

TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES IN FREDRIK BACKMAN'S A MAN CALLED OVE

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Received: 08 February 2024

Accepted: 14 March 2024

Published: 21 March 2024

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find out trauma to the main character in the novel *A Man Called Ove* and its causes. Ove experiences the loss of people he loves, which brings trauma to Ove's life. The data are taken from monologue and dialogue with the other characters in the novel. This research uses a qualitative approach and Sigmund Freud's psychological criticism theory. The primary source is Fredrik Backman's 2013 novel *A Man Called Ove*, while secondary sources include various related publications and online resources that provide credence to the subject. The research results show that there are three types of trauma reactions. The first is a mental reaction, when Ove has difficulty concentrating and feels lost. The next is an emotional reaction, when his new neighbor couldn't park the car and made him angry. The last one is a behavioral reaction, when Sonja died, Ove never set foot in the cafe they used to go every Sunday. The writer also found causes of this trauma: Accident and Death. From all the data found in the novel, it proves that Ove experienced trauma and ultimately died.

Keywords: *Trauma, Accident, Death, Psychological, Criticism*

INTRODUCTION

Wellek & Warren (2016: 3) argue that literature is a creative activity, a work of art. This creative activity produces a series of words or writing that has elements of art. As a work of art, literature is a human creation that contains the expressions, ideas and feelings of its creator. The writer agrees with Wellek and Warren's opinion because literature is an imaginative work that has various forms, one of which is the power of a person's mind to imagine or create images based on their experiences. An imaginative literary work is usually created to contain self-expression and provide inspiration for someone. Not only that, literary works are also expressions of human problems regarding the meaning of life and life or human suffering. Various ideas are

expressed through literary works such as novels, presenting characters with unique characters such as those in the novel *A Man Called Ove*, the writer presents an old man in the novel going through problems or suffering in his life. Every literary work has a function and meaning that can provide pleasure and benefits for its audience. Apart from being able to provide pleasure, literary works can also be used as a means or medium that provides and fosters good values to educate readers or viewers because of the values of truth and goodness contained in them.

Hatta (2016: 18) explains that trauma is an unusual event that causes injury and pain caused by an event that does not occur directly or indirectly to a person, be it physical trauma or psychological injury. In accordance with the explanation above, it is true that the trauma experienced by individuals is an event that leaves a mark and is painful for them and has an impact on behavior. Not everyone can fight trauma within themselves, because each person has different abilities both physically and mentally. The author agrees with what Hatta explained because when someone experiences a very deep trauma and they are unable to fight the trauma within themselves, it causes death.

A Man Called Ove, novel by Fredrick Backman was published in 2012. The novel *A Man Called Ove* is set in the story of an old man who is full of emotion and succeeds in winning the hearts of many readers. The novel *A Man Called Ove* tells about the life journey of an Ove who is now old, traumatized and full of wounds.

Ove had parents who love him very much, but fate had other plans, God called Ove's mother home. After his mother died, Ove lived with his father. They weren't very close because his father didn't talk much. But even so, his father loved Ove very much even if he didn't say it directly. Several years have passed and Ove has grown into an adult. However, when he grew up, after losing his mother, now Ove also had to lose his father because he was hit by a train and died.

Ove's life went so hard and there were many trials, one day Ove was visited by people who wanted to demolish his house. Because Ove refused to do so, they used the most heinous way of burning his house down. Homeless, Ove tries to sleep in one of the train cars. That's where he first met his wife Sonja. One night Ove went out with Sonja on his first date, and their relationship grew stronger from then on. Two

years later Ove worked up the courage to propose to Sonja and Sonja accepted Ove's proposal. After their marriage they lived happily and Sonja became pregnant. Before Sonja gave birth, they spent their days so happy. But on their way home, they had an accident so that Sonja had a miscarriage and even Sonja could no longer walk. And fate said otherwise, Sonja died because of cancer. Ove promised to catch up with Sonja and since then he's been trying to kill himself so he can catch up with his wife. Based on these problems, this prompted the writer to conduct a study entitled "Traumatic Experiences in Fredrik Backman's *A Man Called Ove*". According to Freud (in Zaviera, 2008: 115), traumatic experiences have an impact on the mind. Each trauma must have a distinct impact on a person, which can be understood through personal histories.

