

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

The Rejection of the Idea of Posthuman in Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master's of Arts in English**

By

Bhupal Chandra K. C.

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

April 2011

Tribhuvan University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "**Rejection of the Idea of Posthuman in Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven***" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Bhupal Chandra K. C. has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Bhupal Chandra K. C. has completed his thesis entitled "**The Rejection of the Idea of Posthuman in Albom's *The Five People you Meet in Heaven***" under my supervision. He carried out his research from September 2010 (A.D.) to April 2011 (A.D.). I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Shuv Raj Rana Bhat

Supervisor

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the support and encouragement from my respected teachers and friends. I would like to express my profound sense of gratitude to my thesis supervisor Mr. Shuv Raj Rana Bhat, lecturer at the Central Department of English, T.U., for his scholarly guidance, genuine suggestions, warm response and constructive suggestion to bring the present dissertation in its present form.

I am grateful to Dr. Amma Raj Joshi, Head of Department of English, T.U. for his cooperation in completing this thesis. I am deeply indebted to the teachers, Dr. Rewati Neupane, Dr. Beerendra Pandey, Dr. Sanjeev Upreti, Dr. Anirudra Thapa, Dr. Shiva Rijal, Dr. Baikuntha Paudel, Mr. Deepak Giri, Mr. Harihar Gyawali, Mr. Sarad Chandra Thakur, Mr. Badri Acharya, Mr. Shankar Subedi, Mr. Sajor Ghimire, Mr. Mahesh Poudel, Mr. Pom Gurung and Mr. Khem Raj Khanal for their gracious response. I would like to remember all teachers of the university who taught me to indulge in the realm of literature and philosophy and helped me to relate all of it directly to my practical life.

Words cannot convey the depth of my gratitude to my parents Gun Bdr. and Putala and my brothers, Bhujendra and Debendra as well as sisters Luma and Bijula for their economic and moral support throughout my study. I would also like to remember my friends Madhu, Rudra, Dev, Surya, Shankar, Ashok, Krishna, Dilli, Durga, Indra, Hari, Thakur, Narayan for their continuous encouragement in bringing this project to completion. Last but not a least special thank to Yuwaraj Bhattarai. I want to thank to Unique Computer for its incessant help in typesetting this dissertation.

April 2011

Bhupal Chandra K. C.

Contents

	Page No.
I. Backgrounding Mitch Albom and his Text <i>The Five People You Meet in Heaven</i>	1
II. <i>The Five People You Meet in Heaven</i> as a Rejection of Posthumanism	15
III. Conclusion	40
Works Cited	

Abstract

This research on *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom traces out the idea of rejection of posthuman notion giving emphasis on humanism. Albom shows the value of humanism as well as humanitarian values as the negligence of posthumanism through the presentation of characters full of humanitarian ethos and pathos. Furthermore, Albom through the emphasis on subjectivity of the characters, their deeds, love, emotion, passion establishes the text as a rejection of posthumanism. The research in one hand takes the references from humanism to highlight the humanistic vision of the text. On the other hand it mentions posthuman references for the comparison and contrast with humanism. And this research will find valorization of humanism against posthumanism.

I. Backgrounding Mitch Albom and His Text

The Five People You Meet in Heaven

This research makes an attempt to explore the idea of rejection of post human notion being concerned with humanism and humanitarian values as expressed in the text *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom. To highlight the human values, ethics and morality Albom foregrounds the subject of peace, prosperity, fraternity, optimism and humanity. He deals with the issue of love and relationship, life and death, humanitarian and benevolence deeds and so on. Albom presents the humanitarian vision through the actual representation of morally strong characters in the chaotic society. Almost all the characters in this novel are devoted to their duties, moralities and responsibilities though they are haunted by the traumatic ghost or bitterly suffered by disillusioned scenario, devastated and frustrated world view. In other words, the novel's setting and characters' activities, their tasks and deeds have established them as strong figures of humanism. Not only the major characters of the novel are highly benevolent but also the minor characters have strong belief on their duty.

The basic feature of humanism recurs in the novel in the form of relationship among different characters. This relationship among known and unknown people has left the trace of connection in the name and issue of humanity. And this humanity is able to tie people with love, fraternity and brotherhood. Albom foregrounds the path for peace, prosperity, fraternity, optimism and humanity by highlighting their value in human life. Protagonist Eddie though haunted by aimless act of war and lonely life of

old age, Albom is able to do justice on his life in heaven after meeting the five known and unknown people. This meeting with five different people in heaven highlights the theme of connectedness among human being, being in the similar category of human beings.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven is also based on Albom's life experience. It is significantly influenced by the circumstances of his life. The political and social trends shaped author's humanistic vision. The book centers on an 85 years old wounded war veteran Eddie who is killed in a tragic accident. Eddie tries to rescue the life of a child on his last birthday at Ruby Pier, turns out to be victim himself. He soon discovers that heaven is not merely a destination but a place where five people who help the deceased, understand the significance and value of their life on earth. Gradually, he learns about the interrelationship of all lives, about sacrifice, the everlasting value of love. Finally, his daily routine had in fact fulfilled his life's intended purpose of keeping Ruby Pier's rides safe and a source of joy for generations of children by showing sympathy to them. Albom points his protagonist Eddie learning about the value of life here on earth.

Analyzing some of the works by Mitch Albom, it compels us to say that all of them reflect the author's life, his socio-political views and beliefs. Most of the writers are shaped by the influence of the whole society. Some special people in particular, like Morrie influenced him to write *Tuesdays with Morrie*; his own uncle named Edward Beithman (Eddie) indirectly inspires him to write his latest novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. This is why, it is obvious that willingly or not and consciously or unconsciously, writer's literary works are shaped by their life experiences and biographical evidences.

Mitch Albom's novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* has been dedicated to his beloved uncle named Edward Beithman (Eddie) co-resembling with the character Eddie, an 85 years old man. It deals with the issues of life and death, love and relationships, humanity and morality and so on.

The novel also deals with the protagonist Eddie, an amusement park repairman and his relation with five people in heaven. It recounts the life and death of a simple yet dignified old man, Eddie. The plot of the novel centers around 83 years old wounded war veteran whose death in tragic accident, his one hour life on earth and as well as in the heaven where he meets five different people in the novel. His sudden death happens from the unconscious attempt to save a girl underneath a plummeting ride. Eddie sacrifices his own life in an attempt to save her. He should go to heaven where he learns the most important lesson in life from the Blue man, the captain, Ruby (from her name the park is named 'Ruby Pier'), his own wife Marguerite and Tala, the little girl in the barn who was born by Eddie mistakably. Mitch Albom blends all the characters in the theme of humanism in the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. For this, the protagonist Eddie of 83 years old who tries to rescue the life of a child on his last birthday at 'Ruby Pier' turns out to be victim himself.

Though Albom presents Eddie as an energetic enough to save the girl from the plummeting ride at the cost of his life, it is possible only in the world full of sacrificial feeling with high humanitarian values. The novel is filled with full of sacrificial characters unlike the modern chaotic society where all the people are selfish, mean and profit oriented. Not only the protagonist Eddie; there are other minor characters like Captain, Rabozzo and even The Blue Man and Tala who have sacrificed their lives. Due to this sacrificial feeling and the martyrdom the text could be considerate as a clam of humanism. As far as the text carries the issue of connectedness, love,

fraternity, brotherhood, martyrdom it carries the issue of morality and meaning of life. Regarding this fact into consideration, the present researcher carries out research from humanistic approach.

Furthermore, Albom presents life having chain and overlapping of stories that have great impact to each individual and other. Situations and circumstances bring people at one place and events take place accordingly. Even events have the reasons. Eddie's death is because of Nicky's car key. So the story of Nicky and Eddie meets altogether to cause something. Albom writes: "No story sits by itself. Sometimes stories meet at corners and sometimes they cover one another completely like stone beneath a river" (11). The story of Eddie touches by another innocent story of Nicky and his car key. Albom constructs these stories to show the interconnectedness and logical connection among seemingly insignificant events like losing car's key to terrible events like Eddie's death.

