



The Inner Conflict of the Main Character in the Novel *The Kite Runner* and the Novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the forms and causes of the protagonists' internal conflicts in the novels *The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini and *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* by Brian Khrisna, utilizing Kurt Lewin's approach-avoidance conflict theory. These two novels were selected because they both explore themes of trauma, guilt, and despair experienced by their protagonists despite originating from different socio-cultural contexts thereby enabling a cross-cultural comparison of psychological conflict patterns. The study employs a literary psychology approach, utilizing a qualitative descriptive method and a literature review (textual analysis) for data collection. The data consist of narrative excerpts and dialogue from both novels that indicate the protagonists' psychological conflicts; these data were subsequently analyzed using content analysis techniques. The findings reveal that the character Amir in *The Kite Runner* experiences an approach-avoidance conflict, characterized by a struggle between the desire to atone for past mistakes and the fear of confronting trauma and guilt. Meanwhile, Ale in *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* experiences an avoidance-avoidance conflict, characterized by a choice between enduring life's suffering and putting an end to his despair. These differing forms of conflict demonstrate that the characters' psychological pressures are influenced by the specific socio-cultural contexts of each story. This research is expected to enrich the study of cross-cultural literary psychology, particularly regarding the understanding of the variations in internal conflicts experienced by fictional characters.

Keywords : inner conflict, main character, novel

Konflik Batin Tokoh Utama dalam Novel *The Kite Runner* dan Novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk dan penyebab konflik batin tokoh utama dalam novel *The Kite Runner* karya Khaled Hosseini dan *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* karya Brian Khrisna dengan menggunakan teori konflik pendekat-menjauh (approach-avoidance conflict) Kurt Lewin. Kedua novel dipilih karena sama-sama mengangkat tema trauma, rasa bersalah, dan keputusan tokoh utama, meskipun berasal dari konteks sosial-budaya yang berbeda, sehingga memungkinkan perbandingan pola konflik psikologis lintas budaya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan psikologi sastra dengan metode deskriptif kualitatif dan teknik studi pustaka (studi teks) sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. Data penelitian berupa kutipan naratif dan dialog dalam kedua novel yang menunjukkan indikasi konflik psikologis tokoh utama, yang selanjutnya dianalisis menggunakan teknik analisis isi (content analysis). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh Amir dalam *The Kite Runner* mengalami konflik mendekat-menjauh yang ditandai oleh pertentangan antara keinginan menebus kesalahan masa lalu dan ketakutan menghadapi trauma serta rasa bersalah. Sementara itu, Ale dalam *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* mengalami konflik menjauh-menjauh yang ditandai oleh pilihan antara bertahan dalam penderitaan hidup atau mengakhiri keputusan. Perbedaan bentuk konflik ini menunjukkan bahwa tekanan psikologis tokoh dipengaruhi oleh konteks sosial dan budaya masing-masing cerita. Penelitian ini diharapkan memperkaya kajian psikologi sastra lintas budaya, khususnya dalam memahami variasi konflik batin tokoh fiksi.

Kata kunci : konflik batin, tokoh utama, novel

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INTRODUCTION

Inner conflict in human life often arises as a response to various psychological pressures stemming from life experiences, the social environment, and the individual's values. As stated, inner conflict is a conflict caused by the existence of two or more ideas, or conflicting desires for self-control, which influence behavior (Novika et al., 2023:773). This type of conflict does not simply cease as a momentary emotional issue, but develops into psychological tension that influences how a person thinks, behaves, and makes decisions in life.

In the context of literary studies, a character's inner conflict can be analyzed through a literary psychology approach. Literary psychology is the study of literature that views the work as a spiritual activity. Authors pour their full heart into creating. Similarly, readers respond to works wholeheartedly. In fact, like the sociology of reflection, literary psychology also recognizes literary works as reflections of the author's psyche, capturing the inner state of the author, which is processed into the text and complemented by their own inner thoughts. Thus, literary works are not only understood as entertainment, but also as reflections of the living and real psychological reality of human beings (Melati et al., 2013:231). To examine the characters' inner conflicts more deeply, this study utilizes Kurt Lewin's theory. According to (Habib et al., 2022:29), conflict should be characterized psychologically as a situation in which forces acting simultaneously and in opposite directions, with approximately equal force, act on an individual. Conflict arises from the presence of two or more conflicting drives within an individual, making the process of making choices more difficult. This condition can also occur when an individual faces multiple motives simultaneously, while fulfilling one motive has the potential to hinder the achievement of others. This situation creates psychological tension because the individual must choose between various competing desires or goals (Nurhayati., 2015:01).

