

A QUEST FOR MEANING OF LIFE IN MITCH ALBOM'S THE FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN

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Abstract. Artikel ini melaporkan tentang penelitian karya sastra yang bertemakan pencarian akan makna kehidupan sebagaimana dinyatakan dalam novel karya Mitch Albom yang berjudul *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini didasarkan atas konsep teoretis tentang makna kehidupan yang dikemukakan oleh Frankl (1963) yang berpendapat bahwa manusia menemukan makna kehidupan ketika ia memiliki kesadaran, kepekaan dan tanggungjawab atas kehidupan. Frankl juga mengajukan tiga aspek nilai (value) utama dalam makna kehidupan: nilai kreatif (*creative value*), nilai pengalaman (*experience value*) dan nilai sikap (*attitudinal value*). Penelitian ini memusatkan pada analisis plot novel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ketiga aspek nilai makna kehidupan tampak dalam struktur plot novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memperkaya pengetahuan akan aspek nilai makna kehidupan manusia seperti yang digambarkan dalam novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, dan kekayaan khasanah filosofis karya sastra pada umumnya.

KEYWORDS. Thematic analysis, experiential, attitudinal and creative life values

INTRODUCTION

The search for meaningful life and meaningful will has been a prime motivation of man's life. The will to be meaningful is prime motivation to man's life (Bastaman, 1996:154). It makes man work enthusiastically and creatively. It also makes man endure pains and sufferings. But sometimes man cannot restrain the problem and decides to commit suicide. It is because man cannot find a reason to live. He becomes bored, depressed, distressed, and even desperate. This condition is called existential vacuum and it can be a start of man's quest for meaning of life. This problem usually occurs during the crises of pensioner and aging people. In this period of life, one may not know what to do with his newly acquired free time. As man is different in character, man is different too in his capacity to find the meaning of his life. According to Frankl (1963:176), man discovers the meaning of life when he has awareness, consciousness and responsibility of life. It can be discovered by creative value, experiential value and attitudinal value. In creative value man gives something for life, while in experiential value, man receives something from life and gets deep

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understanding of it. Attitudinal value means either to shape fate or to take such an attitude towards fate. There is achievement in suffering.

The search for life meaning has been one of prominent topics in literary works. As a portrayal of human's real life, a great number of literary works explore man's search for meaningful life in its various aspects. The exploration may be inward in the character's journey of mind and thinking, which is then reflected in his or her outward behaviour and attitude towards his or her surroundings.

The purpose of this study is to explore the search for life meaning as presented in literary works. For the purpose of the study, one of Mitch Albom's novels entitled *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is chosen as the subject of the study. This novel is selected because it presents the experience of life of an old man on earth and in heaven. All of his experiences make him question the meaning of life. He determines to accept all experiences or destiny living on earth without realizing how precious he is. His acceptance is reflected through his behavior, thoughts and feelings. He does not know why he lives and what he lives for. When he is in heaven he discovers that heaven is a place in which he can see his life on earth. Besides, there has been no similar study on the novel.

The novel tells about Eddie, a veteran working at Ruby Piers. When he was a child, he thought that he was rejected and unloved by his father. His living on earth has led him to face some unavoidable situations such as he has been shot in war, he has lost his beloved wife in terrible disease and accident, and he has been trapped working at Ruby Pier. All that tragedies have made him pessimistic in facing his life. He does not realize his meaning of life until his death. He died at Ruby Pier after attempting to save a child. During his living on earth, Eddy has no idea about living in Heaven. In heaven, he can breathe, speak, feel, and think like he lives on earth. He interacts with the five people he meets in heaven. All of them show him the value of his life on earth.

The present study formulates the problem as follows: How does Eddie learn the meaning of his life on earth in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*? The results of the study is expected to give more insights and enrichment to the nature of literary works as a portrayal of real life and to the understanding of human being's meaningful values in life.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Approaches to literature may be done in different aspects. According to M.H. Abrams in his book *The Mirror and The Lamp* (1953: 26), to analyze a novel, we might apply the objective theory. This objective theory regards that the analysis of a novel could be achieved through its elements. Those elements consist of character, plot, setting, theme, point of view, and style that give enough to interpret a novel. Indeed, we may accurately say that in fiction or story there are always some element of control that shape the actions of the author in writing his literary works (Robert and Jacobs, 1986:77). In other words, Robert and Jacobs state that there are some elements which are more important than the others. Thus character, plot and theme may be dominating elements in a novel.

In fiction we may expect characters from every area of life. They also share the same human capacities for happiness, sorrow, disappointment and conflicts as in our life. We should be able to become interested in the plights of characters and how they try to overcome the problem around them. It is obvious that character, plot and theme support each other in describing Eddy's character in questioning the meaning of life.

Discussion on aspects of meaning of life may be traced back to the human history. Frankl (1963) stated that at the beginning of human history, man lost some of the basic animal instincts in which an animal's behavior is embedded and by which it is secured (Frankl, 1963: 168). It means that no instinct tells him what he has to do, and no tradition tells him what he ought to do, so he will not know what he wants to do. He feels apathy, anxiety, boredom, or despair. This phenomenon is called existential vacuum. Each situation represents a challenge to man and presents a problem for him to solve. A quest of why I live and what I live for may actually be reversed. Man should not ask what the meaning of his life is but rather must recognize that it is he who is asked. In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life.

