CHAPTER 4

LANDSCAPES AND ECOLOGY: THE CITY RIVER, THE COUNTRY HEADLAND, THE IMAGINARY ISLAND

4.1 Introduction

Resolved at length, from Vice and LONDON far,
To breathe in distant Fields a purer Air. . .
There none are swept by sudden Fate away,
But all whom Hunger spares, with Age decay;
Here Malice, Rapine, Accident conspire,
And now a Rabble Rages, now a Fire;

(Johnson 2011, 31)

The above lines from Samuel Johnson's "London" (1738) mark a stark contrast between the city and the countryside. The binary between impure city and pure country is mediated through the experience of death. While in a countryside one gradually withers away with age, in the city one cannot escape the city's malicious intent. Thus, an "injur'd Thales" must "[bid] the Town farewell" to seek refuge in a peaceful countryside where he can breathe in fresh air among the green fields (Johnson 30). On the contrary, the city is morally and environmentally polluted and degraded and sucks one in. For Blake too, the cityscape is grim, blanketed in smoke and ash dust. His "Chimney Sweeper" from the *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1794) depicts an industrial London where children work as chimney sweeps. In "London" Blake highlights how the industrial city exploits the working classes and the children, immersing them in tedious labour which deprives them of voice and opinion; "mind-forg'd

manacles", he writes (Blake 2011, 75). The city is also a place of crime such as theft and murder. Johnson advises caution during the night-time in a city space:

> Prepare for Death, if here at Night you roam,
>
> And sign your Will before you sup from Home. . .
>
> In vain, these Dangers past, your Doors you close,
>
> And hope the balmy Blessings of Repose. . .
>
> The midnight Murd'rer bursts the faithless Bar;
>
> Invades the sacred Hour of silent Rest,
>
> And leaves, unseen, a Dagger in your Breast.
>
> (Johnson 2011, 47)

In crime literatures, crime is not limited only to the city space, and has penetrated into the countryside and remote spaces away from the mainland. Agatha Christie's country house detective stories is a popular example, where some of the settings have become a part of literary tourism (Eichhammer, 2016). For P.D. James, crime can happen anywhere, in a city, a suburb, a countryside or an island, as reflected in her novels. The rural, rustic, safe, Eden-like countryside is not a part of James' writings. Both the country and the city are vulnerable to crime, police intervention and criminal investigation.

This chapter focuses on James' representation of the city, countryside and the island space within the framework of Police Procedural writing. The city space in James' work is largely the urbanised Greater London County, however, since the Metropolitan police force does not have jurisdiction within the City of London, there is a narrative limitation. In this chapter, the city space includes the metropolis and the suburban extensions. The countryside in James' novels is limited to South and East England, bordering the English Channel and the North Sea, respectively. The island space features in the thirteenth novel in the series. It is a fictional island space called the Combe. This chapter observes the different geographical

landscapes that influence cultural traditions, and how landscape and ecology frame social relations and community belief systems.

4.2 The City Space

> The city is a centre of meaning, par excellence. It has many highly visible symbols. More important, the city itself is a symbol. The traditional city symbolized, first, transcendental and man-made order as against the chaotic forces of terrestrial and infernal nature. Second, it stood for an ideal human community: “What is the Citie, but the People? True, the People are the Citie” (Shakespeare, Coriolanus, act 3, scene 1). (Tuan 2005, 173)

City spaces are known as sites of civilisation and innovation, with a planned living space. “A city does not become historic merely because it has occupied the same site for a long time. Past events make no impact on the present unless they are memorialized in history books, monuments, pageants, and solemn and jovial festivities” (Tuan 174). Documenting spaces is, therefore, significant for associating a space with a specific sense of identity. Literature plays a key role as it not only records geographical space but also embeds into the text how people live in that space and how place-making is undergone.

The urban space is complex because it signifies massive human intervention and dominance as opposed to the countryside where nature takes over. The city space is highly populated with a constant influx of migrant population. Be it in search of work, better facilities, or migration of refugees, the city is brimming with a multicultural identity. It raises questions such as, what is the identity of the city? What constitutes the native population? What was the native culture prior to urbanisation? What is the urban culture of a particular city? Answers to these questions are challenging because the city space continues to expand and grow, consuming the peripheral areas (Farish, 2005). Talking about the city space in Detective

Fiction, Bavidge (2012) says, "[t]his is a monstrous place, a place which is sucking in the life and vitality of the country around it, and of the people from that countryside. The people shrink in the immensity of this place. They become grains of sand, lost in its hugeness. They become unimportant. They become anonymous" (n.p.). The territorial borders of a city space are fluid bringing in different cultures, people, resources and identities. What we know as the suburbs form the liminal spaces where country space transitions into the urban, gradually forming a megalopolis.

London is an expanding metropolis. It is synonymous with landmarks such as the Big Ben, Westminster, the Buckingham Palace, the Royal Parks, popular in literary works such as Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925).

> For having lived in Westminster – how many years now? over twenty – one feels even in the midst of the traffic, or waking at night, Clarissa was positive, a particular hush, or solemnity; an indescribable pause; a suspense… before Big Ben strikes. There! Out it boomed. First warning, musical; then the hour irrevocable… and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life; London; this moment of June. (Woolf 2011, 3)

Amongst the monotonous strike of the Big Ben, a constant reminder of the passing of time, the rush of traffic and buzzing of military planes post First World War, Clarissa Dalloway's identity and sense of self is closely associated with the city. For her, love, life and London fall together in one plane. Decades later, when P.D. James writes her Police Procedural novels, her London is not about significant landmarks of tourist interest. James' London is made up of hospital spaces, museums, modified houses, criminal courts, local pubs and the River Thames. For Brandt (2009), in post-modern fiction, the fictional and real city converge to form a comprehensive city space.

But London for Dalgliesh is his home, and this is where he finds his repose. Despite the urban chaos of traffic and active nightlife, this is where he gets a sense of peace and privacy. James writes, “London never entirely slept and he enjoyed this early morning calm, the first stirrings of a life which within hours would become raucous, the comparative ease of driving along unencumbered streets” (*Death in Holy Orders* 63). Nearly all her novels in the series feature the city even though it does not always form the *mise-en-scène* (in a Police Procedural novel, this would be where the crime takes place). The first encounter of Dalgliesh with London had been as an eight-year-old boy on a two-day trip of sightseeing with his father. Dalgliesh recollects:

> He could remember lying in his bed the night before, fitfully sleeping and almost sick with excitement, the cavernous immensity and clamour of the old Liverpool Street Station, his terror of losing his father, of being caught up and swept along with the great army of grey-faced marching people. . . The visit had been overwhelming for an eight-year-old, leaving a confused memory of churches and galleries, restaurants and unfamiliar food, of floodlit towers and the dancing reflection of light on the black creased surface of water, of sleek, prancing horses and silver helmets, of the glamour and terror of history made manifest in brick and stone. But London had laid on him her spell which no adult experience, no exploration of other great cities had been able to break. (*Original Sin* 43)

