

LONELINESS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN FREDRIK BACKMAN'S

A MAN CALLED OVE

THESIS

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM

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LONELINESS OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN FREDRIK BACKMAN'S

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MALANG

2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state the thesis entitled “**Loneliness Of The Main Character In Fredrik Backman’s *A Man Called Ove***” is my original work. I do not include any previously written or published by another person, except those cited as reference and written in the bibliography. Hereby. If there is any objection or claim. I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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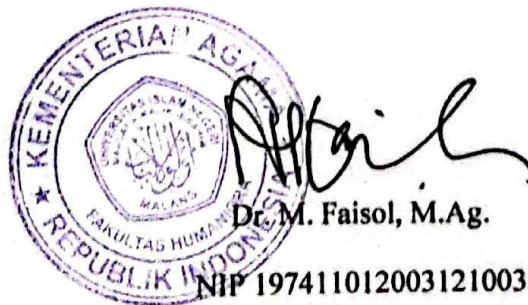


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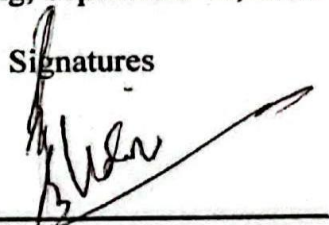
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MOTTO

***"Yesterday is Over, Tomorrow is Yet to Come, But Today's Unknown. So, Let's
Live Today."***

(Yoo Mi Ji, Unwritten Seoul)

DEDICATION

It's an honor to dedicate this thesis to:

I dedicate this thesis to my family, who have been a source of support, trust, and forbearance throughout my academic career, with deep gratitude. Every drop of perspiration and smile from both parents is a source of encouragement that motivates me to pursue my aspirations and finish this research. Furthermore, I, who have kept fighting, have persisted and never given up throughout the process of writing this thesis.

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The Researcher



Mistahul Rahmi

ABSTRACT

Rahmi, Mistahul (2025). Loneliness of the main character in Fredrik Backman's *A Man Called Ove*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Supervisor Dr. Hj. Istiadah, MA.

Keywords: Loneliness, Ove, Psychology of Literature, A Man Called Ove

This study aims to analyze the loneliness experienced by the main character, Ove, in Fredrik Backman's novel *A Man Called Ove*. The focus of this study is directed at three research questions, namely the factors that cause Ove to experience loneliness, the impact it has, and the ways Ove overcomes it throughout the story. This study employs the theory of loneliness proposed by Daniel Perlman and Letitia Anne Peplau (1981) in conjunction with a psychology of literature approach. Data was collected through reading, marking, noting, and categorizing. The results of the study show that Ove's loneliness was triggered by several factors, including the loss of his loved ones (his father, mother, and wife Sonja), changes in social status after retirement, limitations in the quality and quantity of social relationships, an introverted personality, and situational changes that made him feel excluded from his environment. The impact of loneliness extends to various aspects of his life: emotionally, Ove experiences sadness, depression, and feelings of uselessness; cognitively, he is filled with negative thoughts and loses motivation; behaviorally, he withdraws, becomes easily angered, and even attempts suicide; socially, he feels unwanted and distances himself from his neighbors; and physically, he experiences fatigue and declining health. However, Ove gradually managed to overcome his loneliness. He adjusted his social expectations, rebuilt interactions with his neighbors, and found self-esteem and meaning in life through recognition from the people around him and formal institutions. The presence of Parvaneh and her family was an important factor in this process. The overall picture from this study reveals that loneliness is a multifaceted experience, but social support plays a pivotal role in alleviating it and restoring a person's sense of purpose in life.

ABSTRAK

Rahmi, Mistahul. (2025). *Kesepian Tokoh Utama dalam Novel A Man Called Ove Karya Fredrik Backman*. Skripsi Sarjana. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. Dosen Pembimbing: Dr. Hj. Istiadah, M.A.

Kata Kunci: Kesepian, Ove, Psikologi Sastra, A Man Called Ove

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesepian yang dialami oleh tokoh utama, Ove, dalam novel *A Man Called Ove* karya Fredrik Backman. Fokus penelitian diarahkan pada tiga rumusan masalah, yaitu faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan Ove mengalami kesepian, dampak yang ditimbulkannya, serta cara yang ditempuh Ove untuk mengatasinya sepanjang cerita. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori kesepian yang dikemukakan oleh Daniel Perlman dan Letitia Anne Peplau (1981) dengan pendekatan psikologi sastra. Data dikumpulkan melalui membaca, menandai, mencatat, dan dikategorikan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesepian Ove dipicu oleh beberapa faktor, antara lain kehilangan orang-orang terdekat (ayah, ibu, dan istrinya Sonja), perubahan status sosial setelah pensiun, keterbatasan dalam kualitas dan kuantitas hubungan sosial, sifat pribadi yang introvert, serta perubahan situasional yang membuatnya merasa tersisih dari lingkungannya. Dampak kesepian tersebut meluas ke berbagai aspek kehidupannya: secara emosional Ove mengalami kesedihan, depresi, dan rasa tidak berguna; secara kognitif ia dipenuhi pikiran negatif dan kehilangan motivasi; secara perilaku ia menarik diri, mudah marah, bahkan melakukan percobaan bunuh diri; secara sosial ia merasa tidak dibutuhkan dan menjauh dari tetangganya; serta secara fisik ia mengalami kelelahan dan kesehatan yang menurun. Meski demikian, Ove secara bertahap mampu mengatasi kesepian. Ia menyesuaikan ekspektasi sosialnya, membangun kembali interaksi dengan tetangga, serta menemukan harga diri dan makna hidup melalui pengakuan dari orang-orang di sekitarnya maupun lembaga formal. Kehadiran Parvaneh dan keluarganya menjadi faktor penting dalam proses ini. Gambaran keseluruhan dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kesepian merupakan pengalaman multidimensional, namun dukungan sosial memiliki peran sentral dalam meredakannya dan mengembalikan tujuan hidup seseorang.

المخلص

رحمي، مستاهول (٢٠٢٥). الوحدة في شخصية أوفه الرئيسية في رواية "رجل يدعى أوفه" لفريدريك باكمان. بحث تخرج لنيل درجة البكالوريوس. قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة

مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرفة: د. حجة استياده، الماجستير

*تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل شعور الوحدة الذي يعيشه البطل الرئيسي، أوفه، في رواية "رجل يدعى أوفه" للكاتب فريدريك باكمان، من خلال التركيز على العوامل التي أدت إلى شعوره بالوحدة، وآثارها على حياته وكيف تمكن من التغلب عليها خلال أحداث الرواية، اعتماداً على نظرية الوحدة لدانيال بيرلمان وليتيتيا آن بيبلو (1981) ضمن منهج علم النفس الأدبي، وُجمعت البيانات من القراءة والتأشير وتدوين الملاحظات والتصنيف. أظهرت النتائج أن شعور أوفه بالوحدة ناتج عن فقدان أحبائه مثل والديه وزوجته سونيا، وتغير مكانته الاجتماعية بعد التقاعد، وضعف نوعية وكمية العلاقات الاجتماعية، وطبيعته الانطوائية، إضافة إلى التغيرات الموقفية التي جعلته يشعر بالتهميش. وقد ظهرت آثار الوحدة في عدة جوانب، منها العاطفية حيث عانى من الحزن والاكتئاب والشعور بعدم الجدوى، والمعرفية التي سيطرت عليها الأفكار السلبية وفقدان الدافع، والسلوكية حيث انعزل وأصبح سريع الغضب وحاول الانتحار، والاجتماعية حيث ابتعد عن جيرانه وشعر بأنه غير مرغوب فيه، وحتى الجسدية مع تعرضه للإرهاق وتدهور صحته. ومع ذلك، تمكن أوفه تدريجياً من التغلب على وحدته من خلال تعديل توقعاته الاجتماعية، وإعادة بناء تفاعلاته مع جيرانه، واستعادة كرامته ومعنى حياته عبر التقدير الذي ناله من الآخرين والمؤسسات، وكان دعم بارفانه وأسرته عاملاً أساسياً في هذه العملية، مما يوضح أن الوحدة تجربة متعددة الأبعاد لكن الدعم الاجتماعي يلعب دوراً محورياً في التخفيف منها وإعادة الهدف إلى حياة الإنسان.

TABLE OF CONTENT

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP	ii
APPROVAL SHEET	iii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iv
MOTTO	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
ABSTRAK.....	x
الملخص.....	xi
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
A. Background of Study	1
B. Problem of the Study.....	8
C. The Significance of the Study	9
D. Scope and Limitation	9
E. The Definition of Key Terms.....	10
CHAPTER II.....	11
REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE	11
A. Psychology of Literature	11

B. Theory of Loneliness.....	13
C. Factors Causing Loneliness.....	14
D. Impacts of Loneliness	18
E. How to Overcome Loneliness.....	20
CHAPTER III	25
RESEARCH METHOD.....	25
A. Research Design.....	25
B. Data Sources.....	25
C. Data Collection.....	26
D. Data Analysis	26
CHAPTER IV	27
FINDING AND DISCUSSION	27
A. Factors that Lead to Ove's Loneliness.....	27
B. The Impact of Loneliness	41
C. The Ways Ove Overcomes Loneliness.....	50
CHAPTER V.....	62
CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	62
A. Conclusion	62
B. Suggestion.....	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY	65

CURRICULUM VITAE	67
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the research's background, the research's problem, the significance of the research, the scope and limitations and the definition of key terms.

A. Background of Study

Loneliness is now a serious global issue. The World Health Organization (WHO) 2025 report states that loneliness affects 1 in 6 people worldwide. Over 871,000 deaths annually, or approximately 100 deaths per hour, are associated with loneliness. Viewed as a public health threat similar to smoking and obesity, loneliness increases the risk of heart disease, stroke, depression, and cognitive decline. Despite digital advances in communication, many, especially those who stress that relationship quality matters more than quantity. Thus, loneliness is not only an individual issue but also a complex social and psychological problem.

Psychologists define and classify loneliness to better understand its causes and consequences. According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness is not simply social isolation, but rather dissatisfaction with social relationships; one can feel lonely even when surrounded by people if close or intimate bonds are lacking. Loneliness is a common feeling that many people experience at some point in their lives. It can be negative (anxiety, loneliness) or positive (existential loneliness), and may be temporary or chronic, emotional or social. Some individuals passively

accept their loneliness without attempting change (Moustakas, 1961; Weiss, 1973, as cited in Perlman & Peplau, 1981, p. 33).

