CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction that contains an overview of the research. In more detail, this chapter presents the research background, statement of problems, research objectives, research significance, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of the Research

A short story is a work of literary fiction that is a sub-genre of prose, short stories are distinguished from novels by their shorter length and less explanation (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2023). In Britain, the earliest reference to 'short story' is invented in 1877, this reference is recorded in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2023). While in the United States the term 'short story' was invented in the 1880s.

A short story, according to Anthony Trollope (1950), is fictional prose that is shorter than the usual narrative; short stories are about one volume long. Wilkie Collins (1994) referred to short stories as 'little novels'. In accordance with Raymond Williams (1973) in his book *Keywords*, short story is the creation of a word or phrase signifies that there is a shift in consciousness, a change in culture or society in language. Therefore, the neologism of the short story in the late nineteenth century represents a redefinition of literature, how literature is produced, received and consumed. The existence of the short story form is an indicator of the invention of modern fiction in relation to changing economic, cultural and social contexts.

Short stories is divided into five popular sub-genres: gothic, contemporary romance, detective fiction, science fiction, and humor. Initially, the Gothic is a Pangea of genre literatures. In the nineteenth century gothic began to split into romantic and crime sub-genres. The development of gothic also resulted in science fiction, and even the more surreal and darker elements of gothic comics can be categorized into contemporary humor. The crime sub-genre is characterized by problems and solutions that are centered around a sleuth. The

crime sub-genre can be identified by the crime revealed in the disclosure of criminal information (mystery) in a structured and gradual manner, while in the case of detective fiction, it is enhanced by the rationale of the detective as a crime solver. In other words, the crime sub-genre is divided into two forms, mystery genre and detective genre. There is no clear data on when these genres were determined or discovered, but what is certain is that these two genres are the development of the crime sub-genre (Sussex, 2010)

In the development of the mystery genre there are several figures who pioneered this genre, one of which is Agatha Christie, a famous authoress in the early 20th century, along with the first pioneer Edgar Allan Poe in 1841, Willkie and Collins in 1860s (Sussex, 2010). Agatha Christie was a British writer of detective and mystery short stories, novels, who was also a playwright. She passed away on January 12, 1976, in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, after been born on September 15, 1890, in Torquay, Devon, England. During the First World War, Christie wrote her first novels−*The Mysterious Affair at Styles*−while employed as a nurse. John Lane of The Bodley Head Limited publishing business published her debut book (Hack, 2009).

As a writer of detective and mystery genres, Agatha Christie has published approximately 80 books that have been translated into more than 100 languages. One of her mystery genre short story anthologies is *The Hound of the Death* (Christie, 1925). Although not her first anthologies, one of the short stories in this anthology namely "*The Call of Wings*" (Christie, 2013) were written during World War I. It means this short story is Christie's early era (Barnard, 1980).

Shortly, *The Call of Wings* (2013) by Agatha Christie told about Millionaire Silas Hamer and East-End Parson Dick Borrow, after having dinner with their friend Bertrand Seldon, discuss how they are completely opposite in nature, yet both contentedly happy. Hamer is economically happy because he has risen from his poverty-ridden background and built up a fortune, whereas Borrow is spiritually happy because he aids the poor. The two go their separate ways home, and on his way Silas witnesses a homeless man being hit by a bus and killed. Thinking he could have saved the man, Silas goes home mentally troubled.

Besides "*The Call of Wings*", "The Witness for the Prosecution" (Christie, 2011) is also a famous short story in this anthology. This short story was already adapted into a movie by Wilder (1957). As an additional important information, "The Hound of Death" anthology became popular because of the first appearance in Christie's famous short story−*The Witness for the Prosecution.* This was also approved by Robert Barnard (1980) in his book *Talent to Deceive: An Appreciation of Agatha Christie.*

In short, *The Witness for the Prosecution* (Christie, 2011) tells the story of a lawyer, Mr. Mayherne, who is handling a murder case for his client. This client, Leonard Vole, was the accused perpetrator. Vole is cornered from a variety of evidence, because the evidence is very strong to convict Vole as the perpetrator. Mr. Mayherne tries to believe that Vole is not the perpetrator, but it is certainly a difficult thing to gather the information available as a defense in the courtroom. Mr. Mayherne tries to collect piece after piece of evidence, of which the strongest evidence leads to the testimony of his client's wife, Romaine, a witness for prosecution.

Both of the short stories above belong to the mystery genre. Where the significant element within the plot of this genre is element of suspense. As Saricks (2009) states that several authors including Agatha Christie, add the element of suspense as a strong threat to the protagonist throughout the investigation. This is also confirmed by John Barber (1926, p. 9) in the *Daily Express*−a daily tabloid newspaper in the United Kingdom−that Christie's narrative has an element of suspense that is more thrilling than the atmosphere in the story, even according to him no one can beat Christie in this regard.

In line with this, Checkoway (Checkoway, 1999, p. 2) that the element of suspense is the fuel for a good narrative. Because suspense gives the impulse for the reader to keep reading the story until the end. In addition, the element of suspense in this case also adds an elements of surprise to the plot (Klismith, 2014). In agreement with Chatman (1978), suspense and surprise are complementary elements. They work together in complex ways in a narrative: the

story can open with a surprise that then becomes a pattern of suspense and then ends with a plot twist.

Considering the relation between suspense, surprise and twist, the researcher are interested in analyzing both element suspense and surprise also unveiling the process of developing the plot twist in these object research. Before conducting research, it is very important to review previous studies on both short stories and the subject of this research. This is because previous studies have an important position in research, previous studies can provide comparisons and find which research fields have not been studied before. In addition, prior studies can also guarantee the authenticity of the author's work so as to avoid plagiarism and the research will be more credible (Prodi Tadris Bahasa Inggris, 2016).

