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**A Socially Realistic Study of  
Crime and Corruption in P.D.  
James' Works**

**ABSTRACT**

P.D. James is a well - known author of both crime and mysteries who is recognized with enlarging the mystery subgenre. Even though she uses aspects of traditional detective fiction, James is particularly concerned in establishing the psychological motivations of her characters. James is renowned for her sophisticated written style, which is accentuated by literary allusions and quotations, as well as for the vivid, realistic characters and locations she creates.

Writing detective fiction is one of James's passions and she strives to use the techniques that make "serious fiction" gratifying while still adhering to the genre's rules. She was interested in realism as early as her writings show. Her literary style is distinct from the classic "country house mystery" of conventional British detective fiction, in which static characters exist solely to further the plot of the mystery. Despite being constructed in the traditional "whodunnit" way, these novels rely on developed, convincing characterizations.

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**دراسة اجتماعية واقعية عن الجريمة والفساد في اعمال بي .جي. جايمس**

م.د. انتصار محمد وكاع علي الجبوري / جامعة تكريت / كلية الاداب / قسم الترجمة

**الخلاصة:**

تعد بي دي جيمس كاتبة معروفة لكل من الجرائم والألغاز، وهي معروفة بتوسيع نطاق فرع الألغاز. على الرغم من استخدامها بعض جوانب الخيال البوليسي التقليدي، إلا أن جيمس تهتم بشكل خاص ببناء الدوافع النفسية لشخصياتها. تشتهر جيمس بأسلوبها الأدبي الرفيع الذي يتم تعزيزه بالإشارات والاقتراسات الأدبية، فضلاً عن الشخصيات والأماكن الواقعية والحية التي تخلقها. كتابة الخيال البوليسي هي إحدى اهتمامات جيمس وتسعى لاستخدام التقنيات التي تجعل "الخيال الجاد" ممتعاً مع الالتزام بقواعد النوع. كانت مهتمة بالواقعية منذ بداية كتاباتها. ويميز أسلوبها الأدبي التقليدي "لغز القصر الريفي" للخيال البوليسي البريطاني الذي توجد فيه شخصيات ساكنة لا تهدف إلا لتقديم الحكمة. على الرغم من بنائها

بطريقة التقليدية "من فعله"، إلا أن هذه الروايات تعتمد على توصيفات شخصيات مقنعة وواقعية. كلمات مفتاحية: رواية بوليسية بريطانية, دوافع نفسية, الوهم الادبي, شخصيات واضحة, الواقعية, الفساد.

## 1- Introduction

### 1.1. Background

The British novelist P.D. James or Phillips Dorothy James is one of the most famous authors of detective novels in Britain and the world and BD James announced that she actually prefers the term (crime novel) and called for the restoration of the status of this literary genre (**Porter, 1998, pp. 541-556; Priestman, 2003, pp. 1-6**).

P. D. James has a long history of crime novels, exciting stories and science fiction that she is famous for writing, and she says that the police novel over the years has moved its traditions away from the excessive simplicity of the original, which was always characterized as leading the good in the end to victory and the bad to punishment.

Because psychological truth was frequently compromised in favor of the novel storyline in the past, the detective novel was classed as one of the literary sub-genres (**Rowland, 2001, pp.135-146**).

Because of this general transformation, the contemporary police novel has moved away from its previous simplicity, most authors of crime novels are similar to other novelists in that they are concerned with the psychological truth and the moral ambiguities of human action and are based on mixing the original mystery with social realism. An example of this mixture is explicitly evident in P. D. James description of the general formula of the detective novel, where the expected events are: a central mysterious death in the novel or a closed circle of suspects who have opportunities, motives, or means for the crime and the role of the detective appears as either an amateur or a professional. He appears with vengeance to solve the mystery of the crime (**Knight, 2003, pp. 77-94**).

In the end, the reader must be able to reach the solution to the mystery of the crime by logically presenting the evidence that was introduced into the novel in a cunning way, but it is necessary in the context of the events and this formula is what made the P. D. James.

Criticism of James's profusion of information in her books has divided commentators. While some reviewers praised her use of description to evoke a sense of place, others saw it as a detriment to the plot's drive. "So much of her scene-setting serves no other purpose than to create impenetrable mood", Christopher Lehmann - Haupt observed. She successfully transmits the nuances of forensics and police investigation, according to reviews. Critics have consistently praised James for offering readers with greater psychological depth than the conventional detective tale. Commentators frequently point out that James doesn't only present a neatly solved mystery in her novels; she also addresses the bigger human concerns that underlie the crimes. As stated by Walter Wangerin, Jr "Under Miss James' guidance, plot never consists of purely external activity. Always interested in character development, the subtleties of purpose, intellect and emotion, she also ponders the nature of humanity as a whole—this complex mix of virtue and evil, faith and failure, love and homicidal self-sufficiency". One aspect of her writing that is usually commended is the contrast she makes between the typical, tidy life represented in her stories and the tangled chaos brought on by the entrance of the crime (Moltmann, 2001; Wood, 2003, pp. 583-595; Lindsay, 2007).

