

# Psychological and Literary Analysis into *Tuesday with Morrie* through Choice Theory

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## ABSTRACT

The current study examines choice theory, a psychological theory that humans need to live peacefully. Additionally, it explores the psychological development of human beings through literature. A novel, *Tuesday with Morrie*, proposes that individuals rather than external events shape their lives through the choices they make. To become a resilient individual who can handle life hurdles conveniently, they should consider their inner world and manage their real-life situations in line with the current theory. From deeper view, Morrie Schwartz is analyzed within the framework of Choice Theory's five basic human needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. The protagonist, Morrie Schwartz, exemplifies this approach by maintaining emotional resilience, purpose, and affection in the face of his terminal illness. Conversely, Mitch Albom faces difficulties with external control psychology, allowing money, success, and work demands to dictate his life negatively. Through Morrie's teachings, he gradually begins to prioritize emotional fulfillment, self-awareness, and meaningful relationships. In the shed of light, the transfiguration in the study uncovers a significant metamorphosis in his character, for this reason pointing to the possibility of inner development, internal growth. In short, the analysis demonstrates how literature can be a tool for self-discovery and mental clarity as well as a means of emotional connection. Morrie is depicted as a mirror to study human nature in literature and how evolution happens by offering psychological insight into human development.

**KEYWORDS:** Internal World, External World, Basic Needs, *Tuesday with Morrie*, Choice Theory.

## 1. <sup>1</sup> INTRODUCTION

The importance of human relationships and the enduring influence of love are fundamental to personal satisfaction and legacy. This concept is reflected in the assertion. "As long as we can love each other and remember the feeling of love we had, we can die without ever going away" (*Tuesdays with Morrie* 174). To illustrate, the memoir by Mitch Albom looks at how people find meaning and fulfillment despite challenges in daily life. Specifically, William Glasser's "Choice Theory" helps one to see how internal control psychology enables people to take responsibility for their emotions and behaviors, therefore overcoming outside constraints. In brief, this change emphasizes how deliberate decisions, instead of outside events, impact personal development and satisfaction.

*Tuesdays with Morrie*, originally published in 1997 by

Mitch Albom, chronicles Mitch Albom's encounters with his former professor, Morrie Schwartz, who is suffering from ALS. Essentially, Morrie provides observations on life, relationships, and happiness as his illness gets worse. While Mitch, a motivated author, stands for external control psychology, Morrie epitomizes "Choice Theory" and refuses to allow his disease to define him. What is more, Morrie's teachings encourage Mitch to give relationships and emotional fulfillment top priority over time, therefore highlighting a change toward internal control. This metamorphosis fits Glasser's ideas; hence, a psychological study of the memoir warrants psychological analysis.

Though many have examined *Tuesdays with Morrie* for their life lessons, few researchers apply "Choice Theory" to investigate its psychological richness. Most studies focus on existentialism, self-help ideas, or emotional intelligence, therefore neglecting the obvious evidence of internal and external control psychology. Indeed, this

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paper fills in a void in literary and psychological research by using the "Choice Theory," providing a new viewpoint on how individuals change their lives by deliberate decisions. In the same way, the study portrays how this psychological theory enhances literary study by stressing how *Tuesdays with Morrie*

examines personal development. In real life, the language instructs people to be thoughtful, knowledgeable, concerning how they handle their relationships, job objectives, and mental health. Apart from that, knowing the five essential requirements of "Choice Theory"; survive, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun, these basic needs help an individual to find fulfillment by means of internal decisions rather than outside approval.

This study is divided into five sections. This suggests that section one introduces the study, grounded on detailing its background, objective, significance, and research gap. Section Two offers a literature survey. Most importantly, Section three outlines the theoretical framework, applying Glasser's "Choice Theory" to the novel. Focusing on internal rather than external control psychology, Section Four explores the psychological metamorphosis of Morrie Schwartz and Mitch Albom. Completing the research, Section Five summarizes important results and ramifications and using "Choice Theory" as the main framework without references to Albom's other writings or comparable autobiographies, the study focuses exclusively on *Tuesdays with Morrie*.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Introduction

William Glasser's "Choice Theory" works on personal responsibility for emotions and behaviors, leading to stronger relationships and greater personal fulfillment. In addition, this psychological paradigm has been particularly useful in literary analysis, especially in Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie* (1997), which illustrates a transformation from external dependence to internal mastery. Through the visiting conversations between Mitch Albom and his ailing professor, Morrie Schwartz, the narrative examines the existential struggles life and the effective choices that shape human fulfillment.

