CHAPTER-III

THE NOVELS OF THE MIDDLE PHASE
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There was no way I was falling for this woman, so whatever happened was part of my mission. I was here to seduce her, if necessary–I hoped it would be–and find out what I could. (McNab, Murder Undercover, p.74)

Introduction

In the previous chapter James’s early phase novels have been theoretically and thematically examined in the light of crime and mystery. The present chapter analyses her middle phase novels—A Taste for Death (1986), Devices and Desires (1989), Original Sin (1994) and A Certain Justice (1997) which belong to the eighties and the nineties. These novels are more mature than that of her earlier ones; they are more subtle and more complex. James’s second decade as a writer brings several major developments in her literary career. Hence, her reputation and popularity spread across the world, especially in the contemporary literature of the crime and mystery fiction. Critics, who ignored her previously, started taking her seriously. Her detective also grows older and is promoted in his rank.

A Taste for Death (1986) is the seventh novel in the Commander Adam Dalgliesh mystery series. Like her previous novels, it also explores the theme of crime, mystery and detection. James, with her great skill, follows the tradition of ‘Golden Age’ crime fiction writing. The novel is written at the height of British Conservative triumphalism in the 1980s. The era is known as the era of Mrs Margaret Thatcher as the Prime Minister.
The book is about the death of a senior Government minister Paul Berowne and an alcoholic vagabond, Harry Mack. The setting is St. Matthew’s Church, Paddington. In the dingy vestry of church, two dead bodies are found with their throats slashed. It is a kind of cruel murder mystery, and blood-soaked scene of a double murder which is investigated by a poet and Commander Adam Dalgliesh. It is one of the most complicated and difficult cases of his career.

In all of James’s novels the setting, place and the buildings, where the murders occur are the foundation upon which she builds her criminal tales and criminal plots. In her present mystery, *A Taste for Death*, she chooses St. Matthew’s Church, Paddington as a locale. As far as setting is concerned, her novels are set in closed community along with puzzle and throws light upon the dark life of contemporary world. She combines the lives of people and their surrounding world in her novels. For example, ‘Dupayne Museum’ is significant place in the Anglican theological college in *Death in Holy Orders*, the St. Mathews Church, Paddington in *A Taste for Death*, the Peverell Press Publishing House in *Original Sin*, and Martingale House in *Cover Her Face*. Her locale reflects the surrounding world which she knows best.

*A Taste for Death* is a fine classic police detective tale and James has succeeded in grabbing the attention of the reader from the opening line of this novel. As she is the master in storytelling, she skilfully presents the events in the novel. A provocative beginning of this country–house mystery provides the reader to think over ‘what’, ‘who’ and ‘why’:

The bodies were discovered at eight forty-five on the morning of Wednesday 18 September by Miss Emily Wharton, a 65 year-old spinster of the parish of St. Matthews in Paddington, London, and Darren Wilkes, aged 10, of no
particular parish as far as he knew or cared. This unlikely pair of companions had left Miss Wharton's flat in Crowhurst Gardens just before half past eight to walk the half-mile stretch of the Grand Union Canal to St. Mathew's Church. (3)

This is a provocative beginning by James which creates curiosity among the readers from the beginning. No one knows about the dead bodies, who has killed them and what are the reasons behind the murders. Susan Rowland makes her critical analyses about the murder and its association with the golden age crime writing:

The murder of Sir Paul Berowne proves not to be a random killing, but conforms to golden age crime in being bound up with his household. Its members consist of his unfaithful wife, Barbara, her lover, Surgeon Stephen Lampart, her brother, Dominic Swayne, Berowne’s mother, Lady Ursula, Berowne’s estranged daughter, Sarah, now embroiled in far left politics, neglected spinster-housekeeper Miss Matlock Halliwell, the soldier Chauffeur and other acquaintances. (152)

The methodology of James’s writing is in the manner of Agatha Christie and, of course, she throws light on the contemporary social situation in London and complexity of human evil. Human immorality and their material attitude are often highlighted in her novels. The story generates interest among the readers because the mystery begins with two murders but it is not confirmed whether they are murders or suicides. An unlikely pair of victims of the story is a Member of Parliament who is a Junior Minister of crown, and the other is a homeless man, a tramp who has never lost his taste of alcohol. They have died very recently. Their
throats have been cut and they lay like butchered animal in a waste of blood. There is a question before the readers how they have got together and how it has happened.

An unfortunate death of Sir Paul Berowne and Harry Mack creates a dark shadow over the restricted locale. Darren finds out their dead bodies, which are smashed by a shaving razor. Commander Adam Dalgliesh and chief inspector John Massingham and their team are called to find the connection between the two murders. Like her earlier novel, the present novel is also a type of ‘police procedural detective mystery’ which foregrounds the actual methods and procedures of the police work, as the part of their investigations. They are using forensic technology and interviewing of the suspects, with paired police force of Kate Miskin and John Massingham.

James’s both the detectives, Adam Dalgliesh and Cordelia Gray, are very much influenced by Sherlock Holmes. Hence, Dalgliesh starts his investigation immediately and methodically to clear his doubts. He also uses his own rational method while uncovering the murder mystery:

Before he concentrated on the actual scene of the crime, Dalgliesh always liked to make a cursory survey of the surroundings to orientate himself, and, as it were, to set the scene of murder. The exercise had its practical value, but he recognized that, in some obscure way, it fulfilled a psychological need, just as in boyhood he would explore a country church by first walking slowly round it before, with a frisson of awe and excitement, pushing open the door and beginning his planned progress of discovery to the central mystery (36).
Dalgliesh gets information about Paul Berowne’s previous career as a barrister, his first unsuccessful attempt to enter in parliament. The past of victim is very useful in every investigation so Dalgliesh decides to collect his more information so he could reach towards the root of crime and criminal. Dalgliesh has collected Berowne’s detailed information like Paul Berowne’s success at the 1979 election; his phenomenal rise to junior minister rank, his probable standing with the Prime Minister. He lives with his mother, Lady Ursula Berowne and second wife Lady Berowne. He has a child by his first wife, 24-years-old Sarah Berowne. His elder brother has been killed in Northern Ireland and Paul has married his brother’s fiancée within five months. Their marriage is merely a matter of a fraternal duty.

Here, James explores two icons of crimes, one is an upper-class political crime, concerned with political people and another is blue-collar crime, in which Harry who is a common or an individual lower class tramp. The story is a fine combination of political and middle-class background. Nothing is simple in this story; there are no clues and no any context between the murders. At first, the murders seem like suicides. There is no relation between the two disparate men that lead to this horrific crime. Suddenly, the twist evokes in the story, at the beginning of the novel. Two characters Young Darren and elderly Miss Wharton never appear often in the novel, but they further play critical role in the novel. The story is the fine fusion of crime, detection and whodunit for the fans of crime and mystery genre.

