CHAPTER III

THE REAL SITUATION OF MURDER AND THE STATUS OF IDEOLOGY AT THE TIME OF EXECUTION

This chapter closely looks at the actual scene of murder in the novels, analyzing the methods and manners adopted by the murderer-protagonists in the execution of the murder, the intensity of their ideology during the murder, and their physical and mental conditions at the time of the murder. It attempts to recount in detail whether these murderer-protagonists kill their victims at the spur of the moment accidentally, impelled by rage and provocation, or they murder their victims after meticulous planning. Besides presenting a vivid picture of the murder situations, the chapter examines the link between the murder situations and the ideologies of the murderer-protagonists.

Classifying the murderer-protagonists into two categories—the accidental murderers and the calculative murderers—it substantiates that the accidental murderer-protagonists are drawn into the murder situation accidentally and unexpectedly and that the calculative murderer-protagonists pre-plan the murder, create the murder situations and murder their victims with lethal weapons. It analyzes the psychic conditions of the murderer-protagonists at the moment of the murder and makes a study of their pre-criminal psychology in adapting some techniques to deceive law. Examining the link between the murder situations and the murderer-
protagonists' ideologies, the chapter describes how the murder situation in each of these select novels facilitates the murderer-protagonist in executing the murder to realize his/her ideology.

The category of accidental murderers like Bigger Thomas, Richards Rojack, Ezekiel Farragut and Marjorie Adams are the victims of either society or individuals. Bigger Thomas, who has been a victim of the white racial oppression, when left in a fearful situation in a white woman’s bedroom, tries to suppress his fear through his act of murder. His murder of the white girl, Mary, is in a sense, his act of retribution against the white society that has victimized him. Richards Rojack of An American Dream has been a victim of the taunts and humiliations of his disloyal, shrewish wife, Deborah; he murders her accidentally, in his attempt to protect himself from her murderous attack in a drunken state. Ezekiel Farragut of Falconer, like Richards Rojack, is an erudite professor, who has been a victim of his demented family; the members of his family cause him so much mental depression and agony that he seeks refuge in drugs; he expresses his rage against the members of his family through his accidental attack of his brother, Eben, with a fire iron. Similarly, Marjorie Adams of Murder in the English Department, a research student in the University of California, becomes a victim of sexual assault; she kills her professor, the sexist and vicious Angus Murchie in order to defend herself from being raped. Thus, the accidental
murderer-protagonists themselves happen to be the victims of the society, family or vicious individuals whom they fear; and therefore, in their attempt to protect themselves from their victimizers and overcome their fear for them, they are forced to resort to murder.

Bigger Thomas murders his employer's daughter, Mary Dalton out of his fear and hate for the white, on the very first day he joins duty. He fears all white people for their victimization of the black through their oppressive 'power' and ownership. The racial oppression of the white makes him generalize that all white people are inhuman and cruel, and instils in him 'fear', which is responsible for his murder of Mary.

The situation that leads Bigger Thomas to the murder of Mary is quite frightening and unexpected. The murder scene is one of the most important scenes in the novel and it "demonstrates the intensity of Bigger's fear and shows the extent to which fear holds him in a trance, causing him literally to lose sight of everything around him, except the 'white blur'" (Bloom 76-77). The murder situation and the tragedy arise from Mr. Dalton's error of appointing a black boy, Bigger Thomas, who is phobic to the white, as the chauffeur in his household. The countdown of the catastrophe commences when Mr. Dalton orders Bigger to drive his daughter, Mary, to her college. But, she directs him to pick up her boyfriend, Jan Erlone at the Communist Party headquarters. When Jan joins them, he drives the car forcing Bigger to sit in the middle, squeezed
between their alien white bodies. The young liberals explain to him their support for Bigger's race and take him to the black's restaurant, Ernie's Kitchen Shack, on the South Side of Chicago.

In the restaurant, when the couple embarrasses him by forcing him to sit and eat with them in the presence of his black friends, he is deeply mortified. Still, ignorant of Bigger's problem, the couple chats with him in political jargon expressing their wish to meet some black people and discuss their emotions. The young couple's patronizing speech on the black's liberation, their over-enthusiasm in Bigger's personal life, their political theory and their speech on universal brotherhood irritate him and aggravate his fear for the white, instead of comforting him. He fears each of Mary's acts after they leave the restaurant in the car—he fears when she offers him rum, when she comes to the front seat and sits beside him leaning on him, when she requests him to lift her to her bedroom, when she murmurs in half sleep and drunkenness, and when her mother visits her bedroom. Hence, his murder of Mary is only the culmination of all her acts that instilled in him 'fear' and horror.

On the fateful night of the murder, Mary, Jan and Bigger are heavily drunk. As they return home, Bigger drives the car through the park, while Jan and Mary make love in the back seat of the car. It is one o'clock and Bigger drops off Jan near his streetcar stop. So Mary gets down from the car, comes to the front seat and sits beside Bigger. She is too
drunk to sit erect, and so she leans her head against Bigger’s shoulders and stretches out her arms. Therefore, when the car reaches the Daltons, Mary still lies on the seat unable to stand or walk. She requests Bigger to help her in reaching her bedroom on the first floor: “Help me, Bigger. I’m stuck” (81). Bigger helps her and his hands feel the softness of her body as she steps down from the car. Mary, understanding her own unsteady condition, asks him to take her through the back way in order to avoid stumbling and waking up everybody. So he leads her slowly up the narrow stairs to the kitchen door, “his hand circling her waist and the tips of his fingers feeling the soft swelling of her breasts” (82). When they get to the top of the steps, she is completely limp; so he lifts her up and places her on her bed in her room. He leans over her sexually excited, looking at her face in the dim light, not wanting to take his hands from her breasts. But when Mary tosses and mumbles sleepily, he tightens his fingers on her breasts, kissing her again, feeling her move toward him (84).

