

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter explains the method in which this research used by elaborating the design of the research, the definition used in the research, the data collection technique, and the data analysis. As mentioned in chapter two, this research uses a structuralist approach using the methodology of “Narratology” and the data is gathered using the method of Barthes’ codes on plotting.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research employs a qualitative analysis. Using a structuralist approach, the two books are compared and contrasted to see the similarities and the differences using textual evidence. There are two points that need to be discussed in order to understand the design of the research: the approach of the research and the methodology of the research.

##### **3.1.1 Structuralism**

By using structuralism approach, the research focuses on the plot as one of the building blocks of the narrative, it makes the construction of the story an essential part of this research. Bressler (2007) stated that "...structuralists often approach textual analysis as if it were science..." and this is due to the fact that there are "...specific codes within the text that allow meaning to occur" (p.82). To approach the analysis of the text as if it were science means that the texts are analyzed objectively. By looking inside the texts objectively, important elements are detected. One of the important elements that can be detected inside the text are the codes embedded. This research, in particular, looks for these codes that became the tool of analyzing the two books *Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns* by John Green.

Roland Barthes, Claud Levi-Strauss, Gerard Prince as well as Jonathan Culler uses such approach, structuralism, and in order to find the construction of a

text, Gerard Prince then developed Narratology (Bressler, 2007, pp. 82-83). During the research there are many elements that can be analyzed such as the characters, the plot, and the setting. These elements contributed to the building blocks of the story and often, there are repetitions inside the texts. The repetitions consisted of the terms or phrases which are used repetitively. These repetitions consisted of the codes. The codes create the patterns inside the story. Hence, the plot became the main focus in the process of finding these codes due to its nature in portraying the flow of the story.

One of the ways to dissect these codes is by using Narratology. Roland Barthes then developed a way to analyze these codes using his Code on Plotting (Felluga, 2013). Barthes stated that "a story contains codes that refer directly or indirectly to social values, norms, and beliefs" (Herman & Vervaeck, 2005, p. 119) and that "...a story consists of at least three ingredients: an initial situation, an action or event, and an outcome. Connection must be temporal and causal" (Herman & Vervaeck, 2005, p. 13). It can be gathered that the structure and the way that the text is put together and told are important since the codes are able to reveal more about the texts other than just what is written. Thus, the research focuses on the plot of the story and employed a content based analysis using Narratology.

### **3.1.2 Narratology and Roland Barthes' Code on Plotting**

The methodology of this research is content based analysis using Narratology. Content based analysis is essentially the use of texts as the primary source of learning and understanding the research. In this case the texts are Green's *Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns*.

This research employs Narratology as a way to analyze the text. In doing so, codes are identified and analyzed. Fludernik (2010) explained that "[Narratology] analyses... the characteristics of literary texts and their aesthetic functions... [and] narratology resembles semiotics in so far as it analyses the constitution of meaning in texts..." (p. 9). It means that narratology establish meaning inside the text by using the elements such as the plot, the setting, and the characters. Narratology strictly focuses on the text at hand. In Narratology,

Barthes developed five codes on plotting to analyze a narrative: the *hermeneutic code*, the *proairetic code*, the *semantic code*, the *symbolic code*, the *cultural code* (Felluga, 2013). Two codes are chosen for this research: *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code*. The two codes specifically help in seeing the essence of journey in both of the novels and Felluga (2013) even noted that these two codes are the main reason why there is suspense in a narrative. Basically, these two codes helped to make the connection, as in patterns, of the causality inside the story. The application will be shown in the fourth chapter of this research.

### 3.2 Subjects of Research

The subjects of the research are the similarities and differences in the portrayals of journey in John Green's two books (*Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns*) and how the portrayal of journey contributed to the construction of the main character's identity.

*Looking for Alaska* by John Green (2012) is about the story of the life of Miles "Pudge" Halter who goes to a private school called Culver Creek High and met an eccentric and reckless girl named Alaska who changed the course of his life. The story turns into tragedy when Alaska was found dead in a car crash. They discovered many things about Alaska that they never know before. *Looking for Alaska* is a book about a person's growth after coping with a loss of someone who is dear to them.