Trauma is often defined as emotional and psychological suffering caused by unpleasant events or experiences including violence. People can be said to suffer trauma if they are subjected to a high level of emotional stress to the point where they are unable to regulate the feeling itself, which occurs in practically everyone. Freud's ego is the intellectual element of the psyche that mediates between the id's instinctual urges and the superego's moral limitations, and it operates largely at the conscious level. The ego can be described as the aspect of the id that has been altered by the direct impact of the external environment. The ego is the only constituent of the conscious personality. Self-awareness refers to an individual's conscious perception of oneself and their tendency to project certain qualities onto others. The ego develops to function as an intermediary between the irrational id and the tangible external reality. It refers to the cognitive process of making choices and judgments that are influenced by one's personality. Optimally, the ego functions in a logical manner, while the id is characterized by chaos and irrationality. The ego develops from the id throughout childhood. The primary function of the ego is to fulfill the demands of the id in a manner that is both secure and according to societal norms. Unlike the id, the ego operates according to the reality principle and functions in both the conscious and unconscious mind. The ego functions based on the principle of reality, formulating practical strategies to fulfill the needs of the id, often delaying or postponing immediate satisfaction to avoid negative societal outcomes. When making

choices on how to act, the ego considers the existing social conditions, norms, manners, and regulations.

RESEARCH METHOD

The writer employed a qualitative research approach to assess the novel "A Man Called Ove" in this study. This approach is anticipated to enable researchers to generate descriptive data that will uncover the reasons and processes of occurrence. Research, as described by Denzin & Lincoln (Moleong, 2012:5), is a systematic investigation that employs a scientific framework and encompasses diverse methodologies, including interviews, observation, and document analysis. The objective of this research is to analyze and explain the phenomena that occur. Djaman Satori & Aan Komariah (2011:103) Data collection in scientific research is a methodical process for acquiring the essential data. Sugiyono, (2013) identified data collecting as the most crucial stage in research, as the primary objective of research is to acquire data.

For this research, the writer initially conducted a thorough reading of the novel, focusing on gathering data pertaining to the specific sort of trauma depicted in the novel, the portrayal of trauma, and the underlying causes of trauma. The writer also viewed the A Man Called Ove Official Trailer video and thereafter assigned a code to each piece of data, organizing it according to the aforementioned problem. The psychological method is a strategy that relies primarily on the concept of the human unconscious. This refers to the impulses, desires, and sentiments that a person is unaware of, but yet have an impact on their emotions and behavior Meyer, (1997). The previous paragraph outlines that the psychological approach centers on the study of emotions and human behavior. Chapter IV extensively examines the main character's traumatic events in the novel, employing psychological theory as the analytical framework.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will utilize Sigmund Freud's theory to analyze the trauma experienced by the protagonist in the novel A Man Called Ove. The writer will address the inquiries by utilizing research questions that are pertinent to this subject. Upon

completing the novel, the author gathers pertinent facts pertaining to the subject matter explored in this research.

The main character experiences a traumatic event.

Psychological trauma refers to an intense emotional response triggered by a terrifying, unpleasant, or perhaps lethal incident. Psychological stress can arise from various factors such as violence, terrible accidents, abuse, or unexpected death. The reactions of individuals to upsetting events might differ significantly.

Cognitive response.

Trauma include cognitive impairments such as decreased memory and concentration, as well as emotional experiences of loss and confusion. Ove experiences a cognitive response when entering his living room, as he gazes at the ceiling and engages in deep contemplation about many matters. The monologue that follows provides an opportunity for observation.

Ove proceeds to hang his coat on the hook, while being encompassed by his wife's overcoats. As a precautionary measure, he quietly utters the word "idiots" towards the closed window. Subsequently, he proceeds to enter his living room and directs his gaze towards the ceiling.

He is unaware of the duration of time he has been standing in that location. He becomes absorbed in his own thoughts. Drifts aloft akin to a gaseous state. He has never exhibited such behavior before, nor has he ever been prone to daydreaming. However, it appears that something has recently caused a disturbance in his mental state. His ability to concentrate is deteriorating worse. He dislikes it entirely. The citation Backman, (2013:23) is provided.

