



‘Psychoanalysis of Agatha Christie's character - Hercule Poirot in Murder on the Orient Express and Five Little Pigs through Sigmund Freud's theory’

Authored by:

Saloni Saraf, Research Scholar

Dr. Manisha Sinha, Assistant Professor

Amity Institute of English Studies and Research

Amity University, Noida

Introduction

The major aims of the paper are to identify the traits and conduct psychoanalysis of Agatha Christie's Hercule Poirot, the protagonist of the books *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie and *Five little pigs* by Agatha Christie. Regarding the research methodology, evaluation is carried out using a qualitative approach. The events and conversations in the book as well as the author's life provided the information for this study.

Objective of the Thesis

This thesis focuses on analysing Hercule Poirot, the main character of the book, utilising the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud (id, ego, and super-ego). Early Freudian studies of crime “highlight the irrational, infantile, and unconscious dynamics of crime” (Fitzpatrick, 70). Sigmund Freud was the one who first put forth this hypothesis. The stages of personality development, the geography of the mind, and the structure of personality can all be used to conceptualise Freud's theory of personality. He felt that a person's fundamental character had been formed by the age of five years, which is why he views the first five years of a child's existence as being the most significant. The psyche was divided into three components (tripartite) according to Freud's personality theory (1923), with the id, ego, and superego all emerging at various times throughout our lives.

Although each component of the personality possesses distinct characteristics, they work together to form a whole and each component contributes in a relative way to an individual's actions. These are systems, not bodily or mental components of the brain. The inherited (i.e., biological) components of personality present at birth make up the id, which is the basic and instinctual part of personality. The id is the impulsive (and unconscious) portion of our psyche that reacts right away to basic needs, desires, and urges.

The newborn child's personality is the id, and its ego and superego do not develop until much later. The ego is the portion of the id that has undergone direct external influence modification. The ego grows to act as a mediator between the id's false perceptions and the outside real world. The psychological trait responsible for making judgments is the ego, which should ideally employ reason while the id should be unpredictable and irrational.

The superego, which develops between the ages of three and five years during the phallic stages of psychosexual development, includes the values and morals of society that are taught by one's parents and others. Two systems comprise the superego. The ideal self and the conscience. The conscience has the power to chastise the ego by making it feel guilty. The idea of your ideal self, also known as your ego ideal, represents your ideal career, interpersonal relationships, and social behaviour.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytical theory is a critical method informed by Sigmund Freud's studies of the unconscious and behaviour in people. Freud thought that the conflict between child-parent relationships and the three competing drives known as the ego, id, and superego in the brain shaped how people reacted to the outside world. In the beginning, psychoanalytic literary theory involved applying psychoanalysis to either the author or the primary character of a work, looking for latent or unconscious meaning behind the evident language, and examining the symbols present in a particular work.

In many of these writings, Freud himself applied his theories to literary figures like Rebecca West from Ibsen and Hamlet from Shakespeare. Later psychoanalytic thought, which was influenced by Jacques Lacan, shared certain issues with deconstruction and poststructuralist theory and concentrated on the unconscious and language. The mind is linked to an iceberg in Freudian psychology.

Introducing the Author: A Profile

“A case of murder is a case of murder whether it happened now or sixteen years ago.”

- Agatha Christie

Hercule Poirot, the main character in Agatha Christie's novels "Murder on the Orient Express" and "Five Little Pigs," is the subject of this thesis study and psychoanalysis. The thesis employs Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, focusing on the concepts of id, ego, and superego, to understand Poirot's characteristics and motivations. By utilizing qualitative research techniques and making use of situations, conversations, and Agatha Christie's biography, the thesis aims to examine Poirot's mentality and provide insight into his role as a detective in the novels.

A criminal mystery, often known as a crime mystery or a detective mystery, is a subgenre of fiction that focuses on a crime, usually a murder, and the efforts of a detective, investigator, or amateur sleuth to solve the case and find the culprit. The combination of suspense, puzzle-solving, and investigation keeps the audience guessing up until the case is solved.

A detective or an amateur sleuth usually serves as the main character in detective fiction, a category of literature that centres on solving crimes. Midway through the 19th century, this genre first appeared and has since grown incredibly popular. While maintaining its concentration on resolving crimes and engrossing readers in cerebral riddles, the genre has developed over time, absorbing several subgenres and styles.

