



## INNER CONFLICT OF MAIN CHARACTER IN MY HEART AND OTHER BLACK HOLES NOVEL

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### Abstract

This research analyzes the inner conflict experienced by the main character in the novel *My Heart and Other Black Holes*. The focus of the research is on the character Aysel, a teenage girl who feels trapped in dark thoughts and has plans to commit suicide. The research objective of this research is to find out how the inner conflict of the main character is depicted in *My Heart and Other Black Holes* novel as data source.

This research uses descriptive qualitative methods to develop the inner conflict identified. The data of this research was *My Heart and Other Black Holes* novel while the data were narration and dialogue about inner conflict from the novel. This study employed the psychology approach using Freud's id, ego and superego theories. It also employed the inner conflict theory of Kurt Lewin. The conclusion identified three inner conflicts faced by Aysel: her desire to die coupled with indecisiveness, her psychological struggle to find meaning in life through relationships, and her inability to set clear goals due to the complex interplay between her id, ego, and superego. This imbalance among the aspects of her personality, as explained by Freud and Lewin, results in significant internal conflict.

**Keywords:** approach-approach, approach avoidance, avoidance-avoidance, inner conflict

### INTRODUCTION

A literary work can both impart and receive social impact (Klarer, 2003), since it comes from several cultural contexts in society. Literary works arise from the thoughts and experiences of an author while living life, facing problems, and living values; as being tools to convey author's feeling (Kardianyah and Salam, 2021). Literature conveys a meaning or idea through its text's purpose, message, and content (Carter, 2007). By this, the writer uses literature as a tool that contains ideas for works of art (Puspita & Pranoto, 2021). Moreover, literature in the form of a novel describes in detail the character and personality of the characters so as to enable a deeper understanding of human behavior (Quinn, 2009).

Psychology as a description and explanation of states of consciousness, consciousness means things such as sensation, desire, emotion, cognition, reasoning, decision, will, and the like (James, 1892). Freud argued that a person's behavior is not caused by just one desire, but by many desires. Some desires may go unconscious, but they still affect how we take action. The three parts of desire are desire id, ego, superego. Freud states that inner conflict arises as a result of the opposition between the three main personality structure of the id, ego, and superego.

Inner conflict is a complex phenomenon that involves internal opposition between different aspects of a person, such as conflicting values, desires, or identities. This phenomenon is often the result of complex dynamics in individual psychology, which are influenced by various internal and external factors. One of the causes of inner conflict is the disagreement between the needs and internal values of individuals. Inner conflict causes psychology disorder. This conflict is generally experienced by every individual. When a person is faced with a choice between two or more conflicting goals, this inner conflict problem arises. In such situations, individuals have to make difficult decisions because they cannot fulfill all objectives simultaneously. (Masyhur et al, 2023).

This research aim to understand how internal conflicts can affect a person's life. It is very important to understand and analyze literary works like this. Therefore, from here the author raises the study of inner conflicts that affect the main characters depicted in the novel. It means this research will discuss in depth about the inner conflict that exists in Aysel's character. For this reason, a psychological approach was chosen to analyze this issue.

## METHOD

The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method in order to analyze how the inner conflict of the main character is portrayed in the story my heart and other black holes novels. Besides, the qualitative approach focuses on narrative, description, and comprehension analysis (Amelia, 2016; Kasih, 2018). Moreover, the results of this analysis are in the form of words (Kuswoyo and Susardi, 2018). In addition, to some extent, it might help the writer to develop a wider issue of events or phenomena (Ally and Kasih, 2021). As in this research, the best way to do this is from the text in the story of the Novel which will be analyzed one by one wholly. Qualitative research is capable of producing excellent cross-contextual generalities (Fithratullah 2021).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The author presents the findings based on the theories used in this research. Researchers used psychological approaches (Freud) and inner conflict theory (Kurt Lewin). This chapter analyzes Aysel's internal conflict that occurs at the instigation of three human personality structures that work together to shape human behavior. This study focuses on one main character, Aysel. Aysel is the main character in this novel because it affects the storyline significantly. The story focuses on Aysel's emotional struggle as she gets caught in the trap of dark thoughts that drive her to plot suicide. During her journey, Aysel meets another main character, Roman, who shares the same suicidal goals. However as they grow closer, inner conflicts arise when they begin to doubt their plans and find strength and hope through unexpected friendships, which helps them combat despair with new feelings about life and familiarity.

