JACK THE RIPPER AND THE MYTH OF MALE VIOLENCE

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> The hunt for Jack the Ripper—I remember that as well as I remember anything—I don't know if he was in my time or whether it was only talked about. But the boys—horrible little brutes they were — they used to say "Look out, here comes Jack the Ripper" if we were playing in the street some time—and we all used to run. Oh we were proper little cowards. They always pictured him with a big leather apron and a carving knife.
>
> (Mrs. Bartholemew, born 1892, in Poplar, East London. Interviewed by Anna Davin, June 1973.)

> The daily paper is carefully kept out of my way, and no hint of the Jack the Ripper murders reaches me at home. But the boys next door are well advised of them . . . [and] . . . have their story ready. "There's a man in a leather apron coming soon, to kill all the little girls in Tunbridge Wells. It's in the paper."
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> He stands before me, vividly enough, that man with the leather apron and the uplifted, blood-stained knife. I have not forgotten the Bible story of King Herod's order to kill all the babies of Bethlehem. I scarcely ask myself if the boys are lying. It was true "in the days of Herod the king"—and what happened once can happen again. I delight the boys by running indoors screaming, begging Papa to take me away at once from Tunbridge Wells; nor is my confidence fully restored when Papa and Mamma both insist that the story is silly nonsense, made up to frighten me . . . Mamma and Papa, though generally right, can be mistaken. . . .
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> (Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy: An Autobiography, Part 1, 1882-1912.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.)

Like Helen Corke and Mrs. Bartholemew, most of us have grown up in the shadow of Jack the Ripper. As the prototype of dozens of filmic and fictional treatments and as the inspiration for numerous real-life "heroes" of crime,[1] the Ripper has materially

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THE NEMESIS OF NEGLECT.

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SHAPING, TO EYES WHICH HAVE THE GIFT OF SEEING,
INTO THE SPECTRE OF THAT LOATHLY LAIR.
FACE IT—FOR VAIN IS FLEEING!
RED-HANDED, RUTHLESS, FURTIVE, UNERECT,
'TIS MURDEROUS CRIME—THE NEMESIS OF NEGLECT!"

contributed to women's sense of vulnerability in modern urban culture. Over the past hundred years, the Ripper murders have achieved the status of a modern myth of male violence against women, a story whose details have become vague and generalized, but whose "moral" message is clear: the city is a dangerous place for women, when they transgress the narrow boundaries of home and hearth and dare to enter public space.

This article seeks to exorcise that ghost from women's consciousness, by historicizing Jack the Ripper: by returning to the scene of the crimes and investigating how the story of Jack the Ripper was constructed out of the fissures and tensions of class, gender, and ethnic relations in 1888. To appreciate why the murders took on the significance that they did, let us assess the political moment when that "man-monster," "half-beast, half-man,"[2] stalked the streets of London in search of fallen women.[3]

The time was the autumn of 1888, when the respectable classes were obsessed with fears of class conflict and social disintegration. Most of their anxieties focused on the East End of London, the scene of the Ripper murders, which symbolized social unrest born of urban degeneracy. A series of journalistic explorations into "Outcast London" published in the tabloid press in the 1880s had familiarized middle-class readers with the sordid and depressing living conditions of the East End poor and reminded them of the dangerous social proximity between vast numbers of casual laborers and a professional criminal class. Among concerned middle-class reformers, these exposes provoked a "consciousness of sin" — to quote Beatrice Webb — and stimulated a multitude of philanthropic activities in the East End, in the form of religious missions, college settlement houses, housing reform, and elaborate social surveys.[4] Class fear, however, rapidly overshadowed middle-class guilt in the late 1880s when socialists began to organize demonstrations of the East End unemployed in the wealthy West End. In 1886, one of these demonstrations ended in some stoning of fashionable Pall Mall clubs and in sporadic looting and rioting in London's principal shopping district. For the next eighteen months, a real concern over public order existed, and police forbade any further demonstrations. The tension peaked on November 18, 1887, "Bloody Sunday," when London's working classes tried to enter Trafalgar Square and were forcefully repressed by the police. To radicals and socialists, and to the poor themselves, the actions of the police showed contempt for the political rights of the poor and the state's exclusive

interest in protecting the property of the rich. For the propertied classes, the menacing presence of the great "unwashed" in their part of town confirmed their worst fears of "Outcast London" as a vast unsupervised underclass that could be readily mobilized into the revolutionary ranks of the new socialist movement.[5] Coming so fast on the heels of the West End riots, the Jack the Ripper murders fed the flames of class hatred and distrust, on both sides.

The Ripper murders were the latest of a series of sexual scandals linking highlife and lowlife in London in the 1880s. In good part, feminists had helped to initiate this era of sexual scandals, through their political mobilization against state regulation of prostitution in the 1870s and 1880s and their active participation in the campaign against white slavery and child prostitution in London in 1885. Allied with radical working men and middle-class evangelicals, feminists had mounted a successful campaign against the Contagious Diseases Acts and secured their repeal in 1886. The feminist program coupled a libertarian defense of the constitutional rights of working-class women with an assault on the social and sexual prerogatives of men. A desire to liberate women from male sexual tyranny and brutality led to feminist demands for "no secrets" on sexual questions. By setting a "floodlight" on men's "doings,"[6] respectable women asserted themselves in the public discussion of sexuality for the first time, and they proceeded to uncover men's double lives, their sexual diseases, and their complicity in a system of vice that flourished in the undergrowth of respectable society.

In this spirit of sexual muckracking, Josephine Butler prevailed upon W.T. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette,* to expose the traffic in English girls in London. The result was the "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," appearing in the summer of 1885, one of the most successful pieces of scandal journalism of the nineteenth century. Stead used sexual scandal to sell newspapers to a middle-class and working-class readership and ushered in a new era of tabloid sensationalism and cross-class prurience. "Maiden Tribute" documented in lurid detail how poor daughters of the people were trapped and drugged in padded cells and sold to upper-class rakes for the sum of five pounds. Stead's revelations forced the passage of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which not only raised the age of consent for girls from thirteen to sixteen, but also gave police far greater power to prosecute streetwalkers and brothelkeepers. It also made "indecent" acts between consenting male adults illegal,

forming the basis of legal proceedings against homosexuals until 1967. The excitement generated by the "Maiden Tribute" stimulated grass roots political activity: throughout Britain, social purity groups and vigilance committees were organized to oversee the local enforcement of the acts. Vigilance committees attacked music halls, theaters, and pornography as manifestations of "male lust"; their signal triumph, however, was to force police crackdowns on solicitation and brothelkeeping in the metropolis and the major provincial cities. Thus, in the three years preceeding the Ripper murders, a massive political initiative against nonmarital, nonreproductive sexuality had been mobilized, whose initial victims were working-class prostitutes, precisely those women who had been the original objects of feminist pity and concern.[7]

Finally, one cannot emphasize too much the role of the popular press, itself a creature of the 1880s, in establishing Jack the Ripper as a media hero, in amplifying the terror of male violence, and in elaborating and interpreting the meaning of the Ripper murders to a "mass" audience. As other historians have noted, the tabloid press incorporated many of the forms and themes of popular culture, particularly those of sensationalist melodrama, the literary convention that shaped the Ripper narrative in all the London dailies, across the political spectrum.[8] Embedded in this convention was a titillating "sexual script," based on the association of sex and violence, male dominance and female passivity, and the crossing of class boundaries in the male pursuit of the female object of desire.[9] But voyeurist interest in the Ripper murders can not be reduced solely to sexual titillation; when readers and actors in the Ripper drama immersed themselves in the details of the cases, they were equally compelled by the desire to extract meaning out of apparent disorder, to search out the clues to solve the mystery. In reviewing the events of autumn 1888, we should be aware of our own voyeuristic proclivities: to the extent that we are trying to derive meaning from the Ripper murders, we are engaged in an intellectual task similar to our Victorian predecessors.

