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RAÍZA DOS REIS

**THE LOCKED ROOM MYSTERY IN THE WORKS BY EDGAR ALLAN POE, SIR
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE AND AGATHA CHRISTIE**

São Leopoldo
2020

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“When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.” (DOYLE, 1980. p. 122)

Sherlock Holmes

ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to compare three detective stories from different periods of time by analyzing their similarities and differences concerning structure. To undertake this study, three detective stories were chosen: "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Speckled Band", (1892) by Arthur Conan Doyle and **A Holiday for Murder** (1938) by Agatha Christie. These three detective stories were chosen because all of them are part of the Crime Fiction subgenre the Locked Room Mystery. The aim is to verify the similarities and differences among them, since they might follow the same pattern, even though being written in different eras: Romanticism, Victorian and Georgian Literature.

Keywords: Detective stories. Locked Room Mystery. Literature.

RESUMO

O objetivo deste TCC é comparar três histórias de detetive de diferentes períodos de tempo, analisando suas similaridades e diferenças em relação a estrutura. Para fundamentar esse estudo as histórias escolhidas foram: “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) de Edgar Allan Poe, “The Speckled Band” (1892) de Arthur Conan Doyle e **A Holiday for Murder** (1938) de Agatha Christie. Essas três histórias de detetive foram escolhidas porque todas elas são parte do subgênero o Mistério da Sala Trancada. O objetivo é verificar se existem similaridades ou diferenças, pois, aparentemente elas devem seguir o mesmo padrão, mesmo tendo sido escritas em diferentes eras: Romantismo, Vitoriana e Georgiana.

Palavras-chave: Histórias de detetive. Mistério da sala trancada. Literatura

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
2 THREE GREATEST CRIME FICTION AUTHORS AND THEIR ERAS.	10
2.1 Romantic Era and Detective Stories.....	10
2.2 The Victorian Era and the Detective Stories.....	12
2.3 The Golden Age of Detective Story.	13
3 DETECTIVE FICTION.....	15
3.1 Whodunnit.....	16
3.2 Locked Room Mystery.....	17
4 THE ANALYSIS OF DETECTIVE STORIES	21
4.1 The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841) by Edgar Allan Poe.....	21
4.2 The speckled Band (1892) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.....	24
4.3 A Holiday for Murder (1938) by Agatha Christie	26
4.4 The detectives' style of analyzing the clues.....	28
4.5 The Gothicism in the Stories	30
4.6 The Echoes of Imperialism in Literature	32
5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS	35
REFERENCES.....	37

1 INTRODUCTION

Detective fiction is one of the most popular genres in literature and during my graduation I became very interested in detective stories because I love being part of the investigation and trying to solve the murder with the clues given in the book while I am reading. This kind of genre in particular, got my attention when I read some books by Agatha Christie for a subject at University. Since then, I started to buy some books by famous authors and read others online. This made me fall in love with this genre. That is the reason why I chose this subject for my final paper.

Detective stories involve the reader's attention and make them think about who committed the crime. They also help readers develop their imagination and sense of observation. There are many sub-genres of crime fiction. One of them is the Hard-boiled Detective investigation, which was developed in the 1920s in the United States and involves a great deal of violence. The Country-house Mystery is another sub-genre in which a crime happens, as the name says, in a restricted setting and with a limited number of suspects (SCAGGS, 2005). Agatha Christie is a very good representative of this sub-genre. Another one is a spy genre which the narrative centers on espionage, and the detective is part of or works for a governmental intelligence agency.

Nevertheless, the sub-genre of crime fiction chosen to perform this work is the Locked Room Mystery. The Locked Room Mystery is a crime subgenre in which a body is found in a room sealed from inside and there are no evidences since no murder weapon is found. Therefore, this kind of crime is considered impossible to be solved.

The aim of this TCC is to compare three detective stories of different periods of time, by analyzing their similarities concerning structure. To undertake this study, "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) by Edgar Allan Poe, "The Speckled Band" (1892) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and **A Holiday for Murder** (1938) (**Murder for Christmas**) by Agatha Christie were chosen. These three detective stories were chosen because all of them are part of the *Crime Fiction* subgenre the *Locked Room Mystery* and their detectives became extremely famous problem solvers. Consequently, this work aims to verify if there are similarities and differences, since they might follow the same pattern, but they were written in different eras: Romanticism, Victorian and Georgian Literature.

To perform this study the paper is structured as follows: the second chapter gives a brief chronology of the periods in which each author is part of. The third chapter reviews the genre Detective Fiction as well as sub-genres whodunnit¹ and the locked room mystery. The fourth chapter presents the analysis of the three detective stories. The last chapter concludes the findings.

¹ A whodunnit or whodunit is a type of detective story in which the main focus is to find who committed the crime.

2 THREE GREATEST CRIME FICTION AUTHORS AND THEIR ERAS.

This chapter is dedicated to contextualizing the literary periods of the three writers whose crime fictions will be analyzed. The first period is Romanticism. A brief account of this literary movement is given and then Edgar Allan Poe, who is considered the father of crime and mystery fiction, is located within the movement. The second literary period is the Victorian Era Literature. An important representative of the detective fiction is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. This period is particularly important to be contextualized when writing about detective fiction because its famous detective, Sherlock Holmes, is a typical Victorian representative, the one whose behavior created the image of a typical Englishman. At last, but not least important, the period in between World Wars called the Golden age of Detective fiction, whose chosen author and one of the greatest representatives of this period is Agatha Christie, is also contextualized. The period in between wars is generally regarded as Modernism. However, in between wars, there were specific movements in England that differed from Modernism in ideology and aestheticism; the Golden age of Detective fiction is one of them.

2.1 Romantic Era and Detective Stories

The "Romantic Period" refers to literary and cultural movements in England, Europe, and America which took place from 1770 to 1860. The movement begins in Europe with Goethe's masterpiece **Sorrows of Young Werther** (1774) and influences British writers, among them, Lord Byron and Percy Shelley. Romanticism was a reaction to the Age of Reason also Known as the Enlightenment, a political, philosophical and artistic movement whose thinkers put forward the American and the French Revolutions as well as other revolts all over the world. However, the atrocities, known as the Reign of Terror, caused by the French revolution resulted in the opposition to classical values. Therefore, Romanticism was born as a reaction to rationalism of the Enlightenment. While the Enlightenment was objective, materialistic and focused on public responsibility, Romanticism was subjective,

emotional, individualistic and passionate. Besides, there was a group of artists who took Romanticism to its extreme by adopting Gothicism. Kathy Prendergast (n.d) writes: "The Gothic novel, distinctive for its fascination with the horrible, the repellent, the grotesque and the supernatural, in combination with many of the characteristics of the Romantic novel, was (and is still) seen by some critics as a subgenre of Romanticism, and by others as a genre in its own right."

