

**Tribhuvan University**

**Optimistic Outlook as an Assertion of Meaningful Life: An Existential Humanist**

**Reading of Mitch Albom's *tuesdays with Morrie***

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**in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of**

**Master of Arts in English**

**By**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Ms Durga Sangraula has completed her thesis entitled “Optimistic Outlook as an Assertion of Meaningful Life: An Existential Humanist Reading of Mitch Albom’s *tuesdays with Morrie*” under my supervision. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for the final viva voce.

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This thesis entitled “Optimistic Outlook as an Assertion of Meaningful Life: An Existential Humanist Reading of Mitch Albom’s *tuesdays with Morrie*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Durga Sangraula has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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### **Abstract**

This dissertation entitled "Optimistic Outlook as an Assertion of Meaningful Life in Mitch Albom's *tuesdays with Morrie*" is an analysis of the novel with the view point of Existential Humanism. This study attempts to scrutinize the optimism as an outlook of momentous life. The representative voice of Morrie envelops the position of the people under this domain. Morrie voices for all those people who seek to rediscover their life finding a true meaning to live. Following the same tone, the study will relocate the approaches of people in general and Morrie in particular. Along with this, this research has attempted to challenge the "pop culture" and show how optimism can be the foundation of meaningful life.

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### **I. Existential Traits in Mitch Albom's *tuesdays with Morrie***

The optimistic outlook in *tuesdays with Morrie* can be seen as an assertion of meaningful existence in several aspects of human life. This research entitled “Optimistic Outlook as an Assertion of Meaningful Life” analyzes Mitch Albom's *tuesdays with Morrie* (1997) from the perspective of “Existential Humanist” studies. The term, ‘Existential Humanism’ is coined by the renowned existentialist Jean- Paul Sartre in his essay *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946; trans.1948). In this essay, he defends existentialism from the attack especially made by communists that it is gloomy or hopelessness.

In this novel, the protagonist is suffering from deadly disease. Despite of his unbearable pain, he doesn't surrender before death; rather he describes the art of living through his own feeling and achievement. In this novel, Morrie Schwartz is the protagonist and death itself is the antagonist. It is an autobiographical novel written by a student named Mitch Albom to his dying professor Morrie Schwartz. In this sense, it can be regarded as a living homage to a beloved professor. The novel has been divided into different chapters that are titled as “The First Tuesday”, “The Second Tuesday” and so on. The novel in itself is an art of living and it gives the complete art of overall ways of life to which Mitch makes the guidelines for his confusing state of life.

Morrie, in the novel suffers from ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral sclerosis) disease. It is a fatal, progressive neurological disease characterized by a gradual degeneration of the nerves that activated the muscles of the body. Its symptoms appear anywhere. Slowly and gradually, it afflicts the entire body with total atrophy of the muscles. It ends with complete paralysis. Death comes from the weakening of the respiratory action of the chest and diaphragm, making breathing ineffective. If the

patient does not maintained on respiratory s/he will slip in to a coma and die. Despite of his grave illness, he makes an effort to get relief from the disease. He remains happy and inspirational even after he is being overwhelmed by the progression of Lou Gehrig disease. Morrie never withers psychologically. Instead, he makes death, as his final project, the center point of his remaining days. He keeps on his effort to make meaningful life. Morrie determines to live life up to the very end, since he believes that we can't experience anything without living.

Morrie is one of the Mitch's favorite professors in college, at Brandeis University. Of course, he is heading towards his end even though Morrie is innovative and inspirational to those who are around him. He even beholds his own living funeral which provides him the opportunity to hear the praise and tribute paid up on him. In addition, there are several flashback techniques which grasp each and every important moment spent by Morrie. Mitch Albom, the writer of the novel regards Morrie's views as a guide to the confusing state of life. In different fourteen chapters, the writer has discussed with Morrie about the different stages of life. Furthermore, all human being can learn the lesson that how one should live life and what are the roles of different things like, love, money, culture, friends, family members etc. in our lives.

*tuesdays with Morrie*, published in 1997, is the novel of the relationship between the dying professor and his students i.e. author himself. It is utterly based on the real history of the professor, a dying man. The protagonist of the novel is an epitome of the whole human beings. The feeling and attitudes of the protagonist towards the 'Death' is one of the major themes of the novel.

According to *Literary Biography of Mitch Albom* (2007), Mitch Albom, the writer of this novel, was born on May 23, 1958 in Passaic New Jersey, USA. He was the middle of three children to Rhoda Albom and Ira Albom. His family moved to the



Buffalo, New York area briefly before settling in Oaklyn. Albom grew up wanting to be a cartoonist before switching to music. He taught himself to play piano and even played in bands, including The Lucky Tiger Grease Stick Band, throughout his adolescence. After attending high school in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, he left for college after his journey year. He earned a Bachelor's Degree in 1979 at Brandies University in Waltham, Massachusetts, majoring in sociology. Stayed true to his dream of life in music, he worked for several years as a performer, both in Europe and America. He wrote and produced the recording of several songs. In his early 20's, while living in New York, he took an interest in journalism and volunteered to work for a local weekly paper, *The Queens Tribune*. Eventually he earned Master's Degree from Columbia University's graduate school of journalism, followed by an MBA from Columbia University's graduate school of Business. During this time, he paid his tuition partly through work as a piano player.

Eventually, Albom paid full-time to his writing, working as a freelance sport journalist in New York for publications such as *Sports Illustrated*, *GEO*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. His first full time newspaper job was a feature writer and then after sport columnist for *The Lauder News Sentinel* in Florida. He moved to Detroit in 1985, where he became a nationally acclaimed sports journalist at the Detroit Free Press and one of the best-known media figures in that city's history, working in newspaper, radio and television. He currently hosts a daily talk show on WJR radio (AIRS Monday through Friday, 5-7 pm EST) and appears regularly on ESPN sports reports and sports center.

In 1995, he married Janine Sabino. That same year, he re-encountered Morrie Schwartz, a former college professor who was dying of ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. His visits with Schwartz would lead him to the book *tuesdays with*

*Morrie*, which moved Mitch away from sports and began his career as an internationally recognized author.

In fact, Alбом's writing can be regarded as the experiences of common people. In his works, he uses the moments when he was overwhelmed by human emotion. And then he thinks what was behind those moments that happened to push him to that point. This is the cause of his artistic creation. According to *Literary Biography of Mitch Albom* (2007), his first novel, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* (2003) is the most successful US hardcover first adult novel ever. This novel has been turned in to a successful TV movie in 2004 which was the most watched TV movie of the year, with nineteen million viewers. His own uncle Eddie was the source of his inspiration for this novel. Likewise, *For One More Day* (2006) is his most recent, debuted at No. One on the *New York Times Bestseller List* and spent nine month in the list. The inspiration for this novel came, again, from a real person, his mother, who stood up for him all his life. This has been turned into successful film in December 2007.

According to *Literary Biography of Mitch Albom* (2007), *tuesdays with Morrie* (1997) is the chronicle of Mitch's moment spent with his beloved professor. It remained four years on the *New York Times Bestseller List* and is now the most successful memoir ever published. Its film version produced in December 1999. The film generated four Emmy awards, including the best film. And obviously, his beloved professor Morrie Schwartz and his unique personality and unique approach to dying were the inspiration for *tuesdays with Morrie* along with the need to pay his medical bills. According to Scott Peck, M.D., author of *The Road Less Traveled*, "A beautifully written book of great clarity and wisdom that lovingly captures the simplicity beyond life's complexities" (12).

