

Judith R. Walkowitz

City of Dreadful Delight

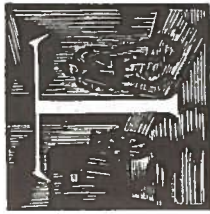
Narratives of
Sexual Danger in
Late-Victorian
London

WOMEN IN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

A Series Edited by Catharine R. Stimpson

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
Chicago

Jack the Ripper



There is only one topic throughout all England," wrote W. T. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette* on 1 October 1888, and that topic was the Whitechapel murders of "Jack the Ripper."¹ Stead himself took the lead in extracting copy from the Ripper murders: acting in collusion with the entire London daily press, he compiled and summarized news accounts from the morning papers in his evening publication, offering some characteristic twists of his own.

Thanks to Stead and his newspaper contemporaries, the Ripper story became national news. It was constructed piecemeal over a period of several weeks, as observers struggled to discern patterns from a murder sequence that they regarded as unique in the annals of crime. Throughout the autumn of terror, the daily press, catering to many different reading publics, was hard at work distilling meaning from the news breaks of the day, while also backtracking and retrospectively establishing a pattern of significance for preceding murders. Drawing on cultural fantasies—about the grotesque female body, about the labyrinthine city, about the mad doctor—that had long circulated among different strata of Victorian culture, media coverage also highlighted new elements of late-Victorian conceptions of the self and London's imaginary landscape.

Media organization of the Ripper narrative helped to contextualize the events of autumn 1888 and to manage anxieties unleashed by the murders. Contemporary observers, keenly aware of the Ripper episode as a media event, periodically took the press to task for provoking hysteria and inter-

fering with the police investigation; but they, along with the experts and the general public, gained their understanding of the Ripper murders through the newspapers. However much diverse constituencies intervened to shape the media's interpretation of the Ripper crisis according to their own political agendas, they were also compelled by the overall *gestalt* produced by the media.

As the property of the entire daily press, the Ripper story represented a different kind of media production, with a decidedly more ambiguous political message, than Stead's "Maiden Tribute" or Mrs. Weldon's populist campaign in defense of the "liberty of the subject." In contrast to these two causes célèbres, media organization of the Ripper story had no defined political center, and women were significantly marginalized from the public telling of the story. This is not to say that all public interventions carried the same weight or that women were completely outside the cultural production of the Ripper narrative. At the local level, working-class women participated in informal storytelling, providing information that others used to process into clues. A similar reprocessing occurred in relation to feminist and antivivisectionist representations of prostitution and of the sexual danger of medicine. Media coverage of the murders took up the themes and narratives of female reformers and reworked them into a male-directed fantasy, closer in tone and perspective to the literature of urban exploration and the male Gothic than to female political melodrama.

This chapter examines the media scandal of Jack the Ripper in two parts. "Making the Case" lays out the barebone elements that were culturally stressed in press coverage, elements that found expression in the cries of newspaper boys hawking the latest particulars of "Murder, Murder, Mutilation, Whitechapel," and the "Mystery of Jack the Ripper." The second section, "Playing out the Story," details how and when these elements entered the Ripper narrative; it outlines the additional stories woven around and superimposed upon the prevailing media coverage of Jack the Ripper by diverse social actors, eager to articulate their version of the "truths" and "fictions" of the Ripper episode.

Making the Case

Over the course of ten weeks, the newspapers were able to consolidate a small number of "facts" about the cases. Between 31 August and 9 November 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).² The murdered victims were Polly Nicholls, 31 August; Annie Chapman, 8 September;

Catherine Eddowes and Elizabeth Stride (the "double event"), 30 September; Mary Jane Kelly, 9 November. 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 local residents kept close watch on each other's movements. Still, there were no witnesses to the crimes; the police could uncover no clues or "rational" motives for the murders.³

The first element underscored by press coverage of the Ripper murders was their setting: Whitechapel, a notorious, 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," the common lodging houses.⁴

By the 1880s, Whitechapel had come to epitomize the social ills of "Outcast London." 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. Worsening conditions, recent historians have argued, precipitated a mounting political crisis in 1888, driving the East End destitute and unemployed towards defiance, and unleashing anti-alien and anti-Semitic protests. But, as Jerry White has observed, the middle classes of London were far less concerned with the material problems of Whitechapel than with the pathological symptoms they spawned, such as street crime, prostitution, and epidemic disease—"the whole panoply of shame of this 'boldest blotch on the face' of the capital of the civilized world."⁵

For the respectable reading public, Whitechapel provided a stark and sensational backdrop for the Ripper murders: an immoral landscape of light and darkness, a nether region of illicit sex and crime, both exciting and dangerous. Like the deserted wasteland of Stevenson's "city in a night-mare," Whitechapel's empty spaces could rapidly fill with a menacing crowd. "All sorts and conditions of men" could be met with on Whitechapel Road, the district's main thoroughfare, with its "flaunting shops," piles of 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 "roughest, roughest streets, taverns and music halls in search of new excitements."

This was Charles Booth's "Tom Tiddler's Ground"—imagined as a place of Darwinian drama and excitement—as compelling to the respectable observer as it was frightening.⁶

At night, commentators warned, 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. "In these squalid parts of the metropolis," reported the *Daily Telegraph*, "aggravated assaults, attended by flesh wounds from knives, are frequently met with, and men and women become accustomed to scenes of violence." In streets with nicknames like "Blood Alley," "Frying Pan Alley," and "Shovel Alley" lay the "warrens of the poor," "all packed by a species that multiplies with astounding swiftness and with miserable results." Here "it may be well to tuck out of view any bit of jewelry that may be glittering about." Even the police hesitated to enter 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." In the same back slums and alleys, poor prostitutes, "fourpenny knee tremblers," lived and worked, often bringing their customers into dark corners to avoid the price of a room. And here, in Buck's Row, Hanbury Street, Berner Street, and Dorset Street (better known in the locale as "Do as You Please Street"), during the "autumn of terror" of 1888, the bodies of four of the victims of Jack the Ripper were found.⁷

In the pages of the daily press, this sensational landscape was juxtaposed to descriptions of the more mundane features of daily life among the poor. Inquest testimonies revealed that 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 and made a "mental note" to tell the police; 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. 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 proprietor 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. 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, the pubs and cheap music halls—all figured as part of the physical setting for the murders and the investigations. To evoke a sense of place, the kitchens of the dosshouses, the shed on Dorset Street where homeless women congregated, and the interior of the room where Mary Jane Kelly was killed appeared in great detail in the daily press.⁸

This physical evocation was not intended to elicit human sympathy for the "people" of Whitechapel as much as to promote an "argument from geography" about the territorially based nature of the crime. Newspaper reports applied Lamarckian theories of urban degeneration to the Whitechapel horrors, diagnosing them as a product of a diseased environment whose "neglected human refuse" bred crime. "We have long ago learned that organic refuse breeds pestilence," declared *The Times*. "Can we doubt that neglected human refuse as inevitably breeds crime, that crime reproduces itself like germs in an infected atmosphere, and becomes at each successive cultivation more deadly, more bestial, and more absolutely unrestrained." This perspective extended well beyond elite circles. Representations of urban degeneration also appeared at the lower end of the spectrum of print culture. *The Curse on Mitre Square*, a Gothic penny dreadful rendering of the Eddowes murder that was hawked on Whitechapel streets, depicted Whitechapel Road as a "portal to the filth and squalor of the East," where several strata of humanity passed along, from "half-starved clerks," to factory hands "limping to the badly-ventilated rooms to work," each more physically dilapidated than the other.⁹

As a sign of racial and class otherness, Whitechapel became a dreaded name, the East End Murderland, infamous throughout the world. Contradicting this totalizing hyperreality were news accounts of Whitechapel's actual diversity, particularly the tense polarity between the Anglo-Irish casual laboring poor and the immigrant Jewish community, and between the rough elements and the respectable citizens of Whitechapel who wanted more police protection. Whitechapel's physical proximity and social connection to respectable parts of London proved even more unsettling: "Unhappily for all of us," declared *The Times*, "the Whitechapel murderers and their victims are neighbours of every Londoner." Although the press tried to stigmatize Whitechapel as a place apart, it also depicted it as a place where many parts of London met: a magnet not only for a "vast

floating population—the waifs and strays of our thoroughfares”—but also for young West End bloods and for scores of respectable “slummers” who visited and even settled in the area.¹⁰

Another compelling aspect of the Whitechapel murders, as the media covered them, 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 willful figures in Poe’s and Stevenson’s novels” or the “stealthy and cunning assassins in Gaboriau and du Boisicobey.” 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.”¹¹

Whereas Mrs. Weldon’s spiritualist adventures combined themes of sexual danger and fantasies of urban access for women, the Ripper murders exclusively evoked the darker social and erotic meanings of the fantastic. Commentators came to believe that the murders, which seemed so senseless and motiveless, possessed a deep meaning. The analytic method for uncovering this occulted truth was twofold. First, it involved an obsessive scrutiny of petty details as signs and codes that would allow the observer to uncover the system of meaning which the fragmented surface masked. Newspaper headlines advertised “New Particulars of the Whitechapel Horrors,” while subheadings seized upon a “piece of an apron,” a “black bag,” “mysterious pawntickets,” an “extraordinary parcel,” “strange communications,” “the writing on the wall,” as potential clues to the murders. But the search for meaning was not simply fixed at the level of extreme nominalism; it also led to theories woven “from the merest figments of fancy.” At the height of the crisis, cultural fantasies ran rampant in speculations about the murderer’s identity and the social and political significance of the crimes.¹²

These speculations also resembled the literature of the fantastic in their symptomatic expression and management of anxieties over social and political disorder. The murders had caused a social breach and crisis that could only be healed by penetrating the “dark cloud of mystery” which “conceals the guiltiest wretch in London from the sight of innumerable eyes peering in every direction, night and day.” Commentators likened the Ripper story to a “dark labyrinth” where every corner revealed a new “depth of social blackness”; they also superimposed this labyrinthine im-

age on the besieged city itself, represented as incoherent, fragmented, ungovernable. In the absence of reliable official statements on the progress of the investigation, rumors flew.¹³

Expressions of social and epistemological disorientation were coupled with repeated denunciations of the representatives of law and order, already under fire for their mishandling of street prostitution and demonstrations of the unemployed. Inept bureaucracy, the faulty leadership of the police commissioner, Sir Charles Warren, who was trying to “militarize” the police, futile competition between two police forces (the City and the Metropolitan) aggravated a situation already experienced as chaotic. “The triumphant success with which the Metropolitan Police have suppressed all political meetings in Trafalgar Square contrasts strangely with their absolute failure to prevent the most brutal kind of murder in Whitechapel,” sneered the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The “East Enders have lost faith in the capacity of the Executive to exorcise the grim spectre by which they are haunted,” declared the *Daily Telegraph*. In the absence of clues or motives, declared the *Star*, the “only practical moral to be drawn from the wholesale massacre . . . is the inadequacy of the police force from top to bottom.” The Conservative press would join issue with the Liberals in denouncing the Ripper murders as one of the most “ignominious police failures of all time,” when, to quote the *Daily Chronicle*, the Metropolitan Police “simply” let “the first city of the world . . . lapse into primeval savagery.”¹⁴

A final element signified by the “mystery” of the murders was sexual. Faced with a “senseless crime,” press commentary invoked the figure of the Gothic sex beast, a “man monster” motivated by “bloodthirsty lust” who “goes forth stealthily and takes his victims when and where he already pleases,” akin to the “were wolf” of “Gothic fiction.” Declared the *Daily Telegraph*, “we are left . . . to form unpleasant visions of roving lunatics distraught by homicidal mania or bloodthirsty lust . . . or finally we may dream of monstres, or ogres.” In the East End, monstrous metaphors assumed a literal status: “People allowed their imagination to run riot. There was talk of black magic and vampires.”¹⁵

