CHAPTER IV

THE CONSEQUENCES OF MURDER AND THE STATUS OF IDEOLOGY AFTER MURDER

This chapter discusses the immediate and remote consequences of Murder in the novels and the resultant success or failure of the murderer-protagonists’ ideologies. It analyses the physical and psychological conditions of the murderer-protagonists after the murder to show the effects of murder on them and their preoccupation with their acts of murder. It attempts to substantiate the murderer-protagonists’ mental disturbance or rejuvenation after committing the murder and their attempt/non-attempt to conceal their murders in deceiving the law with a view to escaping arrest and punishment. The chapter also analyses the predicament of these murderer-protagonists in the post-murder scenario and shows how some of them go scot-free while most of them are trapped, arrested and either executed or sentenced to life for their crimes. Besides analyzing the murderer-protagonists’ post-criminal psychology, it examines whether they achieve what they wanted to achieve through their murders or not, and whether they succeed or fail in realizing their ideologies. It further highlights objectively whether the ideology of each of these protagonists gets established or affected.

Bigger Thomas, the first of the category of calculative murderers, has a real criminal brain and ingenuity in diverting the attention of the
police in his attempt to escape arrest. Though Bigger kills Mary accidentally, he assumes full responsibility for her death because it gives him “a kind of terrified pride in feeling and thinking” (101) and he feels “like a man reborn” and “like a man risen from a long illness” (106). It gives him a sense of potency, of power and of freedom that he has never before experienced. Bone comments that Bigger “discovers a new sense of purpose and a new freedom of action” in the murder of Mary (21). Moreover, in killing Mary, “he feels, he has destroyed symbolically all the oppressive forces that have made his life a misery” (Margolies 109-10). Bigger, therefore, does not want to say that it was an accident and claims it as his premeditated murder.

After the murder, Bigger acquires a new conviction of his own worth and feels superior to others. He experiences a form of transcendence and moves beyond law, beyond convention, beyond good and evil, towards a deeper vision of reality. But he wants to escape arrest and carries Mary’s corpse to the cellar, burns it in the furnace and then goes home. The next morning Bigger deludes himself over the meaning of his crime: “He had murdered and had created new life for himself” (101). The murder gives him such a sense of tremendous power and freedom that he evolves a stupid scheme for extracting ransom money from Mary’s father, Mr. Dalton, and sends him a ransom note. He forces his girl, Bessie, to help him in extracting money. When newspapermen discover
Mary’s bones in the furnace, and the suspicion falls on Bigger, he hides with Bessie in an abandoned building on the South Side. He suspects that Bessie would betray him to the police and so he kills her and throws her body down an airshaft. Now, after the murder of two girls, he feels ‘a queer sense of power’:

*He* had done this. *He* had brought all this about. In all of his life these two murders were the most meaningful things that had ever happened to him. He was living, truly and deeply, no matter what others might think, looking at him with their blind eyes. Never had he had the chance to live out the consequences of his actions; never had his will been so free as in this night and day of fear and murder and flight. (224-25)

He attempts to flee from the police. But the police capture him after a fight on the rooftop, and imprison him. He is tried and sentenced to death despite the intelligent argument of the Communist lawyer, Boris Max.

Though Bigger claims the accidental murder of Mary as a planned one, he attempts to escape punishment for his crime. He tries to conceal the murder by throwing her body into the furnace reducing it to ashes, and by implicating Mary’s Communist lover, Jan Erlone, in her disappearance. Since he needed money for his flight from Chicago, he plans to extract ransom money from Mary’s father, Mr. Dalton, pretending to be her
kidnappers. But unfortunately, all his attempts to conceal his murder and hoodwink the law fail.

Even after his trial and death sentence, Bigger justifies his murder of Mary as an act of vengeance on the white. He considers his murder not simply as a black boy’s murder of a rich white heiress, but as an act of protest of the black represented by him against their white oppressors. To him Mary is a representative of the oppressive, inhuman white race that has “shunted him off into a corner of the city to rot and die” (225), and so, whenever he comes in contact with her, his sense of ‘fear’ and shame rises hot and hard. He identifies in her the whole race of the oppressive white people, and fails to see her as an individual endowed with philanthropy. That is why, when he felt that ‘fear and shame’, and killed her, he was not reacting to Mary. “Mary had served to set off his emotions, emotions conditioned by many Marys”; so, after he murders her, he feels “a lessening of tension in his muscles” (108-09).

As a victim of the white ostracism, Bigger cannot understand the behavioural pattern of the white and, as a result, he mistakes her genuine sympathetic attitude towards him for pretence. He generalizes that all white people are bad, inimical and cruel to his race, and starts developing a kind of fear and hatred for them. As a result, when his defence lawyer, Max, enquires him the reason for his misunderstanding of Mary’s humane nature, Bigger explains to him: “Well, I acted toward her only as I know
how... White folks and black folks is strangers. We don’t know what each other is thinking. May be she was trying to be kind; but she didn’t act like it. To me she looked and acted like all other white folks....” (324). Even after the murder, Bigger justifies his murder as an act not directed towards an individual white girl, Mary, but towards the whole of the white race.

