

**THE MAIN CHARACTER'S BEHAVIOR CHANGES
DESCRIBED IN ANA HUANG'S *TWISTED LOVE***

THESIS

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FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI MAULANA MALIK IBRAHIM
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HUANG'S *TWISTED LOVE***

THESIS

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Requirements for the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra* (S.S.)

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MALANG

2026

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I state that the thesis entitled "**The Main Character Behavior Changes Described in Ana Huang *Twisted Love***" is my original work. I do not include materials previously written in the bibliography. Hereby, if there is any objection or claim, I am the only person who is responsible for that.

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MOTTO

There is no one who doesn't have a hard time. Being thankful or giving thanks is one
of the keys to being happy

- Mark Lee

Long story short, I survived

-Taylor Swift

DEDICATION

With love and support, I dedicate this thesis to:

The biggest support in my life,

My lovely mother, Sumini, and my loving father, Jamaludin

My three beloved siblings, Nina Nuraini, Ahamad Fani, and Rahmawati Nuraini

All my friends who have always given me motivation and support

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Shalawat and salam were continuously to flow to the Prophet Muhammad SAW, may this peace and blessing of Allah be upon him, his family, his friends, and his followers, until the end of time. This thesis, titled *The Main Character Behavior Changes in Ana Huang Twisted Love*, was written to fulfill one of the requirements for achieving a degree of Sarjana Sastra (S.S) in the Department of English Literature, Universitas Islam Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

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The researcher realizes that there are still many weaknesses that need to be corrected and improved in the preparation of this thesis. Therefore, the researcher hopes to receive feedback on this thesis as well as continued research related to the topic or subject of this thesis. The researcher hopes that this thesis will be useful for researchers and the general public.

Malang, 16 May 2026

The Researcher

Hil Diana

ABSTRACT

Diana, Hil (2026). *The Main Character Behavior Changes Described In Ana Huang's Twisted Love*. Undergraduate Thesis. Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities, Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University. Advisor: Hafidhun Annas M.Hum.

Keywords: Behaviour Changes, Behaviours, Response, Stimulus, Twisted Love

Changes in human behaviour are often described in literary works as a reflection of real life, one of the examples is Ana Huang's *Twisted Love*, which shows changes in the behaviour of its main character. This study aims to analyse the behavioural changes that occur in the main character, Alex Volkov, in Ana Huang's *Twisted Love* using B.F Skinner's behaviourism theory, specifically the concept of stimulus and response. This study used a literary criticism method with a psychological approach. The main data source was the 2022 edition of *Twisted Love*, with data taken from dialogue and narrative quotes that reflect the main character's behaviour patterns. The research findings indicate that Alex Volkov's behavioral changes occurred through two mechanisms: stimuli and responses. The stimuli Alex received included an eliciting stimulus, a traumatic experience, and a discriminative stimulus: the presence of Ava Chen and his new social situation. Meanwhile, the responses Alex exhibited included a respondent response, an automatic emotional reaction, and an operant response, a behavioral change that developed slowly through repeated social interactions.

ABSTRAK

Diana, Hil (2026). Perubahan Perilaku Tokoh Utama yang digambarkan dalam *Twisted Love* karya Ana Huang. Jurusan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Humaniora, Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim. Pembimbing : Hafidhun Annas M.Hum.

Keywords: Behaviour Changes, Behaviours, Response, Stimulus, Twisted Love

Perubahan perilaku pada manusia sering digambarkan dalam karya sastra sebagai cerminan kehidupan nyata. Salah satu novel karya Ana Huang yang berjudul *Twisted Love* menampilkan perubahan perilaku tokoh utamanya secara jelas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis perubahan perilaku tokoh utama, Alex Volkov, yang terjadi dalam novel *Twisted Love*. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori behaviorisme yang dikembangkan oleh B.F. Skinner, khususnya pada konsep stimulus dan respons. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kritik sastra dengan pendekatan psikologis. Sumber data utama adalah novel *Twisted Love* edisi 2022, dengan pengambilan data berupa kutipan dialog dan narsum yang mencerminkan pola perilaku tokoh utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perubahan perilaku Alex Volkov terjadi melalui dua mekanisme, yaitu stimulus dan respons. Stimulus yang diterima Alex meliputi eliciting stimulus berupa pengalaman traumatis dan discriminative stimulus berupa kehadiran Ava Chen beserta situasi sosial barunya. Sementara itu, respons yang ditunjukkan Alex meliputi respondent response berupa reaksi emosional otomatis dan operant response berupa perubahan perilaku yang terbentuk secara bertahap melalui interaksi sosial yang berulang.

مستخلص البحث

ديانا، هيل (٢٠٢٦). التغيرات السلوكية للشخصية الرئيسية كما صُوِّرت في رواية «الحب الملتوي» لآنا هوانغ. قسم الأدب الإنجليزي، كلية العلوم الإنسانية، جامعة مولانا مالك إبراهيم الإسلامية الحكومية مالانج. المشرف: حافظ الأتاس، الماجستير العلوم الإنسانية .

الكلمات الأساسية: الاستجابة، الحب الملتوي، التغيرات السلوكية، المثير، النظرية السلوكية.

تُصوِّر التغيرات السلوكية لدى الإنسان في الأعمال الأدبية بوصفها انعكاسًا للحياة الواقعية. وتُظهر رواية «الحب الملتوي» للكاتبة آنا هوانغ التغير السلوكي للشخصية الرئيسية بصورة واضحة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل التغير السلوكي الذي طرأ على الشخصية الرئيسية أليكس فولكوف في رواية «الحب الملتوي». ويستخدم هذا البحث النظرية السلوكية التي طوَّرها بورهوس فريدريك سكينر، ولا سيما مفهومي المثير والاستجابة. كما يعتمد البحث على منهج النقد الأدبي ذي المدخل النفسي. وتتمثل مصادر البيانات الرئيسية في رواية «الحب الملتوي» الصادرة سنة ٢٠٢٢، حيث جُمعت البيانات من خلال الاقتباسات الحوارية والسردية التي تعكس الأنماط السلوكية للشخصية الرئيسية. وأظهرت نتائج البحث أن التغير السلوكي لدى أليكس فولكوف حدث من خلال آليتين، هما المثير والاستجابة. وتمثلت المثيرات التي تلقاها أليكس في المثير الاستثاري المتمثل في التجارب الصادمة، والمثير التمييزي المتمثل في وجود آفا تشين والظروف الاجتماعية الجديدة المحيطة به. أما الاستجابات التي أظهرها أليكس فتمثلت في الاستجابة الانعكاسية التي ظهرت في صورة ردود أفعال انفعالية تلقائية، والاستجابة الإجرائية التي تجلّت في تغيرات سلوكية تشكلت تدريجيًا من خلال التفاعلات الاجتماعية المتكررة.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the background of the study, including previous studies, the problem of the study, the significance of the study, the limitations of the study, and definitions of the key terms. This study focuses on the behavior change of the main character in the novel *Twisted Love* by Ana Huang.

