

## Psychological Analysis of Elsa's Character in Novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" by Fredrik Backman

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### Abstract

The objectives of this study are to elucidate the psychological aspects of the protagonist and identify the many forms of psychology exhibited by the main character in the novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" authored by Fredrik Backman. The research methodology employed is descriptive qualitative. The present study employs the theoretical framework proposed by Soto and John (2017, p. 8). The research findings indicate that the traits of Openness account for 5 (25% of the total) and are exemplified by Elsa's covert departure from her apartment to accompany her grandmother. Similarly, the traits of Conscientiousness also contribute to 5 (25% of the total), exemplified by Elsa's unwavering determination to complete the task assigned by her grandmother. Lastly, the traits of Neuroticism account for 5 (25% of the total) and are evidenced by Elsa feeling pressured by bullying from some of her classmates when she holds a different opinion from one of them. Data findings indicate that Agreeableness is characteristic of 3 (15%) of the participants. For instance, Elsa demonstrates conflict and disagreement with her mother after being summoned by the Principal for attacking one of her friends. On the other hand, Extraversion is characteristic of 2 (10%) of the participants. For instance, Elsa isolates herself from having many friends at school and prefers to confide in her grandmother.

**Keywords:** Analysis of Psychology, The Main Character, Psychological Approach, Literature Analysis, Novel

### INTRODUCTION

Literary work depicts social reality. This phenomenon arises from the inherent interconnection between human beings and literature. There exists a connection in which literary works can serve as a symbolic depiction of social reality. The literary work has the potential to have impact on society and is disseminated to society. It can be inferred that work of literature originates from and serves society.

There exist two fundamental categories of literature. Literature can be classified into two categories: written and oral. Textual literature

encompasses both novels and poetry. Furthermore, it includes sections dedicated to writing, fiction, mythology, novels, and short stories. The category of oral literature encompasses folklore, ballads, myths, and fables. In this instance, the author will analyze written literature. A novel is an extensive fictional tale that incorporates elements of reality. Typically, it is written in prose and is published as a whole volume. Poetry is a kind of literature or creative authorship that endeavors to evoke a reader's imagination or feelings.

The narrative of a novel is conveyed by a multitude of characters, each possessing distinct personalities and attitudes. These characters exert influence over the storyline, atmosphere, and other aspects of the literary piece. Gaining insight into the character enables readers to develop an awareness of deeper elements of literature, such as symbolism. Authors employ an indirect technique by elucidating the appearance, behavior, cognition, and existence of characters, as well as how they are interpreted by secondary characters. This methodology facilitates readers in acquiring a thorough comprehension of the writing.

Functional issues must be taken into account while performing the research. Readers in society have the opportunity to enhance and streamline their understanding in order to examine a novel, particularly when examining the characteristics of the protagonist.

As per MursalEsten (in Toyidin, 2013, p. 3), literature serves as a means of expressing an individual's creative endeavors and imaginative faculties. Literature is a creative manifestation of an individual's imagination that mirrors the fabric of human existence via the use of language. Novels depicted or interpreted the life of an individual within their narrative. Furthermore, it exerts real-life effects on human beings.

Furthermore, Rusyana (in Toyidin, 2013, p. 3) asserted that literature is the result of individuals' creativity in expressing their thoughts through their respective languages. Research has

demonstrated that literature has the ability to mirror an individual's perspectives on social interactions. Literary works are a manifestation of human creativity. Certain genres of writing, however, are widely recognized as part of literature as an art.

Hemlyn (as cited in Y. Sari, 2014, p. 11) provides an alternative description of literature. He asserted that "literature, in its original sense, encompassed all written language." Analysis of the citation reveals that a literary work should evoke a sense of emotional connection in its readers, enabling them to comprehend and appreciate the substance, moral, or narrative of the work. Wellek and Warren (as cited in Y. Sari, 2014, p. 12) categorize literary works into three genres: poetry, prose, and drama respectively.