Bigger’s racial ideology aiming at the liberation and equality of the black forces him to own the accidental murder of Mary for the weight the act carries. Assuming himself as the emancipator of his oppressed race, he attempts to liberate it by way of realizing his racial ideology. As a first step, he claims the accidental murder in order to draw the attention of the white race and teach it a lesson. He wants to rebel against the white society through his murder of the white girl, Marie. Fishburn comments that Bigger, being a ‘rebel-victim’, chooses murder as the only way to rebel against the white successfully (98). He knows that his murder will not bring about any sea change in the lives of the black, but he believes that he is taking the initiative for the black’s liberation through it. Even after his imprisonment, and when he is sentenced to death, he “no longer suffers, is no longer in terror about his impending death” (Gibson, Critical Response 36). He thinks that his murder of Mary is an act of sacrifice on the altar of the black’s liberation. Viewed in the light of his ideology, his murder is neither a sin nor a crime. He justifies his murder saying, “I didn’t want to kill! ...But what I killed for, I am! It must’ve been pretty
deep in me to make me kill! I must have felt it awful hard to murder...” (391-92). He further explains to his defence lawyer, Max, the rationale of his murder, and adds that he has done it for the good of the black people:

“What I killed for must’ve been good!” Bigger’s voice was full of frenzied anguish. “It must have been good! When a man kills, it is for something [...] . I didn’t know I was really alive in this world until I felt things hard enough to kill for ’em... It’s the truth, Mr. Max. I can say it now, ’cause I’m going to die. I know what I’m saying real good and I know how it sounds. But I’m all right. I feel all right when I look at it that way [...] .” (392)

Thus considering himself as the representative of the black, Bigger conveys his final social meaning of his murder through the above passage. Bigger’s final words “When a man kills, it’s for something...” implies that the ‘something’ for which he commits the murder is his racial ideology that aims at the freedom and equality of the black race. Even while facing the electric chair, Bigger does not feel penitent for his crime; instead, he feels proud of having achieved something great in liberating his race. In this respect, Bigger Thomas can be rightly compared with Raskolnikov of Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment, who has no compunction about his murder of Lezaveta even when he is in prison.
Like Raskolnikov, Bigger also justifies his murder, when he faces his death sentence.

Bigger wanted to employ murder as a weapon in order to realize his racial ideology. As he wished, Bigger, through his murder of Mary, not only gains an identity for himself but also sows the seeds of the black’s freedom by warning the white world about the consequences of its oppression. So, when he is sentenced to death, he courageously accepts it with the contentment that he has at least made a beginning of the process of realizing his ideology through murder. Felgar, commenting on Bigger’s self-contentment and courage to face death, says, “When Bigger goes to the electric chair, he is a man who is utterly determined to convince himself that what he has done has had value” (93).

Although Bigger is electrocuted, his death is not a failure; he succeeds in his attempt to initiate his racial ideology through his murder of Mary and his own death by electrocution. Fishburn endorses this view when she says, “Bigger, however, is defeated only in society’s eyes. He is, after all, condemned to die as a murderer; but the so-called defeat is really a victory for Bigger who has rejected this world’s ethical code” (76). Thus Bigger’s life as well as death is paradoxical; he is at first a victim, who becomes a murderer; then he is a murderer who becomes a victim of the oppressive law. Similarly, he dies in his attempt to win liberation for his race, and therefore he wins even in his death.
Bigger is partly successful in his attempt to establish his racial ideology through murder. He is successful in initiating his ideology but as a single man, he cannot establish his ideology overnight. In a land where every one is afraid of risking his life to fight for the black people's liberation, Bigger takes the initiative and bells the cat. He sows the seeds of the black's freedom, which will take years to grow into a tall, fruitful tree. In consonance with the maxim "A thing well begun is half done," Bigger begins the task of carrying the torch of Marathon for the black's liberation and the torch is to be carried over by the succeeding runners till it reaches its destination.

In murdering his victim accidentally, in attempting to deceive law and in having no compunction about his gruesome act, Richards Rojack of An American Dream shows his kinship to his counterpart in Native Son, Bigger Thomas. Except in their end, both of them face almost the same situation and share the same predicament—both of them kill women forced by the situations they face in order to save their lives. But while Bigger Thomas is caught, tried and executed, Richards Rojack escapes arrest and punishment, and goes scot-free. Like Bigger Thomas, who feels as if he were reborn after his murder of Marie, Rojack also feels rejuvenated and regenerated after his murder of Deborah for, after strangling her, he says: "I opened my eyes. I was weary with a most honourable fatigue, and my flesh seemed new. I had not felt so nice since
I was twelve” (39). Later he reiterates this feeling of his: “If Deborah’s dying had given me a new life, I must be all of eight hours old by now” (98).

The thought of the dangerous consequences of the murder of his wife, Deborah, makes Rojack think of committing suicide. First, he thinks of calling the police and confessing to them his crime; but later he changes his mind and plans to escape arrest by passing off her death as suicide. Leaving Deborah’s body in her room, he goes to the room of her servant maid, Ruta, a licentious German girl, makes love to her and comes back to Deborah’s room. Then he lifts her body on his shoulders and throws it down from the window of the tenth storey. He rings up the police and tells that there is an accident. When the police interrogate him, he lies that she has committed suicide for she believed that she had been suffering from cancer. The detectives Roberts and O’Brien at first suspect him of having strangled his wife; but later, after their enquiry, they let him free. Rojack, thus, succeeds in concealing his crime, and escapes punishment through his ingenious replies to the interrogations of the detectives.