Dalgliesh has fixed his eyes on the culprit. As far as the investigation is concerned, he tries to search evidences relevant to the murder mystery of Paul and Harry. He collects detailed information about poor Harry Mack from Father Barnes. Paul’s death is very appalling
shock for his family members. After leaving the church Dalgliesh returns back to Scotland Yard to pick up his files from Theresa Nolan and Diana Travers. After the primary investigation in the church and with Father Barnes, Dalgliesh turns towards Lady Ursula who is the mother of Paul Berowne.

James uses flash back technique in this novel. It is the combination of past and present and all the characters in the story are connected with their past lives. A minister of Crown, Paul Berowne is murdered and there is a rumour that he has committed a suicide. The story turns its path when there is an another death takes place that is of Diana Travers, and there is nothing suspicious about her death:

She died from natural causes, more or less. It could have happened to anyone, she had eaten too much, drunk too much, and she plunged into cold water, got tangled in the reeds, gasped and drowned. There were no suspicious marks on the body. She had had, as you no doubt remember from the PM report, a sexual connection just before death. (351)

In most of James’s novels, she handles the theme of sex, sexuality, illicit love affair, homosexual relationship, and ill-advised friendship. The two young women are dead, one by her own hand, and one by accident. There was no mystery about why and how they are died. Dalgliesh thinks there may be the connection between the two earlier deaths and the mystery of Paul Berowne’s murder. The forensic science laboratory has analysed the result of the blood report, which tells that:

There was blood of two different types on the razor, but that was hardly surprising, the analysis a mere formality. But,
more important, the smear on the carpet under Harry's coat wasn't his blood. (357)

It is very important to Dalgliesh that this important scientific evidence comes in hand in time. Paul Berowne’s wife Lady Berowne betrays him so Paul is suspicious about her pregnancy. He has already some doubts about their marriage. Illicit relationship is the central reason and major motive behind the murder of Paul Berowne. Lady Berowne has an illicit affair with Stephen Lampart.

Berowne is always suspicious about his wife, who is selfish and cruel by nature. When Dalgliesh comes across the fact, he is wondered why Berowne has gone back to church. It may be because of a new complication with his marriage. Paul has faced the psychological dilemma. He suffers a lot by the pain of deception. The way of investigation by Adam Dalgliesh is very rational and always based on logical thinking. He is aware of the pain in the mind of Sir Paul Berowne. At one incident Berowne says, “No one in the world knows where I am at this moment, not a single soul. No one can get at me” (408). James makes her criminal plot very complex, clues and evidences are not enough to reach the murderer. Even for Dalgliesh, it is a very difficult to find out whether it is murder or suicide. Thursday is one of the most frustrating days that Dalgliesh can remember in his life. A press conference is called in the early afternoon, to give information about whether Sir Paul Berowne has been murdered or he has killed himself. The murder is not an ordinary murder. Sir Paul is killed by a gang, a terrorist gang. His wife Lady Berowne with the help of anti-social group makes plan to kill her husband. In her criminal plan her lover Lampart supports her. Harry Mack is the unfortunate victim of the story like Paul Berowne who is victimise by the gang.
The novel is classic whodunit, in which central light is thrown upon crime and criminal. All characters are engaged and undergone with fear, hatred, and conflict. At the end of the murder mystery, Inspector Kate Miskin and Adam Dalgliesh find out the murderer. Lady Berowne and her lover Stephan Lampart confess their crime. With the help of physical evidence, rational thinking and by the individual investigation Adam Dalgliesh finds out the murderer.

Susan Rowland in her non-fiction *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell: British Women Writers in Detective and Crime Fiction* (2001), rightly comments on the novel:

*A Taste for Death* resembles a country house murder where the edifice is not only transported to the modern and political pressures of the capital city but is symbolically divided between the empty Victorian church where the bodies are found and the architectural glories of Berowne’s Soane house. Much is made of the beauties of the house, described as a blend of the classic and gothic. (152)

The root of crime and detective fiction is originated from “Gothic fiction” or “Gothic Romance.” Therefore, the present novel is blended with such horror and terror elements with haunted setting. James has unique literary style, “her detecting figures tend to be subject to negative sublime horror because they are irretrievably cut off from representing the dream of divine justice. Horror at human selfishness and evil is James's formal mode of representing her metaphysics of the genre. Part of the function of frequent references to the Holocaust is to provide an atmosphere of horror as a most acid form of pessimism about secular societies” (Rowland 143).
Her literary realism reflects in her next serial killer mystery *Devices and Desires* published in 1989. James has set the novel and it's scene on Larksoken, an isolated headland in the Norfolk. The novel has complex structure and a strange story. The story is more elaborative and complicated; and a traditional ‘whodunit’. It involves the criminal world of serial killer known as the ‘Norfolk Whistler’. Even, James also uses the scientific world of nuclear power energy, national security, modern terrorism, and the ordinary lives of people as the central theme.

The novel is set in Norfolk. Commander Adam Dalgliesh of the Scotland Yard arrives in Norfolk to deal with the inheritance of his aunt Jane which she has left for him. James in her early novel *Unnatural Causes* has introduced Commander’s only surviving relative, who has died at an old age, bequeathing him the Larksoken Mill, extensive ornithology library and surprisingly large amount of money. Dalgliesh arrives at Larksoken to spend there a short span of holiday and to think of what to do with the mill. During his holiday Dalgliesh is consulted by his former colleague, who is now in the local police department and is investigating the case of the serial killer in the area.

The present novel *Devices and Desires* is considered as one of James’s masterpieces and is also one of her longest novels. Even the novel is complex in terms of the characters and the criminal plot. The story is more elaborative and sophisticated; the mystery involves more narrative lines than just ones. The mystery incorporates with the use of nuclear power energy, national security system, modern terrorism, and also the ordinary lives of people on the specific remote area.

