



Manonmaniam Sundaranar University

*DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION
TIRUNELVELI - 627 012, TAMILNADU*

M.A ENGLISH (FIRST SEMESTER)

Science Fiction, Fantasy and Detective Literature

(From the Academic Year 2023 - 2024)

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FIRST YEAR – SEMESTER I

SCIENCE FICTION, FANTASY AND DETECTIVE LITERATURE

UNIT I BACKGROUND STUDIES

Science Fiction and Fantasy, Cyberpunk (From M.H. Abrams)
Alien Invasion, Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Fiction
Gothic Science Fiction,
Crime Fiction, Mystery Novels, Thriller (From M.H. Abrams)

UNIT II DETECTIVE FICTION

Arthur Conan Doyle – The Hound of Baskervilles
Agatha Christie – Murder on the Orient Express

UNIT III SCIENCE FICTION

Wilkie Collins – The Woman in White
H.G. Wells – The Time Machine

UNIT IV FANTASY FICTION

Peter Straub – Shadowland
Gabriel García Márquez – One Hundred Years of Solitude

UNIT V SHORT STORIES

Edgar Allan Poe – The Murders in the Rue Morgues
E.M. Forster – The Machine Stops
Isaac Asimov – The Last Question

LO1 To familiarize students with different forms of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Detective Fiction.

LO2 To enable students to identify the basic structure and themes of Science Fiction.

LO3 To facilitate learners to appreciate the fundamental features of Fantasy fiction.

LO4 To enhance students' knowledge to identify the basic structure and themes of Science and Detective fiction.

LO5 To engage students in a close reading of important representative texts.

	Text books (Latest Editions)
1.	Christie, Agatha. Murder on the Orient Express. 1934. New York: Harper Collins, 2011.
2.	Poe, Edgar Allan. The First Detective: The Complete Auguste Dupin Stories. Leonaur, 2009.
3.	Wilkie Collins. The Woman in White. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1893.

UNIT I

BACKGROUND STUDIES

M.H. Abrahams:

Meyer Howard was born on 23 July, 1912 in New Jersey. He had his undergraduate education from Harvard University. Then, he moved to Magdalene College, Cambridge. He had the opportunity to learn under I. A. Richards. In 1945 he became a professor at Cornell University. He is well known as an American literary critic and for his works on romanticism, particularly "The Mirror and the Lamp". Under his editorship *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* became the major literary trendsetter. A glossary of literary terms was published by him which explains the literary terms. The definition of Science Fiction and Fantasy can be found in this work and more explanation were given by other too.

Science Fiction and Fantasy:

As a literary term, it refers to works that create a made-up reality that is very different from the real world. The story will take place on a different world, a future Earth, or a made-up parallel universe. Science fiction, on the other hand, uses real or imagined scientific principles that may become fact or be used in the future. A lot of people think that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) was the first science fiction book. Jules Verne's "Journey to the Center of the Earth" and H.G. Wells' "The War of the Worlds" both told stories that clearly explained science ideas. Some important science fiction writers from the last few decades are Isaac Asimov, Arthur Clarke, Ray Bradbury, J.G. Ballard, and Doris Lessing. Popular science fiction shows and movies include *Star Trek* and many others. Though utopias are newer than fantasy, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which is a satire, shows strange places that were a big influence on fantasy. J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis A lot of people write science fiction and fantasy, and Ursula Le Guin is one of them. The impact of real or imagined science on people or society is the main theme of the science fiction subgenre. Asimov states, "Science fiction can be defined as that branch of literature which deals with the reaction of human beings to changes in science and technology". It can also refer to literary fantasy in which science plays a crucial role. The first examples of this writing are found in Mary Shelley's "*Frankenstein*" (1818). When

“*Amazing Stories*,” a pulp magazine founded in 1926, first published the genre as a self-conscious category, it became more serious in “*Astounding Science Fiction*,” published in the late 1930s.

The fictional worlds in this genre are very different from the real world. A different planet, the future Earth, or the fictional parallel universe are common settings for these works. In general, science fiction refers to stories that use scientific principles, technological advancements, or major societal changes to create a plausible fictional world, though science fiction and fantasy are not always easily distinguished from one another. This is not the same as pure fantasy, which usually provides no logical or scientific justification for its made-up universe.

Mary Wollstonecraft Science fiction is frequently credited to Mary Shelley, whose novel *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus*, published in 1818, was a revolutionary work in the genre’s development. In this epistolary novel, the plot centers on a scientific genius who creates a terrifying monster that torments its creator. It is recognized as one of the original works of science fiction.

A prolific writer from France whose works served as a major inspiration for contemporary science fiction. Jules Verne wrote the novel *A Journey to the Center of the Earth*, which was first released in 1864. It is the second book in his well-known *Voyages Extraordinaires* (1863–1910) series, which features books that set the foundation for science fiction by fusing scientific facts with adventure narrative.

H.G. Wells is regarded as the “father of science fiction” because of his highly regarded science fiction works. Before these themes became popular in the genre, his science fiction imagined biological engineering, time travel, alien invasion, and invisibility. H. G. Wells was dubbed the “*Shakespeare of Science Fiction*” by science fiction author Brian Aldiss, who is well-known for his science fiction novels and short stories. One of the first stories to describe a struggle between humankind and an alien or extraterrestrial race is *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

The satirical elements and origins of fictional utopias can be traced back to the fantastical places portrayed in Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). Inspired by classical, biblical, and medieval sources, two of the most renowned modern fantasy authors are C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings*). Another well-known writer from the 1960s who has significantly influenced the science fiction and fantasy genres is Ursula Le Guin. Her

most well-known works are speculative fiction, which includes the fantasy series Earth Sea, and science fiction pieces set in her *Hainish universe*. *A Wizard of Earth Sea* (1968), *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), and *The Play Upessessed* (1974) are some of Ursula Le Guin's best-known works.

Certain works of fantasy and science fiction depict an idealized future society for example (Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*). Other works of science fiction and fantasy, such as Kurt Vonnegut's *Cat's Cradle* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, envision a dystopian future for science or society and use it to criticize it. Many authors use their fictional worlds for political and social satire for example, as Swift did in *Gulliver's Travels*, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and much of Vonnegut's.

Cyberpunk:

Postmodern science fiction is what it sounds like: events happen in a "virtual reality" that is either partially or fully real. Computers or computer networks may be what make up the place. The figures could be real people or computer programs. Bruce Bethke came up with the word "cyberpunk" and used it in a story he wrote in 1982. The story by Bethke, as well as technology fiction from the 1940s and 1950s and the work of Samuel R. Delany, were the beginnings of cyberpunk.

One increasingly popular subgenre of science fiction is cyberpunk. The genre is well known for its dark and melancholic portrayals of a future in which technology has transcended human control and given rise to new forms of oppression and exploitation. This postmodern genre is characterized by a plot that takes place wholly or partially inside a "virtual reality" generated by computers or computer networks. These stories can have artificial intelligence or human characters. The well-known novel by William Gibson in this genre is *Neuromancer*. One of Gibson's greatest contributions to the genre is "cyberspace," a computer-simulated reality that illustrates the nature of information and foreshadows virtual reality technology.

Gothic Science Fiction:

When you mix science fiction and gothic writing, you get gothic science fiction. It has the same moody elements as gothic literature, with a focus on mystery, death, decay, darkness, haunted houses, monsters, madness, and magical elements. Gothic science fiction takes classic aspects of gothic literature and explains them in terms of science. Some common characters are

vampires, who are usually described as being aliens or the result of a disease. Some works look at whole worlds where vampires or creatures that look like vampires live. Dark atmospheres and science fiction elements are often mixed in gothic science fiction. Some works, like “Blade Runner,” mix gothic science fiction and neo-noir themes and styles in their visuals. According to Botting, most science fiction stories are cautionary tales that warn about the risks of technological progress and progress in science. Works like “The Castle of Otranto” by Horace Walpole, which came out in the 18th century, were the start of gothic writing. The word “gothic” came from Horace Walpole’s writings and first meant a style from the Middle Ages. Around the middle of the 18th century, gothic novels became very famous, and they had a lot to do with the rise of romantic literature. Today, the word “gothic” refers to love books that have supernatural or mysterious elements. Gothic science fiction, which focuses on danger and mystery, has had a big impact on science fiction, making it more interested in the unknown and the scary. People point to Frankenstein by Mary Shelley as a key work that brought science into the Gothic literary trend. In the 20th century, the gothic style changed into horror, but science fiction stayed the same. A lot of science fiction authors, like Angela Carter, Stephen King, Philip K. Dick, and others, use strong gothic elements in their writing. Gothic science fiction is very common, which shows that it is a big part of the science fiction genre as a whole.

Alien Invasion:

Alien invasion is a popular theme in science fiction. In these stories, aliens come to Earth for different reasons. “The War of the Worlds” by H.G. Wells had a big impact on this type of invasion fiction. Early stories about traveling to other worlds didn’t show aliens, but people-like beings. The idea of different alien life forms came about in the 1800s, especially with Camille Flammarion’s work. The novel “The War of the Worlds” by H.G. Wells was the first to show aliens as intelligent rivals from Earth.

When Orson Welles read the story on the radio in 1938, it caused a huge fear, showing how important it was to culture. After that, books like “The First Men in the Moon” and “A Martian Odyssey” looked at different, sometimes friendly, ways that aliens behave. Serious literature, like “Star Maker” by Olaf Stapledon, explored the philosophically complicated parts of alien’s life. “Solaris” by Stanislaw Lem and “Mission of Gravity” by Hal Clement both dealt with problems in alien intelligence. “Close Encounters of the Third Kind” by Steven Spielberg and other first-contact stories let people explore without having to deal with everyday

encounters. As seen in “Alien,” themes of alien attack are still common, but there is a shift toward showing aliens as coworkers, love interests, or technical experts. Star Trek and Alien Nation are two examples of shows that have changed how aliens and humans interact. Science fiction uses robots and monsters for similar reasons. Karel Capek added robots to R.U.R. to make it look like an alien threat. Isaac Asimov’s “The Three Laws of Robotics,” which were about how robots should behave, had an impact on science fiction literature. Asimov’s books and short stories looked at the moral issues that come up when people deal with robots.

An old theme in science fiction is space travel, as seen in “From the Earth to the Moon” by Jules Verne and in space tales like Star Wars. There are realistic depictions of space travel and ideas for faster-than-light drives that can help people go on trips outside of space. Space operas have become very famous thanks to writers like E.E. Smith, Edmond Hamilton, and others. The mechanical time travel that H.G. Wells presented in “The Time Machine” became a major theme. Science fiction looks at how history changes, as seen in “A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court” by Mark Twain and so, the cultural meanings are shown in different ways in science fiction, along with the alien figures.

Apocalyptic Fiction:

Apocalyptic fiction is a type of science fiction that shows what happens after a society falls apart. The events could be natural, astronomical, destructive, medical, the end of the world, or made up like a zombie apocalypse, cybernetic revolt, technology singularity, dysgenics, or an alien invasion. The story is mostly about stopping, living with, or what happens after the end of the world. Some ancient cultures, like the Babylonians and the Jews, wrote apocalyptic stories like the Epic of Gilgamesh. Apocalyptic novels have been around since the 1800s, but they really took off after World War II, when people became more aware of the nuclear danger. Ancient apocalyptic literature includes fake names, stories told by others, strange language, a negative outlook, and stories about how the end of the world is coming soon. In the time of Hellenistic rule and the Maccabean uprising, Jews wrote the first works that describe the end of the world. It is clear that the Gospels, especially the words they used from Daniel, had an impact on Christian apocalypticism. Apocalyptic key, the last book of the New Testament, and John’s visions of oppression, martyrdom, judgment, and salvation are examples of Christian apocalypticism. People really liked the books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins that were about the end of the world in the Middle Ages.

Post-Apocalyptic Fiction:

Post-apocalyptic fiction is about disasters that happen on a global scale and kill a lot of people and destroy society. Nature of Disaster could be a nuclear war, a deadly virus, an outbreak of zombies, a climate disaster, or an alien attack. In post-apocalyptic fiction, the story takes place after the end of the world and looks at how people live in a new world. After the end of the world, “The Girl with All the Gifts” by M.R. Carey is one of the most famous works of such fiction. The main ideas in post-apocalyptic fiction are climate change, the loss of morals, the certainty of death, doctorships, and the end of the world. People have always been interested in doomsday stories because they give us a new way to think about the end of the world.

Crime Fiction:

One of the many names given to one of the most common narrative subgenres today is “crime fiction.” This term is very broad, encompassing any story in which a crime and its resolution serve as a primary plot point. The play *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare, which depicts the murder of a king and the eventual revelation that this was committed by Macbeth and his wife, could theoretically be classified as crime fiction. The term “crime fiction,” however, is reserved by literary experts for a more recent genre that emerged in the late 19th century and in which the crime that has occurred is more mysterious. A significant portion of these narratives deal with the efforts made to solve the crime’s mystery. Even though Macbeth tries to throw the guilt on other men, people around him almost instantly discover that he is the real murderer and begin to organize an army against him in *Macbeth*.

The essential components of crime fiction over the past 100 years have therefore included the following. Murder is most frequently committed early in the story. A range of suspects with various motivations are present. Formally or informally, the central character acts as the detective. The detective gathers information about the crime and its victim. Typically, the detective speaks with witnesses and suspects. The detective solves the case and identifies the offender. This crime is typically not prosecuted or otherwise dealt with.

Authors like John Awdeley and Thomas Harman gathered information about the criminal underworld in England, its structure, professions, and language, and published this in a form that was between what could be called sociological information and narrative. The first English texts that focus on crime and criminals appeared in the 16th century. From a literary perspective, the best of these works were two plays by the main Renaissance writer, Ben Jonson (1572-1637),

The Alchemist (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), in which some of the central characters are professional criminals and the plot revolves around their criminal acts. Other works, such as Awdeley's *Fraternity of Vagabonds* (1565), Harman's *Caveator Warning* (1567), and a few others of lesser importance, were later used by Renaissance writers like Thomas Decker (1571-1632) and Robert Greene (1556-1592), working during the Shakespearean era, who expanded the narrative elements and created dialogues between various kinds of professional criminals as well as narratives about how they worked.

Though English Renaissance writers formally condemned criminals as ruthless, immoral, and wicked people, in reality, these narratives are very sympathetic to thieves, prostitutes, and conmen. One sign of this is that the writers create a picture of an underworld with its class system—for some kinds of crime are considered to have higher status than others—and its language, what may be called a sociolect, words, and expressions used by these people to refer to different kinds of crimes, criminals, and victims, as well as some common items from everyday life. Even more significant is the fact that most criminals never repent and are never punished for their crimes. Seldom do detectives show up, though occasionally men in uniform, such as magistrates, may do so. The criminals are then treated like serfs of a sort, which is difficult for writers to handle because the stories are usually light-hearted and the crimes are not serious ones (Danys, *Renaissance Crime Fiction*).

This type of writing was well-liked until the middle of the eighteenth century. Simultaneously with its decline, a more straightforward literary genre concerning criminals persisted for more than two centuries. This was the broadside sheet, also known as “broadside ballads” if they were written in rhyme, and it was a type of popular working-class literature. A broadside sheet is a large piece of paper that was once sold for a low price on the street along with stories, songs, and other texts that were often accompanied by a crude woodcut picture. This was before printing was invented. The ones about criminals purported to be true accounts of men and women who had been detained and hanged, or this criminal's admission before his or her hanging. During the Renaissance and into the middle of the 19th century, hangings attracted sizable crowds of men, women, and children. Astute printers noticed a market in place and had men go through the crowds selling their broadsides about the person being hanged. To draw customers, broadside sheets were also sold in stores close to markets. Even though these texts are

illustrative and frequently contain the same story or confession, they nevertheless show that English readers were curious about the lives of criminals.

The next major phase in crime literature in English took place in the early 18th century when major writers used the new novel form to write stories about highwaymen, thieves, prostitutes, and criminal rings. The first important figure was Daniel Defoe (1660-1731), a journalist whose *Moll Flanders* (1722) takes as its hero a working-class woman who survives by prostitution and stealing. Again, as with the earlier Renaissance texts, readers are made to feel sympathetic to Moll and hope for her escape from punishment. Defoe wrote other novels whose central figures are criminals and was followed by major writers like Henry Fielding (1707-1754) in *The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great* (1743) and John Gay (1685-1732) in *The Beggars' Opera* (1728). All of these works make criminals the central figures of their stories. Indeed, *Moll Flanders* and *Jonathan Wild* are the first-person narrators of their novels, which makes it easy for readers to identify with them.

These in turn led to fictional texts about criminals that were published in the 1830s; some of these continued the tradition of portraying the criminal as a sympathetic figure, while others, like Charles Dickens' novel *Oliver Twist*, were more realistic in their version of the English underworld. Even so, these texts are not crime fiction in the modern sense because readers see crimes being committed and know who is responsible for them. While Golden Age crime fiction borrows many elements from the Sherlock Holmes stories, it also favors unique forms, leading to more complex plots that frequently involve multiple crimes (now almost always murder), a large cast of characters, many of whom are suspects, and a more detailed description of the social structure and geography of the location where the crimes occur. Despite this, there are many similarities to the formula that Conan Doyle developed. Most importantly, from a narrative perspective, these are typically told from the point of view of the detective's friend or assistant rather than the detective.

Crime fiction became extremely popular during the interwar period and has never lost its popularity since. There is an enormous variety of eccentric detectives produced in this period, from the aristocratic Lord Peter created by Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957), who sings beautifully, is always quoting literature, and collects old books, yet is also an extremely fine cricket player, to Nero Wolfe, the very fat detective who rarely leaves his expensive New York apartment where he grows rare flowers, but send south is handsome and athletic assistant Archie to collect

information and bring suspects to his office. Nero Wolfe was created by Rex Stout (1886-1975), but most Golden Age crime fiction in the interwar period was produced by British writers. In the inter-war period, the detective is rarely a member of the police force and, indeed, the police are often treated as unimaginative men who come to simple and hasty conclusions about who the murderer is. The Golden Age detectives show themselves to be superior to the official forces that are supposed to deal with crime.

The major name in this period is that of Agatha Christie, who, like many of these writers, continued to produce her detective novels after World War II with great success. Indeed, although other Golden Age writers are still read today, Christie is the only one who has become a household name like Conan Doyle, with her works translated into most world languages and still selling very well. Although some critics of crime fiction do not treat Christie with great respect, the fact remains that she was not only a very clever producer of clue puzzle novels, but also a writer who had a broad interest in English society and the changes that took place in it from the 1920s to the 1960s. Moreover, though definitely, she was more to learn of social change than many of her fellow Golden Age writers. Almost all of them were well-educated middle-class people who tended, like Dorothy Sayers or Margery Allingham, to create detectives belonging to the aristocracy who have distinct class prejudices and rather irritatingly spend a good deal of time showing off their knowledge in wines and art, making references to works of literature not likely to be known by the masses, and classifying people by their accents and class origins. This material has dated badly, limiting its appeal to later generations.