Similarly, the death of Blue Man is caused by a small child Eddie. This is revealed in heaven while Eddie meets the Blue Man as the first person. The Blue Man stands in the first stage of heaven to tell Eddie his story, which becomes the part of Eddie's story. This plot reveals the reality of events. Albom narrates through the mouth of the Blue Man, "That there are no random acts. That we are all connected. That you can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind" (50).

These all the events are constructed to show the theme of connectedness. So it messages that we should have feeling of humanity for fellow beings because we all are connected. To show the value of humanity, Albom uses the device of heaven and death. If we feel connected with all people, we might load our psyche with responsibility towards other. Then we can become responsible, sympathetic and

helpful to them. It further helps to concern with known or unknown persons who ultimately empower humanly feelings and behavior to fellow beings. There are many events in the text which carries the issue connectedness among different people.

'Meaning of life' is another issue touched by Albom in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Eddie, a wounded hero is haunted by the war experiences. His wound is not only physical but also psychological, which is more painful than physical and remains long lasting, sometimes at night he cannot tolerate it and internal pain suddenly comes out. The torture of the war has made him mentally disordered. He finds pain, sorrow, frustration, depression everywhere which make him as an anxious and fearful person. The search of progress, achievement and better life is not fulfilled in Eddie's life. Eddie's life is triggered by traumatic experiences and loneliness in his old age. He has a very pessimistic perception of life which haunts a lot to make his life better and prosperous. That's why Eddie never finds any significance of his life. But through the end of the novel after meeting five different people in heaven Eddie is aware about the value of his life. Thus, Mitch Albom tries to provide a significant outlook to the life of commoners like Eddie.

'Bravery and martyrdom' of Eddie also help the text to denote as a claim of humanism. When the Second World War started Eddie joins in military service neglecting the advice of his family. It's the duty of every man to involve in army while nation feels need. Furthermore, while Eddie is captured by the enemies with some of his company; he freed all living friends with his skill of juggling stones. With the help of stones Eddie is able to kill the enemies who have carried the advanced mechanical weapons like guns and pistols. This heroism of Eddie is not limited only within his skill. Rather this victory of the skill of juggling stones over the scientific weapons (there is not sufficient role of tool user) presupposes the text as a rejection of

the idea of posthumanism which gives emphasis to tool than tool user.

Mitch Albom, in this novel, presents the language as if it were a moral lesson. The language in the novel talks about the domain of war, their past experiences and other repetitive activities in the relation with human morality and responsibility. At the very initial stage of the novel, the characters' attitude towards war is revealed. The war is dirty it is the cause of human death and ruins the civilization. Though, being the soldier their hatred against war is another point which makes the novel a discussion of humanity.

Albom mostly deals with the issues of life experiences that he encountered with people, actions and events in his novels. For an instance, Mitch Albom wrote, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* from the inspiration his uncle Eddie gave him.

An award winning writer, Albom has written screenplay for both *For One More Day* and *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. He is an established playwright, having authored numerous pieces for the theater, including the off-Broadway version of *Tuesdays with Morrie*. It has been seen more than forty productions nationwide and several recent comedies which have been produced and performed in venues across the country. He is fond of writing fiction as he expresses in his interviews with *Publishers Weekly* in Aug 18, 2003 and from his fictions. Albom is appraised by Andrea Sachs in time, which we have to think of Mitch Albom as the Babe Ruth of popular literature hitting the ball out of the park every time he's bat.

Albom's base to write this novel comes from the story that his uncle, a blue-collar war veteran had told him. He writes with the image of Eddie in his head. He and other people have loved his uncle but his uncle, Eddie dies thinking his life as waste. Similarly, the response to *Publishers Weekly's* question "Did Eddie work at amusement park?" Mitch Albom says "No, he worked as a Cab driver in factories,

that kind of thing. I've always loved amusement parks, and I wanted to set the books in a place would be a little magical. I also want Eddie to be involved with children, and what better place than amusement Park" (56). With the simple man as protagonist, Albom wants to the man as protagonist, Albom wants to make a person think about his/her whole life as if it is happening to him/her.

Mitch Albom deals with the theme of meaning of life in the period of depression and diversified flexibility as turning towards the religion. However, he discards this charge of being theist in his interviews with newspaper, journals. By mismatching the era's situations and circumstances with the issues that he dealt provides the rays of hope in life by showing world war and own country's attack on Vietnam, Iraq and in Afganistan. Mitch Albom finds the futility of war for the sake of humanity. So he tries to derogate the war-oriented mentality through his writings by portraying the ill effects of war on innocent people. For example in the *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, Eddie and Tala are the victims of war. He is also searching for the meaning of life in the insecure time on every field, but finds the meaning of life to distribute others at the mouth of death of his professor Morrie Schwartz.

Mitch Albom has been highly influenced by the contemporary sociopolitical situations. As he has gone through the changes in America, he finds postindustrial America being a superpower over other countries after the collapse of cold war. American attack on Iraq and economic depression during 1990s and its impact on people, people's feelings of depression, alienation, frustration, meaninglessness of life overwhelming during Albom's life in process. So to escape from that frustrated worldly reality to improve the world's deteriorated feelings of humanity he presents his novels intended towards imparting meaningful lesson in life by rejecting the

ghosts of meaningless and absurdity in lifetime. He follows the trend of postmodernism's re-enchantment towards mystic and spiritualistic culture by going beyond the disenchantment of modernism over religion. At the time of insecurity, he searches for the meaningful life and provides the idea of living life by pointing to the value of love, life, sacrifice and generosity. He intends to improve the life in the period of chaos and warfare.

There is the influence of his life on his works. As a rule, a writer's life is the main source of inspiration, and probably the most influential factor which defines his/her literary works. In fact, many cases it is possible to say that literary work of a writer is the reflection of his/her life, and events that occurred in it which produced a significant impact on the writer's personality, his views and beliefs. It happened to Mitch Albom, an outstanding contemporary writer whose life experience is reflected in such works of his as *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, *Tuesdays with Morrie*, and *For One More Day*. Moreover, he deals with traumatic effect of World War II through the character, Eddie in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. All the novels and other writings of Mitch Albom are highly guided by ethics, morality and humanity.

Speaking about the works written by Mitch Albom, it is necessary to say that though they are not very numerous they are still quite interesting and noteworthy because they are closely related to the real life and authors' personal experience and feelings. In fact, they make readers feel as if the author involves him/her in his own life revealing his feelings and thoughts that disturb him as well as he raises problem he is particularly concerned with. Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie*, which is as tragic and complicated as the real life. In this work the author recalls how the political controversies of 1950s affected his and Morrie's years at Brandeis university. Following the national withdrawal from the Vietnam War in 1973, and former

president Nixon's resignation from office in 1974, Brandeis Campus, as many other college campuses nationwide, was "a hot bed for political debate and protest" (Bokenkamp 304). Continuing the thread of racial tension in *Tuesdays with Morrie* is a story Morrie tells about an incident in which he had acted as a "negotiator between the University president and a group black students who felt that they were being oppressed by the school administration" (Bokenkamp 311).

Mitch Albom's genres are sports, nonfiction and modern fiction. He is the author of ten books. They are: *Tuesday with Morrie* (1977), *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* (2003), *For one More Day* (2006), *Bo Fab Five* (1994), *Live Albom II*, *Live Albom III*, *Live Albom IV*, and *Have a Little Faith* (2009). But the work that has made him really popular is *Tuesdays with Morrie* which according to Stewart "Propelled Albom to literary superstardom" (215). His first novel, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, is the most successful V.S. hard back first novel ever and has sold over ten million copies worldwide. *Tuesdays with Morrie*, his chronicle of time has spent with a beloved but dying college professor, has spent four years on the New York times best sellers list and is now the most successful memoir even published overall his books have sold 26 million copies worldwide, in forty one territories and forty two languages. All books are eventually turned into celebrated TV films. The critically acclaimed *The Five People you Meet in Heaven* has aired on ABC in winter, 2004. Orphan Wintrey produces the Film version of *Tuesdays with Morries* in December (1999), Starring. Jack Lemmon and Hank Azaria. The film garners four Emmy awards including best TV films, director, actor and supporting actors.