According to Bastaman (1996:194), the characteristics meaning of life are personal, temporal, and unique. It means the value of meaning of life is different from one man to another man. What is one man assume in this time, might not same the other person at single moment and might change one time to another time. Besides the characteristic above, there is specific and concrete characteristic. It means the meaning of life not only attach to ideology purpose, the highest academic achievement or muse of creatively philosophy but also in daily experience. And it gives direction for the activity done. The meaning of life is challenging and inviting man to fulfill. So, the characteristic meaning of life of one man to another man is unique, specific, and temporal.

According to Frankl (1963:176), man can discover meaning of life by doing a deed, experiential value and suffering value.

1. Doing a deed (creative value)

Man discovered meaning of life by doing a deed (Frankl 1963:176). It means that man is able to work enthusiastically, creatively and responsibly. Actually, works is one way to develop and find the meaning of life. The meaning of life cannot be found in occupation but the attitude and the way he works to attain his best result. He dedicates his ability to give the best quality for his work. He also does a unique task seriously. Creative value helps people to love and to be diligent in his job. Work usually represents the area in which the individual's uniqueness stands in relation to society, thus acquires meaning and value. In other words the meaning and value attached to person's work is a contribution to society. Man must be responsible for his unique task. Man is a responsible creature and must actualize the potential of his life. Self-actualization is not one way to find meaning. It is only side effect of self transcendence. Self transcendence is man's ability to realize and evaluate some experience in the past and continues that project in the future. It makes man fulfilled meaning of life.

2. *Experiential value*

Experiential values imply that man are convinced of and comprehend truth, virtues, ecstatic, creed, ideology, fairness and other value (Bastaman, 1996:195). This value is different from creative value. In creative value man gives something for life, but in experiential value, man receives something from life and gets deep understanding of it. For example man enjoyed beautiful view in a mountain, man feels peacefulness while increasing his faith in God, or two adult are in love. He tries to convince all value. He experiences in faith, joy and love develop meaning of life. Love does not make one blind but seeing-able to see value. It helps man become as the lover sees him. He enables the beloved person to actualize his potentialities (Frankl, 1963:137). He is aware of what he can be and of what he should become. Love is stronger than death (Frankl, 1973:137). It means the existence of the beloved may be annihilated by death, but his essence cannot be touched by death. His unique being is something timeless. While man realizes creative value, he fulfilled of devoted love; in loving memory he is realize experiential value. By loving and loved, man feels happiness, satisfaction, peacefulness and meaningful life.

3. *Suffering (attitudinal value)*

Man cannot predict his future. Suffering and trouble belong to life as much as birth and death. Whenever he is confronted with inescapable, unavoidable situation, or an incurable disease, just then is one given a last chance to actualize the highest value, the meaning of suffering (Frankl, 1963:178). When man gets trouble and suffering, he still can find meaning in his suffering. Suffering is actualized wherever man is faced with something unalterable, something imposed by destiny (Frankl, 1973:05). Whenever a person finds him self confronted by a destiny toward which he can act only by acceptance. The way in which he accepts is the measure of his human fulfillment. In this value, man can change his attitude but not the situation. According to Hebbel in Frankl (1973:113), life is not anything but it is the opportunity for something. It means either to shape fate or to take such an attitude towards fate, there is achievement in suffering. Life can receive meaning not only as the result of death (the man who is hero), but in the very process of death. The process of death is the opportunities attain the highest meaning in suffering. For example man get meaning in sacrifice when he realizes that sacrifice is the opportunity to passing something not really losing something.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative research. Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretative (Creswell, 2003:128). It means that the writers make an interpretation of the data. The source of the data is from Mitch Albom's novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. The data that emerge from a qualitative study are descriptive (Creswell, 2003:199). Since the data are reported in words rather than in numbers, the data are analyzed by using evidences in the form of quotation taken from the novel itself and other references. Other references are also used such as dictionary, internet, some books about literature and psychology and material printed relating to Mitch

Albom's work. Some steps are taken by the writers: first, collecting the data, and then classifying and evaluating. After that, they are organized and developed. The next step is describing them and finally making interpretation or drawing conclusion about them.

In conducting the study, the writers use intrinsic approach. Intrinsic approach is an approach used to analyze literary work from the inside elements such as point of view, character, theme, style, setting and plot (Perrine, 1996:85-87) since this research is based on theme, the discussion is limited on character as the character is a person who act and react according to the theme. The other elements are also used to help the writer in building the character's personality because all elements of literature are interrelated. Character is a descriptive sketch of a personage who typifies some definite quality; the person is described not as an individualized personality but as an example of some vice or virtue or type, in all of it is character, which appears imaginary person (Holman,1978:90). Furthermore, character is used not to refer to a person in a literary work but to what he is like. It generally refers to his whole nature-his personality, his attitude toward life, his spiritual qualities, his intelligence, even his physical build, as well as his moral attitude (Potter,1967: 3). In describing character development, the plot is applied. It is important because each stage of plot contains all of elements that formed a fiction. Each sequence of event performs characters with his characteristic and setting as a place shows a certain atmosphere. Therefore, when we get deep understanding of plot, we also get deep understanding of character, characterization and setting. Plot consists of characters performing action in incidents that comprise a single, whole and complete action (Holman,1992:361). This relation involves conflict between opposing forces. Without conflict plot hardly exists.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, the main character is Eddie, an old man who lives on earth and in heaven. During his living on earth, he undergoes his life only by accepting his destiny. He never knows what he lives for and why he lives. His quest for meaning of life on earth is reflected in heaven too. In heaven, he can breathe, feel, and interact like on earth. When he thinks his life is wasteful like his death, he never knows that heaven is a chance to find and learn meaning of life.