When Bigger is very much immersed in her body, the door behind him opens and the blind Mrs. Dalton enters the room calling out Mary’s name. Bigger sees Mrs. Dalton and a ‘hysterical terror’ seizes him. He wants to kick her out of his way; but he completely loses control as his fear powerfully overwhelms him. “When Mrs. Dalton approaches the bed, he becomes caught up in a spell of hysteria, intuitively acting to safe his life” (Joyce, Critical Interpretations 76). He is afraid that if Mrs. Dalton
discovers him in her daughter’s room, he will be charged with rape and sentenced to death. He is mortally afraid that Mary will betray his presence to her mother through her drunken murmurs. In order to silence her murmurs, he smotheres her with a pillow. Wright charts Bigger’s reactions when he unwittingly kills her. As Mary tries to rise from the bed in response to her mother’s voice,

Frenzy dominated him. He held his hand over her mouth and his head was cocked at an angle that enabled him to see Mary and Mrs. Dalton by merely shifting his eyes. Mary mumbled and tried to rise again. Frantically, he caught a corner of the pillow and brought it to her lips. He had to stop her from mumbling, or he would be caught. Mrs. Dalton was moving slowly toward him and he grew tight and full, as though about to explode. Mary’s fingernails tore at his hands and he caught the pillow and covered her entire face with it, firmly. Mary’s body surged upward and he pushed downward upon the pillow with all of his weight, determined that she must not move or make any sound that would betray him...

Again Mary’s body heaved and he held the pillow in a grip that took all of his strength...

His muscles flexed taut as steel and he pressed the pillow, feeling the bed give slowly, evenly, but
silently...Mary’s fingers loosened. He did not feel her surging and heaving against him. Her body was still. (84-85)

This necessarily long passage in the murder scene of the novel vividly portrays Bigger’s fear and shows the extent to which fear holds him in a trance, causing him to silence Mary’s murmurs once for all.

When Bigger smothered Mary, he is heavily drunk. His physical contacts with her body, while taking her up to her bedroom gives him “physical elation” (82) and makes him so sexually stimulated that he kisses her and tightens his fingers on her breasts. However, the sight of the blind Mrs. Dalton creates in him a “hysterical terror” (84), and he feels “as though he were falling from a great height in a dream” (84). He is terrified that Mary, through her drunken murmurs, may betray his presence in her room to her blind mother. When he smothered her, he is overwhelmed by his fear for the white, fear for the chances of arrest for being alone in a white woman’s bedroom, fear for the white’s false charge of rape and theft, and fear of arrest and death sentence. Joyce comments on Bigger’s fear at the moment of his murder of Mary aptly: “Bigger completely loses control as his fear powerfully overwhelms him” (Wright’s Art of Tragedy 62).

When Bigger comes to know that he has murdered her, he claims the murder. In his words, “It was the first full act of his life; it was the most meaningful, exciting and stirring thing that had ever happened to him. He
accepted it because it made him free, gave him the possibility of choice, of action, the opportunity to act and to feel that his actions carried weight” (364). Thus he intentionally deludes himself into thinking that the killing of Mary Dalton was premeditated. He proudly accepts the murder for he believes that it is “an act of creation” (366). It makes him feel free for the first time in his life and gives him an identity among the invisible black people. Moreover, he feels that his murder of the white girl, Mary, is the first step in realizing his racial ideology promising equality and liberty of the black people. Through his act of murder, he shows the world that he is equal to the white people; like the white people, he is now capable of taking away the life of anyone whom he does not like.

Bigger’s conception of his act of murder as a creative expression and as an act which confers on him a meaningful identity from his point of view is incomplete; he requires some thing more. “He wants to tell the world what he has done: ‘He wanted the keen thrill of startling them... He wished that he could be an image in their minds’” (Skerrett, Jr. 135). In this regard, Baldwin comments that Bigger dreamed of “some black man who will weld all blacks together into a mighty fist”, but none of them had ever done anything (58). Baldwin adds, “It is only he who, by an act of murder, has burst the dungeon cell...He has forced his oppressors to see the fruit of that oppression” (58). Through his act of murder of a white girl, Bigger initiates the black people to revolt for their liberation and thus
realize his ideology. He knows well that the murder will not liberate his people from the white oppression; still he believes that murder is the seed of revolution that will grow into a tree of the black’s liberation. Bigger then voluntarily claims the accidental murder of Mary as a premeditated one in line with his ideology.

While Bigger Thomas of Native Son smothers his employer’s daughter Mary accidentally, Stephen Richards Rojack of An American Dream strangles his shrewish wife, Deborah, accidentally in his attempt to protect himself from her fatal assault. Forced by their circumstances, both are scared of the likely dangers from their women and murder them in their attempt to protect themselves out of fear and hatred. Bigger is afraid of Mary because she is a white girl who, he thinks, may jeopardize his life; similarly, Rojack is scared of his wife, Deborah, because she was violent and ‘was the Devil’s daughter” (204).

Like Bigger, Rojack also lands up in the murder situation unexpectedly. Bigger encounters the critical moment when he helps his mistress Mary Dalton; similarly Richards Rojack faces the murder situation during his courtesy visit to his wife, Deborah. But Bigger and Rojack differ from each other in one aspect; that is, while Bigger is a black boy serving as a chauffeur in a white master’s household, Rojack is a Professor of Existential Psychology, author, television talk show host, ex-congressman and a war-hero. They also differ from each other in their
acceptance of, or escape from their crime and punishment. When Bigger boldly claims the accidental murder as a deliberate act of his, Rojack tries to escape arrest by passing off Deborah’s death as a suicide.

