

**LIFE INSPIRATION AS SEEN  
IN *TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE* NOVEL**

**A GRADUATING PAPER**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Obtaining  
the Bachelor Degree in English Literature



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## A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this thesis is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this thesis. Other writers' opinions or findings included in the thesis are quoted or cited in accordance with the ethical standard.

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## **LIFE INSPIRATION AS SEEN IN *TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE* NOVEL**

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### **ABSTRACT**

As the social creatures, humans are connected to each other and they are ruled by the values and the norms. To live in society, people need to adjust themselves with the rules of humanity. They are the abstract concept of the guidance as the representation of thoughts, ways of life, actions, etc. Relating to the literary works, the values and the norms are the reflection of the social condition. *Tuesdays with Morrie* written by Mitch is based on true story of his conversation with his professor and it is the novel empowered by those rules. This research uses the philosophical approach to the literary works because *Tuesdays with Morrie* is based on true story novel reflecting the social condition especially worth of good will. This research concludes that the character of Morrie has his own perspectives about the norms and the values focusing on the importance of relationship. That view is uttered by Morrie to Mitch in the forms of advice, criticism, and suggestions. From this research, it can be concluded that there are some inspirations of life aspect based on Morrie's view : wisdom and sincerity. The wisdom has six types : wisdom in self-pity, self-regretting, giving and forgiving, controlling the emotion, facing the aging, dealing with financial and cultural problems. The sincerity has three types : sincerity in love, marriage and family, and friendship.

**Keywords :** *philosophical approach, life inspirations, wisdom, sincerity*



## **LIFE INSPIRATION AS SEEN IN *TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE* NOVEL**

Oleh : Jamilatun

### **ABSTRAK**

Manusia sebagai makhluk sosial saling berhubungan antara manusia yang satu dengan lainnya. Dalam bermasyarakat manusia harus menyesuaikan diri sesuai nilai-nilai kemanusiaan. Nilai adalah suatu konsep abstrak yang digunakan oleh masyarakat sebagai orientasi dalam berfikir, bereaksi, gaya hidup, dan lain-lain. Di dalam hubungannya dengan karya sastra, nilai merupakan suatu aspek yang terkandung di dalamnya sebagaimana karya sastra merupakan cerminan dari keadaan sosial, termasuk nilai-nilai sosial, di suatu masyarakat. *Tuesdays with Morrie* karya Mitch Albom adalah salah satu karya sastra yang di dalamnya sarat akan nilai-nilai kemanusiaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan filosofi terhadap karya sastra, karena *Tuesdays with Morrie* merupakan novel yang diangkat dari kisah nyata, sehingga di dalamnya terdapat suatu gambaran yang nyata mengenai kondisi sosial masyarakat terutama nilai-nilai kehidupan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Morrie Schwartz mempunyai pandangan tersendiri terhadap nilai-nilai yang difokuskan pada pentingnya hubungan antar sesama manusia. Pandangan tersebut disampaikan Morrie Schwartz melalui dialog dalam bentuk opini, kritik, maupun saran. Dari penelitian ini, dapat disimpulkan bahwa dari pandangan hidup Morrie Schwartz dapat diambil beberapa aspek inspirasi kehidupan : kebijaksanaan dan keikhlasan. kebijaksanaan ada enam macam : kebijaksanaan dalam mengasihani diri sendiri, penyesalan diri, memberi dan meminta maaf, mengontrol emosi, menghadapi penuaan, keuangan dan budaya. Keikhlasan ada tiga macam : keikhlasan dalam cinta, keikhlasan dalam pernikahan dan keluarga, dan keikhlasan dalam persahabatan.

