

Morry's Existentialism During His Struggling with ALS On Novel, Tuesday with Morrie

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Abstract. The title of this research is Morrie's Existentialism During His Struggling with ALS, on Novel Tuesdays with Morrie. The novel talks about How Morrie's go through his dying life because of ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). This research takes up more on the Morrie's philosophical approaches as main character. Moreover, it is designed for analyzing at how Morrie seeks for meaning in his life during his dying experience. Author using the extrinsic analysis which is Soren Kierkegaard as an expertise in existentialism and emphasized to stage of Morrie's life. This research will aim at how Morrie strives for purpose in his life. Philosophical approach is applied to this research. Author committed using library research. Author used two sources. The key source of this research is the novel itself, Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom. The other sources are books on philosophy, literature, and also internet. Derived from the analysis, Morrie changing his philosophy of life since diagnosed with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). This research focuses on the philosophical values found in the Tuesday with Morrie book. Novel, Tuesday with Morrie is the source of all the data used in the report. The result of the research revealed that there are three stages of human existentialism that relate with Morrie's philosophy they are Aesthetic, Ethics, and Religious. Value of human that also refers to Novel is Being itself and being for itself.

Keywords: Existentialism, Philosophical, ALS

1 Introduction

Henry van Dyke on his book, Literature, stated that Literature is defined as works that interpret the meanings of nature and life in words of enchantment and power, imbued with the author's personality, and presented in creative forms of lasting interest. It usually starts from cultural product and becomes image of common society. Literature is defined as the entire written expression in fiction that interprets the meaning of nature and life, as well as the desire to comprehend, express, and share experiences.

Literature, as a human product, does not appear out of nowhere; it is embedded in a specific culture, time, and civilization. Literary works are also used by humans to communicate thoughts, concepts, ideas and emotion or feelings. In essence, it is similar to the purposes of language. More than that, literature works also use some ways to says it, such as figurative languages that mostly has been usage by author. At the same time, an author's particular circumstance, time, culture, civilization and situation may serve as a powerful motivator in the creation of his or her literary work (Teori Pengkajian Fiksi, 2015; 302).

Moreover, there are several genres of literature that fall under the fiction category. The five other categories based on genres are Poetry, Drama, Prose, Short Story, and Novel. In this case, author uses novel that is based on true story. *Tuesday With Morrie* is more than a book which tells the readers about the plot and climax that written, but also the moral story, idea, the way of thinking, which the main character's philosophical issues. This research focuses on the book, which is essentially a fictitious work.

Different with short story, short story, novels have more complex about the detail of the characters, the settings, the chronological story, the plots, etc. Thus, novels offer more complex conflicts to narrate. Start from the story from the beginning story where less of conflicts, then comes to rising before we come to climax, and ended by the ending story, which can be sad or happy. Reeve, on his book has another opinion about novel. He said that a novel is a portrait of reality and attitude in particular society when its written (1785: 26). That concept claims that a novel is a realistic picture of human life and behavior.

This portrayal is concerned with the representation of culture, education, politics, and social conditions. *Tuesday with Morrie* is written by Mitch Albom. He is the author of international best sellers. Mitch starts his career as journalist. His ability of writing then publish spiritual novels; *The Five People You Met in Heaven* and *For One More Days*, as well as eight other books. Oprah Winfrey have been adapted 3 of them into TV movies, including *Tuesdays with Morrie*, which Oprah Winfrey produced by his publishing. Then in 2004, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* was made into a TV movie. Currently, Mitch Albom still becomes a regular host in daily radio talk show and also on ESPN's "sportsCenter" and "Sports Reporters".

The author uses two individuals at the beginning of the story: The Student, named Mitch, and the professor named Morrie. This novel tells the story of the professor who are the one suspected of having Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Morie and Mitch also have a close relationship and look out for one other. Times flies until the graduation day and regrettably, Mitch must say goodbyes to the professor. Though Morrie asked Mitch to keep contact sometime even the college is done.

One day, Mitch watch Morrie in one of the famous reality shows in television. He had interviews and sine then Mitch known that Morrie is suspected of having ALS condition. After being apart for a long time, they reunite to pass the time. Mitch intentionally comes over to Morrie house to just say hello. The storyline then turns to Morrie's consciousness. Every Tuesday, Mitch goes to Morrie's house and meets with his lecturer in his home. The call this lecturer about life. Both of them express their opinions, give inspiration, and love the remainder of their lives with honestly, even mentioning feelings of regret, forgiveness, family, and death, among other topics.

After reading the whole story, the author recommended this novel to others because it tells the reader to more than just dramatic of a person with ALS; it also speaks to the spirit and philosophy of a person who loves and still being grateful in the rest of his life. Second, this Novel provides readers the incentive to embrace every stage of Morrie's life. The last is among the other novels, *Tuesday with Morrie* is the first to describe ALS, a deadly disease in the United States. Despite the fact that Mitch has authored other motivational books, this one stands out since the novel specially dedicated to his professor, Morrie. The reason stated above, interest the author in analyzing the work and focusing on the senses of life inspiration that center on Morrie's life while he suffers and struggle from ALS syndrome.

