A Barthesian Analysis of the Movie *Murder on the Orient Express*

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ARTICLE INFO			ABSTRACT
Article History:			*The paper aims to analyse the movie Murder on the Orient Express using Roland Barthes' codes of narrative analysis. The work under-discussion is an adaptation*
Received:	February	25,2024	*of the novel of same name written by Agatha Christie in 1934. There is little work done on the visual literature from the perspective of this theory. The authors use*
Revised:	March	29,2024	*the five codes in an attempt to uncover and decrypt the meaning of the movie's plot. The theory for this research is Structuralism and the theoretical framework*
Accepted:	April	30,2024	*is that of Roland Barthes'. Additionally, the data for analysis i.e. dialogues are taken from the movie and rest of the references are taken from different sources*
Available Online:	May	15,2024	*across the internet. The first two codes of the theory can be used to decipher the major events and enigmas of the plot. The rest of the three are used to point out*
Keywords:			*the antithetic, cultural and beyond surface meanings. The writer finds out that the plot is scriptible which means it is not easily understandable to the viewer at*
Agatha Christie, Movie, Roland Barthes, Structuralism, Enigmas			*first glance. One has to contemplate to get a better understanding of the story.*

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INTRODUCTION

Human history is full of instances where there were certain paradigm-shifting events took place. People of the past employed specific practices for peculiar purposes. In all these occurrences, language played a vital role. Language held utmost importance since time immemorial. With the passage of time, language evolved and granted human some of the wonderful insights. It led to construction as well as destruction of history. For instance, there took place a paradigm shift in modernism after the turn of 20th century. Before the World War 2 surrealism and Marxism

dominated the French natives and European masses. After the War, two additional ground-shattering philosophies took the West Europe and rest of the world; Existentialism, which failed to make the impact, however, a prominent theory fathered by Ferdinand de Saussure made an epoch-making influence on the world. This theory was called Structuralism. Plethora of anthropologists was involved in development and advancement of the theory; perhaps, Roland Barthes was one of the influential philologists to contribute to this theory, as well as Poststructuralism. Roland Barthes worked on finding signs in an intratextual analysis carried out to evaluate Honore de Balzac's short story, *Sarrasine*. After a thorough discussion, he derived his own theory of textual analysis (De Man, 1990). He proffered five codes: the hermeneutic code, the proairetic code, the semantic code, the symbolic code and the cultural code. He called them the *voices of truth* that make up structure of a text. These codes were introduced as windows or tools to demystify the meanings in a text (Pirnajmuddin & Arani, 2013).

Cook (1975) discussed various theories that could be applicable on the movies. The cine-structuralist is one of them. Cine-structuralist is basically a framework that is used in keeping in mind the rules of structuralism to evaluate the structure of a movie or any piece of visual narrative. It was in the vogue during late 80s and early 90s. Keeping this in mind, Roland Barthes' codes were not applied on any movie, perhaps. The movie chosen by the researcher is *Murder on the Orient Express*, based on the novel of the same name by Agatha Christie. There is a need to divert researchers' attention towards this theory to apply on the visual literature. The following paper is conducted to address the filling of the research gap present in this niche. Roland Barthes' codes have been used to analyse different texts. Yet, the theory is not used to deconstruct the visual literature. The research is orchestrated to fill in the gap present with regard to application of the narrative codes of Roland Barthes.

Problem Statement

The movie chosen for exploration using Barthes' codes is *Murder on the Orient Express*. Usage of these codes on the visual literature is very limited. If this theory is applicable on the movie(s), to what extent it can decode the meaning of different works. It is to be analysed through the theory if the movie is scriptible or lisible.

Research Questions

1) Which codes of the theory of Roland Barthes are used to understand the plot of the Kenneth Branagh's movie *Murder on the Orient Express*?
2) How these codes are used to demystify the structural thread of meanings and complexities of the plot?
3) Is the plot of the movie "lisible" (readerly) or "scriptible" (writerly)?

