

Five stages of grief in C.S. Lewis' Novel *A Grief Observed*

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Abstract

*Death is inevitable and inapprehensible, yet it is the most trustworthy experience by humans. People have various ways to encounter death, some by witnessing the death of others, some by reading fictional stories. Death and literature are closely related as the literary genres portray deaths from various perspectives. For example, death is praised in Classics, death is tragic in Romantics, and death is a part of life in postmodern literature. However, the attitude of people towards death and grief varies. This research aims at finding the stages of grief (death and dying) using Kübler-Ross theory in C. G. Lewis novel *A Grief Observed* (1961). This research is qualitative, using a content analysis approach. The novel gathered data through words, phrases, and sentences. The findings show that the main character, Lewis, finally manages the five stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Moreover, with his acceptance of the death of his wife, he can capture the world in more meaningful ways and find peace in his heart. It is also strengthened that literature can be a medium for consolation from suffering since this novel is based on a true life story by the author himself.*

Keywords: C.G. Lewis, Death, Five stages of grief, Kübler-Ross,

1. Introduction

Death is inevitable, a secret and mysterious as its nature. In his book, the sociologist Bauman (1992) states that death is the most trustworthy human experience. It is inapprehensible and beyond what human's mind can comprehend. People have various ways of encountering death, some by experiencing and witnessing the death of others, some by reading fictional stories and illustrating how to feel death (Nurjanah, 2021). In some cases, deaths haunt the living. In modern propensity towards individual narration, deaths occur as thefts of obedient husbands, deaths rape the possession of lovely ones, or even act as the ending of suffering (Wood & Williamson, 2003).

The fear of death is oecumenical, as it haunts humans and animals. People designed enormous activities and research to prevent the impediment of fatalities, impede them, and finally accept them as the final destination of humans (Becker, 1973). There are numerous reasons why death can be feared: whether by war, disease, accident, or affliction by other people. For a few who are fortunate, death for all humans is accompanied by pain. Some fear loneliness and isolate themselves (Feder, 1976). Naturally, humans are social beings. There is interaction among other humans to complete their existence and give meaning to life. Concerning death, it is the separation from everything. It is the loss of everything (Hinton, 1967). The most painful experience for humans is the loss of their loved ones (Gordon, 2000). It evokes a natural horror and repulsion just by witnessing someone else's death (Malinowski, 1948).

Since the notion of death generates innumerable fears, scholars have argued that studying death fear needs a multidimensional concept. Hoelter and Hoelter (1978) differentiated that the fear of death is classified into eight dimensions: fear of the dying process, fear of premature death, fear of significant others, phobic fear of death, fear of being destroyed, fear of the body after death, fear of the unknown, and fear of the dead. Furthermore, Florian and Mikulincer (1993) defined that in death fear, there are three components: the intrapersonal

components that bring impacts the mind and body's death which contains the fear of losing one's personal goals and the fear of annihilation, an interpersonal component which relates to the impacts of death in interpersonal relationships, and a transpersonal component which considers the fear of the transcendental self consisting of the fear of life after death and punishment after death. In comparison, Schultz (1979) preferred to use 'death anxiety' to reflect the shapeless death fear feeling.

From the perspective of anthropology, philosophy, and psychoanalysis, they provide proof and reasons that death fear is a natural reaction seen by every single biological organism to sustain and maintain life. Throughout human history, as a universal reaction to death, Taylor (1889) described that all living creatures experience death to fear. Even the most brutal animals fear death. Aristotle (1941) stated that we are terrified of plentiful terrible things, yet death is the most terrifying thing. Similarly, Chamaz (1980) stated that fear of death is a mostly normal response to facing death.

The feeling of fear towards death and how to face death is also strengthened by Kübler-Ross in her book entitled *On Death and Dying* (1969). She proposed the grieving or death and dying model to treat people who face death, loss, and grief. This concept was initially built to trail the emotional phases experienced by patients with terminal illnesses. This theory applies not only to face the death of a loved one but also for anyone who struggles with any grieving circumstances, such as heartbreak from a close relationship, losing precious treasure, unacceptable diagnosis, etc.

