



**THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE
VICTORIAN ERA IN JUDITH MCNAUGHT'S *ALMOST HEAVEN***

Thesis

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UNIVERSITAS JEMBER

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

2023



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A thesis presented to the English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Jember University, as one of the requirements to obtain the degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Studies

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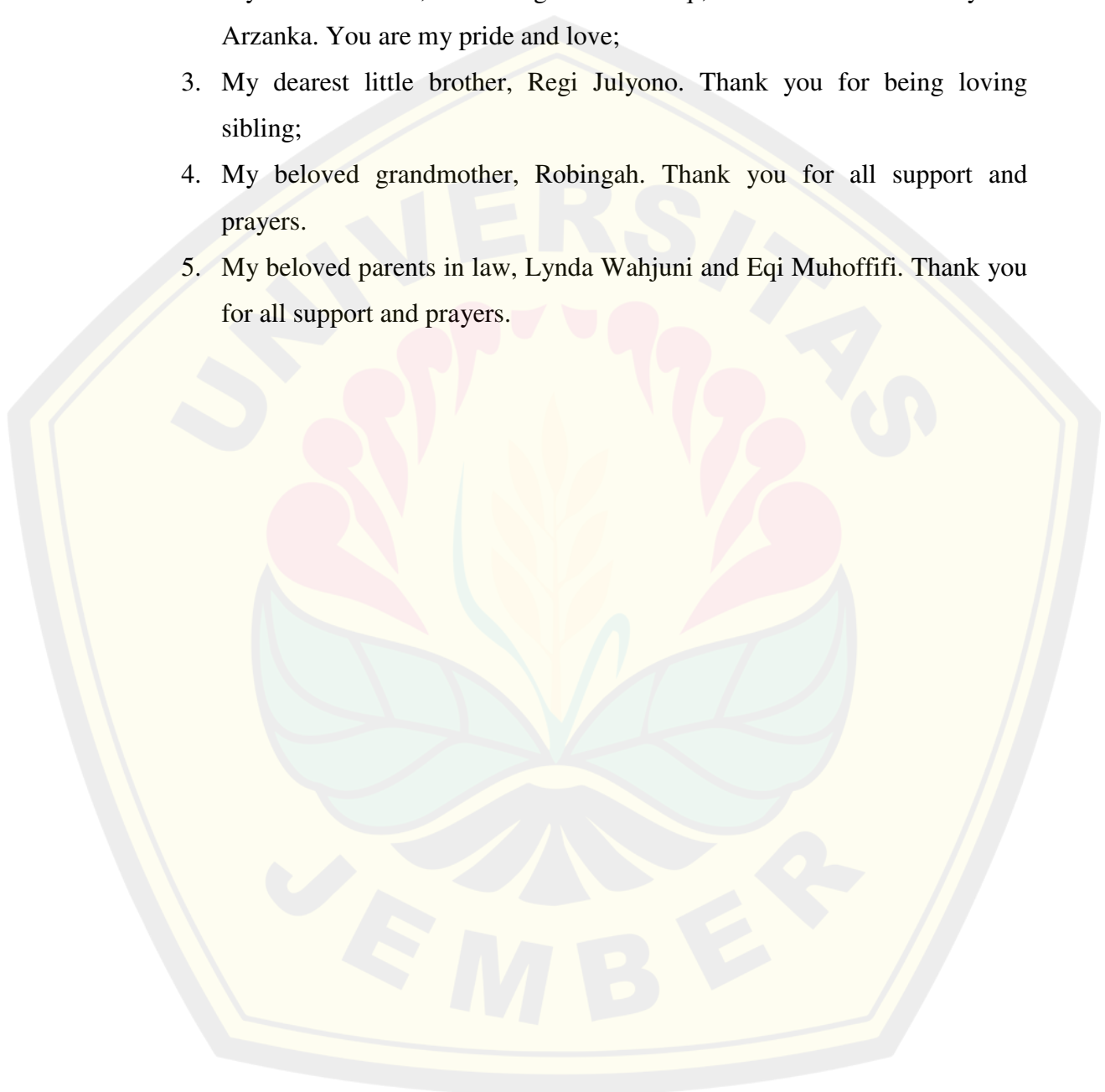
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2023

DEDICATION

This thesis is sincerely dedicated to:

1. My beloved parents, Sugeng Hariyanto and Titin Ariani. Thank you for the incredible love and endless support;
2. My dear beloved, Gemilang Dzaka Rifqi, S.ST and Kaivan Reyndra Arzanka. You are my pride and love;
3. My dearest little brother, Regi Julyono. Thank you for being loving sibling;
4. My beloved grandmother, Robingah. Thank you for all support and prayers.
5. My beloved parents in law, Lynda Wahjuni and Eqi Muhoffifi. Thank you for all support and prayers.



MOTTO

“Whether she is going to have a career or become a housewife, a woman must be highly educated because she is going to be a mother.”

(Dian Sastrowardoyo)



DECLARATION

I thus declare that the thesis titled "**The Representation of Social Inequality in the Victorian Era in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven***" is a work of original research I have written. This thesis has never been submitted for publication or consideration for another degree. I certify that the proper credit has been given to all sources in creating this thesis.

Jember, 3rd July 2023

The Writer,

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SUMMARY

THE REPRESENTATION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN THE VICTORIAN ERA IN JUDITH MCNAUGHT'S *ALMOST HEAVEN*; Ameliya, 160110101085; 38 pages; English Department, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Jember.

This research use the novel as the object of this study. The novel used in this study is *Almost Heaven*. The purpose of this research is to find out how the condition of social inequality discourse are presented in the story. This research is interesting to analyze because the conflicts of social inequality in the victorian era.

The conflict of social inequality in *Almost Heaven* states that two people love each other from different social classes and statuses. Elizabeth Cameron is a Countess of Havenhurst, where Havenhurst is inherited from her parents who are among the nobility. Meanwhile, Ian Thornton is a person from a marginalized circle who is considered to have an unclear family tree by society. The social inequality that occurs in *Almost Heaven* is so obvious. When these two people fell in love, this was opposed by Elizabeth's family. Because marriage in the Victorian era was carried out to raise social status and class, so if Elizabeth married someone whose class was below her, this was against the rules of the bourgeoisie.

To analyze the conflict of social inequality as the subject of this novel, this study uses the theory of representation written by Stuart Hall and related to Foucault's discourse. Furthermore, this research is categorized as qualitative research. There are two kinds of data in this research. First, primary data is taken from narratives and dialogues related to the topic of social inequality in *Almost Heaven*. Secondary data was obtained from several books, journals, and articles to support primary sources. From the results of the discussion, this study concludes that the inequality conflicts presented in *Almost Heaven* are caused by different class conditions. Apart from that, the different class conditions that appear in the

novel are also caused by issues of income, occupational prestige, and education level. In this case, the social inequality that occurs in the novel causes people who are considered from the lower class to be considered inappropriate for respect. Finally, the writer wants to criticize that the upper class in the Victorian era showed an unfair attitude in treating the lower class.



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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the basic ideas and assumptions of the topic in conducting the research and provides the reader with a clear description. The topic of discussion is the representation of social status in the Victorian era in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven*. This chapter explains the background of the study, topic of research, research questions, and goals of study.