Agatha Christie is the owner of the title "Queen of Crimes". Over a billion copies of her novels have been sold worldwide, primarily in English and in more than a hundred other languages. The Mysterious Affair at Styles, Agatha Christie's debut book, was written around the close of the First World War. During the first world war,

Christie worked as a VAD and in it, she invented Hercule Poirot, the diminutive Belgian detective who would go on to become the most well-known fictional investigator since Arthur Conan

Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case* is the name of Agatha Christie's final book starring the renowned investigator Hercule Poirot.

To keep readers wondering until the very end, Agatha Christie used hints and deception in her writing. Hercule Poirot has been a central character in over thirty of Christie's mysteries and more than eighty other works of detective fiction. *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Death on the Nile*, *The ABC Murders*, and *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* are a few of his most well-known cases.

Hercule Poirot- Detective and his Methodology

The name Agatha Christie, or Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie in full, is the one from the illustrious list of detective fiction writers that grabs attention. *A Mysterious Affair at Styles*, her debut book, was released in 1920. Hercule Poirot, the most well-known Belgian detective, is introduced in this book. Her career gained momentum with the release of *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* in 1926, an original tale in which the narrator is also the murderer, and several volumes that followed. "The idea of writing a detective story was conceived while I was working in the dispensary," Christie writes in her autobiography. No doubt A. C. Doyle was the primary source of ideas regarding the concept of the great detective.

Poirot's in-depth understanding of human psychology is the foundation of most of his inferences. He always looks at the characters in a case in terms of their personalities, actions, and interpersonal interactions. Poirot is also a clue-based detective who relies on logic, which he frequently refers to as facts. His famous phrase, "The Little Grey Cell," serves as an example of this in his vocabulary.

The psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud is a sophisticated and significant psychological framework that aims to comprehend human thought and behaviour. The "ego," one of the three primary components of the human psyche together with the id and superego, is one of the essential ideas in Freud's theory and the concept of ego can be observed in the character of Hercule Poirot.

Using reasoning and logic, Poirot is a prime example of logic and reasoning characterising the ego. He is renowned for using logic, deductive reasoning, and great attention to detail when solving mysteries. Poirot's dependence on reason and proof reflects the ego's function in resolving the tension between the id and superego. The ego's main job is problem-solving and decision-making.

In his investigations, Poirot exhibits excellent problem-solving abilities. To find answers, he carefully studies all available information, considers various viewpoints, and applies his intellect.

Poirot's aptitude for solving issues is comparable to the ego's function in settling disputes between the id and superego.

According to Freud, the ego uses several defensive strategies to shield itself from anxiety brought on by conflicts between the id and superego. Like this, Poirot frequently employs coping strategies including intellectualization, displacement, and sublimation to deal with the upsetting aspects of crime and keep his cool.

The main goals of this thesis are to find out the characteristics and the psychoanalysis of the main character from the novel, *Hercule Poirot: Murder on the Orient Express* and *Hercule Poirot's Five Little Pigs* by Agatha Christie. Hercule Poirot's analysis is done through the qualitative method. The data for this analysis is taken from events and dialogues found in the novel and the biography of Agatha Christie, with the application of the personality theory of Sigmund Freud.

Analysis of Hercule Poirot in Murder on the Orient Express

This chapter aims to provide an in-depth analysis of Hercule Poirot, the renowned detective created by Agatha Christie, focusing specifically on his portrayal in "Murder on the Orient Express." Through the lens of psychoanalysis, particularly Sigmund Freud's theory of personality, this chapter will delve into Poirot's distinctive traits and motivations, shedding light on his enigmatic persona and examining the complexities of his ego. Poirot's idiosyncrasies, such as his aloofness, attention to detail, and seemingly unrelated requests, will be explored to uncover the inner workings of his detective mind. Furthermore, the chapter will examine the moral dilemma Poirot faces in the resolution of the case, considering the implications of his choices and the psychological aspects that influence his decision-making process. By employing psychoanalytic theory, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Hercule Poirot's character in "Murder on the Orient Express" and shed light on the intricate interplay between his psyche, detective skills, and moral compass.

