CHAPTER : THREE

DOROTHY L. SAYERS: EXOTIC KNOWLEDGE AND
THE ARISTOCRATIC DETECTIVE

Dorothy L. Sayers (1893-1957), the contemporary of Agatha Christie also belongs to the Golden Age of Detective Fiction. Law and order triumph in her meticulously plotted novels, leading to a secure and blissful society. Her novels are filled with word play and the dialogue is full of literary allusions.

Her fictional hero Lord Peter Death Bredon Wimsey is rich, amusing, sensitive and intelligent. T.J. Binyon says,

In creating Wimsey Sayers learnt from the mistakes of her predecessors. She began by giving him a definite history, first encapsulated in the fake extract from DeBrett that precedes the narrative in the early novels, later expanded into a six-page biographical note ostensibly written by Wimsey's uncle, Paul Delagardie. In this way she was able, unlike Conan Doyle or Freeman, to avoid contradictions and inconsistencies in Wimsey's biography in the course of the books.1

From this biography we know that Peter Wimsey is the younger son of a duke, whose early school days were unhappy. His fastidious nature made his school mates call him 'Flimsy' and treat him as a kind of comic figure. When he was known as the best cricketer his eccentricities were accepted as wit. His

uncle describes him as

really charming, very frank, modest and
well mannered with a pretty, lively wit.2

when he was nineteen he acquired affectations and an exaggerated
Oxford manner and a monocle and aired his opinions a good deal.
He served in the Great War as an officer. "In 1918 he was
blown up and buried in a shell-hole near Caudry, and that left
him with a bad nervous breakdown, lasting, on and off, for two
years".3 With half-a-million in his own right and all the
leisure in the world he began his career as an investigator when
he was thirty-one. He has a flat of his own and lives with his
devoted man-servant Bunter. "He now admits that his 'hobby'
is his legitimate work for society, and has developed sufficient
interest in public affairs to undertake small diplomatic jobs
from time to time under the Foreign Office".4

He works with his brother-in-law Parker in almost all the
cases. He avoids the fisticuffs associated with crime investi-
gation and leaves it to the policeman. He tells Parker "that
in a collaboration like ours all the uninteresting and dis-
agreeable routine work is done by you".5 He finances a bureau

3Ibid., p.9.
4Ibid., p.10.
5 Ibid., p.242.
staffed by Miss Climpson an elderly spinster, who does the leg-work for him. But "Detective or no detective he is a scholar and gentleman". His love for books is revealed in the first novel *Whose Body* (1923) when he is prevented from going to an antique Book Sale as he has to necessarily engage himself with an assignment of utmost importance. So he sends Bunter, his man servant with instructions.

I don't want to miss the Folio Dante nor the de Voragine .... Golden Legend - Whynkyn de Worde, 1493 - got that? - and, I say, make a special effort for the Caxton folio of the four sons of Aymon - it's the 1489 folio and unique, Look! I've marked the lots I want, and put my outside offer against each.

Peter Wimsey doesn't have any exaggerated qualities. In fact he is very humane and suffers from the old nightmares of his childhood days. In *Whose Body* after identifying the criminal correctly he has a recurrence of his nightmares because of the strain, calls Bunter and tells him that he couldn't hear anything but the noise of the guns. Bunter devotedly comforts him and puts him to bed. He woos Harriet Vane through several books starting with *Strong Poison* (1930) and ending in *Busman's Holiday* (1937). He becomes more mature and understanding in the later books. His method of systematic analysis and synthesis

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7. Ibid., pp.21-22.
help him to solve the mystery. In *Whose Body*, the moment he infers Julian Freke to be the criminal he is able to get all his disjointed observations into a single unified whole.

Wimsey appeared in a variety of detective stories and novels throughout the 'Twenties, becoming one of the most notable characters of the "Golden Age" of detection. Then Wimsey is transformed from a cardboard collection of attitudes into a "complete human being, with a past and a future, with a consistent family and social history, with a complicated psychology and even the rudiments of a religious outlook".  

In *Whose Body* (1923) the dead body of a vagrant is found in the bath of Mr. Thipps with nothing on but a pair of pince-nez. He bears a superficial resemblance to a wealthy financier Ruben Levy and would have looked exactly like him if he had a beard. There is a coincidence as Levy disappears. Lady Levy is abroad with her daughter for reasons of health as advised by Dr. Julian Freke, a surgeon in St. Luke's Hospital, who is a former suitor of Lady Levy and at present is the friend of the Levys. Julian is in charge of the dead bodies in the hospital and without his knowledge no dead body can be taken out from or taken into the mortuary. When the Police go to St. Luke's

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hospital to enquire whether any dead body is missing from the
mortuary. Julian is working on a dead body. He goes along with
the Inspector, sees the body of the vagrant, and fails to
identify it.

Mr. Thipps is suspected since the body is found in his
bath. He refuses to reveal to the police his whereabouts on
the previous day. Levy's business rival Milligan is also
suspected. Thipps is cleared when he produces his alibi.
Further there is no motive for him to kill this unknown vagrant.
Wimsey interviews Milligan to ascertain whether Levy has been
murdered. He learns that Milligan desired Levy's absence for a
short period to suit his business matters but would have never
gone to the extent of murdering him. The pince-nez poses
another problem. The advertisement in the papers about it
proves that it belongs to one Mr. Crimplesham who lost it on
the L.B. and C.C. Electric Railway while visiting London the
previous Monday. He has nothing to do with the murder. No one
knows how it happens to be on the dead body.

Levy's movements before his disappearance are traced.
He was very happy on the previous night because of some business
transactions. He dined with three of his friends and refused
to go out with them on account of an engagement the details of
which he never disclosed to others. Julian's statement to Inspector Parker that Levy visited him the previous night to consult him on health grounds rouses suspicion in Wimsey. This helps Wimsey to connect all the information he gathered personally and in the course of the investigation; to guess the identity of the criminal. His clues being: the hair of the victim has been cut so recently that there are quite a number of little short hairs stuck on his neck and the sides of the bath. Shaved recently that there is a dried soap on his cheek, a few strands of material caught in the gutter of Thipps bath from the window, in a crack of the stone parapet and chimney stack.

To this he adds the facts that he has learnt from visiting Levy's room and going through his diary. Freke visits him frequently and it is only on his advice that Lady Levy has gone abroad. The Duchess's information about Julian's failure in love, the single red hair found in Levy's bed, the disagreement between Julian and Dr. Grimbold (who did the postmortem) regarding the time of death and the interview with the medical student — all the above facts help to unravel the mystery. Freke has impersonated Levy since he knows Levy's house well. He has access to dead bodies. He wore surgical gloves and let the body down from the roof with a surgical bandage. Wimsey tells Parker after such analysis,
Everytime we look at Freke, he leads somewhere, whereas Milligan and Thipps and Crimplesham and all the other people we've honoured with our suspicion simply led nowhere.9

Lady Levy identifying the body as that of Levy, Freke is arrested before he can commit suicide but not before he has written a full confession addressed to Wimsey where he also solves the puzzle of the pince-nez.