In this study, the quest for meaning of life is analysis based on plot. It means the investigation is focused on the cause and effect and series of event in Eddie's life that expose Eddie's creative value, Eddie's experiential value, and Eddie's attitudinal value. Eddie's character is also analyzed. The analysis does not search whether Eddie is a round or flat character, rather than Eddie's whole nature-his personality, his attitude toward life, his spiritual qualities, his physical build, and his moral attitude. The discussion is divided into three parts, namely Eddie's Creative Value, Eddie's Attitudinal Value, and Eddie's Experiential Value.

1. Eddie's Creative Value

Eddie comes from a poor family. He never enjoys material satisfaction since he was a child. His father was jobless until Mickey Shea helped him to get a job at Ruby

Pier. When Eddie was born, it was Mickey who lend his parents little money he has, to help pay for extra mouth to feed. Eddie was born in a small hospital 'of the poorest sections of the city.' Eddie has grown up with tenderness of his mother and discipline of his father.

Eddie is described as grizzled war veteran working at Ruby Pier. He is described as a hard worker 'his face is broad and craggy from the sun.' he is also a neat person who always cleans his kitchen, as shown in the following quote:

"Wow.." Dominguez said, upon opening the door and entering the kitchen."Pretty tidy for an old guy" The sink was clean..."

The way Eddie manages his life is admired by Dominguez. He can be a model of responsible man for Dominguez. During his life, Eddie often celebrates his birthday with his family. At his old age, 83years old, Eddie loses nearly every one he has cared about. He lives alone in an apartment near Ruby Pier since his father, his mother, his brother-Joe and his wife-Marguerite died. This situation makes him feel lonely.

"At work, he straps himself on a roller coaster curve, high and alone like a mountain climber. At night he watches TV in apartment " (Albom,195).

Being alone, Eddy attempts to enjoy his commonness of life. He thinks that his life is so common. There is nothing to be proud of. Sometimes, he goes to the shop, checks the maintenance reports, or goes to the cemetery to balance his commonness of life. This situation makes him do nothing in order to face and accept his destiny. He works at Ruby Pier in his remnant life.

Eddie's creative value can be seen from his action. First, he joins the war as a volunteer. Eddie gives the best quality for his work. He shows his readiness to serve his country.

Since he'd never fired an actual rifle, Eddie began to practice at the shooting arcade at Ruby Pier" (Albom,60).

As a maintenance clerk, he only faces machine. But in war, he has faced life and death. He thinks that war is his call to manhood. His pleasure about reading comic heroes influences him to defend his country. During war, Eddie has already learned anything except becomes a prisoner.

Being captured by the enemy during the war is a new experience for him. One night on Philippine island, Eddie and his friends are captured and in captivity for a half year. They accept it as their destiny. Another experience he got from the war is the death of his friend, shot by the captor. All of these experiences make him think how to survive. Eddie thinks that he has to find a way to be free from the guard. He thinks he has to use his potentiality to survive. Here Eddie experiences self-transcendence. Eddie uses the opportunities to escape from the captivity area. He gets an idea after he has evaluated his experiences at Ruby Pier. He uses his ability to juggle. He has new spirit and goes beyond that situation.

Self-transcendence has an effect for a man to actualize the potential of his life. Eddie actualizes himself by juggling since he is at seven years old. He has spirit to live since he has a clear vision. He becomes optimistic in his life. He uses juggling to deceive the captors. He is not an egoistic person because he also thinks that he is responsible to save his friends' life. His promises to Marguerite and his anger on Rabozzo's death make him overcome all of his suffering. He fights to escape. As a responsible creature, Eddie attempts to release himself and friends by juggling. Away that no one can do as well as Eddie.

Eddy dedicates his ability to give the best quality for his country. At that moment, he does it enthusiastically and creatively. For his loyalty, he wins a medal. A medal from a war shows his creative value.

Being a man is being responsible, so is Eddie. After war, he and Marguerite live in a new apartment. Other creative values can be seen when Eddie gets a job as a cab driver. As a cab driver, he is a responsible for his job even though he also works as maintenance clerk at Ruby Pier when his father gets sick. After his father's death, Eddie accepts working at Ruby Pier with the consideration of his mother health. It is because his mother lives in a daze. Even though he never expects that the rest of his life is spent to maintain carts, he still works enthusiastically. Like his father, Eddie is a discipline person.

He does his job with responsibility. He never complains about continuing his father's job, even though he does not like the job. He does his job to keep his mother and his wife alive. He begins as a maintenance clerk; furthermore, he becomes head maintenance at Ruby Pier. He is diligent man to his job and dedicates his life to keep all rides safe for all visitors. Every afternoon, he walks around the park, checking on each attraction. Eddie's creative value can be seen from his creativity. He also works creatively because he often entertains the visitor especially children. Every child who visits Ruby Pier loves Eddie. Eddie knows how to make children happy. He is a kind man who makes toys from pipe cleaners for children. He is also a generous man who gives present to Domiguez or help Noel get a job at Ruby Pier.