When contemporaries invoked fictional analogues of the monstrous, argue cultural critics Deborah Cameron and Kathleen Fraser, they drew on a “transitional language” to represent “sex crime,” just at the historic moment when scientific discourse was transforming the figure of the sex beast into a “sexual deviant” and his sinful crime into a “disease.” In the long run, they argue, the Ripper murders would emerge as the most publicly advertised in an emerging series of case histories of sex crime, thus serving as a media vehicle for concealing yet suggesting the “truth” of “sex.” At the time of the Ripper murders, however, the medicalizing effort to diagnose

the “monstrous” motives of the murders as “sexual” (and as encapsulated within the figure of the sex pervers) was incomplete; the meanings of the murders, like the figure of Jack the Ripper himself, remained ambiguous and polymorphous, encompassing social and geographic, as well as individual, associations of the monstrous.¹⁶

The fact that most of the murders were accompanied by acts of sexual mutilation also contributed to the grisly notoriety of the crimes and provided the most sensational stories the newspapers were to present. At the time, contemporaries disputed whether the murders evidenced anatomical skill and knowledge of the female body. Some believed that the principal objective of the murderer was evisceration of the body after the woman had been strangled and had her throat cut. When the murderer had enough time, observers committed to the “medical theory” believed, the uterus and other internal organs were deliberately removed, while the woman’s insides were often strewn about. Conversely, when some murderers did not “extend so far,” when no “portion” was “missing,” this same school of thought assumed that “the miscreant had not time to complete his design.”¹⁷

The “mangled remains” of the Ripper victims triggered off a set of psychosexual and political fears that resounded, in different ways, across the social spectrum. Body fragments testified to the monstrous nature of the crime, of the criminal, and of the social environment. If, traditionally, the “classical” body has signified the “health” of the larger social body—of a closed, homogeneous, regulated social order—then the mounting array of “grotesque,” mutilated corpses in this case represented the exact inverse: a visceral analogue to the epistemological incoherence and political disorientation threatening the body politic during the “autumn of terror.”¹⁸

Because they were committed on female bodies, particularly on the bodies of prostitutes, the mutilations carried especially transgressive associations. These were not the elegant, dignified female bodies of civic statuary that graced the public squares of the West End, embodying the abstract virtues of race and nation; nor were they the “salon body” of elite females that lined the walls of art galleries and lay on “tea tables in open photo albums” or “animated advertisements for household products.” They were instead “women of the people” “cut to pieces,” grotesque body fragments, replete with gaps, orifices, missing body portions, emblematic of female vice and the teeming multitudes of the East End and their “symbolic filth.”¹⁹

The mutilated bodies of the Ripper victims evoked the “ensemble of representations” that had authorized regulatory policy and official disposition towards prostitutes throughout the nineteenth century. According to

Alain Corbin, these negative body images included the prostitute as putrid body, as sewer, as syphilitic carrier, as corpse, and as link in a chain of resigned female bodies “at the beck and call of the bourgeois body.” Media representations at the time of the Ripper murders called all these images into play, accompanied by renewed demands for the reintroduction of state-regulated prostitution to restore order, but they placed particular stress on the cultural fantasies and associations of the prostitute body as corpse. Not only did the Ripper murders seem to literalize the moral truth that the wages of sin was death—that the “awful being who haunts Whitechapel” presented himself as “an embodied judgment to the women of evil life”—but the murders themselves occurred in the shadow of two death houses: the Aldergate slaughterhouse and the great London Hospital. As experts debated whether the murderer exhibited the skill of a butcher or a “scientific anatomist,” commentators on the crime scenes described the victims variously as slaughtered animals, “ripped open just as you see a dead calf at a butcher shop,” or as dissected cadavers, reminiscent of “those horrible wax anatomical specimens” on display in medical museums and in the windows of anatomical shops.²⁰

As Elaine Showalter observes, the Ripper murders “eerily evoked” themes of medical violence against women that pervaded fin-de-siècle literature—of opening up, dissecting, or mutilating women: indeed, they may well have helped to consolidate and disseminate those themes publicly to a wider readership. They also played on—and seemed to play out—popular fears of surgeons, gynecologists, vaccinators, vivisectionists, and dissectionists, in this context, the innocent bodies of women, children, and animals, that had found considerable expression in a range of popular health and antimicrobial campaigns of the 1870s and 1880s.²¹

The grisly mutilations, provoking a full range of social and political anxieties, and apparently establishing the signature of the killer, intensified public fascination with the mutilator, who acquired the sobriquet “Jack the Ripper” in the course of events in fall 1888. At the time of the “double event” of September 30, an anonymous letter forecasting the murders and signed by “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. A fortnight later, a third letter addressed to the chairman of the local vigilance committee in Whitechapel and accompanied by half of a human kidney reinforced suspicion that the murderer was a necrophiliac. These letters set the tone for the rest (of which 350 have been collected in the files of Scotland Yard). The first two were addressed “Dear Boss,” all three 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." Police authorities believed that these letters were a "creation of an enterprising journalist"; whether authentic or not, the letters helped to establish the murders as a media event by focusing social anxieties and fantasies on a single, elusive, alienated figure, a figure who craved "sensations" and who communicated to a "mass" public through the newspaper. Written in an informal, "Cockney style," the letters also consolidated the murderer's reputation for irony and wit. 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 (George Bernard Shaw's famous suggestion, which was taken up by the press), and a woman.²²

In the telling of the Ripper story, the stigmatized identity of the victims was another striking feature. The social profile of his victims emerging from the local interviews and testimonies of the inquests seemed to be remarkably detailed and precise. "Painfully familiar have become the proceedings of the inquests on the victims of the Whitechapel assassin," commented the *East London Advertiser*. All the inquests seemed to tell the same old story of want, immorality, and inhuman crime." 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." 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." When they could, they worked as charwomen, street sellers, or picked hops during the summer months in Kent. If they had to, they resorted to the streets as casual prostitutes.²³

Economic need forced them to take to the streets on the nights they met their deaths. Newspaper headings and woodcut illustrations persistently fixed on the final dialogues of Polly Nicholls and Annie Chapman before they met their death, as if these statements encapsulated a deep moral meaning. 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." 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."²⁴

To middle-class readers of *The Times* and the *Morning Post*, as well as socialist readers of *Commonweal*, 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 was death. Outside of Whitechapel, the victims became unsympathetic objects of pity—for radicals and conservatives alike. Whatever guilt middle-class readers may have experienced over the "mangled remains" of Annie Chapman, their compunction was 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 in earlier reformist campaigns such as the "Maiden Tribute" and the feminist opposition to state regulation. But reformers such as Butler and Stead had sympathized with the history of young prostitutes, if not with 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. This negative feature of reformist propaganda set limits to the kind of sympathy which could be extended to the fallen women of Whitechapel (and may partially explain feminist reticence to enter into the public discussion).²⁵

In sum, the degraded social settings, the mysterious circumstances, the grisly mutilations, the ominous figure of Jack the Ripper, and the "deviant" lives of his victims combined to produce a dark media fantasy of the Ripper murders. Media coverage transformed the unsolved murders of five poor women into a national scandal; and it incited a wide range of social actors to immerse themselves in the details of the cases, compelled by sexual titillation but also by the desire to extract meaning out of apparent disorder.

Playing Out the Story

The Ripper case, never solved, offers no closure or resolution to the problem of sexual violence and the social order that produced it. Because it achieved no closure, it remains, well into the later-twentieth century, an enigmatic thriller that continually reverberates and reconstructs itself over time. In this section, we shall examine some of the parties to the initial "creation" of the Ripper stories. Following the Nicholls murder, the story gained momentum, direction, and focus, but it never emerged as a unified,

stable narrative. Complicating the process of interpretation was the “introduction” of new narrative elements in successive cases, such as a coroner’s revelation, mysterious “writing on the wall,” the “Jack the Ripper” letters, as well as apparent contradictions within and between the explanatory systems invoked to make sense of the crimes. At strategic moments, different social actors—from Whitechapel residents and friends of the victims testifying at the inquest, to medical correspondents writing to the daily press—played a key role in providing clues or redirecting the interpretation of the crimes.²⁶ Both on the streets of London and in the pages of the national press, diverse constituencies offered competing social perspectives, revising and reprocessing the available media fantasies about the Whitechapel horrors.

The first to intervene and organize opinion on the subject were the police themselves, who followed up clues provided by local residents. Initially, the police treated the 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. Acting on suggestions of local prostitutes, they first investigated street gangs who preyed on prostitutes and who extorted money from them. However, they soon came to imagine that they were in the presence of a serial killer who had concentrated his activities on a particular locale and who preyed on women of “evil life.” The murders, accordingly, took on a new status, and police authorities shifted the supervision of the Nicholls murder away from the local police to Scotland Yard. Simultaneously, news accounts enlarged the significance of the murder, transforming it into national news. Linking the event to two recent cases of unsolved homicides involving poor prostitutes in Whitechapel (despite the fact that these earlier homicides revealed totally different murder patterns), headlines announced “Another Murder in Whitechapel” and the “Whitechapel Horror: Third Crime of a Man who must be a Maniac.” Following the lead of local police, the press now declared that the murders were the work of “one individual.”²⁷

Police continued their manhunt by investigating 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 other occupational groups, such as sailors on board cattle boats, whose presence in and out of London would explain the timing of the crisis and the mysterious disappearance of the murderer. The growing list of candidates reflected the local social economy of Whitechapel; it also mirrored the prejudices of the police and local residents.²⁸ 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.²⁹

Anti-Semitism in 1888 was one articulation of a rising tide of nationalism and racism orchestrated by the popular media. As early as the Nicholls case, Radical dailies helped to stir up local sentiment against Jews by identifying one “Leather Apron” as the “only name linked [locally] with the Whitechapel murders.” Leather Apron was, according to the *Star*, a Jewish slippermaker by trade, a “Strange Character who Prowls about Whitechapel after midnight,” inspiring “universal fear” among women. Leather Apron’s candidacy also gained support from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which republished a description of “Leather Apron” compiled by a *Star* reporter after he had made inquiries among a number of “polyandrous” women in the East End: a man of “sinister” expression, with “small” and “glittering” eyes, “repellent” grin, his business was “blackmailing women late at night. . . . His name nobody knows, but all are united in the belief that he is a Jew or of Jewish parentage, his face being of a marked Hebrew type.” While other dailies republished this new “theory,” they were also quick to point out the “fictional” nature of the description: “He is a character so much like the intention of a storyteller that the accounts of him given by all the streetwalkers of Whitechapel district seem like romances,” declared *Lloyd’s Weekly News*.³⁰

John Pizer, who had been “fingered” by the *Star* man as Leather Apron, finally turned himself into the police, in order to vindicate himself publicly and to escape the fury of the crowd.³¹ The “Jacob the Ripper” theory³² led to two local 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. After the Chapman murder, crowds of roughs assumed a “threatening attitude” toward the “Hebrew” population of the district. “It was repeatedly asserted that no Englishman could have perpetrated such a horrible crime.”³³ Speculations about “Leather Apron” also provoked false accusa-

tions against individual Jews, which in turn gave local youths license to rob and beat them. Along with "Lipski," a Polish Jew executed for violating and murdering his landlady in 1887,³⁴ the sobriquet "Leather Apron" became a common term of abuse applied to Jews.³⁵ Well after the police had discredited the "Leather Apron" theory and declared "Leather Apron" to be a "mythical personage,"³⁶ the man with a knife and leather apron remained an enduring popular image of the murderer. Thanks to continuous verbal and visual representations of the "mysterious" killer in the press as a "foreigner of dark complexion," the Ripper continued to be imagined, both by the police and local cockneys, as a "marked Hebrew type."³⁷

West End dailies made their own contribution to the excitement by lending credence to the worst kind of anti-Semitic fantasies emanating out of Eastern Europe. On 2 October, *The Times* published a suggestion from its Vienna correspondent that the Whitechapel killer might be following the Talmudic injunction requiring a Jew who has been intimate with a Christian to atone for this pollution by slaying and mutilating her. As evidence for this practice, the correspondent cited a recent Galician case involving a Jew named Ritter who had been charged with outraging and murdering a Christian girl. Alarmed by what seemed to be a widespread media effort to connect the Jews with the Whitechapel murders and to revive the "legend of blood," the leaders of Anglo Jewry roundly condemned these speculations as "baseless and without foundation."³⁸

In apprehending Jews as religious fanatics, police followed the lead of the local gentile 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. The double murders of Eddowes and Stride on 30 September cast further suspicion on East End Jews and intensified police concern. Stride's body had been discovered in front of the Working Men's International Club, a political club mostly frequented by Jewish socialists, whose members had just finished hearing a lecture on "Judaism and Socialism." Later that night, a bloodstained portion of Catherine Eddowes's apron was found in front of a building on Goulston Street inhabited by Jews. Above it on the wall was written in chalk, "The Juwes are not the men that will be blamed for nothing." Believing that the message was written "with the intention of inflaming the public mind against the Jews," Police Commissioner Warren wiped out the "writing at once" when he arrived on the scene. His actions provoked severe press criticism for destroying a valuable clue, but they won grateful thanks from the Chief Rabbi of London.³⁹

By mid-September local police had their hands full. After Chapman's murder, a diabolical pattern of crime seemed to have been confirmed, and the impotence of the police to track down the culprit inspired a rising tide of public indignation. Popular rumors of extensive mutilations committed on Chapman's body added to the sensation. Press coverage vastly expanded, as the murder story spread over numerous pages and columns, encompassing leaders, correspondence columns, human-interest stories, official announcements, and police-court anecdotes. Woodcut illustrations of Hanbury Street, maps of the murder sites (showing escape routes to the West End), and clinical drawings of the victims surrounded by cameo portraits of expert witnesses testifying at the inquests, augmented the printed reports. Retrospectives of the life stories of the victims were juxtaposed to future projections of "more" murders to "follow." Sensational language of "bloodthirsty" monsters and fiends in "human shape" intensified, as did reports of copycat activities on the part of men who menaced women. To amplify the news further, papers included ancillary activities within Whitechapel, including local petitions, demands for an official reward and more police patrols, as well as the organization of citizen action groups.

