

The Values of Life in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

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Abstract

*This thesis discussed about the value of life from the novel of Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. The aim of this thesis is to describe the value of life in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. In this thesis, the writer used Pragmatic approach. The writer used the creativity to find a message from the author through literary work that was read. To support the analysis, the writer used the biographical sketch of the author and the concept of life in the second chapter. In addition, the writer also used descriptive qualitative method, in which data were collected and analyzed. In this thesis, the main data source was a novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom. The data were taken from the dialogue and narration.*

The discussion of the analysis involved the character of Eddie in understanding heaven and running life. It stated that, there were five lessons that Eddie got from five people that he met in heaven. First, no life is waste. Second, sacrifice is a part of life. Third, holding anger is a poison and hatred is a curve blade. Fourth, life has to end while love does not end. Fifth, keeping children safe.

Key Words: *Albom, character, life, value*

Introduction

Life is the fight, life is the sacrifice and life is for other people (Teguh, 2008:15). It means that as a human being, we need a struggle and effort to reach a good life but sometimes we also need sacrifice to reach it. Every human has his own life. It means that they have different meaning of life. They have their own living ways, so that it makes a human's life different from other. Life is certainty. It means that dignity happened out of our mind. Meanwhile, as a human being running this life is a choice, so that it must be thought and planned. The explanation about life relate to our concept and conscious about life visions. Actually, the formula about life vision is continuity from consciousness to life. Life has run and life will run then. Basically, the important question about life visions in our life is to give a meaning for life. As a human being, no one asks and plans to live because life is a grace. After we realized and thought, we started to ask "What is life and what is a human being?". We will think and plan, how will we run this life and what should we do as a human being?. The questions about life visions we will think then after we born to this earth. We could release from that questions, but it will danger us if we never think about how we should run this life. As a human being, we have the differences one from another. It is a free willing to choose some choices in our life. However, the important thing is doing right for us and people. Which state by Andrew Ho about how should we run this life "Thankful, patient, positive thinking, sincere, work hard, respect other people, love family, and keep religion. The most important things in life is to learn how to give out love and to let it come in" (2007). When we talk about life values, it is described in the life story of Mitch Albom's work in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, Mitch Albom presents the story about life and how we should run our life as reflected in the first character Eddie. Eddie is a wounded war veteran, an old man who has lived, in his mind, an uninspired life. His job is fixing rides at a seaside amusement park. On his 83rd birthday, a tragic accident kills him as he tries to save a little girl from a failing cart. He awakes in the afterlife, where he learns that heaven is not a destination and a beautiful place as fairy tale that always exist in every mind of the people. It is a place where your life is explained to you by five people from your life. How our life always does connect to other people's life even unrealized, it has changed our life way. Some of whom you knew and others who may have been strangers. One by one, from childhood to soldier to old age, Eddie's five people revisit their connections to him on earth, illuminating the mysteries of his "meaningless" life, and revealing the haunting secret behind the eternal question: "Why was I here?" Mitch Albom arranges Eddie and five meetings through his birthday and the event after he died. There are three important things here, last time, the earth and the heaven. Essentially, it is talk about human being and how should we run our life when we live in the earth. Therefore, the writer is interested to analyze Mitch Albom's *The five people you meet in*

heaven, because it teaches the writer about life and how we should run life. Hopefully, it will be useful for the writer and the readers who read this analysis.

Method

To analyze literary work, the writer does not use numeral or statistic but descriptive qualitative. The writer analyzes the characters by the activity and attitude that describe by words by the author. The writer analyzes the problems by their actions in its situation. According to Hadi in Natalia "A descriptive qualitative in which data collected and analyzed, the conclusion are drawn without making generalization" (2000:12).

Discussion

No Life as Waste

No life is waste. Life is the merciful that God gives to us. Otherwise, as human being, there must be activity that must be done by us and we have to do the right things in our life. Life also has a vision that must be reached. We may not deny that we are socialist.