### **1.2. Aim of the study:**

The current study aims at discussing the problem of crime and corruption from a socialistic point of view in selected works of P. D. Games and giving much more attention to the detective stories can be seen as a tool of social reforming.

### 1.3. Value of the study:

Re-reading the selected works of P. D. James from a different perspective, so that the detective stories can be seen as a tool of social and human progress.

## 2- Characteristics of P. D. James Novels

James novels always characterized by the psychology of the characters and the amazing awareness of the place.

P. D. James has been regarded as the finest contemporary writer of the classic novel, the best practitioner of mystery book writing, and "a craftsman with a poet's vision" and critics have frequently stated that she "transcended" the genre. I didn't like this sentence, she said. I've always thought that crime fiction could stand on its own without the necessity for an "override". But it is true that James adopted the detective book and helped to improve, develop and intensify it. She liked to contrast the form of the traditional detective novel with that of the sonnet—no one claimed that the sonnet's strict rhyming system prevented her from becoming a great poet; similarly, there was nothing in the features of the detective novel that prevented her from becoming a great writer.

Christie, Sayers, Marsh, Allingham and Tay were among the writers who influenced P. D. James during the golden age of mystery writing. BD James excelled in portraying the personality of the detective who uncovers secrets and motives buried long ago and restore order in a turbulent society, knowing that investigators have many flaws and P. D. James excelled in expressing the closed circle of suspects. In the novels of P. D. James, after the mechanisms of the novel's storyline, realism and psychological subtlety occasionally took second priority (**James, 2007, pp. 16-25**).

Forensic science and police procedural were sometimes fantastical. In particular, these notions of order and chaos did not fit into the ambiguity of the post - World War II world.

James began writing in the mid - 1950s and published her first novel (Cover Her Face) 1962 and it was the beginning of a rich history of crime novels, exciting stories and science fiction, which she became famous for writing and her most famous novels, "The Murder Room", "Pride" and "Children of Men", have sold millions of books all over the world.

Many contemporary crime writers are well aware that corruption can exist at the heart of the law, that not all police officers are always truthful, that murder is a tainted crime that changes everyone who deals with it, in fiction as well as in real life and that, while there may be a solution and some justice at the end of the detective novel, it can only be fallible justice (Naugle, 2008).

And it was this fallibility in achieving justice that most amazed P. D. James (The Children of Men 1992; The Murder Room 2003).

The emotional power of James's work stems from the juxtaposition of such apparent fastidiousness with the complex, occasionally corrupt internal lives of her characters"

Through the creation of Cordelia Gray, some commentators applaud James for taking a feminist turn away from the traditional male detective. Because it has the components of a literary novel, according to many critics, James' work goes beyond the mystery genre. Others, however, have maintained that James is the finest of her genre because of what she has accomplished while remaining within the confines of the detective story. P. D. James does not "transcend" genre; rather, she amplifies, deepens and intensifies it (Schmidt, 1992; Gillis, 2001, pp. 1-10).

### **3 - An Overview of Crime and Corruption at P.D. James Novels**

The dominant feature that can be seen in James's work is that it focuses on the interaction between human nature and crime and limiting crime sites inside closed places, which are often the scene of events in all of James's works. James's religious background was an important factor in describing crimes and

their relationship to social structure. In the following, we shed light on this description in some of James's works:

Published from 1962 to 2011, her novels offer a dizzying range of characters, each one – even the smallest – meticulously carved as their lives unravel under the illuminating agony of a murder investigation. It combined a typical detective narrative with a psychological thriller, addressing themes such as obsession, vengeance, neglect, ambition, morality, greed, deception, identity and the existence of evil, as well as the power of a tenacious past, all in prose that was both evocative and enigmatic. Elegant and graceful, with a wry sense of humour at times and a surprising strength at all times. James paid equal care to her characters. It didn't matter how significant or insignificant they were; each one conveyed a tale.

The character's remark was sometimes too abrupt—"the police sergeant looked upon him with the somewhat resigned and pitiful look of a man who has seen so many men fool themselves as to be surprised, but still wishes they had not done it" (James P. D. Novel: Cover Her Face, 1962).

The key to P.D. James' novels has always been setting.

The single corpse on the living room floor was even more horrific than the dozens of bullet-riddled corpses on the streets because it was so out of place. The contrast between respect and intentional cruelty further added to the magnitude of this heinous crime. The location also established the tone for everything that followed, creating mood and atmosphere; who these people are has told you as much as their acts have. That's why cops and detectives always meticulously study the murder scene - not just for clues to the killer, but also for clues to the victim and how he ended up with a body (**Bush, 2000, pp. 962-967; James, 2007, pp. 16-25**).

P.D. James is renowned for her exploration of the moral and social complexities that beset society. Because of the way she depicts the complicated psyches of her characters, she is frequently referred to as a psychological crime writer.

In P. D. James's novels, the crimes take place within isolated communities such as the nurse's training school (*The Shroud of the Nightingale*, 1971), the publishing house (*Original Sin*, 1994), or the museum (*The Murder Room*, 2003) and in these enclosed or suffocating locations. The suspected relationships were investigated as thoroughly by the narrator as the murders were by the detective and the victims were generally conspirators and ruthless characters because of their evil lives and murder on the one hand and a realistic social orientation for P. D. James on the other.

In the novels of P. D. James, a special importance appears for the elements of time and place in creating an atmosphere of anticipation and danger that is required in crime novels, on the contrary of William Faulkner was among the modernist authors who implemented novel devices and techniques. His method involves traversing time (Jassim 2010). It is noted in reading James' works that she avoided exposure to contemporary controversial behaviors such as homosexuality, homosexuality, raping, drug use and people who insult mothers Disguised under the noble times, places and dialogues of P.D. James, these novels, like Graham Greene's when he declared that the act of raping is strictly prohibited. When Greene describes the priest's stance on rape, his authorial intention is determined by this social-religious factor, as both of them following the same style. **(Hasan, M. M., & Hamed, H. M. 2007).**

However, the darkest and most confusing instincts of the human mind are explored with a complexity that defies political bias. P. D. James concurs with the concept that the novel's mission is to let the human heart know itself **(James, 2007, pp. 16-25).**

In James' novels, two main protagonists recur: Adam Dalglish, Cordelia Grey, a working - class private investigator who appears in two novels (*James P. D. Novels: An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*, 1972) and (*The Skull Under the Skin*, 1982). And the novel (*An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*) blends the elements of a realistic novel with the structure of an instructional novel. In

the contrast to what distinguishes the style of the realistic novel in general, such frequent investigations come in an exceptional way, as is confirmed by the title of the novel. Following the publication of this novel, feminist critics were disappointed to see Cordelia Grey disappear for ten years, only to be resurrected in the novel (*Skull Under the Skin*), where she appears foolish and unsuitable for her job at the end of the second novel, and this epilogue appears to declare that the investigation of the murders is not suitable for women and is the result of the author's distancing herself from the feminist movement. In contrast to Cordelia Gray, Detective Adam Dalglish has the status of a leader and central character or a famous poet and despite his intuitive intelligence, he fully knows his mistakes.

He has appeared in 11 of James's novels since her first novel , Adam Dalgliesh , a Scotland Yard detective , is the protagonist of each of these novels, as well as several of James' later works (*Cover Her Face* 1962 ) and even the novel (*James P. D. Novel: The Private Patient* 2008 ) . And James deals with caution in drawing a romantic picture of the detective and says that the detectives are not fictional creatures or the fulfillment of romantic wishes and that they do a difficult job in the modern world. James always stated that she bestowed in Dalglish the attributes most admired in men and women: "sympathy without emotion, generosity, courage, intelligence, and independence" (*James P. D. Novels: A Certain Justice* 1997, *An Unsuitable Job for a Woman*; 1972; *The Skull under the Skin*, 1982; *A Certain Justice* 1997).

James's complex personality traits are much more evident in Detective Dalglish's description of Detective Dalgliesh, where Dalgliesh, a character in (*James P. D. Novel: Shroud for a Nightingale*), for example, feels that he represents this awareness of common humanity's guilt. James agrees that while murder may not be on our list of sins, we are all guilty of "deceit, deceit, failure in human relations" and, as a result, can understand the failures of others, even the most egregious ones. However, the author shows where understanding of



error ends and acceptance of it begins "Passion for a crime I myself do not share may be distinguished from recognition of a common humanity, in my opinion. I wish my hero was not sentimental because I do not like sentimentality" (James P. D. Novel: *Shroud for a Nightingale*, 1971).

James's religious concerns are influenced by the social and psychological issues of society. The reader's interaction with the moral, ethical and sociological themes that the author raises in her story will turn detective fiction, which first does not appear to be religious, into theological literature. James may appear to be more focused on other issues at first glance, like entertaining her readers with a frightening, puzzling book, but the end result inspires a strong religious reaction. To express her profound theological concern, she exploits the literary and historical narrative of detective fiction (**Kayman, 2003, pp. 41-58**).