1.1 Background of Study

A society is a group of people who are connected, have similar interests, and follow a shared culture. In society, the people in it have different characteristics. These differences usually include class, status, skin color, height, place of residence, religion, age, gender, wealth, and even education (Avriyanti, 2014, p. 1). "Class" is a social stratum. Social class is commonly defined as a group of people who share a common political orientation, attitudes, cultural values, and social behavior (Horton, 1984: 6). A person's standing in society will be based on what is valued in the community. Respect and social status create differences in social class. The upper class is considered to have a high social status, while the lower class is considered to have a low social status in society (Avriyanti, 2014: 1)

The researcher has decided to choose Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven* (1989) as the object of the study because it is one of the literary works which explores social inequality. Judith McNaught has written a powerful and memorable masterpiece in it because of their unequal status. It tells about social status in London during the Victorian era, which was very influential in various aspects of life, especially in love.

Social inequality issues such as class and lifestyle are discussed in this novel. Elizabeth Cameron is a woman from the nobility and a Countess of Havenhurst. Due to the carelessness of her stepbrother and late father, she is in heavy debt. Elizabeth, who was originally a noblewoman, apart from her wealth

and position, also had a beautiful face. Because of her beauty, she was in the spotlight, and many men proposed her. However, she accidentally fell in love with a non-noble man. That man was Ian Thornton. Ian was considered unequal due to his dark background and family tree. His father was a nobleman who married his mother, who came from a lower class. Ian's parents' marriage of different class and status was considered a scandal that resulted in his father being stripped of the peerage by his grandfather. Besides that, Ian's status, considered low, was also inappropriate for having any relationship with the upper class. Once, Robert, who was Elizabeth's stepbrother overheard Ian said that he loved Elizabeth and wanted to marry her. This humiliated Robert so much that he challenged Ian to a duel. Robert also said that an honorable viscount had proposed Elizabeth. Elizabeth had disappointed Ian, and Ian judged how naive Elizabeth was, so Ian broke off the relationship and forgot her. A year and a half passed, and Ian inherited everything from his grandfather, The Duke of Stanhope, who made him an influential person in London. Meanwhile, Elizabeth fell into poverty.

This research discusses the problem of social class status in *Almost Heaven*. It is interesting to discuss because the romance between Elizabeth and Ian Thornton is hampered by social inequality and status. This novel brings British culture with the Victorian era's mindset of social class and status. It is between upper class and lower class status. Therefore, the researcher wants to find out about conditions in the Victorian era in England. England is the setting in this novel, particularly London. Lastly, in achieving the research goals, the researcher would like to apply Stuart Hall's Representation Theory and Foucault's Constructionist Approach.

1.2 Topic of Research

The issue discussed is the representation of social class inequality in the Victorian era. The bigger problem in this novel is the inequality of social status between Ian Thornton and Elizabeth Cameron. This social system has made them difficult to achieve their desires.

1.3 Research Problem

In the Victorian era, the problem of social class status became an obvious problem in society. According to the story in this novel, the people considered the lower class inappropriate for socializing and establishing relationships with the upper class. When someone originally from the nobility or upper class had a special relationship with the lower class, this was considered a societal scandal.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study and the topic to be discussed, these are the research questions ;

1. How is the social inequality in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven*?
2. What is the author's critical position?

1.5 The Goals of Study

Based on the discussion above, there are some goals to achieve in this research. The following are the goals of this research ;

1. To know about the social class issues described in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven*.
2. To discover the author's critical position.

CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two is separated into two subchapters. The first sub-chapter explains some previous researches engaged in the topic. The second one describes the theory used to analyze.

2.1 Previous Research

The previous research that the researcher took for this research were several articles and thesis. It needs to be added and is intended as supporting data for this research to avoid plagiarism.

The first previous research is a thesis by Hariyanti (2014) which talks about social stratification. This novel depicted the late-nineteenth-century love story of an upper-middle-class British family. This novel tells the main character, Elizabeth Bennet, who lives in Longbourn, England. She was characterized as a cheerful, polite, and intelligent young lady who would not be intimidated by anyone. Although this study has different topic and theories used, the things discussed have some similarities with the novel that the researcher will discuss. This study discusses social stratification and love between social classes that existed in the 19th century. This study will greatly help and contribute to this research.

The second previous research is conducted by Avriyati (2014). Based on the research results, the problem discussed is the debate of Jane Eyre, a single woman from the lower class whose loved man, Mr. Rochester, was from the upper class. Class differences in the eyes of society became an obstacle for both of them even though their sacrifices for each other did not violate the norms of society. Although this study uses different novels and theories, the topics discussed have similarities regarding the social classes and love relationships that existed in the Victorian era.

The last previous research by Imansari (2020). She analyzes social class issues. The researcher use Imansari's article because it contributes to this research. They have the same discussion that talks about the theme, and it also helps to comprehend and gets references about the discourse of social class. However, they used different theories and topics.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Some significant concepts and theories pertinent to the topic are explained in this sub-chapter. The following sections of this chapter will explore how Stuart Hall's representation applies to the problem of social status. The researcher will also draw on Michele Foucault's discursive approach.

2.3 Theory of Representation

This subchapter elaborates Stuart Hall's representation theory. It is applied to analyze the representation of social status in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven*. This novel will be analyzed through language, communication, signs, ideas, and symbols. Hall claims in his book *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practice*:

“Representation means using language to say something meaning full about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people...Representation is an essential part of process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of culture. It does involve the use of language, of sign and images which stand for or represent things.”

(Hall,1997:15)

According to the quotation, representation is a step in the process of creating and communicating to other meaning of the concepts in our heads through a language. The language enables others to comprehend our thoughts, feelings, and ideas. He also clearly explains that language has become one of the media that culture uses to represent ideas, thoughts, and feelings. The concept of

sign and meaning is central to representation. The concept itself is flexible, and it always acquires a new meaning.

Hall states, there are two types of representation systems. They are language representation and mental representation.

“... Mental representation: all things which we carry around in our heads. Meaning depends on the systems of the concepts and images formed in our thought which can stand for or represent the world. Language: to represent or exchange meanings and concepts, we can only do that when we also have access to shared language. Language depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various languages which stand for or represent those concepts.”

(Hall, 1997: 17-18)

The two systems are engaged to one another. The concepts that exist in minds enable us to comprehend the meaning of things. However, language is required to comprehend the meaning. For instance, we understand the concept of "jar" (for example, a thing used to prepare and serve drinks) even if we can't express it in a language that other people understand.

Therefore everyone interprets things differently, the meaning of the construction process varies greatly depending on culture or group of people. People from a different or specific cultural background will not understand what other communities produce. As a result, people must share a common understanding of cultural codes in order to produce and exchange meaning.

There are three approaches, according to Stuart Hall: reflective, intentional, and constructionist (Hall, 1997: 15). The first approach is a reflective one in which language acts as a mirror, in which it reflects the true meaning that already exists (Hall, 1997: 15). According to the point of view, language reflects the meaning of something. It refers to the usage of language to express or define the meaning of an object or set of objects. The last is the constructionist approach. Hall explains the constructionist approach in his book below:

“Things don’t mean: we construct meaning, using representational system-concepts and signs....we must not confuse the material world, where things and people exist, and the symbolic practice and processes through which representation, meaning and language operate.”

(Hall, 1997: 25)

In this context, constructionist approach does not deny the material world's existence. Meaning is determined by symbolic function rather than material quality. In the constructionist approach, a representational system is used in which concepts and signs are exchanged through language to transfer meaning and start communicate the concept meaningful way to others. In representational systems, meaning is created in and through a language.

Based on the approaches mentioned above, the researcher chose the constructionist approach. The research will be based on the author's sentences, dialogues, and narrations. The researcher can use the constructionist approach to explain the concept of social class / social stratification in the novel, which uses a representational system, signs, and concepts to be represented through language.

