

Breaking stereotypes and psychological conflict in Armijn Pane's *Belenggu*: A study of modern Indonesian prose

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Abstract - This study examines the psychological conflicts experienced by the main character in the novel *Belenggu* by Armijn Pane, as one of the modern Indonesian novels that highlights a lot of human inner upheavals. The purpose of this research is to explain the forms of psychological conflicts that arise, identify the causes of these conflicts, and see how they impact the actions and character development of the characters. This research uses the hermeneutic approach and the literary psychology approach, and utilizes Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory in the data analysis process. The main data of the research is in the form of narrative quotes and dialogues that show the mental state of the characters, such as guilt, anxiety, confusion, emotional dependence, and feelings of emptiness in life. Based on the analysis, it was found that the inner conflicts experienced by Sukartono, Tini, and Yah were influenced by disharmonious domestic relationships, clashes of cultural values, and unmet emotional needs. The conflict then affects the way they make decisions and deal with problems in the story. The results of this study conclude that the novel not only presents the problem of love, but also describes the search for identity and the psychological struggle of modern humans in understanding the meaning of life. Therefore, this novel has an important value in literary studies that focus on the psychological aspects of the characters. Keywords: literary psychology, inner conflict, novel *Fetters*, characters.

Keywords: *Belenggu* novel; character psychology; inner conflict; literary psychology; narrative technique

1. Introduction



Literary works are widely recognized as products of an author's creativity, imagination, and deep reflection on life, society, and the human psyche. Literature not only serves as a medium for expressing personal and collective experiences but also as a mirror of social dynamics and emotional realities (Jannah et al., 2023; Selpiansyah et al., 2025). Novels, as a prominent literary form, often focus on the complexities of human life, highlighting conflicts, dilemmas, and the search for meaning through imaginative storytelling (Jannah et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025). Armijn Pane's *Belenggu* stands out in Indonesian literature for its nuanced portrayal of psychological conflict, especially as experienced by women navigating the tension between tradition and modernity.

The study of psychological conflict in literature is crucial for several reasons. First, it deepens our understanding of character motivation and development, revealing the intricate interplay between internal desires and external pressures (Selpiansyah et al., 2025; Jannah et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025). Second, it provides insights into broader societal issues, such as trauma, identity, and cultural transition, as reflected in the lived experiences of literary characters (Selpiansyah et al., 2025; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Zahrah, 2025). Third, literary psychology fosters emotional literacy and trauma awareness, making it a valuable tool in educational and therapeutic contexts (Selpiansyah et al., 2025; Fauziyah & Khotimah, 2024). In the case of *Belenggu*, the psychological struggles of characters like Sukartono, Tini, and Yah offer a lens through which to examine the impact of social change on individual identity and well-being.

The most influential framework in literary psychology is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which divides the psyche into three components: the id (instinctual desires), ego (rational mediator), and superego (moral conscience) (Nuryana, 2025; Jannah et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Sitohang et al., 2025; Reanitha et al., 2025; Toshtemirovich, 2024). Inner conflict arises when these components are in tension, leading to anxiety, guilt, and emotional turmoil. Freud's model has been widely applied to analyse character dynamics in both Western and Indonesian literature, revealing how unconscious drives and societal norms shape behaviour (Nuryana, 2025; Jannah et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Sitohang et al., 2025; Reanitha et al., 2025; Toshtemirovich, 2024).

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is another relevant framework, emphasizing that unmet basic needs (such as safety, belonging, and self-esteem) can trigger psychological conflict and emotional distress (Zahrah, 2025). This approach is particularly useful for understanding characters whose struggles stem from deprivation, alienation, or the search for self-actualization (Zahrah, 2025).

Literary psychology is inherently interdisciplinary, bridging the gap between psychological theory and literary analysis. It allows for a nuanced exploration of how fictional narratives reflect and shape our understanding of human consciousness, emotion, and social interaction (Selpiansyah et al., 2025; Jannah et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Fauziyah & Khotimah, 2024; Reanitha et al., 2025).