Literature can present various ways to approach death and imagine it from many perspectives. Certain literary genres are numerous written as they respond to losing loved ones, treasures, objects, and close relationships to console their grief. Thus, literature plays an important role as an act of consolation from suffering (Hakola & Kivistö, 2014). For example, in classic consolation found in the *Tusculan Disputations* book, Cicero is noted for praising and welcoming death as it literates people and frees them from calamities and hardships in this world and plenteous evils done by humankind. In Shakespeare's *King Lear*, the drama relies on suffering and closes with the precocious death experienced by the tragic hero, awakening self-recognition. The tragedy drama will be meaningful to the hero's existence if it is paradoxically ended with the hero's death. Haruki Murakami Norwegian Wood's story circles suicidal and precocious deaths. Murakami illustrated death as an important part of human existence: "Death exists, not as the opposite but as a part of life" (2000).

One of the pieces of literature depicting death in the story is a novel by C.G. Lewis *A Grief Observed* (1961). This book describes Lewis's grief from his loving wife and how he copes with it. The human brain and psyche's processes while grieving are presented in the novel. The story challenges whether or not a person facing death and dying, loss, and grieving can undergo normal life back. The narration tells that the wife died of cancer three years after her marriage, and his husband is experiencing unbearable death and loss. He even challenges the existence of God and why he suffers a lot, questioning whether there is any true love in this world. His journey of death and dying, grieving, and grief will be the focus of this research. Thus, this research aims at analyzing the five stages of grief by Kübler-Ross; the stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance in C.G. Lewis novel entitled *A Grief Observed*.

Five previous studies prove why this research is worthwhile and important to conduct. The first is research by Chia-Chi Chien and Ya-Huei Wang entitled *The Dynamics of Hope in Unkrich and Molina's Coco* (2020). This research analyzed an animated film, *Coco*, to investigate the complicated relationships Miguel's family underwent, especially people in Miguel's surrounding, Imelda and Hector, his great-great-grandmother and grandfather. This

research also investigates how the characters cope with their loss and grief. The result shows that Mamá Imelda, Hécto, and Miguel can complete all the stages.

The second is research by Rong-Rong Wang and Ya-huei Wang in their journal entitled *Using the Kübler-Ross Model of Grief with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): An Analysis of Manchester by the Sea* (2021). This research examines how the characters in the film deal with their loved ones' loss using the death and dying model by Kubler-Ross. The characters experience a distinct stage while coping with the loss and grief. The result shows that the film allows the audience to examine and choose paths to think and reason for the traumatic loss, change negative feelings or psychological problems into meaningful life, let their lives bloom, and find happiness. In the film, some characters who fail to cope with their loss are trapped in repetitive grief and cannot escape their bereavement.

The third is research by Avis, et al. 1; entitled *Stages of Grief Portrayed on the Internet: A Systematic Analysis and Critical Appraisal* (2021). This study is interesting since it investigates how the stages of grief are performed via digital communication, such as the internet. This research uses a total of 72 websites in the sample as the objects of research. The results showed a low relevance of the model, with sites ignoring research statements and including explicit confirmation statements. They concluded that such representations are misleading; a clear, uncritical explanation of the model can make a living through partition as the only way to grief. It can cause problems for grieving people. It can exclude those who are not affected by the model.

The fourth is research by John A. Bernau entitled *The Institutionalization of Kübler Ross's Five-Stage Model of Death and Dying* (2022). This research examines the dissemination and organization of the Kübler-Ross model of five stages of grief in science and journalism. Especially, he investigates 3,216 Kübler-Ross articles in the New York Times and Web of Science databases. This research uses qualitative and quantitative methods. The result indicates that the researcher performed how early scientific interest in commercial promotion leads to adoption in popular culture and charts how the five-step process has expanded to cover everything from rental prices to COVID-19. The researcher also argues that the regenerate interest in this model can attain efforts in accessing the culture for a better understanding of grief and death and dying.

The fifth is research by Sia Kok Sin entitled *Analyzing The Grief Of Naomi In The Book Of Ruth* (2022). Applying Kübler-Ross and David Kessler model, this research examines the grief encountered by Naomi and Ruth. In the story, Naomi actually cannot be a role model for this theory, yet her behaviors are approved by many people in facing and coping with her loss. Naomi did not show physical anger, yet it is invisible in her heart. The stages, such as denial and bargaining, also do not exist in the story. Also, for the acceptance, all invisible. However, she projects such characteristics of acceptance of people as she accepts her new circumstances, including Ruth and Boaz's marriage and the existence of Obed in the world.