It is particularly important because Edgar Allan Poe, although being an American author, was greatly influenced by the British Romanticism and German Ironists² and became famous for his Gothic fiction and his tales of the macabre. Edgar Allan Poe also explored the psychological effects of sin and madness as well as the disorder of the human psyche. Poe was the first author to invent the mystery fiction and the first detective story with his "Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841). This story has some Gothic elements. When the neighbors open the door, they see a horrifying scene. Later, the readers learn the murder is committed by a beast.

It is important to mention that the American Romanticism, even though being influenced by the European Romanticism, had its own characteristics. While, the British Romanticism looked back to medieval aesthetics, The American Romanticism was established after the independence of the United States and most of the Romantics were interested in writing about the uniqueness and the natural beauty of their new country.

The Romantic Era was influential in shaping modern views of art, literature, and music. It was characterized by the focus on the narrator's emotion and inner world, the celebration of nature, rejection of industrialization and idealization of women. The romanticism period also can be seen as the people's reactions to the huge changes in society that occurred at that time, like the revolutions that affected countries like France and the United States, which resulted in the spread of democracy.

² According to Thompson (1973, p. 19- 20) Critics have seen some influence of German Romanticism in Poe's writings regarding Romantic Irony. Thompson comments that more than the Gothic gloom; the German Ironists grasped not only the comic, the ironic and the absurd of the world but also the theories of subconscious mind in their writings.

2.2 The Victorian Era and the Detective Stories

The Victorian Literature written in England during the reign of Queen Victoria, in 1837 until 1901. It is characterized by the expanding horizons of education and literacy, as well by an increased desire of the people to question religion and politics.

Queen Victoria takes the crown at the age of 18. Queen Victoria was King George III's granddaughter and the only daughter of Prince Edward who died when she was just 8 months old. Since her three uncles had also died, she became the first in line to the throne.

During her Reign the country saw economic progress, but also poverty. Furthermore, the exploitation of poor people was equally part of it. The gap between the rich and the poor increased significantly and the drive for material and commercial success was seen to propagate a moral decay in the society itself.

While the earlier phase of Romanticism saw a celebration of the countryside and the rich landscape of the flora and fauna, the Victorian era started changing in the geography of the country due to the Industrial Revolution which turned the cities, as London, overcrowded by people who searched jobs at industries and factories, living in poor conditions.

Concerning Literature, novels were the emperors of the Victorian period. The nineteenth century is often regarded as a high point in European literature and Victorian writers like Charles Dickens (1812–1870) became widely writers during the first part of Victorian Era. Dickens was a critic of the Victorian society. According to Dr Andrzej Diniejko (2012):

Dickens was not only the first great urban novelist in England, but also one of the most important social commentators who used fiction effectively to criticize economic, social, and moral abuses in the Victorian era.

Dr Andrzej Diniejko (2019) also writes that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle “shared Dickens’s sense of justice and social responsibility” Both authors published their stories in weekly magazines. Nevertheless, Doyle gave a new dimension to the English Literature creating the most famous detective Sherlock Holmes. Moreover, Doyle developed a new concept of narration by Holmes prolific style. Because of his scientific education and medical training, his detective, Sherlock Holmes’s keen

observation, great deductive reasoning and forensic skills make him the best and most famous detective of the Victorian Literature. Dr Andrzej Diniejko (2019) affirms that:

“Holmes's fictional forefather was Edgar Allan Poe's detective C. Auguste Dupin, but it was Conan Doyle who first introduced to literature the character of the scientific detective. Holmes, one of the best known and most popular characters in English literature, is not only a successful master detective, but he is the epitome of the Victorian and imperial values.”

In 1887 Doyle published his first novel “A study in scarlet”, where Sherlock Holmes appeared for the first time. Doyle also created the loyal, honest, admiring, but not brilliant narrator Dr Watson, who represents a Victorian middle-class man. It is interesting because the middle class was almost nonexistent in the Victorian Era.

Eric Hobsbawm (1999) comments that middle class was very small and formed by solicitors, doctors, engineers, merchants and bankers, ship-owners and factory and mine owners. Christopher. Baker (2020) writes that “The middle class was essentially nonexistent, but the Industrial Revolution meant that the balance of power shifted from the aristocracy, whose position and wealth was based on land, to the newly rich business leaders.” Therefore, Doyle creates a character of the Industrial Revolution Era.

2.3 The Golden Age of Detective Story.

In order to write about the Golden Age of Detective story, it is necessary to contextualize the Georgian Period as well as Modernism. The reason is that these movements basically happened at the same time, but had their specific artistic responses to historical period in England.

British Literature of this period is named for the reign of George V (1910-36). During this period a group of poets wrote poetry that had as the main theme the bucolic countryside England. Their writings were traditional in form and technique. Some important writers of this period are Siegfried Sassoon, who wrote poems depicting the atrocities of World War I and D.H. Lawrence's, who wrote not only

poems but novels, short stories, plays, and literary criticism among others. Lawrence criticized dehumanizing effects of modernity and industrialization in his writings.

However, this movement does not last long due to the rise of Modernism, which co-existed with Georgianism, but reached its peak in the World War I and its aftermath. Modernist writers rejected the aesthetic values of their predecessors and broke with conventional practices and experimented language as, for example Virginia Woolf's and James Joyce's *Stream of Consciousness*. Stephen Kern (2011 p. 3) states:

“The unifying positive attitude of Modernists took shape around celebration of art. This shared value is not surprising in that the leading literary modernists were artists and many of their works focused on creativity as the most prized source of meaning in life.”

Agatha Christie published her first detective story, **The Mysterious Affair at Styles**, in 1920. As written before, this period comprises Georgianism and Modernism. Agatha Christie is considered part of the movement called the Golden Age of Detective story, which began in the 1920s's and ended in the around World War II. This movement also responded to the technological and industrial advance and the wars but with a different perspective, when compared to Modernism. In fact, the authors of this period, all of them women writers, showed a more positive response to social WWI. It seems that detective fiction denied the economic and social crisis of Europe after the war.

