



## Analyzing the Main Character's Response to Life's Challenges in James Joyce's 'An Encounter'

Bintang Heldiyati Rahmanah<sup>1</sup>, Abu Fanani<sup>2</sup>  
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya<sup>1,2</sup>  
[03040321097@student.uinsby.ac.id](mailto:03040321097@student.uinsby.ac.id)

### Abstract:

This research discusses the stream of consciousness and the concepts of id, ego, and superego contained in the short story "an Encounter" from the novel entitled *Dubliners* by James Joyce. The main focus of this research is how the main character deals with the conflicts and problems he faces in the story. The method used is descriptive qualitative, in which the researcher collects data through a thorough reading of the text "an Encounter" and reviews various sources related to relevant theories. This research aims to reveal the psychological dynamics experienced by the main character, especially in the context of the stream of consciousness that describes her thoughts and feelings. Through this approach, the researcher will identify how the id, ego, and superego play a role in the main character's decision-making and reactions to the situation at hand. Thus, the results of the study are expected to provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of the characters and themes raised in Joyce's work. This research not only highlights the psychological aspects, but also enriches the literary interpretation of classic works.

**Keywords:** short story; psychoanalysis; stream of consciousness; an Encounter;

### Abstrak:

Penelitian ini membahas tentang aliran kesadaran serta konsep id, ego, dan superego yang terdapat dalam cerita pendek "an Encounter" dari novel *Dubliners* karya James Joyce. Fokus utama dari penelitian ini adalah bagaimana tokoh utama menghadapi konflik dan masalah yang dihadapinya dalam cerita. Metode yang digunakan oleh peneliti adalah deskriptif kualitatif, di mana peneliti mengumpulkan data melalui pembacaan menyeluruh terhadap teks "an Encounter" dan mengkaji berbagai sumber terkait teori yang relevan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap dinamika psikologis yang dialami tokoh utama, terutama dalam konteks aliran kesadaran yang menggambarkan pikiran dan perasaannya. Melalui penelitian ini, peneliti akan mengidentifikasi bagaimana id, ego, dan superego berperan dalam pengambilan keputusan dan reaksi tokoh utama terhadap situasi yang dihadapi. Dengan demikian, hasil penelitian diharapkan dapat memberikan pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang kompleksitas karakter dan tema yang diangkat dalam karya Joyce. Penelitian ini tidak hanya menyoroti aspek psikologis, tetapi juga memperkaya interpretasi sastra terhadap karya klasik.

**Kata kunci:** cerita pendek; psikoanalisa; aliran kesadaran; an Encounter;

## INTRODUCTION

Prose is a form of discourse or writing that is sometimes used in narrative and descriptive form, where the words are arranged sequentially and follow the rules of



grammar. Iranmanesh (2013) said about the definition of prose “In particular, prose is a word, although it is not a usual thing in poetry (be particular about rhythm and metric or tune), but involves a literary explanation which is common between poetry and prose, discriminates unusual prose from usual one and colloquial language and extracts speech from the scope of perceptions and ordinary explanation.” Prose writing does not have a structure or pattern like that found in poetry, prose is usually written in the form of essays, novels, stories, letters, and others. Chen (2019) says “In a broad sense, it refers to a literary medium distinguished from poetry especially by its irregularity and variety of rhythm and its close correspondence to the patterns.” Prose has several characteristics, namely: 1). It has a linear sequence, where the writing follows the sequence of events conveyed. 2). Using common language, the language used is usually used in everyday life and does not have a special pattern or rhythm like poetry. 3). Has a narrative flow, and the storyline is clear. 4). Sentence length varies, the sentences used are by what is needed to convey information so that it can be completed clearly and effectively. 5). Descriptive and narrative, the process itself is used to convey an idea, convey a story, and provide an overview in a more detailed and in-depth manner.

Dubliners is a collection of short stories written by James Joyce and first published in 1914, It consists of 15 stories that depict the naturalistic life in the early 20th century experienced by middle-class Irish citizens in Dublin and its surroundings. This story was written when Irish nationalism was at its peak. Here the researcher will discuss the short story, entitled *an Encounter*.

In this research, the researcher will use psychoanalysis theory to analyze the short story. At the beginning of the 20th century was the beginning of modern psychology, with this, the psychological analysis of text literature evolved. This theory uses a concept suggested by well-known sociologists, including Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Otto Rank, and Alfred Adler. Psychoanalysis was championed by Sigmund Freud in 1859-1939, then Carl Jung redirected this theory according to his social environment in understanding psychoanalysis in 1875-1961. This therapeutic method was used by Sigmund Freud as a therapeutic method for neurosis, then increasingly developed in literature, art, and other things. Hossain (2017) said that in terms of literature, psychoanalysis has been used as literary criticism for creative purposes. Psychoanalytic theory related to literature is usually related to expression, the personality structure of the writer, and the state of mind experienced by the writer.