Agatha Christie has always envisioned her Belgian detective as an elderly man with a long crime mystery behind him but she never revealed too much about him across her thirty-three novels and multiple story collection. Any hints about his past are usually vague only enough to keep Poirot interesting without distracting from the mystery at hand. The Murder of the Orient Express is not the first literary appearance of Hercule Poirot but is undeniably the most famous when it came time for the Belgian detective to make its cinematic debut it's no surprise that it was at the top of the list for adaptation. The Murder of the Orient Express has two cinematic adaptations with the same title, both original and remake, what we see in these two films is a rare case where the

original and the remake stand on nearly equal footing both works excel in translating Agatha Christie's seminal mystery *The Murder in the Orient Express*. Poirot has "very sharp eyes and nothing hides from his great and penetrating gaze". (Christie, 73)

From the moment we first lay eyes on him in the book, Poirot is difficult to get a read on, he does not really seem like a detective, not even a retired one as he meant to be instead he comes across as aloof a bit high maintenance mad maybe a little bit goofy, plenty of people in the story clearly known who he is either by reputation or from previous encounters or by his career as a criminal detective, but it became clear that even they do not really know Poirot all that well. It also seems that he likes it that way, never once does Poirot explain himself to anyone not even once the investigation has begun of course this is all part of Poirot's method. Appearing aloof and unaware of his surroundings works to his advantage when the situation became disastrous.

He is old and weary from a life of solving crimes and by chance winds up on the train where murder and intrigue run rampant, while on the train Poirot was approached by Samuel Edward Ratchet, a reputable businessman who offers to pay the detective to be his bodyguard as he suspects his life is in danger.

"My life has been threatened, Mr Poirot. Now, I'm a man who can take pretty good care of himself." (Ratchet, 30)

Knowing Ratchet's reputation Poirot refuses and that night, Ratchet is indeed murdered. Poirot is commissioned to figure out what happened since there is clearly a killer on the train and everyone is at risk as Poirot investigates. He discovers that Ratchet was really Lanfranco Cassette a criminal who is implicated in but never convicted of the kidnapping and murder of three-year-old Daisy Armstrong.

"The murderer is with us- on the train now....." (M. Bouc, 50)

This is inspired by the real-life kidnapping and murder of Lindberg's baby a case that remains unresolved to this day it seems clear that whoever killed Cassette was motivated by this hurried crime and the clues support this idea, but who on the train had any connections to the tragedy as it turns out all of them did it. Everyone on the train has a connection to Daisy Armstrong and conspiring for years to avenge the child by dispensing the justice that the courts had failed to do.

The truth is that Poirot is not only observant he is eerily observant even before anything happened. He does not do this because he anticipates foul play but simply because it is in his nature to do so, years spent as a detective make this automatic for him. His good fortune puts him in the right place at the right time to observe what he does, prior to the eponymous murder.

As Ian Marsh classifies, “Functional impulsivity” often leads to the occurrence of a good and useful deed, whereas “dysfunctional impulsivity” leads to destruction (p. 61). It is not only in his observational methods that Poirot is impressive but also in his investigative methods. Throughout the investigation, it is rare thing for Poirot to explain himself or his actions which leaves everyone on the train and the readers confused by his question and request and then stunned when he gets the results, for example, evidence of charred paper, the paper must be some sort of clue but being a charred fragment leaves its significance, unknown Poirot casually requests an oil lamp and a wire hat stand and although it seems like a strange request unrelated to the investigation these items are retrieved.

He then performs a trick no doubt implemented by him before and to the shock of everyone involved he figures out what is on the paper, with this revelation comes the first breakthrough of the case and the connection to Daisy Armstrong. This type of thing was to be expected by a man like Sherlock Holmes it might still be impressive, but it would not be nearly as surprising as we expect this thing from Sherlock Holmes a man whose reputation as genius precedes him but coming from Hercule Poirot someone such as Poirot who has a very different set of quirks than the great detective Sherlock Holmes its gives reader quite a shock.

Most of the time Poirot just asks the question and readers are perpetually confused changing their minds about who is the one behind the dreadful murder, after every interview while the suspects believe they have successfully covered their tracks enough that Poirot is just as confused but no one realizes how well Poirot has been connecting the dots in his mind until the grand finale.