A. Background of the Study

Changes in human behavior have become a major issue in society, especially in the dynamics of modern life, which have increased psychological pressure. The pressure that humans often experience can affect the way they think and feel in their daily lives. According to Heimlich & Ardoin, (2008) , behavioral change does not occur directly, but rather gradually through small, observable actions. Not everyone is aware of these changes because they are often triggered by stress, trauma, or complex emotional experiences. Schmid et al., (2024) show that stress has been proven to be the cause of a shift from goal-oriented behavior to habitual behavior. Such automatic reactions occur more often in stressful situations than in everyday life. This shows that changes in human behavior are not only influenced by rational consciousness, but also by the relationship between stimulus and response formed from personal experience.

This phenomenon of human behavioral change is also reflected in literary work. According to Laurenson & Swingewood (1972), literary works are a faithful representation of the human social world, a reflection of various aspects of real human life. In addition to serving as entertainment and a tool for criticism, literary works also serve to describe issues in narratives based on daily life. Rezende & Shigaef (2023) mention that a fictional narrative can help develop social cognition, which includes empathy and understanding of other people's thoughts and actions through mental simulations of social interactions described in a story.

One type of literary work that can be used as a medium to show a person's behavior is a novel. According to Inayyah & Simanjuntak (2022), literary works that have stories that are not too long or too short are called novels. Novels are expected to positively influence readers and provide an understanding of the social events that occurred at that time. Novels contain storylines, plots, and characters that show society in daily life. Through its characters, a novel not only tells fictional stories but also provides insight into the psychological and social aspects of humans.

A novel that shows the complex dynamics of human behavior is *Twisted Love* (2021) by Ana Huang. This contemporary romance novel tells the story of Alex Volkov, a man with a cold, introverted personality who tends to keep his distance from others. This behavior is the result of traumatic experiences in his past that left him with emotional pain and deep guilt. As a result, Alex becomes

defensive and finds it difficult to express his emotions and build close relationships with others.

The plot develops when Alex is asked to look after Ava Chen, the little sister of his best friend, while her brother is abroad. Ava is described as a warm and empathetic person who brings new emotional stimulus into Alex's life. Alex's interactions and interpersonal experience with Ava bring out new responses that differ from his previous behavior, showing a behavioral change that happens gradually throughout the story

This study aims to analyze behavior changes in Ana Huang's novel, *Twisted Love*, through Skinner's Theory of Behavior. According to Skinner (2014), the process of operant conditioning shapes human behavior, which is the result of interactions between a person and their environment. During the process, behavior is reinforced or weakened by the consequences that follow. Behavior followed by positive reinforcement tends to be repeated, while behavior followed by negative consequences tends to decrease. Skinner emphasized that experiences and learning obtained through reinforcement are the source of behavior, not unconscious impulses. This theory was chosen because it can explain the character changes in Ana Huang's novel *Twisted Love*, where emotional experiences and interpersonal relationships serve as motives and stimuli that influence the main character.

The researcher has found ten studies related to the topic of this research. Several previous studies have used B.F Skinner's behaviorism theory to analyze character behavior in literary work. Research by Sukowati et al. (2024) analyzed

behavioral changes of characters in Niduparas Erlang's novel *Burung Kayu*, and they found that environmental factors play a significant role in shaping behavioral changes through the interaction of stimulus-responses. In line with this study, Pordan et al. (2023) found the presence of operant conditioning and classical conditioning in characters' responses to environmental stimuli. While according to Mustapa et al. (2022) revealed the relationship between behaviorist psychology and linguistic behavior. These three studies indicate that behavior is influenced by environmental stimuli and the learning processes experienced by individuals.

Another previous study that also applied Skinner's theory was conducted by Akrama et al. (2023) and found that the concepts of stimulus and response influence changes in characters' behavior, especially in terms of parental advice and love. Meanwhile, Unsayaini et al. (2020), who used Skinner's behavioral analysis to examine the behavior of the main character in Andrea Hirata's novel *Orang-orang Biasa*, they found that the characters' behavior was influenced by positive and negative reinforcement and cultural evolution.. Haris et al. (2024) analyzed the psychological development and behavior of the main character in Sandra Brown's novel *Breath of Scandal*. Through this research, they identified twenty-eight stimulus-response behaviors that shape the protagonist's behavior. The results show that trauma and betrayal shape the character's emotional defense mechanisms.

In addition to studies that apply Skinner's Behaviorism theory, several other studies have examined character behavior through different approaches.

Matrood (2025) analyzes trauma and interpersonal relationships in the novel *Twisted Love* through critical discourse analysis. On the other hand, Sihotang & Mubarak (2024), they use Freud's psychoanalytic theory to examine the personality of the main character in Matt Haig's novel *The Midnight Library*. Furthermore, Wati & Tawami (2024) and Purnami et al. (2022) found that traumatic experiences influence behavior and emotional responses, and the social interaction of characters in literary works.

Overall, previous studies show that Skinner's Behaviorism theory has been mostly applied in analyzing the behavior of literary characters. This helps readers understand how stimuli relate to responses to the environment. However, most studies have not discussed the external and emotional aspects of behavior that influence a character's reaction to traumatic experiences or interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, this study is trying to combine behavioral analysis through Skinner's theory with looking at the environment. factors that come up in Ana Huang's novel, *Twisted Love*. This is important because behavioral change is a key component in understanding character development, particularly in literary works that depict complex psychological and emotional transformations. This study is expected to give a better understanding of the process of behavioral change in relation to emotional and environmental influences by focusing on how behavior changes through patterns of stimulus and response.

B. The Problem of the Study

Based on the background of the study, the study focuses on answering one question:

1. How does the main character's behavior change in the novel *Twisted Love*?

C. Significance of the Study

This research has both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it is hoped that this research will contribute to the advancement of literary research, particularly that related to psychology. This study bridges the relationship between literature and psychology by using BF Skinner's and Behaviorism Theory, enhancing our understanding of how external stimuli and reinforcement affect characters' actions and emotional development. In addition, this study can be a reference for future researchers who want to study contemporary romantic fiction about human behavior and emotional development.

In practical terms, this research helps readers and academics understand how emotional experiences and trauma influence human behavior, both in fiction and in reality. Readers can understand how emotional reinforcement and emotional learning contribute to changes in behavior through the analysis of Ales Volkov's behavior. This study can help readers analyze psychological character development using behavioral principles. They can also encourage empathy towards people who have trauma and change their behavior in the real world

D. The Scope and Limitation

This scope of research uses Bf Skinner's Behaviorism Theory, specifically the concept of stimulus and response. This research analyzes the behavior change of the main character, Alex Volkov, in Ana Huang's novel *Twisted Love*. The focus of this analysis is to find the external and emotional stimuli that drive Alex's actions and how his behavior is influenced by these stimuli.

The limitations of this study are that it only analyzes one main character in the novel *Twisted Love* and focuses specifically on behavior changes from a behaviorist perspective. This study does not discuss the development of other characters, nor does it analyze psychological conditions clinically. In addition, this study does not include an analysis of other novels in *The Twisted Series* or adaptations of the work. The research data is limited to the data found in the novel *Twisted Love* and uses B.F skinner's behaviorism theory as its main foundation.