According to Hall, constructionist approach has two major models: Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach and Michel Foucault's discursive approach. As a result, in this research analysis of social class discourse, Michael Foucault's discursive approach model is more reliable.

2.4 Discursive Approach

In this research, the researcher decided to use Michel Foucault's discursive approach, which is more reliable for this research. There are three major concepts identified by Foucault that distinguish Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach from his approach of discursive. The concept of discourse, the issue of knowledge and power, and the question of subjects are the three major ideas of discursive (Hall, 1997 :43).

“By ‘discourse’, Foucault meant a group of statements which provide a language for talking about- a way of representing the

knowledge about- a particular topic at a particular historical moment. Discourse is about the production of knowledge through the language.”

(Hall, 1997:44)

Based on the quotation above, the discourse refers to language and practice. The goals are to bridge the gap between what one says as a language and what one does as a practice. As a result, Foucault contends that discourse constructs the topic. It explains and generates our knowledge objects. It defines how a topic can be discussed and reasoned about in a meaningful way (Hall, 1997: 44).

He also emphasized that discourse does not only consist of a single statement, source, text, or action. However, it appears more in a variety of texts and as a form of behavior at several different institutional sites in society. Thus, discursive practice is included in the similarities that occur in discourse.

According to Foucault, he prioritizes the production of meaning and knowledge through discourse rather than language (Hall, 1997:44). This means that discourse is engaged in meaning construction. Foucault states “We can only have knowledge of things if it has a meaning, it is discourse –not things it self-which produces knowledge.” (Hall, 1997: 45). This quotation explains that discourse produces knowledge. Thus, in this study, the researcher use this approach to confront the representation of social status in Judith McNaught’s *Almost Heaven*.

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the study's methodology. Chapter three is divided into three sub-chapters: the first describes the type of research the researcher conducted, the second describes how the researcher collected data, and the third describes how the researcher analyzed the data.

3.1 Types of Research

The type of this research is qualitative research. The data deal in this research contains words rather than numbers. In this point, qualitative data can be spoken words, written words, and visual images (Denscombe, 2007: 273). In addition, the term qualitative research can refer to research based on descriptive data that does not make (regular) use of statistical procedures (Gass and Mackey, 2005: 162). It means that qualitative research focuses on collecting data from descriptive data rather than statistical or numerical data. Thus, in conducting the research, the researcher uses a qualitative method to collect data from the primary source, a novel entitled *Almost Heaven* (1989). Thus, the researcher defines the relation using a theory of representation in Judith McNaught's *Almost Heaven*.

3.2 Data Collection

Data collection is divided into 2 types of data. They are classified as primary and secondary data. First, the primary data are collected from the novel entitled *Almost Heaven*. Narrations and dialogues related to the research topic serve as primary data, i.e., social class status represented in the role of social class inequality in London. At the same time, secondary data is derived from quotations from articles, books, articles, internet sources, literary work reviews, essays, etc. It can guide the researcher when analyzing primary data from that era in search of ideas. As a result, close reading is used to collect all primary and secondary data. It is a reading technique that focuses on both significant data and developing a deep understanding of the meaning of the texts.

3.3 Data Processing and Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to describe the social inequality in the novel *Almost Heaven* as a representation of the inequalities between the upper and lower classes concerning a topic of social inequality. In order to compare the discourse on social inequality in this novel with the discourse on social inequality in real life, notably among Elizabeth Cameron and Ian Thornton, the researcher collected facts and information by reading the text. Then, the researcher collects the data revealed in the novel. The data taken from narrative events and dialogues related to the discourse of social inequality explains the dominant position of the upper class over the lower class. These data were analyzed to answer the first question in the study.

Further analysis, to find out the author's position, the researcher uses intrinsic data from the novel to connect the social context as secondary data with the author's background to prove that Judith McNaught's condition affects her literary work. This explanation aims to answer the second question in this study.

CHAPTER IV. DISCUSSION

This chapter includes the process of answering the research questions. The first is to recognize inequality in *Almost Heaven* through the characters and social conditions in Victorian-era London. The second is to discuss the contextual setting of the author, which shows the author's purpose in writing the novel.

4.1 Social Inequality in *Almost Heaven*

The relationship between lower-class Ian Thorton and upper-class Elizabeth Cameron is portrayed in the *Almost Heaven*. However, the feelings of love that occur between them will cause many serious problems. Social class inequality makes them accept that things will be even more difficult no matter how hard they try to love each other. The status of Elizabeth, who is a Countess of Havenhurst and wants to have a relationship with an unemployed person like Ian, will be strongly opposed by her family.

In addition, Elizabeth also has the status of a woman who is engaged to a wealthy viscount. Thus, when rumors of the forbidden romance between Elizabeth and Ian spread, she had to give up her good reputation as a betrothed lady.

The researcher then cites several articles that explore the same topic as supporting evidence. According to Faith Shin's *Defining Social Class Across Time and Between Groups* (2017), three characteristics can be used to identify social class: income, occupational prestige, and education.

Income is one of the factor used to determine social class. Shin's thesis addresses the confusion concerning the middle class, which their income may identify. Their income will distinguish the social class (Thompson, 1988 : 260). Although, Thompson will be focused on the upper and middle classes, this indicator can still be utilized to determine the social class in *Almost Heaven*. People with a high income will be classified as high class, while those with a low

income will be classified as lower class. This income situation affects their daily living conditions.

Occupational prestige is an indicator of social class in this work. Someone with good prestige is classified as high class, whereas someone with poor occupations is classified as low class. On the other hand, occupational prestige is related to their salary (Shin, 2017 : 3).

The last indicator utilized to classify social class is education level. Someone's academic status or educational state affects them, particularly the characters in *Almost Heaven*. Shin discusses why education is more essential than their job and the money they earn from it. Education will become increasingly important over time. As a result, their educational history is a crucial aspect in classifying their social rank (Shin, 2017 : 3).

4.1.1 Characterization in *Almost Heaven*

A character is someone in a literary work who has identity (it does not need to be a strong one), an identity that is comprised of appearance, conversation, action, name, and (possibly) thoughts flowing through the mind (Gill, 1995: 127). The characters in this novel are Elizabeth Cameron, Ian Thornton, Robert, Sir Francis Belhaven, Julius Cameron, and Alexandra Lawrence.

Elizabeth Cameron is a Countess of Havenhurst who inherited her title and Havenhurst from her deceased parents. Havenhurst is her grandmother's dowry house which she inherited from her parents. However, when her parents passed Havenhurst to Elizabeth, she was on the verge of poverty and bankruptcy. In order to save Havenhurst from poverty and raise her social status again in the eyes of society, Elizabeth will be promoted by her brother as a debutant girl to get proposals from wealthy noble youths. The state of Havenhurst, which is full of debt, along with her brother, whom debt collectors are also chasing, makes Elizabeth finally agreed to her brother's request. When she became a debutant girl,

she attended a party that was indeed held for debutant girls, and the next day, proposals from noblemen came incessantly. Ultimately, as Elizabeth's brother, Robert chose Viscount Mondevale as the suitor who would become Elizabeth's fiancé. When Elizabeth was an engaged girl, she neglected and fell in love with Ian Thorton, an ordinary man with no title and a family background that was not clear according to society. “Handsome man whom society deemed unsuitable merely because he wasn’t a blue blood, and suddenly she hated all the restrictions of the stupid social system that was trying enslave her” (McNaught, 1989: 74).

