CHAPTER-II

THE NOVELS OF THE EARLY PHASE
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Surely if a woman committed a crime like murder, she’d be sufficiently coldblooded to enjoy the fruits of it without any weak-minded sentimentality such as repentance.
(Christie, Agatha. The Murder of Roger Ackroyd 10)

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the theoretical background is presented on the concept of the crime and mystery. It also covers the development of the crime and mystery fiction along with the significant contributors in the field. This chapter attempts to analyze P. D. James’s early phase novels from her Adam Dalgliesh Mystery Series on the basis of the discussion made in the first chapter. Chronologically, James’s early phase novels, which are analysed in the present chapter are- Cover Her Face (1962), A Mind to Murder (1963), Unnatural Causes (1967), Shroud for a Nightingale (1971), The Black Tower (1975) and Death of an Expert Witness (1977) which are published in the 1960s and 70s.

The 1960s may be viewed as James’s leading decade in her literary career. Individually, and as a group they mark the first step on James’s journey toward recognition as a prominent novelist, as well as an excellent crime and mystery writer. She has not yet grown up and matured enough in literary craft, but she has displayed a thorough professionalism. The elements of crime and mystery are all pervasive in her novels. As she is known as ‘the Queen of Crime’, the elements of
crime and mystery are bound to be there in her fictional work. Her detective protagonist Adam Dalgliesh is from Scotland Yard Police, who writes poetry as a passion and follows the way of Sherlock Holmes.

The present chapter tries to analyze and interpret the crime and mystery in the early phase novels of James. She has depicted a real life of society and explored the universal issue of ‘crime’—a baffling problem in the world. Therefore, it is important to study her early phase novels from the point of view of the term crime and mystery.

With *Cover Her Face*, (1962), James has begun her literacy career as a crime and mystery novelist. As she is very much influenced by Agatha Christie and Dorothy Leigh Sayers, her debut follows the rich tradition of Christie and other writers of the ‘Golden Age Crime Fiction’. The novel was written in her forties and her professional as well as autobiographical experience is reflected in it. The present novel explores the theme of detection, puzzle, classic mystery, well-built character and gothic romance etc. It is the best example of a classic locked-room puzzle mystery, which is set in London at Martingale. The title of the novel is taken from a passage from John Webster’s tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi*: “Cover Her Face. Mine eyes dazzle, she died young” (14). In the play, Act IV, scene ii, Duke Ferdinand and the Cardinal, his brother mourns the death of their sister, the Duchess.

Like Edger Allan Poe’s detective C. Auguste Dupin and Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes James first introduces Adam Dalgliesh, a Scotland Yard poet detective in *Cover Her Face*. James takes his work seriously and is very good at his job. At the time of investigation, he always keeps the victim fixed in his mind and makes his friendship with the victim. The details of a victim, his or her past, relationships with others are very much
important to him for his investigation. His way of investigation is different from Conan’s Holmes and Collin’s Auguste Dupin. At the time of investigation of the murder case he has given his first priority to see the body. Dalgliesh believes that detective work is the lifeless job for man. “Although he must constantly interfere in other people’s lives, he must and does remain a loof from them” (22). James has described the value of Adam Dalgliesh in her literary achievement in one of her interview:

When I began, I didn't know he'd be a serial character, and of course there's the challenge of having readers suspend their disbelief. He hasn't aged that much over 40 years and each novel is set in the time of its writing. But I did try to create a character that was someone I'd really like. I gave Dalgliesh the qualities I admire in both men and women: he's good-looking, highly intelligent compassionate but not sentimental, and reserved. It was important too that he was a character who could develop. I never wanted to know him too well. I think Agatha Christie got rather fed up with Hercule Poirot at the end, because she had made him both too old and just too bizarre. (Interview with Alan Taylor, 2008)

James makes her unique impression or notion in the tradition of crime and mystery fiction. Dark side of human being is the prime concern of her notion. She depicts the picture of social evils and reality of the world and increasing violence and insecurity of the contemporary society. The novel begins with a ‘Jamesian’ notion, and it provides the information about the killing.

Exactly three months before the killing at Martingale Mrs Maxie gave a dinner-party. Years later, when the trail was a
half-forgotten scandal and the headlines were yellowing on
the newspaper lining of cupboard drawers, Eleanor Maxie
looked back on that spring evening as the opening scene of
tragedy. (1)

There is a dinner party at Martingale house. The Martingale house, which
is a handsome Elizabethan manor house and it is located in Chadfleet,
with bay windows, Tudor Chimneys, French windows and enclosed
gardens. Generally, such beginning is found in the gothic romance.
According to Norma Siebenheller, the novel is, “. . . not a mystery at all
but a modern Gothic” (7). She further explains about the novel:

It certainly has a Gothic flavor at the start: a grand old
English house in the countryside, its patriarch slowly dying
upstairs; Stephan Maxie, the son and heir, an outwardly cold
and distant young man, though physically attractive; Sally
Jupp, a young and pretty girl in reduced circumstances who
is working for the family as a maid. In addition there is
Catherine Bowers, a capable but uninteresting young woman
in love with Stephen; Deborah Riscoe, Stephen’s very
possessive twin sister; and Felix Hearne, Deborah’s would
be fiancé. Together they comprise all the ingredients of a
classic Gothic confrontation. (7-8)

The novel is set at Martingale Manor which is a traditional
country-house which plays the vital role in the development of criminal
plot. A murder takes place at the Martingale house. The owner of the
house Mrs Eleanor Maxie has given a dinner party, which becomes a
ritual gathering under one roof, where several people are gathered for the
party. The novel is the fine combination of vivid characters, which are
concerned with the white collar community and they follow the traditional English country values and aristocratic lifestyle.

Stephen Maxie who is a rising young surgeon and the representative of modern youth, Deborah Riscoe and Catherine Bowers are also present at the party. Bernard Hinks, the Vicar of Chadfleet is a bachelor, gentle, sweet faced person who is in love with Deborah Riscoe, a daughter of Eleanor Maxie, Dr. Charles Epps is a widower who runs a hospital, and is a physician who has lived in Chadlfeet for thirty years. He is a family doctor of Mrs Maxie and a close friend of her husband Mr Simon Maxie. Miss Alice Liddell, the Warden of St. Refuge for girls attend the party. Martha Bultitaft is the old and long-time servant at Martingale. At Martingale house, Mrs Eleanor Maxie has appointed one of the unmarried mothers as a house parlour maid, from St. Mary Refuge School. Her name is Sally Jupp. Now Sally Jupp works with Maxie’s old and long-time servant Martha Bultitaft. She serves everyone who is present in the party.

Sally Jupp is perfectly normal and respectable girl; she has a quiet and refined manner. She is quite well educated too, a grammar-school girl and is an orphan brought up by her aunt and uncle Mr and Mrs Proctor. She is a good mother and pretty girl like “unmarried-mother-with-child relationship” (4). She has joined the Martingale House along with her tiny baby Jimmie and has been very obstinate and hides her husband’s name. She never discloses the name of her baby’s father. James portrays all characters from the rich and aristocratic society of London. Their standard of living, life style, and manners are in the tradition of an English upper-class society. Mrs Eleanor Maxie who always dominates all family members belongs to white-collar community. The story of the novel moves around Mrs Maxie and Sally Jupp, who is murdered by one
of the members of the Martingale house. Miss Liddell tells about Sally Jupp’s refined manners and hard work to Mrs Maxie:

She has a quiet and refined manner. She is quite well educated too. A grammar school girl! I should never have dreamed of recommending her to your mother if she weren’t a most superior type of girl for St. Mary’s. Actually, she’s an orphan brought up by a court. But I hope you won’t let that play on your pity. Sally’s job is to work hard and make the most of this opportunity. The past is over and is best forgotten. (4)

For the first time in the party Miss Liddell glanced towards Sally. For a full two seconds they looked at each other. Miss Liddell realises that Sally’s eyes reflect something secret:

Miss Liddell flushed and dropped her eyes. Surely she must have been taken mistaken! Confused and horrified she tried to analyse the extraordinary effect of that brief contact. Even before her own features had assumed their proprietal mask of commendation she had read in the girl’s eyes, not the submissive gratitude which had characterized the Sally Jupp of St Mary’s Refuge, but assumed contempt, a hint of conspiracy and a dislike which was almost frightening in its intensity. (6)

She is very thin with the heavy red-gold hair pilled under her cap. She has a slender neck; her childish arms are long, the elbows jutting under the reddened skin. Sally is a secretive girl. Mr and Mrs Proctor have adopted her after her parents have been killed. She does not disclose her personality throughout the novel:
. . . she enjoyed the feeling of power that this hidden knowledge gave her. Pullen has said, “She liked things to be secret.” A woman I interviewed for whom Sally had worked said, “She was a secretive little thing. She worked for me three years and I knew no more about her at the end of them than when she first came.” Sally Jupp kept the news of her marriage secret under very difficult circumstances. Her behaviour wasn’t reasonable. (203)

Thus, in James’s novels she develops each character and their ultimate relations through her criminal plots. She provides the right amount of the character development, their description, relationship, clues and evidence of the murder to make her readers happy. The plot of the novel mingles with the element of romance, the love story between Stephen Maxie, the son of Eleanor Maxie, and Sally Jupp. He has lost his head over a pretty maid. According to Miss Liddell, “Sally is a model of all the virtues except one, and even that was a slip on the part of nature who couldn’t recognize a high-school girl in the dark” (13). Stephen wants to marry her. But Catherine Bowers, a guest at Martingale, expects herself to marry him. Felix Hearne, a person who has taken part in the WW2 resistant movement is also in love with Deborah Riscoe, a daughter of Eleanor Maxie. Deborah’s husband, Edward Riscoe, has died of poliomyelitis within less than a year after their marriage. The novel is the fine fusion of love, romance and gothic elements.

The story turns its track, the scene shifts to the St. Cedd’s annual church fete which is being organized at Martingale. The annual church fete is “waiting for a death” and signifies the murder mystery. The annual church fete is full of enjoyment, complete with red and white marquees, stalls, a tea tent, and pony rides. All family members, guests and others
are present at the fete. On the day of the fete, Sally wears the similar
dress as Deborah with same accessories. Later, she announces at the
dinner that Stephen Maxie has asked her to be his bride. In the party her
relations with Mr Stephen Maxie are disclosed to all Martingale
household. The secret love affair between Stephen and Sally is one of the
reasons of her ruin.

James provides a sudden twist and uncanny incidents in the story.
After the party everyone return to their houses. All members are sitting
together in front of the electric fire talking about annual church fete. The
next morning Martha enters Sally’s room to find out why she has not got
up and not yet come in the kitchen. She finds the door locked and the
only reply is the whimpering of Sally’s baby. Martha Bultitaft arrives and
says to Mrs Eleanor, in an anxiety and trouble that Sally has overslept and
does not give answer from the inside. Eleanor thinks that Sally has a busy
last night fete, so she oversleeps for a long time. But within two minutes
Martha comes back with panic, saying “I can’t make her hear me. The
baby’s awake. He’s whimpering in there. I can’t make Sally hear!” (44).
At last, Felix and Stephen bring a ladder and enter in Sally’s bedroom.
When they enter in her bedroom, they find her in bed, her eyes are closed,
and her baby is playing beside the dead body.

Sally Jupp is murdered last night and she is found dead by a
manual strangulation with healthy hands and short nails. She has also
been drugged by sleeping pills putting in her night drink. There is a
puzzle and no any clear benchmark to know who has done the murder.
The mysterious murder of Sally creates sudden rush, excitement, and
terror in the minds of readers as her dead body looks horrible:
Over the pillow Sally’s hair was spread like a web of gold. Her eyes were closed but she was not asleep. From the clenched corner of her mouth a thin trickle of blood had dried like a black slash. On each side of her neck was a bruise where the killer’s hands had choked the life from her. (46)

Thus, the death of Sally Jupp has changed the track of the novel and the question remains, who is the killer of Sally Jupp. “Her death effectively diverts this book from its formula track and onto a separate road, the road of the mystery. From that point on the object of the story is not romance, but problem solving” (8). As crime takes place at the Martingale, most of the members of the Maxie’s household and their connections are suspected of murdering Sally Jupp. Some motives and objects increase the suspicion. Mrs Maxie, Martha, Catherine Bowers, Stephan Maxie, and Felix Hearne come under the suspicion.

