

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

There are so many genres of fiction in literature. One of them is mystery, “a genre of fiction in which a detective, either an amateur or a professional, solves a crime or a series of crimes” (Wiehardt). Besides, there are a number of sub-genres within the broad category of mystery. One of them is classic detective, it sometimes called the old-fashioned detective story, “it generally features a mysterious death, a closed circle of suspect who all have motives and reasonable opportunity to commit the crime. The central character is the detective who, by logical deduction from the facts in evidence, solves the mystery” (“Genres of Mystery and Crime fiction”).

Among the great authors of detective fiction, I have decided to choose Agatha Christie, who created detective characters such as Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple (Kennedy). She published her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* in 1920. Some of Christie’s novels are *The Mystery of Blue Train* (1928), *Murder On the Orient Express* (1934), *And then There Were None* (1939) (Curran). In my

Thesis, I would like to discuss *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926).

In her novel *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, Christie shows the readers some unexpected events. This novel is about a mysterious murder with an unpredictable ending; the narrator of the story turns out to be the killer. Good mysteries are also good novels if they have memorable character, exciting plot, lively dialogue and writing that “shows” instead of “tells” (Victor). According to M.J. Murphy in *Understanding Unseen*, “Novels of adventure, mystery, crime and detection, espionage and often also science fiction, usually have well worked-out plots” (134). Moreover, as the plot in *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* is the most important literary element, I would like to discuss it in my thesis. Plot is “a carefully thought out plan in which the events, all the actions and reactions of the characters, contribute towards the forward movement of the story” (134). Plot consists of three elements; they are suspense, surprise and artistic unity. Suspense is “the quality of a story that makes the reader ask ‘what is going to happen next?’ or ‘How will this turn out?’ and impels him to read on to find the answers to these questions” (Perrine 45). While surprise is “proportional to the unexpectedness of what happens; it becomes pronounced when the story departs radically from our expectations” (47), and artistic unity means

... the condition of a successful literary work whereby all its elements work together for the achievement of its central purpose. In an artistically unified work nothing is included that is irrelevant to the central, nothing is omitted that is essential to it, and the parts are arranged in the most effective order for the achievement of the purpose. (“Artistic Unity”)

Statement of the Problem

The problems discussed in this thesis are stated as follows:

1. What are the suspenses in the novel?
2. What are the surprises in the novel?
3. How is the artistic unity presented in the novel?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statements of the problem, the purposes of the study are:

1. To show the suspenses in the novel.
2. To show the surprises in the novel.
3. To show how the artistic unity is presented in the novel.

Method of Research

I use library research in writing my thesis. First, I read Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* as the primary text. Then, I take some data from the Internet sites and sources to support my analysis of the elements of plot in the novel. In the end, I draw some conclusion of what has been discussed.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into three chapters, which are preceded by the Table of Contents and the Abstract. 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. Chapter Two contains the analysis of the elements of plot of Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the

Bibliography and the Appendixes, which consist of the Synopsis of the Novel and the Biography of the Author.

