

**MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS: A JOURNEY THROUGH
EVIDENTIARY VALUE AND LEGAL REALITIES**

*Shagun Gupta**

*Shivanshi Ratnakar***

ABSTRACT

Murder on the Orient Express follows the investigation of the murder of an American tycoon by the ingenious Belgian detective Hercule Poirot. Set in a world created by Christie in the early 20th century, it lacks technological and forensic advancements prevalent in today's times. Additionally, the mention of any legal jurisdiction or formal procedure of law is missing and Poirot plays the sole investigating and judging authority on the stranded train, using his knowledge of psychology and his skills in observation to analyse the evidence, behaviours and motivations of the suspects. As a part of this review, we wish to draw parallels between the evidentiary value in the movie and the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam ('the Act')¹. This also involves appreciating the importance of procedures around evidence while solving crimes and bringing matters to justice.

Keywords: Justice, murder, the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, evidence

* Student, Second Year LLB (Hons.), OP Jindal Global University

** Student, Second Year LLB (Hons.), OP Jindal Global University

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THE AVALANCHE OF DEATH: A MURDERED TYCOON AND TRAPPED PASSENGERS

The movie starts with Poirot boarding the Orient Express for a three-day journey to France. His first day goes without much show fare, except for his interactions with 13 other passengers travelling in his coach. On the second day, however, he shared a strange conversation with one Mr Ratchett where he requested Poirot to become his bodyguard as he had been receiving threats. Poirot sensed an ill feeling from Mr Ratchett and refused to do so, as he deduces him to be a criminal and does not want to protect them. This interaction could be admissible as dying declaration under § 26 of the Act as per the rule laid down in *Pakala Narayana Swami v. King Emperor*², pointing towards an enemy of Ratchett. This interaction of Poirot and Ratchett depicted an anticipation of death in Ratchett and the fact that under the same circumstances on the same night, Ratchett was killed, will make this a circumstance of transaction leading to death. Under this dying declaration, he hinted towards his Italian enemies to whom he had sold counterfeit art. On the following night, Poirot faces a disturbed sleep, hearing knocks and sounds coming from Ratchett's compartment, as well as a figure donning a scarlet kimono bolting past the corridor. The next morning, the train stops at a screeching halt leaving Poirot and the passengers stranded in the middle of nowhere due to an avalanche. Another shocking revelation comes to the front: Ratchett was found murdered in his compartment, succumbing to a stabbing frenzy sometime during the night.

On discovery of the body, Poirot called for Dr Arbuthnot (a passenger), who found the death's cause as being stabbed 12 times with a long, straight-edged knife and the time of death was approximated by him to be sometime between midnight and 2:00 AM. These findings by Dr Arbuthnot could be admissible and considered relevant as Expert Testimony under § 39 of the Act, where his opinion on stabbing being the cause of death and time of death provided a reliable direction for Poirot to proceed in this case. It is an accepted position of law that a Doctor is the most competent witness in respect of injuries and cause of death.

² *Pakala Narayan Swami v King-Emperor* 1939 SCC OnLine PC 1

While examining the crime scene himself, Poirot found various evidence. The victim's watch which had stopped at 1:15 AM (corroborating the expert testimony about time of death), a gun under the victim's pillow, a coffee cup with residue of a drug Barbitol, an expensive lady's handkerchief monogrammed with initial 'H', a pipe cleaner and a charred fragment of a note was found. The observations made by him were that the victim could not defend himself despite having a gun due to being under the influence of Barbitol and the charred fragment of the note was an attempt to burn evidence.

BEYOND THE OBVIOUS: NOTES, HANDKERCHIEFS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE

These pieces of evidence are physical or real evidence which are afforded by human agency. The question of their admissibility is connected with circumstantial evidence under § 3 of the Act, as they help in providing an understanding of what the facts in issue could be. For instance, finding objects like the handkerchief and the pipe cleaner may belong to the killer and help shed light on who it was. Barbitol found present on the crime scene provides an occasion for the crime to take place without any resistance from the victim under § 5 of the Act.

Poirot found amongst all of these, the note to be appearing most genuine. He traced the words of that note ("Daisy Armstrong's blood is on your hands; you will die for it.") which displayed a direct link between this case and the chilling case of the murder of Daisy Armstrong where she was kidnapped and murdered by a man named Cassetti. Grief-ridden, her parents (Sonia and John Armstrong) soon ended their lives too and thus the family was destroyed by Cassetti's crime. Poirot arrived at a working conclusion that Cassetti was Ratchett.

