

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

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Murder on the Orient Express portrays the complex phenomenon of human morality that often clashes with the modern rule of law. This case highlights that an act based on human moral sense can encourage individuals and groups to engage in illegal behavior and violate the law. Especially, if the law itself is considered pervert and cannot uphold justice efficiently. However, the act is still regarded as moral due to the variety of moral senses that humans hold based on their adaptive nature and evolved morality. Moreover, referring to human cultural characteristics, the modern rule of law is a relatively recent, formal, and often corruptible proxy for the ancestral, naturally acquired mechanism of human nature as moral justice. Therefore, when the proxy as law fails, the original mechanism of moral justice takes over.

The Armstrong family's coalitional act to murder Cassetti is not some regular murder, but rather evolved psychological mechanisms that make lethal violence an adaptive solution to extreme problems like the one Cassetti presents. Murdering Cassetti was an adaptive response of their social behavior towards their adaptive problem of self-defense and protecting their family from a predator who threatened their lives, Cassetti. The Armstrong family believed murdering Cassetti was the most effective fitness-enhancing strategy. The reason for their action is to eliminate a continuous reproductive threat from Cassetti and to restore group stability, to uphold a sense of fairness and justice for the welfare of the Armstrong family. The Armstrong family's morality is rooted in a social instinct for the good of the community, which is influenced by maternal instinct and a retributive impulse, as a form of coalitional

murder. Regardless of the immoral act they commit as a murderer and violate the established legal rules, they choose to stand by the moral principle they believe in, which is to raise their family's welfare by murdering Cassetti. They act as a representative of a jury of twelve as a representation of a law court jury that failed in Daisy Armstrong's court trial because the law is considered 'perverted', as Cassetti bribed the jury to escape legal sentence.

Hercule Poirot's morality in choosing moral justice over legal justice for the Armstrong family justified their coalition motive to commit revenge murder on Cassetti. Poirot's moral sense was influenced by the factors of reliance on M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine's approval of his fake alibi, along with his ability to examine the cost-benefit analysis that both the Armstrong family and Cassetti have faced. Moreover, Poirot's conscience in releasing them to escape legal punishment reflected his social instinct in indirect reciprocity of reciprocal altruism towards the Armstrong family. Indirect reciprocity means that when you help someone today, someone else will repay you later because of your reputation as a decent person, considering the beneficial impact on each other's lives. (Alexander, 1988, p. 140), The benefits of Poirot helping the Armstrong family will help manage his reputation as a costly signal of his fairness, which guarantees future cooperation, and improves his position in the larger social community among his peers, M. Bouc and Dr. Constantine, the Yugoslavian police, and the readers due to his sympathy towards the Armstrong family in releasing them from any legal sentence. On the other hand, the Armstrong family will be happily free from their suffering and ready to live their normal life again because they are not in prison due to murdering Cassetti.

The outcome leads to a moral justice that the Armstrong family deserved, which gives Cassetti an impactful punishment for what he has done to the Armstrong family. The findings show that humans tend to act according to what their ancestors taught them, with familiar moral principles, and are skeptical of new human cultures, such as law institutions. Because sometimes the modern rules of law in recent society can be easily manipulated and cheated on, such as bribery, corruption, or otherwise. As it is a system that is coercive, the law can be ‘perverted’ due to an immoral person in charge of that system, who should have to uphold justice; instead, they become the criminals themselves by violating the law. To this, humans will tend to act according to their own moral principles, based on what has already been taught them and what they know all along has worked. Throughout this analysis, Agatha Christie wants to show the readers that in certain cases, the sense of morality might outweigh the law to uphold justice effectively, which is portrayed through Hercule Poirot.