1 - A novel called (*Death of an Expert Witness*), which is primarily set in a laboratory for science, keeps religion only barely in the background. The presence of a church on the lab premises alludes to the tension between science and religion. The chapel, which was formerly a place of worship, has since been deconsecrated and is now where three different characters meet. Eventually result in a murder. In this story, which deftly employs the gothic sublime, the author explores religious devotion and apathy by maintaining a religious setting in constant view (James P. D. Novel: *Death of an Expert Witness*, 1977).

2 – Novel (*A Taste for Death*) opens with the discovery of two men, two men with their throats slashed are found in the vestry of St. Matthew's Church at the beginning of *A Taste for Death*. The first was a homeless person and the second was Paul Berowne, a former state minister. Berowne had been going to the church for advice on his problems with his family and his job. Nevertheless, his brutal execution occurs in the church. Despite not being a blatantly religious book, the main action in *A Taste for Death* takes place in a church. As a result, the plot and characters are significantly impacted by the Christian background.

In *A Taste for Death*, as in many of James' Gothic horror books, violent and fatal episodes take place in churches

(James P. D. Novel: *A Taste for Death*, 1986).

3 - The eighth Dalgliesh book by James (*A Certain Justice*) is a tale about retaliation and the extraordinary lengths people would go to in order to obtain justice for atrocities committed against them or their loved ones. When Janet Carpenter, a character in James' story, seeks retribution and selects St. James Church as the location of their meeting, James incorporates a church into the story. However, Carpenter's motivations shift and the church transforms from a place of deceit and retaliation to one of confession, forgiveness and redemption (James P. D. Novel: *A Certain Justice* 1997).

4 - The twelfth and most openly religious of James's mystery books (James P. D. Novel: *Death in Holy Orders*) takes place in St. Anselm's Theological College. Although it is a school for aspiring Anglican priests, it has also been the scene of a number of homicides. The school's physical structure is steadily eroding into the East Anglian seashore, posing the prospect of closure. The dilapidated seminary is reminiscent of the gothic book with its hint of the impending annihilation of the church (James P. D. Novel: *Death in Holy Orders* 2001).

5 - James makes use of gothic fiction elements once more in (James P. D. Novel: *Death of an Expert Witness*). When a body is found hanging in a chapel, a horrifying scene of savagery is depicted. James intends to frighten her readers, as do the majority of gothic novelists. A terrified young woman flees around the grounds of her science lab in the scene before the body is found in the chapel, which is loaded with suspense and terror (James P. D. Novel: *Death of an Expert Witness*, 1977).

6 - In the novel (*The Murder Room*), in James's vision, the middle class was prosperous, well - educated and liberal and it finally gained control of people's lives. They berate us for providing them with unhelpful input that they never

require. They do not have to live in a local government slum with a broken lift and a history of main violence. They, she claims, do not send their children. To schools where classrooms have become battlegrounds and 80% of students are uneducated in English. They are taken to a psychiatrist instead of juvenile court if their kids are misbehaving. Always have access to privacy if they require immediate medical attention. They are bleeding liberals, so it makes sense (James P. D. Novel: The Murder Room, 2003)

### **Conclusion**

In her books, P.D. James demonstrates that murder is a complex problem with no easy answers. She engages her readers in a religious discussion through her mysteries by raising issues like, "Can murder in defense of family be just?" Also known as "Is murder ever justified?" She challenges her audience to consider issues related to justice, grace, mercy, violence, retaliation and murder. Writing detective stories, in James' opinion, is an expression of the triumph of good over evil. Her books are not the flimsy mysteries where a dead body is simply placed in a room to provide the reader with a riddle to solve. Instead, these are deftly written tales meant to illustrate how deeply polluting murder is to every life it touches. In one of the novels' killings, no character will escape untouched. However, James does not simply depict the horrifying pollution that murder has brought about in her ending scenes. She typically gives the villain some sort of retribution at the end of a book. When Dalgliesh makes an arrest, justice is usually served, but it is also possible for someone to commit suicide or die in an accident.

Evil is by definition chaotic and disordered. It distorts what is good and just. By naming evil, James starts the process of getting rid of it. Evil is made more manageable and, as a result, rendered powerless. James identifies this evil by exploring it through the detective genre in his writing and, in doing so, forays into the confusion and disarray in search of order and justice. James thinks that when she tackles these themes through the detective genre, she has a powerful

platform to remark on human suffering, the ability for good and evil within humanity, as well as the triumph of the good over evil.

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**- James P. D. Novels**

- 1 - Cover Her Face, 1962
- 2 - A Mind to Murder, 1963
- 3 - Shroud for a Nightingale, 1971
- 4 - Death of an Expert Witness, 1977
- 5 - A Taste for Death, 1986
- 6 - A Certain Justice. 1997
- 7 - Death in Holy Orders. 2001
- 8 - The Murder Room. 2003
- 9 - The Children of Men. 1992
- 10 - The Private Patient, 2008