Because the novel is about the meaning of life, the author uses literary philosophical methodologies to examine some aspects of Morrie's life mission. A philosophical method is a critical way of understanding, analyzing, and valuing literary works by taking into account the values conveyed in the work. Thus, this is a product of a particular society in a philosophical

approach to literature, and its existence could be understood from many perspectives. Existentialism is important topics to consider in this setting. The goal of this research is to show readers that a simple story can teach them genuine life lessons that can help them grasp the meaning of life.

2 Method

The method of this research used by author is qualitative. Qualitative research, according to Endaswara, is one in which the deep appreciation of the relationship between concepts that are being experimentally researched takes precedence over the data (2004:5). This research takes a qualitative approach, since the data does not deal with images or numbering. In doing this research, the author has elaborated the data, which are in the form of word-for-word narration. The novel itself is a main data where the author taken from. Sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues from Tuesdays with Morrie that indicate life inspiration are included in this research's data. On the other hand, the others data is takes from relevant journals, books, and the internet.

The author uses the documentation approach to gather information. According to Subroto, documentation approach assembles data from written sources (1992:16). Using a philosophical approach to literature theory, this technique is used to find essential meaning of human being or simply we find our life's goal. Why we are born in this universe and what should we do as human being in contribute to mother nature. The author assembles the data based on this research after thoroughly reading the work until fully understands the narrative. Following that, the author notices different interactions in terms of words, phrases, lexicons, and other terms. Finally, the author double-checks the research data before making a decision.

Descriptive analysis is used by the author as a data analysis technique in this research. According to Ratna, descriptive analysis is used to describe the facts that are being investigated (2004:53). Following the data collection, the author examines it in the following steps:

- a. Analyzing the data that has been gathered.
- b. Using the chosen theory to analyze life inspiration as it is expressed in the novel Tuesdays with Morrie.
- c. Drawing a conclusion based on the data analysis.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Morris's Existentialism

The author in doing this research applies Existentialism theory. Existentialism is philosophy theory that emphasizes individual existence, freedom and choice to deal with. Soren Kierkegaard as the founder of existentialist philosophy. He claimed that it is up to each individual, not reason, society, or religious orthodoxy, to give life purpose and live it truly, or "authentically." It is the concept that people define the meaning of their own lives and seek to understand why they make decisions in an irrational reality. It focuses on human existence, the question of why individuals exist in this universe, and their sense that there is no purpose or explanation at the center of existence.

Philosophers have been obsessed with the topic of what it means to be human and what distinguishes humans from other types of beings since ancient times. Their responses to the question reveal that there is such a thing as human existence or a core to what life's purpose is. Author learns that there is a universal essence to what it means to be human, and that this essence

can be found in every single person who has ever lived or will ever live. Theory that authors applies in this research is one of classic philosophers who is an existentialist, Soren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard was from a strong and deeply religious family.

At 17ys, he enrolled in theology course at the University of Copenhagen, but to his father's disappointment was drawn to philosophy and literature. He published *Either/Or* in 1843, followed few months later by *Fear and Trembling*. A year later *Philosophical Fragments* and *The Concept of Under Pseudonyms* came, then the sickness unto Death and Training in Christianity. Because of his active publishing and criticism to Church of Denmark, Wittgenstein described him to a friend as "by far the most profound thinker of the last century.

Soren Kierkegaard proposed three stages through which a person can shift during his life: the esthetic, ethical, and religious phases. The majority of people just go through the first phase, while the second step is rarely used (although many fall short even of that one).

Aesthetics Stage

Kierkegaard's in his book state that aesthetic life is described in a variety of ways, including intellectual pleasure, sensuous desire, and a wish to interpret oneself as if one were "on stage." Because there are so many different levels of aesthetic existence, it's difficult to give a single description. At the end of the day, one could witness a completely unreflective lifestyle. They seek out persons who live lives that are contemplative, autonomous, critical, and socially apathetic. However, most individuals, according to Kierkegaard interpreters, are in the least reflective form of aesthetic stage, with daily duties and worries guiding their lives and actions. People who are more contemplative are less aesthetically guided.

As reflected in the Novel, Mitch Albom as Morrie's student still life in Aesthetics stage. It is characterized by pleasures, and one must strive to optimize those pleasures in order to live the esthetic life to the fullest. As Mitch stated on page 16, line 22 that he wants to stop renting and start to buy. Then he buys a house on hill and cars. He also invests in stocks and built a portfolio to save more.