Researchers discuss the type of inner conflict experienced by the main character of My Heart and Other Black Holes Novel. Based on available data, Aysel is a teenage girl who has experienced inner conflict since high school. In this chapter, researchers use Sigmund Freud's psychological approach and Kurt Lewin's inner conflict theory to classify and analyze Aysel's inner conflict. Sigmund Freud explained that the id, ego, and superego are interconnected in the development of human thought. The following data uses the psychological approach of the id, ego, and superego to determine internal conflict using Kurt Lewin's conflict theory. There are three types of conflict according to Lewin, approach approach conflict, approach avoidance conflict, avoidance avoidance conflict.

### Aysel's Internal Struggle

The inner conflict happens to Aysel when she has strong feelings about dying. She likes expressing this feeling in her monologue of this early novel.

**I spend a lot of time wondering what dying feels like. What dying sounds like. If I'll burst like those notes, let out my last cries of pain, and then go silent forever. Or maybe I'll turn into a shadowy static that's barely there, if you just listen hard enough. (Warga, 2015, p.3)**

The Id is evident in Aysel's intense curiosity about dying. She wonders what it feels and sounds like by saying "I spend a lot of time wondering what dying feels like". This reflects a strong unconscious urge to explore and understand death directly, driven by a desire for immediate release from her pain. It is seen from Aysel's statement, "If I'll burst like those notes, let out my last cries of pain, and then go silent forever". Thus it also reflects her Ego. She attempts to mediate the desires by logically contemplating what might happen at death, trying to understand it with common sense and reason.

**Until three years ago, I used to spend the weeks with my dad and the weekends with my mom. But then after my dad got locked away, mom had no choice but to let me live with her and Steve. Before my father's crime my mother used to look at me with a combination of love and longing, like I was a mirror into her past life, a bittersweet memory. (Warga, 2015, p.17)**

This id is clearly visible in Aysel's desire to remain close to her parents and her sense of loss as a result of her father being in prison. She remembers being with her father and saying "I used to spend the weeks with my dad and the weekends with my mom. But then after my dad got locked away, mom had no choice but to let me live with her and Steve". So the thing is an unconscious desire to go back to the past with her father to return to live with her father, even though her father was imprisoned. "But then after my dad got locked away, mom had no choice but to let me live with her and Steve". This reflects Ego, who is Aysel to adjust to the new circumstances where Aysel had to live with her mother and her new partner Steve. Thus, the ego provides a way to maintain a good relationship with her mother, stepfather, by adjusting to the changes in life. The superego has clearly considered adjusting to the changing family life, with a combination of love. It reflects the reality and rational relationship of family norms.

Aysel felt hesitancy with the situations about a decision because the decision has elements like and not like aspects. Kurt Lewin's theory of inner conflict, specifically approach-avoidance conflict, is also visible in Aysel's desires. Aysel is torn between wanting to stay close to her mother and Steve wanting to have a good family relationship, a clear indication of her approach. However, she was also uncomfortable with the new household conditions because she felt uncomfortable with Steve's presence. This reflects the side of conflict avoidance. This is highlighted in her hesitancy about "before my father's crime my mother used to look at me with a combination of love and longing, like I was a mirror into her past life, a bittersweet memory" (Warga, 2015, p.17). The approach-avoidance conflict creates doubt, significant inner anxiety, as Aysel is caught between the desire to go back in the past with her father and the instinct to stay and have a good relationship with her mother and stepfather, the responsibilities of her Superego and the pragmatic concerns of her Ego.