From the quotation above, Elizabeth knows that what happened was wrong. Loving and having a relationship with a non-royal man would bring big problems, especially now that Elizabeth's status was an engaged woman. However, her mind rejects all social boundaries between the upper and lower classes. No matter how hard Elizabeth and Ian belong to each other, this class boundary system will still be a reference for the upper class to think that Ian is inappropriate and unequal in a relationship with Elizabeth, who is a Countess of Havenhurst. Ian wanted Elizabeth and convinced her to marry him. It was said by an Ian, without knowing that Elizabeth was a Countess and a woman engaged to a respectable viscount. Although Elizabeth also loved Ian, Elizabeth did not immediately accept his proposal. Elizabeth tried to refuse Ian's proposal because she realized that what she was doing would be fatal. However, the conversation between Ian and Elizabeth is overheard by Robert. Thus, this made Robert very angry, and challenged Ian to a duel.

“You arrogant *son of a bitch!*” Robert exploded, his voice vibrating with fury and contempt. “My sister is *Countess Cameron* to the likes of you! And I don’t need an introduction. I know all about you. As to your intentions—or should I say *pretentions*—I wouldn’t let her marry scum like you even if she weren’t *already* betrothed.”

(McNaught, 1989: 107)

From the quotation above, as an upper class, Robert clearly states his unwillingness to bless Ian and Elizabeth's relationship. The sentence Robert threw at Ian was full of ridicule without hesitation. Not without reason, because Ian's

status, considered not part of the upper class, made Robert behave arbitrarily and feel that he was higher in caste than Ian. Robert also invited Ian to a duel because he felt that he had embarrassed a Countess and had to be held accountable. Robert's demeanor mirrors how the upper classes of the Victorian era treated those of the lower classes who were trying to achieve too high a dream.

News of the illicit relationship between Ian and Elizabeth spread widely and quickly among the upper class in London. It is a scandal in the eyes of society because, for them, the upper class having relations with the lower class is the same as violating morals and rules. Moreover, Elizabeth thought that she would never be more humiliated because of the scandal; Viscount Mondevale's departure without saying goodbye had proven Elizabeth guilty, and since then, there had been no more invitations to parties or guests to Havenhurst to visit her.

“In the eyes of the *ton* she was a shameless wanton, soiled and used, unfit company for unsullied young ladies and gullible young heirs, unfit to mingle in Polite Society. She had broken the rules governing moral conduct, and not even with someone of her own class, but with a man whose reputation was black, his social standing nonexistent. She hadn't merely broken the rules, she'd flung them in their faces.”

(McNaught, 1989: 118)

From the quotation above, in the eyes of the public, what Elizabeth did was a scandal. Poverty and social inequality developed moral meanings at this time that, in many ways, are strikingly contemporary. And poverty results from moral failing on an individual level (Malthus, 1992). Elizabeth is considered an unethical and immoral woman. As a nobleman, as well as the status of an engaged woman, Elizabeth should be able to maintain her good reputation by not having contact with a man who is not of her class and has a bad reputation in the eyes of society.

Elizabeth was originally a girl who was always wanted and sought after; now, everyone no longer cared about her and turned their backs on her when she passed. The scandal made a person's situation change drastically. All the dreams

of Elizabeth and her brother, who wanted to marry a nobleman with a title to raise the social status of Elizabeth and Havenhurst, who were almost bankrupt, have vanished. Havenhurst is bankrupt, and Robert ran away because he avoided debt collectors. Finally, Elizabeth had to return to Havenhurst and sell the valuables in it to pay off her father's and Robert's debts. Besides that, he also reduced the number of servants in Havenhurst.

One year passed, and Elizabeth's increasingly apprehensive condition made her uncle, Julius Cameron, intervene. Her uncle came to Havenhurst and immediately cleaned up all the mess, and that was by the mandate of Elizabeth's late father. Julius plans a wedding for Elizabeth. Apart from being a mandate from Elizabeth's father, Julius also wanted the marriage because he was expecting an heir from Elizabeth. It was not without reason; this is because Julius' wife is infertile, so the future child Elizabeth will bear will inevitably become Havenhurst's heir and Julius Cameron's property.

“Julius Cameron looked up as his niece entered his study, and his eyes narrowed with annoyance; even now, when she was little more than an impoverished orphan, there was regal grace in her carriage and stubborn pride in the set of her small chin.”

(McNaught, 1989: 17)

The quote above shows how Elizabeth is used to remaining calm and graceful, like someone still noble in dealing with everything before her, even though now she is just an orphan with no wealth and prestige. Setting to a special meeting room between Elizabeth and Julius Cameron, she also seemed calm even though there would be problems she would face in his meeting with her uncle. Elizabeth's attitude was a habit when she was still a rich person and had a good reputation in the eyes of society. So, even when she is poor, this habit is still ingrained and will always carry over.

Following advice from his late younger brother, Elizabeth's father, Julius is asked to witness Elizabeth's wedding and choose him as a man with titles and assets. Julius thought that finding a husband for Elizabeth would be so easy. Recalling how the year before, Elizabeth, who had no blemish of reputation,

broke the record by getting the most applicants. However, now that Julius is trying to renew his acquaintance with the men who have proposed to Elizabeth, it is surprising that only three men have agreed to his request. They did not reply to the update of the introduction sent by Julius because it is no secret that Elizabeth is now poor. Poverty is what makes these men sneer Elizabeth and become a byword in society.

Elizabeth was shocked by her uncle's decision to find her a husband. And the surprise grew even more when she found out who the candidates who accepted the proposal and would become her husband were. The three suitors were Sir Francis Belhaven, Lord John Marchman, and the last was Ian Thornton, a man who had received humiliation and invitations to duel from Robert because he was considered unfit to be Elizabeth's husband.

As Elizabeth's uncle, Julius Cameron, also did not carelessly find a husband for Elizabeth. Stick to Julius' initial decision and the mandate from Elizabeth's late father that to be able to get Elizabeth to marry a man of nobility as well.

“As she'd explained to Elizabeth as soon as she arrived at the inn, she'd only given his name as a suitor because Julius had begun asking questions about reputation during her debut, and about whether she'd been popular or not. Thinking he'd heard some of malicious gossip about Elizabeth's involvement with Ian Thornton, Lucinda had tried to put a better face on things by including his name among Elizabeth's many suitors.”

(Mcnaught, 1989: 161)

The quotation above shows how Julius Cameron, as an upper class, decides the suitable candidates to become Elizabeth's husband. Ian, who was often ridiculed and avoided because of his social status, and considered immoral by the people of London, is now a candidate who is also being considered by Uncle Julius after two years ago, he met Elizabeth and got into big trouble. Julius' consideration is not necessarily without reason; this is because Ian Thornton has become the official heir of his grandfather, a Duke of Stanhope. For London's

aristocratic society of the era, wealth, position, inheritance, and titles mattered more than anything else.

Apart from Ian, the two suitors from her uncle made Elizabeth unsure. Like, Sir Francis Belhaven, he is a Knight of old age. He is 45 years old and has never been married, and he is a man who is tight-fisted and likes to have fun with several women. He decided not to marry before receiving renewed acquaintanceship with Elizabeth because he felt women were just money-wasting machines. However, he is willing to marry Elizabeth if his introduction is accepted, considering that he needs a wife to procure a legal heir, the dowry offered by Julius is quite large, and the idea of a young girl is also a consideration for Sir Francis Belhaven. In Victorian times, the marriage dowry was paid for by the woman.