E. Definition of Key Term

The following are some key terms used in this study to avoid misunderstanding and provide a better understanding of the concepts discussed:

1. Behavior

Behavior is a term that refers to any action or response that can be observed by a person to a specific environmental stimulus

2. Stimulus

A stimulus is defined as an event or condition in the environment that triggers a response or reaction in a person. External factors or emotional triggers in this study influence the actions of the main character in *Twisted Love*.

3. Response

A response is a reaction or behavior that follows a specific stimulus. In this study, response refers to how the main character, Alex Volkov, responds to emotional or environmental stimulus described in the novel.

4. Behaviorism Theory (Skinner's Theory)

According to Skinner's behaviorist theory, the interaction between stimulus, response, and reinforcement determines human behavior. This study analyzes the behavioral transformation of the main characters in *Twisted Love* using this framework.

CHAPTER II

THE REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section contains paragraphs defining each point discussed by the researcher. It will discuss the definitions of the psychological approach and BF Skinner's Behaviorism Theory. The following is a complete explanation.

A. Psychological Approach

The psychological approach to literature views literary works as reflections of the human psyche. We can analyze characters and conflict in literary works in the same way as human behavior in the real world, driven by motivation and responses to social circumstances. According to Paris (1997), no single psychological theory can fully explain the complexity of human behavior. Therefore, we can use various psychological theories, such as Freud's, Jung's, Adler's, and Honet's, simultaneously to understand characters in literary works. Therefore, analyzing the motives and behavior of characters in literary works requires a psychological approach.

Furthermore, the psychological approach is also based on contemporary cognitive research, which shows that reading fiction can enhance human social mental processes. According to Eekhof et al. (2022), literary works can serve as real-life models for readers to understand the feelings and thoughts of others. These results strengthen the theoretical basis of psychological methods for character analysis because they demonstrate that the same psychological mechanisms are activated in literary works as in human social interactions.

According to Wimmer et al. (2021), social cognition in fiction reading increases when readers identify with the protagonists and simulate their social interactions. This process demonstrates a direct relationship between the representation of literary characters and the reader's psychological response. Therefore, a psychological approach not only allows readers to understand the characters but also helps them understand the emotional dynamics depicted. Based on this foundation, this study uses a psychological approach to analyze the behavior of the main character in Ana Huang's novel *Twisted Love*, which will be further explained through Skinner's Theory of Behavior.

B. Skinner's Theory of Behaviorism

Behaviorism is one of the many approaches that have emerged in psychology as a science. Generally, behaviorism is a research methodology that emphasizes the importance of observing behavior. This approach argues that our understanding of human beings is based on empirical elements that can be objectively observed and measured. This is in line with Graham (2023), who states, 'Behaviorism is no exception.' Loosely speaking, behaviorism is an attitude- a way of conceiving empirical constraints on the attribution of psychological states. Strictly speaking, behaviorism is a doctrine- a way of conducting psychological or behavioral science itself. Despite the contributions of various individuals who developed behaviorism more systematically, the behaviorist approach continues to

evolve. B.F. Skinner is one of the figures who played a significant role in the development of this story.

According to Zaini, (2014), Burrhus Frederic Skinner was born on 20 May 1904 in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, United States. Since Childhood, Skinner showed a strong interest in the arts and intellectual worlds, especially in the field of literature. Skinner received a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Hamilton College, New York, in 1928. After graduating, he tried to become a writer, despite the fact that his father disapproved of this choice because it was not economically viable. However, after a year, Skinner chose to continue his education at the graduate level at Harvard University. He began to study psychology, which he had not previously studied in depth.

After that, Skinner studied psychology at Harvard University with a focus on animal behavior and earned his doctorate from 1931 to 1936. He worked and conducted research at Harvard with a focus on animal nervous system studies. After that, he taught at the University of Minnesota from 1936 to 1945. Experimental analysis of behavior was his main field of study. Known as a leading figure in behaviorism, Skinner conducted many experiments with non-human creatures, such as rats and pigeons. He also believed that the process of operant conditioning controls human behavior.

To provide an understanding of how individual behavior develops and changes, Skinner created a theoretical framework within the behaviorist

perspective that explains the relationship between the environment and individual actions. This theory not only defines behavior but also explains the mechanism through which behavior appears, is reinforced, and changes as a result of interactions with environmental stimuli. Some of the key concepts underlying the analysis within this framework are stimulus and response. These two concepts are interconnected in explaining how behavior is shaped and the changes caused by the experiences and consequences an individual receives.

B. F. Skinner created a theory of behavior that focuses on observable behavior, not internal mental processes or psychological drives. According to (Skinner, 2014), it is not motivation or invisible inner conflict that determines human behavior, but rather the interaction between the individual and their environment. Consequently, behavioral analysis must focus on the relationship between environmental stimuli and the organism's responses.

1. Stimulus

In Skinner's behaviorist theory, a stimulus can be defined as any environmental event or circumstance that can control behavior. Skinner emphasized that stimulus do not function on their own, rather, they take meaning through an individual's conditioning history. In other words, a stimulus becomes significant not only because of its form, but also because it becomes significant due to its function in relation to responses and consequences.

Within his theoretical framework, Skinner (2014) identified two types of stimulus that have different roles in shaping behavior. The first stimulus is the eliciting stimulus, which directly triggers an automatic response without the need for learning first, for example, the fear that appears spontaneously when hearing a loud noise. The second stimulus is the discriminative stimulus, which stimulus that does not trigger a response directly but functions as a signal that a specific response is more likely to result in reinforcement.

According to Skinner (2014), that state, *“when a discrimination has been established, we may alter the probability of a response instantly by presenting or removing the discriminative stimulus”* (Skinner, p.104). Furthermore, discriminate stimulus acts as a stimulus that influences the possibility of a behavior appearing, not as the direct cause of that behavior. Understanding these two types of stimulus is important in analyzing behavior changes, because changes in environmental conditions, whether physical or social, directly influence the response patterns shown by individuals.

2. Response

A response is a creation or action exhibited by an individual as a result of a stimulus received. According to Skinner (2014), responses can be analyzed scientifically if they are observed and measured. He explains that

responses do not occur by chance, rather, they are formed through a learning process that occurs over time from repeated experiences. Therefore, changes in responses indicate that changes in behavior are influenced by an individual's interaction with their environment. Skinner identified two main categories of behavior: respondent response and operant response, which together form the basis for understanding the processes of learning and behavioral change in humans.

a. Respondent Response

According to (Skinner, 2014), respondent behavior is behavior that occurs as an automatic response to a specific stimulus. This behavior is reflexive and influenced by biologically ingrained stimulus-response relationships. The most common examples are spontaneous fear when hearing a loud noise or the reflexive blinking when a bright light is shone into the eyes. In Skinner's works, this behavior is often associated with classical conditioning, the process by which an organism learns to connect one stimulus with another. Respondent behavior in literary research can help explain a character's spontaneous reactions to trauma or past memories triggered by a particular situation

b. Operant Response

According to BF Skinner, most human behavior falls into the category of operant response. Skinner explains that operant response is behavior that comes from the organism itself, and it's not triggered by a specific stimulus. Unlike reflex responses, operant behavior is not “elicited” by a stimulus, but rather elicited by the individual. Skinner states that *“operant behavior, in short, is emitted rather than elicited”* (Skinner, 2014, p.104). This means operant behavior is not an automatic reaction to an external stimulus, it comes from personal experience and the consequences of previous actions.

