

**NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN JOSIE SILVER'S *ONE DAY IN
DECEMBER***

THESIS

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
MALANG
2025**

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN JOSIE SILVER'S *ONE DAY IN DECEMBER*

THESIS

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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MALANG
2025**

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "*Narrative Structure in Josie Silver's One Day in December*" is truly my own work. I have not included any material that has been written or published by others, except for those that have been cited as references and listed in the bibliography. Therefore, if in the future there are any objections or claims regarding this work, I am fully responsible for the contents of this thesis.

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This to certify that Fitra Nur Rahma thesis entitled "*Narrative Structure In Josle Silver's One Day In December*" has been approved for thesis examination at Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as one of the requirements for the degree *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S).

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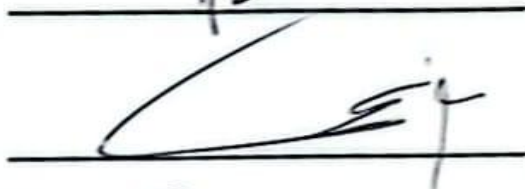

This is to certify that Fitra Rahma's thesis entitled *Narrative Structure in Josie Silver's One Day in December* has been approved by the Board of Examiners as one of the requirements for the degree of *Sarjana Sastra (S.S.)* in the Department of English Literature.

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MOTTO

*“Allah tidak mengatakan hidup ini mudah. Tetapi Allah berjanji, bahwa
sesungguhnya bersama kesulitan pasti ada kemudahan.”*

(QS. Al – Insyirah: 5 – 6)

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents, my academic advisor for their sincere guidance, my older sister, my younger brother and younger sister who have provided support and motivation, as well as my friends who have helped me throughout the process of writing this thesis. Last but not least, I dedicate this thesis to myself, Fitra, who has endured, stayed strong and continued fighting until the very end to complete this journey.

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Malang, December 10th, 2025

Researcher


Fitra Nur Rahma

ABSTRACT

Rahma, Fitra (2025) Narrative Structure in the Novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver. Thesis.
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Keywords: *Narrative structure, Tzvetan Todorov's, One Day in December, romantic novel*

This study analyzes the narrative structure in Josie Silver's novel *One Day in December* using Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory. This novel describes the love story of two main characters, Laurie and Jack, which develops through various phases of life and emotions. Using a structuralist approach, this study aims to explain how Todorov's five narrative stages *a state of equilibrium, disruption, recognition, attempt to repair, and new equilibrium*, are reflected in the development of the plot and the romantic relationship between the characters. The analysis of each stage is conducted by examining the initial condition of the story as a form of equilibrium, the triggering event that disrupts this stability (disruption), the characters' awareness of the conflict they face (recognition), the characters' efforts to face and resolve the conflict (attempt to repair), and the creation of a final condition that shows a (new equilibrium), is realized in the form of a new balance when Laurie and Jack finally unite, after going through various relationship failures, emotional sacrifices, and acceptance of the past. This new balance not only marks the union of their love, but also shows emotional maturity and a more realistic understanding of happiness. The research data was obtained from the narrative text of the novel in the form of quotations, dialogues, and descriptions of events relevant to the five stages of Todorov's narrative structure. The analysis was conducted to identify changes in the situation and plot developments that marked the transition between these stages. The results of the study show that the novel *One Day in December* follows Todorov's narrative pattern sequentially, in which the initial balance is disrupted by love at first sight, then develops through emotional conflict, recognition of reality, efforts to improve the situation, until a new balance is achieved at the end of the story. Through this structure, the love story of Laurie and Jack not only shows the dynamics of a romantic relationship, but also illustrates how conflict, time, and decisions play a role in shaping the meaning of true happiness. This research contributes to literary studies by demonstrating the application of Todorov's theory in understanding the integration of narrative structure and romantic elements in contemporary novels, as well as opening up opportunities for further research on similar works with similar narrative patterns and shaping the meaning of true happiness as the characteristics of romance novel.

مستخلص البحث

رحمة، فطرة (٢٠٢٥). بنية السرد في رواية "يوم من ديسمبر" لجوزيف سيلفر. أطروحة. برنامج دراسة الأدب الإنجليزي، قسم العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: الدكتور مركي عفيفي الدين، ماجستير في الإدارة العامة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بنية السرد، رواية يوم واحد في ديسمبر لتزفيتان تودوروف، الرواية الرومانسية

تحلل هذه الدراسة البنية السردية في رواية جوزيف سيلفر "يوم واحد في ديسمبر" باستخدام نظرية البنية السردية لتزفيتان تودوروف. تصور الرواية قصة حب بين شخصيتين رئيسيتين، لوري وجاك، تتطور عبر مراحل مختلفة من الحياة والعواطف. باستخدام نهج بنيوي، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى شرح كيفية انعكاس المراحل السردية الخمس لتودوروف - حالة التوازن، الاضطراب، الاعتراف، محاولة الإصلاح، والتوازن الجديد - في تطور الحكمة والعلاقة الرومانسية بين الشخصيات. يتم تحليل كل مرحلة من خلال دراسة الحالة الأولية للقصة كشكل من أشكال التوازن، والحدث المحفز الذي يزعزع هذا الاستقرار (الاضطراب)، وإدراك الشخصيات للصراع الذي يواجهونه (الاعتراف)، وجهود الشخصيات للتعامل مع الصراع وإصلاحه (محاولة الإصلاح)، وخلق نهاية تظهر توازنًا جديدًا، يتحقق في شكل توازن جديد عندما يتحد لوري وجاك أخيرًا، بعد مرورهما بمختلف إخفاقات العلاقة والتضحيات العاطفية وقبول الماضي. لا يمثل هذا التوازن الجديد اتحاديهما فحسب، بل يظهر أيضًا نصلاً عاطفياً وفهماً أكثر واقعية للسعادة. تم الحصول على بيانات البحث من النص السردى للرواية في شكل اقتباسات وحوارات ووصف للأحداث ذات الصلة بالمرحلة الخمس لهيكل تودوروف السردى. تم إجراء التحليل لتحديد التغييرات في الموقف وتطورات الحكمة التي ميزت يوم واحد في ديسمبر تتبع نمط تودوروف السردى بشكل متسلسل، حيث يتم الانتقال بين هذه المراحل. تظهر النتائج أن رواية اختلال التوازن الأولى بسبب الحب من النظرة الأولى، ثم يتطور من خلال الصراع العاطفي، والاعتراف بالواقع، ومحاولات إصلاح الوضع، حتى يتم تحقيق توازن جديد في نهاية القصة. من خلال هذه البنية، لا تظهر قصة حب لوري وجاك ديناميكيات العلاقة الرومانسية فحسب، بل توضح أيضًا كيف يلعب الصراع والوقت والقرارات دوراً في تشكيل معنى السعادة الحقيقية. تساهم هذه الدراسة في الدراسات الأدبية من خلال إظهار تطبيق نظرية تودوروف في فهم تكامل البنية السردية والعناصر الرومانسية في الروايات المعاصرة، فضلاً عن فتح فرص لإجراء مزيد من الأبحاث حول أعمال مماثلة ذات أنماط سردية مشابهة وتشكيل معنى السعادة الحقيقية كسمة من سمات الروايات الرومانسية.

ABSTRAK

Rahma, Fitra (2025) Narrative Structure in the Novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver. Skripsi. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Muzakki Afifuddin, M.Pd.
Kata kunci: *Struktur naratif, Tzvetan Todorov's, One Day in December, novel romantik.*

Penelitian ini menganalisis struktur naratif dalam novel *One Day in December* karya Josie Silver dengan menggunakan teori struktur naratif yang dikemukakan oleh Tzvetan Todorov's. Novel ini menggambarkan perjalanan kisah cinta dua tokoh utama, Laurie dan Jack, yang berkembang melalui berbagai fase kehidupan dan perasaan. Dengan pendekatan strukturalisme, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana lima tahapan naratif Todorov's, *a state equilibrium*, *disruption*, *recognition*, *attempt to repair*, dan *new equilibrium* tercermin dalam perkembangan alur dan hubungan romantis para tokohnya. Analisis pada setiap tahapan dilakukan dengan mengkaji kondisi awal cerita sebagai bentuk keseimbangan (*equilibrium*), peristiwa pemicu yang mengganggu kestabilan tersebut (*disruption*), kesadaran tokoh terhadap konflik yang dihadapi (*recognition*), usaha tokoh dalam menghadapi dan memperbaiki konflik (*attempt to repair*), serta terciptanya kondisi akhir yang menunjukkan keseimbangan baru (*new equilibrium*), diwujudkan dalam bentuk tercapainya keseimbangan baru ketika Laurie dan Jack akhirnya bersatu, setelah melalui berbagai kegagalan hubungan, pengorbanan emosional, dan penerimaan terhadap masa lalu. Keseimbangan baru ini tidak hanya menandai penyatuan cinta mereka, tetapi juga menunjukkan kedewasaan emosional dan pemahaman yang lebih realistis tentang kebahagiaan. Data penelitian diperoleh dari teks naratif novel berupa kutipan, dialog, serta deskripsi peristiwa yang relevan dengan lima tahap struktur naratif Todorov's. Analisis dilakukan untuk mengidentifikasi perubahan situasi dan perkembangan plot yang menandai transisi antar tahap tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa novel *One Day in December* mengikuti pola naratif Todorov's secara berurutan, di mana keseimbangan awal terganggu oleh cinta pada pandangan pertama, kemudian berkembang melalui konflik emosional, pengenalan terhadap realitas, usaha memperbaiki keadaan, hingga tercapainya keseimbangan baru dalam akhir cerita. Melalui struktur ini, kisah cinta Laurie dan Jack tidak hanya menunjukkan dinamika hubungan romantis, tetapi juga mengilustrasikan bagaimana konflik, waktu, dan keputusan berperan dalam membentuk makna kebahagiaan sejati. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi bagi kajian sastra dengan memperlihatkan penerapan teori Todorov's dalam memahami keterpaduan struktur naratif dan unsur romantis dalam novel kontemporer, serta membuka peluang penelitian lebih lanjut terhadap karya-karya sejenis dengan pola naratif serupa dan membentuk makna kebahagiaan sejati sebagai ciri khas novel roman.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background of the research including the objectives of the research and previous studies. In addition, this chapter also describes the research problems, the significance of the research, and the limitations of the research scope so that the discussion remains directed. The key terms used in this study are also be defined to ensure a clear understanding for readers.