THE FACTS OF THE CASE

What are the salient facts of the cases as they were presented in the London dailies? Within ten weeks (August 31 to November 9, 1888), five brutal murders of prostitutes took place, all but one

within an "evil quarter of a mile" of Whitechapel, East London (the exception occurring just within the boundary of the City of London).[10] The murdered victims were Polly Nicholls, August 31; Annie Chapman, September 8; Catherine Eddowes and Elizabeth Stride (the "double event"), September 30; Mary Jane Kelly, November 9. The murders were performed at night, four in the open, with great daring and speed. All five took place in a densely populated area where the local residents kept a close watch on the movements of the inhabitants. Still, there were no witnesses to the crimes; the police could uncover no clues or apparent motives for the murders. Nor could they identify any serious suspects although hundreds of men were detained and interviewed all over London. The murderer was never caught.

The first element of the Ripper story, then, was its setting: Whitechapel, a notorious and poor locale, adjacent to the financial district (the City), and easily accessible from the West End by public transportation and private carriage. Part of London's declining inner industrial rim, Whitechapel stood at the edge of the vast East End, London's proletarian center, a "city" of nine hundred thousand. To middle-class observers, Whitechapel was an alien place, a center of cosmopolitan culture and entrepôt for foreign immigrants and refugees, whose latest wave consisted of poor Jews escaping the pogroms of Eastern Europe in the 1880s. Whitechapel was also notorious for its transient and homeless poor, living out of doors or in those "thief preserves,"[11] the common lodging houses.

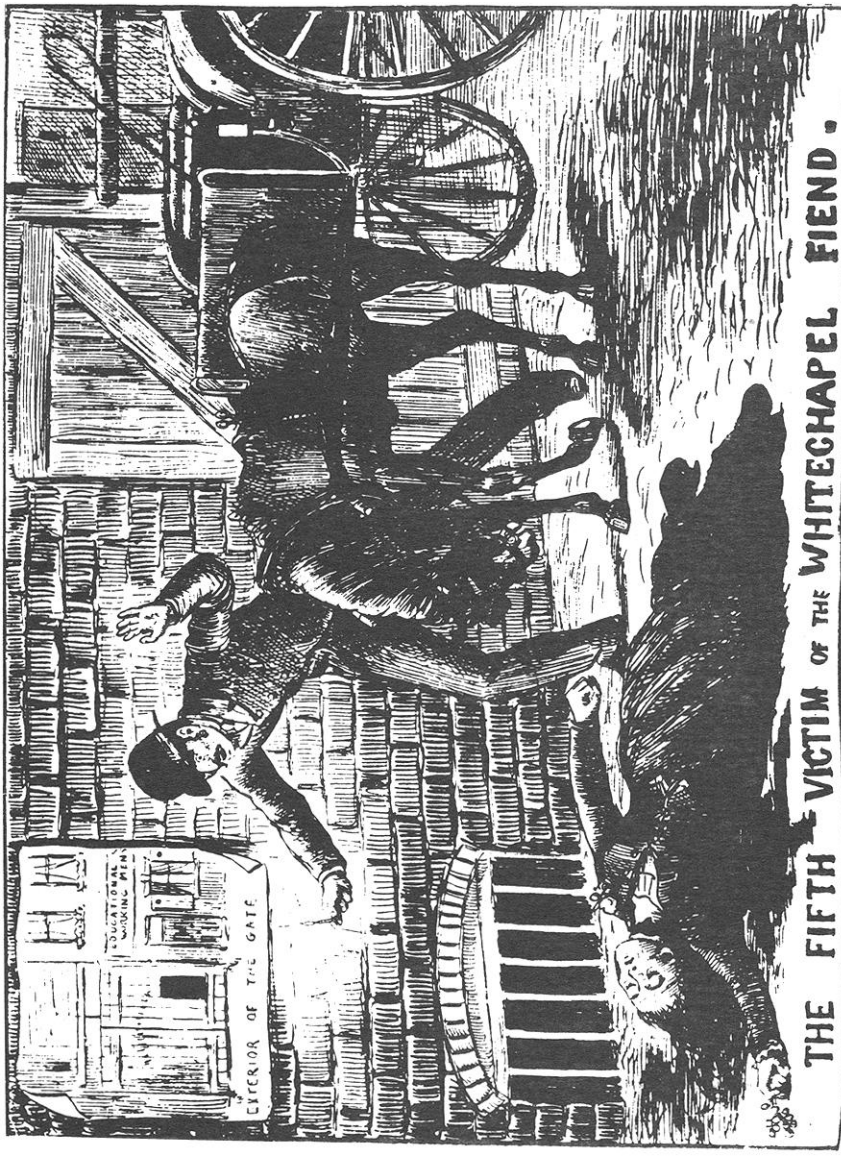
By the 1880s, Whitechapel had come to epitomize the social ills of "Outcast London." Certainly, casual and seasonal employment, starvation wages, overcrowding at exploitative rents, an inhumane system of poor relief, declining traditional industries, and an increase in "sweated" labor were all marked features of living and working conditions there. But, as Jerry White has observed, the middle classes of London were far less concerned with the real problems of Whitechapel than with the symptoms they spawned: "street crime, prostitution, the threat of revolt, expensive pauperism, infectious disease spreading to respectable London—the whole panoply of shame of this 'boldest blotch on the face' of the capital of the civilized world."[12]

Whitechapel thus provided a stark and sensational backdrop for the Ripper murders: a moral landscape of light and darkness, a nether region of illicit sex and crime, both exciting and dangerous. "All sorts and conditions of men" could be met with

on Whitechapel Road, the district's main thoroughfare, with its "flaunting shops," piles of glowing fruit, and "streaming naphtha lamps." A principal entertainment center for working-class London, Whitechapel Road also proved a magnet for rich young bloods from the West End who would tour the "toughest, roughest streets, taverns, and music halls" in search of new excitements.[13]

At night, the glittering brilliance of Whitechapel Road contrasted sharply with the dark mean streets just off the main thoroughfare. Turning into a side street, one was plunged into the "Cimmerian" darkness of "lower London." Here in the Flower and Dean street area, with its twenty-seven courts, alleys, and lanes, stood one of the last remaining rookeries of late-Victorian London. Here lay the "warrens of the poor," "all packed by a species that multiplies with astounding swiftness and with miserable results."[14] Here "it may be well to tuck out of view any bit of jewelry that may be glittering about." Even the police hesitated from entering the notorious Wentworth and Dorset streets alone. In the Flower and Dean street area it was useless for "them to follow when they happen to appear on the scene, as the houses communicate with one another, and a man pursued can run in and out."[15] In the same back slums and alleys, poor prostitutes, "fourpenny knee tremblers,"[16] lived and worked, often bringing their customers into some dark corner to avoid the price of a room. And here, during the "autumn of terror" of 1888, the bodies of four of the victims of Jack the Ripper were found.

Testimonies from the inquests also incorporated many of the more mundane elements of daily life into the Ripper narrative. Most of the bodies, for example, were found by people going to and from work: Robert Paul, a cabman on his way to Covent Garden market at 3:30 in the morning, found the crumpled body of Polly Nicholls in a doorway in Buck's Row; Louis Diemschutz, an "unlicensed hawker" and steward of the International Working Men's Educational Club on Berner Street, was returning home from work at 1:00 A.M. when he found Elizabeth Stride's body in a courtyard adjacent to the club, where he resided.[17] The same mean street that provided the setting for a murder also served as workplace and residence for poor inhabitants engaged in casual and sweated trades. In 39 Hanbury Street, "whose back premises" became the "scene" of Annie Chapman's murder, "no fewer than six separate families reside[d]." Its inhabitants included a packing case maker, two cabmen and their families, a pro-



Louis Diemschutz discovers the dead body of Elizabeth Stride, *Police Illustrated News*, 6 October 1888.

prietor of a cat meat shop (run on the premises), an old man and his "weak-minded" son, and an old lady kept "for charity" by the woman who "tenanted" the house.[18] Political and social institutions — the settlement house at Toynbee Hall, the Jewish socialist club at Berner Street, the Salvation Army mission, the London Hospital, the bastillelike board schools (state schools), the pubs and cheap music halls — all figured as part of the physical setting for the murders and the investigations, while the kitchens of the dosshouses (common lodging houses), the shed on Dorset Street where homeless women congregated, and the interior of the room where Mary Jane Kelly was killed were described in great detail in the press to evoke a sense of place.