"That there are no random acts. That we are all connected. That you can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind". (Albom, 2003:50)

From the quotation above, it means that in running life, we are involved by other people. We must get interaction to other people. We cannot separate from society. When someone lost from our life, the other also will feel the same feeling as us.

"In my funeral", The Blue man said. "Look at the mourners. Some did not even know me well, yet they came. Why? Did you ever wonder? Why people gather when others die? Why people feel they should?. It is because that human spirit knows, deep down, that all lives intersects. That the death does not just take someone, it misses someone else and in the small distance between being taken and being missed, lives are changed".

(Albom, 2003:50)

The passage above is dialogue from the first character, Eddie and The first people that he meets in heaven, The Blue Man. It is one example which describe that our life cannot separate with other people. In running life, human being has empathy feeling. These kinds of empathy feeling that finally make the people helping each other. So that in life, we never standing alone and no life is waste. Something that makes it waste is based on ourselves. How is our way to run our life and make it well without waste it.

"No life is waste," The Blue Man said. "The only time we waste is the time when we spend thinking we are alone", (Albom, 2003:52)

The quotation above is the life lesson that The Blue Man teaches to Eddie. He said that, No life is waste. There is something waste when we let the times of our life for nothing. It is connect to the concept of life from the Paige Geiske who says that in his idea about the concept to running life.

Sacrifice is the part of life

Sacrifice is an act of offering to deity something precious. It called as a self sacrifice. Sacrifice takes some forms, like self sacrifice to family, friends, love even country. Love the country can be done by country guard. For example, we become volunteer and soldier. It becomes a must for us as citizen.

"Young men go to war. Sometimes because they have to, sometimes because they want to. Always they feel they are supposed to. This comes from the sacrifice, the sad, layered stories of life, which over the centuries have seen courage confused with picking up arms, and cowardice confused with laying them down."(Albom, 2003:59)

The quotation above state about a self sacrifice to the country. It derives from their certainty that has patriotism. It is life sacrifice to build a country well. It builds a patriotism soul for everybody.

Sacrifice and aspire are not separate. Both of them are connected. It means, where there is aspire, it must be a sacrifice. As human being, we always do the sacrifice, but sometimes we never realize it. We can estimate whether its sacrifice bad or good when it has not visions. Aspire is not something free. When we will get it, it must be sacrifice. Sacrification has vertical connection to aspire. It means, a bigger aspire that we want, a bigger sacrifice that we have to do.

"Sacrifice," The Captain said. "You made one. I made one. We all make them. But you were angry over yours. You kept thinking about what you lost.

"You did not get it. Sacrifice is a part of life. It is supposed to be. It is not something to regret. It is something to aspire to. Little sacrifices. Big sacrifices. A mother works so her son can go to school. A daughter moves home to take care of her sick father." (Albom, 2003:97)

The quotation above is the life lesson that Eddie get from the second person he meets in heaven, The Captain. The Captain teaches Eddie about sacrifice. He states that sacrifice is not something regret but it is something aspire even it is little sacrifice or big sacrifice.

A Poison and Hatred

Anger is viewed as a natural and healthy response that has evolved to enable us to deal with threats. There are types of anger, named "hasty and sudden anger," it is connected to the impulse for self-preservation. It is shared between humans and animals and occurs when tormented or trapped. "Settled and deliberate" anger is a reaction to perceived deliberate harm or unfair treatment by others. These two forms of anger are episodic. Dispositional, it is related more to character traits than to instincts or cognitions. Irritability, sullenness and churlishness postures are examples of the last form of anger. (Raymon, 2000)

Anger can destruct us and other. Anger will poison us. The physical effects of anger include increase heart rate, blood pressure, and levels of adrenaline and non-adrenaline. On the other hand, anger can be destructive when it does not find its appropriate outlet in expression. Anger, in its strong form, impairs one's ability to process information and to exert cognitive control over his behavior. An angry person may lose his/her objectivity, empathy, prudence or thoughtfulness and may cause harm to others.

"Ruby stepped toward him. "Edward," she said softly, it was the first time she had called him by name.