Kata kunci: *pendekatan filosofi, inspirasi kehidupan, kebijaksanaan, keikhlasan*

*MOTTO*

*“Don’t assume that it is too late to get involved”*

*(Morrie Schwartz)*

*“The influence of a teacher is eternal; It never knows when the  
effect ends”*

*(Henry Adams)*

*“Once you learn how to die, you learn how to live”*

*(Morrie Schwartz)*

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this graduating paper

for:

My beloved Mother and Father

My sister and brother

My big family

and

My great teachers and lecturers

English Literature of UIN Sunan

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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

Literature is cultural product. It becomes mirror and reflection of social condition in every stage of human experiences. It is used as a medium to express ideas, concepts, and feelings. As human product, literature does not come from blank space and appear suddenly, it is presented in particular culture, time and civilization. Humans also use literary works as a means of communication to deliver ideas, thoughts, concepts and feelings. Basically, it is like the functions of the language but the literary works have different ways to deliver it such the use of figurative languages. Producing literary works is not simple because the author should think it deeply. At the same time, the particular situation, culture, time, civilization and condition could be strong motivation of an author in composing his/her literary work.

Further, the creation of the literary works may impact to the readers as the information to straightforwardly tell what really happens to the author, to invite the readers to feel the same situation based on the author's experiences, or to lead the readers into their beyond imagination. Furthermore, the literary work can be divided into two categories; fiction and non-fiction. Fiction is any literary narrative, whether in prose or verse, which is invented instead of being an account of events that actually happened. In narrower sense, fiction denotes only narrative that are written in prose (Abrams, 1997:116) while non-fiction is the opposite meaning of the fiction. In different sentences, the fiction work is a form of

literature which only occurs as the imagination. Literary works which are included in these categories are novels, short stories, dramas or anything containing unreal and untrue information; and non-fictional work is a form of literature which contains fact and truth is based on real information such as the scientific works (Nurgiyantoro, 1995:2)

The comparison of the definition about fiction and non-fiction above indicates that the fictional work can be produced relating to author imagination and the story has its context. This work does not only talk about the story presented in the text, but also tells the story behind the text such as the social condition of the human. This research pays more attention to the novel which basically is included into fictional work.

Although the novel has the same elements like the short story, but novels present more details about the quality of chronological story, the characters, the settings, the plots, etc. Hence, novels offer the specific qualification to narrate the story since the beginning, the rising, the climax, and the ending. Another opinion of the novel comes from Reeve. He states that a novel is a picture of reality and manner of the time in which it was written (1785: 26). That statement argues as an affirmation that a novel is the portrayal of human life along with their behavior in reality. This portrayal deals as the representation which may concern about culture, education, politics, and social condition.

In the view that literary works involve in the human activity, literary work is not an inanimate object. This is a mean to link between the authors and the readers with the figurative speech and the elements of the fiction. This is

functioned to touch the reader's feeling, to share a pleasure, and a lesson. Similarly, Watt convinces that a good literary work will impact the readers as pleasure and instruction, give pleasure feeling, and lesson to stimulate the life spirit (as cited in Endaswara, 1989:109).

Concerning Watt's statement, the writer finds one of the novel which has that quality entitled *Tuesday with Morrie*. This novel is written by Mitch Albom. He also put himself as one of characters in the novel. At glance, as the beginning of the story, the author introduces two characters, Mitch as a student and Morrie as a professor. This novel narrates their relationship like the student and his professor who are suspected with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). They have close relation, and care each other. Unfortunately, they have to say farewell. Passing the time, after being separated for very long time, they gather again and Mitch finds out that Morrie is suspected to suffer ALS syndrome. Then, the story goes on with Morrie's spirit. Every Tuesday, Mitch comes to the college; he meets his professor in his place. Both of them share thoughts, giving inspirations and loving the rest of life with full of sincerity even discussing about feeling of regret, forgiveness, family, death, etc.

From the reason above, the writer prefers this novel to others because this novel speaks more than a person suffering ALS syndrome; it also talks about the spirit of a person who enjoys the rest of his life. Secondly, this novel gives such motivations for the readers in how to appreciate every stage of their life. Thirdly, among the other novels, this novel is the first novel describing about a dangerous disease in America, it is ALS.