Another compelling aspect of the Whitechapel murders was their mystery, the secrecy and impunity with which the murders were committed in public spaces, and the "mystery" as to "motives, clues, and methods." Unable to find historical precedents for the Whitechapel "horrors," commentators resorted to horrifying fictional analogues: "to the shadowy and wilful figures in Poe's and Stevenson's novels," or the "stealthy and cunning assassins in Gaboriau and du Boiscobey."[19] Indeed the events of autumn 1888 bore an "uncanny" resemblance to the literature of the fantastic: they incorporated the narrative themes and motifs of modern fantasy — social inversion, morbid psychological states, acts of violation and transgression, and descent into a social underworld — and gave utterance to "all that is not said, all that is unsayable through realism."[20] "London lies today under the spell of a great terror," declared the *Star*. "Some nameless reprobate, half-beast, half-man, is at large, who is daily gratifying his murderous instincts on the most miserable and defenceless class of the community."[21]

Besides the social setting and the mystery surrounding the murders, three additional features contributed to the grisly notoriety of the Whitechapel killings. All the murders were accompanied by acts of sexual mutilation, committed with some apparent skill and knowledge of the female body. Indeed the principal objective of the murderer seems to have been evisceration of the body after the victim had been strangled and had her throat cut. When the murderer had enough time, the uterus and other internal organs were removed, and the women's insides were often strewn about. Here is the description of the division surgeon, Dr. Phillips, when he arrived at the scene of Annie Chapman's murder.

> The legs were brought up, the feet resting on the ground and knees turned outwards. The face was swollen and turned on the right side, the tongue protruding between the front teeth . . . . The small intestine and other portions of the stomach were lying on the right side of the ground above the right shoulder attached by a coil of the intestine to the rest of the stomach. There was a large quantity of blood, with a part of the stomach over the left shoulder . . . . The throat was deeply cut.[22]

In the midst of this saturnalia of destruction, the murderer had stopped to place Chapman's belongings in a neat pile at her feet, demonstrating uncannily cool deliberation. A young policeman was so affected by the spectacle that he could not eat meat for weeks. "My food sickened me. The sight of a butcher shop nauseated me."[23] "There was no doubt this time," recalled Dr. Halsted of the London Hospital, that the murderer "had removed certain parts of the body not normally mentioned in polite society and this perversion almost more than the murder itself excited the frenzy of the large crowd which gathered round the spot during the following day."[24]

The identification of the murderer with the sobriquet "Jack the Ripper" also gave notoriety to the event. At the time of the "double event" of September 30, an anonymous letter forecasting the murders and signed Jack the Ripper had been sent to the Central News Agency. A facsimile of the letter, and a postcard that followed from "Jack the Ripper," were republished in all the newspapers and posted at street corners. These first two letters set the tone for the rest (of which 350 have been collected in the files of Scotland yard).[25] Both were addressed "Dear Boss," both were jocular and teasing. They bragged of past and future exploits, and of how much the writer enjoyed his "work." "I am down on whores," declared the Ripper, "and I shan't quit ripping them up until I am buckled." I would tend to agree with police authorities who believed the initial letters were a "creation of an enterprising journalist";[26] in any case, they helped to establish the murders as a media event by focusing social anxieties and fantasies on a single, elusive, alienated figure, who communicated to a "mass" public through the newspaper. Anonymous yet polymorphous, the murderer was presumed to be, at various points in the discussion and by different constituencies, a Russian Jewish anarchist, a policeman, a local denizen of Whitechapel, an erotic maniac of the "upper classes" of society, a religious fanatic, a mad doctor, a scientific sociologist, and a woman.

However vague the identity of the murderer, the social profile

of his victims that emerged from the evidence and testimonies of the inquests was remarkably detailed and precise. In the case of the first four victims, all were, according to the *Daily Telegraph*, "women of middle age, all were married and had lived apart from their husbands in consequence of intemperate habits, and were at the time of their death leading an irregular life, and eking out a miserable and precarious existence in common lodging houses."[27] These "drunken, vicious, miserable wretches whom it was almost a charity to relieve of the penalty of existence" were "not very particular about how they earned a living."[28] When they could, they worked as charwomen, marketwomen, or picked hops during the summer months in Kent. If they had to, they would resort to the streets as casual prostitutes. Economic need forced them to take to the streets on the nights they met their deaths. A short time before she was murdered, Polly Nicholls was seen staggering along Whitechapel Road by Emily Holland, her friend and neighbor. Holland offered to take her home, but Nicholls explained that she had no money for her lodging. "But I'll get my 'doss' money," she declared. "See what a jolly bonnet I've got now."[29] Annie Chapman voiced a similar intention, after she had been denied admission to her lodging house on Dorset Street because she did not have the fee of eight pence. "I haven't enough now, but keep my bed for me, I shan't be long."[30]

To middle-class readers of the *Times* and the *Morning Post*, the murders constituted a morality tale of stark proportions. These were economically desperate women, who violated their "womanhood" for the price of a night's lodging, and for whom the wages of sin were death. Outside of Whitechapel, the victims were viewed as unsympathetic objects of pity — by radicals and conservatives alike. Whatever guilt middle-class readers may have experienced over the "mangled ruins" of Annie Chapman, their compunctions were soon overwhelmed by feelings of fear and loathing towards the spectacle of the victims themselves. This paradoxical response to the "great social evil" was not unique; it was embedded in the literature of prostitution and earlier reformist efforts. But in earlier discussions of prostitution, reformers, including feminists, had sympathized with the history of young prostitutes, if not their present reality; and they adopted a protective and custodial attitude toward fallen women as "errant daughters." Both the older age of the Whitechapel victims and their apparent culpability in departing from the patriarchal home rendered this parent-child paradigm inapplicable.[31]

Polly Nicholls's last recorded words before she was murdered (Lodginghouse, Flower and Dean streets), *Police Illustrated News,* 12 October 1888.

The reality of these women's social experience, however, was not so easily abstracted into a simple tale of sin and retribution, nor were the women so isolated from a social community as respectable commentators presumed. On the contrary, testimonies at the inquests reveal a network of support and mutual aid among the poor, who understood much better than middle-class philanthropists the nature of casual employment and the hazards of poverty. Mary Jane Kelly seems to have remained on good terms with a number of her regular customers. On the night of her death, she encountered George Hutchinson, who had occasionally given her a few shillings in the past, and asked him if he had any money to give her. Most of the other murdered women had lovers with whom they lived and pooled their resources. These were practical relationships, but they often entailed strong emotional bonds. Catherine Eddowes and John Kelly paired off in the following way: "We got throwed together a good bit here in the lodging house," recounted Kelly, "and the result was we made a regular bargain."[32]

The murdered women were also part of an intense female network. Prostitutes as well as nonprostitutes inhabited a distinct female world where they gossiped, entertained each other, and participated in an intricate system of borrowing and lending. This female network supplemented women's heterosexual ties, but it occasionally challenged those male-female allegiances. When Catherine Picket, a flower seller and neighbor of Mary Jane Kelly, was attracted to Kelly's singing on the night of her murder, she arose from bed to go out and join her; at which point she was reprimanded by her husband, "You just leave the woman alone," and crawled back to bed.[33] Kelly herself was not as deferential to male authority; in fact, she had just separated from her lover, Joseph Barnett, after the two had quarreled over her taking in another "unfortuate" named Harvey "out of compassion."[34]

In sum, the social setting, the mysterious circumstances, the grisly mutilations, the ominous figure of Jack the Ripper, and the "deviant" lives of his victims turned the murders of five poor prostitutes into a national scandal.

