Book Review – Tuesdays with Morrie

It was after reading “Tuesdays with Morrie”, a New York Times bestseller, that I grew interested in Mitch Albom’s books. This time, I am reading the original version of his newest novel, “The Five People You Meet in Heaven”.

In this novel, Albom attempted to narrate in the third person and through the view of the protagonist, an old man called Eddie. The story sets itself in a modern-day amusement park located at a pier named Ruby Pier, where a lot of families with children would visit and have fun on the rides during vacations. It seems that it is a social type of book, but in fact as you go through the chapters, you will find that the underlying themes are quite philosophical and inspiring.

The book starts by an interesting opening which states that the plot begins at the end, since “all endings are also beginnings. We just don’t know it at the time.” Then Eddie is introduced to the readers about his last hour alive, which was spent on feeling that he had lived an insignificant life and eventually he died saving a little girl from a ride accident. After his death, he got the rationale of the happenings on earth explained by five people in heaven, hence conveying several lessons of life to readers: the circular nature of life, the power of sacrifice, forgiveness and love, and the purpose of his life. The main message that the writer wants to convey is obviously that since we are all connected in one way or another, everyone matters and can make a huge difference to the world. Also, from this theme we can see that our personal actions can affect others seriously but often unintentionally, which indeed expresses the writer’s anticipation towards a harmonious society, where considerate actions and strong bonds can be detected between relationships.

In general, the plot of this novel is very well developed throughout. The storyline is told in a straightforward way but it also requires the involvement of the readers – to link the various events happening in Eddie’s lifetime to the significance they had made to the purpose of his
life and therefore, understand the themes conveyed by the author. In addition, the climax, which lies in Eddie’s last hour alive, is very vividly portrayed to create suspense and arouse interest in readers. Besides, subplots are clearly revealed through birthdays and notably indicated by flashbacks.

As for the characters, they all show many invaluable qualities and are real to life as these qualities can reflect human nature in society. Take the main character, Eddie, as an example. He was pessimistic, but had demonstrated responsibility and dedication in his work. He was also a good-hearted person, which is reflected in his last episode on earth: saving a little girl. He ultimately knew of the power of love – caring for others more than himself. These qualities are all crucial components in conveying the theme of the novel. Besides, the supporting characters are outstanding to tell Eddie about happenings in his life, and therefore they succeed in their part of conveying the author’s messages.

Generally speaking, the book may not be so entertaining and informative, but it does achieve the aim of involving readers in the storyline: the themes and messages are conveyed in such a way that readers will inevitably reflect upon themselves when they see themselves in the actions of the characters. To conclude, it is a highly meaningful book which makes readers aware of the purpose of life, so I strongly recommend it to you all.