When the Detective chief-inspector, Adam Dalgliesh and his assistant, detective Sergeant Martin, arrive from Scotland Yard to investigate the murder, they find out nothing as a clue or motive for their investigation. Dalgliesh is very honest to his work. His honesty reflects through his speech, “work was work wherever you did it, but a man was to his preferences” (47). As Sherlock Holmes has paired with Dr. Watson for the detection of crime in Doyle’s stories, in the same way, Dalgliesh is paired with Sergeant Martin in this novel.

As per police procedural method the team of Dalgliesh inspects the whole house in which the crime has taken place. By using his rational methods and procedures of police work Dalgliesh goes through the murder investigation; there are a number of puzzling questions in his
mind. He collects all information about the relationship among the characters. Catherine Bowers hates Sally, because she expects to marry Stephen. Mrs Eleanor Maxie does not agree with the engagement between Sally and Stephen, and so she strongly opposes it. Deborah Riscoe also hates Sally and even Maxie’s old domestic servant Martha Bultitaft is not very much pleased with Sally Jupp. The story is about personal hates, envy and jealousy. It is very difficult to find out the murderer as many characters come under suspicion including Miss. Liddell and Martha.

Adam Dalgliesh knows that the murder committed in closed circle is always connected with everyone. So, he inspects the room in which he finds out the mug of her late-night drink. The photographer has also completed his work with the dead body. There are no signs of sexual interferences but that does not mean that sex is not the motive of her murder. This is the forensic method of investigation of murder along with several clues, evidences and the interviews of suspects. The room which he has inspected is large and well furnished. There is a curious anonymity about the room:

Prowling from the bookshelf to the chest of drawers, Dalgliesh pulled out each drawer and systematically turned over its contents with practiced fingers. They were in perfect order. The top drawer held only baby clothes. Most of them were hand-knitted, all were well washed and cared for. The second was full of the girl’s own underclothes, arranged in neat piles. It was the third and bottom drawer which held the surprise. (52)
Dalgliesh moves over to the oriel window. He examines his facts with the help of rational and logical method to find out intruder. There is no sign of attempted sexual assault and no any evidence of theft.

Dalgliesh has decided to summon all members in the drawing room and ask questions regarding the matter. Adam Dalgliesh and detective-sergeant Martin take interviews of the members and guests of the Martingale house. He gets the detailed information of the victim, Sally. Everyone is terrified by his method. Tension and fear are visible on their faces. The murder mystery unravels bit-by-bit throughout his investigations. Dalgliesh moves his glance briefly over the small group. He begins from Stephen Maxie who loves Sally and wants to marry her. He proposes her and keeps the secret from the household. There is one more suspense about the Sommeil tablets which are missing; the same tablets which are doped in Sally’s drink. Dalgliesh asks Hearne to describe the dead body, as he sees it first. He describes the dead body:

There was trickle of blood at the corner of her mouth her eyes were almost closed. There was a fairly distinct thumb impression under the right lower jaw over the cornu of the thyroid and less clear indication of finger-marks on the left side of the neck lying along the thyroid cartilage. It was an obvious case of manual strangulation with the right hand and from the front. (62)

Sally is killed inside the room which is locked. The door has two heavy inside bolts and mortice lock. The lock is not used for years, and the keys are always with Mrs Maxie. There is another door into the kitchen quarters. Anyone can get in through the French window in the drawing...
room. Dalgliesh turns towards Catherine Bowers, who also wants to marry Stephen and so hates Sally. She may be the killer.

Dalgliesh asks some question to Mrs Maxie, who is not agree with the marriage and engagement of Sally and her son Stephen. She is an English lady and leads her life with the values of English country house. She personally feels that if Stephen marries Sally Jupp, it is her insult in the tradition of English bureaucracy.

The post mortem report shows that Miss Jupp is drugged and the drug is found in her night drink. Dalgliesh finds two possibilities whether she could have taken the drug herself or someone else has drugged her for a particular reason:

If this crime was premeditated her murderer must have considered how he—or she—could get into that room and kill the girl with the least possible disturbance. To drug her is an obvious answer. That supposes that the murderer is familiar with the evening drink routine at Martingale and knew where the drugs were kept. (79)

Thus, he concludes that only the murderer knows about the hidden drugs. Mrs Martha Bultitaft who is the old and long-time servant at Martingale always puts pills in Sally’s night drink, so she can oversleep again. She hates her as her kitchen maid partner. The doubt turns towards Stephen Maxie the man who is probably in love with her and when she tells him about her intention to marry him, he kills her in a sudden access of jealousy or anger.

Dalgliesh and his team decided to visit St Mary’s Refuge to collect the information about Sally’s past life. She has spent her life in St Mary Refuge School with Warden Miss Liddell. There also Dalgliesh comes to
know about the motive behind her murder. He concludes that Sally’s engagement with Mr Maxie is the prime reason for her death. In this novel the emphasis is laid on the events and the objects which are interpreted by the detective. It is difficult for Dalgliesh to confirm an obvious suspects and the motive. His mind is confused with the new evidence. The medical evidence shows that the death is caused by vagal inhibition during the manual strangulation and has been very sudden. There are about one and half grains of barbiturate acid in her stomach.

Mrs Maxie has taken an active part and interest in Sally’s funeral ceremony. Dalgliesh and Martine try to find out the evidences of the murder mystery. Sommeil pills are used to drug Sally, which is taken from Mr Simon Maxie’s cupboard. As far as the investigation is concerned, some of the puzzling questions are there in the mind of Adam Dalgliesh, related to the murder and the killer:

Why was Mrs Maxie so sure Sally’s door could not be locked? Why did Martha insist Sally must have killed herself? Who drugged the cup of cocoa found beside Sally’s bed? Who stole the sleeping pills from the medicine chest after the body was discovered? Why did Sally keep secret the name of her husband? (Gidez 17)

These questions could lead Dalgliesh to the killer. Martingale is the centre of a murder investigation so all objects and evidences are connected with the house. With the help of these questions Dalgliesh leads his further investigation.

In *Cover Her Face*, the role of Deborah Riscoe is also very important. She is Stephen Maxie’s twin sister, a young widow, who is stunningly attractive, intelligent, and self-interested. The same thing
happens with Dalgliesh. He is a widower as his wife and only child, a son, have died in childbirth. Dalgliesh and Deborah have an intense relationship between each other. The novel develops the love relationship between Dalgliesh and Deborah. James, in her debut, builds the bridge of romance and love, which remains up to the end of Dalgliesh series.

The Martingale house stands up now “with an unsolved crime hanging over” the family (138). Like the classic detective stories of the 1920s, Dalgliesh now gathers all the members together, and in his calm and deep voice explains what has happened at Martingale house at the night of annual church fete. Sally’s room is bolted from inside and she is died of brutal manual strangulation by a right handed person with healthy hands and short nails. The evidence is enough for him to reach at the killer’s identity. Killer has used an effective ways of killing without any weapon.

When Dalgliesh suspects Mr Stephen Maxie, he asks some questions to him regarding his fiancée, Sally. But he expresses his deep sense of grief to his fiancée’s death. He says very fondly, “Cover her face” (70). As in the Webster’s play Ferdinand mourns the death of his sister the Duchess. Stephen shows respect to his fiancée. Then, Dalgliesh eliminates him from his list of suspects. There is one more evidence that Sally’s night drink has been drugged with sleeping Sommeil pills which are prescribed for Mr Maxie. Catherine Bowers tells Dalgliesh that she has noticed the Sommeil pills in Mrs Maxie’s room. Mrs Maxie has invited her to help herself. The Sommeil tablets are missing from the drug cupboard at the night of Sally’s death.

She described how she had woken with a headache after a poor night and had gone in search of aspirin. Mrs Maxie had
invited her to help herself. It was then that she had noticed the little bottle of Sommeil. At first she had mistaken the tablets for aspirin but had quickly realized that they were too small and were the wrong colour. Apart from that, the bottle was labelled. She had not noticed how many Sommeil tablets were in the bottle but she was absolutely certain that the bottle was in the drug cupboard at seven o’clock that morning and equally certain that it was no longer there when she and Stephan Maxie had looked for it after the finding of Sally Jupp’s body. The only Sommeil in the cupboard then had been an unopened and sealed packet. (69)

Dalgliesh thinks that Mrs Maxie may be used the tablets for the death. He collects all evidences, proofs and information. Even he has conducted the interviews of the suspects. He analyses the clues and hidden puzzle of the murder. He arrives at the conclusion to announce the name of a culprit. There is nothing left to discover about Sally Jupp. Throughout his detection procedure, the church bell accompanies him in the case as a theological symbol:

As Dalgliesh opened his dossier he heard the first slow notes of the church bell. The bells had been ringing when he first arrived at Martingale. They had sounded often as a background to his investigation, the mood music of murder. Now they tolled like a funeral bell and he wondered irrelevantly who in the village had died; someone for whom the bells were tolling as they had not tolled for Sally. (189)

Now Dalgliesh makes his final conclusion of the murder mystery. This crime is the contrast between the apparent premeditations and the actual
execution. The murderer uses hand as an object to strangle Sally Jupp. The murderer knows the skill of killing without weapon. He further states about the crime:

This was not a slow strangulation. There were few of the classical signs of asphyxiation. Considerable force has been used and there was a fracture of the superior cornu of the thyroid at its base. Nevertheless, death was due to vagal inhibition and was very sudden. It may well have taken place even if the strangler had used considerably less force. The picture on the face of it was of a single unpremeditated attack. This is borne out, too, by the use of hands. If a murderer intends to kill by strangulation, it is usually done with a cord, or with a scarf, or stocking, perhaps. This isn’t invariable, but you can see the reason for it. Few people can be confident of their ability to kill with the bare hands. There is one person in this room who might feel that confidence, but I don’t think he would have used this method. There are some effective ways of killing without a weapon and he would have known them. (190)

Dalgliesh uses his strategy and declared Mr Stephen Maxie as a murderer of Sally, so he could identify the actual murderer. It is shocking news for Martingale House and especially for Mrs Eleanor Maxie. She wants to save her son and does not want to see him in prison. She confesses her guilt quietly:

I went to her room to talk to her. It seemed that the marriage might not be so bad a thing if she were really fond of my son. I wanted to find out what she felt. I was tired and I
should have waited till the morning. She was lying there on her bed and singing to herself. It would have been all right if she hadn’t done two things. She laughed at me. And she told me, Stephen, that she was going to have your child. It was so very quick. One second she was alive and laughing. The next she was a dead thing in my hands. (212)

Being an egoist woman, and not able to tolerate her insult she has killed Sally Jupp. She is found guilty on the charge of manslaughter. She has killed Sally in a cruel manner without mercy by giving drugs in her drinks. Police arrest her send her to prison. She has killed Sally to save her so-called traditional country values and ethics in the society.

*Cover Her Face* is a classic mystery. Dalgliesh finds out the secret, and solves the riddle to find out the criminal. The novel is an intelligent mind game between the criminal and the detective. At the time of interview with Mrs Maxie, Dalgliesh notes her short nails, and at the same time Deborah’s long nails, as a clue for his further investigation.

Personal hate and envy is the major motive for the murder. Mrs Maxie has strangled Sally Jupp in a cruel manner. The house is empty, she goes to prison and Deborah is left alone in the house; her husband Mr Maxie has died before Mrs Maxie’s confession. Susan Rowland, in *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell*, rightly comments:

. . . *Cover Her Face* . . . located criminal desire as centring upon a woman who deliberately blurred categories of deviant unmarried mother, wife and single woman (160).

The above quote explains that the present mystery focuses upon a woman Sally Jupp, who is the victim. No one knows her past, but she is an unmarried mother. She has married James Ritchie. Therefore, in the
whole classic puzzle she plays vital role a single woman even though she is married.

