

# An Analysis of the Nail-Biting Thriller 'Murder on the Orient Express' Written by Agatha Christie

Ganti Sri Venkata Sai Prerna

**Abstract:** *The novel 'Murder on the Orient Express' by Agatha Christie is an intricate mystery spinning around a bunch of characters cut off from reality where Poirot, the detective, shows not just the intensity of his little grey cells, however his apprehension and empathy for humankind. 'Murder on the Orient Express' is a famous book, which has made Agatha Christie a renowned writer. It is a nail-biting tale that enthralles readers and keeps them engrossed in this mystery novel. This research paper analyzes the social, legal, and cultural aspects of this novel, such as the unusual manner in which the jury system is portrayed. It also briefs about the inadequacy of law as the guilty were not accorded the proper punishment for the crime he committed. The question about the morality of murder, that is, is it morally acceptable to take a person's life to avenge the loss of a loved one and not abiding by the laws, is answered through this research. This paper also shows how Agatha breaks cultural and linguistic barriers and perfectly blends it with slight humor. The study also talks about racism and stereotyping in the late 90s and the usage of old-fashioned French terms.*

**Keywords:** Murder: the unlawful planned killing of one person by another or a group of people, Detective: an individual, particularly a cop, whose occupation is to investigate and address wrongdoings, Investigation: formal or methodical assessment or examination, Jury: an assembly of individuals (ordinarily twelve in number) pledged to decide in a legal case based on proof submitted to them in court, Justice: just conduct or treatment.

## 1. Introduction: About the Book

The novel 'Murder on the Orient Express' is a homicide puzzle with a Belgian detective Hercule Poirot as the hero. It follows the account of the baffling homicide of an American tycoon Ratchett in the compartment of Orient Express on its approach to London. There were fifteen other passengers from different parts of the globe who traveled along with detective Poirot on the first-class compartment. Amidst such odd individuals' carriage, one character mainly pulls in Poirot's consideration: a sagaciously dressed, clearly rich, insidious looking American tycoon Ratchett. The following day shockingly, Samuel Edward Ratchett approaches Poirot in the dining cart, saying that his life has been undermined as he had received death threats from anonymous sources. He offers Poirot a considerable amount of money if the renowned Belgian saves his life. Poirot, however, denies his request as he did not like the American's appearance. The following morning the American is discovered dead of multiple stabs in the compartment close to Poirot's. The circumstance is much more convoluted as the train marooned in a snowdrift between Vincovei and Brod's towns in Yugoslavia. Poirot first inspects Ratchett's body and his compartment. Ratchett has twelve cut injuries. The window is open in Ratchett's compartment, probably to make the specialists think the killer got away out the window, yet there are no impressions outside the window on the day off. A hanky with the letter "H" is found in the compartment, a pipe cleaner, a round matchstick not quite the same as the matches Ratchett utilized, and a signed bit of paper with the name "Armstrong" on it. He suspects all the other 15 passengers traveling on the first-class compartment where the American tycoon's corpse is found. It is intriguing to discover who is included behind the homicide, the thought process, and if the puzzle at long last purposes toward the end or leaves a few inquiries unanswered. The ethical difficulty and inward emergency that Hercule Poirot faces as he is on his obligation of illuminating the homicide riddle gives the story a convincing take. As Hercule Poirot is locked into unwinding the riddle and unbridling the few

associations of the travelers with the homicide, the feeling of expectation is the thing that keeps the readers engrossed until the last page.

## 2. About the Author

Writer Agatha Christie was born in 1890 in England and raised by a well off American dad and an English mother. Many copies of her writings have been sold in English and another billion out of 44 dialects. She is the creator of 78 crime books and was made a matron in 1971. She was married twice. Her subsequent spouse being a paleologist whom she frequently traveled with on his archeological presentations to the Middle East, gave her a comprehension of that part of the world, which she utilized in this story. Agatha Christie passed away in 1976 in her home in England. Agatha Christie is one of the most notable authors, dramatists, and short story scholars ever. She is thought to have altered the mystery genre. Her strength had been the class of crime fiction, investigator, murder secret, and spine chiller. In any case, she had written six romantic books too under the pen name Mary Westmacott. Her meticulously created plots and the plot's diversion keep the reader occupied from the first page till the last. She is popularly known as Queen of Crime due to her innate ability to create a gripping suspense atmosphere. The Last Séance, The Witness for Prosecution, Murder for Christmas, and Then There Were None are some of her best novels. She is known as the most noteworthy selling creator. Agatha Christie was granted the title of Dame in 1971 for her critical commitment to writing. To respect her numerous scholarly works, she was designated 'Commander of the Order' of the British domain in 1956, New Year honours. The following year she was appointed the leader of the Detection Club.

