senses. Y wanted to marry X.	
87.	X refused to marry Y because of Y's background.	
88.	Y teased X about whether X would change X's mind.	
89.	X returned home on horseback.	
90.	X asked K to pick her up that night.	
91.	X ate dinner in her room, watching Y from the window.	
92.	Q and her friends became suspicious of X's whereabouts during the day.	
93.	X made excuses and quickly went to change.	
94.	X told her servant what had happened.	
95.	The servant gave X a letter from Q.	
96.	Q asked X to meet Q.	
97.	X went to meet Q while waiting for K to pick her up.	

98.	Upon entering the greenhouse, X met Y.	
99.	Y hugged and kissed X.	
100.	Y again tried to persuade X to marry Y.	
101.	X rejected Y's advances.	
102.	K arrived and scolded X and Y.	
103.	X tries to break up K and Y.	
104.	K takes X away from the house.	
105.	K and X discuss X's engagement and O in the carriage.	
106.	X reflects on the incident in her room.	
107.	X wakes up and sees K driving his carriage.	
108.	X wakes H and asks for H's opinion.	
109.	K returns with S.	
110.	X asks about K and Y's duel.	
111.	K tells X angrily.	
112.	X escorts S to the door.	
113.	X feels guilty because Y was shot by K.	
114.	X wants to correct the misunderstanding that occurred with Y.	
115.	X tries to explain and apologize to K.	

2. Force1

Force1 occurs from action 35 until 115. Based on the narratological theory put forward by Todorov, this section tells about the beginning of the problems that the main character will face. This is what will start to cause imbalance or shock for the main character.

This novel tells a flashback to Elizabeth and Ian's first meeting two years ago. Elizabeth, who was at that time attending a high-society social event for the first time, met Ian. There, three of Elizabeth's friends, who knew Ian's dark background, persuaded Elizabeth to seduce and approach Ian. Elizabeth, who did not know anything, fell into a trap planned by her friends. As a result, Elizabeth was tied to a scandal with Ian which eventually slowly damaged Elizabeth's image as part of the upper class. Meanwhile, Ian suspected that Elizabeth was the one who deliberately used Ian behind the scandal.

Table 2.3 Disequilibrium

Disequilibrium (116-146)

116.	X attends the ball with her fiancé.	Elizabeth's family hatches a plan to find a wealthy suitor willing to pay off the debts of the Havenhurst estate. Ian and Elizabeth reunite after a long time. This encounter is marked by high tension, verbal confrontations, and the reopening of old wounds. These two stubborn characters
117.	O breaks off the engagement due to rumors.	
118.	K disappears X.	
119.	X returns to Heavenhurst and sells goods to pay her debts.	
120.	X meets J again in the garden.	

121.	X tells J about Z's plan to find X a mate.	continue to bicker, but the emotional and physical pull between them becomes increasingly difficult to ignore.
122.	X and J find a solution to Z's plan.	
123.	L and X finally go to B's residence.	
124.	L and X are escorted to their room by a servant.	
125.	B enters the room and greets them.	
126.	B tries to flirt with X.	
127.	X asks for a rest before dinner.	
128.	X descends the stairs to eat late.	
129.	X dines with B and his three invited guests.	
130.	E criticizes X's very plain appearance.	
131.	B says that the two of them are not suitable.	
132.	L and X return home at dawn.	
133.	X and L arrive at A's house.	
134.	A greets them warmly.	
135.	A escorts them to their room.	
136.	X goes down the river to accompany A fishing.	
137.	X screams that X saw a snake.	
138.	X tries to interrupt A's fishing.	
139.	A sends X home in annoyance.	
140.	The servant tells X that A wants to speak privately.	
141.	X meets A in his study.	

142.	A expresses his feeling that they are not compatible.	
143.	A is surprised by the difference in X from when they first met.	
144.	X explains how she came to A's house.	
145.	A escorts X and asks X to the carriage.	
146.	X leaves to meet H.	