The process of forming operant responses can be explained without the need for a stimulus to work before the behavior occurs. In his book, Skinner explains that in many cases, behavior cannot be linked to a single consistent preceding stimulus. He notes that *“operant conditioning may be described without mentioning any stimulus which acts before the response is made”* (Skinner, 2014, p.104), which shows that operant behavior is very different from reflex responses, which depend on a specific stimulus.

However, Skinner explains that operant responses ultimately create a significant relationship with the environment. A response is only reinforced under certain conditions, resulting in the formation of this relationship. In this case, the stimulus does not function as the direct cause of the behavior, but rather as an opportunity for the behavior to occur. Skinner states that “a

stimulus is the occasion upon which a response is followed by reinforcement.” (Skinner, 2014). The learning process in which individuals learn to distinguish the conditions that allow reinforcement to occur is called *operant discrimination*.

Through operant discrimination, a response becomes more frequent in certain situations and less frequent in others. According to Skinner, stimulus in operant behavior do not function to elicit responses directly, but rather to regulate the possibility of a response occurring. He mentions this in his book, “*The discriminative stimulus does not elicit a response, it simply alters a probability of occurrence*” (Skinner, 2014, p.107). Therefore, behavior is not understood as an automatic reaction, but as an action influenced by previous consequences. Based on B.F skinner’s behaviorist theoretical framework, this study uses the concept of stimulus and response as a theoretical basis for understanding the formation and change of behavior. The concept of respondent response explains an individual’s automatic reaction to a certain stimulus, while the operant response explains behavior that develops from experience and the impact of action taken. These two concepts allow for systematic behavioral analysis. Therefore, Skinner’s behaviorism theory becomes the main theoretical basis for analyzing the behavior of the main character in the novel *Twisted Love*, especially to understand how the character’s behavior changes as a result of the stimulus and responses depicted in the narrative.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

In this section, explain the methodology that was used in this study. This chapter includes the research design, data source, data collection, and data analysis, which are the sub-chapters that comprise this segment.

A. Research Design

This study uses a literary criticism method. According to Wellek & Warren (1956), literary criticism aims to characterize and analyze literary works based on literary theory systematically. This method was chosen because the data in this study consists of literary texts, which are dialogue and narrative quotes from Ana Huang's novel *Twisted Love*, which are then analyzed to describe the patterns of the main character's behavioral changes in more detail.

This study also uses a psychological approach during the analysis process because the primary focus of the study is the behavior of the main character. A psychological approach allows researchers to investigate the relationship between stimulus and response according to Skinner's theory of behavior.

Therefore, literary criticism serves to analyze and interpret data comprehensively, while the psychological approach serves as a theoretical basis for analyzing how the main character's behavior is influenced and shaped by the environment.

B. Data Source

The primary data source in this study is the novel *Twisted Love* by Ana Huang. This novel was first published in 2021. This study uses the 2022 printed edition of the novel, published in Great Britain by Piatkus. This novel has 359 pages and is the first part of The Twisted Series, which consists of four books: *Twisted Love*, *Twisted Games*, *Twisted Lies*, and *Twisted Hate*. This novel does not have a table of contents and is divided into 44 chapters, including an epilogue. Each chapter is numbered and labeled with the name Alex or Ava, indicating the perspective from which the events in each chapter are described.

The data in this study consists of words, phrases, sentences, dialogues, and narrative quotes from the novel *Twisted Love* that reflect patterns of behavior change in the main character, Alex Volkov. Specifically, the data includes dialogue and narrative quotes that reveal Alex's verbal responses to stimuli in his environment.

C. Data Collection

The data collection technique used in this study was library research. This technique was chosen because all data were obtained from written sources. The data collection process began with a thorough reading of the novel to deeply understand the plot and main characters through close reading. After understanding the entire content of the novel, the researcher identified sections of the text that described changes in the main character's behavior, especially those

indicating the presence of stimuli and responses. Next, the identified data were grouped according to Skinner's theoretical concepts of stimuli and responses for the analysis process.

D. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using literary criticism analysis, which described and interpreted the data based on B.F. Skinner's behavioral theory. The analysis process began with a close reading of all the collected data that reflect the pattern of behavioral change in the main character of the novel *Twisted Love*. Each data quote was then analyzed in depth to identify the relationship between stimuli and responses that shaped Alex Volkov's behavioral changes.

The analysis and interpretation process concludes with the researcher drawing conclusions based on the overall results. These conclusions are presented to show how the main character's behavior changes in the novel *Twisted Love* were reflected in B.F Skinner's behaviorism theory, especially through the concepts of stimulus and response.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the research findings in response to the research question outlined in Chapter I. The discussion in this chapter focuses on analyzing the behavior changes of the main characters in Ana Huang's novel *Twisted Love* using the behaviorism theory proposed by B.F Skinner. Specifically, this chapter discusses how the main character's behavior changes through interaction with the environment, and this interaction is analyzed based on the relationship between stimulus and response. This research is presented in the form of novel quotes, including both dialogue and narration, which are analyzed to identify changes that occur throughout the narrative. Furthermore, these findings are discussed with reference to the concepts of stimulus and response in behaviorism theory.

The analysis in this chapter is divided into two main sections to make the discussion easier to follow. The first section discusses the stimuli experienced by Alex Volkov throughout the story, which are classified into eliciting stimuli and discriminative stimuli based on B.F. Skinner's behaviorist theory. The second section discusses the responses shown by Alex Volkov in reaction to these stimuli, which are classified into respondent responses and operant responses.

A. Stimulus Received by Alex Volkov

According to Skinner's (2014) behaviorism theory, an individual's behavior does not arise suddenly, but is shaped through interactions between the individual and their environment. Skinner argues that behavior can be understood through the relationship between stimulus and responses. Therefore, to understand the behavioral changes of the main character in the novel *Twisted Love*, it is important to identify the stimuli that influence the responses of the character, Alex Volkov.

A stimulus is a situation or environmental condition that influences the appearance of a behavior. According to Skinner (2014), stimuli are divided into two types: eliciting stimulus and discriminative stimulus, each of which has a different role in influencing individual behavior. The stimuli in this study were identified through various experiences and social interactions that Alex Volkov experienced throughout the plot of the novel *Twisted Love*. Therefore, this subsection discusses the stimuli experienced by Alex Volkov and classified them into eliciting stimuli and discriminative stimuli.