Unlike joining the war, working at Ruby Pier Eddie always thinks that his life is boring. He faces machine day by day. He thinks that there is nothing to be proud of working at Ruby Pier. After finishing his work, Eddie spends the rest of his time with Marguerite. Sometimes he spends his time with Noel in racetrack. He loses direction of his life because he does not know what he wants to do in his elderly age. Even though he feels bored and has no motivation to live, he is still responsible for keeping the visitors safe.

One of the times, Eddie is visited by a young man named Nicky. He began to drive and is still not comfortable carrying key. He removes the single car key and puts it in his jacket pocket. For the next hour he and his friends ride all the fastest rides: The Flying Falcon, the Splashdown, Freddy's Free Fall, the Ghoster Coaster, unfortunately the key is gone. Freddy's Free Fall is going to fall. The pulley is wedged by a small object-a car key. Willy and Domiguez can save the visitors. No one in the rides gets injured but Eddie dies when he tries to save a child from falling from Freddy's Free Fall.

During his life on earth, Eddie dedicates his life to give the best quality for his work. This creative value helps him to involve his work and his responsibility. All of his life, Eddie never finds the meaning of life. This tragedy makes him quest for the meaning of life. He is unaware of his existence at Ruby Pier or on earth. He always wants to know whether he saves a child or not.

In heaven, "did I save her" is Eddie's prime question. It also becomes his answer on his question for meaning of life. From the sentence "I *couldn't* have pushed her. I felt her *hands*", it can be said he only lives without realizing about his action. The way he saves the child is actually his creative value. His creative value is shown when he is responsible for keeping the visitors safely rides carts. In this case, save a little girl's life.

Meaning of life is not pulled but pushed to fulfill. Eddie has desire to find the truth about little girl that he save. His motivation pushes him to find out what he lives for. Eddie attempts to fulfill his meaning of life by finding out the lesson from the five people who he meets in heaven. Tala, one of the five people he meets in heaven, teaches the meaning of his existence at Ruby Pier. She is a girl who disturbs Eddie at night. Eddie is always anxious when he dreams about her. She makes him realizes that keeping the rides safe for visitor especially children means everything. His creative value can be seen from his action. Making children safe and happy is the aim of his existence at Ruby Pier.

Man is sometimes unconscious about what he has done. He thinks that what he did is useless. He never realizes that his activity save children's life. Being a man is being conscious. Eddie needs Tala to make him realizes the creative value of his life. Since he meets Tala in heaven, he finds the meaning of his life on earth.

2. Eddie's Experiential Value

The meaningfulness of Eddie's existence on earth is based upon his uniqueness. In creative value, Eddie is measured from his activity. In experiential value, Eddie is passive in receiving the world like nature, love, faith, and peace. Eddie's experiential value can be seen from his action without responding actively. First, Eddie has accepted his father's neglect and violence when he was a child. He never got his father's attention and receives his father's smack if his father's bottle has been emptied. Eddie has accepted all of it as if he deserved it when he lives on earth. Eddie always accepts his father's treatment without complaining. He also thinks that his father is selfish and does not care of his family but Ruby whom he meet in heaven, open his eyes on the fact about his father. When his father was dying, he prepared to get forgiveness from Eddie. His father's love is never realized by Eddie. His father gets pneumonia when he defends his mother after Mickey Shea attempts to rape her. At that time his father wants to kill Mickey Shea but at the same time he also remembers what Mickey has done to his family. After the fight, Mickey plunges into the sea, Eddy's father could let Mickey die for what he hasdone but his father attempts to save him. All night long, his father has swum to save him. Eddie never imagines that actually his father is a hero. His father's love for his family is the reason that he endures his suffers alone. Eddie attempts to redeem it by releasing his forgiveness to his father while he is in heaven.

Eddie thinks that working as the head maintenance at Ruby is a curse. He blames his father about it. Because of him, he has to continue his father's job when his father has died. Eddie's acceptance is his experiential value. Eddie receives tiresome work his father had left behind. He thinks that he is trapped and lost his freedom. He works as head maintenance as if he is under compulsion. He tries to be satisfied and enjoy it. Eddie never complains when he does this job.

During his life on earth, Eddie feels happy even though he has to face routine in his life. It is because Marguerite always gives him attention and love. She is a beautiful and good wife. She always supports Eddie when he is in war or working at Ruby Pier. She loves Eddie so bad, so does Eddie. Both of them always spend time together a long the promenade near Ruby Pier.

Eddie's experiential value can also be seen from his deep understanding about love. He receives Marguerite's love that emerge happiness, peacefulness and also satisfaction. Even though, Eddie is going to the war in which he has risks his life, both he and Marguerite have a hope to meet again. Man who has a reason to live always restrains suffering. They are never doubt about the strength of their love.

When Eddie is young, he liked collecting some card from baseball player. He idolized many heroes character in his comic and baseball player. He builds himself to be a hero as his idol. He believes if he is a hero his life will have meaning. This belief influences him to join the war courageously.

His belief pushes him to fulfillment. He is almost convinced that no other way to be meaningful except become a hero. Furthermore, he thinks that to win the war is one way of becoming a hero. Unfortunately, he has to retreat from the war because of the wound in his left knee. His experiential value about his belief gives happiness even though he is not a hero.