The previous study related to the object, namely *The Hound of Death* (1925) is entitled *Methods of Translating Idioms in A Short Story "The Hound of Death" by Agatha Christie into "Anjing Kematian"* by Tanti Lesmana (2016). This research elaborates the translation process of idioms in the short story anthology "The Hound of Death" using Makkai's idiom theory (1972) and Newmark's translation theory (1988). From the five types of idioms in the anthology that has been analyzed, the result of this study shows the dominant result on phrasal verb because this idiom includes particles or prepositions. The translation method used is free translation because Lesmana tries to translate without reducing the meaning of the original language of this anthology.

Previous studies related to the topic are research entitled *The Trusted Might Become the Traitor: A New Critic Reading of Agatha Christie's Detective Story Black Coffee* by Zenda Maurista and Titien Diah (2016). This research identifies the storyline of Christie's detective novel entitled "Black Coffee". The plot in a detective story is not the same as the plot of other genres, because in the plot of a detective story there are suspense, mystery, and complications. This study uses the New Criticism theory (Tyson, 2006) in its study and concludes that all formal elements in this story support the main theme in this study that people who are trusted have the possibility of becoming traitors.

Another previous research related to the topic is entitled *An Analysis of the Use of Suspense in the Plot Development of Agatha Christie's Tape-Measure Murder* by Aye Aye Soe (2020). This research examines the use of suspense in the plot development of detective short stories. In examining the plot development, this study uses Gustav Freytag's pyramid theory, while in classifying the suspense found, this study uses Nino and Tarmar (2013) and Reedsy's suspense classification (2024). The result of this research shows that the type of suspense that dominates this short story is horrific suspense. This indicates that the emergence of suspense greatly influences the development of the plot so that the plot is more horrifying and surprising.

From the previous studies that have been presented, there has been a lot of research on suspense. The difference between this study and previous studies is that this study emphasizes the relationship between suspense and the element of suprise in the plot and how the twist is revealed. In addition, another distinction is the theory and the object studied. The theories used in this study are Saricks' theory to identify suspense (Saricks, 2009), Iwata's classifications of elements of surprise from his framework to identify elements of surprise (Iwata, 2009) and Chatman's theory to reveal the relation between suspense, surprise and twist (Chatman, 1978). The objects analyzed are *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for Prosecution.*

As an early Christie's short story and also her famous short story one, the researcher found that these objects has an urgency to be researched. Interestingly, *The Call of Wings* has not been studied much before and even though *The Witness for Prosecution* has been widely researched, research on the form of short story is quite rare compared to the movie. In addition, *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for Prosecution* in *The Hound of the Death* anthology are approved by Robert Barnard (1980) as the best short story among others.

1.2 Statements of Problems

As explained in the research background, an important element in the mystery genre is the element of suspense. Suspense as described by Chatman (1978) works together with elements of surprise in a chronological plot that leads to a twist. Therefore, to find out the correlation between suspense, surprise and twist, three research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How element of suspense is identified in Agatha Christie's *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for The Prosecution*?

2. How elements of surprise is identified and categorized in Agatha Christie's *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for The Prosecution*?

3. How the twist revealed in Agatha Christie's *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for The Prosecution*?

1.3 Research Objectives

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the research is intended:

1. To identify suspense through its characteristic in Agatha Christie's *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for The Prosecution*.

2. To identify elements of surprises in Agatha Christie's *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for The Prosecution.*

3. To analyze how the plot twist reveal in Agatha Christie's *The Call of Wings* and *The Witness for The Prosecution*.

1.4 Research Significances

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the knowledge about suspense, surprise, and twist within genre mystery. Especially in whodunit subgenre. Practically, this research is expected to enhance understanding of how the element of suspense and element of surprise develop plot twist within genre mystery. It is also expected that this kind of research will be studied more by those who are conducting research on the similar topic or object.

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Definitions of key terms are presented with the aim of avoiding misunderstandings, misperceptions, and ambiguities in the terms used in this study.

1. Short story

   A story, usually about imaginary characters and events, that is short enough to be read from beginning to end without stopping (Hornby, 2015, p. 1389).

2. Genre mystery

   Mystery story, ages-old popular genre of tales dealing with the unknown as revealed through human or worldly dilemmas; it may be a narrative of horror and terror, a pseudoscientific fantasy, a crime-solving story, an account of diplomatic intrigue, an affair of codes and ciphers and secret societies, or any situation involving an enigma. By and large, mystery stories may be divided into two sorts: tales of the supernatural and riddle stories (Britannica, 2024).

3. Element of suspense

   Suspense is a literary device that authors use to keep their readers' interest alive throughout the work. It is a feeling of anticipation that something risky or dangerous is about to happen. The purpose of using this type of anxiety in literature is to make readers more concerned about the characters, and to form sympathetic association with them. Therefore, authors create scenarios that could force readers to understand, and to want to read on to see what their beloved characters face the next (Brewer, 1996, p. 334).

4. Elements of surprise

   Elements of surprise are plot elements that aim to produce a fleeting reinterpretation of events, accompanied by a sense that the evidence for that interpretation has been there all along-the surprise is not only unexpected, but also revelatory. The surprise invites us to look back, to appreciate (or underestimate) how well the foundations of the revelation

have been laid, to savor (or reject) the important new patterns revealed by the new information at the beginning of the narrative (Tobin, 2018, p. 2).

5. Plot twist

A plot twist, an unexpected shift in a story, combines "plot" and "twist" in a clever way. It's not just a compound word. In literature, it's a technique that suddenly changes the story's direction. The occurrence of surprise in a story is often saved for the end, leaving the audience feeling a range of emotions including fear, awe, joy, or laughter (Literary Devices, 2024).