1. Eliciting Stimulus

According to Skinner (2014), an eliciting stimulus is one that directly triggers a response, a response that is automatic and does not require prior learning. That is, when an individual experiences a stimulus that carries strong emotional significance, it can elicit a spontaneous response.

The character Alex Volkov has several life experiences that serve as eliciting stimuli, including traumatic experiences related to loss and threats to those he cares about. These stimuli not only affect Alex's psychological condition but also shape specific response patterns that appear repeatedly throughout the story.

But after seeing what those men did, I wanted to torture them slowly. Endlessly
(Huang, p.231)

This data appears in a flashback to Alex's childhood, when he watched his family being murdered. At a very young age, Alex experienced the traumatic loss of his parents and sister after they were killed by several people. This incident became one of the most meaningful moments in Alex's life and influenced him throughout the story. Therefore, the death of Alex's family can be identified as an eliciting stimulus because it creates a traumatic condition that elicits an automatic response.

According to Skinner (2014), stimuli related to distressing conditions can function as elicit stimulus because they are directly connected to an automatic response. The murder of Alex's family was a meaningful environmental incident. Different from ordinary situations, this incident involved the loss of a loved person and a threat to personal safety, making it a distressing experience.

"I didn't care about birthdays, they were meaningless..."
(Huang, p.61)

This data appears in a flashback describing Alex's childhood. In the flashback, Alex starts his day as an orphan. In this section, Alex reflects on how he views

birthdays, which he usually sees as meaningless, though he used to think they were special before his parent died. This data not only reveals his perspective on a celebration but also shows how he has shaped his thinking about social experiences since childhood.

According to Skinner (2014), behavior is the relationship between a stimulus and a response, which is influenced by the environment and past experiences. Skinner also explains that “the current strength of behavior is due to events which have occurred in the past history of the organism.” Showing that past experiences shape behavior. In this data, a “birthday” can be seen as a social stimulus to which people typically respond positively. However, Alex's response is the opposite. He views birthdays as meaningless. This cannot be separated from Alex's past experiences, especially the loss his parents, which probably influence the way he thinks about the way he thinks.

This condition can be understood through the history of reinforcement, in which individuals are influenced by past experiences. Although Alex has had a positive birthday experience, not all experiences influence behavior. Positive experiences that are brief tend to have a smaller effect than those that are more emotionally intense. As a result, negative experiences related to social relationships, including a potential lack of emotional attachment, dominate Alex's perspective. Social stimuli like birthdays are met with disinterest, indicating that Alex's behavior does not emerge suddenly but is part of a response pattern shaped by past experiences.

*"I snuck peeks at Alex throughout the film, hoping to catch some sort of reaction. None. Nada."
(Huang, p.70)*

This datum takes place while Ava and Alex are watching an emotionally dramatic film (a melodrama). The reason they're watching the movie together is because of a challenge from one of Ava's friends. They call it "Operation Emotion." In this situation, the movie that they watch serves as an eliciting stimulus, the type of stimulus that typically triggers an automatic response such as sadness or being moved. Back to the data, in this situation, Ava looks at Alex several times out of the corner of her eye, hoping to see if he's sad or at least showing some kind of emotional reaction to the film. But her hopes were not realized. Throughout the movie, Alex showed no emotional reaction or any other reaction.

According to Skinner (2014), every stimulus from the environment can produce different responses, which depend on a person's past experience and habits. Based on this data, the movies they watch as eliciting stimulus can produce automatic feelings, such as sadness or being touched, but in Alex's situation, these stimuli do not produce a visible reaction. This shows that not all stimuli automatically result in a response, especially in cases where that response has never been reinforced or become a habit.

*"I'll be right here. I won't let anything happen to you." He radiated calm confidence. "Do you trust me?" (Huang, 155)
Alex clutched my arms, his face white. "Jesus," he breathed, pulling me roughly into his chest while I choked out a sob. (Huang, 156)*

This data arises when Ava had a sort of blackout while trying to swim in the pool. In that situation, Ava's dangerous condition immediately caught Alex's attention. The situation created an urgent situation that involved a threat to someone's safety. Therefore, Ava's dangerous condition can be categorized as an eliciting stimulus because it is directly related to the appearance of a spontaneous reaction.

According to Skinner (2014), explain that an eliciting stimulus is a stimulus that is directly related to the appearance of reflexive behavior, an emotional response, or an emotional behavior that occurs automatically. It contrasts with a discriminative stimulus, which serves as a trigger for a behavior, but an eliciting stimulus has a direct relationship with a specific response. Therefore, stimuli that carry a threat often produce a spontaneous response.

Based on the data identified above, it can be seen that the eliciting stimulus found in the novel is closely related to traumatic experiences and situations that threaten the safety of people who are important to Alex Volkov. According to Skinner (2014), he states that *"Trigger stimuli appear to be more coercive in nature. Their cause-and-effect relationship with behavior is relatively simple and easy to observe."* (p. 108) This is in line with the findings in the data above, where stimuli related to loss and threats to people Alex cares about tend to produce more spontaneous and immediate reactions compared to typical social stimuli.

2. Discriminative Stimulus

According to Skinner (2014), a discriminative stimulus that does not directly elicit a response but serves to raise the possibility of a specific behavior that will result in a specific consequence or reinforcement.

For Alex Volkov, the social interactions and new experiences he experiences throughout the story serve as a “discriminative stimulus” that influences changes in his behavior. The presence of Ava Chen, his interaction with those around him, and the social interactions he faces have created a new environmental situation that slowly influences Alex’s response patterns. These stimuli do not directly force Alex to change, but they increase the possibility of new behaviors based on the consequences he learned from those experiences. Therefore, this subchapter discusses the various discriminative stimuli received by Alex Volkov.

In the first chapter of *Twisted Love*, the first interaction between Alex and Ava takes place when Alex has to pick up Ava on the orders of Josh, Ava’s older brother and Alex’s friend. However, this interaction reveals a unresponsiveness due to Alex’s reaction. This is seen when Ava attempts to initiate communication, but the narrative indicates that:

“Thanks for picking me up, I appreciate it,” I said in an attempt to break the icy silence. I failed. Miserably. Alex didn’t respond or even look at me. (Huang, p.6)

According to Skinner (2014), an understanding of behavior can be achieved through the relationship between stimulus and responses produced from previous

experiences. In this data, Ava said, “Thanks for picking me up....” This is a stimulus, which is an initial form of communication that typically expects a response, such as a verbal reply or nonverbal. Therefore, Ava’s action of initiating communication can be identified because it creates social conditions that enable a specific behavior from Alex to appear.

She ignored me. “I call it...” Dramatic pause. “Operation Emotion.” She looked up and drew an arc with her hand as the words would magically appear in the air. “Creative,” Stella teased. “Hear me out. We all think Alex is a robot, right? Well, what if she ...” Jules pointed at me. “...can prove he isn’t? Don’t tell me you guys don’t want to see him act like an actual human being for once.” (Huang, p.53)

This data happened when Ava and her friend were discussing Alex’s reputation for being cold and unable to show emotion. They then created a challenge called “Operation Emotion” with the hope of seeing if Alex is capable of showing emotions as most people do. Through this challenge, Ava started to interact more closely with Alex and tried to find situations that would bring out his emotional side.