Psychoanalysis is a method used in treating psychic and emotional disorders in which this encourages these patients to reveal or tell about experiences they experienced personally both when they were children and also dreams. According to the American Psychological Association (2022), This method can help a person understand about himself by conveying something that is happening under his unconscious. Psychotherapy can also make someone feel safe by exploring feelings, memories, desires and causes that can make them feel stressed.

In psychoanalysis, the narrator often uses the first-person point of view which is almost the same as the stream of consciousness. Stream of consciousness is a narrative form made by the author in a way that mimics parallels in a character's internal thoughts. Sometimes this is also referred to as "Internal monologue" and the style that often occurs in this stream of consciousness is the natural chaos that occurs between thoughts and actions that are interconnected in our minds at certain times. Stream of consciousness is a narrative form made by the author in a way that mimics parallels in a character's internal thoughts. Sometimes this is also referred to as "Internal monologue" and the style that often occurs in this stream of consciousness is the natural chaos that occurs between thoughts and actions that are interconnected in our minds at certain times. According to (James, 1890) In each individual's personal awareness, thoughts can be continuous and mean two things. There are when they occur in intervals, the aftertaste will feel like the consciousness that occurred before or part of another self and changes from one moment to another in consciousness never suddenly. Stream of consciousness is a psychologist's continuous flow of ideas, thoughts, and feelings that form the content of a person's consciousness.

This psychoanalytic view can reveal the reasons why someone behaves disorderly. Sigmund Freud created this theory to explain phenomena that occur, for example, the meaning behind dreams and reflex behavioral reactions when feeling stress. Stream of consciousness is the main focus of psychoanalytic theory because it has an influence on aspects of life in every individual. The unconscious mind can store memories which are pressures and urges that cannot be expressed and then enter into the conscious mind through many different ways. However, to link what happens to people as children with the behavior they display as adults is still not a sure way. The result is that we cannot be sure that certain childhood experiences can be correlated with the abnormal behavior of some adults. The contemporary psychoanalytic view not only provides a means of



understanding and treating several psychological disorders but also understanding everyday occurrences such as failure and aggression.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychoanalytic theory is based on the psychodynamic theory developed by Austrian doctors in the early 1990s, this behavior is dilated back by psychic forces and conflicts over which we have little awareness or control. Fudayartanta (2011) quotes from Freud's theory that the structure of the mind is divided into three structurally distinct parts, namely the Id, Ego, and Superego. The first is the Id which is formed into a person and the drive that every individual has from birth. In the early years of life, the personality possessed by the baby is the id, which causes the child to act and will immediately give satisfaction. It is this instant gratification and pleasure that is the focus of the id which functions on the unconscious of every individual. The next is the ego is one of the elements that have a function in the conscious mind, which works as a counterweight and is a middle ground between the tension of the id and the superego. The ego here has a role as an individual between the id and superego, trying to make decisions about the advice to be taken. Individuals who have a stable mentality will easily find ways to satisfy both parties through compromise. The last, namely the superego, has a function as the opposite of the id, its job is to pressure individuals to comply with the norms and standards of society, and its job is to guide morals. Compared to the id, the superego is raised through social interaction and can be formed differently between individuals depending on the amount of appreciation it gets for acting according to norms and punishments it receives for inappropriate behavior.

## PREVIOUS STUDY

The study was conducted by Usamedin Nuhui (2020) In his research, he discussed the themes and characters found in James Joyce's work entitled *Dubliners*. Researchers found several main themes in the novel *Dubliners*, including paralysis which is reflected by the characters who appear in the novel, then the next themes are poverty corruption, and death. The researcher used the main method of analyzing, namely by expressing what he saw and giving his opinion on the research.

Further study was conducted by Omid Ghahreman (2013) in his research explains the meaning of the unique gnomonic nature of the Joycean mystery in "An Encounter", one of *Dubliners'* childhood stories. And the result of their research is the mystery of when



they will visit the dove house which is Dublin's electricity and power plant and symbolizes light and power – a metonymy for God, the dove symbolizing the holy spirit, and incompleteness and loss marking their fate.

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the researcher use qualitative research because this research has a descriptive nature and uses more analysis. The process and meaning in this study are highly demonstrated. This statement is used as a guide so that the research carried out is focused and in accordance with the facts that exist. This research design also tends to be more inductive and flexible, which allows the researcher to adjust to what has been found during the research process. Qualitative research methods are used to produce meaningful data. When there is a problem that is still unclear, the researcher will use this method to find out the meaning contained in it. Qualitative research focuses on in-depth observations.

The researcher collected data by reading, taking notes of what was found, and also using observational techniques on the novels being analyzed. This type of research can enable researchers to identify the meaning associated with behavior and interactions with one another.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

After analyzing the data, the researcher will present the data along with the results of the analysis that has been carried out in the short story above. The resulting data includes sentences of consciousness experienced by the characters. The researcher also analyzes the Id, Superego, and Ego contained in this short story.