RESPONSE TO THE MURDERS

Both on the streets of London and in the pages of the national press, diverse constituencies shaped their interpretation of the Ripper crisis according to their own political agendas. The first to

intervene and structure opinion on the subject were the police themselves, who followed up clues provided by local residents. Initially, the police treated the first murder of Polly Nicholls as one of many cases of unsolved assault; only later at the morgue was it discovered that the body had been severely mutilated. Police quickly ruled out robbery as a possible motive, given the extreme destitution of the victims. Acting on suggestions of local prostitutes and others they first investigated street gangs who preyed on prostitutes and extorted money from them. They looked for men in the local neighborhood who might have the tools or skills to perform the bloody mutilations — butchers and shoemakers. They eventually turned their attention to occupational groups, such as sailors on board cattleboats, whose presence in and out of London would explain the timing of the crisis and the mysterious disappearance of the murderer.[35]

The growing list of candidates reflected the local social economy of Whitechapel; it also mirrored the prejudice of the police and local residents. Whitechapel had a large, mobile, and rootless population of men who looked and acted in ways police found suspicious. They were obvious targets of police and popular suspicion.

Jews were targets of both. An endemic form of anti-Semitism existed in the East End, in part an expression of traditional xenophobia and in part a response to the unstable economy and shrinking material resources of the area. Whitechapel was experiencing a severe housing crisis due to the influx of Eastern European Jews and the conversion of housing stock into warehouses and commercial properties. Jews and gentiles, constituting, to a certain extent, two separate classes, had to coexist in the same small area and compete for resources.[36]

On the whole, the Jews were respectable and law-abiding (certainly in comparison with most of the local population), but they had their hoodlums. Suspicion fixed on one of these characters, a Jewish shoemaker named "Leather Apron," who extorted money from prostitutes. Leather Apron finally turned himself in to the police, in order to vindicate himself publicly and to escape the fury of the crowd.[37] The "Jacob the Ripper" theory[38] led to two developments: denunciation of Jews at the inquests as ritual murderers and widespread intimidation of Jews throughout the East End. On the streets popular anger precipitated anti-Jewish riots—one of three such outbreaks in late-nineteenth-century London—and false accusations against individual Jews, which in

turn gave local youths license to rob and beat them.

In apprehending Jews as religious fanatics, police followed the lead of the local population. But in suspecting Jewish socialists and revolutionaries, they acted on their own suspicions and on instructions from above. However, police soon found that anti-Jewish feeling, which they had helped to foster, was getting out of hand. After Chapman's murder, hundreds of police were drafted into the East End to forestall a possible pogrom.[39]

By mid-September local police had their hands full. After Chapman's murder, a diabolical pattern seemed to emerge, and the impotence of the police to track down the culprit inspired a rising tide of public indignation. Something new was introduced into the public discussion. Suspicion shifted from the East End to the West End.

On September 12, the *Times* published a letter from Dr. Forbes Winslow, an expert in criminal insanity, hazarding the opinion that the murderer was not of the class of "Leather Apron," but was instead a "homicidal maniac" of the "upper class of society, as evidenced by the perverted cunning with which the killer had performed the mutilations and evaded justice."[40] Winslow based his "method of madness" theory on the assumption that only a cultivated intellect run amok could have committed such a sexually perverse act. His theory was picked up by the national dailies, discussed in medical journals, and prepared the way for the coroner's "bombshell" at the Chapman inquest on September 26. At that time, Mr. Wynne Baxter disclosed the fact that the murderer had removed the uterus from the body — it was missing — and that the mutilation demonstrated some anatomical skill. A possible motive for the murder, he suggested, was the sale of the organ to American medical schools — recalling the body-snatching crimes of the early nineteenth century.[41]

Fantasies ran wild in the correspondence pages of the national dailies, but the fantasies were never totally removed from social reality. The most significant and enduring cast of villians proposed by the press and by the experts were The Mad Doctor, The Religious Fanatic, The Upper-Class Erotic Maniac, The Scientific Sociologist. All these candidates were familiar protagonists in earlier sexual scandals such as "Maiden Tribute" and the campaign against the state regulation of prostitution. They were also representative of the types of men who were in fact stalking the streets of London in search of fallen women.[42]

Despite the theories about upper-class perverts and maniacal

reformers, police still arrested the same motley collection of East End down-and-outers, including wandering lunatics, mad medical students, American cowboys, and Greek gypsies. They conducted a house-to-house search of Whitechapel, but not of the areas of London where the Ripper, if he were a "toff" (that is, a gentleman) would be lodging. Even when they apprehended respectable suspects in the act of harassing women, police did not follow through on the arrest—this despite the fact that the East End became a sideshow for West Enders fascinated by the murders, bent not only on observing but on hunting the Ripper, and in some cases, emulating his role as well.[43] "No less a personage than a director of the Bank of England," reported the *Echo*, "is so possessed by personal conviction that he has disguised himself as a day laborer, and is exploring the public houses, the common lodging houses, and other likely places to find the murderer."[44]

Amateur detectives supplemented "hundreds of police in uniform, in plain clothes and in all manner of disguise — some even dressed as women — who patrolled every end of every street in the 'danger zone' every few minutes." There were plenty of eccentric and disoriented men in Whitechapel to begin with, but the presence of amateur and professional sleuths, voyeurs, and cranks must have exacerbated the fears and anxieties of the local population.[45]

Respectable citizens of Whitechapel responded to the invasion of West Enders by organizing their own night patrols. Both the men of Toynbee Hall settlement house and Jewish community set up committees, and the socialist and radical working men's clubs formed the East London Trades and Labourer's Society Vigilance Committee.[46]

These activities were evidence of self-protection, but they also constituted surveillance of the unrespectable poor, and of lowlife women in particular. Social reformers at Toynbee Hall used the evidence collected by the night patrols to document the vicious state of the Flower and Dean street rookery and to agitate, as they had for years, for the closing down of those "nurseries of crimes,"[47] the common lodging houses. Beginning in late September, Canon Samuel Barnett, the rector of Toynbee Hall, and his supporters began a discussion in the pages of the *Times* and elsewhere on the meaning of the Whitechapel murders. The discussion focused not on the pathology of the criminal, but on the degraded conditions of the victims themselves.

By designating themselves vigilance committees, the male patrols in Whitechapel explicitly modeled themselves on similarly named social purity organizations already active in the area. Purity groups had closed down two hundred brothels in the East End in the year prior to the Ripper murders, rendering hundreds of women homeless, hence vulnerable to attack, and certainly making the lower stratum of prostitution — where the victims of the Ripper were situated — even more precarious as a means of subsistence. The message of social purity was mixed: it demanded that men control their own sexuality; but it effectively gave them more control over the sexuality of women, since it called upon them to protect their women and to repress brothels and streetwalkers. As Josephine Butler astutely observed, male purity reformers always found it more convenient to "let the pressure fall almost exclusively on women" as it "is more difficult, they say, to get at men." In Whitechapel, middle-class men, backed up by female moral reformers, spearheaded these efforts. Respectable working men, anxious to distance themselves from the "bestiality" of the residuum and to reinforce their male prerogatives inside and outside the family, were also recruited into the assault on vice.[48]

Excluded from the mobilization and press debate were the rough elements of Whitechapel, female or male. Their reaction to the murders sharply diverged from those of the organized working-class and middle-class philanthropists. To the Whitechapel poor, Annie Chapman and Mary Jane Kelly were not degraded outcasts, but members of their own class and community. At inquests, neighbors gave detailed accounts of the victims' lives. Sometimes they stressed the respectability of the women and occasionally refused to acknowledge that the victims drank or were prostitutes. Clearly the murdered women were well known in the neighborhood and many were well liked. Most popular of all was the last victim, Mary Jane Kelly, who was younger (twenty-four), prettier, and more tied to the life of prostitution than the earlier four victims. When men in a lodging house were asked by a reporter if they knew Kelly, they responded, "Did anyone not know her?" Kelly was respected in the neighborhood for being generous and gay-hearted, and "frequent in street brawls, sudden and quick in quarrels and—for a woman —handy with her fists."[49] During Kelly's funeral procession, the coffin was covered with wreaths from friends "using certain public houses in common with the murdered woman." As the