Annie Chapman, declared the *Daily Telegraph*, did "more by her death than many long speeches in Parliament and countless columns of letters to the newspapers could have brought about." Her "mangled remains" provoked a "crisis of conscience" over the failure of Christian charity and the "social organization" to address what *Punch* labeled the "nemesis" of poverty and social neglect in Whitechapel. As police searched two hundred common lodging houses for the murderer, news investigations appeared on "Crime in Whitechapel," and the "Insecurity of Our Streets." Wherever you "inquire," declared the *Star*, there were "fresh stories of robberies and outrage, committed with impunity." Simultaneously letters on the "Moral of the Murders" appeared in the proprietary press, with conventional proposals to cure the social ills of Whitechapel: philanthropic plans for model dwellings, better lighting, improved paving, more Bible women, more night refuges where poor women could sleep, and more laundries where they could work. The letters focused not on the pathology of the murderer but on the degraded lives of the victims. The "Whitechapel horrors will not be in vain," declared "S.G.O." in *The Times*, "if 'at last' the public conscience awakes to consider the life which these horrors reveal. The murders, it may almost be said, were bound to come."⁴⁰

Amidst this extensive soul-searching and philanthropic appeal, an alternative inquiry into the self and the social order materialized in the press. Suspicion shifted from the East End to the West End, as representations of

the Ripper oscillated from an externalized version of the Other to a variation of the multiple, divided Self.

In "Murder and More to Follow," W. T. Stead, that great crusader against libertine debauchery, was the first journalist to draw attention to the "sexual origins" of the crime and to invoke Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as a psychological model of the murderer. *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson's enormously popular "shilling shocker" of 1886, had featured a murderer with a divided personality, who encompassed within himself the two social extremes of London: the urbane Dr. Jekyll, who used his scientific knowledge to create another self, the stunted, troglodyte, proletarian Mr. Hyde, as a cover for "secret pleasures" and "nocturnal adventures." Influenced by French writings on the multiple personality as well as Lombrosian theories of criminal anthropology, Stevenson's story represented the "thorough and primitive duality of [urban] man." Despite the author's repeated denials, contemporary readers and reviewers immediately interpreted the undisclosed nocturnal adventures and pleasures of Jekyll/Hyde as illicitly and violently erotic. When the theater version starring Richard Mansfield opened in the West End in August 1888, it adhered to the interpretation of Jekyll/Hyde as sadistic sex criminal. Mansfield played Hyde as a manifestation of Jekyll's "lust," a creature of infinite sexual drive who, unable to fulfill his desires in conventional heterosexual sex because of his "hideous imagination," "proceeds to satisfy his cravings in violence." To stabilize and fix Hyde's sexual obsession within the boundaries of heterosexuality (the original story remained obscure about the object and aim of Jekyll/Hyde's libidinal desire), the theater version added a new female character, Jekyll's fiancée, murdered by a jealous Hyde, thus injecting heterosexual love and sadism into the closeted professional bachelor world of Jekyll and his friends.⁴¹

With repeated allusions to Stevenson's story and to evolutionary anthropology, Stead characterized the "real-life" murderer in Whitechapel as an evolutionary throwback and sadist. The crime was a "renewed reminder of the potentialities of revolting barbarity which lie latent in man"; it was committed by a "Mr. Hyde of Humanity," a "Savage of Civilization" from "our slums," as capable of "bathing his hands in blood as any Sioux who ever scalped a foe." Animated by a "mania of bloodthirsty cruelty which sometimes springs from the unbridled indulgence of the worst passions" this midnight murderer might well be a "plebeian Marquis de Sade at large in Whitechapel," who, Stead warned, may not confine his activities to the East End.⁴²

"Murder and More to Follow" located the urban savage in London's "teeming" slums. A few days later, however, Stead suggested a more re-

spectable identity and address for the murderer, more akin to Jekyll's urbane appearance and stately West End mansion. In an "Occasional Note," Stead "hoped" that authorities were not confining their attention to those who looked like "horrid ruffians." "Many of the occupants of the Chamber of Horrors look like local preachers, Members of Parliament, or monthly nurses." Even the Marquis de Sade was an "amiable-looking gentleman." In keeping with the case-study approach of Stevenson's *Strange Case*, Stead diagnosed the murderer as a sadistic "victim of erotic mania which often takes the awful shape of an uncontrollable taste for blood."⁴³

Thanks to Stead, speculations about the Ripper as a "dual personality," an "amiable-looking gentleman" who was also a "hard ruffian," who "did his bloody work with the lust . . . of a savage, but with the skill of the savant," began to percolate throughout the press. Other dailies took up the "Jekyll and Hyde" theory and fantasized about a "crazed biologist" who took scientific delight in the "details of butchery" or a "mad physiologist looking for living tissue." Indignant correspondents accused Richard Mansfield of being the Ripper because he played his part so convincingly; alternatively, they complained that he provided a role model for some unstable personality. In deference to the public uproar, the play shut down; fittingly the last performance was held as a benefit for night refuges for homeless women.⁴⁴

As Christopher Frayling has observed, the Jekyll and Hyde model represented the most accessible "explanation" of psychopathology for English newspapers to exploit.⁴⁵ Nonetheless, Stead's reference to "sadism," as a "mania" from which the murderer was "suffering," invoked the concepts of sexual sadism and lust murder, recently introduced into the medical lexicon by Dr. Richard Krafft-Ebing, professor of psychiatry at the University of Vienna, and a pioneer of sexology, the scientific study of human sexuality.⁴⁶ Krafft-Ebing's professional duties included assessing proof of morbidity or "degeneracy" for sexual offenders brought before the court to determine whether they should be held responsible for their actions. Krafft-Ebing collected his case histories and published them in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886), a "medico-forensic study" of the "abnormal." Although the most explicit portions were printed in Latin, the book provoked an enormous popular as well as professional response. Krafft-Ebing found himself deluged with confessional letters from sufferers of sexual misery, which he added to his own body of case histories.⁴⁷ The appearance of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, observes Jeffrey Weeks, marked the "eruption into print of the speaking pervert, the individual marked or marred by his (or her) sexual impulse."⁴⁸

A series of anxieties about the gendered self and the social order under-

wrote Krafft-Ebing's assessment of sexual pathology. In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, he produced an elaborate classification scheme, intended to mark off the perverted Other from the normative Self. Nonetheless, the distinctions he drew between natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, and progressive/regressive, remained ambiguous.⁴⁹ Sexuality, declared Krafft-Ebing, "is the most powerful factor in individual and social existence"; yet all "acts" that deviated from the "purpose of nature"—i.e. propagation of the species—were "perverse."⁵⁰ Unfortunately these perversions were "progressively increasing" in advanced societies; they were component parts of progress, telling expressions of the "nervousness of modern society."⁵¹ Both "unnatural habits" and physical degeneracy accounted for their prevalence: they could be a product of acquired vice as well as congenital defect. Only the case-history approach that investigated the "whole personality of the individual and the original impulse leading to the perverse act," could differentiate disease (perversion) from vice (perversity).⁵²

Krafft-Ebing's taxonomy highlighted two general categories of sexual degeneracy: perversions committed with members of the opposite sex and those practiced between members of the same sex. In this schema, sexual sadism, rape, and lust murder were heterosexual analogues to homosexuality. Like homosexuality, sadistic sexual crimes were "progressively increasing in modern sexual life"; even more so than homosexuality, they were the acts of men. "Man," Krafft-Ebing explained, has a "more intense sexual appetite than woman"; sadism was nothing else than "an excessive and monstrous pathological intensification of phenomena—possible, too, in normal conditions in rudimentary forms—which accompany the psychical *vita sexualis* particularly in males."⁵³

At the time of Chapman's murder, other publicists lent support to the upper-class-maniac theory; they too debated whether the murderer in the Ripper case was mad or vicious, a victim of a disease or a practitioner of "mere debauchery," a "homicidal maniac" bent on violence or an "erotomaniac" bent on sexual satisfaction. In a letter to *The Times* on 12 September Dr. Forbes Winslow hazarded 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." Apparently sane on the surface, the murderer was following the "inclination of his morbid imagination" by "wholesale homicide." Winslow based his "method of madness" theory on the assumption that only a cultivated intellect run amok could have committed an act of such enormity. His reference to "morbid imagination" notwithstanding, Winslow proposed that the criminal suffered from "homicidal mania of a religious description,"

and that he had chosen "the immoral class of society to vent his vengeance upon."⁵⁴

These discussions paved the way for the coroner's "bombshell" at the Chapman inquest on 26 September. Earlier at the inquest, Dr. Phillips, the division surgeon, had described the body as "terribly mutilated," noting "absent portions from the abdomen" (the uterus and appendages had been removed) and "indications of anatomical knowledge." Phillips was reluctant to give the details of the mutilations in open court, and he only agreed to do so after the room had been cleared of women and children. *The Times* pronounced the autopsy report on Annie Chapman "unfit for publication," but the *Lancet* published it in full: "The abdomen had been laid open, the intestines, severed from their mesenteric attachments, had been lifted out of the body and placed on the shoulder of the corpse; whilst from the pelvis, the uterus and its appendages with the upper portion of the vagina and the posterior two-thirds of the bladder had been entirely removed." In the midst of a saturnalia of destruction, Phillips observed, the murderer had stopped to place Chapman's belongings in "order" at her feet, demonstrating what coroner Baxter later termed "reckless daring" and "cool impudence."⁵⁵

In his summary to the jury, Baxter challenged the suggestion circulating in the press "that the criminal was a lunatic with morbid feelings." Resisting the maniac theory, Baxter proposed instead a "rational" pecuniary basis for the crime. "But it is not necessary to assume lunacy. There was a market for that missing organ." 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.⁵⁶

Baxter's "Burke and Hare theory" alarmed medical authorities who worried that Baxter's "dramatic . . . revelation" might undermine confidence in medical research: "The public mind—ever too ready to cast mud at legitimate research—will hardly fail to be excited to a pitch of animosity against anatomists and curators, which may take a long time to subside." This animosity was already manifested in newspaper correspondence on the "medical question": in a letter appearing in the *Evening News*, for example, "Ex-Medico's Daughter" proposed that the murder may have been committed "in the cause of science" by a "medical maniac," investigating "the mysterious changes that take place in the female sex at about the age of these poor women." Pasteur, she reminded readers, was also a "human vivisectionist."⁵⁷

Speculations about a "medical maniac" researching into the "mysteries" of the "female sex" built on antimedical propaganda produced by feminists, libertarians, and antivivisectionists throughout the 1870s and