Numerous studies have explored psychological conflict in literature using psychoanalytic and other psychological frameworks. Research on novels such as *Gadis Pantai* and *Rumah Tanpa Cahaya* demonstrates the utility of Freud's id, ego, and superego in dissecting character motivations and emotional struggles (Jannah et al., 2023; Kurniawati et al., 2025). These studies reveal that inner conflict is often rooted in the clash between personal desires and social expectations, leading to feelings of guilt, shame, and anxiety (Kurniawati et al., 2025; Kurniawati, 2025; Sitohang et al., 2025; Reanitha et al., 2025).

Studies on *Rumah Untuk Alie* show that unmet needs for security, love, and esteem are central to the protagonist's psychological turmoil, highlighting the relevance of Maslow's hierarchy in literary contexts (Zahrah, 2025). Research on modern Indonesian novels identifies various types of inner conflict, such as approach-avoidance and approach-approach conflicts, which are shaped by the characters' ambitions, fears, and social roles (Fauziyah & Khotimah, 2024). Analyses of Western classics like *Macbeth* and *Wuthering Heights* confirm that psychoanalytic theory is broadly applicable, revealing universal patterns of psychological



struggle and transformation (Sitohang et al., 2025; Sitohang et al., 2025; Toshtemirovich, 2024). Studies emphasize that psychological conflict in literature is not only an individual phenomenon but also a reflection of broader social, familial, and cultural dynamics (Selpiansyah et al., 2025; Kurniawati et al., 2025; Zahrah, 2025; Toshtemirovich, 2024).

Research on modern Indonesian prose frequently addresses gender, identity, and psychological dimensions, but direct work on *Armijn Pane's Belenggu* is relatively limited and often fragmented. Studies on the psychology of literature in Indonesia remain less common than sociological or anthropological approaches, partly because researchers feel underprepared in psychology and perceive mental-process analysis as difficult (Ahmadi, 2022).

This is important for *Belenggu*, which hinges on inner conflict, guilt, and divided selfhood, but much existing criticism treats it more as a “social” or “nationalist” novel than as a psychological case study.

Ahmadi's work on masculinities in Indonesian novels demonstrates how male characters embody both “healthy” traits (strength, responsibility, honesty) and “toxic” traits linked to violence and crime (Ahmadi, 2022). While this research does not discuss *Belenggu*, it models a psychology-of-masculinity framework that could be productively applied to Sukartono's crisis of masculinity and his failure to conform to modern/ethical ideals. However, Ahmadi focuses on contemporary novels (*Orang-orang Biasa*, *Rafilus*), not 1940s prose, so diachronic changes in masculine norms are left underexplored.

The next three works you listed all use literary/cultural texts to explore psychological and social themes (self-confidence, social class, nostalgia/relationships). A critical review should assess their theoretical clarity, methodological rigor, and contribution compared with broader scholarship on *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Laskar Pelangi*, and contemporary media analysis. The self-confidence study on *The Old Man and the Sea* should be evaluated against rich existing frames: aging masculinity and performativity (Wohlmann, 2025), heroism criticism (Dhakal, 2025), eco-criticism and ecological ethics (Das, 2025; Niazi, 2021; Yun-Fe, 2015; Bhattarai, 2023), and cognitive metaphor analysis of the “sea” (Xu, 2025).

A strong review would ask: Does “self-confidence” engage with age studies (late-life creativity, dignity in aging (Wohlmann, 2025), and non-human ethics (Das, 2025; Niazi, 2021; Yun-Fe, 2015; Bhattarai, 2023), or is it reduced to generic “bravery”? The *Laskar Pelangi* social-class paper should be judged by how explicitly it uses class theory (Marx, Bourdieu, postcolonialism) and whether it avoids moralizing readings common in school-based discussions of the novel. The *Reply 1988* article needs clear conceptual definitions of nostalgia and bonding, ideally dialoguing with media studies and East-Asian family/culture scholarship (missing in the database, so check against external literature).