Mystery Novel:

From the time of the crime to its conclusion, the mystery genre of fiction tells the story of a crime, like a murder or a disappearance. Many people call mystery books “Whodunnits” because they make readers feel like they are detectives. So, they had to figure out the who, what, when, and how of the crime. In most mysteries, the main figure is a detective or private investigator whose job it is to solve the case. Many times, they use a number of red herrings, twists, and surprises to keep readers guessing until the big reveal.

Classifications of Mystery Fictions:

- **Detective Fiction:** Originated in the mid-19th century, pioneered by Poe and popularized by Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes.

- **True Crime:** Narrates real crimes, often criticized for insensitivity, focusing on the criminal's capture and motivations.
- **Cozy mystery:** Emerged in the late 20th century featuring female amateur detectives, minimal violence, and a closed community setting.
- **Legal Thriller:** Involves legal aspects, with court proceedings playing a significant role.
- **Police Procedural:** Features police officers as main characters depicting routine activities and realistic investigations.
- **Howcatchem:** Inverted detective story, revealing the crime at the beginning, focusing on solving the mystery.
- **Historical mystery:** Set in historical periods, popularized by Ellis Peters's *The Cadfael Chronicles*.

Agatha Christie – The Queen of Mystery:

Agatha Christie, renowned as the Queen of Mystery, contributed significantly to the genre with her brilliant plots and iconic detectives such as Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. The “Miss Marple” series by Agatha Christie is a great example of this style because it has a great mix of mystery and charm. “The Maltese Falcon” by Dashiell Hammett is a famous hard-boiled detective story. Modern mystery books often deal with more complicated topics than just the crime itself. They often explore social problems, psychological depth, and the complicated nature of relationships between people. For example, Gillian Flynn's “Gone Girl” and Tana French's “Dublin Murder Squad” series are not like other mystery books.

Thriller:

Suspense thrillers and crime fiction have a strong association, and some literary scholars claim that they are distinct genres with distinct qualities. In suspense tales, crimes do happen, but the main characters are usually detectives who are trying to figure out what happened. In dramas, on the other hand, fast action is what matters most, and the main characters are often in grave danger. In tension thrillers like “The Da Vinci Code” by Dan Brown or “The Killing” by John Le Carré and John Grisham, characters often move quickly between cities and countries. The acts shown usually involve large criminal groups like the Mafia, people working for the government, or powerful people in big business. These criminals often chase or attack the main characters in suspense movies.

Paragraph Questions

1. What are the main characteristics of Science Fiction according to M. H. Abrams?
2. Explain the concept of Cyberpunk and its major features.
3. What is meant by Alien Invasion fiction?
4. Describe the features of Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic fiction.
5. What are the characteristics of Crime Fiction, Mystery Novels, and Thrillers?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the major characteristics of Science Fiction and Fantasy.
2. Examine the themes and features of Cyberpunk fiction.
3. Analyze the characteristics of Alien Invasion and Apocalyptic fiction.
4. Discuss the major features of Crime Fiction, Mystery Novels, and Thrillers.
5. Evaluate the importance of speculative fiction in modern literature.

UNIT II
DETECTIVE FICTION
THE HOUND OF BASKERVILLES – ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

About the Author:

Arthur Conan Doyle (born May 22, 1859, Edinburgh, Scotland—died July 7, 1930, Crowborough, Sussex, England) Scottish writer best known for his creation of the detective Sherlock Holmes—one of the most vivid and enduring characters in English fiction. Conan Doyle, the second of Charles Altamont and Mary Foley Doyle's 10 children, began seven years of Jesuit education in Lancashire, England, in 1868. After an additional year of schooling in Feldkirch, Austria, Conan Doyle returned to Edinburgh. Through the influence of Dr. Bryan Charles Waller, his mother's lodger, he prepared for entry into the University of Edinburgh's Medical School. He received Bachelor of Medicine and Master of Surgery qualifications from Edinburgh in 1881 and an M.D. in 1885 upon completing his thesis, "An Essay upon the Vasomotor Changes in Tabes Dorsalis."

While a medical student, Conan Doyle was deeply impressed by the skill of his professor, Dr. Joseph Bell, in observing the most minute detail regarding a patient's condition. This master of diagnostic deduction became the model for Conan Doyle's literary creation, Sherlock Holmes, who first appeared in *A Study in Scarlet*, a novel-length story published in Beeton's Christmas Annual of 1887. Other aspects of Conan Doyle's medical education and experiences appear in his semiautobiographical novels, *The Firm of Girdlestone* (1890) and *The Stark Munro Letters* (1895), and in the collection of medical short stories *Round the Red Lamp* (1894). (See also *Sherlock Holmes: Pioneer in Forensic Science*.) Conan Doyle's creation of the logical, cold, calculating Holmes, the "world's first and only consulting detective," sharply contrasted with the paranormal beliefs Conan Doyle addressed in a short novel of this period, *The Mystery of Cloomber* (1889). Conan Doyle's early interest in both scientifically supportable evidence and certain paranormal phenomena exemplified the complex diametrically opposing beliefs he struggled with throughout his life.

Driven by public clamour, Conan Doyle continued writing Sherlock Holmes adventures through 1926. His short stories were collected in several volumes, and he also wrote novels (e.g., *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, serialized 1901–02) that feature Holmes and his assistant, Dr.

Watson. Conan Doyle, however, claimed the success of Holmes overshadowed the merit he believed his other historical fiction deserved, most notably his tale of 14th-century chivalry, *The White Company* (1891), its companion piece, *Sir Nigel* (1906), and his adventures of the Napoleonic war hero Brigadier Gerard and the 19th-century skeptical scientist Professor George Edward Challenger. When his passions ran high, Conan Doyle also turned to nonfiction. His works included military writings, *The Great Boer War* (1900) and *The British Campaign in France and Flanders*, 6 vol. (1916–20), and subjects such as the Belgian atrocities in the Congo during Leopold II's reign, in *The Crime of the Congo* (1909), as well as his involvement in the actual criminal cases of George Edalji and Oscar Slater.

Conan Doyle married Louisa Hawkins in 1885, and together they had two children, Mary and Kingsley. A year after Louisa's death in 1906, he married Jean Leckie and with her had three children, Denis, Adrian, and Jean. Conan Doyle was knighted in 1902 for his work with a field hospital in Bloemfontein, South Africa, and other services during the South African (Boer) War. Conan Doyle himself viewed his most important efforts to be his campaign in support of spiritualism, the religion and psychic research subject based upon the belief that spirits of the departed continued to exist in the hereafter and can be contacted by those still living. He donated the majority of his literary efforts and profits later in his life to this campaign, beginning with *The New Revelation* (1918) and *The Vital Message* (1919).

He later chronicled his travels in supporting the spiritualist cause in *The Wanderings of a Spiritualist* (1921), *Our American Adventure* (1923), *Our Second American Adventure* (1924), and *Our African Winter* (1929). He discussed other spiritualist issues in his *Case for Spirit Photography* (1922), *Pheneas Speaks* (1927), and a two-volume *The History of Spiritualism* (1926). Conan Doyle became the world's most-renowned proponent of spiritualism, but he faced considerable opposition for his conviction from the magician Harry Houdini and in a 1920 debate with the humanist Joseph McCabe. Even spiritualists joined in criticizing Conan Doyle's article "The Evidence for Fairies," published in *The Strand Magazine* in 1921, and his subsequent book *The Coming of the Fairies* (1922), in which he voiced support for the claim that two young girls, Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths, had photographed actual fairies that they had seen in the Yorkshire village of Cottingley.

Conan Doyle died in Windlesham, his home in Crowborough, Sussex, and at his funeral his family and members of the spiritualist community celebrated rather than mourned the

occasion of his passing beyond the veil. On July 13, 1930, thousands of people filled London's Royal Albert Hall for a séance during which Estelle Roberts, the spiritualist medium, claimed to have contacted Sir Arthur. Conan Doyle detailed what he valued most in life in his autobiography, *Memories and Adventures* (1924), and the importance that books held for him in *Through the Magic Door* (1907).

Outline of the Story:

There is a small riddle at the beginning of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*. Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson try to figure out who left a cane in their office and who it belongs to. Watson is amazed by Holmes's amazing ability to observe as he correctly guesses the arrival of James Mortimer, who owns the found object and is a handy way to get into the mysterious Baskervilles curse. Mortimer tells the story of the horny Hugo Baskerville as he walks into the office and opens a notebook from the 18th century. Hugo caught and locked up a young country girl at his estate in Devonshire, but an evil dog attacked him as he chased her through the lonely moors late at night. Mortimer says that since then, a strange and supernatural black dog has been following the Baskerville line. The recent death of Sir Charles Baskerville has made people suspicious and scared again. As it turns out, the next of kin has arrived in London to start his new job at Baskerville Hall. However, an unsigned note of warning and, strangely enough, the theft of a shoe have already scared him.

As soon as Holmes and Watson agree to take on the case, they learn that Sir Henry Baskerville is being followed in London by a strange man with a beard. They try to figure out if the ghost is a friend or foe. But Holmes says he is too busy in London to go to Devonshire with Mortimer and Sir Henry to solve the case. Instead, he sends Dr. Watson to be his eyes and ears and tells him to report back regularly.

When Watson gets to Devonshire, he finds that there is an emergency because armed guards are searching the moors for a prisoner who has gotten away. He meets Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore, the housekeepers, and Mr. Jack Stapleton and his sister Beryl, who live in Baskerville and could be suspects. A string of puzzles show up quickly one after the other: Someone sees Barrymore sneaking around the house at night, Watson sees a lone figure watching over the moors, and the doctor hears what sounds like a dog howling. Beryl Stapleton gives Watson a mysterious warning, and Watson learns that Sir Charles had a secret meeting with a local woman named Laura Lyons the night before he died.

Watson tries to figure out these clues and finds that Barrymore's nightly walks are just him trying to help the escaped criminal, who turns out to be Mrs. Barrymore's brother. The doctor talks to Laura Lyons to find out what role she played and learns that the lone figure looking out over the moors is actually Sherlock Holmes. Holmes has to figure out what's going on, but he has to stay hidden so as not to give the bad guy any clues.

Holmes has found out that Mr. Stapleton is actually going to get the Baskerville wealth, which makes him the most likely suspect. Laura Lyons was just a pawn in Stapleton's game. She was a Baskerville beneficiary that Stapleton persuaded to make and then cancel a meeting with Sir Charles late at night. After luring Charles out to the moors, Stapleton let out his vicious pet dog, which scared the superstitious lord and gave him a heart attack. Holmes and Watson use the younger Baskerville as bait to catch Stapleton in the act in the dramatic last scene. Sir Henry goes home across the moors after a late dinner at the Stapletons', but the huge Stapleton pet gets in his way. Holmes and Watson are able to tame the beast even though there is a thick fog. Stapleton drowns in a pond on the moors as he tries to run away in a panic. People find Beryl Stapleton tied up in Jack's house. It turns out she is his stressed-out wife, not his sister. She refused to take part in his evil plan. To sum up, when Holmes gets back to London, he says that the stolen shoe was used to give the hound Henry's smell and that the strange warning note came from Beryl Stapleton, whose cheating husband had denied their marriage so that he could seduce and use Laura Lyons. Watson writes that the case is over.

Characters:

- Sherlock Holmes
- Doctor John Watson
- Doctor James Mortimer
- Sir Charles Baskerville
- Sir Henry Baskerville
- Mr. Jack Stapleton
- Mr. Barrymore
- Mrs. Eliza Barrymore
- Beryl Stapleton
- Laura Lyons
- Mr. Frankland
- Selden
- Anthony
- Cartwright
- John Clayton
- James Desmond
- Lestrade
- Perkins
- Wilson

Critical Essay:

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle may be seen as a literary innovator in a limited sense because the Sherlock Holmes stories were one of the first magazine series built on a single character. As a mystery story writer, he made no secret of his love for Edgar Allan Poe and the French detective Dupin that Poe created. Poe's ability to create a dark atmosphere made an effect on him that was almost as strong as his love for the plots. Building on the work of authors like Poe and Wilkie Collins, Doyle created two characters, Hercule Poirot and Captain Hastings, that were more famous than any other characters until Agatha Christie created them.

Even though Doyle didn't take the Holmes stories seriously as writing, he created one of the most famous detectives in literature. In fact, he tried to kill the Holmes character in his story "The Final Problem" in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894). Even though he didn't want to keep writing the Holmes stories after he became famous for books like "The White Company" (1891), Doyle did start again. After he was successful, the costs of his house and family kept going up, even though he was making more money, and people wouldn't believe that Holmes was dead. Some people, who didn't really believe in Holmes, were sure that either Watson had made a mistake or the stupid middleman, Doyle, had messed up the information. A lot of people were waiting for this offering when Doyle needed money again.

These stories in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905) meet both Doyle's needs and the needs of the people. But before this set of stories, Doyle wrote *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, a novel-length story he based on a similar story told to him by a friend on Dartmoor one rainy day when he couldn't play golf. Because Doyle was so interested in the subject, his friend agreed to give him a short walking tour of the area. In this case, the plot came to him before he thought about which character would tie it all together. That person was already well-known, so he chose to use them. This is how "The Hound of the Baskervilles" became a Sherlock Holmes story. Some would even say it is the most famous Holmes story ever. Because Doyle still wasn't sure if he wanted to bring Holmes back to life, he set the story before Holmes's supposed death at the Reichenbach Falls.

The Hound of the Baskervilles is Doyle's best book in this field. The empty and scary moors of Devon, the Grimpen Mire, the spectral hound, and the dark and old Baskerville Hall all have a more interesting and scary atmosphere than any place in London. Doyle is able to use all of his detailed skills because Holmes isn't in the main part of the story. Instead, the letters and

diary entries of Watson, who is much more trusting and gullible, tell the story. By looking and listening through Watson's observant but not critical eyes and ears, the reader can feel the moor's threat and see Selden's animal-like face, the Barrymores' mysterious actions, the Stapletons' confusing and scary behavior, the scary sounds of the unknown dog, and even the creepy presence of Holmes, the mysterious stranger.

It's common for Holmes to disappear and then suddenly show up again. This is a trick that Doyle used to hide the answer to a puzzle and that Holmes himself used to make bad guys feel safe. From Holmes's summary at the end of the story, it's clear that the logical detective was not at all interested in the claims that magical forces were following the Baskerville family. Some reviewers say that the use of "light" and "darkness" in this story, like in other stories, shows Holmes as the light of reason fighting against the darkness of both evil and stupidity. Holmes's clear-headed, analytical approach to the story would quickly disprove the legend and take away the gothic mood. It would also be harder to keep the answer a secret, since his appearance brings the answers to some of the mystery's most difficult questions. Since Holmes isn't there, false proof can't fool him, which makes him even smarter. What the Barrymores did has nothing to do with solving the problem. If you don't know that Sir Charles's brother had a son named Stapleton, the Stapletons' acts make no sense. Holmes doesn't have to deal with the other characters' messy personalities, so he can see more clearly into the puzzle at hand.

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That's why *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is a collection of the story and plot elements that made the Holmes stories so famous. Also, even though it's a book, the story flows together like a short story because everything happens in one place. People hold Doyle's and other writers' work to a high standard because it uses both mystery and dark elements and is very long.

Characters:

Sherlock Holmes

James Bond star Sherlock Holmes works as a private detective with Dr. John Watson, who is his friend, sidekick, and official historian. Sir Henry Baskerville and Dr. James Mortimer hire Holmes and Watson to help them solve the strange case of the supernatural Baskerville dog that is killing the last few Baskerville family members. Holmes is known all over the world as a private investigator and a thinker. Mortimer calls him the "second-highest expert in Europe." On the other hand, Holmes is also an egoist. Mortimer's idea that he might not be the best at anything makes him angry. Holmes has good reason to be sure of himself because he has a special skill for solving complicated riddles with very few clues, the kind of things that regular people might miss. With just Dr. Mortimer's walking stick, Holmes can figure out what his name is, how old he is, what he does for a living (or what he did before), and what kinds of pets he has. Often, the agent can get these ideas just a few seconds after looking at a scene. When Holmes decides he needs more time to figure out the puzzle in front of him, he likes to be alone and close to other people. Holmes is very smart, but it costs him something. Holmes is a very logical person, but he has no idea how art works, even though he tries very hard. Watson doesn't like having to listen to Holmes's nonsense about art. Holmes is also known to be rude at times. He likes to ask Watson to help him figure out clues that Holmes already knows the answers to, just so he can make fun of his friend Watson when he comes to the wrong conclusions.

Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore

The Barrymores always appear together and never on their own for long periods of time. Each family has worked on the Baskerville farm for hundreds of years, which makes them very proud. In spite of this, they are afraid that Sir Henry Baskerville, the new young master of Baskerville Hall, will expect too much service and glory from them. What Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore owe Sir Henry is very important to them, but they love each other more than anything else. When Sir Henry and Dr. Watson see Mr. Barrymore using a lantern to send messages to

Selden, the escaped prisoner, Mr. Barrymore won't say anything because it would put his wife in danger. It would have been the end of Mr. Barrymore's career if Mrs. Barrymore hadn't told Sir Henry the secret to save her husband, even if it meant her brother's death. The main job of Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore in *The Hound of the Baskervilles* is to tell stories about the people who lived in Baskerville Hall in the past, such as through the family portraits. This is because Sir Henry Baskerville, who is the only living Baskerville, hasn't been there since he was a child and doesn't know much about his family's history. Of course, they also serve a second purpose as red herrings because of the strange things they do to hide where Selden is.

Beryl Stapleton

Jack Stapleton tells Dr. Mortimer, Sir Charles Baskerville, Sir Henry Baskerville, Laura Lyons, Dr. Watson, Sherlock Holmes, and other people that Beryl is his sister, even though she is married to Jack Stapleton. Even though Jack hurts Beryl physically, she mostly obeys him and even lets Sir Charles court her at her husband's request. She quickly tries to tell Sir Charles Baskerville to stay away from Baskerville Hall, though, because she knows he is in danger. She is also quick to turn on Jack when Holmes finds out about the murderous plan. Beryl is very pretty, and almost everyone says nice things about her.

Jack Stapleton

Sir Charles Baskerville's nephew and Sir Henry Baskerville's cousin is Jack Stapleton. Sherlock Holmes did some study and found that Stapleton's father left England for South America when he was young and had a bad reputation. People thought he had died, but he got married and had his only son, Jack. Jack behaved badly like his father did, and he went back to England after stealing a lot of money and marrying Beryl Stapleton. He put this money to good use by starting a school that failed in very public ways. After that, they changed their names and stopped being husband and wife and started being brother and sister. At this point, Jack's plans to use murder to get Baskerville Hall and the money that comes with it began. While Stapleton was not a real schoolmaster, he was interested in etymology and plants, which helped him make a safe way through the wet moors where he hid his dog. He was also able to quickly get phosphorous from these pursuits, which helped him make his dog look very scary. But for the most part, Stapleton seems like a man with a single goal: to get the Baskerville fortune. He is ready to do anything, even kill innocent people and beat his wife badly.