#### **Aysel's Navigation of the Void**

**But sometimes, I'm ravenous. It's almost as if I want to eat as much as I can to fill up the empty void inside of me. Other days, I can barely bring myself to nibble on a piece of toast. But even if today I can muster an appetite, I'm mostly taking the granola bar show. I don't want to give my mom more reasons to worry about me. I know she's not so-sneakily studying me for signs, searching for any clues to my questionable mental state. I'm doing my best to hide it all from her. Once I'm gone, I don't want her to feel guilty thinking there was something she could have done. (Warga, 2015, p.21)**

This id is evident in Aysel's desire to eat much. She wants to fill her empty stomach and says "it's almost as if I want to eat as much as I can to fill up the empty void inside of me". This quotation shows the unconscious will of the id to eat as much as to meet her inner needs. "But even if today I can muster an appetite, I'm mostly taking the granola bar show. I don't want to give my mom more reasons to worry about me". This reflects the ego who Aysel avoids eating a lot. So the ego consciously desires to conform. Although Aysel felt hungry and wanted to eat more, she chose to take snacks, such as granola bars, so that her mother would not worry. This shows the ego's attempt to restrain the id's desires and consider her mother's feelings. Afterwards, Aysel's inner superego realizes that her mother is worried about her mental health and attempts to hide the symptoms that worry her. This shows concern for her mother's feelings.

The imbalance between id, ego and superego creates inner conflict reflected in Aysel experience, "I know she's not so-sneakily studying me for signs, searching for any clues to my questionable mental state. I'm doing my best to hide it all from her. Once I'm gone, I don't want her to feel guilty thinking there was something she could have done" (Warga, 2015, p.21). The monologue of the novel describes the inner conflict type of approach avoidance depicted when Aysel wanted to eat a lot of food, but she wanted to avoid her mother's concern and concern about mental health.

**"Without me, my mom wouldn't have to stay up at night, worrying that the criminal gene, the murderer gene, was passed to me and that any day now, I'm going to blow up the school or something awful like that. I know she can't live through it all anymore-the police, the media, the gossip. I know she doesn't want to think about it, but deep down, I can see her struggling with her fear and her doubts. Her sideways glances and cautiously probing questions are all her way of determining just how much of a mental case I am. I want to say that I know for sure that I'm different from my dad. That my heart beats in a different rhythm, my blood pulses at a different speed." (Warga, 2015, p.23)**

This id is evident in Aysel's desire to reduce her mother's burdens and worries, this reflected in the monologue, "Without me, my mom wouldn't have to stay up at night, worrying that the criminal gene, the murderer gene, was passed to me and that any day now, I'm going to blow up the school or something awful like that". Which may be reflected in the desire to avoid or reduce her presence so that her mother does not feel worried. "I want to say that I know for sure that I'm different from my dad". Ego comes trying to find a way to convince herself that she would not be like her father, which would make her mother afraid and worried without leaving her. Superego, a feeling of moral responsibility that drives Aysel to help her mother through difficult times.

Inner conflict occurs because it results from complex interactions between the id, ego, and superego in response to different internal and external demands. "That my heart beats in a different rhythm, my blood pulses at a different speed." (Warga, 2015, p.23). Based on the quotation above there is a Approach avoidance conflict, when Aysel wants to help her mother but also avoids feelings of guilt and worry about herself that her mother may cause. She felt perhaps distressed between wanting to provide support to her mother and wanting to avoid direct confrontation with issues that might make her feel uncomfortable.

### **Aysel's Inability to Have Goal**

**"Until three years ago, I used to spend the weeks with my dad and the weekends with my mom. But then after my dad got locked away, mom had no choice but to let me live with her and Steve. Before my father's crime my mother used to look at me with combination of love and longing, like I was a mirror into her past life, a bittersweet memory" (Warga, 2015, p.17)**

The structure of human personality according to Freud, The quote of until three years ago, I used to spend the weeks with my dad and the weekends with my mom. But then after my dad got locked away, mom had no choice but to let me live with her and Steve. It depicts Aysel's desire to remain close to both parents and the sense of loss caused by her father being in prison. So the thing that emerged fromid was the desire to return to live with her father, even though her father was imprisoned, but held back by the ego to adjust to the new circumstances where Aysel had to live with her mother and her new partner Steve. Thus, the ego provides a way to maintain a good relationship with her mother, stepfather, by adjusting to the changes in life. The superego has clearly considered adjusting to the changing family life, with a combination of love. It reflects the reality and rational relationship of family norms.

