

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Chapter I is the chapter that introduces the study and gives some insight on the importance of doing the study and to further understand the study's objective.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

Literature has been used nowadays in people's everyday lives. These literary works can be in the form of narratives, novels, plays, etc. In schools, stories in English language are used to learn English. In leisure times, people read story books such as novels to entertain ourselves. These literature forms also have different genres such as adventure, romance, mystery, comedy, etc. No matter the genres of the story, it will always have patterns or formula. These story formulas that included in the literary works helps readers to understand the consistency of a plot better in the story. According to Cawelti (1976), by knowing the formulas of the story, it gives the audience some sense of familiarity towards a certain kind of story and thereby raising their satisfaction and enjoyment.

To learn the importance of recognizing patterns or formula of a story, literary works have been used in this case to figure out the formula. The literary work that is used is in the form of novel. The novel genre that is used will be about mystery novel. This is the kind of story where the main character, usually a detective, will try to solve a problem which is usually in the form of murder case that occurred within the story and try to find out the culprit behind the case. There are two types of mystery story or detective story. On the one hand, there is one type of story called classic detective story where the detective solving a case by gathering clues, asking the witnesses, etc. The other type is called hard-boiled detective stories. This kind of detective story type is different from the classical detective stories. The difference is that the apprehension of the criminal by the police is considered a less significant matter than the classical detective story type where the detective gathers any clues that he/she can get to apprehend the culprit.

The mystery novel under study will be from Agatha Christie's works. Agatha Christie was a British author that was also famous because of her classical detective fiction works alongside Dorothy Sayers and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. One of her many works that was interesting to read is entitled 'The Murder at the Vicarage.' This novel talks about an amateur detective named Miss Marple who wanted to solve a murder mystery of Colonel Protheroe, who is the husband of Anne Protheroe. The man had been killed with a pistol in the vicarage, hence the title 'The Murder at the Vicarage.' Even though she is an amateur detective, she used an amazing method to solve the crime that eventually brought justice to the murder case. The other novels

that are used for this study are 'The Mystery of the Blue Train', 'Crooked House', and 'The Pale Horse'.

This study is conducted in order to analyze the formula and to prove that the formula in Agatha Christie's works matched with the mystery formula theory from Edgar Allan Poe that John G. Cawelti has stated in his book. For doing such a study, the readers can recognize the patterns or formula of a classical detective stories like in Agatha Christie's novels. Therefore, it is important to do the study about the mystery formula that is from Agatha Christie's novels.

The researcher chose the topic about The Mystery Formulas of Agatha Christie's Novels because there are several similar studies that also discussed the mystery formulas of Agatha Christie's works, but the results were missing their points because each of the studies only use 1 novel. Therefore, the researcher thinks that the previous studies were ineffective and needed further research with more novels included from the same author.

## **1.2 Research problems**

This study is about the analysis of Mystery Formulas in Agatha Christie's novels. The research questions are as follows:

1. How does the application of mystery formula aspects in Agatha Christie's novels work?
2. Is the formula that is used on the novels relevant to the mystery formula theory?

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To describe the application of mystery formula aspects in Agatha Christie's novels.
2. To find out whether the formula used in Agatha Christie's novels relevant to the mystery formula theory by Edgar Allan Poe.

## **1.4 Theoretical framework**

This study relies on patterns of classical detective story's formula based on Edgar Allan Poe's four aspects of detective story formula. He stated that these four aspects are as follows: (Cawelti, pp. 80-98)

1. Situation
2. Pattern of action

3. Characters and relationships
4. Setting

These four aspects of detective story formula are the foundation of classical detective story formula.

Aside from the basic aspects of the classical detective story formula, there is the cultural background of the detective story formula. The cultural background of classical detective story formula is the antagonist or the criminal is said to be the “least-likely” person. Some readers tend not to notice this and usually they see the criminals as the character who had already done bad deeds and any other bad stuff they did. While the seemingly good character such as a priest or something like that is usually less suspected.

### **1.5 Scope and limitation of the study**

The scope of the study is the mystery formula. Anything that is not related to the formula analysis will not be discussed. The limitation will be from Agatha Christie’s works only, so any other detective works that is not written by Agatha Christie will not be included.

### **1.6 The significance of the study**

By conducting this study, the researcher hoped that the readers know the importance of understanding the mystery formula of a classical detective story of Agatha Christie’s works, because it is quite difficult to recognize a pattern of a mystery novel especially for someone who has never read any mystery novel such as classical detective stories before. It is also to encourage more novel researchers and English Department students for doing more literary study. Doing literary study or literary criticism also helps both the researcher and the readers understand other concepts that the readers of a particular novel may not know before.

### **1.7 Definition of key terms**

#### **Literary formula**

In this study, literary formula refers to a structure of narrative that was applied in a great number of several Agatha Christie’s individual works (Cawelti, 1976). In other words, it is a pattern of a story that is usually recognizable when reading stories with similar type or genre, in this case the stories are mystery-themed stories by Agatha Christie.

**Novel**

In this study, novels refer to fictional pieces of prose that are written in narrative style (Ellis, 2009). The fictional pieces used in this study will be from Agatha Christie's works, which are "The Murder at the Vicarage", "The Pale Horse", "Crooked House" and "The Mystery of the Blue Train".

**Mystery**

In this study, mystery refers to a genre of narrative fiction in which the protagonist (detective) must find out the hidden truth behind an unknown event such as a murder case. (Calderwood, 2021).

**Mystery formula**

In this study, mystery formula refers to a pattern of a story in Agatha Christie's novels as mystery-themed novels. According to MasterClass (2021), a mystery formula is literary devices that make a mystery story. In other words, it is the framework that made a mystery story.