“Agatha Christie's influence in detective stories was so huge that includes the development of the country-house murder which is synonymous with the whodunnit, as well as a willingness to subvert the pattern that she effectively created.” (SCAGGS, 2009. p. 26).

The Golden Age was influenced by three others women authors who also became very popular, their names were Dorothy L. Sayers, Margery Allingham and Ngaio Marsh. They focused in male detectives until the Second World War was over. After that, female detectives took place in their stories.

3 DETECTIVE FICTION

This chapter will review the concept of detective fiction and some characteristics employed by these three authors. Some of these characteristics are shared by them, others became their recognizable mark.

Crime fiction is certainly one of the most popular genres in literature. This genre is seen in a lot of short stories, novels plays and films. It englobes some sub-genres and one of them is “detective fiction”. The Detective Fiction is centered around the investigation of a crime that focuses attention on the method of detection by structuring the story around a mystery that appears insoluble through normal investigative methods.

According to Scaggs (2005, p. 30), “Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’, published in 1841, was identified as the first detective story and Poe set the template for the crime fiction of the next century.” Poe create the first detective story “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” is where he introduces his brilliant detective, Auguste Dupin who is methodical and follows a particular method of detection to solve that unsolvable crime.

In the book **The Cambridge Companion of Crime Fiction** (2003) Priestman says that Edgar Allan Poe was the first to theorize about crime fiction. Doyle and Christie were influenced by Poe but created their own characteristics.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s famous detective Sherlock Holmes has much in common with Poe’s detective because they follow the same method of detection. Both detectives solve the crimes by deduction. They find the clues and evidences by reading the newspapers and hearing people telling about the crime. This type of investigation is called “armchair detection” a method the detective follows in which he does not visit the crime scene or interview witnesses to solve the crimes. He just sits in his room by himself and analyzes second-hand information through deductive reasoning.

Priestman, in the book **The Cambridge Companion of Crime Fiction** (2003) also writes that the genre crime fiction, with their clue-puzzle, is the central mechanism used by Agatha Christie and other writers. Some elements in crime fiction became a norm. Multiple suspects of a murder are essential and central to a crime.

3.1 Whodunnit

A very important feature of Christie's detective stories is the term "whodunnit". This term means "who did it" and was first coined in the 1930s, also called the Golden Age of Detective Fiction, to describe a type of fiction in which the puzzle or the mystery element was the central focus (SCAGGS, 2005, pg 35). This is the most important question in detective fiction because the reader wants to know who committed the crime and for what reasons. It was during the "Golden Age" that the "whodunnit" was most popular. The classic "whodunnit" is considered a British formula that started in the 1930s during the Golden Age between the First and Second World War.

In the classic "whodunnit" is given puzzles during the story for the reader to be challenged to discover who the murderer is, so their identity is not revealed until the end. John Dickson Carr, also known as Carter Dickson, was the master of one of the key forms of the whodunnit and he wrote a book about Locked Room Types.

In "The Typology of Detective Fiction" (1977) Todorov says that the classic detective story, also called "whodunnit", is usually divided in two stories: the crime story and the investigation by the detective. The crime story ends before the investigation. The characters of the investigation are then immunized to danger. This first story tells how the crime took place. The story about the investigation, tells how the reader or the narrator learned about it. There is no action by the characters of the second story. The thriller is interesting because at no point does the narrator understand all the events that have taken place. This shows how the detective risks his life to solve the case. Todorov (1977, p.45) also writes that "[t]he hundred and fifty pages that separate the discovery of crime from revelation of the killer are devoted to a slow apprenticeship: we examine clue after clue, lead after lead"

There are other characteristics that are common in detective stories: The detective is immune, which means he is never a suspect and the story is told by a friend of the detective, who is usually writing or has written a book about the case. Todorov (1977, p. 51) cites S. S. Van Dine's eight points³ that summarize the rules of a detective fiction written below.

³ S.S. Van Dine in fact writes 20 rules which he published under the name of The Rules for Detective story in *The American Magazine*. September, 1928. Todorov summarizes 8 of these rules.

1. The novel must have at most one detective and one criminal, and at least one victim (a corpse).
2. The culprit must not be a professional criminal, must not be the detective or must not kill for personal reasons.
3. Love has no place in detective fiction.
4. The culprit must have a certain importance:
 - (a) in life: not be a butler or a chambermaid.
 - (b) in the book: must be one of the main characters.
5. Everything must be explained rationally; the fantastic is not admitted.
6. There is no place for descriptions or for psychological analyses.
7. With regard to information about the story, the following homology must be observed: "author: reader: criminal: detective."
8. Banal situations and solutions must be avoided (Van Dine lists ten).

He then says that some of Van Dine's rules describe the detective fiction, others the whodunnit. Rules 1 to 4a are limited to whodunnit, while rules 4b to 7 are valid for the thriller. Nevertheless, rule 8 is applicable in both cases.

3.2 Locked Room Mystery

The Locked Room Mystery is a subgenre of crime fiction, which a crime is committed in circumstances that it was seemingly impossible for the murderer to commit the crime or evade detection in the course of getting in and out of the crime scene. This subgenre holds the reader's attention when compared to other narratives. It engages the reader to participate in the crime solution because the reader starts making their own assumptions and predictions about what is happened and who could have possibly committed the murder.

All the stories to be presented in this paper follow the characteristics of the Locked Room Mystery sub-genre and in the book **Crime Fiction** (2005), Scaggs gives his explanation about it:

The locked-room mystery was a staple of Golden Age detective fiction, as were various examples of what is known as 'armchair detection', in which the detective (normally an amateur detective, rather than a professional) solves a crime through a process of logical deduction, or ratiocination, from

the evidence that is presented to him or her by others. (SCAGGS, 2005. p. 21).

John Dickson Carr wrote an analysis of the “Locked Room Mystery” sub-genre. According to him, there are no less than seven distinct types of locked room mystery. Carr’s book **The Hollow Man** (1935) published as **The Three Coffins** in the US and featuring his recurring investigator Gideon Fell contains, in chapter 17, the "Locked Room Lecture" given by Dr Fell who speaks directly to the reader, setting out several ways in which murder can be committed in an apparently locked room.