After his murder of Deborah, Rojack has a good time. He makes love to a night club dancer Cherry, who is now involved with a gangster but was formerly the mistress of Rojack’s powerful father-in-law, Barney Oswald Kelley; he defends his right over Cherry by beating up her present
lover, Shago Martin, a black whom he considers “the most talented singer in America” (181); he engages himself in a fierce, climactic confrontation with Kelly, who is associated with the criminal element in America; he suffers the loss of Cherry, who is killed by a friend of Shago; and he goes to west, to Las Vegas, wins enough money at the gambling tables, pays off his debts in New York and decides to desert America. At last he leaves for the primitive wilds of Guatemala and Yucatan. Almost seven-eighths of the action of the novel takes place after Rojack’s murder of Deborah.

Rojack justifies the accidental murder of Deborah as an act of defence against her murderous attack. She is so cruel that he confesses: “I was afraid of her. She was not incapable of murdering me” (33). He justifies that Deborah’s shrewish, aggressive and devilish nature, and her violent attack necessitated him to employ murder as a shield to defend him. Gutman, endorsing Rojack’s justification of his murder of Deborah, comments: “Deborah’s veiled violence and her need for mastery and cruelty bring Rojack to a fever pitch, so that in the space of at most an hour and a half the moon guides him through a murder” (106). Besides his act of defence, Rojack murders her for the power and renewal of life the act gives him. He says that he feels fresh after his murder and that her death has given him a new life (98).

Rojack knows well that Deborah is evil, for she herself confessed to him, “I’m evil if truth be told” (43). He justifies his murder of Deborah as
an act of destruction of the evil and says that he has become evil because of his contacts with her: “Living with her I was murderous...She was evil, I would decide, and then think next that goodness could come on a visit to evil only in the disguise of evil” (43). So, he has no compunction for his murder of Deborah. In not feeling any remorse for his murder and in justifying his act, Rojack can be compared with Raskolnikov of *Crime and Punishment*, who also justifies his murder of Lezaveta, instead of feeling remorse.

Through his murder of Deborah, the personification of evil, Rojack implies that murder can also be good. Just as Rama, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Preserver of the Trinity of Gods in the Hindu mythology, kills the demon, Thadakai, the incarnation of evil, for the good of the world, Rojack also kills his demoniac wife. He does not consider his murder of Deborah as a sin, but as a road to salvation. According to Gutman, it is a journey to the deepest part of him, which helps him for his self-realization (103-04). He adds that in his murder of Deborah, Rojack feels a catharsis or purgation of his soul and renewal of life (104). Rojack considers his murder of Deborah a holy act. Lucid endorses this view saying, “Rojack puts on his shirt after the murder 'with the devotion of cardinal fixing his hat’” (149). Rojack justifies his murder with the argument that the murder of a devilish woman like
Deborah is neither a sin nor a crime, but a holy act of sacrifice that deserves approbation.

Rojack murders his wife, Deborah, impelled by his American Dream ideology, which aims at possessing power, wealth and liberation. He married Deborah, heiress of a fabulously wealthy man, Barney Oswald Kelley, driven by his ideology and his desire to become a Senator. But his marriage to her proves to be a failure and all his dreams of becoming a powerful politician are shattered. Soon he understands that the power he got through his marriage to her is only a gift, and that “the gift was only up for a loan” (26). So when she separates from him, he loses all the power that he got through the marriage. He pathetically complains about his vulnerable condition: “Marriage to her was the armature of my ego; remove the armature and I might topple like clay” (24). So, his addiction to her power makes his survival impossible during her separation from him and forces him to usurp it from her through murder. He believes that by murdering her he can inherit all her power (Radford 35). Moreover, he feels that Deborah is an obstacle that has been impeding his way to a heavenly life—his life of freedom and power (Leeds 128). So, when he gets an opportunity to get rid of her and realize his ideology, he makes use of it successfully.

Rojack’s dream comes true when he succeeds in realizing his ideology of enjoying freedom and power through murder. After he
murders Deborah, he overcomes all his problems successfully and enjoys life the way he wished. Summing up Rojack’s murder and the realization of his ideology Gutman observes that Rojack enjoys his liberation through his act of the murder of Deborah (106-07). Though he commits a murder, he cleverly deludes the police into believing that it was suicide. He escapes punishment and realizes his American dream ideology of power, freedom and material comforts. In fact, he is the only murderer-protagonist who realizes his ideology even while he is alive.