"Learn this from me. Holding anger is a poison. It eats you from inside. We think that hating is a weapon that attacks the person who harmed us. But hatred is a curved blade. And the harm we do, we do to ourselves."

(Albom, 2003:149)

This passage is life lesson that Eddie get from the third person he meet in heaven, Ruby Pier. She is the owner of Ruby pier's play land, a place where Eddie was work as maintenance. He said that Eddie may not keep anger and curve in himself. Because, it will destruct himself. In contrary, Eddie must forgiveness everything that has been happened in his life.

"Forgive, Edward, forgive. Do you .remember the lightness you'felt when you first arrived in heaven?"

Eddie did. Where is my pain?

"That is because no one is born with anger. And when we die, the soul is freed of it. But now, here, in order to move on, you must understand why you felt what you did, and why you no longer need to feel it."

She touched his hand.

"you must forgive."

(Albom, 2003:150)

The point of this dialogue from Eddie and Ruby Pier is about forgiveness. In life, forgiveness each other is very important thing. Forgiveness can make our life harmonics between other people. Because when people were born in this earth there is purity. There is no anger and curved. It just appears a peaceful and restful.

Life has to End while Love does not End

God give us life and its life has the end. One day, when God declares that our life has to end, He will take it and it called the death. Meanwhile, in life, God give us feeling that called love. Love tightens human being each other. With love, automatically, we will sacrifice our life, empathy, attention, and helping each other.

"Love like a rain, it can nourish from above, drenching couples with a soaking joy. But sometimes, under the angry heat of life, love dries on the surface and must nourish from below, tending to its roots, keeping itself alive".

(Albom, 2003:174)

This quotation gives the idea about love through supposition. Besides, Love is any of a number of emotions and experiences related to a sense of strong affection. The word love can refer to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from generic pleasure ("I love that meal") to intense interpersonal attraction ("I love my girlfriend").

This diversity of meanings, combined with the complexity of the feelings involved, makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, even compared to other emotional states. Interpersonal attraction is the feeling that will share by us to other people who we respect. When the people were death, love was not death. It just moved the object. Everyone has different meaning of love. Love has many kinds of form. It depend on how the people definite love.

"People say that they find love, as if it was an object hidden by a rock, but love takes many forms, and it is never the same for any man and woman. What people find then is a certain love". (Albom, 2003:164)

The quotation above state that finding love is depends on the person. Because of love have many forms, when finding certain love, some people say that they get difficulties to find certain love. But the other says that, it is easy to get certain love. When we have found the people who we love very much, in certain moment, we cannot release it. As like as Eddie found his love.

"Eddie found a certain love with Marguerite, a grateful love, a deep but quiet love, one that he knew, above all else, was .irreplaceable. Once she had gone, he had let the days go stale. He put his heart to sleep". (Albom, 2003:155)

The quotation above assumes that as an abstract concept, love usually refers to a deep, ineffable feeling of tenderly caring for another person. Even this limited conception of love, however, encompasses a wealth of different feelings, from the passionate desire and intimacy of romantic love to the nonsexual emotional closeness of familial and Platonic love. Such love might exist between family members and friends.

"In time, husband and wife began talking again, and one night, Eddie even spoke about adopting to Marguerite. Marguerite rubbed her forehead and said, "We are too old now". Eddie said, "What is too old to a child?". I love children and I will care them". (Albom, 2003:175)

This passage is the dialogue between Eddie and his wife, Marguerite who has died because of sickness. Eddie wants to adopting child because he love children. Love does not know the age. The most important thing is our willing to love and care them well.

When someone we loved has gone and she does not beside of us. Love is not gone, it just takes different form. When the people we loved were here, we can still talked to her, touch and share to her but her emptiness makes our love different.