The previous studies explained above have similarities with this research, which uses Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's model of five stages of grief (five stages of death and dying). While the research gap with this research is located in the object of research, the novel by C.S. Lewis *A Grief Observed* (1961). Therefore, this research attempts to find the stages of grief in the novel.

2. Theoretical Framework

Kübler-Ross was a Swiss-American psychiatrist born in Zürich, Switzerland. She dedicated her life to undertaking terminally ill patients. She believed that patients with this circumstance would encounter specific phases of emotional reactions facing near death. She researched and formulated the theory of *On Death and Dying* (1969) based on her experiences

identifying and treating her patients. This theory is also known as the *Five Stages of Grief* by the scholars. These five stages are Denial and Isolation, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, and Acceptance, known as DABDA (Kübler-Ross, 1969). However, she later modified her model, arguing that her modification applies not only to people who face near-death experiences but also to anyone experiencing grief and loss from a close relationship. Moreover, this model could also be applied to all turbulences and calamities in dealing with individual losses, such as job loss, financial problems, or even independence (p. 11-14).

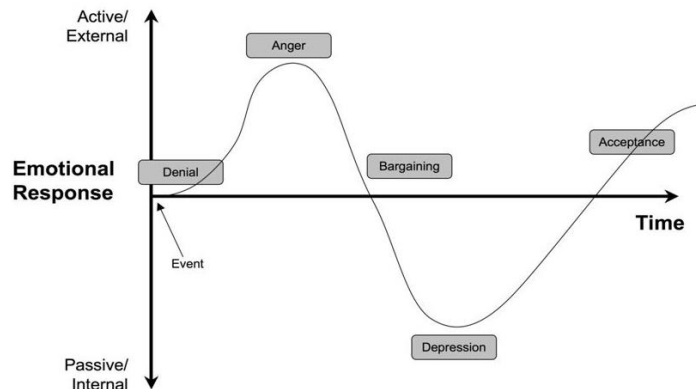


Figure 1. Kübler-Ross five stages of grief model.

The first stage is Denial and Isolation. This stage illustrates what people mostly experience while facing death, loss, grief, or significant changes in their life. This stage can be described as an act of escapist gesture and manner leading them to motivate their self-defense mechanism automatically. Kübler-Ross mentioned that this stage mostly occurs in the short term and is not permanent. The denial acts as a defense that will immediately change into partial acceptance (p. 32). People in this stage may be senseless and reassure themselves that they are fine, nothing has happened, and keep away from hurt. They also think that their life is meaningless and have no sense. Kübler-Ross explained that she conducted interviews with more than two hundred patients. When receiving their diagnosis, most respond with these statements such as “No, not me. It cannot be true!” Denial acts as a cantilever from startling, unexpected information. It allows them to regain themselves, calling up others and less chaotic defenses (p. 32).

The second stage is Anger. After realizing that this first phase is real and fact, they will move into the phase of anger. This phase makes them criticize God and why this happened to them, God is unfair, and this will lead them into a sense of discontent and bearing grudges. Furthermore, they will project negative emotions toward their surroundings, hatred toward everyone, and lose trust. The projection of anger can be pointed to family, surrounding people, friends, strangers, and even inanimate objects. It can also be blamed on the dying loved ones or the deceased (p. 40-42). The anger’s expression usually can be seen, such as “Why me? It is not fair”; “How can this happen to me?”; “Who is to blame?” The person is difficult to handle because they run into misplaced feelings of wrath, resentment, and jealousy. People in this stage cannot stand anyone who symbolizes living ability and energy. This stage differs from the first stage since people with the anger stage have mixed feelings and are confused. They may direct their anger to hospital staff, doctors, families, the environment, etc. (p. 50-51).

The third stage is Bargaining. This stage comes after people succeed in managing the anger stage. People may feel remorseful and encourage themselves to change or negotiate with others, such as with people around them, their environments, and their deceased loved ones to return to their normal lives, their previous lives (p. 66). This phase may stay for an extensive period. This stage's expressions can be described as “Just let me live to see my children

graduate.”; “I’ll do anything for a few more years.”; “I will give my life savings if...” This stage allows individuals to make numerous efforts to stop the event and defer the death. People often make bargaining and negotiation with God, supernatural power, and higher power to extend their lives. They will promise to change habits and lifestyles. The expression from patients with this stage are “I understand I will die, but if I could just have more time...” When they realize that this stage is no longer effective, they may fall into the fourth stage, depression (p. 67-68).