Sir Charles Baskerville

Their uncle, Sir Charles Baskerville, is related to Sir Henry Baskerville and Jack Stapleton. Before he died too soon, he was the master of Baskerville Hall. He died while running away from Jack Stapleton's dog. Dr. James Mortimer was his friend. Sir Charles died very wealthy, even though he had given a lot of money to good causes, including Laura Lyons. People said that his heart was weak, which made him more likely to be scared by the strange dog.

MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS – AGATHA CHRISTIE

About the Author:

Agatha Christie (born September 15, 1890, Torquay, Devon, England—died January 12, 1976, Wallingford, Oxfordshire) English detective novelist and playwright whose books have sold more than 100 million copies and have been translated into some 100 languages. Educated at home by her mother, Christie began writing detective fiction while working as a nurse during World War I. Her first novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (1920), introduced Hercule Poirot, her eccentric and egotistic Belgian detective; Poirot reappeared in about 25 novels and many short stories before returning to *Styles*, where, in *Curtain* (1975), he died. The elderly spinster Miss Jane Marple, her other principal detective figure, first appeared in *Murder at the Vicarage* (1930). Christie's first major recognition came with *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* (1926), which was followed by some 75 novels that usually made best-seller lists and were serialized in popular magazines in England and the United States.

Christie's plays included *The Mousetrap* (1952), which set a world record for the longest continuous run at one theatre (8,862 performances—more than 21 years—at the Ambassadors Theatre, London) before moving in 1974 to St Martin's Theatre, where it continued without a break until the COVID-19 pandemic closed theatres in 2020, by which time it had surpassed 28,200 performances; and *Witness for the Prosecution* (1953), which, like many of her works, was adapted into a successful film (1957). Other notable film adaptations included *And Then There Were None* (1939; film 1945), *Murder on the Orient Express* (1933; film 1974 and 2017), *Death on the Nile* (1937; film 1978), and *The Mirror Crack'd From Side to Side* (1952; film [The Mirror Crack'd] 1980). Her works were also adapted for television.

In 1926 Christie's mother died, and her husband, Colonel Archibald Christie, requested a divorce. In a move she never fully explained, Christie disappeared and, after several highly

publicized days, was discovered registered in a hotel under the name of the woman her husband wished to marry. In 1930 Christie married the archaeologist Sir Max Mallowan; thereafter she spent several months each year on expeditions in Iraq and Syria with him. She also wrote romantic nondetective novels, such as *Absent in the Spring* (1944), under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. Her *Autobiography* (1977) appeared posthumously. She was created a Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1971.

Critical Essay:

Agatha Christie wrote 66 mystery books, 16 collections of short stories, and 19 plays under her own name. She also wrote 5 romance books as Mary Westmacott. It is only William Shakespeare's work that has been translated into more languages and released in more places than any other English author. It's not a surprise that critics would finally look more closely at this huge body of work, which was written just to entertain mystery fans but is still going strong decades after the author died.

Murder on the Orient Express has many of the same themes as other Christie books: being alone, suspects not having much in common, the truth that "everyone has something to hide," and a different kind of justice. The people who killed the man didn't expect Detective Hercule Poirot to be on the train, and they also didn't expect the bad weather to keep the train stuck in the middle of what was then Yugoslavia. If these two unexpected events hadn't happened, the well-planned murder might have gone off without a hitch. But the twelve killers on the train had to change their plans for payback to account for Poirot and the weather. The suspects' little changes and improvisations that helped the detective in the end led Poirot and his "little grey cells" to the truth.

It's only natural that literary reviewers who like detective and mystery books would praise Christie for her clever plots and turns of events. But even so, *Murder on the Orient Express* is one of Christie's books that has gotten the most attention, with equal amounts of praise, copying, and making fun of.

When *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* came out in 1926, Christie had already broken one of the rules of the mystery genre. Christie made herself famous all over the world with this book, in which she tried to make the narrator the murderer, which is the perfect example of an unreliable narrator. When *Murder on the Orient Express* came out for the first time in 1934 as *The Calais Coach Murder*, Christie's fans knew what to expect.

In many of Christie's books, the main idea is that everyone has something to hide, even if they are not actually guilty of a crime. It's better to hide embarrassing past mistakes, bad money decisions, wasted youth, and hurtful relationships. If the detective is looking into something, though, they might have to shine a bright light into a character's dark side to find all the information they need to solve the case. In this way, the Orient Express story is like another book by Christie, *And Then There Were None*, which came out in 1939. This later Christie book is similar because all of the characters have done real crimes but have not been punished. People bring the characters to a remote mansion, where one of them kills them one by one. Christie takes the idea of personal blame to a whole new level in both books, turning all of the characters into not only suspects but also real killers.

Poirot is the main character in 33 of Christie's books. On the Calais Coach, he is the only person who isn't connected to the case of Daisy Armstrong's kidnapping and murder, which links all the other characters. In Christie's books, Poirot is always the outsider. He is the Belgian among Englishmen and the retired, older, more careful gentleman among the younger, less self-conscious crowd. For a reason, Poirot is not involved in the scene. God is the all-seeing, all-knowing hand that makes things right in the world.

Christie's books are studies in the idea of order and chaos. The reader enters a small, well-organized world where everything makes sense. Tragedy builds up below the surface and generally comes out in the form of murder. Poirot looks into the scene and the people in it, gets information, writes down facts and feelings, and then slowly puts the tiny world back together, throwing out the chaos and putting things back in order. He needs to be confused and underrated in order to do this. His strangeness, foreignness, and personal quirks make his subjects less likely to be guilty. After meeting him, these suspects often think that his reputation for being smart and good at solving crimes is not as strong as it seems. Rather than being scary, he is funny. The other people on the Orient Express work together to trick Poirot into thinking something that isn't true. But their tricks fail when they insult Poirot's intelligence.

Outline of the Story:

Hercule Poirot, a Belgian detective, is on a train going to Istanbul. He overhears Colonel Arbuthnot and Miss Debenham, a cold young woman, having a strange talk. Poirot has to get back to London right away and tries to reserve a seat on the Orient Express, but it is already full. He meets M. Bouc, who works for the company, and she helps him get on the train. While Poirot

is in the restaurant carriage, Mr. Ratchett, a guy who looks bad, comes up to him and says that someone has threatened to kill him. A cry wakes Poirot up in the middle of the night, but it turns out to be a false alarm. Then he hears a loud noise in the room next to him. He looks out the door and doesn't see anything strange, so he goes back to sleep. The train gets stuck in the snow the next day, and Bouc tells Poirot that Mr. Ratchett was found dead in his bed. Twelve times, someone has stabbed him. There are no tracks in the snow, even though the window is open. Poirot talks to Ratchett's secretary, MacQueen, and she tells him that Ratchett got notes with threats. The doctor tells Poirot that Ratchett was hurt two hours after he died. Poirot finds out that Ratchett was actually a gangster named Cassetti who had taken and killed an American child. The child was the daughter of Colonel Armstrong and Armstrong's wife, Linda Arden, who is the daughter of a famous actor.

Poirot talks to MacQueen, the director, and Pierre Michel again. Both of them tell him that they saw a woman in a red dressing gown in the hallway. He then talks to Masterman, Ratchett's servant, and Mrs. Hubbard, an American woman who is sure that a man was in her room the night before. She called the conductor, but the man was gone by the time he got there. The space next to Ratchett's is hers. Poirot talks to Greta Ohlsson, a Swedish woman, and then the director again. He shows Michel a button that Mrs. Hubbard found in her bag, but Michel says it's not his. Later, he talks to Princess Dragomiroff, who tells him that Sonia Armstrong, the mother of the killed child, was her goddaughter. After that, Poirot talks to Count and Countess Andrenyi but they can't tell him anything. Colonel Arbuthnot tells Poirot that when he passed by during the night, the door to room 16 was slightly open, and he saw a man looking out in secret. Poirot talks to the American man in room 16, who is a private investigator named Hardman. Ratchett paid him to keep him safe and told him that the threat was a short, dark man with a high voice. Next is Foscarelli, an Italian, and then Debenham, a British woman who also says she saw a tall woman in a red dressing gown the night before. Lastly, Poirot talks to Hildegard Schmidt, who works as a maid for Princess Dragomiroff. She tells him that a small, dark conductor with a loud voice woke her up in the middle of the night. These traits don't fit any of the train operators. Ruth Hubbard finds Ratchett's murder knife in her sponge bag. Colonel Arbuthnot's bag has pipe cleaners that look exactly like ones found at the crime scene, so Poirot starts to search the other passengers' bags. After that, he talks to Miss Debenham, but she won't tell him what she was talking about with Colonel Arbuthnot. Next, Poirot finds under Hildegard Schmidt's desk a

conductor's outfit that is missing a button. The red dressing gown is in Poirot's compartment when he goes back to get smokes. The police found a handkerchief with a H on it at the crime scene. This makes Poirot think of Countess Andrenyi's passport, which had a new ink mark on it. He says that her name might be Helena instead of Elena, which is what it looked like on the visa.

After some thought, Poirot starts to think that the Countess is really Linda Arden's youngest daughter. She tells him, but her husband says he changed the name because he was afraid the cops would think she was up to no good because she had such a strong reason for doing it. The princess walks up to Poirot and tells him that the handkerchief is hers. In his investigation, Poirot learns that Miss Debenham was the Armstrong family's governess, Foscarelli was their driver, and Greta Ohlsson was the child's nurse.

Then Masterman, the manservant, says that he also worked for Colonel Armstrong. There is a call to the restaurant carriage, where Poirot talks about two possible solutions to the case. First, the killer could have been someone Ratchett didn't like who dressed up as a conductor, killed him, and then left the train. The second is that eleven of the twelve customers and Michel, the conductor, are all guilty. They all stabbed Ratchett once, but no one was sure who did it. Everyone had a connection to the Armstrong family and wanted to get back at Ratchett for what he had done. Poirot tells the cops that the first answer is correct, even though the second answer is correct.

Characters:

Hercule Poirot

When Mr. Ratchett, a guy in Hercule Poirot's train car, is killed, Poirot, who is the main character of the story, stumbles upon a murder investigation. Many of the other passengers think Poirot is a silly gent because he is short and bald and cares way too much about his appearance and fashion. But Poirot uses the fact that it seems silly to listen in and get important information for the case. Because he knows many European languages, he can either question suspects or put them at ease. He uses his amazing ability to think and reason to solve the murder by talking to each suspect for a long time and focusing on how they are feeling. As Poirot gets personally involved with the case, gets sidetracked by convenient evidence, and completely fails at detective work, his friend M. Bouc acts as a foil for him.

M. Bouc

A close friend of Poirot's, M. Bouc works as a high-level executive for the Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits, which runs the Orient Express. The company is in a lot of trouble because Mr. Ratchett's death, so Bouc asks Poirot to solve the case. No matter how good Bouc is at running a train, he is hilariously bad at being a detective because he jumps to conclusions about pieces of evidence that are easy to find and acts based on his own biases, like how much he hates Italians. Bouc is a good contrast to Poirot, who is careful and open-minded. This way, Poirot can explain to the reader how he thought about the case by clearing up Bouc's misunderstandings.

Mr. Ratchett / Cassetti

Poirot meets Mr. Ratchett for the first time at a hotel in Istanbul. Mr. Ratchett is an older guy in his sixties who is traveling with Mr. MacQueen. Poirot notices right away that Ratchett seems dangerous. In fact, when Ratchett asks Poirot to look into a possible attempt on his life, Poirot refuses to take on the case. During the book, Poirot figures out that Mr. Ratchett is really Cassetti, an American criminal who was almost found guilty of killing Daisy Armstrong but got off with bribery. Twelve people on the Orient Express, all of whom had some kind of connection to Daisy or the Armstrong family, kill Ratchett on the train. There's no question that Ratchett is guilty, and he's such a bad person that Poirot comes up with a different way for the twelve passengers to outrun punishment for killing him.

Hector MacQueen

Hector is an American guy who is about thirty years old and works as an assistant to Mr. Ratchett. His main job is to help Mr. Ratchett get around Europe by helping him learn the different languages. This information is important when someone from Ratchett's compartment says that everything is fine in idiomatic French the morning of the murder. Hector's father was the district attorney who tried to bring Ratchett to justice for killing Daisy Armstrong but failed.

Dr. Constantine

Dr. Constantine is a Greek doctor who is going on the Orient Express. We need his help to figure out what killed Mr. Ratchett. He notices that lots of different people could have given Mr. Ratchett his twelve stab wounds. He goes to a lot of the suspect interviews that detective Hercule Poirot does.

Daisy Armstrong

Mrs. Armstrong and Col. Armstrong had a girl named Daisy who was three years old. A gangster named Cassetti had taken Daisy hostage, demanded a fee, and then killed her. Even though the crime made people all over America sad and angry, Cassetti later paid off the police, left the country, and changed his name to Ratchett. Because Daisy is so sweet, young, and innocent, killing Ratchett seems more like a good thing to do than murder.

Paragraph Questions

1. Who is Sherlock Holmes and what role does he play in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*?
2. Explain the significance of the Baskerville family curse.
3. Describe the setting and atmosphere in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
4. What is the central mystery in *Murder on the Orient Express*?
5. How does Hercule Poirot solve the crime in *Murder on the Orient Express*?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the role of Sherlock Holmes in solving the mystery in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
2. Analyze the theme of superstition versus rationality in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*.
3. Examine the narrative structure of detective fiction with reference to Arthur Conan Doyle.
4. Discuss the plot and narrative technique of *Murder on the Orient Express*.
5. Analyze Agatha Christie's contribution to detective fiction.

UNIT III

SCIENCE FICTION

THE WOMAN IN WHITE – WILKIE COLLINS

About the Author:

Wilkie Collins, (born Jan. 8, 1824, London, Eng.—died Sept. 23, 1889, London), English sensation novelist, early master of the mystery story, and pioneer of detective fiction. The son of

William Collins (1788–1847), the landscape painter, he developed a gift for inventing tales while still a schoolboy at a private boarding school. His first published work was a memoir to his father, who died in 1847, *Memoirs of the Life of William Collins, Esq., R.A.* (1848). His fiction followed shortly after: *Antonina; or, the Fall of Rome* (1850) and *Basil* (1852), a highly coloured tale of seduction and vengeance with a contemporary middle-class setting and passages of uncompromising realism. In 1851 he began an association with Dickens that exerted a formative influence on his career. Their admiration was mutual. Under Dickens' influence, Collins developed a talent for characterization, humour, and popular success, while the older writer's debt to Collins is evident in the more skillful and suspenseful plot structures of such novels as *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) and *Great Expectations* (1860–61). Collins began contributing serials to Dickens' periodical *Household Words*, and his first major work, *The Woman in White* (1860), appeared in Dickens' *All the Year Round*. Among his most successful subsequent books were *No Name* (1862), *Armadale* (1866), and *The Moonstone* (1868). A master of intricate plot construction and ingenious narrative technique, Collins turned in his later career from sensation fiction to fiction with a purpose, attacking the marriage laws in *Man and Wife* (1870) and vivisection in *Heart and Science* (1883).

Outline of the Story:

An art teacher named Walter Hartright meets a strange woman in all white late at night on a lonely road. Walter is surprised that the woman knows someone in the family he is about to start working with. Walter starts his new job at Limmeridge House teaching art to Laura Fairlie and Marian, who are sister-in-laws and whose parents have both died. He falls in love with Laura, who looks a lot like the “woman in white,” but Laura breaks her promise to her father and marries someone else. Her husband only wants her money, which makes her sad. The “woman in white” also knows a terrible secret about him. He and his shady friend plan to steal Laura's money by pretending to be the “woman in white.” But Laura's husband dies in a fire while trying to make sure no one can find the fake. Laura and Walter meet again and decide to get married.

He meets a strange woman in all white one night. What Walter finds most surprising is that the woman talks about the place and the family he is going to see. She leaves before he can ask her any questions. Cumberland is where Walter goes. At Limmeridge House, he meets Marian and Laura, two of his students who are half-sisters. Walter thinks Laura looks a lot like the “woman in white.” They talk about the strange woman. She really wants to help him figure out what's going on. Walter likes living at Limmeridge House. They become friends, and he falls in

love with Laura. However, Marian tells him to leave Limmeridge House because Laura is going to marry baronet Sir Percival Glyde soon. An unidentified message tells Laura not to get married, and Walter remembers the “woman in white” talking about a wicked and cruel baronet. The man thinks the letter is from that woman. After hearing about the strange woman in the grave, Walter goes there to meet her. When they meet, she tells him her name is Anne Catherick and that she got away from the hospital where Sir Percival locked her up. Then she gets scared and runs away.

Marie and Walter go to the town to talk to Anne Catherick before Walter leaves. They find that Anne has already left when they get there. The family lawyer, Mr. Gilmore, comes to write up the marriage contract. He asks Sir Percival to explain himself by sending him a copy of the warning letter. Walter goes away from Limeridge House. Laura is very sad because she loves Walter. At Limmeridge House, Sir Percival Glyde tells them that Anne’s mother used to work for him as a faithful servant. To show his appreciation, he paid to put her crazy daughter Anne in an institution. Marian writes Mrs. Catherick a letter and gets proof that this is true. Laura then agrees to marry Sir Percival because she doesn’t want to break her promise to her late father. During the marriage settlement talk, Sir Percival insists on getting his wife’s money in case she dies. The idea doesn’t appeal to Mr. Gilmore. Since Laura isn’t twenty-one yet, he talks about it with her uncle, Mr. Fairlie. He does agree with Sir Percival, though. He goes to Central America for eighteen months. The 22nd of December, four weeks from now, is officially Laura’s wedding date. The king tries to find Anne Catherick but can’t find her. She gets married to Sir Percival, and they go to Italy.

He goes to Central America for eighteen months. The 22nd of December, four weeks from now, is officially Laura’s wedding date. The king tries to find Anne Catherick but can’t find her. She gets married to Sir Percival, and they go to Italy. Count Fosco, who is a friend of Sir Percival, brings Laura and him from Italy. It’s clear that Laura’s husband only married her for her money, which makes her very sad. He needs to get his wife’s money to pay off his bills. Marian listens in on a conversation and tells Laura what she heard. When Sir Percival finds out that Mrs. Catherick is coming to visit, he gets very angry. He tries to get Laura to sign something about her money but can’t. Sir Percival leaves Blackwater Park because he is angry. Karen and Marian visit an old wharf and notice a strange person there.

They run away because they are scared, but someone is following them and it’s not Count Fosco. She goes back to the dock and meets Anne Catherick there. Anne tells her that she wrote

the note and followed her the last time. She also says she knows something very bad about Sir Percival. She gets scared all of a sudden and runs away without telling anyone the truth. The great Sir Percival is back. The count tells him about Laura's meeting with Anne after seeing it happen. Then they go to the boathouse to wait for Anne there. But Anne never shows up. Sir Percival gets angry as he reads Anne's note to Laura. Marian listens in on Sir Percival and Count Fosco as they make plans to get Laura's money after she dies. The count wants to know more about the woman he saw with Laura in the dock. Sir Percival tells her it's Anne. Catherick and comments that she looks a lot like his wife, who has been sick for a long time. Marian gets so sick that she can't move while she is spying on Sir Percival and Count Fosco. Count Fosco goes to London, and Sir Percival shuts down Blackwater Park. She also leaves for London after hearing that he took Marian with him. She is still at Blackwater Park, though. Someone had moved her to a different room.