In this data, “Operation Emotion” functions as a social situation that creates an opportunity for certain behaviors to emerge in Alex. Therefore, “Operation Emotion” can be classified as a discriminative stimulus because it creates a social environment that enables new behaviors and interactions to emerge from Alex. According to Skinner (2014), a discriminative stimulus is a stimulus that alters the probability of a behavior occurring because it is associated with specific consequences. Thus, “Operation

Emotion” can be understood as a discriminative stimulus because it provides conditions that support behavioral changes in Alex Volkov.

*I wish I'd had my camera ready, because the expression on Alex's face?
Priceless. He looked like a frozen mannequin except for his eyes (Huang, p. 141)*

*It took some effort, but he eventually relaxed more and more throughout the night until he was **eating** and chatting with people like a normal human (Huang, p. 142)*

This data appears when Ava and her friends have a surprise birthday party for Alex. Since the death of his parents, Alex has stopped celebrating his birthday and considers it unimportant. Therefore, the party becomes an unusual social experience for Alex. Throughout the event, Alex finds himself surrounded by social interaction, attention, and warmth from the people around him.

The surprise birthday party scenario in this data can be identified as a discriminative stimulus. The party, which was attended by Ava's friend, created a social condition that signaled the situation was different from the social condition Alex had usually been avoiding. According to Skinner (2014), state that the discriminative stimulus does not elicit a response, it simply alters the probability of occurrence (p.104). This indicates that a discriminative stimulus does not directly force a behavior to occur, but rather only increases the possibility of that behavior occurring.

Ava swept into my life like a sunrise after dark. Awakening creatures within my soul that I thought had died a long time ago: guilt. Conscience. Remorse. (Huang, p. 225)

This data appears as Alex reflects on the changes that have been happening in his life since Ava came into his life. Before meeting Ava, Alex lived a life full of past

trauma and tended to close himself off from emotional connections with others. However, as time has passed, Ava's presence has brought new experiences and interactions that have gradually influenced Alex's life. Therefore, Ava's presence can be classified as a discriminative stimulus because it created an environmental condition that increased the likelihood of behavioral changes in Alex.

According to Skinner (2014), a discriminative stimulus does not directly elicit behavior, but rather alters the probability of a specific behavior occurring. The stimulus enables an individual to express behavior different from what they previously showed. In this case, Ava's presence did not directly change Alex's behavior, but it introduced a new social and emotional environment into his life. This environment then created opportunities for behaviors that Alex had never shown before to appear. In this way, Ava's presence can be understood as a discriminative stimulus because it created conditions that supported behavioral change in Alex Volkov.

Based on the data identified above, it can be seen that the discriminative stimuli found in the novel *Twisted Love* appear in various social and environmental situations that slowly influence the appearance of new behaviors in Alex Volkov. Skinner (2014) explains that "*the discriminative stimulus does not elicit a response; it simply alters the probability of occurrence*" (Skinner, 2014, p. 107). This statement indicates that a discriminative stimulus does not directly force a behavior to occur but changes the

probability of that behavior occurring based on consequences the individual has previously learned.

Furthermore, Skinner (2014) explains that “*a stimulus is the occasion upon which a response is followed by reinforcement*” (Skinner, 2014, p. 104). This indicates that a discriminative stimulus functions as a condition or opportunity, not a direct cause for a behavior to occur and receive reinforcement. Skinner (2014) also states that “*The social environment contains vast numbers of such contingencies. A smile is an occasion upon which social approach will meet with approval.*” (Skinner, 2014, p. 105). This statement shows that the social environment is full of discriminative stimuli that continuously influence the likelihood of various behaviors appearing in an individual, including social behaviors that have never been shown before. Therefore, when new environmental conditions are consistently present in an individual’s life, these conditions can function as discriminative stimuli that slowly change which behaviors are most likely to appear.

B. Response Given by the Main Character

A response is a behavior that occurs after an individual receives a stimulus from their environment. According to Skinner (2014), responses are classified into two types: respondent response and operant response, which represent different types of behavior resulting from an individual’s interaction with the environment. In Skinner’s theory, stimulus and response are related because every behavior arises as a reaction to specific conditions or events experienced by the individual. Therefore, this subsection

discusses the response shown by Alex Volkov in reaction to the stimuli that were discussed in the previous subsection and classifies them into respondent responses and operant responses based on B.F Skinner's behaviorism theory.

1. Respondent Response

According to Skinner (2014), a respondent response is a response that arises as a result of a specific stimulus and occurs automatically. In the case of Alex Volkov, several experiences involving threats and loss conditions triggered spontaneous responses. Therefore, this subsection discusses the various respondent responses shown by Alex Volkov in reaction to the eliciting stimulus that was discussed in the previous subsection.

*But after seeing what those men did, I wanted to torture them slowly. Endlessly
(Huang, p.231)*

This data appears in a flashback to Alex's childhood, when he watched his parents and sister being murdered. That traumatic experience had a deep impact on Alex's life and influenced his behavior until adulthood. In this data, Alex expresses his desire to punish the murderers after watching his family being killed. This statement indicates an emotional reaction that arises immediately following the traumatic incident. Since this response is a direct reaction to an eliciting stimulus, it can be categorized as a respondent response.

According to Skinner (2014), a respondent response is a reaction triggered by a specific stimulus and occurs automatically. In this data, the murder of Alex's family served as the stimulus that elicited a strong emotional reaction. Therefore, Alex's desire to harm the murderers can be understood as a respondent response because it appeared as a direct reaction to the traumatic experience he faced.

"What I want, Uncle," I said, my voice still registering the clear, high pitch of a baby who had not yet hit puberty. "Is revenge." (Huang, p.63)

This data shows a flashback to Alex's childhood, using the same flashback narration as in the previous scene. This part takes place just before Alex reaches puberty. Alex is asked by his uncle what he wants for his birthday, and Alex immediately reveals that his only wish is to seek revenge for his family's death. This statement is important because Alex's very young age indicates that this desire has been present from the very beginning.

As explained in the previous data, experience provides strong emotional reinforcement; Alex's past shapes his current behavior, rather than his own responses. Therefore, we can understand Alex's desire for revenge as part of the behavior patterns he has developed since childhood. This response shows that Alex directs his emotions toward specific goals rather than expressing them openly in social situations. This response also reinforces the idea that Alex has intense emotional tendencies, which have an impact on his behavior in some situations.

*"I snuck peeks at Alex throughout the film, hoping to catch some sort of reaction.
None. Nada."
(Huang, p.70)*

In this data, Ava observed Alex several times while watching a melodrama, hoping to see a specific emotional reaction. However, Alex showed no expression of sadness, emotion, or any other emotional reaction throughout the film. The absence of such visible responses indicates that the same stimulus does not always produce uniform responses in every individual. Therefore, Alex's response in this data can be categorized as a respondent response because it relates to an emotional reaction that was not visibly expressed in response to the eliciting stimulus, a melodrama film.