“Now, however, he needed a legitimate heir, and for that he needed a wife. During the last year he’d been giving a good deal of thought to his rather stringent requirements for the lucky young lady he would eventually choose. He wanted a young wife as well as beautiful wife with money of her own so she wouldn’t squander his.”
(Mcnaught, 1989: 3)

The quotation above shows that Sir Francis Belhaven behaves like an upper class. He wanted a legal heir from a young and wealthy wife. It was not without reason; in the Victorian era, same-class marriage helped maintain social status or raise social levels in the eyes of society. Besides that, Sir Francis Belhaven, who is stingy, wants a wealthy wife so that his wife will not waste his money. Not only that, McNaught said in this novel that some upper-class people think that marriage is only to fulfill their sexual desires. And some, to raise their social status, they seek sexual satisfaction elsewhere. “Elizabeth with bold interest, giving her the incredible impression that he was actually trying to locate her breasts beneath the shapeless black gown she wore.” (McNaught, 1989: 128).

The quotation explains how arbitrary Julius Cameron is. In addition to what he has mentioned, he wanted a wife from high society to maintain his wealth; he also wanted a beautiful and perfect wife to fulfill his sexual desires.

That is how the upper class behaves in looking for a marriage partner. Also, in the quote, Elizabeth deliberately wears a nun's attire made from black linen without curves. It was intended to discourage Sir Francis Belhaven from making Elizabeth his wife. In addition, the attitude of Sir Francis Belhaven, who is known to be stingy as a member of the upper class, can be proven in the following data;

“Elizabeth climbed the long flight of stairs, glancing curiously about her at the gloomy hall and the crimson carpet on the steps. The carpet was thick and soft at the edges, attesting to its original cost, but it was threadbare beneath her feet and in immediate need of being replaced. There were gilt sconces on the wall with candles in them, but they had not been lit, and the staircase and landing above it were shrouded in darkness.”

(McNaught, 1989: 129)

The quotation above explains how the attitude of Sir Francis Belhaven as a nobleman. Besides, he often acts arbitrarily; his stingy nature has also been ingrained. For the upper class, someone can be considered aristocratic or upper class if they have a certain amount of wealth. Moreover, they also have good property ownership and servants whose job is to serve and care for the property owned. However, in the narrative fragment of the novel, it was evident that Sir Francis Belhaven is miserly. His property is luxurious, but he can only maintain it properly once it wears out. Furthermore, he does not light candles in his room, so his condition is left in the dark.

During Elizabeth's visit to Sir Francis Belhaven's residence, Elizabeth's dress was effortless. It made Sir Francis Belhaven also asked her to change clothes when dinner arrived.

Alexandra Lawrence was Elizabeth's best friend since childhood. She is also a Duchess and the Duchess of Hawthorne. She is a loyal figure in her friendship. Even though everyone shunned Elizabeth, who fell into poverty, Alexandra still visited her best friend and did not mind Elizabeth's problems. In addition to Alexandra's loyalty to Elizabeth, she did not always hesitate to be there and help Elizabeth in trouble. Alexandra already knows Elizabeth's condition; she has nothing and is ostracized in the eyes of society. However, Alexandra still visits

her as proof that loyalty in friendship is above all. Alexandra also married a Duke, making her a Duchess. This title brings more power to the upper class in society to do many impossible things. She offers Elizabeth, whose reputation has been tarnished, to go to London for the ball, lending the vital influence of her husband's grandmother.

“There’s nothing for which to thank me. I’ve heard the whole sordid story, and I don’t believe a word of it! Furthermore, I want you to come to London for the Season and stay with us.” Leaning forward, Alex took her hand. “For the sake of your own pride, you have to face them all down. I’ll help you. Better yet, I’ll convince my husband’s grandmother to lend *her* consequence to you. Believe me,” Alex finished feelingly, but with a fond smile, “no one will *dare* to cut you if the Dowager Duchess of Hawthorne stands behind you.”

(McNaught, 1989: 13-14)

Based on the quotation above shows how the power of Alexandra from the upper class can guarantee that everything will be fine. She offered the influence of her respected husband's family to look after and protect his best friend, Elizabeth. What Alexandra did to Elizabeth was that Elizabeth was a person who was once a noble, and even though Elizabeth is now poor, royal blood still sticks to her. In contrast to Alexandra's treatment of a servant or lower class, the attitude of the upper class to most servants was always arbitrary and belittling. “Berta! Your aunt? The silly widgeon’s afraid of her shadow” (McNaught, 1989: 122). The quote describes how the upper class looks down on a servant. In this quote, Julius' uncle tells Berta to pretend to be Elizabeth's aunt because Miss Lucinda, who is supposed to be a companion, cannot accompany Elizabeth. This Elizabeth conveyed to Alexandra and, of course, how surprised Alexandra was by Julius's decision. How could an uneducated and mentally disabled servant be entrusted with becoming a companion to a countess? Every unmarried noblewoman had to be accompanied by a chaperone during the Victorian era. Of course, this companion must be educated because all education is obtained from her. It is also related to determining a person's social class based on income, occupational prestige, and education level. Also, in the quotation, it was evident that a servant

has the lowest social status. Furthermore, of course, the job of a servant does not have prestige because the salary she gets is relatively tiny. Moreover, with the level of education, to become a servant, no special skills and level of education are required. That is why Alexandra and other upper class view Berta as the lower class can be said to be significantly underestimated.

4.1.2 The Social Condition in *Almost Heaven*

1. Social Status

The Victorian era in British history was the time of Queen Victoria's rule in the 19th century. This era is usually marked by the life of people classified into several social strata and circles. A life full of art, romance and interesting culture brought this era to be one of glory for the British people and colonial. In the turmoil of the industrial revolution, British society was classified into certain social classes: upper, middle, and lower (Sugarbreze, 2017):

Upper Class

The upper class is the highest in the British social hierarchy. They were aristocrats, aristocrats and heirs usually owned a fiefdom. People who are highly educated, have expertise in various fields, and have government positions also fall into this group. The income they get is usually based on investment results or inherited land.

Middle Class

The middle class is usually occupied by professional workers, business people, and significant capital owners who can set up their businesses.

Lower Class

The lower class comprises workers or laborers who usually devote themselves to the highest class to support their economy. They are usually employed to care for livestock, agriculture, and industry, or some become servants.

In *Almost Heaven*, it only focuses on the inequality between the upper class and lower class. As the upper class, in particular, needed money to achieve social prestige, the word "class" was not distant from "money." When in a prominent position, people can occasionally become nasty and arrogant. When they were in a position of authority, they enjoyed pressing those beneath them, or, to put it another way; the dominant pressed the marginal. "Unlike some of her other guests, Ian Thornton who wouldn't be admitted to a respectable drawing room in all of London" (McNaught, 1989: 55). The data the researcher got from the novel shows how Ian Thornton's status, who is from the lower class because he does not have a job or a dark family background, is considered not from the respected class and is often looked down upon by some London aristocrats. They thought Ian was evil, and his presence was hard to accept among the nobility. Ian's status was deficient, even lower than the lower class, because he has no income or prestige and would not get favors from anyone because they thought Ian was not part of them.

2. Aristocracy

In Britain, aristocracy was defined as wealth, influence, and high position. There was a connection between how they lived and the status they claimed as aristocrats. The aristocracy would also recognize their mistakes and strive to act more morally. However, they viewed the attitudes as being extremely virtue-driven and thought that other classes should adopt the aristocratic mindset to recognize their mistakes (Noviati, 2006).

Robert considered Elizabeth a woman of value, and apart from having a beautiful face, Elizabeth was also the heiress of Havenhurst and a Countess, meaning they came from the nobility or the upper class. Her high status was also seen when Robert offered Elizabeth to marry a nobleman to raise her social status. It shows how Robert emphasizes social status more than other aspects (namely humanity). “You’ve compromised my sister, you misbegotten pig, and you’ll answer for it!” (McNaught, 1989: 107). Robert emphasized social status over any other aspect (i.e., humanity). Even as an aristocrat, Robert should have appreciated, sympathized, and compassioned towards others, but he did not have those feelings. Robert treated the human concern for death and illness with flippancy and impolitely.