Poem is a literary genre characterised by the interaction between words and rhythm. In poetry, words are interwoven to create sounds, images, and concepts that may be too intricate or abstract to articulate explicitly. Prose is a literary technique that pertains to the grammatically structured writing, characterized by the employment of words and phrases to construct sentences and paragraphs. Prose is the predominant and widely embraced style of writing in both fiction and non-fictional narratives. Drama is a sort of fictional portrayal achieved by the use of language and dramatic acting. Drama is a kind of artistic composition intended for performance in theater, television, radio, and film.

### ***Psychology Analysis***

Martha Lally and Suzzane Valentine-French (2018, p. 7) define psychology as a methodical approach to investigate cognitive formations and social behaviors. The term "psychology" has its roots in the Greek words "psyche," meaning the mind, soul, or spirit, and "logos," meaning discourse or study. Psychology is intricately interconnected with daily existence. These observations are inherent in daily social interactions. Furthermore, psychology encompasses the practical use of such knowledge in many domains of human endeavor. Psychology analysis refers to the systematic examination of the cognitive processes and actions of individuals, as well as the study of literary works like novels, poetry, prose, and drama.

### ***Character and Characterization***

Nugriyanto (in Nnur Sa'adah, 2017, p. 11) defines the main character as the designated narrator in the story. He serves as the most revealing character, either in the context of preparation or the unfolding of events.

The protagonist is the primary character in a story, while the antagonist is the secondary character who opposes the protagonist. By the aforementioned quote, it is evident that the main character is a recurring figure that exerts a pervasive influence over every aspect of the events in the narrative. Concerning the significance of the active-passive in performing a task, both might function as a subject possessing the potential to do something or as an object that experiences the

consequences of the actions or conditions carried out by the subject. In essence, the primary protagonist assumes the dual role of both the subject and an object. This particular type of character assumes a significant role within the story and should not be disregarded.

The distinctions between flat and round characters in novels were examined by EM Forster in his work *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). Flat characters exhibit consistency and memorability, whereas round figures possess greater complexity and can evoke both tragic and tragic responses over an extended period. The most effective approach is to make them humorous rather than tragic, therefore offering readers a fresh source of enjoyment with each encounter with the narrative. Often, the intricacy of the story necessitates the use of both flat and round characters, as their clashes more precisely mirror life.

Neither major nor minor characters must necessarily be protagonists or antagonists. Major characters may be either protagonists or antagonists, round characters or flat characters, and minor characters can also occupy these roles. Characters and characterization may serve several goals for the writer. A character may engage in characteristic actions to propel the storyline along. Furthermore, characterization is a constituent of the foundational components of fiction.

A method of characterization is a literary technique employed by an author to unveil the personality and character of a fictional individual.

Jones, as cited in M. Muntaqif Latif (2016:7), defines characterisation as the portrayal of distinct and unambiguous representations of an individual. Characterization in a work of literature refers to the process of conceptualising and constructing characters.

Characterization, as defined, refers to the authentic portrayal of the characters involved in the narrative by their behaviors. Characterization refers to the systematic portrayal and description of the characters inside a narrative. There are two established methods of characterisation: theatrical characterisation and analytic characterisation.

The long-term social interactions among individuals. There can exist either a positive or a negative correlation. Momentary social interaction can be characterized by parental care, dominant-subordinate dynamics, aggressive-fearful interactions, and another similar patterns. Hence, a social relationship might exhibit both virtues and vices.

Within a short tale, the primary protagonists are depicted in conjunction with secondary or auxiliary characters. Effective characterization is essential in the development of these characters, as they are the sole ones that are created. It is imperative for the author to offer coherent and plausible reasons and reactions for the characters, therefore assuring their alignment with their own experiences and inherent characteristics. The primary yardstick for evaluating the writing skill of an author is their capacity to

effectively inspire the characters to undergo transformation.