Here, Poirot finding the charred fragment of a note could be relevant under § 57 of the Act as Primary evidence if put on record in its authentic form. If it's not possible to present it in that form (as it was charred and on the verge of being destroyed) then his interpretation of the contents of that note could be seen as secondary evidence under § 58 (v) of the Act as they form oral accounts of Poirot who had seen the document. This secondary evidence could be provided to prove the contents of that note as it falls within the purview of § 60 (c) of the Act.

POIROT'S INTERROGATION ROOM: UNMASKING ALIASES AND MOTIVES

After this discovery, Poirot inspected the train coach and found that doors between coaches were locked and no one other than the passengers, was found in the coach, this fact could be relevant under § 5 of the Act as it provided an occasion for the murder to happen in that particular coach by someone travelling in that coach only. So, Poirot limited his search to the 13 people present in the Calais Coach and asked for everyone's passport and arranged interviews with all these passengers. Under § 124 of the Act, all of them were eligible and competent to testify as they appeared capable of understanding questions and answering rationally. These interviews can be considered to be cross-examinations under § 142 of the Act as the purpose is to expose the truth of their testimonies. The cross-examination is being done by Poirot as the adverse party to elicit from these witnesses something in his favour. However, we distinguish the movie and real-life procedure due to the absence of an examination-in-chief which has to be done to satisfy the requisites of § 144 of the Act.

The next thing to be identified would be the facts in issue as per § 2 (1) (g) of the Act, which were that Ratchett was stabbed by someone on the train with the intention of killing him while he was asleep at night. Now we trace the evidence (some being corroborative and others contradictory in nature) provided by the passengers and their evaluation, which led to the conclusion that all of them collectively murdered Ratchett.

All the interviews would be admissible and relevant as oral evidence under § 55 of the Act, as they are direct and based on their first-hand knowledge (not hearsay) in a sense where it was perceived by their five senses. The nature of Poirot's questions was lawful as per § 149 of the Act, as they were about witnesses' position in life and shaking their credit/character.

Section 9 of the Act comes to the rescue of many passengers as their alibis become relevant evidence under this section. MacQueen's revelation of him not seeing Ratchett after 10:00 PM as he was drinking with Arbuthnot till 2:00 AM becomes relevant to prove that MacQueen was not present at the crime scene around the estimated time of death. Pilar's testimony about Ms Debenham being in the room all night could be relevant to prove Ms Debenham's innocence.

Marquez's statements about Masterman seeing him sleep all night in his compartment could be relevant. Similarly, Princess Dragomiroff's statement that Schmidt was massaging her at 12:45 AM and that she slept afterwards could be relevant.

Furthermore, while analysing their testimonies, the following aspects were identified. The threatening letters described and produced by MacQueen, themselves can be important documentary evidence under § 57 of the Act as primary evidence if put on record in its authentic form. It also corroborated that the anticipation of threat by Ratchet, as communicated to Poirot, was genuine.

Next, Mrs Hubbard providing information that a man was in her room that night and about the communications door being unlocked would be relevant as circumstantial evidence which could be considered under § 4 of the Act if the alleged man is proved to be the killer. Additionally, she also provided physical evidence (a button of the conductor's uniform) corroborating the presence of a man.

Additionally, Masterman's testimony provides facts which are the cause of relevant facts (seen through his ordering the coffee at 9:00 PM which later was the cause of Ratchett being drugged) under § 5 of the Act. Additionally, he provides circumstantial evidence about Ratchett being agitated due to threatening letters.

Also, Pilar's testimony corroborated the alleged time of death as she was the last person to see Ratchett alive, which was at 10:40 PM creating a time frame post which he died. This oral evidence corroborated the expert testimony.

Moreover, Hardman was concealing his identity but eventually came clean to Poirot and was revealed to be a detective whom Ratchett had asked to look out for a man. This could be considered a dying declaration under § 26 of the Act by the virtue of rule laid down by *Pakala Narayana Swami v. King Emperor*³. This interaction depicted an anticipation of death in Ratchett and the fact that under the same circumstances on the same train, Ratchett was killed, will make this a circumstance of transaction leading to death. Under this dying declaration, he hinted towards a particular man who is "short and dark with a high voice" (corroborating Schmidt's statement about seeing a person of same characteristics). Moreover, information that he didn't see anyone in the alleyway all night, contradicted Poirot's experience of that night.