Beside these, Mitch has written many other different genres of books. He himself accepts that all of his books begin with feelings and experiences that he has had himself. And the characters of his works are mostly the real people whom he meets in his course of life. *tuesdays with Morrie* is the burning example of his writing capacity on the real basis. It visualizes his awareness and responsibility regarding human and humanity.

Martin Kohn states that *tuesdays with Morrie*, by Mitch Albom, is the phenomenal *New York Times Bestseller* that first appeared in October 1997. It has been featured in many national publications including People Magazine, TV Guide, and Redbook. It is an autobiographical novel in which Mitch Albom is real and Morrie Schwartz as well. Albom is the author of the book. In this novel, Morrie is suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease which is still regarded as incurable disease. Commenting the book, *tuesdays with Morrie*, Joseph Planta says that the real protagonist's chats are in this book and they never fail to touch one's heart and move him/her. In his view:

*tuesdays with Morrie* is a good book. It breaks your heart when you read about the physical decline Morrie goes through. It lifts your spirit knowing how much wisdom is learned by both men. Wisdom is learned spending some time with someone you love and look up to. Morrie Schwartz was a smart man. He was a professor for a life's career. But it was not until the disease struck him that he really understood life. There is not any sort of religion pushed through the lesson Morrie teaches, it's just honesty. (2-3)

*tuesdays with Morrie* gives the true picture of life. Through the conversation of Mitch and Morrie we can be beneficial in various aspects. Of course, it should be taken as a

guideline for how one should lead his life according to the condition. In this sense, Morrie can be taken as the real master of the life. Martin Kohn examines the book as the precious treasure of life. He says:

Their Tuesdays seminar explore the perennial value of the everyday life: family, Emotion, Money, Marriage, Our Culture, Fear of Aging, etc. The interchanges fortunately, are studded with pearls of wisdom from Morrie. Not only is careful listening and wise telling extolled, but a subtext revealing. Algom's search for and discovery of discarded ideals also unfold in the book. (192)

*tuesdays with Morrie* is wonderful and realistic artifact that is beneficial for all human beings. Though the protagonist is going to die very soon his words are full of wisdom, as a whole optimistic outlook towards life.

Regarding this novel, Stephen Bowen presents his views. He considers this novel as the inspiration how one gets from other. It does not matter; materially how much one is prosperous. It is not the real source of happiness, but it comes from within. In his words:

He wasn't superstar athlete, a successful entrepreneur or a famous actor. He was not household name. His only claim to fame was on appearance on *The Nightline*. But ask anyone who knows him and they'll likely tell you that Morrie Schwartz made more of an impression on them than Michel Jordan, Bill Gates and Jodie Foster combined. *tuesdays with Morrie* (TWM) is more than just a dying man's last words. It is an inspirational recount of a man's life – a man whose passion for the human spirit has continued to live long after his last breath. (3-4)

In fact, Morrie has led a simple yet meaningful life that inspires anyone to live to the fullest. Regarding this, Morrie views that busy, unfulfilled lives, material things, lack of commitments, and craze for career are the things to make a man only a puppet. It always makes us pendulum. True meaning is not found in a career or how much money you make, or what size pants you fit into. It's about enjoying each and every moment and living with love in your heart.

For Jeffrey Hatcher, *tuesdays with Morrie* is a wonder novel which draws the reader in to its spell. Hatcher views:

This book surprised me very much. When I first saw and heard about the book I did not think it would be up to the hype some people gave it, but as soon as you get past the first two chapters this book draws you in. The death of Mitch's and Morrie's relationship is very detailed. Every lesson in the book can be covered to modern day life. This book both educates and states the truth of our society. As Mitch and Morrie get more and more close to the death of Morrie the book becomes harder to put down. We always want to know what Morrie will say about the next subject [. . .]. You will look at our world and society differently, like Morrie did. Life's greatest lesson is something hard to grasp, but Mitch Albom spells it out for everyone that reads book with Morrie's words. (43)

*tuesdays with Morrie* is really a magnificent text which consist of the very appealing story. It is regarded that, this novel is a courageous story of a dying man who faces each of his time boldly wishing that what can he gain? Instead of thinking what he is losing. In this regard, it is a deeply moving account of course and wisdom, shared by a chronic guru looking into the multi texture face of his own death. Consequently, a

reader or a listener can get various lessons from this novel. Alбом brings out the facts and believes on the law of nature. For him, everything happens for the sake of betterment. Regarding this Robert Bly, author of *Iron John*, views that no one can escape of the Nature's Law. He opines:

This story of Mitch Alбом and Morrie Schwartz illustrates many universal truths including this law of nature. And perhaps that law has an emotional equivalent as well. Morrie's illness and death gives Mitch a prospective that directly changes his life. This very success that caused him to neglect the most important things become the means to send Morrie's message to all who need reminders of what these things are- Action and Reaction. (208)

In this regard, it can be said that human being has a kind of emotional attachment. But it is overlapped by different imbibitions which make them selfish. Otherwise, goodness is the inner quality of human being. If anyone would realize this thing, it would bring a sea change in the lifestyle of that person. In this novel Mitch is the burning example who underwent that type of change. The very message is conveyed through this novel and through the Mitch as well.

Immediately after its publication, *tuesdays with Morrie* is being examined from various angles by different critics. This novel is highly appreciated from humanistic point of view. On the other hand, the further study and analysis on it in the light of existential perspective seems to expand its meaning. The present dissertation is an attempt to show how existentialism affects on the overall way of human life.

Existentialism is a philosophical position based on the belief that human is a philosophical thinking being with human subject. It is not merely the thinking subject, but the acting, feeling, living human individual. Existentialism is the movement that is

usually traced back to the nineteenth-century Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard coined by Jean– Paul Sartre. It's a vast term and does not designate any system or school. There are some philosophers who might be described as existentialists but who would reject the title. And, other who might be surprised to be described so. Giving meaning and showing significance of existentialism, Simon Blackburn in Oxford dictionary of philosophy states:

A loose title for various philosophies that emphasized certain common themes: the individual, the experience of choice, and the absence of rational understanding of the universe with a consequent dread or sense of absurdity in human life. The combination suggests an emotional tone or mood rather than a set of deductively related thesis, and existentialism attained its zenith in Europe following the disenchantments of the Second World War. (129-30)

In this regard, existentialism is a loose title given to various philosophies. And it doesn't indicate only the individuality and irrational understanding rather it has optimistic side as well. So far, as people take it as an absurd philosophy, it was none other than the result of the disenchantment of the Second World War.

In addition, Margaret Drabble in her *The Oxford Companion English Literature* clarifies the theories advanced by different existentialist writers diverge widely in many important respects. So that it would be misleading to speak of a philosophical 'school' or movement. Certain underlying themes can be signaled out as characteristic. She views:

Existentialists tend, for example, to emphasize the unique and particular in human experience; they place the individual person at the centre of their picture of the world, are suspicious of philosophical or

psychological doctrines that obscure his essential individuality by speaking as if there were some abstract human nature; some set of general laws or principles, to which men are determined or required, by their common humanity, to conform. Each man is what choose to be or himself. (329)

In this sense, it is a kind philosophy of human being which places the individual person at the centre. But it doesn't mean that it discards humanity. Rather it believes men are determined by common humanity. Existentialism can be seen as a largely practical philosophy in its intentions. And, it has had more impact upon literature than any other kind of philosophy.