The fourth stage is Depression. This stage of depression has two categories. First reactive depression. Reactive depression involves reactions triggered by a recent or minor loss. Second, preparatory depression is the emotional response of those approaching the expected loss. If grieving people can express their grief and depression, they will eventually be able to face the truth while feeling grateful to those around them. When they are in depression, some characteristics of people with this stage are thinking “What’s the use of even trying anymore?”, and carrying sleep disruption such as extremely long sleeping, insomnia, difficulty sleeping, thinking and worrying excessively about their family and themselves, too much crying, losing interest in daily activities, whimpering and whining, addicted to alcohol or drugs, downgrading in performances because it is very difficult for them to concentrate (Joshi et al, 2002). This stage allows the dying patients to accept that death is real and it is a fact they cannot resist. Death is certain. Often, these patients can disconnect themselves from their affections and loved ones (Kübler-Ross, p. 88).

The last stage is Acceptance. Kübler-Ross gave her data from her patients that in this stage, they are no longer feeling angry or depressed. They mostly have made deals with themselves and God to take their fate. These patients often experience excessive tiredness, sleepiness, weakness, and almost the same rhythm as newborn babies (p. 112). She also states, "Acceptance should not be mistaken for a happy stage. It is almost void of feelings. It is as if the pain had gone, the struggle is over, and there comes a time for ‘the final rest’ before the long journey.” (p. 113). Considering the patients with the first type, she explains that, “The harder they struggle to avoid the inevitable death, the more they try to deny it, the more difficult it will be for them to reach this final stage of acceptance with peace and dignity.” (p. 114).

The signs for people in this stage are saying things such as “It’s going to be okay.”; “I can not fight it. I may as well prepare for it.”; “What’s done is done. I have to get on with my life now.” They rise in energy, redrawing their hope for their future, making a new goal, and returning to their previous life. For children, their attitudes toward facing loss and grief are unique. When their loved ones die, let the children express their sorrow. Ensure that they will be okay and not abandoned (Worth, 2005).

3. Research Method

This is qualitative research using a content analysis approach. The content analysis focuses on studying meaning, context, and intentions in texts or messages. It is a technique to create inferences systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1968). It is a method where a message in content becomes the foundation in concluding (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1976). This research employs certain characteristics of Kübler-Ross model of five stages of grief (five stages of death and dying). It applies them in the novels, aiming to find the stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

The data collection was conducted using these six steps. First, formulate the research question and its objective. Second, the selection of the content in the novels. Third, developing the category based on the content. Fourth, finalizing units of analysis. Fifth, organizing coding of the stages of grief. The last is analyzing the gathered data. The data were gathered and identified according to the stages of grief. Then the researcher selected the contents in the

novels based on Kübler-Ross model. The selections were distributed into the stages category. Forthwith, all the categorized contents were analyzed thoroughly.

4. Findings and Discussion

Denial and Isolation.

The first stage of this grieving process, denial, and isolation, helps people reduce their pain and loss. They are trying to process what is happening and find ways to escape their emotional pain. At this point, they deny and reject what is happening. In the novel, Lewis, the narrator, undergoes many experiences dealing with denial and isolation. As the story mentions, "I cannot talk to the children about her. The moment I try, there appears on their faces neither grief, nor love, nor fear, nor pity, but the most fatal of all non-conductors, embarrassment." Here, he admits that he is experiencing grief. He denies by not mentioning his late wife in front of his children. Another statement in the novel "At first I was very afraid of going to places where H. and I had been happy--our favorite pub, our favorite wood. But I decided to do it at once--like sending a pilot up again as soon as possible after he has had a crash." Lewis was initially frightened to go to the sites that had previously been his and his wife's favorite vacation spots. However, he eventually summoned his courage to visit again, reminiscing about his wife. It explains that Lewis has not yet been able to accept his wife's loss because he continues to refer to her.