³ *Pakala Narayan Swami v King-Emperor* 1939 SCC OnLine PC 1

Interestingly, and distinct from everyone was Ms Debenham's interview as she was not very cooperative with Poirot's investigation. This can be seen as an exercise of her right to remain silent available in many jurisdictions globally, and in particular under *Article 20(3)* of the Indian Constitution. But the mere fact that the answer may tend to criminate, is no justification to refuse to answer, barring a ground of relevancy of the question for such refusal as per § 149 of the Act. At last, Princess Dragomiroff's revelation about her being Daisy Armstrong's godmother, provided a strong motive under § 6 of the Act, for her to kill Cassetti alias Ratchett. She even held great hatred for Cassetti, her natural response was to spit at his name in disgust.

Schmidt's interview corroborated the hypothesis of a "short man with a beard and a high voice" being on the train as she mentioned that she saw a man with the same description dressed as a conductor on the train. It is relevant as circumstantial evidence which could be considered under § 4 of the Act if the alleged man is proven to be the killer.

After Schmidt's interview, Poirot found the red kimono in his luggage and the uniform in Schmidt's compartment. The uniform exactly matched the testimony as it had a button missing and a conductor's passkey was in it. This finding of the Kimono and uniform was recognised as a red herring to delay and distract the proceedings of the case.

MCQUEEN'S MOTIVE AND DR ARBUTHNOT'S SECRETS: THE WEB OF SUSPICION THICKENS

The uniform smelled of bourbon, to which Poirot came to a working hypothesis that MacQueen could be the murderer as he was drinking it that night with Arbuthnot and he even had a motive as he was stealing from Ratchett and was even found burning the ledgers relating to Ratchett's business. Dr Arbuthnot also came to his rescue confirming that they were together till 2:00 AM. But this meant that he could have easily acquired Barbitol through Dr Arbuthnot and drugged not only Ratchett but also him. This presumption is authorized by § 119 of the Act, as it emanates from Poirot's experience with human conduct and character which he is entitled to make use of in ordinary course of life⁴. After Poirot's questioning, MacQueen revealed that his father was the prosecutor from the Armstrong case and suffered immensely when the scapegoat he was pressured

⁴ State of Karnataka v David Rozario (2002) 7 SCC 728

to frame (Armstrong's maid Susanne) ended up committing suicide. This established a strong motive under § 6 of the Act. But in the end, he claims not knowing that Ratchett was Cassetti.

Naturally, Dr Arbuthnot was interviewed. His relationship with two people was of interest to Poirot, one John Armstrong whom he claimed to have never heard of. The other, Ms Debenham, whom he admitted having met before boarding the Orient Express. Interestingly, she had claimed otherwise when being asked if she knew of him earlier.

While Poirot was at it, suddenly Ms Hubbard was stabbed with the same knife which was used to kill Ratchett. Poirot theorised that this move was just to dispose of the murder weapon (physical or real evidence afforded by human agency and will be admissible under § 3 of the Act), However, since no fingerprints were found on the same, it will not be of much use. This stabbing incident was recognised as another red herring and wasn't given much importance.

At last, Poirot interviewed the diplomats, Count and Countess Andrenyis. He found that the Countess was always under the influence of Barbitol and had a lot of supply for it (could be relevant under § 6 of the Act as preparation). He even deduced the Countess' motive under § 6 as her maiden name was Goldenberg which showed connection with Linda Arden (mother) and Sonia Armstrong (sister). This interaction displays an idealistic flouting of norms pertaining to diplomatic immunity and separates the movie from reality. Diplomats who enjoy complete immunity from criminal jurisdiction based on international custom and treaties, in this movie, are easily approached, suspected and interrogated by Poirot when push comes to shove.

