

**CONCERN IN BEING GRATEFUL IN MITCH ALBOM'S THE
FIVE PEOPLE YOU MEET IN HEAVEN NOVEL (2003):
SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE THEORY**



**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
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Resti Kusuma Dewi Shinta

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Abstrak

Studi ini adalah tentang rasa syukur didalam novel karya Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel (2003) yang dianalisa menggunakan Sociological Literature Theory. Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi indikator-indikator dalam bersyukur, untuk mengetahui bagaimana rasa syukur digambarkan dalam novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* (2003). Data primer dari studi ini adalah novel karya Mitch Albom yang berjudul *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* yang diterbitkan tahun 2003. Data sekunder dari studi ini berasal dari beberapa sumber, seperti: biografi penulis, buku-buku online dan sumber yang lainnya untuk menganalisa. Hasil dari studi ini adalah: pertama, indikator-indikator yang menunjukkan rasa bersyukur di dalam novel. Kedua, hal-hal yang dapat menunjukkan adanya penggambaran dari isu di dalam novel. Ketiga, menunjukkan adanya pemikiran dari penulis yang membuat orang lain menyadari tentang pentingnya bersyukur.

Kata Kunci: Kesusasteraan sosial, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, bersyukur.

Abstract

This research is about being grateful in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel (2003) which analyzed based on Sociological Literature Theory. The aims of this study was identified the indicators in being grateful, to describe the portrayal of being grateful in this novel and to defined the reason of the author address of being grateful as the issue in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel (2003). The primary data source was the novel by Mitch Albom *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel which announced 2003. The secondary data source was from several sources, such as: the author's biography, e-book and another references to support the analysis. The result of this study are: firstly, the indicators which described of being grateful in the novel. Secondly, show the portrayal of the issue in the novel. Thirdly, showed that there was reason from the author to make people realized about the importance of being grateful.

Keywords: Sociological Literature, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, being grateful

1. INTRODUCTION

This research about *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* have been done by othersresearches which using another object and theories. Some researchers examine *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* based on intertextual teory

which focusing on heaven's concept (Atika, 2016). Other researchers used semiotic theory to analysis the text using semiotic analysis to know the relationship and meaning among sign, the object and interpreting on Eddy's way to heaven (Maulana, 2010). Other reserchers investigate the main character personality traits by analysis character and characterization (Murfunhah, 2010).

The previous study research above show that they use the same object as the writer, however the subject and theory are different. In this research the writer uses Sociological perspectives focusing on being grateful. The novelty of this research is to illustrated the indicators of being grateful, to describe the potrayal of being grateful and to explained the reason of the author addressed the issue in the novel.

2. METHOD

This research is using qualitative method which defined by (Mike & Hubermen, 1994) that analyzing used three technique such as Data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing. The objective of this study are to describe biography of Mitch Albom and his novel entitled *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* that concern in being grateful that depicted in the novel which published in 2003. This study use theory of Sociological by Rene Wellek and Werren to analyze the greatest lesson by Mitch Albom.

There are two type data of data source have been used in this research: The primary data source is *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* Novel by Mitch Albom and the secondary data are the author 's biography, e-books, e-journal and other research that support the analysis.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Indicator of Being Grateful

3.1.1 Individual Factor

3.1.1.1 Personality Factor (openness and agreeableness)

Eddie was a being grateful person Eddie has openness trait that creat him into an open-minded person which more adventures, creative and likes to trying new

things that is why he choose be a soldier as his call manhood. He was being grateful be a soilder because he learn many thing during the war, give him new adventurous, meet with new friend, learn foreing language, and so on. In other side, Eddy has a being grateful personality trait derived from his mother which habit of being grateful from her develop little Eddie into a grateful person in mature.

3.1.1.2 Cognitive Factor

It is an event or someone can improve being grateful in certain situation. In this case, there is a different perception about an incident between Blue Man and little Eddie. In seven years old, he play tosing a baseball with his friend, the ball flies over and out into the street. In the diffrent angel, Blueman drive his car on that street and losing control his car. This accident saving Eddie's life but Blueman get heart attack and die. That why people should being grateful that can see sun in the next day, meet with family and have a pshycal healt.

3.1.1.3 Individual Barriers (depression, feeling guilty, anger)

There is some personality traits that barriers being grateful such as depression, feeling guilty and anger. In this part, Ediie depression with his disabililty after war and decrease how he was being grateful.