On the fateful day of the murder, Rojack visits his estranged wife, Deborah, who lives in an apartment in the tenth storey, with a German servant maid, Ruta. He visits her because he is impelled to see her in order to overcome his suicidal instinct arising from his depression. Rojack married her nine years ago with the dream of becoming a powerful politician for their marriage meant many things to him—his “entry to the big league,” “the armature of my [his] ego” (106) and “a devil’s contract” (107). When she goes away from him and lives alone, he feels that he has lost his power and self-respect in her absence. Leeds comments that Rojack’s dependence on Deborah is so much that he is compelled to visit her frequently at odd hours (127); and Rojack himself tells the reader, “probably I did not have the strength to stand alone” (25). When he visits her apartment even after her separation from him, Deborah insults and humiliates him calling him a “contemptible-looking” man (29) and a “pedlar from the Lower East Side” (31). She calls him “a swine” (30) for not having come earlier to meet her daughter, Deirdre, and calls his true love for his stepdaughter, Deirdre, pretentious. In her drunken and elated mood, she mocks at his heroism in war and makes fun of his affairs with his “little girls” (32).
When Rojack expresses his love for her, despite her separation and cruelty, she says, "It must be awful. Because you know I don't love you any more at all" (34). To add insult to injury, Deborah recounts to him in detail about each of her lovers and the good qualities she liked in them. When her alcoholic and voluptuous body emits a powerful odour of rot and musk like "the scent of the carnivore in a zoo" (37), she realizes it and tells Rojack that she had no complaints of the odour from any of her lovers. Moreover, she narrates in detail her new skills in sexual intercourse, which have been appreciated by one of her beaux.

Deborah's shameless description of her sexual acts with her new lovers evokes in him such a great pain, horror and sense of shame that he slaps on her face in order to stop her narration. The slap falls on her ear; she loses balance and falls down from her bed. But she gets up like a Mahishasura, the demon with a buffalo's head in the Hindu mythology, with a redoubled vigour and like a bull, charges at him with her head on to his stomach. The passage in which Rojack narrates Deborah's indecent description of her sexual skills, her attack on him and his retaliation, vividly presents the logical steps that culminate in her catastrophe:

'I [Deborah] can't tell you how shocked they were when I began. One of them [lovers] said: "Where did you ever learn to root about like that? Didn't know such things went on outside a Mexican whorehouse.'"
‘Shut your mouth,’ I said.

‘Lately I’ve had the most famous practice.’ I struck her open-handed across the face. I had meant— ... —to make it no more than a slap, but my body was speaking faster than my brain, and the blow caught her on the side of the ear and knocked her half out of bed. She was up like a bull and like a bull she charged. Her head struck me in the stomach ... and then she drove one powerful knee at my groin ... and missing that, she reached with both hands, tried to find my root and mangle me.

...I struck her a blow on the back of the neck, a dead cold chop which dropped her to a knee, and then hooked an arm about her head and put a pressure on her throat...

... I choked her harder, and crack I choked her again, and crack I gave her payment... . (37-39)

While strangling Deborah to death, he closes his eyes, tightens his arm around her neck and feels as if “her strength began to pass” to him. When he releases his arm from her throat he feels as if he has opened the door to heaven. Though he is shocked to find her dead, he feels happy that he has ridden himself of the devil that has been enslaving him. Leeds, commenting on Rojack’s feeling of rejuvenation, says, “The act of murder is described in terms of a vision of some heavenly city, and in the
aftermath he feels as though he has been reborn” (128). It is clear that Rojack murders Deborah accidentally in his attempt to defend himself from her murderous assault.

Rojack has been successful as an intellectual figure and a socialite. But when he visits Deborah in her apartment, he is “at the end of his psychic rope” (Leeds 127). He is so much psychologically upset that he cannot do any productive work on a long-planned and neglected major book. In fact, “Rojack has lost his self-respect and is on the verge of despair” (Leeds 127). Since he needs her desperately, her separation makes him weak and infirm. So, when he visits her, he is overwhelmed by the emotions of love, hate and despondency. He becomes so physically weak and mentally infirm that Deborah gives her testimonial to that effect asking him: “You’re fragile tonight, aren’t you?” (31) But he is afraid of her for her cruelty and evil intentions for he says, “She was not incapable of murdering me” (33). Despite his fear for her, he visits her when she is in her bed. But her pungent criticism of Rojack for his connection with his “little girls” provokes his anger. And Rojack describes his burning emotions thus: “A fire had begun to spread in me. It was burning now in my stomach and my lungs were dry as old leaves, my heart had a herded pressure which gave promise to explode” (36). Her taunts drive him to the verge of exploding in anger and he drinks a bit of her rum in order to rein in his emotions. But her praise of the qualities of her new beaux makes
him feel a “sharp sad pain, almost pleasurable” thrust into him and that the pain “was replaced immediately by a fine horror” (37). When he slaps her on the face in order to stop her filthy description of her new skills in sexual intercourse with her new lovers, he is filled with a medley of emotions like fear, pain, horror, shame, hate and despair. When she charges at him, he is terrified that she will kill him. In utter self-defence, he hooks his arm about her neck and strangles her to death.

While strangling Deborah to death, Rojack has the mental image that he is pushing with his shoulder “against an enormous door”, behind which “heaven was there” (38). The act of strangling wearies him with “a most honorable fatigue” but “his flesh seemed new” (39). Foster says that Rojack murders Deborah “in a moment of freeing impulse” (19) and rightly sums up the murder context and Rojack’s medley of emotions at the time of murdering Deborah: “The charge of this self-galvanizing destruction of his immediate enemy propels him into action, turning fear, fatigue, and despair into a redemptive energy of desperation” (19). Rojack murders her with a courage nourished on the ultimate dread of death.