Years later, as a Metropolitan police officer, Dalgliesh claims the city as his own by anthropomorphising it: “He moved over to the window and looked down over London. This was his city. . . London had laid its spell on him then, and though his love-affair with the city, as with all loves, had had its moments of disillusion, disappointment and threatened infidelity, the spell had remained” (*A Certain Justice* 199–200). Like any metropolitan city, London is crowded with the hustle and bustle of people, transportation and active market spaces. It

consists of both posh locations and distraught dilapidated spaces like the Ellison Fairweather Buildings, which Kate Miskin complained that it reeked of urine. While Catherine Bowers seeks weekend refuge at a countryside manor house from the "noise and grime of this dreadful city" (*Cover Her Face* 26), Dalgliesh seeks the "pleasure to visit on foot and in the fitful sunlight of a winter morning these secluded corners of the City" on his way to the Yard (*Shroud for a Nightingale* 220). As argued by Howell (1998), the urban detective in a city is not merely a *flâneur*. He says:

> We should note the correspondence with the spectacular, scopic knowledge of the city that is the privilege of the urban detective, who is really a kind of active *flâneur* able to conquer the physical and epistemological anxieties of the city not merely through a voyeuristic illusion of intelligibility, but also through the active creation of order, the mastering of the urban environment. . . . (Howell 361)

Dalgliesh's London is not a confusing urban-scape, but a peaceful domestic space, and unlike the Hard-Boiled detectives used to the mean city streets, Dalgliesh finds tranquillity and repose in his London home.

4.2.1 The Home

Dalgliesh' home at Queenhithe (sometimes Queenhythe in the novels), overlooking the Thames, in the City of London assures him a secluded life despite its urban location. As a police officer, Dalgliesh traverses various locations as a part of the investigation for his cases. This also includes visiting homes of victims and their families, witnesses, and suspects. Here, as a part of his investigation, he has to rummage through belongings, seeking clues and evidences, and building a narrative of crime retrospectively. He is aware of the invasion of privacy but as a law enforcer, he has the license to breach boundaries between public and private spaces. Such a situation makes him value his own private home space. At the same

time, it makes him anxious when he thinks of a situation where his privacy might be violated. On his visit to Matron Taylor's home in West Sussex, he associates her sense of placemaking, with that of his own:

> There was nothing here to interest anyone except him. The sitting-room for all its individuality was almost as plain as his own flat high above the Thames at Queenhithe. Perhaps that was one reason why he felt so at home. Here were no photographs to invite speculation; no bureau bursting with its accumulated hoard of trivia; no pictures to betray a private taste; no invitations to advertise the diversity, the existence even, of a social life. He held his own flat inviolate; it would have been intolerable to him to think that people could walk in and out at will. (*Shroud for a Nightingale* 195)

However, Dalgliesh's Queenhithe apartment has a dual existence as a private and public space. It is no longer a residential space and has been taken over by a business. Contradictorily, Dalgliesh's long lease enables him to retain his residency, complemented with a private entrance. Since the apartment building, barring Dalgliesh's home, is now an office space, he is able to enjoy the seclusion and the quiet evenings during the after-office hours. Dalgliesh's home represents one of the few stable and unchanging places within James' novels. His apartment window that overlooks the Thames shows a consistent view of an ever-flowing river affiliated with a sense of calm, stability and rootedness in history, in an otherwise turbulent city.

Figure 2: "London Mosaic" from Nasa Earth Observatory (9th June 2021). Image of London taken by an astronaut from the International Space Station. Web. https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/148709/a-london-mosaic

4.2.2 The River Thames

Water is a recurrent element in James' writings and is presented through her settings that border the North Sea, English Channel and the Thames. Figure 2 shows the river Thames cutting across the city in a serpentine form. At the same time, the Thames also connects the city through its waterways and bridges. Waterways act as a tricky port for a crime story where a criminal has ease of movement for infiltration and escape. For a police officer heading an investigation, proximity to a water source is challenging. Limiting a pool of suspects becomes extremely difficult when there is always a possibility that a murderer (from a vast population) can enter or leave a crime scene through a waterway, undetected. The river Thames in particular, holds a significant place in James' Dalgliesh series, significantly so in *Original Sin* (1994).

Original Sin (1994) features the Innocent House and/or the Peverell Press established by Francis Peverell in 1792. Situated right by the Thames in Wapping, it replicates a Venetian style architecture (5, 45–46). The Innocent House was inherited by Henry Peverell who ran the Peverell Press with Jean-Philippe Etienne. With the recent death of Henry Peverell, the shares to the Press are distributed among Frances Peverell (Henry Peverell's daughter), Gerard and Claudia Etienne (Jean-Philippe Etienne's children), James de Witt and Gabriel Dauntsey, a 76-year-old writer. On a Thursday, the 14th of October, Gerard Etienne's body is found in the archive-room of the Innocent House. The investigation is handed over to Dalgliesh and his team which includes Kate Miskin and Daniel Aaron.

The novel's title "Original Sin" refers to the Jewish genocide of 1942, whose history is retold through Jewish characters such as Gabriel Dauntsey and Daniel Aaron (171–172, 537). Aaron remembers:

> his grandfather's words, spoken to him after his bar mitzvah; 'What is a Jew without his belief? What Hitler could not do to us shall we do to ourselves?' The old

> resentments welled up. A Jew wasn't even allowed his atheism. Burdened with guilt from childhood, he couldn't reject his faith without feeling the need to apologize to the God he no longer believed in. It was always there at the back of his mind, silent witness of his apostasy, that moving army of naked humanity, the young, the middle-aged, the children, flowing like a dark tide into the gas chambers. (171–172)

Here, James uses a water imagery: "dark tide", to talk about the deportation of Jews to concentration camps. The Auschwitz genocide, and the cooperation of the Vichy Regime in France with the German regime, form the crux of the plot. The murder of Gerard and Claudia by Gabriel Dauntsey is a counter-reaction to the execution of his wife Sophie and twins Martin and Ruth. We learn that while Dauntsey was in England, his wife and children were seeking refuge in France. Their location was betrayed by Jean-Philippe Etienne, resulting in their capture. Dauntsey and Etienne are a part of the migrant population that now forms a part of the post-war heterogenous British society. Dauntsey's poetry reflects his experiences "of modern war, of loss and grief and terror, comradeship and courage, cowardice and defeat. The strong sinuous brutal verses were lit passages of lyrical beauty, like shells bursting in the mind" (218). Unlike Dauntsey, Etienne is a migrant from France who "hadn't come to England out of any special affection for the country or its people" but because it was "necessary" (317). Etienne contemplates, "gazing across the stretch of quiet water it seemed to him that only in those turbulent and confused days of war had he been truly alive. He had been young, passionately in love, exhilarated by constant danger, stimulated by the ardours of leadership, exalted by a simple and unquestioning patriotism which for him had become a religion" (315). James, in these lines, associates Thames with memory and nostalgia. The "quiet" Thames, can invoke "turbulent" memories associated with the Second World War.