Every murder has a motive, the cause of murder is found to be jealousy and revenge - the primitive feelings that dominate the famous surgeon. He wants to take revenge on the victim just because

Levy - who was nobody twenty years ago - romps in and carries off Freke's girl from under his nose. It isn't the girl Freke would bother about - it's having his aristocratic nose put out of joint by a little Jewish nobody.10

The crime is premeditated murder by one who has the means and opportunity. The murderer

was a powerful man, since he killed him with a single blow on the neck, a man of cool head and masterly intellect, since he did all that ghastly business without leaving a


10Ibid., p.236.
mark, a man of wealth and refinement, since
he had all the apparatus of an elegant toilet
handy, and a man of bizarre, and almost
perverted imagination, as is shown in the
two horrible touches of putting the body in
the bath and of adorning it with a pair of
pince-nez.11

Though the criminal is traced it is very difficult to
prove that he is the murderer. He is over-cautious. He is a
good schemer with no conscience. "Conscience is a sort of
vermiform appendix. Chop it out and you'll feel all the
better" is his motto.12 He loves crime and he gloats over it.
He says how easily he murdered Levy.

As soon as I saw his head in a favourable
position I struck him heavily with the
poker, just over the fourth cervical. It
was delicate work calculating the exact
force necessary to kill him without breaking
the skin, but my professional experience was
useful to me.13

He has been outwardly good and kind and never exposes
his ulterior motive being friendly with the Levy family.
Wimsey's mother, the Duchess is all sympathy for Julian. She
says

I believe young Freke was really devoted
to her, and they're still great friends....
but he's never married.14

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Ltd., 1923), p.57.
12 Ibid., p.236.
13 Ibid., p.275.
14 Ibid., p.71.
Even Levy believes that he is ready to sell him the shares for the sake of Christine when Freke says

"Look here", I said, "I'm not giving this away to everyone, but I don't mind doing you and Christine a good turn. You know I've always kept a soft place in my heart for her, ever since the old days. You got in ahead of me that time, and now it's up to me to heap coals of fire on you both."

Inspector Sugg is all praise for his readiness to help in this case.

He was very kind, was Sir Julian, very kind indeed, though he was at work when they got there, in the dissecting-room. He looked up the books to see that all the bodies were accounted for, and then very obligingly came round here to look at this.... and said he was afraid he couldn't help us - there was no corpse missing from the hospital, and this one didn't answer to the description of any they'd had.

Freke, the surgeon, is methodical and daring with "a face beautiful, impassioned and inhuman". His deeds are as inhuman as his face is.

Freke is a very good schemer, he has planned to kill Levy but is waiting only for the opportune moment. He says

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16 Ibid., p. 30.
17 Ibid., p. 247.
after Christine's marriage with Levy

I devoted myself to my profession, and contented myself with keeping up a friendly connection with Ruben Levy and his family. This enabled me to remain in touch with his fortunes and interests, so that, when the moment for action should arrive, I might know what weapons to use.18

His original impulse to kill Ruben Levy becomes profoundly modified by his habits of thought. His plan, he successfully completes when he accidentally gets the body of a vagrant closely resembling Levy. After murdering Levy he makes certain changes so that there may not be any immediate suggestion to connect Levy with the workhouse vagrant.

A clean shave and a little hair-oiling and manicuring seemed sufficient to suggest a distinct personality for my silent accomplice.19

Since he knows in every murder case it is the disposal of the body that is very difficult he carefully plans to leave the body in someone's staircase or down a chimney. But as he is carrying the body on the roof and realises that he is above Thipps' place he decides to leave it there.

I suddenly thought, "Why, this must be about little Thipp's place", and I remembered his silly face, and his silly chatter about

19Ibid., p. 291.
vivisection. It occurred to me pleasantly how delightful it would be to deposit my parcel with him and see what he made of it.20

He is so proud of his intelligence that he wants to leave his brain to the hospital after his death since such a criminal brain will be of interest to the scientific world. In his book on criminology he gloats over a hardened murderer. "He reserves his contempt for the victims or the penitents or the men who lose their heads and get found out".21 Merryn Williams says that in Whose Body Dorothy L. Sayers displays "in bizarre detail, the perverted psychology of Sir Julian Freke. A freak in every sense, he is not willing to be one of the normal, kindly, slightly ridiculous men who inhabit the rest of the novel. He insists on being looked up to as a great scientist (his attacks on his opponents are savage) and, after his death, a great criminal".22

To sum up Julian

Herc first and perhaps most horrid villain, Sir Julian Freke, suffers from one of the great problems facing modern humanity: the disassociation from mind and heart that often renders "civilized" people incapable of moral behaviour. The great surgeon Freke, who is aptly named because he is a

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21 Ibid., p.236.
22 Ibid., p.86.
frekish half-human, denies the importance of intangibles such as the conscience, which he considers akin to the vermiform appendix. With this perfectly criminal attitude, Freke coolly kills and dissects an old competitor, ironically from one of the oldest, least rational of motives, jealousy and revenge. Freke therefore demonstrates Sayer's point; that a human being, as a creature of both intellect and passion, must struggle to understand and balance both if moral action is to be possible. Freke, the dissector of life, destroys.

The criminal here is a respectable member of society. A skilful surgeon who has to save the life of people. We see the archetypal ritual of the spotless animal being sacrificed. Freke murders Levy an innocent man whose life is quiet, orderly and domestic. A self made man, he is not vulgar. He has considerate habits, simple in his tastes in spite of his wealth. This innocent good man is killed by an evil brooding villain who bides his time to commit his jealousy-induced crime.

When his guilt is proved Dr. Grimbold felt it has been a terrible blow to the whole profession and the civilized world. Wimsey playing the archetypal priest's role first exposes the villainy, shows the transformation of this apparently innocent person into a wilful villain, proves his danger to society and arranges for his arrest. The moment Lady Levy identifies the body and leaves the mortuary Freke is arrested. Until then

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Wimsey had kept everything secret so that the murderer could not escape. He also would have committed more murders if he had got a chance.

Of the three rituals of investigation, trial and punishment we are shown only the first, investigation leading to arrest. The trial and punishment are offstage. We are happy that justice is done. A murderer posing as a healer of men is dangerous to society. With the zeal of a priest Wimsey collects all the instruments for the ritual viz. direct and indirect evidence to make the final sacrifice effective.

Sayers's next novel *Clouds of Witness* (1926) is a domestic tragedy. It involves the Wimsey family. Peter Wimsey solves the mystery to save his family honour and brother's life.

The Duke of Denver, Wimsey's brother is accused of murder. The body of Davis Catheart is found at 3 0' clock outside the conservatory door of the Duke's shooting-box at Riddlesdale. Evidence is given that Catheart, to whom Wimsey's sister Mary is engaged, and the Duke quarrelled the preceding evening. Catheart is shot and the Duke's pistol is found near the scene of crime and the Duke is suspected of being the murderer.