Loneliness is not simply about physical solitude but rather a subjective feeling of social isolation, which can occur even when many surround one. Cacioppo and Patrick, (2008) emphasize that the quality of social relationships influences loneliness more than the number of interactions one has. Feelings of loneliness, if prolonged, can have a negative impact on mental and physical health, such as chronic stress, depression, and immune system disorders. So, loneliness can decrease a person's life expectancy due to increased social and community withdrawal.

In literary works, writers often use the theme of loneliness to portray alienation, personal transformation, the importance of social relationships, and resistance to societal change. According to Klarer (2004), literary works are not only written expressions but also contain imaginative, aesthetic, and reflective elements of the reality of life. Therefore, literature often raises the theme of loneliness as a reflection on the complexity of human relationships and experiences in society. The phenomenon of loneliness, which frequently occurs in real life, encourages authors to explore it in literature as a way to highlight the intricacies of human relationships and emotional struggles.

One literary work that raises the theme of loneliness is the novel *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman. The novel was first published in Swedish under *En man som heter Ove* in 2012 and translated into English in 2013. Just 18 months after its publication, the novel made The New York Times Best Sellers list and sold

over 3 million copies worldwide. *A Man Called Ove* addresses many important themes, including loneliness. The novel tells the story of Ove, a 59-year-old man known as cold, rude, rigid, and often considered annoying by those around him. After losing his wife, Sonja, Ove feels that his life no longer has a purpose. However, his life slowly changes when a new family moves into his neighbourhood. Unexpected relationships with his neighbours, especially Parvaneh, gradually change how he views the world. The novel explores themes such as loss, love, family, and human relationships, which makes it a profound and meaningful work.

The novel *A Man Called Ove* provides an in-depth look at how loneliness is not simply a result of social isolation but a complex and profound emotional experience. Through the main character, Ove, the novel explores how the loss of a loved one, changes in his social environment, and alienation from his surroundings due to differences in mindset can also contribute to feelings of loneliness that he experiences. Using the theory of loneliness Perlman and Peplau, (1981), this research will explore the depiction of loneliness in the novel to better understand the types of loneliness, the underlying causes, the impacts that can be caused and how to overcome them.

In analyzing the novel *A Man Called Ove*, this theory is relevant to how Ove experiences loneliness after losing his wife. He feels that the world around him has changed drastically. His loneliness is not only triggered by loss but also by the way he interacts with the ever-changing world, where he feels he no longer has a clear place or purpose. However, through interactions with his neighbours, Ove slowly

begins to open up and rediscover meaning in social relationships. This initially unexpected relationship helps Ove confront his loneliness and realize that connecting with others can give him new hope and meaning in his life. Therefore, this research uses the theory of loneliness from Perlman and Peplau, (1981) to explore how Ove's loneliness is depicted in the novel, the factors that contribute to his loneliness, and how he tries to overcome these feelings throughout the story.

Several previous studies have examined the novel *A Man Called Ove* with different research focuses. The first was by Hormati, Moge, and Olii (2024) in their journal, *Traumatic Experiences In Fredrik Backman's A Man Called Ove*. Researchers analyzed the impact of trauma on Ove's mental, emotional, and behavioural conditions experienced by Ove due to the loss of loved ones using the theory of psychological criticism by Sigmund Freud. The results show that there are three trauma reactions, namely difficulty concentrating (mental), anger towards neighbours (emotional), and avoiding cafes commonly visited with his wife (behaviour). The research also revealed that accidents and death were the main causes of Ove's trauma.

The second is by Dzulkifli (2024) in his journal, *The Causes of Ove's Attempt of Suicide A Man Called Ove*. This research analyzes the causes of Ove's suicide attempt based on the triggering factors of depression, failure, and self-punishment using Nelson's meaning of life theory. The results showed that psychological suffering, unresolved grief, and suicidal fantasies and desires were the main factors that drove Ove to try to end his life.

The third, by Sharma (2024) in the journal *Fredrik Backman's A Man Called Ove: Role of Community in Piecing Ove Together*. The researcher analyzed the role of community in helping individuals deal with loss and life difficulties in the novel *A Man Called Ove*. Using a social psychology approach, this research draws on the theories of Sense of Community (Chavis & Lee), social support in mental health (Cobb, House, Wooll, Dixon), and Erik Erikson's stages of psychosocial development. The results showed that community support was important in Ove's recovery process. His life slowly changed after the arrival of Parvaneh and her family, who, with their care and warmth, built close relationships and provided social support, helping Ove out of his grief.

Next is previous research that discusses loneliness, namely the first Rotger (2024) in the journal *Narrating Loneliness: Isolation, Disaffection, and the Contemporary Novel*. Researchers used Daniel Perlman and Laetitia Anne Peplau's Cognitive Discrepancy theory (1981) in the Spanish novel *Los Asquerosos* (2018) by Santiago Lorenzo. The research's results reveal that loneliness is not always negative, but loneliness can be an ambiguous experience because it can be painful and provide peace. Loneliness is not just an individual problem but a symptom of a more significant social crisis, such as economic inequality and social divisions. Furthermore, literature as a tool of social analysis helps understand various aspects of loneliness that are not always reached by health research or public policy.

The second is from Prabhakar (2022) in his journal *Examining the Depiction of Loneliness in Virginia Woolf's 'Mrs Dalloway'*. Stream of consciousness theory by Virginia Woolf in analyzing the loneliness and isolation of the characters of

Clarissa Dalloway and Septimus Warren Smith in the novel *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) by Virginia Woolf. The findings are that Clarissa Dalloway feels lonely despite being in society because of her inability to communicate deeply. Furthermore, Septimus Warren Smith, a World War I veteran who experiences PTSD, feels so isolated that he chooses suicide. Clarissa then reflects on his death as the last act of communication of someone who is no longer able to reach out to the world around him. Finally, the character's mind is disrupted, showing loneliness can arise even during social interaction.

The third is from Sulistyowati and Jati (2023) in the journal *Loneliness as Depicted in James Arthur's "Empty Space"*, researchers used Perlman & Peplau's (1981) loneliness theory in analyzing the lyrics of the song *Empty Space* by James Arthur. The findings show that emotional loneliness arises due to the loss of a loved one. At the same time, social loneliness occurs due to difficulty adapting after a breakup. Moreover, the impact of loneliness experienced leads the singer to habits such as drinking alcohol and overthinking.

The fourth is from Husien (2021) in the journal *Margaret's Emotional And Social Loneliness In Tennessee William's "A Cat On The Hot Tin Roof"*. Researchers used Peplau & Perlman's (1982) Loneliness Theory to analyze the emotional and social loneliness experienced by Margaret in the drama *A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) by Tennessee Williams. The findings show that Margaret gets a lack of attention and love from her husband, Brick, and she experiences isolation from her husband's family because she does not have children. The impact of loneliness makes Margaret rude and sarcastic towards others. Besides that, she

talked excessively to overcome her loneliness and tried to attract Brick's attention and maintain her position in the family.

The fifth is from Kriswandi and Hartanto (2022) in their journal, *The Portrayal Of Merrick Rocha's Loneliness In "Taken" By Kellie Maine: Psychological Approach*. The researcher analyzed the novel *Taken* by Kellie Maine using Rubenstein and Shaver's Loneliness Theory (1982), which shows that Merrick Rocha experiences loneliness due to separation, alienation, solitude, and dislocation. In addition, Merrick Rocha can overcome this loneliness by focusing on his career, spending money to build connections, and establishing social relationships with other characters.

In addition, there are previous studies that examine loneliness in their thesis. The first is Mentari (2022), with her thesis entitled *Loneliness In The Secret Garden By Frances Hodgson Burnett*. Researchers use the New Criticism theory and loneliness theory from Perlman & Peplau (1982) in analyzing the two main characters, Mary Lenox and Colin Craven, in the novel *The Secret Garden* (1911) by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The results showed that the loneliness experienced by Mary Lenox and Colin Craven was caused by parental neglect, environmental changes from India to England, and a lack of social skills. Loneliness can be overcome through friendship, physical activity, and connectedness with nature.

The last is from Darmawangsa (2024), in his thesis entitled *The Feeling Of Loneliness Of Nora Seed As Portrayed In Matt Haig's The Midnight Library*. The researcher used Daniel Perlman and Letitia Anne Peplau's Loneliness Theory (1982) to analyze the emotional journey of the main character, Nora Seed, in Matt

Haig's *The Midnight Library* (2020). The results show that Nora feels deprived of meaningful relationships, isolated, and without social support. Her loneliness is triggered by the loss of hope, regret, and a lack of stable relationships. As a result, she experienced depression, desires to end her life, and difficulty making decisions. However, Nora overcame her loneliness by exploring life's possibilities, learning the value of social relationships and the importance of self-acceptance, and eventually rediscovering the meaning of life with a more positive perspective.

Some previous studies on *A Man Called Ove* addressed trauma (Hormati, Moge, & Olii, 2024), suicide attempts (Dzulkifli, 2024), and the role of community support (Sharma, 2024). However, these studies have not specifically examined loneliness as a major issue in the novel. In contrast, Perlman and Peplau's (1981) theory of loneliness has been used in analyses of other literary works, such as *Los Asquerosos* (Rotger, 2024), *Mrs. Dalloway* (Prabhakar, 2022), and *The Secret Garden* (Mentari, 2022). Literature has widely studied the theme of loneliness, but novel *A Man Called Ove* has not yet explored it using this theory. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analyzing the contributing factors and impacts of loneliness experienced by Ove, as well as how he copes with it, using Perlman and Peplau's theory.

B. Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, a research question can be drawn as follows:

1. What are the factors contribute to Ove's loneliness in the novel *A Man Called Ove*?

2. What are the impacts of Ove's loneliness in the novel *A Man Called Ove*?
3. How does Ove overcome his loneliness throughout the story?

C. The Significance of the Study

This research aims to help enrich and deepen the understanding of how loneliness is portrayed in literature by highlighting the link between the psychological depth and emotional responses of the main character. It focuses on Ove's loneliness, the factors that cause it, and his path toward healing and reconnection. Thus, this research aims to raise awareness of the impact of loneliness in real life. Understanding loneliness through literature can encourage readers to recognise and deal with their feelings of isolation, seek more meaningful social relationships, and realise the importance of professional help if needed.