Most of man think of heaven as a paradise garden where laze in rivers and mountain. But heaven in which Eddie lives in is Ruby Pier. He cannot imagine that heaven is a place where he tries to get away. Eddie's experiential value can be seen from his belief. He is convinced that heaven is a place he meets his beloved family. He is sure that heaven is some kind of resting place. In heaven after his death leads him to meet freak man named The Blue Man. The Blue Man is a circus attraction at Ruby Pier. Actually, Eddie does not acquaint with him and ridiculous about heaven. In heaven, he is not only talking less but also listen more. The Blue Man explains heaven is a place he is searching for peace.

“Fairness does not govern life and death. If it did, no good person would ever die young... But there is a balance at all” (Albom, 50).

Eddie learns all his beloved family members have died for balancing of life. One of tragic triads of human existence is death which is part of life. He realizes that his mother, brother, father, friends, captain especially Marguerite were died not because of fairness but of balancing of life.

Though Blue Man is a stranger, he is kind to Eddie. He told him the meaning of life on earth and in heaven. It makes him learn that stranger is like family. They deserve, love and care like family. Love and kindness for the strangers are Eddie's

experiential value which he receives from The Blue Man. This value is convinced by Eddie's father when he interlaced with Blue Man on earth. Eddie realizes how to make his father proud of him. Eddie feels guilty when he thinks that Blue Man death is caused by him. His meeting with the blue man in heaven gives him a new understanding about his life on earth and what he has done but he still thinks that his life on earth is meaningless because he is still haunted by the question "did I save her?"

Captain is the second person who meets him in heaven. Now he finds that heaven is a grave of his commander. It makes him confused what is called heaven if he only sees the same place on earth "I still don't know why I'm here. I had nothing life, see?"

Working and living in the same place for along time makes man feels bored. Boredom is an indication that a man is trapped and has not energy to be out of that condition. He thinks his life is useless; his life has not meaning at all. This situation makes a long sought of his existence on earth. As the second person, Captain teaches Eddie about sacrifice. Sacrifice is part of man's life. Man ever has experiences about it. But Eddie is angry about his sacrifices. He is never aware that his wound forms a sacrifice. He is angry to his commander shooting his leg. In fact, his captain admits it too. Eddie has misunderstood his captain. He does not know that he is alive because of his captain's sacrifice. His captain died when he opened the gate to pick his soldier including Eddie to be out of the captivity area.

The captain teaches Eddy that man often thinks if he sacrifices something precious actually he is not really losing it. He just passes it on to someone else so does Eddie. Eddie's experiential value can be seen from his acceptance of his wound. He suffers it without responding actively when he is on earth. Finally, Eddie receives a value of sacrifice from his captain. His vision is clear and then he gets a deep understanding about sacrifice. Even though he knows the cause of his live, he still questions for what he live for.

The third person Eddie meet is Ruby. Ruby is the owner of Ruby Pier where Eddie works. Eddie is still confused why he is still in heaven whereas Blue Man and Captain are disappear. He desperate because he cannot counter his mother, brother, Noel even Marguerite immediately. It is because of his belief that they will meet in the Kingdom of Heaven. This situation makes him thinks that earth is the better place than heaven. In heaven, he feels either anxiety or restlessness.

Peacefulness is never experienced by Eddie during his life on earth. All things he feels on earth are interlace in heaven. It makes him angry and remembers what his father has done in his life. He tells the agitation of his father to Ruby. Eddie keeps his anger to his father. He blames his father that he has not given peace. He cannot recognize who his father is. Ruby explains about his father condition that Eddie never knows. His father has a good relationship with Mickey Shea. Mickey feels desperate and lonely because he has been fired. He tries to rape his mother. But he still helps Mickey from being drowned.

Man is never driven to moral behavior; in each instance he decides to behave morally. Eddie's father is unlike the person Eddie's thinks that is a drunken. His father shows that he is a loyal person. His father takes an old friendship seriously. It is

Mickey who lends his father little money. His father also shows that his life has meaning for himself and other man. His father becomes a hero for Mickey and Mickey never forgives himself for what has happened and died, a few years later.

Both Eddie's father and Mickey, according to Ruby, have feeling of guilty and regret. Mickey has that feeling when he saw Eddie's father saves him. Eddie's father has that feeling when he has not opportunities to confess his neglect. Sometimes man dies with heroic death or dies for nothing except keep his guilt and regret. Actually, his father wants to beg forgiveness. Ruby also gives lesson to Eddie about forgiveness. Her lesson makes him realize what he lives for. He lives in heaven for forgiving his father because he does not know who his father is. He learns that forgiveness is one of the actions to get peace. Eddie's experiential value can be seen from his action and receive Ruby's lesson.

The Fourth person he meets is Marguerite. Heaven where he met her is a wedding place around the world. Marguerite also shows his experiential value such as love. Love is like rain that can nourish from above with a soaking joy. But sometimes, under the angry heart, love dries on the surface. Sometimes it can make sad and happy. Love is an intentional act. Man finds love if his beloved is always together. But sometimes man finds love only in his memory. It depends on how man recognizes the uniqueness.

The uniqueness means man is able to see the beloved he wants to see. The uniqueness makes love never irreplaceable. It occurs when Eddie is alone on earth but he can touch, dance, sing, and talks. Eddie's experiential value can be seen from his loved in whom he has his memory and contemplation as it is shown in the following quotation:

“Lost love is still love, Eddie. It takes a different form, that's all... Memory becomes your partner. You nurture it. You hold it. You dance with it. Life has to end,” she said. Love doesn't.” (Albom, 184).