1880s. This propaganda had imaginatively connected the fate of animals and women as victims of medical violence, and it widely circulated visual images and narratives of medical sadism and bodily mutilation.⁵⁸ Antivivisectionists like Frances Power Cobbe revived the figure of the scientist as a demonic genius: vivisection, Cobbe insisted, fostered “heteropathy,” a “new vice of scientific cruelty,” which “does not seize the ignorant or hunger-driven or brutalized classes; but the cultivated, the well-fed, the well-dressed, the civilized and (it is said) the otherwise kindly disposed and genial men of science.”⁵⁹ Cobbe linked vivisection imaginatively to traditional fears of medical men as “bodysnatchers,” thus calling into play older popular antagonisms toward anatomists as homicidal maniacs and desecrators of pauper graves. She equipped the “modern” bodysnatcher with the same antisocial associations as his predecessors: libertinism, atheistic materialism, contamination with dark, occult practices and revolutionary ideas gained from study on the Continent. All of these themes figured in *St. Bernard's*, an antivivisection novel published in 1887 and set in the East End, a text that seemed to offer an ominous premonition of the 1888 exploits of Jack the Ripper.⁶⁰ Anxiety over the medical “spaying” of women also peaked in 1886, when professional colleagues accused a Liverpool surgeon of performing ovariectomy and oöphorectomy at an excessive rate. By the late 1880s, then, medical spokesmen had good cause to be anxious over Baxter’s “dramatic . . . revelation,” for recent propaganda, fictional writings, and medical scandals had already cast a dark shadow over medical research into the “mysteries” of the female sex.⁶¹

The Mad Doctor theory enlarged on all these negative associations. To these, the Ripper formulation added syphilitic madness, introduced into the discussion in early October by Archibald Forbes, the foreign correspondent of the *Daily News*, who suggested that the murderer was a “victim” of a “specific contagion” and was avenging himself. From the “knowledge of anatomy displayed in the murders,” Forbes speculated that he was quite possibly a medical student.⁶² To be sure, madness had already been identified as a consequence of sexual impurity, and mid-Victorian doctors understood that the tertiary stage of syphilis could attack the brain, among other vital organs; but the specific connection between tertiary syphilis and general paralysis of the insane, or paresis, was only firmly established in the years immediately preceding the Ripper murders.

Scientific progress only partially accounts for the rise of venereal anxiety: as important, argues Corbin, were the propagandist “efforts of the medical profession to develop and exert its authority, first through social hygiene, then through the prevention of disease.” Thanks to medical publicity, syphilis assumed a greater cultural significance in this period of bio-

logical anxiety, as fears of racial degeneration increasingly obsessed the dominant classes of society.⁶³ The theory of the Mad Syphilitic Doctor completed the cycle of venereal anxiety: it focused suspicion back on the “anxiety makers”⁶⁴ themselves, as deadly materialists soiled by contact with impure bodies.

At the time of the Ripper murders, medical spokesmen were clearly uneasy about the Mad Doctor theory even though they were deeply implicated in its production. It was, after all, Dr. Phillips who had first insisted publicly that the mutilations showed “indications” of “anatomical knowledge.” At Chapman’s inquest, Dr. Phillips drew a direct comparison between his own skill as a medical man and that of the “miscreant”: “I myself could not have performed all the injuries I saw on that woman and effect, even without a struggle, under a quarter of an hour.”⁶⁵ Claiming specialized knowledge of the “details of butchery” himself, Phillips remained extremely reluctant to share that knowledge with the public at large. By trying to restrict knowledge of the mutilations, yet allowing the full publication of the autopsy report in the *Lancet*, medical authorities enacted a well-established strategy designed to maintain a monopoly of expert knowledge over the body.

Yet this elitist and restrictive strategy clearly backfired: it made doctors publicly suspect as possessors of esoteric and occult knowledge. Moreover, by suppressing information about the mutilations, the medical establishment contributed to an explosion of popular rumors, speculation, and fascination with them. “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” (emphasis mine).⁶⁶ The “frenzy” of the crowd at the prospect of a “woman cut to pieces” stood in stark contrast to the medical language of Chapman’s autopsy report, whose Latinate terms (“mesenteric attachments”) and detached clinical picture of a body dispossessed of any personal identity (including sexual identity) were rhetorical efforts to sanitize medical engagement with a “grotesque” female body. Taken together, elite and popular responses to the mutilations operated as a twin strategy in a single regime of knowledge, one that simultaneously incited and repressed the “truth” of “sex.”⁶⁷ The “high” and “low” responses to the mutilations replicated the split “Jekyll and Hyde” personality of the miscreant, the “savage/savant” who also combined behavior of astonishing ferocity with a capacity for rational thought and skill.⁶⁸

Although the mutilations committed on the last Ripper victims seemed

to lack any indication of "anatomical knowledge," the Mad Doctor, as the possessor of privileged knowledge and technical skill, would remain the most enduring and publicly compelling member of a cast of privileged villains proposed by the press and by the experts.⁶⁹ Others included: the Sadeian Aristocratic Libertine; the Religious Fanatic; and the Scientific Sociologist (first proposed facetiously by George Bernard Shaw, who imagined him to be a social reformer trying to expose the conditions of the East End).⁷⁰ Fantasies ran wild in the correspondence pages of the national dailies, but the fantasies were never totally removed from social reality and contemporary political disputes. 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 urban male spectators who were in fact stalking the streets of London in search of fallen women. Just as striking, they were also representative of many men writing into the correspondence columns of the newspapers putting forth their own theories of the Ripper's identity. Sometimes these correspondents proposed versions of the self, sometimes a cultural/political competitor: the Ripper could be a mad syphilitic doctor or a "purity man" gone "mad on religion."⁷¹

Overwhelmingly, these speculations oscillated between two expert discourses: the language of the law, emphasizing free will, responsibility, and reason; and the language of medicine, which focused on nature, determination, and irresponsibility. Commentators tried to determine if the criminal was mad or bad, a "monomaniac" or a "hardened criminal"; whether his crimes were "the freaks of a madman" or the "deliberate acts of a sane man who takes delight in murder on its own account, and who selects his victims by preference from the opposite sex . . . as giving him the means of gratifying some horrid instinct of cruelty and perverted lust." With their emphasis on the cunning and "cool impudence" of the murderer, these speculations not only enhanced the standing of the murderer; like *Psychopathia Sexualis*, they also evidenced a good deal of self-incrimination, especially as they often articulated a very unclear boundary between normative male sexuality and its abnormal, violent expression.

Despite the theories about upper-class pervers 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. Long-standing patterns of deference and assumption of bourgeois respectability ultimately prevailed over speculations about bourgeois criminality circulating in the press. 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. "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." Dr. Forbes Winslow became a common figure on the scene, interviewing the "women of the streets," processing their raw information into "clues," so omnipresent that police suspected him of being Jack the Ripper.⁷²

Amateur detectives like Winslow 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.⁷³

Respectable citizens of Whitechapel responded to the invasion of West Enders by organizing their own night patrols. The men of Toynbee Hall settlement house and of the Jewish community set up committees, and the socialist and radical workingmen's clubs formed the East London Trades and Labourer's Society Vigilance Committee.⁷⁴

These activities were evidence of self-protection, but they also constituted surveillance of the unrespectable poor, and of low-life 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," the common lodging houses. "The stories which they have to tell are of saddening uniformity," declared the *British Medical Journal*: "uncontrollable brutality; women turned into the streets . . . and shivering on the stones at night fleeing from the execrations and the violence of drunken men. . . . tragedies and horrors of public obscenity treated by the police as the ordinary incidents of dark alleys, unlighted courts, and low neighborhoods."⁷⁵

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. 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 workingmen, 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.⁷⁶

Excluded from the mobilization and press debate were the rough elements of Whitechapel, female or male. The poor expressed their engagement with the Ripper murders by rioting. The West End press tended to depict crowd activity in the East End as both ominous and irrational. 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). As press coverage of the murders increased, the poor began to act on information provided by the newspapers—particularly stories that the murders were committed by doctors and by “toffs”—and to describe possible suspects who were “respectable in appearance” or who had the “appearance of a ‘clerk.’” 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.”⁷⁷

The poor also gained access to the public sphere through the inquests, the central judicial dramas of the Ripper murders. At the inquests, a narrative was generated out of “brute facts,” while meaning was “apprehended by looking back over the temporal process.”⁷⁸ Inquests were also the centerpiece of newspaper coverage. Extending over a few weeks, they sustained the momentum of interest between fresh installments of new atrocities.

Although coroners and expert witnesses established an interpretive

authority over inquest proceedings, the poor also took the occasion to produce their own truths and fictions about the murdered women. Neighbors and friends gave detailed accounts of the victims’ lives and of the circumstances surrounding the crimes. 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 community. 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 deposed that he had occasionally given her a few shillings in the past. Kelly had 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. John Kelly explained how he and Catherine Edowes paired off in the following way: “We got thrown together a good bit here in the lodging house,” recounted Kelly, “and the result was we made a regular bargain.”⁷⁹

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 Pickett, 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. Kelly herself was not as deferential to male authority; according to Joseph Barnett, her lover, she had just separated from Barnett after the two had quarreled over her taking in another “unfortunate” named Harvey “out of compassion.”⁸⁰

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. When local men were asked 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.” 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 coffin passed, “ragged caps were doffed and slatternly looking women shed tears.” Dense crowds also lined the streets for the funeral cortege of

Kelly, the last and youngest Ripper victim, who had been brutally disembowelled and mutilated in her room in Dorset Street. Newspapers and memoirs from the period set Kelly apart as the least "impoverished," most attractive Ripper victim—"an aristocrat among street women" with "well-to-do" friends.⁸⁵ The principal identificatory witness at the inquest was Joseph Barnett, a fish porter, who "appeared to be in full possession of the facts of the unhappy woman's life." At the inquest, Barnett identified Kelly by "the ears and eyes." His narrative of her life history, based on Kelly's version of her own story, reads like a penny-dreadful rendition of the harlot's progress and the "Maiden Tribute." With the vaguest of story line and detail, Barnett outlined Kelly's career in West End vice. Widowed at twenty, she arrived from Wales and settled in a "gay house in the West End." "There a gentleman came to her and asked her if she would like to go to France, so she described to me." "She went to France," he continued, "as she told me, but did not stop there long, as she did not like the part." Reporting on the inquest, the *Star* immediately seized the opportunity to elaborate the melodrama of high and low life further: "It would appear that on her arrival in London she made the acquaintance of a French lady residing in the neighborhood of Knightsbridge who . . . led her into the degraded life which has brought about her untimely end . . . while she was with this lady she drove about in a carriage . . . and led the life of a lady."⁸⁶

After Kelly's return to England, Barnett continued, she went to the "Ratcliffe Highway." At this point in the narrative, "hard facts" creep into Barnett's "disclosures": she lived opposite the gasworks with a man named Morganstone, then went to Pennington Street and lived with James Fleming, a mason's plasterer. Barnett "picked up with her in Commercial street, one night when we had drunk together."⁸⁷

This East/West romance set the scene for George Hutchinson's detailed description of the "gentleman" accompanying Kelly on the night of her death. One day after the inquest, Hutchinson, a laborer, deposed to the police that his "suspicions were aroused by seeing the man so well-dressed." He gave a remarkably precise description of the mysterious stranger: "age about 34 or 35, height 5 ft.6, complexion pale. Dark eyes and eye lashes. Slight moustache curled up each end and hair dark. Very surly looking. Dress, long dark coat, collar and cuffs trimmed astrakhan and a dark jacket under, light waistcoat, dark trousers, and gaiters with white burtons, wore a very thick gold chain, white linen collar, black tie with horseshoe pin, respectable appearance, walked very sharp, Jewish appearance." As a number of commentators have noted, this description carefully replicates the costume and stance of the classic stage villain, sinis-

Catherine Eddowes: "Manifestations of sympathy were everywhere visible," reported the *East London Observer*, "many among the crowd uncovering their heads as the hearse passed."⁸¹

In general, press commentary emphasized the "ghastly sameness" of the naturalistic stories emerging from the inquests and stressed that the "element of romance" was "altogether lacking in [the victim's] history."⁸² The matter-of-fact manner in which poor neighbors seemed to recount the dead women's stories, with no moral gloss or condemnation, shocked respectable commentators, as did the tendency of the Whitechapel poor to treat screams of murder or the spectacle of bodies crumpled in a heap on a Whitechapel street as unremarkable and commonplace.