In this regard, it seems that it is a twentieth century philosophical movement embracing diverse doctrines. But it centers on analysis of individual existence in an unfathomable universe and the plight of the individual who must assume ultimate responsibility for his acts of free will without any certain knowledge of what is right or wrong and good or bad. Richard Tarnas seems little bit pessimistic regarding human existence; his eventual focus is on the becoming only by struggle. Tarnas states:

The infinity of human aspiration was defeated before the finitude of human possibility. Man possessed no determining essence: only his existence engulfed by morality, risk, fear, ennui, contradiction, uncertainty. No transcendent absolute guaranteed on his own. All was contingent. To be authentic one had to admit, and choose freely to encounter, the stark reality of life's meaninglessness. Struggled alone gave meaning. (389)



For some philosophers, existentialism is something which indicates towards the isolated being. They even say that men are thrown in to this universe to suffer their predicament. They assume that without struggle there is no meaning of life. They even emphasize that there is absolute truth which determines the meaning of life. Everything changes in course of time and action. To make it clear, M.H. Abram in his famous book *Glossary of Literary Terms* says:

After 1940s, however, there was widespread tendency, especially prominent in the existential philosophy of men of letters such as Jean – Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, to view a human being as an isolated existent who is cast in to an alien universe, the universe as possessing no inherent truth, value, or meaning, and to represent human life, as it moves from the nothingness whence it came toward the nothingness where it must end, as an existence which is both anguished and absurd.

(1)

In fact, human existence used to be taken as meaningless and it is filled with anguish and absurdity. It is considered that there are not any hard and fast rules that determined universal truth. Following the same token, Martin Heidegger tries to examine the essential structure of experience, with the aim of establishing the Universal truth necessary to basic consciousness.

Similarly, Jean- Paul Sartre in his later works indicates that existentialism is humanism. By that he meant existentialists start from nothing but humanity itself. The concept of his full humanistic outlook can be found in his popular essay *Existentialism is a Humanism*. Sartre wrote this essay to defend existentialism from the attack made by different critics and especially communist, like Mile, Mercier. Sartre tries to defend

existentialism against the charge that it was a negative, gloomy, and depressing philosophy. In his own words:

It is a philosophy which inspires people to action by showing them the extent of their freedom to action, and it also shows them that they are responsible not only for their own destinies but for other people's as well. (19)

The existentialist does not even believe in the power of passion. He will never regard a grand passion as a destructive torrent upon which a man is swept into certain action as by fate, and which, therefore, is an excuse for them. He thinks that man himself is responsible for his passion. Neither will nor existential think that a man can find help through some sign being vouchsafed upon earth for his orientation: for he thinks that the man himself interprets the sign as he chooses. He thinks that every man without any support or help whatever is condemned at every instant to invent man. Sartre himself accepts that man is condemned to be free.

For existentialism, the starting point is that everything would be permitted in the absence of God. Everything indeed permitted if god does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or outside himself. Sartre clarifies:

For indeed existence precedes essence, one will never be able to explain one's action by reference to a given and specific human nature; in other words, there is no determinism- man is free, man is freedom. Nor, on the other hand, if God does not exist, are we provided with any values or commands that could legitimize our behavior. Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. We are left alone, without excuse. That is what I

mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does. (13)

Sartre clarifies the meaning of anguish, in his book *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946). Sartre himself replies that man is always in 'anguish'. His meaning of 'anguish' is "when a man commits himself to anything, fully realizing that he is not only choosing what he will be, but at the same time, a legislator deciding for the whole of mankind"(3). In such a moment a man cannot escape from the sense of complete and profound responsibility. For abandonment, he replies "we ourselves decide our being and with this abandonment goes anguish" (4). As for despair, the meaning of this expression is extremely simple for him. It merely means that we limit ourselves to reliance upon that which is within our wills, or within the sum of the probabilities which render our action feasible. Whenever one wills anything, there are always these elements of probability.

What is the very heart and the center of existentialism is the absolute character of the free commitment. From this, every man realizes himself on realizing a type of humanity. A commitment is always understandable no matter what epoch. And, it's bearing upon the relativity of the cultural pattern which may results from such absolute commitment. There is no difference between free being. Being as self-committal, as existence chooses its essence and absolute being. And there is no difference whatever between being as absolute, temporarily localized that is, localized in history and universally intelligible being. Concluding the essay *Existentialism is a Humanism*, Sartre states:

I have been reproached for suggesting that existentialism is a form of humanism: people have said to me, but I have written in my *Nausee* that the humanists are wrong; I have even ridiculed a certain type of humanism, why do I now go back upon that? (49)

Following the same token Sartre clarifies that, in every purpose there is universality, in this sense that every purpose is comprehensible to every man. Not this or that purpose defines man forever, but that it may be entertained again and again. There is always some way of understanding an idiot, a child, a primitive man, or a foreigner if one has sufficient information. In this sense, we may say that there is a human universality. But it is not something granted for Sartre. Rather it is being perpetually made. Sartre views, “I make this universality in choosing myself; I also make it by understanding the purpose of any other man, of whatever epoch. This absoluteness of the act of choice does not alter the relativity of each epoch” (5).

In response, Sartre, in his *Existentialism is a Humanism*; says that one has to take things as they are. Moreover, to say that one invents values means neither more nor less than this; that there is no sense in life a priori. For him, “life is nothing until it is lived; but it ones to make sense of, and the value of it is nothing else but the sense that one chooses” (17). Therefore, one can see that there is possibility of creating a human community.

Similarly, the protagonist, Morrie in *tuesdays with Morrie*, subverts the cultural norms, which is prevailed in the society, that the human being is a isolated, alienated and absurd being who is characterized by disorientation and meaninglessness. His self created lifestyle becomes greatest lesson not only for his beloved student Mitch but also for the reader whoever read him as a ‘human

textbook'. He offers to create the suitable culture if the pop culture prevents them to be comfort.

The present research work has been divided in to three chapters. First chapter is the introductory outline of the novel, writer and the methodology 'existential humanism' as theoretical tools .The second chapter will analyze the text as a considerable length with a critical summary. It will try to prove the hypothesis sorting out some evidences from the text. Last but not the list is the conclusion of this research. It is based on the textual analysis in the third chapter.

## II. Optimistic Outlook as an Assertion of Meaningful Life in *tuesdays with Morrie*

The passion of Morrie to live more as well as meaningful life in *tuesdays with Morrie* reflects Jean –Paul Sartre, in his essay *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), states as existentialism starts from nothing but humanity itself. For Morrie, essence of life is not gloom or hopelessness but renewed confidence in the significance of being human. In other words, Morrie reveals existential humanist features along with optimistic attitude about the capacity of a man. He makes the readers to realize that human nature is purely good. As Sartre says, each and every human being is capable of living up to the existential humanist ideals of rationality and morality. If anything is required that is the right use of our potential and the help of others. The ultimate goal is human flourishing, making life better for all of us. Some existential humanist, especially atheist like Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, do believe in some sort of an afterlife. But the focus here is on doing good and well in here and now i.e. at present, and living the better world for those who come after us. It doesn't believe on suffering throughout the life considering that s/he would be rewarded afterwards.

