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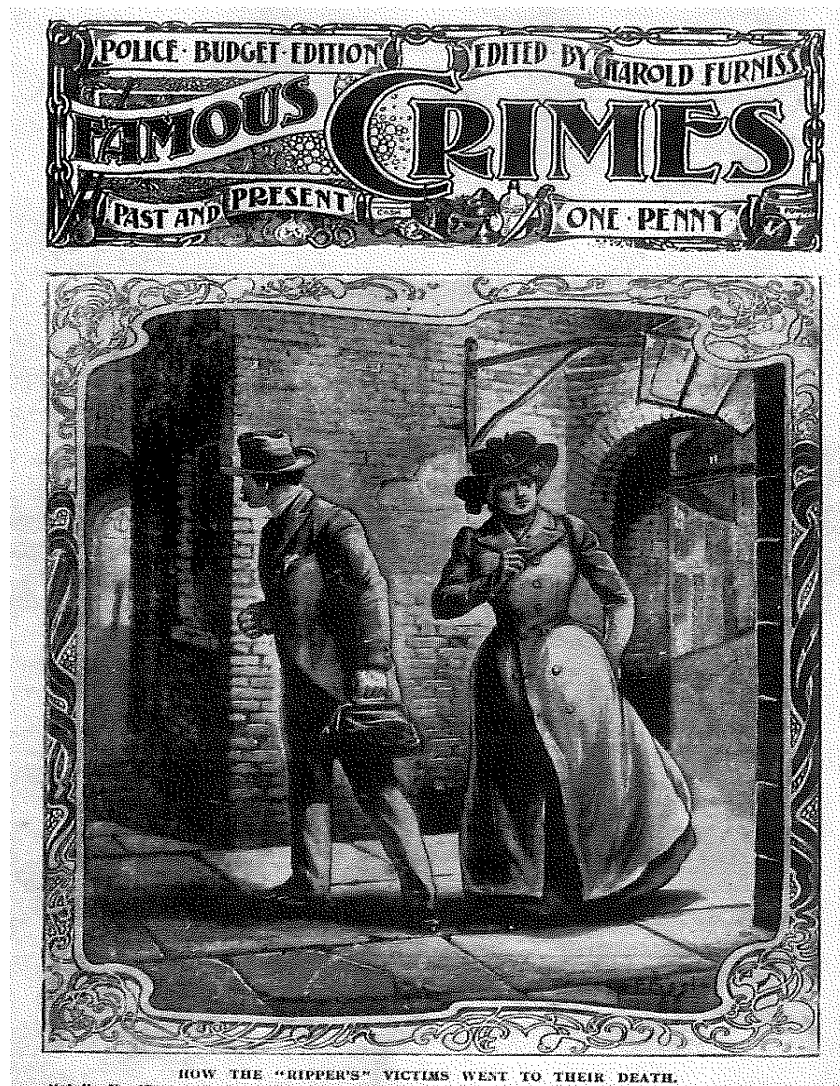
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**Jack the Ripper:
The Divided Self and the Alien Other in
Late-Victorian Culture and Society**

Michael Plater



**Submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines late nineteenth-century public and media representations of the infamous “Jack the Ripper” murders of 1888. Focusing on two of the most popular theories of the day – Jack as exotic “alien” foreigner and Jack as divided British “gentleman” – it contends that these representations drew upon a series of emergent social and cultural anxieties in relation to notions of the “self” and the “other.” Examining the widespread contention that “no Englishman” could have committed the crimes, it explores late-Victorian conceptions of Englishness and documents the way in which the Ripper crimes represented a threat to these dominant notions of British identity and masculinity. In doing so, it argues that late-Victorian fears of the external, foreign “other” ultimately masked deeper anxieties relating to the hidden, unconscious, instinctual self and the “other within.” Moreover, it reveals how these psychological concerns were connected to emergent social anxieties regarding degeneration, atavism and the “beast in man.” As such, it evaluates the wider psychological and sociological impact of the case, arguing that the crimes revealed the deep sense of fracture, duality and instability that lay beneath the surface of late-Victorian English life, undermining and challenging dominant notions of progress, civilisation and social advancement. Situating the Ripper narrative within a broader framework of late-nineteenth century cultural uncertainty and crisis, it therefore argues that the crimes (and, more specifically, populist perceptions of these crimes) represented a key defining moment in British history, serving to condense and consolidate a whole series of late-Victorian fears in relation to selfhood and identity.

PREFACE

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This thesis comprises only original work towards my PhD. Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other materials used. This thesis is fewer than the maximum word limit in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Michael Plater.

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INTRODUCTION

Murderers and their deeds raise acutely the fundamental moral and psychological questions of our existence...The proper study of mankind is murder (Theodore Dalrymple).¹

On Saturday 15 September 1888, the *East London Observer* published a story on the brutal murder of Whitechapel sex worker Annie Chapman, the second in a series of (at least) five murders that would come to be attributed to an unknown killer dubbed “Jack the Ripper” (see Appendix for a summary and timeline of the crimes).² In describing the heightened atmosphere of “mingled excitement, awe, and indignation” that followed news of the murder, the paper noted how it was “repeatedly asserted” by members of the public “that no Englishman could have perpetrated such a horrible crime.”³ Played out on the streets of London’s East End throughout the autumn of 1888, these “Jack the Ripper” crimes would become the most sensational and widely discussed murder case of the nineteenth century. The crimes have continued to be a source of fascination, conjecture, and heated debate, becoming, arguably, the most famous unsolved murder case in history. Focusing on late nineteenth-century public and press reactions to the murders, this thesis argues that the widespread perception that “no Englishman” could have committed the crimes drew upon a number of emergent social and cultural anxieties in relation to late-Victorian conceptions of the “self.” I suggest that these anxieties centred upon the fundamental tension between “self” and “other” that was increasingly prevalent in late nineteenth-century British society and argue that the Ripper case both reflected and actively contributed to this sense of cultural crisis and division.

¹ Theodore Dalrymple, “Revolting Insouciance or Genuine Amnesia?” *Spectator*, Volume 273, Issue 8672 (24 September 1994): 9-10.

² There is no definitive consensus on the number of victims in the Ripper case. The official police files on the murders contain the names of nine women: Emma Smith, Martha Tabram, Mary Nichols, Annie Chapman, Elizabeth Stride, Catherine Eddowes, Mary Kelly, Alice McKenzie and Frances Coles. Of these, Nichols, Chapman, Stride, Eddowes, and Kelly are generally referred as the “canonical five,” based on the likelihood of them all being murdered by the same perpetrator. “Home Office Files.” HO/144/220 [microfiche]. Archived at National Archives of London.

³ “A Reign of Terror in Whitechapel,” *East London Observer*, Saturday, 15 September 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_observer/elo880915 [14/08/2013].

In examining these themes of “self” and “other” in relation to the Ripper crimes, my work focuses on two of the most popular theories of the day – the idea of Jack as “foreigner” and the idea of Jack as divided British “gentleman.” The first theory centres upon public perceptions of the Ripper as racially “other” or “alien,” as somehow “outside” British culture and society. In this, I explore the extent to which Jewish immigrants living in London’s East End were suspected of the murders, and the way in which these accusations drew upon themes of “otherness” as a contaminating, subversive threat to the British sense of “self.” The second theory – the Ripper as gentleman – focuses upon public perceptions of the Ripper as respectable British professional, leading a double or “divided” life.⁴ In this, my work pays particular attention to representations of the Ripper as a doctor or medical professional and explores how this theory subverted and undermined traditional Victorian representations of the “civilised,” culturally advanced British self. In examining both theories, my work argues that they reflected the widespread sense of unease and anxiety that surrounded notions of selfhood during this period, specifically the concern that the self was not safe or stable, but constantly under attack by both external and interior “corrupting” influences. In this, I propose that these late-Victorian fears of the external “other” as contaminating threat ultimately masked deeper anxieties regarding what might be termed the “other inside” – the hidden, unconscious, primal self, buried deep beneath the apparently “civilising” customs of contemporary British culture and society. As such, my work contends that both these theories – the Ripper as alien other, the Ripper as divided self – were essentially manifestations of the same core social anxieties and fears, and that by examining them in tandem we gain a truer understanding of the way in which the Ripper crimes reflected, and impacted upon, the wider culture. Tracing these “self” and “other” themes through seven chapters, my work therefore attempts to evaluate the wider psychological and sociological impact of the murders, treating the crimes as an important component in a much larger late-Victorian narrative, one centring upon the problematic nature of identity in late nineteenth-century Britain.

⁴ These notions of the “divided self” became increasingly prevalent in the years following the Ripper crimes. Most famously, the Scottish psychiatrist R.D. Laing used this concept as the basis for his seminal 1960 work *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness*, which examined themes of madness and “the outsider” in relation to concepts of schizophrenia. See: R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self: An Existential Study in Sanity and Madness* (London, New York, Canada: Penguin, 1990, originally published 1960). It should be noted, however, that my work on the subject takes a different approach, using the term in relation to late-Victorian concepts of degeneration, atavism and “doubleness,” and exploring the way in which it reflected emergent theories of dual consciousness, the double brain and the multiplex self.

As such, my work firmly situates the Ripper narrative within a broader framework of late nineteenth-century cultural uncertainty and crisis. In investigating these social and cultural ramifications of the crimes, my work proposes that, in many respects, the Ripper case constituted a defining moment in nineteenth-century British history. I argue that, in undermining and challenging previous long-held assumptions about the self and society, the Ripper crimes marked a decisive move away from earlier nineteenth-century notions of the “civilised” British self as symbol of Victorian progress. I suggest that public and press responses to the crimes instead tapped into the growing sense of division, fragmentation and duality that increasingly pervaded British culture and society in the final decades of the nineteenth century. My work therefore looks at the way in which these concepts of the “divided self” and the “alien other,” as found throughout the Ripper narrative, were closely connected to a number of existing social and cultural anxieties concerning degeneration, atavism and the “beast within.” I argue that these theories of degeneration – essentially the belief that contemporary British society could “alter” and return to a “lower” state of primitive, animalistic savagery – strongly contributed to dominant representations of the Ripper as subversive, threatening, “other,” transgressing the boundaries of society and nation. Moreover, I suggest that, for late-Victorian commentators, the “horrible barbarity”⁵ of the Ripper crimes played a crucial role in turning these inchoate anxieties of physical and societal decay and deterioration into a reality, challenging and undermining prevailing notions of British cultural progress and social advancement.

In dealing with these themes, my work therefore firmly contextualises the crimes within what we now refer to as the Victorian era, that unusually long epoch that stretched from Queen Victoria’s inauguration in 1837 until her death in 1901. In this, my interest lies principally in the years leading up to, including, and following, that fateful year of 1888, a period in which many of the social and cultural certainties of the era began to falter and break down. Indeed, many commentators at the time used the example of the murders to expound on the seemingly perilous, beleaguered state of late nineteenth-century British society, as those boundaries and demarcations – between self and other, “civilised” and “savage,” masculine and feminine, West and East – that had previously governed English society became increasingly tenuous. With this came a sense of rupture and enervation, reflecting the widespread concern that the British

⁵ “A Reign of Terror,” *East London Observer*, 15 September 1888.

nation itself – as an “imperial force” and “social and cultural power” – was in a state of irrevocable decline.⁶ As such, the Ripper crimes themselves can potentially be seen as a turning point in British history, effectively marking the point at which Victorian optimism gave way to something far darker and more troubling. For these commentators, the crimes seemed to expose some unmistakable, unavoidable truth about the nature of late nineteenth-century existence, revealing the hidden “otherness” that lay beneath the surface of modern, metropolitan, “civilised” British society. As such, my work examines what public and press reactions to the Ripper case can tell us about late-Victorian society and details the way in which these responses to the crimes reflected wider contemporary anxieties regarding notions of British identity and self-perception.