Enquiries reveal that the Duke has nothing to complain of Davis Catheart till that evening. He has received a letter
from his friend Tom Freeborn that Davis is a cheat and has been making money cheating at cards. On being questioned Davis has confessed and has broken his engagement with Mary. He has gone out and the next time the Duke has seen him dead.

Wimsey is puzzled as he cannot trace the letter in question. Parker and Wimsey examine the place and gather some information. At the inquest Wimsey learns something more. He also suspects Mary. Mary's former lover has come back and she has plans of eloping with him. But when she knows that Catheart is dead she cannot carry out her plans. Her lover who is supposed to meet her and take her runs away on hearing the shot. Wimsey knows that these two are innocent. Wimsey accidentally comes across Denver's friend's letter. He also learns that Catheart has written two or three letters before his death. He traces these letters to Catheart's mistress which reveal the fact that he has committed suicide. In the investigation Wimsey is helped by Parker; Wimsey solves the mystery by careful analysis and necessary action.

Here there is a corpse but no murder. We find mystery, suspicion and solution, the elements, that are necessary in a detective novel. Here there is no legal punishment but the wicked is punished through his death. Evil is always punished and so the death of Catheart culminates in moral justice.
This is an unusual case in which the archetypal murderer and the victim coalesce into one figure. By establishing that it is a suicide, a miscarriage of justice—the innocent Denver is saved from capital punishment.

Unnatural Death (1927) deals with "a changing world, particularly a world in which women have opportunities—including those for crime—which had not been available to them before". Peter Nimsey comes to know through a doctor the suspected murder of his rich and old cancer patient who has been killed by her niece three years earlier. Nothing much could be done for the seventy-two-year-old cancer patient. The Old Lady's strong will power and positive determination not to die, keeps her alive.

The niece gives up her job as a nurse at the Royal Free Hospital in order to look after the old lady, being her only living relative. Her training as a nurse is handy to plan for her aunt's death. The old Lady feels that it is unnecessary to write a will since her niece is the only relative she has who would inherit all her wealth after her death.

The old Lady's solicitor insists on a private interview with her which affects her health. Imagining that he conspires with others to kill her, she transfers her legal affairs to another local solicitor. Becoming weaker after a third operation
and being unable to manage matters she vests her niece with
the power of attorney and she takes over the entire management.
Since the niece could not do both day and night work, a nurse
is appointed. She becomes very friendly with the doctor and
they are engaged to be married. In spite of her attachment to
the old lady the nurse is suspected by her and she is sent away.
Another nurse is appointed in her place.

The condition of the old lady becomes worse and the niece
in agitation sends for the doctor thinking that her aunt is
dying. The doctor assures that there is no immediate danger to
the old lady's life, and he administers the necessary medicine
to the old lady. He hopes that she would live for another five
or six months. But three days later the patient dies. The
doctor says that the death is unnatural and asks for a post-
mortem. He himself does the post-mortem but is disappointed
in not finding any trace of poison. Against his own professional
judgement he signs the death certificate as 'heart failure'.
The public sympathy lies with the niece who thinks that the
doctor has neglected his duty paying greater attention to his
fiancée and so kills the old lady when she discovers what is
going on between the nurse and himself. Another rumour is that
he tried to get the second nurse into trouble because he doesn't
like the dismissal of the first one. The doctor stays in the
same place for one more year. When his position became intoler-
able and his practice declines he leaves the place.
When Wimsey asks for the name and address of the parties involved he refuses to tell him. Wimsey is intrigued and decides to investigate. Wimsey finds it difficult to investigate an alleged murder as he has to rely on second-hand information. Miss Climpson, his associate helps him in collecting a list of all the people who are involved with the victim. She tells Wimsey that the old lady is Miss Agatha Dawson and her niece is Miss Mary Whittaker. Dr. Carr and Nurse Philliter are the doctor and the nurse who had attended on Miss Dawson.

Wimsey realises that only two persons have had the opportunity to murder the old lady - Miss Whittaker and Nurse Forbes. Since the nurse gains nothing by the old lady's death Miss Whittaker is the prime and only suspect. He also knows more about her through Miss Climpson. Wimsey himself meets Nurse Philliter and learns that Miss Dawson was always kind and affectionate. He also learns from her that she was never allowed to give the old lady any food during the last week of Miss Dawson's death. Miss Whittaker did everything for her aunt. He also learns about Bertha and Evelyn two sisters employed as maidservants there. One was suddenly dismissed for smashing crockery and the other also left with her. Nurse Philliter is convinced that Miss Whittaker had murdered a perfectly innocent lady.
Wimsey lays traps to get the alleged criminal convicted. His advertisement in the papers asking Bertha and Evelyn to contact a solicitor Mr. Marbles results in the murder of Bertha. Evelyn explains to Wimsey how Miss Whittaker's plan to make her aunt sign the will fails.

Wimsey hears from Mr. Triggs, a solicitor that Miss Whittaker pretending to be Miss Grant had clarified her doubts about the old and new Act dealing with property and inheritance. With this new Act coming into force she would lose everything. When Mr. Triggs recognises her later at a hotel she plans to kill him but fails. She also kills Miss Vera Findlater as she knows too much about her. The dual part she plays as Miss Whittaker and Mrs. Forrest is detected by Miss Climpson. Wimsey saves Miss Climpson by his timely intervention when Miss Whittaker makes an attempt on the former's life. Miss Whittaker is arrested but she commits suicide by hanging herself.

Like an angry deity Wimsey decides to avenge the murder of the old lady. Though there is no proof of the murder Wimsey is sure that Mrs. Agatha Lawson is murdered.

I'll lay you ten to one that Agatha Lawson was murdered, twenty to one that Mary Whittaker did it, and fifty to one that I bring it home to her within the year.25

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He tells Parker the steps he is going to take.

I lay traps; I catch men. I shall let the alleged criminal convict herself.26

Mary Whittaker has committed her first murder for gain. The second murder is that of Bertha, the maid of Miss Dawson because of the fear that she might have exposed certain facts. Evelyn is spared because she is far away from her place and there is no danger from her. The third murder is that of Findlater who is devoted to her and who knows too much about her. Thus one after the other the murders have been committed. She would have continued to murder any number of people since she believes that any one who stands in her way has no right to exist. She fails in her attempts to murder Mr. Triggs the solicitor, Miss Climpson and Wimsey.