Mary Jane Kelly and her dark stranger, *Police Illustrated News*, 17 November 1888.

coffin passed, "ragged caps were doffed and slatternly looking women shed tears."[50] Dense crowds also lined the streets for the funeral cortege of Catherine Eddowes: "Manifestations of sympathy were everywhere visible," reported the *East London Observer*, "many among the crowd uncovering their heads as the hearse passed."[51]

The poor also expressed their anger at the Ripper murders by rioting. The West End press tended to depict crowd activity in the East End as both ominous and irrational.[52] But the victims of mob riot were not selected at random. The Whitechapel poor rioted against the Jews, against the police (for not solving the murders), and against doctors (they believed the mad doctor theory and popular antagonism toward regular doctors was intensified by the recent antivaccination movement. Anyone walking around with a little black bag was in trouble).[53] As press coverage of the murders increased, the poor began to act on information provided by the newpapers — particularly that the murders were committed by doctors and by "toffs." It was only after this idea was floated in the press that local residents provided police with a description of possible suspects who were "respectable in appearance" or who had the "appearance of a clerk."[54] The assumption that the Ripper was a "toff" also gave young working men license to accuse and intimidate their betters. During the Ripper manhunt, more than one amateur detective touring the Whitechapel area was accosted and had his gold watch nabbed. Another gentleman making his way along High Holborn in the City was pounced upon by a man of the "laboring class" yelling "Jack the Ripper."[55]

Response to the Ripper murders, then, reveals significant class divisions. It also exposes deep-seated sexual antagonisms, most frequently expressed by men towards women. This antagonism was aided and abetted by sensational newspaper coverage that blamed "women of evil life"[56] for bringing the murders on themselves, but elsewhere warned that "no woman is safe while this ghoul's abroad."[57] The popular press intensified terror among "pure" and "impure" women by juxtaposing reports on miscellaneous "attacks on women" to an account of the Whitechapel "horror"; by featuring an illustration of a "lady frightened to death" by a Ripper impersonator on the cover of the *Police Illustrated News*; and by proposing that the Ripper might change his venue to more respectable parts as Whitechapel became too dangerous for him.[58] Although the most popular theories and fantasies about the Ripper (such as the erotic maniac

and the mad doctor) contained a coded discussion of the dangers of unrestrained male sexuality, misogynist fears of female sexuality and female automony also surfaced in speculations about a female Ripper. Most of these hostilities focused on prostitutes, who, in the words of one influential commentator, were so "unsexed" and depraved that they were capable of the most heinous crimes;[59] but suspicion also extended to midwives and medical women in as much as the "knowledge of surgery . . . has now been placed within female reach."[60] However different their social class and occupational mobility, prostitutes, midwives, and medical women shared two common characteristics: they possessed dangerous sexual knowledge and they asserted themselves in the public male domain.

Male reaction to the murders mirrored these misogynist attitudes and took a variety of forms, from a conscious imitation and impersonation of the Ripper to a more latent identification with the criminal and subtle exploitation of female terror.[61] In Whitechapel a series of gentlemen-sleuths used their amateur detective status as a cover to intimidate women. Here is a case in point:

> On November 11, a woman named Humphries was passing George Yard and she met a man in the darkness. Trembling with agitation she asked him what he wanted. The man made no answer but laughed. He then made a hasty retreat. The women yelled "murder."[62]

She attracted the police who caught up with him, but "he referred the police to a well-known gentleman at the London Hospital and as a result he was set at liberty." Similar incidents occurred in the West End, involving respectable women; as soon as the assaulting gentleman could produce his business card and show a respectable address, both the lady and the police dropped the case. Laboring men were not immune from acting out the Ripper role themselves. Scores of men, some drunk, some mentally unbalanced, some claiming to be doctors and missing a black bag, gave themselves up to the police. In pubs across London, drunks bragged of their exploits as Jack the Ripper. Some Ripper impersonators harassed prostitutes and tried to extort money from them, with the threat that they would otherwise "Whitechapel" them. James Henderson, a tailor, was brought before the Dalston Magistrates for threatening Rosa Goldstein, an "unfortunate," with "ripping" her up if she did not go with him and for striking her several hard blows with his cane. Henderson was let off with

a fine of forty shillings, on the grounds that he had been drunk—this, despite the fact that the severely injured Goldstein appeared in court "with surgical bandages about her head" and "weak from loss of blood."[63]

Besides these public acts of intimidation, a private reenactment of the Ripper drama between husbands and wives was also staged in various working-class areas of London. (I have no evidence of middle-class cases.) In Lambeth, for example, magistrates received many applications "with regard to threats used by husbands against their wives, such as "I'll Whitechapel you" and "Look out for Leather Apron." The *Daily News* reported the case of a man who actually offered ten shillings for anyone who would rid him of his wife by the "Whitechapel process."[64]

One case that reached the Old Bailey may provide some insight into the circumstances that led up to the threat.[65] Sarah Brett of Peckham was living out of wedlock with Thomas Onley. On October 3, three days after the "double event," her son arrived home from sea with a friend. Brett permitted the friend, Frank Hall, to board with them. On October 15, the common-law husband and the visitor went out and got drunk; when they returned, both abused and swore at her. Brett told the visitor not to interfere; he smacked her and she returned the blow, knocking him off his chair and ordering him to leave. This angered her man, who then declared they were not even married and threatened to do "a Whitechapel murder upon you." He was clearly too drunk to carry out this undertaking and so retired upstairs to bed, leaving her with the visitor who then stabbed her, wounding her severely.

What sense can we make out of this event? Typically, alcoholic consumption helped to precipitate the conflict. Sarah Brett's role was defensive but firm; she did not challenge the boundaries of her "sphere," but she did exercise her prerogatives as manager of household resources and amply demonstrated her own capacity to defend herself. Although her common-law husband abused her first, she only reprimanded the visitor. "It is quite sufficient for Mr. Onley to commence upon me without you interfering." By ordering the visitor out of the house, she nonetheless shamed Onley. She threatened his masculinity; he responded by denying the legitimacy of their relations — in sum, calling her a whore. He then invoked the example of that most masterly of men, the Whitechapel killer, leaving her with the young visitor who still had the strength to carry out the husband's threat.

I am not trying to argue that the Ripper episode directly increased sexual violence; rather it covertly sanctioned male antagonism toward women and buttressed male authority over them. It established a common vocabulary and iconography of male violence that permeated the whole society, papering over class differences and obscuring the different material conditions that provoked sexual antagonism in different classes. [66] The Ripper drama invested male domination with a powerful mystique; it encouraged little boys in working-class Poplar and suburban Tunbridge Wells to intimidate and torment girls by playing at Jack the Ripper. "There's a man in a leather apron coming soon, to kill all the little girls in Tunbridge Wells. It's in the paper." "Look out, Here comes Jack the Ripper," was enough to send girls running from the street or from their own backyards into the safety of their homes.[67] Whatever their conscious ethos, male night patrols in Whitechapel had the same structural effect of enforcing the segregation of social space: women were relegated to the interior of a prayer meeting or their homes, behind locked doors; men were left to patrol the public spaces and the street. Male vigilantes also terrified women of the locale, who could not easily distinguish their molestors from their disguised protectors: "If the murderer be possessed . . . with the usual cunning of lunacy," one correspondent suggested in the *Saint James Gazette*, "I should think it probable that he was one of the first to enroll himself among the amateur detectives."[68]

Women's responses to the events surrounding the Ripper murders were as diverse as men's, yet overlaid by feelings of personal vulnerability. Women in Whitechapel were both fascinated and terrified by the murders: like their male counterparts, they bought up the latest editions of the half-penny evening newspapers; they gossiped about the gruesome details of the murders; and they crowded into the waxwork exhibits and peep shows where representations of the murdered victims were on display.[69] As we have seen, many also sympathized with the victims and came to the aid of prostitutes in their time of crisis. As one clergyman from Spitalfields remarked of the "fallen sisterhood": "these women are very good natured to each other. They are drawn together by a common danger and they will help each other all they can . . . ." Because the women clubbed together, and because common lodging housekeepers were generally "lenient" to regular customers, distress among prostitutes during the month of October was "not as great as one

might expect," reported the *Daily News*.[70]

On the whole, respectable working women offered little collective resistance to public male intimidation. I found two exceptions among matchgirls and marketwomen who were part of an autonomous female work culture. On their own territory, marketwomen could organize *en masse*: a number of women "calling out 'Leather Apron,'" for instance, chased Henry Taylor when he threatened Mary Ann Perry with "ripping her up" in Claremarket; and similar incidents occurred in Spitalfields market, nearby the Ripper murders.[71] Marketwomen enjoyed an *esprit de corps* akin to the feisty, street-fighting matchgirls, who had just won a successful strike from the Bryant and May Match Factory, and who openly bragged about catching the Ripper.[72]

Neighborhood women, such as the Spitalfields marketwomen, participated in crowd activity during the day, but those who could, stayed inside at night behind locked doors. Women who earned their living on the streets at night — prostitutes — did not have that luxury. Some left Whitechapel, even the East End, for good. Others applied to the casual wards of the workhouse. Some slowly went back to the streets, first in groups of two or three, then occasionally alone. They armed themselves, and although they "joked" about encountering Jack—"I am the next for Jack," quipped one woman—they were obviously terrified at the prospect. Some even went to prayer meetings to avoid remaining home alone at night.[73]

Increased attendance at prayer meetings delighted female missionaries active in the Whitechapel area. "Of course we are taking advantage of the terror," explained one Salvation Army "lassie." Another woman who took advantage of the terror was Henrietta Barnett, wife of Samuel Barnett of Toynbee Hall. Distressed at hearing women gossiping about the murders, she got up a petition to the Queen and with the aid of board (state) schoolteachers and mission workers, obtained four thousand signatures of the "Women of Whitechapel." The petition begged the Queen to call upon "your servants in authority" to close down the lodging houses where the murdered victims resided.[74] Although not entirely absent from the Ripper mobilization, female moral reformers like Barnett occupied a subordinate role within it: they remained physically constrained within the female sphere and bent on keeping neighborhood women there as well, moving them inside into prayer meetings, out of earshot of salacious discussions of sex and violence, relinquishing public spaces and

Police Illustrated News, 22 September 1888.

sexual knowledge to men.

It is difficult to determine how much Barnett's petition truly represented the opinion of Whitechapel women. It probably reflected the views of Jewish women and female residents of model dwelling houses, if not the immediate neighbors of prostitutes. But the picture had another side. Although Jewish artisans' wives regarded the women of the lodging houses as "nogoodnicks, prostitutes, old bags and drunks,"[75] they still employed Catherine Eddowes and others like her to char and wash for them, to light their sabbath fires, sometimes even to mind their children. There was a tense and fragile social ecology between rough and respectable elements in Whitechapel, one that could be easily upset by outside intervention.[76] The murders threatened the safety of respectable women; they undoubtedly strained class relations in the neighborhood and intensified gender divisions. They effectively placed respectable women under "house arrest" and made them dependent on male protection.

Women outside of Whitechapel also took a keen interest in the murders, and some even tried their hand at armchair detecting. Queen Victoria for instance, repeatedly wrote into the Home Office and Scotland Yard with her pet theories, and actually forced Lord Salisbury to hold a cabinet meeting on Saturday to consider the question of a reward.[77] At least one woman gained some notoriety from the case: at Bradford Police Court on October 10, 1888, a "respectable young woman, named Maria Coroner, aged twenty-one, was charged with having written certain letters tending to cause a breach of the peace: they were signed 'Jack the Ripper.'"[78] Another woman believed that "respectable women like herself had nothing to fear from the Whitechapel murderer," as she thought it was true that he "respects and protects respectable females."[79] This was, of course, the line taken by police officials, who expressed amazement at the widespread female hysteria over the murders, since they were only perpetrated on prostitutes.

For many women, this was small comfort. Female vulnerability extended well beyond the boundaries of the "danger zone." Mary Hughes, a female professional who lived in the West End in 1888, recalled

> how terrified and unbalanced we all were by the murders. It seemed to be round the corner, although it all happened in the East End, and we were in the West; but even so, I was afraid to got out after dark, if only to post a letter. Just

as dusk came on we used to hear down our quiet and ultra-respectable Edith Road the cries of newspaper boys in tones made as alarming as they could: "Another 'orrible murder . . . . Whitechapel! Disgustin' details . . . Murder!"[80]

What about the politicized edge of middle-class womanhood, the feminists? Did they mount any counterattack? Frances Power Cobbe enthusiastically entered into the fray and called for the use of female detectives whose "mother wit" would guide them to the murderer.[81] Josephine Butler and others expressed concern that the uproar over the murders would lead to the repression of brothels and subsequent homelessness of women. In so doing, they broke with more repressive purity advocates who were totally indifferent to the fate of the victims and to the rights of prostitutes. In the end, only the strict libertarians, female and male, came forward to defend prostitutes as human beings, with essential rights and liberties.[82]

The only piece of feminist anger to receive extensive coverage appeared in the pages of the *Daily News,* a liberal organ. The Whitechapel murders were not just homicides but "womenkilling," declared Florence Fenwick Miller, a noted London journalist, in her letter to the editor.[83] Researching the police columns, she concluded that attacks on prostitutes were not different from other violent assaults on women by men. They were not isolated events, but part of a "constant but ever increasing series of cruelties" perpetrated against women and treated leniently by judges.

Miller's letter generated a small flurry of responses supportive of her position and calling for women's economic and political emancipation. Kate Mitchell, a physician and feminist, applauded Miller's letter and cited the case, mentioned above, of James Henderson who was let off with a fine of forty shillings after severely beating a prostitute. Unless women were publicly emancipated, argued Mitchell, they would remain "ciphers" in the land and subject to male physical abuse.[84] The letters made an important association between public and domestic violence against women, but it would be a mistake to exaggerate their political impact. They remained isolated interventions in an overwhelmingly patriarchal debate; they were discounted or ignored by other dailies and failed to mobilize women over the issues.

The *Star,* a radical evening newspaper whose pages were open to socialists, disagreed with Miller. "It is the class question rather than the sex question that is at issue in this matter."[85] In their own journals, prominent socialists like William Morris and H.M.

Hyndman also refused to address the issue of sex antagonism; they tended to see sex oppression as a result of capitalist productive relations alone. For all their contempt of the proprietary press, the socialists' assessment of the murdered prostitutes as "unsexed" dehumanized "creatures" who had "violated their womanhood for the price of a night's lodging" was remarkably similar to that of the conservative and misogynist *Morning Post* and *Times*. To distinguish themselves from the bourgeois press, socialists would have had to overcome their ambivalence towards prostitutes and the unrespectable poor of Whitechapel and address the subject of male dominance.[86]

RESOLUTION

As we have seen, many discussions of class and gender were developed in relation to the events in Whitechapel, and were reflective of important cultural and social divisions within Victorian society. Nonetheless, the alternative perspectives — of feminists and libertarians, of the Whitechapel poor themselves — were ultimately subordinated to a dominant discussion in the media, shaped and articulated by those people in positions of power, namely, male professional experts. Within this dominant discourse, the discussion of class was more explicit and self-conscious than that of gender. In part, this fact relates to the precise moment of class antagonism when Jack the Ripper stalked the streets of London. The events in Whitechapel could be easily slotted into the "Outcast London" theme. They reinforced prevailing prejudices about the East End as a strange territory of savages, a social abyss, an inferno. The *Times* might well wring its hands about the responsibility of "our social organization" for spawning the crimes, but this momentary soul searching was readily domesticated into an attack on the symptoms, rather than on the causes, of urban poverty.[87]