In the Chart below, it is possible to see the summary of Dr. Fell’s 1935 “Legitimate Classification”:

A. No murderer was in the room

B. Murderer was in the room

A1 Accident, looking like murder	B1 Murderer tampered with the door key
A2 Victim impelled to kill self or crash into accidental death	B2 Murderer tampered with the door hinge
A3 Murder by mechanical device already planted in room	B3 Murderer tampered with the bolt
A4 Suicide, intended to look like murder	B4 Murderer tampered with the latch or bar
A5 Illusion and impersonation: Victim dead; misdirection made him appear alive later	B5 Illusion: murderer locked door from the outside; then used misdirection

<p>A6 Murder made to appear as if committed while murderer was in room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Unusual use of weapon or choice of projectile b) Murderer exploited unobvious aperture c) Victim, mortally wounded elsewhere, entered room then died d) Victim killed while momentarily sticking head out of window e) Death from poisonous snakes or insects previously placed in room f) Natural forces penetrated the room, triggering lethal action 	<p>B6 Murderer tampered with the window</p>
<p>A7 Victim was alive, misdirection made him appear dead. Killed by first-in</p>	

Source: http://www.myiri.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/a_room_with_a_clue_cads_59.pdf

Over the years other authors upgraded the locked room mysteries differently. Robert Adey in his book **Locked Room Murders** (1991) identifies twenty possible solutions written below:

1. Accident
2. Suicide
3. Remote control – the use of poison gas or the victim is impelled to kill themselves inadvertently
4. Mechanical or other devices
5. An animal carries out the murder
6. An outside intervention is made to appear as if the murder has taken place by a murderer inside the locked room, e.g. by throwing a dagger through a window at the victim from outside the room
7. The victim has been killed earlier but is made to appear as if they were alive at a later point
8. The victim is presumed to be dead but is in fact killed later than believed, e.g. by first person to enter the room

9. The victim is wounded outside the locked room but enters, locks the room and dies inside
10. The key, bolt or catch securing the door is manipulated from the outside, using pliers, string or some other device, to lock the door after the murderer has exited
11. The door or window of the room is unhinged and removed to gain entry and the murderer then replaces it after committing the crime
12. As above but confining the removal to a window pane
13. Entry to the room is gained by some acrobatic maneuvers
14. The door is locked or wedged from the outside and the key is only replaced on the inside after entry to the room by those who find the body
15. As above but the key is returned into the room before everyone enters to discover the body
16. Other methods of gimmicking the door or windows
17. The murderer enters and exits through a secret panel or uses one to enable the weapon to be propelled at the victim
18. The murderer is in the room all the time.
19. The murderer is provided with an alibi for the critical time when the murder is committed.
20. Other impersonation stunts.

We can say that Adey's twenty categories are an improvement of Dickson Carr's seven categories. Nevertheless, in some cases Adey's categories can be just subsets of some Dickson Carr's categories.

The books "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841) written by Edgar Allan Poe, "The speckled Band" by Arthur Conan Doyle (1892) and **Murder for Christmas** (1938) **Hercule Poirot's Christmas** by Agatha Christie are the examples of Locked Room Mystery brought to be analyzed in this paper to point the similarities and differences of this subgenre.

4 THE ANALYSIS OF DETECTIVE STORIES

This chapter is divided in six subchapters. The first three subchapters present the analysis of the three detective stories written in different times. The aim is to give a brief overview of the plots see if they follow Van Dine's "whodunnit" characteristics described by Todorov and the Locked Room types organized by Carr and improved by Robert Adey. The last three subchapters bring the analysis of the similarities found in the three stories that are the detective's styles in analyzing the clues, as well as Gothicism and Imperialist vestiges.

4.1 The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841) by Edgar Allan Poe.

This story is told by a first-person unnamed narrator but it is not told by the detective Auguste Dupin. In fact, readers do not have direct access to Dupin in this story but only through his friend. His friend, who he meets in a bookstore, is the one who tells the story. The reader can see how astonished the narrator becomes whenever he sees how clever and brilliant Dupin is.

Dupin and the narrator read an article in the newspaper "Gazette des Tribunaux" about two terrible murders. Madame L'Esplanaye and her daughter Mademoiselle Camille L'Esplanaye, who lived in an apartment on the fourth floor of building in the Rue Morgue, were murdered in the middle of the night. When the neighbors, who heard their screams, accompanied by two police officers could open the door, they found a terrible scene. Although, Dupin does not mention anything about the murders, the narrator sees he is interest because in the next day's edition, the first thing he does is open newspaper to read more about the development of the investigation and what the neighbors and people who knew the ladies told about the them. According to the interviewees, mother and daughter were very quiet, rarely went out and did not receive any visitors, or family. Apparently, there was no reason for them to be murdered. Later that day, they go to the apartment to see the scene of the crime. However, the newspaper reports that the bank clerk, who Dupin knew, was arrested by the police, because he had been seen with Madame L'Esplanaye at

her apartment the same day before the crime. Dupin gets the authorization to examine the apartment and both of them go to the crime scene.

The important part is to show that this story fits both in Van Dine's "whodunnit" rules and Carr's Locked Room Types and Robert Adey's Locked Room Types. This story fits in five rules of Detective stories by Van Dine. According to the theoretician, the detective story must have at most one detective and one criminal and at least one victim (a corpse); the culprit must not be a professional criminal, must not be the detective or must not kill for personal reasons; love has no place in detective fiction; the fantastic is not admitted; banal situations and solutions must be avoided. These five rules are applied to this whodunnit mystery. There is one detective and two victims, the culprit is a beast and it did not kill by personal reasons. There are no love elements in this short story and no fantastic explanations in the story.

Concerning Carr's characteristics of the Locked Room Mystery, the quote below, taken from the book, shows why this story by Edgar Allan Poe fits in this sub-genre.

The windows, both of the back and front room, were down and firmly fastened from within. A door between the two rooms was closed, but not locked. The door leading from the front room into the passage was locked with the key on the inside. (POE, 1842. p. 13)

In this quotation the narrator says how impossible is for someone to commit this horrible crime, yet nobody sees anything. The police told all the passages were shut, so there was no feasible exit for the murderer to escape. Besides, when the neighbors heard the screams, they arrived there fast to see what was going on but nobody came across with the murderer. By examining the evidences, Dupin sees that the only possible way out was by the windows. Dupin searches the chamber and the bodies very carefully and deduces that the murderer escaped through the window. Dupin finds out that one of the windows was not completely shut but only appeared to be so.