### **Psychological Approach in Literature Analysis**

A prevailing belief among modern personality psychologists is that there exist five fundamental characteristics of personality, commonly known as the "Big Five" personality traits. The theory delineates five overarching personality traits: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism. John and Soto (2017, p.8). Utilizing the acronym OCEAN (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) has been shown to be beneficial in recalling the five major attributes. One frequently used acronym is CANOE, which stands for Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Neuroticism, Openness, and Extraversion. It should be emphasized that each of the five personality traits encompasses a spectrum between two highly extreme values. Extraversion, for instance, corresponds to a spectrum that spans from excessive extraversion to excessive introversion. In reality, the majority of individuals occupy a position somewhat between the extremes of both dimensions. Commonly, these five categories are delineated as follows:

#### ***Openness***

This trait features characteristics For example, creativity and depth of understanding. Individuals with a high level of this characteristic also exhibit a wide spectrum of

intellectual interests. Their curiosity about the world and other individuals is accompanied by a strong desire to acquire new knowledge and derive pleasure from novel encounters. Individuals which possess a high level of this characteristic often exhibit greater levels of adventure and creativity. Individuals with low levels of this characteristic tend to exhibit strict adherence to conventional values and may have difficulties with abstract thinking.

### ***Conscientiousness***

Common characteristics of this dimension encompass elevated levels of deliberation, effective regulation of impulses, and actions focused on achieving objectives. Persons with high conscientiousness often exhibit organization and meticulous attention to detail. They engage in proactive planning, consider the impact of their actions on others, and demonstrate great awareness of time constraints.

### ***Extraversion***

Extraversion, also known as extroversion, is defined by heightened levels of excitement, sociability, verbosity, assertiveness, and significant emotional expressiveness. Individuals with high levels of extraversion are sociable and have a tendency to experience increased energy levels in social settings. Being in the company of others enhances their sense of energy and excitement.

In social contexts, individuals with low levels of extraversion (or introversion) often exhibit more reserved behavior and possess less energy to utilize. Public gatherings

can be mentally exhausting, and those with introverted tendencies typically need a period of isolation and tranquility to rejuvenate.

### ***Agreeableness***

Characteristics such as trust, benevolence, friendliness, affection, and other pro-social actions are encompassed within this personality component. Individuals with high levels of agreeableness often exhibit greater cooperation, whilst individuals with low levels of this characteristic tend to display more competitiveness and occasionally, manipulative behavior.

### ***Neuroticism***

Neuroticism is a personality trait marked by feelings of sorrow, moodiness, and intense emotional volatility. Individuals with elevated levels of this characteristic often encounter fluctuations in mood, heightened anxiety, impatience, and feelings of sadness. Individuals with low levels of this characteristic generally exhibit greater stability and emotional resilience.

### ***Fiction in Novel Studies***

As per Britannica (2019) at <https://www.britannica.com/art/fiction-literature>, fiction is a genre of storytelling that is not based on real events or life, but rather on the author's imagination rather than actual knowledge. Every plot, location, period, and condition of events, as well as the interactions among the characters, are entirely imaginary. This fictitious narrative of natural myth showcases the writer's adeptness in establishing connections between many events to

depict it as a highly realistic representation of real life, therefore captivating the reader.

Literary fiction, therefore, is consistently an examination of the human experience and frequently an investigation of complex social or political matters that govern our existence. Broadly speaking, the majority of fiction is driven by a plot. Typically, literary fiction is not. In most works of literature, the heroes and villains are rather distinct, but there is sometimes a certain degree of ambiguity. Literary fiction often leans off the hero/villain archetype and instead focuses on "just people".

Literary fiction sometimes exhibits a tendency to imitate the more vivid and detailed writing style of historical periods. Furthermore, whereas most exceptional fiction prioritizes storytelling above word smiting, literary fiction differs by placing less emphasis on the tale itself and more emphasis on the specific words employed to convey the story.

There exist three primary categories of fiction. Firstly, we present the brief narrative. Short stories, as defined by the renowned short story writer Edgar Allan Poe (in Rani, 2019:2), are characterised by a word count ranging from 1,000 to 20,000 and often span no more than 25 or 30 pages. Given their constrained length, short stories typically center upon a single significant plot or plotline and a small number of characters.

Next, we have the novella. Novellas are longer than short stories and tend to run about 20,000 to 50,000 words, usually between 60 and 120 pages. Because novellas

have more room to work with, they typically have a more complex plot or storyline and more characters than short stories. Famous novellas include Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*.