Throughout the "autumn of terror," leader columns and correspondence pages were filled with conventional proposals to cure the social ills of Whitechapel: better lighting, improved paving, more biblewomen, more night refuges where poor women could sleep, and more laundries where they could work. Overshadowing these suggestions was one dominant theme — the necessity of slum clearance and the need to purge the lawless population of the common lodging houses from the neighborhood.[88] "Those of us who know Whitechapel know that the impulse that makes for murder is abroad in our streets every

night," declared two Toynbee Hallers.[89] The "disorderly and depraved lives of the women," observed Canon Barnett, were more "appalling" than the actual murders.[90] Men like Barnett finally manipulated public opinion and consolidated it behind razing the common lodging houses of the Flower and Dean street area. Artisans' dwellings replaced them. The notoriety of the street impelled the respectable owners—the Henderson family—to sell their property as soon as the leases were up. The Rothschild Buildings (1892), for respectable Jewish artisans and their families, appeared over the site of the lodging houses where Catherine Eddowes and Elizabeth Stride once lived. Prostitutes and their fellow lodgers were thus rendered homeless and forced to migrate to the few remaining rough streets in the neighborhood. Through the surveillance of the vigilance committees and through this "urban renewal," the murders helped to intensify repressive activity already under way in the Whitechapel area.[91]

Such reform-minded responses coincided with a general dissipation of middle-class fears of "Outcast London." The disciplined and orderly 1889 dock strike persuaded many respectable observers that the East End poor were indeed salvageable because they could be organized into unions. Meanwhile, Charles Booth's massive survey of East London, also published in 1889, graphically demonstrated how small and unrepresentative the "criminal" population of the Flower and Dean street rookery actually was. When another Ripper-like murder occurred in July 1889 in Whitechapel, newspaper coverage was far less hysterical and obsessive. In class terms, the crisis had passed.[92]

Sexual fears and hostilities, on the other hand, were less satisfactorily allayed.[93] For the Ripper story has continued to provide a common vocabulary of male violence against women, a vocabulary now almost one hundred years old. Its persistence owes much to the mass media's exploitation of Ripper iconography — depictions of female mutilation in mainstream cinema, celebrations of the Ripper as a "hero" of crime — that intensify the dangers of male violence and convince women that they are helpless victims.

A few contemporary examples illustrate the deleterious effects of the Ripper legacy on women's lives and well-being. Between October 1977 and January 1981, women in the North of England were terrorized by a mass murderer, dubbed the "Yorkshire Ripper" by the newspapers, who principally preyed on prostitutes,

and who was believed — erroneously — to be the author of taped messages sent to authorities. Newspaper discussion of the murders and the trial (this recent Ripper was caught and convicted) reproduced the same categories that had earlier structured press accounts of the Whitechapel "horrors": was the murderer "mad" or "bad"; did the prostitutes bring the murders on themselves; were all women at risk; did the murder setting of "mean streets" explain or generate the crimes? But this time around, the contemporary women's movement organized female patrols against the threat, and a prostitutes' rights group protested at the murder trial.[94]

At a more subtle level, traces of the Ripper's presence constantly intrude into urban women's consciousness. Walking down my street in Manhattan recently, I came upon graffiti emblazoning the Ripper's name on a side of a building. That same week the Lesbian Herstory Archives forwarded to me a threatening letter from "Jack the Ripper": "THE ORIGINAL JACK not a cheap imitation/I've conquered death itself and am still on this earth waiting to strike again."[95]

However pervasive, the Ripper image certainly does not tell us all we need to know about male culture and male nature. Feminists must probe behind the Ripper myth and analyze both its simplified image and the complex reality it masks. By flattening history into myth, the Ripper story has rendered all men suspect, vastly increasing female anxieties, and obscuring the distinct material conditions that generate sexual antagonism and male violence. Finally, the Ripper myth offers women no strategy for resistance; on the contrary, it is about female passivity in the face of male violence. Yet the current women's movement has generated a range of responses that transcend that mythic fatality: take-back-the-night marches, antirape hotlines, battered women's shelters, antipornography demonstrations, and prostitutes' rights coalitions offer diverse strategies against a false notion of universal female passivity. In the "real" world, neither male violence nor female victimization has single-root causes or effects. Only our cultural nightmares and media fantasies construct life this way.

NOTES

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The following abbreviations will be used for sources in this article (all periodicals were from London): *DC—Daily Chronicle, DN—Daily News, DT—Daily Telegraph, ELA—East London Advertiser, ELO—East London Observer, ES—Evening Standard,* HO—Home Office papers, *LWN—Lloyd's Weekly News,* Mepo.—Metropolitan Police papers, *MP—Morning Post, PMG—Pall Mall Gazette, RN—Reynolds' Newspaper, SJG—Saint James Gazette.*

[1]Noel Annan, quoted in Susan Brownmiller, *Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape* (New York: Bantam Books, 1976), p. 325.

[2]*DC,* 11 September 1888.

[3]Useful studies of the Ripper controversy include Donald Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (New York: New American Library, 1975); Tom Cullen, *Autumn of Terror* (London: Bodley Head, 1965); Donald McCormick, *The Identity of Jack the Ripper* (London: Arrow Books, 1970); Alexander Kelly, *Jack the Ripper: A Bibliography and Review of the Literature* (London: A.A.L., 1973); Elwyn Jones, ed., *Ripper File* (London: Barker, 1975).

[4]Beatrice Webb, quoted in Gareth Stedman-Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 285.

[5]See Stedman-Jones, *Outcast London;* Victor Bailey, "The Dangerous Classes in Late-Victorian England: Some Reflections on the Social Foundations of Disturbance and Order with Special Reference to London in the 1880s" (Ph.D. dissertation, Warwick University, 1975). The resignation of Police Commissioner Warren, shortly after the murder of the fifth victim, Mary Jean Kelly, in November 1888, was one important political ramification of the Ripper episode.

[6]Josephine Butler, Royal Commission on the Contagious Diseases Acts, quoted in Glen Petrie, *A Singular Iniquity: The Campaigns of Josephine A. Butler* (New York: Viking Press, 1971), p. 114. On "sexual secrets" see William Leach, *True Love and Perfect Union: The Feminist Reform of Sex and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1980).

[7]Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Edward J. Bristow, *Vice and Vigilance: Purity Movements in Britain Since 1700* (MacMillan: Dublin, 1977).

[8]Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and the Mode of Excess* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) chap. 1; Alan J. Lee, *The Origins of the Popular Press in England; 1855-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), chap. 4; Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man, 1830-1850: A Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 108-18; chap. 9.

[9]Thanks to Mary P. Ryan for this observation.

[10]The number of murder victims credited to Jack the Ripper was contested at the

time and is still subject to dispute. During the "autumn of terror," two earlier murders of prostitutes were initially connected (in retrospect) with the five murders. Two subsequent murders in 1889 and 1891 were subsequently linked to the Ripper. However, two official reports, one by Police Commissioner McNaghton and another by a forensic specialist, Dr. Thomas Bond, asserted that only these five homicides bore the marks of a single killer. See, Mepo. 3/141, 10 November 1888; Sir Melville McNaghton letter, quoted in full in Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper,* pp. 132-36.

[11]Quoted in Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 7.

[12]Ibid., p. 26

[13]"The East End Atrocities," *London City Mission Magazine,* 1 December 1888, 258-60; Chiam Bermant, *Point of Arrival: A Study of London's East End* (London: Methuen, 1975), p. 188.

[14]*ELO,* 27 July 1889.

[15]Quoted in White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 8.

[16]Arthur Harding, quoted in *East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding,* ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 110.

[17]*Times,* 2 October 1888.

[18]*DC,* 19 September 1888.

[19]*LWN,* 7 October 1888.

[20]Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), p. 25.

[21]*Star,* 8 September 1888.

[22]"A Reign of Terror in Whitechapel," *ELO,* 15 September 1888.

[23]Walter Dew, *I Caught Crippen* (London: Blackie & Son, 1938), p. 112.

[24]D.G. Halsted, *Doctor in the Nineties* (London: Christopher Johnson, 1959), p. 48.

[25]All the letters are collected in Mepo. 3/142.

[26]Sir Robert Anderson, *The Lighter Part of My Official Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p. 138; HO 144 /A49301C/8a, 23 October 1888; Mepo. 3/142; Sir Melville McNaghton, *Days of My Years* (London: Edward Arnold, 1915), pp. 58,59.