Towards this end, my work analyses late-Victorian constructions of “Englishness” and “Britishness” and details how these concepts were related to the question of self-identity.⁷ It documents how these narratives of English identity and selfhood were informed by themes of racial and geographical “otherness,” reflecting Peter Sahlins’s observation that national identity is defined by those “social or territorial boundaries [that are] drawn to distinguish the collective self [from] its implicit negation, the other.”⁸ Conversely, it examines the extent to which “Englishness” itself was a state of mind, a psychological and cultural construct reliant upon imagined ideals of character, action and behaviour.⁹ In this, it particularly focuses on late nineteenth-century constructions of English masculinity, wherein the image of the self-controlled, self-reliant male represented wider ideals of British cultural progress and social advancement. It therefore details the way in which the Ripper discourse, with its anxieties of

⁶ Stephen Arata, “The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization,” *Victorian Studies*, 33.4 (1990): 621.

⁷ My usage of both these terms is reflective of the Ripper reportage itself, which routinely emphasised themes of “Britishness” and “Englishness” in dealing with the crimes. Moreover, as Linda Colley points out, such references to “Britishness” were symptomatic of late-Victorian imperialistic discourses, which were “emphatically British, not just English in [their] scope.” It should be noted, however, that these representations of “Britishness” were largely focused on England itself, rather than Ireland, Wales and/or Scotland. See Linda Colley, “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,” *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 4 (October 1992): 317.

⁸ Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 270-71.

⁹ Such definitions are found, for example, in the nineteenth-century English poet Alfred Tennyson’s contention that the English nation is “distinguished primarily, not by place, not language, not race, but by character, along with the political principles in which character seems to be manifest,” and his perception that “the battle for Englishness was fought...within the mind of each English person.” See Roger Ebbatson, “Englishness and the Victorians,” *Literature Compass*, 3/6 (2006): 1408–21.

otherness and the uncontrolled self, challenged these dominant images of Englishness, thereby bringing deeper social and psychological anxieties to the surface.

In exploring these issues, this thesis draws upon an extensive range of nineteenth-century source materials and documentation, seeking to not only comprehensively cover the Ripper reportage itself, but to examine late-Victorian culture and society from an array of angles and perspectives. In terms of the Ripper discourse, my research draws heavily upon nineteenth-century press reports about the crimes, as taken from such British newspapers as *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *The East London Observer*, *The Evening News*, *The Star*, *Daily Chronicle*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Morning Advertiser*, *The Evening Standard*, and *The Times*. These reports were crucial in gauging both press and public reactions to the crimes, highlighting many of the themes and preoccupations that dominated nineteenth-century perceptions of the case. In examining these media sources, I have predominantly focused upon London papers for a number of reasons. Most obviously, the Ripper story is essentially a London story, intimately connected to the social and cultural conditions of London life in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, as Lynda Dryden notes, this era was one in which the “fears and social concerns of the nation” became more perceptibly focused on its capital, with London representing the “heart” of the British Empire.¹⁰ However, whilst my work is predominately London-centric, I also examine a range of national and international publications (including such American newspapers as *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Atlanta Constitution*, and the *Williamsport Sunday Grit*, and Australian papers including Sydney’s *Evening News* and Victoria’s *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*) in order to get a better sense of how the Ripper story was received worldwide, and of how it became very much an international cause célèbre. Alongside these sources, I also examine a number of visual representations of the crimes, as found in such publications as the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, *Punch* and the *Illustrated Police News*, and look at the way that these often very sensationalist images (e.g. the crazed gentleman, the bestial monster, the “untamed” savage, the demonic Jew) reflected late-Victorian concerns with otherness and self-identity.

¹⁰ Lynda Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde, and Wells* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 46.

Another vital resource for my work is “The Whitechapel Murders Papers 1888-1890,” a collection of some 320 letters sent from the public to the London City Police during the general period of the crimes, now held at the London Metropolitan Archives.¹¹ Examined first-hand, these letters proved indispensable to the formulation of my argument, presenting a range of theories, suggestions, and commentary regarding the crimes, whilst offering a vivid insight into crucial aspects of the late-Victorian English mindset. Equally essential to my research were the official police records of the case (the Home Office, Scotland Yard, and Metropolitan Police Files), as found at the National Archives in Kew, London.¹² Containing an extensive array of vital documentation – police reports, coroner's findings, inquest proceedings, witness testimonies – in relation to the case, these documents proved crucial in determining the extent to which official responses to the crimes complimented, and contributed to, wider public and media perceptions of the murders. Another key resource for my work, again examined at the National Archives, are the “Ripper letters,” the large body of correspondence purportedly sent by the actual killer at the time of the murders.¹³ Whilst modern scholars of the case dismiss these letters as hoaxes written by members of the press and/or the public, they nonetheless constitute an essential part of the Ripper story, offering a disturbing glimpse into the darker recesses of the late-Victorian psyche.

Alongside these major sources, my work also examines a number of marginalised or “subaltern” perspectives that criticised and challenged dominant representations of the crimes. The London-based Jewish newspaper *The Jewish Chronicle*, for instance, actively refuted popular notions of Jewish complicity in the murders, offering a crucial (and welcome) dissenting voice to the kind of stereotypical representations of Jewish culture that routinely featured in discussion of the case. Another important resource is *The Women's Penny Paper*, a small London-based periodical established in October 1888 at the height of the Ripper crisis. Billed as “the only paper in the world conducted, written, printed and published by women,”¹⁴ the *Women's Penny Paper* openly challenged dominant representations of female culpability

¹¹ “The Whitechapel Murders Papers 1888-1890: Letters Relating to the ‘Jack the Ripper’ Killings.” London Metropolitan Archives [microfiche]. Formerly held at the Corporation of London Records Office. CLA/048/CS/02.

¹² “Home Office Files,” HO 144/220; “Metropolitan Police Files,” Mepo 3, National Archives of London. These files were first made available to the public in 1986.

¹³ “Ripper Letters,” Mepo 3/142, National Archives of London. The file consists of some 210 letters, preserved on microfilm.

¹⁴ “Women's Penny Paper,” Vol. 1, no. 1 (27 October 1888) - vol. 3, no. 114 (27 December 1890). London: Women's Printing Society, 1888-1890 [microform] archived at Melbourne University.

in the Ripper crimes. Deriding the “sensationalism” of the mainstream media's treatment of the murders, the paper offered a vital alternate viewpoint to the kind of patriarchal assumptions (the prostitute as polluting other, the female body as transgressive threat) that all too often coloured late nineteenth-century reportage of the crimes. As such, in examining the way in which these (often overlooked) sources challenged dominant representations of the crimes, my work aims to further our cultural and social understanding of the case, and to illustrate the way in which these racial and gender concerns became part of a larger narrative of otherness and fractured selfhood.

Furthermore, in exploring the way in which the Ripper discourse reflected and reinforced these wider anxieties in relation to selfhood and identity, my work examines the crimes in relation to the work and ideas of such key nineteenth-century social/cultural theorists as Cesare Lombroso, Charles Darwin, Edwin Ray Lankester, Bénédict Augustin Morel and Max Simon Nordau. I explore the way in which contemporary social and cultural ideologies in relation to such topics as degeneration, atavism, evolutionism and criminal anthropology were assimilated into the Ripper discourse, influencing and contextualising popular perceptions of the crimes. Similarly, in exploring such areas as the unconscious mind and the hidden self, my work examines the Ripper narrative in relation to late nineteenth-century developments in psychology, sociology and the emergent field of psychoanalysis. It references the work of such pivotal figures as British psychiatrist Henry Maudsley, French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot and co-founder of the Society for Psychical Research Frederic Myers, and details how their pioneering research into such areas as dual consciousness, multiplex personality, the double brain and the subliminal mind were echoed in late-Victorian representations of the Ripper as either “divided self” or “alien other.” In examining the cultural significance and status of doctors in late-Victorian culture, my work also references numerous accounts of medical London during this era. As well as examining several autobiographical accounts of medical life during the Ripper period (e.g. D.G. Halstead’s *Doctor in the Nineties* and L. Forbes Winslow’s *Recollections of Forty Years*), I consider various medical journals of the era (*The Lancet*, *The British Medical Journal*, *The Cincinnati Medical Journal*) and examine a range of archival medical reports, findings and articles (as examined first-hand at the London Hospital Archives, Whitechapel) in relation to the Ripper case.

This thesis also investigates the way in which these concepts of self and other were reflected in much of the representative British literature of the day - including such classic works as Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).¹⁵ I examine also the crucial influence of mid nineteenth-century populist serialised fiction – often referred to as “penny dreadfuls” or “penny bloods” – on press coverage of the Ripper murders. Examining such key examples of the genre as *The Mysteries of London* (1844), *The String of Pearls* (1846) and *Spring-Heeled Jack: The Terror of London* (1863), I suggest that, in their blend of Gothic violence and pictorial sensationalism, such works greatly influenced both the form and content of the Ripper reportage. Moreover, in evaluating the Ripper murders within the larger context of late-Victorian British culture and society, my work also looks at a number of studies of London and the East End written during this era, including Andrew Mearns's *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (1883), Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People in London* (1889-1902) and Salvation Army founder General William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890).¹⁶ Ostensibly philanthropic in nature, such works provide a good insight into the kind of racial and geographical stereotyping that was prevalent in many such examinations of East End culture during this period. Indeed, a work like *In Darkest England*, wherein East Enders are portrayed as “foreign and inexplicable figures who could...erupt into irrational violence at any moment,” highlights many of the social and cultural anxieties that are dealt with in my work.¹⁷

In examining the cultural and social significance of the Ripper crimes, my research moves decisively away from dominant readings of the case, which have overwhelmingly focused on the question of the unknown killer's identity. In this, as Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis point out in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, the countless books on the Ripper murders that have appeared over the last century have mainly served to perpetuate the

¹⁵ Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ed. Martin A. Danahay (Canada: Broadview Literary Texts, 2004), [originally published 1886]; Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In: *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (London: Book Club Associates, 1980), [originally published 1891]; Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Aerie Books, 1988), [originally published 1897].

¹⁶ Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: With Leading Articles from the Pall Mall Gazette of October 1883 and Articles by Lord Salisbury, Joseph Chamberlain and Forster Crozier* (Leicester University Press, New York: Humanities Press, 1970), [originally published 1883]; Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London: Poverty*. New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), [originally published 1889 – 1902]; William Booth, *In Darkest London and the Way Out* (New York: Funk and Wagnall, 1890).

¹⁷ Martin A. Danahay, reviewing Booth's work in the Appendix to Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, 178.