Lady Glyde gets to the house of Count Fosco. It looks like she's scared and sick. She dies the next day. Lady Glyde's body is taken to Limmeridge and laid next to her mother. He finds out about Laura's death when Walter Hartright goes back to Britain. Because he still loves Laura, he goes to Limmeridge to see her grave. But in the churchyard, he meets Marian and Laura, who is still living. The three of them rent a small apartment in London. Walter hears their story from Marian. As she was getting better, she found out that Laura had died of a heart trouble. Someone had found Anne Catherick and put her back in the hospital. Things with her mind got worse, and now she believes she is Lady Glyde. Laura was at the hospital when Marian went there.

Together with Laura, she helped her get away. They went to Limmeridge and met Walter there. Laura says Count Fosco met her in London and took her somewhere to meet her sister. He gave her a cup of strange tea there, and she passed out. She got better in the hospital. Sir Percival and Count Fosco put Laura in the hospital as Anne Catherick by making them look alike. They then moved Anne to Count Fosco's house, where she died as Lady Glyde. He goes to see Mrs. Catherick because he wants to learn Sir Percival's secret and use it against him. They had a tough talk, and then she told him to go to the church and look at the book of marriage records.

If Walter goes to the church, he finds that the record of Sir Percival's parents' marriage is fake. His parents never got married, so he is not a baronet and does not legally own Blackwater Park. Besides that, he could go to jail. Sir Percival knows he is in trouble, so he goes to the church to destroy the fake page. He starts a fire by mistake, gets stuck inside, and dies. The

official story is that Sir Percival died in an accident. Walter gets a note from Mrs. Catherick explaining why Laura and Anne look so much alike: they are half-siblings and share a father. This time Walter goes back to London. He tells Marian the whole story, but they only tell Laura that her husband died. Walter and Laura tie the knot. Walter tells Laura what happened when he takes her to Limmeridge House. The law recognizes her as living, and when her uncle dies, she gets Limmeridge House.

Critical Essay:

Things that happen in the book happen in England in the 1850s. A young painter from London named Walter Hartright gets a job as an art teacher at Frederick Fairlie's house in Cumberland called Limmeridge House. The night before he leaves, Walter meets a strange woman in a white dress on an empty street in the middle of summer. As Walter talks about his new job, the woman in white gets antsy all of a sudden. She also talks lovingly about Mrs. Fairlie, the late owner of Limmeridge House. Walter helps the strange woman get into a taxi, but on the way, he runs into two men who are looking for a "woman in white" who has gotten out of a mental hospital.

Walter meets the people who live at Limmeridge. They are Marian Halcombe, Mrs. Fairlie's daughter from her first marriage, Mrs. Fairlie's sister Laura Fairlie, and Frederick Fairlie, Laura's single uncle. Shirley hears Walter talk about the strange woman he met in London. Marian is interested when she reads that her mother's letters talk about a girl named Anne Catherick. Because little Anne looked a lot like Laura, Mrs. Fairlie became attached to her, and Anne did the same for Mrs. Fairlie. At the same time, Walter and Laura fall in love, but Walter is heartbroken when he learns that Laura is already engaged to Sir Percival Glyde, who owns Blackwater Park in Hampshire and is a rich and well-known person. Laura's father asked for the engagement to happen before he died, so she feels she has to honor it, even though she loves Walter and is getting more and more suspicious about Sir Percival, who may have had something to do with Anne Catherick and put her in the asylum. Walt leaves Limmeridge and goes to Central America because he is sad and loves Laura.

It's possible for Sir Percival to explain everything about Anne, but he acts suspiciously and sets up a marriage contract that helps him financially but hurts Laura. Marian and Laura are both getting more and more upset about the wedding, but it still happens, and Laura and Sir Percival go to Italy for their vacation. They leave for six months and then come back to live at Blackwater

Park. Marian joins them to live with Laura as a friend. When they come back, they bring Sir Percival's evil friend, the Italian Count Fosco, and his wife, Laura's aunt Eleanor, who seems to be totally under his spell. It becomes clear that Sir Percival is a controlling and cruel husband. He also needs his wife's money badly because he is having money problems. Count Fosco seems to be Percival's guide and helper, and the Countess is also ready to spy on Laura and Marian and read their letters, leaving them more alone and powerless. When Laura meets Anne, she tries to warn her and tells her a secret about Sir Percival. But when Sir Percival finds out about this meeting, he becomes even more violent and obsessive because he thinks Anne told Laura a secret that he wants to keep from Laura.

Marian is sure that Fosco and Percival are working together to hurt Laura and may even be trying to kill her, but she gets very sick before she can do anything. Since Marian isn't able to do anything, Fosco and Percival start their bad plan: they make Laura think Marian has left the house, which makes Laura think she is following her sister to London. Fosco and Percival will tell the story that Laura gets sick out of the blue and dies in London. Around the same time, Anne Catherick is found and taken back to the hospital. Marian is sure there must be more to the story as she gets better, so she goes to the hospital to see Anne. She is shocked to learn that the woman in the hospital is really Laura and helps her get away. In secret, the two women hide out. Eventually, they run into Walter, who has returned to England and is thrilled to hear that Laura is still alive.

Walter is determined to get Fosco and Percival punished and for Laura to regain her riches and land. Walter did some research and found out that Percival is not really his son and doesn't have any legal right to his title, belongings, or land. There are fake records of his parents' wedding in the church register, and Anne's mother, Mrs. Catherick, knows about his secret. Because of this, Percival has always been scared that either Mrs. Catherick or Anne (who he wrongly thinks also knows he isn't married) will tell everyone his secret. Out of this fear, he had Anne deemed insane and put in an asylum. Percival worries that Walter will find out the truth about who he is and tell everyone. He tries to burn the papers that could give Walter away, but he dies in the fire that starts.

The death of Percival, on the other hand, does not change Laura's character. Proof of that depends on confirming the date Laura got to London, since that date comes before Anne's death. Even though Walter knows it is risky to upset Fosco, he is still determined to get him to back up this scenario. Through his research, he learned that Anne was the father of Laura's child by a

different woman. This means that Anne and Laura are half-sisters, which explains why they look so much alike. Walter and Laura get married so that Walter can better guard her, and Walter asks Pesca to help him.

Walter, his old friend Professor Pesca, and Fosco run into each other. Walter is interested in how scared Fosco looks. He finds out that both Fosco and Pesca are part of an Italian hidden society that Fosco has had an affair with. Because of this, he lives in constant fear of getting hurt. Walter takes advantage of this and makes Fosco write down an admission of fraud in return for the chance to run away. It is now clear who Laura really is, and Anne Catherick can finally rest in peace, buried with her beloved Mrs. Fairlie.

A short time after that, Laura has a baby. Walter learns that Fosco has died while he is traveling abroad. He has come to the conclusion that the secret society found him and killed him. When he gets home, he finds that Frederick Fairlie has also died and that Laura now owns Limmeridge House, which their son will someday receive. This is the last link in the plot against Laura.

Characters:

Walter Hartright

Walt Hartright is a drawing teacher who is twenty-eight years old and comes from a middle-class family. But Walter doesn't have a lot of money and is living in pretty tough conditions. At the start of the book, he doesn't have a job and only got a job as a drawing teacher because his Italian friend Pesco told him about it. In many ways, Walter is the perfect example of a middle-class Victorian man. Besides being brave and hardworking, he is also honest, resourceful, kind, and has a lot of character. His treatment of Laura Fairlie as if she were a child is an example of how Victorian men often treated women with subservience. Victorian class prejudices say that a person from the middle class can move up in society by marrying into the upper class and inheriting a huge property. Walter's love for and ultimate marriage to Laura, a wealthy heiress, goes against these ideas. In the story, he protects Laura, who is weak and doesn't like herself, as a man. He really cares about Laura and stops Sir Percival and Fosco's bad plans. He is also close with Marian Halcombe, Laura's half-sister. Walter tells the story and makes changes to it. As the main person telling the story, he plays a significant part in the telling of this novel. His opinions, attitudes, and biases have a big impact on how readers understand the story.

Laura Fairlie

A twenty-year-old princess who is very beautiful. She is the story's main character and goes through a lot of bad things before she finally finds happiness. Laura fits the mold of a typical damsel in trouble. She goes through unhappiness, sadness, jail time, poison, physical abuse, and losing her legal identity and social standing in the story. Laura doesn't have a family of her own, so her uncle Frederick Fairlie takes care of her. Maria, her half-sister, lives with her as well. Laura Fairlie has all the good traits of a Victorian upper-class lady. She is honest, kind, and follows orders. The lines on her face are delicate and soft, she is quiet and shy, and she always walks with ease and respect. Laura is very good at playing music and loves drawing. In the Victorian era, women looked up to docility, beauty, and grace, and her love of white clothes, flowers, and music makes her a living symbol of these traits. Laura is very feminine, which makes her weak and humble. Without Walter, Marian, and her lawyer in her corner, she can't protect her own interests. Laura falls in love with her drawing teacher, but she has to marry Sir Percival Glyde, a middle-aged baronet. Once Laura gets married, her husband and his partner Fosco have full power over her. Her unhappy marriage destroys all of her happiness and vitality. Her enemies are trying to hurt her, and she can't stop them without Marian and Walter's help. She is locked up in a hospital under the name Anne Catherick and is given drugs by Fosco. Because she is high on drugs and in jail, she temporarily loses her mind. After her enemies' evil plans are discovered and stopped, Laura finally gets back to where she used to be in society. She gets married to Walter, and when Frederick Fairlie dies, Limmeridge House goes to her son.

Marian Halcombe

Maria Fairlee, Laura's half-sister, is one of the most famous and powerful heroines in Victorian writing. Marian and Laura are two very different people. Laura is pretty, artistically skilled, humble, and weak. Marian, on the other hand, is plain-looking, stubborn, brave, and strong. Marian has a beautiful female body, but her face looks very manly. In contrast to Laura, who is very rich, Marian does not have any money of her own and rarely wants to get married. In spite of Laura's marriage, Marian still lives with her as her main guardian. She is very loyal to her sister and is determined to do anything to protect Laura's interests and stop her enemies from getting what they want. Marian goes against the Victorian idea that women should be submissive and obedient to men. Some people say that Marian is stronger than many of the male figures. Her bravery and smarts are so great that even Fosco, her worst enemy, is amazed by her. Marian gets

sick out of the blue in the middle of the story, taking away Laura's only defender.

Frederick Fairlie

Fredrick is the head of Limmeridge House and the uncle of Laura Fairlie and Marian Halcombe. He also looks after them. He fails miserably at his job as Laura's guardian and defender. He does not care about Laura's needs and is not ready to help her get a good marriage settlement. Without any awareness, he doesn't care at all that Sir Percival only wants to marry Laura for money. He still says that the marriage should happen even though he knows Laura doesn't want to sign the papers. Frederick Fairlie is a guy who only cares about himself. People think of him as a cripple who is useless and a ball of nerves. He is too girly and can't handle any shocks or outside stimulation. He is very sensitive to light, sound, and physical stress. He has a lot of money and a big collection of paintings and other art. His taste in art is good, so he hires Walter to teach his nieces how to draw. Overall, he is a stereotype of the rich, upper-class guy whose only skill is an appreciation of beauty. Collins makes fun of Victorian aristocrats who are too busy thinking about beauty to do anything helpful or socially productive. He does this through his character. Frederick Fairle dies at the end of the book, and his land goes to Laura, Walter, and their new baby son.

THE TIME MACHINE – H.G. WELLS

About the Author:

Herbert George Wells, often referred to as H. G. Wells, was an English writer best known for his science fiction works that gave a vision of the future. He was well-known for being proficient in many other genres as well, and had written several novels, short stories, biographies, and autobiographies. An avid reader since a very young age, he read books by Washington Irving, Charles Dickens, Jonathan Swift, Voltaire, and many other important writers of the Enlightenment period. His works were influenced by them in some way or the other. While in college, he devoted a lot of his time to writing and one of his short stories about time travel, 'The Chronic Argonauts', published in a journal, displayed his talent as an upcoming writer. A futurist, he became a literary sensation with the publication of his novel 'The Time Machine'. Besides fiction, he wrote social satires, essays, articles, and non-fiction books as well. He also worked as a book reviewer for many years and promoted the careers of other writers like James Joyce and Joseph Conrad. An outspoken socialist, he openly supported pacifist views, and

most of his later works were political and pedagogic. Wells was also an artist, and often illustrated the endpapers and title pages of his own works. Even after seven decades of his death, he is remembered as a futurist and a great author.

Outline of the Story:

The novel begins in the middle of a story told by a figure only known as the Time Traveller. A small group of interested guys sit in his home and listen to him with skepticism. At first, the Time Traveller tells his friends that they will have to give up some of their scientific and mathematical beliefs in order to follow him. To show this, he uses a mathematical example. He tells them that there is a fourth dimension, the dimension of time, even though most mathematicians only see three dimensions of space: length, width, and height. Time can't be a fourth dimension, people say, because we can't change where we are in time. But the Time Traveller makes a big deal out of saying that he has tested a machine that can move through time. While they talk about the Time Traveler's trick, he leaves the room and comes back with a small device that looks like a clock. All eyes are on the Time Traveler as he or she uses the Psychologist's hand to pull a switch, which makes the Machine disappear right in front of them. The group talks about whether it went back in time or into the future. Is this a plan to trick them? The Time Traveler takes them to his lab to show them a bigger version of the machine and tell them about his plans to use it to go back in time.

The next Thursday, the narrator gets to the Time Traveller's house a few minutes late for dinner. There are five men waiting for their host, who had left a note saying he might be late. The guests call for dinner after some guessing and jokes. The Time Traveler finally comes back, but he is messy, dirty, and limping. He drinks some wine, tells his friends he is going to wash and change his clothes, and asks them to save him some meat. As he gets dressed, his friends make fun of where he might have been. When he gets back to the dining room, the Time Traveler eats his food "with the appetite of a tramp." He tells his story now that he is calm. He starts by setting some rules: while he tells the story, he won't argue with his friends or let them talk during it. The guests agree, and the Time Traveler starts to tell his story.

As the Time Traveller talks about his trip into the future, the story changes to his own point of view. He left just after 10 a.m. and came back five hours later. First, he saw time move quickly forward. The maid, Mrs. Watchett, shot down some stairs and across the lab. As he moved the switch, the light and the scenery changed as the days and years went by faster and

faster. The Time Traveller stops even though he thinks he might die landing because he wants to know about the “wonderful advances” of a better society. He realizes he’s in the middle of a storm and lands in a yard with rhododendrons and a big stone sphinx in the middle. The faraway view shows big houses and hills. He runs back to the time machine out of fear and moves it forward just enough to avoid the storm. The Time Traveler is now afraid that something will see him and try to hurt him. As he prepares to leave, he sees a group of people in “rich soft robes” coming toward him.

The little people meet the Time Traveler. A man laughs and looks right into his eyes, showing no fear at all. Soon, other people show up and try to talk to the Time Traveler and touch

him and the time machine. The Time Traveler takes the switches that could move the Machine and puts them in his pockets to keep them safe. The people who live there look like small, happy cherubs dressed in beautiful silk clothes, but they are actually weak and fragile. They don’t seem to be intellectually curious or able to think. He is afraid that after all the miles he has traveled, he has only found a worse version of people. He, on the other hand, loves the lovely flowers and tasty foods that have grown. He is led to a tall, broken-down building that is overrun with wild plants and animals that show signs that it used to be a beautiful building. The little people inside the house eat strange wild fruit while sitting on cushions at low stone tables. After he gets fed, he decides to learn their language. They get bored with the lesson quickly, though, and want to play.

The Time Traveler walks around and thinks about the world, trying to figure out what it means by its “ruinous splendor.” He sees that there are no houses, that the landscape is full of cupolas, and that the people all look the same and are of different genders. He comes to the conclusion that he is now in a social paradise where people are dying off and nature has been fully and permanently tamed. The Time Traveller figures out that there is no need for heavy values like freedom, hardship, love, intelligence, or courage because of these changes. In fact, having these traits would make you weak and unsafe. Knowing this helps him figure out how to get these tasty people to do what he wants. He finds out later that most of his ideas were wrong.

When the Time Traveler gets back to the time machine, he finds that his device is not where he left it. As he runs through the rough brush, scratching himself, he realizes that the Machine is no longer there. He wakes up the little people and questions them in a rage, but they can’t help him. Later that morning, he calms down, tells himself he was too emotional, looks at the scene with detective-like detail, and comes to the conclusion that the Machine must have been moved. When two little people show up, they point to the big metal pedestal of the Sphinx.

When he tries to ask them about it, they get very angry and leave. He takes it out of his mind and tries to learn as much as he can about his new surroundings because he knows he will finally find his Machine. He is interested in the cupolas with wells and towers. When he looks into the wells, he doesn't see any water, but he does see a maze of tubes that he thinks are part of a system for air flow below ground. He thinks about many things in this world and asks himself, "Why are there no cemeteries?" How do people get nice clothes if there aren't any workshop or factory? The Time Traveler is thinking about these problems when he sees a young woman drowning. He saves her and becomes friends with her.

The Time Traveler seems to have helped "Weena" a lot, but she gets very upset when he tries to leave her. He stays with her, and one night when he wakes up, he goes outside and sees what look like strange white ape-like forms lurking in the dark. At first, he thinks they might be ghosts, but then he remembers meeting one of these pale, shadowy figures while hiding from the sun in some ruins. He thinks there must be a different type of people living below the wells, and he calls them "Morlocks." The little happy people who live above ground, on the other hand, he calls "Eloi." The Time Traveller also thinks that instead of becoming a great "triumph of humanity," people must have split into two separate groups: the degenerate Haves and the Have-Nots. He thinks about what to do next because he thinks the Morlocks must have taken the time machine.

The Time Traveller goes on adventures with Weena, even though he is interested in the Morlocks and what happened to his Time Machine. He finally gets the courage to go down into a hole and explore the unknown world below when he sees the Palace of Green Porcelain off in the distance. The Time Traveler makes the hard climb into the deep darkness, hearing machinery beating and lighting matches to stay away from the Morlocks who are groping at his clothes as he goes down. Weena begs him to stay. The Time Traveler sees a huge network of tunnels and the wrecks of huge machines at the bottom of the hole. He can smell blood and sees the joint of a big animal. He wishes he had brought a camera so he could take shots and look at them later. He is out of matches and can feel thin fingers pulling at his clothes, so he tries to climb back up the shaft to safety. He yells at the Morlocks, who laugh and run after him. His last match flickers, so he kicks the Morlocks off of him and climbs up the shaft until he gets to the outside.