From the inspiration of his beloved professor, Albom becomes a famous writer of different world's best selling novels. He has deep reverence to his professor Morrie Sonwartz. So, after seeking Morrie Schwartz on the screen of American Broadcasting

Company's (ABC) late night news show, Nightline, Albom has gone to visit his former professor in Massachusetts Morrie Schwartz has recently been diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), the disease that has killed baseball great Lou Gehrig some years earlier. Albom's initial visit leads to a weekly visit every Tuesday for the rest of Schwartz's life which had ended fourteen years later. In the course of these visits, Albom has been dismayed to realize that despite his youth, vigor and success of his career, Schwartz was happier and more at peace with himself than Albom had ever been.

This realization leads Albom to write a memoir of his visits to his dying professor, published in 1997 *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson*. This book, written with the remarkable sensitivity that has been so appealing in much of Albom's sports writing, became the best-selling book in the United States in 1998. Albom has used the royalties to help Morrie Schwartz. His illness inspired him to find a volunteer organization to help. He has served on the board of directors of the Caring Athletes Team for children's and Henry Ford Hospitals and has worked with Michigan's Hospice Association. Albom has founded three charities in the metropolitan Detroit area: The Dream Fund (1989), A Time to Help (1998), S.A. Y. Detroit in recent times. He lives with his wife Jennie, in Detroit, Michigan.

Tuesdays with Morrie is an emotional portrait of life lived and a guide to how the life should be lived. Morrie teaches Albom what is the meaning of life at the close of death. Morrie teaches him "to reject the corrupt mores endorsed by popular culture in favour of personal ethical system of values" (Baye 284). In such a way, he rebels against popular cultural norms and appeals to higher moral values. Love is necessary to survive from obstacles, incurable diseases and sufferings.

The latest novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is also based on Alбом life experience. It is significantly influenced by the circumstances of his life. The political and social trends shaped author's humanities vision. The book centers around an 85 years old wounded war veteran who is killed in a tragic accident. He soon discovers that heaven is not merely a destination but a place where five people who help the deceased, understand the significance and value of their life on earth. Gradually, he learns about the interrelationship of all lives, about sacrifice, the everlasting value of love. Finally, his daily routine had in fact fulfilled his life's intended purpose of keeping Ruby Pier's rides safe and a source of joy for generations of children by showing sympathy to them.

Analyzing some of his works, it compels us to say that all of them reflect the author's life, his socio-political and views and beliefs. Most of the writers are shaped by the influence of the whole society. Some special people in particular, like Morrie influenced him (Eddie). This is why, it is obvious that willingly or not and consciously or unconsciously, writers' literary works are shaped by their life experiences.

Mitch Alбом's novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* has been dedicated to his beloved uncle named Edward Beithman (Eddie) co-resembling with the character Eddie, an 85 years old man. It deals with the issues of life and death, love, relationships, humanitarian and benevolence deeds and so on.

The novel also deals with the protagonist Eddie, an amusement park repairman and his relation with five people in heaven. It recounts the life and death of a simple yet dignified old man, Eddie. The plot of the novel centers around 83 years old wounded war veteran who is killed in tragic accident and his one hour life on earth in the novel. His sudden death happens from the unconscious attempt to save a girl

underneath a plummeting ride. Eddie sacrifices his own life in an attempt to save her. He should go to heaven where he learns the most important lesson in life from the Blue man, the captain, Ruby (from the pier), his own wife Marguerite and a Tala, the little girl in the barn. Mitch Albom's novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is criticized by different critics through the various perspectives. Mark K Bird Gulliams regards the text as:

The novel comes down firmly on the side of those who feel that life matters that what we do as individual's matters, and that in the end there will be a quiz. The touchy feeling phobic need not to be afraid, this is not judgemental ax-grinding, nor does it favour any religion. Before you finish reading, you can't thinking about your own life- Albom's whole point, of course. (89)

For this, the protagonist Eddie of 83 years old who tries to rescue the life of a child on his last birthday of Ruby pier turns out to be victim himself. Though Albom presents Eddie as an energetic enough to save the girl from the plummeting ride at the cost of his life, it is possible only in imagination for such an old person to act out. Gulliams focuses on issue of work and its reward in human life. His criticism seems moralistic. Though he does not raise the issue of humanism, his concern with morality could be connected with humaniterian values.

The novel has been viewed by many critics as an interesting and sentimental novel. Critic Erik Singer views the novel:

This life affirming fable ironically opens out the end of the life of a seemingly ordinary man known as “Eddie Maintenance” to those who works with at Ruby Pier, Eddie led what he saw as disappointing life working as head of maintenance at seaside amusement park. Singer’s

plaintive rendition of Eddie and his wife marguerites' song, "You Made me Love You". (20)

Signer holds the emotional aspect of the text. Actually this novel is humanistic. The issue of above mentioned love itself is a clam of humanism. Similarly, another critic Emily Chenowith sees Eddie's reminding of meaning of life from the unexpected characters in a vast web of inter connection with other lives around the world. She further mentions about the text:

Bringing into the spotlight the anonymous Eddie's world, the men and women who get lost in our cultural obsession with fame and fortune, this slim tale, like Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol* reminds us of what really matters here on earth. Of what our lives are given to us for. (55)

Chenowith's criticism too is similar with Signer. Both critics have focused on fairy tale element of the text. Even Chenowith does not hesitate to compare the text with Christmas Carol by Dickens. Basically, this novel is a dramatization of humanistic values, ethics and pathos. Their present lives have not moved smoothly because of the war anguish, destruction, devastation bloody sense, anguish, sorrow and pain. Eventhough they are moral, peace loving, faithful.

To analyze the novel from the perspective of humanism is important to note the motive of the novel. Their motives directly or indirectly provide the clue to claim that the novel is not far from the moral values. Morally strong characters face the problem but never leave the track of their belief. The characters are haunted by the war experiences, live in painful condition in alienation and frustration thinking their lives fruitless and meaningless. But, at the end of the text after the death Albom is able to give the significance toward the life of those war veterans.

To sum up, this thesis will enclose introduction in the first chapter, analyzing the text with the help of discussion of the methodology in the second chapter. The introduction part includes the writer's introduction, his works and issues that he deals with texts introduction and my focus in this research. Theoretical concept of humanism will be merged with textual analysis in the second chapter. And last chapter will sum up the entire research.

II. *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* as a Rejection of Post Humanism

The novel abounds with humanitarian elements. As the humanism deals with the humanitarian values, ethics and morality, the text goes further to the opposition of the notion of post humanism. Significance of life, interconnection among different individuals, issue of love and affection, martyrdom are some elements which make the novel one of the best examples of morality. The novel simply presents the story of journey from earth to heaven taken by protagonist Eddie who does not find any significance of his life.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven centers on an 85 years old wounded war veteran Eddie who is killed in a tragic accident. Eddie tries to rescue the life of a child on his last birthday at Ruby Pier, turns out to be victim himself. He soon discovers that heaven is not merely a destination but a place where five people who help the deceased, understand the significance and value of their life on earth. Gradually, he learns about the interrelationship of all lives, about sacrifice, the everlasting value of love. Finally, his daily routine had in fact fulfilled his life's intended purpose of keeping Ruby Pier's rides safe and a source of joy for generations of children by showing sympathy to them.

Humanism is a broad category of ethical philosophies that affirm the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine right and wrong by appealing to universal qualities; particularly human reasoning power and dignity. Hence, the concept of humanism is centered on men and women and they are regarded as the maker of their own life and dignity. For protecting their dignities and freedom they can make things favorable and comfortable to themselves by rationalizing any kind of situation through their own reasoning capacity. In this regard, Jatava says; "humanism is a system of philosophy that concentrates on

common human needs and seeks ways of solving human problems based on reason rather than on faith in God” (viii). Jatava views that human values are important because among them freedom, equality, fraternity, co-operation, love, sympathy etc. are useful. These values form the basis of humanistic spiritualism and beyond it there is no meaning of any divine spirituality.

As a correlation with this universal humanism, in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* there is a distinct vision about life, death and heaven. Albom's notion of heaven is just opposite than the heaven of religious orthodox. Most of the religious notion of heaven is superstitious, unbelievable and dominated by the existence of God upon human beings. This valorization of God and supernatural by religious orthodox tries to create the image of human beings as a sinful creature.

But Mitch Albom does not give any focus upon God in the text. He does not make heaven supernatural and mysteries where the role of human being is nothing. Rather Albom creates the image of the heaven placing him on the periphery of humanism. Albom's heaven is dominated by the existence of human beings, where everyone could understand their life, relations, events and what they have done on earth.

Protagonist Eddie, 83 years old war veteran goes to heaven after death while he tries to save a little girl Amy in Ruby pier. There, he is told by The Blue Man that heaven is the place where everyone's life on the earth is revised. Albom's heaven is for understanding life on the earth. Albom writes:

Everyone has an idea of heaven, as do most religions, and they should all be respected. The version represented here is only a guess, a wish, in some ways, that my uncle and others like him- people who felt

unimportant here on earth- realize, finally, how much they mattered and how they were loved. (qtd. from dedication page)

Eddie ends his whole life searching the meaning of life. He sees his life fruitless and meaningless in the earth because he could not understand sufficient events and happenings in the course of his life. But, Albom, unlike the religious orthodox, establishes the heaven as a place of understanding human life by searching the meaning. Eddie too understands his life and finding the meaning and significance of his life in heaven in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* after his encounter with different five people directly or indirectly related with his life, events and activities on earth. This encounter among the worldly people in heaven to search the meaning of human life itself is human centric.

The history of human civilization illustrates that the human beings have been seeking harmony and striving for adjustment and longing for justice and peace. By addressing this human desire, this philosophy supports the world peace, social justice and composite culture. Moreover, it opposes war and stands for human rights and is critical of oppression, exploitation, injustice and atrocities whether in the name of nationality or religion.

Humanist thinkers view that man occupies a prominent place in the entire universe; he is the centre of study and investigation; and the progress and continuity of nature and society is related to him. Mukerjee, Radha Kamal Mukerjee in her book *The Way of Humanism: East and West* says, “All civilizations aim at the unity and wholeness of human personality, values and norms and this is the concreteness and immediacy of human relation and behaviors.” (142). Mukerjee glorifies the concept of universal humanism as she says that all the polarities and antinomies of human existence are resolved, synthesized and harmonized at the highest dimensions by

common human values. Thus, the Albom's picturization of heaven disregards the orthodoxal concept of religion in one hand, on the otherhand his heaven is human centric

In addition, the concept of humanism and humanitarianism are different from each other. Humanism is a philosophy in itself, whereas humanitarianism is an expression only of human feelings. Humanism regards science as a powerful means of man's progress and genius; through science rationalism and impartiality are strengthened; and by scientific education the hold of orthodox thought can be lessened. Humanism stands on a firm world outlook on social ground and its basic aim is to know the human situation and to solve the arising problem and remove the obstructions coming on the way of human welfare whereas humanitarianism as Jatava says, "Humanitarianism is an expression only of human feelings. In Humanitarianism, we find certain beliefs such as faith in God, supernaturalism, grace of gods, transmigration, divine deliverance, heaven and hell that are considered to be irrelevant in humanism" (Preface vii).

Jatava says that humanitarianism is an emotional attitude that plans to help the people by reducing their suffering. For this purpose, it seeks ways to solve human problems based on faith in God and crosses the boundary of human reasons.

Similarly, the Buddhist philosophy denies any kind of orthodox and sets man even above gods because everything in Buddhism is unequivocal within the domain of nature. According to Jatava, Buddha propounded a philosophy of humanism:

Buddha launched a powerful movement for social revolution by denying the existence of all supernatural elements in life. He devoted his time in studying the human problems and put his finger on the fact of life that 'people are living in suffering'. The recognition of suffering

and the removal of it were the first steps of Buddhist humanism. The Buddha revolted against all blind traditions and cruel orthodoxy of Brahmanism which mutilated the beauty of human existence. (4)

This philosophy suggests that it is necessary to liberate the fettered humanity from the clutches of injustice. There is a need of universal humanism overwhelmed with understanding, peace and human thought; to develop and maintain closeness and fraternal relation between man/man and man/woman is inevitable; and the world of fraternity is possible through the efforts of co-operation.

Likewise, Cicero, a Roman philosopher, centered his thought on human beings and viewed that they could make independent decisions without detailed interference by fate and gods. Jatava mentions, "He emphasized the need of moderation in human conduct and social relations" (5). Cicero emphasizes that the human beings are the root of the society and the reconstruction of the society is possible only through the fraternity and collective right action of free and enlightened individuals. According to Cicero, humanism is the type of thought that is associated with men themselves and raises questions concerning their ultimate nature without transcending the human limitations.

Like Cicero, Confucius, a Chinese philosopher, stresses the need of human beings' duty to achieve an associated harmonious society. For him, morality is the sustaining value of all humanistic thought and the morality which is based on human values is useful because it stands as a means for maintaining right relations between man and man. Jatava quotes Cicero's concept of humanism as:

His main concern was the morals, man and state. His humanism is based on the principle that "measure of man is man" – which is interpreted as righteousness, benevolence and nobility, beginning with

the individual and extending to the family, the community, the nation and the world. He aimed at creating a stable society, maintaining a certain level of excellence, although not always striving after new successes. (5)

Confucius emphasizes that man is a responsible member of society and he is a citizen with an interest of his own and the common welfare. He is rational as well as critical. Humanism, as Confucius says, society and nature run through all human relations. He presents an unbroken chain of humanist ideas in the long history of mankind. He concludes that everything stands in relation to man living in human society.

Many Renaissance philosophers stress the individual as the basic unity of social relations because they believe that a good society depends upon moral consciousness of individual. If a man is not responsible, a good society cannot survive. Thus, man is the maker of his own society. In this way, the Renaissance movement in Europe revolted against the authority of the Catholic Church and the religious limitations on human knowledge. The Renaissance thinkers "did not believe in the ascetic monk, but in a new type of the universal man delighting in every kind of this earthly achievement" (Jatava 6) because they went against the repressive and other worldliness that had helped human nature in bondage for so many centuries.

Five People You Meet in Heaven by Mitch Albom although presents the setting of heaven believing in the existence after death regards the orthodox concepts of God. Even in heaven after death unlike the religious orthodox people meet other directly or indirectly related human beings, not the God and ferries. About the heaven Albom writes, "Well people often belittle the place where they were born" (36).

Neglecting the religious orthodox notion about heaven Albom writes:

There are five people you meet in heaven [. . .]. Each of us was in your life for reason. You may not have known the reason at the time, and that is what heaven is for. For understanding your life on earth [. . .] people think of heaven as a paradise garden, a place where they can float on clouds and laze in rivers and mountains. But scenery without solace is meaningless. (37)

Mitch Albom presents the heaven as a place where people get a chance to understand their lives. The protagonist Eddie too understands the meaning of his life in heaven after meeting five different people directly/indirectly related with his life. This significance of human beings, their deeds and relationship even in the heaven is related with the idea of universal humanism. This humanism is man centric as well as related with the philosophy of Gautam Buddha, Confucius, Renaissance and Roman philosopher Cicero.

Forgiveness and confession are other dominating themes of the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Mitch Albom highly valorizes the forgiveness and confession inherent in human emotion. When Eddie meets 'Ruby', former owner of 'Ruby Pier' from her name the amusement park is named; Eddie learns the value of forgiveness in human life. The dialogue between Eddie and old lady Ruby the relationship between Eddie and his father is revealed. By these interweaving dead characters and their memories, Albom steps to the path of solving the riddle of father-son relationship. Albom captures not only the essence of the father-son relationship while digging out one portion of Eddie's life but also highlights the issue of forgiveness and confession.

The fact is that father and son adore one another, but it is often only when sons are small boys that they are able to demonstrate their affection for their father without

embarrassment. In addition, parents often damage their children, often inadvertently, sometimes with the best of motives, and sometimes out of selfishness. Albom further writes:

All parents damage their children. It cannot be helped. Youth, like pristine glass, absorbs the prints of its handlers. Some parents smudge, others crack, a few shatter children completely into jagged little pieces, beyond repair [. . .] The damage done by Eddie's father was at the beginning, the damage of neglect [. . .] Eddie's mother handed out the tenderness, his father was there for the discipline. (109)

Further, "the hands on Eddie's childhood glass then were hard and calloused and red with anger, and went through his younger years whacked lashed and beaten [. . .] the damage of Violence" (110-111). Eddie's father did the damage of "Neglect Violence. Silence" (105).

Nevertheless Eddie adores his father and longs for his approval. This is why he worked lying days helping his father as a maintenance mechanic at Ruby's pier. Ironically his father loves Eddie and was very proud of his work ethic, but he could never bring himself to tell Eddie. In this context Albom writes:

This was the second damage done, the one father neglect. The damage of violence. [. . .]Through it all, despite it all, Eddie privately adored his old man, because sons will adore their fathers through even the worst behavior. It is how they learn devotion. Before he can devote himself to god, or a woman, a body will devote himself to his father, even foolishly, even beyond explanation. (111)

Finally, good understanding about the problem of both parties can lead the smooth relationships. If Eddie's father understands the pangs of war injuries, Eddie and his

father can have blissful wife. They stopped talking almost totally, relying on body language and gestures to communicate what they could not put in words. In Albom's language:

By this point- already a strapping teenager- Eddie only nodded back. Unbeknownst to him, he had begun the ritual of semaphore with his father, forsaking words or physical affection. It was all to be done internally. You were just supposed to know it, that's all. Denial of affection. The damage done [. . .] and then one night, they stopped speaking altogether. (113)

When Eddie returned from the World War II, the gap between his father and himself widened even further, in part because his father does not understand what the war has done to Eddie. When Eddie finally defends himself from his father's drunken violence by parrying his father's blows, his father refuses to talk to him again. Albom writes, "He never spoke to his son again. This was the final handprint to Eddie's glass. Silence. It haunted their remaining years. All because that by raised a hand to me"(115).

During his father's illness, which eventually led to his death, Eddie left his job as a taxi driver to fill in for his father at the pier to hold on to his job. After his death, he and his wife moved in with his mother to take care of her, and Eddie continued to work as a maintenance mechanic at the Ruby pier, something he had sworn never do. As a result, he spent the rest of his life in bitter resignation. Albom writes:

Eddie had accepted a job that would let him keep an eye on his mother, a position he had been groomed for summer after summer: A maintenance man at Ruby Pier. Eddie never said this-not to his mother, not to anyone-but he cursed his father for dying and trapping him in the

very life he had been trying to escape, a life that, as he heard the old man laughing down from the grave, apparently now was good enough for him. (135)

Eddie's fly in the sky scrapper of blissful life turned out to be maintenance of Ruby pier after his father's death. Eddie condemned his father of not being able to materialize his dream and imagination of escaping the dull and boring life of Ruby Pire. Albom writes:

Eddie had imagined a certain life – a "could have been life –that would have been his if not for his father's death and his mother's subsequent collapse. Over the years, he glorified that imaginary life and held his father accountable for all of its losses: The loss of freedom the loss of career, the loss of hope, He never rose above the dirty, tiresome work his father had left behind. (150)

One of the things Eddie learns in heaven is to let go of his anger and bitterness. For one thing, as Ruby, one of the five people he meets tells him: "Your father is not the reason you never left the Pier" (150), But more importantly, he learns that bitterness is like swallowing poison and hoping the other person will die. The encounter with fifth person Ruby made him learned the feeling of forgiveness and confession, The tussles between Eddie and his father comes in end at the heaven while Albom writes making Ruby of his speaker:

Learn this from me. Holding anger is a poison. It eats you from inside. We think that hating is a weapon that attacks the person who harmed us. But hatred is a curved blade. And the harm we do, we do to ourselves. [. . .] Forgive, Edward. Forgive. [. . .] That's because no one

is born with anger. And when we die; the soul is freed of it. [. . .] You need to forgive your father. (149-50)

After Ruby's departure in heaven Eddie sees the ghost of his father, smoking a cigar. Eddie whispers 'Dad?' and asks for confession. Albom mentions: "I don't know, [. . .] But you're my father. I'll let it go now, All right? All right? Can we let it go?" (152).

Mitch Albom has created the sacrificial characters. These characters could easily sacrifice for others. The protagonist Eddie gives his life to save a child named Amy at Ruby pier. He does not feel guilt in losing his life rather seems anxious in the matter that the girl is saved or not. Even in heaven he asks all the characters he has met about Amy time and again. He sees the significance of his life at Ruby pier when he knows that he had saved the girl losing his own life. In his entire life he had not seen any significance of his life.

Similarly, Robozzo, Tala, Captian, The Blue Man all have given their lives as a sacrifice for others or for the nation for the sacrificial feeling Albom writes:

"Sacrifice", The captain said. "You made one. I made one. We all make them. But you were angry over yours. You kept thinking, about what you lost. [. . .] Sacrifice is a part of life. It supposed to be. It's not something to regret. It is something to aspire to. Little sacrifices. Big sacrifices. [. . .] Robozo didn't die for nothing, You know. He sacrificed for his country, and his family knew it, and his kind brother went on to be a good soldier and a great man because he was inspired by it.

Albom foregrounds the sympathy inherent in human soul. Characters from *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* feel pain, suffering and plight. Eddie meets the Blue Man as the first person in heaven after his death, the Blue man as the first person

in heaven after his death, the Blue man tells him the lesson of sympathy. It reveals the fact that why and how people are touched and moved by other people's pathetic condition. Because there is the feeling of sympathy inherent in human's soul. People feel sympathy to others because they think the person is facing the plight in his own replace. Albom writes:

Why people gather when other dies? It is because human spirit knows deep down, that all lives intersect. That death just no takes someone; it misses someone else, and in a small distance between being taken and being missed, lives are changed. [. . .] You say you should have died instead of me but during on time on earth, people died instead of me too. (50)

Eddie is a simple maintenance mechanic. He never finds any significance of his life on the earth; he thinks his every tasks and events are meaningless so his life is absurd. As a result He is frustrated, alienated and dissatisfied with his life. But Albom managing different five appointments with different known and unknown people in heaven provides significance upon his life. Now Eddie's every events on earth gets meaning and reason. In this regard Albom writes: "No life is waste, [. . .] The only time we waste is the time we spend thinking we are alone." (52).

People say they "find" love, as if it were an object hidden by a rock. But love takes many forms, and it is never the same for any man and woman. What people find then is creative love. And Eddie found a certain love with Marguerite, a grateful love, a deep but quite love, one that he knew, above all else, was irreplaceable. Once she'd gone, he'd let the days go stale. He put his heart to sleep. (165)

Albom focuses on the platonic love. The love of Eddie and Margurette and their faith upon each other's love portraits the text very ideal as well as humanistic.

All wedding [. . .] "That was my choice. A world of wedding, behind every door. Oh, Eddie, it never changes, when the groom lifts the veil, when the bride accepts the ring, the possibilities you see in their eyes, it's the same around the world. They truly believe their marriage is going to break all the records. (166)

At the eleventh hour of his wife:

Like a hidden grieving that rises to grab the heart, his soul was ambushed with old emotions, and his lips began to tremble and he was swept into the current of all that he had lost he was looking at his wife, his young wife, his missing wife, his only wife [. . .] Further he says, " Oh God, Marguerite [. . .] I missed you so much. Love, like rain, can nourish from above, drenching couples with a soaking joy. But sometimes, under the angry heat of life, love dries on the surface and must nourish from below, tending to its roots, keeping itself alive.

(174)

One July evening [. . .].They looked around and realized they were the oldest people on the beach. (176)

Eddie felt her in everything, in the steering wheel, in the gas pedal, in the blinking of his eye, in the clearing of his throat. Every move he made was about hanging on to her.

Eddie does not want to loss Marguerite even though for few hours. Albom writes, "With Marguerite, he wanted only time-more and more time-and he was granted it, nighttimes and daytimes and nighttimes again" (179).

Even in the war, while Eddie is captured and tortured by enemies with his company. Eddie has the hope of life remembering his wife Marguerite. He lives due

to the memory of love, Marguerite. He sleeps keeping the photograph of Marguerite under his head. Mitch Albom writes:

For the few months of this captivity, Eddie went to sleep with Marguerite's picture in his helmet propped up in front of him. He wasn't much for praying, but he prayed just the same, making up the words and keeping count each night, saying, "Lord, I'll give you these six days if you give me six days with her [. . .]. I'll give you these nine days if I get nine days with her [. . .]. I'll give you these sixteen days if I get sixteen days with her [. . .]. (72)

Eddie acts out his bravery at the age of 83rd while trying to save the little girl Amy from the ride/falling ride at Ruby pier. For this, Albom writes:

The little girl raised her arms. Eddie lunged. His bad leg buckled. He half flew, half stumbled toward her, landing on the metal platform, which ripped through his shirt and split open his skin, just beneath the patch that read Eddie and maintenance. He felt two hands in his own, two small hands. (20)

Deeply rooted violent and accidental memory of past causes Eddie to return that repressed desire to work out with pinching and piercing pain. That is the outcome of painful memory of past activities. In that sense, the novel centers on an 83 years old wounded war veteran who is killed in a tragic accident at the moment of saving a little girl.

As Albom presents that last hour of Eddie's life on earth, he explores Eddie's inherent part of life with the help of heaven and afterlife description. He delineates Eddie's life, arrival to heaven and its different stages and meeting with five different

people having five lessons for life. He shows Eddie as a hero releasing from him from an ordinary people to portrait the humanitarian outlook. Eddie as:

Surprisingly, his back did not hurt. His leg did not throb. He yanked harder and hoisted himself easily over the edge of the teacup, landing awkwardly on the ground, where he was struck by three quick thoughts.

(29)

Albom penetrates the dream like situation of imaginative heaven to provide a significant account to a simple people like Eddie. Though Eddie remains pathetic due to war trauma, he manages chances to rescue himself by imagining better life for momentary solace. As many people cope different obstacles, Eddie becomes successful to live until 83 years.

Every people have different glimpses of imaginative life which turns out to be joyful momentarily. Because of being human, there is impossibility of everlasting joy and happiness. Imaginative or dreamlike thought can surpass the tragic part of life. Though everyone has running boy inside, they grow old with trauma, pain and pangs. After the emancipation from this worldly life, Eddie feels amazing in imaginative rendering of heavenly life. In that case, Albom presents Eddie as:

He lowered his chin and held his arms out like a glider, and every few steps he would jump, the way children do, hoping running will turn to flying. It might have seemed ridiculous to anyone watching, this white haired maintenance worker, all alone, making like an airplane. But the running boy is inside every man, no matters how old he gets. (31)

Life is momentary in this material world. In this momentary life, happiness is momentary. Eddie's life is no exception to the sense situation. So, the ethos, pathos and morality make him escape from his loneliness and pitiful condition. The

relationship of every people whether known or unknown becomes stronger only after realizing and sharing each other's pain, happiness during life. If we feel other's pathetic experiences as purgation, and catharsis, we can better understand human life and help other to endure and cope trauma. These feeling of sympathy dominate the whole text. In that case, Mitch Albom writes, "The Blue man pulled Eddie close. Instantly, Eddie felt everything the Blue man had felt in his life rushing into him, swimming in his body, the loneliness, the shame the nervousness, the heart attack. It slid into Eddie like a drawer being closed" (52).

Feeling of agony and anxiety arises out of the lacking in understanding the meaning of life in this world. Eddie becomes upset and anxious after his death in an accident. Though Eddie thinks his life on earth as barren and meaningless, the significance of his life is explored from his meeting with five different people. His meeting with the first man in his heavenly journey reveals his later chapters. Albom writes:

There are five people you meet in heaven," the Blue man suddenly said. "Each of us was in your life for a reason. You may not have known the reason at the time, and that is what heaven is for. For understanding your life on earth" . . . This is the greatest gift God can give you: to understand what happened in your life. To have it explained. It is the peace you have been searching for. (37)

Paradoxically, everyone searches for calm and peaceful life and Eddie does the same, Eddie's life on earth happens to be pathetic and painful. So he longs for peace even after his death. But by providing significance value of Eddie's life through the five different people meet in heaven Albom not only provides the value on commoner's life but also gives the outlook of humanism.

Humanism is universal and intricate by nature which can be noticed from the tragic and of the Blue man, the first person Eddie meets in heaven. The Blue Man becomes the victim of traumatic circumstances too. He travels to America from Poland with his family. His poverty compels him to work when he was child. But his minor mistake causes to humiliate his father to appeal foreman like a beggar. The memory of Blue Man about him and his father energizes the regrets further. The Blue Man "Can still see that moment, my father pleading with him like a street beggar, the foreman sneering, wiping his nose with the back of his hand. I felt my stomach twist in pain" (42). These regret, memory all are the result of humanism inherent in human soul.

Another humanistic vision could be found in the negligence of war. Even the character from soldier hates the war regarding war as a medium of destruction. Protagonist though involved in army in his past neglect and tries to forget it but hunted by horror memory. Because of being convinced of something innocent burned to death in front of him, Eddie finds "the whole of the war came surging out of him like bile. He was skinned by the bombing and the burning and the futility of it all" (86). Eddie feels the pangs and suffering caused by futile war to human beings whether they involve in war or not. The influence of war trauma engulfs Eddie throughout his life and afterlife. War injures him physically and causes internal mental tortures during his life on earth.

The captain and Eddie talk about their painful memory of war in the second stage of heaven. There, they talk about their friends and the bitter and romantic experiences during World War II. While talking, "Eddie remembered the names. The truth was, they had not kept touch. War could bond men like magnet, but like magnet it could repel them, too. The things they saw, the things they did. Sometimes they just

wanted to forget (68). Albom presenting the conversation between these soldiers in heaven, an imaginative place provokes the reality of soldier's life.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven not only highlights the humanitarian values and humanism but also stands against the posthuman notion about subject, object and agency. Posthumanism is a phenomena developed during the pick of capitalism and technologies when the role of human being is captured by the mechanical instruments and computing. Now let's draft out sift of humanism towards the posthumanism. Neil Badmington, one of the posthumanists traces out the differences between humanism and post humanism. In this regard he says, "Posthumanism does not (and, moreover, cannot) mark or make on absolute break from the legacy of humanism. Post-s speaks (to) ghosts, and cultural criticism must not forget that it cannot simply forget the past. [. . .] Humanism is always becoming posthumanism" (22).

Badmington's posthumanism differs from humanism in the sense that it's due to the development of computing and mechanical instruments in the phase of postmodernism. In this phase of mechanical instrument, the machine has seized away the role and subjectivity of human being. Taking the reference from the *Time* magazine Badmington presents sift of the role of human to the machine as well as humanism to posthumanism. In "Theorizing Posthumanism," he mentions:

Time honored tradition; the magazine was expected to announce its "Man of the Year." There was however, something strange about the winner. "Several human candidates might have represented 1982," the magazine's publisher explained to his readers, "but none symbolized the past year more richly, or will be viewed by history as more significant, than a machine: the computer." There had, of course, been

previous years in which the honor was not, strictly speaking, bestowed upon a "real" person [. . .] but this time something far more dramatic had occurred. Humans had failed to leave their mark. "Man of the Year" had given way to "Machine of the Year," and what looked like humanism's epitaph loomed over the cover's striking scene: "The Computer moves in." (12)

Badmington, thus clearly supports the role of technology in the postmodern era. This role of computing system has narrowed down the role of human which further leads to the concept of posthuman. With the reference of apocalyptic vision Badmington mentions:

Why if the computer has moved in, should there be a human witness? What might such an onlooker reveal about the apparent apocalypse? If technology has truly sped 'us' outside and beyond the space of humanism, why 'Man' still at our side? Man is present at own funeral, how can he possibly be dead? What looks on lives on? The end of man was suddenly in doubt. I had come up against the problem of what to do with human remains. (13)

The remark of death mentioned by Badmington is not the physical death of human being rather a metaphorical death of role and subjectivity of human being.

Subjectivity in posthuman is constructed through the cybernetics and mechanical instrument. Unlike in humanism there is hybrid subjectivity in posthuman. In this connection, Bart Simon in "Toward the Posthuman Future" writes:

Given the humanist complicity that invited the critique of subjectivity that led to the postmodern model in the first place, the question now is whether that model is equally and unwittingly complicit. The

proliferation of hybridizing practices in bio-technology and genetic engineering seem to turn the postmodern conception of hybrid subjectivity into a technoscientific fact, and increasingly the discourse of popular posthumanism and theoretical postmodernism seem to parallel each other. (4)

About the subjectivity formation in posthumanism Simon further connects the idea of postmodern subjectivity formation. He says, "Posthumanism in term of an inescapable tension between humanism and antihumanism. [. . .] deconstructive model of posthuman subjectivity and the fluid, flexible, and fragmented subjects" (5).

Tames Van Pelt mentions about the discourses made on 'Humanism', 'Antihumanism' and 'post humanism' in the course of western literary and philosophical tradition in his article "The Question Concerning Theory: Humanism, Subjectivity, and Computing." In his abstract Pelt writes:

Deeply held humanist ideas constitute a residual discourse in our late age of print discourse that has not been affected by the rise of technology or by widespread computing practices. Against humanism's Enlightenment idea of the rational individual, mid-twentieth century schools of anti-humanism postulated a "Subject" constructed by, rather than controlling, its language culture and technologies. The contemporary notion of the subject comes from Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, whose Lacan draws upon cybernetics and computing as evidence of a symbolic order constructive of subjectivity. (307)

The role of the object to construct the subjective according to the Lacanian phychoanalysis further leads to the idea of posthumanism. This issue is clearly raised

by James Van Pelt. The subjective formation of subject according to Lacan further goes to the Heideggerian theory which completely blurs the dichotomy between subject and object. Pelt again mentions other names; whereas the theory boom of the late twentieth century was driven by Derridian deconstruction, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Foucauldian genealogy, these three movements drew, in turn, upon the philosophy of Martin Heidegger (311). Pelt mentions their names because of their contribution in blurring demarcation line between 'subject' and 'object'. For the special contribution in the development of post humanism Pelt concerning in Heideggerian essay "The Question Concerning Technology says:

For Heidegger the issue of the subject of electric theory is Heidegger's Post war essay "The Question Concerning Technology." Here Heidegger inverts the humanist view that technology confines itself to the deliberate productions of "tools" consciously used by skillful individuals. Analyzing the dynamics of language and social structure, Heidegger looks beyond the common instrumental view of technology, a view as ancient as the Aristotelian notion of the tool user's craft and control. (311)

Heideggerian notion of 'subject' and 'object' is somehow connected with humanitarian notion of Aristotle about 'tool', 'tool user' and craftsmanship. But the demarcation blurring between subject and object makes Heidegger posthumanist rather than humanist. Pelt catches the points. He says:

The thrust of Heidegger's argument centers upon the way modern technologies construct their users; he emphasizes the complex, multi layered social practices in which both user and tool are enmeshed and by which both are changed. For Heidegger, the term "Standing-

reserve" is an "inclusive rubric" insisting upon the inextricability of specific objects from their contexts (the airliner cannot be abstracted from the structure of transportation, for instance). [. . .] Heidegger follows with a quintessentially anti-humanist critique of objectivity, nothing. (311)

The claim of Tamise Van Pelt that Heidegger as a posthumanist is justified by the remark of Heidegger himself. Heidegger in his essay "The Question concerning Technology" writes, "... Man is challenged, ordered, to [exploit the energies of nature], then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature within the standing reserve?" (11). Furthermore Heidegger writes, "When man investigating, observing, ensnares nature as an area of his own conceiving, he has already been claimed by a way of revealing that challenges him to approach nature as an object of research, until even the object disappears into the objectiveness of standing- reserve." (12)

Heideggerian notion about 'tool', tool-user' and craftsman is just reverse with Aristotelian notion due to the merging object with subject. For Aristotle there is a clear cut boundary between tool user and the tool he has used. According to Aristotle the tool is completely under the control of tool user. Here the 'subject' controls over the object. And there is not any role of the object to construct the subjectivity of object. In this regard concerning on Aristotle Pelt writes:

Tied the core value of humanist individualities are related ideas of craftsmanship, of the control of an artist over his tools. The significance of deliberate artistry is as ancient as Aristotle's silversmith, the 'causa efficians' of the silver chalice he hammers out. Classical Greek ideas of the artist separate from and in control of his

materials, find an echo in the twentieth century vision of scientist whose dispassion and insight are insured by his separation from and control over the tools and theories by which he examined his object of study. [. . .] Computer as a tool very much like the scientist's instrument or silversmith's hammer. (309)

Again, Pelt raises the issue about the lost of the human subjectivity in the computing era. The domination of instrument not only constructs the subjectivity of tool user but also ruins the identity. Unlike the Aristotelian notion of craftsmanship where the silversmith controls his object hammer; modern human beings are controlled by the instrument they have used.

Albom's protagonist Eddie with the help of stones is able to kill the enemies who have carried the advanced mechanical weapons like guns and pistols. This heroism of Eddie is not limited only with his skill of juggling stones and killing enemies. Rather this victory of the skill of juggling stones over the scientific weapons (there is not sufficient role of tool user) presupposes the text as a rejection of the idea of posthumanism. Because in the mechanical instrument like guns and pistol there is the domination of object in action unlike in stones there is the domination of tool user the subject.

Mitch Albom's *The Five people You Meet in Heaven* carries the plot occurs in this industrial era, especially after the Second World War. The protagonist Eddie works in an amusement park as a maintenance mechanic. Post humanist notion of construction of subjectivity through the object is applicable with the identity of Eddie. Albom writes; "His work shirt had a patch on the chest that read EDDIE above the word MAINTENANCE and sometimes they would wave and say, "Hiya, Eddie Maintenance" (3).

The term 'maintenance' added after Eddie is the result of his profession which is completely connected with the instrument he is involved. Here, the 'tool' construct identify of 'tool users'. 'Tool' controls the 'tool user' just opposite than Aristotelian notion of 'silversmith'.

Eddie never likes this job of maintenance. But the Ruby Pier controls his desire of freedom. As a result Eddie is frustrated who could not find solace in his duty. Eddie's identify as 'Eddie Maintenance' is constructed by his tool. Eddie further revealed through the dialogue between Eddie and Amy. Albom writes; "Scuuuse me", she said again. "Eddie Maintenance?" Eddie signed. "Just Eddie. " He said. "Eddie?" "Um hmm?" (13).

While the little lady Amy (Annie) calls Eddie connecting the term maintenance, Eddie rejects it and asks only to call him 'Eddie'. The little lady does the same. This Eddie's rejection of the maintenance' as his identify is the rejection of the posthuman notions.

Aristotelian humanistic notion of the craftsmanship, tool and tool user valorizes the skill and tool holder. But the posthumanists forget the role of tool user blurring the dichotomy between subject and object. In this connection the heroic deed done by Eddie in captivity is related with Aristotelian notion of craftsmanship. Eddie, Captain, Robozzo and Morton are captured by enemies in battle and kept in captivity. They are armless before the enemy guard with full of mechanical weapons like guns and pistols. After the death of Robozzo, Eddie is able to kill the enemies with his skill of juggling stone. About Eddie's skill of juggling Albom writes:

Eddie tossed the rocks into a rhythmic weave. Each one was big as his palm. He sang a carnival tune "Da, da-da-da-daaa..." The guard laughed. Eddie laughed. The captain laughed. Forced laughter, buying

time [. . .] "Get closer" Eddie sang, pretending the words were part of melody. Morton and Smitty slid gently n, feigning interest. [. . .] Eddie went faster [. . .] "Now Eddie yelled. In mid-juggle he grabbed a rock and, like a good baseball pitcher he had always been, whipped it hard into the face of Crazy Two, breaking his nose. (77-78)

With his sharp skill of juggling rocks Eddie kills the entire enemies-Crazy One, Crazy Two, Crazy Three and Crazy Four though they are armed with advanced mechanical weapons like guns and pistols. Generally, the traditional tool depends upon the person who has used it; the role of stone is not significant but the role of stone holders like Aristotelian valorization of silversmith's skill to control upon his tool. But in the case of modern scientific instrument the role of object or instrument is greater than the object holder. For example if the enemies were killed by guns or pistols in the place of Eddie's skill of juggling stories, these would not be the domination of tool holder upon the tool.

Now, we can conclude that by showing the victory of Eddie with the help of his skill upon the enemies holding advanced mechanical instrument *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* valorizes the humanism rejecting the posthumanism.

III. Conclusions

This research has analyzed the humanism philosophy and humanitarian values, ethics as reflected in the text *The Five People you Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom. Moving a step further the thesis has pointed out the text as a rejection of posthumanism.

As the correlation with universal humanism in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* there the distinct vision of life, death and heaven. The notion of heaven is just opposite than the religious orthodox. Most of the religious notion of heaven is superstitious, unbelievable and dominated by the existence of God. This valorization of God and supernatural by religious orthodox tries to create the image of human beings as a sinful creature.

But Mitch Albom does not give any focus upon God in the text. He does not make heaven supernatural and mysteries where the role of human being is nothing. Rather Albom creates the image of the heaven placing him on the periphery of humanism. Albom's heaven is dominated by the existence of human beings, where everyone could understand their life, relations, events and what they have done on earth. In the text heaven is presented as a reflection of worldly activities.

Protagonist Eddie, 83 years old war veterans goes to heaven after death while he tries to save a little girl Amy in Ruby pier. There, he is told by The Blue Man that heaven is the place where everyone's life on the earth is revised. Heaven is for understanding life on the earth.

Eddie himself ends his whole life searching the meaning of life. He sees his life fruitless and meaningless in the earth because he could not understand sufficient events and happenings in the course of his life. But, Albom, unlike the religious orthodox, establishes the heaven as a place of understanding human life by searching

the meaning. Eddie too understands his life and finds the meaning and significance of his life in heaven in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. This new perception about heaven is human centric unlike religious orthodox.

Another aspect of the novel is the domination of humanitarian values, ethos and pathos through out the entire text. Humanism is the philosophy which places the human beings in its center. On the other hand humanitarian values mean feelings of love, brotherhood, peace inherent in human's feeling. Mitch Albom has tried to drag out the issue of humanitarian values through the presentation of morally strong characters in text. As the humanitarian feelings the text is constructed with the issues like interconnectedness among known and unknown people, domination of forgiveness and confession, universality of love and affection, sympathetic feelings as well as sacrifice for other.

Albom presents life having chain and over lapping of stories that have great impact to each individual and other, situations, events and circumstances bring people at one place and every event has meaning. Eddie dies while he tries to save Amy. But the accident occurs due to Nicky's car key. So the story of Eddie and Nicky meets altogether to cause something. Albom forms another connection between Eddie and the Blue Man. The Blue man stands in the heavens to tell Eddie the story of his death which itself is connected with Eddie. The story revealed the unknown fact the death of the Blue Man is caused by Eddie. Similar interconnection is formed among many characters in the text though they are known or unknown. Thus this interconnection among people and characters is able to regard the relativity of humanism inherent in every people.

The Five People You Meet in Heaven is dominated with the theme of forgiveness and confession. Friends forgive to friends for the mistake done knowingly

or unknowingly, son forgives his father; even the people forgive other who is the cause of their death. In the heaven Eddie forgives his harsh and drunkard father after meeting Ruby the former owner of Ruby pier. The Blue Man and Tala forgive Eddie though Eddie is the cause of their death. Albom foregrounds the subject of peace, prosperity, fraternity, optimism and humanity. He deals with the issue of love and relationship, life and death, humanitarian and benevolence deeds and so on. Albom presents the humanitarian vision through the actual representation of morally strong characters in the chaotic society. Almost all the characters in this novel are devoted to their duties, moralities and responsibilities though they are haunted by the traumatic ghost or bitterly suffered by disillusioned scenario, devastated and frustrated world view. In other words, the novel's setting and character's activities, their tasks and deeds have established them as strong figures of humanism. Not only the major characters of the novel are highly benevolence but also the minor characters have strong belief on their duty. That's why there is not any evil character through the entire text.

Albom presents the forgiving characters. They are portrait as loving, caring and liberal who could easily excuse other for minor or major mistake done on the course of their lives, as well as they could easily feel guilty and confession after knowing the error. Eddie easily feels confession and asks for forgiveness with the Blue Man as well as with Tala, when he knows himself as a cause of their death. Even he says that he should die instead of the Blue Man. Thus all the characters are dominated with the feeling of forgiveness and confession. Mitch Albom through the creation of such characters valorizes the humanitarian values inherent in human soul.

Albom focuses on the platonic love. Even in the war, while Eddie is captured and tortured by enemies with his company. Eddie has the hope of life remembering his wife Marguerite. He lives due to the memory of love with Marguerite. He sleeps keeping the photograph of Marguerite under his head. The love of Eddie and Marguerite and their faith upon each other's love portraits the text very ideal as well as humanistic.

Mitch Albom has created the sacrificial characters. These characters could easily sacrifice of others. The protagonist Eddie gives his life to save a child named Amy at Ruby pier. He does not feel guilt in losing his life rather seems anxious in the matter that the girl is saved or not. Even in heaven he asks to all the characters he has met about Amy time and again. He sees the significance of his life at Ruby pier when he knows that he had saved the girl losing his own life. In his entire life he had not seen any significance of his life. But in sacrifice he sees the value of his life. Similarly, Robozzo, Tala, Captian, The Blue Man all have given their lives as a sacrifice for others or for the nation.

Albom foregrounds the sympathy inherent in human soul. Characters from *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* feel pain and suffering and plight. Eddie meets the Blue Man as the first person in heaven after his death, tells him the lesson of sympathy. It reveals the fact that why and how people are touched and moved by other people's pathetic condition. Because there is the feeling of sympathy inherent in human's soul. People feel sympathy to others because they think the person is facing the plight in their own replace.

Eddie is a simple maintenance mechanic. He never finds any significance of his life on the earth; he thinks his every tasks and events are meaningless so his life is absurd. As a result he is frustrated, alienated and dissatisfied with his life. But Albom

managing different five appointments with different known and unknown people in heaven provides significance upon his life. Now Eddie's every events on earth get meaning and reason.

'Bravery and martyrdom' of Eddie also help the text to denote as a claim of humanism. When the Second World War started Eddie joins in military service neglecting the advice of his family. It's the duty of every man to involve in army while nation needs. Furthermore, while Eddie is captured by the enemies with some of his company; he freed all living friends with his skill of juggling stones. With the help of stones Eddie is able to kill the enemies who have carried the advanced mechanical weapons like guns and pistols. This heroism of Eddie is not limited only within his skill. Rather this victory of the skill of juggling stones over the scientific weapons (there is not sufficient role of tool user) presupposes the text as a rejection of the idea of posthumanism which gives emphasis to tool than tool user.

Works Cited

- Albom, Mitch. "Everyone Matters." *Publishers Weekly*. New York, 250.33 (2003): 56.
- Albom, Mitch. *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. London: Time Warner Paperbacks, 2004.
- - -. *Tuesday with Morrie*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.
- Badmington, Neil. "Theorizing Posthumanism." *Cultural Critique*. University of Minnesota Press, 53 (Winter 2003): 10-27.
- BockenKamp, S.R. *Mitch Albom: Biography*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Chenowith, Emily. "Five People You Meet in Heaven." *Jefferson Publishers Weekly*. New York, 250. 33 (2003): 55.
- Gulliams, Mary K. Bird. "The Fife People You Meet in Heaven." *Library Journal*. New York, 128. 15 (2003): 89.
- Heidegger, M. *The Question Concering Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977.
- Jatava, D. R. *Social and Humanist Thinker: India and Western*. Jaipur: Ina Shree, 1998.
- Mukerjee, Radha Kamal. *The Way of Humanism: East and West*. New Delhi: Academic Books, 1998.
- Pelt, Tamise Van. "Humanism Subjectivy and Computing." *Computers and Humanism*. New York: Arristed Literary Criticism, 36. 3 (2002): 307-318.
- Simon, Bart. "Toward a Critique of Posthuman Futures." *Cultural Critique*. 53 (Winter 2003): 1-9.
- Singer, Erik. "The Five People You Meet in Heaven." *Publishers Weekly*. New York, 250, 48 (2003): 20.