The novel covers the hidden personality of Sally Jupp, who is the first victim of James’s Adam Dalgliesh mystery series. Through this case Dalgliesh develops his critical insight to look over the case. James has used cinematic picture in the present murder mystery. The novel is appreciated by several critics, scholars and fans of the crime and mystery fiction. By this novel James has made her independent identity on the horizon of crime and mystery fiction. Barzun and Taylor in *A Catalogue of Crime* observe:

Her first detective story, immediately pleasing and impressive. The pace is deliberate, the characterization of the members of an English country family very well done, and the central character of Sally Jupp . . . a servant girl with imagination and a love of power . . . most unusual but compelling. Insp. Dalgliesh is perhaps too quietly competent in his disclosure of Sally’s killer . . . and, despite the title, the girls isn’t a Duchess of Malfi. (1971: 253)

This is fine combination of ‘locked-room’ and ‘country–house’ mystery. James has depicted white-collar crime through this tale. The novel can be compared with Edger Allan Poe’s *The Murder in the Rue Morgue* (1841) and Wilkie Collins *The Moonstone* (1868) which, are locked-room murder mysteries.

A year after the publication of her previous successful novel, James’s second novel *A Mind to Murder* was published in 1963. The novel is very significant; it is based on James’s real experience in the Hospital Administration. James writes the present novel as an innovative
writer, creating and describing a world very differently from the Standard English Country House.

The setting of the novel is the Steen Clinic, a psychiatric hospital in London. It is more contemporary and realistic one than her first book. In her first novel she has described Elizabethan Manor house as a setting, a gothic picture. The present novel moves around the medical world of the ‘Steen Clinic’ and its white-collar community. The Steen Clinic is the central place and the story explores its central characters and their relationships such as doctors, nurses, administrators, orderlies, and patients. The novel is the keen and complete study of characters and their realistic world. All characters come from different backgrounds; they have different motives and drives. The book attempts to make a study of the people, who are different from ordinary people. It is a kind of medical thriller and its focus is on the frame of the story, the details of the profession, and it demands the element of puzzle, suspense, and physical, emotional, and mental dangers faced by the hero.

James herself suffers from the pain of the World War and several experiences of British Health, Medical and Justice Departments:

_A Mind to Murder_ is the first of her books to have a medical setting, the hallmark of her best mysteries. The use of such a setting reflects James’s own experience as a hospital administrator and as a wife to a man incapacitated by mental illness. The medical setting also becomes a fit back-drop for one of James’s most persistent themes—Pain. (Gidez 26)

Pain is the key word in James’s fiction and her character suffers from physical and mental pain. All victims die painfully; murderers kill the
victims out of a sense of pain. Pain is a part of human being which James encompasses in her novels.

The Steen Clinic shows the contemporary and realistic world of London, specially the Britain’s National Health Services. The Steen has been founded by Hyman Stein and he maintains its independent status and reputation within the framework of the National Health Service. It is a psychiatric facility hospital that specializes in helping those who are not dealing with severe mental problems but rather have minor conditions and desire discretion. It is set in an old house in London, so the building is meant to be fairly warm for patients, if not entirely inviting for the public.

On Friday evening, the clinic is opened for the session of Dr. James Baguley’s electro-convulsive therapy (E. C. T), and the staff is engaged in their work. At that time Miss Priddy with shocking manner says to Dr. Baguley:

“It’s Miss Bolam. She’s dead. Someone’s killed her. She’s in the basement record room and she’s murdered. I found her. Enid’s been murdered!” (18)

Thus, Miss Enid Bolam, one of the administrative officers is murdered, someone killed her and she is found in the basement record room. Jennifer Priddy a junior typist finds the dead body. Her dead body is surrounded by the scattered files and old documents. Enid Bolam has been stabbed through the heart with a chisel. After the death of Miss Bolam, the track of the novel changes from the crime to its investigation.

Dr. Henry Etherege, who is the medical director, gathers all staff and the patients and orders them not to leave the building including. It is
a shocking news and trouble for the members of the clinic. Dr. Steiner expresses his pity about Miss Bolam’s dead body:

In life he had thought of her as graceless and unattractive, and death had lent her no dignity. She lay on her back, her knees raised and parted so that there was an expanse of pink woollen knicker clearly visible, looking far more indecent than naked flesh. Her round, heavy face was quite peaceful. The two thick plaits which she wore wound above her broad forehead were undisturbed. But then, nothing had ever been known to disturb Miss Bolam’s archaic hair style. (21-22)

Now the staff of the clinic decides to call the police. Adam Dalgliesh a detective holds the position of Superintendent. He has been promoted in his profession and now in charge of this case. He attends the case along with his squad. Here Dalgliesh visits Deborah Riscoe, a daughter of Mrs Maxie from the novel Cover Her Face. Dalgliesh suffers a lot by the pain of loneliness. His wife has died in childbirth and even Deborah is also a widow. Throughout this novel the love relationship between them is flourished. Along with his team, he comes to the Steen Clinic:

The house itself was one of a Georgian terrace. It stood at the south corner of the square, comfortable, unpretentious and wholly pleasing. At the rear a narrow passage ran into Lincoln Square Mews. There was a railed basement; in front of the house the railing curved on each side of the broad steps which led to the door and supported two wrought-iron lamp standards. On the right of the door an unpretentious
bronze plaque bore the name of the Hospital Management Committee which administered the unit and, underneath, the words, “The Steen Clinic”. (30)

Dalgliesh tries to examine the building; its past and about its ownership. Hyman Stein has founded the Steen Clinic and maintains its independent value or reputation within the framework of the National Health Service. He starts investigation with the help of ample motives. Within a couple of hours, he has to apply his forensic method, to discover who is responsible for the crime. He observes the body but the primary inspection is hard to analyse the case. It is narrated as:

He did not touch it except to part the cardigan and blouse, both of which were unbuttoned, and expose the handle of the chisel. It had been driven up to the hilt. There was very little bruising of the tissues and no blood. The woman’s vest has been rolled up above her breast to expose the flesh for that vicious calculated thrust. Such deliberation suggested that the killer had a confident knowledge of anatomy. There were easier ways of killing than to pierce the heart with one thrust. But for those with the knowledge and the strength there were few ways so sure. (32-33)

The murderer has killed Bolam and hidden her dead body in a basement room full of old record files. Dalgliesh unravels the murder mystery saying that the murderer is very sharp and intelligent with the skill of murdering.

The novel explores the tale of various staff members related to the medical world. One psychiatrist himself suffers from his doomed marriage and unhappy divorce. A doctor suffers from his marriage to a
neurotic woman and his affair with his mistress. The clinic’s administrative officer has lost her mother; she commits a suicide because of her mental illness. The porter of the hospital is aging and sick. The former patient of the clinic is under the huge tension of blackmailer. The novel is filled with broken marriages and unhappy emotional lives and intricacies of the clinic’s internal politics. The world of doctors and their activities are reflected through the disastrous marriage, an illegal affair, blackmail, etc. Thus, the novel unfolds the theme of personal gloom, the human unhappiness and insecurity of the life.

The Steen Clinic itself is an object to develop the story line. An essential elements of mystery and crime novel like the characters, the setting, the plot, the problem and the solution are present in the novel. The setting becomes an appropriate site for the murder. James through this novel expresses her unsympathetic view about doctors.

Dalgliesh conducts the interviews of all members present at the Steen Clinic: Dr. Paul Steiner, the consulting psychiatrist at the Steen Clinic; Mr Burge, Peter Nagle, Mrs Shorthouse, and Miss. Priddy. Dalgliesh uses a different sort of detection methods in this case. He collects the essential evidences, lists the suspected people and then he starts his investigation. Peter Nagle, who is the owner of the chisel, comes under the shadow of suspicion. Nagle is a very sharp, serious and talented painter in the clinic, having a partner Jennifer Priddy. Dalgliesh applies forensic method to find out the clues and motives of the murder mystery:

Dalgliesh disappeared into the record-room with the police surgeon and photographer. The print man, small and plumb-cheeked as hamster, with tiny delicate hands, gave his
attention to door handles, locks, the tool case and Tippett’s fetish. Plain-clothes men, made their methodical search of every room and cupboard in the clinic verifying that there was indeed no unauthorized person on the premises and that the back doors both of the ground floor and the basement were securely locked from the inside. (36-37)

The story has changed its track from the murder of Miss Bolam. Now it turns from crime to the police procedural or detection. He collects all information about Miss Enid Bolam. She is pretty, honest and lacking in experience of life, knowledge or good judgement. She has a shapely and oddly mature body, along with innocent nature and a great sense of her duty. When Adam Dalgliesh discovers her personal life, he finds that she is very efficient in her professional life; neat and obsessively tidy. Her personal life is totally apart from her work. Due to her honesty and efficiency, as well as her devotion towards the Steen Clinic, she is the victim of clinic’s internal politics.

Dalgliesh believes that the outsider member cannot kill Bolam and the killer is still in the building. Miss Bolam has some enemies in the clinic. Many people hate her because she holds a significant position in the clinic. Everyone who knows her agrees that Enid Bolam is very strict and efficient woman. Before her murder, Miss Bolam has made a telephone call with Mr Lauder about the serious matter in the clinic. Then there is the question in the mind of Dalgliesh why Miss Bolam, on the morning of the murder, has phoned Mr Lauder to tell him something is going on at the Steen Clinic. She has needed advice from him so she has asked to speak to him personally and has sent a message through his secretary. When Dalgliesh asks about the exact conversation, the secretary replies it has been more or less like:
Can I have an appointment to see you as soon as possible? I think there may be something going on here that you ought to know about. I should like your advice. Something that started well before my time here.’ I said that I couldn’t see her this afternoon as I would be in the Finance and General Purposes Committee from two-thirty onwards and had a Joint Consultative Committee immediately afterwards. I asked whether she could give me any idea what it was all about and whether it couldn’t wait until Monday. She hesitated, so, before she could reply, I said, I’d drop in on my way home this evening. I knew they had a late clinic on Fridays. She said that she would arrange to be alone in her office from six-thirty onwards, thanked me, and rang off. The J.C.C. lasted longer than I expected—that Committee always does—and I got here just before seven-thirty. But you know that. I was still in Committee at the time they found the body, as no doubt you’ll be checking in due course.” (51)

There may be something serious going on and Bolam is aware of the matter. She is suspicious about the systematic policy of thieving. She suspects that someone blackmails the patients. Miss Enid Bolam realizes the internal politics of the medical staff. The death of Miss Bolam is connected with blackmailing. One of the patients has sent fifteen pounds in an envelope addressed in green ink to the administrative secretary of the clinic. The arrival of those fifteen pounds is mysterious. It creates trouble among the staff. Dalgliesh is confused whether the connection between the two crimes are appropriate or not. Miss Bolam’s call to Mr
Lauder for the advice is related to her death. It is important to discover what she has suspected and what she knows about the serious matter.

Money and financial gain is the major matter of the story. The well-trained, highly competent staff of the clinic is always jealous, and they hate, and envy one another. The questions arise before Dalgliesh: who will be benefited by this death? What are the different reasons behind the murder? Miss Enid Bolam’s cousin, Nurse Marion Bolam also works in Electro Convulsive Therapy unit. They have a grandmother who has left all her money to Enid Bolam and neglected Marion Bolam. Dalgliesh thinks that the money may be the reason of Miss Enid Bolam’s murder. The murder mystery turns sometimes towards Peter Nagle, who is the owner of chisel and sometimes Marion Bolam may be the killer. Both Dalgliesh and Martin have examined the basement room for the last time, so they can collect remaining clues and evidences.