The Time Traveler is afraid of the dark now that he or she has come back from the Underworld because that's when the Morlocks appear. He knows that the next two things he needs to do are make tools and find a safe place to sleep. He goes to the Palace of Green

Porcelain one afternoon with Weena on his back. He gets tired after a while and, finding Weena sound asleep, lies down in a field under the stars to think about more important things. It scares him to think that the Eloi, who are like fat cattle and dance in the moonlight, are being raised to feed the horrible things that live below. Is this what the Morlocks eat? It dawns on the Time Traveler that the Palace of Green Porcelain must be the remains of a great museum. Inside, he finds things from ancient times, like halls with dinosaur skeletons and others with minerals and weapons. While the Time Traveler looks around the museum, Weena plays. She starts to feel scared when one of the galleries sinks into the ground and gets darker. Through the dust, the Time Traveler can see Morlock tracks and feel their presence. Before he leaves the museum, he finds a wrench, a box of matches, and some camphor that he can use as weapons.

Someone from the past starts a fire. Weena tries to play with the flames even though she has never seen one before. The Time Traveler looks back as he carries the scared Weena away from the fire and sees that it has spread to some nearby trees. He keeps pushing, one arm around her and his guns around the other. In the dark, he can hear Morlocks following him. When they start to pull on his coat, he puts Weena down, lights a camphor block on fire, and throws it at the Morlocks. In the chaos that follows, the Time Traveller punches the Morlocks' white bodies as they try to catch up to him. He also loses his bearings and chooses to make a fire and spend the night there.

The Time Traveler sees how dry the leaves are and how Weena passed out from being scared during the fight as the fire burns. He goes to sleep and wakes up to find that the Morlocks who had come up to the out-of-control fire are attacking again. The Time Traveler is terribly upset that he has lost Weena and that his original fire has spread all over the forest and is now out of control. He fights furiously because he thinks that he and Weena will both die in the battle. He is determined to kill as many Morlocks as he can. The Morlocks look seriously scared, like the light from the fire around them is making them blind. As he fights off the last of them, he can't find Weena and thinks she's dead.

When the Time Traveller wakes up in the light, he looks at the beauty of the Over-world with much more care because he can feel the darkness below it. He thinks about how much humanity loses when it gives up its intellectual and creative skills to find comfort and ease. He goes to sleep and wakes up right before the sun goes down. He walks up to the Sphinx with a crowbar in one hand and matches in the other. He is glad to see that the metal pedestal is open, because inside it is his clean and well-oiled Time Machine. He walks in just as the platform door

shuts. Because he can hear laughter, the Time Traveler knows that the Morlocks think they have him caught. When they get close, he tries to light a match from his pocket but can't because he doesn't have the box. He uses his crowbar to fight off the Morlocks and then climbs into the Machine. He pulls the button and sees a gray light that looks like it has been there before.

The Time Traveler doesn't go back to his own time; instead, he moves the lever forward and goes even further into the future. From his Machine, he is amazed at the strange changes in the sky: the moon dies, which slows the waves in the ocean, the sun gets hotter, and the sky is black because there are no stars. He comes to a stop on a salty beach and hears a loud scream. He moves forward one month because huge monster crabs are following him. When he gets there, the beach is full of these horrible creatures. After one hundred years, the sun is less bright, the air is cooler, and the plants are small and covered in moss. He stops many more times as he travels into the future to find out what will happen to Earth. As he does this, he sees the crabs leave the beach and a bitter cold come down. He thinks that life is still going on because there is green slime on the rocks, and he sees something black floating on the beach. Later, he realizes that it was just a rock. The world looks quiet and dead during an eclipse because it makes the planet darker. The Time Traveler is very sad about how the world is in its last stages of death and doesn't think they can make the trip back. He's scared enough to get on the time machine when he sees a small black thing with limbs.

The Time Traveler goes back to his own time and stops the Machine when he sees Mrs. Watchett walk backwards down the stairs and across the building. He first thinks that his trip might have been a dream, but then he feels that the Machine has moved. Therefore, he comes to the conclusion that the Morlocks moved the Machine from the garden to inside the base of the Sphinx, so it is not in its original place in the lab. He looks at the newspaper and sees that today is the first day of his trip. He walks into his study and hears the voices of his guests in the house. He can also smell meat cooking. "The Time Traveller" tells his friends that he doesn't think they will believe his story as he ends it. The book then jumps to the point of view of the house guest who started telling the story. The guests' first response is to beg to differ. Some people think it's a shame that the Time Traveller doesn't write stories.

The Medical Man is interested in the flowers the Time Traveler brought back, so he asks him where he got them. The Time Traveler starts to have doubts, so he quickly runs back to the lab to check his Time Machine again. He looks at the damage to the Machine and sees pieces of mud and grass. He knows that what he said about what happened is true. But his guests don't

believe him. He told a “gaudy lie,” and the Editor said it. The Medical Man told the Time Traveller he has been working too hard. When the narrator comes back the next day, the Time Traveller is getting ready to leave again. His host tells him to wait for half an hour, and the reporter sees him disappear in his Time Machine. He still hasn’t come back after three years.

Critical Essay:

The Time Machine starts with a dinner party where the person who invented the time machine tries to convince his skeptical guests of the ideas behind his creation. That’s a scene from any Wells story where someone with a unique mind is stopped in their tracks by an audience shocked by their bravery and creativity. But the time traveler keeps going, and his auditors start to question their basic assumptions, even though they still don’t believe it’s possible to move through time. Even though Wells rarely went into great detail about the scientific reasons for his relationships, the inventor’s speech can still seem believable to someone who isn’t a mathematician. The inventor tells his friends about the findings of his trip through time in the first-person pronoun for most of the book.

Long, long ago, the time traveler (who doesn’t have a name) meets the Eloi, a small, delicate, and shy people who live on food. Even though their surroundings seem safe, they are afraid of the dark and huddle together when the Morlocks, who the time traveler slowly learns are the underground rulers of this future world, show up. The meat-eaters are the Morlocks. They stay underground in deep shafts and eat the Eloi. The time traveler has to go into these shafts to find his time machine because the Morlocks took it.

A lot of the book is about how terrifying it is for the time traveler to find this split world. Over time, it becomes clear that the book is more than just an adventure story or a book about the cool things that can happen in science fiction. It’s also a story about people who are mistreated and the worst kind of society where people are separated by class and have things that others don’t. Near the end of the book, the time traveler makes it clear that he or she thinks this is where history is going: toward this splitting of humanity into two groups, the powerful and the weak, where people will actually build a society that feeds on itself.

The time traveler survives a tight escape by finding his machine and beating off the Morlocks. He then goes to a further future where there are no signs of humans and the land is inhabited by huge plants and monsters. Like in the first adventure, the sure-of-himself scientist faces a future that goes against modern faith in perfection and the power of science to give people control over their environment. He goes back to the present day a man who is sorry and

tired. People are very skeptical of the time traveler's story, except for one of his friends, who tells the story and sees the time traveler leave for an unknown place.

At the end of the book, there is no sign of the time traveler and no promise that he will come back. Instead, there is a warning that people should live as if they can still change the future for the better. This prediction is very bad. It shows both the strengths and weaknesses of science, as well as Wells's own doubts about whether the latest scientific findings would be good in the long run. A lot of the drama in the book comes from the first-person, first-person story and from the time traveler being so immersed in another world that he can't believe what he thinks about his own present.

Characters:

The Time Traveler

The Time Traveler, who exhibits his Time Machine one evening after dinner. The next week, his guests arrive for dinner but do not find him home. Informed that they are to proceed without him, they sit down to dinner. Later, their host arrives, dirty and limping. He has traveled to the year 802,701, the time of the sunset of humanity. He tells his guests what he found. The people, weak, rounded creatures about four feet high, are vegetarians called Eloi, living in enormous buildings. Underground live the predatory Morlocks, apelike creatures also descended from humans. They were responsible for the disappearance of the Time Machine, but the Time Traveler says he managed to get it back and take off as the Morlocks sprang at him. Then, after quick and horrifying excursions ahead millions of years to the distant future, when the sun is dying and the earth is enveloped in bitter cold and deathly stillness, he hurried back to the present. The next day, the Time Traveler silences his friends' doubts by departing again on his Time Machine; he does not return, and his friends can only wonder what mishap has made him a lost wanderer in time.

Weena

Weena is an Eloi girl. She is about to drown, but the Time Traveler saves her and makes her his friend and guide. They thought they had walked too far to get back that night after seeing the sights. They build a fire on a hill to scare off the Morlocks, but when the Time Traveler wakes up later, the fire is out and Weena is. People in the beginning of the story are like the characters because they are like people Wells himself knew. In their own way, the editor, the journalist, the medical man, the psychologist, the silent man, and the argumentative man are all

doubtful about the time traveler's trip. The storyteller is the only one who says they believe the traveler's story. People see the traveler as a very patient inventor who is interested in both science research and philosophical thought. Although the time traveler's attempts to figure out the puzzles around him are written in a very logical way, they show how easily the mind can be fooled by what it sees.

When the traveler gets to the year A.D. 802,701, he meets the Eloi for the first time. The Eloi are small, beautiful, and frail-looking people who don't dress or look differently for men, women, children, or teens. They play the whole time and don't seem to be interested in him or any kind of work. Weena, a young woman he saves from drowning in the Thames, is the only person who stays with him permanently. The other Eloi just watch helplessly. Her love and thanks are always there for him. Some of the parts were made of ivory and metal, and others were made of rock crystal and had been filed or sawed out. At first, the traveler thinks that there is no more fear in this world of the future, but he soon realizes that the Eloi are afraid of the dark. Later, he connects this to the Morlocks, who look like apes and hate light and come out at night to catch Eloi and carry them below.

Two very vivid sections show how the traveler met the Morlocks. He checks out their underground homes and then starts a forest fire to save himself and Weena. When the fire takes Weena, the traveler's only goal is to get back home and get his stolen machine. After one last fight with the Morlocks, he is able to move the machine forward in time and get away. In the book, the time traveler's voice talks about the problems that too much social division can cause for everyone, including those who live in too much comfort and those who have to work in horrible conditions. People often say bad things about Wells's work because it is mostly negative, and *The Time Machine* is no exception. However, philosophers also believe that people can change the future if they are aware of the way they are making it. The narrator's final words, after the traveler has disappeared into an unknown future, are another sign of hope. As the narrator looks at the flowers Weena gave to the traveler, he realizes that "mutual kindness and gratitude" had lived on, even though many other morals had died.

Paragraph Questions

1. Describe the character of Walter Hartright in *The Woman in White*.
2. Explain the role of Count Fosco in the novel.

3. What is the central mystery in *The Woman in White*?
4. Describe the journey of the Time Traveller in *The Time Machine*.
5. What do the Eloi and Morlocks symbolize in *The Time Machine*?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the themes of identity and deception in *The Woman in White*.
2. Analyze Wilkie Collins's narrative technique in *The Woman in White*.
3. Examine the concept of time travel in *The Time Machine*.
4. Discuss the social criticism presented in *The Time Machine*.
5. Compare the representation of science and society in the works of Wilkie Collins and H. G. Wells.

UNIT IV
FANTASY FICTION
SHADOWLAND – PETER STRAUB

About the Author:

Peter Straub was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the son of Gordon Anthony Straub and Elvena (Nilsestuen) Straub. Straub read voraciously from an early age, but his literary interests did not please his parents; his father hoped that he would grow up to be a professional athlete, while his mother wanted him to be a Lutheran minister. He attended Milwaukee Country Day School on a scholarship, and, during his time there, began writing. Straub earned an honors BA in English at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1965, and an MA at Columbia University a year later. He briefly taught English at Milwaukee Country Day, then moved to Dublin, Ireland, in 1969 to work on a PhD, and to start writing professionally. After mixed success with two attempts at literary mainstream novels in the mid-1970s (“Marriages” and “Under Venus”), Straub dabbled in the supernatural for the first time with “Julia” (1975). He then wrote “If You Could See Me Now” (1977), and came to widespread public attention with his fifth novel, “Ghost Story” (1979), which was a critical success and was later adapted into a 1981 film. Several horror novels followed, with growing success, including “The Talisman” and “Black House”, two fantasy-horror collaborations with Straub’s long-time friend and fellow author Stephen King. In addition to his many novels, he published several works of poetry during his lifetime. In 1966, Straub married Susan Bitker. They had two children; their daughter, Emma Straub, is also a novelist. The family lived in Dublin from 1969 to 1972, in London from 1972 to 1979, and in the New York City area from 1979 onwards. Straub died on September 4, 2022, aged 79, from complications of a broken hip. At the time of his death, he and his wife lived in Brooklyn (New York City).

Outline of the Story:

The story is about two teenage boys named Tom Flanagan and Del Nightingale who go to Carson’s, a famous private school for boys only. Some seniors, like Steve “Skeleton” Ridpath, son of Coach Ridpath and one of many mean and annoying teachers at Carson, have a lot of power over the newcomers. A few of the students become friends with Tom, and he stays close with them all year. When Tom and Skeleton close their eyes, they see vultures and a scary

person that Del seems to know. Over the course of the book, Skeleton goes crazy and starts to hurt other people, which makes him act weird at school. Del and Tom become close because they both love magic. Del is very good at it and shows Tom during the school year. When the boys' football team plays another private school away, Skeleton steals something from the other school without any trouble. So much chaos in both schools! Teachers at Carson are questioning the kids a lot, but they still can't figure out who stole the item.

According to the evidence, Skeleton kept the item—a golden owl—inside the piano with papers he had stolen. This is why he got so angry at the students when they were near it, like when he hit Del with his belt. After that, Del breaks the owl, and most people forget about it. It's okay for Tom and Del to start a magic club at school and put on a show. As Tom and Del's show comes to an end, the theater suddenly catches fire. They barely make it out alive, but they do. Dave Brick, a fellow freshman and math genius, is the only one who dies. Tom and Del don't know who started the fire and are looking for Skeleton. When summer comes, Del asks Tom to go to Shadowland with him. Tom goes because he wants to protect his dead father. They all get on the same train from Arizona to Vermont to stay with Del's uncle. Tom learned from Del that his uncle was a famous magician who taught him real magic. Now Del wants to teach Tom magic too. He also admits that he tried to get Skeleton removed from school by controlling him to steal the owl, but the plan clearly did not work.

During the train ride, Skeleton gets on and finds a room from the 1940s at the back of the train that wasn't there before. This scares Tom. There is no sign of Skeleton, and the train is late because of an accident a few miles ahead. Tom meets Coleman Collins, Del's drunk uncle and a magician. They go to Collins's home, which he calls Shadowland, where he gets ready to teach them magic all summer. Collins does a lot of tricks and fantasies on Tom and Del to teach them magic. Collins talks to both boys in the woods and tells them stories about his time as a doctor in WWII and how he became magical.

When Del sees that Tom is spending more time with Collins, he gets jealous. Collins tells Tom that he wants Tom to take over as King of the Cats and master of Shadowland, but Tom is really planning to give the job to Del. The boys grow apart, but they get back together over time. A group of strong men at Shadowland are known as the Wandering Boys. They like to bait badgers and live in the woods at the Shadowland estate. The Wandering Boys are Collins' protectors and were part of his traveling act during the War. Del puts Tom in touch with Rose

Armstrong, a fifteen-year-old girl who lives on the farm by the lake. Rose falls in love with Tom and tells him she wants to leave Shadowland before the “big show.”

Both boys fall in love with her. They talk Del into going with them, and Del starts to realize that Collins is crazy and insane. During the book, Tom and Rose get together at night to talk about how to get out of Shadowland and grow closer. Collins becomes more strange and dangerous as he tells the kids the story of the Collector, a monster he made for his magic shows. The Collector was with Collins’ friends Rosa Forte (a singer who was once Rose) and Speckle John (another magician who taught Collins magic). Collins used The Collector to get rid of people who got in his way. What a shape! Collins wrote The Collector while he was a doctor in the war. He got multiple personality disorder after killing another soldier out of kindness, which caused him a lot of stress, which led him to run away and do magic shows all over Europe. Tom starts to worry that Collins will make him lead Shadowland and train him to be the best magician. Collins then tells Tom that he took Speckle John’s magic when he was better than his mentor and left him alive because he thought it was worse than death.

Rose, Tom, and Del use sewers to get out of Shadowland. A devil named M. greets Tom and tries to get him to leave his friends and become a magician with Collins. He says no. The Wandering Boys catch the three as they keep going through the tunnels. Rose turns out to have lied to them and led them down the path they had been on before, thinking it would be the best way to get away. Collins starts his last show early and has the Wandering Boys hang Tom in the theater, where he also taught them magic and told them stories. The other boys are outside and begin to kill Del by hitting him.

If you mentally push Tom when he wakes up, Del’s helper, who is a reincarnation of Speckle John, helps you get off the cross. Tom is in a lot of pain, but he gets outside and kills a few of the Wandering Boys with an old pistol before the others can get away. Tom soothes a hurt and dying Del. When Rose joins them, she says she didn’t know Collins was going to kill them. Tom can see that Collins also tricked her. The boys see Collins as the Collector shows up as Skeleton Ridpath. It turns out that the Collector took control of Skeleton Ridpath near the beginning of the book. The Collector kills Tom for a moment and then takes him, Del, and Rose to the show. Before Collins kills the last Wandering Boy, he brings Del to him and brings Tom back to life. As Tom fights off the Collector, Rose runs out of the theater.

Finally, Tom is able to save Skeleton and cut him out of the Collector's skin. Skeleton then leaves Shadowland. Then Tom and Rose break into Collins's room. Collins tells Tom that he will kill Del if he doesn't drop his gun. Collins then tells Tom that he has one more show to do, turns Del into a bird, and runs away. Tom follows Collins's ghosts around the house. Around a hundred people watch in the theater as Collins turns the bird version of Del into a figure and kills the boy. Tom fights Collins the same way Tom fought the Collector. Tom turns Collins into the Collector and propels him through the bathroom glass, which is where the Collector lives.

After that, Tom sets the house on fire and runs out of the garden on foot. Before he leaves, Tom brings the Book of Spells with him. Collins used it when he was first starting out with Speckle John. Rose takes Tom to the beach and then doesn't show up again in the morning. Before leaving the broken-down Shadowland, Tom puts the figure of Del on the lake. Also, at the beginning and throughout the book, it comes out that one of Tom's school friends wrote the story with Tom's approval and had been asking people who knew Tom to help with research for the story. The friend goes to see an older Skeleton who is now a priest and then to the Shadowland ruins, where he realizes that Tom was telling the truth.

Critical Essay:

The story of Shadowland is about two young students, Tom Flanagan and Del Nightingale. They become close because they both like magic tricks and don't like the bully Steve Ridpath. They put up with his mean behavior for the whole school year before running away to Shadowland in the summer to spend time with Del's retired uncle Coleman Collins. At first, they were going to explore their shared interest in magic, but nothing is what it seems in Shadowland. Someone brought Tom and Del in for reasons they didn't understand at first. It will break their hearts and change their lives forever.