Ezekiel Farragut of Cheever’s *Falconer* resembles both Bigger Thomas and Richards Rojack, his counterparts in the category of accidental murderers, in his post-murder phase of life. Like them, he accidentally commits murder, a fratricide, in a fit of uncontrollable rage, and faces its consequences. Farragut shows more kinship to Bigger Thomas than to Rojack, in his accidental murder of his brother, Eben, and in his arrest, trial, imprisonment and sentence; but he differs from Bigger in not simply submitting himself to law and fate, and in escaping from prison. However, in deceiving law and the police and in escaping punishment, he is more like Richards Rojack. Though Farragut lacks Rojack’s hypocrisy and cunning in totally escaping from his imprisonment, he is like Rojack in realising a sense of freedom to start a life afresh when he escapes from prison.
The action of the whole novel takes place after Farragut’s murder of Eben, within the prison of Falconer and within the confused but entirely human head of Ezekiel Farragut. After he murders Eben, Farragut is tried, convicted, taken to the Falconer Correctional Facility manacled with four more black convicts, and put in cell block ‘F’ along with pickpockets, hijackers, murderers and embezzlers. He becomes friendly with the prisoners like Cuckold, Chicken Number Two, Ransom, Bumpo and Stone. During the course of his stay in prison, his beautiful but unloving wife, Marcia visits him twice and accuses him of having spoiled her life. He seeks the company of his fellow prisoners to comfort his depressed heart. Alienated from and deserted by his self-centred wife who abandons him to his fate, Farragut turns to Jody, a young fellow prisoner and has homosexual relationship with him twice a week. Meanwhile, he attends a course in banking offered to the prisoners by the Fiduciary University of Banking, and he tops the test. When a Cardinal visits the prison to award the certificates, Jody disguises himself as one of the acolytes and escapes in the Cardinal’s helicopter. Soon a riot breaks out at Amana, the huge upstate prison, and Farragut hopes to escape. He makes a radio and gathers news about the riot.

Jody’s escape makes Farragut temporarily bereft. The urgings of his flesh are transformed into a more humane and compassionate love. When Chicken Number Two falls ill, Farragut takes care of him until he
dies. When the dead body is kept in the body sack, he removes it from the sack and substitutes himself for the corpse. The guards carry the body sack and leave it outside the prison gate in the dark; he cuts the sack and escapes. Finding himself free, he gets into a bus and journeys towards his happiness. The whole action of the novel, from his imprisonment to his release, takes place as a consequence of his murder of his brother, Eben.

Unlike Bigger Thomas and Richards Rojack, Farragut does not justify his murder; he claims innocence and denies having murdered Eben. He pleads that he struck only once on Eben’s head with a fire iron and that Eben collapsed hitting his head against the hearth. He says that Eben’s death was an accident and that he did not mean to kill Eben. Though Farragut does not overtly justify his murder of Eben, the murder can be amply justified. Waldeland, justifying Farragut’s act says that, Eben’s motiveless malignity towards his younger brother, Farragut, and his attempts to secretly dispose of Farragut thrice, more than justifies Farragut’s murder of him (137).

The murder can also be justified on moral grounds. While assaulting Eben, Farragut does not assault an ideal brother like Rama, elder brother of Lakshmana in the great Indian epic, The Ramayana. Had Eben been an ideal, duty-conscious elder brother like Rama, Farragut would have been an obsequious and adoring younger brother like Lakshmana. But Eben does not behave like Rama, and so Farragut cannot
behave like Lakshmana. Since Eben tries to behave like Cain who kills his brother Abel in the Old Testament, Farragut tries to save Eben’s family from his cruelty. If one looks at Eben from the viewpoint of Farragut, one can understand that Eben is an incarnation of the evil itself. Like Satan in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, he makes a hell wherever he goes; in fact, he himself is an ambulatory hell.

In addition to torturing Farragut, Eben extends his cruelty and victimization to his wife and children. Unable to bear his tortures any more, his daughter, Rachel, attempts to commit suicide thrice and his only son serves a two-year sentence in prison. Farragut advises him with the good intention of protecting the family from his evil acts; but the alcoholic, belligerent Eben provokes him revealing the family secret about Farragut’s birth. Farragut, unable to put up with Eben’s cruelty anymore, kills him. Justifying Farragut’s murder of his brother, Gardner comments: “Farragut, a college professor and heroin-methadone addict who accidentally, for good reason, has killed his brother, a man who was truly murderous, but the kind you can never put in jail because although he cruelly persecutes his family and friends and causes attempted suicides, he does it all legally” (81).

Though Farragut does not overtly proclaim any ideology in the novel, his love for his family, his craving for true love and affection, and his attempt to solve the familial problem at any cost, reveal his conviction
in his ‘familial ideology’ that one can sacrifice anything for the peace and happiness of the family. Consequently, when Eben’s wife, Carrie, laments about her family tragedy resulting from her husband’s irresponsibility and cruelty, Farragut interferes in Eben’s family affairs. He advises Eben with the intention of correcting him and restoring peace and happiness to his family. But unfortunately, it leads to an altercation with him resulting in his fatal attack of Eben.

In his attempt to establish his familial ideology through murder, Farragut does not succeed. He murders Eben with a view to retrieving happiness and peace to Eben’s family but the murder aggravates the family problems, instead of solving them. As a result, neither Farragut’s nor Eben’s family enjoys peace and happiness through his murder. For instance, Eben’s widow, Carrie loses her happiness after the murder and Farragut himself loses his family life after the murder. It is obvious that Farragut’s murder does not facilitate him in realizing his ideology.