The optimistic outlook in *tuesdays with Morrie* can be seen in several aspects of human life. As to make clear this statement, Morrie, the protagonist of the novel regards that love always brings meaning in life. He further adds that without love, a person may as well be dead. For him, love is something very important which gives spirit to the loving one. Clarifying this fact, Jean –Paul Sartre says:

Love is not primarily to be explained in term of 'ownership'. The man who wants to be loved does not really desire the enslavement of the beloved. He is not bent of becoming the object of a devoting which flows forth automatically. (118)

In Morrie's view, love simply does not mean care of or for other, it is often called spiritual security. It does not deprive a person from his/ her freedom. Morrie believes, if we do not have love, we do not have anything at all. Morrie quotes Auden in saying "love each other or perish" (91). In Morrie's terms, compassion, and acceptance – of others and of oneself help us to be "fully human". He quotes Levin, who says, "love is the only rational act" (51). Morrie means that love is the foremost human behavior that comes naturally to all. Love is so irrational; it can be argued that it is in itself a rational act, even in all of its mystery.

Morrie prefers a new culture because he has experienced a bitter taste of one sided culture. Morrie means to create such a culture where there is value of good relationship and love. For him, one should have the right and revolutionary choice of own culture. He states, "Every society has its own problems. The way to do it, I think, isn't to run away. You have to work at creating your own culture" (156). Right culture generally leads people towards happiness. William Barret in his famous book

*Irrational Man* says:

Nietzsche, like Kierkegaard and like all true Existential philosophers wished to free people from the shackles of illusion. The illusion in this case is of course that of the immutability of first scientific and then moral law. Most people simply accept without question the morality of their society, and feel themselves bound by it. Nietzsche tells that they are not really bound, they have being human, the will which enables them to adopt some different law for themselves. (17)

Moreover, in exposing the social problems, Morrie talks directly about culture and its product, young people. The sense of love and good relationship in modern society has become scarce. For Morrie, culture in modern society lacks its true value

consequently, unable to provide a better relationship for the young generation. Morrie exemplifies the frequency of getting divorce within the six months of marriage to prove his point. The young generation is further victimized by many social affairs. The blame doesn't go to them but to the culture and its trend because it has taught them in the very way.

So Morrie is worried about young couple who aren't able to recognize their partner as well. Regarding this pop culture Morrie opines:

In this culture, it's so important to find a loving relationship with someone because so much of the culture does not give you that. But the poor kids today, they are too selfish to take part in a real loving relationship, or they rush into marriage and those six months later, they get divorced. They don't know what they want in a partner. They don't know who they are themselves so how can they know who they're marrying? (148)

Regarding the problems with marriage in this generation, Morrie views that it is so important in today's culture to find a loving relationship; he feels that people are either too selfish to take part in a real marriage, or rush into marriage and get divorced shortly thereafter. These people rush in to marriage but do not know exactly what they want in a partner. The protagonist Morrie even talks about some essential rules that are true about love and marriage: respect for other person, compromise, open conversation and common, sets of values. The most important thing is that the two must believe in the importance of their marriage and loving relationship. It means someone is always watching over them. Morrie states, "If you don't have the support and love and caring and concern that you get from a family, you don't have much at all. Love is so



supremely important” (91). Time and again, Morrie quotes Auden’s view “love each other or perish” (91).

Likewise, Morrie feels that if he does not have his family around him during his sickness, it would be much harder for him. He feels safe knowing his family will never leave and always be watching out for him. He even feels that the love between family members goes hand to hand. Morrie depicts the net of love everywhere since he is nostalgic about it. He was deprived of it in his childhood and was away from the love of people at that time. He does not feel love in sympathy and pity rather claims it to be sharing of feelings. He prefers love and says:

Part of what a family is about, not just love, but letting others know other’s someone who is watching out for them. It’s what I missed so much when my mother died what I call yours spiritual security- knowing that your family will be there watching out for you. Nothing else will give that. Not money. Not fame. (92)

Morrie focuses on modern traits and says that these people are so hungry for love that they are even ready to substitute artificiality for it. They are embracing material things and expecting a sort of hug back. But it never works. He views, “You can’t substitute material things for love or for gentleness or for tenderness or for sense of comradeship” (125). People, is guided by materialistic culture in search of love and, are ready to substitute the space with material things. But Morrie disregards them and says that “money is not a substitute for tenderness, and power is not substitute for tenderness” (125). For Morrie, neither money nor does the power give the feeling what one is looking for. He criticizes that “there’s a big confusion in this country over what we want versus what we need” (126). It means it is difficult enough to get satisfaction from those things. We get them only when we devote ourselves to love others,

community around us, creating something that gives us purpose and meaning. But this purpose and meaning has nothing to do with our lives because love itself is bad faith.

According to Sartre, most of our lives spend in bad faith because we can never be fully sincere or even sure about who we are. The paradox of bad faith is stated most boldly in Sartre's famous claim that "I am what I am not, and I am not what I am" (86). It means we are not fully sincere or sure about our real identity. In fact, we are always in the process of becoming who we are; we are not finished as long as we live. We have the freedom to create ourselves and the freedom to change ourselves at any time. This view of Sartre can be realized in the protagonist, Morrie. For him, there is not any hard and fast rule for any task. According to him, we can do what our heart tells to do. He says, "Don't think that it is too late to get involve in life" (190). He was changing until the day he said good -bye.

The most important thing in life is how a person feels about his own life. Happiness gives spirit to life. Regarding this, Sartre views, "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (7). In this way, existentialism puts every man in possession of himself, and places the entire responsibility for his existence upon his own shoulders. When it is said that man is responsible for himself, it does not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but he is responsible for all men. Regarding this, Morrie says, "Be compassionate. And take responsibility for each other. If we only learned those lessons, this world would be so much better a place. Love each other or die" (163). Sartre talks about the word subjectivism. For him, subjectivism means, on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject and, on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity. Sartre states, "When we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that every one of us must choose himself; but

by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men” (13). On the other hand, Morrie takes the problems of other as his own. He says:

Why do you think it’s so important for me to hear other people’s problems? Don’t I have enough pain suffering of my own? Of course I do. But giving to other people is what makes me feel alive. Not my car or my house. Not what I look like in the mirror. When I give my time, when I can make someone smile after they were feeling sad, it is as close to healthy as I ever feel. (128)

It shows Morrie’s emotional attachment up on others. In this sense, Morrie believes that love and responsibility make the world better one. He even forgets his pain and suffering for the help of others. He feels alive and healthy in service of others. Morrie believes, to make other smile is greater than personal requirements. He believes in unconditional service.

Morrie assumes that mass culture discriminates people on the basis of diverse things. But he says that we should not discriminate any one, as nature never discriminates. Concerning this, Morrie states:

The problem is that we don’t we are as much alike as we are. Whites and blacks, Catholics and Protestants, men and women. If we saw each other as more alike, we might be very eager to join in one big human family in this world, and to care about that family the way we care about our own. (156)

Morrie, without discrimination anyone in the name of color, race, gender, religion, imagine the whole world as ‘a big family’. He believes, we must think others’ problems as our own. Morrie even adds that after joining this ‘one big family’ we

should take care of it. For Morrie these are the real human behavior that adds the meaning in life.