So, Shadowland is a fantasy book about a group of young sorcerers who are growing up. Sounds like you? That's because it's pretty much the plot of the Harry Potter books, which came out seventeen years later but which I read and watched years before Shadowland (I didn't read the book, but I did see the movies). What I'm about to say is very unfair to Peter Straub, but I think a lot of other people will feel the same way: caring for teenage witches wears me out mentally. That's why I said it didn't hold up well over time. Straub clearly came up with the idea first, but Shadowland seems so tame and typical now: two kids from different backgrounds bond over something cool, go on a life-changing journey together, and (spoilers, I guess?) end up sad,

disappointed, but a little smarter. Unfortunately, Shadowland (the place) and magic have become the model for zeitgeist-defining content, so it doesn't stand out.

I will give credit where credit is due: Shadowland's main metaphor is very clever and easy to understand, and it kept me reading all 400+ pages. Shadowland is a metaphor for life because it's a place where people lie and change the truth to get what they want. That's why Shadowland (the setting) keeps "claiming" people in the book. That's the main reason Tom Flanagan and Del Nightingale go there. As they grow up, they face the world as it really is for the first time as young men. Of course, magic is to blame for most of their confusion, but Coleman Collins' lies also put them in tough places. Shadowland has a lot of flash and illusions, but what I found most interesting were the exchanges between Tom, Del, and the older magicians. They helped me figure out what was really going on.

An awful lot of writers have told me over the years that they feel stuck in one field and can't be as creative as they'd like to be. Shifting quickly to a different subject without giving any warning is not a good idea, as I learned with Shadowland. If I had known anything about Shadowland before I read it, I probably would have found a reason not to read it. That's how much I love the change from mystery/supernatural horror to fantasy. To be clear, Shadowland is not all bad. I can't say it's badly written, stupid, or mean. I just don't want that from a Peter Straub book. I don't mind when writers try new things and get out of their comfort zones, but this is way too much. It's like the beginning of Harry Potter meeting *The Prestige*. I would never have read something that sold itself as that. Peter Straub has written a lot of great books. That's not one of them.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE – GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

About the Author:

Gabriel García Márquez, (born March 6, 1927, Aracataca, Colombia—died April 17, 2014, Mexico City, Mexico), Colombian novelist and one of the greatest writers of the 20th century, who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982, mostly for his masterpiece *Cien años de soledad* (1967; *One Hundred Years of Solitude*). He was the fourth Latin American to be so honoured, having been preceded by Chilean poets Gabriela Mistral in 1945 and Pablo Neruda in 1971 and by Guatemalan novelist Miguel Ángel Asturias in 1967. With Jorge Luis Borges, García Márquez is the best-known Latin American writer in history. In addition to his masterly

approach to the novel, he was a superb crafter of short stories and an accomplished journalist. In both his shorter and longer fictions, García Márquez achieved the rare feat of being accessible to the common reader while satisfying the most demanding of sophisticated critics. Born in the sleepy provincial town of Aracataca, Colombia, García Márquez and his parents spent the first eight years of his life with his maternal grandparents, Colonel Nicolás Márquez (a veteran of the War of a Thousand Days [1899–1903]) and Tranquilina Iguarán Cotes de Márquez. After Nicolás's death, they moved to Barranquilla, a river port. He received a better-than-average education but claimed as an adult that his most important literary sources were the stories about Aracataca and his family that Nicolás had told him.

Although he studied law, García Márquez became a journalist, the trade at which he earned his living before attaining literary fame. As a correspondent in Paris during the 1950s, he expanded his education, reading a great deal of American literature, some of it in French translation. In the late 1950s and early '60s, he worked in Bogotá, Colombia, and then in New York City for *Prensa Latina*, the news service created by the regime of Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Later he moved to Mexico City, where he wrote the novel that brought him fame and wealth. From 1967 to 1975 he lived in Spain. Subsequently he kept a house in Mexico City and an apartment in Paris, but he also spent much time in Havana, where Castro (whom García Márquez supported) provided him with a mansion.

Before 1967 García Márquez had published two novels, *La hojarasca* (1955; *The Leaf Storm*) and *La mala hora* (1962; *In Evil Hour*); a novella, *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (1961; *No One Writes to the Colonel*); and a few short stories. Then came *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in which García Márquez tells the story of Macondo, an isolated town whose history is like the history of Latin America on a reduced scale. While the setting is realistic, there are fantastic episodes, a combination that has come to be known as “magic realism,” wrongly thought to be the peculiar feature of all Latin American literature.

Mixing historical facts and stories with instances of the fantastic is a practice that García Márquez derived from Cuban master Alejo Carpentier, considered to be one of the founders of magic realism. The inhabitants of Macondo are driven by elemental passions—lust, greed, thirst for power—which are thwarted by crude societal, political, or natural forces, as in Greek tragedy and myth. After being diagnosed with cancer in 1999, García Márquez wrote the memoir *Vivir para contarla* (2002; *Living to Tell the Tale*), which focuses on his first 30 years. He returned to

fiction with *Memoria de mis putas tristes* (2004; *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*), a novel about a lonely man who finally discovers the meaning of love when he hires a virginal prostitute to celebrate his 90th birthday. García Márquez was known for his capacity to create vast, minutely woven plots and brief, tightly knit narratives in the fashion of his two North American models, William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. The easy flow of even the most intricate of his stories has been compared to that of Miguel de Cervantes, as have his irony and overall humour. García Márquez's novelistic world is mostly that of provincial Colombia, where medieval and modern practices and beliefs clash both comically and tragically.

Outline of the Story:

“One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Gabriel García Márquez is a masterpiece of writing. It's a beautiful weave of stories that has captivated readers since it came out in 1967. This amazing work of magical realism is a story that spans several generations and combines the history of the Buendía family with the history of the made-up town of Macondo. It creates a captivating story that goes against the rules of normal storytelling and tests the limits of reality and imagination. José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán found the town of Macondo in the middle of the Colombian bush. This is the first story in the book. The Buendía family grows over the years, and their lives become connected to the magic and mystery that swirl around Macondo. Love, power, time, and fate are some of the ideas that the book explores through the Buendía family, whose members have both amazing skills and terrible flaws.

One of the most interesting things about “One Hundred Years of Solitude” is the writing by García Márquez. His writing is rich and evocative, with evocative language and vivid images that take the reader to the magical world of Macondo. The author is a genius at writing because he can blur the line between reality and fiction and make magic and everyday things seem like they belong together. The book has a lot of different, memorable personalities, and each one has their own quirks and habits. The characters in the book bring the story to life, from the mysterious José Arcadio Buendía to the strong-willed Úrsula and the passionate Aureliano to the fairy-like Remedios the Beauty. The fact that García Márquez wrote about their lives and futures shows how well he understood people. There is magical realism at the heart of “One Hundred Years of Solitude.” García Márquez adds magical elements to his stories without making them seem out of place, blurring the lines between the real and the supernatural. In the world he makes, flying carpets, monks who can levitate, and characters who live for hundreds of years are

all normal things. Putting together the strange and the normal gives the story an extra layer of magic and wonder.

“One Hundred Years of Solitude” is mainly a thought-provoking piece about how history and life are both circular. The book looks at the idea that patterns and traits are passed down from one generation to the next and that the Buendía family is stuck in a cycle of loneliness and sadness. The way García Márquez tells stories (circular and recursive) reinforces this theme and gives the novel’s study of time and memory more depth. Even the title of the book is a strong metaphor for how alone and isolated the Buendía family feels. It seems like every generation has to repeat the mistakes and tragedies of the past. This gives the story a feeling of doom and isolation. Finally, Gabriel García Márquez’s “One Hundred Years of Solitude” is a great work of literature that takes readers into a world of magic, wonder, and deep thought about what it means to be human. This book by García Márquez is a timeless and great work of literature because of its beautiful writing, complex characters, and unique way of telling a story. That shows how powerful stories are and how they can capture the complicated nature of the human soul. One can be taken to a world where the lines between reality and fantasy are fuzzy and the beauty and depth of the human spirit are explored.

Critical Essay:

One Hundred Years of Solitude tells the story of the made-up town of Macondo through the story of a family that starts with José Arcadio Buendía and ends with Aureliano Babilonia one hundred years later. In a way, One Hundred Years of Solitude is also the history of Colombia over the past hundred years. The work mixes the magical with the real in a way that is just as true to life as telling only the truth. Even though they are afraid of having a child with a pig’s tail, José Arcadio Buendía marries his cousin Úrsula. Their kids are Aureliano, José Arcadio, and Amaranta, and they are all healthy. Each of these names comes up again and again, but Aureliano is the most common. The first Aureliano had eighteen children of his own, one with his wife and seventeen others with women he met while serving as Colonel Buendía in the Colombian civil war. Melquíades is a traveling gypsy who becomes friends with José Arcadio. Melquíades often brings the future to Macondo with him. He shows José Arcadio the ice, the magnet, and the binoculars. Along with his writing, Melquíades leaves a note in a strange language. Many generations of Buendía men have come back to this text to try to figure out what it says.

The manuscript's meaning isn't clear until the last Buendía is born. He is the son of Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Úrsula. Aureliano finds out that Amaranta is his aunt. Melquíades' text says that their child will have a pig's tail when it is born, and ants take it away. Aureliano, the last Buendía still alive, spends his last moments reading the Sanskrit text. It turns out to be the gypsy's account of the whole Buendía family history, written a hundred years before it happened. At the end of the book, Macondo and Aureliano Babilonia vanish in a biblical whirlwind, along with the family's stories from the past. Being yourself is what *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is all about. A lot of the time, characters have the same name, and names change to fit each person. For instance, Colonel Aureliano Buendía stops being Aurelito when he joins the army. People remember nicknames like "Remedios the Beauty" better than their full names. The living can talk to the dead, and their names stay the same. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is still an important piece of Latin American writing and a well-liked novel that shows all of Latin America.

One Hundred Years of Solitude follows the Buendía family through six generations of chaos as they lose their power. José Arcadio Buendía, the head of the family, starts the almost perfect town of Macondo with 300 people, all of whom are under 30 years old. As a man with "unbridled imagination" who always goes "beyond the genius of nature and even beyond miracles and magic," José Arcadio spends his whole life seeking knowledge. But the intensity of his search finally gets the best of him, and he ends up spending his last days chained to a chestnut tree preaching in Latin against the existence of God. Colonel Aureliano, José Arcadio's son, leads Macondo through a time of political unrest and conflict that reminds García Márquez of the civil wars that were a part of his childhood stories and culture. A big American fruit company builds up the town, but angry workers go on strike over being exploited, and in a secret murder, thousands are killed. For more than 130 years, Úrsula, the head of the family and José Arcadio's wife, has been fighting to keep her family from a bad fate. But her death means that the family and Macondo are no longer alive.

In the end, the two Buendías who are still alive have a baby together. The baby is born with the pig's curly tail that was predicted. The child and his mother both die, leaving the father alone. The book seems to be written from the point of view of an all-knowing author until the very end. At the end, the reader finds out that the story was based on a promise made by the old gypsy Melquíades, who had written down the Buendías family history in Sanskrit a long time

ago. As his last act, the father decodes the parchments of Melquíades. He is the only one left alive in the family and in the town of Macondo. He starts to read about the present moment, “prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last pages of the parchments, as if he were looking into a speaking mirror.” People will never remember this story again because “races condemned to ‘One Hundred Years of Solitude’ did not have a second chance on earth,” and he knows this as soon as he finally stops reading.

So, the book turns into a world that both creates and eats itself. People have seen this book as a family saga, a history of Colombia in small sections, and even an epic myth of the human experience from the Garden of Eden to the end of the world. The main theme is loneliness and humanity’s fate in a universe it can never fully understand or control. When García Márquez writes, he mixes details from everyday life with the fantastic, creating unforgettable images like a plague of insomnia that affects the whole town, Remedios the Beauty who rises to heaven still holding the bedsheets she hung out to dry, and a cloud of yellow butterflies that follow Mauricio Babilonia everywhere he goes. This piece is based on Latin American history, but it uses facts and numbers in a poetic way. For example, García Márquez changes the number of real deaths in the United Fruit Company strike of 1928 from seventeen to more than three thousand. He does this to represent a popular Latin American legend and to show how many bodies there were—enough to fill a train.

Characters:

José Arcadio Buendía

The father of the city of Macondo and the head of the Buendía family. He marries his third cousin, Úrsula Iguarán, even though his family doesn’t want him to. Because of a long history of marriage between their families, they are told before they get married that any child they have will have a pig tail. They set out to find a new city where they wouldn’t have to feel bad about their past incest and other mistakes. They found Macondo and raised their three biological children, Colonel Aureliano Buendía, José Arcadio (I), and Amaranta, along with the orphan Rebeca. The gypsy Melquíades gets José Arcadio Buendía really interested in science, and he slowly changes from being the town’s founder and producer who worked with his hands to being a lonely man who is crazy about technology. Because he is so angry, he starts to damage his own house, and his family thinks he is crazy. He spends the rest of his life tied to a tree in the middle of town.

Úrsula Iguarán

She was the head of the Buendía family and married José Arcadio Buendía. They had three children: Colonel Aureliano Buendía, José Arcadio (I), and Amaranta. Her business making candy animals and other treats is growing, and she works hard to make it happen. People in her family have been afraid for generations that married someone from another family will give them a child with a pig's tail. She is also one of the characters who can most clearly see the cycles that the family goes through because she knows what the names Aureliano and José Arcadio mean. In old age, she starts to lose her mind, but she lives to be over 120 years old.

Pilar Ternera

An old fortune teller in town who always makes the guys of Buendía want to be with her. She has a child with Colonel Aureliano Buendía named Aureliano José. She also has a child with Colonel Aureliano Buendía's brother José Arcadio (I). She will live at least 140 years. "Big and talkative, with the air of a matron in shame," An attractive smell that makes José Arcadio want to be with her is that of smoke. After a while, she runs a brothel and still uses her cards to tell the future and the past.

Renata Remedios (Meme)

The first child that Fernanda del Carpio and Aureliano Segundo had together. Everyone in the family and town calls her Meme, but Fernanda calls her Renata. She falls in love with a car mechanic named Mauricio Babilonia and has his child, Aureliano. She doesn't talk after being caught kissing Mauricio Babilonia and is sent to a convent, where she is never seen or heard from again.

Aureliano Segundo

He was the brother of José Arcadio Segundo and the son of Arcadio and Santa Sofía de la Piedad. Aureliano gets fat and starts having wild parties and acting badly. He married Fernanda del Carpio, a woman from another town that he likes in a carnival parade, but they don't work out because she is much more polite than he is. Aureliano Segundo has been having an affair with Petra Cotes for a very long time. The love in their relationship spreads to the animals they raise together, which makes Aureliano Segundo very rich. Úrsula thinks that Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo switched names as kids because they both have the exact personality traits of the other person.

Paragraph Questions

1. What is the significance of the magical elements in *Shadowland*?
2. Describe the theme of imagination and illusion in *Shadowland*.
3. What is magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*?
4. Describe the importance of the Buendía family in the novel.
5. How are fantasy and reality blended in these works?

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the theme of magic and imagination in *Shadowland*.
2. Analyze the concept of magical realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.
3. Examine the role of fantasy in shaping the narrative of these novels.
4. Discuss the significance of the Buendía family in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.
5. Evaluate the blending of reality and fantasy in fantasy fiction.

UNIT V
SHORT STORIES
THE MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUES – EDGAR ALAN POE

About the Author:

Edgar Allan Poe was born January 19, 1809, and died October 7, 1849; he lived only forty years, but during his brief lifetime, he made a permanent place for himself in American literature and also in world literature. A few facts about Poe's life are indisputable, but, unfortunately, almost everything else about Poe's life has been falsified, romanticized, slanderously distorted, or subjected to grotesque Freudian interpretations. Poe, it has been said at various times, was a manic depressive, a dope addict, an epileptic, and an alcoholic; moreover, it has been whispered that he was syphilitic, that he was impotent, and that he fathered at least one illegitimate child. Hardly any of Poe's biographers have been content to write a straight account of his life. This was particularly true of his early biographers, and only recently have those early studies been refuted. Intrigued with the horror and mystery of Poe's stories and by the dark romanticism of his poetry, his early critics and biographers often embroidered on the facts of his past in order to create their own imaginative vision of what kind of man produced these "strange" tales and poems. Thus, Poe's true genius was neglected for a long time. Indeed, probably more fiction has been written about this American literary master than he himself produced; finally, however, fair and unbiased evaluations of his writings and of his life are available to us, and we can judge for ourselves what kind of a man Poe was. Yet, because the facts are scarce, Poe's claim to being America's first authentic neurotic genius will probably remain, and it is possible that Poe would be delighted.

Both of Poe's parents were professional actors, and this fact in itself has fueled many of the melodramatic myths that surround Poe. Poe's mother was a teenage widow when she married David Poe, and Edgar was their second son. Poe's father had a fairly good reputation as an actor, but he had an even wider reputation as an alcoholic. He deserted the family a year after Poe was born, and the following year, Poe's mother died while she was acting in Richmond, Virginia. The children were parceled out, and young Poe was taken in as a foster-child by John Allan, a rich southern merchant. Allan never legally adopted Poe, but he did try to give him a good home and a good education. When Poe was six years old, the Allans moved to England, and for five

years Poe attended the Manor House School, conducted by a man who was a good deal like the schoolmaster in “William Wilson.” When the Allans returned to America, Poe began using his legal name for the first time.

Poe and his foster-father often quarreled during his adolescence and as soon as he was able to leave home, Poe enrolled at the University of Virginia. While he was there, he earned a good academic record, but Mr. Allan never allowed him the means to live in the style his social status demanded. When Poe tried to keep up with his high-living classmates, he incurred so many gambling debts that the parsimonious Mr. Allan prevented his returning for a second year of study. Unhappy at home, Poe got money somehow (probably from Mrs. Allan) and went to Boston, where he arranged for publication of his first volume of poetry, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827). He then joined the army. Two years later, when he was a sergeant-major, he received a discharge to enter West Point, to which he was admitted with Mr. Allan’s help. Again, however, he felt frustrated because of the paltry allowance which his foster-father doled out to him, so he arranged to be court-martialed and dismissed.

Poe’s next four years were spent in Baltimore, where he lived with an aunt, Maria Clemm; these were years of poverty. When Mr. Allan died in 1834, Poe hoped that he would receive some of his foster-father’s fortune, but he was disappointed. Allan left him not a cent. For that reason, Poe turned from writing poetry, which he was deeply fond of — despite the fact that he knew he could never live off his earnings — and turned to writing stories, for which there was a market. He published five tales in the *Philadelphia Saturday Courier* in 1832, and because of his talent and certain influential friends, he became an editorial assistant at the *Southern Literary Messenger* in Richmond in December 1835.

The editor of the *Messenger* recognized Poe’s genius and published several of his stories, but he despaired at Poe’s tendency to “sip the juice.” Nevertheless, Poe’s drinking does not seem to have interfered with his duties at the magazine; its circulation grew, Poe continued producing stories, and while he was advancing the reputation of the *Messenger*, he created a reputation of his own — not only as a fine writer, but also as a keen critic. Poe married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, in 1836, when she was fourteen years old. He left the *Messenger* the following year and took his aunt and wife to New York City. There, Poe barely eked out a living for two years as a free-lance writer. He did, however, finish a short novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*, and sold it to the *Messenger*, where it was published in two installments. *Harper’s* bought

out the magazine in 1838, but Poe never realized any more money from the novel because his former boss had recorded that the *Narrative* was only “edited” by Poe.