D. Scope and Limitation

This research uses a psychology of literature to explore how loneliness is portrayed, the factors that cause it, and how to overcome the loneliness experienced by the main character in the story. The limitation of this research is that it only focuses on what loneliness Ove experiences without deeply analyzing the loneliness experienced by other supporting characters.

E. The Definition of Key Terms

1. Loneliness

Loneliness is a feeling that arises when someone wants closer or more meaningful social relationships, but in reality, they do not have these relationships or feel less fulfilled (Perlman and Peplau, 1981).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The researcher discusses the psychology of literature, the theory of loneliness, symptoms, types and impacts of loneliness, factors causing loneliness, and also how to overcome loneliness.

A. Psychology of Literature

Psychology of literature is an approach in literary studies that uses psychological theories to understand the psychological aspects of literary works, both in terms of characters, authors, and readers. Tyson, (2006) explains that this approach provides deeper insights into how characters' psychological experiences affect their behavior and how the emotional dynamics they experience shape the storyline and themes in a work. Using this approach, the analysis of characters in literature becomes more comprehensive because it highlights their outward actions and includes unconscious motives, inner conflicts, and complex personality development.

Psychological conditions such as trauma, loneliness, emotional distress, and inner turmoil are often the primary basis for the portrayal of literary characters. A psychology of literature approach allows readers or researchers to uncover these dynamics and understand how psychological elements contribute to narrative development and characterization. This shows that characters in literature are not

just a product of the author's imagination but also a reflection of complex human psychological realities.

Wellek and Warren, (1949) suggest that psychology can be applied in analyzing literary works through three main aspects: the psychology of the author, the psychology of the characters in the story, and the psychology of the reader. First, the research of authorial psychology seeks to understand how the author's personal experiences, emotional background, and mental state influence his or her creative process. Second, character psychology is used to examine the character's personality, motivation, and emotional changes in depth, especially in terms of how the character develops in the face of conflict or life pressure. Third, reader psychology examines how the emotional interaction between the reader and the text occurs, with readers often reflecting on their personal experiences through emotional attachment to characters or stories.

In this context, psychology of literature also explains that readers are not passive but active in giving meaning to the text based on their psychological responses. This process is known as reader-response criticism which readers' interpretations are strongly influenced by their personality structures (Holland, 1989). This means that each individual brings specific emotional backgrounds, life experiences, and psychological conditions that shape how they understand, respond to, and even reconstruct meaning in literary works. Thus, there is no single absolute meaning in a text. However, it is dynamic and subjective, depending on who is reading it and how their psychological processes occur when interacting with the text.

Through the psychology of literature approach, literary works are seen as a reflection of the human psyche. Story characters can be analyzed as individuals with psychological backgrounds, personal motivations, and emotional responses to specific events. Thus, psychology of literature plays an important role in bridging the worlds of literature and psychology by placing works of fiction as a reflection of humans' complex and meaningful inner reality.

B. Theory of Loneliness

Loneliness is a feeling of isolation that makes someone feel alone, even though there are other people around them. According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness occurs when someone feels they do not have enough or quality social relationships. This feeling can arise because someone does not have close or meaningful relationships with others. In other words, loneliness is more related to how someone feels alone and withdraws from their relationships with the people around them.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness is a condition that arises due to a lack of sufficient and quality social relationships. This is subjective because it is not always related to physical isolation and causes unpleasant and sad feelings for someone who experiences it. In many cases, a person can feel lonely even though other people surround them if they feel that their relationships do not provide emotional closeness or sufficient social support. This shows that a lack of objective social interaction does not always cause loneliness but is more related to how individuals interpret and assess the quality of their relationships with others.

In addition, loneliness can also affect mental health by increasing the risk of depression and anxiety (Mijušković, (2012)). Furthermore, prolonged loneliness can trigger profound emotional disturbances, cause feelings of hopelessness, and increase the risk of suicide. Individuals who feel lonely tend to experience more severe depression, have a negative outlook on the future, and lack effective coping mechanisms, making it increasingly difficult for them to escape the cycle of loneliness they experience.

C. Factors Causing Loneliness

Perlman and Peplau (1981), in the book *Toward a Social Psychology of Loneliness*, divide the factors causing loneliness into five categories. These factors include the quantity and quality of social relationships, individual characteristics such as personality and physical attributes, and broader situational and cultural characteristics.

1. Changes in Achieved Social Relations

Loneliness often arises as a result of changes in previously established social relationships, which then lead to a decrease in a person's level of interaction with their environment. These changes can occur in a specific relationship or affect the entire social network. Perlman and Peplau (1981), explain that the gap between desired social relationships and actual relationships can trigger feelings of loneliness. Changes in achieved social relations, such as relationship termination, physical separation, and status changes, can cause this gap.

These changes can include the end of important emotional relationships, such as divorce, breakups, or the death of a loved one. Additionally, physical separation due to moving, job changes, or other geographical barriers can also limit previously existing social closeness. Changes in social status, such as retirement, promotion, or changes in marital status, can make someone feel disconnected from their community, especially if they struggle to adapt to a new social environment. These three factors play a significant role in creating a sense of alienation, which is the primary trigger for loneliness..

2. Changes in Desired Social Relations

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), when someone desires more social relationships or different ones than they currently have, they may feel lonely. This is a mismatch between reality and expectations that can lead to feelings of alienation, even in social settings. Three main factors can cause this: developmental changes, situational changes, and changes in expectations.

The first factor is developmental changes, which refer to age-related shifts in a person's ability and willingness to form social relationships, potentially leading to feelings of loneliness. The second is situational changes. A person's desire for social interaction is not constant. Occasionally, a person needs more emotional support, especially in stressful situations or significant changes in their life. The third is changes in expectations, when the level of social relationships a person wants is often influenced by expectations about what might happen in a social situation but is not met.

3. The Quantity and Quality of Social Contacts

The quantity of social contact can be observed by the frequency of a person's interactions with others. Individuals who feel lonely generally have fewer social interactions than those who do not. However, a high number of interactions does not always guarantee the fulfillment of emotional needs, because a person may have many acquaintances, but if the relationships are not close or meaningful, the interactions do not provide sufficient emotional satisfaction.

As Perlman and Peplau (1981) explain, individuals who feel lonely tend to have fewer social relationships, and they often report dissatisfaction with the quality of these relationships. Thus, the quality of social relationships also plays a very important role in the emergence of loneliness. Even when one engages in numerous social interactions, relationships that fail to provide emotional support can exacerbate loneliness. So, to meet a person's emotional needs, it's vital to consider the relationship's depth and significance, not just the number of interactions.

4. Personal Predispositions

Loneliness not only depends on how often a person interacts with others but is also influenced by various personal factors that affect how a person establishes and maintains social relationships. Perlman and Peplau (1981) explain that certain personality characteristics, such as shyness or low self-esteem, can predispose a person to loneliness because they limit their ability to establish or maintain satisfying relationships. In addition, limited social skills, differences or similarities

in personal traits with others, demographic factors such as age and marital status, and childhood experiences that shaped their attachment patterns are among the factors that contribute to some people having difficulty establishing significant relationships. These personal factors contribute to a person's vulnerability to experiencing loneliness in a broad social environment.

5. Cultural and Situational Factors Contributing to Loneliness

Personal factors, cultural values, and certain social conditions influence loneliness. Cultural values play a significant role in shaping how individuals form social relationships. In societies that emphasize competition and individualism, people tend to focus more on personal achievement than on building close social relationships. In addition, *social norms* also influence loneliness, where individuals who do not conform to cultural expectations, such as not having a partner or a wide social circle, can feel isolated and lonely.

Additionally, situational limitations also influence the degree of loneliness. Individuals who live or work in remote areas often have fewer opportunities for social interaction, which can make them more vulnerable to loneliness. Similarly, social environmental factors such as enclosed living spaces or a highly competitive work atmosphere can inhibit the formation of meaningful interactions. As Perlman and Peplau (1981) assert, social and cultural conditions also play a role in loneliness. Values that emphasize individualism or competition may hinder close relationships, while situational constraints, such as geographical isolation, may limit opportunities for social interaction. Thus, cultural and environmental

influences must be taken into consideration in understanding loneliness, in addition to the personal factors that individuals possess.

D. Impacts of Loneliness

Loneliness has a broad impact that covers emotional, cognitive, behavioral, social, and physical and medical aspects. This indicates that loneliness not only affects psychological well-being but also impacts a person's social behavior and physical health. These impacts can be explained as follows:

1. Emotional and Psychological Impact

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness is essentially an unpleasant emotional experience. Lonely individuals tend to experience feelings of sadness, depression, anxiety, lack of happiness, and dissatisfaction with their lives. This condition can develop into depression if allowed to last long. Hawkley and Cacioppo (2010), add that prolonged loneliness can trigger a bodily stress response that reduces an individual's ability to control emotions, thus increasing the risk of psychological disorders such as anxiety and depression.

2. Cognitive and Motivational Impact

Loneliness also affects a person's thought process and their level of motivation. Perlman and Peplau (1981), explain that lonely individuals often exhibit a negative bias in interpreting social cues, become more wary of rejection, and tend to misjudge interpersonal situations. This is reinforced by Heinrich and

Gullone (2006), who found that individuals who feel lonely often misinterpret social cues and experience fear of rejection. In terms of motivation, loneliness can have a paradoxical effect: on the one hand, it encourages the desire to seek relationships, but on the other hand, it weakens motivation to engage in other activities, leading to fatigue, loss of energy, and difficulty concentrating.

3. Behavioral Impact

In terms of behavior, loneliness often leads to social withdrawal. Perlman and Peplau (1981), note that lonely individuals tend to reduce initiative in seeking interaction or even become defensive and aggressive. Additionally, they often struggle to express their feelings, lack skills in interpersonal communication, and exhibit low levels of assertiveness. This pattern ultimately reinforces the vicious cycle of social isolation.

4. Social Impact

Loneliness also impacts social engagement. According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), social isolation can worsen an individual's social functioning. Popular authors have even linked it to serious social problems, such as alcohol abuse or suicide. Joiner (2005), through the Interpersonal Theory of Suicide, states that the two main factors that drive individuals towards suicide are the feeling of being a burden to others (perceived burden) and the inability to build meaningful social bonds (thwarted belongingness). Both of these conditions are closely related to chronic loneliness.