### Stream of Consciousness

“I pretended that I had read every book he mentioned...” Joyce (1914, p.13)

This sentence is a stream of consciousness, here the narrator consciously and deliberately says that he also read the book mentioned by the old man, even though the narrator has not read the book and the old man believes what he said.

“It was too late and we were too tired to carry out our project of visiting the Pigeon House. We had to be home before four o'clock lest our adventure should be discovered. Mahony looked regretfully at his catapult and I had to suggest going home by train before he regained any cheerfulness.” Joyce (1914, p.15-16)

In the sentence above it can be seen that they still have several plans that have not yet been carried out, but they have to arrive home before four o'clock and the narrator asks Mahony to hurry home before he loses his enthusiasm, and this sentence is included in the stream of consciousness because the narrator consciously remembers and does the things they should do at that time.

"His attitude on this point struck me as strangely liberal in a man of his age. In my heart I thought that what he said about boys and sweethearts was reasonable. But I disliked the words in his mouth and I wondered why he shivered once or twice as if he feared something or felt a sudden chill. As he continued I noticed that his accent was good." Joyce (1914, p.17)

In this part, the boy realizes that the man is showing attitudes that are generally not carried out by men his age, so the boy does not like the words the man says to him and Mahony. But on the other hand, the boy consciously admitted that the man had a good accent when he spoke, from the data above the researcher was able to classify this stream of consciousness.

"After an interval the man spoke to me. He said that my friend was a very rough boy and asked did he get whipped often at school. I was going to reply indignantly that we were not National School boys to be whipped, as he called it; but I remained silent." Joyce (1914, P.18)

Based on the data above, the boy can consciously restrain himself from directing his anger toward the man who talks carelessly about Mahony. The attitude carried out by the boy can be classified as a stream of consciousness because he consciously suppressed his emotions so as not to be angry with the man.

### **Id, Ego, and Superego**

"The mimic warfare of the evening became at last as wearisome to me as the routine of school in the morning because I wanted real adventures to happen to myself. But real adventures, I reflected, do not happen to people who remain at home: they must be sought abroad" Joyce (1914, p.13)

Based on this sentence, it can be said to be Id, because in this expression the narrator feels fed up with the situation that is happening at his school so he has the desire to get rid of the feeling of disgust and boredom he is experiencing, namely by going on an adventure and when he reflects on this, the adventure he means is not an adventure. Which is normal but he has to go to another country, "With Leo Dillon and a boy named Mahony I planned a day's miching. Each of us saved up sixpence." Joyce (1914, p.13).

Meanwhile, Ego here can be explained that the narrator has a plan to skip school with his two friends and they make a plan to collect sixpence every day so that they will earn enough money to be pocket money that they use in their plan when traveling, "We



waited on for a quarter of an hour more but still there was no sign of Leo Dillon.” Joyce (1914, p.14) . The superego here is depicted as them waiting for Leo Dillon to appear for some time and apparently, he never came, and in the end, it was just the two of them who went on this adventure.

## CONCLUSION

Psychoanalysis is a theory used to try to understand how a person's feelings, thoughts, and behavior are influenced by the drives and conflicts that occur in their unconscious mind, humans have three main parts, namely the id, ego, and superego. This theory places more emphasis on stream-of-consciousness conflicts that arise as a result of moral demands coming from the superego and unfulfilled unconscious drives. On the other hand, the stream of consciousness in this case is based on a continuously connected flow that occurs in a person's mind. By analyzing the short stories, it can be seen that by experiencing events in his consciousness, the narrator can understand what has happened around him. Briefly in this research, the theories used by researchers are psychoanalysis and stream of consciousness.

## REFERENCES

- American Psychological Association. (2022). *Psychoanalysis - APA dictionary of psychology*. PscNET Journal Article. <https://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/specialize/psychoanalysis>
- Chen, G. (2019). *A literature review on prose study*. 378(Icelandic), 512–516. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.191217.182>
- Fudayartanta, K. (2011). *Psikologi Umum 1 & 2*.
- Ghahreman, O., & Pourgiv, F. (2013). James Joyce's “An encounter”: from the perversion of an escape to the perversion of the fatherhood. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 2(2), 158–164. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.2n.2p.158>
- Hossain, M. M. (2017). Psychoanalytic theory used in English literature: A descriptive study. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Linguistics & Education*, 17(1), 41–46.
- Iranmanesh, Z. (2013). Narrative prose and its different types. *Journal of Languages and Culture*, 4(8), 125–131. <https://doi.org/10.5897/JLC11.073>
- James, W. (1890). *stream of thought*.
- Joyce, J. (1914). *Dubliners, by James Joyce: A painful case*. <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/j/joyce/james/j8d/chapter11.html>
- Nuhiu, U., & Nuhiu, U. (2020). An analysis of themes and the language of the characters in James Joyce's ‘Dubliners.’ *ANGLISTICUM. Journal of the Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies*, 9(11), 22–26. <http://www.anglisticum.org.mk/index.php/IJLLIS/article/view/2136>