The criminal here is the female counterpart of Sir Julian Freke. She is shrewd like him but greedy. Though Miss Dawson is not able to understand the impact of the New Property and Inheritance Act Mary Whittaker knows everything. She very carefully consults another solicitor excluding Mr. Probyn, the old lady's solicitor. She knows that if the murder is found out Probyn might remember her clarifying on the point of inheritance and she could be easily accused. She knows how to murder the

old lady without leaving any trace of poison. Wimsey says "the more I hear of Mary Whittaker ... the less I like her". She ruthlessly murders people without any compunction. To quote Wimsey "very odd things seem to happen to the people who are in a position to give information about the last days of Agatha Dawson. Bertha Gotobed dies suddenly, under suspicious circumstances; her sister thinks she sees Miss Whittaker lying in wait for her at Liverpool docks; Mr. Triggs is inveigled into a house of mystery and is semipoisoned". She is very clever and her usual ways are "the secret appointment. The drink. The endeavour to get one to stay the night at all costs". She uses poison of a kind that leaves no signs. In the murders, "there have been no signs or traces of poison discoverable in the bodies at all by any examination or analysis that skill can devise. In fact, not only no proof of poison, but no proof of anything but natural death". In the words of Parker 'she is the most ruthless criminal in the world - fifty times worse than a man, because she is always so much more single-minded about it. She is 'an arrogant person who feels, like Milton's Satan, that it is better to reign in hell than serve in heaven".

28Ibid., p.215.
29Ibid., p.217.
30Ibid., p.272.
Wimsey the priest figure in the archetypal ritual realises the danger Miss Whittaker can cause to society. He says

My Honour (Capital H) is concerned to track this Human Fiend (capitals) to its hidden source, and nail the whitened sepulchre to the mast even though it crush me in the attempt.32

He is hesitant earlier to hunt for this 'murderer' since his interference results in a series of crime again. So he consults the Priest Tregold whether he is doing the right thing by reactivating an old and dead crime. He is assured that he is doing the right thing since the past crime shows that the murderer has committed the murder for her advantage. The Priest further states that no one has a right to take away the life of people for his or her advantage.

He further states:

Society is never safe from the man who has deliberately committed murder with impunity. That is why - or one reason why - God forbids private vengeance.33

Since Wimsey is not taking private revenge he is particular that justice be done. The murders must be avenged since Mary

33Ibid., p.216.
Whittaker is an eternal threat to society. She murders every person who comes to know of her crimes. So she has to be prevented from committing other murders. With the information about Miss Whittaker collected from various sources Wimsey performs the role of the Priest in search of this "the pharmakos" and gets rid of her. Northrop Frye observes that "the pharmakos or sacrificed victim, (who) has to be killed to strengthen the others" in society. Miss Whittaker is not a victim in the sense of an unjustly punished individual but is the element which endangers others in society and therefore she has to be removed before further damage is inflicted on society.

In detective fiction the criminal symbolises the autonomous existence of evil in society whose members face permanent danger from it. The detective playing the role of the Priest exercises his power to identify and drive away evil to ensure society's safety.

Here again of the three rituals of investigation, trial and punishment we are shown investigation and punishment - death is just mentioned. No trial is conducted.

The problem of inheritance is once again the subject matter in Sayers's next novel The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club (1929).

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General Fentiman is found dead in an armchair at the Bellona Club reading the *Morning Post*. Fortunately his doctor Penberthy is there at the Club to confirm his death as heart failure. Lord Peter Wimsey is also there. When this news is to be informed to the General's sister Lady Dormer it is known that she has died that morning. She, in her will has left a major portion to the General if he survives her. A small amount will go to her distant relative and companion Miss Ann Dorland who stays with her. If on the contrary, the General dies before his sister the position will be reversed. Ann will enjoy a major share and a small amount will be divided between Robert and George the grandsons of General Fentiman. Since both of them are dead now it becomes necessary to know the time of the General's death in order to execute the will. Lady Dormer has died at 10.37 and if the General died even one minute after 10.37 he would get the major share. Mr. Murbles the solicitor of the Fentimen family wants Wimsey to find out the time of the General's death.

Wimsey is not able to get the exact time of arrival of the General at the Club. It is taken for granted that he might have arrived there at 10 0' Clock, his usual hour of arrival at the club. Wimsey suspects that it is murder and not natural death as he has seen the absence of rigor in a leg while helping the corpse to be taken away. His discussion with Dr. Penberthy
reveals the fact that the joint has been forcibly loosened by somebody after rigor has set in. It would remain loose until the whole body is relaxed. Wimsey also learns that the phone in the library is out of order and a notice to that effect is stuck there. But the person in charge of the switch board seems to have no knowledge of it.

The prime suspect is Ann Dorland since she will benefit by the earlier death of the General. Captain George is in greater need of money. He has been invalidated, is jobless and dependent on his wife's salary. He is in a state of financial crisis because of his imprudent marriage. Robert is unmarried and is still in the army. Though "he is not particularly well off", 'he does very well'. 35 From Robert Wimsey learns that the General has stayed with one Mr. Oliver his friend, to discuss business and has phoned home to that effect. So the General has not returned to his apartment. Robert doesn't know the address of Oliver.

Wimsey is unable to meet Ann to get any information from her. She does not agree to a compromise. Wimsey feels that Mr. Pritiehard Ann's solicitor knows something but doesn't want to reveal it.

George is another suspect because of his financial crisis. According to General Fentiman's Will the little that he has is to be divided between George and Robert. Considering George's

great necessity General Pentiman gives him the better claim
to his money and "Robert was finally named as executor and
residuary legatee, thus succeeding to all such personal effects
and moneys as were not specifically devised elsewhere". 36

Wimsey suggests exhumation to find out whether Ann and
her solicitor are honest. If so they would support him, other-
wise he would know that they have something to conceal. In the
meantime Ann seems to have changed her mind and is now ready
for a compromise. But Wimsey is not for it now.

Robert who sees the dead body in the Library carries it
without anybody's notice by making use of the two minutes
silence on Armistice Day when "everybody would be either out
in the street or upstairs on the big balcony that runs along
in front of the first-floor window" 37 of the club. He invents
'Oliver's name only to divert everyone from suspecting him.

Robert's confession makes certain things clear. His
grand-father has talked to him about the will of Lady Lormer.
He expressed his desire to divide everything between George and
himself. But the General wasn't quite satisfied with George

36 Dorothy L. Sayers, The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club,
37 Ibid., p. 147.
"and he wanted to think it over and see what was best to be done, in the way of making a new will". He then went down to the library. Robert who wants to say something on behalf of George goes down to the library and finds the old man dead. He places the body in the usual place where the victim used to sit as guessed by Nimsey. Oliver is a mere invention, a red herring to throw suspicion off him.

The autopsy result only points out "traces of a powerful dose of digitalin ... with a subject whose heart was already in a weak state, the result of such a dose could not but be fatal".

Nimsey's interview with Ann solves the mystery. She is engaged to Dr. Penberthy who wants everything to be kept a secret. They have even plans of having a clinic with the money that she will inherit. But Dr. Penburthy's behaviour changes and he gets engaged to Naomi Rushworth. Ann realises that he wants only her money. It is he who has murdered the General since the General on that day had told him everything. He had said that if he survived his sister Felicity all the money would go to him, otherwise it would go to the girl. Dr. Penberthy had given him a slow working capsule thinking that the old man would go straight to his flat. Unfortunately he had gone to the club and died there. Robert had found the body, hidden it and exposed it the next day.

39 Ibid., p.167.
Dr. Penberthy knows that the postmortem result would reveal digitalin and so falsely indicates that death took place earlier than it actually did. He has misled Ann to believe that it is Wimsey who wants to hush up everything which leads to Ann's unwillingness for a compromise. He even tries to persuade Ann to agree to a compromise while she wants a proper enquiry. This results in their first quarrel. He knows well that if his engagement to Ann is known he will be suspected. So he hurries to be engaged to Naomi Rushworth severing his connection with Ann. When Wimsey narrates all these events Penberthy is compelled to plead guilty. He is asked to write a confessional statement and suggests suicide by leaving a pistol by his side.

The crime here is once again murder for personal gain as in the case of Unnatural Death. Like Julian Freke and Mary Whittaker, Dr. Penberthy is entrusted with the life of people. He is in fact the old General's physician. It is a breach of confidence both as a friend and physician. Dr. Penberthy wants money as he is sick of being poor. He knows Ann would get money from Lady Dorner. We know his motives in being friendly with her. In Wimsey's words to Ann

He'd probably heard all about the family quarrel with the General, and expected it would be the lot. So he started to make your acquaintance. But he was careful
He asked you to keep quiet - just in case, you see. The money might be so tied up that you couldn't give it him, or you might lose it if you married, or it might only be quite a small annuity, in which case he'd want to look for somebody richer.40

When he knows that the General is to get the money if he survives his sister Penberthy gives him a slow working pill to kill him.

He is as good a schemer as Julian Freke and Mary Whittaker; but he lacks their courage. He is careful and does not leave any trace. He tells Wimsey "Not even a bit of paper to give me away ... I just had to put the stuff into a couple of capsules and tell him to take them at 7 O'Clock ... And the next day I'd only to get a fresh supply of the stuff and fill up the bottle. I'll give you the address of the Chemist who sold it. Easy? - it was laughable ... People put such power in our hands".41 He is like Julian who gloats over the murder in his confessional statement. But he allows himself to be led into unpleasant way of doing things - leaving Ann, hurriedly getting engaged to Naomi Rushworth - it is just self-defence. But he is ruthless when he says that he never feels sorry for killing the old man. If he would get his half million "Ann


41 Ibid., p.277.
Dorland would have got a perfectly good husband, and the world would have gained a fine clinic, incidentally".  

He is different from Julian Freke and Mary whittaker in that he doesn't cruelly murder everyone who accosts him. That may be due to his fear. In spite of his wickedness he is prepared to make it clear in his statement that Ann is innocent.  

Wimsey eliminates one after another all the suspects and finally settles on Dr. Penberthy. Wimsey knows that as a physician and friend Penberthy is dangerous to society. Wimsey as the archetypal Priest figure, has taken the law into his hands and has shown the way to Penberthy to take the easy way out of a disgraceful trial and execution by leaving behind a pistol. Considering his position as a doctor and friend he does not want a respectable member's reputation to be spoilt. Hence he suggests suicide. The ritual is different here as the criminal is not arrested but allowed to commit suicide. It is pointed out to Penberthy that if there is a trial and arrest "that would cause a great deal of unpleasantness to yourself and to other people, you may wish to take another way out of the situation. As a doctor, you will perhaps prefer to make your own arrangements .... If not, I happen to have brought

this with me from my private locker. I am placing it here, in the table-drawer, preparatory to taking it down into the country tomorrow. It is loaded". 43

The detective enacting the archetypal role of the Priest provides the means for the ritualistic cleansing of society. Dr. Penberthy the scape-goat villain is sacrificed for the good of the society. It is moral law and not judicial punishment that is given to Dr. Penberthy. It must be emphasized repeatedly that in detective fiction the scape-goat is not innocent but guilty. The villain is made the scape-goat in the sense that with his/her removal society is cleansed of a sort of sin and made safer for the innocent to survive.

In The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club, the culprit is offered an honourable way out. Dr. Penberthy is gently persuaded by Lord Peter to write a confession, clearing Ann Dorland. Colonel Marchbanks of the club leaves a revolver handy in the library and Penberthy shoots himself. The tragedy is kept at a distance. A final touch is in keeping with the title of the book The Club's chronic complainer, Wetheridge, rushes into the bar:

I say, you fellows ... here's another unpleasantness. Penberthy's shot himself in the library. People ought to have more consideration for the members. 44

44 Ibid., p.280.
Of the three rituals of investigations, trial and punishment we are shown the first and the last while the trial is avoided for the reasons mentioned above.

The next Wimsey novel is *Strong Poison* (1930). Here Harriet Vane is introduced as the accused. Wimsey saves her, falls in love with her and marries her later. From the point of the personal life of Wimsey it is a very important novel. It is in this novel that we hear about Wimsey's sister's marriage to Inspector Parker, with whom Wimsey collaborates in crime investigation.

In *Strong Poison* Harriet Vane is accused of murdering her former lover Philip Boyes. A disagreement between the jury results in the necessity of a second trial. Wimsey takes up the case and proves that the murderer is Norman Urquhart the solicitor and Boyes's cousin.

Boyes and Urquhart are the great nephews of a ninety-year old lady Mrs. Rosanna Wrayburn. Her successful and somewhat scandalous stage career under the name of Cromorna Garden makes her very wealthy. Urquhart is her solicitor and in her will is appointed as her executor and residuary legatee. Philip Boyes on the other hand is a writer and is not well off.
The connection between the family of Boyes and the Urquharts is explained by Urquhart himself. Of the three sisters the first married a Boyes, the second an Urquhart, and the third went on the stage and became very rich. The eldest was very cold towards her; her letters were returned unopened by Henry Brown, her sister’s husband. He even humiliated her by sending her out of the church at his wife’s funeral. The Urquharts were better; they kept their relationship at a distance in a polite, kind way. The old lady never forgot her humiliation and never forgave the Boyes. Wimsey asks Urquhart whether Boyes has any chance of financial expectations. He gets a negative reply. Further, Urquhart says that when he points out to the old lady that Philip Boyes has had nothing to do with the elder sister’s humiliating treatment she wouldn’t hear a word in his favour. So Urquhart has to draw up the will as she wants it. She has suffered a severe stroke that left her completely paralysed and imbecile. So Urquhart gets the power of attorney and manages everything. He even shows Wimsey a copy of the will dated eight years earlier appointing Norman Urquhart as sole executor and the entire property is bequeathed to him. It is mentioned in the will that Urquhart should not render any monetary help to Philip Boyes.

Wimsey suspecting some foul play employs Miss Climpson to find out certain details. She, in turn, manages to get
John Murchison employed in Urquhart's office to get some information. These two help him to unravel the mystery.

Wimsey knows that Urquhart has recklessly squandered most of the fortune entrusted to his care by gambling on the Stock Market with heavy losses. He has used Mrs. Wrayburn's money for his private speculations - deposited her buildings as security for larger loans and invested the money thus raised in the Megatherium and other wild-cat schemes. The Megatherium trust has collapsed.

The original will also is found out. According to this Urquhart is only a residuary legatee. Phillip Boyes is evidently her favourite relative and is left £ 50,000 and the whole of her real estate. Since Urquhart is in a financial crisis he needs money. Boyes's quarrel with Harriet Vane gives him the opportunity to influence Boyes who lives with Urquhart after his quarrel. Urquhart poisons him. Urquhart's involvement in the Megatherium Trust, his forged will typed on Urquhart's type writer, and the poison in his secret panel with the chemist's address - all expose Urquhart's villainy and he is arrested. Harriet Vane is acquitted.

The crime here is murder of a cousin who never suspects the criminal. The murder is committed for personal gain. As a result of this murder Phillip Boyes who will inherit a large
sum, is disposed off and everyone suspects only Harriet Vane, who is Boyes's former lover as Boyes fell sick everytime after his visit to her. Further it is proved that Harriet Vane has been buying arsenic under the pretext of killing rats when there were no rats at all; on another occasion it was to kill the weeds when there was no garden attached to her flat. She had given an explanation saying that she has made these purchases to experiment as she is engaged in writing a novel about poisoning.

The criminal is a respectable member of society and solicitor to the old lady. The old lady who is ninety years old is leading a wretched life - dragging on - a misery to herself and everybody else. Urquhart is her man of business. He pretends to be sympathetic towards Boyes but cannot do anything by way of helping him as the will prevents him from doing so. He tells Wimsey that the only hope of salvation for Philip would have been to make his way by his own work. Though he doesn't want to talk ill of the dead, it is a fact that Boyes doesn't like to work. In fact he relies too much on other people. He presents himself as one who has great concern for his cousin but is morally bound according to the old lady's will.

He, like Julian Frake, Mary Whittaker and Dr. Penberthy is very careful. In the words of Mrs. Arbuthnot "Friend Urquhart has been very careful though. Bound to be - respectable family
lawyer and all that. But I saw a man yesterday who knows a fellow who had it from a chappie that said Urquhart had been dipping himself a bit recklessly off the deep end".45

He is clever enough to mislead Wimsey with a fake will drafted by him which he himself has typed on his machine. Wimsey realises that there is no need for him to show it. He is convinced that Urquhart purposely wants to mislead him. But his foolish action of not destroying the will exposes his villany. The Will is not only in favour of Phillip Boyes but also in a special paragraph explains that

the greater part of the property is left to Phillip Boyes in token that the testatrix forgives the ill-treatment meted out to her by his family, for which he was not responsible.46

Urquhart makes Wimsey believe that though he pleaded for Boyes and tried to change the old lady's mind he did not succeed in his attempt. He tried to make Wimsey believe that the old lady never forgave Boyes. In reality Urquhart has been consistently misusing his position as trustee by spending Mrs. Wrayburn's money for his private speculations.

He is a good schemer. When Mrs. Wrayburn had a serious attack and Philip Boyes quarrelled with Vane he became friendly

46 Ibid., p.245.
with Boyes and invited him to stay at his house. Boyes's attacks of illness were caused by consistent semi poisoning. As residuary legatee he had seen to it that he would receive all the money bequeathed to Philip Boyes after Mrs. Rayburn's death. Though he may not get the money which he has already spent, his fraudulent dealings will not be exposed.

He is very cautious like Julian Freke. He "took special pains never to be left alone with the patient, and never to give him any food or medicine, even when she herself was present". That argues a bad conscience.

Wimsey playing the part of the Priest in the cleansing of society finds out first the motive - need for money. Then he employs Miss Climpson and through her knows the villainy of Urquhart. The last chapter where he exposes the criminal is in the vein of Agatha Christie though it is not the entire gathering we have here as we have in Christie. It is only Wimsey and Urquhart, the priest and the criminal. Though Wimsey cannot find any evidence as to how the poison is administered in the food Boyes has taken, he guesses the way it is done. It is introduced through the crack in one of the eggs which Urquhart desired to be used to make an omlette. Boyes and Urquhart ate the omlette, Urquhart got used to arsenic by taking

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it in little quantities. He had been taking arsenic six or seven grains at a time for nearly two years. Thus having made himself immune he shared the arsenic poisoned omlette with Boyes. His hair and nail when tested proved the presence of arsenic in his body. He even tries to escape but Wimsey is too clever and Urquhart is arrested.

Like Sir Julian Fereke (Whose Body) Mary Whittaker (Unnatural Death) Dr. Penberthy (The Unpleasantness at Bellona Club) Norman Urquhart is a villain who misuses the position of being a trusted confident to commit crimes. So it becomes doubly difficult to prove his guilt. Lord Peter Wimsey who is able to identify them plays his role as a priest detective using his skill almost intuitively to identify the culprit.

The archetypal pattern in a way is similar to that of Clouds of Witness in the sense that Wimsey prevents injustice done to Harriet Vane by saving her from capital punishment.

Sayer's next novel The Five Red Herrings (1931) has murder as the crime but not an intentional one. It is committed while the criminal tries to defend himself. At McClellan Arms a quarrel breaks out between Campbell, a Scottish landscape painter and Waters, an Englishman. Wimsey who is there takes him to his lodgings as Campbell is a notorious fighter. The
next day Campbell is dead - he has drowned. Wimsey is sure that Campbell had been painting and while stepping back to view the painting might have fallen into the river and been drowned. Wimsey learns that Campbell had been fighting with the golf club secretary Farren, Ferguson and has not spared anybody. There are six suspects and all of them painters of one sort or another. Michael Waters who boasts that he can easily counterfeit Campbell's style fought with Campbell the previous night. Hugh Farren another painter is jealous of Campbell. Mathew Gowan, a landscape painter is publicly insulted by him. Jack Graham a portrait painter carries on a feud with Campbell. Henry Strachan, another portrait painter has quarrelled with Campbell. John Ferguson quarrelled with Campbell when the latter knocked down his wall with his car.

Wimsey starts collecting information about the suspects. He knows that except for Ferguson the others did not have an alibi. All of them are away and each has some story or other which could not be completely proved. All have motives but Farren had a bigger motive since Campbell was paying attention to Farren's wife. Wimsey realises that everyone seems to be full of mysterious hints but no one can say why it is murder or when and how it was done by an artist. Wimsey analyses the facts and unravels the truth.
Wimsey's investigation starts with the missing white flake. It is the fundamental medicine which a painter uses to mix with his other colours to produce various shades of light and shadow. Campbell had used it on that day. After Campbell's death it has been missing. Wimsey concludes that Campbell has been murdered and the murderer has painted the picture and has taken away the flake white with him by mistake or might have put it in his pocket if that had been his habit. So he visits studios and watches people at work to find out their habits. The tidy Gowen has a place for everything and he keeps it in its place. Waters throws his paints into a satchel. With Campbell's satchel ready he would have thrown the paint in it.

Graham put his tubes while painting out of doors either on the ground or in his hat. Waters confirmed this. Farren uses the sketching box and puts each tube in its place. Strachan had laid his colours on the tray of his easel always in the same order, the order of the spectrum. Ferguson always put the paints in his pockets. Wimsey has seen him doing it. Wimsey reconstructs the crime with the help of the police officers.