5. Physical and Medical Impact

In addition to affecting psychological health, chronic loneliness also negatively impacts physical health. Cacioppo and Patrick (2008), found that loneliness is associated with increased blood pressure, decreased sleep quality, a weakened immune system, and an increased risk of death. Long-term social isolation affects not only the elderly but also individuals of all ages.

E. How to Overcome Loneliness

Perlman and Peplau (1981) emphasize that strategies for coping with loneliness must match the source of the problem, whether it stems from mismatched expectations, limited social networks, or personal factors. Effective interventions can be done at the individual and group/community level. Here are some approaches that can be used:

1. Adjusting Social Expectations

Loneliness often arises because of a mismatch between the social relationships one expects and the ones one actually has. Perlman and Peplau (1981) assert that the discrepancy between desired and actual social relations is at the core of the loneliness experience. In other words, the core of the loneliness experience lies in the gap between expectations and reality in social relations. This situation causes individuals to feel alienated, even when they are surrounded by others, because their expectations do not match the reality of their social interactions.

To address these conditions, interventions can be directed toward two main approaches: If the problem stems from expectations, then cognitive strategies are used to lower overly high standards, correct misperceptions, and help individuals be more realistic in assessing their social relationships. Adaptation can also be done by diverting energy to activities or hobbies that provide emotional satisfaction independently. Conversely, if loneliness is rooted in a lack of meaningful social relationships, then interventions aim to expand and strengthen social networks, for example, by joining communities, strengthening relationships with family, or rebuilding existing friendships. This alignment between expectations and reality minimizes the social gaps that trigger loneliness.

2. Social Skills Training

For individuals who struggle to build or maintain relationships due to communication difficulties or low self-confidence, social skills training is essential. This program may include assertiveness training, the ability to start and maintain conversations, proficient listening skills, and the development of empathy. Improving these skills helps individuals become more confident and effective in their interactions, thereby increasing their chances of forming meaningful social relationships. As Perlman and Peplau (1981) explain, individuals with poor social skills or shyness may be predisposed to loneliness, as they encounter difficulties in forming or maintaining satisfying relationships.

3. Reducing the Psychological Impact of Social Inequality

Social inequality can exacerbate a person's feelings of loneliness, especially when individuals feel treated differently or under-recognized in social interactions. According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness arises from the difference between social expectations and experienced reality, not just from a lack of interaction. This situation can lead to a sense of isolation and low self-esteem and reinforce negative perceptions of social relationships. To mitigate this impact, individuals need to realistically reassess their social interactions, reduce negative biases, and enhance their social skills to build more meaningful relationships despite differences in status or background.

Additionally, individuals can expand their opportunities for social interaction by participating in community activities, social gatherings, or interest groups that offer support and a sense of belonging. These approaches help strengthen social networks, improve emotional well-being, and demonstrate that loneliness is not just a personal issue but is also influenced by the social context. With these strategies, the psychological impact of social inequality can be mitigated, enabling individuals to form more positive relationships and experience a sense of social connection.

4. Increasing Social Interaction

In addition to interventions at the individual level, it is important to provide opportunities for meaningful interactions at the community level. Opportunities for new connections can be made by strengthening existing relationships with family and friends, joining community or interest groups, volunteering, or attending religious gatherings. An environment that provides this kind of social support can reduce isolation, expand social circles, and foster a sense of belonging in the community. Perlman and Peplau (1981) emphasize that situational and cultural contexts, such as geographic isolation or social norms, can significantly influence the occurrence of loneliness.

5. Combination or Multifaceted Approach

Since the causes of loneliness often involve a combination of individual, social, and situational factors, the most effective interventions are typically multifaceted approaches. For example, a person can strengthen their social skills, change maladaptive thought patterns, and expand opportunities for social interaction. Such an integrated approach not only helps individuals expand their social networks but also improves their outlook and the skills needed to maintain them.

6. Prevention and Further Research

In addition to treatment strategies, Perlman and Peplau (1981) emphasize the importance of prevention efforts. This can be achieved through social policies

that promote community cohesion, for example, by providing public interaction facilities or social programs for at-risk groups, such as the elderly and newcomers. They also encourage further research to test the effectiveness of various forms of intervention. Multidimensional measurement of loneliness is essential so that interventions can be tailored to the specific needs of individuals.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter explains the research design, data sources, data collection, and data analysis applied in this research.

A. Research Design

This research uses the theory of loneliness proposed by Daniel Perlman and Letitia Anne Peplau (1981), which defines loneliness as a mismatch between desired and actual social relationships. Using a literary psychology approach, this study examines Ove's emotional experience in the novel *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman. The primary purpose of this study is to examine the impact of loneliness on Ove's daily life, the factors that contribute to it, and how Ove copes with it. Through Perlman and Peplau's theoretical framework, this study examines how Ove's loneliness is portrayed in the narrative and how social interaction contributes to alleviating it.

B. Data Sources

The data source of this research is taken from the novel *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman, published in Swedish under the title *En man som heter Ove* in 2012 and published in English in 2013. The data in this research are in the form of sentences, paragraphs, and dialogues between characters in the novel. This research focuses on analyzing the factors that contribute to Ove's loneliness, its impacts, and how he overcomes it, in line with the research objectives.

C. Data Collection

The data collected in this research was gathered through several steps. First, read carefully to understand the content, especially those related to the research topic. Second, highlight and underline the important parts related to the topic of loneliness. Thereafter, recording the results of the data found, then categorizing the data according to the analysis criteria, and including them in the research.

D. Data Analysis

This research uses a psychology of literature to analyze data obtained from Fredrik Backman's novel *A Man Called Ove*. The analysis was conducted concerning Daniel Perlman and Letitia Anne Peplau's theory of loneliness. The data analysis steps were carried out in stages. First, the researcher identified the factors causing Ove's loneliness by grouping the data into five categories: changes in existing social relationships, changes in expected social relationships, the quantity and quality of social contact, personal factors, and situational factors.

Second, Second, the researcher analyzed how Ove's loneliness is depicted in the novel, focusing on its emotional, social, existential, and chronic aspects, as well as the psychological and social effects on his life. Third, the researcher analyzed how Ove coped with the loneliness he experienced throughout the story, which was grouped into three main strategies: adjusting social expectations, increasing social interaction, and reducing the psychological impact of social inequality. Finally, all analysis results were summarized to answer the research questions established in this research.

CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of data analysis aimed at answering the research questions on the factors that contribute to loneliness, its impacts, and how the main character overcomes it. The research was conducted by analyzing the novel *A Man Called Ove* by Fredrik Backman (2012), using the theory of loneliness by Daniel Perlman and Laetitia Anne Peplau (1981) as the primary reference.

A. Factors that Lead to Ove's Loneliness

Ove's loneliness did not arise suddenly or be caused by a single event. Instead, it emerged gradually and was the result of various painful events and losses that he experienced throughout his life, from childhood to adulthood. Ove has experienced many significant losses, including the loss of loved ones and social roles that made his life feel alive.

Ove experienced feelings of loneliness not only because he was physically alone, but also because he no longer felt socially and emotionally connected to his surroundings. He lost his family from childhood, his only life partner, his job, and his place in a rapidly evolving society. In addition, Ove's sense of isolation is reinforced by his introverted personality and his tendency to avoid others. Factors include changes in achieved relationships, desired relationships, quantity and quality of social contact, personal factors, and situational factors.

1. Changes in Achieved Social Relations

This factor concerns the loss of individuals who played significant roles in Ove's life. From childhood, Ove endured substantial losses. His relationship with his parents, especially his father, was emotionally significant, even if not always verbally expressed. The abrupt severance of these bonds created a void that proved challenging to fill.

Ove's loss extended beyond physical absence to include the disappearance of security, closeness, and togetherness that once provided comfort. His profound emotional loneliness began with his mother's death and intensified after his father's departure, leaving him orphaned at a young age. This early experience became the foundation for the persistent loneliness that marked his adulthood and old age.

The loss of a mother during childhood often results in profound emotional trauma. For children, a mother typically represents both nurturing and the central source of emotional warmth within the family. Ove experienced this significant loss at a very young age.

Datum 1:

"...Ove remembers how as a child he could never understand how this could be something bad. Then Mum died. And Dad grew even quieter. As if she took away with her the few words he'd possessed. So Ove and his father never talked excessively, but they liked each other's company. They sat in silence on either side of the kitchen table, and had ways of keeping busy..." (P.38)

This quote illustrates that Ove lost his mother during childhood, before he could fully comprehend the concept of grief. For a child, the loss of a mother signifies not only the absence of a caregiver but also the loss of the family's emotional core. Her death fundamentally altered the household atmosphere.

Following his mother's death, Ove's father became increasingly silent and withdrawn, seemingly losing his capacity for communication. The phrase 'as if she took away with her the few words he had possessed' underscores the mother's role as the family's primary communicator. This pervasive silence gradually shaped Ove into a reserved individual who internalized his emotions and matured in an emotionally constrained environment.

After his mother's death, Ove and his father maintained their relationship through silent routines rather than open communication. Shared meals, collaborative work, and daily life unfolded in silence, creating an emotionally charged yet inexpressive environment. This context offered Ove minimal opportunities to articulate his emotions, particularly sadness.

Perlman and Peplau (1981) explain that loneliness arises when there is a discrepancy between expected social relationships and actual relationships. In this context, Ove, as a child, certainly expected emotional warmth, communication, and support from both parents. However, after his mother died, his father became even more withdrawn, so Ove's emotional needs were not met.

Therefore, the early loss of his mother resulted in emotional loneliness for Ove, defined by the absence of anticipated emotional closeness. He sought warmth from his family but encountered only silence. This experience laid the groundwork for the enduring loneliness that would shape his later life.

Ove's loneliness intensified with the loss of his father during adolescence, a period when emotional support remains crucial. He confronted this trauma at the age of sixteen, compounding his earlier experiences of loss.

