

## Eddie's Psychological Problems in Mitch Albom's *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims to understand the characterization of Eddie, as someone who lives a life full of psychological problems, in the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* (Albom, 2003). This research examines all the psychological problems that Eddie has and analyzes the roots of all of them. Eddie's journey in heaven after death where he meets five different people is seen as the way Eddie solves all the problems that he has. By employing Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach, this research focuses on the psychological problems that are most prevalent in Eddie's character. The data are taken from the narratives and dialogues in the story. The background chapters in this novel are analyzed to understand the roots of Eddie's psychological problems. His journey in heaven is viewed as the method of curing all of those problems.

**Keywords:** *identity; Mitch Albom; personality; psychoanalysis.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Eddie, the main character in Mitch Albom's (2003) *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, is a perfect example of someone who has been battling psychological anxieties for a long time in life. He always thinks that his life is such a failure and that he should have done a lot better about it. He does try to change his fortune but often times finds himself incapable of altering the situations and ends up blaming fate as his scapegoat. Although he dies for a noble reason of saving a little girl, he himself has never actually found peace. It is after his death that he finally is at peace after meeting the five people in heaven. Each of the five people he meets teaches him a lesson of his life.

It can be seen that Eddie, in many ways, has similar symptoms as those who suffer mental illnesses. As a character of a fictional work, he actually is an embodiment of an actual individual who suffers from mental issues in real life. Mitch Albom himself explicitly states in the book that

Eddie is drawn from a real person, that is, his own uncle, Edward Beitchman. Edward was a World War II veteran who died at the age 83, the same as Eddie. After his duty as a soldier, he also suffered anxieties over his life, thinking that he did not accomplish what he should have accomplished, the same with Eddie. This is the first reason why Eddie fits to be the subject of Freudian psychoanalysis as this research suggests. However, it has been mentioned in one of the previous paragraphs above that no individual is in fact completely free of any psychological issues. Eddie being a character with a psychological problem is not enough to justify choosing him as the subject of this research, hence the second reason.

The second reason that makes this novel an interesting subject of psychoanalysis research is the interpretation of heaven that Mitch Albom offers here. As a metaphysical thing or place, heaven is commonly believed to be the place to go after death for those whose lives are full of good deeds to have their wishes granted by God. On the other hand,

this novel defines heaven as a journey of meeting five different people, each with a lesson to teach. As the story progresses, it is revealed that these five people have their lives intertwined with Eddie's at least once. Each lesson that Eddie is given shows him the interconnected-ness of the world, and how every individual's life is part of a bigger story that Eddie may not be aware of.

Eddie discovers the wisdom of life from these five people and finally makes peace with his own. He understands that his life is in fact not as miserable as he thinks it is and that he actually is a good person. He also learns that he makes two fatal mistakes that lead to the deaths of two out of the five people that he meets in heaven. Eddie curses himself at first for not realizing these facts, but he is forgiven by them and told to let go of any of the burden. Each person teaches Eddie to find peace by breaking down the anxieties that Eddie has and then tells him to let go of it.

This concept of heaven that Mitch Albom portrays in *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* is similar with the method of free associating dreams and symptoms that Freud has developed in psychoanalysis study. Both are meant to help unveil someone's deepest emotions that are unconsciously stored. The five people that Eddie meets in heaven have a similar role as a psychiatrist whose aim is to help patients of mental illness. If Freudian psychoanalysis helps patients by free associating the dreams and symptoms that they have, the five people that Eddie meets help him by telling him their stories that intertwined with Eddie's life.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been a number of studies investigating the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*. Lestari (2008), for example, examined the points the readers liked and disliked about the novel. She argued that the recent appeal for books with religious/spiritual theme helped the novel become popular with three out of four of the given Amazon's American reviewers respond positively while only one out of ten reacts negatively to it. The points that the readers like are the novel being an easy yet provoking read, its circular nature of life

theme, and its interesting version of heaven. What they dislike about the novel are its being rudimentary and the unappealing version of heaven that the novel offers.

Another study by Mansyur (2010) investigated the relationship between the sign, the object, and the interpretant, and to get the messages among them on Eddie's way to heaven. Mansyur (2010) argued that each person Eddie meets represents values such as balance, sacrifice, forgiveness, love, and purposes as parts of life.

Wulandari (2010) examined Eddie's perception of his former life and how the five people he meets influence him to change that perception. It was found that Eddie used to deem himself worthless. But after meeting the five people in heaven, he realizes that he is actually kind, brave, skillful, and loving. Those people show him that his life is meaningful and purposeful. This research approaches Eddie's thoughts as mere perceptions, not as psychological problems that need to be taken care of.

Marfungah (2014) investigated the characterization of Eddie, the main character of the novel. She found that Eddie is a character who is true to life and has an agreeable personality that is reflected in the facets of altruism, tender-mindedness, trust, compliance, and modesty.

Finally, Khoeriyah (2016) examined the interconnection between the concept of heaven depicted in the novel and its relation to Qur'an verses. The results show that there is an interconnection between both concepts of heaven from the novel and the Qur'an. The similarities and differences signify that people have their own interpretation of heaven and each has to be respected.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychological disorder can be defined as a syndrome characterized by clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotion regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning (Black &

Grant, 2014). According to the American Psychological Association (2013), psychological problems can be classified into eighteen types according to their symptoms. These types include neurodevelopmental disorders, schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders, mood disorders, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive and related disorders, and dissociative disorders. However, the disorders that are discussed in this research are only those that are the most prevalent in Eddie's character.

### Depressive Disorders

Depressive disorders are classified under mood disorders. Mood disorders are highly prevalent, have high morbidity, and are associated with early mortality and suicide. They are among the world's most disabling illnesses, as documented in *The Global Burden of Disease* (Murray & Lopez, 1996). Characterized by prominent and prolonged disturbances of mood generally inappropriate to the individual's life situation, depression and mania are considered the primary syndromes (Black & Grant, 2014, pp. 89-90). The symptoms of mood disorders include insomnia, suicidal thoughts, and anorexia. Specifically for depressive disorders, the symptoms include feelings of being a burden for others.

### Separation Anxiety Disorder

The use of the word *anxiety* is very diverse. In the world of psychology, the term *anxiety* is described as the presence of fear or apprehension that is out of proportion to the situation (Black & Grant, 2014). Separation anxiety disorder is a condition in which a person has excessive anxiety regarding separation from places or people to whom he or she has a strong emotional attachment (Black & Grant, 2014, p. 150).

### Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

This disorder falls under Trauma- and Stressor- Related Disorders type, which often occurs to individuals who are exposed to traumatic or stressful situation or events. PTSD is most prevalent to soldiers who go to the war zone where they often face difficult situations that leave them with traumatic memories. Women who have the

experience of being sexually harassed often have this disorder. As to men, it is usually a follow up of a combat experience (Black & Grant, 2014, p. 177).

## METHODS

Library research was conducted as the primary method of collecting data. The novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* by Mitch Albom (2003) was the main resource from which the data were taken. The data consist of the psychological problems that Eddie battles against in his life, by which his thoughts and behaviors are shaped. The forms of the data are narratives and dialogues of the characters.

The secondary data source was also used in this research. These sources include previous papers, studies, and articles that discuss the same novel. References explaining Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis were also important to fully understand what the theory is all about and to identify which data were important and which were not.

Close reading of the novel multiple times was done to gain a comprehensive understanding on what the novel actually talks about. The next step was identifying the main character, Eddie's psychological anxieties that he has before his death by collecting any narratives, dialogues, or events that show his anxieties issues.

After identifying the psychological problems that Eddie has, the next step was identifying the causes of those problems. This was done by closely reading the flashback stories between the main story chapters that tell about Eddie's life in the past when he is a child of a family, a brother, a soldier, a boyfriend, a friend, a husband, and a widower. Each and every flashback story contains information of how Eddie develops the unconsciousness in himself. The next step was free associating the anxieties that Eddie has with any experience in his past life that corresponds to each anxiety. This was done by analyzing the five lessons that Eddie learns during his journey of meeting the five people in heaven.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* showcases the example of someone who has been battling psychological anxieties for quite along time in life. Eddie, the main character of the novel, is portrayed to have a complicated history over the course of his life before he finally seems to settle down with all the problems that he has. From the outside, he seems to be just an ordinary old man with an ordinary lonely life who looks content with what he has, but deep inside he has always been regretting his life over the decisions that he made and how he feels forced to live his life that way. He considers his life to be a failure and that he never does enough or tries harder to change it. The novel explicitly talks about the anxiety issues that Eddie has and also specifically explains the roots of all that, dating back to the time when Eddie is younger, that is when he is still a child and onwards.

The chapters in the novel in general tell two types of story; the main story and the flashback. Although its first chapter is titled 'The End' and the story begins with the last few hours of the main character's life, the main story of the novel is actually written progressively from that point onward to the moment he dies and goes to heaven. Between the chapters that tell about the main event, there are flashback chapters that give insights into Eddie's past life; as a child in his family, a little brother, a soldier in Philippines war, a boyfriend, a husband, a friend, a widower, and so on. Every flashback chapter is always preceded with the story of Eddie's birthday. The flashback chapters are very important in this discussion because they help readers understand the roots of Eddie's characteristics. Understanding these roots gives the platform to free associate and interpret Eddie's unconsciousness.

As a maintenance guy of Ruby Pier, Eddie is in charge of keeping every ride to be in a good condition to be safely ridden by the visitors. One day, one of the rides is stuck mid-air with the passengers threatened to be thrown out. He and the other workers manage to save the passengers but the ride still goes free fall right before Eddie's eyes. He sees a little girl standing right below the falling

ride and tries to save her. He runs towards the little girl and pushes her away. The girl is saved but the ride hits Eddie hard and he dies right away. Eddie wakes up and finds himself in heaven, although he does not realize it at first.

Just like the case with the flashback chapters, the concept of heaven offered in this novel is also a significant tool to actually analyze Eddie's unconsciousness. Heaven as portrayed in this novel is not the same with what most of us probably believe it to be. As a metaphysical thing, heaven is mostly believed to be a place where people whose lives are filled with good deeds go to after they die. The belief about heaven is also commonly entailed with the belief about hell, a place to go after death for those who do many sins in life, which is the exact opposite of heaven.

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 that time, and that is what heaven is for. For understanding your life on earth."

Eddie looked confused.

"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.

"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." (Albom, 2003, p. 35)

Instead of being a place to reap the fruits of human's good deeds in life, the concept of heaven as mentioned in the story above gives us a very good foothold to analyze Eddie's characteristics deeper. In a way, this concept of heaven can also be used to confirm whether the results of free associating Eddie's characteristics with the stories of his past are correct or not. Each person whom Eddie meets shares a history with him during his life before, whether Eddie knows it or not. Each one of them is there, in Eddie's heaven, to teach him a lesson of life. There are a total of five lessons that Eddie needs to learn and every lesson teaches Eddie a new perception of his own life.

In a way, the five people that Eddie meets can be considered to be the psychiatrists who help Eddie to take care of his psychological problems, similar to the relations between Freud and his patients.

### **Eddie's Psychological Problems and Their Roots**

As mentioned previously, it is understood that no human being is completely free of any psychological problems and Eddie is not an exception. This section specifically discusses the psychological problems that Eddie has and specifies them according to the types of psychological disorders described in the book *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) 5<sup>th</sup> Edition* (American Psychological Association, 2013).

As mentioned in the book, there are three psychological disorders that are discussed in this research. These disorders are chosen because among all disorders that are classified into the nineteen types of disorders mentioned in the book, these three specific disorders are the most prevalent in Eddie's case. That is to say, it is important to note that there are other disorders that Eddie has, but they are not specifically discussed in this research as they are not as prevalent as the three disorders that have been chosen.

#### ***Depressive Disorder***

Classified under the mood disorder, which is one group of disorders that are among the world's most disabling illnesses, the specific symptoms of depressive disorder that are not found in other disorders in the mood disorders group include feelings of being a burden for others. This very specific symptom is found in Eddie's case in many occasions throughout the story in the novel. Among all the occasions, the most prevalent one is at the time when he just gets back from the Philippines War onward.

Eddie's feeling of being a burden, which is a symptom on depressive disorder, is for the most part implicitly told in the novel. One occasion that shows Eddie's feeling of being a burden is when he meets Marguerite in heaven, as shown below.

"I should have worked somewhere else," he told her. "I'm sorry I never got us out of there.

My dad. My leg. I always felt like such a bum after the war" (Albom, 2003, p. 170).