Kübler-Ross also states that the phase of isolation increases loneliness, which can be shown in words, sometimes with little gestures or nonverbal communication (p. 36-37). In the novel, the sense of loneliness is shown as quoted "There is one place where her absence comes locally home to me, and it is a place I can not avoid. I mean my own body. It had such a different importance while it was the body of H's lover. Now it is like an empty house." He feels his house's emptiness without his wife's presence and cannot escape from that reality. Also, in another quotation, "What chokes every prayer and hope is the memory of all the prayers H., and I offered and all our false hopes. Not hopes raised merely by our wishful thinking; hopes encouraged, even forced upon us, by false diagnoses, X-ray photographs, strange remissions, or one temporary recovery that might have ranked as a miracle." He fantasizes that the death of his wife never happened. It is wrong, and wishing his grief is just a dream and unreal. He expects that everything is just a mistake. He hopes that his wife's diagnosis is fake. This incident demonstrates Lewis' continued denial of the facts he has been presented with.

The denial of reality can be found in the quotation, "But her voice is still vivid. The remembered voice can turn me into a whimpering child at any moment." Here, he denies his reality and only accepts his fantasizing reality, believing that his wife is still alive. This action is a self-defense mechanism to protect his heart from the hurtful truth. This behavior is also shown in "I must think more about H and less about myself. Yes, that sounds very well. But there's a snag. I am thinking about her nearly always. Thinking of the H facts, real words, looks, laughs, and her actions." He refuses to accept the truth, that his loved one is gone. "You tell me 'she goes on'. But my heart and body are crying out, come back, come back." These expressions by Lewis show how he coped with his first stage as a temporary response to going through his first phase of pain and loss.

Anger.

Kübler-Ross argues that a person who reaches this point will no longer be able to ignore the condition he is experiencing and will direct his anger at those close to him, including doctors, nurses, family, lovers, and others (p. 40-41). It is a stage where people realize that the facts and events are real and criticize God. In the novel, Lewis expresses his anger as quoted, “Meanwhile, where is God? It is one of the most disquieting symptoms.”; “I tried to put some of these thoughts to C. this afternoon. He reminded me that the same thing happened to Christ: ‘Why hast thou forsaken me?’ I know. Does that make it easier to understand?”, and “But oh God, tenderly, tenderly. Already, month by month and week by week, you broke her body on the wheel while she still wore it. Is it not yet enough?” This catastrophic news normally occurs in this phase; some people succeed in maintaining, but some cannot manage. When the first stage of denial cannot be maintained any longer, it is replaced by feelings of anger, rage, envy, and resentment (p. 40) which is shown in the novel “And this separation, I suppose, waits for all. I have thought of H. and myself as peculiarly unfortunate in being torn apart.”

Kübler-Ross also explains in her book that in contrast to the stage of denial, this stage of anger is very difficult to cope with from the point of view of family and staff. The reason for this is that this anger is displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment at times almost at random (p. 40), which is shown in the novel “Cancer, and cancer, and cancer. My mother, my father, my wife. I wonder who is next in the queue.” He merely liked to blame his situation on the surroundings and question his miserable fate by challenging who will be the next to make him lose and hurt his family members, even himself. This phase also allows people to overflow with sad feelings, as shown in the novel “He meant he was going to weed and water and generally tidy up her grave. It horrified me because this mode of sentiment, all this churchyard stuff was and is simply hateful, even inconceivable, to me.” In death loss cases, the anger is often directed at the deceased because they leave them behind and make them unable to cope with their gone.

People who lose their loved ones may become furious, enraged, and frustrated because they think about their guilty feelings if only they could do something to prevent the events or situation, and even regret their memories that no longer exist. In the novel, it is shown as “And this separation, I suppose, waits for all. I have thought of H. and myself as peculiarly unfortunate in being torn apart.” The death of his wife scattered his life and tore his dreams. He is upset with his situation, which places him in grief and turns his life in complete disarray. The novel also shows his anger as quoted “What pitiable cant to say ‘She will live forever in my memory!’ Live? That is exactly what she will not do. Like the old Egyptians, you might as well think that you can keep the dead by embalming them.” At this point, his expression is an act of rebellion, rage, and envy. Kübler-Ross recommends that in this stage, patients may be in an irrational state of mind, therefore, it is better not to take their negative behavior, attitude, or saying personally (p.52).

Bargaining.