“mythology” of the Ripper case, with the “historical truth” of both the murders and the victims becoming increasingly obscured under the weight of endless speculation and conjecture about the murderer himself.¹⁸ Such writing has tended to twist and distort the facts of the case in order to accommodate the particular viewpoint being espoused by the writer. As L. Perry Curtis Jr puts it, this literary game of “hunt the Ripper” has generally operated “by the rule that even the flimsiest circumstantial evidence can serve to buttress a foregone conclusion.”¹⁹ Or as Drew D. Gray similarly notes: “History requires a level of academic rigour that is sadly lacking from many of the Ripper books. Conjecture replaces fact, hearsay is substituted for documentary proof.”²⁰ Whilst a number of excellent overviews of the case can be found within the “Ripperology”²¹ format – Donald Rumbelow’s *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (1975), Martin Fido’s *The Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper* (1987), and Philip Sugden’s *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (1994)²² are all largely free of personal bias, offering instead authoritative, comprehensive, well-researched accounts of the crimes – all too often historical accuracy has been sacrificed in favour of sensationalism and hyperbole. In the past fifty years alone, all kinds of implausible “final solutions” to the murders have been published – often involving such far-fetched elements as masonic cover-ups, royal conspiracies, black magic rituals, and secret diaries – whilst the wider cultural and social resonances of the case have been largely overlooked.²³

¹⁸ Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis, eds., *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 2.

¹⁹ L. Perry Curtis Jr, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2001), 1.

²⁰ Drew D. Gray, *London’s Shadows: The Dark Side of the Victorian City* (London & New York: Continuum, 2010), 26 (kindle edition).

²¹ A term allegedly coined by the late British writer/philosopher Colin Wilson back in 1972 to describe the burgeoning industry of true crime books on the subject. See: Colin Wilson and Robin Odell, *Jack the Ripper: Summing Up and Verdict* (London: Corgi, 1988, second edition). In recent years, the term has been used disparagingly to describe the sense of zealotry and self-righteousness that often surrounds work on the subject. The author/screenwriter/ film director Bruce Robinson, for instance, in his 2015 work on the Ripper, *They All Love Jack*, refers to the “constipated strictures of Ripperology,” and suggests that by a “process of attrition and endless industry, this coterie of authors has come to ‘own’ this history. They are self-appointed ‘experts’ and guardians of flat-earth thinking.” Bruce Robinson, *They All Love Jack: Busting the Ripper* (London: Fourth Estate, 2015), xii-xiii.

²² Donald Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper* (London: Penguin, 2004, fourth edition); Martin Fido, *The Crimes, Detection and Death of Jack the Ripper* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987); Philip Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (London: Robinson, 2006, second edition).

²³ For examples of such work, see Stephen Knight, *Jack the Ripper: The Final Solution* (London: Harrap, 1976); Melvyn Fairclough, *The Ripper and the Royals* (London: Duckworth, 1991); Paul H. Feldman, *Jack the Ripper: The Final Chapter* (London: Virgin Books, 2005, originally published 1998); Ivor Edwards, *Jack the Ripper’s Black Magic Rituals* (London: John Blake, 2002). Published in 1976, Knight’s bestselling book was the first to feature the now-familiar royal/masonic conspiratorial angle on the murders. According to Knight, Ripper victim Mary Kelly had witnessed the secret marriage of Prince Albert Victor (Queen Victoria’s step son and heir to the throne) to a Roman Catholic shop assistant named Annie Elizabeth Crook, and had used this information to

Indeed, despite having had “more written about them than any [murder case] since Cain killed Abel,”²⁴ there has been a marked shortage of in-depth academic analysis of the way in which the Ripper crimes reflected, contributed to, and impinged upon the late nineteenth-century consciousness. As Warwick and Willis note:

It is clear that the Whitechapel murders are more than just a Victorian murder mystery: they have a profound legacy that has shaped the public and professional imagination in sometimes disturbing ways. It is perhaps then surprising that academic discussion of the significance of the Whitechapel murders and their representation has been relatively scant.²⁵

Academic interest in the subject is a relatively new phenomenon; as English professor Paula Marantz Cohen (author of *What Alice Knew: A Most Curious Tale of Henry James and Jack the Ripper* – a fictional work on the subject) admits, only recently has “an academic literature [on the Ripper case] begun to accumulate as the cultural turn in the humanities intersected with a widespread interest in true crime.”²⁶ As such, in investigating the cultural and social ramifications of the Ripper crimes my work joins a small but growing body of academic work on the subject that attempts to examine the wider significance of the case on both the nineteenth century and modern culture. A key text in this regard is Judith Walkowitz's ground-breaking *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*.²⁷ Published in 1992, Walkowitz's examination of the Ripper crimes takes place within a broader narrative that explores issues of identity, representation and meaning in late nineteenth-century England. Dealing particularly with themes of sexuality, feminism, power, and politics, her work locates the Ripper crimes within the context of Victorian narratives of sexual danger and threat. As

blackmail the government. Dispatched to deal with the problem, physician to the Queen, Sir William Gull, proceeded to brutally murder Kelly and her accomplices (the other Ripper victims) according to ancient masonic rituals. Built on a series of “falsehoods and absurdities,” Knight’s story has nonetheless deeply informed popular perceptions of the murders. See: Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 7-8. Feldman’s book, meanwhile, deals with the 1992 discovery of the alleged “Jack the Ripper diary,” a document of dubious provenance, today almost universally regarded as a forgery/hoax, which suggested that the Ripper was Liverpool cotton merchant James Maybrick. The extent to which these two theories have informed subsequent research on the subject is evident when examining Bruce Robinson’s 2015 work, a painstaking yet ultimately unconvincing attempt to, essentially, merge these two theories (Robinson suggests that the murders were committed by James’s brother Michael, a prominent Mason with political connections).

²⁴ Judith Flanders, *The Invention of Murder: How the Victorians Revelled in Death and Detection and Created Modern Crime* (London: Harper Press, 2011), 424.

²⁵ Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis, eds., *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, 3.

²⁶ Paula Marantz Cohen, *What Alice Knew: A Most Curious Tale of Henry James and Jack the Ripper* (Illinois: Sourcebooks, 2010); Cohen, “Jack the Ripper through a Wider Lens,” conference notes, available at: <http://drexel.edu/honors/conferences/jtr> [2/05/2016].

²⁷ Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (University of Chicago Press, 1992).

such, her work is a crucial reference for my own research, sharing my interest in examining the crimes in relation to broader late nineteenth-century social and cultural anxieties.

Following on from Walkowitz's work, Sander L. Gilman's 1993 article "Who Kills Whores? I Do, Race and Gender in Victorian London,"²⁸ is another pivotal addition to Ripper literature, exploring the similarities between representations of the "foreign" (Jewish) body and representations of the female body in press accounts of the murders. In dealing with themes of physical and bodily "otherness," transgression and threat in relation to the Ripper crimes, Gilman's work offers a crucial adjunct to my own research into representations of the self and other in late-Victorian society. L. Perry Curtis Jr's *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (2001), meanwhile, is an important examination of the way in which these representations of the Ripper crimes were disseminated via media and print culture – another major concern in my work. Andrew Smith devotes a chapter to the Whitechapel murders in his excellent *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siecle* (2004).²⁹ Discussing the Ripper crimes in relation to Victorian anxieties regarding masculinity and medical science, Smith's work constitutes another important addition to academic discussion of the case, reflecting key concerns found in my own work. More recently, Judith Flanders' *The Invention of Murder* (2011), a vital investigation into Victorian attitudes to violence and murder, documents the active role played by the public in creating and perpetuating the mythology of the Ripper.

However, whilst the ground-breaking work of these writers has undoubtedly been crucial in promoting serious discussion of the Ripper case, there remain many fields of inquiry and analysis (particularly in relation to the cultural and social significance of the crimes) that have not been fully explored. Indeed, the Ripper story itself is not the major focus of these writers' work, in each case only featuring as part of a much larger narrative. Full length examinations of the case by such writers as L. Perry Curtis Jr and Sander Gilman, meanwhile, have tended to focus on one particular aspect of the Ripper story (e.g. media reports, cultural prejudices), rather than fully exploring the interconnected, analogous nature of such representations. In this

²⁸ Sander L. Gilman, "Who Kills Whores? I Do, Says Jack: Race and Gender in Victorian London," in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, 215-28.

²⁹ Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity, and the Gothic at the Fin De Siecle* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

way, the deeper complexities of the case have often been obscured, whilst key underlying sociological and psychological issues have been ignored or inadequately dealt with. Critical analyses of late-Victorian depictions of the Ripper-as-Jew, for example, have all too often failed to address these deeper psychological concerns. A case in point is Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delight*, which maintains that these conceptions of the Ripper as Jewish immigrant were a "response to the unstable economy and shrinking material resources" of late nineteenth-century East End life. In this, Walkowitz links these Ripper-as-Jew perceptions to endemic anti-Semitism and to local resentment over the need to "compete for resources" (housing, jobs) with newly-arrived Jewish immigrants.³⁰ However, whilst such economic and racial factors undoubtedly played a part, they alone cannot fully account for the sheer sense of desperation that lay behind the relentless insistence that "no Englishman" could have committed the murders, or the overwhelming need to believe that a Jew (or similar foreign "other") must have been responsible.

As such, it is my contention that to truly understand these responses to the murders, it is necessary to examine the latent, deep-rooted psychological anxieties of late-Victorian culture and society. In delving into these notions of the hidden self and the unconscious mind, my work often runs counter to conventional wisdom about the case. In his 1992 work on the subject, *Murder and Madness: The Secret Life of Jack the Ripper*, the psychoanalyst Dr David Abrahamsen, for example, suggests that "at the time of the Whitechapel murders, concepts of the mind and how it functions were virtually non-existent." He writes of Freud's "epoch-making discovery of the mind's unconscious power," and dates this "discovery" to the early years of the twentieth century.³¹ My work disputes this viewpoint, arguing that these notions of the "unconscious mind" not only pre-dated Freud, but that such concepts became an important cultural preoccupation in late-Victorian society, where they played a crucial role in shaping public and media perceptions of the Ripper murders. As such, in investigating the late nineteenth-century tension between "self" and "other" that underpinned popular discussion of the crimes, my thesis seeks to bring these sociological, medico-scientific and psychological issues to the foreground.

³⁰ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 203.

³¹ David Abrahamsen, *Murder & Madness: The Secret Life of Jack the Ripper* (London: Robson, 1992), 45-6.

In doing so, my work necessarily examines the crimes from a variety of competing angles and perspectives, taking a “cross-disciplinary” approach to the subject matter and engaging with a number of historiographical fields and modes in a bid to properly gauge the social and cultural significance of the crimes. As it deals with late-Victorian cultural anxieties concerning the body and the self, my research draws upon a range of seminal readings of the body in culture and society by such authors as Michel Foucault, Thomas Laqueur and Kelly Hurley.³² In exploring notions of the transgressive body as “threat,” my work references a number of important studies of Victorian prostitution, including works by Lynda Nead, Mary Spongberg and Nina Atwood.³³ In determining the critical role that late nineteenth-century theories of degeneration played on the Ripper narrative, I look at such crucial studies as Daniel Pick’s *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder* (1989) and William Greenslade’s *Degeneration, Culture, and the Novel 1880-1940* (1994).³⁴ In regards to the social and cultural history of Victorian London, works like Lynda Nead’s *Victorian Babylon* (2000) and Peter Ackroyd’s *London: the Biography* (2001) were vital in clarifying the way dominant late nineteenth-century British attitudes to race and identity were informed by colonisation and imperialism – a key theme in my own work.³⁵ In examining issues of race and cultural identity in connection to the Ripper case, I also draw upon a number of important studies of the immigrant experience in Victorian London.³⁶ Alongside these social and cultural studies, my research has also examined a range of works dealing with the mental and psychological state of late-Victorian society.³⁷ Anne

³² These include such works as: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London and New York: Penguin 1990, originally published 1976); Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur, eds., *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1987); Kelly Hurley, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin De Siecle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³³ See: Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Mary Spongberg, *Feminizing Venereal Disease: The Body of the Prostitute in Nineteenth-Century Medical Discourse* (New York: New York University Press, 1997); Nina Atwood, *The Prostitute's Body: Rewriting Prostitution in Victorian Britain* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011).