At the war in the Philippines, Eddie and his unit are taken captive by the enemy. They are tortured and forced to strip coal from the walls to help the enemy's war effort. One day one of them falls sick and then is shot right in front of their eyes for failing to do the job. The experience triggers their anger and makes them realize that they need to get out of there as soon as possible. After almost half a year, they execute an escape plan and kill their captors. Eddie thinks he sees a small shadow of a child while setting the place on fire. His unit is ready to leave but Eddie insists on saving the shadow. Then a bullet goes right into his left leg and while being semi unconscious Eddie is taken by his unit. The bullet, which later in the story turns out is shot by his own Captain to save Eddie's life, cripples Eddie's left leg.

... All Eddie knew was that he'd awoken in a medical unit and his life was never the same. His running was over. His dancing was over. Worse, for some reason, the way he used to feel about things was over, too. He withdrew. Things seemed silly or pointless. War had crawled inside of Eddie, in his leg and in his soul. He learned many things as a soldier. He came home a different man (Albom, 2003, p. 85).

The wound proves to hurt Eddie so much not only physically but moreover mentally. It leaves him a weak man, as he is not able to do the same things he could do before enlisting for war. He loses his confidence and deep down feels that he has upset his father by going home crippled. It is his relationship with his father that makes things even worse for him. Even though Eddie is abused by his father many times, he still secretly adores his old man and wants to be recognized by him.

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 boy will devote himself to his father, even foolishly, even beyond explanation (Albom, 2003, pp. 105-106).

As stated by Lois Tyson "... the family is very important in psychoanalytic theory because we are each a product of the role we are given in the family-complex" (Tyson, 2006, p. 13). Eddie's family plays a huge role in determining his characteristics, even after he himself becomes an old man. Since childhood, Eddie has always wanted to have his father's love, but his father has always been very harsh on him. Many times it even seems like Eddie's father hates Eddie. This leads Eddie to become a tough teenager who believes that the only way for him to get his father to recognize him is by becoming tougher and tougher.

Mickey grabs a chair. Joe clears a small tabletop. Marguerite moves Eddie's crutches. Only his father does not shuffle for the sake of shuffling. He stands against the back wall, a jacket over his arm, staring at Eddie's leg, encased in plaster from thigh to ankle.

Eddie catches his eye. His father looks down and runs his hand over the windowsill. Eddie tightens every muscle in his body and attempts, by sheer will, to force the tears back into their ducts. (Albom, 2003, p. 103)

However, as he gets home crippled from war, his relationship with his father becomes even more complicated. His father seems to put a distance between him and Eddie even further than before Eddie's enlistment. It can be interpreted from the quoted paragraphs above that Eddie understands it very well about his father's disappointment, but it does not seem like there is anything much he can do to get his father to recognize him again this time. He is no longer the man who is capable of protecting his older brother, he is just a crippled ex soldier now.

It is also understood that after coming back home from war, Eddie always tries to avoid his father. This is one type of defense mechanism that a person with a psychological problem normally uses, that is avoidance. Eddie puts a distance between himself and his father because he does not want to be in a situation that may evoke his feelings and make himself anxious. He is afraid of what may happen if he gets close to his father after all that, so he just chooses to put a distance with his old man. Apparently, Eddie's father also tries to do the same, that is avoiding any situation that will put him and

his son in a difficult position that may evoke any unwanted emotions.

Eddie is so depressed after the war that he has no desire whatsoever to find a job. He just stays silent at home. His father, who does not understand what depression is, grows more frustrated and disappointed with Eddie. He becomes more and more agitated seeing Eddie at home doing nothing, he feels that even if his son is crippled he should still try to look for a job. On the other hand, Eddie's mother always tries to understand Eddie. She tries to calm his husband every time he gets agitated seeing Eddie. She thinks that Eddie just needs time, but Eddie's father thinks that it is just a weakness.

The situation gets even worse when one day Eddie's father can not take it anymore and both get into a fight. Eddie, for the first time in his life, stands up to his father and fights back. It makes his father, who is already an abusive father, even more upset. The two then never find a way to reconcile their relationship.

He never spoke to his son again.

This was the final handprint on Eddie's glass. Silence. It haunted their remaining years. His father was silent when Eddie moved into his own apartment, silent when Eddie took a cab-driving job, silent at Eddie's wedding, silent when Eddie came to visit his mother. She begged and wept and beseeched her husband to change his mind, to let it go, but Eddie's father would only say to her, through a clenched jaw, what he said to others who made the same request: "That boy raised a hand to me." And that was the end of the conversation. (Albom, 2003, p. 109)

If the situation above is seen from another perspective, the fight actually forces Eddie to come out of his depression a bit more as he then tries to get a job and even get married. However, Eddie's father who has already been too upset to forgive Eddie never sees it that way. On the other hand, Eddie seems to get a job no longer to entertain his father whom he secretly adores. He only gets a job to get away from him. Both the father and the son have lost interests in each other and seem to only mind their own business from then on. The story even goes further by showing that even after Eddie's death, his father still ignores him in heaven.



All parents damage their children. This was their life together. Neglect. Violence. Silence. And now, someplace beyond death, Eddie slumped against a stainless steel wall and dropped into a snowbank, stung again by the denial of a man whose love, almost inexplicably, he still coveted, a man ignoring him, even in heaven. His father. The damage done. (Albom, 2003, p. 108)

The three damages that Eddie gets from his father are the very things that shape Eddie's life. He tries his whole life to overcome those damages just to get his father to show more affection towards him, but he still ends up upsetting his old man. He ends up becoming very angry to his own father for everything his father has done to him. Eddie does not want to be like him anymore. He does not want to work at the pier like his father used to.

When Eddie was a teenager, if he ever complained or seemed bored with the pier, his father would snap, "What? This ain't good enough for you?" And later, when he'd suggested Eddie take a job there after high school, Eddie almost laughed, and his father again said, "What? This ain't good enough for you?" And before Eddie went to war, when he'd talked of marrying Marguerite and becoming an engineer, his father said, "What? This ain't good enough for you?" (Albom, 2003, p. 125)

The quoted paragraph above shows that since before enlisting as a soldier, Eddie does not like the idea of him working for the pier in the future. He does not like the job very much, and he wants something more than just becoming a maintenance guy at the pier. He wants to study engineering and become an engineer in the future, something that his brother Joe does not think suits Eddie well. He only works at the pier as a teenager to entertain his father and to get his attention, although he actually does not like it. After going back home from war crippled and depressed, he hates the idea of working at the pier even more.