The river enables the characters to revisit the past, and thus, Frances Peverell too gazes at the river and recollects:

> From her earliest years her father had told her stories of the river which for him had been almost an obsession, a great artery, endlessly fascinating, constantly changing, bearing on its strong tide the whole history of England. He told her of the rafts and coracles of the first Thames voyagers, the square sails of the Roman ships bringing cargo to Londinium the Viking long boats with their curved prows. He would describe to her the river of the early eighteenth century when London was the greatest port in the world and the wharfs and quays with their tall masted ships looked like a wind-denuded forest. He told her of the raucous life of the waterfront and the many trades which drew their life from this bloodstream; the stevedores or lumpers, the watermen who worked the lighters. . . boat builders, ships' bakers, carpenters, rat-catchers. . .; river festivities; floods and tragedies. (98–99)

James anthropomorphises the river by using the term 'artery' and 'bloodstream' to indicate that the flowing body of the river is essential to bring life to the English society. The river documents history through its trajectory, sedimentation, and ancient settlement of people near the banks. The 1980s saw the revival of archaeological study in England. Financial support was provided to study about historical places and architectural structures that were destroyed during the bombing of the Second World War (Hingley 2018, 1,6). In 1992 the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MOLAS) was established, and it seems that James too attempts to document English history and contribute to the study through this novel which was published in 1994 (Cohen, 2010).

The focus on the Thames is strategic to the narrative, as it gives the city its identity. Rivers have been known as sites of civilisation. Here, the Roman settlement of Londinium emerged as the City of London (Paine 2018, 462; Hingley 7). Rivers form important ports that are essential for trade and economy, apart from being used for navigation and irrigation purposes (Paine, 2018; Hingley 24). Rivers are often politicised as they naturally form

territorial boundaries (Paine, 2018; Stockton, 2018). However, that is not the case with London. Man-made technological interventions such as the bridge networks provide interconnectivity between city spaces across the river. One cannot ignore their presence in popular nursery rhymes that refer to the dilapidation and reconstructions of the bridges (here, referring to the London Bridge) (Stockton, 2018).

As a landscape, Thames has featured in works of art and literature. Monet's painting "The Thames below Westminster" (1871), where he is fascinated by the foggy Thames, has multiple versions. Matthews (2019) studies how Shakespeare uses "aqueous imagery" for Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (412). James' Thames is symbolic at various levels. On the one hand, it gives a sense of stability, such as in the case of Dalgliesh; on the other hand, it records socio-historical change and the flow of time. Much like Dalgliesh, Kate can now view the river and its tides from the balcony of her new flat at the Docklands. James writes, "She would get to know the river, become part of its life and history" (*Original Sin* 158).

The Thames is a part of everyday life of Londoners as they use it for navigation. The employees at the Press travel using the launch to reach work. The police too arrive at the Innocent House using their police launch boat. Their incident room is set up at the Wapping Police Station which overlooks the Thames (184, 281–282). Sergeant Robins recollects the historical information on Wapping and tells Inspector Aaron: "'It's interesting to be here, isn't it? The oldest police station in the United Kingdom.'"; Aaron replies, "'If you're itching to tell me that the River Police were established in 1798, thirty-one years before the Met, then I know.'" (283). According to Bryne (2012), it was on Bentham's advice that John Harriott devised the policing of the Thames in 1797, and Patrick Colquhoun's work on *The Policing and Commerce of River Thames* (1800) is considered as the "first law book of the river" (27).

While Thames is integral to the British society, it also invokes terror, which makes it an ideal space for a crime fiction narrative.

As a conventional trope of crime narratives, the river's foggy mist and lack of visibility add gothic elements that contribute to the sensationalising of the mystery. "Darkness had fallen and the river had become as smooth and thick as oil", paints a grim image and acts as an omen to a misfortune waiting to unfold (*Original Sin* 112–113). In *Original Sin*, the river is a gravesite where the ashes of the dead are released. James documents the "London Bridge where once the heads of traitors were displayed on spikes at either end; Traitor's Gate, green with algae and weed; and Dead Man's Hole under Tower Bridge where, by tradition, the ashes of the dead were scattered outside the city boundaries" (146). After Henry Peverell's death, his ashes are also scattered across the Thames. Hingley (2018) in his archaeological study states that human bones and metalwork were excavated from the River Thames which indicated that the river was considered as a "rite of passage" by the Roman settlers (12,16).[7]

The river also turns into a crime scene as the character Esmé Carling's (a crime fiction writer who was published at the Peverell Press) body is found on the river bank. The investigation reveals that she was killed on a launch boat (*Original Sin* 493). For Frances Peverell the river invokes fear:

> It was always the terror of the river, not its romance or its mystery, which had held her imagination and, with Gerard's brutal rejection, these terrors, which she thought she had put away with childhood, reasserted themselves. This Thames was a dark tide of horror. . . [It] brought to mind unbidden the greatest tragedies of all Thames tragedies when, in 1878, the paddle-streamer *Princess Alice*, returning loaded from a trip to Sheerness, was mown down by a collier and 640 people drowned. It seemed to her

[7] Today, organisations like the Heritage Fund and Hermitage Community Moorings conduct studies on understanding the history of Thames, and the ecology and communities associated with it. (Kew, "Hermitage – A Sense of Place" and "Thames Tales Gathered for Historic Harbour", 2010)

> now that it was their screams that she had heard in the cries of the gulls and, looking down at night at the dark river splattered with light, she could imagine the pale faces of the drowned children torn from their mothers' arms floating like frail petals on the dark tide. (100–101)

The Thames in James' novels represents British history, identity and memories. While the narratives are fictional, the river is real. The author acknowledges it in her "Author's Note": "This novel is set on the Thames and many of the scenes and places described will be familiar to lovers of London's river. The Peverell Press and all the characters exist only in the imagination of the author and bear no relation to places or people in real life" (n.p.). Hence, the setting gives the Procedural authenticity and bridges the gap between literature, geography, and history. As the river progresses to meet the ocean, let us now progress to the next section, where the land and the sea meet: James' countryside and the shore.

4.3 The Countryside

> The 'country way of life' has included the very different practices of hunters, pastoralists, farmers and factory farmers, and its organisation has varied from the tribe and the manor to the feudal estate, from the small peasantry and tenant farmers to the rural commune, from the *latifundia* and the plantation to the large capitalist enterprise and the state farm. The city, no less has been of many kinds: state capital, administrative base, religious centre, market-town, port and mercantile depot, military barracks industrial concentration. (Williams 1973, 1)

The countryside has always been considered in opposition to the city space. The natural as opposed to the artificial, the pastoral as opposed to the industrial, the peaceful as opposed to the competitive. The leisurely and slow-paced life associated with the countryside acts as a refuge from the city, where people find repose and solitude (Williams 46). The countryside also represents community living rather than the individualistic city life.