Although, Mitch has written several motivation novels, but this novel is special for him since it is dedicated to his professor. With these reasons, the writer feels interested to analyze the novel and pays more attention in what are the aspects of life inspiration which focuses on the life of Morrie who suffers from ALS syndrome.

Since the novel deals with the life inspirations, the writer applies the philosophical approach of literature to analyze some aspects of life inspirations. Philosophical approach is a critical way, to understand, to analyze and to give value to literary works by considering the values presented in the literary work. Thus, in philosophical approach of literature, literature is seen as not standing alone as a product of a particular culture, or art as “art” but it exists and its existence should be understood with its social context. The purpose of this study is to inspire the readers that the simple story can teach them the valuable aspects of life which are useful for understanding the meaning of life.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

This research focuses on the character in the novel entitled *Tuesdays with Morrie*. The study concerns on the life inspiration of *Morrie* to face his ALS. Then, the problem statement relating to the topic is

“what are the aspects of life inspiration of Morrie in *Tuesdays with Morrie*?”

### 1.3 Objective of Study

In accordance with the problem statement, the purpose of this research is to describe the aspects of life inspiration of Morrie in *Tuesdays with Morrie*

### 1.4 Significances of study

In this research, the writer hopes that this study is useful for others whether as the new storage of knowledge or the contribution for several people only. At least, this may be significant for:

1. English literature student: a study about literature is a study about the meaning of life, understanding and giving value to every moment of life. Hopefully this research will be useful for English literature students who seek the meaning of life.

2. Researchers: this study can be analyzed with different perspectives. This study also can be compared, explored, and analyzed deeply through different theories. Hopefully, the next researcher will give an additional support and a criticism to this research.

3. Common people: this research is not limited to particular group. Hopefully, this research is also beneficial for common people who are interested in seeking for inspiration through literary works, especially novels. Hopefully, by reading this research, common people will be inspired to face their life.

### 1.5 Literature Review

Related to this research, the writer finds some researchers relating to this object, *Tuesdays with Morrie*. First is Kartika Daris Tiani from Brawijaya University (2014) in her thesis, “Morrie Schwartz’s Perspectives on American Values in Mitch Albom’s *Tuesdays with Morrie*”. She uses the sociology of literature in her study because *Tuesdays with Morrie* is based on a true story which contains real descriptions of American culture and social condition, especially the values.

The result of Tiani’s study, she reveals that Morrie Schwartz has his own perspectives toward American values. Most of his concern is about the importance of human relation above all values. Those perspectives are delivered through Morrie Schwartz’s opinions, criticisms, and suggestions. At the same time, Morrie Schwartz has the idea of intimate individualism, a state of being free to express oneself yet fully consider about relating to others. Then, she also convinces that Morrie also has a thought that material possessions is not the key to happiness, but love within human relationship is. Family and marriage are believed to be the spheres to decrease individualism and materialism. To Morrie Schwartz, growing old is not the limitation for people to be actively productive (Tiani, 2014).

Second is Tong Su Hsien from University of Malaya (2012) as a thesis entitled, “Circumstantial Meanings in *Tuesdays with Morrie*: A Systematic Functional Perspective”. The current study attempts to examine the use of Circumstantial elements in the memoir *Tuesdays with Morrie: An old man, a young man, and life’s greatest lesson* by Mitch Albom. Drawing from Halliday

and Matthiessen's (2004) System of Circumstantiation, this study aims to reveal the choices of Circumstantial elements in the data and relate how the choices are used to fulfill the text's social purpose of recounting. Hence, this study attempts to give importance to the System of Circumstantiation. Among the four types of Circumstances of Expansion, Enhancing plays a significant role in expanding a text as it predominates at 87.76% (Matthiessen, 2004)

Third is Leonardo Herlangga from Sanata Dharma University (2009) as a thesis entitled, "Morrie's View of Life Based on Buddhist Philosophy as Reflected in Mitch Albom's Tuesdays with Morrie". His research questions are (1) how is Morrie's described in the novel? (2) what ia Morrie's view of life based on Buddhist philosophy as reflected in the novel. He uses the theory of characterization and using references of Buddhist philosophy. He makes a conclusions that Morrie is a wise man.