The clinic does not open on Saturday so the police are able to work in the building. The whole affair is mysterious and puzzling. The mystery also throws light upon the relationship between Jennifer Priddy and Peter Nagle. They have a physical relation with each other. It is narrated as:

The girl smiled again, gathered up her clothes with one arm and the tea tray with the other and disappeared through a door at the far end of the studio. It was difficult to recognize in this confident sensual figure the tear-stained, diffident child Dalgliesh had first seen at the Steen. He watches her as she passed. She was obviously naked except for the dressing gown of Nagle’s; her hard nipples pointed the thin wool. It came to Dalgliesh that they had been making love. (158)
The circle of suspicions moves around restricted community of the Steen Clinic. When Dalgliesh asks to Miss Fredrica Saxon about the reality of the case she says what she thinks about the motives for a murder to Dalgliesh. Judging by character and the nature of the crime, Miss Saxon assumes that the killer is Peter Nagle or of course a male so she says:

Partly because I think this was a masculine crime. The stabbing is significant. I can’t see a woman killing in just that way. Faced with an unconscious victim I think a woman would strangle. Then there’s the chisel. To use it with such expertise suggests an identification of the weapon with the killer. (187)

There are two crimes along with mystery to combine together to fulfil the curiosity of the fans of the crime and mystery fiction. Blackmailing and murder two icons of crime have been used in the present novel. The case has “the obvious suspect, the obvious motive”. So for Dalgliesh this case is too obvious and perfectly straightforward. Dalgliesh finds that someone at the Steen Clinic is blackmailing the former patients. He finds a victim of blackmailing, Colonel Fenton, who as per the instruction sends fifteen pounds by the first of each month to the administrative officer at the Steen in an envelope addressed in green ink. The demand is never increased, but once the payment is late so there is another phone call by the blackmailer. The series of the phone calls create menace in the mind of Colonel Fenton. He wants to stop the matter, and tells the whole thing to his wife. She suspects Enid Bolam as a blackmailer. When she knows about Bolam’s death, she expresses her pity for her and says to Dalgliesh:

So somebody killed her. I know I ought to feel pity for her whatever she did. But I can’t. Not yet. I should have realized
that Matthew wouldn’t be the only victim. These people never stop at one victim, do they? I suppose someone couldn’t stand it anymore and took that way out. It’s a very terrible thing, but I can understand it. I read about it in the papers, you know, before the medical director telephoned. Do you know, Superintendent, for a moment I was glad. That’s a terrible thing to say, but it’s true. I was glad she was dead. I thought that now Matthew needn’t worry any more.

(206)

It is thought that money is the most obvious motive behind the murder. As per instruction Colonel Fenton has send fifteen pounds to the blackmailer. Mrs Fenton has given detailed information to Dalgliesh. Her husband has been being blackmailed since last two years. Dalgliesh clears Mrs Fenton’s doubt that Miss Bolam is not blackmailing her husband. It is possible that Bolam has been killed because she has found out the actual blackmailer of Fenton in the Steen Clinic. The blackmailer is very sharp; there is an unknown voice of woman on the telephone. Someone rings the Fenton, and the voice on the telephone is a woman’s voice. After the inspection of the matter, Dalgliesh says:

It’s interesting that your husband should say it was a woman. He could be right, but it would be a clever deception on the blackmailer’s part and difficult to disprove. Some men are able to mimic a woman’s voice very convincingly and the casual references to establish sex would be even more effective than a disguised voice. If the colonel had decided to prosecute and the matter had come to court, it would have been very difficult to convict a man of this particular crime unless the evidence was very strong. And as far as I can see
the evidence would be almost non-existent. I think we keep a very open mind on the question of the blackmailer’s sex.

(212)

Thus, the mystery of the murder still becomes complicated. The experience of the complex case has been a sobering one for Dalgliesh. Both Dalgliesh and Sergeant Martin come to certain conclusions. They analyse the clues, evidences and personal interviews of the doctors, nurses, and staff of the Steen Clinic. Peter Nagle is the prime suspect for the crime of blackmailing of the former patients:

. . . Peter Nagle let himself into the Steen by the front door and locked it behind him. He did not put on the lights but made his way to the basement with the aid of his heavy torch. There wasn’t much to be done; just the kiln to be turned off, the boiler inspected . . . . It would mean entering the record room but that warm, echoing place of death had no terror for him. (228)

Peter Nagle and his beloved Jennifer Priddy are blackmailing the patients. Nagle has attempted brutal attack on Jenny because he fears that she may betray him and disclose the blackmailing scheme to Dalgliesh. She is of no more importance to him. As she is an effective witness against him, so he tries to kill her. Nagle is a psychologically haunted killer as well as a blackmailer. He offers her foaming light beer. He has pulled a cushion from one of the armchairs and pushed it under her head, “he couldn’t make love to her now” (237). Her body is relaxed, she sleeps for forever. Dalgliesh has arrested him on the charge of the murder of Jennifer Priddy. He confesses his crime. He does not kill Miss Bolam. It is Nurse
Marion Bolam who has forced him into all the trouble and danger of murder of Enid and Jenny.

Two months later a magistrate court accused Marion Grace Bolam for trial on a charge of her cousin’s murder. Marion Bolam uses an intelligent plan to kill her sister:

. . . Marion Bolam making that final contemptuous gesture.
But it was an obvious crime, all right . . . . The rubber gloves she wore were stuffed back in her uniform pocket. The weapons she chose were the ones nearest to hand . . . . she telephoned the general office and asked Nagle not to come down . . . . Then she rang for her cousin. She couldn’t be absolutely sure that Enid would come alone and the excuse had to be valid so she threw the medical records on the floor.
Then she waited in the record room for her victim, fetish in hand and chisel in her uniform pocket. (248)

Making easy money and greed for money are the major motives for the both murderers. Nurse Marion Grace Bolam and Peter Nagle are arrested on the charge of her cousin’s and Jennifer’s murder. She feels no guilt for being found criminal. Now they are behind the bar. The novel throws light on the real picture of contemporary society. Most of the people run towards making easy money, they have greed for money. For the sake of money people commit crimes like murder, blackmailing, robbery etc.

Here, James has formulated good use of the device, which she has used in her earlier novel *Cover Her Face*. In *Cover Her Face* (1962), the major character Sally Jupp is murdered with the proper conspiracy and personal hate, but in the present novel, she explores both blackmailing as well as a murder mystery at the same time. The murder mystery is highly
twisted and Dalgliesh blames himself to concentrate on Nagel as a murderer instead of Marion Bolam.

James has painted the story of blackmailing, medical thriller and the murder mystery intelligently and interestingly. The novel is well-plotted; clues and puzzles are pasteurizing or handling in the manner of complex mystery fiction. The present novel has surprising ending and makes its nature complex. As the civil servant of National Health Service, James is well aware of the mental illness and psychological dilemma of patients. Hence, it is possible for her to underline the realistic picture of people around hospitals and clinics from first-hand experience. The novel is photographic representations of her real experience which gives a shock and surprising ending.

According to *Times Literary Supplement*, “the book is better than *Cover Her Face*, mainly because of James’s sure handling of the medical background, a far more original setting than the manor home of her first novel, the startling final twist, the accuracy of the social and psychological insights, and the melancholy tone that underlies the book” (30). Like her earlier novel the present novel represents closed-community locale along with medical touch. Christie’s *Peril at End House* (1932), a classic crime and mystery novel is similar with *A Mind to Murder*, in which the murderer and her victim are cousins like Miss. Enid Bolam and Nurse Marion Bolam.

In *Shroud for a Nightingale* (1971), once again, James uses her real experience as a hospital administrator. This medical mystery is set in a hospital and also a Nurse Training School. James has depicted the scenes which she knows best. This novel takes place at Nightingale House, the
nurse’s school attached to the John Carpendar Hospital in Heatheringfield, at the Sussex-Hampshire Border.

Like her earlier novel *A Mind to Murder* (1963), the present novel is another ‘medical thriller’ set in a restricted locale. The novelist very successfully handles the complicated plot as well as makes the study of vivid characters with thought-provoking theme. As James is associated with the tradition of crime and mystery fiction, the present novel explore the theme of the dark legacies of the past, love and selfishness, and the uses and abuses of power. The novel draws attention to the closed community of the hospital world and the outside world.

Nightingale House is, “a mysterious but fascinating world of men and women performing a great variety of necessary jobs from consultant surgeon to ward cleaner” (46). James illustrates the medical world at Nightingale House. Like the Steen Clinic, the Nightingale House is originally a private home, a huge Victorian house. The setting of the novel is appropriate and suitable for the Gothic thriller. The former owner of the Victorian house has been tortured by a young maidservant, who has hanged herself. Her ghost weeps after the dark midnight in the rooms of the ground. The novel is the best example of supernatural horror. James sometimes handles in her literary work like this novel, supernatural, non-supernatural and ancient past as her subject matter.

Miss Muriel Beale, the inspector of the nurse training school has arrived to the grand General Nursing Council, for an annual visit. She is introduced to the principal tutor Miss. Hilda Rolfe, and to a senior consultant surgeon, Mr Stephen Courtney-Briggs. Mary Taylor is the matron of the school; Ethel Brumfett and Mavis Gearing are sisters of the school. Along with staff, the students are also engaged in their job. Nurse
Heather Pearce and Josephine Fallon are the students of the school. Miss Muriel Beale has come there to get information about the function and studies of the training school. She has inspected the class; students are busy in their experiment to practice feeding a patient by intro-gastric tube. Some pour corrosive acid into the warm milk that is the part of the demonstration about how to feed a patient. Nurse Heather Pearson is performing the role of a patient for the demonstration.

James is a serious about her fictional crimes in her novels. She feels that death is a serious matter and it should be written in serious matter. Here, the story covers the sudden death of one of the nurses from the hospital. Sometimes her speciality is to begin the novel with the brutal murder mystery in the early pages of the story. There is shocking and horrible incident takes place in the clinic. The mysterious death of Nurse Heather Pearce at Nightingale House creates sudden change in the community. The milk, which she has drunk, has been replaced by carbolic acid. James describes the murder as ‘horrifying’ in the novel. As the carbolic acid enters into the stomach of the Nurse Pearce, it burns her stomach, and affects her entire body. She dies of a horrible death. All students are frightened by the brutal death of their fellow mate. Miss Taylor gives the information about the horrible death to the students:

Children, Nurse Pearce died a few minutes ago. We don’t yet know how or why, but when something inexplicable like this happens we have to call the police. The hospital Secretary is doing that now. I want you to be brave and sensible as I know you will be. Until the police arrive, I think it would better if we don’t talk about what has happened. You will collect your textbooks and nurse Goodale will take you to wait in my sitting-room. (26)
This is not a natural death; there is something mysterious behind the murder. Mr Stephen decides to call the police. They also decide not to move the dead body until police come. Sister Mavis Gearing has expresses her protest and appeals to the staff:

My dear woman, the girl’s dead! Dead! What does it matter where we have the body? She can’t feel. She can’t know. For God’s sake don’t start being sentimental about death. The indignity is that we die at all, not what happens to our bodies. (28)

She further says that death is supposed as the final separator of the people. Once, the soul is away from the body it becomes not a person, but flesh. Death is a mystery whereas after the death we do not know what happens to our bodies it is mysterious.

Some people think that Pearce has killed herself. There is no need to call the police. Since Pearce’s death, everyone becomes conscious, but Josephine Fallon has not been afraid. The series of crime and murder unravel the story further. The series of murder does not stop only after Pearce’s death, a second of the Nightingale House, Josephine Fallon also dies in the same mysterious manner two weeks after the earlier death of Nurse Pearson. Nurse Dakers who has seen the body of Jo Fallon first, she becomes soundless and is not able to utter a single word. Her tongue is struck into the roof of her mouth. She is very frightened by the death of Jo Fallon.

The second death also seems to be very complex and mysterious. Chief Superintendent arrives at the Nightingale House along with his team. He starts examining the dead girl’s cloths, and glances over the room. The photographer and pathologist are engaged in their work. Now,
Dalgliesh is waiting for the post mortem report. As usual, he extends his investigation by arranging a secret meeting with the students and nurses. The major clue of the murder is the carbolic acid which is added in the milk without a great deal of care, particularly in replacing the bottle seal and making sure that the concentration is right and that stuff has the texture and colour of milk. It cannot have been done in hurry as it is pre-planned.

Jo Fallon always keeps her whiskey in her bedroom. The fingerprint officer keeps the whiskey bottle and beaker on the table. He finds out that this is not likely to be a natural death. There is no evidence of strangulation or suffocation. There is no any external mark of violence on the body. Now, Dalgliesh begins his investigation very systematically, and starts interviewing all those who are involved in the case. In this case nurses like Moureen and Shirley Burt, Julia Pardae, Christine Dakers, Diane Harper and Madeleine Goodale, and all staff of the Nightingale, Mary Taylor, Ethel Brumfett, Rolfe Gearing, Len Morris and a surgeon Stephen Courtney-Briggs come under the shadow of suspicion.