As a frustrated and dejected husband deprived of wealth and power, Rojack longs to free himself from Deborah’s repelling “touch” (17) and her “hooks” (33), in order to realize his American dream ideology. When he gets an opportunity to get rid of her and get into a heavenly world of freedom and pleasure, he makes use of it properly. So he turns the
accidental and unexpected situation to his advantage and murders her deliberately. That is why when he strangles her, he goes ahead choking her harder and harder till she dies, despite the dictates of his conscience that tells him: "'Hold back! You're going too far, hold back!'" (38). He has been driven by "some black-biled lust, some desire" (38), his ideology. Since he considers Deborah an impediment in realizing his ideology, the image that appears to him while choking her to death is that of an enormous door impeding his way to freedom and heaven (38). Commenting on Rojack's ideological affinity, Khan says that Rojack's vision of heavenly pleasure that he would enjoy by murdering Deborah, intensifies his passion for freedom and expedites his act of murder (104).

Rojack is of the conviction that murder gives him power for he believes, "death was a creation more dangerous than life" (15). He wants to create a new life and a new world for himself on the ashes of his cruel wife. He strongly believes that he can free himself from Deborah and inherit her power only when she dies. According to Gutman, Rojack murders Deborah, "ostensibly, as an act of liberation" and after the murder "he is free of her, of her malice toward him, and of his past" (106-07). When the time is ripe to fulfil his dream, he murders her with his American dream ideology behind him.

Like Bigger Thomas and Richards Rojack, Farragut of Falconer murders his brother, Eben, in the heat of passion. While Bigger happens to
smother Mary, and Rojack intentionally strangles his wife Deborah, Farragut strikes his murderous brother with a fire iron causing his death. Like Bigger and Rojack, Farragut is also unexpectedly drawn into the murder situation and forced to resort to murder by circumstances under the influence of alcohol. However, Farragut is more akin to Rojack than to Bigger in murdering his relative out of provocation, and in being a college professor and a heroin-methadone addict. But Farragut differs from both of them in killing a man.

The murder situation in *Falconer* arises as an outcome of a brotherly quarrel between the cruel, murderous and drunken Eben, and the peace loving, humane but equally drunken Farragut. When Farragut and his wife, Marcia, visit Eben in his country house, they find Eben’s wife, Carrie, lamenting all the time her family tragedy—her son’s imprisonment and her daughter, Rachel’s mental depression and suicide attempts. So Marcia asks Eben about the reason for Carrie’s misery and cries, and Eben replies: “She cries all the time ... Don’t pay any attention to her. She cries at parades, rock music; last year she cried through the whole World Series. Don’t take it seriously...” (193). But enraged by Marcia’s interference in his family affairs, Eben shouts at his wife for simply sitting on the stool sobbing and frightening him of leaving the house: “Oh, shut up ... “Shut up. Shut up. You’ve been leaving me weekly or oftener for as long as I can remember” (195). Farragut, shocked at Eben’s
unsympathetic attitude towards his emotional wife, asks him not to be so cruel to her; Marcia also accuses Eben of being cruel; but Eben replies: “I’m not always cruel” (195). When Farragut asks Eben why he has been making his family miserable through his drunkenness and cruelty, Eben declaims:

“Because I love it,” said Eben. Then he bent down, raised the old Turkey carpet and kissed it with his wet mouth.

“I know one thing,” shouted Farragut. “I don’t want to be your brother. I don’t want anyone on the street, anywhere in the world, to say that I look like you. I’ll be any kind of a freak or addict before I’ll be mistaken for you. I’ll do anything before I’ll kiss a rug.”

“Kiss my ass then,” said Eben.

“You’ve got Dad’s great sense of humor,” Farragut said.

“He wanted you to be killed,” screamed Eben. “I bet you didn’t know that. He loved me, but he wanted you to be killed. Mother told me. He had an abortionist come out to the house. Your own father wanted you to be killed.”

Then Farragut struck his brother with a fire iron. (197-98)

Farragut’s murder of his alcoholic and belligerent brother, Eben, occurs when the latter provokes him by revealing to him the secret about
his birth that his father had wanted to have him aborted when he was in
his mother’s womb. Eben employs the family secret about Farragut’s birth
in order to create mortal fear in him and to secure his silence when
Farragut corners him questioning about his waywardness and
irresponsibility in his family affairs. Eben’s revelation, instead of
silencing Farragut, provokes him and evokes in him an uncontrollable fear
to overcome which he seizes the fire iron and strikes Eben to death.

Though Farragut’s assault and murder of his brother Eben is
accidental and unpremeditated, his desire for revenge has been deep-
rooted in his subconscious. Though Farragut remorsefully confesses that
he struck Eben only once and that he did not intend to kill his brother, his
words claiming innocence cannot be taken for granted (198). On the
contrary, Eben’s wife testifies that “Farragut had struck his brother
eighteen to twenty times” with the intention of killing him (198). It is
explicit then that though Farragut does not pre-plan and premeditate the
murder of Eben, he has the murder motive dormant in his subconscious.

Farragut is under the influence of drugs when he strikes Eben. The
judge who tries Farragut observes that he has “chosen to commit the
heinous crime of fratricide while under the influence of dangerous drugs”
(9). The effect of drugs on him is so much that he loses control of his
emotions and is extremely excited when Eben lets out the cat about his
birth. Eben’s words provoke his rage, and as a result Farragut hits him on
the head, with a sense of retribution for all the wrongs he has done to him. Samuel Coale comments in this context: “Appalled by the final assault [Eben’s revelation about Farragut’s birth] on his fragile sanity and hold on life itself, Ezekiel attacks his brother with a fire iron” (109). When he assaults Eben, there is a surge of different kinds of emotions in his mind. The shock about his birth, fear about his life, anger towards his unscrupulous, deceitful brother and a desire to avenge his secretive murder attempts make Farragut lose his mental equilibrium totally and therefore he hits Eben to death. He is in such a disturbed and deranged state of mind at the time of murder that he cannot say for sure the number of times he struck Eben. Farragut is under the influence of drugs when he altercates with Eben and assaults him to death. He is so terribly excited and emotionally upset that he is not conscious of what he is doing.