Datum 2:

“He had only just turned sixteen when his father died. A hurtling carriage on the track. Ove was left with not much more than a Saab, a ramshackle house a few miles out of town, and a dented old wristwatch. He was never able to properly explain what happened to him that day. But he stopped being happy. He wasn’t happy for several years after that.” (P.43)

This quote marks a pivotal moment in Ove's life. The loss of his father represented not only the absence of a parental figure but also the disappearance of the remaining security and togetherness following his mother's death. The phrase 'he stopped being happy' highlights the depth of his emotional trauma. The physical inheritance he received, an old car, a dilapidated house, and a broken watch, served as symbols of his isolation rather than replacements for familial affection.

Perlman & Peplau (1981) emphasize that the loss of meaningful relationships can create a huge gap between expectations and social reality. In Ove's case, his father's death meant the loss of his only remaining emotional bond. From that moment on, Ove's need for emotional attachment was no longer fulfilled, so that loneliness was not just a momentary feeling, but developed into a long-term condition that shaped his life into adulthood.

Consequently, his father's death exacerbated Ove's emotional wounds by removing his final source of support and leaving his social needs unmet. This event transformed his loneliness from a transient feeling into a persistent condition that influenced his adulthood. The complexity of this loss increased as Ove recognized he was orphaned before he could establish a new family.

Loneliness can result not only from loss but also from a lack of opportunities to form stable relationships. Ove experienced this realization, recognizing that he had lacked a solid emotional foundation since youth.

Datum 3:

"It's a strange thing, becoming an orphan at sixteen. To lose your family long before you've had time to create your own to replace it. It's a very specific sort of loneliness." (P.64)

This quote demonstrates Ove's recognition of his loneliness. Becoming an orphan at a young age, before he could establish a new family, resulted in an irreplaceable sense of loss and a persistent emotional void. The lack of stable relationships deprived Ove of a solid emotional foundation, leaving him to enter adulthood without reliable support.

According to Perlman & Peplau (1981), loneliness can arise when individuals lack the opportunity to form new social relationships to replace those that have been lost. Ove lost both his parents before he was able to start his own family, creating a permanent discrepancy between his expectations of a complete family and the reality of living alone.

Ove's loneliness results from both personal experience and theoretical considerations. He lost two central figures in his life and lacked opportunities to replace these relationships, leading to persistent emotional loneliness into adulthood. This loneliness, originating in childhood and adolescence, subsequently influenced Ove's interactions in adulthood, particularly in his relationships beyond the family context.

2. Changes in Desired Social Relations

This factor relates to the loss of social relationships that Ove himself desired and chose. Unlike relationships that form naturally from childhood, these

relationships are born out of desire and deeper emotional involvement. In this case, Ove's relationship with Sonja is the only form of social relationship that he has consciously built with love and commitment.

Following a childhood marked by loss, Ove found happiness and meaning through his relationship with Sonja. Unlike relationships formed by circumstance, this bond was a deliberate choice grounded in love and commitment. Sonja became central to Ove's emotional well-being, providing acceptance, affection, and a sense of purpose. Her loss represents the removal of the foundational support he had worked to establish.

Datum 4:

"...Of all the imaginable things he most misses about her, the thing he really wishes he could do again is hold her hand in his. She had a way of folding her index finger into his palm, hiding it inside. And he always felt that nothing in the world was impossible when she did that. Of all the things he could miss, that's what he misses most." (P.63)

This quote illustrates the depth of Ove's longing for Sonja, highlighting the significance of small, intimate gestures, such as holding hands. Such moments provided Ove with a sense of security, confidence, and resilience. Sonja's absence thus signifies the loss of his primary source of emotional stability and intimacy.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness arises when there is a discrepancy between expected relationships and actual experiences. In this context, Ove expected emotional continuity with Sonja because their relationship was built on choice and deep love. However, Sonja's death severed that hope, creating a huge gap between his expectations of togetherness and the reality of living alone.

The loss of Sonja confirms how Ove's loneliness stems not only from the absence of a life partner but also from the loss of the only relationship he

consciously and lovingly chose. The hand that once gave him a sense of security is now just a memory, deepening the gap between his hopes for emotional closeness and the reality that he must bear the burden of living alone. This is the tangible form of emotional loneliness, as described by Perlman and Peplau (1981), where loneliness arises from the absence of meaningful, intimate relationships.

Beyond the physical loss, Ove experiences profound regret regarding the limited time he shared with Sonja. He perceives their time together as insufficient to fulfill their mutual aspirations, intensifying his sense of loneliness.

Datum 5:

"I just thought I'd have more time, somehow. To do... everything." She doesn't answer." (P.244)

This quote indicates that Ove's grief encompasses both the loss itself and dissatisfaction with the time he shared with Sonja. The statement *'I just thought I'd have more time...'* conveys unfulfilled expectations, while Sonja's silence underscores the irrevocability of the loss. Perlman and Peplau (1981) explain that loneliness can occur when a person's social expectations are not met by reality. In this case, Ove hoped to have more time to share his life with Sonja, but reality had other plans. The gap between his hopes for a shared future and the empty reality deepens his loneliness.

Ove's regret reveals that his loneliness stems not only from losing his partner but also from the inability to fulfill shared future aspirations. The disparity between his dreams and reality intensifies his emotional isolation, as Sonja's loss eliminates both present companionship and future hopes. Following Sonja's death, Ove entered a more profound cycle of loneliness. Unlike his childhood, this experience was

intensified by his prior exposure to love and emotional warmth, rendering the subsequent emptiness more acute.

3. The Quantity and Quality of Social Contacts

This factor relates to the number and closeness of Ove's social relationships in his daily life. It is not only about the number of people he knows, but also about the depth and meaning of those relationships. The quality of social contact has a significant impact on a person's sense of connection to their environment. In Ove's case, he is described as a person who lives with very little social interaction, often preferring solitude.

Following the loss of his loved ones, Ove did not attempt to establish new social connections. He chose solitude and routine, opting to avoid interaction with others. As a result, his life became monotonous and lacked the sense of closeness, value, or fulfillment that meaningful relationships provide.

Datum 6:

"He had no friends. But on the other hand he hardly had any enemies either, apart from Tom, who since his promotion to foreman took every opportunity to make Ove's life as difficult as possible..." (P.66)

This quote demonstrates that Ove exists in a neutral social position, lacking both friends and enemies. The absence of close relationships contributes to a sense of emptiness in his life, as he experiences no daily greetings, conversations, or companionship that foster a sense of being valued.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), the quality of social contact plays an important role in shaping an individual's sense of connectedness. Loneliness

often arises not because of the absence of people around, but because of the absence of meaningful relationships. In Ove's case, this condition is clearly evident because he does interact with several people, but these relationships are superficial and lack emotional closeness.

Ove's limited social interactions have resulted in existential loneliness. The lack of meaningful relationships leads him to feel unnecessary within his environment. This underscores how both the quality and quantity of social relationships significantly contribute to his loneliness. This loneliness becomes even more apparent after Sonja's death, which leaves Ove completely bereft of his remaining social ties. This is clearly illustrated in the following data.

Datum 7:

"...Before Parvaneh and that Patrick backed into his mailbox he could barely remember saying a word to another human being since Sonja died." (P.215)

This quote illustrates Ove's growing loneliness following Sonja's death. Since losing his wife, he has hardly spoken to anyone else. This indicates that he has completely withdrawn from social interaction, as if cutting off all communication with the outside world. Overall, this situation highlights the fragility of Ove's social life. The lack of daily conversation suggests that he lives in isolation, devoid of the warmth of human relationships. Consequently, his life is marked by loneliness, monotony, and a sense of purposelessness.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness is not only caused by a lack of relationships, but also by the gap between expected social relationships and reality. In this context, Ove hoped to continue living with Sonja, have someone to

talk to, and enjoy a routine of togetherness. However, in reality, he lost everything, and his hopes were completely unfulfilled.

The connection between this analysis and the theory shows that the loss of Sonja is not only the loss of a life partner, but also the loss of the center of social communication within Ove. As a result, he feels a deep sense of loneliness due to the gap between his social expectations and the reality of his isolated life. That quote confirms that Ove was entirely lonely from the social world following Sonja's death, until Parvaneh and her family gradually reintroduced opportunities for interaction. Ove's experience reveals a significant gap between his need for meaningful social engagement and the reality of his isolation.

4. Personal Factors

Personal factors encompass Ove's internal disposition, personality traits, and attitudes, all of which contribute to his persistent loneliness. Beyond the loss of loved ones and limited social connections, Ove exhibits a rigid and withdrawn character, consistently avoiding social interaction. He rarely initiates new relationships, and his inherent disposition frequently impedes potential connections. Although his childhood, marked by loss and silence, may have influenced these tendencies, Ove's continued isolation indicates that he has normalized solitude as his preferred way of life.

Datum 8:

"People said he was bitter. Maybe they were right. He'd never reflected much on it. People also called him antisocial. Ove assumed this meant he wasn't overly keen on people. And in this instance he could totally agree with them. More often than not people were out of their minds." (P.36)

This quote demonstrates Ove's awareness of being perceived as bitter, stubborn, cold, and unfriendly. Rather than rejecting this perception, he accepts it, attributing it to his belief that most people behave irrationally. This response indicates that Ove has developed emotional defenses, maintaining distance from others not solely due to trauma or loss, but also as a deliberate choice grounded in distrust and resentment toward his social environment.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), personal factors such as introversion and cynicism towards others contribute greatly to the emergence of loneliness. Individuals with such characteristics tend to limit themselves from opportunities to interact, thereby deepening their feelings of isolation. In Ove's case, his cynicism and rejection of others serve as primary factors reinforcing his sense of alienation. While the initial trigger was the loss of loved ones, his personality further intensified his isolation. Ove is thus both affected by external circumstances and actively contributes to his own social withdrawal.

Ove's personal factors are further reflected in his closed communication style. His inability to engage in basic conversation hinders the initial steps necessary for establishing social relationships.

Datum 9:

"Ove wasn't one to engage in small talk. He had come to realize that, these days at least, this was a serious character flaw..." (P.36)

This quote highlights Ove's aversion to small talk and his reluctance to initiate casual conversations. Although he acknowledges this limitation, particularly in a context where communication skills are essential for relationship-

building, Ove makes no effort to alter his behavior. As a result, he continues to maintain a lifestyle characterized by social distance and increasing isolation.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), limited social skills are a primary trigger of loneliness. Individuals who are unable to engage in casual conversation will lose the opportunity to expand their social network and build meaningful relationships. This confirms that Ove's loneliness is not only caused by external factors but also reinforced by his personal attitude and the communication limitations he has created for himself. Even though he is aware of his shortcomings, Ove makes no effort to change, thus deepening his social isolation.