3. Marriage

Love and marriage are also featured in *Almost Heaven* as the love and marriage between Elizabeth and a select few men. For the bourgeoisie and the nobility, marriage is a business agreement containing property, wealth, and status. Robert shows marriage to aristocrats as a business deal when he tells Elizabeth he wants to marry Viscount Mondevale. He said that ‘married life is about to be lived to raise social status and maintain what has almost been lost, which is Havenhurst.’ “That marriage will bring you jewels and gowns and beautiful homes, and it will bring *me* connections that will be worth more than money.” (McNaught, 1989: 28).

Family name and lineage are significant factors in a marriage, in addition to economics. The aristocracy and bourgeoisie had different expectations for marriage, different standards and preferred to wed someone from the same family or with a similar social standing. Parents carefully selected and planned their children's marriages in the Victorian attitude towards marriage. Elizabeth should have commented when Robert informed her when and whom he would propose. She just gave up and agreed to improve Havenhurst and raise her and her brother's

social status in the eyes of society. Finally, the requirement for marriage was extremely unsettling because, in this situation, it was a business transaction, and bloodlines and fortune were valued over love.

4. Title or Name

In *Almost Heaven*, several British nobility titles from the Victorian era have been found. This title can only be obtained by the nobility or the upper class. Each title obtained determines the amount of power and the autonomous region owned—a title inherited from the British royal family and governs directly. The following are the British peerage titles in *Almost Heaven*; Duke, Earl, Countess, Viscount, Baron, and Knight.

Ownership of the title at this time has a high prestige. People who have titles will be highly respected in society. Moreover, these titles also make those with them feel they have power, so sometimes they act as they please toward people below them or the lower class. “Berta! Your aunt? The silly widgeon’s afraid of her shadow” (McNaught, 1989: 122). The conversation fragment shows Alexandra’s attitude toward a servant like the Duchess of Hawthorne. Although at first, she was sweet and loyal to her best friend, Elizabeth, who is now poor, on the other hand, her attitude shows that she is reluctant to respect and appreciate Berta, who is just a servant in Havenhurst.

Besides that, Ian Thornton, who did not have a title, also received unfavorable treatment from nobles who had high titles in London. Ian Thornton’s social status made him endlessly humiliated, sidelined, and considered inappropriate in London.

“In a roomful of lords and knights who were supremely conscious of their mutual superiority, Ian Thornton was outranked and outnumbered. He was outsider, Everly was one of them, and they would never side an outsider against one of their own.”

(McNaught, 1989: 65)

The quotation above explains that in a card game room at a party, Ian Thornton was the only guest who did not hold any peerage. In the game room where the gambling matches occurred, Ian Thornton defeated Lord Everly. However, the victory he got was an insult to his opponent. Thus, Lord Everly challenged Ian to a duel. Everly is a relatively easy opponent for Ian. Ian can easily beat him, and everyone in the room knows it. However, they (the people in the room) would never side with anyone who was not part of their class as royalty or the upper class. It was not without reason; for them supporting the untitled Ian was the same as making friends with Ian, who was a nobody and would not contribute anything to their friendship.

“Unlike some of her *other* guests,” Lord Everly put in contemptuously, tipping his head toward Ian Thornton, “who wouldn’t be admitted to a *respectable* drawing room in all of London!”

(McNaught, 1989: 55)

The above dialogue fragment shows Lord Everly, someone who inherits the title of nobility and belittles Ian Thornton as the lower class. His trait of blatantly belittling anyone from the lower class is because Everly considers himself much better and has strength or support. He also said that someone like Ian would not get a place of honor anywhere in London. Everly said this because he assessed how Ian’s family background was filled with scandalous issues, namely the marriage of Ian's parents to different classes and the stripping of Ian's father's peerage from his grandfather.

The position of the grandfather of Ian Thornton, a Duke of Stanhope, still upholds the purity of class equality marriages. Even when his son, the father of Ian Thornton, married the daughter of a poor Scottish vicar, the Duke of Stanhope made a unanimous decision.

“... the proud man who had turned his back on his noble heritage and instead married the sister of a poor Scottish vicar. By his actions he had forfeited a dukedom . . . and had never given a blessed damn.”

(McNaught, 1989: 156)

The title of Duke is the highest in the British peerage system. A Duke has the authority to decide something. In the quotation above, it is explained that the Duke of Stanhope did not like the decision of his son, the father of Ian Thornton, to marry a girl from a poor Scottish family. It was a shameful act and tarnished the reputation of the Duke family. Marrying someone from a different or lower class was considered a scandal by London society in that era. Therefore, the Duke of Stanhope stripped his son of the peerage. The nobility or aristocracy highly upholds the purity of same-class marriages. It is intended so that the assets and titles that go down to the heir are also apparent. In addition, marrying someone from the lower class would only make society look down on the family. For aristocrats, most of them considered marriage was only a medium to raise social class status or to maintain wealth and possessions. The rest, for matters of sexual satisfaction, are looking for it out there (McNaught, 1989).

In addition to his prerogative right to strip his son of the peerage, after decades of having no heirs for his property and land, the Duke of Stanhope is now looking for Ian Thornton, who is his grandson whom he has not acknowledged for a long time because he is a child from a different class marriage from his son. "Now, fourteen years later, there were fleets of ships Ian's flag and carrying his cargo; mines filled with his silver and tin; warehouse loaded with precious goods that he owned." (McNaught, 1989: 156)

From the quotation above, during the search, the Duke of Stanhope always sent letters to Ian Thornton so that Ian would come and return to him to inherit everything he owned. However, Ian, a man full of pride, always ignores the letter because he remembers how his parents were mistreated. If Ian wanted, he would accept all the offers and forget all the humiliation he got from society as a despised lower class. However, after he received unfair treatment from Robert, Elizabeth's older brother, Ian weighed in and finally accepted an offer to become the heir of the Duke of Stanhope. Now, Ian is someone who is most influential and respected in London.

The power of the wealth that the Duke of Stanhope gave to his grandson is authentic. In the past, Ian was known as a gambler with an unclear and scandalous family background. However, when people now know that he is the grandson of the Duke of Stanhope, everyone talks about him and considers him a person of influence. Ian, whose presence was constantly belittled and always avoided, now approached to ask for help or financial advice from Ian. The reign of the Duke of Stanhope gave Ian power and luxury.

Even though Sir Francis Belhaven's character in this novel is described as arrogant, he also knew how he should be respected according to his title. "And once again. 'There is hardly a need for all that,' he said, covering his puzzlement with forced joviality. 'I am only a knight, you know. Not a duke or even an earl.'" (McNaught, 1989: 130). In that quotation, it has a double explanation. Firstly, Sir Francis Belhaven did not want Berta, whom he did not know, was pretending to be Elizabeth's aunt, to overdo it by bowing. Because Sir Francis Belhaven thought their positions were the same class and Sir Francis was just a Knight. Second, Berta's habit is still carried over as a maid who always bows like a maid to her master. It made Elizabeth worried that her plan would be exposed and that she would be even more humiliated. Asking for travel assistance from a maid who had no special knowledge would only make Elizabeth more ridiculed for her poverty.