There is a flaw that is unconsciously corrected by Ferguson. Ferguson accepts that his blow kills Campbell in the fight but that is not intentional. Ferguson is frightened when he saw that Campbell is dead because he has quite often threatened to kill him. So he tries to make it appear as an accident.

The jury considered it to be midway between murder and self-defence.
They strongly recommended mercy on the ground that Campbell was undoubtedly looking for trouble everywhere.

The crime here is murder but an unintentional one. The victim takes the place of the criminal since he happens to be an undesirable character. He proves to be a man of uncivilized habits. When he quarrelled with Waters in his irritation, "He used a few brief and regrettable expression, and transferred the better part of the contents of his glass into Waters' countenance. 48

McGeoch who was at the bar says "Campbell will be getting into trouble one of these days, I shouldn't wonder. The manners of him are part all bearing ..."49 "He's a devil when he's drunk and a lout when he's sober. It's a great shame".50 The row between Campbell and the golfclub secretary at Gatehouse had become local history. He fought with Graham about fishing and to spite him Graham was fishing in the pool below Campbell's house though there were many pools around. He has a quarrel with Gowen calling him an out-of-date old blunderer. As a result they are not on talking terms now. He paid attention to Parren's wife and incurs his displeasure. He breaks Ferguson's wall and refuses to repair it. Thus from the first

49 Ibid., p.13.
50 Ibid., p.13.
chapter itself we know that what an undesirable person this
Campbell is.

In Campbell we have an unusual combination of culprit
and 'pharmakos', Ferguson's acquittal is almost an acknowledge-
ment of his function as the agent of justice. Lord Peter Wimsey
fulfils duly the role of the priest performing the ritual of
identification. The sacrifice of the scapegoat has already taken
place. Before the sacrifice the artistic community enjoys
peace and happiness. The arrival of Campbell changes everything.
To quote McSleoch

Our little artistic community has always
got on well together without giving offence
to anybody. And now there are nothing but
rows and bickerings - all through this
fellow Campbell.51

The sacrifice has been effective since peace and happiness are
restored to the little artistic community.

In The Five Red Herrings the criminal renders justice by
killing Campbell while in the next novel The Nine Tailors (1934)
it is Providence that brings justice. Here also the murder is
accidental. On New Year Eve Wimsey's car which is driven too
fast meets with an accident near Fenchurch St. Paul. He stays
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In The Five Red Herrings the criminal reverses justice by killing Campbell while in the next novel The Nine Tailors (1934) it is Providence that brings justice. Here also the murder is accidental. On New Year Eve Wimsey's car which is driven too fast meets with an accident near Penchurh St. Paul. He stays with the Rector Mr. Theodore Venables that night. Wimsey comes

toknow that the Rector has planned to ring in the New Year 15,840 Peals of Kent Treble Bob Major equalling the performance of the college youths in 1868. Unfortunately the bell-ringer William Thoday is down with influenza and the Rector has to give up his plan. With Wimsey volunteering, the plan is executed to the utmost happiness of everyone involved. Wimsey returns to London. He receives a note from Mr. Venables requesting him to come to Fenchurch village to solve a mystery. The note says that Lady Thorpe died in January, and is buried in the churchyard. Her husband died in the following Spring. When they opened the grave to place him beside his wife an unidentified corpse with a mutilated face and hands cut is found there.

When Wimsey and the superintendent start their investigation another mystery involved with this is brought to their notice. At the wedding of Sir Henry Thrope a wealthy relative's valuable emerald necklace is stolen. Geoffrey Deacon, Thrope's butler, his wife Mary and Cranton, a London Jewel thief, are involved in the theft. Though Deacon and Cranton are sent to jail the necklace is never recovered. Hence Sir Henry pays for the necklace.

Deacon escapes from prison and his body is found in a stone quarry. After Deacon's death, Mary married William Thoday and lives at Fenchurch St. Paul. But Deacon is not dead. He
kills a soldier who is at home on leave and is mistaken for that man and is sent back to the western front. When he is wounded, he is nursed by a French woman whom he marries later. He is afraid that he would be arrested for theft, jail-breaking and murder and he does not return to England to get the necklace.

When Deacon needs money he arranges with Cranton to go to Fenchurch St. Paul. He goes there but does not get the jewels. Thoday who recognizes him in the church realises that if he is seen by others, his marriage with Mary would be annulled and his daughters would be declared illegitimate offspring. So he ties Deacon to the post in the church belfry promising to release him later. Unfortunately he becomes ill. Deacon is trapped in the belfry during the nine hour ringing of the bell, dies of a stroke. Thoday's brother James who finds him dead, mutilates the body beyond recognition and disposes it off to the most convenient spot, namely, the new grave in the churchyard. Wimsey deciphers the cryptogram of Deacon given to Cranton and gets the missing emeralds.

The accidental death, the supposed crime, is caused by many people. William Thoday since he has tied Deacon to a post in the belfry; Wimsey, the rector and all other bell ringers become responsible for the crime. Thoday did not have an evil intention in tying Deacon to the post. He only wanted to protect
Mary. "imsey and others ignorant of Beacon's presence ring the bell with all good intentions. The wicked here are punished not by secular justice but by Providence.

"imsey doesn't play a very prominent role in solving the mystery. He only recognises the cryptogram message and the fact that Beacon does not die in 1918 as it is taken for granted. The mystery is solved by many people: Thorpe who finds the cryptogram, Venables in decoding it and the British and the French Police providing vital information. There is no trial and no punishment as it is death by accident. There is a corpse but no murder. The only murder stated is that of an unknown soldier who is replaced by Beacon. Hence his supposed death answers for the death of the soldier.

"imsey's function as detective-Priest is taken over by Providence but the essential components of the archetypal ritual are evident - the crime (Beacon killing the soldier) the victim (the soldier), and the Priest (the 'providential' death of Beacon) and ultimate justice is done. In the words of the Rector

Perhaps God speaks through those mouths of inarticulate metal. He is a righteous judge, strong and patient and is provoked everyday.52

The Superintendent is satisfied with the fact that 'the man is dead, and the fellow that put him up there is dead too, poor chap, and that's all there is to it.'

Geoffrey Leacon was a bad man and the intolerable death agony he has undergone is the right punishment for his wicked deeds.

In her next novel *Gaudy Night* (1935) Sayers deals with the frustrations and insecurities of women in the character of Annie "ilson, the maid at Shrewsbury college.

Ten years after her graduation Harriet Vane is invited by her classmate Mary Stokes Attwood to an annual celebration, the 'Gaudy' at Shrewsbury college. To begin with, her stay is unpleasant as she comes across a crudely drawn picture of a naked woman stabbing a figure in academic dress. On her way back to London she finds a message in her gown: "YOU DIRTY MURDERESS. AREN'T YOU ASHAMED TO SHOW YOUR FACE?" The words used are cut from newspaper headlines. She doesn't give importance to it as she assumes it to be accusing her of murdering her lover Philip Boyes (*Strong Poison*, 1930) and concludes it to be a personal attack. She is later on requested to return to Shrewsbury to find out the source of a series of malicious and increasingly dangerous pranks taking

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place on the college campus. In addition to this there is vandalism and the manuscript of Miss Lydgates study of English prosody mutilated, a gown burnt in the quadrangle, and library books torn.

