

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consist of five main parts. First, it is the research background that outlines the reasons for conducting research on various issues and other problems. Second, it is the research question that formulates the questions to address the problems in this study. Third, the purpose section explains the research objectives that provide answers to the research questions. Fourth, the research significance section explains the theoretical advantages and potential benefits of this research. Finally, there is the scope and limitations of the study, which indicates the research area and data in a brief narrative that represents the issue of this study.

1.1 Background of the study

According to Hans Bertens (2008: 1-23) New Criticism in literature is a theory that focuses on the text itself, without consideration of external factors such as authorial intent or historical context. It emphasizes the intrinsic qualities of literary works, examining how form and content interact to create meaning. New Critics maintain that a text should be treated as an independent entity with its own internal wholeness. By analyzing formal elements such as imagery, symbolism, and structure, they seek to uncover the deeper meaning and thematic significance of a work. This approach, known as intrinsic criticism. Seeks to reveal how the language and form of the text contribute to the overall interpretation. New Criticism has had a profound impact on literary studies, influencing the way we interpret and appreciate literature in various genres and time periods.

According to Lois Tyson (2006: 139) New Criticism emphasizes the importance of ambiguity and complexity in literary works, encouraging readers to explore the nuances and layers of meaning. This approach deepens understanding and appreciation of language and symbolism in literature. In new criticism, ambiguity is considered an essential element in literary works, offering readers the opportunity to

engage in the process of interpretation and meaning-making. This engagement with the text allows readers to appreciate the nuance of language and symbolism, which are fundamental to appreciating the text as a whole. Ambiguity can enhance the theme, creating tension and allowing readers to discover deeper meaning. Theme is the main idea in a literary work, providing depth and cohesion.

According to Lois Tyson (2006: 155) New Criticism is the main idea or message contained in a literary work, which provides depth to the narrative and maintains the cohesion of the entire text. It serves as the thread that connects the other elements of the text and provides insight into the author's intentions and the broader meaning of the work. Unity, an important concept in New Criticism, refers to integrating all elements in a literary work to create a cohesive and harmonious whole. Unity is also important in literary works for creating a memorable story. The concept of Unity is achieved by integrating various elements, including plot, characterisation, imagery, and language. By ensuring that each aspect of the text contributes to the overall meaning and impact of the work, unity strengthens the thematic coherence and artistic integrity of the text.

One of the literary authors who is very famous for writing children's stories is Hans Christian Andersen. Some of Andersen's most celebrated fairy tales include *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Nightingale*, *The Stoic Tin Soldier*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Princess and the Peas*, *The Snow Queen*, *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Wild Swans*, *The Match Girl*, and *Thumbelina*. His narrative has also been adapted into ballets, plays, and animated and live-action films. *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans* are chosen for over one hundred years; both stories have been a childhood favorite. Through the study, the ambiguity, theme, and unity of the stories are analyzed based on New Critical theory.

The Ugly Duckling is a short story by Hans Christian Andersen (1843), first published in 1843. It narrates the tale of a duckling who is distinct from his siblings. The other ducklings are all beautiful and white, whereas this one is gray and perceived as ugly. Consequently, the other animals and birds on the farm ridicule and repudiate

The Ugly Duckling matures into a beautiful swan. This narrative serves as a reminder that outward appearances can be deceptive and that all individuals possess the capacity to be beautiful and distinctive in their own manner. Additionally, it underscores the significance of benevolence and acceptance toward those who may differ from us.

The Wild Swans is a captivating fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen (1872), first published between 1835 and 1872. The story revolves around the plight of eleven princes who are transformed into beautiful wild swans by a wicked queen. Their sister, Eliza, a kind and innocent princess, sets out to save them. Through her journey, Eliza faces numerous challenges, including the queen's attempts to turn her into a swan as well. Ultimately, Eliza finds her brothers and, with their help, breaks the curse that has been cast upon them. This enchanting tale serves as a reminder of the power of love, perseverance and acceptance in the face of adversity, highlighting the importance of recognizing the beauty within all individuals, regardless of their external appearances.

This study aims to explore the concept of ambiguity, theme, and unity in Hans Christian Andersen's short stories *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans* using new criticism. This study employs the lens of New Criticism theory to examine the short story *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans* by Hans Christian Andersen. The focus is on analyzing the concepts of ambiguity, theme, and unity in Andersen's works, particularly in relation to self-discovery, acceptance, and change. The research aims to analyze how the use of imagery and language in *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans* reflects these themes. By examining the literary techniques employed by Andersen, this analysis aims to enhance our understanding of how these devices influence the reader's interpretation of the story. Additionally, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of the interactions and contributions of the story of the various elements of the story to its overall meaning and impact. *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans* are selected for analysis because it is a well-known and widely discussed tale that explores themes of self-discovery, acceptance, and transformation. These themes align with the principles of New Criticism, which emphasizes the intrinsic qualities of literature. The study will closely examine the

utilization of ambiguity, theme, and unity in the story to uncover how Andersen skillfully employs these literary devices to convey his themes and to uncover the subtleties of his writing styles.

