

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Among the three genres in literature, I think novel is the easiest genre to read since a novel usually gives a very clear description and detailed information. According to Harry Shaw in Dictionary of Literary Terms, ‘Novel is a lengthy fictitious prose narrative portraying characters and presenting an organized series of events and setting.’ (Shaw, 1972:257)

Oscar Wilde is an Irish poet and dramatist. His plays The Importance of Being Ernest (1895) and Lady Windermere’s Fan (1892) are considered masterpieces. Wilde is famous for his Comedy of Manners. ‘Oscar Wilde’s plays were leading examples of this type of drama at the end of the nineteenth century, and his work has had a great effect on several writers in the twentieth.’ (Thornley and Roberts, 1968: 175) Among his many well-known works, The Picture of Dorian Gray is his only novel.

I am interested in analysing The Picture of Dorian Gray because this novel partly reflects the life of Oscar Wilde: ‘The Picture of Dorian Gray was published first by *Lippincott's Magazine* in 1890... The book has some parallels with Wilde's own life. At Oxford he became a close friend of Frank Miles, a painter, and the homosexual aesthete Lord Ronald Gower, and it seems that they both are represented in *Dorian Gray*.’ (<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/owilde.htm>)

The protagonist of this novel is Dorian Gray. According to Shaw, ‘Protagonist is the leading character of a drama, novel, or other literary works.’ (Shaw, 1972:305) As the leading character, I think Dorian Gray is involved in most of the conflicts in the novel.

I find that the conflicts in this novel are very important and worth analysing. Shaw defines conflict as:

‘the opposition of person or forces upon which the action depends in drama and fiction. There are three types of conflicts; one type of conflict is elemental or physical: a struggle between man and the physical world. It represents man versus forces of nature, the difficulties and danger. Another type of conflict is social: a struggle between man and man. Much popular fiction is based on social conflict. A third type of conflict is internal or psychological: a struggle between desires within a person.’  
(Shaw, 1972: 91)

I have chosen to analyse the protagonist’s social conflicts because there are hardly any significant physical conflicts or psychological conflicts in this particular novel.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

I would like to state the problems as follows:

1. What are the protagonist's conflicts in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray?
2. What causes the conflicts?
3. How are the conflicts resolved?

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

Considering the problems above, I present the purposes of this study as follows:

1. To show the protagonist's conflicts in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray.
2. To show the causes of the conflicts.
3. To show how the conflicts are resolved.

### **METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The method of research that I use is library research. First, I read Oscar Wilde's novel The Picture of Dorian Gray. I then decide what topic to discuss. I also use some references which are relevant to the topic being discussed. I gather some information from the Internet which supports this research. Finally, I draw the conclusion.

### **ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS**

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis.

In Chapter Two, I present the analysis of the protagonist's conflicts in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray. Chapter Three is the Conclusion, in which I draw my conclusion from the previous chapters. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the Appendices, which contain the Synopsis of the novel and the Biography of the Author.