Feminist readings of Indonesian fiction show that women are no longer portrayed only as passive and submissive, but increasingly as subjects who openly or covertly resist patriarchal norms (Muslimat et al., 2025). Muslimat et al. (2025) reveal female characters who reject religiously justified oppression through personal struggle, intellectual debate, and norm-breaking acts. This resonates strongly with *Belenggu's* female figures (Rohana and Yah) who contest traditional gender roles, but most feminist work surveyed here concentrates on post-2000 novels and explicitly religious frameworks, not on early modern secular-urban texts.

The literature also highlights how religion and cultural norms are socially constructed tools of male dominance and how women's resistance arises from critical awareness of this misuse (Muslimat et al., 2025). *Belenggu* invites a similar analysis of marriage, morality, and respectability, yet there is a gap: feminist criticism rarely returns to canonical early modern works to trace the genealogy of such resistance. Psychological criticism of Indonesian prose is acknowledged as rare, particularly regarding inner conflict and mental processes (Ahmadi, 2022). Masculinity studies have not yet systematically engaged with canonical texts like *Belenggu* to historicize changing male identities (Ahmadi, 2022). Feminist work on resistance and stereotype-breaking largely focuses on 2000s novels and religious themes, leaving early modern



urban novels like *Belenggu* under-theorized as precursors of later female agency and gender conflict (Muslimat et al., 2025).

The literature indicates that psychological conflict in literary works can be examined through the interaction between characters' internal psychological conditions and the social, cultural, and narrative environments in which they exist. Studies of Indonesian novels have identified inner conflict as an important element in character development, particularly through psychological pressures, moral dilemmas, identity crises, and struggles between personal desires and external expectations. Research on *Robert Anak Surapati*, *Pasung Jiwa*, *Kau, Aku, dan Sepucuk Angpao Merah*, *Terusir*, and *Rumah Untuk Alie*, for example, demonstrates that psychological approaches can reveal the complexity of characters' emotional and mental experiences (Apriyanti, 2023; Anmawar et al., 2023; Nuriyati, 2018; Sukini et al., 2024; Zahrah, 2025). Similarly, studies employing Freud's psychoanalytic framework emphasize the role of the id, ego, and superego in explaining character behavior and internal tension (Aswal, 2023; Fauziyah & Khotimah, 2024; Istikawati et al., 2024; Nuryana, 2025; Toshtemirovich, 2024).

The study of character conflict also intersects with broader questions of gender, social inequality, religious values, and resistance. Literary characters may experience psychological tension when their individual aspirations conflict with cultural norms, social expectations, or patriarchal structures. Research on Indonesian novels shows that women's resistance can be represented through struggles for autonomy, rights, justice, and recognition, thereby demonstrating how psychological conflict is closely connected to social and ideological conditions (Hasanuddin et al., 2025; Asia et al., 2025). The development of female characters and their strategies for confronting social pressures further indicates that conflict can function as a means of representing individual agency and self-defence (Pratiwi, 2013). In this context, literary psychology provides a useful perspective for examining not only what characters experience internally but also how their psychological conditions are shaped by the social structures surrounding them.

Previous studies have examined *Belenggu* by Armijn Pane from diverse perspectives, including social criticism, colonialism, nationalism, modernization, sociology of literature, and character comparison. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that the novel presents complex social and cultural tensions, particularly in relation to women, modernity, colonial experience, and interpersonal relationships (Maulidya, 2022; Tang et al., 2024; Sari & Zulfadhli, 2026; Wulandari, 2023; Ernis, 2018). However, existing studies have predominantly emphasized sociological, feminist, historical, and social-critical dimensions of the novel, while the psychological dimensions of its characters have received comparatively less attention. In particular, limited attention has been given to how internal psychological struggles are constructed and represented through characters' thoughts, emotions, motivations, decisions, and interpersonal interactions. This limitation indicates a research gap concerning the nature and representation of psychological conflict in *Belenggu*.