## 3. Literature Review

There are many critics and reviews on the book 'Murder on the Orient Express' by many publications and authors. There

were mixed reviews on this book where a few of them criticized the plot, but overall the book received positive reviews from all over the world. The *Times Literary Supplement* (1934) January 1934 published that, "The little grey cells solve once more the seemingly insoluble. Mrs. Christie makes an improbable tale very real and keeps her readers enthralled and guessing to the end". In the article "*A family and their revenge in Agatha Christie's novel Murder on the Orient Express*" (Asri, 2018), Mega Asri says how the family took revenge by murdering the villain on a train and how the mystery continues. It also talks about the book's sociological approach, i.e., how the family plan to murder Cassetti for the betrayal he had done to the family years ago. In the review given by Michael Dirda for the *Washington Post* (Dirda, 1934), he wrote that "Like so many Golden Age mysteries, the original novel is essentially a closet drama, one that closely observes the theatrical unities of place, time and action." Kenneth Branagh also directed a film, "*Murder on the Orient Express*" on the book which turned out to be a great hit as it portrayed the nail-biting mystery and offered the audience to experience the journey through screens. "A brilliantly ingenious story." *Dorothy L. Sayers*, published in the *Daily Herald*. "Ingenuity at its height ... the idea is utterly novel, the setting a model of realism, and the characters a versatile, attractive crew." reviewed the *Woman's Journal*. "A piece of classic workmanship .. exquisite and wholly satisfying," said the *News Chronicle*.

#### 4. Research Methodology

The research methodology applied to complete this research paper is a qualitative research approach used for the subjective assessment of the paper. This paper's various sources are primarily the novel in its whole, and the secondary sources are articles, essays, research papers, and other literary works. This paper analyzes the novel "Murder on the Orient Express" and explains the themes and subjects of the book.

#### 5. Analysis

The narrator narrates in a third-person perspective, focusing on the musings and activities of Poirot. The narrator is genuinely leveled in her perceptions; however, the content is peppered with each character's succulent, abstract subtleties. All perceptions appear to be steady with Poirot; what the narrator believes is equivalent to Poirot. There is one occasion that a first-person perspective is utilized. The book "Murder on the Orient Express" has all the highlights of an incredible detective story, including fascinating characters, exciting anticipation, and a splendid bend towards the end. This story is about the differentiation between appearance and reality, and this is something the reader finds themselves as they understand that this is certainly not a usual detective story. For sure, this story is unique as there is not only one murderer, but twelve. Every one of these twelve travelers recognizes each other yet pretend they do not know each other during Poirot's investigation. The reality that there are twelve assistants is notable, as this is also the number of individuals in a jury. All things considered, these twelve travelers speak to a remarkable translation of equity, whereby twelve individuals have concluded that murder is

justified. At that point, Poirot, representing an adjudicator, settles on an official choice to stay quiet about his discovery, as he likewise accepts the homicide was justified. This content additionally draws on philosophical and political topics and is not just merely for entertainment. We question the idea of equity through the content and whether murder can genuinely be supported. In the wake of finding that the victim in the book kidnapped an innocent young girl and slaughtered her, we question whether he is genuinely the "person in question" by any means. This is the conclusion of the twelve travelers, who have decided to take control over issues to acquire equity for the young Daisy Armstrong. This story is additionally intriguing because of its broad scope of characters. M. Bouc says (Christie, 1934), "All around us are people, of all classes, of all nationalities, of all ages," which sums up Christie's different selection of travelers. This part of the content makes it considerably additionally stunning that all the characters are associated with the situation of Daisy Armstrong, taking into account how different they all are.

#### 6. Conclusion

The book ends on a very different note, which the readers do not expect. In the end, Poirot finds out that there were not two murderers but instead, twelve of them, which astonishes the readers. At the peak of the novel, we will see Poirot's rationale and allowance abilities in real life. We realize he has everything sorted out in his mind. However, we watch him really getting back to every traveler and going up against them with reality: that will be, that they are associated with the Armstrong family. This part of the novel takes as much time as needed, which, luckily, permits those of us who are attempting to find Poirot's deduction to attempt to sort out the answer for ourselves. However, for readers, the possibility that everybody may have done it will never enlist. It violates the norm, hugely ameliorating the locked room secret equation, the recipe that makes Christie's books so impulsively lucid. There is intended to be one executioner for each wrongdoing, a solitary figure whose rationale, means, and opportunity all become clear toward the end in a solitary sparkling snapshot of the disclosure. The way that everybody is dubious is cover, intended to divert readers from the shrouded truth. By making every last bit of her presumes the aggregate killer, Christie utilizes the recognizable murder secret structure as her most noteworthy distraction. The misleading lies not in any of the pieces of information Poirot is looking at yet in the reader's scholarly, oblivious information on how murder mysteries work. Also, that causes a definitive to uncover all the more surprising and brilliant. Christie is not the one beguiling the readers; eventually, the readers trick themselves.