### 2.1 Studies

Several scholars have studied *Tuesdays with Morrie* from multiple viewpoints—According to Hyde (2005), brings to light attention to the philosophy of Morrie's lessons, which demonstrate the significance of acknowledging and being conscious of morals in education. Riyanti (2007) reviews how Morrie reaches

self-actualization by experiencing happiness even though he is sick. Rahmahwati (2014) examines the novel's contemplative aspects, concentrating on its portrayal of the human search for purpose in everyday life. While previous studies provide valuable observations to assist humans to live calmly, they lack studies for the psychological mechanisms which drive character development or inner growth character. Other scholars have analyzed the work through the lens of aging and intergenerational relationships. Similarly, some studies examine how *Tuesdays with Morrie* fosters positive attitudes toward older adults among college students. Fourthly, Atkins (2018) emphasizes its educational worth (586-590), emphasizing how Morrie's acceptance of death offers a model for emotional resilience. Fifthly, Flinders (2003) explores the inner conflicts of aging (258-262). As argued by Delis (2012) illustrated how modern writing brings attention to nursing theories by using Parse's Theory of Human that has relation to Morrie's experience (144-146). Correspondingly, these studies help to explain how the book influences opinions of aging, but they do not examine the psychological decisions the characters make. In some manner that related to Mitch's development in the book (20-27), McAdams (2008) examines American identity and the idea of the redemptive self. Finally, although they do not apply "Choice Theory" to literature, Levin and Milgrom (2004) outline the ideas of the theory. Pioneer of "Choice Theory", Glasser (1999) contends that internal drive rather than outside control drives human action. Applying Glasser's framework to *Tuesdays with Morrie* provides a new perspective on Mitch's choices and Morrie's influence.

### 2.2 Research Gap

Although various facets scholars analyze *Tuesdays with Morrie* through rhetorical, existential, and gerontological perspectives, few have applied a psychological approach particularly "Choice Theory"—to examine its depth. Morrie's guidance enables Mitch take responsibility for effective his choices and change his life by means of deliberate decision-making, accordingly, reflecting Glasser's values. This research attempts at narrowing that gap through studying the influence of psychological needs and individual choices on the narrative.

### 2.3 Conclusion

Though multiple studies have assessed at the psychological roots of character formation, the body of current material on *Tuesdays with Morrie* has studied its rhetorical, existential, and pedagogical elements. This study will provide a fresh perspective on the novel's themes of personal growth and self-actualization through the lens of "Choice Theory."

### 3. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK: "CHOICE THEORY" ON TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE

#### Introduction of Choice Theory Psychology

A new Psychology of Personal Freedom (1998), "Choice Theory," offers a paradigm for comprehending emotional well-being and human behavior. Glasser contends that people, instead of being victims of outside events, oversee their feelings and behavior. What's more, he questions the conventional wisdom that holds human happiness or misery determined by outside events like the behavior or situation of other people. Instead, he emphasizes that every human action stems from internal motivations and personal choices (Glasser 7).

The basic tenet of the Choice Theory is that individuals choose their emotions including both happiness and suffering. In addition, Glasser states that, whereas outside factors can only offer knowledge, they cannot regulate emotions or behavior. He argues, "For all practical purposes, we choose everything we do, including the misery we feel" (Glasser 8).

This assertion shifts from attributing blame externally to assuming personal accountability for folks in real life context. In addition, the Choice Theory's rejection of external control psychology, which depends on incentives, coercion, and punishment to influence behavior, is a further important aspect. For instance, individuals who comprehend their capacity to impact superior decision-making might exert more control over their emotional health and personal development such as controlling their inner character. Glasser also maintains that this traditional way of doing things is the cause of most dissatisfaction and issues in relationships. Whether in relationships, businesses, or classrooms, he argues that compulsion erodes personal ties and fuels animosity. Quite the contrary, he espouses internal control psychology where people make decisions based more on long-term well-being and personal requirements than on outside pressure (Glasser 9).