³⁴ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848 – c. 1918* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture, and the Novel 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

³⁵ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000); Peter Ackroyd, *London: The Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 2001).

³⁶ See: Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990); Anne J Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1660-2000* (London & New York: Routledge, 2005); Paul Knepper, “British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire,” *British Journal of Criminology*, January 2007, available from <http://bjc.oxfordjournals.org> [12/05/2013]. These works proved crucial in gauging the kind of racial prejudices and stereotypes that were prevalent during the period, and the way in which such attitudes informed public and press responses to the Ripper crimes.

³⁷ See: Eric M. Sigsworth, ed., *In Search of Victorian Values: Aspects of Nineteenth-Century Thought and Society* (Manchester and New York: St Martin’s Press, 1988); Roy Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (London & New York: Routledge, 1997). These collections were useful in

Harrington's *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain* (1987), Ian Hacking's *Rewriting the Soul* (1998) and Joel Peter Eigen's *Unconscious Crime* (2004),³⁸ for example, were essential resources for my research into such areas as the divided self, dual personality, the unconscious, and the subliminal mind. In terms of literature dealing with themes of otherness and the self, Richard Kearney's *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (2003), was another crucial source, its central contention that "what we most fear in the demonized other is our own mirror image: our othered self," paralleling my own findings on the subject.³⁹ Such references were essential to my work, allowing me to connect the Ripper narrative to deeper late-Victorian psychological and sociological anxieties and concerns.

My opening chapter, "East Vs West: Jack the Ripper, Self, and Other in Late-Victorian Society", introduces these themes of "self" and "other" that are central to my work. Examining the state of British society at the time of the Ripper murders, I argue that popular representations of the Ripper as racially "other" were reflective of a number of dominant cultural anxieties and prejudices of the period. I suggest that these representations drew heavily upon themes of imperialism and colonisation, juxtaposing a "civilised" English self against a foreign "savage" other that threatened and contaminated the larger culture. As such, this chapter examines the way in which public and media impressions of the Ripper crimes reflected the wider late-Victorian concern that the "savage" and the "civilised" had acquired a destabilising, threatening proximity to one another, and that with this came a blurring of those mental, physical, and geographical boundaries that had previously separated "self" from "other" in nineteenth-century British society. Documenting the way in which the Ripper narrative was played out in a London that seemed to mirror this sense of dualism and division, I argue that this image of the Ripper as transgressive, corrupt other challenged and undermined dominant late-Victorian notions of British cultural achievement and social order.

helping me to understand the complex and problematic nature of Victorian self-identity, and its relationship to the cultural and social conditions of the times.

³⁸ Anne Harrington, *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1998); Joel Peter Eigen, *Unconscious Crime: Mental Absence and Criminal Responsibility in Victorian London* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004).

³⁹ Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 75.

With my second chapter, “The Men That Will Not Be Blamed for Nothing: Jack the Ripper, Jewishness, and the Other as Threat in Late-Victorian British Culture”, I focus on the way in which this preoccupation with issues of race and racial otherness in public and media accounts of the crimes led to the immigrant Jewish population of London’s East End being suspected of the murders. Documenting the kind of stereotypical and prejudicial representations of Jewish culture that were prevalent during the period, I examine the way in which these Jewish immigrants were routinely depicted as a polluting, transgressive presence within British culture, threatening the boundaries, social order, purity, and future of society and nation. I argue that these anti-Jewish remonstrations drew heavily upon interconnected late nineteenth-century theories of degeneration and criminal anthropology, with the “barbarity” of the Ripper crimes being aligned with the perceived “savage,” uncivilised nature of Jewish culture. As such, I examine the way in which this image of the Ripper-as-Jew seemingly confirmed prevalent late-Victorian anxieties concerning the contaminating, subversive potential of the “other” in society.

My third chapter, “Man Is Not Truly One, But Truly Two: Jack the Ripper, the Divided Self, and the Body as Other”, examines the way in which these “Ripper as foreign other” theories were gradually superseded in the public imagination by (ultimately more disquieting) notions of the murderer as an outwardly respectable “divided gentleman.” In tracing this shift, I reveal how contemporary fears of the “other in society” were connected to deeper anxieties concerning the hidden self and the “other within.” Investigating these popular nineteenth-century perceptions of the Ripper as a divided “gentleman” hiding an interior bestial or “savage” self, my work explores the way in which these “half beast, half man” representations focused upon the human body as a site of potential corruption and degeneration. I suggest that such concepts reflected post-Darwinian fears of the “animal within man,” specifically the fear that the latent, animalistic “passions” and impulses of the human body had the potential to undo the “civilising” customs of modern society. Moreover, I investigate the way in which the “civilised” body in Victorian culture became the culturally policed body, defined by concepts of control and restraint, and by how well it adhered to the demands of society, nation, and empire. I argue that the figure of the Ripper, in evoking these themes of bodily and social degeneration, therefore came to personify late-Victorian fears of the body as a site of otherness, transgressing the boundaries of society and nation.

In my fourth chapter, “Educated Men and Wild Beasts: Jack the Ripper, Medical Science, and the Divided Gentleman in Late-Victorian Culture”, I explore how these dualistic gentleman/beast representations in relation to the crimes increasingly focused on theories of the Ripper as a divided doctor. In doing so, this chapter examines the complex and problematic status of doctors in late-Victorian culture and society and considers the way in which these representations of the Ripper as a medical professional undermined and challenged dominant notions of Victorian progress and civilisation. It details the way in which such representations linked themes of degeneration and the “other within” to contemporary anxieties surrounding medical science and the human body, playing upon a number of popular late-nineteenth century fears of surgeons, anatomists, vivisectionists and medical dissection in general. I argue that these social and cultural anxieties surrounding the self, body, and medical science coalesced in one of the defining representations of the Ripper – the “syphilitic doctor” theory. I suggest that, in linking notions of the corrupted self to a wider sense of moral contamination and cultural decline, this image of the Ripper as syphilitic doctor became strongly evocative of incipient social, cultural, and physical disintegration, chaos, and decline.

With my fifth chapter, “The Victim’s Victim: Jack the Ripper, Self, Other and the Female Body”, I examine these concepts of self and other in relation to late-Victorian representations of femininity. Documenting the way in which public and press discussions of the Ripper crimes were dominated by male perspectives, I look at how such representations drew upon a series of popular fears and anxieties in relation to the supposed transgressive, degenerative potential of the female body. I argue that the female body was routinely represented as a threatening other and associated with themes of moral corruption and physical disease, and that such representations complemented and reinforced dominant theories in relation to the Ripper case. I examine the way in which these notions of “transgressive” femininity played a crucial role in representations of the Ripper as both a syphilitic “gentleman” doctor and an “alien” foreigner. In response to this, I explore also the way in which these depictions of the “uncontrolled” female body as threat were strongly criticised by a small but significant number of female commentators. I suggest that, for these commentators, the Ripper crimes instead evoked patriarchal society’s policing and control of the female body and its attempts to subjugate and silence the female voice.

My sixth chapter, “After the Same Stile – Jack the Ripper, the Divided Self and the Alien Other in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Popular Culture”, examines the Ripper narrative in relation to the literary and cultural modes of the late-Victorian era. Examining key late nineteenth-century literary works like Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, it argues that the Ripper reportage became part of a wider late-Victorian existential discourse centring on issues of identity and the nature of the self. It looks at the way in which these works shared with the Ripper discourse a central preoccupation with examining the “other within,” dealing with themes of duality, divided consciousness, and the division between self and other in late-Victorian culture and society. I therefore argue that such ideas were very much at the forefront of late-Victorian intellectual and philosophical culture. Examining the interplay between “high” and “low” culture in Victorian society, I detail the way in which press accounts of the Ripper murders reconfigured these literary/intellectual/philosophical ideas for a contemporary urban readership, incorporating motifs from a variety of literary sources (modern Gothic literature, “Sensation” novels, populist “penny dreadfuls”) in evoking the essential otherness of the crimes.

With my penultimate chapter, “Unconscious Mania: Jack the Ripper, the Subliminal Mind and the Unconscious Self”, I examine these notions of otherness, duality and the divided self that have been developed throughout the thesis in the light of late-Victorian conceptions of the unconscious and the subliminal mind. Examining the Ripper discourse in relation to contemporary developments in the emergent fields of psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology, I argue that it reflected a larger late-nineteenth century fascination with the issue of human consciousness and the attendant struggle between conscious will and unconscious desire. As such, it looks at the way in which dominant representations of the Ripper as both “divided self” and “alien other” built upon a series of late-Victorian medical and philosophical discourses in relation to such areas as dual consciousness, multiplex personality and the double brain. In tracing these hitherto overlooked/undeveloped links between late-Victorian notions of the unconscious and the Ripper discourse, I suggest that the deep sense of horror and anxiety that the Ripper crimes evoked was intimately connected to this sense of the unconscious as transgressive, corrupting other.

Finally, in my conclusion, I draw together these themes of self and other developed throughout the thesis and attempt to not only explain how the Ripper narrative itself was shaped, but also to offer a possible explanation as to why the crimes generated such deep cultural, social and psychological anxiety. In evaluating the psychological and sociological impact of the murders, I argue that the crimes not only provide us with a vivid insight into crucial aspects of the late-Victorian psyche, but that the Ripper narrative itself constitutes a key moment in nineteenth-century British history. In documenting these conclusions, I compare my findings with contemporary developments in the field of Ripper research, detailing how my thesis adds to, and departs from, current historiographical conventions in relation to the subject matter.

As previously discussed, in concentrating upon the cultural and social significance of the Ripper crimes, my research joins a small yet growing body of academic work on the subject. Such work has stressed the historical importance of the Ripper case, treating the crimes as a pivotal moment in the transition from a Victorian to a modern sensibility and as a “vital ingredient in the creation of modern Britain.”⁴⁰ Indeed, many of the issues raised by the Ripper murders (race, class, and gender issues, psychological and sociological concerns, the role of the tabloid press, forensic science, serial murder) foreshadowed key modern concerns. The continued relevance of the Ripper case, and its relationship to modern cultural mores, can even be seen in two controversial events that recently made news headlines – the publication of Russell Edward’s *Naming Jack the Ripper* (2014) and the opening of a “Jack the Ripper Museum” in London’s Cable Street in September 2015. Russell’s book, which (erroneously) claimed to offer irrefutable DNA proof that the Ripper was a Polish Jew by the name of Aaron Kosminski, again pushed questions of Jewish involvement in the crimes to the forefront of discussion of the case.⁴¹ The opening of the Ripper museum meanwhile, after residents had disingenuously been promised a “women’s history” museum celebrating 150 years of female cultural achievement in the East End, made news headlines in late 2015, with protesters

⁴⁰ Warwick and Willis, eds., *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, back cover.

⁴¹ For a good overview of the objections to Edwards’s claims see Stephen Ryder, “Has DNA Evidence Finally Solved the Jack the Ripper Case?” Available at: <http://www.casebook.org/dissertations/dst-edwards.html> [26/09/2014].

denouncing it as “salacious, misogynist rubbish.”⁴² Significantly, both of these concerns – issues of race and gender in relation to the Ripper discourse – are key aspects of my own work.