3. Disequilibrium

Disequilibrium occurs from action 116 until 146. Based on Todorov's narratological theory, this section contains the culmination of the problems faced by the main characters.

This novel tells how Elizabeth and Ian's situation worsens, especially when Elizabeth's fiancé, Lord Mondevale, chooses to cancel their engagement due to Elizabeth's worsening reputation in society due to her scandal with Ian. In the midst of mounting debt, Elizabeth finally decided to sell several items to pay off the debt until her house was almost empty. In desperation, Elizabeth finally decided to meet the three candidates who had received letters from her uncle.

Table 2.4 Force2

Force2 (147-168)

147.	X has an accident on the way with H.	Secrets and misunderstandings from the night of the scandal years ago slowly begin to unravel. Ian begins to investigate the truth of the past and realizes that Elizabeth was the victim of manipulation and prejudice, not the mastermind behind the scandal. Regret creeps into Ian. He tries to right his wrongs and protect Elizabeth from the pressure of his family. Ian offers Elizabeth a formal marriage as the best way to protect Havenhurst and restore her reputation. Elizabeth hesitates to accept Ian's proposal, fearing that the marriage is based on pity or obligation, rather than love. The wedding takes place, but their relationship remains fraught with awkwardness and emotional distance.
148.	X and H arrive at Y's residence in Scotland.	
149.	Y greets X warmly Cold and hostile.	
150.	Y thought this was just X's attempt to trick Y again.	
151.	X tried to remain calm and polite.	
152.	Y continued to mock and tease X.	
153.	X offers to clean Y's cottage.	
154.	X tries to cook for herself.	
155.	X tries to help W cook but fails.	
156.	X washes her clothes in the river.	
157.	Y continues to tease X but begins to feel guilty.	
158.	X finds an old treehouse while wandering around.	
159.	X finds Y's sketchbook.	
160.	Y is angry with X.	
161.	Y confesses about the fire that killed Y's family.	
162.	Y kisses and hugs X.	
163.	V sees him.	
164.	V demands that Y take moral responsibility.	

165.	Z sends a surprise message to X to return home.	
166.	Y follows X, curious about Z's plans.	
167.	Y secretly visits Havenhurst.	
168.	Y is surprised to see the house empty.	

4. Force2

Force2 occurs from action 147 until 168. Based on Todorov's narratological theory, this section describes the process of the problems faced by the main character starting to subside.

This novel tells the story of Ian and Elizabeth's meeting after the conflict they faced. Elizabeth, who came with the aim of resolving past misunderstandings, was greeted with negative prejudices that still haunted Ian's mind about Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth returned home, Ian secretly followed her to uncover the truth behind their past conflict.

Table 2.1 Equilibrium2

Equilibrium2 (169-181)

169.	Y meets Z and takes over X's finances.	The early years of their marriage were filled with Ian's efforts to win Elizabeth's heart and prove his sincerity. Elizabeth and Ian began to build a sense of warmth and trust in their marriage. A public confrontation ensued, revealing the truth, the evil intentions of others, and past lies. Ian expressed
170.	Y pays off all of X's debts.	
171.	K appears and accuses Y of harming X	
172.	X travels to London.	
173.	X announces her love for Y in high society.	
174.	Y proposes to X in an emotional ceremony.	

175.	After their marriage, X moves into Y's residence.	his deep and honest love for Elizabeth, erasing any lingering doubts. Havenhurst was rescued and fully restored, marking the end of Elizabeth's financial burden and suffering. The couple enjoyed peace and domestic happiness, re-accepted by society.
176.	X manages a very wealthy household but remains humble.	
177.	Y rewards X by restoring Havenhurst.	
178.	Y also helps K get his life back on track.	
179.	X gives birth to two children, XA and YA.	
180.	XA and YA ask about heaven.	
181	Y replies that the life they live is almost like heaven.	

5. Equilibrium2

Equilibrium2 occurs from action 169 until 181. Based on the narratology theory put forward by Todorof, this section contains the resolution of the problems faced by the main character to form a stable state that is relatively the same as the beginning of the story but in a different situation and condition.

In this novel, he tells how he finally finds out the truth behind his misunderstanding of Elizabeth in the past. Ian, with his wealth, finally decides to help Elizabeth by marrying her and paying off Heavenhurst's debt. Although at the beginning of their marriage there was still doubt between the two, they slowly built trust between each other until they had a happy relationship, Elizabeth also had a good reputation again among the upper class and Ian's presence was increasingly respected because he became the protector of Heavenhurst.

2.2. The Development of the Protagonist in *Almost Heaven* by Judith

McNaught

In Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven*, the transformation of the protagonist, Elizabeth Cameron, is deeply intertwined with the narrative structure. By applying Tzvetan Todorov's theory of narrative, which comprises five distinct stages equilibrium, disruption, recognition, repair, and new equilibrium it becomes evident that Elizabeth's character arc follows the story's structural progression. Her evolution from a socially defined aristocratic debutante to a self-aware and emotionally mature woman is mapped through the disruptions and resolutions that mark her romantic and personal journey.

Elizabeth Cameron's Character Development through Todorov's Narrative Structure in *Almost Heaven*:

1. Equilibrium¹

Character Condition: Passive personality and naive characterized by conformity to social norms.

"...by the time she was seventeen Elizabeth Cameron was very unlike most well-born young ladies. Extraordinarily well-read, poised, and with a streak of practicality that was evidencing itself more each day, she was already learning from the bailiff about the running of her own estate. Surrounded by trusted adults for all her life, she was naively optimistic that all people must be as nice and as dependable as she and everyone else at Havenhurst." (McNaught, 1989, p. 33-34)

The quotes highlight Elizabeth as atypical for a woman of her rank and era. Rather than focusing solely on traditional accomplishments expected of young women, she is "extraordinarily well-read" and possesses strong practical capability. Her proactive

involvement in learning estate management directly from the bailiff showcases independence, intelligence, and a grounded work ethic.

Despite her practical intelligence, Elizabeth harbors a significant vulnerability: her profound naivety. Because she grew up surrounded exclusively by trustworthy, dependable adults at Havenhurst, she projects her own integrity onto the wider world. She naively assumes that all people share the same goodwill and honesty, leaving her ill-prepared for the deceit, manipulation, or malice she might encounter outside her estate.

Initially, Elizabeth is portrayed as a young noblewoman, innocent, idealistic, and compliant with the expectations of London's upper class. Her characterization is heavily defined by social structures; she fulfills conventional gender roles by accepting an arranged proposal out of a sense of familial duty and a desire to preserve the Havenhurst estate. At this stage, Elizabeth's agency and self-control are limited, she acts in accordance with a narrative shaped by the standards of the aristocratic society surrounding her.

2. Force1

Character Condition: Shock, loss of status, and isolation.

“My uncle is coming to see me.” Actually, Elizabeth's social schedule was perfectly blank for the next twelve months, and her uncle's occasional visits were worse than having nothing to do.” (McNaught, 1989, p.18)

The quote highlights Elizabeth's isolation within high society. Having a "perfectly blank" schedule for an entire year indicates complete exclusion from normal aristocratic social circles. Her willingness to invent a visit from her uncle, even though she finds his

real visits excruciatingly tedious, underscores her desperation to maintain a facade of social engagement and shield her pride.

The scandal at Lady Charise's party and Robert's disappearance serve as basis that shatter the structure of Elizabeth's life. A confrontation arises between her social identity (as a respectable Lady) and her new reality (as a disgraced woman). Her character transformation is triggered when the protection afforded by her social status is abruptly stripped away. Elizabeth is forced to confront trauma, betrayal, and public humiliation, experiences that dismantle her naivety regarding the artificiality of high society.

3. Disequilibrium

Character Condition: Self-awareness and mental resilience.

"It means," she informed him, making a monumental effort to speak clearly and coolly, "that you have no right to act as if I did something evil, when in truth you yourself regarded it as nothing but a—a meaningless dalliance. You said as much, so there's no point in denying it!" (McNaught, 1989, p.245)

This quote shows Elizabeth's high level of self-awareness regarding her self-worth and the reality of her social situation. When Ian Thornton attempts to corner or intimidate her, Elizabeth does not fall prey to imposed guilt.

"The footman stared at mine. No woman is safe in this place. We only had a bit of—of stage fright just now. We're new to playacting, but tonight I'll carry it off. You'll see. No matter what it takes, I'll do it." (McNaught, 1989, p.146)

This quote shows Elizabeth's remarkable mental resilience when faced with financial pressure, social isolation, and threats to her future. Rather than succumbing to despair or emotional distress, she engages in cognitive reframing.

She acknowledges her initial anxiety yet immediately steels her resolve ("*No matter what it takes, I'll do it*"). This reflects the psychological fortitude of a woman who refuses to be a victim of circumstance, choosing instead to maintain control over her emotions and actions amidst an intensely pressured environment.

At this stage, Elizabeth undergoes an internal awakening. She realizes she can no longer remain passive or rely on the hope that circumstances will improve on their own. When her uncle (Julius) attempts to regain control over her life and sell off her assets to cover debts, Elizabeth consciously chooses to remain at Havenhurst and manage her remaining wealth. Her character transforms from someone shaped by circumstances into an active subject who responds to them. She refuses to be crushed by social stigma, instead summoning an inner courage that had previously lain dormant.

4. Force2

Character State: Active Agency, Resolve, and Emotional Maturation.

“With his current mood, Elizabeth realized, she was going to have to make her own opening. Lifting her eyes to his enigmatic golden ones, she said quietly, “Ian, have you ever wanted something very badly—something that was within your grasp—and yet you were afraid to reach out for it?” (McNaught, 1989, p.434)

The quote shows Elizabeth as a figure possessing "active agency," evidenced by her realization that she can no longer remain passive while waiting for Ian's moods to shift. She refuses to be a merely reactive participant in the conversation, choosing instead to actively take control of the interaction's dynamics.

Her resolve shines through as she summons the courage to meet his gaze directly. Despite recognizing Ian's unpredictable emotional state—which could easily spark tension—Elizabeth refuses to be intimidated; she steps forward to confront the uncertainty with steadfast determination.

Elizabeth's emotional maturity is further reflected in her chosen approach. Rather than voicing her arguments impulsively or explosively, she calmly poses her questions, employing profound analogies regarding desire and fear. Her ability to wisely initiate a vulnerable conversation demonstrates a high level of emotional maturity in handling sensitive communication.

The most significant change occurs during this recovery phase. Elizabeth demonstrates active agency. She dares to confront Ian Thornton again without averting her gaze, casting aside her fear and demanding respect for her dignity. Elizabeth refuses to be materialistic or to exploit others for quick gain, even when facing dire financial straits. She is no longer a hesitant young woman but an independent figure, brave enough to fight for the truth regarding past scandals and critical of the prejudices held by those around her.

5. Equilibrium²

Character State: Full Control, Maturity, and Self-Actualization.

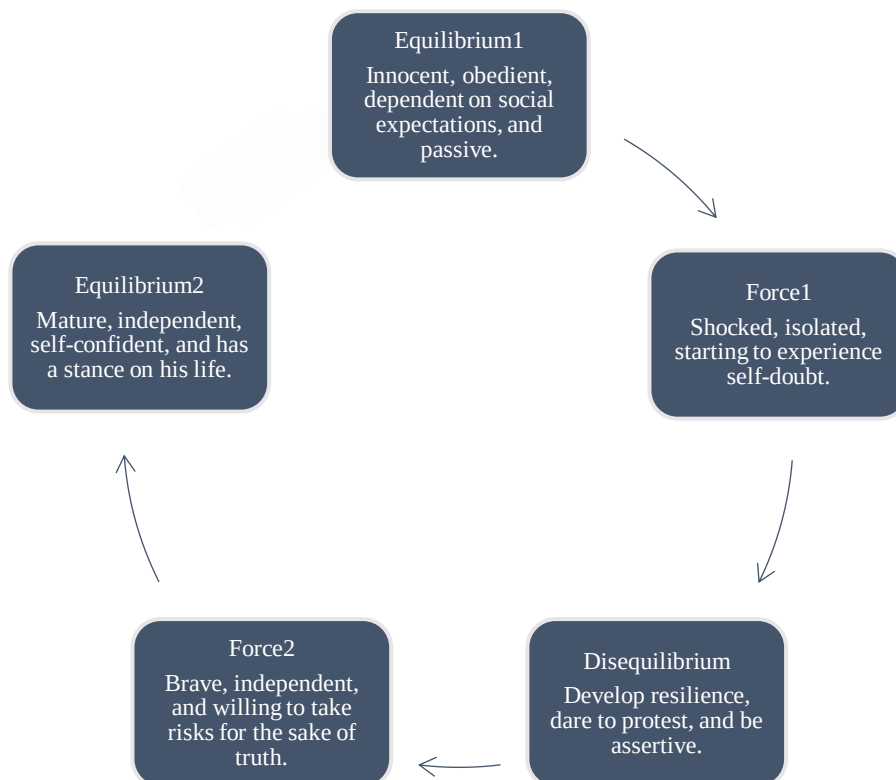
“It’s so hard to know,” she whispered, “how I ought to feel or what I ought to think. And I have the worst feeling it’s not going to matter what I know or what I think,” she added almost sadly, “because I am going to love him.” She opened her eyes and looked at Alex. “It’s happening, and I cannot stop it. It was happening two years ago, and I couldn’t stop it then, either.” (McNaught, 1989, p.417)

This quote shows the emotional climax and Elizabeth's conscious understanding of her life choices and her love, no longer overshadowed by fear or the social conventions of the Regency era.

“I’ve hurt you terribly, my love, and I’ll hurt you again during the next fifty years. And you are going to hurt me, Ian—never, I hope, as much as you are hurting me now. But if that’s the way it has to be, then I’ll endure it, because the only alternative is to live without you, and that is no life at all.”
(McNaught, 1989, p.555)

This quote demonstrates Elizabeth's emotional maturity as she accepts compromise and the reality that relationships and marriages involve pain, yet chooses to persevere for the sake of true love.

By the end of the narrative, Elizabeth reaches a new state of equilibrium that represents the pinnacle of her character development. She does not revert to her former self (naive and subservient to rigid social norms); instead, she transforms into a complete and empowered woman. Her marriage to Ian Thornton is no longer the result of social pressure or a family financial arrangement, but the outcome of a free choice based on love, trust, and emotional equality. She successfully retains her ancestral Havenhurst and reclaims her social standing with a new identity as a strong, principled woman, liberated from the shadow of manipulative societal expectations.



Overall, Elizabeth's developmental trajectory within Todorov's framework illustrates a transformation from a narrative object into a narrative subject. The disruption shatters her innocence and passivity, while the repair phase fosters her resilience and independence. Consequently, upon reaching a new equilibrium, Elizabeth transforms from a fragile debutante into a woman who possesses full control over her own life, self-worth, and happiness.

This new equilibrium signifies a successful narrative closure, both structurally and psychologically. The external conflicts are resolved, and the internal transformation of the heroine is complete. Through Todorov's framework, Elizabeth's arc can be seen as a journey from external conformity to internal authenticity, highlighting the interplay between narrative form and character development.