For Morrie, happiness depends on life's choice and culture often prevents us from our life's choice. He adds that after all we feel regret because of culture which forbids us in our choices. According to Morrie, our happiness depends on the ability of our choice which leads toward perfection, i.e. satisfaction. And the most important thing is that there is no condition where we can escape from the choice. However, this very choice leads to suffering eventually. Since an individual chooses to take birth in this world, he is compelled to face the entire social and cultural values, Thus, man is shackled in various social relations living not only for himself but for others as well. And for him, the choice too becomes the choice for others. Translating Sartre's view on choice Philip Mairet writes:

First they tax us with anarchy; then they say, you can't judge others, for there is no reason for preferring one purpose another; finally, they may say, everything merely voluntary in this choice of yours, you give away with one hand what you pretend to give with other. These three are not very serious objections. As to the first, to say that it does not matter what you choose is not correct. In one sense choice is possible, but what is not possible is not to choose. I can always choose but I must know that if I do not choose that is still a choice. (12)

In most of the cases, our choice is bound or shaped by the existing culture. For Morrie, media creates a culture of greed, violence, and lacking satisfaction. He even feels that we should reject pop culture, values and develop our own sense of values and culture. Morrie expresses that an individual may quit his culture or values and adopt others for one's own satisfaction. People become mean when they are

threatened. Our culture threatens us because it creates chaos and fear of losing our jobs, not earning enough money or not staying thin enough. For Morrie, we should even obey the small rules such as speed limits and red lights to make our life meaningful and worthy.

On the other hand, the protagonist feels that we should create our own “sub culture” determined for each individual; how and what we value etc. In Morrie’s words:

Here what I mean by building your own little sub-culture, I don’t mean you disregard ever rule of your community. I don’t go around naked, for example. I don’t run through red lights. The little things, I can obey. But the big things-how we think, what we value- those you must choose yourself. You can’t let anyone- or any society – determine those for you. (155)

All these characteristics should be chosen specifically by each individual and that one should not let a society to choose it for them. The hero of the novel Morrie has developed his own culture long before he got sick. He even believes that if we are successful at rejecting pop culture, we will lead more meaningful lives. Morrie states “the culture we have, does not make people feel good about themselves. And, you have to be strong enough to say if the culture does not work, don’t buy it” (42). Morrie strongly opposes to adopt the culture which is not beneficial to one’s life. In other words, Morrie suggests one to stick to the “sub-culture”.

Likewise, Nietzsche argues that moral values are not objective or universal. Such values arise from the evaluation of human activities. He discusses about the transvaluation of values which means turning values around. It occurs when there is a change in creators of values. What was once bad becomes good, what was once good

becomes bad, because the values are assessed a new. Creators of values replace the old values with new ones. Historically, such changes most often occur when rulers of society are over thrown and superseded by new rulers, because rulers wield the power to create the guiding for their society. The transvaluation of values may occur individually. Individual breaks from the herd and becomes the creator of their own values.

That is why, Morrie emphasizes on the choice of own culture. So, he says, “so many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep’ even when they’re busy doing things they think are important” (43). For Morrie, in so called modern society, people use to run after the fashion. They think that fashion itself is the important thing. Morrie discards this trend of the society. He further adds, actually they are not completely awaken. Instead of it, He emphasizes on inner peace. He says, “I always wished I had done more with my work; I wished I had written more books. I used to beat myself up over it. Now I see that never did any good. Make peace. You need to make peace with yourself and everyone around you” (167). In this way, Morrie claims that actually we all are in illusion that we have achieved so much. But in Morrie’s views these all are nothing than the vain.

Despite the charge, made by catholic critics like; Mlle. Mercier that existential theory emphasized on solidarity and human as an isolated being, twentieth-century’s existentialists have rejected the notion of an individualized self and existing independency of others. They understood the individual as inescapably linked with others. A human being does not exist statically among others without affecting them or being affected by them. Moreover, when one undertakes practical task, one understands the meaning of situations, objects, and events. In this sense we automatically one is drawn into the world dwelled shaped by others. The individual’s

activities and understanding do not occur in a self- enclosed space; rather they open into the world –the world share by others. Regarding human relation Morrie says, “There is no formula to relationship. They have to be negotiated in loving ways, with room for both parties, what they want and what they need, what they can do and what their life is like”(177-78). Therefore, we cannot create the meaning of life in isolation because meaning of life is only possible in relation with others. On the other words, meaning of life and human relations are the supplementary of each other.

Morrie realizes that he is still in process of self- development and states, “I don’t want to live the world in a state of fright” (107). In relation to his aging, he answers “that the sixties weren’t so bad, compared to the time we lived in now” (111). People can do anything but there should be a will to do. Aging is problem only in the eyes of the society. Morrie, instead of his old age and deadly diseases seems strong enough to protest against popular culture. He says, “I’m an independent person, so my inclination was to fight all of this –being helped from the car, having someone else dress me. I felt a little ashamed because our culture tells us we should be ashamed if we can’t wipe our own behind” (115-16). Here Morrie demonstrates his dissatisfaction regarding popular culture. So, he suggests, “but then I figured, forget what the culture says; I have ignored the culture much of my life. I am not going to be ashamed. What’s the big deal” (116)?

Morrie embraces aging and claims that it has provided a great opportunity for the experiences. It teaches people through experiences. That is why he says, “aging is not just decay, it’s growth too” (118). He feels that aging is not burden in itself. It depends on the individual in what ways it is taken.

Morrie declares:

As you grow old, you learn more. If you stayed at twenty two, you'd always be as ignorant as you were at twenty-two. Ageing is not just decay, you know. It's growth. It's more than the negative that you're going to die, it's also the positive that you understand you're going to die, and that you live a better life because of it. (118)

Aging not only have the negative sides but it has positive side as well. Due to the realization of it, we get the better opportunity to increase the meaning to the life. On the other hand, every stage of life is equally valuable. Morrie believes that who afraid with aging those are the people who never get meaning in life. If they have found meaning in life, they never want to go back. In other words, we are not going to get anything then unhappiness from the battle against getting older because aging and death are the inevitable things. Whether we want or not we must face it. Regarding the concept of different stages of life, Sartre applies his existential outlook. He says:

Every stage is part of itself no one can escape of it, and it prevents us completely from absorbing himself in any other stage. I am nothing more than this. I cannot completely become anything more than what I am. Every stage is equally important, in the solid inevitable way that a young is a young or an old is an old. (100)

Everything has its own value in its own place. Similarly, the various stages of life can't be the exception of it. Morrie says that it is impossible for the old to envy the young. But we must accept who we are and revel in that. For Morrie, the most important thing is to find out the meaning of life. He adds that looking back makes us competitive and aging is not a issue of competition. Every stage of life is equally valuable for the completion of our life. Thus, Morrie views that we should respect each stage of our life.



Because of his deadly disease, Morrie has to face various difficulties. One of many indignities that Morrie faces with respect is to be dependent on others for his basic needs. He needs to ring a bell when his head needs adjusted when he has to "go on the commode" (56). Morrie must depend on his small army of home care workers to attend his feeding, mobility and toileting. Mitch thinks Morrie would be depressed over this. Morrie explains the way how he handles it. According to him, he has used to put a limit on the daily amount of mourning he allows himself. He further adds, "Sometimes, in the morning, he said. "That's when I mourn. I feel around my body, I move my fingers and my hands – Whatever I can still move –and I mourn what I have lost. I mourn the slow, insidious way in which I'm dying. But then stop mourning" (56-57). Morrie believes, sometimes cry also becomes beneficial for us. So he gives "good cry" if it needed. It is said that cry is the symbol of weakness. Similarly, men are considered to be bold so they should not cry. But unlike this, Morrie believes that cry has a kind of healing power. Furthermore, he says that if we are in pain we should divert us. In this way, when we concentrate on our previous good thing which we have done in our life, and the surroundings as well as the people who come in our contact, it helps to convert our pain into happiness.