Farragut’s childhood experiences as an unloved-and-uncared-for son and an unwanted brother in the family make him crave for love, affection and solace from the members of his family. His bitter past experiences with the members of his family—his father’s hostility, his mother’s lack of love, his brother’s murderous nature and his wife’s disloyalty—press for familial bonds and force him to conceive his ‘familial ideology’ that familial love and happiness is the ultimate goal of a perfect life and that one can sacrifice anything to achieve it. When he visits his elder brother, Eben’s family, he is shocked to learn about the
wastrel, can also be sacrificed for the sake of domestic peace and harmony.

While Bigger Thomas and Richards Rojack happen to murder women, Marjorie Adams of Valerie Miner’s *Murder in the English Department* murders a man, her own professor, Angus Murchie of the English Department of California University. Though Marjorie strikes some semblance to Farragut in killing a man, she differs from him in killing a person of the opposite sex. She is like her counterparts, Bigger and Rojack, in facing the crisis created by her victims.

The dynamic, revolutionary and vivacious Marjorie Adams is beset with the ill-fated hour when she visits her professor, Angus Murchie, at his office room in the Wheeler Hall, California University on the New Year’s Eve. She is lured there by Murchie for a drink before Matt’s party, “on the pretext of recovering some urgent bibliographic reference to ‘Il Penseroso’” (41). Since she plans to go with Murchie to attend Mr. Matt’s party, she chats with Murchie in a joyful mood, not realizing his evil intention and the peril she is in. She is too innocent to see through Murchie’s evil plans. She chats and laughs with him in such a loud voice that it reaches the ears of her research supervisor, Nan Weaver, who has come there for her night studies. Even as Nan worries about Marjorie’s safety, the laughter of Murchie and Marjorie disappears, and Marjorie, in a strained voice, shouts at Murchie resisting his sexual
advances: “you bastard. You dirty bastard” (43). Conversely, when the sexist Murchie, unbothered about her shouts, continues with his detestable sexual assault letting his pants down, she, in her attempt to protect herself from being raped, grabs the letter opener from his table and stabs thrice at his bare waist.

Actually the murder scene is presented from the point of view of Nan Weaver who narrates the murder scene from her first-hand knowledge. Since Nan is present in the next room in her office, she hears their chat and laughter and the final shrill voice of Marjorie. She rushes up to Murchie’s room in order to rescue Marjorie from any impending danger but, to her dismay, she finds Murchie lying on the floor gushing quantities of blood (44). She tries to save him by giving him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation but her attempts fail and he dies.

Marjorie’s integrity and audacity embolden her to visit a male professor in his office room in the Department of English on the New Year’s Eve. When she visits Murchie’s room she does not suspect anything. She is so frank and ingenuous in her conversation with the deceitful Murchie that she breaks into laughter, unaware of the dangerous ambience she is in. But her inherent audacity and self-confidence help her to rise up to the occasion when Murchie makes sexual advances to her. She first warns him to stop his advances but when the sexist Murchie, ignoring her warnings, tries to treat her like his other students who fell
into his lecherous trap, she stabs him with his letter opener like Parashakthi, the chief goddess in the Hindu mythology, killing Mahishasura, the demon with a buffalo’s head. Though Marjorie stabs Murchie to death boldly, she is a bit dumbfounded at his unexpected, indecent sexual assault. She fears Murchie for his sexual assault and kills him. Similarly, she fears the consequences of the murder and escapes from the scene in haste, dropping down her scarf. In short when Marjorie murders Murchie and escapes from the scene, she is full of ‘fear’ and rage.

Marjorie believes neither in the feminist ideology of her research supervisor, Nan Weaver nor in her Sexual Harassment Campaign. But at heart she is an unprofessed radical feminist who believes in destroying any force that oppresses the womenfolk. Though she moves freely with the male professors of the University, like Professor Matt and Professor Angus Murchie, she is totally against their male-chauvinistic attitude to women. She moves with them just as she moves with the female professors, like Nan Weaver, without any gender discrimination, and argues with them on social and academic matters. But at the same time if someone tries to misbehave with her taking advantage of her liberal attitude, she won’t hesitate to use violence and teach him a lesson. When the lecherous Murchie lures her to his room with the intention of having sex, the mercury of her feminist ideology shoots up rapidly and she rises
to the occasion. The situation comes handy for her to realize her feminist ideology through violence and thereby upholds gender equality. Though Marjorie does not profess any ideology of her own, her act of killing her sexual assailant Murchie undoubtedly conforms to radical feminism.

While the accidental murderer-protagonists kill their victims by accident without any pre-plan, the calculative murderer-protagonists kill their victims after meticulous planning and after creating a situation conducive to murder. When the murderer-protagonists of the first category do not anticipate the worst situation leading to the gruesome act of murder, the murderer-protagonists of the second category prepare the ground meticulously and decide the time and venue of their murders. But the murderer-protagonists of both these categories show their kinship in killing their victims with their ideologies as a driving force. For instance, Clyde Griffiths of *An American Tragedy*, Humbert Humbert of *Lolita* and Judas of *The President’s Daughter* conspire the murders of their victims well in advance, and succeed in realizing their dreams, their ideologies.