3.1.2 Social Factor

It is how religion and relationship benefits influence someone for being grateful. He had good relationship with Marguerite. He being grateful to have a good wife who never leave him.

3.1.3 Individual Benefits (physical health, well-being, healing trauma survivors, cultivating other virtues)

Gratitude can help people with traumatic experiences. Gratitude can break negative psychological that might arise from trauma, as the experience of Blue Man that gratitude can wipe up his bad memories about his blue skin where this situation bothering his daily life, unaccepted in society and difficult to find work.

3.1.4 Gratitude Intervention (counting blessing and death reflection)

People who counting blessing in their life will being grateful than people who might have regret in life.

3.2 Depiction of being Grateful

3.2.1 Through Character and characterization

Eddie meet with five people that give him different life lesson about love, sacrifice, forgiving and talk about destiny. All of it change him into more grateful.

3.2.2 Through Event

The war change Eddie into an ungrateful person because of his leg disability.

3.2.3 Through Setting of Place

Eddie meet five people in the heaven that explain his life in the world that give him life lesson into a being grateful person.

3.2.4 Through Style

The author uses symbols to make this story more meaningful such as Ferris Wheel that represent to Circle Nature of life, Eddie knee injury represent his sin to Tala. In addition the author also uses irony about Tala hand, Eddie expect that the small hands belonged to the child whose life Eddie saved, however the hand that bring him to heaven belong to the child whose life Eddie ended.

3.3 The Reason Author Addressed Being Grateful as the Issue

Mitch Albom's reason addressed the issue is to dedicate his novel for his Uncle named Edward. He want to recreate the life journey of his uncle that who never got to see his dreams fulfilled and never really knew how much his family loved him change into a better person who was being grateful in his life. and the reader can learn the great lesson of this journey to take a great lesson of it.

3.4 Discussion

According to Wellek and Warren, they divided sociological into three major principle such as sociological of the author, sociological of literature work and sociological of the readers. First, Sociological of the author approach is related to the social experience of the author and how the author themselves react and respond to the system that has been constructed by the social order where he has lived. The social experience how Mitch albom change become a being grateful person can be seen from the lesson of life that he get through his professor Morrie and his family. Professor teach Mitch that family is an important thing in the world. When Morrie was sick his family give support and never leave him. Another part, Mitch also learn being grateful by Morrie's positive value about his condition caused by ALS. Morrie was accepting his condition and he know how to treat himself to feeling sorry, Morrie was not allowed himself to self-pity that is improving his personality to being grateful. Morrie more respect himself, respect time, respect job, and other.

Mitch also learn being grateful by death. His mother lost her father when she was fifteen years old by heart attack. Mitch mother was completely change by that and growing up. When Mitch was twenty-two his beloved uncle Mike died of cancer. He was living by him at the time that profound affect on him. All three his grandparents died in the years that followed as did his older uncle and aunts, including his uncle Eddie his inspiration behind *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. He

have been exposed to people dying at various stage, each of those events ultimately taught him the value of cherishing every day and the foolishness of pretending death was not a real part of life. It is a subject to be shunned or avoided. He realized that loss, love and finding meaning in his life.

Second, the sociological of literature work. It reflected on the content of the literary work itself, the goals or another matter implicit which related to social problems. In *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel being grateful was described in his main character “Eddie”. Met his wife Marguerite increasing his gratitude, nothing more important than having a family who love us. Working in an Amusement Park another thing that Eddie was being grateful because it help his customer feeling safety while playing. He feels grateful for his little sacrifice, he do not mind if this sacrifices will guide him to the good or bad destiny. We should be being grateful for the destiny that God has given, God always has a good lesson for us to learn.