Dalgliesh examines that the direct application of milk and replacement of the acid tube, can be easily done by a woman as it is difficult for a man. The probability is that both the girls are murdered by a woman. The murderer uses his criminal qualities to hide from the view of the closed circle. The death of both the nurses is shocking and very horrible for everyone. Most of the nurses and authorities think that the death is a horrible accident. But it is not an accident but a brutal murder according to Mr Courtney-Briggs when he talks with Sister Mavis Gearing:
‘Accident, Sister?’ Mr Courtney-Briggs turned from the window. He strode over to her and bent his bull-like head close to hers. His voice was harsh, contemptuous as he almost spat the words into her face. ‘Accident? Are you suggesting that a corrosive poison found its way into that feed by accident? Or that a girl in her right mind would choose to kill herself in that particularly horrible way? Come, come, Sister, why not be honest for once? What we’ve just witnessed was murder!’ (29)

Nurse Hearth Pearce and Jo Fallon are orphan girls and sympathetic victim of the story. Madeleine Goodale provides some information to Dalgliesh about Miss Jo Fallon’s previous life. Before her death she has been pregnant and she has hidden the name of the father of her child.

Dalgliesh turns his investigation to the principal tutor Hilda Rolfe. One new point comes into light that Nurse Pearce is blackmailing someone and it may be the major motive for her death. The Nightingale community is very much interested in sex. James explores the homosexual relationship between woman and woman, and man and man. Courtney-Briggs has sexual relation with Josephine Fallon who is his mistress.

Most of the people think that the deaths are suicides and not a murder. They might have committed suicides. Dalgliesh does not agree with them. He asks Nurse Goodale about what has happened immediately after the death of Nurse Pearson. She replies:

I can’t believe that Pearce was murdered. But if she was, then surely the library book could have been taken from her room any time after five to nine when Pearce went into the
demo room. The murderer would know that she wouldn’t come out of that room alive and that it would be safe for him, or her, to remove it. If the book were taken after Pearce’s death it could have been taken by anyone and for a perfectly innocent reason. But if it were taken before she died then it was taken by her killer. That would be true even if the book itself had nothing to do with the reason why she was killed? And Pearce’s question to us all about something missing from her room suggests that the book was taken before she died. And why should the murderer bother to remove it if it wasn’t in some way connected with the crime? (184)

There is a great deal of doubt as the list of the suspects increases. Strong poison of nicotine is mixed in the tube; Hilda Rolfe has blames Leonard Morris and Mavis Gearing for the murder of both the girls. Sister Brumfett is remained to be cross-examined. She is very close friend of Matron Mary Taylor. When Dalgliesh asks Brumfett, she tells that Nurse Pearce’s death is rather different from Nurse Jo Fallon’s death. Nurse Fallon has committed suicide. First she kills Pearce and then herself. Thus, it is said that Fallon has murdered Pearce, and there is no doubt she has her reasons. According to Ethel Brumfett:

There are no valid reasons for murder. And even if Fallon did kill Pearce, I doubt whether she killed herself. I’ve no doubt your colleagues have told you about the rose spray. Remember that Fallon hadn’t been in Nightingale House since that tin of nicotine was placed in the conservatory cupboard. Her set haven’t been in Nightingale House since the spring of last year and Sister Gearing bought the rose
spray in the summer. Nurse Fallon was taken ill on the night that this block began and didn’t return to Nightingale House until the evening before she died. (205)

In the middle of the story James provides the past of Nightingale House and its horrible story. The novel is full of mysterious incidents along with horror and tragic atmosphere. The place is built in 1880 by a Thomas Nightingale, a local string and rope manufacturer who has come up in the world and wants a house to dignify his new position. Nightingale has lived there with his wife; they have no children, until 1886. One tragic and rather horrible story happens in the Nightingale Estate. In the January of that year the body of one of the maidservants, a nineteen-year old girl called Nancy Gorringe, who has been taken by Mrs Nightingale from an orphanage, is found hanging from one of the trees in the grounds. The body is systematically ill-treated, beaten, tortured over a period of months. The novel is also a fine fusion of supernatural element along with suspense, thriller, excitement, and a sense of menace. The Nightingale house and its community hear the voice of weeping of Nancy Gorringe’s ghost. And now, two murders of Nurse Pearce and Nurse Jo Fallon add to the history of the violence and horror.

After having examined all members of the Nightingale House, a new evidence comes into the light. The solution of the murders at Nightingale house lies in the past, in one of the most evil chapters of twentieth century history-Nazi Germany. German woman, Irmgard Grobel, is once employed at the John Carpendar. She is a former accused war criminal and has been acquitted for taking part in the killing of Jewish slave workers in the German concentration camp. The court is not trying the defendant Irmgard Grobel for her participation in the death of German nationals. Afterwards, Grobel has started her new life in England
and obviously would not want this incident of her past to come into light. She hides her old identity and leads her life with a new identity as Mary Taylor. Within a short span of time she involves in the company of Nightingale. Ethel Brumfett is completely dedicated to Matron. They take tea together, golf together, vacation together. Brumfett is Matron’s “protector, adviser, confidante” (276).

Nurse Heather Pearce blackmails Ethel Brumfett. Pearce and Fallon have discovered something about Ethel Brumfett’s past. Ethel Brumfett has killed Jo Fallon and Nurse Heather. Brumfett’s detailed confession is found in her room:

I killed Heather Pearce and Josephine Fallon. They had discovered something about my past, something which was no concern of theirs, and were threatening to blackmail me. When Sister Gearing rang to tell me Fallon had been taken ill and was warded I knew that Nurse Pearce would act the patient in her place. I collected the bottle of disinfectant very early that morning and filled one of the empty milk bottles from the sister’s utility room. I replaced the cap carefully and took the bottle with me to breakfast in my tapestry bag. All I had to do was to slip into the demonstration room after I had finished breakfast and substitute the bottle of poison for the bottle of milk on the trolley. (289)

From this, it is clear that Ethel Brumfett is the killer. The murder mysteries of both girls are now solved. Pearce has blackmailed Brumfett so she has killed her and she wanted to implicate Josephine Fallon in Pearce’s death. Pearce has made no financial demand but enjoys her secret knowledge and past.
In an epilogue, there is one sealed and addressed envelopes to Dalgliesh. The writing is perfectly firm, black and spiky. The envelope is from Mary Taylor:

They wouldn’t believe you that but you were right. I killed Ethel Brumfett. It was the first time I had ever killed; it seems important that you should know that. I injected her with evipan, just as I shall shortly do myself. She thought I was giving her a sedative. Poor trusting Brumfett! She would have easily taken nicotine from my hand and it would have been as appropriate. (311)

Brumfett and Mary have been mates since twenty years in Nightingale House. After knowing Brumfett’s crime, Mary has killed her to free herself from her “intolerable devotion” (285).

The novel focuses on greed for power-to reach the top of the hierarchy of community. The present novel throws light on several issues like power, blackmailing, sex, homosexuality, and Nazism etc. The novel ends with happiness. Nurse Dakers is appointed as the chief and has an authority to lead the Nightingale House.

In the present novel James draws the world of women and the closed community of Nightingale House with their white-collar conducts like jealousies, sexual frustration, hatred, etc. She also explores the various types of love-relationship. “The love one woman may have for another ranges in this book from the purely sexual and selfish to the possessive to the purely innocent and happy” (Gidez 48). The world of hospital is full of sex, romance and homosexuality. To some extent the novel may be categorised as a “sexual crime novel.” Josephine Fallon has a subsequent homosexual affair with her brother Stephen Courtney-
Briggs, who is a senior consultant surgeon at John Carpendar. Other illegal relationships are between Brumfett and Mary Taylor, and Mavis Gearing and Nurse Goodale, etc. The characters try to fulfil their sexual urge through sexual activities.

James has written the present novel in the tradition of ‘Historical Crime Fiction’. History is produced and viewed predominantly with social, political and historical context of the particular era. The journey of the historical novel moves from present to the past and past to the present. This type of fiction is often termed as ‘trans-historical crime fiction’ according to Murphy. (247).

The novel is considered as the novel of murder, the novel of detection and the novel of serious intent. The novel catches the attention of the fans and critics of the medical thriller. The title of James’s novel provides symbolic meaning to the readers. Gidez explains the significance of the title as:

The title announces this dual character, “Shroud” refer not only to the burial garments, the winding sheets, used to wrap corpses, but also to concealment as in the phrase “shrouded in mystery.” Both connotations are, of course, appropriate for a thriller. But “Shrouded” also carries the connotations, of complexity, duplicity. In Shroud for a Nightingale, motivations, personal relationship, and questions of right and wrong, innocence and guilt, are themselves wrapped in shadows, shrouded in ambiguity. (46)

The book has earned James high praise by several scholar and critics. It is the traditional British mystery praised by several scholars and critics. Robin W. Winks appreciated this book and saying, “Here mood,
pace, style and atmosphere are all in perfect balance” (54). This novel is
the bridge to understand James’s next murder mystery and an adventure
thriller *Unnatural Causes*.

*Unnatural Causes* (1967) is a significant and third mystery novel
through which James has offered her homage to the writers whose
influence James has acknowledged in her literary journey, especially to
Dorothy Leigh Sayers. The novel is set on the English coast of Suffolk,
Monksmere, a small village on the Suffolk coast. The place is known as a
vacation cottage with “the sea slowly eating it away” (Craig 642). The
novel is the best example of mystery and thriller run parallel at the same
time throughout the novel. Mystery, thriller, and adventure are all
combined together in this novel.

Adam Dalgliesh is on vacation cottage, staying with his aunt Jane
in Suffolk. This time Adam Dalgliesh is a “Scotland Yard’s Wonder
Boy” (15). Now he holds the position of a Superintendent. He arrives at
Monksmere Head, a desolate headland near Ipswich in Suffolk, to visit
his only living relative, an elderly aunt Jane Dalgliesh, and wants to spent
a ten-day autumn holiday with her and his beloved bird sanctuary.

During the time of his holiday, most of the time he has been
thinking about Deborah Riscoe. They have been lovers for years and so
Dalgliesh has decided to ask her to marry him. She is the same woman
whose mother Dalgliesh has sent to prison in his first case described in
*Cover Her Face*. Since his first meeting with Deborah Riscoe, their
relationship is strongly built as a lover forever.

The present novel focuses on the community of Monksmere Head.
The crime and mystery generates in the restricted community of
Monksmere Head. The murder is describes on the very first page. The novel begins with ‘Jamesian’ impression:

The corpse without hands lay in the bottom of the small sailing dinghy drifting just within sight of the Suffolk coast. It was the body of a middle-aged man, a dapper little cadaver, its shroud a dark pin-striped suit which fitted the narrow body as elegantly in death as it had in life. The hand-made shoes still gleamed except for some scuffing of the toe caps; the silk tie was knotted under the prominent Adam’s apple. He had dressed with careful orthodoxy for the town, this hapless Voyager; not for this lonely sea, nor for this death. (3)

No one knows who the victim is, who killed him and why his hands are missing. Adam Dalgliesh, who is not on the duty, devotes his holiday with his aunt, Miss Dalgliesh with fine time and is engaged in deciding about his future. “He must choose marriage or privacy, Deborah or Adam” (19). He faces the dilemma to lead his life for investigation or to settle with Deborah as her husband.

Most of the characters, which James depicts in this novel, are associated with the literary world that is white-collar community. The community of Monksmere Head is considered as the literary colony. The Monksmere residents are—Celia Calthrop, who lives at Rosemary cottage and a writer of popular romances; R.B. Sinclair, at Priory House, a writer of three excellent novels written some thirty years before; Oliver Latham, a dramatic critic who lives in a little stone cottage on the headland; Justin Bryce, a playwright, Maurice Seton, the famous mystery and detective novelist, and Elizabeth Marley a member of literary set.
Digby Seton is Maurice Seton’s half-brother and Sylvia Kedge is Maurice Seton’s crippled secretary.

The small group of Monksmere residents have come across something serious thing. They are worried because Maurice Seton is disappeared since some days. The community has decided to take advice from Adam Dalgliesh. No one knows about Maurice; where he goes and his intention. Everyone thinks:

Maurice Seton may have disappeared for some purpose of his own, perhaps to collect material for his next book. He’s been hinting that this is to be something different – a departure from his usual classical detective novel. He’s a most conscientious craftsman and doesn’t like to deal with anything outside his personal experience. (25)

The novel is a mysterious representation of literary and non-literary persons, who know each other since several years. The novel is the keen study of all characters and their concern for each other. The mysterious disappearance of Seton is a serious matter in the community.