After four years of silence, Adam Dalgliesh’s new book of poetry, ‘A Case to Answer and Other Poems’ has been published and Adam Dalgliesh is frankly glad to have an excuse to escape from the murder
investigation case. But detection is in his blood like Sherlock Holmes; soon he gets involved with the local police investigation of the serial killer known as the Norfolk Whistler, who is terrorizing the region. Sebastian Herne has died within three months of his marriage who is a cautious, conventional man and reserved eccentricity, imagination and occasional risk taking for his publishing:

Herne had died less of sexual exhaustion, assuming that to be as medically credible as puritans would like to believe than from a fatal exposure to contagion of fashionable sexual mortality. (15)

Inspector Rickards and Sergeant Oliphant have played an important role in the investigation of the crime. The story moves around East Coast of England in Norfolk and the Larksoken Power Station. The Power Station has been terrorizing and shocking by the series of murders. The first victim is found just after midnight in a shelter at the end of the East-haven promenade. The murder takes place and the murderer does not keep single motive or clue for the further investigation. It is the serial of murders and there is no motive. There are three previous murders by the Whistler without any clue or puzzle.

Hilary Robarts who is the Acting Administrative Officer of the power station and Christine Baldwin are the Whistler’s fourth and fifth victims:

They’re the devil, these serial murders. No motive—no motive that a sane man can understand anyway—and he could come from anywhere, Norwich, Ipswich, even London. It’s dangerous to assume that he’s necessarily working in his own territory. Looks like it, though. He
obviously knows the locality well. And he seems to be sticking now to the same MO. He chooses a road intersection, drives the car or van into the side of one road, cuts across and waits at the other. Then he drags his victim into the bushes or the trees, kills and cuts back to the other road and the car and make his gateway. (91-92)

Death shatters every person and has its huge impact over them. Meanwhile, one more tragic incident takes place Toby Gledhill is one of Alex’s most brilliant young scientists, who has killed himself at the station. He has broken his neck by throwing himself down on top of the reactor, and there is no mystery about his death and it seems a suicide.

The novel has a complex structure. There are number of objects and incidents appearing throughout the book. James uses the evidences and clues like headland, nature, wind mist to create mysterious atmosphere. Cottages take an active part in the criminal plot. The Mill, Larksoken Power Station, the Whistler are connected with murders and crime is connected with things such as the victim’s bodies, footprints, key, locket, a credit card, a glass of whisky etc.

James, like her earlier novels, paints the picture of the England country side. In her novels, most of the crimes take place at old and ancient cottages, palaces, and hospitals. Here, she uses several cottages which are directly connected with murder. For example, Martyr’s Cottage where the Mairs live; the Scudder’s Cottage, home of the Blaney family; the Larksoken Windmill, the old Rectory Cottage, house of Mey Dennison and the Copley’s, Thyme Cottage, home of Hilary. Most of the major characters live in cottages, and the murder mystery is developed within the cottages, a restricted locale with smaller amount of suspects.

Though the novel is about the serial killer known as the Norfolk Whistler, here James has given more emphasis on the murder mystery of the murder of the Administrative Officer Hilary Robarts who is the wife of the Alex Mair. When he knows about the news of his wife’s death, he asks whether it has been done by the Whistler. As usual, her husband thinks that the murder is done by the serial killer, Norfolk Whistler. The suspicion goes towards the Whistler. The Whistler is a murderer like any others. Local inspector Rickards is the in charge of this case. The police have arrived and try to find out the evidence, footprints and motives. Adam Dalgliesh finds out the dead body of Hilary Robarts and he is the prime evidence of the case. This is not an Adam Dalgliesh case; it is Inspector Rickards, who is going to investigate the murder mystery.

Miss Mair has given dinner party last Thursday. After the party the body of Hilary Robarts is found by Adam Dalgliesh. Here Dalgliesh himself comes under suspicion because he is one of the prime evidences of the murder. Rickards asks some questions to Dalgliesh related to Hilary. Most of the people think that the Whistler is the murderer of Hilary, but Rickards declares that this is not the work of whistler. He says about him, “May be. But this wasn’t the Whistler. The Whistler’s dead.
Killed himself in a hotel at East heaven, sometime around six o’clock. I’ve been trying to reach you to let you know” (225). It means the primary doubt on the Whistler comes to an end. However, it is found that instead of the Whistler, one of the members at Larksoken Nuclear Power Station has committed the crime.

James like her earlier country house mystery novels here explores the internal politics, conflict and hatred of the Larksoken Nuclear Power Station which belongs to the high-class family and white-collar elite community. It clearly shows that on preliminary examination the murder has taken place by the strangulation. Adam Dalgliesh is unofficially working with the case. He has himself found the body; therefore he comes under the shadow of suspicion. As Dalgliesh lives on the headland he knows the girl; he knows how the Whistler has killed. According to inspector Rickards, he may not be a serious suspect in their eyes but he makes his statement like everyone else does. As a detective himself Dalgliesh has enjoyed a new experience in this case.

The mystery moves further with proper investigation. On Monday 26 September Jonathan Reeves has been working during the 8.15 to 14.45 shift and suddenly he has a telephone call and hears the expected voice. Caroline Amphlett sounds perfectly calm; only the words are urgent:

I have to see you. Now can you get away?
I think so. Mr. Hammond isn’t in yet.
Then I'll meet you in the library. At once. It’s important, Jonathan. (264).

Caroline has always disliked Hilary. Hilary’s father behaves badly with her mother, so Caroline hates Hilary’s father and Hilary. As per police procedural method the Chief Inspector Rickards arranges the
interviews and tries to reach towards essential clues and evidences of Hilary Robarts murder case. Rickards and Oliphant make their different ways to find out the criminal. The Power Station has seven divisions, each with a head of department; Medical Physicist, Station Chemist, Operations Superintendent, Maintenance Superintendent, Reactor Physicist, Work Office Engineer and a Station Administrative Officer, the post held by Hilary Robarts. Rickards and Oliphant question the members of each division along with the staff. Three violent deaths of the members of Larksoken Power Station staff take place within the space of two months: first Dr. Gledhill’s suicide, then Christine Baldwin’s murder by the Whistler and now Hilary Robarts. It is after midday that the interviews at the Power Station have been completed, and Rickards and Oliphant are ready to leave from Martyr’s cottage.

Here, James is a master storyteller. She skilfully presents the events in the novel and its impact on Larksoken. Dalgliesh plays very less part in this case; James has placed the role of Adam Dalgliesh as a bystander instead of the chief investigator. She uses the traditional whodunit formula along with psychological dimensions. The Whistler is a puppet, accompanied by his helps in crime, his props; a dog, a dog lead, a hat, a knife, a car and some female clothes. With all these things at hand, his lethal game could start and be staged successfully for many months, increasing the number of his victims, their bodies each time marked symbolically with a L-shaped cut on their forehead and public hair staffed in the mouth, all of that to allude to Neville Potter’s hated mother Lillian.