[27]*DT,*24 September 1888.

[28]*PMG,* 10 September 1888.

[29]*DC,* 10 September 1888.

[30] *PMG,* 19 September 1888.

[31]*Commonweal,* 13 November 1888; Judith R. Walkowitz, "The Politics of Prostitution," *Signs* 6 (Autumn 1980): 124-27.

[32]Jones, *Ripper File,* p. 51.

[33]*DC,* 10 November 1888.

[34]*DT,* 10 November 1888.

[35]HO 144/220/A49301c/8a, 23 October 1888.

[36]Bermant, *Point of Arrival,* chap. 9; White, *Rothschild Buildings,* chap. 1; *Jewish Chronicle,* 5 October 1888.

[37]*ELO,* 15 September 1888; Dew, *I Caught Crippen,* pp. 108-11.

[38]Bermant, *Point of Arrival,* chap. 9; White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 25.

[39]HO 144/220/A49301C/8C and 15; A49301D/5. As Bermant *(Point of Arrival,* pp. 116-18) notes, the Police Commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, fearing a pogrom, wiped out a message scrawled on a wall near the double murder of Eddowes and Stride, "The Juwes are not the men that will be blamed for nothing." Elizabeth Stride's body had been found in front of the Working Men's International Club, a club for Jewish socialists.

[40]*Times,* 12 September 1888.

[41]Jones, *Ripper File,* pp. 24, 25.

[42]My book in progress on Jack the Ripper discusses the theories of the Ripper in some detail. These theories not only represent male fantasies of power, but also evidence a good deal of self-hatred.

[43]HO 144/220/A49301C/8a, 23 October 1888.

[44]*Echo,* 14 September 1888.

[45]Frederick Porter Wensley, *Detective Days* (London: Cassell & Co., 1931), p. 128; Halsted, *Doctor in the Nineties,* p. 45.

[46]*DC,* 15 September 1888; *DT,* 2, 4 October 1888; *DN,* 9 October 1888; Halsted, *Doctor in the Nineties,* p. 48.

[47]White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 9.

[48]Walkowitz, "Politics of Prostitution," pp. 129-30; Josephine Butler to Miss Priestman, 5 November 1896, Butler Collection, Fawcett Library, City of London Polytechnic, London; Henrietta Barnett, *Canon Barnett: His Life, Work, and Friends by his Wife,* 2 vols. (London: Murray, 1921), 2: 305-8.

[49]"The Terrible Crime," *Echo,* 10 November 1888.

[50]*DC,* 10 November 1888.

[51]"The Whitechapel Horrors," *ELO,* 13 October 1888.

[52]*Times,* 6 October 1888.

[53]Dew, *I Caught Crippen,* p. 107; *ELO,* 15 September 1888; Halsted, *Doctor in the Nineties,* pp. 54, 55; Mepo. 3/140. For popular antagonism against doctors, see R.M. McLeod, "Law, Medicine and Public Opinion: The Resistance to Compulsory Health Legislation, 1870-1901," *Public Law* (1967), 189-211; *The Threepenny Doctor: Doctor Jelley of Hackney* (London: Hackney Workers' Education Association, 1974).

[54]*ELO,* 13 October 1888.

[55]*DN,* 6, 15 October 1888; *Times,* 6 October 1888.

[56]*ES,* 9 November 1888.

[57]*Star,* 8 September 1888.

[58]*DC,* 18 September 1888; *Police Illustrated News,* 3 November; 1 December 1888; *Women's Penny Paper,* 6 November 1888.

[59]"G.S.O." to the *Times,* 22 September 1888.

[60]Letter to the Editor, *SJG,* 12 November 1888.

[61]It should be noted that male libertarians came to the defense of prostitutes in the pages of the *Personal Rights Journal* (November 1888), pp. 69, 76, 84.

[62]*Times,* 12 November 1888.

[63]Cullen, *Autumn of Terror,* p. 78; *Echo,* 1, 2, 3 October 1888; *ELO,* 6 October 1888; *MP,* 4 October 1888.

[64]*Times,* 1 October 1888; Cullen, *Autumn of Terror,* p. 79; *Echo,* 3 October 1888.

[65]Criminal Court London, 109 (1888-89), pp. 76-78. Thanks to Ellen Ross for this citation.

[66]Ellen Ross, "'Fierce Questions and Taunts': Married Life in Working-Class London, 1870-1914," this issue.

[67]Helen Corke, *In Our Infancy: An Autobiography, Part 1, 1882-1912* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), p. 25 (thanks to Dina Copelman for this citation); Mrs. Bartholemew, interview (thanks to Anna Davin for the transcript).

[68]Letter to the Editor, *SJG,* 16 November 1888.

[69]Montagu Williams, *Round London: Down East and Up West* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1892), p. 12; *PMG,* 18 October 1888.

[70]*DN,* 4 October 1888.

[71]*DT,* 4 October; 10 September 1888; *RN,* 9 September 1888.

[72]Mepo. 3/142, 5 October 1888.

[73]Dew, *I Caught Crippen,* p. 95; "Ready for the Whitechapel Fiend: Women Secretly Armed," *Police Illustrated News,* 22 September 1888; *DT,* 2 October 1888; *War Cry,* 1 December 1888.

[74]*War Cry,* 1 December 1888; Barnett, *Canon Barnett,* p. 306.

[75]Quoted in White, *Rothschild Buildings,* p. 125.

[76]Ibid., chap. 4.

[77]Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper,* p. 86.

[78]McCormick, *Identity,* p. 81.

[79]Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper,* p. 101.

[80]M.V. Hughes, *A London Family, 1870-1900* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 362.

[81]Frances Power Cobbe to the Editor, *Times,* 11 October 1888.

[82]*Dawn,* 1 November 1888; *Personal Rights Journal,* November 1888, pp. 69, 76, 84; *Sentinel,* December 1888, p. 145.

[83]*DN,* 2 October 1888.

[84]*DN,* 4, 6, 9, 11 October 1888.

[85]*Star,* 4 October 1888.

[86]See, for instance, *Justice,* 6 October 1888 and 17 November 1888; *Star,* 1 October 1888; Ben Tillett, quoted in William J. Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875-1914* (London: Duckworth, 1975), p. 236.

[87]Peter Keating, "Fact and Fiction in the East End," in *The Victorian City,* ed. H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff, 2 vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 1: 585-603; Bailey, "Dangerous Classes in Late-Victorian England"; *Times* leader, quoted in "Murder as an Advertisement," *PMG,* 19 September 1888.

[88]White, *Rothschild Buildings,* chap. 1. See, for example, *Times,* 22 September; 2, 11, 18, 26, 29, 30 October; 6, 16 November 1888. See the series of letters in the *Daily Telegraph* on the "Safe Four Percent," 21, 24, 26 September 1888.

[89]Thomas Hancock Nunn and Thomas Gardner to the Editor, *Times,* 6 October 1888. Both Nunn and Gardner were members of the National Vigilance Association, a repressive social purity group.

[90]*Times,* 16 November 1888.

[91]White, *Rothschild Buildings,* chap. 1.

[92]Jones, *Outcast London,* chap. 17; Keating, "Fact and Fiction," pp. 595, 596; *Star,* 20 July 1889.

[93]Medical doctors did try to allay fears by representing the Ripper as an individual erotic maniac whose activities were unconnected to the normal interactions between the sexes. See the letter from Dr. Thomas Bond, Mepo. 3/141, 10 November 1888; Richard Von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: A Medico-Forensic Study,* trans. Harry E. Wedeck (New York: Putman, 1975), p. 119.

[94]Mandy Merck, "Looking at the Sutcliffe Case," *Spare Rib: A Women's Liberation Magazine* (July 1981); 16-18; Wendy Holliway, "I Just Wanted to Kill a Woman. Why? The Ripper and Male Sexuality," *Feminist Review* 9 (Autumn 1981): 33-40.

[95]"Jack the Ripper" to Lesbian Herstory Archives, 5 October 1981, New York, New York.