

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presented the background of the study, problem statement, the objective of the study, limitation of the study, the significance of the study and research paper organization. The background of the study consists of why the researcher chooses this novel and why it chooses the issue and explain the synopsis about the novel. The problem statement and objective of the study consist of the questions and answers about the issue in the novel. The limitation of the study consists of boundaries where the researcher only focuses on the issue and the novel. The significance of the study consists of the benefit of this research to other people. And the research paper organization consists of the composition of the whole research.

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Optimistic life is a life that is disposed to think positively or take a positive view of something and expect the most positive outcome. Some optimistic feelings may be influenced by their life goals. By having the objective of life, someone will try to strive for fulfilling their needs and getting optimism to reach it. Optimistic feeling also encourages them to be more active to achieve the perfect life or life which they want to. Because of this condition, they try to leave their weakness or their inferior thinking to get the life that they want to. Optimism is all about "can-do" beliefs, positive view, expectations, choices, and strategies, also about knowing someone can be effective on their behalf. The optimism learns all they can from the adversity and then propels themselves forward their goals and vision. The optimists take credit for the things which they have accomplished, savor the victories, and use them as fuel for the on-going journey of dreams and discovery.

Paul Kalanithi as the author of the novel wants to motivate the readers through "*When Breath Becomes Air*" novel. The readers have to be optimistic about living life. In this world, everyone has different conditions in living

their lives. Some people get their nice, prosperous, happy, and wealthy life. On the other hand, there are several who live in misery and illness. Optimistic people always live happily without any complaints. Although they have been given many obstacles or problems in life, they still keep their smiles and strive for a better life. On the other side, several people who are only given a few problems and sadness are pessimistic in living their lives. They will complain about their life problems and give up easily. Paul Kalanithi has gone through with illness problem, but he keeps optimistic. He had cancer that attacks his lungs, backbone, and his liver. He was inspired to start writing to make other people believe through life optimistically.

“*When Breath Becomes Air*” novel was inspired by Paul Kalanithi's own life. At the age of thirty-six, on the verge of completing a decade's worth of training as a neurosurgeon, Paul Kalanithi was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. One day he was a doctor treating the dying, and the next he was a patient struggling to live. And just like that, the future he and his wife had imagined evaporated. “*When Breath Becomes Air*” chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from a naïve medical student “possessed”, as he wrote, “by the question of what, given that all organisms die, makes a virtuous and meaningful life” into a neurosurgeon at Stanford working in the brain, the most critical place for human identity, and finally into a patient and new father confronting his own mortality.

Paul Kalanithi died in March 2015, while working on “*When Breath Becomes Air*” novel, yet his words live on as a guide and a gift to us all. He realizes that coming face to face with his mortality, in a sense, had changed nothing and everything. He wants “*When Breath Becomes Air*” is an unforgettable, life-affirming reflection on the challenge of facing death and on the relationship between doctor and patient, from a brilliant writer who became both.

There are several reasons why the researcher is interested to analyze this novel. Firstly, the character and characterization of *When Breath Becomes Air*. The writer as the main character described himself in detail

how he struggles with his cancer optimistically and never gives up with any situation that makes him down.

The second, this novel is an autobiography that means it is a true story about Paul Kalanithi's life, how he faces his cancer. Ironically he got cancer when he was at the top of his career when the diagnosis turned his life upside down into what could be considered ironic; one day he was a doctor, the next a terminally ill patient. Kalanithi's cancer was the only answer to his question, "What makes a life worth living?"

The third reason and the most important reason this novel choose the researcher because the main story has similarity with the researcher's life, where the researcher should face the truth that the researcher losing his father in cirrhosis of the liver. The researcher's father looks like the author of the novel, even struggling with his disease researcher's father still spent his last time doing what he wants and most importantly it should use to the other. The researcher's father is a lecturer, he studying literature and language. So this is the most important reason why the researcher chooses this novel, in memoriam Drs. Siswanto, M.Hum. The researcher hopes this research can share with all the readers how we should keep optimistic about our life even us facing death.

The last reason is this study can beneficial for the students with the good moral values contained in this research that optimism is needed for achieving the perfect life which they want to. Paul Kalanithi strives to live, although he got cancer. He had to live and struggle to live with his sickness. However, he looked optimistic and enjoyed his life.

The researcher decides to use the existentialist to analyze this novel because the perspective is suitable with the topic will be discussed. The novel shows the optimistic life of some characters, especially the main character named Paul Kalanithi. For that reason, the researcher conducted this research entitled **OPTIMISTIC LIFE REFLECTED IN PAUL KALANITHI'S WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR (2016) BY USING EXISTENTIALIST PERSPECTIVE.**

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Based on the background and the limitation of the study, the researcher formulates the problem statements which are related to the study, it is determined as follows:

- 1.2.1** What are the indicators of an optimistic life in Paul Kalanithi's *When Breath Becomes Air*?
- 1.2.2** How is optimistic life reflected in *When Breath Becomes Air*'s novel?
- 1.2.3** Why is an optimistic life especially addressed by the author in *When Breath Becomes Air* novel?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

According to the problem statement above, the objective of the study will be derived like:

- 1.3.1** To identify the indicators of optimistic life in Paul Kalanithi's *When Breath Becomes Air*.
- 1.3.2** To describe how optimistic life reflected in *When Breath Becomes Air*'s novel.
- 1.3.3** To reveal the underlying reasons why optimistic life is especially addressed by the author in *When Breath becomes Air* novel.

## **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

To make the research is appropriate to the objective of the study; the researcher will make a limitation to the research. The researcher only focuses on analyzing the optimistic life which is reflected in Paul Kalanithi's *When Breath Becomes Air* (2016) by using the existentialist perspective.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study has theoretical and practical benefits that can use to help the next research.

### **1.5.1 Theoretical Benefit**

This study is purposed to give a contribution to the large body of knowledge, particularly in the sociological approach in literary work. It can be used as a reference for literature study in the future. The study also can improve the reader's knowledge concerning the existentialist prospective study in literature.

### **1.5.2 Practical Benefit**

There are some practical benefits of this study. The practical benefit can be used for the researcher, lecturer, and present researcher.

#### **1.5.2.1 Researcher**

The result of the study is expected to broaden the researcher's knowledge in literary work practical in the understanding of the novel related to the aspect of the sociological approach. This study is also expected to contribute to the development of the larger body of knowledge, particularly literary studies on Paul Kalanithi's *When Breath Becomes Air*. And it also can be used as a reference for other researchers who want to research optimistic life in the novel

#### **1.5.2.2 Lecturer**

The study can be used as a reference to the lecturer when they want to teach about the existentialist perspective theory on optimistic life issues.

#### **1.5.2.3 Another Researcher**

The study can be used as a reference to the future researcher who wants to discuss reflected of optimistic life in the existentialist perspective.