The novel is full of puzzle, clues, and physical evidence in which James has combined the story of murder, interconnected characters, their
social justice and injustice, ego, psychological dilemma. Thus, it is more fascinating work of fiction:

The portrait is a puzzle, I’ll grant you that. And that's not the only difficulty. Someone had drink with Robarts before she took that last swim, someone she let into the cottage, someone she knew. There were two glassed on the draining board and in my book that means two people were drinking. She wouldn't have invited Blaney to Thyme cottage and if he turned up I doubt if she would have let him in, drunk or sober. (383)

Rickards recalls one previous murder case twelve years before by the Whistler. He and Dalgliesh are working together in the metropolitan police. A victim is a fifty-year-old prostitute; she has been dead for over a week. She has been lying naked among the bottles, the pills, and the half-eaten food. For Rickards this is not a pleasant remembrance as he feels humiliated by Dalgliesh’s words and dislikes him since then. He comments over the body of dead prostitute, “For God sake, can’t we get this thing out of here?” (411). Then Dalgliesh has answered him, his voice from the doorway like a whiplash:

Sergeant the word is “body”. Of, if you prefer, there’s “cadaver”, “corpse”, “victim”, even “deceased” if you must. What you are looking at was a woman. She was not a thing when she was alive and she is not a thing now. (411)

Dalgliesh has explained him the relation between police and crime. But Rickards opposes his opinion and looks towards Dalgliesh with arrogant face and speaks the truth, “But she isn’t a woman now, is she, sir? She is not a human being any more, is she? So if she isn’t human, what is she?
Through this narration readers come to know or they face very complicated question whether we are human beings or things, after our death no one knows whether the memories of human being remain alive or people forget them in the span of time. The serial killer is found dead. He is suddenly discovered in the hotel having committed suicide. Rickards reads the news:

I have learned that Neville Potter, the man now identified as the Whistler, who killed himself in the Balmoral Hotel at Easthaven on Sunday, had been interviewed by the police early in their inquiry and eliminated. The question is, why? The police knew the type of man they were looking for. A loner. Probably unmarried or divorced. Unsociable. A man with a car and a job that took him out at night. Neville Potter was just such a man. If he had been caught when he was first interviewed the lives of four innocent women could have been saved. Have we learned nothing from the Yorkshire Ripper fiasco? (414-15)

Here also, as in her other novels, emotional blackmail and sexuality are the major motives for the murder of Hilary Robarts. She is sexually unsatisfied and has immoral relationship with Mrs Dennison’s brother Toby Gledhill. Mrs Dennison tells about them:

I know that she attracted him sexually. He wanted her. She was one of those dominant, physically powerful women who do attract sensitive men like Toby. I think she knew that and she used it. (439)

Hilary Robarts is any way responsible for Toby Gledhill’s death. Here James once again blends the elements of romance and sex combined to
sustain mass murder thriller. The detective uses all the tricks and strategies; he knows how to reach towards the criminal and solve the case. It is a thriller story which expands the curiosity of the readers and gives them an opportunity to guess about ‘who-dun-it’ and ‘why-dun-it’. The story develops slowly and gradually with an irresolvable mystery, especially a mass murder or serial killer.

P. D. James herself has explained in her interview, "The Art of Fiction No. 141" in which she comments on setting and locations of her novels:

> Of course I keep my mind and my imagination open to receive inspiration, but I don't rush around looking for places in the hope that they can provide me with a setting. It is always fortuitous to give an example: *Devices and Desires* is set on the east coast of England in Norfolk. I was visiting Suffolk, the country to the south, and one day I was standing on a shingly beach looking out over the cold, dangerous North Sea. (Interview with Shusha Guppy).

James is very much fascinated by surrounding nature and atmosphere of her fictional world. As usual, her novels provide an unexpected ending to the readers. Dalgliesh does not lead the case investigation, but at the end of the novel he assists a local CID officer to find out the killer. In James’s novels there is always a question reproduces which is related to modern world. Can we really eradicate evil from the society and can we really say that there is an absolute morality?

The investigation of Hilary Robarts murder mystery travels from person to person. Caroline Amphlett is the major suspect for her murder. The speciality of this novel is that James never discloses the identity of
actual killer up to the end of the novel. Dalgliesh also uses his forensic method but the case has very less motive. He says about the case:

The absence of motive is the weakest part of the case. And I admit there isn’t a single piece of forensic or other physical evidence. But Alice Mair fulfils all the criteria. She knew how the Whistler killed; she knew where Robarts would be shortly after nine o’clock; she has no alibi; she knew where she could find those trainers and she is tall enough to wear them; she had an opportunity of throwing them into the bunker on her way back from Scudder’s Cottage. But there is something else, isn’t there? I think this crime was committed by someone who didn’t know that the Whistler was dead when she did the murder and did know shortly afterwards. (582)

Surprising ending is one of the features of James’s fiction or this seems to be a ‘Jamesian Technique’. Here, in the present novel Alice Mair commits the crime and she does not feel guilty for it. She confesses her guilt and is sentenced to death: “Here the past and the present are fused and her own life, with its trivial devices and desires, seemed only an insignificant moment in the long history of the headland” (594).

The setting of this novel is very crucial; it takes place near the sea, on a deserted headland. Larksoken Nuclear Power Station is a restricted and country-house area for the present mystery. The story is the fine fusion the element of ‘coastal mystery’, ‘techno-thriller’, and ‘science thriller’ in which an extensive detailed and technical language is used. Along with techno science thriller the novel explores the ‘sexual crime’, ‘white-collar crime’ and ‘corporate crime’. In this tale James uses paradox and ambiguity to explore the human condition and the moral
dimension of human choices. Michael Clay Smith rightly comments about the novel and its ambiguity:

Because moral convictions and social understanding give birth to the law and sustain it, the law necessarily must deal with the ambiguities and gray areas in the range of human conduct. James treats the ironies familiar to the student of justifiable homicide: impelled perpetration, choice of evils, even public authority. As well, she treats what the law labels “negative acts:” those situations in which a failure to act becomes a criminality culpable actus reus. (1107)

The first speciality of the novel is the mass murderer by Norfolk Whistler. The term ‘serial killer’ and ‘mass murders’ are somewhat related to an individual person, who kills more than three murders. S. T. Joshi defines both terms in a fine manner: “a serial killer is someone who commits three or more murders over an extended period of time and a mass murderer is an individual who kills three or more people in a single event and in one location.” (475)

The stories of James's murder mystery are with full of terror, horror, violence and hatred. The book offers a fascinating story, memorable characters, justice, and dilemma of human nature. Her next crime novel explores complex closed community mystery and traditional whodunit which is set in the Peverell Press with fine fusion of past and gothic subject matters.