Finally, a novel is a work of fiction that contains over 50,000 words or 120 pages. Novels are even more complex than novellas, and they usually have more than one plot or storyline and many well-developed characters. Novels can be as long as their authors want them to be. There is no outer limit to their length. In fact, the longest novel ever written is a 17<sup>th</sup>-century work that contains over two million words and more than 13,000 pages. Believe it or not, the book was very popular with the readers of its day.

The Big Five Personality Traits theory, which includes Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism, is used to explain research. These traits are universal and have biological origins, with psychologist David Buss proposing an evolutionary explanation for their significance in shaping our social landscape.

The reason the writer uses The Big Five Personality Traits as a psychological approach in literature analysis in this novel is that this can help to address the issues from the novel. It's a test that can be used to measure a person's most important personality characteristics and help to understand which roles suit the best.

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method to analyze literature, focusing on Fredrik Backman's stories. The psychological approach in literature analysis is used to understand how individuals subjectively perceive and give meaning to their social reality. The research uses observation and document analysis to collect information related to the study. The focus is on the main character and her psychological aspects in the novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry." The sub-focus is on the psychology of the main character and its types. The research instruments include the writer and data collected from the novel, classified using the "Big Five" personality traits. A structural analytical approach is used for data analysis, using sentence and dialogue quotations from the study.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present study aims to undertake an analysis of the protagonist, Elsa, in the novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" authored by Fredrik Backman. In the study, the author employs a psychological methodology for analyzing literature. The author will examine the psychological aspects of the protagonist in the novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" by Fredrik Backman using the "Big Five Personality Traits" methodology developed by Soto and John in 2017. The theory delineates five overarching personality traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

## Openness

### ***Elsa sneaked out of her flat's front door to have an adventure with Granny***

Page 15-16

*"Elsa sneaked out of the front door every night ...."*

An example of a character statement inside the Openness characteristic is Love Adventure. Individuals which possess a high level of this characteristic often exhibit greater levels of adventure and creativity. This phenomenon results in individuals having a wide array of interests and exhibiting more inclination towards adventure in the process of decision making. In this passage, Elsa demonstrates her adventurous nature by clandestinely leaving her flat and entering her grandmother's flat. Under those circumstances, the conditions at her residence are inconvenient for her to engage in activities. Hence, she visits Granny's flat in order to immerse herself in Granny's narrative, which serves to soothe her among the turbulent circumstances of her parents. In order to satisfy her desire for empathy from her parents, she actively pursues adventure.

### ***Elsa sneaked out of the flat to go to the zoo in the middle of the night with Granny***

Page 19

*"...Elsa sneaked out of the flat ..."*

Openness is a trait encompassing not only imagination

but also insight. Persons with a high level of Openness typically push themselves to go on adventures that go beyond their actual existence. In chapter 2, Elsa exhibits atypical conduct for a seven-year-old child, as she surreptitiously leaves her flat while her parents are asleep and accompanies her grandmother to the zoo mid-night. She yearns to embark on unforgettable adventures with Granny, her sole companion. She presents the character statement of Love Adventure from the perspective of a seven-year-old girl. Despite potential challenges in problem-solving beyond her familiar area of expertise, Elsa possesses a strong curiosity about the world and is enthusiastic about embracing novel experiences.

***Elsa goes out by bus without her parents or guardians***

Page 210 – 211

*“... when all the passengers in the bus starts to look at the Monster and Wurse, then move awkwardly to be far from them and to get close until next stop, Elsa realize it will not be easy.”*

The trait of openness quantifies the degree to which an individual possesses imagination and creativity, in contrast to being grounded and traditional. The feature of openness pertains to individuals' inclination to explore novel experiences, their capacity to exhibit vulnerability, and their aptitude for innovative thinking. As in this chapter, Elsa opts to embark on her expedition with her recently acquired companions by boarding a bus. During this

expedition, Elsa endeavors to employ innovative thinking in order to accomplish her assignment assigned by Granny before to her demise. She excludes her parents or guardian from participating on the trip. She believes that embarking on a journey without adult interference will provide a greater sense of adventure. She persists on her path though she finds it challenging to do so.