Third, Sociological of the Reader. According to Swingwood and Laurenson (1972:21) argue that sociology reader try to keep track of how literary work is received by certain in the public at a particular historical moment. This part showed by some reader respons in *steemit.co*, they give review how *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel give them life lesson of being gratitude. The first reader respon with anonymous name in *steemit.com* said that “...I've always had these thoughts of having two opposing beliefs simultaneously in my mind, when I can't really come up with a certain result, out of a set of paradoxes... and the idea of considering yourself as a mortal coil, with a limited time for living or kind of expiration date, that leads you to live your life in more present way and to be grateful for everything you have (literally seizing the day) completely bamboozles me when I think of my life after the death....”. Then, other reader respon in *bookbrowse.com* named kelsey12 said “This book is just simple wonderful. It makes you

realize how important everyone is in your life. I absolutely love this book. I hope that there is a sequel. There was so many amazing things in this book. Everybody in our live affects us in some way....”. Third, dim_wiTted in Bookbrowse.com said “*The Five People You Meet in Heaven* enable us to view life beyond it, help us to realize that all happenings in life have lesson to learned. Mitch Albom systematically enumerates all the important lesson one must learn to be able to float in the sky without worrying about pain, suffering and all that. The thought that once we live our life in a way that we thought is the best in just the same when you live your life at worse...”.

By that statements above, the readers responds of *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel was showed that after reading this novel can change their perspectives about life, family, gratitude and others. They apply what they learn in this novel into their life, they feels more grateful on this life and be more respect about what happens.

4. CLOSING

After analyzing *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* novel, the researcher draws some conclusion. Firstly, there are four indicators of being grateful by Summer Allan. There are: individual factor, social factor, individual benefits, and gratitude intervention. Individual factor occurring in the novel is Eddy has openness and agreeableness personality trait, where people who has openness trait tend to be open-minded and being freedom likes Eddie that choosing soldier as his future job because he can go out from Ruby Pier, learn many thing as a soldier and meet a new friend that can teach him foreign language. In other side, being grateful as a personality trait also can be influenced by traits passed down from parents in this case Eddy being grateful likes his mother.

Then, social factor these including how the religion and relationship benefits can influence of being grateful. Religion tend to learn people to being grateful by doing religious activity such as praying, charity and so on. Religion also remembering to heaven and death so the people will be being grateful of their life. Mitch pick a quote in Bible about Adam and Eve, it told that Adam first

night on Earth he was laying down to sleep, he was thinking that it was all over. At that time he did not know what sleep is, his eyes was closing then he thinks he leaves this world. The day after he wake up he realized his body feels fresh after sleep. From that event, he realized a concept call: yesterday. Mitch was learn from it about being gratitude. He feels grateful for waking up every morning with a physical health.; Individual benefits it was described in the novel reflected into physical health, well-being, benefits for people with the psychological challenge (healing trauma survivor) and cultivating other virtues. In the heaven all the pain that Eddy has on the earth was disappear, he feels his body like an infant fascinated by new mechanics, he felt incribable, he can walk and jump again without pain, this situation make Eddy was being grateful for having a physical health; Last indicators, Gratitide Intervention is how applied good habits that can improve being grateful such as counting blessing and death reflection. The traumatic events such as death reflection and life-threatening illnesses might enhance gratitude, reflecting on death causes people to appreciate life as a limited resource. Eddy see his own funeral and Blue Man give him some advise that death does not take someone it losing someone else. In the small distance between being taken and being lost live are changed. It happens everyday. We think it is a random thing but there is a balance to it all. So do not think a death as a bad experience but try to appreciate life.

Secondly, being grateful which depicted in the novel can be seen through the character and characterization which showed in five character in the novel. First person teach Eddy that all life is interconnected, being grateful in every events that happens in our lives, there are other events that also occur, which happen to the people around us. It can be fun events, or vice versa, all events have their own meaning. Second person teach about sacrifice, every day we can through a places that may would not existed without a sacrifices from people born before us. Third person teach about forgiving, Eddy holding anger to his father likes a poison. It destroy him from the inside, also saving hate is a curved blade the harm we do but we do to ourserlves. Release anger, forgive

others and positive value will follow you such as being grateful. Fourth person teach Eddy about love that having family and good partner is an important thing in the world. People would feel grateful if having someone who never leaves in every situation. Fifth person teach Eddie about doing work or something with all heart and soul, maybe someone could get something better in the life future.

Thirdly, the reason why the author addressed being grateful in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is to share the precious stories from his uncle Edward about his life journey. Mitch could not get this story out of his mind, suddenly he was imagine the moment that his life was overwhelmed by emotion, he feels tears out from eyes, and he stop breathing. He thought Edward story was so inspiring it make him to write this novel. Within this novel he wants to share with people how to being grateful like the main character that he reflect into a fiction story about heaven and death which delivered by five people in the heaven.

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