Clyde Griffiths of *An American Tragedy* is prominent among the category of calculative murderers with a neat programme and he excels the other two calculative murderers Humbert Humbert and Judas, in his planning and execution of the murder of his victim, Roberta Alden. When Clyde Griffiths finds his poor, pregnant beloved, Roberta Alden, an obstacle on his road to becoming wealthy and powerful in society by
marrying his new beloved, the luxurious, affluent Sondra Finchley, he contrives to get rid of her. As a first step towards the execution of his plan, he sends the pregnant Roberta to her native village, Biltz in order to avoid any suspicion about his affair with her. But knowing his hypocrisy, Roberta threatens that she will reveal their secret affair to his uncle, Samuel Griffiths, if he does not marry her soon. “When she insists on marriage, Clyde panics at the loss of his evaporated dream” (Frohock 34). He knows well that marriage to Roberta means the loss of his job, rejection by his newfound relatives and the shattering of his dreams. “When faced with the insoluble dilemma of a socially desirable match and an obstacle to that match” (Pizer 203), he resolves to murder Roberta for the sake of his American dream ideology.

When he is deeply thinking about some means by which he could get rid of Roberta, he happens to read a news item—the mysterious drowning of a couple at Pass Lake, Massachusetts— which inspires him to contrive his plan of drowning Roberta in the lake. As the next step in executing his murder plan, he persuades her to go with him to Grass Lake for a premarital honeymoon. However, finding the place too crowded to execute his plan, he takes her to another, more isolated lake, Big Bittern, rents a boat and rows it to the far end of the lake.

As the boat drifts on to the middle of the deep waters of Big Bittern, he finds no soul on the shoreline to witness the enactment of his gruesome
drama. He hears the harsh, unearthly cry of the weir bird “Kit, Kit, Kit, C-a-a-ah!” (529). But poor Roberta, ignorant of the weird situation in which she is, prattles innocently “Clydie Mydie” and strikes an optimistic note that they can find employment in the new collar factory in Syracuse after their marriage. “Clyde, tense as a fiddle string, anticipates the perfect moment to kill, yet delays, shrinking from the deed” (Gerber 140). He visualizes the rehearsal of the murder scene in his mind:

All that he needed to do now was to turn swiftly and savagely to one side or the other—leap up—upon the left wale or right and upset the boat; or failing that, rock it swiftly, and if Roberta protested too much, strike her with the camera in hand, or one of the oars at his right. It could be done ... with him swimming swiftly away thereafter to freedom—to success—of course—to Sondra and happiness—....”

He squats in a trance, staring at Roberta in a “static between a powerful compulsion to do and yet not to do.” (530)

Tormented by his thoughts, he looks as though he were about to fall into the water. Worried by the strange look on his face, Roberta starts forward in the boat, drawing closer to him seeking to take his hand in hers and the camera from him in order to put it in the boat. But Clyde shrinks and does not want her to touch him and so he pushes her with the camera in his
hand, striking her and causing her scream. Startled by her shriek, he lurches forward to help her, but capsizes the boat throwing her into the deep waters of the lake. A gunwale hits her on the head and she sinks but surfaces soon crying for help. But Clyde, ignoring all her cries, swims back to the shore with the contentment of having done his job successfully.

Clyde faces dilemma in the execution of his murder plan. At the initial stage, he is bold and courageous in luring Roberta to a deserted corner of the lake of Big Bittern. But on reaching the spot of execution "he finds that his will is strangely paralyzed" (Lundquist 93). He visualizes the scene of capsizing the boat and drowning her in his mind’s eye. Gerber describes the psychic condition of Clyde at the time of drowning Roberta:

He is paralyzed by the stalemate between a “chemic revulsion” against the very notion of murder and a violent impulse to seize the moment and implement his plan. His nerves are riddled. He squats in a trance staring at Roberta in a “static between a powerful compulsion to do and yet not to do.” (140-141)

The dilemma in executing his plan results in his disturbed state of mind and Roberta is able to gaze at “his troubled and then suddenly distorted and fulgurous, yet weak and even unbalanced face” (530).
His distressed face expresses a medley of angry, ferocious and demoniac qualities (530). His mind, caught in between the desire to do and not to do, becomes a battle field and there is “a balanced combat between fear...and a harried restless and yet self-expressed desire to do—to do—to do...a static between a powerful compulsion to do and yet not to do” (530). With his indecisive mind, Clyde shows his kinship to Shakespeare’s Hamlet who encounters a similar dilemma: “To be, or not to be, that is the question” (3.1.56).

In his confused state of mind, Clyde is unable to decide his course of action. His eyes grow larger and more lurid and his face, body and hands become tense and controlled. When Roberta, understanding his unusual facial expressions, reaches for his hand in order to give him solace, he strikes her in the face with his camera causing her to fall into the deep waters. He turns a deaf ear to the drowning Roberta’s cries for help and avoids helping her wantonly. No doubt, Clyde’s fear and cowardice in executing his murder plan make him carry out his plan indirectly, by reacting to her in a crude manner capsizing the boat and causing her fall into the water.