From the statement above we can say that love is more than an emotional condition; love is eternal. That is why love can outlast the death of the beloved; in that sense we can understand why love is stronger than death. Love can emerge death. He/she still feel loved though the beloved person died. Eddie feels lonely when he cannot realize Marguerite is still alive in his heart and memory. Love can exist in the lover's heart until he/she died. Eddie has met four persons teaching him and helping him to see his life on earth.

Eddie's encounter with Marguerite is increasing his faith in God. It means Eddie admits his sin and knows who is God. Eddie's experiential value can be found as it in the quotation below:

At one point, he asked his wife if God knew was here. She smiled and said, “Of course,” even when Eddie admitted that some of his life he'd spent hiding from God, and the rest of the time he thought he went unnoticed (Albom,182).

The quotation above shows that Eddie does not realize that during his life on earth. He still keeps noticing by God. His relationship with God influences him to get meaning of his existence. If he does not hide from God, he knows that man is created for an aim. So he can also responsible to his life and get meaning of his existence in his life.

The fifth person he meets in heaven is Tala, a little girl who is burned by Eddie when he escapes from prison in Philippine. She does not give Eddie a lesson, but she answers Eddie's question. Eddie is still in despair about his life. He thinks that his life is meaningless. It is because he has not reason to live and to whom he understands himself to be responsible.

Eddie does still not realize what he lives for. Then Tala gives him explanation about the reason why Eddie lives. Eddie's life is for children happiness, through he himself has no child and his childhood, as he always think, is neglected by his father. By working at Pier he gives children happiness. Eddie's life is for children.

Eddie works on earth to keep children safe. By examining all carts, he often shows his spiritual qualities for children. Eddie's aspiration for a meaningful existence is showed by making some toys for them. He loves them and has new understanding that he can treat children well. He ever realizes that he can treat children when he is in heaven. He treats child especially Tala very well even though he has not child as it states below:

"You wash me," she said again, holding out the stone. Eddie dragged himself into the river. He took the stone. His finger trembled." I don't know how..." He mumbled, barely audible.

"I never had children..

"She raised her charred hand and Eddie gripped it gently and slowly rubbed the stone along her forearm, until the scars began to loosen (Albom,202).

Tala knows how to make Eddie realizes his meaningful life. Tala shows that he can treat as well as any other father can, eventhough he has not a child to wash. She makes Eddie's self-insight cleared that his life has meaning. Eventhough his life has not meaning for himself, his life has deep meaning for Tala and another children. Though Tala has explained everything, Eddie still has the question whether he saves a little girl. It is shown from the following quotation:

"Did I save her? Did I pull her out of the way?" Tala shook her head. "No pull..." "Push," Tala said He looked up. "Push?" "Push her legs. No pull. You push. Big thing fall. You keep her safe" (Albom204-205).

From the statement above it can be assumed that meaning of life is not pull but push to fulfill. Eddie is active because he has prime motivation in which pushes him to save her. It also means that meaning of life as if challenging and inviting someone to fulfill. Eddie has fulfilled the meaning of life by doing a deed. Eddie's experiential value can be seen from his activity to make the children save and happy. This value is the reason why he lives for and traps working at Ruby Pier.

3. Eddie's Attitudinal Value

Eddie faces many problems in his life and it makes him think that his life is meaningless. Eddie's childhood is neglected by his father. He is rarely held by his father. He is grabbed by the arm, less with love than with annoyance. Eddie's mother handed out the tenderness, his father there for the discipline. Youth is like pristine glass, followed it handlers. It also occurs in Eddie's youth. He is formed in violence by his father as it is shown in the following quotation:

“The hands on Eddie's childhood glass then were hard and calloused and red with anger, and he went through his younger years whacked, lashed and beaten. This was the second damage done, the one after neglected. The damaged of violence” (Albom, 111).

Eddie has grown up with anger to his father. His father tries to repair their relationship. His father's efforts show his support and proud of when he plays baseball and win in alley fight. Eddie's attitudinal value can be seen from a manner in which Eddie faces unalterable situation or something imposes by destiny. Relation between parents and sons is the same as the ground, which fetters him by its gravity, but without which walking would be impossible. Son cannot choose who his parent is, so do parents. He can only accept one to another even though it is worst behavior of his son or his parents. Eddie's father is disappointed to him about Eddie's depression after war. His depression is caused by his wound in his left knee as he joins the war.

Eddie is in despair after he returns from the hospital. He becomes an introvert man. Day by day, Eddie spends hours staring out the kitchen window, rubbing his bad knee. To his father it was a kind of weakness, so his father shows his disappointment by forcing Eddie to get a job as it is states:

The old man wobbling, but he came toward Eddie and pushed him.” Get up and get a job! Get up and get a job!
Get up...andGET A JOB” Eddie rose to his elbows....
He reeled back to throw a punch, but Eddie moved on instinct and grabbed his father's arm mid-swing (Albom,114).

The statement above shows that Eddie's manner to face that situation is self-defense. The first time he has ever done anything beside receiving a beating as if he deserves it. Man is never driven to moral behavior; in each instance he decides to behave morally. That situation makes both of them never spoke again. Eddie is also disappointed to his father neglects. His father is always silent when Eddie moves into his own apartment, took a cab-driving car. His father is silent when Eddie's wedding and came to visit his mother. When his father is sick and still silent, Eddie visits him. Eddie tries to accept him.