In summary, personal factors significantly reinforce Ove's loneliness. His solitude results not only from the loss of loved ones but also from self-imposed limitations rooted in his personality and habitual behaviors. When combined with external influences, these factors intensify his isolation, as will be further demonstrated in subsequent data.

5. Cultural and Situational Factors

Situational factors are conditions or changes within the social, cultural, or technological environment that may cause individuals to feel marginalized, alienated, or without purpose. In Ove's case, his loneliness arises not only from personal loss or introversion but also from societal changes that render his values obsolete. As the world evolves rapidly, Ove remains committed to traditional principles. When these principles are no longer recognized, he perceives himself as excluded from society. This dynamic is evident in the following quote:

Datum 10:

“This was a world where one became outdated before one's time was up. An entire country standing up and applauding the fact that no one was capable of doing anything properly anymore...” (P.74)

This quote illustrates Ove's dissatisfaction with societal change. He perceives the modern world as disregarding the principles he values, such as hard work, precision, and responsibility. The phrase “*outdated before one's time was up*” underscores his sense of obsolescence prior to old age, which intensifies his perceived separation from society.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), one cause of loneliness is social and cultural change that makes individuals feel isolated because the values they hold are no longer recognized by their environment. This condition falls into the category of social loneliness, where individuals do not find compatibility with the changing communities or social structures around them.

Thus, Ove's feeling that he is “*outdated*” is not just a personal expression, but a tangible manifestation of social loneliness that arises from the clash between traditional principles and the demands of the modern world. What he feels aligns with Perlman and Peplau's theory that cultural and situational changes can widen the gap between individuals and their environment.

Beyond feeling disconnected from societal changes, Ove's loneliness is exacerbated by developments in his professional life. His job, a central component of his identity and daily routine, was abruptly terminated. Retirement not only

ended his professional role but also diminished his sense of meaning and personal pride.

Datum 11:

“...An entire society where no one knows how to back up with a trailer. Then they come telling him he’s not needed anymore. Is that reasonable?” (P.24)

This quote illustrates Ove's profound disappointment following his forced early retirement. The phrase *“they come telling him he's not needed anymore”* conveys his emotional distress, stemming not only from job loss but also from a perceived loss of value. For Ove, work represents responsibility and integrity. When his contributions are disregarded, he experiences heightened marginalization and a diminished sense of purpose.

Perlman and Peplau (1981) explain that the loss of meaningful social roles can trigger existential loneliness, characterized by the feeling of having no place or purpose in life. Situations such as retirement or job loss often cause feelings of emptiness because individuals feel that they are no longer needed by their community.

Thus, Ove's bitter negative experience at work reinforces his existential loneliness. Job termination is not solely a financial setback but also signifies that his integrity and experience are deemed irrelevant. This observation supports Perlman and Peplau's (1981) argument that the loss of meaningful social roles contributes to growing alienation from society.

B. The Impact of Loneliness

Prolonged loneliness has a significant impact on an individual's psychological and behavioral functioning. In the novel *A Man Called Ove*, the protagonist, Ove, is depicted as deeply affected by the loss of his wife, Sonja. He experiences not only emotional distress but also notable changes in cognition and behavior. Following Sonja's death and his retirement, Ove gradually withdraws from social interactions, perceiving his life as lacking meaning.

Perlman and Peplau (1981) define loneliness as an unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively. This definition emphasizes that loneliness arises not only because of the absence of people around, but because the quality or quantity of social relations no longer matches a person's emotional needs.

In Ove's case, the loneliness he experiences does not only manifest as sadness or longing, but develops into despair, a loss of will to live, and even the urge to end his life. Ove no longer showed any interest in interacting with others, preferring to spend his time in solitude and rigid routines. He felt that life no longer lived up to his expectations. Thus, Ove's experience clearly illustrates what Perlman and Peplau described: that loneliness arises from a mismatch between relational expectations and reality.

a. Emotional and Psychological Impact

Ove's life underwent a dramatic transformation following the loss of his wife, Sonja. Previously, he maintained a structured and predictable routine; however, he now experiences a profound sense of emptiness and directionlessness. The absence of daily interactions, such as morning greetings, has removed his motivation to engage in regular activities. His initial sadness has intensified into despair, leading him to perceive his life as devoid of meaning. This is illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 12:

"...He canceled his telephone line rental and his newspaper subscription... 'Life was never meant to turn into this.' He's turned off the radiators, the coffee percolator, and all the lights... In this house all wooden worktops get an oiling every six months, whether it's necessary or not..." (p.13)

This quote illustrates that Ove's actions, such as canceling his telephone and newspaper subscriptions and turning off household appliances, signify his withdrawal from external engagement. The statement "Life was never meant to turn into this" underscores his profound disappointment with his current circumstances. Rather than seeking new meaning, Ove becomes entrenched in rigid routines, which symbolize his despair and indicate a loss of purpose.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness can arise from the difference between expected social relationships and actual reality. In Ove's case, he lost the emotional support of Sonja, who had previously been the center of his life. It was this void that caused his deep emotional loneliness. Meanwhile,

Cacioppo and Patrick (2008) emphasize that loneliness not only affects psychological conditions but is also associated with a decline in mental health, such as depression, despair, and loss of motivation to live.

Judging from his actions, Ove exhibits symptoms of emotional loneliness as described by Perlman and Peplau, in which he feels he has lost the main figure in his life and has failed to find a replacement for that relationship. This situation is in line with Cacioppo's theory, because the loneliness he experiences no longer stops at sadness, but has developed into despair that threatens his mental health. Thus, loneliness for Ove has transformed into a source of real psychological suffering, making him feel that his life no longer has meaning.

Ove's loss of meaning in life is evident in his daily behavior and intensifies his inclination toward suicide. The following data further illustrates his suicidal tendencies as a response to persistent loneliness.

b. Behavioral Impact – Suicide Attempt

The behavioral impact refers to how prolonged loneliness can influence a person's actions. It may reduce social involvement, increase withdrawal, or result in extreme behavior. Perlman and Peplau (1981) note that chronically lonely individuals often act defensively or aggressively, show little initiative to seek social interaction, and struggle to express emotions. These behaviors can create a cycle that reinforces social isolation.

In *A Man Called Ove*, loneliness drives Ove to his darkest point: wanting to end his life. After losing his wife, Sonja, and feeling unwanted, Ove sees his life as empty and meaningless. For him, death seems the only way to escape daily loneliness and pain. His repeated suicide attempts highlight the severity of his isolation and show how far loneliness can push someone.

Ove's first suicide attempt was ritualistic and deeply emotional. He chose a simple, symbolic method: retrieving the rope, touching Sonja's coat, tying the knot, and climbing onto the stool before kicking it away. He carried out each step calmly and deliberately, making each action personally meaningful. These actions reveal Ove's enduring love for Sonja and the profound despair that underlies his decision.

1) Hanging Himself

Datum 13:

"He takes down the rope from the clothes-dryer in the hall. Gently, with the back of his hand, he caresses her coats one last time. Then he goes into the living room, ties a noose in the rope, threads it through the hook, climbs up on the stool, and puts his head in the noose. Kicks the stool away. Closes his eyes and feels the noose closing around his throat like the jaws of a large wild animal." (p.63)"

In this quote, Ove's sincere and serious intentions are evident. Most notably, his gentle touch on his deceased wife's coat reveals his enduring love for Sonja. This moment highlights Ove's act as a final farewell and illustrates how his love has shifted into a profound burden of grief.

According to Perlman and Peplau (1981), loneliness results from a discrepancy between desired and actual social connections, particularly following the loss of significant relationships. Sonja's death removed Ove's emotional anchor,

disrupted his daily routine, and eliminated his primary source of meaning. Consequently, this loss rendered him susceptible to despair and left him unable to compensate for the void created by Sonja.

Ove's calm and methodical behavior indicates a lack of impulsivity and suggests he was mentally prepared for death. His actions were intentional and precise. However, his survival after the rope broke demonstrates an unexpected interruption to his plan, as illustrated in the following quote:

Datum 14:

"Then, in shock, he stares at the rope, which has snapped into two long stumps. This society, thinks Ove. Can't they even manufacture rope anymore?" (p.75)

Ove's anger toward the broken rope redirects his frustration outward, attributing blame to society and criticizing its perceived decline in quality standards. This response exemplifies ongoing existential loss, aligning with Perlman and Peplau's framework in which despair persists due to the loss of meaning and connection. The failed suicide attempt disrupts Ove's carefully constructed plans and further underscores the depth of his loneliness. Subsequently, Ove makes another suicide attempt.

2) Carbon Monoxide Smoke

Following the failure of his initial suicide attempt, Ove pursued an alternative method. He employed carbon monoxide in his car, demonstrating a continued intent to end his life.

Datum 15:

"...Gets into the driver's seat and starts the engine. Opens the back electric window a couple of inches. Gets out of the car. Closes the garage door. Fixes the plastic tube tightly over the exhaust pipe. Watches the exhaust fumes slowly

bubbling out of the other end of the tube. Then feeds the tube through the open back window. Gets into the car. Closes the door. Adjusts the wing mirrors. Fine-tunes the radio one step forward and one step back. Leans back in the seat. Closes his eyes. Feels the thick exhaust smoke, cubic inch by cubic inch, filling the garage and his lungs (p.90) ”

In this quote, Ove shows how serious he is about ending his life by carefully preparing: starting the car engine, attaching a hose from the exhaust into the car through a slightly open window, closing the garage door, then sitting in the driver’s seat, adjusting the rearview mirror and radio, and finally closing his eyes to wait for the smoke.

These actions demonstrate Ove's resolve and methodical approach, indicating neither hesitation nor haste. This behavior aligns with Perlman and Peplau's (1981) theory, which suggests that chronic loneliness may drive individuals to undertake extreme actions.

Despite his efforts, Ove's attempt was again unsuccessful. While seated in the car, he was interrupted by persistent banging on the garage door. In his irritation, he abruptly opened the car door, dislodging the plastic hose and allowing smoke to escape onto the garage floor. Consequently, his second suicide attempt was thwarted.