Kübler-Ross argues that “If we have been unable to face the sad facts in the first period and have been angry at people and God in the second phase, maybe we can succeed in entering into some sort of an agreement which postpones the inevitable happening: If God has decided to take us from this earth and he did not respond to my angry pleas, he may be more favorable if I ask nicely.” (p. 82). In the novel, after Lewis has undertaken many actions, such as being angry, cursing, criticizing God, and avoiding everything from happening, he manages to enter the third stage, bargaining. Bargaining can also appear in the form of negotiation, whether negotiating with living things, the environment, and even himself, which is shown in the novel as quoted, “Yesterday I stopped myself only in time from saying about some trifle ‘H. wouldn’t have liked that.’ This is unfair to the others. I should soon be using ‘what H. would have liked’

as an instrument of domestic tyranny, with her supposed likings becoming a thinner and thinner disguise for my own.” Here, he was initially afraid of his loss and rejected visiting her wife's accident site. However, by the bargaining stage, he manages to conquer his sad situation and face reality shown in the novel: "At first I was very afraid of going to places where H. and I had been happy, our favorite pub, our favorite wood. But I decided to do it at once.” Here, the expression like “I decided to do it at once” reflects that he contents himself in temporary grief. It is an act of negotiation, bargaining, and dealing with the reality of losing his wife.

Depression.

This stage shows where people are in a low temper and are reluctant to do activities. In the novel, these situations are described as quoted “And no one ever told me about the laziness of grief. Except at my job, where the machine seems to run much as usual, I loathe the slightest effort. Not only writing but even reading a letter is too much. Even shaving. What does it matter now whether my cheek is rough or smooth? They say an unhappy man wants distractions, something to take him out of himself. Only as a dog-tired man wants an extra blanket on a cold night; he would rather lie there shivering than get up and find one. It is easy to see why the lonely become untidy, finally, dirty and disgusting.” The novel shows that the main character is in a state of repulsion in doing his daily activities. He begins to comprehend the certainty of his wife's death, expressed in his overwhelming feelings such as hopelessness, mourning, and frustration. He feels numb as he loses all his dream, his future plans with his wife, his hopes by her death; he lacks control.

After losing his control, he realizes that the reality is certain. It cannot be altered. Consequently, he enters a desperate and depressed mood. This depression phase turns him paralyzed for everything. Furthermore, this depression makes him mentally down and physically hurt. He experiences sleep disturbance, anorexia, and a suicidal mentality. It can be shown in the novel: "I must have some drug, and reading is not a strong enough drug now.” He enters suicidal actions by taking drugs as he hopes that he will lose all of his mourning. It makes him fall tenacious to things that elevate his spirit to improve himself.

Contrary to most commonly believed, the depression stage is a stage that may consume a lot of time to develop. People often think that if they are depressed for the first time, grieving appears, yet in reality, there are many shocks and various expressions before the real depression occurs. It can be seen in the novel: "And grief still feels like fear. Perhaps, more strictly, like suspense. Or like waiting; just hanging about waiting for something to happen. It gives life a permanently provisional feeling. It does not seem worth starting anything. I can not settle down. I yawn, I fidget, and I smoke too much. Up till this, I always had too little time. Now there is nothing but time. Almost pure time, empty successiveness.” He shows symptoms of depression over the grief after realizing the sense of finality. This depression may occur episodically. However, it may last for many or long periods.

In the novel, the depression stage is categorized into the second type, preparatory depression, since he shows his private feelings and mourning over the death of his wife. This type of depression is more likely a preparation to say goodbye and farewell to his loved wife. As Kübler-Ross mentions, "The second type of depression is one which does not occur as a result of a past loss but is taking into account impending losses. Our initial reaction to sad people is usually to try to cheer them up and tell them not to look at things so grimly or hopelessly. We encourage them to look at the bright side of life, at all the colorful, positive things around them. It is often an expression of our needs, our inability to tolerate a long face over an extended period.” (p. 70). In the novel, these actions are quoted as “Here, for instance, is a new phase, a new loss. I do all the walking I can, for I would be a fool to go to bed not

tired. Today I have been revisiting old haunts, taking one of the long rambles that made me so happy in my bachelor days.” He begins cheering himself to stand up against his grief and tries to be positive-minded. He admits that he is happy for him to try not remembering his mourning but reminiscing his childhood memories. It is a step up to a better phase of his grief.