When his father is in hospital, Eddie substitutes his father's job by working at Ruby Pier as maintenance clerk. An unavoidable situation that he thinks he is trap in that job for the whole of his life when his father has already died. He is really disappointed to his father about his condition as it is shown the following quotation:

“Like most workingmen’s sons, Eddie had envisioned for his father a heroic death to counter the commonness of his life. There was nothing heroic about a drunken stupor by the beach” (Albom, 134).

The statement above shows that Eddie never attains something precious in his life. His thinks of “the commonness of his life” can be assumed his meaningless life. He thinks that his routine activity in Ruby Pier is meaningless. Eddie feels bored because he is trap in his routine work. All day long, he faces machine, keep the rides safe, and no one thinks his job is something to be worthy. No one is happy to be maintenance clerk.

Sometimes Eddie entertains himself by looking some happy moments he spends with his customer especially children. However, he still feels despair while he does not have reason to continue his job. No body is to be responsible for. He loses his way how to live, consequently, his life becomes existential vacuum. He has no self-insight which makes him realize to fix the condition and to be out of desperation and loneliness courageously. This condition influences his view of life. Being a man is not always a success without failure. Each man ever experiences failure, guilt, sin, pain, suffer even death. It also occurs in Eddie’s life. Sometimes, this situation makes man pessimistic. In contrast, Eddie is never pessimistic when he was young.

Other Eddie’s attitudinal value can be seen from his reaction out of his pessimistic, when he is failed to continue his study in engineering after he finished senior high. He cannot continue his education because of his country enters to the war and becomes a volunteer. He wants to defend his country than traps in father’s job. He thinks war is his call to manhood. Before he goes to war, he spends the singular moment with Marguerite. During the war, Eddie learns many things except how to become a prisoner. His life has changed when he becomes a prisoner in Philippine. He feels despair as it is shown in the following quotation:

“A plane roared in the distance, filling Eddie with a sudden, sickening wave of despair. It is the inner torture of every capture soldier... if Eddie could only jump up, he could fly away from this mistake” (Albom, 69).

The statement above shows that Eddie has experienced an existential vacuum. He thinks there is no future. He did not know the short distance to be free. He feels regret to join this war. He and the others soldiers are forced to strip coal even though they are sick, eat rice and salt once a day, sleep on burlap sacks with straw. This situation is a pressure to his mental condition. Sometimes when he cannot suppress his anger, he clenches his fist and slaps into his palm like baseball player. Eddie also loses his will to live. He has not reason to live as it is stated below:

“I lost myself,” he said.

“No,” his wife said.

“Yes,” he whispered, and said nothing else (Albom, 181).

Here, Eddie loses his motivation to live. He does not know what he ought to do and he does not know what he wants to do. He feels apathy and anxiety. This condition makes him regrets about that war.

The other Eddie's attitudinal value can be seen from his manner to face unexpected situation. He sees a child cross over the burning barn. He tries to save that child, but his leg is shot. This situation makes his life changes. He is anxious when he dreams about that situation. His career ends and he sends back to his country. Nothing is going to be proud of that war. His suffering makes him despair and depression as it states below:

“The darkness of combat had left Eddie changed. He rarely spoke to Marguerite. He spent hours staring out window...but his father grew more agitated each day. He didn't understand depression. To him it was weakness.”(Albom, 113).

His suffering makes him becomes an introvert man. He rarely speaks even to his wife. He feels desperate about weakness and nightmare about war in Philippine. It worsens when his father does not care about his condition. Moreover, his father is disappointed to him. Their relationship breaks up. Both of them do not want to repair it.

Another Eddie's attitude value can be seen from his reaction of Marguerite's death. Eddie is confronted with the question of life since he cannot understand why Marguerite dies earlier. He thinks life is not fair by taking his wife earlier than him. Marguerite's death badly affects his life. He feels guilty when he leaves her in war. Bet the horses in race track, Marguerite gets accident when she drives to the racetrack. They are delay of their plan to adoption. He cannot dance and enjoy the beach view together. He never feels peacefulness when both of them celebrate Eddie's birthday. He has no desires to speak everything and look her face. He really feels lonely as it is shown in the quotation follows:

“It is never hard to act ordinary if you feel ordinary, and the paleness of surrender becomes the color of Eddie's day” (Albom, 195).

Eddie's life has no spirit to confront again but acceptance of unavoidable situation. If man cannot change the situation, he is only able to change his attitude. Eddie continues his routine work at Ruby Pier and accepts his life as his destiny.

Man hopes to have a child in his/her family. He/she thinks that family without children is not complete. Eddie also confronts to destiny, when he does not have child. He and his wife attempts to get children by adoption as it is stated below:

In time, husband and wife began talking again, and one night Eddie even spoke about adopting. Marguerite rubbed her forehead and said, “We're too old now” (Albom,175).

The quotation above shows that he never surrenders to get a child. He is still missing a child in his elderly age. Eddie is against life, but he still has not power to realize it. He

gets some problems in which he cannot adapt. Marguerite's health is one of the problems. They cancel to adopt a child. Eddie's attitudinal values can be found while he passed the years without children. His wound slowly heals and his companionship rises to fill the space they are saving for another.