Research Objectives

- To find out the codes of Roland Barthes theory that help in understanding the plot of the movie.
- To find out how these codes are used in the movie to deconstruct its narrative.
- To find out the whether the plot of the movie is "lisible" (readerly) or "scriptible" (writerly)

Delimitation of the Study

In the following study, the author utilizes the concept of Roland Barthes' theory of narrative analysis. A movie is analysed which is rarely done. However, the author declares that his study is restricted to usage of this specific theory on the movie. It can be explored using different paradigms and perspectives. Even within the constraints of Structuralism, there are different angles to analyse a literary work from.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ali et al. (2022) carried out a research on a novel written by an Israel writer, Leigh Bardugo. The novel, Shadow and Bone, was analysed through the lens of Roland Barthes' theory. Ali found some interesting results. The novel included all the elements that could be analysed using the Barthesian approach. He went on to say that most of the plot of the novel was woven around the first two codes i.e. the hermeneutic and the proairetic code. This fact is corroborated by Kalhoro & Sangi (2022) that most of the stories are fabricated onto conduct of the first two codes of Roland Barthes. They did a rigorous study of Paulo Coelho selected short stories. One can understand the real motive of life by studying a work of fiction or non-fiction through these codes. The psychology of the character is denuded by the lenses of Barthesian theory. These codes are mostly used in qualitative research and various linguistic elements in the text resonate to their usage. The symbolic code is a great conduit of lexicogrammatical patterns in a story (Guzel, 2023). Malik et al. (2014) analysed the short story *The Optimist* by Bina Shah using the Barthesian theory. Difference between Pakistani and Western culture were delineated for the ease of readers to understand the concept of the story. In-depth structural understanding is gained through application of these codes. The application of this theory did not remain limited to the genre of novel only, Robinson (2019) analysed the poetry with these codes. He found out that these codes were applicable on the poetry. The intricate construction of Donald Hall's poem, *The Town Hill,* was construed through these codes. It was found that the poem was rich of the cultural code more than any other code. Akbar et al. (2021) conducted a research on Zaibunnisa Hamidullah's short story *The Bull and the She Devil* employing structuralist stance. They found out that the story was a blend of suspense and opposite binaries. All the codes encapsulated the short story to manifest underlying social, cultural, symbolic, and enigmatic aspects. Furthermore, the themes and structure were demarcated by the writers to elucidate the extent of the theory. Different short stories have remained the point of interest of the research-paper writers who apply Barthes' approach for their research. One such instance was application of the approach to study Qaisra Shahraz's short story *A Pair of Jeans* which declared to be a scriptible text (Zaib & Mashori, 2014).

The work chosen for analysis is *Murder on the Orient Express* movie. Directed by Kenneth Branagh in 2017 and is depiction of Agatha Christie's masterpiece by the same name. The movie accommodates techniques such as code-switching and code-mixing in the light of Wardhaugh and Suwito's frameworks. Metaphorical code-switching was a dominant form of techniques of the above mentioned theorists (Fauzana et al., 2022). Saragih & Manullang (2012) did a frantic research on the movie *Murder on the Orient Express* keeping in mind its subtitle-related aspects of English and Indonesian English. They found seven types of different translational elements in 563 utterances taken from the movie. A research was carried out by Daning & Widiyanto (2022) on the morality presented in the movie through dialogues. They delineated four kinds of moral values in *Murder on the Orient Express:* forgiveness, compassion, honesty and respect for

others. This was an effort by the duo to disclose the fact that how movies propagate ideologies and through these ideologies moral values can be disseminated.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following research is conducted using Structuralism's ramification Roland Barthes' narrative codes of textual analysis to analyse *Murder on the Orient Express,* the movie. The movie is an adaptation of Agatha Christie's novel that has the same name. The author used the qualitative methodology to direct forward his study.