Then there is an incident that leaves his father hospitalized. Eddie then has to take over his father's job, the very job that he curses so much, that is maintaining the Ruby Pier. He has to do that to support his family financially because working as a

cab driver does not pay much. He drives the cab during the day and takes care of the pier's maintenance during the night. After being hospitalized for quite some time, Eddie's father finally dies, leaving Eddie with the job of maintaining the pier. He leave his job as a cab driver and focuses on maintaining the pier. After the death of his father, he feels the emptiest kind of anger. On the other hand, he also feels like he is nowhere better than his old man as now the maintenance job is the only one that good enough for a crippled man like him.

Eddie never said this— not to his wife, not to his mother, not to anyone—but he cursed his father for dying and for trapping him in the very life he'd been trying to escape; a life that, as he heard the old man laughing from the grave, apparently now was good enough for him. (Albom, 2003, p. 128)

To summarize things, Eddie's depression comes from his early childhood family complex where he wants to get his father's love by doing things that he thinks will make his old man proud. However, when he gets back home from war as a crippled old man, he understands that he can no longer get his father's love. His depression leads him to become the man his father hates the most, a weak man. The depression manifests into anger towards his own father to the point that he no longer feels like he should be favored by his father anymore. However, after the death of his father, Eddie is forced to work at the pier which reminds him a lot of the man that he hates, which pushes Eddie into depression even further.

### ***Separation Anxiety Disorder***

Classified under anxiety disorders, Separation Anxiety Disorder is a condition in which an individual goes through an excessive anxiety regarding separation from certain places or other individuals to whom he or she has a strong emotional attachment (Black & Grant, 2014, p. 150). In the world of psychology, anxiety is specifically described as the presence of fear or an out of proportion apprehension towards a situation. To understand Eddie's separation anxiety disorder, it is important to discuss the roots of it first. Eddie's

relationship with his wife Marguerite is the one thing that causes this disorder.

In the novel *The Five People You Meet in Heaven*, the main character Eddie dies after living a relatively long life (83 years). During his life, he loses many people he knows which include his father, his mother, his older brother Joe, his wife Marguerite, and many more of his comrades during his time as a soldier. In a way, each and every loss that Eddie has to face during his life has significant impact towards Eddie. However, there is one loss that Eddie struggles to cope with the most, a loss that Eddie feels the most burdened by, a loss that changes Eddie as a person, that is the death of the wife he loves so dearly, Marguerite.

Marguerite is a very important character in the story. She is not only Eddie's wife whom he loves dearly, she is also the fourth person that Eddie meets in heaven after his death. She is first introduced in one of the early flashback chapters of Eddie's birthday. It is Eddie's seventeenth birthday and the night before that day he meets Marguerite. Joe teases Eddie by telling the whole family about Marguerite and that makes Eddie both embarrassed and angry at the same time.

"You don't have to ask me to wait," Marguerite says suddenly.

Eddie swallows.

"I don't?"

She shakes her head. Eddie smiles. Saved from a question that has caught in his throat all night, he feels as if a string has just shot from his heart and looped around her shoulders, pulling her close, making her his. He loves her more in this moment than he thought he could ever love anyone. (Albom, 2003, p. 79)

Before leaving for war, Eddie has another birthday celebration with his family and Marguerite. The night after the celebration, Eddie and Marguerite walk around the pier for their last date before Eddie leaves. As quoted above, it is understood just how much Eddie loves Marguerite and how difficult it is for him to leave her for war.

He learned to pray quickly. He learned in which pocket to keep the letters to his family and

Marguerite, in case he should be found dead by his fellow soldiers. (Albom, 2003, p. 64)

As the story continues, it is understood that Eddie's relationship with Marguerite is going well. But then Eddie decides to enlist himself into the army and the couple has to cope with long distance relationship. As shown in the quoted paragraph above, during his time as a soldier Eddie always keeps two letters with him, one for his family and the other for Marguerite, just in case he dies anytime. There is also another occasion during his time as a soldier that shows how much Eddie loves Marguerite, that is, when Eddie and his unit are taken captive by the enemy in the Philippines war.

For the first 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. . . ." (Albom, 2003, p. 69)

The quoted paragraph above shows how much Eddie loves and misses Marguerite during the time when he is captured by the enemies in the Philippines. During Eddie's time as a soldier, the novel does not say much explicitly about Eddie's plans for his relationship with Marguerite, the novel just repeatedly explains how Eddie loves Marguerite so much. However, it can be understood that of course Eddie wants to come home as the man he is when he enlists himself. However, things get worse during the war. Eddie and his unit are captured by the enemies and Eddie gets his left leg shot while trying to escape.

As explained in the discussion about Eddie's depressive disorder, the wound on Eddie's left leg makes him less of a man he is when he enlists for the army. The wound proves to hit Eddie so hard not just physically but also mentally. The wound does not just change his life on an individual level, but also on a social level. His relationship with his family changes, so does his relationship with Marguerite. In many ways, Eddie feels that he will not be able to make Marguerite happy being the



man that he is right now, a crippled man, and this thought haunts Eddie all the time, even until his death.

As the time goes by, Eddie slowly tries to get out of his depression over his crippled leg. The fight that he has with his father, which shakes both men's relationship as a father and a son, in a way wakes him up a little. He moves out from his family house and works as a cab driver. His relationship with Marguerite goes well and finally he gets married to her. Things start to look better as he is married to the one woman that he loves dearly and who loves him the way he is as well.

"Happy birthday to you . . ." Marguerite emerges, singing in her soft sweet voice. She looks beautiful, wearing the print dress Eddie likes, her hair and lips done up. Eddie feels the need to inhale, as if undeserving of such a moment. He fights the darkness within him, "Leave me alone," he tells it. "Let me feel this the way I should feel it." (Albom, 2003, p. 119)

Reading the paragraph above, it is understood that with Marguerite Eddie wants to be as happy as he could possibly be. With Marguerite he wants to forget the dark memories that has been haunting him since the days of war in the Philippines. Eddie believes that it is with Marguerite that Eddie can at least repress the darkness inside himself. Her presence is what keeps Eddie conscious of the fact that he is lucky he is alive.

