

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

There are so many genres of fiction in literature, such as fantasy, humor, and mystery (“Genres of Literature”), but I just want to focus on one of them, which is mystery. Mystery is “a genre of fiction in which a detective, either an amateur or a professional, solves a crime or a series of crimes” (Wiehardt). There are also some sub-genres within the category of mystery. One of them is classic detective, which was at its height in the 1930s. “It generally features a mysterious death, a closed circle of suspects 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, solve the mystery” (“Genres of Mystery and Crime Fiction”).

One great author of detective stories is Agatha Christie. She is best known as the creator of Belgian detective Hercule Poirot and village lady Miss Marple. Christie has written more than 70 detective novels, some of them are *The Murder*

of Roger Ackroyd (1926), *The Mystery of the Blue Train* (1928), *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death in the Clouds* (1935), and *The Moving Finger* (1942) (“Agatha Christie Biography”). In my thesis I would like to discuss *Murder on the Orient Express*.

In her novel *Murder on the Orient Express*, Christie tells the story of a murder committed in the middle of the night, on a train named Orient Express. The main character is a Belgian detective, named Hercule Poirot who has been asked to investigate the murder case by Mr. Bouc, a director of the Orient Express and an acquaintance of Poirot. The victim is a man, named Ratchett. Poirot suspects thirteen passengers on the train. At the end of the story the reader finds surprising facts about the murderer and the motives of the murder and how Poirot closes the murder case.

As the plot in *Murder on the Orient Express* is the most important literary element, I would like to discuss it in my thesis. Plot is “a literary term used to describe the events that make up a story or the main part of a story. Plot is also known as the foundation of a novel or story which the characters and settings are built around. It is meant to organize information and events in a logical manner” (“Plot”). Plot consists of three elements, they are suspense, surprise, and artistic unity. Suspense is “the intense feeling that an audience goes through while waiting for the outcome of certain events. . . . Without suspense, a reader would lose interest quickly in any story because there is nothing that is making the reader ask ‘What’s going to happen next?’ ” (“Suspense”). Meanwhile, surprise occurs when the events in the story violate the expectations the reader has formed. (“Surprise”), 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 :

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 *Murder on the Orient Express* as the primary text. Then, I take some data from the Internet sites and references to support my analysis of the elements of plot in the novel. In the end, I draw some conclusion.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into three chapters, which are preceded by the Table of Contents and the Abstract. Chapter One 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 is the analysis of the elements of plot in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. 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.