John Green's *Paper Towns* (2012) tells the story of Quentin Jacobsen (who goes by the nickname Q) who is in love with a girl named Margo Roth Spiegelman ever since he was nine years old. A couple of years later, Margo sneaks into Q's bedroom and asked him to help her pull pranks on the people that have made her life miserable. The story turns into a mystery as a couple of days later Margo disappeared, leaving clues. Q decided to look for her along with the help of his friends. In the end, they found Margo. The story is about how complex it is to understand one another and to judge someone one barely knows based on one's idea is wrong.

### 3.3 Data Collection Technique

The data are collected using two major techniques: (1), close reading or an in depth reading of the two books and (2), analyzing the two books to retrieve several quotes that portray the journey in order to find the codes by implementing Barthes' code on plotting.

#### 3.3.1 Close Reading

Based on structuralism, a textual analysis is employed. *Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns* were closely read to find the patterns. The patterns consist of the codes scattered inside the plot of the two books, indicating the portrayal of journey. In the two books, the codes inside the quotes are marked to signify their importance in contributing to the portrayal of the journeys. The codes are indicated by certain repetitions in the books. Those repetitions consisted of words or phrases that is continuously repeated in the book. To narrow the collection of the quotes, ten quotes were retrieved from each book. These ten quotes contained the most important points where the codes appear (see Appendices). The data are collected using tables.

Two tables are created to divide the two books and they also show columns intended to indicate the codes. The word or phrases that contained the codes inside the quotes are marked in **bold** and the ones that indicated the specific codes are marked in **bold and underline** for *Hermeneutic Code (HER)* and **bold, underline, and highlight** for *Proairetic Code (ACT)*). The textual evidence collected is arranged chronologically. The chronological arrangement signifies the plotting of the stories. The data are divided into two major sections indicating the textual evidence and the codes. This is the sample of the two tables:

<i>LOOKING FOR ALASKA</i>			
No.	TEXTUAL EVIDENCE	CODE	
		HER	ACT
1	Part 1: Before “ ‘So this guy,’ I said, standing in the doorway of the living room. <b>‘Francois Rabelais.</b> He was this poet. <b>And his last words were ‘I got to seek a <u>Great Perhaps.</u></b> ’ That’s why I’m going. <b>So I don’t have to wait until I die to start <u>seeking a Great Perhaps.</u></b> ” (Green, <i>Looking for Alaska</i> , 2012, p. 5)	V	

(Table.1 - *Looking for Alaska*. For the complete version, consult the Appendices)

AND

<i>PAPER TOWNS</i>			
No.	TEXTUAL EVIDENCE	CODE	
		HER	ACT
1	<u>Prologue</u>	V	
	<p>[One day, when they were nine, Quentin and Margo found a dead body. That night Margo goes to Quentin's room, since they lived across from one another, to talk about what happened.]</p> <p>" I think I maybe know why,' she finally said.</p> <p>'Why?'</p> <p><b>Maybe all the <u>strings</u> inside him <u>broke</u>, ' She said.</b></p> <p>...</p> <p><b>Margo always loved mysteries. And in everything that came afterward, I could never stop thinking that maybe she loved mysteries so much that she became one."</b> (Green, Paper Towns, 2012, p. 8)</p>		

(Table.2 - *Paper Towns*. For the complete version, consult the Appendices)

### 3.3.2 Implementing Barthes' *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code*

Ten quotes that contained the *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code* are chosen from each books. The ten quotes were chosen specifically because they contained the most important codes that contributed significantly to the plot of the story. After ten quotes from each book are chosen and put inside the tables, two of Barthes' codes on plotting are implemented to analyze the quotes from the two books further. These codes are *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code*. According to Felluga (2013), *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code* build "suspense" in a narrative. However, the elements of suspense does not always apply to detective novels. Both the *Paper Towns* and *Looking for Alaska* contain similar elements of suspense. Both girls, Margo and Alaska, are the mysteries that need to be solved and both girls influenced the changing of the main character's identity (Miles "Pudge" Halter and Quentin "Q" Jacobsen) in the two novels.

