

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This section will present the research background, research questions, research objectives, research significance, scope and limitations, and will display key terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature is a social institution that uses language as its medium, symbolizing life and functioning as a convention and norm within society. By depicting life, literature reflects the realities of human experiences and social interactions. Human beings are inherently connected to literary works, as they provide a medium to express ideas, emotions, and imagination. The existence of literary works within society serves as evidence of individual and collective human experiences. He further emphasizes that the study of literature is not confined to belles-lettres or printed manuscripts but must be understood in light of its contribution to the history of culture (RAMIL, 2023).

In addition to reflecting individual experiences, literary works are also products of social realities. Their existence is shaped by the emotional pressures and societal conditions experienced by community members. One prominent form of literary work is the novel. According to Akulick (2019), a novel is a fictive prose narrative of considerable length that describes characters, events, and actions representative of real life, often with a structured or unstructured plot. Novels are widely appreciated for their ability to enrich readers' knowledge, provide valuable information about the world, and offer an aesthetic experience.

Similarly, The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English describes a novel as "a story with a plot long enough to fill a book or more" (Shakespeare, 2020). Analyzing literary works, particularly novels, is an intellectually rewarding activity as

it offers insights into history, politics, social life, and other aspects of human existence. This makes reading novels an engaging and educational pursuit, especially when readers can enjoy and comprehend the historical and cultural contexts depicted within them.

Moreover, reading a novel can evoke strong emotional engagement as its content immerses readers, persuades them to reflect on moral and philosophical questions, and liberates them from negative emotions or guilt. Novels can also teach readers about human nature in ways that surpass psychological theories. However, fully understanding a novel's content can be challenging. Readers must recognize and analyze key elements of the narrative, particularly when certain aspects are implied rather than explicitly stated by the author.

One of the fundamental elements in a novel is the arrangement of events, with conflict being a central component that propels the narrative forward. Conflict, often described as the struggle between opposing forces or characters, serves as the backbone of the plot, influencing character development and thematic depth (Forster, 2020). It is through the integration of conflicts that a novel's story becomes compelling and emotionally engaging for readers. The sequence of events and how conflicts are resolved contribute significantly to the novel's coherence and readers' enjoyment (Nikolajeva, 2021). Therefore, this study emphasizes analyzing the portrayal and structure of conflict in novels, aiming to explore its role in shaping the narrative's overall impact.

This research aims to explore the central theme of conflict in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce, with a particular focus on the main character. While previous studies have examined the novel's exploration of identity, religion, and aestheticism, the role of conflict—both physical, social, and psychological—has not

been thoroughly investigated. For example, Ellmann (1959) provides a comprehensive biographical account of James Joyce, linking the author's personal struggles with the spiritual and intellectual journey of Stephen Dedalus. Similarly, Henke (1982) discusses Stephen's rejection of institutional ideologies, framing his egoism as a form of political resistance against social conformity. And the last one, these frameworks are highly relevant to the present study, which seeks to identify and analyze the types of conflict—physical, social, and psychological—embedded in the novel's plot. In terms of narrative structure and thematic development, Forster (2020) highlights conflict as the driving force behind plot progression and character transformation. He asserts that the effectiveness of a novel heavily depends on how conflicts are introduced and resolved. Nikolajeva (2021) builds upon this idea by explaining how cause-and-effect sequencing in narrative events helps unify the story and enhance reader engagement. By analyzing the cause-and-effect structure of the narrative, this study seeks to understand how Joyce's arrangement of events leads to the climax and the ultimate resolution of the protagonist's internal and external struggles. Additionally, the theme of human sacrifice, often overlooked in existing literature, will be analyzed to determine its symbolic and literal implications for the character of Stephen Dedalus. This research addresses a gap in current scholarship by providing a focused analysis of how conflicts shape the narrative structure and thematic development in Joyce's work, offering new insights into the complex interplay between character, theme, and plot.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background description above, there are several problems that will be discussed by the author in analyzing James Joyce's work. The main problems of this research can be listed as follows:

How is the representation of conflicts in "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" involving the main character?

1.3 Research Objective

By looking at the problems of this research, the objectives of this research are as follows:

To investigate the portrayal of conflicts involving the main character in the e-novel.

1.4 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this research is confined to identification and classification of three distinct types of physical, social, and psychological conflict, encountered by the protagonist, Stephen Dedalus, throughout the e-novel. These conflicts are examined in relation to Stephen's development as an artist and his changing relationships with his family, society, and religion. The main character mentioned by the researcher is only one, Stephen, because he is the most prominent in this e-novel. The limitations of this research focus on conflicts involving the main character in the e-novel in chapters 1-3.

1.5 Significance of the Study

a. For Lecturers

This study offers valuable insights into the thematic and structural elements of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce, particularly through its analysis of the conflicts faced by the protagonist. For lecturers, this research provides a comprehensive framework for teaching the novel, emphasizing the relationship between narrative structure and character development. By focusing on conflict as a central theme, lecturers can incorporate this study into their courses on modernist literature and literary

analysis, enhancing students' critical thinking and interpretive skills. Additionally, this research may serve as a reference for discussions on the role of conflict in literature and its contribution to the understanding of complex characters.

b. For Students

For students, this study offers a deeper understanding of the conflicts in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and their significance in the protagonist's development. It equips students with analytical tools to explore the ways in which Joyce uses conflict to advance the narrative and express broader themes such as identity, rebellion, and artistic growth. By engaging with this research, students can gain a more profound appreciation for modernist literature and its exploration of complex human experiences. This study also encourages students to develop their analytical writing skills and critical thinking, which are essential for interpreting literary works at an advanced level.

c. For the Future Researchers

This research aims to be a reference for future researchers. There is still little research on the topic discussed this time. A detailed analysis is given to Joyce's work which is usually included as part of the modernization literature curriculum. A study focuses on the conflict that occurs in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Many researchers will take up the subject of English language difficulties.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To make easier understanding this study, the creator gives a definition of the key terms and hopes the readers feel easier to master this study. The terms are as follows:

1. Novel Analysis

Analysis is an examination of something together with thoughts and judgements about. (Tips, 2020) Analysis is to search an event or a thought in acting by ourselves. In order we know what happened.

2. The Story's Conflict

In stories that usually have scenes of endangerment, or conflict is referred to as "Conflict". Conflict is basically when a character wants to do something but something else gets in the way and prevents the main character from achieving their goal (Bushnell, 2021).

3. James Joyce

"A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" was written by James Joyce. He had been interested in both the Realists and the Symbolists of the second decade of the 19th century because of his study of European literature, and his work began to demonstrate the integration of these two opposing ideologies. In order to draw attention to the main character, he revised "Stephen Hero" as "a work in five chapters" with the title "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" after concluding that it lacked shape and was not artistically controlled.