A. Background of the Study

Literature is an art form, through which people use language to convey their human experiences, thoughts, feelings and imagination. A novel is one of the most popular literary works as it provides a profound story regarding the human life. Throughout its course of development, the novel has not only changed as entertainment but also as a means of expression of ideas and a social reality. The novel, in the postmodern context, is a powerful means that an author would use to understand the intricacies of reality, identity and other forms of critique of the modern day life (Bafoeva, R., 2025).

According to Deyana Chriszia et al. (2020), behind the creation of an interesting literary work lies the important role of the author in building emotions and ideas that *can touch* readers. Emotional relations, love stories, and interpersonal conflicts are the main aspects that the authors of romantic novels often develop. The love and attachment and emotional conflict are not just entertaining but also mirror the actual love situations in human beings. In every literary genre, they all possess

their specific peculiarities, and in romance, the main attention is devoted to the representation of love as a universal feeling that is not subject to culture and time (Maryani, 2024). In this way, romance novels are very relevant, as they convey personal narratives which are universal and similar to the experience of the readers.

Narrative structure is significant in the romance genre in determining the reading experience and emotional engagement of the reader. The most popular genre is romance novels as they provide not only entertainment but also affect the intricacies of the relationships between people, love, fate and emotive processes of the characters. Romance novels are usually regarded as light reading but in most cases, they raise tensions between old and new social developments in gender norms. Although they are often viewed negatively stereotypically, nevertheless, this genre also has its audience, and the number of readers is increasing among women in particular (Petrovic, 2023).

This is reflected in the novel *One Day in December*, in which the reversal point of view of the narration of both characters, Laurie and Jack, gives rise to a high emotional involvement of readers and characters, as well as to the non-linear storyline of their story. This plot device allows the novel to be more than just a standard romance novel, it is also something of a commentary on how the emotions and choices of humans are subject to time, chance, and society. Thus, the analysis of the novel *One Day in December* is not just about having fun reading the story but it is also about the interpretation of the application of narrative structure to form the elements of romance and plot development. This can be revealed in one way by

a use of narrative analysis, one of the theory is the narrative structure theory by Tzvetan Todorov's which has its stages of plot development in a story..

A number of the earlier works also indicate the use of the narrative structure theory proposed by Tzvetan Todorov's in narratives and visual media studies. To understand the dynamics of plot changes, Zerlina, R. M. (2022) studies how the balance theory was applied in modern novels by Todorov's. Another study by Benny D. and Thatit M. (2024) also provides the stages of narrative, starting with the balance and reaching a new balance in the development of characters. Wahid K. et al. (2025) illustrate the applicability of Todorov'sian structure in popular novels, especially in bridging the conflict and resolution. Boyd et al. (2020) and Muhammad Hidayat and Sukardi Weda (2021) compare novel and film-adaptation patterns and give an insight into the impact of structure on the experience of the reader or viewer. Also, Zakaria, M. F. R. (2020) and Centre, L. (2021) focus on the analysis of the typical narrative patterns in the recent works of literature and films and prove the extensive use of Todorov's theory in narrative research.

In addition to novels, the theory put forward by Todorov's is also implemented in the works dedicated to films and other popular art. Ananta, B. D. B., and Andini, T. M. (2024) discuss the Japanese literary adaptation movie *The Fallen Angel* through the prism of Todorov's, and Fikriyah, N. U., and Muassomah, M. (2025) refer to the identical theory when discussing the film *Wadjda as the manifestation of the social reform in Saudi Arabia*. The article by Setiadi, R. V., Indriani, S. S., and Puspitasari, L. (2025) analyses the identity crisis of Po character in Kung Fu Panda 3 in terms of Todorov's narrative stage. In particular, the article

by Reggina A. (2024) is devoted to the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver. Even though it is based on the triangular theory of love as developed by Sternberg, it nevertheless provides the pertinent insight into the mechanics of romantic relationships in the novel. Therefore, these ten sources can be viewed as a solid conceptual base of this study and also highlight the value of the narrative analysis by Todorov's to the plot and romance structural parts in the novel *One Day in December*.

Past studies that utilized narrative structure theory conducted by Tzvetan Todorov's tend to be implemented to a genres with complicated and non-linear story lines whereas research concerning the use of the narrative structure theory in modern romance novels is extremely minimal. Past literature also indicates that the analysis of narrative structures is more prevalent in other forms of media, e.g. movies and digital games than in novels where the chronological flow is realistic. Moreover, the analysis of the novel *One Day in December* puts more emphasis on the elements of love and interpersonal relations rather than narrative structure of the novel. Thus, the given work is performed under the premise that the romance genre, with its peculiarities in terms of the plot and the evolution of the relationships between the characters, should be researched further within the framework of the theory proposed by Todorov's. In this manner, this study attempts to examine the narrative structure in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver to address the gap in the literature of narrative structure in contemporary romance genre.

It is interesting since the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver adheres to the emotional journey of the main characters, Laurie and Jack, through

different troubles and transitions that are consistent with the stages of the narrative as described by Todorov's. In spite of the fact that the topics of love and destiny are frequently debated in other researches, there are not a lot of studies that explore how the narrative structure constructs the entire story and supports the themes. This study attempts to close this gap by examining the way the plot structure of this novel influences the character development and conflict development of the characters. Through this trend, we are able to uncover that romance novels are not an entertainment, but maybe a mirror of the social and cultural values that are emerging within the society. Moreover, the novel *One Day in December* also provides the chance of being compared to other works with the similar narrative pattern. Such comparison may offer some new information on how authors can convey the same theme in a different manner. In this way, the study should have a wider insight into the application of the narrative structure theory developed by Tzvetan Todorov's to modern day romance novels and the impact that its narrative structure has on meaningfully reading the narrative.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the background and objectives of the research described above, it is necessary to formulate the main problem that becomes the focus of this study. Using Tzvetan Todorov's's narrative structure theory to analyze novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver, this study focuses on the following question: How does Tzvetan Todorov's's narrative model describe the highlight of romantic relationships in Novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver?

C. Significance of the Study

The research is a contribution to the literary study as it offers a structural analysis of the novel *One Day in December* based on the narrative theory as put forward by Todorov's. The method gives a broad pay off in the way the plot development is organized in the novel, and can be used in future research of the narrative studies. The study can also be useful to the literature students because it can be used to illustrate the theory of narrative structure where Tzvetan Todorov's did to examine the modern day novels and assist the reader and writers to recognize the structural complexity of the so simple romantic narratives. Moreover, this paper offers the chance to draw the comparisons between the new *One Day in December* and other pieces that have a similar plot structure. This kind of comparison may give some fresh ideas about how authors are able to put the same theme in a different manner and thus expand the topic of how the theory of narrative structure by Tzvetan Todorov's can be applied to the present day romance novels and how narrative structure can influence reading experience in a more meaningful way.

D. Scope and Limitation

The given research is directed at discussing the plot within the novel *One Day in December* according to the narrative structure theory by Tzvetan Todorov's. The author is primarily concerned with the narrative stages that develop the plot and therefore does not elaborate on other aspects like the characters, settings, and themes. Nevertheless, character developments which proceed the plot development are emphasized. Moreover, this paper considers the text of the novel *One Day in December* as the primary source of data and does not take into account the

adaptations of the source in other media, including movies. Other subjective interpretations and reader responses are not also studied. The limits will be established so that the research is not done out of scope but it should be aimed at the intended purpose which is to examine the narrative structure through the Todorov's approach.

E. Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstandings terms, the researcher explains several definitions of keywords in this research:

1. **Narrative** : A method of storytelling in prose form that involves a series of events arranged in a structured manner to communicate ideas, themes, and characters to the reader. Narrative refers to the organization of events in a literary work, where events are deliberately selected, arranged, and linked to form a meaningful sequence consisting of a beginning, a disruption, and a resolution (Wakhid at al., 2024). According to Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory, narrative is not merely a record of events, but rather a construction that moves from an initial state of equilibrium, through disruption and recognition of that disruption, followed by attempts to repair it, until finally reaching a new equilibrium.
2. **Narrative Structure** : Narrative structure refers to the pattern of story composition that is constructed through the arrangement of plot and sequence of events in a literary text. This structure can involve more than one storyline that is arranged in a non-linear manner, with variations in the order of events, duration of time, and causal relationships between events.

In this type of narrative structure, the narrative does not always develop through a single chronological plot, but rather through a series of events that alternate and move towards a certain point of development in the story. This pattern of arrangement challenges conventional assumptions about linearity and cause and effect continuity, and places narrative meaning as the result of the process of reading the relationships between events in the text (Martín-Salván, 2025). Steps in the story structure depicting plot development, including introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution, are analyzed using Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory.

3. **Romance Novel** : A literary genre that focuses on the emotional relationship between female and male characters as the center of the story, with an emphasis on the development of love, conflict, and the process of unification as the final resolution. This genre not only presents love stories in a sentimental way, but also depicts inner conflicts and character development that evolve through a structured storyline (Prayuna, 2023). According to Regis (2003), romance novels have a distinctive narrative pattern that includes the meeting of the main characters, obstacles or conflicts in the relationship, increased emotional tension, and the achievement of a new balance through union. This pattern shows that the romance genre is highly dependent on narrative structure, making it relevant to analyze using Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory, which emphasizes the stages of state equilibrium, disruption, recognition, attempt to repair, and new equilibrium.