In Khaled Hosseini's novel, *The Kite Runner*, the main character Amir's inner conflict is depicted

through a traumatic experience and prolonged guilt after he allows Hassan to experience violence without defending himself. This incident doesn't remain a thing of the past, but continues to haunt Amir's life into adulthood. He struggles with the desire to maintain a comfortable life and the moral urge to atone for his mistakes. This situation demonstrates a psychological conflict that simultaneously draws him closer and further away from the same choice.

In contrast, Brian Khrisna's novel **Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati** depicts the inner conflict of Ruslan Abdul Wardana, also known as Ale, a corporate employee diagnosed with acute depression by his psychiatrist. His large, tall frame, and dark skin make him the target of demeaning glances from those around him, including his family, who constantly compare him to others. In this situation, Ale is faced with equally uncomfortable life choices: endure the suffering or succumb to despair. This situation demonstrates a form of psychological conflict characterized by a lack of favorable options, where every decision carries emotional pressure.

The differences in the social and cultural backgrounds of the two novels demonstrate that the characters' inner conflicts do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by the life contexts that shape them. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir's inner conflict develops in the setting of Afghan society, which is fraught with moral values, social structures, and a complex history of political conflict. Meanwhile, in *A Portion of Chicken Noodles Before Dying*, Ale's inner conflict develops in the context of modern life, which is closely related to urban realities, individual loneliness, and the psychological pressures of contemporary social relations. These differences in context indicate that inner conflict can emerge in different forms despite having the same psychological basis. Based on this background, this study focuses on the inner conflict of the main characters in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Brian Khrisna's *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, which are analyzed using Kurt Lewin's conflict theory perspective to identify the forms



of approaching-approaching, approaching-moving, and moving-moving conflicts experienced by Amir and Ale in both novels.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive method. The descriptive method is often used in social research including literary studies (Afifuddin & Saebani, 2002; Razak, 2017; Yuliani (2018). Through the descriptive method, the inner conflict of the main characters in Khaled Hosseini's novels "The Kite Runner" and Brian Khrisna's novel "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati" through comparative literary studies.

The data sources come from Khaled Hosseini's novel "The Kite Runner" (first edition, 2003, with 616 pages) and Brian Khrisna's novel "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati" (first edition, 2023, with 216 pages). The research data consists of quotations and sentences that illustrate the focus of the issues in both novels.

Data collection was conducted using listening and note-taking techniques. The listening technique involved carefully and repeatedly reading both novels to identify narratives and dialogues that indicate the main characters' inner conflict, particularly sections representing the three forms of conflict according to Kurt Lewin's theory: approaching-approaching, approaching-moving, and moving-moving. The note-taking technique involved recording the identified quotations along with their page numbers, then grouping them based on the form of conflict they represent to facilitate the analysis process in the next stage.

Data analysis techniques are carried out through the stages of reading, classification, analysis, description, and interpretation as well as drawing temporary conclusions regarding the research results.

RESULTS

Analysis of the novels "The Kite Runner" and "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati" shows that both main characters experience three forms of inner conflict, as proposed by Lewin: approach-approach

conflict, approach-distance conflict, and distance-distance conflict. Although all three forms of conflict are present in both characters, there are differences in the source of the conflict, the intensity of the psychological pressure, and how each character responds to the conflict they experience.

1. Inner Conflict of Main Characters Reviewed from the Approach-Approach Aspect

Approach-distance conflict occurs when an individual is faced with two goals that are both positive but cannot be achieved simultaneously. In "The Kite Runner" Amir experiences this conflict through the struggle between his desire for recognition from Baba and his loyalty to Hassan. Meanwhile, in "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati" Ale experiences a similar conflict through the pull between death, which he views as certain, and the memories of life that still hold a powerful allure.

Data 1

"I had to win. There was no other choice. I had to win, and I had to catch that last kite. Then, I would bring it home and show it to Baba. Finally, show him that his son was valuable too." (Khaled Hosseini, 2003:68)

The quote above shows that Amir experienced psychological pulls in two equally positive directions: the desire for Baba's recognition and loyalty to Hassan. This condition is a concrete representation of the approach-approach conflict in Lewin's field theory, where two positive valences are present simultaneously but cannot be achieved simultaneously.