"It wasn't my choice," Eddie said, sighing. "My mother needed help. One thing led to another. Years passed. I never left. I never lived nowhere else. Never made any real money. You know how it is—you get used to something, people rely on you, one day you wake up and you can not tell Tuesday from Thursday. You're doing the same boring stuff, you're a 'ride man,' just like . . ." (Albom, 2003, p. 132)

Their marriage life seems to be a happy one for quite a long time, even during the time when Eddie has to take care of his parents' financial problem, as mentioned in the quoted paragraph above, because his father falls sick and can not earn money. While his mother is waiting his father at the hospital, Eddie works as a cab driver during the

day and as a maintenance guy for Ruby Pier during the night. Eddie goes back to his old routine as a teenager before enlisting as a soldier, that is helping his father maintaining the arcades. It does not seem that difficult for Eddie to do this as he knows every ride very well. His marriage life goes well through all that, and even through the time when Eddie's father eventually passes away.

There is one thing however, that is still missing in Eddie's and Marguerite's life, that is, a child. During Eddie's 38<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration, this idea of having a child is firstly introduced. It is Marguerite who wants it.

Eddie snorts. He watches his wife organize the group. As always with Marguerite and children, his mood is lifted by her easy connection to them and dampened by her inability to bear them. One doctor said she was too nervous. Another said she had waited too long, she should have had them by age 25. In time, they ran out of money for doctors. It was what it was.

For nearly a year now, she has been talking about adoption. She went to the library. She brought home papers. Eddie said they were too old. She said, "What's too old to a child?"

Eddie said he'd think about it. (Albom, 2003, pp. 152-153)

The extract above shows that both Eddie and Marguerite have been trying to have a child for quite some time, but they always fail. It can be understood that Marguerite is the one who has a problem and as the time goes by they run out of money for doctors to cure Marguerite. After that they have been thinking about adopting a child and this can be noted as the beginning of a sad tragedy that happens towards the couple afterward.

In the next flashback chapter, which is during Eddie's 39<sup>th</sup> birthday, a tragedy occurs. To celebrate his birthday, Eddie goes to a racetrack with Noel, his co-worker, to test their luck. Eddie wins quite a sum of money Noel tells him to gamble even more. He is hesitant at first but then Noel convinces him that he will be able to use the money that they win to pay for the kid that Marguerite has been wanting to adopt. The idea entertains Eddie as he thinks that it can make his wife happy. By the time he has won

much enough, that is, 800 dollars, he calls Marguerite, hoping that she is going to be delighted for his win.

Things do not go the way Eddie expects. Marguerite is angry at Eddie for behaving like that when they both know that they will have a baby soon. This upsets Eddie so much that he hangs up the phone with anger and chooses to splash the money all the way he likes. He wants to get back at Marguerite by winning so much more and tells her to use the money anyway she likes later when he gets back home. One thing that Eddie does not know is that at the time Marguerite turns out to be feeling really guilty after scolding Eddie like that.

What he does not know is that Marguerite, unable to call him back, has chosen to drive to the track and find him. She feels badly about yelling, this being his birthday, and she wants to apologize; she also wants him to stop. She knows from evenings past that Noel will insist they stay until closing—Noel is like that. (Albom, 2003, p. 162)

She regrets her conversation with Eddie on the phone. She should have known that if he is with Noel, they will of course gamble. Moreover, since it is Eddie's birthday she thinks she should have let Eddie enjoy his time with his friend. However, as she is driving on the road towards the racetrack, a drunk teenager lets go a bottle of liquor from above and the bottle hits Marguerite's car. The car veers into the concrete and shakes Marguerite's body inside it.

Marguerite suffers a great deal of damage to her body, but she survives. However, the recovery sacrifices many things. She has to be confined for bed rest for 6 months and the bill for the treatment of her injured liver costs them both the money and the time that they have prepared for adoption. Their relationship goes stale and they do not talk much to each other. They also do not discuss anything about who is to blame for Marguerite's accident. Time is the only thing that can recover the situation right now.

Indeed, as the time goes by, they begin talking again. Eddie proposes for another adoption, but Marguerite refuses. Things start to get better like the way it was before. But then Marguerite is diagnosed with tumor and Eddie has to take care of

the sick Marguerite once again. Eddie never complains about his as what he really wants is just to get as much time as possible with his beloved wife. After battling with the tumor, Marguerite eventually dies by the age of 47, leaving Eddie as a lonely old man who no longer has any motivation to continue living in this world. Marguerite's death leaves Eddie with a hole in his heart that he can never fill in even until his own death.

### *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*

PTSD is a disorder that is often found in soldiers who have the experience of being exposed to a traumatic or stressful situation in the war zone. In Eddie's case, he has the experience of being kept captive in the Philippines by the enemies for almost five months. However, the most traumatic event that happens to him during his time as a soldier does not really occur until the very last moment of his service, that is when he and his unit try to escape from captivity.

In the Philippines war, Eddie and his unit are taken captive by the enemy for almost 5 months. They are tortured and forced to strip coal from the walls to help the enemy's war effort. One day one of them falls sick and then is shot right in front of their eyes for failing to do the job. The experience triggers their anger and makes them realize that they need to get out of there as soon as possible. After almost half a year, they execute an escape plan and kill their captors. Eddie thinks he sees a small shadow of a child while setting the place on fire. His unit is ready to leave but Eddie insists on saving the person. Then a bullet goes right into his left leg and while being semi unconscious Eddie is taken by his unit.

Interesting enough, one thing that keeps haunting Eddie in his dreams after he comes back home from war is not the moment when he is shot, but the small shadow of the child that he believes is really there at the time. Even after Eddie's marriage with Marguerite, he still has that dream now and then. The dream always sets in the Philippines, the last night of war, in the village that Eddie and his unit set on fire as they try to make their escape from the place. Eddie will then feel a surging pain from his left leg in his dream, a pain that comes from a bullet that he does not see coming. He always tries

to swat it but it is invisible to him, so he always misses. When the flames become more intense, Eddie sees Smitty, one of comrades, coming and yelling at Eddie to follow him. Eddie tries to answer him but he can not. Then something from the muddy earth under him grabs his legs and drags him in. The dream always stops at that, he wakes up panting and sweating.