As such, it is clear that the Ripper case continues to exert a powerful hold on the public imagination, whilst the questions raised by the crimes continue to resonate through contemporary culture. In addressing the cultural and social significance of the murders, my work aims to further popular and scholarly understanding of the case, which has all too often remained shrouded in mythology, rumour and unsubstantiated conjecture. Thus, this thesis opens up new avenues of discussion in relation to the case, offering a number of new directions for future research and study. Examining the crimes (and their reception) from both a psychological and sociological perspective, it places the Ripper narrative firmly within the context of the cultural upheavals and tensions of the late-Victorian epoch. In doing so, it not only illuminates the Ripper case itself, but also the society and culture in which these events occurred.

⁴² See Rachael Pells, “Jack the Ripper Museum,” *Independent*, Sunday, 25 October 2015. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/jack-the-ripper-museum-fails-to-open-after-designer-labels-it-misogynist-rubbish-10446242.html> [25/10/2015].

CHAPTER ONE

“East Vs West”:

Jack the Ripper, Self and Other in Late-Victorian Society

On Saturday in several quarters of East London...it was repeatedly asserted that no Englishman could have perpetrated such a horrible crime as that of Hanbury Street and that it must have been done by a Jew (“A Riot against the Jews,” *East London Observer*, 15 September 1888).

Appearing under the heading “A Riot against the Jews,” this news report, which appeared in the *East London Observer* on Saturday 15 September 1888, detailed the atmosphere of public indignation, horror and disgust that followed in the wake of the murder of Whitechapel sex worker Annie Chapman.¹ Chapman’s mutilated body had been discovered in a yard in Hanbury Street, an area with a large Jewish population in London’s East End, in the early hours of Saturday 8 September. Her death was the second in a series of five murders that would come to be attributed to an unknown (and ultimately uncaught) killer popularly dubbed “Jack the Ripper.”² In repeating the popular assertion that “no Englishman” could have committed the murder, the *Observer* article was reflective of prevalent late-Victorian perceptions of the Ripper as racially and culturally “other” or “alien,” as somehow “outside” British society. This chapter examines these notions of the Ripper as “alien other,” arguing that such representations

¹ “A Riot Against the Jews,” *East London Observer*, 15 September 1888, available from: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_observer/elo880915 [14/08/2013].

² As noted in the introduction, there is no clear consensus regarding the exact number of Ripper victims. For the sake of consistency and clarity, I have chosen to largely focus on the five “canonical” victims, with Annie Chapman as the second victim, following Mary Anne Nichols (who was murdered on Friday August 31, 1888). (See the Appendix for further details). The sobriquet “Jack the Ripper,” meanwhile, came from a letter posted to London’s Central News Agency, a media service that collected and collated telegraph reports from correspondents in both the United Kingdom and abroad. Dated 25 September 1888, this letter was received by the Agency on 27 September. Addressed to “Dear Boss,” the letter told of how “I am down on whores and I shant [sic] quit ripping them till I do get buckled...I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little games.” The writer signed off with “yours truly Jack the Ripper.” Whether this letter was a genuine communication from the killer or simply a hoax (there was speculation that the letter was a journalistic invention) has never been established. When the contents of the letter were published in various newspapers on 1 October 1888, it sparked off a deluge of “Ripper” letters and firmly established the name “Jack the Ripper” in the public consciousness. See Stewart P. Evans and Keith Skinner, *Jack the Ripper: Letters from Hell* (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2001), 14-30.

tapped into a number of emergent cultural anxieties and prejudices of the era, specifically the fear that the “self” and the “other” had acquired a destabilising, threatening proximity to one another. Documenting the kind of racial and cultural prejudices and stereotypes that were prevalent during the period, it examines late-Victorian notions of the foreign other as “threat” – as a contaminating and corrupting influence on the social order, strength, purity and future of Anglo-Saxon British society. Tracing these self/other tensions through press accounts of the murders, police reports, letters from the public and nineteenth-century literature, it argues that the shadowy, indistinct figure of the Ripper came to embody late-Victorian notions of the other as a transgressive, corrupting force, threatening the boundaries of self, society and nation.

This perception that “no Englishman” could have been responsible for the Ripper murders is found throughout press reports of the era. Indeed, many contemporary newspaper articles strongly evoked themes of race and racial otherness in their treatment of the crimes. The *Star*, for instance, wrote of the murderer “stalking down his victim like a Pawnee Indian,” whilst the *Pall Mall Gazette* suggested he was “as much a savage as an untamed Australian aborigine.”³ The influential editor of the *Gazette*, William Thomas Stead, similarly wrote of the as-yet nameless killer as a “savage” as “capable of bathing his hands in blood as any Sioux,” in an article that appeared the following day.⁴ These evocations of racial otherness are also apparent in *The Whitechapel Murders, or the Mysteries of the East End*, an anonymous pamphlet published in 1888 and distributed throughout London:

Brutality in the shape of bloodthirsty hacking [is] an aggravation for which English society...declines to be responsible. When stories appear in the newspapers of atrocities on dead bodies we can generally boast that they...belong to a lower civilisation than ours.⁵

³ “Horror upon Horror,” *Star*, 8 September 1888, 2, available from http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880908.html [10/05/2014]; William Westall, “A Precedent for the Whitechapel Murder,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Friday, 7 September 1888, available from British Library Newspapers: http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNCN&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=unimelb&docPage=article&docId=BA3200412738&contentSet=LTO&source=gale [14/10/2014].

⁴ W.T. Stead, “Another Murder – And More to Follow?” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Saturday, 8 September 1888, Issue 7326, 1. Available from: tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5FTBG0 [2/10/2017].

⁵ *The Whitechapel Murders, or the Mysteries of the East End*, Anon, published by G. Purkess, 1888. Quoted in: David Schmid, *Natural Born Celebrities: Serial Killers in American Culture* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 39.

This perception that the Ripper crimes were the work of “lower” races outside of mainstream British society is similarly found in many of the letters written by members of the public in regard to the murders. A “John Binny,” writing to the City of London Police, for instance, suggested that the killer had to be a “Malay cook,” since no “Britisher” [sic] could “act so like a fiend of hell.”⁶ Another correspondent blamed the murders on “Foreign Medical Students [original emphasis] who have no belief in God or man.”⁷ A “William Gow,” meanwhile, suggested the murders were the work of a gang of “Indian hill tribesmen,” who wore the “generative organs” of their victims as magical amulets.⁸ In a similar vein, another letter found in the Metropolitan Police Files advanced the theory that the murderer, having contracted a sexual disease “from that class of women known as unfortunate,” was “using the part cut off from the woman as a kind of poultice to suck off the virus from his ulcers.” This, the anonymous writer suggested, was evidence that the killer was from a Chinese or Malay background, as these races were apparently known to “commit this kind of crime for this very purpose.”⁹ In this way, such public and press speculation highlighted the essential “foreignness” of the murders, whilst downplaying any suggestion of “English” culpability in the crimes.

This reportage drew heavily on themes of imperialism and national and civic identity, juxtaposing a “civilised” British self against a “savage” external “other.” As Lynda Nead notes in *Victorian Babylon*, London during this era was the “centre of a global commerce that was subjugating the rest of the world; it was the seat of an empire that was defining contemporary history.”¹⁰ It was also an Empire strongly defined by colonisation and colonial power. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the British Empire expanded dramatically; by the 1880s its

⁶ As discussed in Chapter Five, John Binny was a noted journalist and social investigator of the period. Whether the City Police correspondent was the same John Binny (or perhaps someone consciously invoking his name) is unclear. “Letters Relating to the Whitechapel Murders 1888-1890: Letters from Members of the Public to the City Police,” Corporation of London Records Office. London Metropolitan Archives. See also L. Perry Curtis Jr, “Responses to the Ripper Murders: Letters to Old Jewry,” in *Ripperology*, ed. Paul Begg (London: Magpie, 2007), 190.

⁷ “Whitechapel Murders Papers: Letters Relating to the ‘Jack the Ripper’ Killings,” London Metropolitan Archives. CLRO Ref Police Box 3.15 no. 87.

⁸ “Whitechapel Murders Papers.” CLRO Ref Police Box 3:14, no. 78. Fiche 07.

⁹ CLRO Ref Police Box 3.17 no. 200. For further information in relation to perceived links between race, the female body, and disease in Victorian culture see Chapter Five.

¹⁰ Nead, *Victorian Babylon*, 3.

territories covered approximately “one quarter of the earth's land surface.”¹¹ With this came an imperialistic insistence on the “civilising” influence of British colonialism on supposed primitive or “savage” cultures. The statesman Charles Adderley, for instance, suggested in the House of Commons that such colonisation was motivated by the “desire of spreading throughout the habitable globe all the characteristics of Englishmen – their energy, their civilization, their religion, and their freedom.”¹² In this respect, it is significant that the racial allusions found in the aforementioned Ripper reportage directly referenced the indigenous subjects of British-colonised territories such as India, Australia and America. As such, the non-British subject became a kind of mirror used to “stabilize the colonialist’s inverted self-image,”¹³ an “other” against which the self could be defined. In this way, clear physical and mental boundaries were drawn, dividing “home from alien territory, the included from the excluded, the familiar from the other.”¹⁴ As Richard Kearney points out in *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness*, it is a discourse that sees an “elect nation or people” defining themselves against an external, exotic “alien adversary” in order to separate a “pure” self from an “impure” other.¹⁵ In this way, an idealised British self-image was constructed, one which projected onto the “other” all those characteristics and behaviours that threatened or undermined this sense of self-identity. The Ripper reportage reflected this colonialist self-image, stressing the “religious, educational, and philanthropic” achievements of nineteenth-century Britain, juxtaposing such achievements against the “barbarity” of the Ripper murders.¹⁶ The *East End News*, for instance, wrote of the “revolting” crimes as a “fearful blot on our boasted civilisation and philanthropy,” whilst London’s *Evening Standard* suggested they were a “fearful testimony to the amount of hideous ferocity which still lies close alongside the borders of our fairest civilisation.”¹⁷ The *Daily Telegraph* described the murders in similar terms, writing of how such “inhuman deeds” were a “deep humiliation to every Londoner who

¹¹ See Karl Beckson, *London in the 1890s: A Cultural History* (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), 344-78.

¹² Quoted in *Ibid*, 344.

¹³ Susan Yi Sencindiver, Maria Beville and Marie Lauritzen, “Introduction,” in *Otherness: A Multilateral Perspective*, ed. Susan Yi Sencindiver, Maria Beville and Marie Lauritzen (Frankfurt...: Peter Lang, 2011), 21.

¹⁴ Joel S. Migdal, “Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints,” in *Boundaries and Belonging: States and Societies in the Struggle to Shape Identities and Local Practices*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7.

¹⁵ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 72.

¹⁶ “Murder in Whitechapel,” *Evening Standard* (London), 1 September 1888. Available from: www.casebook.org/press_report/evening_standard/18880901.html [08/05/2014].

¹⁷ “The Mysterious Atrocities,” *East End News*, Friday, 5 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_end_news/een881005.html [11/10/2016]; “Murder in Whitechapel,” *Evening Standard* (London), 1 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_standard/18880901.html [17/01/2017].

has heretofore taken a just pride in the many evidences of a high civilisation abounding in the English capital.”¹⁸ With their pronounced emphasis on the issue of “civilisation,” such news reports reflected wider imperialistic notions of Britain as morally, intellectually, and biologically superior to those “other” (perceivably savage or barbarous) races beyond their borders.