The relevance of psychological approaches to literary interpretation is further supported by studies of other literary and cultural works. Previous research has addressed a range of issues related to identity, self-confidence, social relationships, memory, emotional experience, and social class, demonstrating the significance of psychological and social dimensions in understanding literary characterization. Research on *The Old Man and the Sea*, for example, highlights the development of self-confidence through the protagonist's experiences and characterization, while the analysis of *Laskar Pelangi* demonstrates how social class influences characters' relationships, opportunities, and life experiences. Similarly, literary studies of *Sebuah Usaha Melupakan*, *This Is Me! Whatever You Say*, and *Miracle in Cell No. 7* emphasize emotional experience, personal identity, resilience, and interpersonal relationships as important dimensions of literary and cultural interpretation. Research on *Reply 1988* further extends this perspective by examining nostalgia and its interconnected relationships with friendship, family, and love in contemporary Korean popular culture (Wajdi et al., 2023a; Wajdi et al., 2023b; Wajdi et al., 2023c; Wajdi et al., 2024a; Wajdi et al., 2024b; Wajdi et al., 2025). Taken together, these studies



demonstrate that literary and cultural texts offer significant representations of psychological, emotional, and social experiences that contribute to the complexity of characterization.

Studies of other literary works further demonstrate the applicability of psychological perspectives to the analysis of character complexity. Research on *The Old Man and the Sea* examines masculinity, creativity, human–nature relationships, and metaphorical meanings, indicating that literary characters can be understood through interconnected psychological, cultural, and symbolic dimensions (Wohlmann, 2025; Bhattarai, 2023; Niazi, 2021; Das, 2025; Xu, 2025). Similarly, research on *Macbeth* demonstrates the applicability of psychoanalytic perspectives to literary characterization and personality development (Sitohang et al., 2025). These studies reinforce the importance of examining characters not only in relation to their social and cultural environments but also in terms of their internal psychological processes. Accordingly, a psychological approach to *Belenggu* provides an opportunity to extend existing interpretations of the novel by examining the internal dimensions of its characters' experiences. Therefore, the present study focuses specifically on the psychological conflicts experienced by the characters in *Belenggu*. Rather than viewing psychological conflict solely as a reflection of broader social conditions, this study examines how internal struggles are manifested through the characters' thoughts, emotions, motivations, decisions, and interactions with others. This approach is expected to provide a more focused understanding of character complexity and to complement previous sociological, feminist, historical, and cultural interpretations of the novel. By addressing the comparatively limited attention given to psychological conflict in previous research, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how internal psychological struggles function in the construction of characterization and meaning in Armijn Pane's *Belenggu*.

Table 1: Main research strands linked to *Belenggu*'s themes

Strand of research	Main focus	Relevance / limitation for <i>Belenggu</i>
Feminist criticism, resistance to patriarchy	Women's open/hidden resistance to religiously justified gender oppression	Offers tools for reading Rohana/Yah as resisting norms, but corpus is post-2000 and religion-centred, not 1940s urban modernity (Muslimat et al., 2025)
Psychology of masculinities	Healthy vs. toxic male behaviours in recent Indonesian novels	Provides a masculinity framework for Sukartono's conflict, but ignores early modern texts and broader psychological nuance (Ahmadi, 2022).

Based on the above, the following research problems are formulated for the study of *Belenggu*: (1) What are the forms of psychological conflict experienced by the main characters in *Belenggu*? (2) What factors contribute to the emergence of inner conflict in Sukartono, Tini, and Yah, particularly regarding the clash between traditional and modern values? (3) How do these psychological conflicts influence the characters' thoughts, attitudes, and actions throughout the narrative? (4) What psychological changes do the characters undergo as a result of social, emotional, and moral pressures?

The psychological conflicts depicted in *Belenggu* are emblematic of the broader human struggle to reconcile personal desires with societal expectations. By applying psychoanalytic and psychological frameworks, this research aims to illuminate the complex interplay between individual psyche and cultural context, contributing to the development of literary psychology in Indonesian and global literary studies.