Yet the "element of romance" was not missing in the histories produced by the poor. Many of the witnesses consciously dissimulated, refusing to acknowledge that the victims drank or were streetwalkers. Sometimes they struck melodramatic poses and even resorted to exaggerated gestures to reenact their part "when called to the scene of the crime." Legal decorum did not inhibit one witness at Annie Chapman's inquest from performing an elaborate pantomime about his discovery of the body: "When he had arrived [in his performance] at the discovery of the body, . . . the hands of the witness were kept in constant motion—describing alternatively, in pantomime show, how the intestines of the woman were thrown slightly over the left shoulder, and what position the body precisely occupied in the yard."⁸³

The murdered women were objects of fantasy for residents of Whitechapel as well as for the educated reading public. Fictions of kinship surfaced at the inquest of Elizabeth Stride, the "Berner street victim," who was "strangely identified as two persons." At Stride's inquest, Mary Malcolm came forward and insisted that "the woman who had been murdered was her sister because when she was in bed, the poor creature came and kissed her hand." Malcolm's testimony excited considerable attention, inspiring many newspaper readers to call for the "aid of spiritualism and other more or less occult agencies"; it was entirely discredited when her sister turned up alive and well and full of outrage. Michael Kidney also positively identified the body as that of Elizabeth Stride, whom he had known for nearly three years. Stride had told Kidney that her husband and children had died on the *Princess Alice* (a shipping disaster), but even this proved to be a fiction on Stride's part to conceal marital estrangement. After Stride's nephew recognized her photograph, he came forward to identify her as the widow of John Thomas Stride, a carpenter, who had died in a workhouse in 1884.⁸⁴

The thickest layer of fantasy settled around the life and death of Mary

ter, black-mustached, bejewelled, and arrogant, who manipulated his privilege and wealth to despoil the vulnerable daughters of the people. With Hutchinson's evidence, the "image of the toff, a man of education, influence, and money was consolidated." Inquest stories and depositions around Kelly's death provided fodder for the next one hundred years of conspiratorial theories, focused on Kelly as the intended object of the Ripper's revenge, and as the center of a set of interwoven relationships, linking high and low, East and West in class-divided London.⁸⁸

Response to the Ripper murders, then, reveals significant class divisions and class-based fantasies. It also exposes deep-seated sexual antagonism, most frequently expressed by men towards women. This antagonism was aided and abetted by sensational newspaper coverage that blamed "women of evil life" for bringing the murders on themselves, though it warned elsewhere that "no woman is safe while this ghoul's abroad."⁸⁹ The popular press seemed to glory in intensifying terror among "pure" and "impure" women by juxtaposing reports on less serious "attacks on women" with 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. Although the most popular theories and fantasies about the Ripper contained a coded discussions of the dangers of unrestrained male sexuality, misogynist fears of female sexuality and female autonomy 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; but suspicion also extended to midwives and medical women inasmuch as the "knowledge of surgery . . . has now been placed within female reach." 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.⁹⁰

Copycat activities mirrored these misogynist attitudes and took a variety of forms, including a conscious imitation and impersonation of the Ripper as well as a more latent identification with the criminal and subtle exploitation of female terror.⁹¹ In Whitechapel, it seems, gentlemen of all sorts were walking about in the evenings looking for women to frighten. 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 agi-

tation she asked him what he wanted. The man made no answer but laughed. He then made a hasty retreat. The woman yelled "murder."⁹²

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. 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. 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."⁹³

Besides these public acts of intimidation, there was also a domestic enactment of the Ripper drama between husbands and wives in various working-class districts. (I have no evidence of middle-class cases.)⁹⁴ In Lambeth, for example, right after the "double event," 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."⁹⁵

One case that reached the Old Bailey may provide some insight into the circumstances that led up to the threat.⁹⁶ Sarah Brett of Peckham was living out of wedlock with Thomas Onley. On 3 October 1888, 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 15 October, 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, alcohol 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 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 established a common vocabulary and iconography for the forms of male violence that permeated the whole society, obscuring the different material conditions that provoked sexual antagonism in different classes.⁹⁷ 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.⁹⁸ 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 molesters 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."⁹⁹

Although the Ripper murders reinforced the spatial polarities of gender and class, they also stimulated male fantasies of vulnerability and identification with the female victims. Men fantasized about the female experience of terror; amateur detectives donned female garb to attract the murderer's attention. Although some boys played at being "Leather Apron," others found the Ripper episode to be personally threatening and terrifying. At three and a half, Leonard Ellisden believed the Ripper to be a particular "evil-looking man with a beard who used to eat fire at Margate sands." When this "worthy gentleman" entered his parent's tobacconist

shop, Ellisden "drove the ladies of the family nearly round the bend by rushing in shrieking in terror 'Jack the Ripper's in the shop.'" Middle-class boys as well as girls identified the Ripper with the dangers of the street—dangers that seemed to penetrate the sanctity of the home, thanks to the cries of the newspaper boys hawking news of the latest Whitechapel horror and the avid interest of maidservants and nannies, who spread copies of illustrated Sunday papers across the nursery table. The nightly "fears and fantasies" of Jack the Ripper made the prospect of "going to bed almost unendurable," Compton Mackenzie recalled:

Whitechapel became a word of dread, and I can recall the horror of reading "Whitechapel" at the bottom of the list of fares at the far end inside an omnibus. Suppose the omnibus should refuse to stop at Kensington High Street and go on with its passengers to Whitechapel? What could that Eminent Q.C. in his wig . . . do to save everybody inside that omnibus from being cut up by the knife of Jack the Ripper?¹⁰⁰

Women's reaction to the events surrounding the Ripper murders were as diverse as men's, yet even more heavily overlaid by feelings of personal vulnerability. Women in Whitechapel were both fascinated and terrified by the murders: like their male counterparts, they brought 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. 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 keepers of common lodging houses 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*.¹⁰¹

On the whole, respectable working women offered little collective resistance to public male intimidation. I found accounts of two exceptions among match girls 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 Clare market; and similar incidents occurred in Spitalfields market, nearby the Ripper murders. Marketwomen enjoyed an esprit de corps

akin to that of the feisty, street-fighting matchmakers, who had just won a successful strike from the Bryant and May Match Factory, and who, according to one anonymous letter purporting to come from Jack the Ripper, openly bragged about catching him.¹⁰²

Those women who could, stayed inside at night behind locked doors, but women who earned a 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. “Of course we are taking advantage of the terror,” explained one Salvation Army lass.¹⁰³

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 from 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.¹⁰⁴ 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 sexual knowledge to men.

It is difficult to determine how much Barnett’s petition truly represented the opinion of Whitechapel women. Jewish artisan wives regarded the women of the lodging houses as “noodniks, prostitutes, old bags and drunks,” but 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.¹⁰⁵ There was a tense and fragile social ecology between rough and respectable elements in Whitechapel, one that could be easily upset by outside intervention. The murders threatened the safety of respectable women; they undoubtedly strained class relations in the neighborhood and intensified gender divisions. They temporarily placed respectable women under “house arrest” and made them dependent on male protection.

Local folklore, however, tested the spatial boundaries of gender erec-

ted by the Ripper danger. Family stories, passed down among Jewish and Irish cockney residents in the Whitechapel area over three generations, accorded working-class women a more active role in the Ripper episode than did the night patrols of Whitechapel. These tales recount how “mother,” forced to go out late one “wintery” night either to obtain medicine for a sick child or to visit an ailing husband in the London Hospital, was accosted by a “stranger” in the darkness. After interrogating her about the nature of the medical-emergency-propelling-her-out-of-her-home (or examining the visitor’s card to the hospital), the mystery man realized she was “poor” but “honest” and let her go. The next morning, two hundred yards down the road the “mutilated” body of a prostitute was found.¹⁰⁶

“Mother Meets Jack the Ripper” vividly illustrates how working-class women organized their own identity around the figure of the prostitute, who served as a central spectacle in a set of urban encounters and fantasies. In public, a poor woman continually risked the danger of being mistaken for a prostitute; she had to demonstrate unceasingly in her dress, gestures, and movements that she was not a “low” woman. Like her middle-class counterpart, a working-class woman established her respectability through visual self-presentation and through her status as wife and mother.¹⁰⁷

As a wife and mother, the female protagonist in “Mother’s” story claims immunity from the Ripper’s knife. Although the tale vindicates female virtue over female vice, it also establishes a certain identification with the plight of fallen women. Unlike the men in their civic tales of hunting down Jack the Ripper, “Mother” could insert herself into the drama only by impersonating a potential victim, who is resourceful enough to talk her way out of a difficult situation.¹⁰⁸ “Mother’s” story also draws on media fantasies of the Ripper as a dark representation of conflicted masculinity: the “midnight murderer” appears as a compelling but dangerous stranger, a savage/savant, knowledgeable about medical matters, able to interrogate and discern female virtue, yet capable of maniacal violence towards women of “evil life.”

Women outside of Whitechapel also took a keen interest in the murders. Queen Victoria repeatedly wrote into the Home Office and Scotland Yard with her pet theories, and actually forced Lord Salisbury to hold a cabinet meeting on a Saturday to consider the question of a reward. All across London, female mediums tried their hands at armchair detection by calling up the spirits of the murdered women: at a private séance held in West Kilburn on October 16, the spirit of Annie Chapman directed the group to look to the “military medicals” who “want our bodies for a particular reason,” “they want to find something.” Female spiritualists re-

of female detectives whose “mother wit” would guide them to the murderer. The only piece of feminist anger against male violence to receive extensive coverage appeared in the pages of the *Liberal Daily News*. The Whitechapel murders were not just homicides but “womenkilling,” declared Florence Fenwick Miller, London journalist and “platform woman,” in her letter to the editor. 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 a part of a “constant but ever increasing series of cruelties” perpetrated against women and treated leniently by judges.¹¹³

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. 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 male-dominated debate; they were discounted or ignored by other dailies and failed to mobilize women over the issues.¹¹⁴

The *Radical Star*, whose pages were open to socialists, disagreed with Miller. “It is the class question rather than the sex question that is the issue in this matter.” The *Star*'s opposition of class and sex signaled a tendency among Victorians to conceptualize social problems and identities as stark dichotomies, rather than as multiple and intersecting determinants. Commenting on the Whitechapel murders 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 gender oppression as a result of capitalist productive relations alone. For all their contempt for 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 *The 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.¹¹⁵

The Whitechapel horrors provoked multiple and contradictory responses, expressive of important cultural and social divisions within Victorian society. Nonetheless, the alternative perspectives—of feminists and

stricted their sleuthing to the séance circle, unlike the clairvoyant R. J. Lees, who claimed to have used his powers to track down the “mad doctor” at his West End mansion.¹⁰⁹

At least one woman emulated the copycat activities of men and gained some notoriety from the case: at Bradford Police Court on 10 October 1888, a “respectable young woman, named Maria Coroner, aged twenty-one, was charged with having certain letters tending to cause a breach of the peace; they were signed ‘Jack the Ripper.’” Like the Whitechapel mothers who encountered Jack the Ripper in the dead of night, one female correspondent 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.” This was, of course, the line taken by police officials, who expressed amazement at what they regarded as the widespread female hysteria over the murders, since they were perpetrated only on prostitutes.¹¹⁰

For many women, this was small comfort. While many middle-class women were determined to resist the panic and to assert their right to traverse public places, female vulnerability extended well beyond the boundaries of Whitechapel. Mary Hughes, a secondary-school teacher 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 go 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!’”¹¹¹

What about the politicized edge of middle-class womanhood, the feminists? Did they mount any counterattack? 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 personal rights and liberties. “Not till the personal rights of the poor pariahs are counted as worthy of recognition and defense as, let us say, those of their patrons, will mankind [be on] the road towards the extinction of this evil,” declared the *Personal Rights Journal*.¹¹²