Eddie's attitudinal value can be seen from his reaction when he faces his death in Ruby Pier's tragedy. Eddie is not only bewails this tragedy but also he feels sinful when he arrives in heaven. In heaven, he can breathe, feel, think and interact as he lives on earth. He meets the first person named The Blue Man. The Blue Man who works at Ruby Pier as circus attraction. The Blue Man's death is caused by heart attack influenced Eddie. At that time Eddie cross the road and The Blue Man almost hit him then he is collapse because of heart attack. His guilty feeling of The Blue Man's death is shown bellow:

"Please, Mister..." Eddie pleaded. "I didn't know. Believe me... God help me, I didn't know."

The Blue Man nodded. "You couldn't know. You were too young." "But now I gotta pay," he said.

"To pay?"

"For my sin. That's why I'm here, right? Justice?"

The Blue Man smiled. "No, Edward..." (Albom, 49)

The statement above shows that suffering means experiencing something unpleasant. The way Eddie blames himself is his reaction in that situation. Being a man is being conscious. He also has consciousness which gives him direction what he ought to do. Eddie attempts to redeem it but it's too late because The Blue Man has already died. He continues his journey in heaven and accepts his life as his destiny. Man's attitude about death is paradoxes. One side he realizes that death is destiny, but other side he rarely thinks about it.

The other Eddie's attitudinal value can be seen from Eddie's reaction of acceptance of his father. When he lives on earth, his reaction about his father is confrontation. But in heaven, he truly accepts his father after he meets Ruby as the third person he meets in heaven as it is stated:

"You beat me. You shut me out. I didn't understand... I didn't know *you*. But you're my father. I'll let it go now, all right? Can we let it go?".... Then softer:"You hear me? Dad?" He leaned in close. He saw his father's dirty hands. He spoke the last familiar words in a whisper. "It's fixed" (Albom, 152)

The statement above shows that man cannot recognize himself moreover other man. Eddie cannot recognize who his father is. It makes him misunderstands his father. From this situation, Eddie only accepts his father and never regrets to his father. It is because no body can choose his parents or his child. Man as a social creature needs other man. He needs to see himself. At the end we can say that we need somebody as a mirror to reflect ourselves.

CONCLUSION

Eddie is an old man who thinks that he is trapped at Ruby Pier. It is because he only continues his father's job. Even though he is bored when he faces machine day by day, he undergoes his job with responsibility. He works enthusiastically and keeps rides safe for visitors. He feels meaningless when he thinks that to work at Ruby Pier is not as worthy as to work as a soldier. When he becomes a soldier, he feels worthy; it is because he defends his country with his life. He also receives a medal for his loyalty. He thinks he becomes a hero, but in his remnant life, he thinks that he is trapped at Ruby Pier.

Eddie feels lonely because he has lost his beloved wife and does not have child. It is one reason that Eddie feels his life is meaningless. He thinks no one becomes his reason to responsible, not his father, mother even Marguerite. He undergoes his life as much as his destiny. He loses his will and unconscious what he lives for or what he is responsible for. He does not know what he ought to do in his spare time.

At his 83rd birthday, Eddie gets accident at Ruby Pier. When he attempts to save a child, he is fallen by the rides. He dies bellow famous rides. He never knows whether he saves a child. He still questions whether he saves that child or not. After his death on earth, he lives in heaven. In this place, he can breathe, feel, speak, think and interact as well as on earth. He feels disappointed when his belief about heaven as a garden that full of peace and a place to meet his beloved is not proved, but he finds heaven is a place for understanding his life on earth. He finds that heaven is Ruby Pier, graveyard, and wedding place. It makes him quest for meaning of life.

In heaven Eddie learns about his life from five people he meets. He finds his life is meaningful when he has consciousness about creative value in which he has responsibility to his work, experiential value in which his loving memory and attitudinal value which take his attitude towards fate. All these values help him to find his meaning of life. Being man is being conscious, in contrast, Eddie is not conscious about meaning of his life.

The Five People he meets in heaven helps him to be aware or conscious about his meaningful life. The first people names Blue Man teaches him about experiential value of fairness. Blue Man attempts to convince Eddie that fairness does not govern life and death but for balancing. The second people calls the captain teaches him about attitudinal value of sacrifice. The third people names Ruby teaches about experiential value of forgiveness. The fourth people teaches about experiential value of love and the fifth people teaches him about creative value of his job.

Eddie realizes the meaning of his life when he meets the fifth people in Heaven. Even though Eddie thinks that his life does not have meaning for himself, and he does not have child, he knows how to treat and entertain the children. From her explanation, he knows that his life has a meaning for children. Meaning of life is determined by the way of Eddie's think. Eddie gets an idea that he has meaningful life when he makes children happy not for himself.

Through this study, the thesis writer concludes that what is undergone by Eddie might represents what is undergoes by the old in general. Presently, man questions for

meaning of life because he is not aware and lost of will. He has existential vacuum of his life. He/she endures his routine activity or destiny without any hope for their future.

Finally, the thesis writer concludes that existential vacuum is indeed a negative mental attitude. It gives feeling of meaningless, worthless, and boredom which give tendency to despair. It is declination of life because man always has negative thoughts of their life. The will to be meaningful is prime motivation of man to resurrection from his existential vacuum. He finds his meaning of life by being conscious, being responsible, and has positive thought.

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