After all the interviews, Poirot reconciled two significant observations- that a geography book was found in Mary's bag, and the Countess had a governess who was a "stickler for geography". He couldn't shake this aside as a coincidence and confronted Mary about her lies, that being the governess in the Armstrong household, she had relevant motive under § 6 of the Act and decided to seek revenge by murdering Cassetti. Poirot, while leaving Ms Debenham and thinking that he had solved the case, was shot by Dr Arbuthnot. He reveals himself being best friends with John Armstrong who had also given him a future. He gives away that he had drugged MacQueen and changed the time on the watch so the time of death couldn't be figured out. But Poirot had his reservations about this story, he was also confused as to how Arbuthnot being a sharpshooter in the army couldn't kill him at a close range.

FROM DAISY ARMSTRONG TO CASSETTI: A CONSPIRACY OF REVENGE AND COLLECTIVE JUSTICE

The final scene of the movie starts with Poirot connecting the dots by finding the personal connection each passenger had with the Armstrong family, which ultimately provided a strong motive under § 6 of the Act to avenge their loved one's death. To this, 'Mrs Hubbard' confesses that she is Linda Arden, who planned this murder and recruited all of them to help with the same. Poirot based his whole case on circumstantial evidence only, which could have been a relevant reason for conviction as it is a settled position of law in the Indian jurisdiction⁵.

The 'witnesses' end up being the perpetrators, cooking up a false tale to misguide Poirot- be it through contradicting statements or the hypothetical "short man, with a high voice". All these factors made him believe that none of them could have done it single-handedly and it was a joint effort under a common design, relevant as per § 8 of the Act, which was eventually also admitted by 'Mrs Hubbard'. Throughout his enquiry, Poirot admitted relevant evidence and orchestrated the sequence and order of his cross-examinations as per his judgement, authorised by § 141 of the Act.

SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS: CLASS, RACE AND STEREOTYPES IN CHRISTIE'S WORLD

Now, we will *engage with the sociological issues* highlighted in the movie. The story revolves around the Orient Express- a playground of the affluent. Set in the 1930s, it showcases an era where class and racial distinctions were rampant and affect character interactions and development in the movie. The passengers hailed from different nationalities attributed to stereotypes (on which the movie treads lightly, compared to the source material). The 'angry Russian', the Latin-American 'immigrant' and the sardonic German are some examples. However, it is important to address the effect media has as a normalization vehicle to deliver ideologies which serve as tools for creating public norms on the 'normal and acceptable'⁶. Gerbner's Cultivation Theory also

⁵ Ronny Alias Ronald James Alwaris Etc v The State Of Maharashtra (1998) 3 SCC 625

⁶ Juliana Hubbard, 'The Perpetuation of Criminalization: The Appearance of Black Criminalization in Fictional Movies' (English and Media Studies Honours thesis, Guilford College 2022) < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.32506330> > accessed on 26 December 2023

expounds on this, and how behaviours and interactions of people can be guided by their media consumption⁷. More so, when constant exposure to artificial worlds created for entertainment, without a strong anchor to the ‘real world’, leads to a distorted, stereotyped and biased perception for the viewer⁸.

Addressing the effects of consumption of crime fiction is crucial especially when it contains *depictions of discrimination*, stereotyping and exclusion of ‘People of Colour’ and especially Black characters. This argument is exemplified through depictions such as the white character’s refusal to be seated with a black passenger simply based on a disparity in their ‘likeness’; or fingers of suspicions instantly being raised at the Black and Latin-American travellers by their white counterparts. An initially hesitant Poirot too takes on the case, after being reminded of how the police are going to frame the two non-white passengers, not wanting to get knees deep in this muddy investigation. Albeit not uncommon for that time and era, still, Poirot’s scales of justice get coloured with a white saviour trope. History of media showcases how the worldview of the rich and the powerful forms the dominant ideology, by ownership and means of production⁹. This can prejudice and negatively impact investigation and criminalisation in ‘real-world’ contexts as well, discussed in the next segment.

On this note, we also address the strong motifs of the *class structure* in the film and onboard the Orient Express where a stark difference exists between the affluent and the working-class passengers¹⁰. The theory of Symbolic Interactionism helps us navigate the dynamic relationships of people, the social class they belong to and the society they form part of¹¹. This is done through a lens of lifestyle indicators and how they shape an individual’s identity and daily interactions.