After having analyzed the crime scene Dupin confirms what he thought had happened and who the murderer had been. They go home and Dupin explains his thesis to his friend. However, his friend does not understand what Dupin figured out. So, Dupin shows him some clues from the crime to prove what happened. Dupin

discovers that who killed the two women was a very strong and dangerous wild Ourang-Outang who had escaped from his owner.

Like one of the Locked Room categories written by John Dickson Carr showed above, the category (*murderer tampered with the window*) fits in the Poe's story because one of the nail heads was faulty, so that was the reason the giant Ourang-Outang was able to lift the window out. This story also fits in Adey's Locked Room Type number 5 - An animal carries out the murder because the beast was responsible for the killing.

Moreover, "Murders in the Rue Morgue" has the Grotesque element, very common in Poe's fiction. The scene of the crime causes revulsion and disgust. There is a brutal murder, one of the victims is mutilated, decapitated; the other is fatally beaten and stuck in the fireplace chimney. Besides, the crime is committed by a beast, an exotic animal taken from its natural habitat. The diction and discourse also connote the grotesque, the horror of the situation. Here is the *Gazette des Tribunaux* description of the murder.

[...] (horrible to relate!); the corpse of the daughter, head downward, was dragged there from; it having been thus forced up the narrow aperture for a considerable distance. The body was quite warm. Upon examining it, many excoriations were perceived, no doubt occasioned by the violence with which it had been thrust up and disengaged. Upon the face were many severe scratches, and, upon the throat, dark bruises, and deep indentations of finger nails, as if the deceased had been throttled to death. After a thorough investigation of every portion of the house, without further discovery, the party made its way into a small paved yard in the rear of the building, where lay the corpse of the old lady, with her throat so entirely cut that, upon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off. The body, as well as the head, was fearfully mutilated - the former so much so as scarcely to retain any semblance of humanity. "To this horrible mystery there is not as yet, we believe, the slightest clew." (POE, 1842, p. 9).

Scaggs (2005, p. 51) writes that in John Carr's book **The Hollow Man** (2002), the detective Gideon Fell, in his locked room lecture, "teaches us variations of the form being one of them "The murder which is not a murder, but rather a series of accidents and/or coincidences ending in what appears to be murder". (CARR, 2002. p. 155-163 apud SCAGGS, 2005. p. 52). In "The Murders in the Rue the Morgue", the murder of the two women is committed due to a series of mistakes by the sailor, who owned the "beast" for not knowing how to deal with the animal. Because of the man's mistakes, the frightened animal runs away and ends up killing the two ladies.

Edgar Allan Poe created tales of horror and mystery with illusion of logic by presenting facts of scientific thoughts. His works are remarkable because of elements of fear, terror and human madness. Nevertheless, Poe was also able to demonstrate that the observation and reasonable thought can help to discover links between events. The detective Auguste Dupin in the story “Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) always surprises the narrator with his incredible ability of deduction and observation.

4.2 **The speckled Band** (1892) by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

“The speckled Band” is about Helen Stoner, who is around thirty years old and lives with her bad-tempered stepfather Grimesby Roylott, at Stoke Moran. She is nervous and frightened when she arrives at Sherlock Holmes house in Baker Street to seek advice. She tells Holmes that her stepfather, Roylott, married her mother, whose first husband had died when Ms Stoner and her sister Julia were both very young. She also tells Holmes that their mother was already wealthy when they got married and, because of the marriage, decided to leave her money by will to Roylott while she was alive, on condition that an annual sum is paid to the sisters when they married. Some years later the girls’ mother was been killed in a railway accident, and Roylott took the two girls to live with him at Stoke Moran. Throughout the years, Roylott became violent. Besides, he started to connect with wandering gypsies who hang around on the plantation near Stoke Moran. He also started to ship exotic animals over from India, including a baboon and a cheetah.

Then Helen tells that her sister Julia got engaged but just before the wedding, she told to Helen she had heard a whistling sound at night while she was in her bedroom. Sometime later, Helen was woken by a loud scream from her sister’s room, followed by a metallic whistling sound. She tries to help her sister, but Julia dies shortly after. Just before dying, Julia says: ‘It was the band! The speckled band!.’ Helen tells Holmes she believes her sister’s dying words was a possible reference to the ‘band’ of gypsies.

Holmes and Watson decide to meet Helen at Stoke Moran, while her stepfather is in London on business. Holmes carefully examines the room where Helen’s sister died, and where Helen now sleeps. He discovers that the bell-pull,

installed a few years ago, is a dummy and the ventilator, installed at around the same time, is connected to Dr Roylott's room, rather than with the outside air. Besides, Dr Roylott's room is next to the girl's room. Holmes tells Helen to go to bed early that night, while he and Watson wait in the nearby village. When she gives them the signal, they will sneak into the room where Helen sleeps and she will move to her old room.

After several hours in silence, Holmes and Watson hear Dr Roylott arriving and lighting a lantern next door. Then, Holmes begins to strike the rope with his cane when he hears a deadly cry from Dr Roylott's room. Holmes and Watson go into his room and find the doctor sitting in his chair, the stick in his hand, and a snake around his neck. The doctor was bitten by the deadly swamp adder and died in few seconds. Holmes uses his cane to capture the snake and place it back in the doctor's iron safe.

Concerning the whodunnit categories, Doyle's story fits in five of the eight categories: the novel must have at most one detective and one criminal, and at least one victim (a corpse); love has no place in detective fiction; the culprit must have a certain importance and one of the main characters; everything must be explained rationally; the fantastic is not admitted; banal situations and solutions must be avoided. The five rules are applied to this whodunnit mystery. There is one criminal who is Dr. Roylott and one victim that is Helen's sister who was killed by a snake placed in her bedroom by her stepfather Dr. Roylott. There is neither a romantic situation nor fantastic elements in this detective story. All explained with Holmes' reasonable thoughts.

Julia and Helen locked the doors and windows at night because they were afraid of their stepfather. Nevertheless, Julia was killed in her room with the door and windows locked. It seemed to be impossible for someone to have killed her and escaped the room. But as one of Dickson Carr's categories (*death from poisonous snakes or insects previously placed into the room*), Julia was killed by a snake's bite that was not previously placed at her room but could pass through a hole in the wall at night to bite and kill her. This story also fits in Adey's category number five (5. An animal carries out the murder) because the snake was responsible for the death of Julia.

Doyle mostly develops the stories from a client's visit to 221B Baker Street. Almost all the facts of the cases are narrated by Watson. His context is relied mainly

by deduction and Doyle's detective is a man of action. Sherlock does his stuff out of what you read and just presents his answers in the end.

The Sherlock's readers are more interested in knowing how Sherlock finds the guilty one. The reader waits to know what method Sherlock employs to deduce the facts and to connect the dots because the readers always wait for that part where Sherlock explains the facts to Watson who shares the reader's ignorance.

4.3 **A Holiday for Murder** (1938) by Agatha Christie

In the book "Hercule Poirot's Christmas" (1938) or "A Holiday for Murder" (1947), Simeon is a very rich old man with a bad temper and he has four children, Alfred, David, Harry, and George Lee. Even though they are brothers, they have very different personalities and lives. Alfred is a devoted son, David still mourns over his mother, Harry is the black sheep who was abroad and recently returns home and George is the economic one. The family does not get on well with each other, so everyone is surprised when Simeon invites the whole family together for Christmas. Nobody knows what this old man wants. Besides that, having been invited by Simeon, Pilar, his daughter's granddaughter, who none of the sons have met before, causes estrangement in the family. Another presence that causes awkward emotions is Stephen Farr's. Stephen is Simeon's former business partner's son. Stephen's father and Simeon worked together in the diamond mine business.

In the afternoon before Christmas dinner, Simeon calls the family to listen to his conversation with his attorney about changes in his will. This upsets not only the sons but also their wives. Later in the evening, after Christmas dinner, Simeon Lee is found dead in a pool of blood and his throat was slashed. Just after the crime, the local superintendent of police Sugden comes to the house. He says he had arranged a visit earlier that evening to sort out a theft of some uncut diamonds from Simon's safe.

Hercule Poirot, who is staying in the village with a friend for Christmas, offers to assist the investigation of the murder. The murder was committed in a locked room and diamonds apparently had disappeared before Simeon was murdered. After investigating the case, Poirot reveals that Sugden, the police officer that was helping in the murder investigation, was Simeon's illegitimate son born from an affair with a

local girl. Sugden hated the man who abandoned his mother and paid her off. Sugden planned his revenge carefully and murdered his father hours before he set off the bladder's pig noisy as we can see the explanation on the book:

Do you know those long pink bladders that are sold at fairs with faces painted on them called "Dying Pigs"? As the air rushes out they give forth an inhuman wail. That, Sugden, was your final touch. You arranged one of those in the room. The mouth of it was stopped up with a peg, but that peg was connected to the cord. When you pulled on the cord the peg came out and the pig began to deflate. On top of the falling furniture came the scream of the "Dying Pig". (CHRISTIE, 1938, p. 162).

With respect to whodunnit characteristics, the story follows five of them as follows: the novel must have at most one detective and one criminal, and at least one victim (a corpse); love has no place in detective fiction; the culprit must have a certain importance and one of the main characters; everything must be explained rationally the fantastic is not admitted; banal situations and solutions must be avoided. In this story there is one detective, one criminal that is Sugden and one victim that Simeon Lee. Love is not involved in this story. The culprit is important in this story because Sugden is Simeon's son and helps in the investigation. All the facts are explained rationally by detective Poirot and there are no fantastic elements in the story.

However, Christie's stories seem different from the others with reference to the descriptions and psychological aspects, which Dine does not consider as being characteristics of whodunnit. Agatha Christie's whodunnit might conform her literary time and place since she highlights some aspects of her contemporary society. Therefore, she adds long descriptions of the place where the crime is committed as well as characters' psychological traits.

Regarding the Locked Room Mystery, Dickson Carr's category (illusion: Murderer locked the door from outside; then used misdirection) and the category number 7 from Adey (The victim has been killed earlier but is made to appear as if they were alive at a later point) can fit in this story because Simeon's door was locked from outside. Sugden enters in the house to kill his father and just after the murder he appears in the house again.

There is a basic formula in her works. A murder happens and all the characters in the story have something to be suspected of due to some secrets that they hold back, which are purposely inserted to confuse the reader. Therefore, all the

characters of the plot always look suspicious and have something to hide. Christie's detective, Hercule Poirot is a man of comforts and his stories are more focus on family affairs. Poirot explains the reader the evidences to make us to try to solve the case before telling who the murder is. Poirot presents every single clue but if the reader can't connect the dots, he will explain everything in the end. However, it is quite difficult to figure it out yourself because the murderer is the one you would never suspect of.

There are three relevant findings in the analysis of the Locked Room that are going to be analyzed in this chapter. The first one is the capacity of analyzing the clues and solving the crime. The second one is the Gothicism in the stories and the third one is the theme of imperialism. These three findings will be discussed in the following section.

4.4 The detectives' style of analyzing the clues

When comparing Poe's and Doyle's detectives we find several similarities. Dupin has the same characteristics of Sherlock Holmes. Both of them are very smart detectives who always astonish people with their cleverness. They solve their cases mostly by deduction and reasoning, by looking at all the evidences and from different perspectives. This is when the detective reveals his true intellect. Besides, they use the scientific method. What interests this work is the 18th and the 19th and 20th centuries and how these three detectives used the methods to solve the crimes. During Poe's time there were discussions concerning the scientific method, one of the most influential philosophers was John Stuart Mill (1806–73). Mill combined the Enlightenment thinking with the Romantic and historical philosophy. One of his most important works is **System of Logic** (1843). Poe was influenced by Stuart Mill and other important philosophers of that time. One of the discussions that was happening at that time was about how science was reliable and how "one moved from observations to logically deduced law" (GILMORE, 2019, p. 755). Poe used this in his detective stories. After observing and logically analyzing the evidences, Dupin reveals to the readers, at the end of the story, his discovery before the police arrive and find who the murderer is.

Poe had a great influence on the works of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle when he created the most famous detective Sherlock Holmes who also has the ability of

deduction and reasoning. Both detectives use the scientific method of deduction: Both ask questions, do background research, construct and test hypothesis, analyze data and draw a conclusion. In the end, they report their conclusion. The difference between Dupin and Holmes is that during Holmes' times there were great advancements in science because of the Industrial Revolution, as for example, the fingerprinting, the magnifying glass, the photography, and the method of detecting bloodstains. The science of ballistics among other inventions that were used by Holmes to solve his crimes, so the detective usually finds, photographs, footprints, and other important clues that help him solve the crime. In the "The speckled Band" he sees that the bell-pull was dummy and the ventilator was wrongly installed on purpose.

Agatha Christie's mystery story follows the same whodunnit and the Locked Room Mystery created by Edgar Allan Poe. However, Christie does not show violent crimes. Christie's detective, Hercule Poirot, also inherited the armchair detection method. He interviews the witnesses and goes to the crime places to collect some clues. Then, he sits down and analyses the observation, but what differ him from the previous detectives is that he also analyses the suspect's psychology to find the culprit.

In Agatha Christie stories, the descriptions of the psychological characteristics and of the rooms in which the crimes are committed are usually functional. Both descriptions are intended to hint the characters' personalities to help readers discover the culprit. Bargainnier (1980) states the author gives a detailed description of the rooms, maps and floorplans of a house to create verisimilitude. Bargainnier (1980. p. 25) also writes:

[Maps] and floorplans are used to help the reader see the actions, but they are also used to puzzle or confuse him by indicating the apparent impossibility of the having been committed as it actually was. These maps give sense of isolation and are, in fact related to the locked-room ploy, for they pose the question: it was done, but how could it have been?

These aspects, are not found in the whodunnit detective stories by Poe and Doyle in this study. Both stories do not deviate from the aspects outlined by Van Dine and presented by Todorov in his "The Typology of Detective Fiction" (1977).

4.5 The Gothicism in the Stories

Edgar Allan Poe is one of the most significant writers of gothic. He became very famous because of his tales about the dark side of the humanity. Poe and Doyle had remarkable impact within the genres Gothic Fiction and Detective Fiction. These are different genres but Poe and Doyle mixed them together to create a successful formula for their stories. They combine the horror and reasoning to cause fear and relief at the same mystery. The gothic is made by the reader's fears and anxieties of the unknown. Therefore, Poe and Doyle can make clear these fears by the use of logic and reasoning.

"The Speckled Band" by Doyle also contains some gothic aspects. The first gothic element is Helen's state when she arrives at Holmes's office; she shows signs of great distress. She is frightened by her stepfather's behavior and the noise she hears at night.

The second gothic element is the "old ancestral house at Stoke Moran" in the country (DOYLE, 2006, p. 561) in which only one wing is inhabited. This description is usually associated with horror stories. The third Gothic element is the stepfather himself. He is violent, "absolutely uncontrollable in his anger" (DOYLE, 2006, p. 561), everybody in the village is frightened by his uncontrollable behavior and "the folks would fly at his approach" (DOYLE, 2006, p. 561). The fourth is the description of the noises she hears: "a low, clear whistle". (DOYLE, 2006, p. 562)

Other gothic presences in Poe's story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and Doyle's story "The speckled Band" are defined by the appearance of dangerous exotic animals. In the end of Poe's story, we discover that who brutally killed those two women was a huge and strong Orang-Outang from India that was brought to Paris but escaped from his sailor. In Doyle's story Dr. Roylott owns a cheetah and a baboon also brought from India. No servants wanted to stay in the house because they were frightening by the animals. Dr. Roylott had locked in a safe a poison snake that at night he put it in a hole in the wall to pass through Julia's ventilator in her bedroom and bite her.

Helen and Julia were portrayed as innocent characters making them the gothic figures of the victimized women and the terrorized female characters. The gothic elements in the stories are used to cause fear and terror by uncertain thoughts.

In the beginning of the story, when Helen explains her situation and tells what happened to her sister to Sherlock Holmes, we imagine that her fears could be related to the supernatural. Murat Çagliyan in his thesis “The Gothic Elements in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes Stories” (2010) also considers her situation as being a gothic element in the story. Here is an example of a supernatural element mentioned in Murat’s thesis about Julia’s death:

The supernatural implication is further strengthened in the story, after Julia dies. The coroner who examines Julia’s body cannot find any trace of injury. No “satisfactory cause of death” (218) can be found, and after examining the rooms, the coroner cannot find any place from which anyone could have entered Julia’s room, which means that she was alone before dying. (ÇAGLIYAN, 2010, p. 30).

We believe there is a supernatural force that killed Julia because Helen is in Julia’s bedroom at night after Julia died and hears the same noises Julia had described before she died. Nevertheless, when she turns the lights on, she sees that there is no one in her bedroom, so she is really scared. When Julia goes to Holmes office, she tells him “It is my belief that she died of pure fear and nervous shock, though what was frightened her I cannot imagine” (DOYLE, 2006, p.564). Julia’s fear is a typical a gothic element.

In this quote we also can think that a supernatural force could enter in Julia’s bedroom and killed her just by the shock. But in the end Holmes destroyed the supernatural elements in the story using reasonable thoughts explaining that the ventilation hole in Julia’s room is connected to Dr. Roylott’s bedroom and Holmes revealed that Dr. Roylott used a snake to kill Julia and tried to kill Helen, in order not to let them marry and so that he could get their inheritance.

To a lesser degree, it seems there has been an attempt to bring some gothic elements in Christie’s book **A Holiday for Murder**. These elements are used to explore the atmosphere of the story, that is, they are used to give emphasis to either give the reason for the crime to be committed or to cover the act of killing. Simeon’s vengeful, malicious personality and attitudes towards everyone lead him to death. The pig screaming effect is used to distract not only the siblings but also the readers.

The pig sound also seems to be an important element in the story, since the noise it made, not only hide the murder but also gave the gothic element in the story. When Poirot reveals the crime, he asks the siblings if they remember how they

described the noise they heard when their father was killed. The vocabulary used is “A man with mortal agony”, “a soul in hell”, “a cry of someone who had no soul”, “it was inhuman like a beast” and “it sounded like killing pig”. Besides, it is possible to find some degree of Gothicism in Simeon’s personality. He is manipulative, greedy, malicious and vengeful. It takes him a great pleasure in upsetting his family, who is completely dysfunctional.

4.6 The Echoes of Imperialism in Literature

Literature popularized and criticized the deeds of the Empires throughout the time. Some authors, as Daniel Defoe, Rudyard Kipling and Millet Pierre were inspired and praised Imperialism. Others as Jonathan Swift, and George Orwell criticized the imperialist agenda. In some writings by other British writers, such as, Charles Dickens and Frances Hodgson Burnett and Maran René among others, we find the echoes of the empire. This study found those echoes in the three Locked Room Mysteries. Therefore, to discuss those echoes, this study presents two short timelines about the British and the French Empire to contextualize the findings. This is necessary because Poe’s story is set in France while Doyle’s and Christie’s are set in England.

The History of the French and the English Empires are closely related. Both countries fought for the same territories many times. France started her expansion in the sixteenth century as a consequence of the French Wars against England. The first tentative navigation was to go to Japan. One of the ships was wrecked and another arrived in Ceylon and traded in Sumatra. France decided to form a French East India Company on the model of Britain and dealt with merchants to find trades in Asia. Other adventurers reached China under the name of the French Crown. France also established trading posts in West and North Africa. Other colonies were established in the southeast of India and in the Indian Ocean, as for example Mauritius and Seychelles. France also had colonies in the Americas. However, due to the wars between Britain and France, the French empire lost territories. After Napoleon was defeated, some French colonies were restored and given back to France by Britain. Nevertheless, some French colonies were annexed by Britain as

Seychelles and Mauritius. In the nineteenth century France acquired Haiti and Algeria. Tahiti also became French Protectorate as well as other five group of islands called the French Polynesia.

The British Empire started in 1497 with the great Navigations. Between 1497 and 1763, English seamen discovered new lands, set up colonies and traded all over the world. The first English colonies were formed in North America in 1585. In 1612, the East India Company began to build up a small empire of trading posts in India. In 1620, the British established a colony in West Indies. In the eighteenth century, England took over the French colony of Acadia in northeastern North America, and expelled France from India. However, in 1776, England lost the American colony.

The second British Empire takes place from 1783 to 1924. This is when the sent “criminals” to Australia, forced China to buy Opium, faced the Mutiny in India, and acquired Colonies in Africa and South Africa. England not only politically controlled these colonies, but also established unfair leadership systems and trade markets, which greatly benefited Britain economically but turned some colonies extremely poor.

WWI cost Britain a lot of money and maintaining the Empire was very difficult so Britain decided to give some political freedom to the colonies. This led to nationalist movements, some countries negotiated their independence in a more peaceful way, and others protested and rioted and eventually got their independence after a series of clashes. Canada became independent in 1926. Australia, New Zealand and South Africa became independent in 1947. The process of independence in Africa started in the 1950s. Other colonies became independent countries later one.

A relevant finding is that the three stories touch the issue of the European Imperialism in the three different moments. The animals came from East Asia and India and the diamonds that made Simeon’s fortune came from South Africa.

In Poe’s Murders in Rue Morgue, the orang- outang was brought to France by the sailor after an excursion in Borneo, Southeast Asia, where he captured the animal and brought to Paris with the idea of making some money out of the exotic animal. The Sailor was French and the French explored, traded and exploited Asia. It was very common for traders and poachers to travel to the colonies and seize animals and natural resources and take to Europe to make extra money. This is exactly what the French sailor tells Dupin.

In Doyle's story is set in 1892 during the Victorian Era. It was when The British Empire and its citizens benefited a great deal from the trade in India. India was the one of the most profitable colonies. Roylott was a businessman and as most Victorian traders, had business in India, so shipped a baboon and a cheetah from India, which is a clear example of Imperialism. Roylott is greedy as the British Empire. He kills for money and the British Empire. However, his deeds turn against him. The poisoned snake he brings from India and uses to kill Julia is the snake that kills him. As George Orwell in his Essay "Shooting an Elephant" (1935) writes, "when the white man turns tyrant it is his own freedom that he destroys. He becomes a sort of hollow, posing dummy, the conventionalized figure of a sahib."

In **A Holiday for Murder**, Simeon Lee made a big fortune when he was younger, collecting diamonds in South Africa and this can be related with Britain's colonial empire because he earned his fortune from the British colony. Simeon is unethical and does everything to upset his family and maintain his superiority as the British Empire did in its colonies, especially in India and Africa. The author also makes an irony by writing a Christmas story involving a family who is mostly greedy and wants the old man's money because Christmas was supposed to be related to family love and be grateful for what we have. Again, this is another analogy for the imperialism practiced by Britain.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The purpose of the current study was to determine the similarities and differences found in the works of Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie concerning the sub-genre Locked Room Mystery and the Whodunnit of detective fiction.

The results of this investigation show that the three stories have things in common. Five rules of eight of detective fiction created by S. S. Van Dine fitted in all the three stories. Besides, the similarities found in the locked room stories were the detectives' style of analyzing the clues as well as the Gothic and the imperialist elements.

Poe and Doyle's detectives share the same characteristics of analytical skills; both of them are very clever and solve the murders mostly by reasoning. Both of them ask questions and do background researches then go to their rooms, sit in their comfortable armchair and find the criminal.

Their differences are more related to the time they were written. When Doyle started to write, the Industrial Revolution had advanced a great deal in the science field. They had finger printing, the photography, and the ballistic methods among others to help in the investigations.

Agatha Christie's detective Poirot also follows the armchair detection, he also interviews witnesses and go to the crime scenes to look for clues. Some differences between Agatha Christie's stories and the others are that Hercule Poirot analyzes the psychology of the suspects. Besides, Christie gives a fully details of the place where the murders are committed to show the characters' personality.

There is also the presence of gothic elements in all the stories. All characters describe sounds and sights as well as fear one or another situation. Also, a great deal of macabre vocabulary is used to describe people, places or actions. The differences are that Doyle's stories deal more with the supernatural; Poe's stories deal with the dark side of the human nature and Christie's stories are about family affairs.

The three stories have some elements of the European Imperialism. In Poe's story, the wild orang-outang that killed the two ladies with his owner's razor who also let the animal escape, was shipped from East Asia. In Doyle's short story the

cheetah and the baboon were shipped from India by Dr. Roylott to live with him at Stoke Moran.

In Christie's novel, imperialism is portrayed with the diamonds extracted from the English colony of South Africa that made Simeon Lee wealthy. It was very common to travel the colonized lands and bring exotic animals or natural resources back to Europe to keep or sell for extra money.

The analysis here presented is one possibility to the reading of the three Locked Room Mysteries. Nevertheless, it is possible to make other readings and interpretations of the three short stories.

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