Data 2

"I saw Baba on the roof. He was standing there, shaking his fists. Cheering and applauding. And that was the single greatest event in my twelve years of life, seeing Baba on the roof, finally being proud of myself. But then Baba did something, moving his hands as if an emergency had occurred. Then I understood." (Hosseini, 2003:81)

The quote above shows that although Amir successfully won the tournament and earned Baba's respect, this achievement could not be fully enjoyed because his other positive goal of protecting Hassan was forced to be neglected. The feeling of happiness mixed with moral burden, creating the psychological tension typical of unresolved near-term conflicts.

Data 3

"I only asked for two things: to die peacefully, and a portion of Mrs. Tini's chicken noodles first. Both felt equally important that night. Both were certainties I wanted to achieve." (Khrisna, 2023: 14)

The quote above shows that Ale felt an equally strong psychological pull toward two different goals: death as an escape from suffering and chicken noodles as a final positive memory. Both had a positive valence in Ale's life space, which had long been filled with stress and pain.

Data 4

"I sat in front of that bowl longer than I should have. Something inside me didn't want to rush. Something that had been silent for a long time suddenly whispered: maybe there are still one or two things you haven't tasted." (Khrisna, 2023:47)

This quote demonstrates the emergence of a new positive valence in Ale's psychological landscape. The inner whispers that emerged signaled a real approaching-approaching conflict: between the certainty of a planned death and the possibility that life still holds something valuable.

2. The Main Character's Inner Conflict in Terms of Approaching-Distant Aspect

The approaching-distant conflict occurs when an individual is faced with an object that simultaneously possesses both attraction and repulsion. In the novel *The Kite Runner*, this conflict is reflected in Amir's attitude toward the opportunity for redemption, which he simultaneously desires and avoids. In the novel *A Portion of Chicken Noodles Before Dying*, a

similar conflict is evident in Ale's behavior, who desires social connection but always withdraws before getting too close.

Data 1

"I became who I am today at the age of 12, on a freezing winter day in 1975. I still vividly remember kneeling behind the ruins of a clay wall, peering down a narrow alleyway that stretched near a frozen river. That event was long ago, but my experience has shown me that we can never bury the past. Because, no matter what, it will always emerge, seeking a way out." (Hosseini, 2003:1)

This quote illustrates Amir's core psychological state: past events cannot be buried and always resurface. Rahim Khan's statement that there is still a path to goodness represents an object that is simultaneously desired (redemption) and feared (facing trauma). This tension between the same object and the conflict between Amir's approach and distance is at the heart of his conflict.

Data 2

"Come. There is a path to return to goodness," Rahim Khan said shortly before he ended the conversation. He added the words, as if previously forgotten. "A path to return to goodness." (Hosseini, 2003:240)

The quote above shows that Rahim Khan's words have both an attractive and repulsive force for Amir: he desperately wants to atone for his mistakes, but the journey back to Afghanistan means confronting the trauma and guilt he has been avoiding. The forces of approach and avoidance operate simultaneously on the same object.

Data 3

"I know people say life is beautiful. I don't believe it. But there are small moments that make me pause: when the cat in the alley looks at me without judgment, when the evening sky is orange, when Bu Tini's chicken noodles still taste the same as they did twenty years ago. Those moments draw me in. And I always pull back before I get too close,



because the closer I get, the more painful it is when it turns out it's not enough." (Khrisna, 2023: 62)

The quote above demonstrates a clear pattern of approach-avoidance conflict in Ale. He acknowledges the allure of life's small moments, but actively keeps his distance for fear of disappointment. This dominant avoidance gradient stems from the repeated wounds of rejection since Ale's childhood.

Data 4

"In the cafeteria, I always ate alone. Not because there weren't any empty seats at other tables. But because every time someone smiled at me, I always looked away first. It was easier not to try than to try and fail again." (Khrisna, 2023:33)

This quote demonstrates the behavioral manifestation of Ale's approach-avoidance conflict in the context of social relationships. Another person's smile has a positive valence, but the greater force of avoidance pushes Ale away before there is any possibility of rejection.

3. The Main Character's Inner Conflict Reviewed from the Aspect of Avoidance-Awaiting

A distance-avoidance conflict occurs when an individual is faced with two equally undesirable choices, leaving no safe path. In the novel "The Kite Runner," Amir experiences this conflict when he must choose between defending Hassan or remaining silent. In the novel "Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati," Ale faces a similar conflict between enduring suffering or choosing death.

