



# **The Art of Deception: Unraveling the Mystery in *Murder on the Orient Express***

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## **Abstract**

The novel *Murder on the Orient Express* is a homicide puzzle with a Belgian detective Hercule Poirot as the protagonist. It follows the account of the baffling homicide of an American tycoon in the compartment of Orient Express on its approach to London. The suspense builds up as Hercule Poirot unravels the truth and reveals a shocking twist. This paper focuses on the main theme which revolves around the nature of justice and morality. It explores the idea of right and wrong, and the lengths people are willing to go to seek justice or protect their own interests. The story also delves into the complexities of human nature, showcasing the various motives and secrets that drive individuals to commit heinous acts. This paper also examines the concept of truth and how it can be distorted or hidden amidst a web of lies. Overall, it's a thought-provoking exploration of morality, justice, and the intricacies of the human psyche.

## **Keywords**

Complexities of Human nature, Morality, Justice, Human psyche.

## Introduction

*Murder On The Orient Express* is a novel written by Agatha Christie, on January 1, 1934 was published by Collins Crime Club in the United Kingdom for the first edition (web). The major character in this book is Hercule Poirot, a Belgian detective. The next publication on February 28, 1934 in the United States, was published by Dodd, Mead and Compan with a slightly different title is *Murder In The Calais Coach*. This book is sold for seven shillings and sixpence (716) in the UK, while it is sold for \$ 2.00 in the United States (web). The title of *Murder In The Calais Coach* in the US is due to the fact that before this novel was published, there was a novel of the same title *Stamboul Train* (1932) by Graham Greene in which the background of this novel was taken from the Orient Express in the US.

The allure of *Murder on the Orient Express* extends far beyond its status as a beloved detective novel. It is a work that immerses readers in a world of glamour and intrigue, where secrets are carefully concealed and motives remain shrouded in mystery. Agatha Christie's narrative prowess shines as she expertly crafts a tale that keeps audiences guessing until the final revelation. The novel is a testament to her ability to use the art of deception not only as a plot device but as a means to explore complex themes, including the blurred lines between right and wrong, the consequences of collective action, and the fundamental nature of justice.

As we embark on this literary journey, we will unravel the layers of deception, dive into the enigmatic characters that populate the pages of this novel, and examine how Christie's storytelling continues to resonate with readers, cementing *Murder on the Orient Express* as an enduring masterpiece that stands the test of time. Join us as we explore the secrets, the suspense, and the sheer brilliance of a mystery that has left an indelible mark in the world of literature.

## Hercule Poirot's detective Skills

Hercule Poirot who first appeared in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles* (published in 1920) and exited in *Curtain* (published in 1975) is a fictional detective created by Agatha Christie. His detective skills are renowned for his meticulous attention to detail, logical reasoning, and keen observation. Hercule Poirot often uses his "little gray cells" to solve complex mysteries. He excels at analysing human behaviour and motives, which helps him uncover the truth in even the most perplexing cases. Hercule Poirot's distinctive traits include his obsession with symmetry and order, which he applies to solving crimes. His skills make him one of the most famous and beloved detectives in the world of mystery fiction. Hercule Poirot has an extraordinary ability to notice the smallest details that others might overlook. He often emphasises the importance of collecting and analysing even seemingly insignificant clues. Hercule Poirot relies heavily on deductive reasoning. He approaches cases with a methodical and logical mindset, piecing together evidence and eliminating possibilities to arrive at the truth. He is a master of psychology, and he often uses his understanding of human nature to unravel motives and uncover hidden truths.

He can read people's emotions and behaviour with precision. Even in moments of extreme chaos and fear, eating is a smart and well-organized activity for Hercule Poirot. Suganya et al discussed in their article, "Gender Performance on the Reinvigoration via Food" that "The food item is used as a regulatory tool, which increases the positive affect and reduces the negative affect" (Suganya, et al 886).