Marjorie Adams of Murder in the English Department resorts to killing her professor, Angus Murchie, when he makes sexual advances towards her. But after her unexpected and unpremeditated murder, she wants to escape from the law and the police. Despite her fear and bewilderment, she opens the window wide, jumps out through it and disappears in the dark. She is unaware of the fact that she has left her Cashmere scarf in Murchie’s room and that Professor Nan Weaver has
seen her fleeing into darkness. She becomes so nervous and panic-stricken after the murder that she cannot keep her appointment with her research supervisor, Nan Weaver, the next afternoon and so sends her a letter of apology.

When Marjorie meets Nan two weeks after the murder, she does not speak anything about the incident. She seemed “quite composed for someone who had killed a man with his own letter opener in the room next door” (85). However, when Nan shows Marjorie her Cashmere scarf, she is bewildered and loses her composure; but soon recovering from her shock, she lies that she left it there during her previous visit. She shows her courage and intelligence in her conversation during her second visit to Nan Weaver. When Nan mentions about Murchie’s murder, she expresses her disinterestedness: “I would prefer not to discuss the matter” (108). During her third visit to Nan, she not only continues to maintain composure but also feigns innocence. Though she knows that Nan knows the secret, she pretends to be bold and unaffected by the murder, and does not want to confess to Nan. However, despite her taciturnity and secretiveness about Murchie’s murder, she tells Nan, “I’ve been quite upset since Professor Murchie’s death” (120). Expressing her friendship to Nan, she tells her that her therapist has suggested her to take “a break, get a change of scene” and that she is going back to her family place outside Baltimore “just for a couple of months, just my [her] head is clear (121).
Nan, appreciating Marjorie’s cleverness and escapism, thinks: “Marjorie had done the best thing. Marjorie was a survivor. Best to get out of the picture...Marjorie was doing the right thing” (122).

After Marjorie leaves Berkeley, a gamut of events take place. Nan is suspected and arrested for the murder of Murchie. Nan is imprisoned in Santa Marta jail where her intimate friend and feminist lawyer Amy Warren visits her and tries all means of getting Nan out of the prison. Amy understands that Nan is trying to bear the cross for somebody else’s sake. She asks Nan to tell her the fact in order to save her; but Nan hides the fact and says, “There’s nothing to say, really, I didn’t kill Angus Murchie and I don’t know who did” (129).

A trial is conducted and Mr. Johnson, the guard, witnesses Nan’s presence in the English Department on the New Year’s Eve. The coroner also evidences that Murchie was stabbed “in the midst of ‘sexual activity’” (128). Amy’s witnesses Professor Matt and Shirley, Nan’s sister, testify that Nan was with them on the New Year’s Eve. To the surprise of Nan, Marjorie, who has come to know about Nan’s arrest and trial through Liza’s letter, appears on the scene and sits beside Shirley and Lisa observing the proceedings of the court. When the prosecutor accuses Nan of murdering Murchie and the judge is about to pass his verdict convicting Nan based on the circumstantial evidences, Marjorie shouts at the judge in a loud voice, “And I should like to say something, your
honour',... ‘I killed Angus Murchie’... ‘while he was trying to rape me’” (144-45).

Though Marjorie considers her murder of Murchie a just act, she confesses the crime before the judge to save the life of her saviour, Nan. As a result Nan is acquitted and Marjorie is imprisoned. In prison she completes ten more pages of her thesis and hands it over to her research supervisor Nan when the latter visits her. Finally, Marjorie is released after six months owing to the efforts of Liza, who becomes a feminist propagandist and conducts road shows justifying Marjorie’s murder as an act of self-defence.

Despite her fear of arrest, Marjorie Adams shows complacence and courage. She plans to deceive the law by concealing the murder. Even though she knows well that Nan Weaver is aware of her crime, she maintains secrecy till the end. In her attempt to conceal her murder and to deceive law and the police, Marjorie Adams is akin to Bigger Thomas and Richards Rojack. She believes that nobody has witnessed the murder and escapes to her native place near Baltimore. But when she learns about Nan’s sacrifice for her own sake, she lets out the secret about the murder and prepares herself to receive the wages of her sin.

Marjorie murders her professor, Murchie, in her attempt to protect herself from being raped. Confessing her crime before the Judge, she justifies her murder as an act of self-defence (145). Though she does not
give any considerable justification for her act, her murder of Murchie can be justified on all grounds. Murchie is "the most sexist professor in the department" (24); he has been "more reckless in attempting to bed down his female students" and has made sexual advances to as many as twenty-two women (25). He does not spare even his colleagues from his mischief. So Nan testifies, "Murchie was the biggest lech west of the Rockies" who "had sent three of his advisees to Student Psychiatric last quarter" (41). He "had been a constant irritant" and "an annoying fly" to Nan (46). Therefore when he tries his nasty tricks with Marjorie, she stabs him to death in self-defence. He is such a rogue that his death gives her "a curious relief" as if "an unknown tumour had been removed", and she experiences a "terrible pleasure" (46). In killing Murchie, Marjorie does not kill a saint or a gentleman, but a sexist rascal who has been an irritant to the entire womenfolk. Marjorie's murder can be viewed neither as a crime nor as a sin, but as a sacrificial act of hunting a demon that has been sexually assaulting the womenfolk of California University.