**To identify the inner conflict that occurs in Aysel's character, Freud's psychological approach and the use of Lewin's inner conflict theory are used in the quote depiction of Conflict avoidance. Aysel experiences an inner conflict between two unwanted choices, such as between staying with her mother and Steve that might make her feel uncomfortable, or trying to deal with an uncomfortable situation with her imprisoned father But sometimes, I'm ravenous. It's almost as if I want to eat as much as I can to fill up the empty void inside of me. Other days, I can barely bring myself to nibble on a piece of toast. But even if today I can muster an appetite, I'm mostly taking the granola bar show. I don't want to give my mom more reasons to worry about me. I know she's not so-sneakily studying me for signs, searching for any clues to my questionable mental state. I'm doing my best to hide it all from her. Once I'm gone, I don't want her to feel guilty thinking there was something she could have done. (Warga, 2015, p.21)**

The above quote shows the unconscious will of the id to eat as much as possible to meet her inner needs. Then the ego unconsciously desires to conform. Although Aysel felt hungry and wanted to eat more, she chose to take snacks, such as granola bars, so that her mother would not worry. This shows the ego's attempt to restrain the id's desires and consider her mother's feelings. Afterwards, Aysel's inner superego realizes that her mother is worried about her mental health and attempts to hide the symptoms that worry her. This shows concern for her mother's feelings. In the quote above there are types of inner conflict, which is in accordance with the avoidance-avoidance conflict, which is Aysel wants to avoid making her mother worry about her situation, but also wants to avoid hunger and dissatisfaction inside her.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusions from the analysis of this study are presented in this chapter. The writer draws conclusion in this research from the discussion and findings as follows: this research focuses on the analysis of inner conflict Aysel which is triggered by the interaction of three human personality structures: id, ego, and superego. This research found that Aysel experienced various types of significant inner conflict throughout the story, especially in the context of her suicidal thoughts and her relationship with Roman, who shared the same suicidal goals. Through these interactions, Aysel begins to doubt her plans and finds hope through her closeness to Roman, who helps them fight despair. Using Freud's psychological approach, this research identifies that Aysel's inner conflict often arises from the pull between the id (subconscious desire to die), ego (attempt to understand and mediate this desire logically), and superego (feeling of guilt and moral responsibility). Using Kurt Lewin's inner conflict theory, this research identifies the types of conflict experienced by Aysel, including approach-approach, approach-avoidance and avoidance-avoidance conflicts. So the result of this research is the complexity of Aysel's inner conflict using Freud's psychological framework and Lewin's inner conflict theory. The conflict between the id, ego, and superego, as well as the types of inner conflict identified by Lewin, provide a deep understanding of Aysel's emotional struggles and how she confronts and navigates her conflicts throughout the story.

The conclusion found three of inner conflicts happening to Aysel. First Aysel internal struggle. She had a strong feeling about dying, wanting to be closer with her parents, hesitancy about decisions. The second Aysel in navigation avoidshows Aysel's psychological struggle in searching for the meaning of life as well as her efforts to find a reason to stay alive through relationships with the people around her, namely the romance of her friend who committed suicide. Third, the inability of goals, this shows that Aysel experiences an inability to overcome her inner conflict and have clear goals, reflecting the complex dynamics between id, ego and superego in her personality. These conflicts, both avoidance-avoidance and approach-avoidance, show Aysel's struggle to find a balance between personal desires, moral responsibility, and social reality. Finally, imbalance between id, ego, and superego causes inner conflict. Freud and Lewin's theory explains this dynamic by showing how these three parts of the personality interact with each other, resulting in complex internal conflicts.

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