Datum 16:

"There's more frenetic banging at the garage door. Ove stares sourly at it. More banging. Ove thinks to himself that it's enough now. 'That will do!' he roars and opens the door of the Saab so abruptly that the plastic tube is dislodged from between the window and the molding and falls onto the concrete floor. Clouds of exhaust fumes pour out in all directions." (p.91)

Ove's frustration at the interruption of his suicide attempt reflects his ongoing sense of isolation and lack of purpose. The knocking on the door can be

interpreted as a representation of societal attempts to connect with him, which he perceives solely as an intrusion. His persistent grief prevents him from responding positively, indicating that external efforts at social connection have no immediate impact.

Ove's anger supports Perlman and Peplau's (1981) theory that social connections are effective only when individuals are receptive to them. The failure of his second attempt further highlights the severity and persistence of his psychological distress.

3) Drug Overdose

Following two unsuccessful suicide attempts, Ove selected a third method that appeared more subdued and discreet: ingesting a large quantity of pills. Unlike his previous attempts, which involved tools and public spaces, this act was carried out in isolation within his bathroom, as demonstrated in the excerpt below.

Datum 17:

"He unscrews the lid and distributes the pills along the edge of the washbasin. Watches them as if expecting them to transform into little murderous robots. Of course they don't..." (p.180)

This action appears simple, but it holds a sincere intention. Ove opened the medicine bottle and calmly arranged the tablets on the edge of the sink, as if arranging something definite and planned. He did not cry, did not panic; everything took place in silence and calm, reflecting the depth of his despair. This was the most passive form of suicide attempt, but it still showed that he did not want to continue living.

Thus, Ove's calm act of arranging the pills can be understood not only as an expression of personal despair, but also as a tangible manifestation of the chronic loneliness described by Perlman & Peplau (1981). He no longer had any social relationships that could hold back his desire to die, so suicide became the only way out he could see.

However, once again his attempt failed, not because he changed his mind, but because a noise from outside disturbed his concentration. Just as Ove was about to swallow the pills, he suddenly heard another sound.

Datum 18:

“But then it’s interrupted by another, quite different sound. A dog barking. Ove looks up. It’s quiet for a few seconds, and then he hears the cat yowling with pain. Then more barking. And Blond Weed roaring something.” (p.180)

Ove stopped what he was doing and turned toward the sound of a dog barking outside the house. Soon the barking grew louder, followed by the sound of a cat meowing in pain, and finally the scream of a blonde woman scolding someone. These sounds indirectly saved his life, even though they seemed trivial.

This event shows that the outside world began to “knock” on Ove's door again through the voices of dogs, cats, and humans who accidentally saved his life. This disturbance serves as a reminder that he is still needed, even though Ove is not yet ready to accept it and only temporarily stops his suicide attempt. This is in line with Perlman & Peplau's idea that social intervention can open up opportunities to reduce loneliness, but real change only occurs if individuals are willing to open up and build meaningful relationships.

4) The Gun

After three failed suicide attempts with a broken rope, disconnected hose, and undigested medication, Ove tried again. He took his father-in-law's old gun from the attic.

Datum 19:

“The next morning, after letting the cat out, he fetched Sonja’s father’s old rifle from the attic... For this reason, he stands now in the little road between the houses, his arms defiantly crossed, looking at the man in the white shirt and saying: ‘I am here because there was nothing good on the TV.’” (p.221)

This quote illustrates Ove's profound despair. After letting the cat out, he retrieves Sonja's father's rifle from the attic and prepares to end his life. At this stage, Ove demonstrates indifference to the presence of others, and his actions represent the culmination of his isolation. Perlman and Peplau (1981) argue that such behavior results from a significant discrepancy between an individual's need for social connection and their actual social environment. Thus, this suicide attempt provides clear evidence of Ove's struggle with severe loneliness.

Ove's intention to use the gun is disrupted by the arrival of Adrian and Mirsad. Their presence, marked by visible fear rather than verbal persuasion, proves pivotal and changes Ove's actions. This behavioral shift highlights the moderating effect of immediate social interaction during psychological crises and demonstrates the impact of external social cues in moments of acute distress.

Datum 20:

“Ove looks like he’s coming to his senses slightly. He lowers his weapon to the ground.” (p.234)

By putting down his gun, Ove showed that his life could continue and change. The failure of his fourth suicide attempt marked the start of his social recovery. It also signaled that Ove's life still held value to others. This moment shows that even simple social interaction can break through isolation and slowly draw Ove back into the world.

The effectiveness of this social intervention supports Perlman and Peplau's (1981) theory of loneliness, which posits that both the quality and presence of social relationships can alleviate loneliness. Although Ove is not yet fully open to others, his interactions with neighbors initiate the restoration of his social connections and demonstrate that he remains valued by them. This event highlights that direct human interaction can have a profoundly positive influence on even those who have lost hope.

C. The Ways Ove Overcomes Loneliness

Ove eventually overcomes the loneliness he has felt throughout his life. Although he was initially trapped in despair, Ove gradually begins to free himself from isolation through a series of unplanned events and interactions. As he reengages with real social life, this change occurs gradually, and he rediscovers the meaning of life.

1. Adjusting Social Expectations

Ove's first step toward overcoming his loneliness began with a small decision to postpone his suicide plans, marking a turning point and showing that even in despair, his doubts left room for hope. As Ove looked at a photo of his late

wife, Sonja, he started questioning his intention to commit suicide. This suggests that even in the depths of sorrow, hope can still emerge from memories of loved ones.

Datum 21:

"...He looks at the photo of Sonja on the wall. She laughs back at him. Maybe it's not so enormously important to die that it can't wait another hour, thinks Ove, and follows the cat into the street." (p.182)

This quote indicates a shift in Ove's attitude, which had previously been centered on death. The question in his mind, "Can death be postponed?" marks the beginning of a mental shift from despair to the possibility of continuing to live. His simple interaction with the cat is also a sign of Ove's initial engagement with the world around him. Emotionally, Ove begins to lower his ideal standards of a perfect life and accepts the reality that life goes on without Sonja.

According to Perlman & Peplau (1981), loneliness occurs when individuals feel an imbalance between desired and actual social relationships. This data marks the beginning of Ove's efforts to adjust his social expectations, specifically accepting that perfect relationships are not always achievable, but that small social interactions, such as looking at Sonja's photo or caring for his cat, can help reduce his loneliness. The decision to postpone suicide is a form of adaptation to the loneliness he experiences, where Ove begins to open himself up to the possibility of new social relationships.

This quote illustrates how simple moments can trigger major changes in Ove's psychology. According to Perlman & Peplau's (1981) theory of loneliness, it can be seen that Ove began to adjust his social expectations: he no longer demanded

perfection or Sonja's physical presence, but instead found meaning in small interactions. His doubts about death show that even though he had felt lonely for a long time, emotional connections, even in the form of memories, could be the starting point for the healing process.

Ove's change in attitude in postponing his suicide attempt becomes the foundation for the next step: beginning to assess and understand the struggles of others. This is evident in Ove's interaction with Parvaneh, which marks an increase in his empathy and social involvement, as well as a strengthening of his process of overcoming loneliness.

Datum 22:

"Now, you listen to me," says Ove calmly while he carefully closes the door. "You've given birth to two children and quite soon you'll be squeezing out a third. You've come here from a land far away and most likely you fled war and persecution and all sorts of other nonsense. You've learned a new language and got yourself an education and you're holding together a family of obvious incompetents. And I'll be damned if I've seen you afraid of a single bloody thing in this world before now." (p.198)

This quote indicates that Ove has begun to appreciate and value the abilities and resilience of others, particularly Parvaneh, who faces various life challenges. This change in attitude marks Ove's shift from being completely cynical to becoming open to understanding the experiences and struggles of others. This empathetic attitude is evidence that Ove is beginning to adjust his expectations of social interaction and understand that perfection or the absence of problems is not a realistic standard of living.

According to Perlman & Peplau (1981), loneliness can be reduced through social involvement and adjustment to social expectations. In this case, Ove begins

to exhibit a deeper form of social engagement, acknowledging Parvaneh's life experiences and offering sincere appreciation. Recognizing the struggles of others helps Ove build social connections and reduce his loneliness as he begins to understand the value of the existence and contributions of those around him.

The quote describes Ove's process of adjusting his expectations of social interaction. By beginning to appreciate the resilience and success of others, Ove no longer focuses on his own loneliness; instead, he begins to open himself up to meaningful social relationships. In line with Perlman & Peplau's (1981) theory of loneliness, emotional involvement and recognition of others are the first steps in reducing the loneliness experienced by Ove. The empathy shown here is also a sign that Ove is beginning to build healthier social connections.

Ove's change in attitude, where he begins to appreciate and value the struggles of others, lays the foundation for active involvement in social interactions and delays his suicidal intentions due to distractions that capture his attention.

Datum 23:

“And this was the reason why Ove did not die today. Because he was detained by something that made him sufficiently angry to hold his attention. (p.225)”

Ove, known for being a rigid and gruff figure, displays an emotional reaction to something that disturbs or captures his attention. This distraction is enough to make him focus on the world outside himself and delay his suicidal intentions. This moment marks the beginning of Ove's attachment to his environment, not in the form of love or affection, but as an attention that keeps him connected to real life. Psychologically, he begins to accept the fact that life is not always ideal and starts to respond to the people and events around him.

According to Perlman & Peplau (1981), loneliness arises from an imbalance between desired and actual social relationships. This data shows the beginning of Ove's efforts to build social bonds, even though they are simple and not directly interpersonal. The disturbances that attract his attention are the first steps in reducing his loneliness, as he begins to pay attention to the world outside himself and is no longer completely emotionally isolated.

This data shows the relationship between Ove's emotional experiences and the theory of loneliness. Ove's reaction to external disturbances becomes an early form of social and emotional involvement, in accordance with Perlman & Peplau's (1981) theory, which states that attention to social interaction can reduce loneliness. By beginning to respond to the disturbances around him, Ove slowly adjusts his expectations of life and other people, allowing the process of recovery from loneliness to begin.

This initial change paves the way for active involvement in social interactions, such as helping and sharing experiences with neighbors. The next data shows how Ove begins to rebuild social relationships and feel a stronger emotional connection.

2. Increasing Social Interaction

After adjusting his social expectations, the next step in Ove's recovery from loneliness was his renewed social engagement. Previously withdrawn and reluctant, Ove gradually began to open up. He started to help, interact, and show concern for

those around him. Circumstantial interactions evolved into warm, meaningful relationships.