5. Manners and Social Rules

Manners and social rules are one of the things that must be learned when they are young. It is intended to build morals and perspectives appropriate to their class/position (Sugarbreze, 2017). Here are some rules of cultural facts in *Almost Heaven*;

An unmarried woman was not allowed to go anywhere without a companion. Even if she has an appointment to hobble with a guest of the opposite sex, an escort must accompany her. If the woman is married, the husband will be

her companion. "Then take Berta instead and have Lucinda join you later when you go to visit Thornton in Scotland" (Mcnaught, 1989: 21).

From the dialogue, Elizabeth reasoned that Lucinda Throckmorton-Jones was visiting her sister because she knew that her uncle would allow her to postpone her meeting with the suitor by reasoning like that. In the late nineteenth century, the introduction of the opposite sex was not without debate. It ranged from questions about national identity and moral standards to concerns about social change and its impact on heterosexual relationships. The escort was, of course, related in particular to the status of the young unmarried woman, to the period in a woman's life between appearing in high society and marriage. The figure of a companion is meant to guard young girls against bad guys and to scheme from young men who are penniless and hasty romantic marriages, as it is emphasized by one of the most widely cited authorities on manners, declaring that a companion is essential for a girl who is engaged. Mother, or several female friends, should always accompany a young fiancé on his trips to various entertainment establishments and other places (Montgomery, 1996).

The purpose of having a chaperon or duenna or companion for unmarried women during the Victorian era, as mentioned above, was one of the ways to protect unmarried women from men who had no money. And this relates to the views of the upper class towards lower class people who have low incomes or do not have a job. They (lower class) are certainly considered it inappropriate to approach these women because they are afraid that unstable thinking can lead to different class relationships, which, of course, will become a scandal for upper-class women. Although chaperons are frequently seen as a restriction on youth's independence, they helped bourgeois women access public spaces by bringing household manners into the wider world. She would watch after her charge at the park or the skating rink, just as a chaperone could be in the drawing room when possible suitors call.

At the same time, the chaperone's presence helped to define a socially stratified and secure zone for a young single bourgeoisie amid the promiscuity of

the streets or venues for marketed entertainment. She aided in preventing any undesirable mixing across class lines as a result. In doing so, the chaperone promoted social exclusivity in the context of the bourgeoisie's leisure pursuits, elevating their social pretenses. Chaperonage was, therefore, a clear indication of the underlying class motives underlying the etiquette system. Putting a shield of defense around the well-bred, keeping the coarse and disagreeable at bay, and punishing those who disobey her [Society's] rules by excluding them from the social circle. The idea of defending bourgeois ladies from lower-class males was entwined with sexism. However, aristocratic men enjoyed the freedom of the city. They might socialize with men from their socioeconomic class or go to the Bowery and engage in activities popular with working-class men. For bourgeois males, bridging class divides in this manner was not frowned upon. Additionally, they could dine in a classy establishment with a prostitute or chorus girl without necessarily raising eyebrows, in contrast to Delmonico's uptown fashionable restaurant, which forbade the entry of single women once dinner had started to be served.

Only the Duke and Duchess may be called Your Grace. Other nobles may only be addressed as Lord/Lady. "Begging your pardon, Your Grace, he said formally, his kindly old face filled with concern" (McNaught, 1989: 15). From that dialogue, it is clear that Alexandre Lawrence is a Duchess, a title she got after marrying the Duke of Hawthorne. So that the greeting she gets as a nobleman or Duchess is "Your Grace". In addition, there is another reason why only the Duke or Duchess gets the nickname 'Your Grace.' It is because in the British aristocratic system, the status or position of the title Duke or Duchess is the highest. A Duke or Duchess is also highly respected because people with this title have extraordinary power in society. It can be proven by researchers from the data found on *Almost Heaven*. "No one will dare to cut you if the Dowager Duchess of Hawthorne stands behind you" (McNaught, 1989: 14). In this quote, Alexandra, Duchess of Hawthorne, dares to guarantee Elizabeth's comfort during London's party season. It is due to Alexandra's status as a Duchess in her husband's family, and she will also seek help from the influence of her husband's grandmother, a

Dowager Duchess of Hawthorne. It is closely related to the social conditions of British society, in which no one dares to oppose the decisions of someone with a title and high position in society.

6. Properties and Things

In the Victorian era, ownership of certain goods or property was also a factor that determined the status and class of each individual. Ownership of these particular items, which of course, can only be owned by the upper class.

Fullbrook (1986), the author suggests a metaphor for a high-class world whose gardens with many flowers look impressive. After that, this condition provided the facilities owned by Elizabeth's family before falling into poverty, namely having a garden. Not everyone had a garden at that time because they would spend more money. So, this moment explains the wealth of Elizabeth's family, as the family is like the upper class. The condition of their wealth must have something to do with their job and status. Someone having a garden in their house meant that they had to have a house and space for a garden, and only the rich could spend on it. "In the ballroom the orchestra was tuning up, and suddenly the opening strains of a lovely waltz drifted into the garden, filling it with music" (McNaught, 1989: 38)

This quote shows that Charise, the party host, comes from an upper-class family. Because someone with a garden must have more space at home, this can only be done and owned by the upper class. Not to mention, a person's ability to organize a party in the party season at her house is considered a wealthy person. Someone with high wealth, like Charise, is also highly respected by several people. In holding a party at his house, she also invited Ian Thornton, who said that Ian was very ostracized in society. However, Charise still invites him regardless of Ian's status in society. It is not without reason why Charise wants to invite Ian to her party. Charise knows that even though Ian has background

parents who marry each other in different classes, Ian is still the only legal heir of his grandfather, the Duke of Stanhope.

According to Satia (2018), owning a gun was a privilege reserved for the state and the upper classes. At the time, the use and ownership of pistols was the right of the upper class, and they were free to study and use it. "I shot him in the arm, I was aiming for his black heart, and I missed!" (McNaught, 1989: 112). From the quotation, it is clear that only the upper class owns a gun. Even a duel, a natural illegal act at that time, made Robert challenge Ian to a duel and open fire on Ian arbitrarily. That is how Robert behaved like an Upper class who unwisely used the right to own a gun. Violence in some form or another may always exist. Civilization did not end violence; it only provided a framework for ritualizing and institutionalizing acts of violence. Once civilized, ritual violence is almost entirely the domain of men.' Ritual violence takes many forms, but the duel is one of the most romantic. Dueling differs from wartime violence and barroom brawls in that it pits two opponents, almost always of the same social class, against each other in a highly stylized form of combat.

Fighting and war are not the same. No one follows the rigid formalities that dueling requires, and fighters defend personal honor as duelists always do. Dueling is a unique form of violence; its origins are found only in the upper echelons of society, separate from other acts of violence. It is still being determined when the practice duels or the first actual duel occurred. Most writers agree that dueling probably began as a primitive justice system in which disputes were settled by hand-to-hand combat. However, when civilization finally created an orderly procedure for administering justice, dueling continued as a means of debating matters of honor (Ellett, 1997). The fight between Ian and Robert is related to Robert, who feels humiliated and is challenged to have a duel with Ian. The humiliation of Ian from the lower class boldly declaring that he wanted to marry and love Elizabeth. Dueling is a suitable option for Robert for this humiliation.

People who came from upper class families lived in lavishly furnished homes and had many servants. “‘Aunt Berta!’ She said forcefully as the front door of the great, rambling house was swung open. The butler stepped aside, and footmen hurried forward. (McNaught, 1989: 127). In the quotation above, explain that Elizabeth made Berta Elizabeth's maid, who pretended to be her aunt when visiting Sir Francis Belhaven's house. Calling 'aunt' to Berta invited enthusiasm from the servant of Sir Francis Belhaven to welcome their arrival immediately. The researcher took this data to prove that Sir Francis Belhaven, one of the characters, is from the upper class, as evidenced by having many servants.