⁷ W. James Potter, ‘A critical analysis of cultivation theory’ (2014) 64(6) Journal of Communication < <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcom.12128> > accessed on 26 December 2023

⁸ Juliana Hubbard, ‘The Perpetuation of Criminalization: The Appearance of Black Criminalization in Fictional Movies’ (English and Media Studies Honours thesis, Guilford College 2022) < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.32506330> > accessed on 26 December 2023

⁹ Juliana Hubbard, ‘The Perpetuation of Criminalization: The Appearance of Black Criminalization in Fictional Movies’ (English and Media Studies Honours thesis, Guilford College 2022) < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.32506330> > accessed on 26 December 2023

¹⁰ Z.D. Lalhmangaihi, ‘A Study of Power Dynamics in Select Novels by Agatha Christie’ (MPhil thesis, Mizoram University 2014) < <https://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/813/1/Z.D.%20Lalhmangaihi%20,%20Eng.pdf> > accessed on 26 December 2023

¹¹ Frez Colonia and others, ‘Parasite Deception: A Discourse Analysis on Class Inequality Depicted in Bong Joon Ho’s Movie’ (2022) 2(2) IJLS < <https://al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijls/article/view/4315/3670> > accessed on 26 December 2023

The Train in itself is a symbol of wealth and luxury, creating a world of its own, with its conventions and protocol¹². The exclusivity of the experience goes hand in hand with its inaccessibility. We observed this when the Manager on the train had to give up his private cabin to accommodate his friend on the train. Each passenger brings with them their whims and fancies, which the staff- be it the train's or their private aids, scrambles to fulfil. Cartloads of luggage expecting to be unpacked magically as soon as a step is taken onto the train, luxurious upkeep for pets and painstaking perfection in food and drink give us a peek into the world. This mechanistic cycle never tires even when stranded in the middle of nowhere. Clothing, language, way of speaking and accent are essential factors on how people interact with each other on the train. Valets and lady's maids were expected to be subdued ordinarily and talking back or taking a stand for oneself was seen as a suspicious circumstance, and the employer's word was usually taken as speaking for their employee as well. The affluent characters operated with a sense of assurance, when enormous amounts of Barbitol (poisoning drug) were found with Countess Andrenyi it was nothing of concern to her. Meanwhile, when the Uniform (red herring evidence) was found planted in Schmidt's compartment, it reduced her to an anxious pleading state. But the grandest symbolism of money and status comes through the victim, Ratchett. His money allowed him to escape punishment for his heinous crimes, and continue living comfortably dealing in fraudulent artwork, which is another symbol of status and wealth. Meanwhile, the scapegoat for his crimes ends up being a member of the working class with no means of avoiding allegations. Throughout the film, money runs parallel to power. However, the perpetrators end up being shown as powerless, irrespective of their social status. They come together under the umbrella of justice to defeat the common enemy, thus aiming to show that power is "portable, changeable, unbiased and democratic" and can be achieved by all, despite their social standing¹³.

¹² Anna Madoeuf, 'Murder on the orient-express: A literary and train journey from Istanbul to Europe' in Emmanuelle Peraldo (ed), *Literature and Geography: The Writing Space Throughout History* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2016) < <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01242611/document> > accessed on 26 December 2023

¹³ Z.D. Lalmangaihi, 'A Study of Power Dynamics in Select Novels by Agatha Christie' (MPhil thesis, Mizoram University 2014) < <https://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/813/1/Z.D.%20Lalmangaihi%20,%20Eng.pdf> > accessed on 26 December 2023

THE POWER OF MONEY AND THE ILLUSION OF JUSTICE

The movie raises an important issue related to *Police procedures for investigating a crime*. There are many instances in the movie wherein, Police methodology is ridiculed. Poirot's role as a detective contrast with that of the Police. Certain statements in the movie like, wherein Bouc states that if Poirot refuses to investigate the matter at hand, the police might find a scapegoat, most probably, Dr Arbuthnot or Marquez and just close the case. This instance incorporates the historical fear of black people, who are straightaway labelled as criminals in every interaction with law enforcement¹⁴. This criminalization of black people is in all facets of society, be it popular culture, education system or legal system. Black people being the constant victims of police harassment, over-policing in black neighbourhoods and mass incarceration of black people, are all examples of the same¹⁵.

Another important aspect of police incompetency was highlighted in the Armstrong case within the movie, where the poor maid was used as a scapegoat to hide the police failure in finding the actual culprit. The police convicted her despite a lack of concrete evidence and ignored her voice, which ultimately led to her death. This Scapegoat strategy is often seen in police investigation, where the rich and the privileged easily get away with the crime while the poor bear the brunt of it. This tragic nature of detective fiction is to mainly explore police's incapacity as a figure of authority and to use intellectual skills to resolve the chaos¹⁶.