The Ripper crimes, therefore, were a source of anxiety and fear in that they located this otherness within the boundaries of the British nation itself, forcing commentators to look within their own borders for a suitably exotic scapegoat on which to blame the murders. With the Ripper reportage, this sense of otherness became inexorably linked to the locale of the murders themselves – the “loathsome dens” of London’s East End.¹⁹ Encompassing such areas as Whitechapel, Shoreditch and Spitalfields, and known colloquially as “the Abyss,” the East End was generally seen as a “haven of immorality, evil, and savagery,” a place of poverty, crime, prostitution, corruption, vice and “godlessness.”²⁰ According to late nineteenth-century writer and journalist Arthur Morrison’s *Tales of Mean Streets* (1894), it was an “evil plexus of slums that hide human creeping things,” a place where “every citizen wears a black eye.”²¹ Writing at the height of the Ripper panic, the *Daily Telegraph* described the East End as a place where:

The poverty and misery of our huge population settle down after daylight, as the dregs fall to the bottom of a vessel in the dark; these foul breeding-places of vice and filthy refuges of recklessness, where womanhood must unsex itself, and self-respect abandons everything to despair, and where to be decent is out of the question and to remain virtuous is unpermitted and impossible.²²

Significantly, the London Docklands were also situated in the East End, and, as such, the area became an entry point for foreign travellers and immigrants into England.²³ By the time of the Ripper murders, successive waves of immigration (from such areas as Poland, Russia,

¹⁸ “Two More Women Butchered in Whitechapel and Aldgate,” *Daily Telegraph*, Monday, 1 October 1888, 5, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_telegraph/dt881001.html [14/01/2017].

¹⁹ “What We Think,” *Star*, Wednesday, 19 September 1888, 1, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880919.html [17/01/2017].

²⁰ Peter Ackroyd, “Introduction,” in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 21; Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, 55.

²¹ Arthur Morrison, *Tales of Mean Streets* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company: 1895), 15 [originally published 1894].

²² “The Metropolitan Police,” *Daily Telegraph*, Saturday, 22 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_telegraph/dt880922.html [18/01/2017].

²³ For more information, see: <http://www.eastlondonhistory.co.uk/london-docklands-canary-wharf/> [22/06/2017].

Romania, Austria, Asia, Africa and Ireland) had dramatically altered the racial and cultural makeup of the area, with some forty per cent of the population of Whitechapel, for instance, consisting of recently-arrived Eastern European Jewish immigrants (theories of the Ripper as Jewish immigrant are dealt with in my next chapter). As such, the essential “otherness” of the East End was defined in distinctly racial terms. As Peter Ackroyd notes in his introduction to *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, during this era the East End was increasingly seen as a separate, alien territory within London itself, becoming a kind of microcosm of “that large and menacing ‘East’ that lay beyond the boundaries of Christian Europe.”²⁴ Other commentators likened the area to the “wilds” of “darkest Africa,” with the nineteenth-century philanthropist and founder of the Salvation Army, General William Booth, suggesting that:

As there is a darkest Africa is there not also a darkest England... May we not find a parallel at our own doors, and discover within a stone's throw of our cathedrals and palaces similar horrors to those which Stanley has found existing in the great Equatorial forest... The foul and fetid breath of our slums is almost as poisonous as that of the African swamp.... What a satire it is upon our Christianity and our civilisation, that the existence of these colonies of heathens and savages in the heart of our capital should attract so little attention.²⁵

Similar racial allusions are found throughout the Ripper reportage, with London's *Morning Advertiser*, for example, depicting the East End at the time of the Ripper crimes as a place where “successive generations of vice” had “bred up along us a race of savages more brutal than the aborigines of New Guinea, or the least civilised parts of Central Africa.”²⁶ This sense of the East End as a savage, exotic and foreign urban jungle, a “dark continent” of vice and otherness that lay “within walking distance”²⁷ of civilised society, is one that played a pivotal role in the development of the Ripper narrative, hugely contributing to popular perceptions of the Ripper as threatening, alien other.

This sense of threatening otherness is evident, for example, in “Murder in Whitechapel”, an article which appeared in the *Evening Standard* on 1 September 1888, the day after the body of the first “official” Ripper victim Mary Ann Nichols had been found in Buck's Row, a small

²⁴ Ackroyd, “Introduction,” in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, 21.

²⁵ Booth, *In Darkest England*, 11-12.

²⁶ *Morning Advertiser* (London), 19 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/morning_advertiser/18880919.html [14/11/2016].

²⁷ These quotes are taken from George R. Sims' *How the Poor Live*, originally published in 1883. George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (Piccadilly: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 1.

thoroughfare in the eastern section of Whitechapel.²⁸ Writing of how the “monstrous and wanton brutality” of the murder was “something we might expect from a race of savages,” the article noted that:

It is terrible to reflect that at the end of the nineteenth century, after all our efforts, religious, educational, and philanthropic, such revolting and sickening barbarity should still be found in the heart of this great City, and be able to lurk undetected in close contact with all that is refined, elegant, and cultivated in human society.²⁹

With its imperialistic allusions to religious, educational and philanthropic “efforts,” and its concern that such “barbarity” could be found in “close contact” with “cultivated” British society, the article reflects the prevalent late-Victorian anxiety that the “savage” and the “civilised” had acquired a destabilising, threatening proximity to one another. This perceived tension between “savage” and “civilised” races and modes of existence strongly underpinned much of the Ripper reportage, reflecting the fundamental division between “East” and “West” that characterised late nineteenth-century English culture. This East/West duality is apparent in late-Victorian representations of London as a “bifurcated” city, divided between the wealth and power of its opulent West End and the “godlessness” and “squalor” of the poverty-stricken East End. These divisions essentially saw the metropolis separated into two distinct zones, one of “respectability” the other of “iniquity”, with clearly delineated mental, physical and geographic boundaries between the two.³⁰ These geographical divisions between East and West reflected wider imperialistic notions of Western culture as a beacon of civilisation and progress, with Britain seen to be “carrying the light of civilisation into the haunts of barbarism” world-wide.³¹ In such depictions, the “West” represented the “pure,” civilised, advanced English self, with the “East” acting as its “impure” antithesis, its exotic, barbarous other. In this way, London’s West End represented the perceived cultural, social, religious, economic and philanthropic achievements of England in the nineteenth century, whilst the East End was

²⁸ It should be noted that whilst Mary Ann Nichols was the first “official” victim, many commentators, past and present, have suggested that several earlier attacks could have been the work of the Ripper. The murder of East End sex worker Martha Tabram on 7 August 1888, for instance, has often been regarded as a potential Ripper crime. For more information, see Appendix. See also: Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 14-36.

²⁹ “Murder in Whitechapel,” *Evening Standard*, 1 September 1888, available at: www.casebook.org/press_reportsevening_standard/18880901.html [08/05/2014].

³⁰ William Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel 1880-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 22; Carol Margaret Davison, “Blood Brothers: Dracula and Jack the Ripper,” in *Dracula: Sucking Through the Century 1897-1997*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison (Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1997), 150.

³¹ “A Cry of Despair,” *Echo* (London), 2 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/echo/18881002.html [18/01/2017].

defined in terms of its threatening, oppositional otherness. Configured into “familiar and unfamiliar spaces,” London therefore became defined not only by geographical boundaries but also by distinct mental boundaries – what Joel S. Migdal refers to as the concept of “mental maps.” In late-Victorian England, these mental demarcations became a kind of “limit against which the self [was] defined,”³² with the East End characterised in terms of the transgressive, contaminating threat it posed to this sense of self.

At the heart of such representations was an underlying fear that this moral and physical corruption would spread beyond the boundaries that separated East from West and come to “infect” wider British society. These themes of foreignness, tension, infection and threat are evident, for instance, in John Henry Mackay’s *The Anarchists: A Picture of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (1891), wherein he suggests that the East End:

Encircles with its mighty tentacles the life and the wealth of the city and of the West End...a world in itself, separated from the West as the servant is separated from his master...one hears about it...as of something far off, somewhat as one hears about a foreign land inhabited by other people with other manners and customs.³³

These themes are similarly evident in “What We Think,” an editorial published in *The Star* on 19 September 1888, which used the example of the Ripper murders to attack the “loathsome dens” of the East End “herd,” a herd who would “one day swarm, in our time of trouble, and smash our civilisation like so much pie-crust.”³⁴ The article’s use of the term “pie-crust” is significant, echoing Andrew Mearns’s description of late-Victorian London (as found in his sensational 1883 exposé *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*) as a “vast mass of moral corruption...of absolute godlessness...concealed by the thinnest crust of civilisation and decency.”³⁵ In suggesting that the separation between “civilisation” and “godlessness” was

³² Migdal, “Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints,” 5-21.

³³ Mackay’s book was conceived between 1887 and 1888. He notes in his introduction, in reference to Whitechapel, how “I did not dream that the very section which I had selected for more detailed description would soon thereafter be in everybody’s mouth in consequence of the murders of ‘Jack the Ripper.’” John Henry Mackay, *The Anarchists: A Picture of Civilization at the Close of the Nineteenth Century* (Boston: Benj. R. Tucker), 1891. A full transcription of the work is available at: <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/john-henry-mackay-the-anarchists-a-picture-of-civilization-at-the-close-of-the-nineteenth-centu> [16/08/2016].

³⁴ “What We Think,” *Star*, Wednesday, 19 September 1888, 1.

³⁵ Published anonymously, as a small penny pamphlet in 1883, the authorship of *Bitter Cry* was eventually traced to Rev Andrew Mearns, Secretary of the London Congregational Union. The effect of the pamphlet was immediate and pronounced, with such newspapers as the *Pall Mall Gazette* discussing and debating its significance at length. Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London*, 55.

little more than that of a “pie-crust,” easily penetrated, these descriptions reflected late-Victorian anxieties of the “pure” English self merging with, and being subsumed by, the “impure” alien other. In doing so, they suggested that the mental, physical, and geographical boundaries that had previously separated self from other, East from West, and “civilised” from “savage,” had, by the late nineteenth century, begun to irrevocably break down. As Walkowitz notes, the cultural and social landscape of London shifted, during this period, from “one that was geographically bounded to one whose boundaries were indiscriminately and dangerously transgressed.”³⁶ Or as Mearns himself puts it in *The Bitter Cry*: “THIS TERRIBLE FLOOD OF SIN AND MISERY IS GAINING UPON US. It is rising every day.”³⁷ As William Greenslade points out, this “movement across boundaries,” this “mingling” of self and other, was viewed with alarm and horror by late nineteenth-century commentators,³⁸ reflecting the contemporary fear that “high civilisation” could fall and be replaced by something barbaric, primitive. These concerns were seemingly borne out by the Ripper crimes, with commentators suggesting that the police, in failing to keep Whitechapel under control, had let “the first city of the world...lapse into primeval savagery.”³⁹ To these observers, the Ripper murders seemed to reflect the beleaguered state of late nineteenth-century English society, a society seemingly under mortal attack by subversive, transgressive elements from within the culture.

Such commentaries drew strongly on contemporary fears of “degeneration,” specifically the fear that, if left unchecked, British society could devolve or “degenerate” into chaos and savagery. This belief that mankind could “alter” due to the influence of “criminal or diseased progenitors” and “return to the characteristics peculiar to primitive savages” was a source of deep anxiety in late nineteenth-century culture.⁴⁰ As found in Cesare Lombroso’s *Criminal*

³⁶ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 29.