Data 1

"I opened my mouth, almost saying something. Almost. The rest of my life would have been different if I had. But I didn't. I just watched. Stunned." (Hosseini, 2003:89)

This quote illustrates Amir's psychological state of frozenness. Both available options posed significant threats: defending Hassan meant facing physical danger, while remaining silent meant betraying his best friend.

Data 2

"Actually, I was trying to be a coward because the other option was the real reason I ran away was because Assef told me the truth: Nothing is free in this world. Maybe Hassan was the price I had to pay, the lamb I had to sacrifice, to win Baba's heart." (Hosseini, 2003: 95)

This quote demonstrates Amir's response to the conflict: distancing himself. His admission that Hassan was a "lamb to be sacrificed" is an attempt at rationalization that actually reveals the depth of his psychological conflict.

Data 3

"I don't want to die. But I also don't want to live like this. And I've run out of ways to imagine a different life. So between two things I don't want, I choose the one that at least has an end date." (Khrisna, 2023:19)

The quote above shows that Ale consciously expressed his unwillingness to both death and the life he was currently living. The choice of death was not made because of its positive valence, but because it was perceived as a condition that guaranteed an end to suffering.

Data 4

"Going home to my parents means hearing the same questions again: when will I get married, when will I lose weight, when will I be successful. Not going home means sleeping in this apartment alone, hearing the neighbors laughing behind the wall, and wondering why I can never have that. Both hurt the same way." (Khrisna, 2023: 28)

This quote illustrates the conflict of distancing and distancing in Ale's daily life regarding family relationships. Returning home brings social pressure, while not returning brings painful loneliness. There is no safe position; both directions bring pain of equal intensity.

DISCUSSION

Inner conflict is a crucial element in character development in literary works. Through inner conflict, readers can understand the various

psychological struggles that influence characters' attitudes, actions, and decisions in facing life's challenges. In Khaled Hosseini's novel **The Kite Runner* and Brian Khrisna's novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, the main characters' inner conflicts demonstrate complex psychological dynamics in response to each character's life experiences. Based on Kurt Lewin's conflict theory, the inner conflicts found in both novels include approaching-approaching, approaching-moving, and distancing-moving conflicts. These three forms of conflict are discussed below.

Inner Conflict: Approaching-Approaching

In **The Kite Runner**, Amir's desire to win the kite tournament can be understood not only as personal ambition but also as a determined effort to prove himself to Baba and gain the recognition he has long desired. Inner conflict within characters often stems from an unmet need for recognition, giving rise to ongoing psychological tension. When Amir finally achieves Baba's pride, standing on the roof applauding, this achievement does not bring complete satisfaction because it simultaneously sacrifices his loyalty to Hassan, Lestari et al. (2023:146). Meanwhile, the inability to feel complete satisfaction from a single achievement, when other equally valuable options must be sacrificed, is a characteristic of psychological struggle that can continue to haunt a character's development, Firzanah et al. (2026:74). Muhlason (2021:182) adds that this pattern can develop into a long-term psychological burden that shapes how a character interprets his life experiences.

Meanwhile, in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, it is clear that even though Ale has planned his death, he still feels a strong pull towards a portion of Bu Tini's chicken noodles as a final positive memory he wants to achieve before everything ends. This condition indicates that Ale's psychological field is not completely in darkness, as the attraction of life persists despite profound depression. At the moment when Ale sits longer than necessary in front of the bowl and an inner

whisper emerges that perhaps there are still one or two things he hasn't experienced yet, a new positive valence emerges competing with the decision he has made. This kind of struggle becomes especially intense when two different goals compete in relative balance within the character's consciousness, so that any decision still leaves dissatisfaction (Lestari et al., 2023:149). Inner conflict in literary works serves as a means to reveal the dynamics of a character's psyche through the conflict between desires, hopes, and life experiences (Widiastuti 2023:6).

Inner Conflict: Approaching-Distant Aspect

In *The Kite Runner*, Amir realizes that past events can never truly be buried, but rather continue to resurface and seek ways to confront them. This recognition becomes the psychological foundation that shapes his ambivalence. When Rahim Khan later suggests that there is still a chance to return to goodness, Amir finds himself in a situation he both desires and fears. This condition arises when a single object possesses both attractive and repulsive forces, causing the individual to experience deep doubt in determining their course of action (Miqdad et al., 2023:19). In characters with repeated trauma, the force of avoidance tends to strengthen with previous experiences of disappointment, making the process of moving forward increasingly difficult (Parhana et al., 2023:165). The avoidance response that forms repeatedly in traumatic characters is essentially a self-protection mechanism that can actually prolong the psychological burden the character bears (Fachrudin 2020:5).

Meanwhile, in the novel *SSeporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, Ale's consistent mental pattern is evident: he recognizes small moments that still draw him in, such as the orange evening sky, the non-judgmental cat in the alley, and the consistent taste of Bu Tini's chicken noodles. However, each time the attraction arises, he withdraws before getting too close due to fear of disappointment. In this case, the attraction remains, but the force of



repulsion is more dominant. In another situation, Ale's behavior in the cafeteria, frequently turning away when someone smiles at him, indicates that this avoidance pattern has become an automatic response in his daily social life. Razzaq et al. (2022:6), when the force of avoidance dominates, an individual can appear behaviorally stagnant even though cognitively they still desire change. Avoidance can become an automatic response that is difficult to stop because past experiences continue to reinforce fear schemas every time the individual tries to approach them (Parhana et al., 2023:168).

Inner Conflict: The Aspect of Distancing and Moving Away

In the novel, *The Kite Runner*, Amir realizes that past events can never truly be buried; they continue to resurface, demanding to be confronted. This realization becomes the psychological foundation that forms his ambivalence. When Rahim Khan suggests that there is still a chance to return to goodness, Amir finds himself in a situation he both desires and fears. Miqdad et al. (2023:19) argue that this condition arises when a single object possesses both attractive and repulsive forces, causing the individual to experience profound hesitation in determining a course of action. At this point, previous traumatic experiences reinforce avoidance tendencies, as demonstrated by the findings of Parhana et al. (2023:165). Repeated trauma increases an individual's resistance to moving forward. Fachrudin (2020:5) argues that repeated avoidance in traumatic characters serves as a self-protection mechanism, but at the same time, it prolongs the psychological burden experienced by the character.

Meanwhile, in the novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*, Ale's inner patterns exhibit similar dynamics, but in a more subtle form. He recognizes small moments that still draw him in, such as the orange evening sky, the non-judgmental cat in the hallway, and the consistent taste of Bu Tini's chicken noodles. However, each

time this attraction arises, he withdraws before getting too close due to fear of disappointment. The attraction remains present, but its repulsive force is more dominant in guiding the character's behavior. In its social context, this is evident in Ale's habit in the canteen of frequently turning away when someone smiles at him, indicating that avoidance patterns have become an automatic response in everyday life. The dominance of avoidance mechanisms makes individuals appear behaviorally stagnant even though they cognitively still desire change (Razzaq et al., 2022:6). Repeated avoidance tends to strengthen into an automatic scheme because each previous attempt to approach is always followed by a negative experience that reinforces subsequent fears (Parhana et al., 2023:168).

Comparison of the Main Character's Inner Conflict in the Novel "The Kite Runner" and the Novel *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati*

The near-close conflicts experienced by Amir in *The Kite Runner* and Ale in *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* show fundamental structural similarities, although the contexts behind them are significantly different. Amir is pulled between two goals that are both positive: gaining recognition from Baba through winning the kite tournament, while maintaining his loyalty to Hassan. Meanwhile, Ale also experiences a similar tension, namely between death which he perceives as certainty and the last positive memory of a bowl of Bu Tini's chicken noodles which still holds the appeal of life. Both show that in the psychological field of each character, two positive valences are present simultaneously but cannot be achieved simultaneously, so that the achievement of one goal always requires the sacrifice of the other. In understanding this dynamic, it is important to note that the inner conflict within the character is often rooted in the need for unfulfilled recognition, thus giving rise to ongoing psychological tension as emphasized by Lestari, et al., (2023:146) a similar pattern in the analysis of the main character of the novel *Rasa*. The inability to feel complete satisfaction from a single achievement, when other equally valuable options

must be sacrificed, is a characteristic of the psychological struggle that continues to haunt the character's development, Firzanah and Laksono (2026:74). This pattern develops into a long-term psychological burden that shapes how the character interprets his entire life experience and influences every decision he makes thereafter, Muhlasen (2021:182).

The approach-avoidance conflict experienced by Amir and Ale appears to be superficially different, but shares the same psychological mechanism: both simultaneously desire and avoid the same object or situation. For Amir, that object is the opportunity for redemption offered by Rahim Khan—a much-desired opportunity to escape guilt, yet simultaneously demanding that he return to Afghanistan and confront the trauma he has buried. For Ale, the object is the social connections and small moments of life that still attract him, but which he always pushes away before getting too close due to a deep fear of disappointment and rejection. Thus, the difference between the two lies not in the presence or absence of attraction, but rather in the source of the injury reinforces each character's avoidance tendencies. In this regard, a study by Miqdad et al. (2023:19) found that such ambivalence arises when a single object simultaneously possesses both attractive and repulsive forces, leading the individual to experience profound doubt in determining their course of action. Similarly, Parhana et al. (2023:165) found that in characters with repeated trauma experiences, the force of avoidance tends to strengthen as previous experiences of disappointment increase, making moving forward increasingly difficult. The avoidance response that forms repeatedly in traumatic characters is actually a self-protection mechanism that paradoxically prolongs the psychological burden borne by the characters themselves, Fachrudin (2020:5).

Inner Conflict: The Aspect of Distancing

The avoidance-avoidance conflict experienced by Amir and Ale demonstrates the

most challenging psychological condition of Lewin's three conflict types, as neither option offers relief at this point. Amir is faced with two equally threatening choices: defending Hassan means facing real physical danger from Assef, while remaining silent means betraying his best friend and enduring a lifetime of guilt. Ale also faces a structurally identical trap: surviving life means enduring unbearable suffering and loneliness, but choosing death is not something he truly desires. Both are immobilized because they are stuck in a situation where every direction carries threats, not because of a lack of desire to escape. The most striking difference lies in how each character responds to the trap: Amir chooses silence and then constructs a rationalization that Hassan is a "sacrificial lamb," while Ale chooses death not because of its positive valence, but simply because death is perceived as having the certainty of ending suffering. In understanding this response, Razzaq et al. (2022:6) emphasize that when avoidance mechanisms dominate, individuals can appear behaviorally stagnant even though cognitively they still desire real change. Repeated avoidance tends to become reinforced into an automatic scheme because each previous attempt at approach is always followed by a negative experience that reinforces the subsequent fear (Parhana et al., 2023:168). In line with Widiastuti's (2023:6) opinion, inner conflict in literary works serves as a means to reveal the psychological dynamics of characters through the conflict between desires, hopes, and life experiences. Thus, a comparison of these two characters ultimately confirms the universality of human psychological experience beyond the boundaries of culture and the surrounding social background, as also emphasized by Nitami et al. (2022:76) in their cross-cultural comparative literary study.

Overall, a comparison of the inner conflict between Amir in *The Kite Runner* and Ale in *A Portion of Chicken Noodles Before Dying* shows that although both characters face psychological

pressures from different backgrounds and sources, the psychological dynamics that emerge share significant structural similarities. Amir grapples with guilt and the need for redemption in the socio-cultural context of Afghanistan, which is steeped in the values of family honor, while Ale is trapped in a void of meaning and social rejection amidst the impersonal contemporary urban reality. Thus, differences in context do not eliminate the underlying pattern of internal conflict, namely the tug-of-war between the desire to survive and the urge to escape unresolved psychological wounds. Comparative literature does not stop at identifying thematic similarities but also opens up space to examine how similar conflict structures can emerge in different socio-cultural contexts, as well as how these contexts shape how characters experience and respond to their internal conflicts (Nitami et al., 2022:76).

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Brian Khrisna's *Seporsi Mie Ayam Sebelum Mati* using Kurt Lewin's conflict theory, it was found that the three types of inner conflict—approaching-approaching, approaching-moving, and moving-moving—are present richly and deeply in both novels, albeit with different nuances and contexts.

The approaching-moving conflict is evident in Amir's struggle, torn between his desire for Baba's recognition and his moral responsibility to Hassan, while Ale finds himself in a tug-of-war between death, as a certainty, and the memories of life that still hold a certain allure. The approaching-moving conflict is present through Amir's ambivalence toward the decision to return to Afghanistan, which offers both redemption and danger, and through Ale's desire for connection, which is constantly hampered by the fear of rejection. The moving-moving conflict is depicted in the entrapment of both of them in choices, none of which are free of psychological burdens.

Theoretically, this research confirms that Lewin's three types of conflict can operate simultaneously within a single character and mutually reinforce the psychological dynamics of the story. Practically, these findings demonstrate that a cross-cultural comparative literature approach can reveal the universality of human psychological experience beyond cultural boundaries and social backgrounds. Further research is recommended to expand this study by using other literary psychology approaches, such as Freud's psychoanalysis or Maslow's humanistic psychology, to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the psychological dynamics of characters in cross-cultural literature.

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