Dalgliesh and his aunt Jane are sitting comfortably at Pent lands along with her neighbours Celia Calthrop, Elizabeth Marley, Justin Bryce, Oliver Latham and Sylvia Kedge. Dalgliesh asks Miss Calthrop about Mr Seton’s last presence in the Monksmere. Before she answers Sylvia Kedge gives the answer. She tells directly to Dalgliesh, without any interruption:

Mr Seton went to London last Monday morning to stay at his club, that’s the Cadaver club in Tavistock square. He always spends a week or two there in October. He prefers London in the autumn and he likes to do research for his books in the
club library. He took a small suitcase with him and his portable typewriter. (25-26)

Dalgliesh is little suspected about Sylvia’s answer. His sharp mind recognises that she hides something about Mr Seton. Maurice is always very odd by nature and a secretive person and he has a very clever mind.

When Dalgliesh is enjoying his holiday delightfully, there is a sharp knock on the door. The two local policemen a detective inspector Reckless and a sergeant Courtney from the country CID come there to know about Digby Seton. His small boat has come ashore at Cod Head. Everyone becomes frightened by the strange incident. They inform them that the Maurice Seton’s body is in the boat. He has not been sailing, but is lying dead in the bottom of the boat with both hands taken off at the wrists. His body has been chopped; the right hand has been taken off, his jacket and shirt has been pulled up from his body. the dead body is described as—

The legs, still clamped in rigor, were wedged one each side of the centre-board case and the forearms had been placed resting on the thwart. Both hands had been taken off at the wrists. There had been little bleeding. On each forearm a trickle of blood had spun a black web between the stiff fair hairs and the thwart was stained as if it had been used as a chopping block. But that was all; the rest of the body and the boards of the dinghy were free of blood. (4)

The brutal murderer has cut Maurice Seton’s hands away from the body like a butcher and the flesh has scattered all over the place.

The story travels towards detection of Seton’s murder. Local C.I.D Reckless and Courtney are aware of the Scotland Yard sleuth Adam
Dalgliesh’s method of detection. They invite him to solve the murder mystery of Maurice Seton. The literary community undergoes the menace of thrill and horror of the murder. Along with Dalgliesh, the local squad has started their investigation by collecting clues and facts regarding the death. Reckless investigates the case by asking everyone, who belongs to the literary and non-literary world. Sylvia Kedge who is the secretary of the Maurice Seton and his half-brother Digby Seton are the prime suspects for the murder. Inspector Reckless turns to Sylvia Kedge and asks her about the keys of Seton’s house. She replies:

Mr Maurice Seton gave his brother a key about two years ago. From time to time he did mention asking for it back but Mr Digby used it so seldom when his brother wasn’t at home that I suppose he thought it didn’t matter him keep it. (46)

Digby Seton is in police station at the time of his half brother’s death. Someone calls him to identify his brother’s dead body. The police are thinking over the murder mystery and waiting for the post mortem report.

Reckless has suspected Celia Calthrop, Sylvia Kedge and Digby Seton for the murder of Maurice. The Will of Maurice Seton is the major reason behind his death. He has rich property of 200,000 pounds. The estate is partly from his late wife Dorothy. Maurice Seton has not left his property to his half-brother Digby Seton. So the police suspect Digby. The estate is partly divided into his mother and partly his late wife. The solicitor Charles Pettigrew tells about a Will of Seton:

Maurice Seton, after instructing that his body be used for medical research and afterwards cremated, and 2,000 pound to Celia Calthrop, ‘in appreciation of her sympathy and understanding on death of my dear wife’, and 300 pound to
Sylvia Kedge, ‘provided she has been ten years in my service at the time of my death’. The remainder of the estate was left to Digby Kenneth Seton, on trust until he married, and then to revert to him absolutely. If he died before his half-brother or died unmarried the estate went absolutely to Celia Calthrop. (85)

There is a condition for Digby Seton to inherit the estate, he must get married. If he dies before Maurice or dies unmarried, his estate will be added to Celia Calthrop. Sylvia Kedge is disappointed because she gets very less amount from the estate of Maurice Seton.

Celia Calthrop who has written romantic novels is the doyenne that is the oldest and most experienced and respected women in the group of the Monksmere literary community. She supports her niece, Elizabeth Marley, a student at Cambridge. After the suicide of Dorothy “Celia had offered herself to him, only to be silently spurned” (37). Oliver Latham and Justin Bryce dislike Maurice Seton. Oliver Latham has an illicit relationship with Seton’s wife, Dorothy. They have been lovers, and Latham blames Maurice for her death. Justin Bryce also blames Maurice for the death of his beloved Arabella.

Sylvia Kedge is an orphan who lives alone in her cottage in Tanner’s Lane. Since long time she has been working as Maurice Seton’s Secretary. James paints her picture as a repellent, disgraceful woman. Everyone observes her as an ugly, abnormal and sexless woman so the Monksmere community hates her nature. Regarding Sylvia Kedge, Norma Siebenheller points out that—

Sylvia is a despicable person. She uses her affliction as a weapon against the world. Her manner is continually saying,
“Look at me! Am I not horrible, repellent, disgusting?” In the face of such a barrage, the world comes to agree with her assessment of herself—and she hates them for it. She hates everyone, but she hated Maurice Seton a little bit more than most. (24)

The death of Seton seems like a murder but Dr. Walter Sydenham’s pathologist report declares the cause of the death. Seton’s post-mortem report reveals that Maurice’s death is from a natural cause a heart attack. He has died three hours after his last meal. His body has been chopped some hours after his death. Dalgliesh does not agree with the facts, but Reckless is satisfied because the mystery of Seton’s death is solved. Seton dies at midnight, when Digby Seton has been in police custody for over an hour.

The earlier case is still remaining to solve and there is another death, and it creates terror in the mind of Monksmere community. Digby has been killed by strong poisoning. Dalgliesh has no doubt that the two murders are related to each other but he finds some dissimilarity in the case:

The killing of Maurice Seton had been almost unnecessarily complicated. Although it might still be difficult to prove that the crime was indeed murder in face of the pathologist’s report of death from natural causes, there was little else natural about it. The difficulty was not lack of clues. . . . But this new killing was simpler, more direct. There could be possibility here of a verdict of death from natural causes. This murderer was not trying any double bluff. There hadn’t even been an attempt to make it look like suicide, to suggest
that Digby had killed himself in a fit of remorse over his brother’s death. (212)

The question remains before Adam Dalgliesh about the death of Digby Seton and who killed the Digby and why. Digby Seton dies of poisoning. There has been no bottle near the body except the hip flask. This time the murderer diverts the attention of the detective and his team. He does not left single clue and evidence for his further investigation.

Dalgliesh has no doubt that the two murders are related to each other. He has made the list of suspected people like Sylvia Kedge, Celia Calthrop, Marley, Bryce and Oliver Latham. Maurice Seton has died in London and it is possible to believe that he has died naturally or someone in London is responsible for his murder. But Digby’s death takes place at Monksmere and no one is sure that there has been anything natural about it.

The attraction of 200,000 pounds is strong enough, for Sylvia Kedge. She has secretly married with Maurice’s half-brother Digby Seton so he could inherit his own estate as per the condition of the Will. After their marriage she makes herself free from him. Sylvia has always planned to kill Digby because she is very greedy for money and wants grab the property of the Setons.

Love, lust, loathing and lucre would be the responsible motives for the murder. The four ‘L’ attracts human being or drove them to commit the crime. Dalgliesh and his old Chief know perfectly the actual concern of complex human personality:

The detective, who concentrated logically on the ‘where’, ‘when’, and ‘how’, would inevitably have the ‘why’, revealed to him in all its pitiful inadequacy. Dalgliesh’s old
chief used to say that the four L’s – love, lust, loathing and lucre— comprised all motives for murder. Superficially that was true enough. But motive was as varied and complex as human personality. He had no doubt that the Inspector’s horribly experienced mind was already busy recalling past cases where the weeds of suspicion, loneliness or irrational dislike had flowered into unexpected violence and death.

(95)

The root of violence and criminal activities exists in the modern society because of their greed, hatred and envy. Mankind is always engage in such activities to harm each other.

Throughout the investigation process ‘objects’ plays an important role to lead the detection. In this novel writer uses an important objects like weapons; the hands (part of body), Source of income, (Lucker’s Parcel); a chopper (cuts the hands); the dinghy (a small boat); two letters (manuscripts); the typewriter, the motorcycle in which the victim has been transported from London to Monksmere. The intention of the writer is to visualise the cinematic picture before the readers with the help of objects.

The murderer Sylvia Kedge confesses her guilt. It is in recorded form in a tape-recorder. James provides her true punishment in the end of the novel. Nature itself sentences her punishment as she has severe accident in the stormy sea. The tape is the only evidence of the Seton’s murder mystery. She uses her master mind behind the murder plan, how to kill Maurice and then to dispose of Digby Seton by giving him poison.

After detailed investigation of murder case, Dalgliesh along with his team listen the confession of her crime. She has used arsenic a very
strong poison to kill Digby. She makes the perfect plan to kill both the brothers:

It was those conditions which made the crime so interesting to plan and so satisfying to excuse. Firstly he had to die from natural causes. Digby, as his heir, would be the natural suspect and it was important to me that nothing should jeopardise Digby’s inheritance. Then he had to die away from Monksmere; there must be no danger of anyone suspecting me. On the other hand I wanted the crime to be connected with the Monksmere community; the more they were harassed, suspected and frightened the better, I had plenty of old score to be settled. Besides, I wanted to watch the investigation. It wouldn’t have suited me to have it treated as a London crime. Apart from the fun of watching the reaction of the suspects I thought it important that the police work should be under my eye. (225-56)

Sylvia is responsible for the suicide of Maurice Seton’s wife Dorothy. She creates prejudices in the mind of Oliver Latham and Bryce, so that they hate Maurice. She has enjoyed his panic and desperate condition. Even she has killed Arabella, who is the beloved of Bryce, and Bryce thinks that Maurice is responsible for his beloved’s death.

Maurice is thinking of changing his Will. When Sylvia knows his plan, she uses Digby Seton as means to destroy his half-brother. She drives him to kill his brother and inherit the estate. It is a cozy game which she has played with them. Digby carries out all instructions from her, and then he gives drink to Maurice and suffocates in a brutal manner.
Now, Sylvia does not want to take risk making him her partner in her plan, so she decided to marry him:

No one would be able to prove that we killed Maurice unless one of us talked. And a wife can’t be made to give evidence against her own husband. It was arranged, of course, that we would divorce after a reasonable time and I was very generous about the marriage settlement. Not suspiciously generous. Just very very reasonable. I could afford to be. He had to marry me to keep me quiet and collect the cash. I had to marry him because I wanted the whole of his fortune. As his widow. (268)

James evokes the climax, twist, puzzle and melodramatic situation as she has depicted in her earlier novel *Cover Her Face* (1962), in which Mrs Eleanor Maxie has played crucial role. Here Sylvia Kedge is similar to Mrs Maxie. She thinks that a murder is carefully planned and has been done successfully. Sylvia has a very sharp mind and a proper plan of murder whereas Maxie makes the plan to kill Sally by drugging pills in her night drink.

The novel is full of parody. James is parodying the impossible and puzzling crimes so popular in the detective fiction of the 1920s and 1930s. The novel *Unnatural Causes* recalls the Dorothy Leigh Sayers’ mystery *Unnatural Death* (1927), in which victims are murdered by injections of air into their arteries. They appear to be fatal heart attacks. Even in *Whose Body?* (1923), the opening character, a corpse is found in a bathtub as *Unnatural Causes* opens with horrible death without hands. The novel is an excellent adventure thriller and country–house mystery. The novel seems like the James Bond adventure movies, which focuses
action and the fast-faced stories with worries, obstacle, and danger. Adam Dalgliesh is the traditional adventure hero who passes through many adventures perils to reach his ultimate goal.

The novel ends the love relationship between Deborah and Adam Dalgleish. He takes both the letters, his and hers, and throws them in the fire. The Deborah episode is over and Dalgliesh becomes one of the most realistic and the most intriguing detectives in the contemporary mystery fiction.