Theoretical Framework

The theory used in the research was expounded by Roland Barthes in 1970 after he did a thorough scrutiny of Honore de Balzac's short story *Sarassine,* and came up with his five codes in his book, S/Z. It has features of Structuralism and Poststucturalism as well. These five codes include the hermeneutic code, the proairetic code, the symbolic code, the semantic code and the cultural code.

i) The Hermeneutic Code

This code harbors enigmatic elements of a story. A writer introduces an element which is surrounded by mystery and remains like this for a while in the progression of the story.

ii) *The Proairetic Code*

This code is built on the elements of action. It is close to the hermeneutic code; however, it is related to an action going on and its immediate resolution.

iii) *The Symbolic Code*

This code is all about antithesis and binary oppositions. It relates to themes as well as symbolism used in the story.

iv) *The Semantic Code*

This code tells about the meaning in a story. It is difficult to demarcate this from the symbolic code. The difference is that the symbolic code goes deeper with respect to meaning and it also includes binary oppositions. On the contrary, the semantic code does not go into much details.

v) *The Cultural Code*

This code delineates the cultural factors of a text from that of the semantic or symbolic. This code includes factors such as dressing, language and sometimes the setting where an event is taking place.

Data Collection

The writer used the movie as the main resource for analysis of the application of the codes. To bolster up the study, references of several researches were given in *the review of the previous studies* section. Mainly, Google Scholar was used to take references for the research.

DATA ANALYSIS

The Hermeneutic Code

The hermeneutic code is excessively at play in the movie. This code is called the Enigma Code as well. The writer presents an enigma to enthrall the viewer, and make an individual to anticipate the outcome of the work.

To begin with; the title of the movie is perplexing. The title is: *Murder on the Orient Express;* when the viewer gets to know the title, he makes up from the title that there will be a murder on a train. However, there is an uncertainty in the mind of the viewer that how a murder will take place on a well-guarded train as the name the *Orient Express* suggests. Orient Express started to operate in 1883 in London and was considered a symbol of prestige and safety (*Wikipedia*). This certain choice of words instills an aura of mystery from the very beginning of the movie. After the movie starts, a scene is shown, set in 1934 in Jerusalem. There is a crowd gathered around a place called *The Wailing Wall.* In the very next scene, there is a boy running hastily with a box held in his hand. He gives the box to a man wearing a chef uniform. It is disclosed that the boy was carrying a box full of eggs. The scene continues, and the chef says, "He said four minutes precisely" (Branagh, 2017, 1:51). Now, the viewer becomes confused that what is going on and who is being served eggs with such a worry on the faces of chefs? This scene also creates a bit of tension in the mind of those who are watching the movie. In the consequent scenes, one gets to know that the eggs are served to a man with long moustaches. He rejects the first lot of boiled eggs. Another four eggs are brought for him. Here, it becomes evident that the man being served is someone very special; however, his identity is not disclosed, creating hype and an air of mystery for the audience. A guard standing beside the moustached man calls him, "Mr. Poirot," (2:59), and ask him to, ". . . if you're going to perform one of your mircales, the time is now" (3:02). Another sense of enigma is inculcated in the minds of the viewer as he is unbeknownst to the truth of miracle and what miracle is going to be cast by Mr. Poirot. After a bit of progression, a scene comes up where three accused are being called in the public, all of them being religious preachers. Again, a sense of mystery surrounds the viewer's mind as he is bound to think what crime would these accused might have committed? The scene is full of tension. In the resolution of the scene, the enigma of theft gets resolved; one the guards are revealed to be the main culprit.

Another enigmatic sense is developed when Poirot is accosted by an aged man who hands him a letter. The detective tells him that he knows what is written in the letter and it is about "The Kassner Case" (12:56); no one knows that what this case is and how Poirot knew it before. A sense of suspense surrounds the viewer's mind. The mystery is not resolved even until the end of the movie. In the next scenes, the movie shows different characters. Among them, an old man is shown with another young man. The young man calls the former as *Masterman* while Masterman calls him Mr. MacQueen. Masterman is asked by Mr. MacQueen, "Hey, you got everything?" (14:39); this kind of conversation embeds a sense of mystery in the minds of the viewer. No one knows what these two characters are talking about. For what purpose Mr. MacQueen asks Masterman whether he owned everything. This conundrum is one of the techniques of a writer to attract the attention of the readers, in this case viewers of the movie. In the very next scene, a photographer reaches a sad-looking man who is revealed to be Count Adrenyi. The photographer takes a picture of him and when the camera flashes, the man goes crazy and starts throwing punches on the picture-taker. This sight makes the viewer mesmerized and confused as he/she wants to know the reason of such behavior of Count Adrenyi. During the

questioning session, Poirot enquires from Mary Debenham about the conversation he had overheard between Dr. Arbuthnot and her. She gets disturbed clearly and says, "As we established, there are no laws against my silence" (1:01:53). The confusing thing is why she wants to remain silent? Is she and Arbuthnot the individuals who plotted this whole fiasco? This conversation impregnates the mind of the viewer with dubiousness about the events and their resolution. Poirot starts to question Princess Dragmiroff and her subordinate Fraulen Schmidt. Schmidt reveals during the conversation that she saw another conductor having short height and long beard, wearing a red kimono. The story becomes immensely twisted as the skepticism escalates regarding the murderer. The detective catches Mr. MacQueen running away from the train after his compartment is searched. After getting caught, MacQueen discloses the fact that he was stealing from money from Mr. Ratchett as he was the accountant of him. However, he did not kill his boss. The dialogue between Poirot and MacQueen is going on but abruptly, there is a scream. Poirot and Bouc rush into the cabin of Mrs. Hubbard and find out that she has been stabbed by someone. She says, "Someone kicked in the door. . . . Covered my face" (1:12:54). No one knows who came and stabbed Mrs. Hubbard at the exact time when Mr. MacQueen was being interrogated. It becomes very obscure to understand the turnout of events by the viewer as mystery encapsulates them.

The Proairetic Code

The code is also known as the Action Code. It entails an action, raising suspense in the viewer's mind, and it consequent resolution. It leads to progression of a story by building and deepening the narrative. The first two codes, i.e. the enigma code and the action code are needed to be observed in temporal sequence to understand the story. They are heavily interwoven into each other (Felluga, 2015).

In the very beginning, it is observed that a boy is running with something in his hand. To add up to the suspense, a mysterious music is added in the background. The viewer starts to speculate outcome of the event; however, does not know for sure that what will happen. The action is resolved in the next scene when it is unveiled that there are some eggs being brought by the boy to a chef who serves them to Hercule Poirot. The next instance of the action code is when Poirot is called to investigate a case of a robbery. He commences his examination and brings out in the public that the thief is no other than the Chief Inspector of the police. Once found guilty, he starts running. In the struggle, another guard points gun at him and stops him. Here, the viewer is filled with suspense, whether the guard will shoot him or not. Amidst this enthrallment, the culprit pushes a person towards the guard who is pointing gun at him. The accused runs away in an effort to escape; however, is knocked down the scepter instilled in the wall by Poirot. At 33rd minute of the movie, a very extensive play of the action code is executed. Poirot is reading a book in his compartment, when he suddenly hears a noise in the adjacent compartment. He goes out to check and he finds that there is nothing unusual. The viewer is pushed into a mysterious contemplation here. Again, Poirot hears a tumult and goes out to see Mrs. Hubbard running in the corridor. Suspense grows in the viewer's mind. Then comes a scene that brings the viewer to the edge of the seat; lightning strikes a mound of snow on the hill above the railway track and a great deal of snow starts coming down towards the train, turning into an avalanche. The train is in the way of the avalanche. Consequently, the train is derailed by the snow. Everyone on the train is frightened but safe. This action sequence leads to another mystery; Mr. Ratchett gets murdered in between the night. Poirot suggests Bouc to let him question everyone on board in a

one-on-one setting. Mr. Bouc permits Poirot to execute the procedure. This questioning of every individual leads to certain set of clues and hints and adds to the progression of the story.

During a questioning session with lady Estravados, it is revealed upon Poirot that Estravados had an encounter with Mr. Ratchett at around 11 o' clock the night Mr. Ratchett died. She recalls the event, "When I went to see Mrs. Hubbard, first, I opened the wrong door" (Branagh, 2017, 57:33). It is interesting to witness that when she opens the door, she is held at gunpoint by Mr. Ratchett who seems ready to shoot anyone entering his cabin. During this scuffle, the viewer is anticipating a myriad of outcomes. It was possible Mr. Ratchett could have shot Estravados. However; in the conclusive part, Mr. Ratchett does not shot her and she closes the door. A brief scene, but engaging enough to make the viewer brew some speculations. Princess Dragmiroff's maid is questioned by Poirot and he finds that she saw another conductor yesternight. This makes Poirot more suspicious and he brings her to Michel- the conductor who was at duty last night. She declares that she saw someone who was short-heighted and had long beard. Music intensifies and Poirot runs to check luggage of all those who are aboard to match the button dropped by the person who masqueraded himself/herself as conductor; resulting in him/her changing the costume, putting it somewhere in the luggage. The viewer becomes suspicious once again. Speculation surrounds the viewer's mind. At last, the action gets resolved and relayed when the costume is found in Poirot's luggage bag. The story becomes enchanting and the viewer is bamboozled upon finding this. Poirot finds out the uniform worn by the person who surreptitiously entered the compartments the night Mr. Ratchett was murdered. The uniform smells of same scent used by Mr. MacQueen. Bouc and Poirot are having a scrutiny of the evidence when in MacQueen's compartment when they hear a loud noise. "MacQueen also had a ledger. All his dealings with Ratchett" (1:06:29); they hear a loud thud and sees MacQueen running away carrying the ledger. Poirot starts chasing him. The viewer starts hypothecating the outcome of the ongoing scene. Poirot captures MacQueen in a fiery chase to conclude the scene.

The Semantic Code

The rest of the three codes among the five are not as much dominant as the first two. The Semantic code is also called the connotative code or the semic code. It goes beyond the superficial meanings. It is challenging for a researcher to differentiate between the semantic code and the symbolic code. For instance, clothing of characters is something that can tell about her/his status in the society. Mostly if a character is wearing formal dress, it is understood that he/she may belong to a rich background. On the contradictory, if a character is not wearing a formal dress, it is inferred that she/he is underprivileged and impoverished (Pirnajmuddin and Arani, 2013). Additionally, Names of the characters give an idea about their background and certain connotative tendencies are associated with them (Ali, 2022). Use of certain terms and sentences carry a beyond surface meaning. At the very beginning, Mr. Poirot is shown to be solving the mystery of a theft. During his proceeding towards the place where verdict is going to be declared, he steps on dung. He takes a respite from walking and looks at his feet and says, "It is the imbalance of the . . . ." (Branagh, 2017, 3:38); and puts his other foot on the dung. This act of the detective denotes towards his satiation for balance. In the following scene, Poirot makes it clear during his investigation that the three holy men would not do a robbery of a valuable relic embedded in the holy site, as getting wealthy out of the blue would make them target of the people. The following claim shows that usually the individuals who are connected to religion are masking themselves and do not do acts that would result in the public embarrassment. Similarly, the fact that Poirot is wearing a three-piece suit shows his well-offness. On the contrary, amidst

first scenes, the religious men are wearing very plain clothes as well as the crowd gathered there; signifying a social classification and strata. When Mary Debenham meets Poirot for the first time while waiting for the yacht to arrive, after a short while Poirot asks her whether she belongs to Baghdad or not. She is moved by the prediction of Poirot. Poirot tells her how he evaluated it by looking at the bag she is carrying. In a connotative sense, the writer is trying to convey the fact that Hercule Poirot is an extra-intelligent individual.