"Lost love is still love. It takes a different form, that is all. You cannot see their smile or bring them food or tousle their hair or move them around a dance floor. But when those senses weaken, another heightens. Memory, memory becomes your partner. You nurture it. You hold it. You dance with it". (Albom, 2003:184)

This quotation state that when we lost our love, because of the death exactly, that love is not gone through the way. It just takes the different form. When our love with someone is separated by the death. We may not see her factly, but love will always alive by praying and memorizing her. This is Eddie's feeling after his wife died. He knows that he cannot see his wife anymore, but his love to his wife will always alive by praying and memorizing her.

Eddie thought about the years after he buried his wife. It was like looking over a fence. He was aware of another kind of life out there, even as he knew he would never be a part of it.

"I never wanted anyone else," he said quietly.

"I know," she said.

"I was still in love with you."

"I know," she nodded, "I felt it."

"Here?" He asked.

"Even here," she said smiling. "That is how strong lost love can be."

"Life has to end, love does not."

(Albom, 2003:185)

The passage above is the dialogue between Eddie and his wife, Marguerite. This is the fourth lesson that Eddie get from his wife in Heaven. He know how big love alive in himself and the other. It was happened to his life, it state that when we run our life love is take part in our life. We need love and we have to give love.

Keeping Children Safe

A child is a human being between birth and puberty, a boy or girl. Child generally refers to a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority. Child may also describe a relationship with a

parent or authority figure, or signify group membership in a clan, tribe, or religion. It can also signify being strongly affected by a specific time, place, or circumstance, as in "a child of nature" or "a child of the Sixties." Children are future. They are our life continuity. Children are God's gift who has been given for us to save them. So that, it is a duty for us as a parent to care, guide and educate them.

"Tala?", he whispered.

She looked up.

"The little girl at the pier? Do you know about her?"

Tala stared at her fingertips. She nodded yes.

"Did I save her? Did I pull her out of the way?"

Tala shook her head. "No pull."

Eddie shivered. His head dropped. So there it was.

"Push," Tala said.

He looked up. "Push?"

"Push her legs. No pull. You push." "Big thing fall. You keep her safe."

(Albom, 2003:204)

The passage above is the dialogue from Eddie to the fifth people that he met in heaven, Tala. She died when Eddie burned a post unintentionally in Philippine. It conclude that How big Eddie's love to children and he wants to care them while he sacrifice himself and his life. He dedicates his life to other people and helps them as like as Eddie spent his last life as maintenance in play land. The last lesson that he gets in explaining his life is keeping children safe.

"There was a pier filled with thousands of people, men and women, fathers and mothers and children- so many children-children from the past and the present, children who had not yet been born, side by side, hand in hand, in caps, in short pants, filling the boardwalk and the rides and the wooden platform, sitting on each other's shoulders, sitting in each other's laps. They were there, or would be there, because of the simple, mundane things Eddie had done in his life, the accidents he had prevented, the rides he had kept safe, the unnoticed turns he had affected every day. Children, you keep them safe. You make them good". (Albom, 2003:204)

This passage explains about the lesson that Eddie gets from the fifth people who he met in heaven explicitly. It states that how important is, we as human being can help each other. Moreover as the parent, we have to keep the children safe. Save their future and their life in this world.

Conclusion

Having analyzed the discussion in this thesis, finally the writer draw a conclusion based on the analysis. Actually, we have own perception about life. Its perception appears when we have run it. As like the perception about life that finally appears life's values based on Mitch Albom through the heaven in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*.

Through Eddie as his first character in the novel, he states that actually heaven is not only a paradise and beautiful garden, but where his life is explained again by five people that Eddie meet in heaven. As stated by his uncle through the character of Eddie on his experiences when he was threaten his illness in hospital and got the trip of another world. The writer highlight the points that are mentioned below.

There are five life values done in running our life, as reflected in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. First is No life is waste, the only time we waste is the time we spend thinking we are alone. Second is Sacrifice is a part of life, either little or big, it is not something to regret, it is something to aspire. Third is holding anger is a poison and hatred is a curve blade, the harm we do, we do to ourselves. Fourth is Life has to end while love does not end. Fifth is Keeping children safe, you make them good.

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