Quite unwillingly Harriet goes to her college. Her methods fail and she is unable to solve the mystery. There is no murder but many wanton acts of destruction of personal and college property. All over the campus anonymous and obscene notes are seen. Harriet is attacked being mistaken for Miss de Vine, the college's Research Fellow. Harassed by more than thirty such abusive notes one student tries to drown herself in the river. Harriet is shocked and Miss De Vine, a heart patient is intended by the yet unknown villain to die from the trauma of the attack. What is worse, the members of the faculty begin to suspect one another. "One can secretly call in the police .... the less publicity the better" because the mischief-monger wants only such an ugly publicity. Harriet unable to solve the mystery herself seeks Jimsey's help. He is ready and willing. Though he teaches her some fundamentals of self-defense, he doesn't interfere with her investigation and doesn't even reveal the name of the culprit to Harriet.

Miss de Vine recalls an experience - a historian applying for a professional post has submitted an essay without acknow-

ledging a letter condemning his thesis. As a member of the appointing committee Miss de Vine is aware of the letter and strongly feels that the candidate also knows about it. He does not get the job. Worse than that he is stripped of his M.A. and excommunicated from the academic world. This disgrace drives him to drink and suicide leaving a destitute wife and two small children. Annie, the wife has decided to take revenge on the whole body of women scholars. The culprit is found out but punishment is different. She is not sent to prison but is placed under psychiatric care with the promise of rehabilitation.

The crime here is not murder but harrassment, actions causing suspicion among staff themselves and attempted murder. One of the outrageous actions is the torture of the student Newland that drives the girl to attempt suicide when she should be preparing to do brilliantly in her exams. The desire to bring scandal and disgrace to the college is shown in defacing the library. Personal vendetta is proved in destroying a scholar's manuscript. The obscene notes expose the perverted mind of the criminal. An attempt is made on the lives of Miss de Vine and Harriet. Though the crime here is not murder it is disruption of university life and destruction of a microcosm of civilization. The villain is a woman and unlike the women criminal of the earlier novel she is not educated and she doesn't have any knowledge about academic life. She knows only one
thing, that the academicians are responsible for her husband's death and she has to avenge his death. She comes to this college "when Miss de Vine's appointment was announced, with the intention of revenging his misfortunes upon Miss de Vine, the college and academic women in general".\(^{55}\) When the appointment is announced she applies for a job here. "She probably knew that, as an unfortunate widow with two small children, she would receive kindly consideration".\(^{56}\)

When the culprit is found out she never feels sorry for her deeds. When she is wanted to clear certain facts she says "clear myself! I wouldn't trouble to clear myself. You smug hypocrites - I'd like to see you bring me into court. I'd laugh in your faces. How would you look, sitting there while I told the judge how that woman there killed my husband?"\(^{57}\) These words only expose the pain she has lived with since her husband's disgrace and death. She is very happy to see them scared of each other.

God! how I laughed to see you all look at one another! You didn't even trust each other. You can't agree about anything except hating decent women and their men... I wanted to see you thrown out to starve like us... But I made you shake in your shoes anyhow.\(^{58}\)


\(^{56}\) Ibíd., p.464.

\(^{57}\) Ibíd., p.468.

\(^{58}\) Ibíd., p.469.
She is satisfied having caused such discomfort to the academicians.

She is proud of her actions as she states

I'm not afraid. I did nothing but stand up for my own flesh and blood.59

Being unable to continue further she breaks down. We are able to sympathise with her inspite of her activities since she is incapable of understanding the ethos of scholarly integrity. She says

Was a dirty bit of paper more important than all our lives and happiness?60

Commenting on the character of Annie Virginia B. Marris in her article 'Arsenic and Blue Lace', says

In the evolution of the women criminal in Sayers' novels, Annie is clearly the culmination of an increasingly serious and innovative view of the forces that drive quite ordinary human beings - particularly women - to acts of violence.61

It is pointed out,

In keeping with the deeper examination of criminal motives, Sayers makes the crimes in the novel more atypical as well. Instead of

60 Ibid., p.469.
murder or robbery, the perpetrator engages in apparently wanton acts: destroying personal and college property; sending anonymous, obscene notes; and, in the most overtly violent action, assaulting Harriet after mistaking her in the dark for Miss de Vine, the college's Research Fellow. But the harassment is not trivial. One bright but troubled student, plagued with thirty or more of the abusive notes, tries to drown herself in the river, and Miss de Vine, widely known to have heart trouble, is no doubt intended to die from the trauma of the attack that stuns the hardier Harriet.62

Annie in spite of her unpleasant activities has succeeded in making Miss de Vine think of the consequences of her upright academic honesty and feels sorry for the fate of Annie's husband which she never realised till then.

_Gaudy Night_ has all the trappings of the archetypal ritual. The victim (the entire campus represents the whole of a closed society instead of a representative), the culprit who is a threat to the psychological well-being of the society (on the campus) and the cleansing figure of the Priest in this case, Harriet Vane is helped by Wimsey. The only thing that is lacking is the corpse. With the sending of Annie to a Psychiatrist the college atmosphere is cleansed of its unpleasantness and normalcy is restored. Justice is done in not punishing Annie because of her birth, and lack of education. If Ferguson in _The Five Red_
Herrings can escape punishment because of self-defence Annie could be saved because of her lack of understanding about University ethics and the suffering undergone by her after her husband's death.

In the above cases the crimes pose a threat to the stability of society. A series of murders, criminal and offensive acts create panic in society. So the detective has to sacrifice the criminal or the wicked person (sometimes the victim) to restore order and peace. The criminals are responsible members of society - surgeon, physician, solicitor and nurse. In Whose Body Julian Reke the surgeon diabolically uses his surgical skills to flaunt his crime. In Unnatural Death Mary Whitaker, the Nurse uses her nursing skills to commit murder. In The Unpleasantness at the Bellona Club, Dr. Penberthy takes advantage of his authority as General Fentiman's physician. In Strong Poison Norman Urquhart abuses his position as family lawyer and trustee of an estate. They were entrusted with the well-being of individuals. When these guardians of civilization break the law no one is safe as the well-being of society is at stake. Just as people turn to God for peace the people in detective fiction turn to the detective for protection from evil.

The archetypal pattern varies in the novels of Dorothy L. Sayers and there is variety in the nature of crimes as in the
punishment of the criminals. But all have one common agenda that is good triumphs and evil fails. God is there to justify the activities of man and woman, to punish wickedness when the criminal escapes punishment and bring peace and security to the people.

In Sayers the archetypal pattern rings the changes on the nature of the crime, the criminal, and the punishment. It is in the priest-detective figure - whether Lord Peter Wimsey or Harriet Vane that remains constant.