The previous researches above show that they use the same object as the writer, however this is different on the subject. In this research, the writer applies the philosophical approach and sociology of literature concerning on the life inspirations of Morrie. This can be seen on the problem statement that the writer struggles to answer; what aspects of life inspiration of Morrie in *Tuesdays with Morrie* are.

## 1.6 Theoretical Approach

### 1.6.1. Philosophical approach

This research applies the philosophical approach. Philosophical approach concerns in the relation between subject and object, between human being and reality in philosophical view. The aim of philosophy is understanding, which necessitates the examination of the relation between awareness of the world and the world as the material of awareness (Dunkel, 1953: 25 ).

Hogan said that moral or philosophical approach in literature purposes to teach morality and to probe philosophical issues. Thus, literary work is not only presented stories, but also must exhibit moralism and utilitarianism (Hogan, 2000: 01). Similar to Hogan, Proclus also believes that literary works can also be a way of conveying moral or philosophical truth since it is possible to convey divinity directly (as quoted in Day, 2008; 76).

Literature or *sastra* is derived from Sanskrit, the term *shastra* which means a text containing, instruction or orientation. It is constructed from the word *sa* which means ‘instruction’ or ‘tenet’ and *tra* which means ‘tool’ or ‘medium’. Thus, *sastra* or literature is a collection of tool or medium for teaching, a good manual book or learning book (Ratna, 2003:1).

Wellek and Warren in the *Theory of Literature* emphasize that literary work can be more universal and hence more philosophical than historical texts. The universality of literature made it became different with language which not excluded in literary work (1949 ; 7).

Further, philosophical approach is useful for literary work which presents an obvious moral philosophy. It is also useful when considering the themes of a universal human phenomenon. Indeed, in philosophical approach, literary work is not viewed merely as an “art” or “Literary work” isolated from all moral implication. Directly or indirectly, literature can affect the readers, thus the message in literary work is important.

Abram states that literary work which contains moral lesson and inspiration also can be classified as didactic literature. Didactic literature is a kind of literature which is intended to give some instructions, either in religion, or philosophy (1999: 65). Thus, didactic literature will give both lesson and pleasure.

The main point of philosophical approach in literature is describing or evaluating a work in term of ideas and value it contains. It means, it is examining a work’s ideas and values, either expressed by narrator directly or characters implied by overall design and content. Elmer More explained that to evaluate the quality of work’s idea and value by certain criteria, such as truth, usefulness and clarity. Besides looking idea is looking for general way in how the image, character presented in literary work (1989 : 2).

Philosophical approach in literary works has some values. First is as collection of guidance and usually positive principles. Second is value to determine thought, belief, opinion, behavior and action. Third is belief of person in social group in which they have an emotional investment. Fourth, to identify the value underlying literature is to understand the writer purposes and objective position (Elmer More, 1989: 3).

## **1.7 Method of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

The method used in this research is a qualitative method. Endaswara defines that a qualitative research is a research done by not prioritizing numbers, but put the depth appreciation of the interaction between concepts that are being studied empirically (2004:5). This research uses qualitative method because the data does not deal with numberings and graphics. In fact, the writer has to elaborate the data which is in the form of data narrated in word.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

The primary data are taken from *Tuesdays with Morrie* novel. The data of this research are sentences, paragraphs, or dialogues that illustrate life inspiration in *Tuesdays with Morrie*. On the other hand, the secondary data are taken from the books, journals, and internet that are relevant for this research.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

To collect the data, the writer uses the documentation. Subroto states that documentation technique use written material sources to assemble the data (1992:16). This technique is functioned to seek the meaning about the definition of life inspiration using the philosophical approach of literature theory.