Marjorie is an ingenious, bold and forward thinking girl who does not like to confine herself to the limits of any particular 'ism' or ideology. She believes neither in Nan's feminist organization nor in her Sexual Harassment Campaign. However, she believes in her own gender ideology that men and women are equals in all aspects and that a woman faced with sexual assault can even use murder as a weapon to protect her self-respect.
Her gender ideology, which has its kinship to the extremism of the Radical feminists, is akin to that of her research supervisor, Nan Weaver’s Feminist ideology. Though Marjorie does not overtly profess her ideology, she has been unwittingly following the feminist ideals. She is a feminist at heart and she practises what Nan has been preaching. The intensity of her ideology is so much that it impels her to kill him when Murchie attempts to molest her. Marjorie, through her murder of the lecherous professor, Angus Murchie, succeeds in establishing her unprofessed ‘gender ideology.’ Though, later, she confesses her crime and undergoes imprisonment, she is acquitted and she enjoys the fruits of her ideology.

While the category of accidental murderers kill their victims inadvertently, forced by their situations, Clyde Griffiths of *An American Tragedy* murders his poor beloved, Roberta Alden, after careful scheming and meditation, for realizing his American Dream ideology. But in his crime and punishment, Clyde Griffiths shows his affinity to Bigger Thomas of *Native Son*, as both of them share the same pre-murder and post- murder predicament—both Clyde and Bigger are victims of poverty and suffering; both are youth struggling for identity in the oppressive society; both murder girls for their survival; and both are hunted by the police, arrested, tried and electrocuted. The only point in which they differ from each other is in the way they execute the murder. While Bigger
Thomas kills Mary accidentally, Clyde kills Roberta after careful planning.

Clyde is mentally disturbed after his murder of Roberta Alden. After drowning Roberta in the waters of Big Bittern, he swims to the shore, walks through the forest, and joins his wealthy beloved, Sondra Finchley, who is camping with her friends at Pine Point. He is very much worried about the three hunters who saw him in the forest and is afraid of detection. He is so much preoccupied with the consequence of his murder that he cannot enjoy the situation when Sondra expresses her love for him. His fear of impending arrest so much overshadows his feigned happiness in the company of Sondra that she notices the change in his face; when she asks him about his troubled looks, he conceals everything from her. Similarly, when his crime is detected and he is arrested, he is worried more about his shattered dreams than about his own end. When a crowd jeers at him while he is taken to jail, he is so much afraid of the crowd that he enters the outer gate of the jail and heaves a sigh of relief for the protection it offered him. Thus, ‘fear’ is the dominant emotion that has been haunting Clyde from the moment he murdered Roberta till the moment he is electrocuted. He fears losing his relationship with his wealthy uncle, Griffithse’s family, fears losing the golden chance of marrying Sondra Finchley, and fears facing his death through the electric
chair. Jephson, his defence lawyer, senses Clyde’s fear and defends him in the court, saying that he lacks “moral or mental courage” (736).

After drowning Roberta in the deep waters of Big Bittern, Clyde attempts to conceal his murder in order to avoid arrest and punishment. He swims back to the shore, hides the camera tripod and heads South through the woods. He accidentally encounters three woodmen on his way to the Twelfth Lake, where he joins Sondra and her friends who are on a camping trip. But unfortunately, the amateurish way in which Clyde has carried out his plot betrays him to the detectives. The camera and tripod are found and traced to Clyde. Roberta’s possessions, and information obtained from her poor parents turn up evidence linking her to Clyde. To make matters worse, the district attorney Orville W. Mason, who seizes upon Clyde’s plight as a means to further his own ambition, finds in Clyde’s room the pleading letter of Roberta concerning her pregnancy. Clyde is arrested and taken to the Cataraqui country jail to await trial. Though his uncle, Samuel Griffiths appoints two lawyers to defend him, he cannot save Clyde’s life. The evidence against Clyde is so strong that the jury convicts him of murder in the first degree, and he is sentenced to death by electric chair. Despite his meticulous plans to deceive the police and law in escaping imprisonment and death sentence for his crime, Clyde is arrested, tried and electrocuted.
Even though Clyde justifies his plan of murder of Roberta before its execution, he feels repentant for his act after the murder. His views about the murder totally change after drowning her, and he no more justifies his act afterwards. He starts realizing the seriousness of his crime when the police search for him and arrest him. He understands that the punishment for his crime will be death sentence; so, in his attempt to escape death, he lies during the trial that he did not attack Roberta, and that the capsizing of the boat resulting in her drowning was only an accident. But when he is guilty and he is sentenced to death, he feels remorseful for his crime. He is so much spiritually stirred by Rev. Macmillan's advice that he repents for his sin praying to God, reminding the reader of Dr. Faustus's repentance for his sin at the hour of his death:

He tried to think of Roberta and the evil he had done her, to read the Bible—even—lying on his face on the iron cot—repeating over and over: "Lord, give me peace. Lord, give me light. Lord, give me strength to resist any evil thoughts that I should not have. I know I am not wholly white. Oh, no. I know I plotted evil. Yes, yes, I know that. I confess. But must I really die now? Is there no help? Will you not help me, Lord?" (867)

He realizes the seriousness of his crime and understands that what he considered correct and just before the murder is unjust. Clyde, after the
murder of Roberta, does not stick to his justification of his murder; instead, he feels a change of heart and a transformation of his soul.

