

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Research**

Morality is a concept that people have individually in their minds. The moral values contained in morality have several aspects, such as power, kindness, tolerance, justice, honesty, fairness, and self-control. These values will influence human nature and actions in moral philosophy and determine how humans act, which is known as ethics. Ethics is a social system that regulates human behavior to determine which acts are right and wrong based on moral values. (Krebs, 2011). However, the ethical values of each human being are different due to the influence of their environment, experiences, and culture. Therefore, each individual has their own interpretation of moral values towards an object in life.

The law is the government's institution containing rules that provide people with legal protection. (Bastiat, 1998). The law is made for persons to stand up for themselves, by using ethical values as a basis for human rights. Therefore, people would have the legal power and protection under the country, instead of using individual power to stand up for themselves. The other purposes of law are to protect persons, maintain justice, and prevent criminality. Moreover, as law is made to rule society and become a legitimate order, the powers are strong and coercive. Therefore, the law is officially managed and protected under the country's name. In sum, law is a social and governmental legitimate system that contains a set of rules to guide human behavior for the welfare of society.

Referring to both moral and law, the two terms have certain contradictions in both viewpoints and often become a conflicting issue. The law represented specific rules and regulations in generalizations, similar to the social norms in a group and society. On the contrary, morals and ethics reflect an individual's principles. Therefore, the conflict between morality and law arises when personal beliefs about right and wrong clash with established legal rules, resulting in a dilemma for individuals and society.

The contradiction between morals and law reflects the conflict in human life. One way to analyze the issue and find a solution is through literature. Literature is adaptive in mapping human life issues (Gotschall, 2012). For that reason, literature can help humans overcome problems and find solutions. Additionally, the applicable work could rely on a detective-crime mystery genre, and Agatha Christie is the best British author of that genre from the 1920s until now. The most well-known and notable work of Christie is *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934).

*Murder on the Orient Express* (1934) is considered one of Agatha Christie's most popular works. As Christie received several awards for this title, it led to the most profitable and critical success of Agatha Christie's. Christie's works are renowned for their famous main character, Hercule Poirot, who is the greatest detective in the world, and has solved cases remarkably. The story reveals the morality of the issue of murdering a murderer. The Armstrong family commits revenge murder on Cassetti, the murderer of their beloved one, Daisy Armstrong, leading to the death of 4 members of their family, causing the Armstrong family to suffer prolonged pain. However, the fact that the Armstrong family was eventually

released by detective Poirot as a sense of justice leaves the choice between morality and law in a dilemma. The issues presented in the story are viewed through the lens of morality and law, including murder, motives, justice, and social grouping, all of which are explained by human nature. Understanding the study of human nature, traits, and motives is reflected in Literary Darwinism, rooted in Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, as it explores human motives in the adaptive nature of forming friendships and coalitions (Carroll, 2011). The issue depicted in the book was to examine the Armstrong family's coalition motive to uphold moral justice through revenge, which contradicts the law. It also seeks the reason behind the preference of the Armstrong family for choosing revenge murder over a legal sentence for Casseti's punishment from a human nature viewpoint.

Consequently, this research focuses on analyzing *Murder on the Orient Express*, a novel by Agatha Christie, using an evolutionary psychology study, the branch theory of literary Darwinism. This study will thoroughly analyze the decision of the Armstrong family and Detective Poirot to prioritize moral justice over legal justice, demonstrating how their choice reflects evolved human traits and the adaptive nature of social behavior.

## 1.2 Identification of the Problems

The ending of *Murder on the Orient Express* shows the dilemma between morality and law. The story reveals murdering a murderer as reflected by the Armstrong family's forming a coalition to commit revenge murder on Cassetti, who had murdered their 5 family members of the Armstrong family. The Armstrong family's vigilante act is contradicted by the rules of law, which only see murder as the highest crime and must receive a heavy sentence from the law institutions. However, the Armstrong family's act is also considered an acceptable moral due to their adaptive response of social behavior towards their adaptive problem of self-defense and protecting their family from a predator who threatened their lives, like Cassetti. Therefore, this research hopes to reveal the reason for the Armstrong family's vigilante act to murder Cassetti and Detective Hercule Poirot's decision to release the Armstrong family from the law sentence that contradicts the law, as an acceptable moral.