Some female publicists also used the occasion to air feminist critiques of male violence in regard to medical sadism and wife-beating. Frances Power Cobbe enthusiastically entered into the fray; speculating that the murderer was a “physiologist delirious with cruelty,” she called for the use

libertarians, of the Whitechapel poor themselves—were ultimately subordinated to a dominant discussion in the media, one that was shaped and articulated by those people in positions of power, namely, male professional experts. Within this dominant discourse, the discussion of class, particularly of a dangerous class marked off from respectable citizens and the “people” of London, was more explicit and self-conscious than that of gender. In part, this fact relates to the precise moment of class anxiety 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.¹¹⁶

Throughout the “autumn of terror,” one theme overshadowed all the other proposals to cure the social ills of Whitechapel: the necessity of slum clearance and the need to purge the lawless population of the common lodging houses from the neighborhood.¹¹⁷ “Those of us who know Whitechapel know that the impulse that makes for murder is abroad in our streets every night,” declared two Toynbee Hall residents.¹¹⁸ The “disorderly and depraved lives of the women,” observed Canon Barnett, were more “appalling” than the actual murders.¹¹⁹ Men like Barnett finally dominated public opinion and consolidated it behind razing the common lodging houses of the Flower and Dean Street area. 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.¹²⁰

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 White-

chapel, newspaper coverage was far less sensational and relentless. In class terms, the immediate crisis had passed.¹²¹

The Ripper Legacy

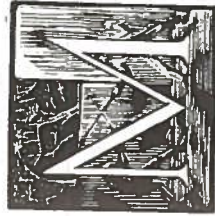
Sexual fears and hostilities, on the other hand, were less satisfactorily allayed. After Mary Kelly’s death, the police, finding themselves completely at sea, dropped the whole matter in the lap of Dr. Thomas Bond, syphilologist and expert in forensic medicine, asking him to provide them with a psychological profile of the murderer. In his letter to Scotland Yard, Bond pronounced the series of “five murders,” beginning with Polly Nicholls and ending with Mary Kelly, to be the “work of one hand.” Bond discounted the possibility that the culprit was a revengeful religious fanatic or that the mutilations demonstrated “scientific or anatomical knowledge.” The murderer, Bond explained, was suffering from “satyriasis” (i.e. he was oversexed and resorted to violence to satisfy his excessive sexual cravings). In external appearance, he might well be a “quiet, inoffensive man probably middle-aged, and neatly and respectably dressed.” “. . . he would be solitary and eccentric in his habits, since he is most likely to be a man without regular occupation, but with some small income or pension.”¹²²

To construct this profile, Bond relied on newspaper theories of an erotic maniac leading a “Jekyll and Hyde” double life, as well as on emerging typologies of sex crime formulated by Continental sexologists like Krafft-Ebing. Newspaper coverage of the Ripper murders not only helped to popularize expert medical opinion on sexual pathology; it also provided narrative materials that sexologists would process into the most notorious case history of sex crime to date. Contemporaneous with Bond’s report there began a public recycling of Jack the Ripper as a medical specimen. In November and December 1888, two articles appeared in American medical journals, “Sexual Perversion and the Whitechapel Murders,” by Dr. James Kiernan, and “The Whitechapel Murders: Their Medico-Legal and Historical Aspects,” by Dr. E. C. Spitzka. Both articles catalogued prior case histories of “lust murder” to counter the impression that the murders were unprecedented in the annals of crime; and both located the Ripper along a spectrum of contemporary pervers, from female masturbators and “urnings” of both sexes, to the exclusively male perpetrators of “lust murder” and sexual sadism (including reference to the “Minotaur” of the “Maiden Tribute”). Both relied on newspaper accounts of postmortem reports of the mutilations and murders to diagnose the criminal; both remained undecided as to “his” legal responsibility, whether his actions were the result of congenital disease or acquired vice. In the published Jack the

Ripper letters that forecast more murders to follow, Spitzka found “the genuine expression of intention” to be at variance with any diagnosis of “impulsive,” “periodical,” or “epileptic insanity.” Spitzka was quite taken with the discursive propensities of the murderer, a ‘speaking pervert’ who communicated his ‘truth’ to the reading public: “It would not be the first time that a subject of sexual perversion had entered the lists as a writer,” he insisted, “no artifice . . . would be too cunning for one of this class.” Drawing on the writings of Spitzka and Kiernan, Krafft-Ebing included the Ripper in his next edition of *Psychopathia Sexualis*, as a clinical specimen—the most famous clinical specimen—of lust murder. From newspaper accounts that linked a monstrous crime and a monstrous individual to a monstrous social environment, the Ripper story was reduced to a notorious case history of an individual erotic maniac, whose activities were seemingly unconnected to normal interactions of men and women.¹²³

The social context of the Ripper’s exploits, however, have not disappeared from twentieth-century representation, although they too have undergone a mythic revision. The Whitechapel murders have continued to provide a common vocabulary of male violence against women, a vocabulary now more than 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 intensify fears of male violence and convince women that they are helpless victims. Changing historical circumstances, however, can provoke and enable a different response to these media productions. The case of the Yorkshire Ripper, to be considered in the epilogue, constitutes a late-twentieth-century ‘replay’ of the Ripper episode that engendered a different political reaction from contemporary British feminists, who took to the streets to protest the crimes and the media amplification of the terror.

The Yorkshire Ripper



adame Tussaud’s Ripper street, installed in 1980, capitalized on a “real life” horror show that inflicted “years of stomach-churning fear” on women in the North of England.¹ Between October 1975 and January 1981, residents in Leeds and Bradford were terrorized by a mass murderer, dubbed the “Yorkshire Ripper” by the newspapers, who was believed—erroneously—to be the author of taped messages to the authorities and who was thought—also erroneously—to be a prostitute killer who left his signature on the bodies of his victims. By the end of 1980, he had already claimed thirteen murder victims, including six “innocent” women.

The Yorkshire Ripper murders and the response they provoked appeared to take their cues from the legendary events of 1888.² As in 1888, the same elements seemed to be present: a single mythic killer, “a series of similar murders, ritual slayings, stereotyped victims, intense publicity, and a specific, systematically terrorized region.”³ Newspaper discussion of these new “Ripper” murders reproduced the same categories that had informed press accounts of the Whitechapel “horrors” one hundred years earlier. Was the murderer mad or bad? Did prostitutes bring the murders on themselves? Were all women at risk? Did the setting of “mean streets” explain or generate the crimes? As in 1888, the murders precipitated an acute outbreak of “checkbook journalism” and a crisis in police credibility, as the police inquiry faltered in the face of bureaucratic rivalries and drowned in the chaos of information it had collected. By the end of the trial, the credibility of the media, the law, and the medical profession was se-

and that it is administered with culpable laxity." *The Times*, 19 Aug. 1885. Medical correspondents to *The Times* reiterated this point and acknowledged that the practical difficulties were compounded by the "uncertainty" of diagnosis and treatment of the insane. Dr. Bucknill, to the editor, *The Times*, 21 Aug. 1885.

87. Mrs. Weldon, quoted in "Some Topics of the Day."
88. "Ladies-No X. Mrs. Georgina Weldon," *Vanity Fair* 31 (3 May 1884): 243; F. C. Philips, quoted in Treherne, *Plaintiff*, pp. 93, 94; "Some Topics of the Day."

89. Treherne, *Plaintiff*, p. 96.

90. Mrs. Weldon, quoted in Grierson, *Storm Bird*, p. 227.

91. Junior members of the bar had dubbed her the "Portia of the New Law Courts" and undoubtedly took some pleasure in her triumph against the eminent senior counsels for the defense. A number of presiding judges graciously endeavored to instruct her in the best way to proceed with her case. On the other hand, the fiercely misogynist Fitzjames Stephens severely rebuked her to "argue in a legal manner." Grierson, *Storm Bird*, p. 227.

92. William Joseph Reader, *Professional Men: The Rise of the Professional Class in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), pp. 150, 151, 174-8; Daniel Duman, *The English and Colonial Bars in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 48, 49, 114-16.

93. "Mrs. Georgina Weldon," *Vanity Fair*.

94. *The Times*, 23 Sept. 1885.

95. Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1840-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 104.

96. Grierson, *Storm Bird*, p. 233. Barrow, *Independent Spirits*, chap. 5, notes the triangular relation among secularists, spiritualists, and socialists, all of whom were competing for the same constituency. Victor Bailey argues for a similar congruence between socialism and the Salvation Army: "In Darkest England and the Way Out: the Salvation Army, Social Reform and the Labour Movement, 1885-1910," *International Review of Social History* 29 (1984): 135. Mrs. Weldon blissfully ignored the ambiguities and animosities among these groups, as she heralded Mrs. Booth and Annie Besant as her two favorite heroines.

97. "Some Topics of the Day."

98. Grierson, *Storm Bird*, p. 245.

99. Mrs. Weldon, quoted in "Some Topics of the Day." She did, however, dress up as "Sergeant Fuzbuz" (a senior member of the bar), as one of her satirical turns on the stage.

100. Philips, quoted in Treherne, *Plaintiff*, p. 94.

101. "Mrs. Georgina Weldon," *Vanity Fair*, p. 243.

102. *Ibid.*

103. Anna Clark, "The Struggle for the Breeches" (unpublished paper, 1987).

104. "Days with Celebrities: A Women's Rightness," *Moonshine* (10 May 1884): 217.

105. Sarah Maitland, *Vesta Tilley* (London: Virago Press, 1986), pp. 78-103; Ellen Ross, "Fierce Questions and Taunts: Married life in Working-Class London, 1870-1914," *Feminist Studies* 8, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 593-95; Gareth Stedman

Jones, "Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London," 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class," in *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working-Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 225-27.

106. Historians have noted a high degree of gender conflict and gender consciousness among different classes in late-Victorian society; but they have yet to compare their different meanings or to explore the relationship among the cultural forms they took.

107. Treherne, *Plaintiff*, p. 118.

108. For a discussion of nineteenth-century women and spectacle, see Abigail Solomon Godeau, "The Legs of the Countess," *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 66-108.

109. Grierson, *Storm Bird*, p. 223.

110. See Marion Meade, *Madame Blavatsky: The Woman Behind the Myth* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980); Diana Burford, "Theosophy and Feminism," in Pat Holden, ed., *Women's Religious Experience* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), pp. 27-56; Edward Maitland, *Anna Kingsford: Her Life, Letters, Diary and Work* 2 vols. (London: G. Redway, 1896); Joy Dixon, "Theosophy and Feminism in Late-Nineteenth Century and Early Twentieth Century England (unpublished paper, 1987).

111. Shortt, "Physicians and Psychics," pp. 354, 355.

112. Owen, *The Darkened Room*, p. 167, argues for the abatement of medical antagonism toward "mediumship pathology" because, by the 1890s, British psychiatrists themselves had begun to use hypnosis. At the time of Mrs. Weldon's campaign, articles in the *Law Times* emphasized the practical lessons in self-restraint doctors had begun to draw from the Winslow and Semple trials: "The Lunacy Laws," 77 (1884): 373; "The Reform of the Lunacy Laws," 8 (1885): 296.

113. Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers, and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

114. Winslow, *Recollections*, pp. 251, 252. According to Donald McCormick (*The Identity of Jack the Ripper*), "All the detectives working on the case knew [Winslow] and at one time his ubiquity at the scene of the crimes caused them to check up on his movements." Quoted in Tom Cullen, *Autumn of Terror: Jack the Ripper, His Crimes and Times* (London: Bodley Head, 1965), p. 91.

115. "The Spirits on the Whitechapel Murders," *Medium and Daybreak*, 5 Oct. 1888; "Mrs. Nichols Controls," 12 Oct. 1888; "Notes and Comments," 19 Oct. 1888.

Chapter Seven

1. This is an extensively revised version of an article, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," *Feminist Studies* 8 (Fall 1982): 542-74. *PMG*, 1 Oct. 1888. Quoted in Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block, 1887-1920* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), p. 26.

2. 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 retrospectively 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 Nov. 1888; Sir Melville McNaghton letter, quoted in full in Donald Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (New York: New American Library, 1975), pp. 132-33.

