

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an explanation of the five parts of the introduction. These are the background of the study, the statement of the research question, objective of the study, significance of the study, and scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Determination is a powerful drive to uphold one's inner ideals. This study aims to reveal that determination is a central theme in the novel *Botchan* by analyzing formal elements such as tension, ambiguity, and imagery, which represent the the main character's determination through the lens of New Critics. The research examines how the text constructs the meaning of determination through its literary structure, without relying on external context, in accordance with the principles of New Critics.

Botchan by Natsume Sōseki tells the story of a man with strong ideals. As a child, the main character was mischievous and often caused trouble for those around him. He was frequently punished and even considered useless by his own parents only the family maid, Kiyo, showed him affection. After graduating from university, he got a job as a teacher at a school in the countryside. Here, conflicts arise between the main character and his students as well as his colleagues, due to their dishonesty and arbitrary treatment. the main character decides to confront them. the main character's determination serves as the central focus of this study.

New Critics has two main theoretical flaws that limit its effectiveness. First, it mistakenly tries to evaluate poetry based on the emotional responses it evokes rather than analyzing the actual content and structure of the poems themselves. Second, it often falls into moralistic judgments, showing it hasn't fully broken free from traditional critical approaches. Critics would benefit from moving beyond these limitations (Ransom, 1941, p. xi). From the quotation, it can be understood that prior to the emergence of New Criticism, traditional literary studies were grounded in two main principles: first, interpretation based on authorial intent, and second, evaluation through reader response. However, this approach contains

fundamental weaknesses in terms of objectivity. On one hand, it's impossible to definitively know what authors truly intended, especially for literary works from the past. On the other hand, reader responses are inherently subjective as they are influenced by psychological states, cultural backgrounds, and individual life experiences, resulting in varied and inconsistent interpretations.

The New Critics focus their analysis solely on the literary work as an autonomous object, maintaining that a text's meaning must be derived intrinsically through its linguistic structure and literary elements, without reference to external contexts such as authorial intent or reader response (Tyson, 2011, p. 68). From the quoted passage, it can be concluded that the New Critics places more emphasis on how the text's structure, language, and literary devices contribute to its meaning rather than on external elements like the author's goals or the historical setting. In a literary work, there are components that form the structure and meaning of the text. Each element is interconnected to support the theme and the work as a whole. Additionally, all these elements work together to create unity.

The New Critics assert that a literary work possesses an organic unity, meaning that all components of the literary work are interrelated. Each element not only reflects but also supports the central theme of the literary work (Bressler, 2011, p. 59). Based on the previous quotation the concept of organic unity in New Criticism refers to the idea that a literary work functions as a cohesive whole, where all its elements such as theme tension, ambiguity, imagery, symbol metaphor, and simile are solid and work together to support and strengthen each other. According to New Critics, a text achieves its highest level of meaning when these elements are not merely compared but are organically integrated, contributing to the overall theme in a way that makes the work inseparable. In other words, they should be understood as part of a unified system that supports the central message or theme.

Indeed, John Crowe Ransom and other New Critics applied New Criticism primarily to poetry; however, New Criticism can be fully applied to novel analysis as well, because its methodological core—close reading and the principle of textual autonomy—is universal. A novel, much like a poem, is an independent structure of meaning, in which formal elements such as plot, characters, symbols, imagery

patterns, irony, and stylistic language are interwoven to form a coherent organic whole. By conducting a careful reading of these textual layers, one can reveal complexities, tensions, and figurative language that are often even richer and more layered in extended narratives. The New Critical focus on "the text itself" can liberate the novel from being reduced to mere historical documentation or author biography. Instead, it highlights the novel as an autonomous aesthetic achievement, crafted through the deliberate weaving of words, phrases, and narrative structures.

In literary analysis, the theme of a text signifies its fundamental meaning or message. According to New Critics, a distinguished literary work embodies a theme that deepens our insight into the essence of humanity (Tyson, 2011, p. 71). It can be understood from the previous quotation that the main idea or message that arises from the interplay of the formal elements in a text is called the theme. The theme is more than a straightforward moral lesson or simple statement, in their view a great literary work ought to inspire a deep comprehension of humanity. The reason New Critics emphasize the theme as deepening our insight into humanity is because they believe that literature, when properly analyzed, allows readers to connect with the fundamental aspects of human existence.

The writer chooses the novel *Botchan* (1906) by Natsume Sōseki because it is suitable for analysis using New Criticism. The novel extensively employs many figurative language and ambiguity in its storytelling. Furthermore, Natsume Sōseki conveys through author narration that the main character in this story is in conflict with almost all the other characters in the novel due to differences in ideology, which gives rise to two opposing concepts that can be categorized as tension. The amount of figurative language and narrative structure is the reason why the writer chose *Botchan* novel as source of data which can be analyzed through the lens of New Criticism.

There are nine previous studies that serve as references in helping the writer in analyzing *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki. These nine studies are divided into two categories: the first consists of five studies that apply the same theoretical approach, while the second includes four studies that analyze the same literary work, *Botchan*, by Natsume Sōseki.