CHAPTER II

PREVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher introduces a number of theories which help to analyze the narratives which are under discussion. These theories involve the concept of a narrative which talks about narrative structure and plot structure, which deals with the patterns and phases of plot development in a narrative and the theory of narrative structure by Tzvetan Todorov's which addresses the model of a state equilibrium in a story plot, beginning with a stable state of the beginning, the appearance of a disruption and the state of a new equilibrium. Moreover, the structuralist approach supports this study, as it focuses on the meaning in literature work being expressed as a combination of relationships between text elements, as opposed to the existence of the meaning alone. Knowing these theories and methods, the current research recognizes the way in which the narrative framework is created and how it helps to transfer the meaning and reveal the romanticism elements of the considered piece of art.

A. Structuralism

Structuralism is a method of literary analysis that pays attention to how components of a literary work interrelate as a system. This methodology is informed by the fact that the meaning of a text does not exist alone but emerges as a result of the interaction between different aspects of a text including characters, plot, setting, theme, and style of language. In this method every part of the text plays a designated role that leads to the structure as a whole, thus that is obtained through interpretation

of association among these parts of a literary work (Monita & Sakina, 2025). Structural analysis therefore focuses not on the external forces of the text like the author or the social context but on the internal structure itself. The founder of structuralism Ferdinand de Saussure insists on the significance of the system of signs (language) to interpret meaning, and the concept is later modified by literary scholars who need to investigate the narrative structure and conventions according to which works of fiction are created.

Applied to literary studies, structuralism tries to demonstrate the patterns or processes of a text, how the components of the text are dependent on each other to create the meaning. It is significant in uncovering the inner design and linguistic patterns and shaping of the literary meaning. Structural analysis allows one to read literary work in a systematic way to discover the association between form and content supporting one another (Monita and Sakina, 2025). Structuralism also forms a method of the collection and analysis of data in a literary study as well. The data collection process is conducted through studying and choosing intrinsic elements found in the text, including plot structure, characterization, setting, and narrative pattern, which are the points of analysis. These aspects are then explored in terms of structure with an effort to identify patterns of relationships that create narrative coherence. The analysis procedure consists of categorization of narrative events and how the individual part leads to the entire structure of the story.

This method assists scholars to discover the similarity behind the heterogeneity of the tales that become visible at the surface. Tzvetan Todorov's and his theory of narrative structure is one of the key contributors to the use of

structuralism in the analysis of literature as he came up with the narrative structure theory that describes how a narrative unfolds in stages. Literary texts with their structuralist perspectives like the narrative by Todorov's, can be interpreted to be systems with narrative regularity in which every event serves to constitute a logical and coherent whole of meaning.

B. Narrative

Narrative refers to a type of storytelling that makes use of a chronological delivery of events. A narrative story usually consists of the characters, settings and conflicts that influence the plot of a story. The main aim of a story is to narrate experiences, real or fictional in a manner that finds interest and meaning to the reader. Hanyfah and Purwanti (2024) argue that a narrative analysis is employed to interpret and describe the composition and flow of a story concerning the theme. This underlines the fact that narrative is more than a series of events but an entity that can be created using patterns which can be analytically put together. As a rule, stories are developed in terms of plot including the introduction, complications, climax and resolution. This structure allows the readers to follow the story in a systematic way, starting with the initial status, until the climax of the conflict, to the resolution.

The plot has a regularity which proves the fact that every event has a logical cause and effect relation and it is interrelated in creating the meaning of the story. Thus, the narrative theory is a definite analytical tool to comprehend the dynamics of the plot of the story, the conflicts occurring in it and the way to solve them. Modern narrative has a more intricate tendency in its development

compared to conventional patterns. According to Shahid et al. (2024), modern narrative formats are not invariably linear, but they may be designed with non linear plots, a number of viewpoints, or an un-chronic time presentation. Such approach makes the reading process even richer, because readers are also encouraged to perceive the story in different ways and unusual forms. Narrative, therefore, is not simply perceived as a flow of events, it is also a narration plan that encompasses multiple opportunities of presenting the meaning and giving the reader a richer experience of reading.

C. Tzvetan Todorov's Theory

Tzvetan Todorov's is a literary critic and philosopher whose ideas regarding the narrative structure are famous. According to Todorov's, narrative analysis in his essay *Structural Analysis of Narrative* (1969), attempts to grasp the abstract form of a story and not the concrete form of the piece of writing. He writes that the work will be considered as the manifestation of an abstract structure, merely one of its possible realizations an understanding of that structure will be the real goal of structural analysis (Todorov's, 1969, p. 70). That is, a literary work is considered to be a reflection of a more general structural pattern, and it is the latter that is of the most significant concern of the narrative analysis. The narrative structure proposed by Tzvetan Todorov consists of five main stages, namely initial a state equilibrium, disruption, recognition of the disruption, attempt to repair the disruption, and new equilibrium. These five stages explain the development of the story from its

initial stable condition to the achievement of a new equilibrium after the conflict is resolved.

Among the main ideas of Todorov's is the fact that all narratives tend to swing between two states of equilibrium. According to him, "*the minimal complete plot can be seen as the shift from one equilibrium to another*" (Todorov's, 1969, p. 75). By equilibrium here, we do not imply stationary, but a state of affairs that can be shaken by an event or a conflict. Once the first equilibrium has been shaken, the story will follow a sequence of events, until it gets to the next equilibrium. According to Todorov's, all stories start at the point of a state equilibrium with any possible conflicts trying to keep each other in balance by a particular frame. It seems that this theory is universal because nearly all stories occur in a similar way, they have a beginning, the middle, and the end. The nature of the Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory however extends to the realization that any narrative possesses a simple plot or storyline, and it is interrelated by cause and effect linkages besides events. In addition to this, Todorov's identifies five key phases in the narrative structure.

Tzvetan Todorov identifies five main stages in the narrative structure that explain the systematic development of a story. The first stage is a state equilibrium, which is the initial condition of the story that shows a stable and balanced situation, where the characters are introduced and there is no major conflict yet. The second stage is disruption, which is marked by the emergence of events or conflicts that destroy the initial balance and disrupt the established order. The third stage, recognition, occurs when the characters become aware

of the disruption and understand that the previous equilibrium has been disturbed. The fourth stage is attempt to repair the disruption, which is the characters' efforts to overcome the conflict and restore stability. The final stage is new equilibrium, which is the creation of a new equilibrium at the end of the story. This equilibrium differs from the initial equilibrium because the characters and situation have undergone changes as a result of the series of events in the story.

A state equilibrium, the film starts when everything is in balance, and the characters are presented, and the world of the story is in balance. Disruption, a phenomenon that breaks the first balance, is an occurrence that is in most cases a conflict or some unexpected event. Recognition, the characters realize the existence of a conflict and have to confront the challenges appearing. Attempt to Resolve the Disruption, The characters attempt to overcome the disruption, attempt to find a solution, or act in order to correct the situation. The story finishes with a New Equilibrium in which a new balance is established, unlike the one in the beginning as it has evolved. This phase is identified in line with the opinion of Todorov's that narrative is a process that comprises of a process of degeneration and a process of improvement (Todorov's, 1969, p. 75).

This step is consistent with the fact that narrative is made up of a degeneration process and a process of improvement (Todorov's, 1969, p. 75). Accordingly, the narrative structure theory introduced by Tzvetan Todorov's offers the proper structure of the plot analysis of the logical and logical development of the plot based on causal-consequence relationships. So, any

plots are regarded as being a move where the first state of affairs is balanced in the start of the plot, is disturbed by confrontation, evolves through a range of incidents, and, eventually, ends with the reversal or transformation to resolve the story (Septina & Afrianto, 2023). Therefore, the theory of narrative structure provided by Tzvetan Todorov's helps to understand that narrative structure is not just about the narrative under discussion but also about the organization of events and creation of coherent and pleasing narrative progression by the reader.

D. Romance

The romance genre is one of the most popular and sought after genres in contemporary literature. The popularity of this genre is inseparable from its main focus on emotional relationships between characters, especially between female and male protagonists. Romance does not merely present love stories, but also depicts the emotional processes, inner conflicts, and character development experienced by the characters. Therefore, this genre has certain characteristics and conventions that distinguish it from other literary genres. According to Prayuna (2023), the romance genre has a distinctive narrative pattern and aims to provide an understanding of love, relationship problems, and the possibility of a happy ending.

Romance tends to place love at the center of the story, but that love does not appear instantly. Instead, it develops through various obstacles and conflicts that test the emotions and commitment of the main characters. This shows that romance is a genre that is highly dependent on narrative structure and plot development. Regis (2003) defines romance novels as fictional prose that tells the story of the

meeting between a female and male character, the development of love between the two, and the process towards commitment or a long-term relationship. He also emphasizes that romance focuses on the emotional movement towards the acknowledgment of love and union, and contains social values that make the relationship morally and emotionally meaningful. Thus, romance cannot be understood merely as a sentimental story, but as a narrative with a specific structure and purpose.

Theoretically, Regis (2003) argues that romance novels have several important elements, such as the meeting of the main characters, obstacles that hinder their relationship, emotional attraction, climactic conflict, and union as a form of resolution. These elements form a narrative framework that guides readers through emotional tension until they reach satisfaction at the end of the story. This pattern shows that the romance genre is strongly compatible with narrative structure theory, especially theories that emphasize balance, disruption, and restoration. In relation to Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory, the romance genre generally moves from a relatively balanced initial condition (equilibrium), then experiences disruption due to romantic conflict, the presence of a third party, or moral dilemmas, and finally moves towards a new equilibrium through the resolution of conflict. Conflict in romance serves as the main driver of the plot as well as a means of character development. Therefore, romance is highly relevant for analysis using Tzvetan Todorov's structural approach.