The author analyzes that the proof is showing how Mitch Albom is only concerned with his personal enjoyment and aesthetics life. He has no firm structure from which to make coherent, consistent decisions because aesthetic pleasure is so brief. He do something to meet his personal desire only without personal motivates.

Another proof is Mitch Albom living in the least reflective kind of aesthetic stage, his lives and activities guided by daily tasks and worries. The reflective sort is less the aesthetically guided people. It can be shown in the page 34, line 7:

"...Instead, i had been in Detroit for ten years now, at the same workplace, using the same bank account, visiting the same barber. I was thirty-seven, more efficient than in college, trued to computers and modems and cell phones..."

The authors analyze the prove shown above that Mitch Albom is living in the "lowest level" of human existence who have the simplest way of thinking, by only doing on physical pleasures. Mitch Albom is busy in a routine that focuses only on worldly life. According to Kierkegaard, maybe that's how aesthetic human beings forget their miserable existence — by having fun, having physical needs like working, earning money and drowning in the hedonism of life. Kierkegaard also said that Aesthetics guides one away to consistency, since repetition can lead to comfort zone.

Ethics Stage

The second level of existence is the ethical. This is the point at when a person begins to take responsibility for his or her actions, becoming aware of and individually responsible for both good and negative, and creating a commitment to oneself and others. One's activities have a consistency and coherence on this plane of existence that they lacked in the previous realm. Many of Kierkegaard's authors place a high value on ethics. It encourages each person to reflect on their lives and examine their actions in light of total responsibility, which Kierkegaard refers to as repentance.

Morrie Schwartz is identified as a Seventy-Eight-year-old man who is dying because he suffers from the fatal neuromuscular disease ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis). After diagnosed, he become conscious and wiser. In general, humans move from aesthetic to ethical as they age or because of any reason like suffer from serious illness. The more he gets older, the more people feel they have to do things that they really "don't like", simply to fulfill their responsibilities.

Since diagnosed with ALSA, Morrie's life is based on a precise, consistent set of rules formed for the good of society and have goals for his life. He can still experiences pleasure while living the ethical life by sharing and giving to others. He appreciates life more and understands about life's real meaning. Morrie never regretted the illness he suffered, because everything has reason. Here is proof of the information above, it can be found on page 52, line 6,

... *"Mitch, you asked about caring for people I don't even know. But can I tell you the think I'm learning more this disease?"*

What's that?

"The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in."

From the proof above, Morrie tells Mitch Albom that the object of ethical life is to allow different individuals to live side by side in peace and to cause individuals to act for the good of society. The ethical individual evaluates the consequences of his or her actions on others and prioritizes advancing happiness and wellbeing of society over personal gain. Being aesthetic will not be able to provide the happiness as ethical because they are in different level of emotional. Morrie shares positive vibes and values to people surround him, as family, friends and society. He loves what he does because he knows on of the values being human being is only sharing.

Religious Stage

Religion is the highest stage of human life, according to the Kierkegaardian pseudonyms that discuss the philosophy of the stage. In one research of religious life, one of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms, Johannes Climacus, differentiates two forms of Religiousness A and Religiousness B within this stage. Socrates, the Greek philosopher, represents one type, whose impassioned quest of truth and individual consciousness clashed with his society. Another type of religiousness is one in which the individual recognizes that he or she is sinful and the source of lies.

Morrie was born Jewish. When he was teen-ager, he shifts to agnostic. He was a religious agnostic. Partly because what he experienced as a child. He learnt some philosophies of Buddhism and Christianity. Dealing with syndrome ALS makes really change all the way he thinks about facing the death, especially in his last months before died seemed to relate to be wiser and wiser, like shown in page 81, line 16

"How can you ever be prepared to die"

... 'Is today the day? Am I ready? Am I doing all I need to do? Am I being the person I want to be? "He turned his head to his shoulder as if the bird were there now..."

Regarding the proof above, it is shown that Morrie as in the highest level of Human Existence stage of life, Religion, he understood that good and bad were no longer about himself, but about his relationship with God. He understood that his goal in life was not himself, a temporary goal designed to fulfill him. There is no room for complacency in achieving anything in a relationship with the divine, including moral life or even eternal happiness.

4 Conclusion

Based on result of analyze, author explains there are three stages through Morrie which keep him exist in his rest of life: the esthetic stage, the ethical stage, and the religious stage. After Morrie was diagnosed with ALS in summer 1994, most people only go through the first step, and mostly the second (although many fall short of even that one). The insight in Morrie's conflicts and struggle offers us the solution to many of the problems of life. It seems hard for most individuals to imagine pleasures greater than sensual pleasures.

The pure of joy of being alive or even the greatest quality that comes when we are truly life in present and life in balance. Morrie tries to keep the harmony and consciousness walk side by side and don't let the Aesthetic control in his rest of life. The real joy of life is what we call sense of the being pure happiness, it is how existentialism should in human being.

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