## 1.3 The Review of Previous Studies

Several studies have examined Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*. First, the article entitled *Hercule Poirot and Criminal Psychology: Crime and Detection in Selected Novels of Agatha Christie* was published in the Journal of Language Horizons, Alzahra University in 2020, and was written by Esmaeil Najar and Fatemeh Salehi Vaziri. The writers explore Hercule Poirot's characterization of psychological processes in problem-solving and how it affects Poirot's final decision in *Murder on the Orient Express* using a theory of criminal psychology of behaviorism. The study concludes that through Poirot's investigation, the criminals cannot escape from their crimes, especially using psychological mechanisms.

Second, a thesis entitled *Trauma in Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express* was published in 2020 and was written by Nur Muhammad Saiful Rijal Romadhoni. The writer discussed the trauma experienced by the Armstrong family in *Murder on the Orient Express* using a psychological theory to seek the reason behind the trauma that occurred and its symptoms. As a result, the Armstrong family in the story suffers from three different types of traumatic symptoms: prevention, reliving, and excitement. The findings also identified two factors that trigger the trauma of the characters: the abduction of Daisy Armstrong and the corruption in the court system.

Third, a thesis entitled *A Family and Their Revenge in Agatha Christie's Novel Murder on the Orient Express (1934): A Sociological Approach* was published in 2018 and written by Mega Asri Utama Putri. In this thesis, the writer examines the primary motives for revenge within Armstrong's family using a sociological approach. The results of this research are divided into three; the first findings are the abduction of Daisy Armstrong as the main motive to do revenge, the second findings are the way Linda Arden formed a social group to do revenge by using their family-related title and the last findings are the reason of Christie's write the novel was influenced by her real experienced of stuck in a train under a snowy-weather for 6 days.

Fourth, the article entitled *Justice in Crime Fiction: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and Agatha Christie's Murder on the Orient Express* was published in the Bulletin of The Faculty of Languages & Translation in 2018, and was written by Dr. Doaa Talaat M. Owais. This study examined the concept of justice in crime fiction, as in *Murder on the Orient Express* and *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, using a comparative analysis. The purpose is to seek the hidden motives of the crime and how the detective solves the case to justice. The findings show that in *Murder on*



*the Orient Express*, Christie uses the ‘Armchair Detection’ mystery as a detective can find the truth through logical investigations. Therefore, Poirot used his logical analysis to solve the crime. Meanwhile, in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, Poe uses the locked-room mystery that the detective must find the relationship between the presence of a locked room and the space around it, which challenges the detective’s intellect. It also reveals that both works are personified using male figures, which caused conflict among feminists in detective literary works, and the social function of crime fiction helps readers understand real-life crime with various motives, such as the insufficiency of law in society, through this analysis within both works.

Fifth, the article *Understanding the Justice in Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express* written by Lucky Aditya and was published in 2019 in the journal Kata Kita of Petra Christian University. This study examined the concept of justice in the retributive justice lens using the theory of morality and the detective’s code of conduct. The author analyzes the justice viewpoint of the mastermind of revenge murder, Linda Arden, and Hercule Poirot’s moral choice to understand justice. The findings reveal that the retributive justice act can be ahead of legal rules and justify certain actions outside legal rules. Moreover, the justice viewpoint of Poirot and Linda Arden in terms of morality is different from the theory.

Besides, numerous studies have examined the Darwinian perspective in literary works with various themes aside from Agatha Christie’s *Murder on the Orient Express*. In a thesis entitled *Love as Darwinian Survival Mechanism in John Green’s The Fault in Our Stars*, which was published in 2022 and written by Muhamad Iqbal, the writer uses the Darwinian literary studies approach to demonstrate the adaptive functions of the survival mechanism in the characters’ romantic relationships. The writer reveals

several factors that influence love in the character's survival mechanism, which refers to human motives in finding a mate and the use of imagination to survive. The result of this thesis revealed that John Green shows the reader the motivations of humans to survive through mate selection and imagination as the characters' adaptive function in facing death.