The "Choice Theory" also stresses the need for positive relationships in personal growth. According to Glasser, damaged relationships—especially those involving people trying to control others—cause most of human suffering. "The seeds of almost all our unhappiness are planted early in our lives when we begin to encounter people who have discovered not only what is right for them—but also, unfortunately, what is right for us," says Glasser (9).

He says that while granting autonomy promotes better, more satisfying relationships, pushing one's ideas and choices on others causes conflict. Parenting, education, and workplace interactions are just a few of

the spheres of life where mutual respect and autonomy can replace pressure and control. "Choice Theory's key consequence is that personal development calls for a change of perspective, says Glasser (9).

People understand that their feelings and behavior are not under the control of outside events. For instance, Glasser questions the idea that brain chemistry by itself causes depression by contending that people have more control over their emotional states than they usually think. Although he agrees that biological elements play a part, he argues that most emotional suffering results from decisions people make in reaction to their situations (Glasser 10). Ultimately, by stressing personal responsibility, internal control, and excellent relationships, the "Choice Theory" offers a transforming method for personal development. People can enhance their emotional well-being and relationships by divorcing from outside control psychology and realizing the influence of personal decisions. As Glasser says, knowing and using these ideas will help one to experience more personal freedom and pleasure (Glasser 11).

#### 3.1 Relevant key concepts of "Choice Theory"

Five basic psychological needs—survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun—drive human behavior, according to William Glasser's "Choice Theory" (1998). What's more, these needs shape emotions, decisions, and personal satisfaction.

Survival calls for stability, health, and physical security. Beyond basic needs, psychological security—that which relates to emotional and financial well-being—is quite important for human drive. Besides, stress and anxiety rise when people feel insecure or doubtful about their future, therefore compromising their general mental health (Glasser 18).

Belonging and love underline the need for personal interaction. Glasser contends that emotional stability starts with connections. People who lack meaningful relationships may try to satisfy this unfulfilled need in other ways and thus go through loneliness, sadness, or destructive conduct (Glasser 19).

To be successful, acknowledged, and to have self-worth, one must have power. People in both personal and professional areas look for achievement, reputation, or competency. When this desire is not satisfied, poor self-esteem and irritation can result in disengagement or negative coping strategies, including too much control over others (Glasser 20).

Freedom embodies personal choice and sovereignty. People want freedom in terms of decision-making and unrestricted opportunity to follow their interests. Individuals who exhibit resistance, defiance, or apathy when their independence is denied may have detrimental

effects on relationships or productivity (Glasser 21).

Emotional health, education, and creativity all depend on fun. Participating in fun events builds resilience and problem-solving ability. Glasser notes that those who include fun in their daily lives create stronger coping strategies and feel more generally happy and fulfilled (Glasser 22).

### 3.2 Your Quality of Life – Total Behavior –

William Glasser contends in "Choice Theory" (1998) that how successfully people meet their psychological demands determines their quality of life (24). For general well-being, he focuses on good connection as vital.

Strong personal relationships, according to Glasser, greatly improve emotional stability and satisfaction (25). Furthermore, encouraging inspiration and confidence is having a goal and achieving something (26). Those who have personal independence in decision-making, he notes, often feel more content and in charge of their life (27). Finally, including fun and enjoyment in everyday activities helps to build resilience and inventiveness, hence fostering long-term happiness (28). Making wise decisions in line with these demands helps people to raise their emotional well-being and quality of life.

William Glasser, as a theorist, describes Total Behavior in "Choice Theory" (1998) as comprising four linked elements: acting, thinking, feeling, and physiology (31). Additionally, while people directly control their behaviors and ideas, emotions and physiological reactions are indirectly shaped.

Acting is a deliberate activity selected to satisfy psychological requirements (Glasser 36). Thus, thinking impacts emotional reactions and decision-making, therefore directly affecting behavior (Glasser 37). Feelings include emotions like happiness or frustration that vary depending on ideas and behavior (Glasser 38). In Particular, physiology is the study of how emotions and ideas affect physical reactions including stress (Glasser 39).

Knowing Total Behavior enables people to own their decisions, therefore enhancing their relationships and well-being.

### 3.3 External Psychology and Internal Psychology in "Choice Theory"

William Glasser separates internal from external control in "Choice Theory" (1998), stressing their effects on businesses, education, and family life. External control forces behavior and often causes resistance, while internal control encourages responsibility, leading to better relationships and outcomes. On the other hand, Glasser notes in the workplace, workers who feel independent

and respected show more drive and output; on the other hand, too much outside control, which comes from rigorous supervision, may lower engagement (121).

In the classroom, he contends that students who feel personally accountable for their education do better. Schools that rely on outside control by rewards and penalties often inhibit natural inspiration and innovation (101). Likewise, Glasser stresses that while authoritarian parenting based on external control can cause rebellion or resentment, parents who embrace autonomy and emotional connection build closer relationships (83). Encouragement of internal control will help people to establish better surroundings in family life, business, and education.

#### 3.3.1 Morrie's Teachings of "Choice Theory"

Morrie Schwartz as a teacher in the novel, he argues that regularly the significance of personal motivation, inspiration to appreciate life and encourages individuals to come to decisions grounded on their own values, they have to value their soul, character, feed their charismatic flow, rather society. His ideas are similar to William Glasser's "Choice Theory," which asserts that a meaningful life comes from meeting five psychological needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and enjoyment. Glasser's theory proposes that humans make choices based on their own desires. At the same time, Choice Theory's key difference from internal to external control psychology is one of its main points of contention. More importantly, Glasser defines external control as the process by which people let familial expectations, social conventions, or workplace needs define their decisions (Glasser 86–101). Morrie says he hates outside control and reminds Mitch that real happiness comes from loving relationships instead of career achievement.

"The most important thing in life is to learn how to give love and to let it come in." (Albom 99).

Morrie's point of view is consistent with Glasser's claim that psychological well-being depends mostly on love and acceptance (Glasser 96). Additionally, Morrie also shows the ideas of internally driven decision-making by giving emotional ties top priority over social demand.

#### 3.3.3 Mitch's Transformation Through Choice Theory

At the start of the memoir, Mitch is firmly in an externally regulated life where his work goals and financial achievement define his identity. Glasser notes that in companies, external control is sometimes imposed by fear of failure, status-seeking, and rivalry, which causes people to give external validation top priority over actual fulfillment (Glasser 90). This captures Mitch's original perspective since he pursues

financial achievement at the expense of human relationships.

By means of his weekly sessions with Morrie, Mitch starts to see that his outward goals have failed him. Glasser notes that those who move to internal drive come back under control over their life and feel more emotionally satisfied (Glasser 99). Mitch's metamorphosis as he decides to reach out to his family, give meaningful connections top priority, and embrace a more emotionally satisfying existence clearly shows this change. Having admitted his past errors, he says:

"I had started to get overly caught in the siren song of my own success." Albom 120 is the reference number. By the time the memoir ends, Mitch exemplifies the ideas of "Choice Theory" – making decisions based more on inner fulfillment than on social expectations.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 External Control vs. Internal Control

The modern world often compels people to adhere to external standards, perhaps compromising personal well-being. Morrie Schwartz observes. "The culture we have does not make people feel good about themselves, and you have to be strong enough to say if the culture doesn't work, don't buy it" (Albom 42). In "Choice Theory," this quotation fits internal control psychology. Morrie counsels Mitch to take charge of his happiness and buck outside social expectations. Glasser claims that those conditioned by external control psychology typically suffer as they depend on others or society for approval (Glasser 86-101). The comment made by Morrie emphasizes how much more satisfaction an internal drive brings about. Building on Dale Carnegie's perspective "giving the other person a good reputation to live up to," As outlined in Choice Theory underlines innate motivation grounded on psychological needs for love, power, independence, and happiness. As deprived from Carnegie (1936), indicating a positive picture of someone helps them to match that image, therefore fulfilling their need for respect and validation. Carnegie's methods effectively integrate the basic concepts of Choice Theory with pragmatic interpersonal skills. Along with this, the approach mediates on Choice Theory on how fulfilling these needs motivates individuals to act in ways that meet their values and ambitions in real life context, hence promoting autonomy and good behavior (Glasser, 1999).

### 4.2 Quality of Life & Internal Control

"Dying," Morrie suddenly said, "is only one thing to be sad over, Mitch.

Living unhappily is something else." (Albom 52)

Morrie's perspective captures Glasser's idea of quality of life that happiness is a personal decision. He perseveres

inner control over his attitude and relationships even if his sickness cannot be changed. In this way, it supports the Choice Theory's view of people to shape their emotional well-being by emphasizing what they can control instead of outside events. This interpretation increases broadness by connecting Morrie's ideas about self-realization, eternal understanding, and personal well-being to Glasser's idea of resilience, which focuses on his ability to adapt and find inner peace. (Glasser 99).

### 4.3 Personal Development and Choice Theory

"So many people walk around with a meaningless life. They seem half-asleep, even when they're busy doing things they think are important. This is because they're chasing the wrong things." (Albom 43)

Morrie in his sessions with Mitch, he insisted that external control psychology is big hurdles to hurt individuals, in which they let society's expectations define their pleasure. As Glasser argued, Choice Theory holds in genuine inner side of human beings rather than depending on outside gratification like money or position. As informed by the true fulfillment comes from individuals pursuing what really satisfies their psychological needs (Glasser 92). In short, Morrie's realization helps people to match their decisions with their own ideals and encourages inner drive, takes time, by filling up thoughts which they reflect Choice theory.

### 4.4 Five Basic Needs – Love and Belonging

On *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Morrie Schwartz exemplifies Covey's principle of seeking first to understand, then to be understood, by engaging in nonjudgmental active listening with Mitch. He guides insightful questions to Mitch, inspiring him to contemplate his career-oriented lifestyle rather than hate it, he listens to him, for a while, to let the oppose to empty himself then, he puts meaningful acknowledgements (Albom 64). Covey asserts that "most individuals do not listen with the intent to comprehend; they listen with the intent to respond" (Covey 239), but Morrie opts for profound listening, cultivating authentic relationship. This corresponds with "Choice Theory," which asserts that relationships flourish when people engage in sympathetic listening rather than attempting to exert control over others (Glasser 45). By opting for complete presence, Morrie satisfies his desire for love and belonging while steering Mitch towards profound human bonds. (Albom 52)

One of Glasser's five necessities is love and belonging Morrie stresses (Glasser 95). "Choice The theory proposes that significant interactions contribute to overall well-being; not meeting this need leads to anguish in the heart. In the same manner, Morrie teaches Mitch that pleasure is caused by having strong personal ties instead than from outside affirmation, thus

prompting him to pick love more than worldly objectives. Morrie insinuates that love will satisfy people, will let people live peacefully, to find themselves proper in this crowded modern life. In short, love will make people to concentrate their life to decide and interact with people with no tied hurdles.

#### 4.5 Total Behavior & Quality World

"Do what the Buddhists do. Every day, have a little bird on your shoulder that asks,

'Is today the day? Am I ready? Am I doing all I need to do? Am I being the person I want to be?'" (Albom 69)

This aligns with a core principle of "Choice Theory," Total Behavior, which posits that individuals must consciously choose their actions, thoughts, and emotions to shape their world (Glasser 87). Thinking about Morrie helps us become more aware of ourselves and live more intentionally. It also reminds us that we can shape our own Quality World, which is the ideal life we want. According to Glasser, individuals should be proactive, they have contemplated the situations, become wise to decide, to have knowledge, these are all will guide someone to decide properly.

#### 4.6 Internal vs. External Control in Relationships

"If a woman tells her spouse that she is going to leave him unless he treats her better, then she is redefining her independence. She has always had the option to go; what she must now decide is how much freedom she is prepared to give up if she remains." (Glasser 90)

This statement illustrates the impact of choices on relationships. such as marriage, friends, colleagues. In real life situations, Glasser posits that individuals cannot change others; they can only regulate their own behavior, they can observe their manners, to become closer to study himself. In another word, an individual control themselves as a guide to live calmy, to have their mark fingers on life (Glasser 90).