2. Method

This research method uses a hermeneutic approach and a literary psychology approach. This approach was chosen because the research seeks to interpret the inner meanings, symbols, and psychological experiences of the characters in the novel *Belenggu* by Armijn Pane. In hermeneutics, literary texts are understood not just as a series of stories, but as a space of meaning

that continues to develop and can be understood through a deep process of interpretation. Therefore, the researcher tries to reread the experiences of Sukartono, Tini, and Yah as a form of existential struggle that is not only visible on the surface, but also implied through dialogues, narratives, and symbols used by the author.

The literary psychology approach is used to see how the psychological conditions of the characters play a role in shaping the plot, characters, and meaning of the story. The hermeneutic method was chosen because this study focuses on the analysis of texts and meanings, not on the calculation of numbers. Through this method, the researcher described the findings in the form of quotes, narratives, and dialogues in novels that contain psychological elements. The goal is to understand the psychological symptoms of the characters in depth and describe how the inner conflicts reflect the complexity of modern humans that are characteristic of Indonesian prose in modern times. The data source consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data came from the main text of the novel *Belenggu* by Armijn Pane, while secondary data was obtained from literary theory books, scientific journals, articles, and previous research that discussed the theory of literary psychology and psychoanalysis. This source is used as a theoretical foundation in understanding the personality of the characters and the inner conflicts they experience.

The data collection process is carried out using the library research method. The researcher reads the text of the novel thoroughly and marks the parts that describe the psychological state of the characters, such as guilt, loneliness, indecision, and emptiness. The citations found are then recorded and categorized based on the type of conflict or psychiatric symptoms that arise. The data became the basis for the next analysis process.

The analysis technique used is content analysis. This analysis examines the content of the novel text, then interprets the psychological meaning it contains. The theory used to help the analysis process is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, explaining that the structure of human personality consists of three aspects, namely id, ego, and superego. Through this theory, the researcher traces how these elements interact with each other and cause inner conflicts in the characters in the novel *Belenggu*. For example, Sukartono's character is described as being between inner impulse (id) and morality (superego), which ultimately causes tension in him.

The stages of data analysis in this study are carried out through several steps. First, the researcher identified the data by tracing quotes that described the existence of psychological conflicts in the characters. After that, the data found are classified according to the type of conflict, for example conflicts in the form of guilt, depression, and emptiness. The next step is to interpret the data by examining the hidden meaning behind the dialogue and actions of the characters through the perspective of literary psychology. Finally, the researcher draws conclusions to formulate the forms of inner conflict and human values that emerge from the overall results of the analysis. other relevant research. This step is taken so that the resulting analysis is more objective and can be scientifically accounted for.

Through this method, the researcher seeks to show that the psychological conflicts in the novel *Belenggu* not only depict the inner struggles of individuals, but also reflect the changing way of modern human perspectives on life, love, and morality. Thus, this work can be understood not only as a personal story, but also as a reflection of modern Indonesian prose that highlights the complexity of the human soul in the midst of social and cultural changes.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

In this section, the results of research obtained from the analysis of various quotes in the novel *Belenggu* by Armijn Pane are presented. The data displayed are findings related to the forms of psychological conflict experienced by the main characters. The presentation of results is made in a sequential manner by grouping the quotes based on the type of influence that triggers the inner conflict based on verbal influence. Each data is then explained to see the type of conflict, its triggering factors, and its impact on the character. This section is the basis for understanding the psychological dynamics of the characters before being explained further in the discussion section.



3.1.1 Inner Conflict Based on Verbal Influence

The following table presents a summary of data on psychological conflicts that appear in the novel *Belenggu* by Armijn Pane. The presentation of this table aims to make it easier for readers to understand the patterns of inner conflict experienced by the characters before entering into a more in-depth analysis explanation. With a structured format, readers can see an overview of the character's psychological dynamics clearly and systematically.