And then he wakes up. Sweating. Panting. Always the same. The worst part is not the sleeplessness. The worst part is the general darkness the dream leaves over him, a gray film that clouds the day. Even his happy moments feel encased, like holes jabbed in a hard sheet of ice. (Albom, 2003, p. 118)

The worst part about Eddie's dream is the darkness that engulfs him. The darkness often comes out whenever Eddie is in a happy situation, like when he is with Marguerite. He always hides this darkness inside him from Marguerite and from anyone. He is the only one who knows about it, simply because everyone who is in the same unit as Eddie before is pretty much not around anymore. They do not keep in touch at all after the war. Eddie fights this darkness alone.

"Happy birthday to you . . ." Marguerite emerges, singing in her soft sweet voice. She looks beautiful, wearing the print dress Eddie likes, her hair and lips done up. Eddie feels the need to inhale, as if undeserving of such a moment. He fights the darkness within him, "Leave me alone," he tells it. "Let me feel this the way I should feel it." (Albom, 2003, p. 119)

The recurring dream that Eddie has can be discussed as a way of the repressed feeling to manifest itself. When Eddie is awake, just like the scene from the quoted paragraph above, his defense mechanism always tries to repress the feeling from coming out, although it may not always be successful. However, it is another story when he is asleep, his defense mechanism is at its weakest point that the repressed feeling can actually manifest itself in the form of a dream.

Just like what Freud suggests, a dream is often a symbolism over some repressed experience or emotion. A dream can not always be interpreted as simple as it looks to be and there should be

something else that it represents. In Eddie's case, it is understood that Eddie's dream is clearly connected to a specific moment that Eddie himself also understands. As Eddie's dream is vividly described, the set of the dream is exactly the place where Eddie gets his leg shot while escaping a war zone. This dream is a clear symptom of someone who is suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder.

Before a repressed feeling or emotion manifests itself as a dream, it will go through some distortion. The distortion here is one type of defense mechanism that an unconscious person has while he or she is asleep. The distortion is meant to keep the repressed feeling from manifesting itself into some dream that mind can not take. Once a dream is too much for the mind of the dreamer to handle, he or she will wake up right away. In a sense, waking up from dream is a defense mechanism that will activate whenever the dream distortion does not alter the repressed feeling's manifestation enough.

The one thing that can be seen as distorted in Eddie's dream is him getting dragged into the muddy earth under him. Everything else is quite clear for Eddie, but this one thing sure makes him wonder. Later in the story when Eddie dies and goes to heaven to meet the five people, it is revealed that this one thing that Eddie does not understand actually does represent something real.

The darkness that had shadowed him all those years was revealing itself at last, it was real, flesh and blood, this child, this lovely child, he had killed her, burned her to death, the bad dreams he'd suffered, he'd deserved every one. He had seen something! That shadow in the flame! Death by his hand! By his own fiery hand! A flood of tears soaked through his fingers and his soul seemed to plummet. (Albom, 2003, p. 188)

The shadow that Eddie's see while he and his unit are burning the village is real. That is the shadow of a little girl named Tala who at the time is waiting for his mother in the house. Eddie understands right away that it is his mistake that he lets that little girl get burnt and killed. After the war, the dream that keeps haunting him at night is a manifestation of his guilty feeling over his cruelty of not saving that little shadow that he sees. Whenever his mind suggests that there could have been a little

girl who is burnt to death, he keeps denying that thought.

Eddie denying the possibility of that shadow becoming an actual human being is one type of defense mechanism that is called denial. He does not want to accept the possibility of that shadow becoming an actual dying human being because he does not want to feel the guilt. When he dies and goes to heaven, he finally has the chance to know the truth about the incident at that night. Tala, the little girl, is the fifth person that Eddie has to meet. She tells him what actually happens at that night to Eddie and he starts to cry and blame himself for it.

His body convulsed, and his head jerked wildly, until the howling gave way to prayerlike utterances, every word expelled in the breathless surge of confession: "I killed you, I KILLED YOU," then a whispered "forgive me," then, "FORGIVE ME, OH, GOD . . ." and finally, "What have I done . . . WHAT HAVE I DONE? . . ."

He wept and he wept, until the weeping drained him to a shiver. Then he shook silently, swaying back and fourth. He was kneeling on a mat before the little dark-haired girl, who played with her pipe-cleaner animal along the bank of the flowing river. (Albom, 2003, p. 189)

The quoted paragraph above shows just how guilty Eddie feels towards the little girl. In psychoanalysis, this is similar with the result of interpreting a dream by the means of free associating it. Eddie finally understands where all the darkness that has been engulfing him originates from. During his life, it is a guilty that he does not know exist and does not want to acknowledge its existence either. But after his death, he can not deny and escape from it anymore. He has to face the ugly truth, the greatest sorrow that he always avoids during his time on earth.

### **Eddie's Journey in Heaven to Find Peace**

The previous section discusses Eddie's psychological problems and how these problems come into existence. This section deals with how Eddie's journey in heaven after death actually helps Eddie to solve or redeem all those problems. His

journey in heaven can be divided into five parts, each of which is about meeting one person whose life intertwined together with Eddie's life before. Each person has a story to tell and Eddie finds some lessons about his own life from them. His journey in heaven can be interpreted as the way Eddie free associates things in his life to actually find peace for himself, pretty much like the way free association is used in psychoanalysis.

The way the five people tell Eddie the lessons is similar with one type of the defense mechanisms that a mind has, that is, regression. Regression helps individuals who suffer from psychological problems to relive their experiences in order to first acknowledge their existence. After acknowledging their existence, it is going to be easier for the individuals to actually deal with the problems. Albom (2003) presents the five lessons that Eddie has to learn by taking him to the old experiences or memories during which any significant moments happen, which is similar to regression.

#### ***The First Person – The Blue Man***

"I am your first person, Edward. When I died, my life was illuminated by five others, and then I came here to wait for you, to stand in your line, to tell you my story, which becomes part of yours. There will be others for you, too. Some you knew, maybe some you didn't. But they all crossed your path before they died. And they altered it forever." (Albom, 2003, p. 35)

The first person that Eddie meets in heaven is the Blue Man, someone from the Pier's circus freaks from a long time ago when Eddie is still a child. He is the one who explains to Eddie about the purpose of heaven. He meets the blue man at the pier, the old Ruby Pier, the very place that Eddie despises. He tells Eddie that he is the first of the five people he has to meet in heaven, each of which has his or her life intertwined with Eddie's life before. The reason may be unknown to Eddie at the time, but that is what heaven is for, to understand life on earth.