“And now, let us come to the event of last night. M. Ratchet retired to bed- when?” (Poirot,150)

Speaking of which this finale completes this investigation of Poirot. Everyone is gathered in the single boggy of the Orient Express, so Poirot can present his reconstruction of events. Poirot reveals that he has it all figured out and later while explaining how the dots are connected, he makes an interesting choice, he opens his speech by saying there are two possibilities of the murder.

“There are two possible solutions of the crime. I shall put them both before you, and I ask M. Bouc and Dr Constantine here to judge which solution is the right one.” (Poirot, 258)

The first of which is that the murderer was someone who boarded the orient express at its last stop killed Cassette then ran out into the snow. He is likely got lost or frozen to death and would never be found and the second one is everyone is behind the murder. After presenting this and the actual sequence of events Poirot states that it is not up to him to decide which scenario is the correct one even though the answer is obvious. The question arises here why Hercule Poirot would do this, and the simple answer is out of mercy, just like the real crime inspired by the death of Daisy Armstrong which is a high-profile case where many felt that justice was not truly served.

Murder on the Orient express shows Poirot’s major personality traits in relation to Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalytic theory. Poirot has a well-developed ego and a sense of self-importance. He is aware of his superior intelligence and frequently takes pride in his abilities. Carron Stewart Fillingim (2007) in Revelations from ‘Cheesecake Manor’ says Agatha Christie, Detective Fiction, and Interwar England, speaks of the significance of the highly English settings of Christie’s stories that seem to recount “a tale of a highly defensive middle class determined to defend its privileges against the dual threats of the organized working class and socialism” (p.

43).

Poirot often enjoys being the centre of attention and relishes the opportunity to showcase his deductive skills, sometimes even displaying a certain level of vanity. Moreover, each member of the conspiracy against Cassetti somehow had their life ruined in the aftermath making this a tragedy with far-reaching consequences. “Detectives are entrusted with a highly serious job” (Westera et a, 4). They may have all committed the ultimate crime, but it is difficult to not sympathise with them. Therefore, by providing another solution and stepping aside Poirot is effectively saving them. It is as if he is an Omniscient godlike figure gazing upon the group of guilty and he can easily smite a lot of them in one blow, but he chooses not to do so would be a grave injustice.

Following the detective’s leads, the train officials declare that it must have been a mysterious third party who vanished in the snowy landscape and the case draws to a close. The Novel end in a sort of revenge story based on a real-life story but also provided us with the perfect portrait of Hercule Poirot as the legendary detective.

Sign Of Perfectionism In Hercule Poirot

Five Little Pigs

This chapter delves into the intriguing mystery of "Five Little Pigs" by Agatha Christie, featuring the brilliant detective Hercule Poirot. In this captivating crime novel, Poirot takes on a closed case from sixteen years ago, aiming to uncover the truth behind the poisoning of the famous painter Amyas Crale. As he carefully studies the accounts of five important witnesses, each of whom is referred to as one of the "Five Little Pigs," Poirot's excellent analytical intellect and fastidious disposition come to the fore. This chapter examines Poirot's peculiar traits and investigation techniques through the prism of psychoanalysis, specifically Sigmund Freud's notion of ego. Poirot's ability to observe subtle cues, his unwavering confidence in his abilities, and his adherence to symmetry and order exemplify Freud's concept of the ego. Additionally, the chapter delves into the complexities of memory and multiple perspectives, shedding light on the impact they have on reality and the pursuit of justice. By applying psychoanalytic theory, this chapter seeks to unravel the intricate workings of Hercule Poirot's mind and unravel the layers of deception in Five Little Pigs.

Another of Agatha Christie's most well-known mysteries, featuring Belgian detective Hercule Poirot, is Five Little Pigs this mysterious crime is about the famous lavishly well-known painter Amyas Crale who is found dead after being poisoned with coniine a poisonous chemical compound, and alkaloid presents in isolable from poison hemlock. Caroline Carle, Amyas's wife is charged with his murder and based on the presumed evidence she is found guilty and passed away in Prison. However, sixteen years later Caroline writes a letter to her daughter, Carla, proclaiming her innocence and hoping to convince Carla that she has been falsely accused of doing something.