Table 2: Inner Conflict Based on Verbal Influence in the Novel <i>Belenggu</i>						
No	Data	Data Code	Information	Influencing Factors	Psychic Impact	
1.	"The feeling of anger turns into a feeling of displeasure with himself"	KB/B/18	Internal conflict and guilt	Introspection after anger	Guilt, restlessness	
1.	"His own face is dark."	KB/B/25	Inner Loneliness and Emptiness	Loneliness in the household	To the Kehampa	
2.	"Feeling happy in his heart because he was nurtured like this. Such a thing has been long awaited."	KB/B/33	Inner Intimacy and Need for Affection	Unmet affection needs	Emotional dependence, inner fragility	
3.	"Don't go, don't let me go; You said let it dream for a long time. You are the one who planted hope"	KB/B/38	Verbal emotional dependence (heart expression)	Fear of losing a dependency figure	Anxious, afraid of being abandoned	
4.	"It would be nice if he kept quiet, just died."	KB/B/55	Inner Depression, Internal Depression	Domestic pressure, heavy social roles	Mild depression, desire to end suffering	
5.	"Desire to grasp the hand of his soul, hold the soul"	KB/B/64	Inner Battle verbal symbols	Desire to improve the relationship but unable to	Inner conflict between hope and reality	
6.	"He felt empty, like something was missing from his soul."	KB/B/78	To the Kehampa	The trauma of losing a child and unstable relationships	Confusion of the direction of life	
7.	"The letters seem to dance without meaning."	KB/B/83	Tono's inner recovery	Process of receiving a statement	Inner peace, acceptance	
8.	"Strange calm, calm like water that stops rippling after a long storm."	KB/B/87	Tono's inner recovery	Process of receiving a statement	Inner peace, acceptance	
9.	"He smiled smalllly, feeling that he was part of them no longer as someone who was isolated,	KB/B/90	Inner balance	Getting back into the mix with the environment	Social recovery, emotional balance	



10.	"Tears of Tini dot"	KB/B/132	Emotional release (non-verbal, but internal)	Long-harbored emotional stress	Emotional release, momentary relief
11.	"Tono is awake... raised his hands toward the rising sun."	KB/B/148	A new hope, a symbiote of inner recovery	New awareness after a long process	Optimism, psychic awakening ¹

The inner conflicts that arise through words and inner conversations in *Fetters* show that the psychological struggles of the characters are more born from their own minds. Characters like Sukartono, Tini, and Yah are often shrouded in guilt, disappointment, or emptiness that comes from reflection and conversations in their hearts. This condition gives an idea that emotional problems at that time were more predominantly influenced by the way the character interpreted himself and the circumstances around him, rather than from real physical or social pressure. This is in line with the opinion of Martilopa (in Endraswara 2013) who emphasizes that the psychological conflicts of characters in modern Indonesian novels often stem from conflicts of values within themselves, inner dialogue, and repetitive moral associations.

3.1.2 Inner Conflict due to Others

Table 2 makes data about the factors that affect the appearance of psychological conflicts in characters in the Novel *Belenggu*. Each quote in this table shows how certain conditions or situations can trigger the inner tension of the character. The presentation of this data helps to clarify the relationship between the events experienced by the characters and the form of conflict that arises, so that readers can understand the process of forming conflicts in a more targeted manner before further analysis is carried out.

Table 3: Inner Conflict due to Others' Words in the Novel *Shackles* by Armijn Pane

No	Data	Data Code	Information	Influencing Factors	Psychic Impact
1	"No, where is the notepad? You both understand, that is what does not please doctor Sukartono. Others are aware of his wife's behavior toward him."	KB/B/15	Sukartono was offended by the maid's remarks	A maid's speech that opens up the disgrace of the household	Shame, offended, decreased self-esteem
2.	"Patient, patient, forever patient, his wife is abandoned..."	KB/B/35	Tini was angry and reprimanded, triggering Sukartono's moral conflict	Tini's words that rebuke and accuse	Guilt, anxiety, moral conflict

The inner conflicts that arise due to the words of others in *Belenggu* show that the character is very sensitive to the comments or criticisms received. Sukartono's embarrassed reaction when his maid mentions his condition, or his anger when Tini reprimands, suggests that speech can directly trigger considerable emotional distress. This indicates that speech is still an important aspect that is closely related to self-esteem and social honor. This finding is in line with the view of Mulyana (2005) who explained that verbal communication is very likely to trigger conflict because it is related to a person's efforts to maintain self-image in the eyes of others.