3. Dozens of books have been written on Jack the Ripper. They include Leonard W. Matters, *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper* (London: Hutchinson, 1929); Daniel Farson, *Jack the Ripper* (London: Sphere Book Limited, 1973); Tom Cullen, *Autumn of Terror: Jack the Ripper His Crimes and Times* (London: Bodley Head, 1965); Elwyn Jones, ed., *Ripper File* (London: Barker, 1975). A whole new crop of Ripper books appeared in honor of the 1888 Ripper centenary, many of them new editions of books first published in the 1970s. They include Martin Howell and Keith Skinner, *The Ripper Legacy: The Life and Death of Jack the Ripper* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987); Colin Wilson and Robin Odell, *Jack the Ripper: Summoning Up the Verdict* (London: Bantam Press, 1989); Donald Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper*; Terence Starkey, *Jack the Ripper: 100 Years of Investigation: The Facts, the Fiction, the Solution* (London: Ward Lock, 1987); Martin Fido, *The Crimes, Detection, and Death of Jack the Ripper* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987). A few cultural critics have attempted a more serious exploration of the Ripper story. They include Christopher Frayingling, "The House that Jack Built," in Sylvia Tomaselli and Roy Porter, eds., *Rape* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 174-215; Deborah Cameron and Elizabeth Fraser, *Lust to Kill: A Feminist Investigation of Sexual Murder* (New York: New York University Press, 1987); Jane Caputi, *The Age of Sex Crime* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987).

4. Quoted in White, *Rothschild Buildings*, p. 7.

5. W. J. Fishman, *East End 1888: Life in a London Borough among the Laboring Poor* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988); David Widgery, "History without its Aitches" [review of *East End 1888*], *New Statesman & Society* (17 June 1988): 39, 40; White, *Rothschild Buildings*, p. 26.

6. "The East End Atrocities," *London City Mission Magazine* (1 Dec. 1888): 258-60; Chaim Bermant, *Point of Arrival: A Study of London's East End* (London, Methuen, 1975), p. 188; Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London*, 17 vols., 1st series: *Poverty*, in 4 vols. (1889-1903; rpt., 3d ed., New York: Macmillan, 1902-3), 1:66-68.

7. *DT*, 10 September 1888; *ELO*, 27 July 1889; Quoted in White, *Rothschild Buildings*, p. 8; Arthur Hardings, quoted in *East End Underworld: Chapters in the Life of Arthur Harding*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 110.

8. *The Times*, 2 Oct. 1888; *DC*, 19 Sept. 1888.

9. On an "argument from geography," see Mandy Merck, "Sutcliffe: What the Papers Said," *Spare Rib* no. 108 (July 1981): 17. On Lamarckian interpretations of the murder site, see *The Times*, quoted in Farson, *Jack the Ripper*, p. 100, and *The Curse upon Mitre Square*, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 99.

10. *The Times*, quoted in Farson, *Jack the Ripper*, p. 100; *DT*, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 101.

11. *LWN*, 7 Oct. 1888; Rosemary Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London and New York: Methuen, 1981), pp. 25, 26.

12. *RN*, 1 Oct. 1888; *Echo*, 19 Oct. 1888; *ELA*, 15 Sept. 1888.

13. *DT*, 2 Oct. 1888; *Star*, 14 Sept. 1888.

14. "Murder—And More to Follow," *PMG*, 8 Oct. 1888; *DT*, 1 Oct. 1888; *Star*, 4 Oct. 1888; Walter Dew, *I Caught Crippen* (London: Blackie and Son, 1938); *DC*, 11 Sept. 1888.

15. For a discussion of the "sex beast," see Cameron and Fraser, *Lust to Kill*, pp. 35-44. For Gothic images in the press, see *LWN*, 7 Oct. 1888; *DC*, 10 Sept. 1888; *DT*, 2 Oct. 1888. For "talk" of black magic, see Dew, *I Caught Crippen*, p. 125.

16. Cameron and Fraser, *Lust to Kill*, p. 127; Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1985), p. 56.

17. "The Whitechapel Murders," *Lancet* (29 Sept. 1888): 637.

18. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 20-23.

19. Marina Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (New York: Atheneum, 1985); Nancy Armstrong, "The Occidental Alice," *Differences* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1990): 14; *The Times*, quoted in *Ripper File*, p. 49; Stallybrass and White, *Politics and Poetics*, p. 23.

20. Alain Corbin, "Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century France: A System of Images and Regulation," in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 209-18; *ES*, 9 Nov. 1888; *RN*, 2 Sept. 1888; *PMG*, quoted in Farson, *Jack the Ripper*, p. 47.

21. Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* (New York: Viking, 1990), p. 127; Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980); R. M. McLeod, "Law, Medicine, and Public Opinion: The Resistance to Compulsory Health Legislation, 1870-1901," *Public Law* (1967): 189-211; R. D. French, *Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), chap. 11; Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers, and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985); Mary Ann Elston, "Women and Antivivisection in Victorian England, 1870-1900," in Nicholas Rupke, ed., *Vivisection in Historical Perspective* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 259-89.

22. All the letters are collected in Mepo. 3/142. Sir Robert Anderson, *The Lighter Part of My Official Life* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), p. 138; H.O. 144/A49301C/8a, 23 Oct. 1888; Mepo. 3/142; Sir Melville McNaghton, *Days of My Years* (London: Edward Arnold, 1915), pp. 58, 59; *Star*, quoted in Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, p. 93; Caputi, *Age of Sex Crime*, p. 21.

23. Ironically, the assumption of a "familiar" pattern was made at the time of a 1889 murder inquest when the homicide was incorrectly associated with the serial crimes of the Ripper. *ELA*, Aug. 1889; *Daily Chronicle*, Nov. 10, 1888; *DT*, 24 Sept. 1888; *PMG*, 10 Sept. 1888.

24. *PMG*, 19 Sept. 1888; *DC*, 10 Sept. 1888.
25. *Commonweal*, 13 Nov. 1888; *The Times*, 18 Sept. 1888; 1 Oct. 1888; 12 Oct. 1888; Judith R. Walkowitz, "The Politics of Prostitution," *Signs* 6 (Autumn 1980): 124-27.
26. Ruth Harris, "Melodrama, Hysteria and Feminine Crimes of Passion in the Fin-de-Siècle," *History Workshop* 25 (Spring 1988): 32, 33.
27. *The Times*, 1 Sept. 1888; *Star*, 1 Sept. 1888; *Penny Illustrated News* and *The Times*, quoted in Harris, *Jack the Ripper*, pp. 18, 19; Howells and Skinner, *Ripper Legacy*, p. 4. In the two previous homicides, for example, Emma Smith lived to tell her story of being beaten, robbed, and assaulted by four men, while Martha Tabram received 39 bayonet wounds, rather than knife wounds to the abdomen, as suffered by Nicholls and some later Ripper victims. Nonetheless, both the *Star* and the *PMG* stressed the "SIGNIFICANT SIMILARITY" between the Nicholls murder and the "two mysterious murders of women." *Star*, 1 Sept. 1888; *PMG*, 3 Sept. 1888. Thanks to Jennifer Pugh for these observations.
28. H.O. 144/220/A49301C/8a, 23 Oct. 1888.
29. Bermant, *Point of Arrival*, chap. 9; White, *Rothschild Buildings*, chap. 1; *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 Oct. 1888.
30. For a summary of contemporary parliamentary discussion on restricting immigration, see Fishman, *East End*, pp. 144-47. For press coverage of Leather Apron, see *Star*, 7 Sept. 1888; "The Horrors of the East End," *PMG*, 8 Sept. 1888; *LWN*, 9 Sept. 1888.
31. It is significant that Pizer, the man accused of being Leather Apron, used the occasion of Annie Chapman's inquest to vindicate himself—an example of the way the poor used legal occasions and spaces for their own purposes and to obtain a public hearing. See Jennifer Davis, "A Poor Man's System of Justice: The London Police Courts in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *The Historical Journal* 27 (no. 2) (1984): 309-35.
32. Bermant, *Point of Arrival*, pp. 110-18.
33. *ELO*, 15 Sept. 1888.
34. Michael I. Friedland, *The Trials of Israel Lipski* (London: Macmillan, 1984).
35. It was also generalized into a term of abuse applied to threatening husbands.
36. *DC*, 10 Sept. 1888.
37. After the *Illustrated Police News* published a woodcut of Leather Apron, one man resembling the picture found himself surrounded by a menacing crowd. Into the nineties, children still taunted strangers with being Leather Apron; Leather Apron toffee became a local East End speciality. Farson, *Jack the Ripper*, p. 25.
38. Fido, *The Crimes*, p. 63; *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 Oct. 1888; Samuel Montagu to the Editor, *PMG*, 15 Oct. 1888.
39. H.O. 144/220/A49301C/8C and 15; A49301D/5; *Ripper File*, p. 135; Bermant, *Point of Arrival*, pp. 111-18.
40. *DT*, quoted in Farson, *Jack the Ripper*, p. 101; "The Nemesis of Neglect," *Punch*, 29 Sept. 1888; "Undiscovered Crimes," *Star*, 10 Sept. 1888; "Crime in Whitechapel," *Star*, 14 Sept. 1888; "The Insecurity of Our Streets," *DC*, 14 Sept.

- 1888; "S.G.O." to the Editor, *The Times*, 22 Sept. 1888. See discussion of model-dwelling plans in letters on "A Safe Four Percent," *DT*, 22 Sept. 1888.
41. "Murder and More to Follow," *PMG*, 8 Sept. 1888; Robert Louis Stevenson, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, with an introduction by Abraham Rothberg (New York: Bantam, 1967; first edition, 1886), p. 78 (all citations from the novel come from this edition); Paul Wilstach, *Richard Mansfield, the Man and the Actor* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908); Harry M. Geduld, Introduction, in Harry M. Geduld, ed., *The Definitive "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" Companion* (Garland-New York and London, 1983), p. 12; "Richard Mansfield, vol. 8," Robinson Locke Collection, New York Public Library.
42. "Murder and More to Follow," *PMG*, 8 Sept. 1888.
43. "Occasional Notes," *PMG*, 10 Sept. 1888.
44. *Star*, 16 Sept. 1888; *DT*, 22 Sept. 1888. The *East London Advertiser* pronounced the Jekyll and Hyde theory an "enduring theory" (13 Oct. 1888). On the closing down of the play, see Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper* (1975), p. 124.
45. Frayling, "The House," p. 197.
46. Cameron and Fraser, *Lust to Kill*, p. 127.
47. *Psychopathia Sexualis* grew from 45 case histories and 110 pages in 1886 to 238 histories and 437 pages by the twelfth edition in 1903. See Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and Its Discontents: Meanings, Myths, and Modern Sexualities* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 67.
48. Weeks, *Sexuality and Its Discontents*, p. 67.
49. Thanks to Susan Maslin for these observations.
50. Dr. R. von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct: A Medico-Legal Study*, trans. Charles Gilbert Chaddock (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1892), pp. 1, 56.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 378. As Sander Gilman observes, Krafft-Ebing's view of perversion as intrinsic to modern life differed from the evolutionary view of earlier sexologists, who tended to treat sexual perversions as throwbacks to an earlier sexual primitivism, as "ambiguous eddies" within a linear history of progress. "Sexology and Psychoanalysis," in J. Edward Chamberlain and Sander Gilman, eds., *De-generation: The Dark Side of Progress* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), pp. 75-79.
52. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, p. 57.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 60.
54. Forbes Winslow to the Editor, *The Times*, 12 Sept. 1888; *Recollections of Forty Years* (London: J. Ousley, 1910), p. 270.
55. *Lancet*, excerpted in Jones, *Ripper File*, p. 26; Coroner Baxter, excerpted in *ibid.*, p. 31.
56. Baxter, excerpted in Jones, *Ripper File*, pp. 31, 24, 25.
57. "The Whitechapel Murders," *Lancet*, Sept. 29, 1888: 637; "The Whitechapel Murders," *EN*, 17 Sept. 1888.
58. Antivivisection was a campaign with no "landmarks," that reached no great climax, that was fought in the hearts and minds of Victorians with few institutional and legal results. Nonetheless, the amount of propaganda literature churned out by Cobbe's organization is staggering: in 1885 alone, Victoria Street put out

81,672 books, pamphlets, and leaflets (French, *Anti-Vivisection*, pp. 255, 256). Though the press remained overwhelmingly hostile to Cobbe and her fellow agitators, antivivisection tropes and iconography pervaded popular journalism and fiction. Indignant opponents of the "Maiden Tribute," for example, accused Stead of "moral vivisection" for imposing the gynecological examination of Eliza Armstrong. Stead himself made ready use of antivivisectionist rhetoric in his crusades against sexually dangerous men. In 1887, he introduced Edwin Langsworthy to his readers as a privileged sadist who amused himself by torturing cats before he extended his "cruel sport" to his bride, a "refined and cultivated lady." Quoted in Raymond L. Schults, *Crusader in Babylon: W. T. Stead and the Pall Mall Gazette* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1972), pp. 212, 213.