***Elsa imagines about magical creature from Granny's stories***

Page 16

*“...Elsa up, and then fly higher and higher and higher, until Elsa sees all the magical creatures...”*

Openness to experience refers to the richness and intricacy of an individual's cognitive processes and accumulated experiences. It is alternatively referred to as intellect or imagination. Within the present chapter, Elsa presents her Imaginative character statement. This attribute is characterized by qualities such as creativity and acute perception. As Elsa clandestinely entered her grandmother's flat each night, she was introduced to a fantastical realm that was meticulously crafted by her grandmother. Through her imagination, Elsa vividly envisions the mystical monster in Granny's tale. She can envision the ethereal beings that transport her and Granny to the lofty heights of the skies. She envisions an aerial journey with the mystical beings to the celestial realm, where she witnesses phenomena from a great height.



***Elsa imagines about angels that sacrifice themselves on a beach***

Page61

*“Elsa is stood by her Granny on the rocks by the coast where ninety nine snow angels sacrifice themselves. She has looked out all over the sea where one day the shadows will come back.”*

An individual with low levels of Openness generally values routine above diversity, adheres to familiarity, and favors minimum exposure to abstract arts and entertainment. This chapter elucidates Elsa's enjoyment of socializing with Granny and engaging in imaginative activities. At this juncture, Granny escorts Elsa to their fictitious realm - Miamas - in order to seek refuge from the harshness of reality, as Elsa faces criticism from her professors of her traumatic upbringing. In her imagination, Elsa perceives shadows as the celestial beings that will return to engage in combat with her in Miamas, her mystical realm. She protested engaging in monotonous everyday exercise with her classmates. She extends her acquired knowledge by using her imagination to explore Miamas with Granny.

**Conscientiousness**

***Elsa explains details about superhero to those that not understand about it***

Page 21

*“..... To such villains dime, Elsa would explain very slowly that X-Men are indeed superheroes but first and foremost they are mutans.*

The trait of conscientiousness encompasses elevated levels of contemplation, effective impulse control, and activities focused on achieving goals. Individuals with a high level of conscientiousness often exhibit a keen focus on things that were previously overlooked by others. Through these statements, it is evident that Elsa demonstrates meticulousness by attempting to elucidate concepts that are only comprehensible to her audience. She endeavors to elucidate phenomena to those who do not share her own perspectives. She articulates her thoughts at a deliberate pace to ensure comprehension by others regarding specific matters. Those with high conscientiousness are typically well-organized and quite attentive to details.

***Elsa corrects a supermarket sign***

Page 67

*.... she gets out a red felted pen from her jacket pocket and adds an ‘ed’ and a slash to show that it should be two words.”*

Conscientiousness is a personality characteristic associated with consciousness. Although certain individuals may prioritize immediate well-being or enjoyment, conscientious individuals often exert persistent effort to attain their objectives. Their meticulous attention to detail ensures the successful fulfillment of their commitments. Based on these

observations, it is evident that Elsa demonstrates meticulousness by attempting to rectify an advertisement in a supermarket that has incorrect words. Despite the tendency of many to overlook these minor errors, Elsa cannot disregard them. She retrieves her marker and proceeds to make spelling corrections to the word. She does not allow herself to go without rectifying something that requires correcting. Some individuals with high conscientiousness are particularly attentive to details.

***Elsa always completes the tasks that given by Granny***

Page 26

*" ... of the land of the almost awake..... Elsa always gets them done because that is what Miamas's knight has to do"*

When an individual possesses Conscientiousness, they demonstrate the capacity to use self-discipline and self-control to actively seek and ultimately accomplish their objectives. Furthermore, they exhibit qualities of responsibility, goal orientation, reliability, organization, and hard effort. Immediately upon hearing the assignment from her grandmother, Elsa readily accepts the duty. Her prompt nod indicates her compliance in completing the assignment. She diligently completed the assigned chores promptly upon receiving the instructions. She does this particularly with the responsibilities assigned to Granny. Individuals exhibiting high conscientiousness have a tendency to engage in

immediate completion of assigned activities.