Clyde’s murder of Roberta by drowning her in the waters of Big Bittern is neatly pre-planned. In fact, he carefully inches toward his goal with his “materialistic ideology” at work. He feels that realizing his
ideology is the ambition of his life. Frohock’s comment on Clyde’s dream is relevant here:

In its elementary form, the dream consists of rising in business until you can have the money, luxuries, pleasures and, especially, women you want—“a good time,” as Clyde thinks of it; “the better things,” according to Dreiser. Clyde would like to be like his uncle, who owns a factory in Lycurgus, N.Y., or like his cousin, who will one day inherit it and meanwhile drives a car of his own. (33)

Naturally, when he comes in contact with the beautiful, wealthy and luxurious Sondra Finchley, he dreams of realizing his ideology through marriage to her for he believes in “the American myth of success” that “marriage is a step upward socially and materially” (Pizer 203). According to Pizer, Clyde considers “Sondra a gateway to paradise of wealth, position and comfort” (248); therefore, when Roberta who carries his child compels him to marry her, he finds in her an obstacle in entering the “gateway to paradise.” He knows well that marrying Roberta “would spell complete ruin for him, the loss of Sondra, his job, his social hopes and ambitions” (448). To overcome the obstacles on his way to marry Sondra and to realize his American dream ideology, Clyde drowns Roberta in the lake of Big Bittern.
Though he feigns innocence dubbing it as an accident, he is solely responsible for her death. He wantonly abstains from rescuing Roberta because he wants to get rid of her and marry the wealthy, Sondra Finchley, in order to realize his American dream ideology.

Just like Clyde Griffiths, who premeditates the murder of his victim, Roberta Alden, Humbert Humbert of *Lolita* also premeditates the murder of his victim Clare Quilty for his betrayal in love and kidnapping of his ‘nymphet’ Lolita. While Clyde schemes and murders his beloved Roberta for a top rung in the ladder of society, Humbert Humbert murders his rival, Clare Quilty, for marring his ‘love ideology’.

Humbert Humbert, the French nymphomaniac’s infatuation with Lolita, the thirteen-year-old daughter of Charlotte Haze, grows since the time he first met her. Enthralled by Lolita’s beauty, he does everything in his power to posses her permanently—marries her widowed mother, Charlotte Haze, admits Lolita in drama and music classes and takes her on a year long jaunt across the U.S.A. to console her bereaved heart when her mother dies. His perverse love for her induced by her physical beauty turns into a spiritual love. As a result, when he meets her two years after her disappearance, he gives her many times the amount she demands and sets out to take revenge on the person responsible for her present abject state.
Like Clyde, Humbert Humbert creates the murder situation in order to avenge the betrayal of Clare Quilty. When Humbert learns from Lolita that Clare Quilty, the playwright from Ramsdale, is her abductor, who tortured her to act in pornographic films and yield to his friends in sex at the Duk Duk Ranch, he boils with rage and decides to kill him. He traces out Quilty’s residence at Pavor Manor, Grimm Road, Parkington, and visits him arming himself with a pistol filled with a fresh batch of cartridges. He enters the house pushing the main door open and climbs up the stairs clutching the pistol in his pocket. His step is springy; he goes from one room to another in search of Quilty and finally finds him sitting in a bar-adorned kitchen.

When Humbert catches up with Quilty, the latter is so doped and drunk that he mistakes Humbert for a man from the telephone company or a foreign literary agent. Humbert, understanding Quilty’s condition, tries to play his melodrama. He sits in an easy chair, surprises Quilty by calling him by his name, and asks him whether he recalls a little girl Dolores Haze. But Quilty cleverly replies that he is fond of children and that their fathers are among his best friends. When Quilty tries to get up from his seat, Humbert pushes him down into the easy chair and tells him that he is going to kill him. He shows his pistol, shoots around Quilty’s feet and tells him that the reason for his present attack of Quilty is his kidnap of Lolita. Quilty, sensing the dangerous situation in which he is,
tries to convince Humbert saying that he only saved Lolita from a sex pervert and that he did not rape her, as he is an impotent. When Quilty realizes that his attempts to convince and pacify Humbert have failed, he falls over Humbert throwing his pistol away, down under the drawers. The two men, in their attempt to reach for the gun, find themselves grotesquely wrestling. Humbert humorously narrates the scene of his tussle with Quilty:

We rolled all over the floor, in each other’s arms, like two huge helpless children. He was naked and goatish under his robe, and I felt suffocated as he rolled over me. I rolled over him. We rolled over me...He and I were two large dummies, stuffed with dirty cotton and rags. It was a silent, soft, formless tussle on the part of two literati, one of whom was utterly disorganized by a drug while the other was handicapped by a heart condition and too much gin. (314-5)

At the end of the brawl Humbert retrieves his gun and forces Quilty to read out his own death sentence, a neat typescript, containing a poem explaining the reason for his killing Quilty:

Because you took advantage of my inner essential innocence
because you cheated me—
because of all you did
because of all I did not
you have to die. (315-16)

At first Quilty, not knowing the impending danger appreciates Humbert's poem and praises him. But when Humbert points his gun at him, he is very much perplexed. So, he attempts in vain to pacify Humbert promising him money, property and women. But Humbert, unyielding to his temptations, fires at him. As the shot misses, Quilty scrambles into the next room and begins to play the piano. Again, Humbert fires at him three or four times and wounds him. The mortally wounded Quilty runs away to his bedroom, climbs onto his bed and wraps himself up. But Humbert continues to fire at Quilty filling his body with lead till he dies.

Humbert kills Quilty in order to avenge his betrayal; but he executes the murder in cold blood. Unlike the typical murderers and mercenaries who kill their victims in haste, with precaution and seriousness, Humbert kills his victim in a jovial, relaxed and humorous manner. He reads out his poem to Quilty, tells him the reason for killing him and finally, after chess like sparring, kills him with the gun lent to him by his chess-mate Gaston Godin.