According to Skinner (2014), a respondent response is a response elicited by a specific stimulus and is generally associated with emotional or reflexive behavior. Although a stimulus has the potential to evoke an emotional response, Skinner emphasizes that an individual's behavior is influenced by their history of interaction with the environment. Therefore, individuals receiving the same stimulus may show different responses. In this data, the melodrama film served as an eliciting stimulus that generally has the potential to trigger emotions, but Alex did not show any observable emotional response. This indicates that responses to stimuli do not always appear in the same form in every individual.

"I'll be right here. I won't let anything happen to you." He radiated calm confidence. "Do you trust me?" (Huang, 155)
Alex clutched my arms, his face white. "Jesus," he breathed, pulling me roughly into his chest while I choked out a sob. (Huang, 156)

In this data, Alex showed several physical and emotional reactions when he saw Ava black out in the swimming pool. He immediately grabbed Ava's arm, his face turned white, and he pulled Ava into his arms. These reactions were spontaneous, occurring without prior consideration or planning. The occurrence of this spontaneous behavior indicates that the response was a reaction to a situation that threatened Ava's safety. Therefore, Alex's behavior in this data can be categorized as a respondent response because it occurred automatically after receiving a specific stimulus.

"Don't worry about it." He ran a gentle hand over my hair, but an inferno raged in his eyes. "We'll figure everything out. Leave it to me."

This data appears after Ava tells Alex that her father, Michael, once tried to kill her, including pushing her into a lake and choking her with a pillow. Recalling that traumatic experience, Ava had a terrible physical reaction, throwing up repeatedly, and ended up sitting limp on the floor. In that situation, Alex gave her a glass of water, and when Ava apologized for feeling embarrassed, he gently brushed her hair and the line in the data above.

In his previous behavior patterns, he was described as someone who was unable to show direct concern for others. First, an open response in Alex was shown by gently touching Ava's hair and saying, "Leave it to me". According to Skinner, operant

responses are formed and reinforced through the consequences that follow. Alex's behavior change was reinforced by Ava's continued presence and his acceptance of him, despite his darker side. The protective behavior he shows in this data is not spontaneous; it comes from his experience with Ava, which changed how he acts in situations involving others' fragility.

Furthermore, the burning anger in Alex's eyes can be interpreted as a respondent response to a stimulus, specifically, the information that someone important to him has been hurt.

According to Skinner (2014), a respondent response is a reaction triggered by a specific stimulus and occurs automatically. This type of response is generally related to emotional or physiological behaviors that arise automatically when an individual faces a specific situation. In this data, Alex's behavior emerged immediately after he realized that Ava was in danger. Responses such as his white face and the protective actions he took indicate an emotional reaction that occurred directly in response to the stimulus he received. Thus, Alex's behavior in this data can be understood as a respondent response because it emerged spontaneously as a reaction to a situation that threatened Ava's safety.

Based on the data identified above, it can be seen that the respondent response found in the novel *Twisted Love* reveals a relationship between the stimulus and the emotional reaction or automatic reaction in the main character. Skinner (2014) states,

“we simply increase the magnitude of the response elicited by the conditioned stimulus and shorten the time that elapses between stimulus and response” (Skinner, 2014, p. 65). This indicates that the respondent response has a direct relationship with the stimulus eliciting it, which is different from the operant response that depends on the consequences of previous behavior.

2. Operant Response

According to Skinner (2014), an operant response is a behavior that arises through an individual’s interaction with their environment. In the character of Alex Volkov, life experiences and social situations influence the appearance of new behaviors throughout the story. Therefore, this subsection discusses the various operant responses shown by Alex Volkov in reaction to the discriminative stimuli discussed in the previous subsection.

“Thanks for picking me up, I appreciate it,” I said in an attempt to break the icy silence. I failed. Miserably. Alex didn’t respond or even look at me. (Huang, p.6)

In the stimulus subsection, Ava’s efforts to communicate serve as a new stimulus for Alex, but Alex shows no response. Alex shows behaviors as a result of his interactions with his environment and the experiences he has had. Rather than being an automatic response, this behavior grows through life experiences, interpersonal relationships, and various social situations that Alex has faced throughout the story. Therefore, Alex’s behavior can be classified as an operant response because it does not

occur automatically, but is shaped and reinforced through experience and the consequences that follow.

According to Skinner (2014), an operant response is a behavior influenced by the consequences that follow it. Behavior tends to be reinforced when it produces certain consequences and can change when those consequences also change. In this way, an individual's behavior is influenced not only by the stimuli they receive but also by their history of interactions with their environment. In this data, Alex's behavior showed that life experiences and social situations play a significant role in shaping and reinforcing his behavior throughout the story. Therefore, this behavior can be interpreted as an operant response because it evolved through a process of interaction with the environment.

*I pushed the basket toward him. "These are an experiment. I tried a new recipe and wanted to see what you think."
He made an impatient noise. "I don't have time for this."
He chewed slowly, his face not betraying any emotion whatsoever. (Huang, p. 88-89)*

"You know that magical thing you did during movie night called a laugh? You did it once, you can do it again. Come on," (Huang, p. 91)

"..... You want the world to think you have no heart when in reality, you have a multilayered one: a heart of gold encased in a heart of ice. And the one thing all hearts of gold have in common? They crave love." I tightened my grip on her, equal parts furious and turned on by her foolish, stubborn goodness. "What did I tell you about romanticizing me?"

Two data above happened after Ava and her friends created a challenge called Operation Emotion, as explained in the subsection on discriminative stimuli. The

challenge was created because they viewed Alex as a person who did not often show emotions as most people do. Through Operation Emotion, Ava tried to create some social interactions that could elicit an emotional response from Alex, such as inviting him to watch a movie together and giving him a cake with an unusual flavor. These interactions provided Alex with new social experiences that he had never experienced before. The first quote shows that Alex still kept a flat expression even while engaged in these interactions. However, the second quote shows that Alex laughed during movie night, which indicates a change in his emotional behavior compared to his previous behavior.

According to Skinner (2014), an operant response is a behavior that is shaped and reinforced through an individual's interaction with their environment. This is different from respondent behavior, which happens automatically. Operant behavior is shaped as a result of experience and the consequences that follow that behavior. In this data, Alex's behavioral change from showing no emotional expression to being able to laugh indicates a learning process through repeated social interaction with Ava. The presence of Operation Emotion provided new social experiences that Alex had never experienced before, and this influenced his behavior gradually. Therefore, the behavioral change shown by Alex can be classified as an operant response because it developed through experience and interaction with his social environment.

*I wish I'd had my camera ready, because the expression on Alex's face?
Priceless. He looked like a frozen mannequin except for his eyes (Huang, p. 141)*

It took some effort, but he eventually relaxed more and more throughout the night until he was eating and chatting with people like a normal human (Huang, p. 142)

In this data, Alex's response when he was first surprised showed awkwardness and discomfort. This was seen from his expression, which was described as that of a "frozen mannequin," which shows that Alex was not yet adapted into such social situations. As discussed in the previous subsection, the surprise birthday party served as a discriminative stimulus because it created a social environment different from Alex's previous life. As the event progressed, Alex gradually began to feel more relaxed until he eventually ate and chatted with others. This behavioral change indicates that Alex adjusted his behavior to the new environmental conditions. Therefore, Alex's behavior in this data can be classified as an operant response because it evolved through interaction with the social environment created by the discriminative stimulus.