59. Frances Power Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe*, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1895), 2:607.

60. Authored by Edward Berdoe, an East End doctor and close collaborator of Cobbe, *St. Bernard's* was a thinly disguised autobiographical account of Berdoe's own training at the London Hospital. Its publication caused quite a sensation: over fifty reviews of the novel appeared, some denouncing it as a "gross calumny" upon the medical profession, others concerned and appalled by its exposé of doctors as "monsters of cruelty" and of hospitals as "hotbeds of corruption and cruelty." Edward Berdoe, *St. Bernard's: The Romance of a Medical Student* (London: Swan, Sonnenschein, 1887); Edward Berdoe, *Dying Scientifically: A Key to St. Bernard's* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1888); Coral Lansbury, *The Old Brown Dog: Women, Workers, and Vivisection in Edwardian England* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), chap. 10.

61. Orvilla Mosucchi, *The Science of Woman: Gynecology and Gender in England 1800-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Already stung by public criticism over lunacy confinement and the medical "rape" of registered prostitutes, doctors responded to this propagandist assault by defending animal experimentation as a sacred cause to be upheld against quacks and religious fanatics. They also countered with their own interpretation of the medical invasion of innocent "feminized" bodies. Medical publicists acknowledged the experimental link between women's bodies and those of laboratory animals, but they defended the violation of the latter to preserve the health of the former. It was precisely because the "public" demanded such medical intervention into female bodies that animal experimentation was necessary, declared one gynecologist, Mr. Spencer Wells, who pointed to surgical advances in ovariectomy gained from animal experimentation. Wells complained of public ingratitude: "the public demands of us to save the lives of their wives and daughters and forces upon us operations undreamt of from their very severity even a few years ago" ("Vivisection and Ovariectomy," *BMJ*, 22 Jan. 1881, p. 133). The symbolic struggle between antivivisectionists and their medical opponents escalated significantly in the 1880s, as did the statistics on antivivisection experiments: in 1879, there were 270 vivisections in Great Britain; ten years later there were 1,417.

However, some doctors remained uneasy about the link between vivisection and ovariectomy. Because the ovaries were deemed the "grand organs" of female identity, medical spokesmen expressed fears that their surgical removal would lead

to the "unsexing" of women: there was a widespread feeling, argued the *British Medical Journal* in 1887, that the ovaries of women should be respected because they were "the organs of sexual life, making a woman what she is, fitted for the duties of womanhood, including childbearing." "Normal Ovariectomy: Battey's operation: Tait's operation," *BMJ*, 1 (1887): 576-77. Mosucchi, *Science of Woman*, pp. 134, 157.

62. Archibald Forbes to the Editor, *DN*, 3 Oct. 1888.

63. This veneral anxiety also coincided with a more explicit thematizing of the danger of "syphilis of the innocents," as expressed in works like Ibsen's *Ghosts* and the New Women novels of the 1890s. Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*; Alain Corbin, *Women for Hire: Prostitution and Sexuality in France after 1850*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 249.

64. Alex Comfort, *The Anxiety Makers: Some Curious Preoccupations of the Medical Profession* (London: Nelson, 1967).

65. Dr. Phillips, testimony at Chapman's inquest, excerpted in Jones, *Ripper File*, p. 25.

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

67. Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1.

68. As Ludmilla Jordanova observes, because doctors regularly executed tasks which would "in normal circumstances be taboo or emotionally repugnant," they had to renegotiate "body taboos" by presenting themselves "as rational, scientific, in alliance with polite culture and clean." Ludmilla Jordanova, *Sexual Visions* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), p. 138. Thanks to Andrew Bragen and Kim Thompson for some of these observations.

69. In addition, later media coverage "democratized" knowledge by reporting on the extent and nature of the mutilations. *Star*, 1 Oct. 1888; Fido, *The Crimes*, pp. 70-80.

70. George Bernard Shaw, "Blood Money to Whitechapel," letter to the Editor, *Star*, 24 Sept. 1888.

71. *DT*, 4 Oct. 1888.

72. H.O. 144/220/A49301C/8a, 23 Oct. 1888; *Echo*, 14 Sept. 1888.

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

74. *DC*, 15 Sept. 1888; *DT*, 2, 4 Oct. 1888; *DN*, 9 Oct. 1888; Halsted, *Doctor in the Nineties*, p. 48.

75. "The East End Murders: Detailed Lessons," *BMJ* (6 Oct. 1888): 769.

76. Walkowitz, "Politics of Prostitution," pp. 129-30; Josephine Butler to Miss Priestman, 5 Nov. 1896, Butler Collection, Fawcett Library, City of London Polytechnic, London; Mrs. H. O. R. Barnett, Canon Barnett, *His Life, Work, and Friends by His Wife*, 2 vols. (London: Murray, 1921), 2:305-8.

77. *The Times*, 6 Oct. 1888; Dew, *I Caught Crippen*, p. 107; *ELO*, 15 Sept. 1888; *DN*, 6, 15 Oct. 1888; *ES*, 6 Oct. 1888.

78. Victor Turner, "Social Dramas and Stories about Them," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (1980): 141-68.

79. John Kelly, testimony at Catherine Eddowes' inquest, excerpted in Jones, *Ripper File*, p. 51.
80. DC, 10 Nov. 1888; *DT*, 10 Nov. 1888.
81. "The Terrible Crime," *Echo*, 10 Nov. 1888; DC, 10 Nov. 1888; "The Whitechapel Horrors," *ELO*, 13 Oct. 1888.
82. Quoted in Howells and Skinner, *Ripper Legacy*, p. 112.
83. "Reign of Terror in the East End," *ELO*, 15 Sept. 1888.
84. "East End Horrors," *LWN*, 7 Oct. 1888; *DT*, 4 Oct. 1888; Harris, *Jack the Ripper*, pp. 23, 24; Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, pp. 74, 75.
85. *Matters, Mystery of Jack the Ripper*, p. 243. "I knew Marie quite well by sight," declared Walter Dew, who had been a constable in Whitechapel in 1888. "Often I had seen her parading along Commercial Street . . . in the company of two others of her kind, fairly neatly dressed and invariably wearing a clean white apron, but no hat." Dew, *I Caught Crippen*.
86. "Whitechapel: Important Evidence at the Inquest Today," *Star*, 12 Nov. 1888.
87. Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper*, pp. 88, 89. The transition to the East End always proved a difficult narrative move: "By some means, however, at present not exactly clear, she suddenly drifted into the East End." "Whitechapel," *Star*, 12 Nov. 1888.
88. George Hutchinson, deposition, reproduced in Wilson and Odell, *Jack the Ripper*, p. 63; Fido, *The Crimes*, p. 178.
89. *Star*, 8 Sept. 1888.
90. *ES*, 9 Nov. 1888; DC, 18 Sept. 1888; *Police Illustrated News*, 3 Nov., 1 Dec. 1888; *WPP*, 6 Nov. 1888; "G.S.O." to the Editor, *The Times*, 22 Sept. 1888; letter to the Editor, *SJG*, 12 Nov. 1888.
91. It should be noted that male libertarians came to the defense of prostitutes in the pages of the *Personal Rights Journal* (Nov. 1888), pp. 69, 76, 84.
92. *The Times*, 12 Nov. 1888.
93. Cullen, *Autumn of Terror*, p. 78; *Echo*, 1, 2, 3 Oct. 1888; *ELO*, 6 Oct. 1888; *MP*, 4 Oct. 1888.
94. On marital cruelty in middle-class households, see A. James Hammetton, "Victorian Marriage and the Law of Matrimonial Cruelty," *Victorian Studies* 33, no. 2 (Winter 1990): 269-92.
95. *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1888; Cullen, *Autumn of Terror*, p. 79; *Echo*, 3 Oct. 1888.
96. Criminal Court, *Sessions Papers*, London, 109, (1888-89), pp. 76-78. Thanks to Ellen Ross for this citation.
97. Ellen Ross, "Fierce Questions and Taunts: Married Life in Working-Class London, 1870-1914," *Feminist Studies*, 8, no. 3 (Fall 1982): 575-602.
98. 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).
99. Letter to the Editor, *SJG*, 16 Nov. 1888.
100. Leonard Elisden, "Starting from Victoria," #229, Burnett Collection, Brunel University; Leonard Woolf, *Sowing: An Autobiography of the Years 1880 to 1904* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), pp. 60-62; Sylvia Pankhurst, *The Suffragette Movement* . . . , pp. 110, 111; Compton Mackenzie, *My Life and Times: Octave One 1883-1891* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1963), pp. 164, 165.
101. Montagu Williams, *Round London: Down East and Up West* (London: Macmillan, 1892), p. 12; *PMG*, 18 Oct. 1888; *DN*, 4 Oct. 1888.
102. *DT*, 4 Oct., 10 Sept. 1888; *RN*, 9 Sept. 1888; *Mepo*, 3/142, 5 Oct. 1888.
103. Dew, *I Caught Crippen*, p. 95; "Ready for Whitechapel Fiend: Women Secretly Armed," *Police Illustrated News*, 22 Sept. 1888; *DT*, 2 Oct. 1888; *War Cry*, 1 Dec. 1888.
104. *War Cry*, 1 Dec. 1888; Barnett, *Canon Barnett*, p. 306.
105. Quoted in White, *Rothschild Buildings*, p. 125.
106. In interviews conducted in East London in July 1983, four informants, three women and one man, told this story as their family history. As far as I can discern, this story has not entered print culture.
107. Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 176-80; Ellen Ross, "Not the Sort that Would Sit on the Doorstep: Respectability in Pre-World War I London Neighborhoods," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 27 (Spring 1985): 39-59.
108. In 1966, a woman who, as a young woman, had lived in Jubilee Road, "in the heart of the area terrorised by Jack the Ripper," remembered her father taking part in nightly patrols to protect the women. She herself came close to stumbling on the murderer as she walked along Hanbury Street one night at dark. When, the next morning, she found out a "42-year old widow" (Annie Chapman) had been murdered, "I was terrified to put my head outside the house for days." "R. J. Lees—the Jack the Ripper Case," Society for Psychical Research Archives, London.
109. Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper*, p. 86; "The Whitechapel Murders," *Medium and Daybreak* (London), 2 Nov. 1888. On R. J. Lees, see the reprint of an article in the *Chicago Sunday Times-Herald* of 1895, in Jones, *Ripper File*, p. 166; Nandor Fodor, *Encyclopedia of Psychic Science* (1933; rpt., New Jersey: Citadel Press, 1974), p. 193; "R. J. Lees—the Ripper Case"; Harris, *Jack the Ripper*, chaps. 18, 19.
110. Quoted in McCormick, *Identity*, p. 81; Quoted in Rumbelow, *Complete Jack the Ripper*, p. 101.
111. On women who resisted the terror, see Margot Asquith, *The Autobiography of Margot Asquith*, ed. and intro. Mark Bonham Carter (London: Methuen, 1985; rpt. from 1962 ed.), pp. 43, 44; Margaret Nevinson, *Life's Fitful Fever: A Volume of Memories* (London: A. and C. Black, 1926), p. 106. On the effects of the terror, see M. V. Hughes, *A London Girl of the 1880s* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. 218.
112. *Personal Rights Journal*, Nov. 1888, pp. 69, 76, 84; *Dawn*, 1 Nov. 1888; *Sentinel*, Dec. 1888, p. 145.
113. Jan Lambertz, "Feminists and the Politics of Wife-Beating," in Harold L.