In addition to narrative structure, the romance genre also emphasizes character development, especially that of the female protagonist. Radway (1984) explains that romance novels generally depict the emotional journey of female characters through experiences of love and interpersonal relationships. This journey positions love not only as the ultimate goal of the story, but also as an emotional process that shapes the character's understanding of relationships, commitment, and the meaning of life. Thus, love in romance novels serves not only as the ultimate goal, but also as a process of identity formation and emotional maturity for the characters.

As explained in the article *Almost An Author*, romance is a genre of literature that focuses on emotional attachment and love between characters, and generally has a happy ending. A good romance novel not only highlights physical attraction, but also explores inner conflict, emotional struggles, and character development. Readers of the romance genre tend to look for stories that evoke emotion, offer hope, and present a satisfying resolution to the conflict. In general, romance writing includes five main components, a sympathetic female character, a strong and attractive male character, sufficient emotional tension, a coherent storyline, and a happy ending or happily ever after. These five components play an important role in creating an interesting and meaningful romance story, with emotional tension in particular being a key element that maintains reader interest and drives the plot forward. Kouch Peydeh et al. (2025) show that romantic relationships in novels are often built through interactions between intimacy,

passion, and commitment, which shape the emotional development of the characters and influence the direction of the plot.

All of the characteristics and theoretical elements of the romance genre can be found in Josie Silver's novel *One Day in December*. Laurie is portrayed as an emotional, sensitive, and reflective character in her understanding of love, while Jack undergoes significant character development as the story progresses. The presence of supporting characters such as Sarah and Oscar creates conflict, a love triangle, and emotional dilemmas that serve as obstacles in Laurie and Jack's relationship. These obstacles reinforce the emotional tension and drive the plot towards resolution. Thus, a theoretical discussion of the romance genre helps position novel *One Day in December* as a work that follows romance conventions while also having a clear narrative structure. The romance genre approach and Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory provide a strong foundation for analyzing the plot development and romantic relationships in the novel.

In addition to the definition and general characteristics of the romance genre as explained earlier, this genre also needs to be discussed from a theoretical perspective, particularly in relation to narrative structure and the function of conflict in stories. According to Albanjari, et al. (2024), the plot elements in a novel play an important role in building narrative coherence through the stages of setting, conflict introduction, conflict escalation, climax, and resolution. In general, the romance genre not only presents a love story between two main characters, but is also constructed through a systematic and focused plot pattern. This pattern allows

readers to follow the characters' emotional journey from the early stages of their relationship to a satisfying resolution. Thus, the love story in the novel does not stand alone but develops alongside the social, psychological, and moral conflicts faced by the characters, thereby strengthening the role of narrative structure in shaping the overall meaning of the story (Albanjari, et al., 2024). Therefore, romance can be understood as a genre that is highly dependent on a clear narrative structure.

In Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory, romance stories generally move from a relatively stable or balanced initial state (state equilibrium), then experience disruption due to romantic conflict, misunderstanding, or the presence of a third party, before finally reaching a new equilibrium. Conflict in the romance genre serves as the main trigger for plot changes and character development. Without conflict, love stories would lose the emotional tension that is the main appeal of the romance genre. Thus, Tzvetan Todorov's theory is relevant for understanding how romance plots develop gradually and structurally. Pamela Regis (2003) also emphasizes that conflict or obstacles are important elements in romance novels. These obstacles can take the form of differences in social background, moral dilemmas, bad timing, or the presence of other characters who hinder the relationship between the main characters. These obstacles not only serve to delay the union of the couple but can also strengthen the emotional value of the relationship. In this context, conflict becomes a means of testing the sincerity, commitment, and emotional maturity of the characters involved.

In addition to emphasizing conflict, the romance genre also pays close attention to the emotional and psychological development of characters, especially female characters as the center of the story. Radway (1984) states that romance novels often depict the heroine's emotional journey toward self understanding and emotional maturity. Love in romance is not only positioned as the ultimate goal, but also as a learning process that shapes the identity and outlook on life of the main character. Thus, romance can be understood as a genre that highlights the emotional transformation of characters through the experience of love.

The romance genre also has social and emotional functions for readers, that popular literary works, including romance, follow certain formulas that provide readers with a sense of security, hope, and emotional satisfaction. Through the presentation of realistic conflicts and satisfying resolutions, romance offers a reflection of social values about love, loyalty, and commitment. Therefore, happy endings in romance are not merely cliches, but symbols of achieving a new balance after going through various conflicts. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that the romance genre has a strong theoretical foundation, both in terms of narrative structure, conflict, and character development. Understanding these theories helps to position the novel *One Day in December* as a work of romance that follows genre conventions while also having a clear plot structure. With this theoretical foundation, the analysis of the plot and romantic relationships in the novel can be carried out in a more systematic and academic manner.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter will discuss in detail the research design that serves as the framework in analyzing the topics raised. In addition, the data sources that form the basis of the research, the methods used in the data collection process, and the data analysis steps applied to obtain valid and relevant results are also described. Thus, this chapter will provide a clear picture of how this research is conducted, from planning to the analysis stage.

A. Research Design

The researcher employs a literary criticism technique which is backed by the narrative structure theory by Tzvetan Todorov's in this study. Literary criticism is a method that seeks to analyze, interpret and evaluate literature that has been carried at the expense of a particular theoretical approach. The perspective adopted in this study is structuralism that is concerned with the interaction of the components of a literary text like plot, character, setting and theme with a resultant coherent and meaningful structure. The theories of Tzvetan Todorov's can be considered as one of the aspects of structural literary criticism as it investigates the inner structure of the narratives, using the recognizable forms and stages, which organize a narrative.

Todorov's believes that any story is characterized by a series of changes that lead to a state of equilibrium through the disruption, the realization of the disruption, the effort to restore and a new equilibrium. This theory is the main one

that is used to analyze the plot of the narrative in the *One Day in December* novel by Josie Silver. This study uses literary criticism with a structuralist approach, specifically narrative structure Tzvetan Todorov's theory, to conduct an in depth textual analysis of the intrinsic elements of the novel. This analysis aims to explain how the narrative structure based on Todorov's model reveals the development of the storyline and the dynamics of romantic relationships between characters. Through the application of narrative structure Todorov's theory, researchers can systematically identify patterns of conflict, change, and resolution, thereby forming a complete meaning and unity in the literary work.

B. Data Sources

The literature used in this paper is the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver published in 2018 by Penguin Books in New York, the United States. The novel is in the form of a printed book, and has 416 pages and is written in English language. The data involved in this study are the textual data present in the novel such as the narration, dialogues, description which are based on the progression of the narration and the characters. The reason behind picking this novel is that it had a very clear storyline and conflicts and could be analyzed in the context of the narrative structure theory of Tzvetan Todorov's. Besides, the romantic theme of the novel and its development in different stages of the narration make it an interesting topic of this paper.

C. Data Collection

In collecting the data, the researcher will attentively and comprehensively read the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver to get a general knowledge

about the contents of the novel. The researcher marks and identifies texts, narrations and dialogues in the novel in relation to the research purposes. The information of this work is reflected in the form of sentences, conversations, and narrative fragments, which depict the process of plot and romantic development in the work. Subsequently, the data selected are then classified and put into groups based on the objectives of the research to make them easy to analyze using the narrative structure theory as proposed by Tzvetan Todorov's.

D. Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, all the data collected are ready and analyzed meticulously. The researcher compares and contrasts the data to make sure that every aspect of the research is related and well explained. Tzvetan Todorov's theories of narrative structure are then applied to find out the five stages of the narrative structure of a state equilibrium, disruption, recognition, attempt to repair, and new equilibrium. Lastly, the researcher provides the answer to the research questions and the role of the narrative structure towards the plot and the romantic aspects of the novel *One Day in December*.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The chapter includes the explanation of data analysis of the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver to locate the answers to the research problem which is how the narrative structure theory by Tzvetan Todorov's assists in interpreting the romantic elements and plot development in the novel. This chapter is divided into two sub chapters, the first subchapter will be discussing the five stages of narrative structure as laid down by Todorov's, which are created within the novel and these include, initial state of equilibrium, disruption of equilibrium, recognition of the disruption, attempts to resolve the disruption, and establishing a new equilibrium. The second part explores how these five stages contribute towards the plot development and enhance the romantic theme of the novel within the themes of love at first sight, waiting, and destiny, and how this structure of the narrative creates emotional tension and resolution in the relationship between the characters.

A. The Five Stages of Todorov's's Narrative Structure in *One Day in December*

According to Tzvetan Todorov's, there is a structure of any narrative. First, Todorov's claimed that there are three basic stages of the narration. This opinion was however further expanded by various theorists, including Nick Lacey and Gillespie, such that five stages of the narrative were formed out of the three. According to this theory, the researcher interpreted the narrative form in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver, the five stages are: the first stable state

(equilibrium), the lack of equilibrium, the awareness of the lack of equilibrium, the efforts to solve the lack of equilibrium, and the establishment of the new equilibrium (Wakhid et al., 2024). The analysis is made to discover how the five stages of the narrative structure are created in the novel and how the structure can contribute to the comprehension of the romantic aspects and the progression of the plot.