From New York City, the Poes moved to Baltimore, and for two years, the young family lived in even more dire poverty than they had in New York City. Poe continued writing, however, and finally in May 1839, he was hired as a co-editor of *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*. He held this position for a year, during which he published some of his best fiction, including “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “William Wilson.” Because of his drinking, Poe lost his job the following year. This was unfortunate because his *Tales of the Grotesque*, which had been published several months earlier, was not selling well. Once again, Poe and his wife found themselves on the edge of poverty, but Poe’s former employer recommended Poe to the publisher of *Graham’s*, and once again Poe found work as an editor while he worked on his own fiction and poetry.

In January 1842, Poe suffered yet another setback. His wife, Virginia, burst a blood vessel in her throat. She did recover, but Poe’s restlessness began to grow, as did the frequency of his drinking bouts, and he left *Graham’s* under unpleasant circumstances. He attempted to found his own magazine and failed; he worked on cheap weeklies for a while and, in a moment of despair, he went to Washington to seek out President Tyler. According to several accounts, he was so drunk when he called on the President that he wore his cloak inside out. Shortly afterward, Poe moved his family to New York City and began working for the *Sunday Times*. The following year was a good one: James Russell Lowell praised Poe’s talent and genius in an article, and Poe’s poem “The Raven” was published and received rave reviews.

Seemingly, Poe had “made it”; “The Raven” was the sensation of the literary season. Poe began lecturing about this time and, shortly afterward, a new collection of his short stories appeared, as well as a collection of his poetry. Most biographers agree that Poe died of alcoholism — officially, “congestion of the brain.” However, in 1996, cardiologist R. Michael Benitez, after conducting a blind clinical pathologic diagnosis of the symptoms of a patient described only as “E.P., a writer from Richmond,” concluded that Poe died not from alcoholic poisoning, but from rabies. According to Dr. Benitez, Poe had become so hypersensitive to alcohol in his later years that he became ill for days after only one glass of wine. Benitez also refutes the myth that Poe died in a gutter, stating that he died at Washington College Hospital after four days of hallucinating and shouting at imaginary people.

Outline of the Story:

There is a short quote from Sir Thomas Browne, a writer from the 1600s, at the beginning of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" that talks about the stories of the Sirens and Achilles and attempts to explain them. After this, there is a long reflection on the analytical parts of the mind. This meditation talks about the good things about analytical thinking and how mathematical thinking can make analytical thinking more interesting. Then, the narrator talks at length about the differences and similarities between chess and card games, implying that card games require a lot more real analytical thought than chess. Specifically, a good card player needs to be able to watch his opponents well. Finally, he says that real analysis is not just creativity. After making these claims, the narrator starts a story that he says will be kind of a take on them. The narrator says he lived in Paris for a few months in a year in the 1800s, but he doesn't say which year it was. A young man named C. Auguste Dupin met him while he was there. He came from a good family but wasn't very rich for different reasons. Dupin loved reading, and he and the narrator met in a store in Paris. They became fast friends.

They finally chose to share a room in a house that was in a bit of bad shape. They had a lot of space to live there. At night, Dupin loved to walk, and the storyteller often went with him. The person telling the story started to notice and like how analytical Dupin's mind was during these walks. Dupin liked being able to think critically and liked showing it off. People told Dupin that he could see into their minds and hearts. The person telling the story thought that Dupin's mind was either overactive or maybe even sick. They had not talked for fifteen minutes when Dupin told the narrator all of a sudden what the narrator had been thinking. This happened while they were walking through the streets of Paris at night. The person telling the story was amazed by this. What shocked him even more was Dupin's patient explanation of how, using analytical thinking, he had come to such a shockingly accurate conclusion. One night, while reading a newspaper together, Dupin and the narrator came across a very detailed account of some shocking killings that had recently happened in a house on a street called the Rue Morgue. There had been loud shrieking before the killings.

A group of people, along with cops, broke down the gate of the house where the screams were coming from and found the bodies of Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter, Mademoiselle Camille L'Espanaye. There was a fight going on between two voices before the crowd could get into the room where the killings had happened. When the crowd got to the women's rooms, the

sounds had stopped, which was a shame. They found a chaotic scene inside the flat. A bloody razor was lying on a chair, and bloody gray human hair that looked like it had been ripped from someone's head could be seen. Valuables were all over the floor, and a small safe was found open and not locked. The older woman was not to be seen, but her daughter's body was found stuck high up in the chimney with her head facing down. The daughter had been strangled, as shown by the marks of fingers on her neck.

The body was badly beaten and scratched. The body of the old woman was found in the small back yard at the same time. While her body was being moved, her head fell off. Both the head and the body were horribly cut up. At the end of the story, the newspaper said that the killings were still a mystery. The newspaper reported a lot of new evidence the next day. Most of it came from questioning neighbors and many of the people who had helped find the crime scene and the bodies. Laundry worker Pauline Dubourg said the two women looked like they lived alone and got along well with each other. She was sure they didn't have a helper, and she knew the old woman was a fortune teller who had saved some cash. A tobacconist named Pierre Moreau said that the two women kept to themselves. He didn't believe the claims that she told fortunes, but he did think she was pretty rich. A doctor had come to the flat a lot of times, he knew. Some neighbors confirmed these basic stories.

On the stand, police officer Isidore Muset said that he had arrived at the apartment gates around 3 a.m. and found a lot of people already there. He heard loud shrieks until he was able to break down the gate. As he got closer to the apartment, he heard two people arguing loudly. One had a rough voice, and the other had a strange, high-pitched voice. The man with the rough voice was French, and the person with the high-pitched voice, who seemed to be speaking Spanish, could have been either a guy or a woman. Another neighbor, Henri Duval, said in court that he thought the high-pitched voice spoke Italian and agreed that it could have been a guy or a woman. The shrill voice had sounded Italian to Duval, even though he didn't know Italian. He was sure that the high-pitched voice didn't belong to either of the women he had talked to a lot. According to what the Dutch diner owner agreed with, the shrill voice (which he thought was harsh instead of shrill) belonged to a Frenchman. It had said "sacre," "diable," and even "mon Dieu" more than once in a rough voice.

A banker and his assistant said that the old woman took out 4,000 francs from her account three days before she died, and that the money had been brought to her flat. An English tailor

said he had heard the argument. He said the rough voice spoke French, the shrill voice was louder than the rough voice, and the rough voice didn't speak English but seemed to speak German, which the tailor didn't understand. Four of the witnesses who came before said that the flat door had been locked from the inside. There were no windows open in the room. It looked like no one had messed with the doors, and there was no other sign of breaking in. A Spanish mortician named Alfonzo Garcio said that the rough voice had said something in French and the high-pitched voice had said something in English, even though he doesn't speak or understand English. A baker was another witness who said the rough voice had spoken French and the shrill voice had spoken Russian, even though neither of them speaks Russian. The newspaper story went on to say that several witnesses agreed that the house's chimneys were too small for people to enter or leave through, and that there was no back door to the house.

A group of people had to work together to get the body out of the chimney because it fit so tightly. The bodies were in terrible shape, according to the doctor who looked at them. There were signs that the girl had been severely strangled and the mother had been severely beaten. Because the beatings were so bad, the doctor thought that the attacker must have been a very strong man and not a woman at all. I think a knife was used to cut the mother's head off of her body, and she was also badly hurt, according to the doctor. Another doctor agreed with this evaluation. The newspaper article finished by saying that there were no clues about who the killer(s) were.

Later, it was stated that a suspect had been caught with very little proof. After hearing about the arrest, Dupin became interested in the case and asked the reporter what he thought about the crime. The storyteller agreed that it looked like there was no way out. In addition to being very skeptical of the Parisian police's methods and skills, Dupin also thought deeply about what Truth is and how to find it. He said that looking into the case might be fun.

After getting permission from the cops to look around the scene, Dupin and the narrator went into the apartment where the killings had happened, but not before looking at the neighborhood next door. They stayed in the flat until it got dark and looked at the crime scene (which was still in one piece) and the bodies that were still there. Dupin didn't say anything that night, but at noon the next day, he asked the storyteller if they had seen anything "weird" at the crime scene. When the storyteller said he hadn't, Dupin said the crime must have been even worse than what the newspapers had said. He thought the killings were strange because of how

brutal they were. In spite of this, Dupin was very sure that he could solve the case. In fact, Dupin told the narrator that he thought someone involved in the crime would soon show up at their house. Even though he didn't think that person was a killer, he thought it might be a good idea to have pistols ready in case the guest refused to show ID. Dupin then said that the older woman could not have killed her daughter and then killed herself, so it was clear that someone else was involved.

Everyone deposed agreed that the rough voice belonged to a Frenchman, but there was a lot of debate about what race the person with the high-pitched voice was, and most people thought it was very strange. Dupin also took the time to explain why getting out of the room would have been hard. Once Dupin looked more closely, he saw that one of the windows wasn't as tightly attached from the inside as the other. He thought that window might have let someone in during the crime. When the outdoor window shutter was open, it got close enough to a lightning rod outside the building that someone who was very strong and quick could climb up it and get in.

Dupin also pointed out that the killer had not taken anything expensive from the apartment. Killings that were so brutal and putting the daughter's body in the chimney made it seem unusual that a normal killer was involved. Most killers also wouldn't have been able to pull out so much of the old woman's hair by the roots like they did. After going over all the strange things about the crime, Dupin asked the storyteller who he thought might have done these kinds of killings. The storyteller said that someone crazy could have done it, but Dupin said that someone crazy would have at least spoken a language that people could understand. In addition, he said that someone who was crazy would not have had the hair that Dupin saw in the old woman's hands. The narrator said that this hair did not look like human hair when Dupin showed it to them. Next, Dupin showed a drawing he had made of the finger marks that had been found on the daughter's neck. Both men agreed that the marks were made by fingers that were too big to be human.

At this point, Dupin wrote a scientific account of an orangutan from East Asia. The person telling the story knew right away that the grip on the neck and the strange hair belonged to a certain kind of animal. Dupin then came up with the idea that the rough voice had come from a Frenchman and the high-pitched voice had come from an ape. Dupin thought that the Frenchman might have followed the ape to the crime scene, but it was clear that he couldn't stop the killings. Anyway, Dupin now admitted that he had already put an ad in a Parisian newspaper saying that

he had caught an orangutan and that it could be picked up at his house. Because he found a knot in a ribbon near the lightning rod, Dupin thought that the ape's owner must be a French sailor working on a ship leaving from Malta. Dupin was sure that the Frenchman would come get the ape for a number of different reasons.

Sure enough, the French sailor showed up and introduced himself nicely. Dupin greeted him kindly and told the sailor that the orangutan was keeping the sailor in a nearby cage. The sailor offered Dupin a small prize for helping him find the ape. Dupin told the sailor that he would be grateful if the sailor could just explain what happened in the Rue Morgue. He then locked the door and put his gun on a table to show the sailor. The sailor was shocked and got up for a moment, but then he fell back down in his chair. Dupin tried to calm the man down by telling him that he wasn't guilty of anything but had to tell what he knew. This was especially true since the killings had put an innocent man in jail. The sailor then started to talk about how the murders happened. After a trip through Asia, he brought the ape back to Paris and hid it in his house until he could sell it.

When he got home one night, the ape was in his bedroom, bent over a mirror with a razor in its mouth, clearly trying to shave like it had seen its owner do. The monkey ran away from the house when the sailor pulled out a whip. It was early in the morning in Paris, so the streets were dark and empty. The sailor chased it until he saw it climb up the lightning rod next to the homeowners' house. Then it got into the bedroom by swinging through the open window. The skilled climber sailor had also climbed the rod, but all he could see was the ape using the knife to hurt the old woman. The girl had passed out. The old woman fought back, so the ape cut her throat. Now it choked the daughter, but then it saw the Frenchman's shocked face through the window. The ape tried to hide the body of the daughter in the chimney because he was afraid of being beaten. He then threw the body of the old lady out the window. While this was going on, the Frenchman slid down the lightning rod and ran home, but the crowd that was coming up behind him could hear his disgusted screams and the ape's shrieks. It's also possible that the orangutan got away down the lightning line.

Following the conversation with Dupin, the sailor was able to successfully capture the ape. The suspect who was in jail was then freed, and the police were annoyed that Dupin had solved the crime instead of them. Dupin, on the other hand, didn't seem to care what they thought.

Critical Essay:

“The Murders in the Rue Morgue” is the first short story in American writing to be a detective story. Poe had a long-time fascination with puzzles, mind games, and secret codes called cryptographs. He often wrote and broke these codes in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. This is where the detective story came from. He would challenge his fans to send him a code that he couldn’t figure out. Most of the time, though, Poe made up fake people to send him puzzles that he had to answer. “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and the later story “The Purloined Letter” help Poe keep up a longer story arc in which he presents seemingly impossible problems that his main character, M. Auguste Dupin, always manages to solve in the end. In the form of a strange murder case, Dupin stands in for Poe and builds and solves a complicated cryptograph.

Also, Poe’s life has something to do with “The Murders in the Rue Morgue.” The murders in the story feature two women, and Poe lived his adult life with his wife Virginia and his aunt Maria “Muddy” Clemm. Poe felt connected to the deaths of women because he saw his mother die and Francis Allan suffer when he was a child. Poe’s life was full of tragedies involving women, and the wild and deadly Rue Morgue apartment is a metaphor for those tragedies. Poe shows how the calm domesticity that Dupin and the narrator experience is different from the violent chaos that exists in Madame L’Espanaye’s home. Poe never found this kind of comfort in his own home during his lifetime, and he fills this scene of a broken-down home with painful memories from his own life. Poe’s creation of Dupin not only shows how clever he really is, but it also gives him the peace and friendship at home that he had been looking for so long.

“The Murders in the Rue Morgue” also depends on the storyteller being Dupin’s friend. The reason Poe doesn’t use Dupin as a narrator is to give the story a sense of being separate from the mind it describes. The narrator’s role as a foil for Dupin makes him a better detective hero. The person telling the story likes Dupin and asks him to give his analysis, which always surprises the person telling the story. He gives Dupin a chance to trick him, which shows that Dupin is smarter than both the cops and the average reader. While following Dupin to the crime scene, the narrator sees what seems to be the same evidence, but he needs his friend’s explanations to fully grasp what it is and how it fits into the bigger picture.

Part of Dupin’s talent is that he can keep his emotions in check while he’s at the crime scene. The cops get sidetracked by how horrifically cruel the scene is, but Dupin can look past the violence and calmly look into the small details that would otherwise be missed. Dupin says

that the awful headless body of Madame L’Espanaye is just one horrible case that keeps the police from solving the crime. It doesn’t matter how smart or logical Dupin is; the real reason for the crime is ridiculous: the Ourang-Outang did it. It’s hard to tell if he meant for this answer to be funny or not. If you want to see the story as a joke, it’s not a parody of the detective story because it was too new at the time. Poe tries to show the analytical differences between Dupin and the Paris police, but his tendency to overstate gets in the way. One could say that the need to bring in a wild animal to solve the crime overshadows Dupin’s cleverness in the end. If Dupin gets the case right, Poe might go too far with how strong his main character’s thinking is.

THE MACHINE STOPS – E.M. FORSTER

About the Author:

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London in 1879, the son of an architect. He attended Tonbridge School, which he hated; he caricatured what he termed “public school behavior” in several of his novels. A different atmosphere awaited him at King’s College, Cambridge, which he enjoyed thoroughly. After graduation, he began to write short stories. He lived for a time in Italy, the scene of two of his early novels: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), and *A Room with a View* (1908). Cambridge is the setting for *The Longest Journey* (1907). It was in this year that he returned to England and delivered a series of lectures at Working Men’s College. His most mature work to date was to appear in 1910 with the publication of *Howards End*.

Forster then turned to literary journalism and wrote a play which was never staged. In 1911 he went to India with G. Lowes Dickinson, his mentor at King’s College. During World War 1, Forster was engaged in civilian war work in Alexandria. He returned to London after the war as a journalist. In 1921 he again went to India, to work as secretary to the Maharajah of Dewas State Senior. He had begun work on *A Passage to India* before this time, but on reading his notes in India, he was discouraged and put them aside. The book was published in 1924, having been written upon his return to England. This was his last novel. It is considered to be his *magnum opus*, and it won for the author the Femina Vie Heureuse and the James Tait Black Memorial prizes in 1925.

In 1927 Forster delivered the William George Clark lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge. Titled *Aspects of the Novel*, the lectures were published in book form the same year. Also in 1927 he became a Fellow of Cambridge. Forster’s writing after that time has been varied.

A collection of short stories (*The Eternal Moment*) was published in 1928. *Abinger Harvest* (1936) is a collection of reprints of reviews and articles. During World War II he broadcast many essays over the BBC. He has written a pageant play (*England's Pleasant Land*), a film (*Diary For Timothy*), two biographies (*Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson* in 1934 and *Marianne Thornton* in 1956), a libretto for Benjamin Britten's opera, *Billy Budd* (with Eric Crozier), and numerous essays. In 1953 he published *The Hill of Devi*, an uneven collection of letters and reminiscences of his experiences in India.

In 1960 *A Passage to India* was adapted for the stage by Santha Rama Rau. After playing in London for a year, the play opened on Broadway on January 31, 1962, and ran for 110 performances. Although Forster was "delighted" with the adaptation, most of the American critics felt the play did not measure up to the novel. In 1946, Forster moved to King's College in Cambridge to live there as an honorary fellow. Mr. Forster's numerous awards included membership in the Order of Companions of Honour, a recognition bestowed in 1953 by Queen Elizabeth II. Forster died on June 7, 1970.

Outline of the Story:

To commence, a concise synopsis of the narrative of "The Machine Stops." In the future, people live underground and depend on the Machine to meet all their needs. "The Book," which is not a text but more of a how-to guide for the Machine, is something that everyone has. The person telling the story says that "the awkward business of public gatherings had been long since abandoned." Under the ground, people stay in their own rooms and talk to each other through technology. They learn and socialize virtually instead of in person. When people go to sleep, they "isolate themselves" by cutting themselves off from the world of technology and phones.

In the northern hemisphere, Kuno lives with his mother Vashti, who is a lecturer and lives in the southern hemisphere. They talk to each other through a round plate that works like a videophone. Kuno wants his mother to come visit him in the northern hemisphere, where he lives, because he wants to see the stars not from an airplane but by standing on the ground and facing them directly. But Vashti isn't sure what to do. At first, she doesn't want to go see him because she doesn't want to leave her room.

Vaishnavi finally gives in and plans to visit her son. She takes an airplane to get there. People say that not many people travel these days because almost everywhere is the same. People used to travel to see things, but now everything is brought to their rooms, so airships have

been kept alive from that time. Vashti's trip makes her think of her "horror of direct experience": she gets scared when she has to leave her "bubble" or "cocoon," the safety and comfort of her room, and be with other people.