Similarly, Morrie highlights on all the positive things in his life, such as his visits from Mitch and the fact he is lucky for he has so long to say goodbye to his loved ones. It is primarily Morrie's attitude that permits this ability to see the positive side in his otherwise dour condition, "it's only horrible if you see it that way" (57). It is seen that there is great degree of mutuality and the benefits stemming from Mitch and Morrie's Tuesday meetings. Morrie admits that one of the ways he copes with his illness is by thinking of these visits and of Mitch when it is Tuesday, since they are "Tuesday people" (57). Morrie is not alone. Company of Mitch and his visits provide

him optimism and something to look forward. Most people would want to die that way. This is because Morrie did not choose to wither in front of ALS. Rather, he chooses to deal with ALS in the most positive manner. He determines to tackle with ALS in order to learn about life, living and death as much as he can.

In addition, it is well-known that acceptance is a gradual process. It gives life to the human being. Similarly, Morrie can't be an exception of it. He accepts his condition and does not become ashamed of his disabilities. Acceptance brings drastic change in life. When Morrie becomes sick and disable, he can no longer do his daily tasks without the help from others. In such a condition, Morrie embraces and enjoys it. Of course, he has changed his perspective towards life. Morrie takes life like an infant or a child. Eventually, he realizes that he is dying and learns to accept his death. At that moment, Morrie wishes to share his philosophies of life with the world. Morrie thinks sharing would be beneficial for him as well as for other. He knew very well that beside it there is no other way out. Eventually, he comes to realize that we must accept every ups and down and these are the two sides of a coin. One cannot be complete without other. In other words, the meaning of one is not possible in absence of other. Morrie considers that it is the universal law of nature and the reality of life. So that, there is not solution on escape. For Morrie, acceptance is the better way to look life positively. To clarify this concept of Being is insightful Sartre says:

If a man is poor, or ill, he may regard his misfortune as an inevitable part of his life, and he may therefore live with his poverty or illness without ever thinking of a future without it. But, in so far as he is a conscious human being, a Being –for-himself. Set as a distance from the world, he is never the less capable of imagining a life without poverty or illness. Once he has done this then he will have a motive to

try to improve his situation. Although, even when he thought his misfortune was inevitable, he was in a way aware of it, it had it, at the time, an object of only for his non-reflective consciousness. As soon as he started to contemplate his situation, to detach himself from it and exercise upon it his faculty of description and of negation, than he could be to plan deliberate action to mitigate or remove it. (119)

In this sense, nature never discriminates. The natural calamities appear equally to every class, gender and race. And these are inevitable to all. Morrie believes, “we should take life as it is. Neither more nor less than these” (23). If we take life in this way, there would be the probabilities for improvement. When we become conscious that something is inevitable in our life, from the very moment we start to think what should be the better solution of it. Morrie accepts his condition and takes it positively. He says, “I am trying to enjoy the process. After all, I get to be a baby one more time. Well, I have to look at life uniquely now” (49). Morrie opines that the very process would be the right way of thinking about life and it guides us towards the satisfaction.

In Sartre’s view, “To exist as a human being is not simply to be with others in the way that we exist with the trees on the surface of the earth, but to exist for others” (19). For him, most of our emotions and many of our decisions register how aware we are that we exist for others: We are happy, nervous, angry, jealous, usually as a result of our relations with others. The protagonist, *tuesdays with Morrie* believes that people treat us as we treat to them. He says, “Love is when you are as concerned about someone else’s situation as you are about your own” (178). In this way Morrie views we choose many of our actions in view of how others will be affected by them

or how others will judge it. In this regard, the judgment is only possible in comparison.

Furthermore, existentialism always prefers man's satisfaction. It often thinks about the condition of man as a scope of its study. Satisfaction is the summit of human feeling. In *tuesdays with Morrie*, Morrie believes, satisfaction does not mean having more money and wealth. For him, real satisfaction comes from devoting ourselves to loving others. He adds, it's a kind of inner feeling and it comes from our heart. He says, "Do the kind of things that come from the heart. When you do, you won't be dissatisfied, you won't be envious, you won't be longing for somebody else's things. On the contrary, you will be overwhelmed with what comes back" (128). Morrie says that we must invest everything for human community. And that is the same community through which life gains purpose and meaning. He views, "Invest in the human family. Invest in people. Build a little community of those you love and who love you (157). It is more important to offer our time to the needy people. In this way, they think that they are equally important like others. The protagonist of the novel feels that it is most important to be engaged and devoted when in the presence of others and during conversation as well. Morrie believes that when he is with someone, he is there. He even believes that in being fully present only with that person.

Similarly, so many people have not found meaning in their lives, thus they rush and run around time after time in search of it. In fact, Morrie finds most of the people, in this modern society, are in search of more materialistic things. Morrie demonstrates his dissatisfaction regarding trait on materiality. He says, "They repeat something over and over. And that's what we do in this country. Owning thing is good. More money is good. More property is good. More commercialism is good.

More is good. More is good” (124). He claims that it might provide them material satisfaction but that is not the real and everlasting satisfaction. The protagonist emphasizes the importance of “small talk” and “real listening” to someone, without trying to gain anything in return. We can infer that since Morrie has given so much of time and attention toward others, this is why he has been having so many visitors. They are drawn to him due to all of the attention he has aid to them. Morrie seems so much emotionally attached with others that he has almost forgot his pain and suffering at the presence of the visitors. He himself is in the threshold of death, despite it; Morrie continued to listen others, just as he had always wanted someone to listen to him. Morrie feels that living a full life and being satisfied means offering other people what we can offer, i.e. our time. In his words, “The truth is, you don’t get satisfaction from those things. You know what really gives you satisfaction? Offering others what you have to give. I don’t mean money. I mean your time” (126). Morrie opines, beside material support there is another kind of support which needs humanity to work. The offering based on the real humanity, is the real offering for Morrie.

. In addition, the protagonist of the novel, Morrie, believes in most cases or stages of our life, it demands bargaining, life does not follow the universal law as we think. In reality, there is not any universal law for life as such. Life is so open and uncertain that anything i.e. anything may happen at any moment. There is not universal law followed by the people. Sartre, in his book *Existentialism and Human emotions*, views that there is not unanimity in the universal laws and values.

On the other hand, atheistic existentialists, like Sartre, declare with greater consistency that if God does not exist, there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence. A being which exists before, it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man. This means, they view that existence precedes

essence. They say, first of all man exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards. So they believe that man can't be defined because he begins with nothing. According to them, man's identity depends up on themselves. He will be what he makes of himself. Morrie too believes in self made identity.

According to him, man himself is responsible in the selection of his lifestyle and meaning of life as well. So, in this novel, he himself seems to be a self made person.

In this novel *tuesdays with Morrie*, Morrie expresses his view towards religion only once. Ted Koppel is the interviewer of Morrie who presents his story on TV show, with whom Morrie, for the first time talks about God in his final interview. From his view it becomes clear that he has taken his illness as a terrible test but one he has chosen to tolerate in a positive way. By bringing the example of Biblical character he says, "Job is a good man, but God makes him suffer. To test his faith" (150). Mitch Albom, the writer of the novel, brings up Job as a symbol of suffering. When Albom asks Morrie what he thinks about God's action to Job, Morrie replies "I think he over did it" (151). It shows his dissatisfaction on the way of giving punishment. After all Morrie believes that the suffering, which he is facing, has been given by God. For him, it is the test of his faith. Despite of his anger towards God's action, he determines to tackle with it.