These are five previous studies by five writers related to the data in this study. This first previous study by Fatima Javed (2023) entitled “A Duckling A Fairy: Tale Revolution” discusses the themes of belonging, acceptance, kindness, togetherness, and isolation in Kamila Shamsie’s novel. The second previous study by Siti Yuni Nurjanah, Alifah Ramdhaniah, and M. Efransyah (2018) discusses the use of affixation in narrative text. Specifically, it focuses on the derivational and inflectional processes found in *The Ugly Duckling* narrative. This third previous study by Megan M. Morse (2014), titled “In Search of Self: Understanding Biracial Identity Through the Ugly Duckling Fairytale”. The study discusses the challenges and nuances by biracial individuals in understanding and accepting their identity within societal contexts. This fourth previous study written by Lesley Willis (2015), entitled “The Bogus Ugly Duckling: Anne Shirley Unmasked”, discusses the portrayal of Anne Shirley in “Anne of Green Gables” in relation to the use of myth and fairy tale elements. The last previous study by Anita Gamboss (2004) studies the themes of transformation and the use of alchemical motifs in the context of Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Ugly Duckling*. The study references various theories and concepts from psychology and mythology, including the Triple Goddess archetype and the alchemical process of transformation.

The study employs the theory of New Criticism to analyze Hans Christian Andersen’s short stories, specifically *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans*. It explores themes, ambiguity, and unity in her writing style. In contrast, previous studies have different topics and objectives. For example, one of previous studies discusses the themes of existence, acceptance, kindness, unity, and isolation in Kamila Shamsie’s novel (2023) titled “*A Duckling A Fairy: Tale Revolution*”. Another study examines the use of affixation in the narrative text of *The Ugly Duckling*. One study explores the challenges and nuances of biracial identity in relation to the Ugly Duckling fairy tales. Another study analyzes the portrayal of Anne Shirley in relation to elements of myth

and folklore in “Anne of Green Gables”. Another study examines the themes of transformation and the use of alchemical motifs in Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Ugly Duckling*. The methods employed in the study differ from those of previous studies, which utilize theories of psychology and mythology. The data in this study is from Andersen’s short stories that using new criticism theory to analyze the data.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the elaboration of the background of the study, the writer formulate the research question as follows:

1. How does the short stories present the ambiguity?
2. How does the short stories present the theme?
3. How is the unity form from the short stories?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The research objectives of this study are:

1. To describe the use of ambiguity in the two short stories, analyzing how it contributes to the overall narrative and the reader’s understanding of the stories.
2. To describe the themes which present in the two short stories, exploring how they are developed and relate to the broader literary context.
3. To describe the unity of the short stories, examining how the various elements (setting, point of view, plot, style, and theme) work together to create a cohesive narrative.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study focuses on the ambiguity, theme, and unity found in Hans Christian Andersen’s stories *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans*. The research contributes the **theoretical** significance by using the principles of New Criticism to dissect the complexity of these literary works. Through analyzing the ambiguity in the stories, the study uncovers multiple layers of meaning and interpretation, offering deeper insight

into their symbolic and thematic structures. Additionally, the research highlights the crucial relationship between theme and unity and their role in appreciating the artistic and intellectual cohesion of the narrative. **Practically**, this study provides a framework for readers, educators, and students to approach literary texts in a more focused and analytical manner. It serves as a guide to developing critical thinking and interpretation skills, encouraging readers to actively engage with texts and gain a better appreciation for literary works. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the enduring relevance of New Criticism in the exploration of classical literature in contemporary literary studies.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study focuses on analyzing two short stories by Hans Christian Andersen, *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans*, by applying the theory of New Criticism. The research specifically examines literary elements such as ambiguity, theme, and unity in these works to show how Andersen utilizes these techniques to convey meaning and achieve unity. This study is limited to analyzing *The Ugly Duckling* and *The Wild Swans* solely through the text, following the principles of New Criticism. The focus is solely on ambiguity, themes and unity, without considering the author's intent, historical context, or reader reactions. Furthermore, this research does not compare these stories with Andersen's other works or those of other authors, thus limiting the scope to these two stories and the elements within their texts.