## Layers of deception

At the heart of *Murder on the Orient Express* lies a murder mystery involving multiple layers of deception. The murder itself is a carefully orchestrated act, involving multiple conspirators who have their reasons for silencing the victim. Hercule Poirot's task is not just to identify the murderer but to uncover the intricate web of deception surrounding the crime. The story begins with a seemingly straightforward murder of Ratchet (also known as Cassetti), who is found dead in his compartment. However, it soon becomes evident that this murder is anything but straightforward. The victim's true identity and his connection to a notorious crime become central elements of the deception. Many passengers aboard the Orient Express are traveling under assumed identities, further complicating the investigation. They all have secrets to hide, which adds layers of intrigue and complexity. "Perfectly," said Poirot. "The matter begins to clear itself up wonderfully! The murderer was a man of great strength—he was feeble—it was a woman—it was a right-handed person—it was a left-handed person. Ah! c'esto rigolo, tout ca!"(33-38). These false identities are intended to mislead both the characters in the story and the readers themselves. As Hercule Poirot delves deeper into the case, he uncovers that nearly every passenger has a motive to kill Ratchett. Each motive is concealed behind layers of deception, with characters attempting to protect their own interests by presenting alternative narratives. Christie brilliantly uses contradictory testimonies from the passengers. Their accounts of the night of the murder differ, providing ample opportunities for deception and misdirection. Hercule Poirot's task is to sift through these conflicting statements to uncover the truth. Deception also extends to the manipulation and hiding of evidence. Characters go to great lengths to ensure that their involvement in the crime remains hidden. Hercule Poirot must use his keen investigative skills to unearth these concealed clues. The ultimate deception in the novel is the revelation of the collective conspiracy involving multiple passengers. This twist challenges the reader's perceptions of right and wrong, as Hercule Poirot grapples with the moral dilemma of whether justice should prevail or be perverted in this unique case. Throughout the narrative, Christie weaves a complex web of lies, secrets, and hidden truths. Readers are kept in suspense, constantly questioning the authenticity of the characters and their stories. Authenticity as said by Suganya et al in their article "Communal Expectancy and the Authentic Self of Men and Transgenders - Arms and the Man by George Bernard Shaw and Birthday by Meredith Russo" is expressing their genuine emotions regardless of their gender. "Love, compassion, fear, grief and happiness are some of the innate emotions of mankind regardless of gender" (Suganya. et al, 880).

## Revenge

"Revenge is a kind of wild justice; . . ." (26) is the opening line of Francis Bacon's essay "Of Revenge" which was written in the year 1625. In this essay he talks about 'Revenge and its role in human interactions. According to Bacon revenge turns a man into an unconstrained human being, who takes up the law in his own hands. The term 'wild' is often connected with beastly behaviour. What differentiates humans from beasts is the conscience but in the novel these characters lose their humane side and expose their animalistic nature by killing a human being. The term 'wild' is connected with 'justice' to define the cruel method used to attain justice. Here, the murder of Ratchett is considered as a wild form of justice because it compromises the conscience and morals to achieve a cruel goal. In the novel the judicial system failed to issue Ratchett a punishment and as a result the victims take up the roles of the system and act. The punishment that they felt well deserved is death. So they became the court and the magistrate and gave the culprit a death sentence.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* is a masterclass in the art of deception within the realm of mystery literature. Through its intricate layers of deceit, the novel keeps readers enthralled from start to finish. The initial murder, false identities, multiple motives, contradictory testimonies, concealed evidence, and the ultimate revelation of deception all contribute to the rich tapestry of this captivating story. Christie's genius lies not only in crafting an absorbing mystery but also in exploring the moral complexities that arise when deception and justice intersect. As readers navigate this labyrinth of secrets and falsehoods, they are reminded that in the world of crime and intrigue, nothing is as it seems, and the truth can be the most elusive prize of all. The layers of deception in the novel are multifaceted, encompassing false identities, contradictory testimonies, concealed evidence, and even the detective himself as part of the intrigue. These layers serve not only to captivate readers with a gripping plot but also to delve into deeper themes of morality and justice, as the story challenges traditional notions of right and wrong.

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[\\_Arms\\_and\\_the\\_Man\\_by\\_George\\_Bernard\\_Shaw\\_and\\_Birthday\\_by\\_Meredith\\_Russo.](https://www.eurchembull.com/uploads/paper/72c7b104b7b5ddc1f8fe0b8cbb0f69a8.pdf)

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