#### 4.7 Power and Control in Life Choices

On *Tuesdays with Morrie*," Morrie Schwartz portrays Covey's Be Proactive habit by prioritizing thankfulness and substantive dialogue despite his affliction (Albom 57). Clearly, this illustrates James Clear's concept that "every action is a vote for the type of person you wish to become" (Atomic Habits 38) and corresponds with "Choice Theory," which asserts that people govern their behavior and make decisions to satisfy their fundamental needs (Glasser 23). Morrie's deliberate choices enable him to satisfy his need for power, especially via his capacity to persist in educating and impacting people despite his physical decline.

"Part of the problem, Mitch, is that everyone is in such a hurry. People haven't found meaning in their lives, so

they're running all the time looking for it. They think about the next car, the next house, and the next job. Then they have those things, and they're still empty, too, and they keep running." (Albom 107)

Morrie opposes society's reliability on outside validation, he declares, week character will be influenced by outside world. In line with Choice Theory, which holds that those with an internal locus of control concentrate more on meeting psychological demands than on pursuing financial success (Glasser 96). It must be noted that Morrie questions outside influence psychology and exhorts people to slow down and consider what really makes them happy. This is not gullible, as it is a naive approach to record it. By applying the needs of choice theory, which make an individual satisfied, that person has an inner world filled with pictures, is ready to decide, and has a good relationship with people.

#### 4.8 Freedom and Personal Responsibility

"We cannot control other people. The only person we can truly control is ourselves."

(Glasser 56)

Choice Theory's basic tenet – that we can only control our own actions and emotions – is based on this idea (Glasser 56). By embracing his circumstance without blaming others or looking for outside control, Morrie epitomizes this idea. According to his knowledge, concentrating on internal decisions rather than outside factors helps one to improve personally.

#### 4.9 Fun & Enjoyment in Life

"I have to look at life uniquely now. I can't go shopping, I can't take care of the bank accounts, and I can't take out the garbage. But I can sit here with my dwindling days and look at what I think is important in life. I have both the time – and the reason – to do that." (Albom 62)

Reflecting Glasser's Five Basic Needs, especially freedom and enjoyment, Morrie refines his attention to what he can manage (Glasser 97). Though physically declining, he decides to savor his last days by having meaningful talks instead of grieving lost talents. "Choice Theory" stresses the need of making deliberate choices to keep a good quality of life even under trying conditions.

#### 4.10 Love as a Rational Act (Personal Development & Quality World)

"Love is the only rational act." (Albom 82)

Morrie's statements fit the Quality World of "Choice Theory", according to which good connections lead to a happy existence (Glasser 94). Morrie exhibits internal control psychology by putting love above fear or bitterness and by choosing emotional connection instead

of solitude. Glasser argues that emotional well-being is mostly dependent on relationships, so love is a deliberate decision rather than a force from the outside world.

#### 4.11 Survival Need – Facing Death with Acceptance

"Do I wither up and disappear, or do I make the best of my time left?" (Albom 19)

Morrie's response to his illness exemplifies Glasser's need for existence, in another word, he fights for living, needs to survive, including both mentally and psychologically well-being (Glasser 93). Subsequently opts for personal control rather than externalizing or blame or succumbing to despair, committing to staying alive completely till the end. In thus, this aligns with the principles of "Choice Theory," which posits that individuals must actively shape their own experiences, irrespective of the circumstances.

### 5. CONCLUSION

This study focuses on literature from psychological theory and how William Glasser's "Choice Theory" clarifies the role of internal control in governing human behavior and satisfaction in *Tuesdays with Morrie* which is American Novel. In particular, the analysis of Morrie Schwartz and Mitch Albom demonstrates that human satisfaction is the result of deliberate decisions rather than environmental factors, shows how a teacher patiently deal with a lazy student to become top students in the class. In the world, he illustrates a character who goes from unhappy and worthless situations, such as divorced his wife, unsettled life balance to such a huge impact character that he can potentially live calmly and cope with the external world conveniently. It should be noted that Mitch's transformation emphasizes from external control to self-determined satisfaction, circulated an example of how materialization fill humans with lots of responsibility which be hard to view life from inside self. Thereafter, the work subsequently forges a link between psychology and fiction by embedding the subject matter inside literature, enabling a comprehensive examination of psychological theories in character formation. In a broader perspective, future scholars should apply theory

to other literary works to elaborate on how characters preserve a balance between internal and external influences. In the end, this work enhances our comprehension of the essential role of choice in personal and mental growth and the nature of humans.

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