The main issue of the movie revolves around the word '*justice*' and its different interpretations. Towards the end of the movie, we see Poirot and Pilar having a conversation, wherein, Pilar is trying to make Poirot understand that Justice was the reason behind them murdering Ratchett while Poirot is trying to rationalise the scenario stating that murdering someone cannot be Justice. The conspirators perceive the murder as a righteous act to provide Justice. It was almost as if a twelve-judge bench condemned him to death. Even though all of them

¹⁴ Juliana Hubbard, 'The Perpetuation of Criminalization: The Appearance of Black Criminalization in Fictional Movies' (English and Media Studies Honours thesis, Guilford College 2022) < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/community.32506330> > accessed on 26 December 2023

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Z.D. Lalmangaihi, 'A Study of Power Dynamics in Select Novels by Agatha Christie' (MPhil thesis, Mizoram University 2014) < <https://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/813/1/Z.D.%20Lalmangaihi%20.%20Eng.pdf> > accessed on 26 December 2023

were personally harmed by Ratchett, the movie shows them in a light of rendering justice rather than taking revenge¹⁷. The legal system's incapacity to uphold justice is the motivating factor in the movie. In his work *Discipline and Punish*, Michel Foucault analyses the nature of justice as well as criminal operations that have taken on extrajudicial elements: "Today, criminal justice functions and justifies itself solely by constant reference to something other than itself, through continuous inscription in non-judicial systems. Knowledge will reshape its destiny"¹⁸.

Similarly, in this movie, The tragedy of the Armstrong family overpowers the rational evidence that Poirot had against all the conspirators. As a result, he depicts a criminal justice system based on his knowledge and personal sense of right and wrong¹⁹.

This Ethical Dilemma regarding 'justice' is depicted in Poirot's last dialogues, "The scales of justice cannot always be evenly weighed, and I must learn to live with the imbalance", here, Poirot challenges the criminal justice system and emphasises that rule of law doesn't always imply justice. He transforms into a figure of power and the judge of the innocent²⁰. At the end of the movie, no one gets arrested as they aren't criminals according to Poirot, the one actual nasty criminal on that express was Mr Ratchett alias Casseti. Overall, it deals with a unanimous dilemma of individual justice vs. collective justice²¹.

CONCLUSION

The movie utilised a tried and tested crime fiction formula- where the task of conviction of a culprit takes you through dramatized depictions of manipulation of truth, institutional injustices and procedural inadequacies²². The morality struggle allowed for a gratifying 'happy ending' by the victory of 'good' over the 'evil'²³. But the winning takeaway for us was an appreciation for formal

¹⁷ Ina Hark, 'Twelve Angry People: Conflicting Revelatory Strategies in "Murder on the Orient Express"' (1987) 15(1) *Literature/Film Quarterly* < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43796290> > accessed on 26 December 2023

¹⁸ Z.D. Lalmangaihi, 'A Study of Power Dynamics in Select Novels by Agatha Christie' (MPhil thesis, Mizoram University 2014) < <https://mzuir.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/813/1/Z.D.%20Lalmangaihi%20,%20Eng.pdf> > accessed on 26 December 2023

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Robert Rushing, 'Traveling Detectives: The "Logic of Arrest" and the Pleasures of (Avoiding) the Real' (2005) 108 *Yale French Studies* < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4149300> > accessed on 26 December 2023

²² Matthias Kuzina, 'The Social Issue Courtroom Drama as an Expression of American Popular Culture' (2001) 28(1) *Journal of Law and Society* < <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3657949> > accessed on 26 December 2023

²³ Ibid.

procedures of evidence. Poirot's methods may help him solve the impossible, but they rely too hard on assumptions and light-bulb deductions. An objective criterion was lacking throughout, perhaps due to a lack of higher authority (like Courts) where matters can be verified and examined. Our 'witnesses' not only take justice into their hands but eventually convince Poirot that 'law of man' may not be sufficient to alleviate all our problems. This indulgent plot in fiction promotes chaos in real life. It makes the justice system more prone to retribution than reform²⁴.

²⁴ "An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind."