

AGATHA CHRISTIE'S PLACE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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***Abstract.** This article delves into the enduring legacy of Agatha Christie, one of the most celebrated authors of detective fiction. Additionally, the article discusses Christie's lasting popularity, touching on adaptations of her works for film, television, and stage.*

***Key words:** authors, works, poems, novels, literarture, fiction, detective, plays, stories*

INTRODUCTION

Agatha Christie, often hailed as the "Queen of Mystery," remains one of the most celebrated and prolific authors in the history of detective fiction. With a career spanning over half a century, Christie's works continue to enchant readers with their clever plots, memorable characters, and unexpected twists. Born in 1890, her life and writing reflect an era defined by intrigue, suspense, and a deep understanding of human behavior. From her iconic detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple to the intricate puzzles she crafted, Agatha Christie's influence extends far beyond her literary accomplishments, shaping the very essence of the mystery genre.

FINDINGS

Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie, Lady Mallowan, DBE (née Miller; 15 September 1890 – 12 January 1976) was an English writer known for her 66 detective novels and 14 short story collections, particularly those revolving around fictional detectives Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. She also wrote the

world's longest-running play, the murder mystery *The Mousetrap*, which has been performed in the West End of London since 1952. A writer during the "Golden Age of Detective Fiction", Christie has been called the "Queen of Crime"—a moniker which is now trademarked by her estate—or the "Queen of Mystery".[1][2] She also wrote six novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott. In 1971, she was made a Dame (DBE) by Queen Elizabeth II for her contributions to literature. Guinness World Records lists Christie as the best-selling fiction writer of all time, her novels having sold more than two billion copies. Christie was born into a wealthy upper-middle-class family in Torquay, Devon, and was largely home-schooled. She was initially an unsuccessful writer with six consecutive rejections, but this changed in 1920 when The Mysterious Affair at Styles, featuring detective Hercule Poirot, was published. Her first husband was Archibald Christie; they married in 1914 and had one child before divorcing in 1928. Following the breakdown of her marriage and the death of her mother in 1926 she made international headlines by going missing for eleven days. During both World Wars, she served in hospital dispensaries, acquiring a thorough knowledge of the poisons that featured in many of her novels, short stories, and plays. Following her marriage to archaeologist Max Mallowan in 1930, she spent several months each year on digs in the Middle East and used her first-hand knowledge of this profession in her fiction. In 1955, Christie was the first recipient of the Mystery Writers of America's Grand Master Award. Later that year, Witness for the Prosecution received an Edgar Award for best play. In 2013, she was voted the best crime writer and The Murder of Roger Ackroyd the best crime novel ever by 600 professional novelists of the Crime Writers' Association. In 2015, *And Then There Were None* was named the "World's Favourite Christie" in a vote sponsored by the author's estate[3] Many of Christie's books and short stories have been adapted for television, radio, video games, and graphic novels. More than 30 feature films are based on her work. After completing her education, Christie returned to England to find her mother ailing. They decided to spend the northern winter of 1907–1908 in the warm climate of

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Egypt, which was then a regular tourist destination for wealthy Britons. They stayed for three months at the Gezira Palace Hotel in Cairo. Christie attended many dances and other social functions; she particularly enjoyed watching amateur polo matches. While they visited some ancient Egyptian monuments such as the Great Pyramid of Giza, she did not exhibit the great interest in archaeology and Egyptology that developed in her later years. Returning to Britain, she continued her social activities, writing and performing in amateur theatrics. She also helped put on a play called The Blue Beard of Unhappiness with female friends. At 18, Christie wrote her first short story, "The House of Beauty", while recovering in bed from an illness. It consisted of about 6,000 words about "madness and dreams", subjects of fascination for her. Her biographer Janet Morgan has commented that, despite "infelicities of style", the story was "compelling". (The story became an early version of her story "The House of Dreams"). Other stories followed, most of them illustrating her interest in spiritualism and the paranormal. These included "The Call of Wings" and "The Little Lonely God". Magazines rejected all her early submissions, made under pseudonyms (including Mac Miller, Nathaniel Miller, and Sydney West); some submissions were later revised and published under her real name, often with new titles. Christie's first published book, The Mysterious Affair at Styles, was released in 1920 and introduced the detective Hercule Poirot, who appeared in 33 of her novels and more than 50 short stories. Over the years, Christie grew tired of Poirot, much as Doyle did with Sherlock Holmes. By the end of the 1930s, Christie wrote in her diary that she was finding Poirot "insufferable", and by the 1960s she felt he was "an egocentric creep". Thompson believes Christie's occasional antipathy to her creation is overstated, and points out that "in later life she sought to protect him against misrepresentation as powerfully as if he were her own flesh and blood". Unlike Doyle, she resisted the temptation to kill her detective off while he was still popular. She married off Poirot's "Watson", Captain Arthur Hastings, in an attempt to trim her cast commitments. Miss Jane Marple was introduced in a series of short stories that began publication in

December 1927 and were subsequently collected under the title The Thirteen Problems[4] Marple was a genteel, elderly spinster who solved crimes using analogies to English village life. Christie said, "Miss Marple was not in any way a picture of my grandmother; she was far more fussy and spinsterish than my grandmother ever was", but her autobiography establishes a firm connection between the fictional character and Christie's step-grandmother Margaret Miller ("Auntie-Grannie") and her "Ealing cronies". Both Marple and Miller "always expected the worst of everyone and everything, and were, with almost frightening accuracy, usually proved right". Marple appeared in 12 novels and 20 stories. Christie never wrote a novel or short story featuring both Poirot and Miss Marple. In a recording discovered and released in 2008, Christie revealed the reason for this: "Hercule Poirot, a complete egoist, would not like being taught his business or having suggestions made to him by an elderly spinster lady. Hercule Poirot – a professional sleuth – would not be at home at all in Miss Marple's world". In 2013, the Christie family supported the release of a new Poirot story, *The Monogram Murders*, written by British author Sophie Hannah. Hannah later published three more Poirot mysteries, *Closed Casket* in 2016, *The Mystery of Three Quarters* in 2018, and *The Killings at Kingfisher Hill* in 2020.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Agatha Christie's enduring legacy in the realm of detective fiction remains unparalleled. Her meticulous plots, ingenious characters, and timeless mysteries continue to captivate readers worldwide, decades after her passing. Christie's ability to weave intricate puzzles while delving into the complexities of human nature showcases her unparalleled storytelling prowess. Her impact on the genre has been profound, influencing countless authors and shaping the very foundations of mystery literature. Through her works, Christie invites readers into a world where the seemingly impossible becomes solvable, and where the human mind is both the greatest weapon and the most intriguing puzzle of all.

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