*Original Sin* is classic detective novel was first published on 2, November 1994. It is set in London, the bank of Thames and many of the places familiar to the lovers of London’s predicament. The novel moves around London’s river mainly in Wapping in the Borough of the Tower
Hamlets, and centres around the city’s oldest publishing house, the Peverell Press.

The novel is an account of the characters in the Peverell Press. In her earlier novels a self-contained closed community is depicted; for example, Anglican Theological College in *Death in Holy Orders*, Paddington Church in *A Taste for Death*, the Dupayne Museum in *The Murder Room*. The present novel concerns with the Peverell Press, the oldest publishing firm founded in 1792. *Original Sin* explores country-house publishing firm the Peverell Press, the oldest publishing firm in London. The Press is owned by the Peverell and Etienne family. The second generation of the family run the Press, after their retirement. Frances Peverell, Claudia Etienne, Gabriel Dountsey, Gerard Etienne and James De Witt are the primary shareholders and directors of the Press. Gerard Etienne is the chairperson and managing director of the Peverell Press.

Death is the terrible price which James often highlights in her novels. The novel begins with Sonia Clements suicide. She commits suicide, but no one knows the reason behind her death. Here, James’s intention is not to focus on the Sonia Clements death but on the further murder mystery which takes place in the Peverell Press. The history of the Peverell Press is related to the past. It is built by Francis Peverell and the house is known as ‘Innocent House’. There is an interesting story about Innocent House. Lady Sarah Peverell, who is the builder’s wife throws herself from the top of the balcony and is instantly killed. Now, her ghost is still walks in the blood-stained courtyard. The presence of her ghost is strange and mysterious and covers the story with full of excitement.
London is a gothic city in P. D. James’s *Original Sin*. Along with supernatural entity, she describes the city: “The night air smelt cold and clean with the familiar tang of the river. Grasping the rail she felt as if she were suspended, disembodied in air. A cluster of low cloud lay over London, stained pink like a lint bandage which had soaked up the city's blood” (91). Violence and death run hand in hand and the suspect of dark side moves around the characters.

Susan Rowland scholarly comments on the setting of the novel, which is an important part of the novel:

Innocent House provides the traditional Gothic mansion, fusing eighteenth-and nineteenth-century horrors by bringing the haunted castle to the spectral city. Named after its location on Innocent Walk where freed criminals left the local law courts, the neo-venation palace on the Thames doubly ironises its name in a novel whose title, *Original Sin*, comes more and more to stand for crimes that the low and contemporary society cannot purge. (131)

The setting of the novel is appropriate to create a mystery in the minds of the readers. James has become very successful to create classic whodunit and a detective thriller in the grand manner.

The story turns its track by the death of one of the directors of the Peverell Press. Commander Adam Dalgliesh and his team, Kate Miskin and Daniel Aaron are selected to investigate the murder mystery of the Peverell Press. A murder has taken place in the office of the Peverell Press, a venerable London publishing house located in a dramatic mock-venetian palace on the bank of Thames. James describes the river Thames
as a ‘dark tide of horror’ (96). Through this novel she shows her interest in ‘supernatural horror’.

The Peverell Press is run by Gerard Etienne, the son of a French Resistance war hero. He is the victim of the story, the brilliant but ruthless new managing director, who wants to change or restore the firm’s fortunes. He intends to less the staff and makes some other changes but he is murdered before he can succeed in his plans. His death is mysterious and looks horrible:

In the little archives room. Dead! Murdered! That’s what’s happened. He’s lying up there half-naked and stiff as a bloody board. Some devil has strangled him with that sodding snake. He’s got Hissing Sid wound round his neck with its head stuffed in his mouth (145).

His sister Claudia Etienne finds out his body in the same room as the earlier suicide of Sonia Clements has occurred. The Peverell Press is associated with past incidents, “the house represents a potent amalgam of beauty and horror in the legend that it was built with the money of a neglected wife who committed suicide in despair” (Rowland 131). James blends supernatural and gothic elements to expose the ‘other’ world from human being, which is beyond the human imagination.

The special unit from the New Scotland Yard headed by Adam Dalgliesh reaches the murder scene. In this five episode mystery including Foreword to Murder, Death of a Publisher, Work in Progress, Evidence in Writing and Final Proof, James describes the particulars of police procedural of a crime scene, questioning the witnesses and analyzing the evidence to identify the killer.
James creates atmosphere of suspense and introduces such characters whose psychology is plausible and gripping in such activities. This is the bizarre murder mystery and the whole team accepts the challenge before them. As a part of police procedure Detective Dalgliesh conducts interviews of the Peverell Press members and tries to collect the clues. The death may have been accidental but it has several motives and clues. The team is sure that someone from inside the Peverell Press is involved in the murder case. Now they have to find out who and why someone killed Gerard Etienne.

Mr Dountsey Gabriel is the foremost suspect for the murder. Mr Etienne is dead long before midnight and the possibility is that the snake is put around his neck some hours after he has died. Someone has gone to the archives room and kills Gerard. Police suspecting Mr Dountsey Gabriel as a killer but he is innocent and he himself wants to catch the guilty. He states:

I want them to find out who put that snake around Gerard’s and stuffed its head in his mouth. That was an abomination, a desecration of death. I prefer the guilty to be convicted and the innocent vindicated. I suppose most people do. That, after all, is what we mean by justice. But I don’t feel personally outraged by Gerard’s death, not by any death, not any longer. I doubt whether I have the capacity to feel strongly about anything. I didn’t murder him; I have done more than any my share of killing. I don’t know who did, but this murderer and I have something to in common. We didn’t have to look our victim in the eyes. There’s something particularly ignoble about a murderer who doesn’t even have to face the reality of what he has done. (263)
Dalgliesh, along with Kate Miskin, has conducted the interviews with the partners in Gerard Etienne’s office. The assumption is that Gerard could have a heart attack and the snake has been put around his neck. It seems like an accident more than murder. The murderer is very sharp; he has taken care that nothing should remain in the room as an evidence. The floor and mantelpiece has been cleaned, all the papers have been removed and Etienne’s diary with the gold pencil attached has been stolen the day before. The laboratory and post-mortem report declared that the death of Gerard Etienne is by the Carbon-monoxide poisoning. Death is always encountered in James’s novels and in almost every character of her literary work has paid the price of it. As far as her contemporary crime writers are concerned, her characters are almost always faced with death.