In crime fiction narratives, the countryside is infiltrated with crime, and thus the author brings in the unimaginable and the gross, juxtaposed to the beauty of headlands and shores. James' countryside undergoes gradual change as the city expands its boundaries and penetrates the country space first in the form of suburbs or as small units (enclaves) thus instilling within the country space an urban lifestyle, architecture and diverse population, ripping off the former rural ambience. Kodanaga (1998) quotes Rendell, "These country towns are strange places. They aren't like what you'd think them from the descriptions in guidebooks. . . pretty and cozy with nice fresh air and happy people leading relaxed lives. . . The reality is different. For one thing, they have great sprawling industrial estates. . . ." (419). Kadonaga observes the springing of suburbs between the wars followed by a new "wave of development" post the Second World War: "Council estates proliferated, recognizable as public-assisted housing by the smaller size of the dwellings and their less elaborate designs" (418).

Large number of immigrants in England increased the demand for space and dwelling which resulted in the reconstruction and modification of existing structures by dividing them into smaller units to accommodate more occupants. This resulted in miniaturisation and condensing of space for maximal utility and occupancy. For example, in *A Certain Justice* (1997) James mentions the "multi-occupied houses" and houses being "converted into flats" (272). In *Devices and Desires* (1989) we see urbanisation, or the infiltration of an artificial unit in a rural setting in the form of a Nuclear Power Station. Geographically, Nuclear Power Stations across the globe, are located in countrysides, adjacent to larger waterscapes. This section discusses such interventions and interactions of the urban and the rural, and how such changes affect not only the environment but the society and culture of the place.

The countryside in the Dalgliesh series borders the North Sea and the English Channel. These countrysides interact with water bodies and form shores and headlands with gradual erosion. The proximity to waterscape provides uncertainty to the crime story. It allows the

crime writer to propose a criminal who could escape from the shores, or evidences which could be destroyed easily. In a headland space, however, the terrain is difficult, and therefore, it gives us a clue that the culprit might either be an expert climber or an insider. With such possibilities, a crime in the countryside can also become challenging to the investigating officers. However, that is not the only reason why James uses the countryside as the *mise-en-scène*.

The use of the country space as a scene of crime has been used by Holmes and Christie in their writings. The country as a rural space represents purity and innocence as opposed to the city space. A crime in the countryside, therefore, surprises the readers. As stated by Auden (1948), "for the more Eden-like it is, the greater the contradiction of murder" (n.p). James too, applies this writing technique, however, her countryside is not a stagnant picturesque space. It is instead, a transitioning space, gradually losing its natural identity as it is interspersed with the mechanical/artificial.

4.3.1 The Headlands

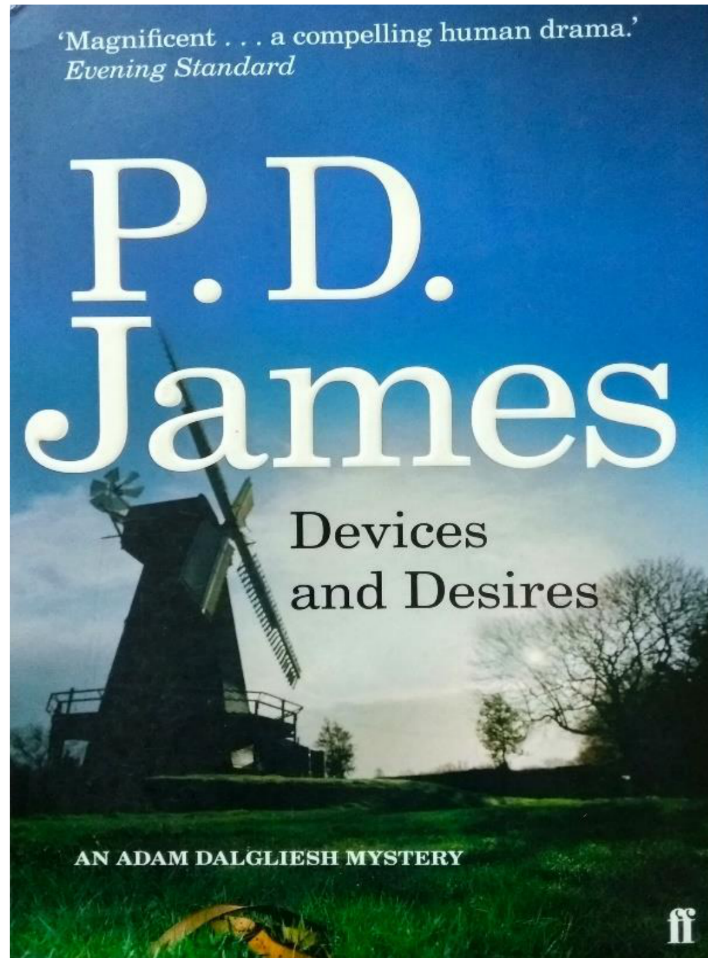

Figure 3: Photograph of the Cover Page of James' *Devices and Desires* (1989), Faber and Faber Edition (2010).

The cover page of the 2010, Faber and Faber edition (Figure 3), of *Devices and Desires* (1989) depicts a mill on the headlands of Norfolk. It represents the windmill that Dalgliesh's aunt Jane has left for him in her will (*Devices and Desires* 10). A windmill invokes the rural lifestyle. The cover page does not display the Nuclear Power Station which is largely the focus of the text. The mill was built in 1825, was converted into a residential building and bought by Jane Dalgliesh who was attracted to "its remoteness, its closeness to notable bird sanctuaries and the impressive view of headland, sky and sea" (82). For Dalgliesh the mill is "a refuge from London, eccentric and remote, providing a temporary escape from the demands

of the job and the pressures of success" (39–40). In this novel, Dalgliesh is on leave from his work, and heads to a fictional place called Lydsett village on Larksoken headlands on the Norfolk coast. He undertakes a long journey in his Jaguar from London to Norfolk, traversing through fast-transitioning spaces such as the suburbs. The arrival of the coastal countryside is indicated by olfactory clues instead of the visual landscape. Dalgliesh "could smell the North Sea, that potent but half-illusory tang evoking nostalgic memories of childhood holidays. . . . (24). Graziadei *et al* (2017) in their study argue that such aural and olfactory clues in "fiction can simulate sensory experiences for readers and viewers to the extent that it partly activates the same areas of the brain as "real" sensory experience" (243). The smell of the North Sea and the salty winds, transports Dalgliesh to his past, thereby associating space with memory, apart from it acting as a geographical indicator of the coast, Dalgliesh's destination, and the setting of the novel.

Dalgliesh's long journey indicates his movement out of his 'jurisdiction', to a space where he cannot exercise the policeman's clout. James depicts how police officers are professionally rooted within spatial boundaries. Crossing borders deprives Dalgliesh of the power and authority which he can practise within London (except the City of London). Dalgliesh, here, is a witness, and even a suspect, unlike the other novels in the series (*Devices and Desires* 89–90). For the first time, we see Dalgliesh being interrogated (253). However, as a police officer, we observe that he can never be off duty, and assists Rickards to solve the case: "It wasn't his case. It would never be his case. But by force of habit, he timed the arrival of the police. . . ." (222). But despite his experience as a police officer, Dalgliesh's reaction on discovering the body of Hillary Robarts is similar to that of a civilian:

> He was inured to horror; few manifestations of human cruelty, violence or desperation were unfamiliar to his practised eye. He was too sensitive ever to view a violated body with crude indifference. . . This was the first time he had almost stumbled over a

> murdered woman. Now he looked down on her, his mind analysed the difference between the reaction of an expert summoned to the scene of crime knowing what to expect and this sudden exposure to ultimate violence. (214)

Dalgliesh's reaction indicates that the perception of a crime scene varies between a civilian and a police officer or the SOCO team. James, in this instance, specifically indicates spatiality affecting the sense of identity. Dalgliesh's identity as a police officer is rooted within a specific spatial jurisdiction, which not only affects his professional roles and responsibilities but also his behaviour and psyche.

Inspector Terry Rickards, on the other hand, is the investigating officer in this novel. James informs us that Rickards had once been a part of the Metropolitan police force. Rickards explains that he moved to the country space to move away from the city life and corruption within the Met. However, with a serial killing, he finds it "frustrating" (89, 94). Dalgliesh agrees and adds, "It must be uncomfortable, particularly in a small community, to be the object of so much malevolence" (41). The Lydsett village is a close-knit community where interpersonal relationships are significant. It reflects in Rickards and Alice Mair's thought processes. Rickards hopes that the culprit is not Ryan Blaney, because he is a single parent and looks after his children (380). Similarly, Alice too makes sure that Blaney has an alibi at the time of Robarts' murder. In a community where there is concern, care and trust, one wonders why there is a murder and a motive for murder. This is where the relationship between certain spaces and the extent of community formation in such spaces, becomes relevant. The introduction of a Nuclear Power Station in the countryside destabilises not just the physical geography of the space, but also the tightly-knit social community.

4.3.2 The Nuclear Power Station

The Larksoken headlands of Norfolk form a natural habitat for a diversity of birds (*Devices and Desires* 24). It consists of an "old railway track" that runs "behind the wood of pines" and

old “abbey ruins” (186–187). The Lydsett village consists of cottages, an old rectory and the Larksoken Mill. The headlands due to their geographical terrain limit access from the shore. Standing in contrast to the rural landscape is the fictional Larksoken Nuclear Power Station. Rickards tells Dalgliesh:

> Everything on this headland is contrast. After I left Pascoe’s caravan this morning I stood on those low sandy cliffs and looked south. There was nothing but an old fishing smack, a coiled rope, an upturned box, that awful sea. It must have looked like that for near on a thousand years. And then I faced north and saw that bloody great power station. There it is, glittering away. And I’m seeing it under the shadow of the windmill. . . . (388–389).

Published just three years after the Chernobyl disaster, James’ Larksoken Nuclear Power Station, serves as a critique of the Sizewell Nuclear Power station on the Suffolk coast (79). Decades after the publication, the debate between nuclear power stations and the environment upholds utmost significance. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster in 2011 is yet another example.

Nuclear Power Stations are constantly in conflict with organisations focussed on environmental conservation. The PANUP: People Against Nuclear Power, in *Devices and Desires* is a fictional organisation that advocates against the Power Station due to its impact against natural environment and the high risk of radioactive contamination that impacts biodiversity and human and marine life (463). James’ writing reveals her critique against the Power Station as a visual and architectural intrusion, but also against how it brings in a culturally variant migrant population into the country community. The Power Station exists as an urban enclave that attracts work opportunities. The employees at the Power Station find residency at Lydsett Village. This creates interpersonal conflicts between people who do not identify with the Power Station and those who find it as their livelihood and emphasise its

importance for national development, in accordance with global standards. Amy Camm, for example, tells Alex Mair: "your bloody great power station [is] an eyesore. That's in everyone's direct line; we all have to look at that" (167).

The visibility of the Power Station is jarring to the eye due to its immensity. At night it is flooded with lights contradicting the natural darkness of the headlands: "It took a few minutes before his eyes had adjusted to semi-darkness and the great sweep of the headland became visible, its shapes and forms mysteriously altered under the high stars. To the north the power station was a glittering galaxy of white lights, its stark geometric bulk subsumed in the blue-black of the sky" (112). While this lack of visibility in the headlands is natural, it facilitates the execution of crime, and brings unrest and fear within the community.

Although no other death occurs inside the Power Station, except for Toby Gledhill's suicide, the Power Station itself becomes a symbol of death and traumatic memories for the people there. Meg Dennison in a conversation with Dalgliesh says:

> When I first came here from London it almost frightened me, the sheer size of it, the way it dominates the headland. But I'm getting used to it. It's still disturbing but it does have a certain grandeur. Alex tries to demystify it, says its function is just to produce electricity for the National Grid effectively and cleanly, that the main difference between this and any other power station is that you don't have beside it a huge pyramid of polluting coal dust. But atomic power to my generation always means that mushroom cloud. And now it means Chernobyl. (122)

For Dennison, the Power Station is not completely comprehensible, and therefore, is something that is mysterious and threatening. Dalgliesh asks: "Are you happy living on the headland?" (125). She responds: "Yes, I think that I am. Sometimes very happy. I came here to escape from the problems of my life in London and, without really meaning to, I came as far east as I could get" (125–126). Dalgliesh continues, "And found yourself confronting two

different forms of menace, the power station and the Whistler" (126). She replies, "Both frightening because both mysterious, both rooted in horror of the unknown . . ." (126).

Devices and Desires (1989), is not simply a mystery-puzzle narrative. It establishes a debate between scientific advancement and the environment. The Power Station, although fictional, represents history and resurrects images of the war, the atomic bombing, the struggle for nuclear power, disasters, deaths, ailments, lifelong disabilities and scarred memories.

> [As Dennison] reached a low ridge on the headland she turned and looked north at the power station, the generator and symbol of the potent and mysterious power which she could never separate from the image of that curiously beautiful mushroom cloud. . . Somewhere at this moment a new Whistler could be planning his dreadful revenge against a world in which he had never been at home. . . Here the past and the present fused and her own life, with its trivial devices and desires, seemed only an insignificant moment in the long history of the headland. (593–594)

The history of the English countryside is a set of complex interrelationships between human identity and memory and geographical space. The community identity builds through its associations with space. The above quote from the text, brings together place ('headland', 'home'), time ('past and present') and memory ('life', 'history'). While the countryside remains a space of turbulence, the architectural dominance creates an impact on the visual perception of space. One such architectural structure that visibly demarcates space is a lighthouse, relevant to island spaces. The next section will discuss how James uses a lighthouse and an island space as a setting for her Procedural novel.

4.4 The Island

Research on island studies indicates isolation and insularity to be key factors that shape the island, community identity and social structure. Be it at an individual or a community level,

the concept of isolation is equally relevant for spatial theorists, especially those concerned with island spaces (Jędrusik 2011, 202–203; Pungetti 2012, 51; DiNapoli and Leppard, 2018; Connor *et al* 2020, 90). According to Pungetti (2012), "Isolation can refer to a distant, inaccessible place, as well as to a person or a community living a way of life without, or very limited, contact with other groups, or suffering from contagious disease, quarantine or detention" (51). Scholars of island studies argue that "islands are, by their very essence, isolated or insular" (Connor *et al* 90).

Island spaces are naturally "territorialized" due to the surrounding waters (Grydehøj, 2015) or by the "submerged coral reefs" that take the form of a "natural fort" (Sasikumar 2019, 63), or by rocky headlands or capes. Owing to its spatiality, including climatic conditions and the distance from the mainland, island spaces evolve ecologically, developing its own vegetation and habitat, which in turn frames its society and culture (Baldaccchino, 2012). Campbell's (2009) study explicates the traditional knowledge and practices of islander communities that facilitate survival such as production of surplus food, especially famine food such as yams, sago and alocasia, for situations of natural disasters (90). Island spaces endure situations where there is a lack of freshwater sources, and are also at the risk of immersion from high tide and increasing sea levels due to global warming (McCall, 1994). Therefore, traditional knowledge enables island communities to take preventive measures such as building steep roofs, developing inter-island communication, preservation and storage of food, and establishing residential spaces away from the coast side (Campbell 2009, 91). Such practices contribute to the island's insularity and identity. However, with colonisation, modernisation, technological advancement, and increased migration, the passing-on of traditional knowledge has declined, increasing island dependency on the mainland, such that, islands are "significantly 'de-islanded'" (Hayward 2016, 1).

According to DiNapoli and Leppard (2018):

> Islands have long been important locales for the study of ecology and evolution. This utility stems from several distinctive characteristics of islands, such as their inherent boundedness, relative isolation, and biogeographical variability. In addition, many of the world's island regions were colonized by populations from similar mainland areas who then diversified along several dimensions of biological and cultural variability. (1)

Island spaces, therefore, form complex systems of geographical, cultural, and ecological interactions. As Hayward (2016) explains, the Japanese word '*shima*' depicts this complexity through its "dual meaning, referring to both an island as a geographical feature and "a small but densely cultured territory. . . ." (2). It is because of this reason that scholars such as Norder and Rijsdijk (2016) express a need for interdisciplinarity for the study of island spaces or "nissology" (McCall, 1994; Baldacchino, 2012). Literary narratives are one such medium which can help us understand island culture, history and identity.

Island spaces have often been a trope in fictional narratives. Island settings feature in epic narratives such as Homer's *Odyssey*, or Valmiki's *Ramayana* (McMahon and André, 2018); in adventure fiction such as Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Jules Verne's *The Mysterious Island* (1875), and R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883); or in political commentaries such as More's *Utopia* (1516) and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954) (Cameron, 2012). Crane and Fletcher (2016) study island spaces in both literary classics such as Shakespeare's *Tempest* as well as popular fiction (639). According to Tuan, "[t]he island seems to have a tenacious hold on the human imagination. . . Its importance lies in the imaginative realm [. . .] Above all, it symbolizes a state of prelapsarian innocence and bliss, quarantined by the sea from the ills of the continent" (as quoted in Riquet 2017, 215).

Fictional and non-fictional islands appear in crime literatures too. The isolation of an island makes it an interesting setting for crime fiction by turning the story into one of a locked room mystery. The 'innocence' or state of purity of an isolated island space, as mentioned above, enables the writer to project a jarring contradiction in the form of sudden crimes. Islands feature in the Greek crime fiction writer Yannis Maris' *Murder in Mykonos* (1958), however, it was with Christie's "Triangle at Rhodes" in *Murder in the Mews and Other Stories* (1937), *And Then There Were None* (1939), and *A Caribbean Mystery* (1964) that island settings were popularised in crime fiction. P.D. James situates her Cordelia Grey novel *The Skull Beneath the Skin* (1982) on the fictional Courcy Island on the coast of Dorset. Twenty-three years later, through *The Lighthouse* (2005), she revives the island setting for her thirteenth novel of the Dalgliesh series. Through the fictional Combe Island in the *The Lighthouse*, James addresses isolation and insularity within island spaces and highlights the challenges of criminal investigation within such communities.

The Combe Island, although fictional, can be located on a real map. It is a part of the British archipelago, situated near the coast of Cornwall and "Newquay is the nearest large town" (*The Lighthouse* 5). According to James, the island was once used by Mediterranean pirates for slave trade, then it remained neglected for many years after which the Halcombe family acquired it. Gerald Halcombe used the island for "family holidays" by restoring the cottages and building the Combe House by 1912 (5–6). During the Second World War, they had to vacate the island, after which he built a charitable trust and handed over the island and property (237). At present, the island is managed by the Combe Trust, and the Combe House is used as an office space. Maycroft works there as a secretary and is assisted by Adrian Boyde, who is also a clergyman at the Chapel Cottage. The only surviving member of the Halcombe family is Emily Halcombe, an eighty-year-old retired History Professor. She now resides at the Atlantic Cottage. The island has eight cottages, and, the Combe House and the Lighthouse

are its major architectural structures. A detailed history and a plausible background of the island space, makes it real and believable for a procedural narrative.

4.4.1 The Lighthouse

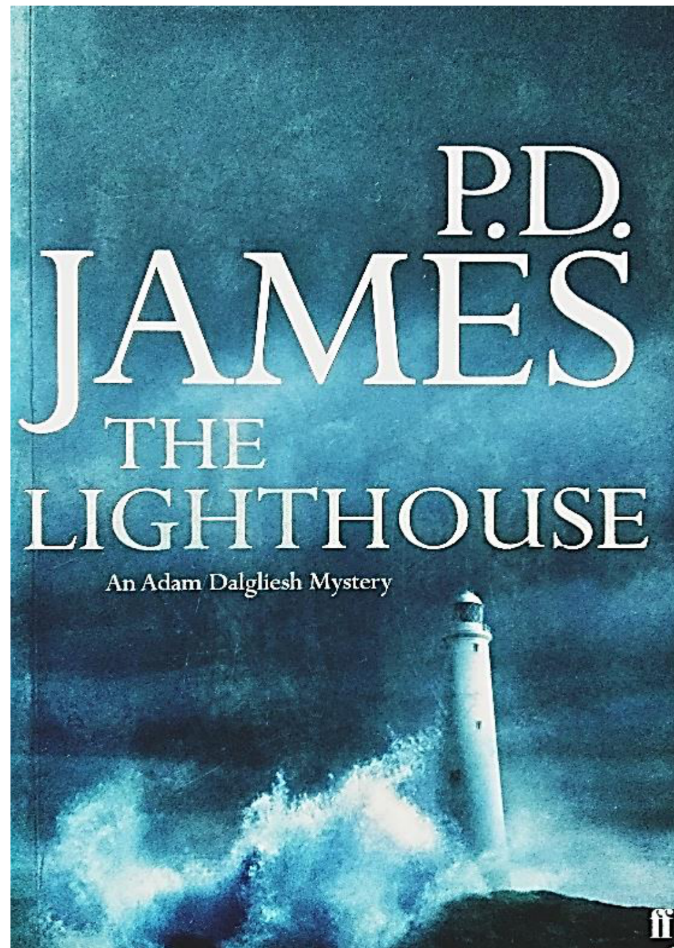

Figure 4: Photograph of the Cover Page of P.D. James' *The Lighthouse* (2005), Faber and Faber edition.

The Lighthouse forms the most significant architectural structure in this novel and is reflected in the title and on the cover page (Figure 4). The white Lighthouse against the dark backdrop reflects a contradictory representation of the island space. Island spaces are known for their natural scenic beauty and the lighthouses act as tourist attractions (Jones 2013, 53). Lighthouses represent maritime economy and trade and have been extremely important in the

English society, known for their history of navigation (Jones 12). It is a structure deeply entrenched in an island's historical past, indicating human civilisation, and intervention in the form of technology and engineering.

The Lighthouse at Combe Island still preserves the photographs, books and religious texts of its keepers. The interior structures have been upgraded and automated with technological advancement (*The Lighthouse* 119). However, here, the Lighthouse is a scene of crime and a space of violence and struggle. It shows human decadence with the public display of a hanging body and as a site that holds a young girl (Millie Tranter) hostage (till she is rescued by Detective Kate Miskin). It is also a symbol of surveillance. Its history documents the period around the Second World War, when on 10th October 1940, three German soldiers had landed on the island to colonise it and used the Lighthouse to spy on the Island (238). The Lighthouse as a tool of colonial power also becomes an alternative site of colonial resistance, as these soldiers are set ablaze within the structure. Years later, the Lighthouse, once again becomes a site of murder, with a public display of Nathan Oliver's body. The investigating officers wonder why the murderer chose to hang the body instead of pushing the body down from the top of the Lighthouse towards the sharp cliffs at the bottom. With this brutal act, the Lighthouse, which is literally a source of illumination, ironically becomes a dark space of revenge and a metaphor for crime.

The cover page of *The Lighthouse* deliberately uses shades of black and blue and colours a gothic ambience to an imaginative Combe Island. The fierceness of the waters represents the turmoil on the Island, and the mist emanating from the sea surrounds the Island with an ominous foreboding of misfortune and crime. James writes:

> And then, as suddenly and capriciously as always on Combe, the mist came up, in parts no more than a delicate translucent veil, in others thickening into a damp occlusive fog, shrouding the blue of the sea, transforming the massive tower of the house into a

> looming presence, felt but not seen, and isolating the delicate red cupola at the top of the lighthouse so that it looked like some bizarre object floating in space. (75)

The mist acts as a trope for mystery stories, as it obstructs the human vision rendering an individual disoriented to one's surroundings. More importantly, the mist conceals the act of the crime. The sound of thrashing waves against the rocky shore disconnects an individual from his/her auditory and visual senses. This attack on the sense perceptions instils in both the characters and the readers, a sense of panic and fear. As this thick mist uncovers, there is the striking revelation of the murdered corpse:

> And now, as mysteriously as it had risen, the mist began to lift. Frail and wispy veils drifted across the lighthouse, formed and dissolved. Gradually shapes and colours revealed themselves, the mysterious and intangible became familiar and real. . . And gradually the horror was revealed, at first behind a thin drifting veil of mist and then with absolute clarity. . . And high against the whiteness of the lighthouse a hanging body. . . . (76).

The discovery of the body calls for a police investigation, and Dalgliesh and his team are summoned to the island.

4.4.2 Isolation and Investigation

The island space due to its isolation from the mainland remains at the periphery of policing. Compared with the high population and larger crime rates in urban areas, island spaces have a low population and hence lower crime rate, leaning towards a largely harmonious community living (Souhami, 2020; Baldacchino and Veenendaal, 2018). According to Staines and Scott (2020):

> Social disorganization theories take an ecological approach, assuming that the spatial distribution of crime is reflective of organization and structural differentiation within

> a specific ecological setting. . . The theory starts with structural-level assumption that crime is anomic, based on lack of shared values and beliefs among members of a society, and an inability to solve common problems and promote social cohesion through shared norms and practices. . . Communities with a high density of acquaintanceship through informal interaction and shared membership in local groups will exhibit comparatively lower crime. (38)

This theory agrees with Newns (2021) who shows the interdependency of humans and the environment, each contributing to creating the other in the process.

Island geography, with a limited land area and population, initiates social interaction and a close-knit community. The islanders know each other and thus refrain from committing a crime, due to distinct possibilities of identification and social ostracism. An escape from an island is also not feasible. The Combe Island, writes James, is surrounded by sharp "underwater rocks" (278) and "look[s] inviolate, [with] no beaches, no receding lace of foam" (*The Lighthouse* 96). Therefore, one cannot approach the Island by swimming. Only expert climbers can attempt to ascend the cliffs but find it extremely challenging. Jago Tamlyn monitors the Combe's harbour and is responsible to ensure security of the Island from external invasion through surveillance from the Lighthouse.

The Island also houses an elderly population. Grydehøj and Hayward (2014) in their study on the Isles of Scilly and Isle of Wight observe that the islands consist of "high proportions of residents over the age of 65 and between 45 and 64 years old" while the young population often migrate to the mainland for education and work opportunities (14, 16). Similarly, in Combe Island, Millie Tranter is considered too young to be on the island. Mrs Plunkett tells Dalgliesh, "Still, the island's not really a suitable place for a young girl. She needs her own kind and a proper job" (*The Lighthouse* 210). The Island, however, has permitted tourists who come there for its "silence" and "security" where they can "sleep with

doors and windows open" as opposed to the city (190) At Combe, Mark Yelland "was free from the problems, great and trivial" and "needed no protection officer, no vigilant police" (53). He found the "solitude" "satisfying and healing" (53).

The crime on an island is therefore a breach of normalcy, and police intervention, despite a murder, is an "unwelcome" imposition (95). The Islanders believe that, "the island will hardly be a haven of peace and solitude with the police milling around" (90). The arrival of the Met police officers threatens the Island's isolation. Combe Island can now be accessed by Adam Dalgliesh and his team, Kate Miskin and Benton-Smith, along with the forensic pathologist Dr Glenister, by a helicopter. The air route access exposes the Island to an all-pervasive aerial view. The view of the Island scape, with the Lighthouse dominating the scene, is placed under surveillance. The lack of trees enables clear visibility and exposes the Island and the Island community for the view of outsiders. Since access to the Island through air route is restricted, Dalgliesh and his team are compelled to take prior permission before entering. A crime, especially a murder, renders the Island vulnerable, leading to a breach in the isolation.