Acceptance.

It is a stage of awareness, consciousness, realization, awakening, and cognition of what had happened. People will understand and realize that they must accept the reality, the painful event, and the grief without bearing everything quietly. They can finally comprehend that the faults are not theirs and searching good from calamities. One of the ways is by comforting and healing themselves. In the novel, this stage is presented as quoted, “Is anything more certain than that in all those vast times and spaces, if I were allowed to search them, I should nowhere find her face, voice, touch? She died. She is dead. Is the word so difficult to learn?” He finally accepts that the death of his wife is real. She is no longer with him, and his dreams and future plans with her are gone for good. He accepts the world does not harm him, that his broken heart is not difficult to be healed.

He reaches a point where his grief is no longer haunting him. He is no longer trying to recover his life with his late wife. He enters new episodes of the new life, beginning a new life, and continues his life with his children. It is shown in the novel as quoted, “‘She is in God’s hand.’ That gains new energy when I think of her as a sword. Perhaps the earthly life I shared with her was only part of the tempering.” After finishing a war with God, he accepts that the higher power will care for his wife and himself. It is not to tell that the grief is no longer there a hundred percent, that the grief emotions are gone, yet he is embracing the idea that he is reaching his new point in life. The phrase “She is in God’s hand” indicates his sincerity in accepting everything he has gone through. In addition, he said that these words could increase his energy. It is clear that at this stage, the grieving person already feels sincere and can make peace with reality.

The other evidence of his acceptance stage is his calm and more mature perception of his life. It is shown in the novel: “It is hard to have patience with people who say ‘There is no death’ or ‘Death does not matter’. There is death. And whatever matters. And whatever happens, has consequences, and it and they are irrevocable and irreversible.” He has gained his dignity back and become wiser in perceiving life. “In that respect, H. and all the dead are like God. In that respect, loving her has become, in its measure, like loving Him.” By repenting to God, he finishes his stages of grief and is ready for a new beginning. Kübler-Ross theory of the five stages of grief may vary from person to person.

Furthermore, Kübler-Ross believes everyone will go through at least two of them. However, no matter how many stages one experiences, the final step is always acceptance (Kübler-Ross, 2005). This novel shows that the main character overcame his loss and grief and managed to proceed through the five stages that fully complete his grief journey transformation.

5. Conclusion (and Suggestion)

Human beings encounter variations of traumatic loss, such as the loss of a loved one, the loss of health, or the loss of the capacities we are so proud of. Traumatic grief is the grief that accompanies loss, especially when it is unexpected. This research aims at identifying the stages of grief by Kübler-Ross. The result shows that the main character goes through all the stages in the novel. First is denial and isolation. He shows some characteristics such as feeling frightened to go to the sites that had previously been his and his wife's favorite vacation spots, feeling the emptiness of his house without his wife presence and cannot escape from that

reality, and refusing to accept the truth that his loved one is gone. Second, the anger. He shows the anger's characteristics such as criticizing God, blaming God or the higher power, and challenging God for what else he can lose from his family.

Third is bargaining. He shows characteristics such as negotiation, bargaining, and dealing with losing his wife. He also braves to visit places he used to visit with his wife. Fourth depression. He shows characteristics such as beginning to comprehend the certainty of his wife's death, which is expressed in his overwhelming feelings such as hopelessness, mourning, and frustration, feeling numb as he losses all his dream, his plans with his wife, his hopes by the death of her; he is lack of control; starting to do drugs and suicidal behavior. Fifth is acceptance. He shows characteristics such as accepting that his wife is dead, his wife is no longer with him, and that his dreams and plans with her are gone for good; accepting the world does not harm him, that his broken heart is not difficult to be healed; and believing in God and relying on his wife and his life in God's hand. As he becomes more mature and wiser, he continues walking with honor and dignity to the future.

This study, however far from the word perfect. This research is expected to contribute to literature and psychoanalysis study, especially Kübler-Ross model of grief. Also, for further analysis, it is expected to investigate deeper and broader analysis using Kübler-Ross model of grief using a change curve which contains two more stages. In addition, since this research uses popular literary works as the object of research, similar research could be conducted using literary works from different genres to conceive the complexity of Kübler-Ross model of grief (death and dying).

6. References

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