Currently, Ove had a recent neighbor who attempted to engage with him. However, Ove never anticipated getting near to them. He has a preference for solitude and would prefer death instead.

Ove is persistently preoccupied with contemplating his own demise. This speech exhibits observable characteristics.

He proceeds into the living room. He forcefully inserts his hands into his pockets. Gazes at the ceiling. Pauses briefly, contemplating the most suitable type of concrete-wall anchor bolt for the task at hand. The reference is from Backman's work published in 2013, specifically on page 25.

Ove's sole desire is to gently pass away, although he is persistently hindered from achieving this. The monologue that follows provides clear evidence of this.

As he sits in the Saab, gazing through the open garage door, he contemplates his sole desire: to depart tranquilly. By simply avoiding his neighbors, he may be able to depart by this afternoon.

Emotional response

Unpleasant feelings and emotions arise when we experience dissatisfaction due to the loss of something of great significance. Ove experiences emotional distress when he encounters situations that make him feel uneasy. This emotional response was triggered when his new neighbor struggled to park his car. This can be observed in the subsequent conversation:

Ove forcefully strikes his fist against the roof of the car, resulting in the Lanky One becoming startled and inadvertently hitting his head on the doorframe. "Exit the vehicle!"

"Pardon?"

"Exit the vehicle immediately, as I have previously instructed!" The citation for this information is from Backman's work published in 2013, specifically on page 21.

There are significant concerns regarding whether individuals who are unable to park their vehicles correctly should be granted the right to vote. Ove grows increasingly enraged as his new neighbor's car emits piercing noises.

Ove surveys his surroundings with a visage filled with anger. "What on earth are you... why are you producing that sound?" he angrily whispers at the instrument panel, striking the steering wheel. "Cease this behavior immediately, as I have explicitly stated!" (Backman, 2013: 21-22).

Simultaneously, his new neighbor only intends to acquaint Ove with the car's controls, although Ove declines and reprimands his new neighbor in return.

Ove lowers the window and directs a vexed countenance at him.

"The noise is caused by the reverse radar," the Lanky One responds, affirming with a nod. "Do you not believe that I am aware of that?" Ove is quite angry.

"This car is rather unique. "I was contemplating the possibility of demonstrating the controls to you... "I am not a fool, you are aware!" Ove emitted a loud, forceful sound through his nostrils. The citation "Backman, (2013:22)" refers to a specific source and page number.

Parvaneh and her spouse, who are the recent residents next to Ove, wish to express their gratitude to him for assisting them in maneuvering their trailer in reverse. They arrived to deliver cookies on his behalf. During our conversation, an event occurred that caused Ove to become unhappy. The subsequent discourse is observable.

Ove retreats. The individual's foot is adhered to a strip of adhesive material in close proximity to the opening. As he attempts to dismiss it, he inadvertently shreds a little portion of the plastic. As he attempts to remove the tape and plastic sheeting, he loses his balance and unintentionally collects more amounts of it. He quickly recovers his equilibrium with a display of anger. Lingers on the verge, endeavoring to evoke tranquility. The citation is from Backman's work, specifically page 58, published in 2013.

During that period, it was winter, and the entire area was covered with snow. Ove was transporting the shovel towards the warehouse when a white Skoda emerged from the left, causing him such a strong shock that he almost fell down in a heap of snow next to the warehouse. This monologue clearly demonstrates the following.

Ove advances, wielding his clenched fist. "Are you incapable of reading, you imbecile!" he shouts. The reference is from Backman's work published in 2013, specifically on page 90.

The driver, a slender gentleman holding a cigarette, seems to have perceived his words. As the Škoda comes to a stop at the bike storage, their gaze connects through the side window. The man gazes directly at Ove and lowers his car window. He lifts his eyebrows, displaying indifference. "No motor vehicles allowed!" Ove reiterates, indicating the sign with the identical phrase. He walked towards the Škoda car with his hands tightly closed. The citation Backman, (2013:90) is provided. Furthermore, they proceed to drive back across the street in a Skoda, which intensifies Ove's anger.