But unlike Job, Morrie would have opted for a less devastating manner of passing life. Job is a religious figure for the symbol of suffering. To make his struggle easier, he has made his own way of life. Through the whole novel, Morrie seems self created man and of course he is. But in the audiovisual, part three, on the Eleventh Tuesday, Morrie talks about spirit and body. It is true to say that a man, especially, only in his suffering or in the time of trouble memorizes the God and even his deeds and misdeed that he had done in the past. And it is because to gain a better place after

wards. Morrie states, “this disease is knocking at my spirit, but it will not get my spirit. It will get my body. It will not get my spirit. I’m bargaining with Him up there now. I’m asking Him, Do I get to be one of the angels”(163)? Here, Morrie expects that he will get a better place on heaven after life. For Morrie, in front of spirit, body does not have any value. So, Morrie said, he never gives his spirit to anyone.

Beside this, the protagonist of this novel, Morrie, most of the time, talks about freedom. But freedom for Morrie, does not only mean being free in this existing world. It’s a kind of fear caused by several factors of the society that prevents us from being totally free. He views that it is especially culture that does not encourage us to think about ourselves, it always chases and forbids one from being an individual. Man should have enough enthusiasm to make free himself from those external bondages and for that we must go away from the fear. Only after that, internal freedom is possible gradually. For Morrie, this type of freedom is real freedom which the Existential Humanist also seeks. Existential Humanism focuses on will and clarifies that will should be free. And most of the time it is impossible to free our will. Existential philosophers view that no one can will the freedom of other. That is why; they form judgments upon those who seek to hide from themselves the wholly voluntary nature of their existence and its complete freedom. Those who hide from this total freedom; they are cowards for Existential philosophers. Morrie thinks that we hesitate to say anything because we have the fear that it might hamper our relation. For Morrie, that is the cause which prevents from being free. He even presents certain ideas to reduce the fear. Regarding this Morrie says:

We are frozen with the fear of what those words might do to the relationship. Wash yourself with the emotion. It won’t hurt you. It will only help you. If you let the fear inside, if you pull it on like a familiar

shirt, then you can say to yourself , All right, it's just fear, I don't have to let it control me, I see it for what it is. (105)

In Morrie's view, we ourselves should decide our way of life. It indicates that freedom is so supremely important that it enlightened the people which enable them to think of themselves. Due to which they not only think of themselves but they also introduced themselves with whole responsibilities and the right way of life. That is why; Morrie says that we should not let fear to control us. It always prevents us from being free.

On the other hand, sometimes in search of materialistic prosperity we lost our real freedom of life. It entrapped us and we become crazy to get success. This trend has affected most of the people of modern society. So many people are living a meaningless life; they become too involved in their jobs, money, and fall under the popular culture. Morrie says that to create meaning in our life, we should create our own meaning of life and do not waste our life chasing false and superficial dreams.

Morrie states:

So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep' even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they are chasing the wrong thing. The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to create something that gives you purpose and meaning. (43)

Morrie opines that most of the people in this modern world use to rush and run after the materialistic ambitions. Of course, it might provide material prosperity but not real satisfaction. And it never adds meaning to the life. The real meaning and the purpose can be attained through the devotion of ourselves to the social service. For Morrie, those people, who are running behind such meaningless things, are guided by



subconscious mind. Consequently, they have become the victim of meaninglessness. Morrie adds that we must think about the meaning of life.

According to existential humanism, it is up to us to find the truth. It does not wait for it to be handed to us through anything else that is incompatible with the application of logic to the evidence. In demanding that truth, we avoid blindly accepting unsupported beliefs. Existential humanism supports scientific skepticism and method rejecting authoritarianism and extreme skepticism, and rendering faith an acceptable basis for action. It also asserts that knowledge of right and wrong based on our best understanding of our individual and joint interests, rather than stemming from a transcendental or arbitrary local source. Explaining this view, Mary Warnock says:

In the group, by its very nature, everyone is dependent up on everyone else, and therefore no one is dispensable. It is therefore possible to treat all men as my brothers, and to identify my brothers, and to identify my life with theirs. The original choice of freedom was the original and radical conversation, the formation of group. And there after every measure which is aimed towards the preservation of the group is a further choice of freedom. It is the point where lives start to get meaning. (130)

For Existential philosopher like Sartre, there are some basic facts of our relation with other people. Our life cannot be lived entirely at the level of pre-reflective self-consciousness. We are something like the man at the keyhole, made aware of ourselves in a different way, in shame, which reveals that we are exposed to the comments of others. This then constitutes Sartre's proof that other people exist. And in totality, our existence gets meaning and value. Existential philosophers say that our

lives get meaning when we choose the right way of the life. What is good and what is bad is purely decision, which no one can take on behalf of another.

Morrie, in the novel *tuesdays with Morrie*, seems very much clear about the co-existence of the human being. His concern for humanity becomes pretty clear from this view:

it's hard to explain. Now that I'm suffering, I feel closer to who suffer than I ever did before. The other night, on TV, I saw people in Bosnia running across the street, getting fired up on, killed, innocent victims and I just started to cry. I feel their anguish as if it were mine. I don't know any of these people. But – how can I put this? – I'm almost drawn to them. (50)

As Morrie believes, human is the social being, s/he should make a choice in relation to others. He is so much affected by the worldly affairs that the condition of Bosnian people makes him cry. In fact, Morrie doesn't know them. Even though he can feel their pain and suffering. Morrie prefers such kind of human relation which never brings chaos in the world. So far freedom is concerned it entirely depends on the freedom of the others. And the very kind of freedom only gives meaning to the life.

The whole novel centers around the death. Death is the only reality and it is inevitable fact in this universe. No one can escape of death. It does not have similar path to all. It comes differently as it is uncertain. It mostly comes with suffering and pain. As it is the inevitable force. It should be respected. The 'death' this novel talks about is something different from that of sudden death. The protagonist of the novel is totally aware of his death. He is feeling his death which is approaching towards him gradually. As a whole, the philosophy of novel is that the death should not be embarrassing. Morrie the protagonist intends on proving that the word 'dying' is not

synonymous to useless. Only the victim is the real witness of his own torture that's why he should not be ignored, rather we should respect them and we should learn lesson from them as well. No one knows that when and how one has to follow the same death bed. Readers are under compulsion to realize this fact when Morrie says, "May be death is the great equalizer, the one big thing that can finally make stranger shed a tear for one another" (51). Death is one ultimate reality that no one believes until it approaches. It is just like that all people know that they are naked inside their clothes but they never think and aware of it.

Likewise, everyone knows that they are going to die but nobody believes it. If we do, we would do this differently. If there would be abundance of love then only life would get its meaning, which would be the most important achievement of life. If we understand and believe the death, we would not always battle against getting older and being unhappy because it has to happen anyhow. The ultimate fact is that we are going to die eventually which is well-known to the protagonist. As a whole, death is as natural as life and we should make it so because love is created only with the meaning of life. And, love is the spirit which always keeps dead alive. After being away from our loved ones, we are actually not dead, we are still there in their heart. It becomes petty clear when Morrie says, "Death ends a life, not a relationship" (174).

In addition, the knowledge of Buddhist philosophy, regarding death, makes Morrie easier to take death as natural process. According to Morrie, everyone has bird on our shoulder. Here bird symbolizes death. It means no one can escape from the inevitable death. We should take it as natural as the birth. Morrie says, he always asks the bird on his shoulder, is today is the day I die? It serves as a metaphor for his awareness that he may die at any moment. On the other hand, the bird itself is the symbol of Morrie's consciousness as well. He is conscious that his death is fast approaching and he is ready to accept whenever it arrives.