***Elsa nods to her Granny right away she gets the assignment***

Page 27 - 28

*"... Elsa nods, tough she was terrified at our friend..."*

People who score high in Conscientiousness is often associated with high levels of achievement. They consistently engage in the pursuit of excellence in all their endeavors. Therefore, they are frequently highly ambitious and strive to achieve lofty objectives. In the present chapter, Elsa promptly consents to the assignment from her grandmother as soon as she is presented with the duty. Despite her perception of the difficulty of the job, she is eager to get the assignment from her grandmother without delay. The strong conscientiousness of Elsa is shown in her tendency to promptly complete the duties assigned to her. She displays no evident reluctance in commencing the completion of the assigned chores.

***Elsa manages to arrive early in-residence meeting to be able to run her task***

Page 39

*" But Elsa still goes there today because she needs to know where the arguing starts, so no one notices when sneaks out. Elsa arrives early."*

An individual with high conscientiousness will consistently engage in the meticulous planning and analysis of their own actions.

People that are conscientious demonstrate exceptional skills in delaying immediate satisfaction, adhering to regulations, and efficiently strategizing and coordinating plans. Chapter 3 describes Elsa's deliberate strategy of waiting for the opportune moment to carry out her assignment. It is imperative for her to ensure that no one will impede her strategy to accomplish the assignment from Granny. She deliberately arrives early to the monthly meetings of the residents in order to ensure that she has enough time to discreetly leave her unit and bestow a chocolate upon her friend without drawing any attention. People with strong conscientiousness will engage in proactive planning to successfully accomplish their duties. Otherwise, more prone to persevere when tasks become challenging, monotonous, or unsatisfying.

### **Extraversion**

#### ***Elsa prefers to be alone with Granny as her only friend***

Page 2

*"...totally thick just because she is seven. That's why she doesn't have any friend except Granny. Because the others of seven-year old in her school are idiotic as seven-year old tend to be."*

Individuals with low Extraversion temperament are those who prefer not to be the focal point of attention and actively engage in social interactions with others. They gravitate towards isolation and exhibit reduced vitality in social

interactions. Being the focal point of attention or engaging in casual conversation can be particularly exhausting. These statements illustrate how Elsa is being unfairly judged by others in her vicinity only due to her slight deviation from her contemporaries. She lacks the ability to socialise with her peers who are of the same age as her. Elsa is a youngster who frequently exhibits intricate details and a beyond-average level of knowledge compared to children her age. As a result, Elsa gravitates towards solitude and avoids engaging in conversations with people. Individuals with low extraversion sometimes exhibit more reserved behaviour and have reduced energy to invest in social situations. It is evident that Elsa's sole companion is Granny.

#### **Elsa does not fit in her school social life that cause her to stay alone**

Page 82

*"That's why Elsa always tore up the notes she gotten in her locker. ...."*

Typically, individuals with a high level of Extraversion derive energy and rejuvenation from social interactions, whereas those with low levels become fatigued by such interactions and restore their energy through solitude. This chapter portrays Elsa's aversion to attending school and socialising with others due to receiving numerous negative comments. She experiences anger when reading notes from her classmates in her locker every Monday morning. This incident has

led Elsa to prefer solitude at school rather than being in the company of those who do not accept her into their groups. She feels incongruous with her peers, particularly at school.

### **Agreeableness**

*Elsa doesn't care about her headmaster's thought about her, so she keeps defending herself from the headmaster*

P

age 85

*"... then the headmaster says she can go and wait in the corridor. She sounds relief"*

Trust, altruism, friendliness, and affection are the defining features of agreeableness. Disagreeableness, conversely, is socially undesirable and devoid of concern or empathy. In the present chapter, Elsa, who finds herself at the headmaster's office subsequent to an accident, exhibits a preference for socializing with her grandmother rather than engaging with her mother and headmaster. She exhibits considerable reluctance in confiding in others about her issues and has a sense of relief when granted permission to leave the workplace. Notwithstanding the death of her grandmother, Elsa fails to perceive any other beneficial endeavors.

