

# CHAPTER I

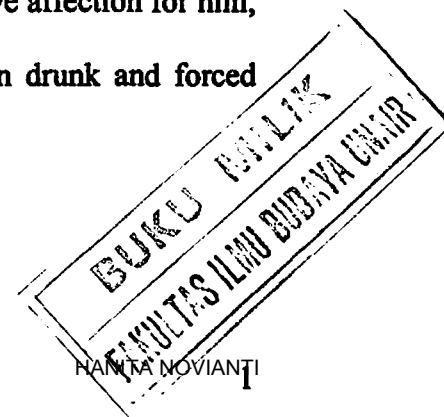
## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

In some cases, people often face problems in relation with their searching for the meaning of life. They do not know for whom their life, for what they are present, and why they are born in this world. These situations make them feel meaningless. Actually, nobody's life has exactly zero significance. Although it is hard to answer the meaning of life but every person should consider his presence in this world based on other people perception.

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is a great example of novel that tells about the search for the meaning of life. It is a fiction novel by Mitch Albom that was published in 2003 and broadcasted in 2004 by ABC with the same title. This novel tells about an old man named Eddie who died because of an accident when he wanted to safe a little girl from the falling chart.

When he was life, he works and lives in Ruby Pier. Ruby Pier is a park where is completed with games and shows. At there, Eddie works as a worker, he maintains the attractions such as roller coaster, bumper cars, and the other attractions. He feels that his life is meaningless, because he can't achieve anything in his life. His wish to become an engineer failed to come true because of the accident he got in the World War II. His father also never gave affection for him, since he was child his father didn't care with him, he often drunk and forced



Eddie to be like him. Moreover, his beloved people one by one died and left him alone in Ruby Pier.

The title *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* here represents the five people that Eddie meets in Heaven after he died on his 83<sup>rd</sup> birthday. These five people are the blue man, the captain, Ruby, Marguerite, and Tala. From each of these five people Eddie will learn something different about himself and its significance to his life and about life itself. He learns about the interrelationship of all lives, about sacrifice, the everlasting value of love, the poison of lingering anger and, finally, about how his daily hum-drum, tedious daily routine had in fact fulfilled his life's intended purpose of keeping Ruby Pier's rides safe, and a source of joy, for generations of children.

Mitch Albom, 45, lives in Michigan with his wife. He is a nationally syndicated columnist for the *Detroit Free Press* and nationally syndicated radio hosts of his own show. Albom has also been named the top sports columnist in the nation 13 times by the Associated Press Sports Editors of America -- the highest honor in his field. He is the founder of The Dream Fund, a charity that helps underprivileged youth study art, and of A Time to Help, a volunteer program. Albom serves on the boards of numerous charities. On the fun side, he is a member of *The Rock Bottom Remainders* a rock band who are authors for their day job. He is the author of seven books, including *Tuesdays With Morrie*, the phenomenal *New York Times* bestseller that first appeared on that list in October 1997 and stayed atop the list for four straight years.

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* has very interesting story that near with our real life. The problems that the character in this novel experienced often happen in this world. Through the character, Eddie, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* provides the readers with a depiction of an old man's journey in looking for the meaning of his life. The point of the *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is to assist those like the Eddie in the book and Albom's real-life uncle, also named Eddie (to whom the book is dedicated), who feel their lives unimportant, to realize that their lives really have an importance, a tremendous value and are worthy of appreciation (TheBestNotes.com).

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is interesting to discuss because this kind of novel, the story about life after death, reincarnation, heaven, and anything that related with them, become phenomena today. Especially, it is interesting to analyze the character of Eddie in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. His character in this story is somewhat parallel to the case of many people in the world. In some cases, there are some people that even they have owned all they want, they still do not know what the meaning of their life.

There are some elements that are interesting to be analyzed too. The other characters that support this story, especially the five people in heaven, they become the key in directing and helping Eddie to solve and reveal his problem. Then the settings in this story also symbolize and describe something behind the story.

The question that this study tries to pose is the search for the meaning of life through Eddie's character. Especially, it will be seen from Eddie's problem

during his life, the presenting of the five people in heaven, and through the characters, settings and the symbols. Then the writer will reveal the purpose of the five people presence and after that relate the relationship between the setting and symbols toward the characters.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problems**

There are two statements of the problem that will be analyzed in this study after reading *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. The problems are:

1. What kind of problems did Eddie face during his life?
2. What are the purposes of the five people presented based on Eddie's problems in searching for the meaning of life?

## **1.3. Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study will be intended to answer every coming out questions that has been mentioned in the statement of the problems, by using the chosen theories as the tool to analyze it. Therefore, this study tries to answer the above questions:

1. The problems Eddie faced during his life.
2. The purposes of the presence of the five people in heaven based on Eddie's problems in searching for the meaning of his life.

## **1.4. Significant of the Study**

*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is probably considered as a mere work of fiction. However, in Eddie's case is probably not only a fictive case. Every people in this real world might experience similar problems and conflicts in looking for the meaning of their life. Thus, this study aims to explain briefly about the idea behind this phenomenon. This study is also meant to give contribution toward the study of literature, especially the English Department of Airlangga University.

### **1.5. Scope and Limitation**

In discussing *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, there are many issues and conflicts that can be analyzed. However, the writer of the study considers that by attempting to analyze the whole issues, the study will probably become unfocused. Therefore, despite those interesting issues, the writer decides to limit the study in the discussion of the characters, especially the characters of Eddie and the five people.

### **1.6. Theoretical Background**

In analyzing the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom, the writer applies New Criticism to conduct in revealing the problems. New criticism is similar to intrinsic theory. It is dominated by the literary studies from the 1940s through the 1960s. The focus of this theory is the individual literary work in isolation from other literature and from other cultural productions. In some cases, this theory pointed in the text itself.

The only way to know a given author's intention or a given reader's interpretation actually represent is by carefully examining, or closely reading, all the evidence provided by the language of the text itself: its images, symbols, metaphors, point of view, plot, characterization, setting, and so forth, which, because they form, or shape, the literary work are called its formal elements (Tyson 119). *Close reading*, the scrupulous examination of the complex relationship between a text's formal elements and its theme, is how the text's organic unity was established by the New Critic (Tyson 124).

The author also uses the psychological approach to help in analyzing the psychological problems in this novel. This approach explains the influence in father's involvement toward his children growth and how their psychological development with or without their father.

### **1.7. Method of the Study**

This study uses qualitative method. First, the writer chooses an interesting topic that will be analyzed. After it is accomplished, the writer starts to gather the data in the novel, which are related to the topic. Moreover, the writer starts to analyze from the intrinsic part of the novel. Due to further analysis, the writer uses the presence of other characters as addition.

Apart from using qualitative method, the writer of this study also finds sufficient information as well as data that will assist the analysis through books that are related with this study. However, in acquiring the latest information that the books cannot provide, electronic source taken from Internet is also used.

## 1.8. Definition of Key Terms

- Heaven:*** a place or condition of supreme happiness and peace where good people are believed to go after death, and, especially in Christianity, where God and the angels are believed to dwell
- Meaning of life:*** something that someone needs to look for in order to know the purpose of his life
- Ruby Pier:*** the name of a park in the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* where there are many attractions at there
- Depression:*** a condition that is caused when someone could not afford to handle his problems that makes him feels under pressured
- Problem in life:*** a state of difficulty that appears in people's life and needs to be solved

# **THESIS**

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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