3.1.3 Inner Conflict Due to the Actions of Others

Table 4 presents the psychological impact experienced by the characters in the Novel Belenggu due to the conflicts they feel. Each included quote describes a change in the character's attitude, emotions, or inner state in response to the conflict. The preparation of this table aims to provide a more systematic overview of how conflict affects the psychological development of characters before being explained in detail in the next discussion.

The inner conflicts triggered by the actions of others are less numerous than the verbal conflicts in this novel. This shows that physical behaviour or real actions are not too often a source of psychological problems for the characters. Even so, Yah's action of staying away and about to leave still caused emotional pressure for Sukartono. Such avoidant behaviour can give rise to fear of loss and reinforce the character's inner dilemma. This view is supported by Rakhmat (2005) who states that non-verbal behaviours such as withdrawing or withdrawing can cause insecurity and emotional anxiety in human relationships.

Table 4: Inner Conflict due to the Actions of Others in the Novel Shackles by Armijn Pane

No	Data	Data Code	Information	Influencing Factors	Psychic Impact
1.	"His mind is calm when he's there... but his thoughts: If I let go, well."	KB/B/40	Conflict due to the Action of Yah who wants to leave (Actions trigger anxiety)	Yah's actions that often go away or stay away	Fear of loss, inner dilemma

3.2 Discussion

The novel Belenggu by Armijn Pane illustrates how complicated the inner conflicts of man are. Various emotional conflicts such as guilt, feelings of emptiness, and moral pressure experienced by the characters are in line with Rahmadhani's (2020) analysis which states that imbalances in social relations and cultural pressures are often triggers for the emergence of psychological conflicts in Indonesian novels. The symptoms of existential anxiety experienced by Sukartono and Tini are also strengthened by the findings of Sari (2021) who states that characters in modern literature tend to experience identity crises due to the clash between personal desires and social demands.

Feelings of guilt and moral conflict are common features in literary works that depict domestic problems. From this, it can be seen that Belenggu not only tells the story of a love triangle, but also reflects the psychological condition of a person who is looking for self-control in the midst of emotional pressure. This is reinforced by Fadhilah (2023) who emphasizes that characters who live in times of cultural change are more vulnerable to facing moral dilemmas that trigger prolonged anxiety. The dynamics of inner conflict in this novel are still relevant to people's lives today because they reflect the struggle of humans in balancing emotional needs and social demands.

The psychological conflict in this novel also shows how the elements of id, ego, and superego clash with each other, which is in line with the latest literary psychology studies. Astuti et al. (2026) explained that inner conflicts usually arise when the ego is unable to mediate emotional urges and strict social rules, as experienced by Sukartono when he oscillated between comfort with Yah and his obligations as a husband to Tini. In addition, Pramudita (2021) revealed that female characters in modern Indonesian literature are often under identity pressure that makes them experience mild depression, clearly seen in Tini who experienced mental exhaustion due to her unmet emotional needs. Emotional dependency like the one experienced by Yah is a form of relational trauma that arises from the instability of life experiences. Nurdyana (2024) added that the inner struggles of the characters are usually reflected through symbols, dark narratives, or repetitive introspective dialogues. Based on these findings, the mental structure of

the characters in *Belenggu* can be understood as a psychic network that is interrelated with social norms and their emotional experiences, thus forming complex behaviours.

In addition to highlighting the inner conflict, this novel also depicts the psychological healing process of the characters. Hidayati (2021) stated that literary works that display emotional dynamics usually show the character's recovery flow from the crisis phase to self-acceptance, as experienced by Sukartono and Tini towards the end of the story. Sukartono's inner calmness process is in accordance with the opinion of Widyaningrum (2022) who states that emotional calmness in literary texts is a sign that the character has succeeded in achieving harmony between the ego and the superego. On the other hand, the release of emotions through crying experienced by Tini is supported by the findings of Mutia (2023) which confirms that emotional expression is a healing mechanism for female characters in Indonesian literary works. Changes in Yah's self, which experiences emptiness, is also relevant to Safitri's research (2025) which states that characters who lose emotional grip usually experience disorientation before finally adapting to new conditions. Therefore, the novel *Belenggu* not only presents psychological conflicts, but also depicts the stages of mental recovery that show the human journey from adversity to self-acceptance. This novel succeeds in affirming its position as a modern literary work that remains relevant in reading the psychological dynamics of society until today.

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the comprehensive analysis of fifteen instances of inner conflict in the novel *Belenggu*, it is evident that the primary source of psychological turmoil for the characters is rooted in the verbal domain—notably, in their recurring thoughts, feelings, and internal dialogues. These internal verbalizations serve as the main arena where emotional struggles unfold, highlighting the significance of self-reflection and personal interpretation in shaping the characters' psychological states. While conflicts arising from the words of others are also present, they tend to be more situational and are closely linked to the characters' sensitivity to criticism, sarcasm, or external judgment. Such conflicts are often triggered by specific interactions and are less persistent than those generated internally.

In contrast, conflicts instigated by the physical actions of others are the least frequent. This pattern suggests that, within the narrative structure of *Belenggu*, emotional pressure and psychological tension are predominantly influenced by how characters process and interpret language—both their own and that of others—rather than by direct physical events. The dominance of internal conflict underscores the novel's focus on the inner lives of its characters, making psychological struggle a central element in the development of the story and the evolution of its protagonists.

This finding aligns with broader literary psychology research, which emphasizes that novels often use internal conflict as a means to explore complex emotional and moral dilemmas. For example, studies on other Indonesian novels, such as *Gadis Pantai*, reveal similar patterns where guilt, shame, sadness, hatred, and love are intricately woven into the characters' internal experiences, shaped by both personal reflection and social context (Jannah et al., 2023). The use of literary psychology, particularly psychoanalytic theory and emotion classification, proves effective in uncovering the layers of inner conflict and emotional dynamics that drive character development.

4.2 Suggestion

The results of this study indicate that the literary psychology approach is highly valuable for understanding how language—both spoken and internalized—shapes the emotional dynamics of literary characters. However, the current research is limited in scope, as it focuses solely on a single novel and specific categories of inner conflict. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding, future research should consider the following directions:

- (a) Comparative Analysis: Examine multiple novels from the same historical period or literary movement to identify recurring patterns and variations in the portrayal of inner



conflict. This would help determine whether the dominance of verbal/internal conflict is a broader trend in Indonesian literature or unique to *Belenggu*.

(b) Interdisciplinary Approaches: Integrate literary psychology with social and historical analysis to contextualize inner conflicts within the broader cultural, societal, and historical frameworks. This can reveal how external factors such as class, tradition, and social change influence the psychological experiences of characters (Jannah et al., 2023).

(c) Educational Application: Develop teaching materials that utilize literary works to help students explore and understand emotional and psychological complexity. For instance, using novels like *Belenggu* or *Gadis Pantai* in high school curricula can foster empathy, critical thinking, and self-awareness among students (Jannah et al., 2023).

By broadening the scope of analysis and incorporating interdisciplinary perspectives, future studies can enrich our understanding of character development and inner conflict in Indonesian literature, offering deeper insights into the human condition as reflected in literary works.

The study of inner conflict in *Belenggu* demonstrates the centrality of internal verbal processes in shaping character psychology. Expanding research to include comparative, interdisciplinary, and educational approaches will provide a richer and more nuanced understanding of inner conflict and character development in Indonesian literary tradition.

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