"Could you please move aside?" he requests. "What is your purpose for being in this location?" Ove exclaims abruptly. "There is no cause for concern," states the man in the white shirt in a monotonous tone, resembling a computer-generated voicemail message notifying Ove of his successful connection to a telephone line. He inserts the cigarette that he had expelled from its container into his mouth and ignites it. Ove inhales with such intensity that his thorax expands and contracts beneath his outer garment. The reference for this information is Backman (2013), pages 161-162. Ove instructs Parvaneh in the art of driving. They traveled to a certain location, and Parvaneh encountered difficulty in departing from the parking lot. Once given permission to exit the parking lot, Parvaneh faced difficulty in regaining control of the vehicle, while the car behind them persistently sounded its horn, causing irritation to Ove. The monologue shown below provides clear evidence of the observation.

The individual forcefully opens the door, exits the vehicle, proceeds cautiously around the SUV, and forcefully opens the driver's door. "Have you never been a student driver or not?" The motorist lacks the capacity to react promptly. "You foolish, insignificant offspring!" Ove angrily confronts the young man with a shaved head and tattoos on his throat, causing his saliva to flow into their seats. Ove's eyes are filled with intense anger, seeming completely black. The citation for this information is found in Backman's work from 2013, specifically on pages 204-205.

Response Concurrently, one may witness behavioral responses when an individual tries to evade stimuli that trigger memories of a distressing event. Ove's

behavioral response was triggered when Parvaneh arrived at his home, accompanied by Anita, who proceeded to discuss Sonja. This can be observed in the subsequent conversation: Parvaneh closely observes Ove as he takes another step back to obstruct the Lanky One's line of sight. "It is of no significance." "However, I can perceive that it is—" the Lanky One starts, feeling confused. "It was Ove's spouse, Sonja, she was—" Rune's wife interjects in a pleasant manner, but she is only able to utter the word "Sonja" when Ove abruptly interrupts her and whirls around with unrestrained fury. "That is plenty! "Now please be quiet!" The citation for this information is from Backman's work in 2013, specifically page 65.

Ove consistently endeavors to suppress his emotions whenever he encounters or becomes aware of anything distressing that pertains to Sonja and her demise. Ove clenches his jaws with such force that he starts grinding his teeth. "One cannot rely on buses. The drivers are consistently intoxicated," he murmurs softly, tilting his chin as if attempting to conceal his comments inside the confines of his shirt collar. The citation "Backman 2013:96" refers to a specific source and page number. Ove experienced and observed a noticeable change in his mood as soon as Parvaneh spoke the word "bus".

Subsequently, Ove accompanied Parvaneh and her spouse to the hospital. Upon reaching the hospital, Ove chose not to go inside and instead stayed in the car with Sonja's feline companion. Simultaneously, Ove observes an object that triggers memories of Sonja. The monologue that follows provides clear evidence of this. Furthermore, Ove must confront the cat's malevolent stare. The glance of the object reminds him of how Sonja used to look at him. Backman, (2013: 174)

In order to avoid a situation similar to Sonja, he took the initiative to steer the conversation in a different direction and discuss other subjects. While Ove and Parvaneh were traveling, they halted completely in a café.

Ove shifts his weight from his left foot to his right and surveys the surroundings. He has always had an aversion to cafés. Sonja had a strong affection for them. She expressed her desire to spend an entire Sunday simply observing people. Ove would

frequently sit alongside her and peruse a newspaper. Every Sunday, they performed the task. He has not visited a café since her demise. The source cited is Backman, (2013), page 216.

While seated in the cafe, Ove reflects on his past experiences with Sonja and comes to the realization that he has not visited a cafe since her passing.

Inflicts psychological trauma upon the protagonist.

Collision

Accidents exert a psychological influence on an individual. The psychological repercussions can be substantial, and they commonly present as trauma.

Ove's initial psychological repercussion from the incident took place when he and Sonja arrived back from their vacation and the bus they were traveling in crashed with another vehicle. The monologue that follows provides clear evidence of this.

He rose from his seat and proceeded towards the washroom. However, as he was halfway down the aisle, the bus suddenly jerked and made contact with the center barrier, resulting in a brief period of immobility. As though time had paused momentarily. Subsequently, a detonation occurred, causing glass to shatter into numerous fragments. The act of contorting metal generates a cacophonous shrieking noise. The vehicles trailing the bus collided with it, resulting in forceful impacts. And the cacophony of shouts. He would not fail to remember them. The reference is taken from Backman's work in 2013, specifically page 175.