³⁷ Ibid, 56.

³⁸ Greenslade, *Degeneration, Culture and the Novel*, 22-23.

³⁹ “The Press on the Police of London,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Monday, 10 September 1888. Available at British Library Newspapers: http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNCN&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=unimelb&docPage=article&docId=BA3200412798&contentSet=LTO&source=gale [06/01/2017].

⁴⁰ Gina Lombroso Ferrero and Cesare Lombroso, *Criminal Man According to the Classification of Cesare Lombroso* (New York and London: The Knickerbocker Press, 1911). These concepts of degeneration were complex and tended to vary over time, with various biological, psychological and sociological explanations given for these conditions. Moreover, as William Greenslade suggests, by the late nineteenth-century, degeneration has become a “catch-all term of abuse,” reflecting the view that modern civilisation itself had become “a pathological condition.” See William Greenslade, “Fitness and the Fin de Siècle.” *Fin de Siècle/Fin du Globe: Fears and Fantasies of the Late Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Stokes (New York: St Martin’s Place, 1992), 38. These concepts of degeneration are discussed in greater detail in the following chapters.

Man (1876), Edwin Lankester's *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism* (1880), Henry Maudsley's *Concerning Degeneration* (1883), and Max Nordau's later *Degeneration* (1892), these theories of degeneration focused heavily on issues of racial "pollution" and contamination, reflecting an "imperialistic insistence on the racial superiority of the world's colonisers over the colonised."⁴¹ Seen as a "self-reproducing force" that jumped "across bodies" and crossed biological, racial, and societal borders, degeneration was considered a "rapid and fatal" process that led inexorably to social disintegration.⁴² As Mary Douglas observes in *Purity and Danger*, these concepts of contamination and "social pollution" were defined in terms of a "danger" that came from "transgressing the internal lines of the system,"⁴³ a danger of the impure, "exterior" other merging with the pure "interior" self. Such concepts are found in the highly influential contemporary works of founding father of "criminal anthropology" Cesare Lombroso, who postulated that there were "whole tribes and races" that were "given to crime" and that close proximity to such races (through immigration) could have a corrupting influence on the general population. Noting how "the agglomeration of population produced by immigration is a strong incentive to crime," Lombroso suggested that:

The primitive instincts of theft, homicide, and lust, the germs of which lie dormant in every individual as long as he is alone, particularly if kept in check by sound moral training, awaken and develop suddenly into gigantic proportions when he comes into contact with...those who already possess such criminal tendencies in a marked degree.⁴⁴

This image of civilised society being engulfed by "savage" elements within that society is one found in the work of a number of nineteenth-century degeneration theorists. As British psychiatrist Henry Maudsley noted in *Body and Will* (1884):

Survival of the fittest does not mean always survival of the best in the sense of the highest organism; it means only the survival of what which is best suited to the circumstances, good or bad, in which

⁴¹ Daniel Pick, *Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c.1848 - c.1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 21. See also: Edwin Ray Lankester, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism* (London, Macmillan, 1880); Max Simon Nordau, *Degeneration* (London: William Heinemann, 1895, originally published 1892).

⁴² Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 66.

⁴³ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 122.

⁴⁴ Ferrero and Lombroso, *Criminal Man*, 79.

it is placed – the survival of a savage in a savage social medium, of a rogue among rogues, of a parasite where a parasite alone can live.⁴⁵

These concepts were routinely applied to London's immigrant population; the late nineteenth-century politician and journalist Lord Dunraven (aka Windham T.W. Quin), for instance, wrote of how such immigrants were:

Used to an infinitely lower standard of living than the English with whom they compete. They are a lower form of humanity; and occupy a lower grade of existence...They can feed off the offal of the streets, and live in conditions...of indecency, dirt and overcrowding incompatible with existence to an Englishman...it is the superiority of the lower over the higher order of organism – the comparative indestructibility of the lower forms of animal life.⁴⁶

These themes are again evident in the contemporary writings of William Wilkins, the secretary of the “Association for Preventing the Immigration of Destitute Aliens,” who suggested that successive waves of foreign immigration were creating living standards “which to the more highly developed Englishman and Englishwoman [means] disease and death.”⁴⁷ Similar concerns are found throughout the Ripper reportage, wherein the “savagery” of the murders was seen as the inevitable consequence of an endemic and invasive East End culture of degeneration and corruption, one which, according to hyperbolic press reports of the time, threatened to engulf “higher” civilisation and the British nation itself.

As such, both the Ripper and the East End became locked in a symbiotic relationship, with both representing the degenerate, invasive otherness that lurked beneath the surface of “civilised” nineteenth-century English society. *The Star*, for example, depicted the East End at the time of the Ripper murders as a breeding ground for “moral sewerage and poison,” resulting in a “residuum as foul, as dangerous, as loathly as any that haunted the back streets of Rome in old Imperial days.”⁴⁸ Such commentaries routinely drew upon the historical example of the Roman Empire to illustrate these themes of racial enervation and national decline and fall. As Wilkins put it during this period:

⁴⁵ Henry Maudsley, *Body and Will: Being an Essay Concerning Will in Its Metaphysical, Physiological and Pathological Aspects* (New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1884), 237.

⁴⁶ Earl of Dunraven (Windham T.W. Quin), “The Invasion of Destitute Aliens,” *Nineteenth Century*, 31 June 1892, 988.

⁴⁷ William Wilkins, *The Alien Invasion* (London: Methuen & Co, 1892), 95.

⁴⁸ “What We Think,” *Star*, Wednesday, 19 September 1888, 1.

When Rome in the height of her Imperial splendour, welcomed all nationalities...it was a sign of the canker which in time ate away the heart of the Empire. So, too, England in the Victorian era – an era of prosperity unequalled even by Imperial Rome throws wide her arms to receive the destitute, the criminal and the worthless of other lands.⁴⁹

In the case of the East End, these immigrants were depicted as not simply “criminal” and “destitute” but actively degenerate. Defined in terms of their alien “foreignness,” these inhabitants of the East End were routinely portrayed as bestial, subhuman – a devolved and degenerate subspecies. According to Booth’s *In Darkest England*, the East End of the late nineteenth century was one populated by “beasts of prey in human shape” who were “steeped in vice, eaten up by every social and physical malady.”⁵⁰ Similar characterisations are found throughout the Ripper narrative, with London’s *Morning Advertiser* commenting on how:

The lowest type of life in East end rookeries is lower, mentally and morally, than the life of the average savage. It would, indeed, be difficult to find among the lower races instances of crime excelling in barbarity that which now makes the public imagination reel in angered disgust.⁵¹

With its pointed references to “lower races,” the article drew clear links between the “savagery” of the Ripper crimes and the “savage” nature of those “other” races that populated and represented the East End. This connection between the crimes and the social conditions of the East End is evident, for example, in the *Star*’s contention that the area’s “savage incontinence of life,” and “utter absence of moral, of religious, of prudential restraints,” were responsible for the “production of such monstrous growths as the Whitechapel murders.”⁵² As Johannes Fabian points out in *Time and the Other*, the term “savagery” is a “marker of the past,” denoting an early stage in the evolutionary process.⁵³ In being applied to the Ripper crimes, and, by extension, to those East End “others” suspected of the murders, it signalled a violation and transgression of the boundaries of civilisation and society, one that perceivably threatened the social order and future of the British Empire.

⁴⁹ Wilkins, *The Alien Invasion*, 57 -8.

⁵⁰ Booth, *In Darkest England*, available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/475> [6/07/2014]

⁵¹ *Morning Advertiser* (London), 1 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/morning_advertiser/18880901.html [14/11/2016].

⁵² “What We Think,” *Star*, Wednesday, 19 September 1888, 1.

⁵³ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Subject* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, originally published 1983), 75.

In this way, the vehement insistence that “no Englishman” could have committed the Ripper crimes was one which highlighted a fundamental tension between “self” and “other” in late-Victorian British culture. This dualistic tension was evident from the earliest stages of the Ripper narrative, with commentators using the example of the murders to advance themes of racial and geographical otherness, juxtaposing notions of the civilised, advanced English self against a foreign, degenerate, alien other that purportedly threatened and undermined the wider culture. Such depictions were intimately connected to nineteenth-century Britain’s sense of itself as the world’s leading superpower, as culturally, biologically, intellectually and morally superior to the rest of the world. The Ripper crimes, in forcing commentators to confront the underlying “otherness” within their own culture and society, fatally destabilised this English self-image, revealing the deep sense of fragmentation, incoherence, disorder and division that, in many ways, marked English life during this period. This sense of duality and division was most clearly evoked in the symbolic split between “West” and “East” that characterised late nineteenth-century London (and, by extension, wider British society). If these West/ East End distinctions served as an attempt to reaffirm some kind of idealised English self-image (with the “West” representing larger notions of progress and civilisation), they instead exposed the inherent hypocrisy and instability of late-Victorian society. The Ripper crimes, and the East End culture that ostensibly produced them, shocked because they seemingly revealed these ideas of social advancement and “high civilisation” to be a kind of grand self-delusion. Blurring and transgressing all those boundaries – between self and other, civilised and savage, West and East – that Victorian society tried so desperately to impose and maintain, the Ripper crimes would therefore lead commentators to question all those assumptions about national and personal identity that had previously governed nineteenth-century British life. In this way, this image of a geographically, culturally and racially divided cityscape evoked the deeper schisms that lay beneath the surface of Victorian society. This sense of duality and rupture, this fundamental tension between self and other, would go on to underpin the entire Ripper narrative, drawing the murders into a much larger late-Victorian debate concerning British identity and the nature of the self.

CHAPTER TWO

“The Men That Will Not Be Blamed for Nothing”: Jack the Ripper, Jewishness and the Other as Threat in Late- Victorian Culture

The Juwes are The men that Will not be Blamed for nothing [sic]. (Chalked message found on a doorway in Whitechapel’s Goulston Street, near a bloodied piece of clothing belonging to Ripper victim Catherine Eddowes)

The excitement in Hanbury-street and the surrounding neighbourhood still continues, and extra police have been employed...in this they are very much hampered by noisy crowds of men and boys crying ‘Down with the Jews!’...Just as our correspondent was writing a gang of young vagabonds marched down Hanbury-street shouting ‘Down with the Jews!’ ‘It was a Jew who did it!’ ‘No Englishman did it!’...As the night advances the disorderly mobs who openly express antipathy for the Jews increase (“Yesterday’s Whitechapel Tragedy,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, Sunday, 9 September 1888).¹

Given the prevalent late-Victorian focus on themes of racial and cultural otherness noted in Chapter One, it was perhaps inevitable that the sizable Jewish immigrant population of the East End would come under suspicion for the Ripper crimes. Emphasising themes of foreign invasion, infection and threat, these representations of the Ripper as a Jewish immigrant dominated early press and public conjecture in relation to the crimes, reflecting a nexus of anxieties about the disruptive, contaminating potential of the “other” in English society. Drawing upon an extensive array of primary documentation (press reports, police files, letters from the public, witness statements), this chapter argues that these anti-Jewish remonstrations were again reflective of the fundamental tension between self and other that marked late-Victorian culture and society. It documents the way in which this image of the Ripper-as-Jew embodied late-Victorian fears of degeneration, social pollution and cultural deterioration, with the “barbarity” of the Ripper crimes being aligned with the perceived “savage,” uncivilised

¹ “Yesterday’s Whitechapel Tragedy,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, Sunday, 9 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/lloyds_weekly_news/18880909.html# [24/07/2017].

nature of Jewish culture. I argue that these representations of the Ripper as Jewish immigrant therefore condensed and consolidated popular late nineteenth-century fears of the foreign other as a contaminating, transgressive presence, threatening the boundaries, social order, purity and future of both self and nation.