Ava swept into my life like a sunrise after dark. Awakening creatures within my soul that I thought had died a long time ago: guilt. Conscience. Remorse. (Huang, p. 225)

In this data, Alex directly admitted that Ava's presence brought about a major change in his life. He described Ava as "a sunrise after dark," a metaphor suggesting that Ava brought hope and new experiences after he had lived for so long with trauma and isolation. Ava's presence not only changed the way Alex interacts with others but also reawakened feelings of guilt, conscience, and regret that he had long believed were lost. These changes did not occur suddenly but developed through the ongoing relationship and interactions between Alex and Ava. Therefore, the emergence of this

behavior can be understood as an operant response because it was shaped through repeated social experiences.

Skinner (2014) explains that operant behavior develops through an individual's interaction with their environment. In this novel, Ava becomes an important part of Alex's social environment, which had previously been very limited. The relationship that develops with Ava provides new experiences that gradually change the way Alex views himself and others. This is evident in Alex's acknowledgment that feelings such as guilt and regret, which he had previously believed to be dead, resurface after Ava's arrival. The behavioral changes Alex experiences demonstrate that a person's behavior and emotional tendencies can evolve when they interact with an environment different from their previous experiences.

My uncle smiled. "Congratulations. Though I have to admit, it was a bit anticlimactic. I'd expected your final move to go off with more of a...bang."
My jaw tightened. "The situation changed, and I had to adapt."

This data happens when Alex meets his uncle, Ivan, to report that his plan for revenge has been successfully executed, a plan he has been planning and preparing for over a decade. Ivan greets the news with a smile, but comments that the outcome feels "anticlimactic" and doesn't live up to his expectations. Alex responds with a tight jaw and says, as noted above. The narrative in the novel later reveals that what changed was Ava's entry into his life. Ava has brought back feelings of guilt and regret that Alex Thought had long since died within him, causing him to question whether the ends really did justify the methods he had been using all along

This data shows a change in Alex's behavior. It is a change in the discriminative stimulus that previously controlled his actions. For years, revenge and plans for revenge served as the discriminative stimulus, showing that manipulation would result in reinforcement in the way of achieving his goals. But Ava's presence introduced a new discriminative stimulus, emotional closeness, and the possibility of losing Ava if he continued down the same path. As Skinner (1953) stated, "a discriminative stimulus does not elicit a response; it simply alters the probability of occurrence" (p. 107). Ava does not force Alex to change, but merely makes it more likely that Alex will make a different behavior choice. Thus, Alex's statement, "The situation changed, and I must adapt," reflects the process of operant discrimination; he learns to distinguish the old situation from the new one and adjusts his actions based on the consequences he observes.

*My insomnia meant I only slept two or three
hours a night, though I often crashed for naps in the middle of the day when I could.
(Huang, 79)*

*She had me doing all sorts of crazy things these days, like giving up coffee and sticking
to a sleep schedule. She said it would help with my insomnia, and yeah, I slept more hours
than I used to*

This data takes place toward the end of the novel, after Alex and Ava have officially become a couple. Returning home early from work, Alex finds his apartment filled with decorations Ava has placed there—photos of the two of them, artwork, flowers, and pictures of Ava's friends displayed everywhere. In his internal monologue, Alex admits that Ava has made him do things he never would have

imagined: giving up coffee, sticking to a regular sleep schedule, and letting photos of other people decorate his home. He even admits to sleeping more than before, though he jokes that it's more because Ava is by his side than simply due to his new habits.

This data clearly shows that Alex's behavior changes have become part of his daily routine and are not just a passing reaction. This indicates that the operant conditioning process Alex experienced has successfully shaped a new, consistent pattern of behavior in him. Alex's new behavior, such as giving up coffee and staying on a sleep schedule, is a continuous operant response that has produced positive outcomes in their relationship. As Skinner (2014) explained, behavior tends to be repeated if followed by strong consequences, which is exemplified by Alex.

Based on the data identified above, it can be seen that the operant response shown by Alex Volkov is a behavior that was shaped not because a specific stimulus forced him to react automatically, but rather because of the consequences he received from his repeated social interactions. Skinner (2014) states that *"that a man behaves because of the consequences which are to follow his behavior, we simply say that he behaves because of the consequences which have followed similar behavior in the past. This is, of course, the Law of Effect or operant conditioning."* (p. 85). This is reflected in the changes in Alex's behavior throughout the story, in which he slowly begins to socialize, and even acknowledge the resurgence of his feelings of guilt and conscience,

not because he is forced to, but because his social interactions with Ava consistently produce consequences that reinforce these new behaviors within him.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In this chapter, the researcher explains the conclusions of this study and suggestions for future research. The conclusions are made based on the analysis of changes in the behavior of the main character, Alex Volkov, in Ana Huang's *Twisted Love*. This process of behavior change is analyzed using Skinner's (2014) behaviorism Theory, especially through the concept of stimulus and response. In closing, recommendations will be given to future researchers in researching similar issues.

A. Conclusion

Based on an analysis using Skinner's behaviorism theory, it can be concluded that Alex Volkov's behavioral changes occur through two main mechanisms: stimulus and response. On the stimulus side, Alex received eliciting stimuli in the form of traumatic experiences and situations that threatened the safety of the people he cared about, and also discriminative stimuli in the presence of Ava and various new social situations that slowly increased the appearance of new behaviors in him.

On the response side, Alex shows a respondent response in the form of automatic emotional reactions, as well as an operant response in the form of behavioral changes that develop gradually through repeated social interactions and the consequences that follow. Therefore, Alex Volkov's behavioral changes in this novel do not occur suddenly but are the result of a process of interaction between him and his environment, as explained in Skinner's behaviorist theory.

B. Suggestion

This study has limitations, and there are some suggestions that the researcher hopes will be considered by future researchers. One of the limitations of this study is just focus on a single character, Alex Volkov. His behavior changes cannot be separated from Ava Chen's character throughout the novel. Their interactions are also mutual, so it is possible that Alex's behavior also influenced Ava's behavior. To have a better understanding of the stimulus and response of both characters, future researchers are suggested to analyze both characters at the same time.

Furthermore, this study only analyzed Skinner's behaviorism theory. Even though this theory is relevant for analyzing Alex's behavior changes but one of the reasons for these changes is the trauma of losing his parents in his childhood, and it would be interesting to study this in other ways. Therefore, it is suggested to add other theories focused on trauma to produce a more comprehensive analysis.

The researcher realized that this study has many limitations that cannot be avoided. The researcher hopes that the findings of this study can make a small contribution to the development of literary research. May this study and this suggestion become a useful reference to other researchers.

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