

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Literature has long served as a mirror of human experiences, emotions, and social realities. Eagleton (1996: 13-14) argues that literature is not merely artistic expression but a cultural and ideological product that shapes and reflects human consciousness. Likewise, Wellek and Warren (1949: 24) emphasise literature's value in exploring human nature and behavior, asserting that novelists often delve deeply into the human psyche, making literature a rich source for psychological analysis. Through literary characters, readers and scholars can gain insight into the psychological mechanisms behind human behavior.

Personality traits significantly influence an individual's emotions, behaviors, and social interactions. According to Costa and McCrae's Five-Factor Model (1992), these traits are divided into five dimensions: openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These dimensions are widely recognized in psychology as central to understanding personality and its development over time.

In literary psychology, fictional characters often mirror real-life psychological patterns (Pervin & John, 2008: 83). Analyzing a character's personality traits can enhance one's understanding of a novel's deeper themes and conflicts. *Beauty of the Broken* by Tawni Waters is a novel in which personality traits play a crucial

role in driving the narrative. The story centres on Mara Stonebrook, a teenage girl growing up in a conservative, small-town environment marked by religious fanaticism, violence, and prejudice. Her journey reflects the psychological complexities shaped by her environment and personality. Raised in a dysfunctional, abusive home, Mara internalizes trauma, leading to high neuroticism expressed through anxiety, guilt, and self-doubt. These struggles are heightened by her community's strict religious beliefs, which condemn her romantic feelings for her best friend, Xylia. Examining her traits is essential to understanding not only her development but also the broader dynamics through which oppressive cultural systems inflict lasting psychological harm.

This study aims to analyze Mara's personality traits using McCrae and Costa's Five-Factor Model. It explores how these traits are portrayed in the novel and how genetic, environmental, and cultural factors influence them. Additionally, the research examines how Mara's traits affect her relationship with Xylia. The analysis will also consider elements such as characterization, conflict, and setting to gain a fuller understanding of the novel's narrative structure.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

1. How is the Five-Factor Model depicted in Mara's character in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*?
2. What are the causes of personality traits that are portrayed in Mara's character in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*?

3. How do the personality traits of Mara in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken* impact the relationship between her and Xylia in the novel?

### **1.3 Purpose of the Studies**

1. To analyze the Five-Factor Model depicted in Mara's character in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*.
2. To describe the causes of the personality traits of Mara's characters in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*.
3. To explain the impact of Mara's personality traits in her relationship with Xylia as depicted in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*.

### **1.4 Scope of the Studies**

In this study, the writer intends to analyze the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of literature in the novel *Beauty of the Broken* by Tawni Waters. The intrinsic elements to be analysed include characters and characterisations, conflict, and setting, as they are related to the extrinsic elements that will be discussed further. The analysis of extrinsic elements will be referred to Five-Factor Model based on Robert McCrae & Paul Costa's theory. This study will centre on how the Five-Factor Model is depicted by the characters in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*. It also explores what causes those personality traits to occur in the characters of Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken* by analyzing the society, environment, and genetic influences. Lastly, it also discusses the effect and impact

of those personality traits on the relationship between Mara and Xylia in Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken*.

### 1.5 Previous Studies

This research reviews six previous works related to *Beauty of the Broken* by Tawni Waters to highlight how they differ from the current analysis. These earlier works offer a foundation, expose research gaps, and help shape methodological approaches.

The first one is a review by Eva Langston (2014) on the *Burlesque Press* blog that highlights *Beauty of the Broken's* emotional depth, describing it as a fable-like story about a young girl discovering love and self-acceptance in a conservative town. Langston praises the lyrical writing and the main character's emotional journey.

Additionally, the journal titled *Bulletin of the Centre for Children's Books*, written by April Spisak (2014), includes a review of *Beauty of the Broken*. Spisak summarizes the novel and recommends it to readers who might enjoy its themes and style.

A different perspective comes from a 2017 blog post on *American Indians in Children's Literature*, where Dr. Debbie Reese analyzes the representation of Henry, a Native American character in *Beauty of the Broken*. She critiques the use of problematic descriptions and stereotypes, encouraging a closer examination of how indigenous identity is portrayed.

The fourth one is an article by Keys, Marshall, and Pini (2017) titled *Representations of Rural Lesbian Lives in Young Adult Fiction* includes *Beauty of the Broken* among several novels that depict lesbian experiences in rural contexts. Their analysis highlights the story's treatment of identity, acceptance, and resilience.

Moreover, a chapter in *Examining Images of Urban Life* by James F. Nicosia and Laura M. Nicosia (2021) critiques *Beauty of the Broken* for reinforcing the idea that queer individuals must leave rural areas to find acceptance. The novel portrays small-town life as violent and intolerant while presenting San Francisco as a safe haven for queer identity.

Lastly, a review on *StoryGraph* by “cocoanofbooks” (2023) gives *Beauty of the Broken* a 2-star rating. It criticizes the handling of themes like Christianity, LGBTQ+ issues, and racial representation, arguing that the plot feels inconsistent and the characters underdeveloped, with cultural portrayals appearing stereotypical.

These previous studies largely focus on LGBTQ+ and rural representation, author insights, and critical reception. In contrast, this study analyzes the main characters of *Beauty of the Broken* by Tawni Waters using the Five-Factor Model of personality traits, exploring the causes of Mara's traits and how they influence the relationship between Mara and Xylia throughout the novel.

## **1.6 Writing Organization**

### CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter is divided into six parts with sub-chapters. Those parts are the background of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, scope of the study, previous studies, and writing organizations.

## CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The second chapter contains theories, definitions, and concepts that the writer uses in this study. In this chapter, the writer defines the theories of the intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The intrinsic elements are characters, characterizations, conflict, and settings. The extrinsic elements that the writer applies in this study are the theory of personality traits by Robert McCrae & Paul Costa to analyze the extrinsic elements through the qualitative method and library research, with Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken* as the primary data and books, journals, and websites as the secondary data.

## CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The third chapter includes the analysis of Tawni Waters's *Beauty of the Broken* based on the theories, concepts, and subject matter in the research questions of this study, which discusses Mara's personality traits, the causes, and their impact on Mara's relationship with Xylia.

## CHAPTER IV: CONCLUSION

The last chapter is to conclude the analysis of the study.

## REFERENCES