Regarding this research, the writer assembles the data after reading the novel closely until comprehending the text. Then, the writer notices some conversations in the term of words, phrases, lexicons, and etc. Last, the writer rechecks before deciding the data of the research.



#### 1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

In this research, the writer applies descriptive analysis in data analysis technique. Ratna states that descriptive analysis is aimed at describing the facts continued by the analysis (2004:53). After the writer collects the data, the writer analyzes it in the following steps;

- a. Reviewing the data that have been collected.
- b. Analyzing life inspiration reflected in *Tuesdays with Morrie* novel with the chosen theory.
- c. Drawing conclusion based on the result of data research.

#### 1.8 Paper Organization

This paper is divided into four chapters. The first chapter describes the general information of the research including the background of study, problem statements, objectives of study, significances of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and also paper organization.

The second chapter explains the intrinsic elements of *Tuesdays with Morrie*. The intrinsic elements consist of plot, theme, character and characterization, setting, and point of view. In the third chapter, the writer analyzes about aspect of life inspiration perceived through intrinsic of *Tuesdays with Morrie* in detail.

The last chapter presents the conclusion of the research and the writer's suggestion. In this chapter the writer also gives some values from *Tuesdays with Morrie*.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

After analyzing the novel using philosophical approach of literature, and based on the description of the problem above, the novel *Tuesdays with Morrie* written by Mitch Albom deals with life inspiration. The process of conveying inspiration of life is contained in the dialogues of the characters. The writer describes some aspects of life inspiration that is taken from the point of view of Morrie Schwartz. Then, the inspirations are lessons of many things that happen in human life and those need interpretation to create a good person in society and find the meaning of life.

Relating to the problem statement of this research, on the aspects of life inspiration of Morrie in *Tuesdays with Morrie*, it can be concluded that there are two basic aspects of life inspiration; wisdom and sincerity. Those aspects appear based on the problems that Morrie faces in his life, like the disease of ALS. Starting from the wisdom, it can be divided into six types: wisdom in self-pity, self-regretting, giving and forgiving, controlling the emotion, facing the aging, and wisdom in facing financial and cultural.

Those wisdoms refer to his perspective to manage the problems. Then, the sincerity deals with the quality of being open and truthful; not deceitful or hypocritical. Part of sincerity are, love, friendship, marriage, and family. With wisdom and sincerity, Morrie finds a virtue in facing difficulties in his life.

## 4.2 Contribution to Islamic Studies

The novel is not only entertain but also gives education. This novel talks about the basic idea of the other side. The novel *Tuesdays with Morrie* contains universally moral value and inspiration. The universal idea about life inspiration also obtained in Islamic teaching. Islam as religion contains general ideas about inspiration which are very useful for mankind. As cited in Al-Nahl 70:

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْ لَا يَعْلَمَ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ (70)

*“and Allah created you; then he will take you in death. And among you is he who is reversed to the most decrepit (old) age so that he will not know, after (having had) knowledge, a thing. Indeed, Allah is knowing and competent” (16: 70).*

From the verses above, there are several lessons that can be obtained. First is about death and life. Both death and life are in the hand of Allah, human being has no authority in it. Second is about life's quality, the quality of life cannot be measured from old or young age. The proper measurement is being useful or being wasteful in social life.

## 4.3 Suggestion

The researcher realizes that this analysis is not so deep. The researcher hopes this research will be completed in the research done by another researcher. *Tuesdays with Morrie* is a great novel, It can be analyzed from different perspectives. Thus, the writer hopes this novel will be explored again.

However, the novel can be recommended for research-based structural analysis and can also be analyzed by using other theories of the sociology of literature, such as psychology of literature to further explore the psychological character in the face of any problems that occur on every character.



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### Work Experience:

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