Every suspected persons in the novel have been interviewed by Dalgliesh and his team. Here, James explores unpleasant secrets along with the detailed information of each character. Their secrets are somehow related to the truth behind the murder. The murder mystery lies in the past sins of the Peverell Press partners and the history of the publishing firm. Sonia Clements death is also relevant to the death of Gerard Etienne. She knows something about Innocent House, or about the people who worked there.

James generates romance, sex and thriller at the same time in the present novel. As per the tradition of crime and detective fiction, she creates several motives, clues, puzzles and suspected characters in the criminal plot. Etienne Gerard makes plan to sell the Innocent House and moves it in modern building. He is the man of many enemies. He wants to change the structure of company, cut down the staff, change the books they sell, and cut some of their long time authors that are no longer
writing well. After the death of Gerard his sister Claudia has taken the charge of Managing Director and appeals to the staff:

First of all I would like to thank you all for your loyalty. My brother’s death and the method of it has been a horrible shock for us all. This is a difficult time for Peverell Press, but I hope and believe that we shall come through it together. We have a responsibility to our authors and to the books which they expect us to publish to the same high standard that has characterized the Peverell Press for over two hundred years. I have now been informed of the result of the inquest. My brother died of carbon-monoxide poisoning, obviously from the gas fire in the little archives room. Precisely how that death occurred the police aren’t able to say. I know that Commander Dalgliesh or one of his officers has already spoken to all of you. There will probably be continued interviews and I know that all of you will do what you can to help the police in their inquiries, as shall we the partners. (389-90)

Claudia Etienne gets the advantage of her brother, so she has an opportunity and means to kill her brother. Including her, Frances Peverell, Blackie and many more people come under suspicion. There are three murders occur in the novel, and the solution of the murders lies hidden in their past events as well as historical events.

Once again twist comes in the investigation of Dalgliesh. The first victim is Etienne Gerard, the second victim is Sonia Clements who has worked at Peverell Press for twenty-four years and Gerard who has sacked her very brutally, and the third victim is Mrs Esme Carling. One suicide and two murders have taken place and the investigation team
never found evidences and clues to reach towards the killer. Innocent House is shattered by the three terrible incidents.

The novel is a mixture of gothic and supernatural elements. The language used by James in this novel is appropriate to the gothic romance. There is a dark atmosphere, an ordinary thing remains extra-ordinary, and there is an imagination beyond the horizon of human being. The intention of the writer is to create curiosity and horror in the mind of the readers. Here is an example of how she creates the mysterious nature by the use of fine language:

The bottom two storeys were faintly lit by the lights from the forecourt, the slender marble pillars gleaming softly against the dead windows, black cavernous opening into an interior which she now knew so well, but which had become mysterious and forbidding . . . All these thing ordinary things remained even when there was no one there to see them. And there was no one, no one at all . . . The chair and the table would still be in place, but there would be no bed, no woman’s body, no naked man clawing at the bare boards. Suddenly she saw again Sonia Clément’s body, but more real, more frightening than when she had seen it in the flesh . . . Lady Sarah wife of the Peverell, who had built Innocent House, had thrown herself from the top balcony and smashed to death on the marble. (396)

It is a fine representation of ‘Jamesian Craft’. The novel is filled with such incidences like supernatural and non-supernatural things are combined together, all ordinary things remain extra-ordinary and sometimes people are haunted by the uncanny incidents throughout the novel. Now, Lady Sarah’s ghost walks in the blood stained courtyard. An
icon of haunted courtyard has attracted the attention of the readers. The roots of crime and mystery fiction are generally found in gothic romance. Here James exhibits her expertise to create such picture in the manner of gothic horror. The novel *Original Sin* is constructed with a sense of Gothic horror. Here temporary typist Mandy enjoys a literacy sense of Gothic horror:

It seemed to her now that Innocent House held her in some mysterious thrall. She came to work each morning energized with a mixture of excitement and anticipation spiced with fear. That small bare room in which, on her first day, she had stood looking down at the body of Sonia Clements possessed her imagination so powerfully that the whole top floor, still securely locked by the police, had assumed some of the terrifying potency of a child's fairy-tale, Blue beard's lair, the forbidden territory of horror. (388)

*Original Sin'* is more than a metaphoric reference to the Bible. James refers to several biblical and historical incidents and references along with the elements of crime and mystery. It is a fine blending of ‘mystery with history.’ Susan Rowland comments, “The snake, sign of ‘Original Sin’ in the biblical sense, signifies here the irredeemable stain that Gerard and Claudia Etienne were born carrying, as children of a so-called war hero who deported Jews under the Nazis, in particular, the family of the killer. Even Gothic London comes to represent this original twentieth-century sin that the law and current social conventions cannot erase or contain, according to this novel.” (Rowland 132)

The former owner of Peverell Press Francis Peverell has written his confession in the manuscript. He has killed his wife Lady Sarah Peverell for her money. In the beginning of the novel the death of Lady Sarah
appears as a suicide, but in reality it is a brutal murder by her husband. Through this novel James wants to throw light on upper class society and their greed for money. Money is the major motive for her murder. Francis Peverell writes in his confession:

I, Francis Peverell, write this with my own hand on the forth of September 1850 at Innocent House, in my last agony. . . This, my confession, can bring no relief to mind or body since I have not sought absolution nor confessed my sin to a living soul. Nor have I made restitution. What restitution can a man make for the murder of his wife?

I write these words because justice to her memory demands that the truth be told. Yet I still cannot bring myself to make public confession, nor to lift from her memory the stain of suicide. I killed her because I needed her money to finish the work on Innocent House. I had spent what she brought as a marriage-portion but there were funds tied up and denied to me that would come to me on her death. (502-03)

The police know that Dountsey Gabriel is the obvious suspect. He has made the plan of Gerard Etienne’s murder and it looks like an accident; even without mercy he has killed Esme Carling. Like his earlier two murders he has also killed Claudia Etienne who is the sister of Gerard Etienne. With the help of clues, interviews and evidences, Adam Dalgliesh and his team find out the actual murderer. Gabriel Dountsey who is the partner of Peverell Press has killed Jean-Philippe-Etienne’s two children’s that is Gerard Etienne and Claudia Etienne to take revenge of his own children death. Claudia’s dead body has been found out by the police. Gabriel Dountsey, the man in love with Frances has killed
Claudia. He has strangled her in the garage. Gabriel takes revenge on the Etienne family. He says:

This is revenge. Justice doesn’t require that you come finally to tell me what you have done. Call it justice if it comforts your conscience. It’s a strong word, I hope you know what it means I’m not sure that I do. Perhaps the representative of the law can help us. (544)