Nathan Oliver, whose body is found hanging at the Lighthouse, is a famous novelist. The investigation of his death is assigned to Dalgliesh from the Special Squad of Metropolitan Police instead of the local island police (9). Geographically, Combe Island falls within the jurisdiction of the Cornish police (134). Souhami's (2020) study talks about the reluctance of police officers to serve at island spaces due to challenges such as lack of a backup team, forensic resources, connectivity to the mainland, "intense weather systems" and frequent power cuts". Similarly, in *The Lighthouse* (2005), there is no provision of the SOCO team because of which Miskin and Benton-Smith collect evidences (23,170–171). Dr Glenister, also, cannot conduct her post mortem on the island, and must take the body back with her on the helicopter for further investigation and analysis. This is unlike a regular Police Procedural

narrative situated in an urban setting where the police officers have accessibility, resources, a trustworthy team and tips from informants to solve a case (Srinivasan *et al* 2020, 9). This hints at how the choice of geography, location and isolation impacts the Police Procedural's genre structure. Moreover, there is also no dedicated facility or prison on the island to keep the culprit in custody. The Island itself becomes a temporary prison where Dan Padgett is captured and monitored till he is transferred to the mainland.

The police officers in charge of the case, face challenges during the procedural as the natives are reluctant to cooperate with the interrogation. For example, Jago Tamlyn tells Dalgliesh, "I don't care who killed Nathan Oliver, if he was killed. And I reckon you wouldn't be here if he topped himself. It's your job to find out who strung him up. You are paid to do it. I'll not lie, but I'm not in the business of helping you either, not by pointing the finger at other people and landing them in the shit" (*The Lighthouse* 168). Similarly, the nurse, Joanna Staveley argues:

> You're an experienced detective. We know about you. So don't tell me that you see Adrian as a serious suspect. Aren't you just grubbing out the dirt for the fun of it – the power, if you like? I mean, it must give you some satisfaction, this asking questions which we have to answer. If we don't, we look guilty; if we do, someone's privacy is violated. And for what? Don't tell me it's all in the cause of justice or truth. (190)

The islanders are reluctant and sceptical of the police. They also wish that there is minimum media publicity regarding the case to protect their state of isolation, and therefore, no journalist is allowed on the island (134).

In the middle of the investigation, Dalgliesh is infected with SARS and is quarantined, while Miskin starts leading the case (315). This is the first time in James' novels that a woman police officer takes the reign. It resonates with James' contemporary society, the period of

SARS epidemic, and the changing social structures that initiated women police officers to take up leadership roles in a profession dominated by men (Fielding and Fielding, 1992; Unur, 2020). With the Island in quarantine, the police officers cannot leave for the mainland. By the end of the narrative, the Island community accepts (rather, temporarily adapts) the presence of the three police officers. Despite so, as Kate and Dalgliesh leave the island, they know they will "never see it again" thereby restoring the island community's status quo (321, 323).

The Islander identity is undetermined since James' does not talk about the natives. Who are the natives of Combe? How did they react when the Halcombes arrived and took over the island? What was the island's name before the Halcombes named it Combe Island and established their ownership? What happened to the slave communities that were brought into the island? What is the native vegetation, and the flora and fauna? Adrian Boyde says, "I miss trees, there are so few here on the island. We even import the logs we burn" (200). While we learn of the landscape's dearth of trees, there is a lack of substantial information on the ecology and highlights the need for documentation of the Island's pre-colonial history, culture, tradition and identity. According to Maycroft, "You wouldn't get much out of the natives if you asked about Combe Island. This place has a long and unhappy history. There's a folk memory about its past, not helped by the fact that it's privately owned and no tourists are allowed" (156). This monitored access, surveillance, and the rocky shores of Combe imply an intended emphasis on isolation and insularity. However, this isolation brings into question the voiceless natives who remain absent in the narrative despite an incident of crime which is quite unusual in an island space.

Emily Halcombe knows that in the sixteenth century, Mediterranean pirates invaded the island and "captured young men and women and sold them into slavery. Thousands were taken in this way and the island was dreaded as a place of imprisonment, rape, and torture. To this day it's unpopular with local people and we used to have some difficulty finding

temporary staff" (236–237). With the absence of the local people in the story, the narrative too isolates itself to the community that exists within the Combe cottages giving a microscopic vision rather than a panoptic glimpse of the entire Island. This isolation seems farcical with the presence of 'temporary staff', the non-islanders accepted by the Islanders.

It brings us to question, who are the islanders? The residents of the Island claim to be Islanders, but in actuality, they are outsiders settled on the Island. People like Maycroft and Staveley have been recruited to work on the Island, and Dan Padgett and his mother are outsiders who have gained acceptance within the Island community. On the other hand, Nathan Oliver is never accepted as an islander (235). Nathan Oliver is, therefore, subjected to "social isolation" wherein, despite having a residential home, he is expected to vacate the Island (Bingham, 2021). Apart from the employees on the Island, there are the select rich tourists, Millie Tranter who has been rescued from the mainland by Jago, and the police team who find temporary residence on the Island.

With crime and police intervention, one enters a zone of conflict between spaces and identities: private and public, isolated and exposed, islanders and outsiders and so on. As Baldacchino (2012) argues, "*a whole* island can become a nature reserve, a quarantine station, a prison, an offshore finance enclave, a military base, or an upscale tourist resort, apart from private property" (57). Therefore, in the event of a crime, the island oscillates between such multifarious identities.

4.5 Conclusion

"We've moved a long way, haven't we, between the mill and the power station? What is it? Four miles of headland and three hundred years of progress. And then I think of those two bodies in the morgue and wonder if we've progressed at all" (*Devices and Desires* 389).

The above quote from James' *Devices and Desires* (1989) sums up a debate between nature and man, between natural and artificial and the rural and urban. James' Police Procedurals address spatial setting that do not exist in such binaries but are in fact overlapping and transitioning. The city space is interspersed with the river Thames; the countryside headlands with a giant Nuclear Power Station; and an island that cannot preserve its isolation.

James' writing although fictional, serves at documenting British history and place-making such as the origins of the urban civilisation on the banks of the River Thames, which we now know as the London metropolis, or the history of the River Police and policing system. Through her novels, she critiques rampant technological advancement in a changing society such as the establishment of Sizewell Nuclear Power Station on the Suffolk coast. Her writings indicate the loss of community living and an increase in crime that penetrates into the deep crevices of human civilization including isolated and protected spaces such as islands. While on one hand, she represents a society, scientifically progressing, on the other a society that is symbolic of injustice, torture, revenge and murder. Thus, she wonders: 'if we've progressed at all'. At the same time, it also shows a society that is gradually changing as it sees a woman police officer take charge of an investigation in an otherwise patriarchal profession.

This chapter focused on James' representation of geographical landscapes which saw how spatial practices are developed based on how spaces are 'perceived' by individuals and communities. The river for example, is where the ashes of the dead are scattered, which might resonate with the mythological river Styx that acts as a pathway for the dead to leave the mortal world. Spaces, thus, determine cultural practices and its continuity. For others, the darkness of the River indicates the passage of time and takes them back to their own lived experiences and memories. Conflicting perceptions of space leads to the possibility of crime, as we also saw in the case of headland and island spaces. Reversibly, the following chapter discusses how

a crime can impact place-making (the ‘conceived’), and how smaller spaces of habitation within the larger geographic space are affected with the aberration in human law.

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