*The Black Tower* is published in 1975 is the best example of an adventure story. Like *A Mind to Murder* and *Shroud for a Nightingale*, the present novel also reflects the photographic images of James’s twenty year experience with the British National Health Service. The murder mystery is set at the Toynton Grange, a private rest home for the disabled and lunatic asylum people. Like the Steen Clinic and the Nightingale House, the present novel throws light on the world of lunatic disabled patients and the series of baffling murder mysteries. Wilfred Anstey, the owner of Toynton Grange is devoted to his own property and a financial resource person to serve the disabled. The story moves around another closed-community, the staff and patients of the Toynton Grange hospital.

It is a kind of closed-community mystery and most sombre, melancholy book of James in which she has drawn the protective isolation of a hospital situation. As she has completed the job in Hospital Administration she has painted anger, jealousy, deceit, and fantasy of the present society. James shows the characters with their hopes, motivations, and their integral part to create curiosity among the readers and even she has created distinctive communities with varied characters.
The characters in the novel react with anger, jealousy, deceit, and fantasy in their efforts to cope with forces beyond their control:

With considerable skill James makes these people come to life as distinct individuals, and though many are unsympathetic characters, she draws them so completely that the reader is able not only to understand what has made them so, but to feel their pain. (Siebenheller 92)

This novel opens with Adam Dalgliesh, now a commander, of Scotland Yard recovering from a life-threatening illness, and the doctor has diagnosed him as a patient of fatal leukemia, a serious disease. He is suffering from the pain of life and death. Eleven days later, Dalgliesh returns to his home and receives a call for the advice from an elderly friend, who works as a chaplain in a home for the disabled at the Dorset Coast: “I know that you must be very busy but I would very much welcome a visit from you as there is a matter on which I would be glad of your professional advice” (6). So, Dalgliesh goes to Dorset Coast, in Toynton village. There, he is assigned to investigate an unexpected death of the Chaplain of Toynton Grange. All patients and the staff are shattered by the unexpected death of Father Baddeley.

In his primary inspection, Dalgliesh has found nothing suspicious and there is no sign about the murder mystery. But his mind alerts him that something is wrong. The investigation journey of this novel progresses through ‘police procedural detection’, the novel foregrounds the actual method and forensic procedure of police team in the investigation of the crime.

Toynton Grange is still another structure in James’s fiction that is used with the purpose to create the gothic romance. The Georgian house
is described as—“a powerfully built square stone house dating, . . . from the first half of the eighteenth century. But the owner had been unlucky in his architect. The house was an aberration, unworthy of the name of Georgian” (14). Now, the house is in danger of passing from the private to the public sector and even worse things are happening in the terrible way like the mysterious death of priest Father Michael Baddeley. James has an excellent quality to shape the story with thrill, romance, and with known and unknown human personalities. Toynton Grange community is still under the terror of Father Baddeley’s death. The death of the Father is narrated as follows:

He had been dead eleven days and buried five. But he [Dalgliesh] would have known that father Baddeley had died recently. How else could one account for that sense of his personality still lingering in the cottage, the feeling that he was so close that one strong call could bring his hand to the latch? Looking at the familiar faded cloak with its heavy clasp—had the old man really not changed it in thirty years?—he felt a pang of regret, of grief even, which surprised him by its intensity. An old man was dead. It must have been a natural death; they had buried him quickly enough. His death and burial had been unpublicized. But there had been something on his mind and he had died without confiding it. (17-18)

There is a hidden secret in the mind of Father Baddeley. But it has vanished by his death. This is an exciting mystery with a number of murders. Arriving at Toynton Grange, Dalgliesh senses “something strange and almost sinister in its emptiness and loneliness which even the mellow afternoon sunlight couldn’t dispel” (15). The obvious place is a
nursing home of lunatic asylum. Before the death of Father Baddeley, one of the patients Victor Holroyd commits suicide by throwing himself over the Toynton Head and smashing himself on the rocks. A few days later, Father Baddeley succumbs to heart disease. Within a short span of time two deaths occurs and it confirms the Dalgliesh’s suspicion. The question remains before Dalgliesh regarding the reason of death and whether it is linked with something.

Here, James, like in her other novels, explores the vivid characters and keen study of their behaviour. Eric Hewson, the resident medical officer has been removed for a time being from the medical register because he has immoral sexual relationship with a sixteen-year-old patient. He and his wife Maggie live in Charity cottage. Dorothy Moxon, the matron, has to leave her last post after striking an elderly patient. Grace Willison, the middle-aged spinster; Ursula Hollis, a tall spotty-faced girl; Jennie Pegram, the youngest patient; Henry Carwardine, Albert Philby, Georgie Allen are the patients in the Toynton Grange. Dennis Lerner, a male nurse, has homosexual relations with Julious Court. An exciting mystery moves around them, showing their tension and fear.

Arriving at the Toynton Grange, Dalgliesh keenly studies the lives of the staff, consulting with the local authorities and he finds that “All of them, to be unhappy, bitter, and dissatisfied, both with themselves and with Toynton Grange” (46). There are a few patients like George Allan who is the youngest and the most severally ill; Grace Willison, dull, middle aged, and religious and gray-haired patient; Jennie Pegram, a blond teenager; Henry Carwardine is the only adult male patient, and Ursula Holliss in her mid-twenties, a victim of venereal disease. Apart from staff and patients, two other characters come under the inspection of
Dalgliesh that is Wilfred’s widowed sister, Millicent and Julius Court. Regarding the patient’s bitterness towards life Norma Siebenheller comments:

It is a macabre scene. James trying out some black humour. She understands how the chronically ill or disabled can, simply by existing, make the rest of the world slightly uncomfortable, as if ashamed at its own good fortune. Eric Hewson does not wish evil on any of them, but he sees them, with their unresponsive muscles and powerless limbs, as something less than fully human. They are no longer in charge of themselves. Therefore, they are puppets—someone else is pulling the strings. The patients have good reason for their bitterness toward life. (47)

The Toynton Grange is nothing but a kind of prison in which all patients have spent their lives with full of burden, fear, and they cannot leave the prison. It is a kind of horrible world in which Adam Dalgliesh desires to investigate the murder mystery. It is complex case, the clues are scattered everywhere, and not a single clue matches with the dark puzzle. He conducts interviews, makes expensive tastes, and lists the suspected people.

The plot of the story turns its track; the earlier case is still to be solved and one more thing adds in his investigation is the death of Grace Willison, one night without any warning and with no apparent motive, Grace is strangled in her bed. Nobody knows whether her death is natural or suicide. But Ursula has realised that Grace Willison is not going to kill herself. This is the third victim of the story. Dalgliesh is thinking about Grace Willison and trying to understand and analyse the cause of her
murder. There has been no visible marks on the body, no sign of disturbance in her room, nothing unusual about the death. Dalgliesh thinks that most of the cases provide an obvious motive, at least one clue, to forward the case further for investigation. But here in this case there is no motive and no evidences. He thinks:

> Every death benefited someone, enfranchised someone, lifted a burden from someone’s shoulders, whether of responsibility, the pain of vicarious suffering or the tyranny of love. Every death was a suspicious, death, at the last, was a natural death. (265)

The series of death is continued further. Not long after the death of Grace Willison, Maggie Hewson who is the wife of Eric Hewson is found dead in her cottage. This is the fourth victim of the story and still Dalgliesh cannot find out the connection between previous three deaths at Toynton Grange. Maggie Hewson is a sharp and clever nurse in the staff; she has ability to find out secret things. She might have found out something secret about the killer or she may be known about the actual killer. Her husband Dr. Eric Hewson has an affair with Helen Ranier, a resident nurse. He wants to divorce his wife and free from her. Hence, her husband is one of the prime suspects of the case.

The story moves around the four deaths. Dalgliesh, “a good detective: the instinct for asking the right questions and knowing where to put the pressure” (69) asks questions, consults with the local authorities, and studies the lives of staff and patients. All deaths are co-incidental, but deaths are becoming a little too common at Toynton.

The present novel is fine combination of detection, puzzle, adventure, thriller, and homosexuality. The staff of Toynton Grange
engages in sexual activities and at the same time some of them have involved in anti-social activity. Victor Holroyd, who is the victim, has the homosexual relationship with Henry Carwadine a young male patient; Dr. Eric Hewson maintains sexual relationship with Helen Ranier, and Dennis Lerner with Julious Court.

Along with sexuality, the murder mystery copes with very serious crime in the Toynton. The smuggling of drugs and opium is the business of Toynton community. Julious Court, the only private citizen living on the grounds of the Grange is using the Grange’s pilgrimages as the foil for drug smuggling. Toynton Grange is the centre to run the business of smuggling. Grace Willison is the only person who knows the names of the grange’s patients who are involved in the opium and drugs smuggling. Dennis Lerner and Julious Court run the trade of drugs. Julious Court uses his master mind behind the drug trade. When Dalgliesh comes to know about an organised anti-social activity he telephones the local police force and contacts the central drug control branch.

Drug smuggling is a major motive and basic reason behind all the deaths. Julious Court is the killer of four innocent people. Dalgliesh collects all evidences and proofs against him. When Dalgliesh and his team reach to arrest Julious Court, he attacks on him. Here, James has showed physical conflict and hand-to-hand battle between Dalgliesh and Julius Court. Dalgliesh has a slight wound by Julius. Dalgliesh gives him chance to surrender but Julious shoots some bullets at Dalgliesh. Father Baddeley, Maggie Hewson, Victor Holroyd and Grace Willison come to know about Julious’s serious concern, that is, drugs smuggling. Hence, Julious has decided to kill them one by one. He creates twist, and complexity in each murder. He tries to show that their murders seem like
natural deaths or suicides. Thus, Julious Court is psychologically disturbed killer and brutal murderer.

When Julious is totally trapped, he realizes that his game is over and he pulls his gun. At the end, Julious pulls the trigger of his own gun and kills himself. He is very confident about death and thinks death as annihilation: “I know what will happen to me when I die; annihilation. It would be unreasonable to fear that” (364). In his last words, he confesses his crime and gives justification for that:

I can’t be poor again. I need money as I need oxygen. Not just enough; more than enough. Much more. Poverty kills. I don’t fear death but I fear that particular slow and corrosive process of dying. (365)

In this way James show that poverty is one of the basic social causes behind crime. ‘The Black Tower’ is a symbol of death. The four murders take place in the mysterious manner, Julious Court who is the drugs smuggler and a ‘serial killer’ fulfils his urge by killing people.

*The Black Tower* represents number of murders, and different homosexual relationships than any other mystery novels of James. The novel is complex and the story is weak. *New York Times Book Review* describes the novel as a slow moving book, “heavy-going” (52). The last incidents are dramatic and a kind of physical conflict. The world of Julius Court is different from other characters of James’s novels.

According to some critics the present novel is “melodramatic” and it is James’s weakest story. Once again she uses a closed-community mystery, thriller and international issue in her writing. The novel is completely satisfied to the readers as a novel of mystery and detection. Writer tries reflects the world of physically handicapped people and death
within death. The world of desire, love, lust and smuggling explore in the novel by James with several serious characters. She successfully handles “death-as opposed to murder” (72) in the present novel. The novel is divided into eight chapters and their titles also emphasize death: sentence of life, Death of a Priest, A Stranger for the Night, The Dreadful Shore, Act of Malice, A Bloodless Murder, Mist in the Headland, and The Black Tower.

Like James’s other seaside novel, here in *The Black Tower*, Adam Dalgliesh is in unofficial position. *Unnatural Causes* and *The Black Tower* are supposed to be the most personal books of Adam Dalgliesh. The novel has given more emphasis on characters and themes than on crime and detection. Her next science thriller continues to play the rational role in the contemporary crime and mystery fiction.

*Death of an Expert Witness* (1977) is another crime and mystery novel of an Adam Dalgliesh series. The novel portrays medically oriented people and places. James sets her scenes in a forensic science laboratory in East Anglia. Along with murder mystery, the novel is about past follies, hidden fears, well-kept secrets, and personal desires. Here, she has portrayed the picture of forensic laboratory staff, pathologist, biologists and other scientific specialists.