Clyde miserably fails in his attempt to realize his American dream ideology through his murder of Roberta Alden. Motivated by his ambition to become wealthy, he conceives his ideology of gaining wealth, power and social status. He tries every possible means of realizing it. At first, he joins a medical shop, then a luxurious hotel, the Green Davidson in Kansas, and then gets a job in his wealthy uncle’s Collar Company, Lycurgus. When he finds his poor beloved, Roberta an impediment in marrying the wealthy Sondra and realizing his ideology, he drowns her in the lake of Big Bittern and passes it off as an accident. Unfortunately, all his plans to deceive the police fail, and he is arrested, tried and electrocuted for his crime. Clyde, therefore, cannot realize his American dream ideology through murder. As Mc Aleer comments, “the American Dream had made Clyde willing to sacrifice Roberta” (143) but it is an irony that Clyde has sacrificed his own life in his attempt to realize his ideology.

Like Clyde Griffiths, Humbert Humbert of Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita also kills his rival Clare Quilty according to a neat plan. Humbert murders Quilty, a sexual pervert and playwright, for having spoiled his love life with Lolita. He takes revenge on Quilty, impelled by his love ideology, when he comes to know that the latter kidnapped Lolita from
him and forced him to act in pornographic films. Though Humbert shows semblance to Clyde Griffiths in his premeditation and planning of the murder, he differs from the latter in his post-murder phase of life.

Since Humbert’s wreaking vengeance on Quilty occurs at the close of the novel, very few events take place after the murder. After shooting Quilty to death, Humbert feels a burden instead of relief and he says: “Far from feeling any relief, a burden even weightier than the one I had hoped to get rid of was with me, upon me, over me” (320). He washes up his bloodstained hands in the bathroom and leaves the room. When he reaches the main hall he hears music and voices of men and women, who drink Quilty’s liquor. He tells them that he has killed Quilty but to his surprise, they appreciate Humbert’s bravado and say, “Somebody ought to have done it long ago” (321). They offer him beer, but he reaches for his car. He drives slowly to a mining town in a valley, where he hears the song of the children and is reminded of Lolita’s separation from him.

Humbert feels sad thinking about Lolita but he feels a great sense of freedom after murdering Quilty. As an ardent lover of Lolita, Humbert feels complacent after killing Quilty. He wants to forget the whole incident of Quilty’s murder and he says: “on the whole I wished to forget the whole mess—and when I did learn he was dead, the only satisfaction it gave me was the relief of knowing I need not mentally accompany for months a painful and disgusting convalescence interrupted by all kinds of
unmentionable operations and relapses..." (322). So, with a sense of great relief, he drives away gently and dreamily on the wrong side of the road, deliberately courting arrest and exposing his guilt. Finally, while he is in the psychopathic ward, he writes his story expressing his contentment in sacrificing his life for the sake of his love through the murder of Quilty.

While shooting Quilty, Humbert justifies it as an act of vengeance for having spoiled his love life with Lolita (316); he does not justify it after the murder. Still, his post-murder behavioural pattern bears testimony to his justification of the murder. Humbert’s sense of relief and complacence at the death of his rival and lack of remorse for his gruesome act bear evidence to his un-proclaimed justification of his murder.

Humbert, therefore, motivated by his love ideology considers himself as the saviour of ideal love and he kills Quilty. Endorsing this view, Morton comments that Humbert’s “perverted but idealistic love” for Lolita forces him to take revenge on the equally perverted and lustful Quilty (79).

After his murder of Quilty, Humbert does not join his beloved. On the contrary, through his murder of Quilty, he realizes his love ideology and proves that the opposing elements to true love can be razed enabling it to live-forever. He is unable to enjoy his love life with his cherished nymphet, Lolita, because of Quilty’s abduction and seduction of her; he at
least, wants her to enjoy her married life with her husband, Robert Schiller, without any threat from the sexual pervert, Quilty. So he kills Quilty enabling his beloved live in peace and happiness. Humbert, thus, succeeds in his attempt to realize his love ideology through his murder of Quilty. Though Humbert’s life is at stake after the murder, he achieves what he wanted to achieve through the murder.

Humbert is akin to Clyde Griffiths, in premeditating and scheming the murder of his victim Clare Quilty. Yet he differs from Clyde in not attempting to escape arrest and in having no compunction for his murder (322). While Clyde tries to delude the police and law, Humbert wants to pay for his crime by driving his car deliberately on the wrong direction, courting arrest and he justifies his act, thus: “Since I had disregarded all laws of humanity, I might as well disregard the rules of traffic. So I crossed to the left side of the highway and checked the feeling, and the feeling was good”. Humbert, unlike Clyde, feels great relief after the murder as he thinks that his act is justifiable.