These five previous studies are applied in this study as references for conducting the analysis, aiming to enhance understanding and depth in the analytical process. By using the same theoretical framework New Criticism as these studies.

The first reference is a thesis by Shendythalia Diah Pangestu (2024) entitled *Analysis of Tension and Ambiguity Reflected in Sally Rooney's Normal People: A New Criticism Study* from Universitas Trunodjoyo Madura. The study focused on the formal element such as tension and ambiguity using New Criticism theory by Lois Tyson.

The second reference is a thesis titled *The Portrayal of Regret as Seen in Adele's Hello: A New Critic Reading* by Arifah Fauziah (2017) from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. The study focused on the formal elements such as ambiguity, paradox, irony, and tension of the song using New Criticism theory.

The third reference is a thesis titled *War As Seen In Black Sabbath's War Pigs a Graduating Paper* by Linda Lutfiyatus Saadah (2018) from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. The study focused on the ambiguity, irony, paradox, and tension of the song using New Criticism theory by Cleanth Brooks.

The fourth reference is a thesis titled *The Portrayal of Optimism as seen in Maher Zain's song* by Fauziyah Febriyanti (2017) from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. The study focused on intrinsic element like rhyme, diction, imagery, paradox, irony, ambiguity and tension of the song using New Criticism theory.

The fifth reference is a thesis titled *War as Represented in Michael Heart's "We Will Not Go Down"* by Gunawan (2013) from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta. The study focused on the portrait of Palestine war based on intrinsic elements of the song using New Criticism theory by Cleanth Brooks.

The second category consists of previous studies that use the same source of data, *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki, comprising four studies. Four previous studies

have examined Natsume Sōseki's *Botchan* (1906), but the current study distinguishes itself by introducing a new critical approach through New Criticism.

The first reference is a thesis titled *The Need For Social Skills As Reflected On Natsume Sōseki's Botchan Novel: a Sociology of Literature Approach* by Feri Hanifahsari (2018) from Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta. The study focused on the indicators of social skills such as the ability to cope conflict, the ability to cope anger, and the ability to communicate feelings and thoughts, this study uses the same source of data *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki using Sociology of Literature theory.

The second is a journal article titled *Aspect and Discourse in Tense-Switching: A Case Study of Natsume Sōseki's Botchan* by Hiroshi Nara (2011) from Japanese Language and Literature Journal, Vol. 45, No. 1 (April 2011), pp. 273-305. This study focuses on aspect and tense-switching and how both influence each other, using the same source of data, *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki, furthermore this study using the theory of narrative meta-functions (foreground and background) proposed by Hopper 1978 and Hopper and Thompson 1980.

The third reference is a journal article titled *Returning to the Rural: Rethinking the Cultural Landscape of Natsume Sōseki's Botchan* by Kelly Hansen (2023) from Kumamoto University, Kumamoto prefecture. This study focused on the contrast between *Botchan*'s highly critical evaluation of Matsuyama and the city's present-day image as a preserver of Japan's nostalgic past.

The fourth reference is a journal article titled *A Comparative Study of Translated Texts through the Analysis of Their Word Spectra: Application to a Text in Botchan* by Kazuya Hayata (2003) from Sapporo Gakuin University, Hokkaido prefecture. This journal article focuses on a comparative study of translated texts using word spectrum analysis. Specifically, it examines the frequency distributions of word lengths in translations of Sōseki's *Botchan* into multiple languages, including English, German, French, Spanish, Russian, Filipino, Malay, and Indonesian.

1.2 Research Question

Based on the background of the study that has been described, the writer formulates the research question:

1. How is determination represented through the formal elements in *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki

1.3 Objective of Study

Based on the research question of the study that has been described, the writer formulates the objective of study:

1. To find out determination represented through the formal elements in *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki

1.4 Significances of the Study

There are two significances of the study:

1. The first significance is theoretical. This study provides strong theoretical support for New Criticism's fundamental principle that a literary work's meaning must be analyzed based solely on its intrinsic textual elements, without reference to external factors. Through a hard examination of *Botchan*'s formal elements, the study demonstrates how determination is entirely constructed through the novel's own linguistic and structural devices.
2. The second one is practical the writer is expected to contribute to both the writer and the readers. First, for the writer, it is hoped that this research can serve as a foundation for conducting further studies on New Criticism in the future. Second, the writer hopes that this study can become a reference for readers interested in applying New Criticism theory, which focuses solely on the text itself without considering external factors in literary works, in their future study.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study utilizes the novel *Botchan* by Natsume Sōseki as its source of data. The writers focused on analyzing the formal element to find out and describe the themes depicted in its novel. This study utilizes New Criticism theory by John Crowe Ransom. New criticism theory helps the writer in finding the themes in the novel through the text itself. This study collected data exclusively from Natsume Sōseki's *Botchan* (1906) through systematic analysis of formal elements that

demonstrate how determination manifests in the main character that can build the theme. The writer limits this study to the main character by focusing on formal elements that explain determination through the author's narration and the main character's utterances.