The novel opens with a brutal murder of a young girl. The setting of the story is the small town of Chevisnam, not far from Cambridge, in East Anglia. A young woman is dead by throttling and has been found in the Wasteland—a Clunch Field at north-east of Muddington. At 6:12 in the morning someone calls the local Detective Inspector Doyle. The Clunch Field, the local name for the soft chalk mined, place is an arid scrubland between the two ends of the town, little-strewn and edged with
sparse trees above a ditch. Inspector Doyle who is in charge of the murder case tries to find out the domestic murderer. Though the novel begins with the discovery of a murder of a young girl, this is not the focus of the novel as the first murder is not principally concerned with the story. This first murder is a prologue to introduce the people and lab, which is responsible for the next murder mystery.

The Clunch Pit murder resembles with The Black Tower murder. Like James’s earlier novel *The Black Tower*, the present story leads in the mysterious manner. The novel throws light on the actual murder of Dr. Edwin Lorrimer, who is the Principal Scientific Officer and in charge of the Biology Department, and experimental expert witness of the earlier murder. Doyle has closed his notebook and is supervising the removal of the body as if it is a precious exhibit.

The earlier death is solved, the victim girl’s husband, who is butcher’s assistant, writes his confession letter and confesses his guilt. With one of the knives of his trade, he cuts her wife’s throat. After having the first murder, James turns towards the main story of the book. The next murder is associated with Hoggatt’s Laboratory. Like the Martingale House and the Steen Clinic, James uses the Hoggatt as a locale for her present novel. It has been described as, “an unsuitable Palladian mansion” (79). Colonel Hoggatt had established his laboratory in 1898.

Dr. Edwin Lorrimer who is the Principal Scientific Officer and in charge of the Biology Department; Dr. Maxim Howarth is a newly appointed Director of the Forensic Scientific Laboratory; Paul Middlemass, Principal Scientific Officer and Document Examiner; Cliford Bradley, the higher scientific officer of the Biology Department; Mrs. Bidwell, cleaner of the laboratory; Dr. Charles Freeborn the
Controller of the Forensic Science Service; Stephen Copley, Senior Chemist; Claire Easterbrook the senior scientific officer and Mrs. Brenda Pridmore, the receptionist. They are the staff members of Hoggatt's Laboratory and have been running it successfully. All the characters belong to the white-collar community and related to the medical world.

The night after Clunck Pit Murder that is the earlier death of young girl, Dr. Edwin Lorrimer works late at night in the laboratory. One of the staff members Miss Brenda Pridmore come across one dead body lying in the space between the two large central examination table, face downward, and his left hand seemingly to clow at the floor, his right arm hunched beneath him and his legs are straight. Brenda has made her way over to the counter and pick up the receiver. She is frightened by the horrible death of Dr. Lorrimer. Someone has attacked heavily on his skull with a wooden hammer and killed Lorrimer. No one knows who has killed Lorrimer and why. The dead body is locked from the inside. The same situation is created in the novel *Cover Her Face* in which Sally Jupp is killed inside the locked room.

The authority finds out the dead body of Lorrimer and calls the local police. Inspector Blackelock examines the dead body, with primary method of investigation. The news of Dr. Lorrimer’s murder spreads among the authority and everyone expresses their deep remorse for the death of Dr. Lorrimer. The question remains before everyone who is the culprit or murderer.

Scotland Yard Commander Dalgliesh and his team, along with Detective-Inspector John Massingham, arrive to head the investigation of Dr. Lorrimer’s murder case. This is a second case of Dalgliesh with John
Massingham as his paired partner. The chief constable and Dr Maxim Howarth has given him detailed information about the murder:

The skull smashed, apparently by a heavy mallet which Lorrimer had been examining. The lab found properly locked when the Assistant Police Liaison officer and the young C.O. arrived at eight-thirty this morning. Lorrimer’s keys in his pocket. He often worked late and most of the lab staff knew that he proposed to do so last night. No sign of a break-in. Four sets of keys. Lorrimer had one set as the senior P.S.O. and Deputy Security Officer. The Assistant Police Liaison Officer has the second. Lorrimer or one of the Police Liaison officers were the only people authorized to lock and open up the building. The Director keeps the third set of keys in his security cupboard, and the fourth is in a safe at Guy’s Marsh police station in case the alarm rings in the night. (91)

The heart of every murder mystery is to know about the victim or build up the relationship with the dead. The victim is central to the mystery of his own death. With the help of Massingham’s intelligence and his devotion for work, Dalgliesh leads his investigation. Dalgliesh has been very much impressed by Massingham and his capacity of work. Meanwhile, they decided to collect, victim’s personal information and his relationships with others so it can be easy to reach the murderer. It is a strange part of detective’s job because every victim has died because of what he has been. Dalgliesh has collected a dozen of pictures of Lorrimer's personality, so he can make his own assumption and preconceptions.
The story moves around the Hoggatt’s laboratory. The huge mansion visualises the eighteen century picture like the gothic novel. The speciality of James’s writing is to provide the flashback to the readers. Her novels are in the tradition of gothic romance and depict visual notion before the readers. Such kind of gothic picture creates mysterious atmosphere to cope up the situation. Sometime, unknown and uncanny things are so powerful to drive the storyline further. The present novel depicts visual notion and gothic fascination:

THE HOUSE WAS an excellent example of late seventeenth century domestic architecture, a three-story brick mansion with a hipped roof and four dormer windows, the centre three-boy projection surmounted by a pediment with a richly carved cornice and medallions. A flight of four wide, curved stone steps led to the doorway, imposing on its pilasters but solidly, unostentatiously. (111)

The novel focuses on another closed-community murder mystery. Hoggatt’s laboratory and its staff is a kind of closed community, with restricted suspect and limited circle. Dr. Kerrison, a consulting pathologist “a man with failed expectations and little sense of self-worth, but he does his job well and hopes for the recommendations that will change it from its present temporary status to permanent one” (Siebenheller 51). Maxim Howarth, who is a newly appointed director in the lab, forensic science laboratory are the major suspect for the murder. There are some questions before Dalgliesh: Why someone dislikes Lorrimer enough to smash in his skull? Along with squad Dalgliesh starts the preliminary interviews of the staff.
Dalgliesh is not ready to accept the detailed information given by the suspected people. Whatever information given by them has no match with the case. The case is very complicated as immoral relationship and love affairs are involved in this case. The story moves around Domenica Schofield who is the lover of both Dr. Lorrimer and Dr. Kerrison. At the same time the story throws light on lesbian relationship between Angela Foley and Stella Mawson.

The staff of the laboratory feels uncomfortable with Dr. Lorrimer; they are afraid of him and always hate him. He has just broken off his affair with Domenica because his intention is to achieve Domenica’s love. Dr. Maxim Howarth hates him because he maintains immoral relationships with Lorrimer’s half-sister Angela. Cliff Bradley, Lorrimer’s assistant has received an adverse rating from Lorrimer so his career is in jeopardy. There is a love triangle; Dr. Kerrison also loves Domenica, and he has replaced his own place in Dominica’s bed. Dr. Lorrimer has threatened Dr. Kerrison by disclosing the affair with Domenica to Kerrison's ex-wife. Lorrimer wants to punish him. Here, James scatters a several motives and clues which are responsible for the murder of Dr. Lorrimer. Blackmailing by Lorrimer to Dr. Kerrison is one of the clues of the murder mystery.

The four police officers, Sergeant Reynold, Sergeant Underhill, Inspector Blackelock, and Detective Superintendent Mercer are assigned the job to help Dalgliesh in the case. The police procedural novel leading with the team work and a detective is paired with a partner, with whom Dalgliesh shares the details of the investigation. Dalgliesh has updated his team before he starts the preliminary interviews. At the time of inspection, Dalgliesh attempts to get inside each of the suspect’s personalities. As a part of his job, Dalgliesh uses every investigation
method, which is often used by Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot to find out the culprit.

After the general inspection, Dalgliesh finds out Angela Foley who has come under the shadow of suspicion. She has been working as the Director’s Secretary for five years, first with Dr. MacIntyre and now with Dr. Howarth. Two years ago, she has lived in a bed-sitting room at Ely. Edwin Lorrimer and his father are her only living relatives and she is also the cousin of Dr. Lorrimer and only one principal beneficiary of his will. Lorrimer is wealthy and he has recently changed his will to exclude his cousin Angela. Therefore, Angela Foley comes under suspicion. Dalgliesh fits the puzzles and clues together logically and skilfully. He conducts the interview of Major Hunt and asks him about the estate and will of Lorrimer. He explains:

I thought it right to point out that in the event of his death his cousin, as his only surviving relative apart from his father, might wish to content the will. If she did, a legal battle would cost money and might seriously deplete the estate. (208)

Domenica Schofield who is a beloved of Dr. Lorrimer also comes under the suspicion. Dalgliesh discovers enough motives for the murder case. One more twist comes in the story when Stella Mawson is found hanging herself and the question remains who is the ex-wife of Dr. Lorrimer. Stella is the second victim of the story. A couple of murderers take place in a small community is too much of coincidence.

Through the keen study of the various staff members and their interviews, Dalgliesh comes to know the personality of Dr. Edwin Lorrimer. He has secretly married Stella Mawson. He has enjoyed his
secret life with Domenica Schofield. His sexual failure with his first wife Stella and his broken affair with Domenica frustrate him.

Dr. Kerrison, a consulting pathologist, is one of the James’s most sympathetic killers. His life is psychologically frustrated because his wife has run away with her lover, leaving Kerrison alone with their two children William and Nell. He is always hated by Dr. Lorrimer and is trapped by Domenica and threatened by Stella Mawson. Lorrimer starts blackmailing Kerrison and wants to tell the details of his present affair to his wife. In a panic situation Kerrison grabs the mallet and strikes Dr. Lorrimer. Kerrison, who is a lovely father, has committed the crime out of love for his children. He is not a bad man, he is presented as, “the ordinary man pushed beyond his limits into the ultimate crime” (58) because Lorrimer has disturbed his family life.

From James’s, early phase novels, the qualities of criminals and murderers are explored—Julious Court and Marion Bolam are greedy; Mrs Maxie is proud; Mary Taylor, cold-blooded; Sylvia Kedge, Vengeful. But in Death of an Expert Witness, the murderer Dr. Kerrison is represented as a person who is as sympathetic, afraid, and disturbed by the emotional problems and frightened by several activities. Here, James focuses on the victim and murderer as deeply involved in each other's life and death. Both Dr. Lorrimer and Dr. Kerrison are concerned with the same laboratory and associated with the same profession. Foibles and follies of mankind are drawn through this novel. Human weaknesses lead some people to commit the crime. Dr. Kerrison has killed Dr. Lorrimer because he loves Domenica so out of love for her and in the fit of anger he has killed him. Later he kills Stella Mawson because she tries to blackmail him and wants to disclose his name as a killer.
Finally, Dr. Kerrison is arrested by the police and sentenced to life imprisonment. He has realized his crime and now he has to live away from his children forever and alienated from the society. He is always tortured by the futility of his crime. He experiences the pain of loneliness. When Dalgliesh arrests him, Kerrison turns to Dalgliesh and says:

> It wasn’t love, but it was in its own way a kind of loving. And it was such peace. This is peace, too, knowing that there’s nothing else I need do. There is an end of responsibility, an end of worry. A murderer sets himself aside from the whole of humanity forever. It’s a kind of death. I’m like a dying man now, the problems are still there, but I’m moving away from them into a new dimension. I forfeited so many rights when I killed Stella Mawson, even the right to feel pain. (361)

In this way, Dalgliesh has played the crucial role in the case, in order to trap the murderer. The case has been solved, it pays a terrible cost. Lorrimer is dead because of sexual frustration and jealousy; Kerrison has killed him and Stella to hold his position in the Hoggatt’s laboratory.

James has very successfully handled the theme of sexuality, lesbianism, hatred, jealous, unhappy marriage, and broken relationship among the characters in the present novel. The novel is the best example of white-collar crime, in which James places the best plot and clues.

In short, James’s early phase novels can be grouped as the white collar crime, sexual crime, and organised crime along with the locked room mystery, country house mystery, medical thriller, supernatural mystery, science thriller, serial killer mystery and costal mystery. All novels arouse suspense, terror, gloom of murder. One more aspect of her
novels is that the people around her are greedy, avarice, materialistic, and egoistic. Civilised men and women are also involved in the crime. The exact picture of today’s world has been portrayed by the writer in her early phase novels.