Datum 24:

"I can have a look at it if you'll let me," said Ove and looked enthusiastic all of a sudden. It was the first time Sonja could ever remember him actually sounding enthusiastic about anything." (p.133)

This quote illustrates Ove's newfound enthusiasm for engaging in others' lives and activities, a notable shift. He isn't just willing to help but seems excited, signaling his return to social life. His focus shifts from death to caring about people and things beyond himself.

Perlman & Peplau (1981) state that meaningful social involvement can reduce loneliness. By engaging in conversations about hopes, disappointments, and courage, Ove feels more connected and balances the gap between desired and actual relationships. Ove's choice to help is a genuine social engagement. Through openness and enthusiasm, he creates chances to build relationships and lessen his loneliness.

Ove's simple acts, like offering help enthusiastically, show his growing shift from isolation to social engagement. According to Perlman & Peplau's theory, this marks the start of meaningful relationships, where active involvement lessens loneliness and boosts feelings of belonging.

Ove's early social steps lead to deeper engagement with his neighbors, including sharing experiences, emotional discussions, and forming warmer, more meaningful bonds. Ove starts showing deeper emotional involvement. He is not

only physically present but also genuinely cares about others' lives, reflecting his social growth following his experience with loneliness.

Datum 25:

"That evening Ove has his dinner with Parvaneh and Patrick, while a father and son talk about disappointments and hopes and masculinity in two languages in Ove's kitchen. Maybe most of all they speak of courage. Sonja would have liked it, Ove knows that much. But he tries not to smile so much that Parvaneh notices." (p.263)

Deep conversations about hopes, disappointments, and courage reveal Ove's emotional presence. He now listens actively and understands others, marking the start of more meaningful engagement to fill the void after Sonja's absence. Perlman & Peplau (1981) assert that loneliness arises when desired and actual social relationships differ. Deep social interaction builds emotional connections. Ove's meaningful conversations align with this, helping him balance previous social gaps.

By engaging emotionally, Ove builds healthier, more meaningful relationships. His participation in discussions about courage and hope reduces loneliness and strengthens his sense of belonging, as Perlman & Peplau describe. This stage laid the foundation for Ove's ongoing social involvement. He began sharing life skills and taking pride in his environment, guiding Adrian in tasks such as changing car tires and showing care for the Parvaneh family.

Datum 26:

"Ove teaches Adrian how to change tires. The kid may have bought a Toyota, but that doesn't mean he's entirely beyond help, Ove explains to Sonja when he visits her one Sunday in April. Then he shows her some photographs of Parvaneh's little boy. Four months old and as fat as a seal pup. Patrick has tried to force one of those cell phone camera things on Ove, but he doesn't trust them. So he walks around with a thick wad of paper copies inside his wallet instead, held together by a rubber band. Shows everyone he meets. Even the people who work at the florist's." (p.276)

Over-teaching Adrian and sharing baby photos displays practical social involvement. He actively contributes to others' lives, deepening his sense of connection, attachment, and role within his community. Perlman & Peplau (1981) emphasize that loneliness decreases when people engage in meaningful interactions and feel a sense of purpose. Ove's help to Adrian and care for Parvaneh's child show how active social involvement boosts value, reduces loneliness, and strengthens relationships.

Through consistent practical actions, Ove builds stronger relationships. This demonstrates Perlman & Peplau's theory: meaningful involvement helps him feel connected, useful, and valued, greatly reducing loneliness. This involvement led to Ove's sense of peace, seen in his restful sleep. His calmness reflects his emotional recovery through meaningful interactions, showing that he feels valued and at home even with simple creatures like cats.

Datum 27:

"Ove looks like he's sleeping very deeply. She has never seen his face looking so peaceful. The cat lies at his side with its little head carefully resting in the palm of his hand..." (p.278)

Ove's peaceful sleep reflects a reduction in loneliness and emotional emptiness. The cat beside him demonstrates that he can connect and feel comfortable with his environment, marking the culmination of his recovery, which began with small steps like adjusting to social expectations and engaging with neighbors. According to Perlman & Peplau (1981), engaging socially reduces loneliness by providing connection and recognition. Ove's peaceful sleep signals

the result: his bonds make him feel accepted, valued, and connected, reducing loneliness.

Ove overcomes loneliness through consistent social and emotional engagement. His peaceful sleep shows balance between desired and actual relationships, in line with Perlman & Peplau's theory. Connections with people and animals play a crucial role in his emotional recovery. Ove's peace from social interaction sets the stage for the next step in his recovery, social recognition and self-esteem reinforced by community appreciation.

3. Reducing the Psychological Impact of Social Inequality

One of the reasons Ove feels so lonely is because he believes he is no longer useful or needed by anyone. He feels excluded from modern society, which moves quickly and leaves no room for people like him. However, over time and through his re-engagement in social life, events gradually change Ove's perspective on himself. He began to feel valued and recognized, knowing he had a role, even if it was a simple one. This recognition was important in restoring his self-esteem and reducing the sense of alienation he had been experiencing.

A significant moment highlighting this change appears when Ove helps Adrian repair a bike for a girl. Ove does not initially show concern. Still, his choice to help despite not being asked demonstrates both care and empathy.

Datum 28:

"So me and Ove drove all this way just to give you a bike so you can mend it? For a girl?" Adrian nods. Parvaneh leans over the counter and pats Ove on the arm. "You know, Ove, sometimes one almost suspects you have a heart. . . ."
(p.209)

Ove helped Adrian, showing a concern no one had seen before. Parvaneh acknowledged him through touch and words, sincerely appreciating his gesture. This interaction turned into a pivotal moment, and Ove realized his presence mattered. He gained self-esteem and felt less alienated.

Perlman & Peplau (1981) state that loneliness comes from an imbalance between desired and actual social relationships. This quote suggests that social recognition and involvement in meaningful roles help reduce loneliness. Warm responses from others act as social reinforcement. They restore self-esteem and reduce the psychological impact of social inequality.

Through simple but meaningful interactions, Ove began to feel social connectedness and recognition. This fits with Perlman & Peplau's (1981) theory. The attention and appreciation of others reduced Ove's loneliness and raised his self-esteem. Parvaneh's gestures showed that Ove was rediscovering feelings of acceptance and appreciation.

Social recognition from this close circle serves as the foundation for broader recognition, including that from formal institutions. This shows that Ove's psychological recovery stems not only from personal interactions but also from social recognition from a wider group.

Datum 29:

"I know who you are, Ove. I know everything about all the letters you've written about your wife's accident and your wife's illness. You're something of a legend in our offices, you should know," said the man in the white shirt, his voice quite unwavering." (p.224)

In this excerpt, a social worker directly states that Ove is known and respected. He is recognized for his efforts in writing letters and fighting for his wife's rights when she was ill. The nickname "legend" is not just praise. It is recognition that he once fought for something important. This recognition is vital because it restores his lost confidence and self-esteem. Ove, who once felt he had no place in the modern world, is still valued and remembered by others.

Perlman & Peplau (1981) state that loneliness arises from an imbalance between desired and actual social relationships. Recognition from formal institutions demonstrates a broader form of social connection, extending beyond personal circles. This helps reduce loneliness. Ove begins to feel that his existence still matters and is valued. Social and emotional imbalances start to resolve.

This quote reinforces that recognition from loved ones and formal institutions is key to Ove's psychological recovery. Perlman & Peplau emphasize the importance of the quality of social relationships in reducing loneliness. With this recognition, Ove gains external validation. This strengthens his self-esteem, fosters social connectedness, and helps him emerge from a deep state of loneliness.

These two events demonstrate that recognition from close friends and formal institutions played a crucial role in restoring Ove's psychological well-being.

He no longer felt excluded or belittled. By being himself, Ove began to see he still had a place in other people's lives. That helped him slowly rise from his deep loneliness.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter presents conclusions and suggestions derived from the research findings. The conclusions directly address the three established research questions. First, it identifies the factors influencing the emergence of loneliness in Ove. Second, it examines the effects of Ove's loneliness in the novel *A Man Called Ove*. Third, it analyzes how Ove overcomes his loneliness throughout the story. Finally, recommendations for future research are provided at the end of this chapter.

A. Conclusion

Ove's loneliness in the novel *A Man Called Ove* results from several interconnected factors. The death of his wife, Sonja, his main source of emotional support, leads to profound loneliness. Retirement intensifies his sense of purposelessness and reduces his perceived value within the community, furthering his social isolation. Ove is portrayed as a rigid and withdrawn individual who consistently avoids social interaction. The decline of traditional values such as hard work and responsibility in contemporary society also contributes to his sense of alienation and existential loneliness, especially as he seeks to redefine his purpose after retirement.

Ove's loneliness following Sonja's death profoundly affected his psychological and behavioral state. He experienced intense despair, a loss of life's meaning, and increasing social withdrawal. This emotional distress manifested in multiple suicide attempts, including hanging, carbon monoxide inhalation,

medication overdose, and the use of a firearm, underscoring the severity of his isolation. Each attempt was inadvertently thwarted by external interruptions, such as the unexpected presence of others or environmental disturbances.

Throughout the narrative, Ove gradually alleviates his loneliness by establishing meaningful relationships, particularly with Parvaneh and her family. By tending animals, assisting neighbors, and supporting Parvaneh's household, he reconstructs his social network. These activities enable Ove to adapt to life without Sonja and rediscover a sense of purpose. Increased community involvement facilitates his transition from loneliness to active participation, allowing him to share his expertise and offer practical support. Recognition from both his peers and local institutions ultimately restores his self-esteem and mitigates his sense of loneliness.

B. Suggestion

This research is expected to serve as reference material in literary studies that raise psychological issues, especially regarding loneliness and how fictional characters confront it. For future researchers, it is suggested that they can develop this research from different perspectives, for example, by using developmental psychology theory, humanistic psychology, or a socio-cultural approach. In addition, further research can research the transformation aspect of Ove's character or compare Ove's loneliness with characters in other novels with different social backgrounds.

This research is limited to analyzing the main character and does not reach interdisciplinary aspects. Therefore, the development of studies with

multidisciplinary approaches such as psychology, sociology, and even existential philosophy is highly feasible. Thus, research into literary works can help readers and the general public understand how loneliness affects human life and how loneliness can be overcome through meaningful social relationships.

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