Kuno tells her when she gets there that he made her come to see him because he has something to say that he couldn't say through the Machine. People are threatening to kill him for being brave enough to go out onto the Earth's surface by himself, showing that he has free will and can make his own decisions. People are allowed to go up to the surface, but they must be watched and follow the rules. Kuno has turned bad by going out there by himself. Kuno tells his mother she's wrong for worshiping the Machine, and the two of them fight. He tells her that he found out that his room is below Wessex, which is in the southwest of England. He also says that he climbed up and saw the hills the way the Anglo-Saxons did a long time ago. Nature and the land had become important to him again. Before, he had only been able to experience the land through history classes. He found out that the Machine doesn't have power over some people. Strange "worms," on the other hand, chased him and caught him, taking him back underground and to the Machine. Intoxicated, he woke up in his room.

Vashti goes home because she thinks her son is crazy. In the following years, respirators are no longer used, which meant that people could safely visit the earth's surface. Top academics also said that "first-hand ideas" were a mirage, since it was safer to get information about the surface from "gramophone" recordings or what Forster calls the "cinematophote," which are film recordings or moving pictures. These professors say that thoughts that come from second- or even tenth-hand experience are better than first-hand experience. There is also the return of religion, with people worshiping the Machine as a god. Vashti has lost all sense of what life is all about; giving a bad lesson is enough to make her want to end her own life.

Vashti stops talking to her son for a while, but one day she gets a message from him. Because he broke the rules, he was sent to the southern hemisphere and put in a room close to hers. He says to her in a mysterious way, "the Machine stops." He means that the Machine, which everyone now relies on, is slowing down and stopping. They tell Vashti that her complaint will be "forwarded in its turn" when she complains to the Committee of the Mending Apparatus that the music the Machine gives her is "imperfect." When other people file complaints, they get the same answer.

People eventually come to accept these flaws (like smelly bath water, flawed poems, and soiled music recordings) as normal parts of their lives, just like most people had come to accept “good enough” for everything in their lives. An unnamed character in Forster’s work tells us that the “collapse of humanity” began when people’s beds failed to appear in their rooms when they were called. From there, things get worse, with professors telling everyone that things are fine and that people shouldn’t worry about sleep, clean air, or light. Forster’s narrator tells us that as things get worse, there is “hysterical talk” of “measures” and “provisional dictatorship.” Then the whole system for talking hangs up.

People are scared and desperately pray to the Machine, but it doesn’t help because, as the narrator says, man is “dying in the garments that he had woven.” Vashti finds Kuno, who is also dying. But before they join the other dead, Kuno tells Vashti that he has seen and lived with the “Homeless” who live above ground, and that even though he and his mother will die, humanity will live on because it has learned its lesson.

Critical Essay:

E. M. Forster’s *The Machine Stops* is so harsh that people can’t live on the Earth’s surface. The Machine, which is all-powerful and all-knowing, rules over the humans who live underground. In spite of the fact that humans made the Machine, the underground population slowly submits to it and refuses to go against its commands. People can move above ground, but most people don’t like it; since they need a respirator to do so, many people would rather stay below. Everyone lives alone in a box where the Machine takes care of all their needs. People talk to each other through a videoconferencing machine that lets them share information and ideas.

Vashti and Kuno, a mother and son, live underground on different parts of the Earth. It makes Vashti happy that the machine runs her life, but Kuno, who likes to be different, doesn’t want to talk to her through the machine. Vashti agrees to make the long trip to Kuno on a “airship” that is “a relic from a bygone era.” Vashti didn’t like looking out at the empty Earth because it didn’t give her any thoughts.

When she gets to see her son, he tells her that the Machine have “threatened with Homelessness” (exposure to air, which would kill him) him after he went above ground without permission. His behavior disgusts Vashti, and Kuno says, “It is irreligious of me to have found a way of my own.” There is strong denial of this Machine worship throughout the novella, but it is clear that Vashti and others do worship the Machine. For example, earlier, Vashti holds up “The

Book of the Machine” and cries “O Machine! O Machine” while putting it to her lips. It is hard to miss the religious overtones of this, especially considering how religious the time was when the novella was written.

As soon as Vashti goes back to her normal life, the “respirator” system that keeps life going in the outside world is turned off, and “Technopoly,” a religion that worships the Machine, becomes official. Many of the Machine’s growing problems are being blamed on its omnipotence now that the totally obedient underground population has forgotten that the Machine was made by humans and not by a spiritual being. During this time, the Mending Apparatus stops working. This is a system that fixes problems with the Machine.

You move Kuno from the Northern Hemisphere to the Southern Hemisphere. He now lives in a room close to his mother’s. He informs her that “The Machine Stops” because he thinks it is slowly breaking down. The Machine keeps breaking down, and once again, the helpful humans ignore the clear problems. No one knew how to fix it because the Mending Apparatus usually fixed all of the Machine’s problems.

When the Machine finally breaks down, Vashti says, “That civilization’s long day was closing.” As Vashti “opened her prison and escaped” into the dark tunnel and sharp air, the language used to describe the Machine and the underground society changed. She “wept for humanity” as she saw “hundreds of people dying out in the dark.” Vashti looks for Kuno and asks him if they both have “any hope.” Kuno tells her, “None for us.” As Vashti crawls over the dead bodies, Kuno finally gets to spend time with his mother, as “we touch, we talk, not through the Machine.” He gave her a kiss.” People who live in the outside world have “recaptured life...hiding in the mist and the ferns until our civilization stops,” Kuno realizes. This means that people can start over. He believes that people will never make the same mistake again, saying “Humanity has learned its lesson. “Vashti and Kuno are killed when “the whole city was broken like a honeycomb.” For a split second, they saw the nations of the dead and, before they joined them, pieces of the pure sky.

Characters:

The Machine

In many ways, the main bad guy in the story is the Machine, a hugely complicated computer system that seems to meet all of people’s wants and needs. People may have first made the Machine to help them stay alive after the Earth’s surface became unlivable due to an

environmental collapse. They have since gone underground and each person now lives in their own pod. The Machine takes care of everything in this underground society, from simple needs like air, light, food, and beds to higher desires like music, literature, and socializing. The Machine, on the other hand, is out of control because no one living today knows how the whole system works; the people who made it have been dead for a long time. People aren't changing the Machine to fit their wants and needs; instead, they're changing themselves to fit the Machine. They even kill babies who might not be good for life in the Machine. The Machine is so important to people that they start to worship it as if it were a god because they don't understand how it works anymore. They seem to forget that they made it. They are being foolish by thinking this way because their faith in the Machine's strength makes them unable to see its flaws, which leads to the collapse of their entire society. Before the big accident, the Machine had already changed a lot about people, like their desire for close relationships with others and their desire to live in harmony with nature. The Machine's deadly power is a metaphor for the risks that come with making systems that are out of our control and keep us from being our best selves.

Vashti

Vashti is the main viewpoint character of "The Machine Stops." She is an "everywoman" of this society, accepting its values and lifestyle. She is perfectly content to spend her whole life in her underground room, listening to music and lectures and calling her friends. She also has a great fondness for her son Kuno, even though she also finds him strange. Despite her hatred of traveling, Vashti nonetheless undergoes the journey to visit her son simply to make him happy. However, she has a falling-out with Kuno after he tells her the story of how he escaped to Earth's surface, because this, for her, is crossing a line too far. Unlike Kuno, she worships the Machine, finding great comfort in praying to her Book.

But the Machine's final collapse transforms her worldview, as she finally recognizes what her son has been trying to warn her of all along: the vulnerability and destructiveness of the Machine. Vashti's perspective provides the reader with a valuable insight into the values and worldview of this society, but she is also a complex character who does not align completely with this society's values, such as in her love for her son. The clash between her conformist worldview and Kuno's rebellious worldview provides the central conflict of the story, while her final transformation as a character is the internal climax that coincides with the external climax of the Machine's destruction.

Kuno

When it comes to being against the Machine, Kuno, Vashti's son, is the exact opposite of Vashti. He doesn't want to spend his whole life in his basement room like Vashti does. He likes to go on adventures. He has a deep respect for nature. The scenery and constellations he sees from airships hold his attention, and the hills he sees when he comes back to Earth's surface amaze him. Kuno, on the other hand, doesn't like to follow the rules like Vashti does. For example, he seems irrational in his desire to "find his own way out" to Earth's surface instead of going through the right routes to get an exit permit. He is very angry about how much his society worships the Machine and insists that it is something that people made, not some kind of mysterious god. He has a lot of faith in people and feels like he has a psychic link to the past of people. He believes that people will be able to live through the Machine's deadly power and will one day see their mistakes and get back in touch with what is best about themselves. His beliefs finally led him to look for the "Homeless," which are groups of people who have adapted to life on Earth's surface and are safe from the Machine. In contrast to the shallowness of the society he lives in, Kuno wants real human connection. For example, he wants to see Vashti without the Machine's help, and he is happy to be with her again at the moment they are both dying. Even though the reader doesn't get to see things from Kuno's point of view, he speaks for the story's themes, challenging Vashti's comfortable view of the world and leading to her final change. He has hope for the future of people, which is what makes "The Machine Stops" a truly positive view of human nature instead of just a negative dystopia.

THE LAST QUESTION – ISAAC ASIMOV

About the Author:

Isaac Asimov was a Russian-American biochemist and science fiction author. He was born in Petrovichi, Russia in 1920, and migrated to the United States with his family at age three. He grew up in Brooklyn, New York and attended Columbia University. During World War II, immediately after his graduation from Columbia, he worked at the Naval Aviation Experimental Station in Philadelphia. After the war ended in 1945, he completed his doctorate in chemistry, again at Columbia, and then joined the faculty of Boston University. Asimov first began publishing science fiction short stories in 1939. In particular, he published many stories in a magazine called *Astounding Science-Fiction*, edited by John W. Campbell, Jr. One of his most

famous stories, “Nightfall” (1941), earned him a highly regarded position in the science fiction genre. In 1940, he began writing stories about robots, which would become part of a series on the topic. He was one of the first science fiction writers to develop a code of ethics for his robots, rather than casting them as evil or immoral agents. In later decades, Asimov published science fiction novels, series for children, and further short stories. In the late 1950s, however, he began to write more nonfiction, primarily on science topics for the public. Asimov was extremely prolific and was deeply influential in making ideas about technological advancement and scientific progress accessible to the public.

Outline of the Story:

Beginning in 2061, the story takes place over more than ten trillion years. It has just under 4,500 words, which is about 2.2 billion years per word! If you want to understand the story better, think about it in terms of the different computer generations that were asked “the last question.”

Multivac: People first talk about entropy on Earth, or more accurately, in a room deep below the surface. At that time, Multivac was the most powerful computer in the world. At this point, Multivac needs human workers to do some of its work. However, people can do their jobs without Multivac, though not as well. Alexander Adell, a technician at Multivac, asks the question to settle a bet he made with another technician while they were drinking.

Microvac: As the human population grows and people move to other worlds to live, bigger and better versions of Multivac are made and placed all over the Milky Way. They are called Planetary ACs. When scientists figure out how to use molecular switches instead of electric ones in computers, it changes everything. Microvacs are a new type of computer that is almost as strong as Planetary ACs but small enough to fit on a spaceship. Microvacs can work without help from people, but people need them to move through space. Another person who asks the question is Jerrodd, a resident who is going from Earth to X-26. The man asks the question on behalf of his young children, who become worried when they hear their parents talking about entropy.

Galactic AC: Two big changes happen during this time: As of now, 1) people have different ways to live forever, and 2) all contact happens through a single computer. Relays that use subatomic particles are better than those that use molecules. Galactic AC is a powerful new computer that now serves all people by talking to tiny contact boxes in hyperspace that are only

two cubic inches in size. Some scientists, VJ-23X and MQ-17J, are on a spaceship. Within 5 years, everyone will have settled down in the Milky Way, and they are now on a mission to write a report on population growth options for the Galactic Council. The Galactic AC can work without help from people, but people now depend on The Galactic AC to stay alive. Scientists are worried about how much energy it would take to move a lot of people to other galaxies, which is why MQ-17J asks the entropy question a third time.

Ultimate Computer: The main computer, which is now known as Universal AC, has grown to the point where most of it is in hyperspace. As people have evolved, so has their mind. It can live outside of their body. The minds of people can move freely through space while their bodies stay in place on their home worlds. Zee Prime and Dee Sub Wun meet in the void. They are “mind travelers” from different worlds. When Universal AC tells them that the Sun, the first star that people saw, is now just a white dwarf, Zee Prime asks the last question in a new way: Universal AC! How can we keep stars from dying?

It’s “cosmic” now that the machine has gone. It is said to be made of something that is neither matter nor energy and exists only in subspace at this point. We also meet “Man,” a collective being made up of many separate thoughts working together. The world is ending, and people can see that almost all of the stars are now white dwarfs.

AC: There is no longer any cosmic AC. The minds that make up Man merge with AC one by one as the world and men’s bodies die. AC still doesn’t know the answer when the last thought asks the last question for the last time. It’s too late to talk about AC’s final answer with anyone else. AC chooses to show, but the fact that there is light after AC said, “LET THERE BE LIGHT!” does not show that entropy can start to flow again. It does show, though, that the process can begin all over again after entropy has finished, all life has died, and the world is in a state of chaos.

Critical Essay:

The Last Question is a story by Isaac Asimov that is science fiction. The story shows different steps of how humans and machines have changed over time. The first story takes place in 2061. The first time people asked Multivac the title question was on May 21, 2061, when two technicians named Alexander Adell and Bertram Lupov were celebrating Multivac’s solar power answer. By an order of magnitude, Multivac can get more energy from the Sun than Earth can from coal and other fuels that don’t grow back. Adell says they have a lot of energy to last a long

time. Lupov says that they are wrong and that it will only last for billions and billions of years because entropy means that we will run out of energy. So, the two techs ask Multivac to find out if entropy can be turned around. The answer from Multivac is “INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR MEANINGFUL ANSWER.”

A family of pioneers named Jerrodd, Jerrodine, and Jerrodette I and II have come out of hyperspace close to planet X-23, where they will live from now on. His children are upset that Jerrodd brought up entropy in passing, so they ask Microvac if entropy can be turned around. He puts his daughters to bed after telling them that Microvac has fixed everything. For one last time, Jerrodd reads the answer out loud: “INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.” People from even further in the future, VJ-23X of Lameth and MQ-17J of Nicron, are writing a report for the Galactic Council about how fast humanity is spreading across the galaxy.

They understand that the rate of energy use is even higher than the rate of population growth. VJ-23X jokes that MQ-17J should ask the Galactic AC if chaos can be turned around. It tells us, “THERE IS INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.”

Going back in time, we meet Zee Prime and Dee Sub Wun. They are basically Energy Beings since their brains can travel through the galaxies while their bodies stay on planets forever. Because they are interested, they ask the Universal AC to show them the original star and the original galaxy from which people came. Since it’s so many millions of years from now, the sun is now a white dwarf, and Zee Prime is sad because she knows that all the stars will die. What does the Universal AC say when they ask how to reverse entropy? “THERE IS AS YET INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.”

It is now just before the end, and Man is the only person left. Man is made up of the thoughts of a trillion trillion trillion other people. Three times, man talks to the Universal AC to ask how chaos can be turned around. It always comes back with the same answer: “THERE IS AS YET INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.” There is no more data to collect after the end of the world. Time has also disappeared along with space. It took ten trillion years to find the answer to the last question. The Cosmic AC thinks for a while as it sorts through the data and tries to figure out how it all fits together. When there is finally a solution, the AC thinks about the empty space that used to hold a world. To give a correct answer, it would turn back into a Universe, AC then said, “Let there be light!” There was light too.

Characters:

Adell and Lupov

Multivac workers who do their jobs. This group of guys is the one we spend the most time with. The silly talk about entropy they have while drinking drinks brings out their friendship and personality. But they don't really care about or are passionate about entropy. Like most of us, they don't think the end of the world is close enough to worry about it.

Jerrodd & Family

Going through space with great excitement to help settle a new planet in the Milky Way. Earth seems to have created a new way to name things, where entire groups use names that come from the patriarch. People may now see the family as the most important thing in society, which could mean that things have changed. The kids don't get what their parents are saying when they talk about chaos. Though, even though they are young, they can see that the end of the world will be bad, no matter how far away it happens.

VJ-23X and MQ-17J

As they travel through space, they reluctantly put together a report on ways to stop population growth that they know will upset the Galactic Council. After a code number and the person's world of origin, the way they are named has changed again. In this case, the world seems to have become the most important social point of reference. Galactic AC has made it possible for people to live forever. This has caused two things: 1) a huge increase in population; and 2) everyone now knows that the answer to the last question is very important. When VJ-23X ends, we can tell that the two men are angry: "We'll just have to build new stars out of interstellar gas."

As VJ-23X tries to give a simple example of entropy, the part ends on a funny note: "We both know entropy can't be reversed." It's not possible to turn ash and smoke back into a tree. Since MQ-17J is from a different planet, he or she might answer jokingly, "Do you have trees on your world?"

Zee Prime and Dee Sub Wun are mind travelers who are out in space while robots on their home worlds take care of their bodies. Names are back, and it looks like the home star is now the social center. People no longer have to work or give to society, so there doesn't seem to be any kind of social structure. If there was nothing to do for all time, it would be a lonely and dull life.

I don't know if Asimov meant for it to be this way, but it seems like an even worse life than the "struldbrugs" in Gulliver's Travels. Even so, Zee Prime becomes even more desperate to solve the entropy problem when he learns that the Sun, the first star that humans saw, has turned into a Nova star. Universal AC gives his usual cautious answer, and Zee Prime chooses to go down the path VJ-23X suggested millions of years ago. This is what we get: Zee Prime started gathering cosmic hydrogen to use in building his own small star, which made him sad. Even if the stars die one day, at least some could still be made.

Man

The thoughts of all people have now joined together in Man. Besides Cosmic AC, Man is now the only thing in the world that can think for itself. When Man gets the normal answer about entropy from Cosmic AC, he is smart enough to ask another question: Will there ever be enough data, or is the problem impossible to solve in any way? As a positive response, Cosmic AC said, "No problem is insoluble under all possible circumstances!" The bodies of the people who make up Man start to die as the stars around them go out. They are no longer controlled by Man, and their thoughts merge with AC.

Paragraph Questions

1. What is the significance of deduction in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*?
2. Describe the character of C. Auguste Dupin.
3. Explain the theme of technology in *The Machine Stops*.
4. What is the central idea of Isaac Asimov's *The Last Question*?
5. How do these short stories combine science and mystery?

Essay Questions

1. Analyse Edgar Allan Poe's contribution to detective fiction with reference to *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.
2. Discuss the theme of technology and human dependence in *The Machine Stops*.
3. Examine the philosophical ideas presented in *The Last Question*.
4. Analyse the narrative techniques used in these short stories.
5. Evaluate how science and mystery are explored in these short stories.