From the outside Eddie looks just like the old man he is before his death, a squat, white-haired old man, with a short neck, a barrel chest, thick forearms, and a faded army tattoo on his right

shoulder (Albom, 2003, p. 2). However, he feels his body is like that of a child. The blue man explains that it is because Eddie is a child when their lives intertwine before. The blue man on the other hand looks just like the freak that Eddie knows before.

The blue man tells Eddie the nature of his death. He explains that he dies because of a child who runs into the road after a ball while he is driving a car. He has a heart attack after avoiding the child and dies beside the car. Nobody is around the area to witness the accident and gives him a medical treatment. Later it is concluded by the police that heart attack is the only possible cause for his death. Indeed, heart attack is the cause for the blue man's heart to stop, but nobody knows what causes the heart attack itself. The blue man has a heart attack because he tries to avoid the child. Eddie becomes speechless as he realizes that the child is him after all.

The Blue Man gives Eddie his first lesson. The lesson is all lives intersect, they are all connected, even those of strangers. Compared to the other lessons that Eddie gets from the other four people, this first lesson does not deal with any of Eddie's psychological problem in particular. It is more like a general lesson about life that is not specifically meant for Eddie only. This part of the story gives more of an understanding about the concept of heaven that Mitch Albom presents in the novel.

### ***The Second Person – The Captain***

The next person that Eddie meets in heaven is his captain when he is a soldier in the Philippines war. This time he meets him at the battleground where Eddie and his unit are taken captive by the enemy once. His body feels as strong as it has ever been, because that is how he is when he is a soldier. The captain talks to Eddie about how together they try to make their escape at the time. The captain confesses to Eddie that he is the one who shoots Eddie at the time and Eddie is then furious about it.

WHY? YOU BASTARD! You bastard! Not you! WHY?" They were grappling now on the muddy earth. Eddie straddled the Captain's chest, pummeling him with blows to the face. The Captain did not bleed. Eddie shook him by the collar and banged his skull against the mud. (Albom, 2003, p. 87)

The quoted paragraph above shows just how angry Eddie is that he gets shot at that night and never even knows how he gets that shot or who shoots the bullet. Apart from this part of the story, the novel does not explicitly tell Eddie's anger over the wound that ends up making him a crippled man for the rest of his life, that is for around 50 years. He keeps the anger within himself and never actually expresses it up until the captain tells him that he is the one who shoots Eddie that night.

"No one gets left behind, remember?" the Captain said. "What happened to you—I've seen it happen before. A soldier reaches a certain point and then he can not go anymore. Sometimes it's in the middle of the night. A man'll just roll out of his tent and start walking, barefoot, half naked, like he's going home, like he lives just around the corner. (Albom, 2003, p. 88)

The captain then talks about his principle of not leaving anyone behind that he tries to hold on to as strong as possible. He explains to Eddie that it is because of this exact principle that he shoots Eddie's leg during that escape, which he means to save Eddie's life. The captain argues that at the time he believes that Eddie is experiencing what many soldiers experience in extreme situations. He believes that Eddie is hallucinating, and he thinks that the only way to snap Eddie out of it and save him is by shooting his leg to calm him down.

The captain then explains to Eddie another thing that he does not know about that night. The captain tells him that a land mine explodes under his feet and tears his body into pieces when they try to make their escape. He has been waiting for Eddie at that place where his body is scattered all over the place to tell Eddie what actually happens after Eddie is shot and loses consciousness.

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.

"You didn't get it. Sacrifice is a part of life. It's supposed to be. It's not something to regret. It's something to aspire to. Little sacrifices. Big sacrifices. A mother works so her son can go to school. A daughter moves home to take care of her sick father. (Albom, 2003, p. 93)

The second lesson that the Eddie gets from the captain is about sacrifice. The captain teaches Eddie that everyone makes sacrifices now and then. It is a part of life that Eddie has to accept. Eddie may get his leg shot at the time, but it is a small sacrifice compared to losing his own life. The captain also sacrifices himself to save his unit at that night. If it is not him who gets exploded by the land mine, his unit might all be death for not knowing that there are land mines.

This second lesson that Eddie gets help him deal with the depressive disorder that he has. He learns that he does not really have to get that depressed over his crippled leg, which makes his relationship with his father becomes so bad. He learns to cherish the fact that he is alive rather than being depressed over the things that have already happened. He should also get over his crippled leg and keep living life the best way that he can. After the war, Eddie is so depressed that he just stays at home and does not have the motivation to do anything. This makes his father so angry. If only he chooses to let go of what has happened and continue living life the way it should be, his father will not be as angry and they could have a better father and son relationship.

The lesson also helps Eddie deal with his posttraumatic stress disorder. His recurring dream about that last night of war that he keeps having finally finds some light. It is his captain who shoots him at the time and it is meant to save Eddie. The captain also sacrifices himself to let his unit survive. It helps Eddie relieves the anger that has been with him for around 50 years, an anger that often manifests itself in the form the dream that he keeps having.

### ***The Third Person – Ruby***

Eddie's third person is someone he does not know, a woman named Ruby. He remembers seeing her face somewhere at the pier. She tells him that her husband, Emile, was the one who built Ruby Pier for her long ago before Eddie's time, hence the name. The first Ruby Pier is burnt down after a firework accident. This accident drives Emile into despair. He is then hospitalized next to Eddie's dying father. Ruby tells him the story behind his

father's death which Eddie always assumes to be caused by his own drinking antics.

Eddie is then taken into the scene where he sees drunk Mickey Shea, a friend of his father, tries to rape his mother. He is caught by Eddie's father and then runs to the sea where he tries to drown himself out of guilty feelings. Eddie's father who is after him with the intention to beat him ends up saving him. The incident makes Eddie's father fall sick, both mentally and physically, and he dies without telling Eddie a single thing.

Ruby stepped toward him. "Edward," she said softly. It was the first time she had called him by name. "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. Do you remember the lightness you felt when you first arrived in heaven?" (Albom, 2003, pp. 141-142)

The third lesson Ruby teaches Eddie is about forgiveness. This lesson helps Eddie to deal with his depressive disorder. Just like Eddie's father who chooses loyalty over anger and forgives Mickey Shea, Ruby urges Eddie to also forgive his father to find peace. He realizes one thing that makes him so depressed is that he can not forgive his father for what the old man has done to damage him. Once he lets go of the anger and chooses to forgive his father he feels peaceful.