*Elsa argues with her mother and does not shows empathy toward her mother's feelings*

Page 88

*"... 'You were always fighting. You probably just glad she is dead!'"*

Interpersonal agreeableness refers to the degree to which individuals get along with others. The concept of extroversion pertains to the sources of energy and the need for social connections, whereas agreeableness pertains to one's orientation towards others. Within this chapter, Elsa is engaged in a dispute with her mother subsequent to the incident that occurred in the headmaster's office. Elsa's mother attempts to establish contact with Elsa in order for Elsa to confide in her. Nevertheless, Elsa allowed her emotions to dominate as she angrily reacted when her mother addressed her. Despite the fact that not only Elsa lost a grandma, but her mother also lost her own mother, she disregards her mother's emotions. Elsa utters a statement that really caused her mother emotional distress.

### **Neuroticism**

*Elsa gets beaten because of having argument with his classmate*

Page 86

*"She heard one of the boys roar, 'Get her!' and the clattering of the footsteps behind her. She ran so fast that her knees are hitting her rib. As usual she needs to cover her face so that mom cannot see the damage."*

Neuroticism is not indicative of cruelty or incompetence, but rather of self-assurance and ease in one's own identity. Psychological stability

and overall temperament are encompassed by it. Within this chapter, Elsa engages in a dispute with one of her peers on the concept of heroes. While Elsa aspires to be Spiderman, her classmate also shares the same desire. The guy asserts that a girl cannot embody the character of Spiderman, but Elsa holds a disagreeing viewpoint. Their altercation compels Elsa to remain in the classroom in order to engage in a discussion with the teacher. Evidently, following the discussion, the child and a few of his companions are now anticipating the arrival of Elsa. Their pursuit of Elsa culminates in their fatal assault on her. This occurrence contributes to Elsa's heightened stress levels in her school life due to her divergent perspectives on life compared to her peers and others in her social circle.

***Elsa gets verbal insult-ment and bullying from her schoolmate***

Page 110

***“bloody ugly scarf? Only after the girl smacked Elsa in the face, ripped her scarf and threw it in the toilet, had Elsa grown a conscious a fact that the girl haven’t read Harry Potter at all.”***

Neuroticism is defined by persistent feelings of sorrow, moodiness, and emotional instability. Often misidentified as antisocial behaviour or, in more severe cases, a more serious psychological problem, neuroticism is a physiological and psychological reaction to stress and perceived dangers in life. Within this chapter, Elsa is partaking in her midday meal at the cafeteria of the

school. Sitting alone, she savoured her lunch until a young girl approached her, frightening her and causing Elsa to spill dressing salad across her beloved scarf. She endured a verbal affront from her classmate that induces a sense of physical and emotional strain. Moreover, Elsa is being subjected to physical assault and her preferred scarf is being discarded into a toilet just due to a girl's differing opinion on the scarf. These occurrences are not merely isolated events in her daily school life.

***Elsa gets easily upset because of her teacher doesn’t want to listen to her***

Page 86

***” if he heard something that called Marvel Comic, but the teacher haven’t. ‘AND THEY LET YOU TEACH CHILDREN?!’***

Neuroticism is a psychological characteristic that quantifies an individual's emotional stability and self-assurance. Individuals with higher levels of neuroticism may exhibit more susceptibility to distress and reduced self-assurance. Individuals with lower levels of neuroticism generally exhibit greater levels of security and an even temperament. An individual with high levels of neuroticism is prone to readily become overwhelmed by negative emotions. This section depicts Elsa engaged in a dispute with one of her peers on the selection of superheroes to be showcased in their Literature class. On that occasion, Elsa struck her buddy with a book, prompting her instructor to approach her and request an explanation. Upon learning that her

teacher is unaware of superheroes in comic books, Elsa becomes immediately enraged.

**Elsa feels afraid because of a nightmare that she had after Granny's dead**

Page 242

*"... sweaty and exhausted, checked to see if she is not being bitten by one of the shadows, tries to get her thoughts into order"*

The feature of neuroticism is characterised by a tendency to experience adverse consequences such as wrath, anxiety, self-consciousness, irritability, emotional instability, and depression<sup>1</sup>. Individuals with heightened levels of neuroticism exhibit inadequate reactions to environmental stress, perceive commonplace circumstances as menacing, and may perceive even tiny annoyances as despairingly overpowering. This chapter elucidates Elsa's profound sense of fear and exhaustion when she experiences a nightmare, just after a prolonged period of being free from such vivid memories. She dreams of her grandmother's enchanting fairy house vanishing in a conflagration. Elsa experiences sorrow over the events in her dream involving Miamas, her beloved home with Granny. Her anxiety stems from her lack of knowledge on how to ensure the safety of Miamas.