Before elaborating Barthes' two codes further, the five codes will be briefly introduced. There are Barthes' Five Codes on Plotting according to Felluga: *the hermeneutic code*, *the proairetic code*, *the semantic code*, *the symbolic code*, and *the cultural code*. The *hermeneutic code* (HER.) is the essence of the story that demands to be answered (Felluga, 2013) so if there are certain things that baffle the readers and leave them with questions in their minds, then it

indicated that this code plays a role in raising those questions. The *proairetic code* (ACT.) is the main element of the narrative that makes the reader hooked to the story, making them even more curious to discover what will happen next (Felluga, 2013). The *semantic code* (SEM.) adds meaning in the text that gives an implied or suggested idea (Felluga, 2013). The *symbolic code* (SYM.) has a role in giving a “deeper structural principle that organizes semantic meanings, usually by way of antitheses” (Felluga, 2013) meaning that this code can show the contrasting ideas inside the text. The *cultural code* (REF.) “designates any element in a narrative that refers to a science or a body of knowledge” (Felluga, 2013) which means that this code refers to our shared knowledge about the way the world works.

Two types of codes have been chosen specifically for this research. Those two codes are *Hermeneutic Code* (HER.) and *Proairetic Code* (ACT.). The role of *hermeneutic code* is to tie the beginning to the end of the story by raising questions in readers’ mind and the role of the *proairetic code* is to engage the readers to the story. There are two reasons why the two codes are chosen. First, both *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code* give suspense to the story (Felluga, 2013). The two codes give suspense by raising questions in readers’ minds and engaging the reader to the story, carrying the reader to the final conclusion of the story. Therefore it fits with the element of mystery in both *Paper Towns* and *Looking for Alaska*. Second, both codes also deal with causality so it can help to analyze the significance the two books’ use of the phases as well as the repetitions of words and phrases that indicated one’s beginning and one’s ending in the portrayal of journey.

The quotes, which are the textual evidence, are then gathered and organized into chronological order inside a table for the purpose of finding the pattern inside the two books. By finding the pattern, which consisted of words and phrases continuously repeated in the books' plot, the construction of the change in the main characters’ identity can be explicitly identified.

### 3.4 Data and Source of Data

The data consist of textual evidence which is in the form of quotes taken from the two books, *Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns*. When putting the events of the story together, the research uses the plot of the stories: "Plot is a sequence of narrated events... related by causation... Discussion of plot can emphasize narrative's complicated relations with the time (chronology), order (and disorder), and generic convention." (Keen, 2003, p. 23) and Narratology is employed at this point.

The source of data is the two books, specifically the ten quotes: from *Looking for Alaska*, the codes that indicated Alaska's death and the reason of her death and from *Paper Towns*, the codes that indicated the clues of Margos' whereabouts and the her reason for leaving. The quotes from Green's two books (*Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns*) are compared and contrasted to see the differences and similarities of the codes used inside the quotes. These codes are identified using Barthe's *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code*.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

Since the two novels, *Looking for Alaska* and *Paper Towns*, shared many similarities as well as differences therefore an in depth analysis is needed. The data are analyzed using Barthes' *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code*. The differences and similarities are compared and contrasted in order to find the portrayal of journey used in the two books. The patterns are indicated using Barthes' codes on plotting. The two codes are given as option to indicate the different characteristic of the quotes and the code inside the quotes, to see whether the quote impose questions in the reader's mind (HER as *Hermeneutic Code*) or give the reader something to look forward to (ACT as *Proairetic Code*). Other than the change of the identity of the main characters, the codes also help to see the construction of the narrative.

The data are analyzed using the *Hermeneutic Code* and *Proairetic Code*. The analysis of the codes inside the two books, *Looking for Alaska* and *Paper*

*Towns*, revealed that the similarities and the differences in the portrayals of the journey construct the main character's identity by showing how the journey taken contributed the changing of their identity. Similarities and differences of the two books' portrayals of journey are analyzed by looking at the components of the books such as the division of the two books and the use of the codes in the plot of the two books.