Judas of The President’s Daughter murders his enemies in order to realize his racialist ideology of founding a free Jewish nation, Israel. He is so callous regarding his gruesome murders that he continues to show sang froid, even after murdering Jackson, and remains unbothered about the consequences. He, therefore, goes ahead with his ideological murder of the Muslim terrorist, Hakim and his two wives. He is a dare devil who is
never afraid of the threat from the police and the detectives and goes ahead with his murders of his enemies. Expressing his readiness to do any thing for the sake of his nation, Judas tells his captive Dillon, "Well, you know we’re Israelis, but we’re patriotic Israelis willing to go to any lengths to preserve the integrity of our country" (84). Even after learning about the British detectives’ hunt for him, he audaciously proceeds with his plan and murder of Dermot Riley, after Riley delivers his kidnap message to the American President. Finally, even when he comes to know that his whereabouts has been identified and he is surrounded by Marie’s rescuers, Dillon and Johnson, he is not disheartened; he fights them boldly and dies courageously. Judas is bold, complacent and audacious even after the murder of his victims.

Judas is very confident of getting the Nemesis signed for he believes that nobody can trace out his hideout. But the President of America, Jake Cazalet sends his detectives Dillon, Ferguson and Blake Johnson to redeem his daughter from Judas. The detectives identify Judas’s castle in Corfu, attack his men Aoron, Raphael and Moshe, and rescue Marie de Brissac and Hannah. Though Judas follows them in a boat firing at them, the rescuers blast his boat and kill him.

Judas, forced by the constant threat of the Muslim terrorists and by the death of his mother and sister in the Hamas bombing, frames his Jewish racialist ideology that aims at founding an independent Jewish
nation, Israel. He considers murder as the strongest weapon to fight out
his problems and he employs it to realize his Jewish racialist ideology.
But, in his attempt to realize his racialist ideology of freeing Israel, Judas
fails. He is successful in the execution of his kidnap plan of Marie, in
alluring and kidnapping Sean Dillon, the British operative and Hannah,
and in sending the kidnap message to the President of America through
Dillon. But he cannot succeed in his attempt to get the Nemesis signed
because, all his plans are foiled, and he is killed by the President’s men.
Judas, thus, cannot achieve what he wanted to achieve through
murder and his dreams of an independent and threat-free Jewish land
vanish in the air.

An analysis of the select novels makes it evident that the
murderer-protagonists of these novels differ from one another in their
post-murder psychology, in their attempt to deceive the police and law, in
their realization of their ideology through murder, in their feeling
compunction, and in their facing their respective doom. However, all of
them, with the exception of Humbert Humbert, show their similarity in
their attempt to bamboozle the police and escape law to avoid punishment.
For instance, Bigger flees from the police after implicating the
Communist, Jan Erlone, in the murder; Rojack deceives the police and
law by passing off the murder as suicide, Farragut denies having murdered
his brother, Eben; Marjorie escapes arrest by hiding facts about her
murder of Murchie; Clyde Griffiths runs away from the scene of murder and denies having murdered his beloved Roberta; and Judas hoodwinks law after the murders of the Muslim terrorists. Still, all of them differ from one another in their post murder psychology, for some of them feel happy and rejuvenated, while others are very much troubled by their criminal acts. For instance, Bigger Thomas, Richards Rojack, Humbert Humbert and Judas feel refreshed, complacent and reborn, whereas Clyde Griffiths, Ezekiel Farragut and Marjorie Adams are mentally disturbed and worried after the murder.

Similarly, these murderer-protagonists vary in their post-criminal psychology in devising their plans to hide their murders in order to escape arrest and lead a happy life. It is noted that all of them, excluding Humbert Humbert, follow their own criminal methods to conceal their murders. For instance, Bigger Thomas tries to hoodwink the police by throwing Mary’s body in the hearth and then by implicating her Communist lover, Jan Erlone in the murder. Richards Rojack of *An American Dream* cleverly conceals his murder and fools the police by pushing Deborah’s body from the tenth floor of her apartment, and passes it off for suicide. Clyde Griffiths of *An American Tragedy* tries to throw dust in the eyes of the police after drowning his beloved, Roberta, in the deep waters of Big Bittern by creating an alibi that he was with Sondra Finchley at the time of Roberta’s drowning. Marjorie Adams of *Murder in the English*
Department conceals her murder of Angus Murchie from both the police and her research guide, Nan Weaver, by disappearing from the scene on sick leave. And Judas of The President's Daughter deceives the police by adopting disguise while murdering his enemies. Ezekiel Farragut of Falconer also tries his best to escape punishment by disclaiming the murder, but the witnesses given against him by the members of his family, including his wife, Marcia, convict him to life sentence. However, Humbert Humbert of Lolita is the only exception to these murderer-protagonists in not attempting to conceal his crime, or to escape punishment; in fact, he wants to expiate for his murder of Quilty and he rides his car happily against the traffic rules to court arrest.

In conclusion, it is explicit from the study of the select novels that while some of the murderer-protagonists like Richards Rojack, Marjorie Adams and Humbert Humbert are successful in their vision and mission and some of them like Clyde Griffiths, Ezekiel Farragut and Judas are not successful. Bigger Thomas is partially successful in his attempt to realize his ideology through murder.