Different characters of are introduced boarding the train. From their discourse and behavior their true nature is depicted. Mr. Ratchett is very eloquent at first; however, when he meets with his servant, Mr. Masterman, he acts very rudely with him. The writer wants to assert that people of that society had double-standard approach. When Bouc offers beer to the individuals onboard, Estravados refutes and says, "No, thank you. I do not drink" (24:23). This elucidates that Estravados follows religious norms and avoid carousing and lewd activities. Poirot is shown to be an individual who is stoic and balance-loving. However, he waive off his shield when Bouc talks to him about love. Poirot says, "Romance never goes unpunished. There was someone once" (26:15). In the very next scene, Professor Hardman is sitting next to Dr. Arbuthnot. He gets up and tells Mr. Bouc, "Like should be seated with like. We are not alike" (26:34). This shows how rude he is and there is a sense of hubris in him. Racial segregation is the theme the writer is directing towards.

The Symbolic Code

The symbolic code is very similar to the semantic code; however, the only exception is that the symbolic code goes deeper into dismantling and disrobing the meaning of the text or literary piece. It associates certain events and symbols to particular ideas. Jadoon et al. (2020) elucidated in their research paper that it was quite difficult to distinguish the symbolic code from the semantic code owing to nebulousness of Roland Barthes' concept. A reader or viewer must keep in mind that it is separated on the basis that it delves into the antithetical components of the story. The antithesis in the story is dispensed heavily.

a) Antithesis in the Title

The title of the movie is *Murder on the Orient Express.* The train is luxurious and all the passengers hail from affluent background. On the other hand, murder on it is the least occurrence one can expect on such a safeguarded and confined place. It is an antithesis that such two different events happen on the train of such caliber.

b) Antithesis among the Characters

There is plethora of characters in the movie. All most all of them hail from different backgrounds and professions. The detective, protagonist of the movie, Hercule Poirot, is a man who loves balance and has principles and rules in his life. His best friend, Bouc, a detective also, is totally the opposite of him. He has no rules and discipline in his life. He follows no certain principles in leading his career. Bouc constantly indulges himself in carnal activities, and for this Poirot tries to admonish him; perhaps, invain. Similarly, Pilar Estravados is a woman who refrains herself from drinking alcohol. She believes in religion and seems a practicing religious individual. Her character is opposite to every other character in the story. Furthermore, Mr. Ratchett is a killer who ruined lives of three individuals in the Armstrong Case. Everyone who was connected to the Daisy Armstrong- a child killed by Mr. Ratchett- is on the train and wants to avenge the death of

Daisy. Every other person is not a killer perhaps until they kill Mr. Ratchett. Mary Debenham and Arbuthnot love each other. Dr. Arbuthnot is from an African background and Mary is a white girl. The love affair itself contains antithesis as it was considered a preposterous for a black to love white or reciprocity. Additionally, Professor Hardman, as mentioned above, chides Bouc to have him sit with a black man, Dr. Arbuthnot. To this, Mary Debenham criticizes the Professor about his tendencies towards racial segregation. The movie is based on the novel by Agatha Christie set in 1934. At that time, racial abomination was on its peak in the European countries as well as globally. There were people who contested against this injustice while some favoured it. Through the characters of Debeham and Hardman Christie depicts the gloomy picture of the society of that time. When the movie is about to end, Poirot solves the puzzle of the murder. Everyone in the audience is expecting from Poirot that he will report the crime to the police as his consciousness towards justice is spot on. Nevertheless, Poirot cancels the intent to report the killers. It is an antithetic stance to the nature of Hercule Poirot.

Symbolism in the Movie

Different objects have been used to symbolize deeper meaning. The train itself symbolizes the confinement of the characters. They are trapped in a world where they cannot escape from the eyes of Hercule Poirot. The watch that is present on the table of the victim is stopped exactly by the killer when the victim is killed. The watch symbolizes the time of the deceased life. The third symbol is the moustache of Poirot. He keeps his moustaches balanced on both sides. This symbolizes his affinity for balance and justice.

The Cultural Code

Tohar et al. (2007) went on to say that the sociocultural contexts are discussed under the referential code. The cultural code is also known as the referential code. Communal thinking is another factor which is counted in this code. Language is an indicator of culture as well. Language denotes the culture a character hails from. Apart from language, certain symbols contribute to the understanding of the culture the story is taking place in. Among all other yardsticks of the cultural code, dressing is one of the most important among these.

In the movie, one can see that the opening scene depicts a crowd who is wearing long cloaks and certain type of hats. This depicts the setting of a region where there live different people of varying traditional and religious origin. Agatha Christie wanted to balance out her characters and setting of the novel, implying equality. Furthermore, the writer portrays characters hailing from different countries and having certain culture-specific traits. Hardman's abhorrence towards Dr. Arbuthnot for his black color is an illustration of the culture of the white supremacist that was dominant during the 1930s and onwards. The train is a symbol of opulence and there is an utterance, "The Orient Express, the train of kings and spies" (Branagh, 2017, 23:20). It was a symbol of well-heeled people who belonged to a rich culture and wealthy background. The language by Hercule Poirot is another allusion of a cultural diversity. Poirot uses several expressions of French language, as well as German. He talks to Dragomiroff's servant in German language. Moreover, Bouc is called Michelangelo in a scene set in Istanbul. Michelangelo was an Italian architect and sculptor. This allusion unveils the relationship of Bouc and his uncle. Poirot is shown to be a great fan of Charles Dickens. He enjoys reading his books. This is a depiction of the cultural trend of that time through the allusion of Charles Dickens' likeness.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The novel is set in the post -World War 1 era and shows disturbance in the society. More than that, The Great American Depression of starting in 1929 aligns with the time the novel was written. The writer of the literary piece wanted to paint a spot on picture of the society of that time. The effects of the Great Depression were not only limited to Europe and America only but to the whole world.

The author used Roland Barthes' theory of narrative analysis to analyse the movie *Murder on the Orient Express.* The approach falls under the umbrella of Structuralism. The first question that what are the codes of Barthes theory that help in building the plot and narrative of the movie *Murder on the Orient Express,* is answered by decoding the plot keeping in mind the concept of the five codes expounded by the French essayist. All of the five codes are applicable as per the author. The second question is, if applicable, how these codes deconstruct the plot of the movie. The hermeneutic code and the proairetic code are used to establish the main crux of the story. These codes contribute a great deal in captivating the interest of the viewer. All enigmas and mysteries are catered to by using these two codes. The remaining three codes provide crucial information to the viewer, and are, one way or another, indispensable to understand the story. The semantic and symbolic code are quite alike; however, these to overlap in meaning at few points of the story. The semantic code is used to point to connotative meaning of the discourses of the characters. Apart from that, the symbolic code is an "advance form" of its predecessor. The symbolic code goes a bit further from the semantic code and harbors sociocultural concepts. The last code, the referential code, or one may call it the cultural code; contribute to the understanding of the story by manifesting some pivotal cultural connotations.

To answer the third question, after a rigorous analysis, as per the author, the plot of this fiction is scriptible- the writer has made it difficult for the reader, in this case the viewer, to understand the meaning of the plot right away. With blending these codes, one may make out the meaning of the plot. It is evident from the discussion above that one cannot understand the meaning of the movie right away. The writer has encapsulated the meaning into an enigma. The author used these codes to give a practical stance of solving the underlying patterns made by the writer.

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