After sixteen years, Carla still struggles to make decisions considering the situation. She made the decision to enlist the assistance of the famous detective Hercule Poirot and he agreed to take up a closed case from sixteen years prior. "Mademoiselle, I am honoured! I will justify your faith in me. I will investigate your case of murder." (Poirot, 30)

Poirot is known for his exceptional analytical mind. As Stephen Tong and Benjamin Bowling (2006) rightfully assert that "The scientific approach to detective work points to a potentially evolving 'professional' detective significantly different from the detectives in the past" (Tong, 326). Poirot uses his analytical mind to good use when solving complex mysteries. He pays careful attention to details that others may overlook and sees significance in seemingly

inconsequential clues. His intellect is on full display in "Five Little Pigs," where he sifts through past accounts to uncover the truth. Poirot commences an inconsequential investigation, where he speaks with the five witnesses to the murder on the day of the crime. He concludes the identity of the murderer from these five witnesses and frequently referred to them as 'Five Little Pigs'.

The title "Five Little Pigs" symbolized the five key witnesses in the case, who are compared to little pigs metaphorically. Each of these five witnesses provides their own point of view on the events leading up to Amyas Carle's death and their attestation presents a crucial picture of love, bitterness, and treachery. These witnesses include Philip Blake, Amyas Carle's best childhood friend who harboured secret feelings for Caroline Carle.

However, it is revealed in the novel by Poirot that Caroline turned him down, and he lived the rest of his life harbouring anger, resentment, and abhorrence towards Caroline Carle. Poirot had excellent analytical skills, and in just two conversations with Philip Blake, he was able to deduce that Philip was in love with Caroline Carle.

In addition to Poirot's analytical prowess, Poirot is a perfectionist who leaves no stone unturned when tackling a case. He approaches each investigation with precision and exactitude. Ensuring that justice is served. This meticulous nature is evident in "Five Little Pigs" as he thoroughly examines all testimonies and accounts.

Meredith Blake, the elder brother of Philip Blake, is the second witness.

Throughout the investigation, Meredith Blake is reasonable with Poirot and with Poirot's peculiar habits. Poirot has a fondness for symmetry and order, which often involves straightening and aligning objects precisely. Agatha Christie formed an exasperating habit of idiosyncrasy and eccentricity in Poirot's personality which can be related to Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical Theory of Ego.

Rene Cutforth (1976), in her book *Later than We Thought: A Portrait of the Thirties*, asserts "It is impossible to set the English scene at any period without becoming involved in the subject of class" (p. 25). Freud's ego decides how to act by considering social reality, conventions, etiquette, and rules. The ego has no concept of right or wrong sometimes is good simply if it achieves its end of satisfying without causing harm to the universal personality of a human being.

The third witness and the real murderer is Elsa Greer, who was in a relationship with Amyas Carle at the time of his death. Elsa is portrayed as a stunning and mysterious woman who immensely

impacted Amyas Crale's life. Her testimony and observations are vital in assisting Poirot in discovering the truth behind her identity as a murderer.

“I found the stuff and I gave it to him, and I sat there watching him die.” (Elsa Greer, 335)

One of Poirot's defining features is his impeccable observation skills, he notices subtle cues that others miss, such as body language or facial expressions. This talent proves invaluable as he delves into past events relating to the case at hand.

Angela Warren and Cecilia Williams are the fourth and fifth witnesses.

Angela Warren is Caroline Carla's younger sister who had a deafening relationship with Amays Carla and throughout the novel, Angela believes Caroline is innocent and has sent a letter to Carla containing the final wishes of her deceased mother. Cecilla Williams is Angela Warren's governess at the time of the murder. Poirot asked Each one of the witnesses to recount their version in an interview with Poirot, everybody is asked to describe their version of what occurred on the day of the murder. Through these conversations, he discovers discrepancies and conflicting testimony. Poirot slowly fits together the circumstances leading up to Amyas's killing and discovers the real reason why the crime was committed.

"Five Little Pigs" is noteworthy because it examines memory and how diverse perspectives may change reality. It emphasizes the significance of looking back to uncover long-forgotten secrets and guarantee that people who have been wronged obtain justice. Although, even though it may not depict much of Poirot's personality or habits, Five Little Pigs is one of Poirot's most influential criminal cases. As Marsh asserts, “Depending on what and how we learn, we either may or may not learn to behave in either criminal or non-criminal ways” (Marsh. 65). Finally, Poirot exudes unwavering confidence in his abilities despite facing many obstacles and dead ends along the way, one of the reasons why justice prevails whenever he tackles a case.

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