Revenge is the central idea of the present murder mystery. The novel exposes the white-collar crime and country-house mystery. It is a fine fusion of historical incidence and past background which leads the story with crime and mystery elements. The story covers past tragic episode, the story of Jewish mother Sophie Dountsey and her four-years-old twins Martin and Ruth who are betrayed and murdered by the owner of Peverell Press Jean-Philippe-Etienne. Gabriel has uttered his last words, which are interrelated with the past:

You killed my children; I have killed yours. I have no posterity; you will have none. After Sophie's death I could never love another woman. I don't believe that our existence here has a meaning or that we have any future after death. Since there is no God there can be no divine justice. We have to make justice for ourselves and make it here on earth. It has taken me nearly fifty years but I have made my justice. (544)

James has the uncanny ability to expose the marvellous depiction of all backgrounds and types of people throughout her novels. She uses theological references in different ways. Sin and justice are always based on the temperament of human being. Sin is the religious term whereas
crime is the social term. The story exposes the unpleasant secrets behind the murder and the history of the publishing firm. Sin and its adverse effects on human being are underlined by James in the present novel, “If God is eternal, then His justice is eternal. And so is His injustice” (359).

James exposes the same concern in her next murder mystery *A Certain Justice*, which evokes failing of profession and the social fragmentation of secular modernity, and the crisis in maternity in the modern world.

*A Certain Justice* was published in 1977. This is the tenth novel in the series of Adam Dalgliesh mystery. The novel highlights the strange closed world of the law courts and the London legal community. This novel is supposed to be the English country house mystery and legal thriller. It moves around Powlet Court. Though the characters are fictitious and are not based in any way on living persons, they represent contemporary society of James’s era.

James is very intelligent to handle and unfolds her mystery with all the art and the fascinating language. The novel begins with a trial for a murder, a serious crime nowadays in the world. The renowned criminal lawyer Venetia Aldridge successfully defends Garry Ashe against the charges of having brutally killed his aunt Regina V. Ashe. The opening line of the novel introduces the murder mystery:

Murderers do not usually give their victims notice. This is one death which, however terrible that last second of appealed realization, comes mercifully unburdened with anticipatory terror. When, on the afternoon of Wednesday, 11 September, Venetia Aldridge stood up to cross-examine the prosecution's Chief Witness in the case of *Regina V.*
Ashe, she had four weeks, four hours and fifty minutes left of life. After her death the many who had admired her and the few who had liked her, searching for a more personal response than the stock adjectives of horror and outrage, found themselves muttering that it would have pleased Venetia that her last case of murder had been tried at the Bailey, scene of her greatest triumphs, and in her behaviour court. (3)

It is the fascinating beginning of the English court system that wins the heart of the readers. James throws light on the English legal and judicial system.

Garry Ashe, aged twenty-one years and three months is accused of murdering his aunt, Mrs. Rita O’Keefe, by cutting her throat. It is a kind of brutal murder mystery James has depicted in the present novel. Garry Ashe has been living with his maternal aunt, Mrs. Rita O'Keefe. She is always engaged in the illicit sexual activities and always drinking heavily. James describes skilfully the dead body, “When the police arrived at twelve-twenty they found Mrs. O’Keefe lying on the single divan in the front sitting room, practically naked. Her throat had been cut and she had been slashed with a knife after death, a total nine wounds” (6). Most of her novels have such murder cases that shatter readers. Her way of visualising the murder and criminal activities before the readers is in the manner of Agatha Christie and Sayers.

The novel is divided into four phases, Book one-Counsel for the Defence, Book Two-Death in Chambers, Book Three- A Letter from the Dead, and lastly Book Four- The Reed Beds. The novel moves around the four Phases the trial of Garry Ashe, The murder of Venetia Aldridge, the
discovery of her body and investigation of her death by Dalgliesh and his team.

Now the trial begins for the murder, Venetia Aldridge is defending Garry Ashe on the charges of having brutally killed his aunt. His aunt has been drunken, unattractive, quarrelsome, fifty-five year old, “with an insatiable appetite for gin and sex” (8). The present novel explores the dark side of human nature. Venetia Aldridge has played a crucial role as a “strong feminine roles”. The novel is a classic whodunit in which James wants to throw light on contemporary justice system. Venetia successfully won the case and Garry Ashe is freed from the charges of the murder of his aunt. After the successful victory, the mystery or criminal plot turns its track. Lawyer Venetia Aldridge who is the woman of several enemies in her career herself victimise. The earlier death and its trial is responsible for her destruction.

The next victim is Venetia Aldridge herself, she has been stabbed through the heart with her own paper knife in her Middle Temple Chambers. Harry Naughton finds out her dead body. It is not the natural death, she has been murdered and there is a lot of blood beside her dead body. The staff of the Middle Temple Chambers, Mr. Laud, Mr. Langton and Valerie Caldwell, call the police to investigate the murder of Venetia. James creates mysterious death of Aldridge, without giving any clue and motives. After having a successful trial case, she is found dead and it is unexpected to the readers and it creates twist in the criminal plot. Commander Adam Dalgliesh and his team along with woman detective Kate Miskin and Piers Tarrant are called to investigate the murder. Harry who has seen the body first is very shocked. He tells to the detective:

I'm sorry sir, but I have something very shocking to tell you. It’s Miss Aldridge. When I arrived this morning her house
keeper rang to say that she hadn't been home last night. Both
doors of her room here were locked but I’ve got the spare key. I’m afraid that she’s dead, Sir. It looks like murder. (122)

The photographer and fingerprint officer arrive and start their work. The weapon is a sharp blade, something like a small thin dagger. It is a steel dagger with a brass handle and guard. While policing the murder case, Dalgliesh has gone through clues, motives and interviews of suspected people. He collects her all information like her relationship with staff, her private life, her friends etc. She is dead and it seems terrible to discuss about her, and more terrible to gossip about her private life. Her fellow members do not want to disclose her private life. In this context Dalgliesh says gently, “In a murder investigation to protect the dead can often mean endangering the living. I’m not here to judge her, I’ve no right. But I do need to know about her. I do need the facts.” (189)

Miss Aldridge has been appointed as the Head of Chambers, so that most of the people hated her even no one feel genuine pain for her death. Even, she holds her monopoly and dominance over judicial system, by hook or crook she tries to win the case. She is not that much popular among the legal community and she has continuing ‘masculine’ nature in her profession. Susan Rowland comments about her power:

Many people whose lives are injured by Venetia’s unfeeling struggle for power prove to have had a hand in her demise. Punished through her inadequacies as a mother, Venetia is nevertheless willing to use her gender in first displayed to the reader in the service of dangerous criminal Gary Ashe, and brings about terrible retribution. (177)
Venetia Aldridge, who is the victim, always thinking about ‘individual selfishness’ in her work. She enjoys her powerful life and professional power. She has also used her power brutally at work, threatening the livelihoods and futures of employees and her colleagues. She is self-confident, ruthless, and many people feel trouble from her power.