During the Era, many men and women expressed their income through fashion. If a women's dress had numerous layers of cloth, that would mean she comes from a prominent family.

“Dreadful,” said Berta, eyeing the severe, high-neckled black linen gown Elizabeth had carefully chosen to wear at this, her first meeting with the prospective husband whom Alexandra had described as a lecherous old roue.”

(McNaught, 1989: 127)

The quotation above shows that Elizabeth deliberately wore clothes that looked ancient when visiting the residence of Sir Francis Belhaven. He intended to make Sir Francis Belhaven uncomfortable and dislike Elizabeth's presence and cancel or shorten the renewal of their introduction.

In the Victorian Era, stacked or ruffle dress models were trendy among upper-class women. The accent usually attached to the dress is lace decoration, adding a classic and classier impression. The better the materials used, the higher the class of the individual, likewise with piles of ruffles on skirts. Upper-class women in this era always wore dresses with stacked skirts, which showed the dress style of the upper-class people, and this also showed that they came from the nobility. The material of the clothing worn by Elizabeth, which has been mentioned in the quotation, is that Elizabeth deliberately wore a nun's dress made of linen. A person from the upper class will wear silk or other soft fabrics,

showing his life's luxury and prosperity. Elizabeth's attitude she did show Sir Francis Belhaven that she was an impoverished upper-class woman who did not have special knowledge in dressing like an upper-class woman. "Oh my dear, I've invited a few guests," he added pointedly, his eyes on her unattractive gown. "I thought you would want know, in order to attire yourself more appropriately." (McNaught, 1989: 133).

From the quotation above, Elizabeth's appearance, wearing a dress without curves, made from cheap materials and accessories that looked old-fashioned, made Sir Francis Belhaven give a little satire that offended Elizabeth. The plan, which aims only to make Sir Francis Belhaven not want to make her his wife, ends in Sir Francis Belhaven's dinner plan by inviting many guests, which, of course, will make Elizabeth even more intimidated as a Countess who falls into poverty to have a decent dress, but she cannot.

"Elizabeth accepted a helping of cold meat to silence her protesting stomach while both women studied her with unhidden scorn. "That is a most unusual ensemble you're wearing, I must say," remarked the woman named Eloise. Is it the custom where you come from to dress so . . . simply?"

(McNaught, 1989: 135)

In the quotation above, Elizabeth's dress was effortless and did not reflect where she came from (an upper-class family). This situation suddenly made guest Sir Francis Belhaven comment on Elizabeth's appearance, who was considered to have bad fashion sense as an aristocrat. That was Elizabeth's intention, so she could say she did not have to waste money on expensive dresses that could only be worn a few times. This answer made Sir Francis Belhaven agree with what Elizabeth said. However, she continued that the money could be used for charity rather than to buy meaningless dresses. Just the same, as an aristocratic individual known to be stingy, Sir Francis Belhaven deplored Elizabeth's answer, which turned out to be using the money in vain for the charity that would be given away. To become a good part of the nobility, one must be able to place oneself, including socializing and appearance, or even other habits.

Men from the family often accompanied females. It would be a misfortune if found with someone who was not blood-related.

“Elizabeth fled in sheer terror from the gentle confidence she’d heard in his smiling voice. As she galloped through the thick fog and wet underbrush she was no longer the sensible, confident young lady she’d been before.”

(McNaught, 1989: 99)

The quotation above explains that many bad things will happen if a woman from the upper class violates the rules of the upper class. One of them is to go outside alone without the assistance of men who are blood-related. In the quotation, Elizabeth felt uneasy because besides she had violated the rules as a woman of the nobility, she had also experienced bad things, in which she almost lost her dignity and reputation as an aristocrat. After all, she had gotten along too far with Ian Thornton, the man considered trivial by upper-class society. As an upper class, they must protect the family ideal by safeguarding morality, decency, aversion, sexual segregation, parental discipline and authority and male domination (Culjat, 2018).

4.2 The Critical Position of The Author

In order to respond to the second research question, this sub-chapter aims to discuss the author's critical position from their point of view. The literary work, as a cultural product, typically communicates the ideology and the moral value presented by the author to reveal the author's critical perspective. The language of tensions in social inequality examined in the stories reveals the author's critical viewpoint. Then the researcher combines it with the biography of the author. By relating to the two points above, the critical position of the author can be known whether she criticizes the whole characters who represent the conflicts of social inequality or agrees with the whole characters who represent the conflicts of social inequality in the novel.

As an author of *Almost Heaven*, Judith McNaught was born in San Luis Obispo on May 10, 1944. She attended Northwestern University and majored in business. Prior to her divorce, she had two children with a St. Louis doctor she had married. She was president of a temp agency, assistant controller for a sizable trucking company, executive search firm president, and assistant director for a film crew before his breakthrough as a writer. She was also the first female executive producer of the CBS radio station. While working as an assistant director for a film team, she met Michael "Mike" McNaught, who would become her second husband. He oversees public relations for the business. Even though book publishers turned down her works, her husband supported her for years and encouraged her to create (Coleman, 2006).

Judith McNaught was one of the few authors in the historical romance genre at the beginning of her writing career. However, the genre had taken off by 1985, and more than 50 new historical romances were released monthly. Despite years of success in the historical romance genre, she turned to write contemporary romance in 1990, hoping to have a better chance to stand out from the competition in a less crowded market. As her literary career progressed, she gradually added suspenseful themes. Regardless of the genre, her works are always action-packed and include strong female characters who are empathetic, loyal, and intellectual. After falling in love with Dallas while on a book tour, McNaught, who had previously resided in Saint Louis, Missouri, moved to Texas. Her third marriage to professional golfer and engineer Don Smith ended in May 1993. She characterized the split as amicable and had a party for 160 guests to mark the beginning of a new stage in her life (Coleman, 2006).

In this critical position, the author has an experience as an upper-class woman, educated, persistent, and always in the spotlight because of her achievements. On the other hand, she has a position in the story as a woman who always thinks about other people's conditions. Thus, she easily fell in love with the opposite sex until, in her third marriage, she had to separate from her husband.

McNaught's kindness to others is like building a school foundation for illiterate women (no prior education).

McNaught's position as an upper class illustrated that social power was dominated by the upper class. Elizabeth, a part of the upper class, was presented by McNaught as a positive role model who built social equality. Although not all members of the upper class are as bad as they were made out to be, some did recognize inequality and make an effort to create social equality.



CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION

Social Inequality causes a conflict between several people in the novel, Elizabeth as a woman from a noble family and Ian Thornton as a non-noble man with unclear background family. The life situation of two people in this novel depicts the condition of London at the Victorian era. The unequal social status experienced by Ian was due to something that had happened to his parents in the past. A different-class marriage involving his parents made Ian ostracized from society. The bourgeoisie conducted marriages in this era to increase social status and wealth so that they would be increasingly respected and not excluded from society. However, Ian's father did something that violated the rules of society, namely marrying a poor Scottish woman who was Ian's mother. It caused Ian's father to be stripped of his peerage by the Duke of Stanhope. As a result, the impact that harmed Ian at this time was because of what his parents had done.

This social status inequality occurred in the Victorian era due to the stark contrast between the upper and lower classes. This difference includes income, occupational prestige, and education level. In addition, title possession was also an indicator of class distinction in this era. Everyone with the title will be honored and respected by everyone.

After that, Judith McNaught's position as the writer of *Almost Heaven* positioned her as a woman from the upper class who does not necessarily look down on people from the lower class. McNaught in *Almost Heaven* several times stated that from any background, everyone has the right to be respected, whether they have a position or not.

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