***Elsa feels angry because of free newspaper in her neighborhood***

Page 265

*"... It makes Elsa furious again, gets her thinking how much Granny was willing to fight to get them to stop putting newspapers in her letter box"*

There is a negative relationship between neuroticism and self-esteem, self-efficacy, and internal locus of control. Individuals with high neuroticism may encounter fluctuations in mood, feelings of worry, and irritability. Certain individuals may react to elevated amounts of stress in their daily lives. An illustration of Elsa's sentiments towards free newspapers in her community is her dissent with Granny about the use of wood as paper. The protagonist experiences anxiety due to her inability to modify her behaviour from her childhood, which is regarded peculiar by others.

This study examined the protagonist, Elsa, in the literary work titled "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry." Elsa has a range of personality characteristics that vary depending on the circumstances and the individual he is conversing with. An analysis of Elsa's personality was conducted using the Big Five Personality traits, which are shaped by her surroundings and social interactions.

Elsa exhibits a 25% Openness trait, which she positively values and derives pleasure from, as evidenced by her interactions with her grandmother and friends. In addition, she possesses a Conscientiousness attribute of 25%, in which she demonstrates exceptional proficiency in attending to details and successfully accomplishing

tasks. Her neurotic tendency, accounting for 25% of her personality, induces worry and stress, resulting in both verbal and physical victimisation. Elsa exhibits lower levels of Extraversion (10%) and Agreeableness (15%) due to her aversion to being the focal point of attention and interacting with unfamiliar individuals. The environment and social interactions exert a significant influence on Elsa's personality.

The description above indicates that the main character in "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" exhibits a psychological composition characterised by Openness, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism, as determined by the psychological approach of literary analysis as proposed by Soto and John (2017, p. 8). This assertion can be substantiated by the data results, which indicate a total of five discoveries (25%) derived from the combined data on those characteristics. Hence, the psychological state of the protagonist in "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" called Elsa inherently exhibits an ambiguous character psychology. The research findings reveal the dominant personality traits of Elsa, the protagonist of the novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry." These traits largely manifest in her fervent enthusiasm for experiences, keen observation of details, and her uneasiness stemming from the people in her life, particularly her classmates.

Psychological Within Fredrik Backman's novel "My Grandmother

Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry," the character of Elsa is examined through the psychological method of literary analysis as proposed by Soto and John. The prevailing personality components are openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism, each accounting for 25% of the total. Elsa's enthusiasm for embarking on excursions with her Granny is clearly demonstrated by her openness, which she exhibits through her creative thinking and unwavering will to accomplish assignments. Elsa's conscientiousness is seen in her meticulous emphasis on detail and unwavering commitment to attaining objectives. In contrast, neuroticism is distinguished by adverse consequences including rage, anxiety, self-awareness, irritability, emotional volatility, and despair. Elsa grapples with Neuroticism, resulting in challenges in comprehending her place and identity in society.

Elsa's Agreeableness (15%) and Extraversion (10%) personality qualities are less prominent, as she has a strong aversion to being the focal point of attention and interacting with unfamiliar individuals. An inherent flaw in her character is ascribed to her experiences that did not fully fulfil the initial phases of personality formation. Notwithstanding her challenges in interpersonal relationships, Elsa ultimately establishes new friendships throughout her escapades and successfully accomplishes the chores delegated to her grandmother.

## CONCLUSION

The psychological analysis of Elsa's character in Fredrik Backman's novel "My Grandmother Asked Me to Tell You She's Sorry" reveals five personality traits. The dominant personality is Neuroticism (25%), characterized by anxiety, stress, and mood swings. Elsa experiences bullying from classmates and schoolmates due to her unique traits. On the other hand, she shows less

Extraversion (10%), preferring attention and meeting new people. Novels are long narrative works of fiction with realism, often published in prose form, and can also serve as educational mediums, particularly in psychology. This research aims to provide insights into character types in novels and may aid researchers in analyzing the main character's personality.

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