He wants everybody, to realize that this bird is on everyone's shoulder. It may appear at any moment of their lives, no matter how young or old they are. He tells to Mitch that "learn how to die, and you learn how to live" (83). In this sense, he means that one must accept the possibility of one's own death. He views that we have the tendency of appreciating material prosperity which we have in this earth but one day it will be out of reach. It gives us company only for a limited period of time. In fact, eventually we must accept the death. Of course, Morrie is in the threshold of death although he tries to manage his rest of the time in a radical way. It leads him to something new. He does not give up his life at the mouth of his illness. His disability and consciousness about it becomes the root cause of his new journey of life.

Thus, Morrie decided that he would be a sparkling scholar to deal the forthcoming days of his life. Regarding this, Mitch says that "in the fall of 1994, Morrie came to the hilly Brandeis Campus to teach his final college course. He could have skipped this, of course. The university would have understood. Why suffer in front of so many people? Stay at home. Get your affairs in order. But the idea of quitting did not occur to Morrie" (9). Morrie believes one must do his/her duty. He further adds that if we live our duty, it ruins our life. That is why; he does not quit his duty even in his dour condition. Not only he fulfills his duty but also he inspires others to complete their duty. He adds, if we should stop with our life. He says, "Do not stop your lives otherwise it ruins our lives" (93).

In this way, he continues his semester even he suffers from ALS. He does not wish to be a betrayer by not completing his responsibility. It is his conscious that lead him towards new way of life. In fact, after two years, his death is certain. That very two years at least brings the rays of hope for him. The very hope inspired him to do something and make a profound decision.

For all human being, optimistic viewpoint in life is very important. Optimism gives peace to the mind and leads towards the perfection. *tuesdays with Morrie* is a novel which is filled with dose of optimistic outlook. For Morrie, life is the mingled thread of joy and sorrow and of course joy alone is not the demand of life. As the life is totally open, anything can happen at any moment. Morrie has also finally surrendered to his illness: he can no longer go to the bathroom by himself. Instead of being frustrated, he is enjoying all the people around him who are helping him and taking care of him. The protagonist even feels that it is beneficial to be aged to learn more, to gain a better understanding of our life and to experience growth, if not life may be under the sorrow. Youth is regarded as the most important part of our life. Generally people think that being old means going to face many problems and hazards of life. That's why people are always in the fear of ageing. But Morrie believes, ageing means an opportunity to learn more. For him, young are also not very wise in the sense that they have little understanding about life.

In this way, Mitch Albom's *tuesdays with Morrie* demonstrates the concept of humanistic outlook. The protagonist of the novel Morrie is suffering from deadly disease. Despite it, he never surrenders in front of death; rather he described the art of living through his own feeling and action. Morrie believes life cannot be understood without living it to the very fullest, to the very end. Which becomes pretty clear from the event that Morrie who himself is on the threshold of death he teaches the importance of life, love and affection. Mitch as well as others who are directly or indirectly are in contact with him has been benefited by his philosophy of life. It demonstrates his concern with existential humanism. This novel even awakes all the readers who are reluctant to take life seriously and optimistically.

### III. Real Meaning of Life with in Human Ability

Mitch Albom, in *tuesdays with Morrie* illustrates the experiences and feelings of the protagonist on the subject of living meaningful life. In this wonderful chronicle, Morrie Schwartz is the real master who teaches the significance of life to the author along with the whole world. Their personal affiliation is the epitome of human relation. The distorted mind of Mitch throughout the novel is the result of their relation. The human life is better illustrated in the course of the autobiography of Morrie who has dedicated his life in care and love for other. He even feels other's pain in him even though he himself has abundance of his own troubles. Morrie is the man of keen heart who always thinks to care for others and live a complete life. For him, completeness in life comes from modest things but not from material prosperity at all. Despite the suffering and hardship, Morrie seems attach with the other person and he locates meaning of living in sharing of emotions and feelings. The establishment of harmonious and compassionate human relationship is the central idea of the novel which has been set up by Morrie.

The novelist has thrown light on the value of love in human life. The loving and caring relationship among Morrie, his wife Charlotte, his caregiver Connie and his two sons make it pretty clear that love is something very essential which gives strength to the loving one. Writer has positioned love in such a point that if we don't have love in life we don't have anything at all. He further focuses that love even assists us to tackle the dour situation. It's not fair to receive love as a form of possession but it flows forth automatically. Albom exemplifies the supremacy of love in the reunion of his relation with his departed brother. In addition, Albom emphasizes that the existence without love is living without life.

Furthermore the foundation of human relation is stand on the love and responsibility. The writer has justified it with the Morrie's behavior in the novel. Albom has presented Morrie as a milestone to establish harmonious human relationship. For instance, Morrie worries too much on the plight of Bosnian people. Since human is a social being, he never get identity in isolation. So that, people not only think of themselves but he is concerned for human goodness along with the goodness of the society. Albom tries to prove that the relation depends upon the upbringing of it. Good relation remains even after death.

Likewise, the writer has tried to justify that happiness can be achieved through social service and from such works which our heart tells us to do. Material prosperity is not the source of joy. It makes our life a kind of battle where the break is intolerable. The acceptance of the inevitable force also contributes on our happiness. Morrie who is facing his old age and is on the threshold of death, despite of it remains happy till his last breath. Morrie takes aging and death as slightly different as general thinking. People generally think aging is a trouble and scared with death. Unlike them, Morrie thinks we must respect it because it's going to take place with everyone whether we accept it or not because it's an ultimate reality. On the other hand, these stages of life are the basis of wisdom and experience. It teaches us how to tackle with ups and down of life. Thus, novelist reveals that we must take our life as it is.

Mitch Albom tries to show the principle of our life is to live meaningful life and for that we have to devote ourselves to the community and to love others. He emphasizes on the dedication to create something that gives us meaning and purpose. Albom emphasizes on the human ability. He expresses that man is nothing but what he makes of himself. Similarly, he highlights on the human existence. Novelist tries to justify that without living we can't experience anything. For instance, Morrie

determines to live his life to the very end. And the experiences of Morrie become the guideline for meaningful existence.

This novel tries to justify that optimism is the supreme power to make life glorious. It's a kind of outlook which provides us positive perception. Something becomes horrible only if we see it that way. On the other hand, optimistic outlook helps us to enhance positive perspective and it renews our confidence. The experiences and feelings of the protagonist exhibit the impact of positive perspective. This research, with the help of illustrations of number of passages from the text, attempts to reveal whether the text holds the evidences enough to support the hypothesis assumed by the present study. The analysis and illustration clearly depict that the present text deals with the sufferings, experiences, cultural norms and world views about human existence.

In this way, Albom in *tuesdays with Morrie* has managed to demonstrate the concept of humanistic outlook. The protagonist of the novel Morrie is suffering from deadly disease. Despite it, he never surrenders in front of death; rather he describes the art of living through his own feeling and action. Morrie believes life cannot be understood without living it to the very fullest, to the very end. It becomes pretty clear from the event that Morrie who himself is in the threshold of death but he teaches the importance of life, love and affection. Mitch as well as others, who directly or indirectly are in contact with him, have been benefited by his philosophy of life. It demonstrates his concern with existential humanism. This novel has tried to awaken all the readers who are reluctant to take life seriously and optimistically and existential humanism has worked as the specific technique to show human nature and its impact on the others.



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