Sonja was admitted to the hospital after the accident, and Ove remained at her side throughout her treatment. Ove consistently positions himself adjacent to her bed.

He remained seated beside her bed for the entire duration of the first week. Upon the nurses' recommendation, he was advised to take a shower and change his attire. Backman, (2013:176) states that Senja and Ove's eldest offspring perished as a result of an accident. The doctor intends to notify Ove about the demise of their kid, but Ove is unwilling to acknowledge it, while Sonja remains unconscious.

A physician appeared and addressed Ove in an emotionally dispassionate and objective manner, discussing the necessity for him to mentally and emotionally brace

himself for the high probability of her not regaining consciousness. Ove forcefully propelled the doctor into a door. A door that was securely fastened and completely shut. "She is alive," he exclaimed down the corridor.

"Cease acting as though she were deceased!" No one at the hospital had the audacity to repeat such an error. Backman, (2013:176) states that Sonja remained in a state of slumber for a duration of 10 days prior to awakening and making physical contact with Ove's hand. The nurses propose to inform him, but Ove vehemently insists on handling the task himself. The monologue that follows provides an opportunity for observation.

Subsequently, he proceeded to disclose all the details to her in a composed demeanor, gently manipulating her hands within his own, as if they were very frigid. The individual conveyed to her the details regarding the driver emitting an odor reminiscent of wine, the bus veering towards the crash barrier, and the subsequent collision. Backman, (2013:176).

The elements of time, sorrow, and fury coalesce in a profound and enduring gloom. This incident led Ove to hold himself responsible.

At that precise moment, Ove realized that he would forever hold himself accountable for leaving his seat and failing to safeguard them. And was aware that this agony would endure indefinitely. The reference for this information may be found in Backman's work, namely on pages 176-177 of the 2013 edition.

In addition to losing their child, Sonja suffered a physical impairment that rendered her unable to walk, necessitating the need for physiotherapy. During their conversation, a woman entered the room and displayed impolite behavior, causing Ove to become irritated.

believed that Ove could no longer envision himself remaining with his wife. "Given the present circumstances," she said, silently acknowledging the situation at the bedside. She addressed Ove as if Sonja's presence was inconsequential. Although it must be acknowledged that Ove was the one who unlocked the door on this occasion, she was nonetheless ejected. "We are solely returning to our own residence,

which is the place where we currently reside!" Ove vociferated at her, and in a state of extreme frustration and anger, he forcefully hurled one of Sonja's shoes out of the room. The citation for this information is found in Backman's work from 2013, on page 177.

Ultimately, Ove commenced corresponding with the Spanish government, Swedish authorities, police, and the court over the calamity.

Mortality

Psychology, a scientific discipline that studies human ideas, emotions, and actions, asserts that death, a devastating event, profoundly affects an individual's life. Particularly when one's nearest and dearest pass away.

Ove's paternal and maternal figures, the individuals he had the deepest affection for, passed away. Ove's mother passed away during his childhood, and he currently resides with his father. However, as he rose, he also experienced the loss of his father.

The subsequent discourse is observable.

However, his sense of happiness ceased.

He continued to experience unhappiness for several years thereafter. The citation for this information is found in Backman's work from 2013, on page 44.

Upon the demise of his father, Ove encountered a multitude of challenges in his life before to his encounter with Sonja. They wedded after enduring numerous hardships. However, Sonja is suffering from cancer. One day, Sonja was recuperating in the hospital, reassuring Ove that everything was excellent. The monologue that follows provides clear evidence of this.

All was going to be OK. Ove reasoned that it was effortless for her to make such a statement, but he felt a strong surge of anger and sorrow in his chest. However, she softly murmured, "Rest assured, my dear Ove, that everything will be satisfactory." The source of this information is Backman's work from 2013, specifically page 121.

Ove has recently become convinced, however, fortune is not favoring him. Following the demise of his father and mother, Ove has now experienced the loss of his cherished wife, Sonja.

She delicately inserted her index finger into his palm. She shut her eyes and passed away. Backman (2013:122) states that the burial took place on Sunday. He commenced his duties on Monday. However, if someone had inquired, he would have asserted that he had never experienced existence before to encountering her. Subsequently.

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