Adam Dalgliesh appears very less in this novel. He gives more priority to his subordinates Kate Miskin. The squad has been working and unravel the complex clues of Venetia’s death. They are concentrating on the prime suspects. They find out the actual incident of the murder, “The murder forced Aldridge back against the wall, bruising the back of her head, and stuck in the knife straight to the heart. Either he was lucky or he knew his anatomy. Afterwards he dragged the body across the carpet—there are heel marks in the pile—and put her in the chair. (225-26)

Dalgliesh finds out a letter, as an important clue for his investigation. The letter throws light on the possible facts. The murder mystery is connected with past incidents. Venetia’s strong professional power is the major cause behind her murder. She saves many guilty criminal by using her defence skill. Thus, she is the woman of many enemies. Mrs. Janet Carpenter is prime suspect for her murder. She has the means and the opportunity for her murder. One past incident is associated with the present one, in the year of 1992 Aldridge has successfully defended the case of Dermot Beale:

Mrs. Janet Carpenter, a widow. Lives with her daughter-in-law and granddaughter just outside Hereford. Three years ago the child is raped and murdered. The murderer, Dermot Beale, is convicted and is now serving a life sentence. He had previously been tried in 1992 for an almost identical
rape and murder. The evidence was less compelling and he was acquitted. The defending counsel was Venetia Aldridge. Emily’s mother, distraught with grief, kills herself. After her suicide Janet Carpenter sells her house, moves anonymously to London, cuts herself free from her old life. (317-18)

James has depicted the serious crime that is murder and rape in the present novel. In modern world sexual offence and rape always take place in the society. Sexually sick people, commit such kind of sexual crime. James has used contemporary world and its civilized culture, which is dominated by evils, vices and immorality in most of the novels.

Emphasis in this novel is on the ‘objects’ which often occur in her novels. Mrs. Janet Carpenter has the opportunity to kill Aldridge. Blackmailing and money is the prime motives for her murder. As James’s earlier novels, which concern with more than one victim, the present novel has three murders: one is Venetia Aldridge, second is Mrs. Carpenter and third is Coley. Janet Carpenter has killed Venetia Aldridge. Janet kills Venetia because she wants to fulfil the satisfaction of her revenge. She takes revenge and has given justice to her dead daughter. The two deaths are certainly connected. Two murders have been done in the same way as their throats are cut. The same person is responsible for both of the murders. The shadow of suspect moves throughout the novel, until the expected conclusion comes out. Sometimes suspects has been leading towards her fellow lawyers because she is very ambitious lady and has many enemies. Mystery unravels the novel, twist and turns goes hand in hand.

This novel is the best example of ‘police procedural’ and ‘legal thriller’ in which the central focus is on police officer. Here, woman detective Kate Miskin and Tarrant have played an important role to find
out the murderer. James’s victims are, perhaps more complex and introspective. She describes about her innocent victims, in “The Art of Murder”, an interview with Jennifer Reese:

I like to try to show what makes the victim the victim. The victim is usually someone who is not particularly agreeable. You're unlikely to have a victim who is an absolutely delightful, kind, lovely wife and mum with 2.15 children and a loving husband. Somehow there's got to be a motive for this appealing and contaminating crime. So therefore the victim is usually someone like Venetia, someone who has made enemies. And I think it's important to show why the victim has made enemies. In A Certain Justice, it’s interesting to think back to what made this rather cold-hearted, brilliant, ambitious, beautiful woman the kind of person she was. (440)

James provides surprising ending and uncanny incidents to her readers. Mrs. Janet Carpenter who is the murderer of Venetia Aldridge is killed by an obvious psychopath, Gary Ashe. He is the psychic killer who loves Aldridge’s daughter Octavia and wants to marry her. He kills Coley in brutal manner:

After that it was a confusion of horror. Coley made a move to shield her, then rushed at Ashe. But the reaction was a second too late. Ashe’s hand jerked forward and the knife sank into Coley’s stomach. Wild-eyed, rooted with horror, Octavia heard his cry, a low shuddering cry between a grunt and a moan. Then, as she watched, the red stain spread over his vest and he sank almost gracefully to his knees and keeled over. Ashe bent over him and drew the knife across
his throat. She saw the great rush of blood and it seemed to her that the dark eyes, still with that look of pleading, gazed into hers and slowly dulled as his life drained away into the sandy earth. (410)

The brutal murder is supposed to be a psychological thriller. Octavia shatters by his homicide way of killing. She tries to run away from him. She has been thinking Gary kills her like he has killed Coley. The psychological thriller is finished by Inspector Tarrant. He shoots Gary Ashe.

James’s characters always feel fear and pain of death. They think that they could be the next victim of the murderer. Death destroys their privacy and they have undergone a terrible shock of murder:

Fear was like a pain. It swept over her, receded into a few minutes of blessed peace, then returned stronger and more terrible than before. She tried to think, to plan, to scheme. Could she persuade him that running away had been instinctive, that she had never meant to leave him that she loved him and would never betray him? But she knew that it was hopeless. What she had seen had killed her love for ever. She had been living in a world of fantasy and delusion. This was reality. It would be impossible to pretend, and he knew it. (412)

The story is a fine fusion of whit-collar crime and corporate crime along with legal thriller. Like her earlier novels the present novel represents restricted locale Pawlet Court closed-community mystery. The story is shocking and fascinating with unexpected end. James has kept several suspects and built the story with tension and logic. The end of the novel is
an unpredictable. Many characters have motive for murder but the plot twists and turns in ‘puzzle’ style of British crime and mystery fiction.

Thus, in this chapter James exposes criminal passions and their lives throughout her writing of crime and murder mystery novels. She depicts political crime, gothic thriller, supernatural mystery, legal thriller, science thriller through her middle phase novels. Her middle phase novels are more elaborative, complex, and realistic one. As usual in her earlier phase, she presents Jamesian notion through this phase. Her stories create tension and suspense among the readers. Her way of writing crime, mystery and detective novels expand the horizon of the lovers of crime and mystery fiction.