At the hour of the execution of Quilty's murder, Humbert has "overdone the alcoholic stimulation business" (309). When he enters the
castle searching for his victim, he is "lucidly insane, crazily calm", and looks like "an enchanted and very tight hunter" (310). But finally when he catches sight of his prey, his heart pounds with "tiger joy" (310). He feels an "intolerable bliss" when he traps Quilty, "after those years of repentance and rage" (311). Despite his anger towards Quilty and his decision to murder him, Humbert does not express any feeling of anger or hatred towards him while killing him. He is calm, relaxed and jovial in his conversation with Quilty. He does not lose his equi poise even after wrestling with him, and he reads out to Quilty a poem justifying his murder. He is rather humorous and farcical in the execution of Quilty's murder. Humbert is scarcely provoked by Quilty's actions, for his responses to Humbert's shots are rather funny and farcical than infuriating. Like a boy finding pleasure in his game, he finds delight in chasing Quilty from room to room for an hour, and finally raining bullets into him. The act of his murder of Quilty brings him complacency.

Humbert's bitter love experiences with his childhood love, Annabel, and his first wife, Valeria, give rise to his 'love ideology' that one can sacrifice anything and can destroy any opposing force for the sake of true love which, according to him, is the summum bonum of life. When he finds in Quilty the opposing power that has destroyed his spiritual love for Lolita, he decides to kill him. The intensity of Humbert's love ideology is so much that it compels him to plan Quilty's murder, to create
the murder situation, to kill him in his castle and thereby sacrifice his own life for its sake. In his act of the murder of Quilty and self-sacrifice for the welfare of his once cherished beloved, Lolita, Humbert can be compared with Sydney Carton of A Tale of Two Cities, who sacrifices his life for the sake of Lucie Manet, the girl he loved.

Like Clyde Griffiths and Humbert Humbert, Captain Daniel Levy alias Judas of The President’s Daughter also pre-plans his murders and executes them in order to realize his racial ideology of founding a free Jewish land, Israel. Judas’s bitter experiences as a victim of the Muslim fundamentalists and the death of his mother and married sister in the Hamas bombing of Jerusalem bus station force him to frame his racial ideology, and he organizes a secret Jewish extremist army in creating a fearless Jewish nation.

Judas’s ambition to liberate Israel from the constant threat of the Muslim terrorists, forces him to murder anyone who comes in his way in realizing it. As a first step, he wants to get rid of the threat of the neighbouring Muslim countries like Iran, Iraq and Syria by waging a proxy war against them through America. Knowing well about the pre-existence of such a plan in America, called the Nemesis,—total destruction of nuclear research sites, power stations and Army and Navy headquarters in Iran, Iraq and Syria—Judas moves frantically to force the
American President to sign it. He kidnaps Marie, daughter of the President, Jake Cazalet, and uses her as a bargaining counter in his signing the Nemesis.

Judas, in his attempt to realize his racial ideology, commits six murders in the course of the novel, either by himself or by his devoted followers called Maccabees. He executes his first murder that of Jackson, an officer in Wandsworth prison, through his follower, Paul Berger, by pushing him from the back on the railway track when the train comes near him. Judas kills Jackson because, he is afraid that Jackson may help the police in identifying Paul Berger, who is responsible for the kidnap of Sean Dillon and Hanna. Next, he kills the Muslim terrorist leader Hakim al Sharif, his two wives and his caretakers, an old couple, considering himself as the saviour of his Jewish race. Then, he tries to execute the murder of Sean Dillon through his follower Mark Gold, Senior Computer Operator in the Defence Department of U.S.A., when Dillon finishes his duty of conveying Judas’s kidnap message to the President of America. As directed by Judas, Mark Gold shoots Dillon and thinks that Dillon is dead. But Dillon comes alive from his shroud just as a phoenix and foils his attempts to murder Marie de Brissac. Judas, finally, plans to murder Marie de Brissac, the President’s daughter, if her father fails to sign the Nemesis. But fortunately she is rescued from Judas by the adventurous acts of Sean Dillon and the FBI agent, Blake Johnson.
Judas is very cool and level headed in his planning and execution of his murders through his ardent followers, the Maccabees. Despite his thirst for revenge on his victimizers, he is very rational and meticulous, and is never impulsive and emotional in the execution of their murders. But he becomes emotional and impulsive only in the last scene, when he makes his defence attack against Marie’s rescuers, Dillon and Blake Johnson, and dies in his attempt to execute his murder plan.

The violent acts and murders of Judas stem from his racialism and nationalism. His racialist ideology aiming at the formation of a threat-free, independent Jewish nation, Israel, is the root from which all his murderous acts stem—his formation of the army of Jewish terrorists, the Maccabees, his kidnapping of the president’s daughter, Marie de Brissac, his kidnapping of Sean Dillon, the British operative, his murder of Jackson, the prison officer in Wandsworth prison, his attempted murder of Dillon through Mark Gold, and his attempt to kill Marie and her rescuers, Dillon and Blake Johnson. Judas, thus, deliberately creates the murder situations towards realizing his racialist ideology.

This chapter has thus presented a photographic view of the actual situations, which impel the murderer-protagonists to commit murder, and shows how the murderer-protagonists face the situation. It has analysed in detail the method and manner adopted by each of the murderer-protagonists in executing his murder, his psychic condition at
the time of the murder, the link between his murder and his ideology, his premeditation or un-premeditation of his murder and his pre-criminal psychology.

An analysis of the select novels makes it obvious that the accidental murderer-protagonists like Bigger Thomas, Richards Rojack, Ezekiel Farragut and Marjorie Adams encounter the murder situations unexpectedly and accidentally; whereas, the calculative murderer-protagonists like Clyde Griffiths, Humbert Humbert and Judas create the murder situations according to their convenience and execute their murder plan to realize their ideologies. It further shows the intensity of the murderer-protagonists’ ideologies at the time of murder, which gives them the impetus to resort to murder in their attempt to liberate themselves/their people from the constant ‘fear’ of the power of their victim/victims. Whether these murderer-protagonists get rid of their fear and realize their ideologies through these murders has proved to be worth analysing.