Eddie did. Where is my pain?

"That's because no one is born with anger. And when we die, the soul is freed of it. But now, here, in order to move on, you must understand why you felt what you did, and why you no longer need to feel it." (Albom, 2003, p. 142)

### ***The Fourth Person – Marguerite***

This time Eddie is in a world of weddings, going from one wedding ceremony of a couple of certain nationality to other wedding ceremonies of couples of other nationalities. In one of those weddings, Eddie finally meets the person he dearly loves and badly misses, Marguerite, his wife. The

story then flashes back to the time when Eddie and Marguerite are still together, from their courtship at the pier, their humble wedding ceremony at a Chinese restaurant, and also to their attempt of adopting a child.

Their attempt of adopting a child is ruined after Marguerite gets into a tragic car accident while trying to stop Eddie from gambling his birthday money on horse race. The money they have saved to get the adoption is then used to pay for Marguerite's treatment. Although they keep loving each other dearly, the accident takes a toll on their relationship. They do not speak about what happened, Marguerite goes silent for a long time while Eddie loses himself at work. As time goes by things get better, but soon afterward Marguerite dies of a brain tumor.

Eddie falls deep in sorrow with the death of his wife for he has always considered Marguerite as his only source of happiness. She has been the guiding light for Eddie going through the difficulties he has after his time as a soldier. Eddie feels that Marguerite went too soon and Eddie lost his love after her death.

"Lost love is still love, Eddie. It takes a different form, that's all. You can not see their smile or bring them food or tousle their hair or move them around a dance floor. But when those senses weaken, another heightens. Memory. Memory becomes your partner. You nurture it. You hold it. You dance with it.

"Life has to end," she said. "Love doesn't." (Albom, 2003, p. 173)

Marguerite teaches him the fourth lesson of life that love transcends death, life ends but love does not. Lost love is still love, it just changes form. Eddie may not see Marguerite anymore, but his love takes form in memory that he holds and nurture. This lesson helps Eddie dealing with his separation anxiety disorder. After Marguerite is dead, Eddie lives his life as if he has lost everything in life. It never truly drives him to any extreme actions, but he loses his interest and motivation to continue living. This lesson teaches Eddie that his love, Marguerite, is still with him all the time, it just changes form. The lesson helps Eddie finding peace that he has lost since the death of Marguerite.

### ***The Fifth Person – Tala***

Eddie finds himself near a river where he sees thousands of children playing together with the water. His eyes are then drawn to one little girl who waves and motions at him to come closer. The girl, who seems to Eddie to be Asian, introduces herself as Tala. She reveals that she is burned by Eddie at that last night of war. She is the little shadow Eddie sees inside the flaming hut back when Eddie and his unit escape from the war zone in Philippines.

"I was sad because I didn't do anything with my life. I was nothing. I accomplished nothing. I was lost. I felt like I wasn't supposed to be there." (Albom, 2003, p. 191)

Eddie falls deeply in despair and thinks that he deserves every bit of tortures he suffers after that war. It is real, he kills that little shadow. The very nightmare that has been haunting him since then finally reveals itself. Eddie is sad, he assumes that he has accomplished nothing. He feels that he should not have been at the pier.

"Children," she said. "You keep them safe. You make good for me."

She wiggled the dog against his shirt.

"Is where you were supposed to be," she said, and then she touched his shirt patch with a small laugh and added two words, "Eddie Mainten-ance." (Albom, 2003, p. 191)

Tala teaches Eddie the fifth lesson of his life, that is he has done what it takes to redeem himself. By maintaining the rides, Eddie keeps safe of the children who visit the pier. The pier is exactly the place where Eddie is supposed to be after his service as a soldier. The last moment of Eddie's heroic action of saving a little girl from the falling arcade by sacrificing himself is also one form of redemption that Eddie has done to make up of what he does back the Philippines.

This lesson about redemption helps Eddie dealing with his posttraumatic stress disorder. For decades after that last night at war, the recurring dream that Eddie keeps having revolves around that mistake of not saving the little shadow that night. After Tala tells him that he has done what he has to do to make up for that mistake it makes Eddie feel at peace eventually.



## CONCLUSION

In this novel, Mitch Albom depicts the concept heaven as if it is a place to redeem the mistakes that someone has during his or her life. Albom also depicts it as a place for those who are death to finally be at peace with anything that has happened before. The psychoanalysis approach that is used in this research is meant to help analyze the connection between Eddie's childhood experiences with his family, the psychological problems that he has during his life, and also his journey after death to meet the five people in heaven. His journey in heaven proves to be not only the key to solve his psychological problems.

Eddie's father's harsh treatment makes Eddie a child who lacks affection from a father and this leads him to desperately want to get his old man's recognition. This later becomes the roots of Eddie's first disorder, that is, depressive disorder. The lessons about sacrifice and forgiveness that Eddie gets from the captain and Ruby, the second person and third person that he meets in heaven, help Eddie solve this depression.

Eddie's deep love towards his wife Marguerite and his guilty feeling of not being able to do his best to make her happy while she is still alive proves to be the root of Eddie's second disorder, separation anxiety disorder. The death of his wife is too much of a loss that Eddie has to handle as he feels that he has lost everything. The fourth lesson about love that transcends death and never perishes that he gets in heaven, which is given by Marguerite herself, helps him to deal with his separation anxiety disorder.

The root for Eddie's third disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, is found to be caused at that night when Eddie and his unit try to make their escape from captivity. The recurring dream that he keeps having is finally explained by the captain and Tala, the second person and the fifth person that Eddie meets in heaven. The one who shoots him and cripples his leg is the captain and the shadow that Eddie sees that night is real, it is Tala. The lessons about sacrifice and redemption that Eddie gets from the two of them help him solve his posttraumatic stress disorder.

In conclusion the results of the research above have answered the two research questions of this research. The research found that by using the approach of Freudian psychoanalysis, Eddie is understood to have three most notable psychological disorders that are apparent in the story. Three of them, as mentioned above, are depressive disorder, separation anxiety disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder. The roots for each of these three disorders are found by analyzing the flashback chapters that the novel has. By the means of regression, the five lessons that Eddie gets from the five people that he meets in heaven are proven to help Eddie solve all these three disorders.

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