Moreover, the article *Humanity Biologised: The Re-definition of Human Ethics in Ian McEwan's Enduring Love* in the journal *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, written by Fadel Amjad, Sayed Marandi, and Amin Asli in 2018, also applies a Darwinian evolutionary theory under the Darwinian ethics approach to redefine and demonstrate human ethics in *Enduring Love* novel by Ian McEwan. The discussion focused on analyzing moral values written in the novel throughout the dialogue to seek human ethical qualities through the Darwinian viewpoint. The result reveals that the value system in *Enduring Love* proposes actions and choices that are adaptive and beneficial to the survival of human beings.

Furthermore, another research using Darwinian perspective in an article entitled *The Nuanced Psychology of The Handmaid's Tale: Commentary on Power, Feminism, and the Patriarchy from Four Feminist Evolutionary Psychologists*, in the *Journal of Behavioral Science*, which was published by the American Psychological Association in 2020, was written by Jessica L. Calvi, Ashley M. Rankin, Nikki Clauss, and Jennifer Byrd-Craven. In this article, the authors examine the evolutionary psychology and feminist theory in *The Handmaid's Tale*, a novel by Margaret Atwood. The authors seek to understand what influences and motivates women to have sexual preferences in the middle of high-powered social and political systems through feminist and evolutionary psychology lenses. As a result, the author believes that through the

ongoing study of power and hierarchy structures in evolutionary psychology, humans can learn how to deal with the system using the advantage of developed cognitive mechanisms and power structure systems.

Eventually, the article entitled *The Darwinian World of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Jodi Picoult's Wish You Were Here: An Evolutionary Perspective* in the Journal of Languages and Translation (JLT) was published in 2023 and written by Nihal Muhammad. In this article, Muhammad explores the issue between humankind and the contagious COVID-19 virus through evolutionary perspectives in the novel using literary Darwinism theory, especially evolutionary psychology under contemporary terms called 'Evo criticism' proposed by Brian Boyd. The research resulted in the mapping of how our human behaviors react to pandemics differently in a sort of adaptation to natural selection. For instance, patients who got infected by COVID-19 tend to have short lifespans, and those who are healthy tend to survive. Or the morality of the healthcare workers to challenge their self-interest or empathy during their occupation.

To conclude, this research has a total of 9 related literature reviews. The gap of this research from other reviewed studies reveals that there has not been a discussion of the morality over the law issue using Darwinian literary studies that focused on the evolutionary psychology of homicide adaptation and Darwinian morality. Therefore, this research fills the gap by offering a new analysis of morality over the law in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express* from a Darwinian perspective.



#### 1.4 Research Questions

The writer breaks down the topic analysis according to the following questions:

1. How does morality contradict the law in *Murder on the Orient Express* by Agatha Christie?
2. How do the Armstrong family's coalition motives to commit revenge murder for the final punishment of Cassetti reflect the evolved human mind in adaptation to murder?
3. How does Detective Hercule Poirot's decision to release the Armstrong Family from the law sentence reflect morality over the law?

#### 1.5 The Scope of the Research

This research is limited to reviewing and analyzing the issue in the novel. The writer aims to examine the Armstrong family's coalition motives to commit revenge murder on Cassetti to seek moral justice. It also seeks reasons why Detective Poirot's moral decision to release them from the law sentence can be understood as part of human nature. The analysis focuses on analyzing the adaptive nature of the Armstrong family's social behavior to solve the adaptive problem of self-defense and protecting their family from a predator who threatened their lives, as Cassetti and Detective Poirot's moral decision to release them from legal sentence that reflects morality over the law, which aligns with the principles of evolutionary psychology and Darwinian morality within the framework of literary Darwinism.

## 1.6 The Objective of the Research

This research aims to reveal the Armstrong family's coalition motive to commit revenge murder and Detective Poirot's moral decision to release them from the law sentence, which can be explained as part of human nature. Through Darwinian literary studies, this research aims to understand the adaptive nature of human traits towards the Armstrong family's adaptive problems of self-defense and protecting their family from a predator who threatened their lives through revenge, and exploring the ethical reasoning behind Detective Poirot's decision to release them from punishment, which highlights the importance of morality over the law. Therefore, discovering the truth behind the controversy between morality and the law is beneficial for future analysis. As both often become a conflicting issue. Moreover, the writer's purpose in conducting this research is to fulfill the curiosity about the issues, expand knowledge of the theory, and help readers gain new insights into the overall findings.