1. State Equilibrium

This phase indicates the beginning part of the tale, that is, when the protagonist is claimed to be in a healthy, steady and well-adjusted position. This condition is sometimes called the first scenario or equilibrium in the story plot (Ikhwan et al., 2024). Equilibrium in this case explains a narrative world that is in its normal or a stable state and has yet to be influenced by any major events which will alter the direction of the narrative. This balance is represented in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver, which portrays the life of the main character before it is interrupted by events. This disruption is what further incites the events that lead to some sort of transformation to the plot more so in the life of the main character who is the central figure in the story. The balance level can be observed in the life of Laurie James in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver, as she has a monotonous and flat life not only in the workplace but in personal life. Laurie is a hotel receptionist whose work is not driven by passion or keen ambitions. This is a good emotional background due to her stable yet dull life which creates a denouement and that balance will be altered when she encounters with Jack O'Mara. This description is backed by the following quote:

*"Thank God I've finally finished work for Christmas, because I don't think my brain or my body could withstand even one more shift behind that awful hotel reception desk... I'm loosely planning to hibernate until next year once I get home to the nostalgic familiarity of my parents' house tomorrow ..(p.2)
I'm loosely planning to hibernate until next year once I get home to the nostalgic familiarity of my parents' house tomorrow." (p.2)*

This quote demonstrates that Laurie is in a tiring and yet routine cycle. She is tired of her work and awaits the Christmas holidays to give her a chance to have a break with her very hectic life. Her wish to hibernate shows that she is emotionally tired and she has a strong urge to take a break on her usual activities. This, in the light of the theory of Todorov's, validates that Laurie is at the state of equilibrium. Moreover, this a state equilibrium is not yet disrupted in a manner that would alter the way her life runs currently. More so, this balance is emotionally flat and very stable, as it demonstrates that Laurie has not been able to find new meaning to her life yet. Her exercise outlines a sense of emptiness and a sense of lack of profound emotional satisfaction. Symbolically, this scene also can be interpreted as the image of so called inner emptiness prior to the coming of the experience of love that transformed her. Laurie is still in her comfort zone where nothing changes or challenges much is taking place.

This part reveals that the life of Laurie can be described as peaceful, stable, and unconcerned with serious conflict. Todorov's (1969, p. 75) has classified the first phase in the narrative structure as the equilibrium stage where the protagonist is in the normal state of life, not bothered by the occurrences that will alter the course of the story. In this regard, Laurie leads a life that is exemplary of this state, she has a well established job, a home to stay in, healthy social relationship with her best friend Sarah. This scenario depicts the point of balance prior to the

occurrence of disruption. The monotonous and ordered life of Laurie, the friendship relations, which are in balance, show that she is at the stage of emotional and social repose. But, beyond this seemingly calm routine, there is a wish to avoid monotony of existence because it is observed in her decision to get a new love and a new job. This situation also portrays Laurie as a mere, practical and realistic individual. Her normal character at this tender age will later be in a sharp contrast to the changes in her feelings upon meeting Jack. In this way, this state of equilibrium becomes the initial point of the life of Laurie, which will be interrupted by a romantic conflict and which will run its course a lot differently.

The equilibrium level in the novel *One Day in December* is very short; it is that at the start of the second story in the book, called December 21, which includes pages 1 to 4 and Laurie spies Jack through the bus window. This part continues to depict Laurie as a young woman who lives her everyday life with her best friend, Sarah, with no serious emotional attachment. The moment Laurie sees Jack, this balance is broken and the process of the disruption stage starts, the point of the main conflict in the storyline the emotional and romantic interference begins. The state of equilibrium in i shows the initial days of a stable, orderly, and peaceful life of Laurie prior to the conflict. The circumstance occupies a structural position in the further development of the narrative whereby she is accidentally met by Jack and this meeting leads to a major shift in her life. In the context of the theory of Todorov's, the stage presents a kind of first balance which will be disrupted by the key events in the story, leading to the future emotional change and love story of Laurie.

2. Disruption

This stage describes how the narrative shifts from a stable situation to an unbalanced state, where normal living conditions are disrupted by an important event or the appearance of a certain character (Ikhwan et al., 2024). According to Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure, disruption marks the second stage in the narrative structure, which is when the balance that was established at the beginning of the story begins to be shaken, and the main conflict begins to emerge in the plot. In this context, the disruption in Josie novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver comes as a sudden emotional turning point that changes the main character's view of love and life. In the novel *One Day in December*, the disruption stage begins when Laurie, the main character, unexpectedly sees a man through the bus window and feels a strong and deep emotional connection in an instant.

This event marks the moment when her previously calm and ordinary life begins to change into one filled with emotional uncertainty. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

"I see defeat turn out the light in his eyes, and because it is Christmas and because I have just fallen hopelessly in love with a stranger at a bus stop."
(p. 4)

The quote describes the exact moment when Laurie felt an intense and sudden attraction to a stranger. The phrase "*I have just fallen hopelessly in love*" can demonstrate that this sensation was not an episode of a certain feeling, some flash of the sublime, but the start of serious psychological and emotional turmoil which transformed the inner life of Laurie. This surprising romanticism upsets her stability of life, henceforth, she thinks and feels of the possibility of meeting the man she spotted in the bus window. Following this incidence, the emotional center

of Laurie is no longer her real life and routine but a quest towards ideal and romantic love.

With her longing and obsession, she lacks the stability she had in her former life in her psychological state. This disruption increased when Laurie saw the same man at a Christmas party only to discover that he was the boyfriend of her best friend Sarah. This was an outrageous scene which is summed up in the next passage:

"She tugs me through our laughing, drunk friends and a whole load of people I am not sure either of us even know, until finally we reach her boyfriend standing uncertainly by the front door." (p. 26)
"Laurie." Sarah is jittery and bright-eyed. "Meet Jack. Jack, this is Laurie. My Laurie," she adds, for emphasis. (p. 26)
"I open my mouth to say hello and then I see his face and I feel as if someone... My heart jumps into my throat... just laid electric shock pads on my chest and turned them up to full fry. I can't get any words to leave my lips." (p. 26)

The quotes provided above clearly reveal the emotional shock and internal conflict which Laurie goes through to the point where she realizes that her lover was a lover to the best friend she has. The sentence *"My heart jumps into my throat"* underlines the glaring shock and emotions storm that she experiences. This incident turns into a critical point of the story and turns the plot of the narrative to moral and social tension. This break also does not happen in Laurie alone, but also in Jack as he understands that Laurie is the woman that has been haunting his mind since the first encounter they had. In the excerpt given below Jack is seen to struggle at the inside:

"You read my mind," I say, turning to Laurie. I force a casual smile, because, in truth, this is really fucking awkward. I have seen her before, before last night, I mean. It was just once, fleetingly, in the flesh, but there have been other times in my head since: random, disturbing early-morning lucid dreams where I jolt awake, hard and frustrated." (p. 31)

In this passage, Jack admits that Laurie has remained in his thoughts since their first encounter. The phrase *"there have been other times in my head since"*

shows that his attraction to Laurie has grown. In this section, Jack admits that Laurie has remained in his thoughts since their first meeting. The phrase “*there have been other times in my head since*” suggests that his attraction to Laurie has developed into an ongoing psychological disturbance. This psychological tension causes Jack to feel guilty and emotionally confused, as he is caught between his romantic relationship with Sarah and his hidden feelings for Laurie. This section shows that the disruption in *One Day in December* does not arise through physical events, but rather through the internal and emotional conflicts of the characters.

Todorov’s (1969, p. 75) supports the idea that disruption happens when a previously established balance is broken by some significant event, and the characters have to deal with moral and psychological issues to propel the storyline. Here, the balance of the lives of the Laurie and Jack is ruined by the love at the wrong place and time. Emotional and moral contradictions which appear subsequently result in the generation of the primary tension in the story and define the flow of the further plot development. The disruption phase in the novel *One Day in December* spans between page 4 and 38 as Laurie suddenly becomes attracted at the bus as well as when Jack is awakened inside after meeting Sarah once more at a Christmas party held at Sarah.

This part portrays a slow loss of balance by providing intricate emotional conflicts, which forms the premise of the further unfolding of the story to the recognition and recovery stages. In the theoretical framework of Todorov’s, this phase displays how a stable situation proceeds to imbalance, in which the emotional tension and a moral conflict are the primary forces that advance the plot.

3. Recognition

This step is what defines the process where the characters start noticing and accepting the imbalance created by the breakage of the original equilibrium in the story (Ikhwan et al., 2024). As per the narrative model introduced by Tzvetan Todorov's, it is the moment when recognition of the disturbance takes place, and the main character realizes the forces of the disruption that has settled in his life. This awareness is brought about in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver where Laurie realizes slowly that she is in love with Jack the man who happens to be a boyfriend to her best friend Sarah and that she can not simply ignore it. Though Laurie first attempted to reject her emotions and continue living the normal life the fact that Jack was the "bus man" she was seeking all along made her feel she was shaky in the world.

Her first moment of realization came at Sarah's Christmas party, when she finally met Jack in person. Laurie felt a mixture of relief, disbelief, and panic when she realized that the man standing in front of her was the same person she had seen from the bus window. This emotional realization is captured in the following quote:

"Laurie." He says my name, and I could cry with the sheer relief of him being here. It's going to sound crazy, but I've spent the last year wishing, hoping I'd run into him. And now he's here. I've scoured countless crowds for his face, and I've searched for him in bars and cafes." (p.26)

This quote shows that Laurie's turmoil is not a sudden event, but the result of a long emotional search and hopes that have now turned into a painful moral dilemma. The meeting she had been waiting for turned out to be the source of her deepest conflict, because the man she loved belonged to her dearest friend. Laurie's awareness of these emotional turmoil becomes increasingly clear when she can no

longer pretend to be calm in front of Sarah and Jack. She begins to withdraw both physically and emotionally, as illustrated in the following quote:

"I need to get away from him, from them, from this. In the safety of the bathroom, I slam the door and slide onto my backside with my head in my hands, gulping air down so as not to cry." (p.28)

This quote reflects Laurie's admission that she is in an unbearable emotional situation. Her act of hiding in the bathroom symbolizes her desire to escape from external tension and inner turmoil. The description of "*gulping water down so as not to cry*" illustrates her struggle to hold back her overwhelming feelings of love, guilt, and despair. This moment becomes a turning point where Laurie begins to face the depth of the emotional turmoil she feels.

Laurie is at this point awakened to self moral consideration since she understands that concealing her real emotions has resulted in her being a person who leads a life full of lies. This understanding is well evident in the below quotation:

"But since we got back to London it's been worse. Because not only am I lying to myself. I'm lying to Sarah too. God knows how people have affairs, even this paper-thin layer of deception has me constantly on edge." (p.40)
"I have made a liar out of myself by omission, and now every day I look at Sarah through my liar's eyes and speak to her with my forked, serpent tongue." (p.41)

Both the quotes prove that Laurie is fully conscious of her split inner world. Though she has not betrayed Sarah physically, Laurie acknowledges that she is a moral liar because of the silence and secret emotions. Her strong regret and guilt are highlighted by the metaphors, "*liar eyes*" and "*forked*", serpent tongue. This realization represents the end result of the mental self exploration of the novel where Laurie realizes that the emotions and morality of her actions have impacted the honesty and integrity of her relationships with others.

It is the stage where the protagonist comprehends the nature and effect of the perturbation completely and therefore prepares the story towards the next phase which is the phase of the effort to mend (Todorov's, 1969, p. 75). In this instance, the realization that Laurie shows is the development of the denial to the acceptance of the bitter truth that there can be no love and loyalty without sacrifices. The consciousness of the transgression in this novel is between pages 26 and 41, which include the emotional consciousness of Laurie during the Christmas party and her moral consciousness of guilt and lies. This is a middle ground between the emotional instability and the following narrative stage during which the characters start to attempt to mend and reinstate order following the disturbance.

4. Attempt to repair

This stage represents the fourth phase in Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure, namely the stage when the main character attempts to remedy the situation that has been disrupted and restore the balance that was lost after experiencing conflict or emotional crisis (Ikhwan et al., 2024). In this context, attempt to repair describes the character's awareness to restore moral, social, and emotional balance that had been shaken by the disturbances in the storyline. This stage is also an important moment where the character begins to show a process of inner healing and self-improvement after experiencing suffering or moral dilemmas. In Josie Silver's novel *One Day in December*, this stage is reflected in Laurie and Jack's efforts to rebuild their lives after experiencing inner turmoil due to unrequited love.

Laurie begins to try to improve the situation by deciding to keep her distance from Jack as a form of respect for her friendship with Sarah. Laurie's moral awareness is evident in the following quote:

"I resolve to never, ever kiss my best friend's boyfriend ever again. In fact, I'm never going to allow even one errant thought about him to enter my head." (p.102)

This quote demonstrates that Laurie tries her best to repress her affection towards Jack so that she could preserve the integrity of her relations with Sarah. She understands that the only way to regain her inner peace is to manage the emotional urges which are the cause of conflict. The fact that Laurie is sincere in managing her emotions is demonstrated by a strong metaphor used in the next quote:

"I'm putting all unplatonic thoughts of Jack O'Mara into a crate, sealing it with bright yellow 'toxic' stickers and chucking it into the hinterland at the back of my head." (p.102)

This quote indicates that Laurie is trying to isolate her emotions to Jack as a gesture of symbolism to heal herself emotionally. She attempts to shove aside unpleasant memories to reestablish her emotional level. In the meantime, Jack is also attempting to mend his relationship with Sarah after he understands that his intimacy with Laurie had damaged the faith of his girlfriend. This is reflected in the quote below:

"I'm sorry," I whisper into her hair, making a silent resolution to not kiss anyone other than Sarah this year." (p.103)

The quotation above reveals that Jack is remorseful and is on a mission to reconcile with his errors. Trying to revive his relationship with Sarah he attempts to suppress his emotions to Laurie and give up on the emotional cycle which makes his life imbalanced.

Nevertheless, this is not a simple process of repair. Laurie is in a great dilemma after she realizes that Jack does not recall their initial encounter at the bus stop. Her disappointment and relief have been elaborated in the following passage:

"Jack doesn't remember me from the bus stop... It's crushing... and yet it's freeing too... as if he's rubber-stamped the fact that I need to let it go now." (p.109)

This scene has turned into a turning point of Laurie. She starts to understand that to be able to bring a balance in her life, she will have to properly lose her feelings toward Jack. This is painful and hard but it makes Laurie feel freer and is prepared to continue with her life. Laurie then made a decision of visiting Thailand as part of the healing process. It was not only a getaway, but a kind of a soul searching and a quest to find a balance within. Laurie, in her conversation with Sarah, vowed to go back with a heart which would be more strong:

"I promise I'll come back, Sarah. I promise." (p.115)

This quote demonstrates that despite the attempts of Laurie to maintain her distance, the emotional bond with her best friend still existed. Her visit to Thailand was a metaphor of trying to recover herself and develop inner strength again after the emotional and moral storms had hit her. Laurie starts to open her heart to new love when she is in Thailand. Her meeting with Oscar is a sign of her willingness to live a more normal life without being tainted by the past:

"I'm Oscar," he said, extending his hand politely across the space between our tables. "And my plan for today is to spend it with you." (p.119)
"There's something about living in a different place that allows you to be whoever you want to be." (p.120)

The quote depicts a new dimension to the life of Laurie since she does not remain trapped in her past with Jack, but she is making an effort to open up to a different and healthier relationship. It is a real life case of an effort to overcome a

trauma, as the character is attempting to re establish a state equilibrium of emotion and provide a sense of self acceptance and a life turnaround. In the meantime, Jack also proves that he is trying to make his life better, concentrating on his career and a relationship with Sarah. This is depicted through a letter by Sarah which says:

“Jack has gone completely native... He even went and checked out a radio station in Melbourne, seriously, if they offered him a job, I don't think he'll ever come home again.” (p.128)

This quote indicates that Jack is making attempts to reconstruct his life by focusing on his career and his relationships with Sarah. The move decision also indicates that he is attempting to find a new balance following a long duration of inner conflict.

The move to fix the break culminates where Jack goes to the wedding of the Oscar of Laurie. He still feels about her yet he decides to leave Laurie alone and wishes her goodbye to hope that she will be happy. In the quote, this is depicted:

“Go and marry the man waiting at the altar for you, Laurie, and then live the glorious life that's waiting for you. Be happy. You deserve it.” (p.250)

This quote is the resolution of emotions of Jack because he has accepted the reality and truly released his beloved. This act demonstrates that Jack has attained moral and spiritual harmony after experiencing all sorts of conflict within himself. This part demonstrates that both Laurie and Jack have attempted to rebuild their lives that had been earlier derailed by emotional and moral dilemmas. Todorov's (1969, p. 75) states that the attempt to repair stage is a significant stage of the story as the protagonist starts perceiving where the imbalance originates and, therefore, attempts to restore it to reach the previous state of balance. The attempts of Laurie to repress her feelings towards Jack, to retain her friendship with Sarah, to open up

to new love with Oscar that may be found in the context of the novel *One Day in December* are tangible accounts of moral and emotional repairing processes. Conversely, Jack is also a changed person because he values honesty, responsibility, and reality.

The act of repairing stage in this novel occurs in the mid part of the novel between pages 102 to 250. It is in this section that the two main characters are emotionally growing as they emerge after experiencing an experience of extreme struggle. Their striving to make the situation better forms the basis of a new equilibrium in the end of the story. In the narrative theory as presented by Todorov's, the stage can be seen as a transition between disruption and new equilibrium where the characters start exhibiting considerable changes that cause narrative resolution. Therefore, the effort to mend stage becomes a significant stage of the emotional journey in Laurie and Jack, the point of starting a healing, acceptance procedure, and the attainment of a new balance.

5. New Equilibrium

It is the last step of the narrative pattern in the eyes of Tzvetan Todorov's, which is the stage when the protagonists of the story had experienced different conflicts and upheavals but have come back to a stable and balanced state of existence. Nevertheless, the balance that is formed at this point is not necessarily the same as the one that existed at the beginning, but simply the outcome of events and transformations that occur in the main characters on the journey through a lengthy emotional process (Ikhwan et al., 2024). Through this part, you can see that both Laurie and Jack eventually strike a new rating in their lives, both emotionally

and morally. The stage whereby the key characters recover after suffering the different types of disruption is known as New Equilibrium stage (Todorov's, 1969, p.75), whereby a new order is created, which is more emotionally mature. In the novel by Josie Silver *One Day in December*, the stage offers the romantic marriage between the characters Laurie and Jack and describes their success in overcoming and solving their internal confusion, moral issues and complicated emotional contradictions.

The love story that was originally full of challenges and misunderstandings ends with emotional maturity where both characters would go to the level of telling their true feelings and they are willing to take steps to the right direction of their happiness. This stage started coming out in the chapter of December 12, 2012, where Laurie was getting ready to marry Oscar. Later that night, there was a very emotional and heated interaction between Laurie and her best friend, Sarah. Semi-intoxicated yet fully awake, Sarah at last decided that the man they had been seeking so long the “*bus boy*”, was Jack. Laurie, who was hiding this fact all along, was no longer able to bear the burden of her lie and decided to confess.

“It was Jack.” “Stop saving it,” I whisper, and a hot tear runs down my cheek.
(p.245)

This quote depicts the climax of the emotional strain which Laurie had been in carrying. The secret she had been keeping all her life was finally revealed and ruined her credibility with Sarah. Sarah sought an explanation in confusion and guilt as is illustrated in this quote:

“You swear on my life you never so much as kissed him?” “I can't lie. Once.I kissed him once.” (p.247)

This conversation is such a critical point at which Laurie loses not only the trust of her best friend, but also starts to question her choice to marry Oscar. She is heartbroken and entirely lonely.

"I've never felt so alone in the world as I do right now." (p.247)

This is the point of emotional transformation in Laurie and the start of a new balance. She starts to confront the fact that she did not actually stop loving Jack, and she will never be able to live a lie anymore. This step is a great stepping stone towards her further character growth as Laurie chooses to live an emotionally honest life, although it may lead to the loss of a false sense of comfort she has been living with this long time.

The process of reaching a new balance went on on December 14, 2013, on the day of the marriage between Laurie and Oscar. Jack was called on that day to deliver a speech on behalf of Sarah. Jack used love and coincidence in his speech and he did not mention the name of Laurie directly, but the words he said showed that he loved her. Jack wrote Laurie a letter on the same day, the letter which he never delivered to her personally.

"I've loved you since the day you looked up at me from that bus." (p.259)

The letter turned out to be an embodiment of the emotional sincerity that he had been suppressing all this time. In response to a walk past by Laurie when she was at the altar, Jack captured his feelings in the following quote, *"As she walks past me, her eyes on Oscar, I feel something in me break."* (p.259). This quote demonstrates Jack having an extraordinary inner struggle. He was forced to allow the woman that he loved to marry another man yet he had still strong feelings

towards her. The letter became a signal of change to self acceptance and emotional honesty.

The second phase was characterized by the fact that Laurie decided to break up with Oscar as she understood that the two did not love each other. Laurie made an honest declaration on October 13, 2014:

"I can't marry someone who I don't feel the same about as I do about you." (p.286)

This quote demonstrates that Laurie has obtained emotional integrity. She did not want to have a relationship that only appeared dreamy among the other people, but hollow in her heart. This move indicates that he is brave enough to live based on his own emotions and not on what the social culture wants. The transition to a new equilibrium was also experienced in Jack. Jack eventually confessed that he had never actually lost his love towards Laurie on November 21, 2015: *"It's always been you. I think I knew, even when I didn't want to know." (p.290)* This confession is a self-acceptance following a great battle. Jack this time comes out with the truth about his feelings, and he knows that Laurie is the only lady that he loves. This discovery is the climax of the emotional growth of Jack; it makes both of them more ready to begin the real relations.

They had recognized their feelings towards one another however, their marriage did not occur at that time. Laurie and Jack really reunited, emotionally and physically, only December 23, 2017. This time of separation turned out to be a time of introspection, healing and individual development of both of them. The final page of the novel has Laurie gazing at Jack and uttering, *"Jack?"* He replies, *"Laurie."* Then the story is terminated by the following sentence: And all at once,

it is us. *Finally us.*" (p.312) This is the quote of the accomplishment of the real new balance not only a happy ending, but a significant character change toward the truth and sincerity, acceptance, and mental maturity. Therefore, the stage of New Equilibrium in the novel *One Day in December* starts on page 245 and continues up till the finale, developing the full closure of the narrative circle. This is what indicates that Laurie and Jack not only have found true love, but also the inner harmony and emotional maturity, which lie at the center of the narrative structure Tzvetan Todorov's.

The general discussion in Chapter IV indicates that the Chapter IV narrative structure of Tzvetan Todorov's such as a State equilibrium, Disruption, Recognition of Disruption, Attempt to Repair and New Equilibrium in turn characterizes how the story evolved and the relationship between Laurie and Jack in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver. By using the narrative structure theory of Tzvetan Todorov's, it is evident that their love story is not merely romantic as it also emphasizes on the emotional maturity process, self acceptance and the pursuit of balance in their lives following the numerous challenges that they undergo. In this way, the narrative structure assists in elucidating the way in which the aspects of romance, opposition, and reconciliation are united to create a complete and consistent plot and also highlights that the happy resolution in this story is a product of a lengthy journey towards a fresh, more adult and realistic equilibrium. So, the structure of a narrative presented by Tzvetan Todorov's contributes to demonstrating the key points of the romantic relationship between Laurie and Jack,

their adorable first encounter, profound personal struggle, and the attainment of the true love and emotional maturity.

B. The Role of Tzvetan Todorov's Narrative structure in Building Romantic Elements and Plot Development

The idea of the five stages of narrative structure by Tzvetan Todorov's is discussed here as to how it has worked in the plot and the enhancement of romanticism in the novel *One Day in December* by Josie Silver. Each phase of the story structure, the a state equilibrium and the new equilibrium, have been elaborated in the section above. In this part the analysis is put on the way these stages interrelate and create a narrative structure which can bring out the emotional energy, conflict of inner feelings, and progression of the love maze between Laurie and Jack as the story unfolds. The narrative structure used by Tzvetan Todorov's serves as a structural pattern of the plot, as well as, an expression of the emotion process of the characters. The changes in the main character of each of the stages are that the character is in a state of serenity, but through the instability of emotions, then confronts a moral dilemma, and finally achieves a more adult state of understanding and attitude to life (new maturity).

Regis (2003) defines romantic novels as fictional prose narratives that focus on the meeting between the female and male protagonists, which can foster love between them, the existence of obstacles that hinder their relationship, and the movement towards emotional commitment or union. Regis (2003) emphasizes that romantic narratives are driven by emotional movement and moral meaning, where love is tested through conflict before reaching resolution. This definition shows that

romantic novels as a whole depend on a structured storyline, which moves from emotional stability to conflict, and finally towards resolution, thus closely aligning with Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory. Tzvetan Todorov's five stage narrative structure is discussed here in terms of how it is applied in the storyline and reinforcement of romanticism in Josie Silver's novel *One Day in December*.

Each phase of the story structure, namely the state of equilibrium and new equilibrium, has been explained in the section above. In this section, the analysis focuses on how these stages interact with each other and form a narrative structure that can express emotional energy, inner conflict, and the development of the labyrinthine love between Laurie and Jack as the story progresses. The narrative structure used by Tzvetan Todorov serves as a structural pattern for the plot, as well as an expression of the characters' emotional processes. The change in the main character at each stage is that the character is in a state of calm, but through emotional instability, is then faced with a moral dilemma, and finally reaches a state of understanding and a more mature attitude towards life (new maturity). Thus, this narrative structure provides a logical framework for the development of a realistic and moving romantic story, as intended by Josie Silver through this work.

1. From Equilibrium to Disturbance, The Beginning of Romantic Tension

In romance theory, the early stages of love often begin with an attraction that disrupts the emotional stability of the protagonist. Regis (2003) explains that the initial meeting between romantic characters usually serves as the first emotional trigger that disrupts their normal lives. This attraction introduces emotional tension and curiosity, which then become the basis for romantic conflict. Therefore, the

shift from balance to disruption is a crucial stage in romantic narratives, as it marks the birth of romantic desire.

The first step in the narrative structure theory by Tzvetan Todorov's is the state of equilibrium and is used to describe the normal life of the protagonist of the story, even though, it is interrupted by the incidence. When it comes to the novel *One Day in December*, Laurie is depicted as a young lady who leads a normal life in London. She is employed, resides with her best friend Sarah, and leads her normal life without any events that are worth remembering. This state of being indicates the first balance where Laurie is comfortable and stable emotionally. This balance however shifts radically when Laurie accidentally looks through a bus window and notices a man. Within a few seconds, admiration and feelings of love are experienced. Here, the occurrence represents the point of the disruption in the theory of narrative structure developed by Tzvetan Todorov's, in which the first balance is starting to be disturbed by the appearance of new feelings that have never been experienced before.

Laurie had no acquaintance with the man, yet that moment spent more than a minute changed her life significantly. Structurally, this disturbance became a turning point and it provoked a entire chain of events that followed. Thematic perspective on that moment portrayed the development of a conflict within one self, which is love and personal choice, which was at the centre of the entire story. This brings about a romantic conflict on which the central story is built. After that, Laurie spends months in the quest to find the missing man until she accidentally finds out that he is Jack, a boyfriend of her best friend Sarah. This fact not only adds

emotional tension but makes the inner conflict, which lies at the core of their love story, more complicated as well. Therefore, the balance and disintegration phases of the narrative structure of a story by Tzvetan Todorov's do not only represent the initiation of the plot, but also the emotional base of the story. These phases bring in the question of illicit love, the one of personal want, and faithfulness to a friend which, in its turn, becomes the uniting element of the novel

2. Recognition and Efforts to Improve, Moral Conflict in Love

Romance theory emphasizes that love is often accompanied by moral dilemmas and emotional sacrifices. Radway (1984) argues that romance novels often depict the emotional journey of female protagonists as they navigate love, responsibility, and self esteem. At this stage, love is not depicted as pure happiness, but rather as a complex emotional experience that requires self control and ethical consideration. Conflict, therefore, becomes a central mechanism that deepens emotional realism and character development.

After the disruption occurs, Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory mentions the stages of recognition and attempt to repair, in which the character realizes the imbalance and tries to fix the situation. In this novel, this stage is shown through Laurie's awareness of the complexity of her feelings towards Jack. She realizes that she cannot express her love because it will hurt Sarah, a friend who means a lot to her. The recognition stage is seen when Laurie begins to understand that her feelings for Jack cannot be ignored. She realizes that her love is real, but at the same time, she also knows that these feelings cannot be acted upon. This realization presents a deep moral conflict between her feelings and her principles.

Laurie not only struggles against her love, but also against the guilt that continues to haunt her.

Meanwhile, the effort to fix stage comes out as Laurie aims to repress her emotions and go on with the normal living. She attempts to keep her emotional distance between her and Jack so that she could save her friendship with Sarah. Nevertheless, this attempt does not come easily as the three of them can arrange their time together quite frequently. This condition leads to repetitive emotional stress, and it is an expression of the question of desire, denial, and responsibility. Structurally, these two levels help in extending the tension and further developing characterization. Laurie is the character that does not just act on the basis of love, but also morality and empathy.

This inner conflict that she is going through gives this love story more reality, since love is not just put forward to be about happiness but also about pain and sacrifice. Moreover, Josie Silver, the author of the novel *One Day in December*, explains that love is not just about possessing a person, but also knowing when to release and tolerate the emotions and feelings of other people. Therefore, the narrative structure by Tzvetan Todorov's is used to bring out the moral aspect into the love story between Laurie and Jack. Criticism and effort to heal, as such, turn out to be the arenas, in which characters develop and learn to perceive what love really means.

3. A New Equilibrium, Emotional Honesty and Romantic Fulfillment

In romance theory, a happy ending or emotional satisfaction does not signify the absence of problems, but rather the achievement of emotional maturity and balance.

Regis (2003) states that the union of romantic characters represents the resolution of conflict and the restoration of emotional order. This new balance reflects character growth through love, patience, and understanding, which is in line with the final stage of narrative structure according to Tzvetan Todorov.

The last phase of the narrative theory by Tzvetan Todorov's is known as new equilibrium that is a realization of a new equilibrium following the different struggles experienced by the characters. This new balance is established in *One Day in December* when Laurie and Jack finally meet after spending several years together but without fulfillment, misunderstanding, and emotional distancing. But the balance in the end of the story is not identical to the balance initially in the story. At this point, Laurie as well as Jack have experienced emotional changes. They are no longer impulsive, possessive people, but people who know what true love is loyalty, honesty, and the ability to stand the consequences. Laurie eventually decides to express her emotions and no longer conceals her emotions. Another character that demonstrates the ability to make amends with his mistakes is Jack, who begins a new life with Laurie.

According to narrative structure, such a stage completes the cycle in a manner which is comparable to the narrative structure principle as mentioned by Tzvetan Todorov's, that is to say that the state of imbalance present in the beginning has been replenished, only in a different form. The lives of Laurie and Jack are in a new balance not because everything has gone away, on the contrary, they are both at peace with the past and have decided to live a more emotionally honest life. Thematically, this new balance position also reveals that true love is not an easy

thing to come by but a process of self-awareness, patience and sincerity. As the writer of this novel, Josie silver underlines that the meeting of two hearts is not the only key to a happy relationship in Romance, but also the possibility of the two characters to develop together and to forgive each other.

4. The Relationship Between Narrative Structure and Romance Themes

Overall, the romantic genre relies heavily on a clear narrative structure to guide emotional development and reader engagement. Albanjari et al. (2024) explain that plot elements such as conflict introduction, escalation, climax, and resolution are crucial in forming narrative coherence, especially in romantic novels. Without a structured plot, romantic tension loses its emotional impact. Therefore, the combination of Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure and romantic theory provides a strong analytical framework for understanding how love stories are constructed and resolved.

On the whole, the use of the narrative theory created by Tzvetan Todorov's allows discussing the way in which Josie Silver manages to create a logical, emotional, and significant plot. All the steps of the narrative structure that are taken by Tzvetan Todorov's serve to create romance in the novel *One Day in December*. The balance and disequilibrium phases explain how love occurs as a force that abruptly transforms the life of a person. Its acknowledgement and effort to fix the phases depict the human aspect of love, which has to struggle with morality and social reality. In the meantime, the new equilibrium level can be defined as the level of emotional recovery and maturity following different trials.

Through the narrative structure pattern of Tzvetan Todorov's that true love is a journey with twists and turns, beginning at the attraction, moral challenges, and eventually at the realization of what love and happiness is all about, he managed to describe it. In this manner, the readers are welcomed to perceive that in each and every relationship, there exists a certain emotional swing, as it starts with the state of stability, proceeds to a state of chaos, and then discover a new, more mature and meaningful order. The researcher applies the narrative structure theory proposed by Tzvetan Todorov's to ensure that *One Day in December* is not just a normal romantic novel, but a novel about emotional development, ethical conflict, and sincerity of emotions. This novel encourages the readers that true love is not judged by the speed that one falls in love but by the strength that one shows and the sacrifices as well as the lessons that one learns to eventually get to true love.

According to the analysis of the narrative structure in *One Day in December* by Josie Silver through the use of narrative theory developed by Tzvetan Todorov's, it can be concluded that five stages of narrative structure, which are in equilibrium, disruption, recognition, attempt to repair, and new equilibrium, contribute to the formation of the plot and reinforcement of the romance component in the story. Every stage is a kind of the milestone of the plot development as well as the description of the emotional path of the characters, particularly, Laurie and Jack who change their spontaneous attraction to more mature and understanding love. By using the narrative structure developed by Tzvetan Todorov's, Josie Silver has managed to make her love story romantic as well as moral, full of inner dilemma and personal development. The relationship between Laurie and Jack evolves in

accordance with the equilibrium to disruption, and, ultimately, reaches a new equilibrium which is realistic and emotional. Therefore, the narrative theory offered by Tzvetan Todorov's can offer a useful analytical tool of responding to the question concerning how romance is built, sustained, and resolved within the plot.

Through this analysis, however, it is also possible to note that the narrative form is also intimately connected with the overall theme of the novel, i.e. a voyage of love and the trials thereof and the pursuit of personal harmony. In general, this discussion indicates that the narrative structure theory created by Tzvetan Todorov's can assist us in comprehending the way the love narrative of Laurie and Jack unfolds gradually in this novel *One Day in December*. Every narrative stage not only constructs the plot, but it also displays all the emotional dynamics, which are typical of the romantic relationships, love at first sight, moral struggle and rejection, acceptance and emotional maturity. Accordingly, the use of the Todorov's theory in this novel does not only show the structures used in the narrative, but also enhances our comprehension of the romantic aspects that constitute the main theme of the novel *One Day in December*.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION

This study was conducted to answer the question of how Tzvetan Todorov's narrative structure theory can help understand the romantic elements and plot development in Josie Silver's novel *One Day in December*. This study examines the course of the relationship between Laurie James and Jack O.Mara using the five stages of narrative structure as suggested by Tzvetan Todorov's. The presented analysis is devoted to the contribution of each narrative stage to the dynamics of romance, emotional conflict, and shifts in the consciousness of the characters in the course of the story.

A. Conclusion

The relationship and plot developments in *One Day in December* by Josie Silver are the central subjects of this paper because it narrates a love story full of uncertainty, ethical challenges, and seeking emotional equilibrium. The love in this story does not appear in just one form but passes through different phases through which the inner transformation of the characters is brought out. This paper applies the narrative structure theory developed by Tzvetan Todorov's to find and describe the narrative stages occurring in the story of the journey of Laurie and Jack, beginning with the state of equilibrium to the creation of a new equilibrium.

This study findings suggest that the plot development in the novel *One Day in December* is based on the five stages of narrative structure by Tzvetan Todorov's namely: a state of Equilibrium, Disruption, Recognition, Attempt to Repair, and

New Equilibrium. At the Equilibrium phase, Laurie is said to have a stable life but not full of romantic life, and Laurie spends her time repeating the same activities. Disruption stage takes place when Laurie spots Jack on the other side of the bus window which generates an emotional shock which is the center of the conflict in the story. Meanwhile, Recognition stage reveals that Laurie is aware of the internal conflict that appears as the result of her secret attraction to Jack, as well as the fact that he is the boyfriend of her best friend Sarah. This is a revelation to demonstrate that the disruption that follows is not necessarily an external one, but it can also directly affect the identity of Laurie, her morality, and social relations.

Then there is the stage of Attempt to Repair which is the description of the attempts of Laurie and Jack to repair the situation. Laurie attempts to keep her distance to create a new life and a relationship with Oscar and Jack attempts to preserve his relationship with Sarah and repress his feelings. This phase demonstrates the attempts of the characters to overcome the conflicts which have been caused by emotional decisions that are rather challenging and need a careful thought. The findings of this analysis indicate that the path that the characters have taken towards New Equilibrium is not a hasty accomplishment, and is a long accomplishment that includes contemplation, emotional development and having the strength to be truthful with themselves. Finally, Laurie and Jack also discover a new equilibrium that is not the same as the one they had at the beginning, that is, more mature and stable relationship after experiencing a range of conflicts and challenges.

Using the results provided, this paper demonstrates that the narrative structure theory proposed by Tzvetan Todorov's can be extremely effective in terms of the way the plot development and the romantic elements of *One Day in December* are framed. This theory does not only assist in tracing the path of the story, but it also demonstrates how the relationships of love, inner struggle, and growth of characters are created systematically over the course of the story. This novel demonstrates that love is not only a feeling but also a process of development and search of the balance in life. In this way, the analysis once again puts an accent on the fact that narrative structure is an essential part of enriching the story and influencing the reader on an emotional level.

B. Suggestion

According to the study carried out, the author provides a number of recommendations, as below. *One Day in December* is a novel that one can reflect on the multitude of love, friendship and social pressure. The Laurie and Jack story indicates that love is sometimes to be sacrificed and one has to be brave enough to be emotionally honest. This study confirms that Tzvetan Todorov's narrative theory is not solely applicable in the analysis of the narrative structure but it can also be applied to find out the emotional and social aspects in the literature of the day. Hopefully, the future studies will be able to integrate the theory proposed by Todorov's with other methods, like literature psychology, gender studies, or cultural studies, in order to make the interpretation of the work more multifaceted and interdisciplinary.

This This novel makes us hopeful that a mere love tale can be turned into the purposeful work using a systematic plot, the development of characters, and the topical social commentary of such. This can be used as a guideline in developing literary works that can not only entertain but also pass moral and social messages to the readers. In addition, to make future studies, it is suggested that the structural approach of Tzvetan Todorov's should be contrasted with other approaches to the narrative, including the Pyramid, which is more specific about the exposition, climax, and resolution, or the Morphology which concerns the functions of the narrative in the folk tales. It is in order to expand the range of the analysis and observe the flexibility of the narrative approach regarding the modern fiction.

Additionally, other research of a similar theme, in terms of love triangles, internal conflicts, and friendships that have love as a test, can be put through This approach to determine the similarity or variation in patterns of narrative development. It is believed that with these recommendations, the research on novel *One Day in December* can offer wider merits both in the academic sphere and in ordinary life. This comparison allows the future study to expand the analysis scope and show how the narrative approach is flexible when applied to the modern fiction. Moreover, this theory can also be used on other works sharing the same theme like love triangle, inner conflicts, or friendships challenged by love to observe similar or varied patterns of development of the story. Therefore, it can be hoped that the study on the novel, *One Day in December*, would have a wider payback both in academia and in daily life, particularly in the interpretation of the meaning of love, honesty, and balance in the relationship between people.

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