The 1870s and 1880s had seen a huge influx of East European Jewish immigrants into Britain, resulting in a dramatic increase in the size and nature of London's Jewish population. Estimates put the number of Jewish immigrants living in London around the time of the Ripper murders at between 80,000 and 100,000, of which some 40,000 were based in the East End.² The majority of these immigrants came from Poland and Russia, fleeing the persecution, anti-Jewish violence, poverty and social restrictions they faced in Eastern Europe. The situation of Russian Jews, in particular, had become increasingly untenable; the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in St Petersburg in 1881 led to a wave of anti-Jewish violence (or “pogroms”), brought on by the (inaccurate) belief that Jewish radicals had organised the murder.³ Similar pogroms swept Russia during the reign of Nicholas I, with Jewish communities “prohibited from engaging in agriculture, denied residence in cities, and barred from education and the professions.”⁴ Fleeing to London, and unfamiliar with the English language, these immigrants settled in recognised Jewish districts such as Whitechapel and Spitalfields (both of which were in close proximity to the London Docks), becoming part of the East End's “ghetto” community.⁵ Seen as “strange, menacing, and dangerous,” as “aliens and outsiders,” who could not be fully assimilated into British society, these Jewish immigrants came to embody the essential “otherness” of the East End.⁶ Such themes are evident, for instance, in *London: A Pilgrimage* (1872), written by the English journalist Blanchard Jerrold, which describes an East

² See Anne J. Kershen, “The Immigrant Community of Whitechapel at the Time of the Ripper Murders,” in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, 65-97; Ackroyd, *London: The Biography*, 662-75; William J. Fishman, *East End 1888: A Year in a London Borough amongst the Labouring Poor* (London: Duckworth, 1988). A number of writers have suggested that these figures were even higher. Peter Ackroyd, for instance, suggests that there were around 100,000 Jewish immigrants living in Whitechapel and Spitalfields at the time, however, this estimate seems somewhat exaggerated, and he gives no corroborating evidence to support his claim.

³ Jewish involvement in the assassination of the Tsar was minimal; as Drew D. Gray notes, only one Jewish woman had a minor role in the terrorist cell (*Narodnaya Volya*) that had carried out the killing. See: Gray, *London's Shadows*, 83.

⁴ Knepper, “British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire,” 62.

⁵ As pointed out in the previous chapter, the East End's proximity to the docks and the river Thames was a major factor influencing Jewish settlement in Whitechapel, with the East End acting as “the point of entry to the United Kingdom for those who disembarked at St Katherine Dock.” Paul Begg and John Bennett, *Jack the Ripper: The Forgotten Victims* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 13.

⁶ Todd M. Endelman, *Radical Assimilation in English Jewish History 1656-1945*, 98. See also Knepper, “British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire,” 61-79.

End full of dirt, unsanitary living conditions, poverty and “swarthy” and “leering” foreigners, whom he compares to “Fagin,” the stereotypical Jewish pimp/criminal of Charles Dickens’s 1838 novel *Oliver Twist*.⁷ He notes how the West Londoner, in entering the district, “is as completely in a strange land as any traveller from the Continent.”⁸ These representations highlighted themes of Jewishness as an insidious, contaminating threat and located this threat within a transgressive and “alien” East End culture of immorality and disease.

As such, the visible concentration of Jewish immigrants in and around the Ripper murder sites, coupled with their status as exotic, strange and unfathomable “outsiders,” made them obvious targets for suspicion and blame. As Sara Blair points out, the Ripper was “virtually made to order” as an embodiment of Anglo-British stereotypes of the Jew.⁹ Regularly linked with a wide range of “social evils,” including crime, disease, usury, trafficking and prostitution, the Jewish immigrants that populated the East End were routinely portrayed as “foreign and inexplicable figures” who could “erupt into irrational violence at any moment.”¹⁰ This sense of threatening otherness is found throughout the Ripper reportage, with early press speculation in regards to the murders focusing on (generally unreliable) reports of the killer as “dark” complexioned and “foreign” looking.¹¹ As Nathan Abrams notes, such press descriptions were “vague but stereotypically Jewish: dark beard and moustache, dark jacket and trousers, black felt hat, foreign accent.”¹² More explicitly, visual representations of the Ripper, as found in such publications as the *Illustrated Police News* and the *Illustrated London News*, routinely

⁷ The actual term “East End” was coined c.1882. For the sake of consistency, I’ve used the term “East End” throughout, even when referring to events that predated its general use.

⁸ Blanchard Jerrold and Gustave Dore, *London: A Pilgrimage* (London: Anthem Press 2005, originally published 1872), 144.

⁹ Sara Blair, “Henry James, Jack the Ripper, and the Cosmopolitan Jew: Staging Authorship in ‘The Tragic Muse’,” *ELH*, Vol. 63, No. 2 (Summer, 1996): 490, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30030229> [27/04/2014].

¹⁰ Martin A. Danahay, in the Appendix to Stevenson, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 178.

¹¹ The *Daily Telegraph*, for instance, suggested that the “Berner-street suspect was described as a very dark man. The Hanbury-street victim was seen in company with a dark-foreign-looking man, and a similar description was given of a suspected individual at the time of the Bucks-row murder.” Such representations may have derived from Elizabeth Darrell’s witness statement in relation to Annie Chapman’s murder, in which she described Chapman’s companion on the night of her murder as “dark-complexioned” and “shabby,” and noted that “he seemed to be a foreigner.” As she admitted that she never saw the man’s face, her statement is of limited value. See: John J. Eddleston, *Jack the Ripper: An Encyclopaedia* (London: Metro, 2002), 151; “Dorset-Street Murder: Inquest and Verdict. Description of the Assassin.” *Daily Telegraph*, Tuesday, 13 November 1888, Mepo 3/140, National Archives.

¹² Nathan Abrams, “When Anti-Semites Screamed out Jack the Ripper,” *Haaretz*, 9 September 2014, available from: <http://www.haaretz.com/life/movies-television/.premium-1.614917> [13/10/2014].

depicted him as a kind of stereotypical Jewish caricature, with hooked nose, beard and dishevelled appearance (see Figure 1).



Fig. 1 – “Sketch of the Supposed Murderer”

Illustrated Police News, 20 October 1888.

These themes of otherness and threat were evoked by a range of commentators in connecting Jewish immigrants to the Ripper crimes. One such theory, printed in *The Times*, suggested that among “certain fanatical Jews there existed a superstition to the effect that if a Jew became intimate with a Christian woman he could atone for his offence by slaying and mutilating the object of his passion.”¹³ Emphasising themes of fanaticism, primitivism, superstition, occultism, sexual immorality, violence and ritualistic blood sacrifice, such theories tapped into popular racial anxieties surrounding Jewish culture and religious practices. In a similar vein were popular notions of the killer as a “Jewish minister” who was acting on the “literal meaning of the law as laid down in their Bible” – specifically the belief that “a woman who is a prostitute shall be put to death.”¹⁴ These theories reflected the wider self/other dichotomy inherent in

¹³ “The Ritter Trial,” *Times* [London], 16 October 1888: 3. The Times Digital Archive. Available at: <http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupN=unimelb&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS50515792&type=multimage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [12/08/2013].

¹⁴ See “To Lord Mayor of London,” CLRO Ref Police Box 3.13 no 20, 15 October 1888.

late-Victorian society, evoking the essential otherness of Jewish culture, its perceived “apartness” from the conventions and standards of mainstream British life.

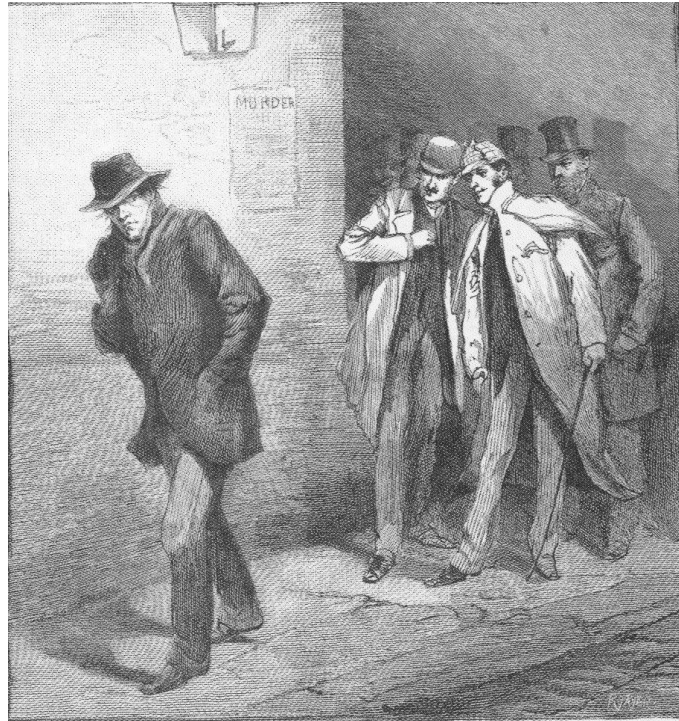


Fig. 2 – Representation of the Ripper

Illustrated London News, 13 October 1888.¹⁵

These suspicions of Jewish culture are similarly found in the official police files of the Ripper investigation. A high proportion of the 130 suspects interviewed by police were of Jewish backgrounds, with assistant commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Criminal Investigation Department (and the officer in overall command of the investigation) Robert Anderson later noting that:

One did not need to be a Sherlock Holmes to discover that the criminal was a sexual maniac of a virulent type...his people knew of his guilt, and refused to give him up to justice...the conclusion we came to was that he and his people were low-class Jews, for it is a remarkable fact that people of that class in the East End will not give up one of their number.¹⁶

¹⁵ Note the exaggerated “Englishness” (top hats, canes, “deerstalker” caps) of the onlookers, particularly compared to the furtive “otherness” of the suspect himself.

¹⁶ Robert Anderson, *The Lighter Side of My Official Life* (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1910), 137-38. Available at: https://archive.org/stream/lightersideofmyo00anderich/lightersideofmyo00anderich_djvu.txt [13/10/2014].

This sense of the East End Jewish population as a separate community and race, divorced from the social, cultural, and even legal standards of mainstream British society – “he and his people,” “people of that class,” “one of their number” – reflected the themes of alterity, exteriority and otherness that dominated public speculation in relation to the crimes. Such was the pervasiveness of these notions of Jewish complicity in the crimes that the influential and long-running London-based Jewish newspaper the *Jewish Chronicle* felt compelled to combat Anderson’s claims in print.¹⁷ The paper’s response to Anderson’s comments strongly conveys the highly-charged atmosphere of the period:

Was anything more nonsensical in the way of a theory ever conceived...Here was a whole neighbourhood, largely composed of Jews, in constant terror lest their womenfolk, whom Jewish men hold in particular regard – even ‘low-class’ Jews do that – should be slain by some murderer...And yet Sir Robert would have us believe that there were Jews who knew the person who was committing the abominable crimes and yet carefully shielded him from the police. A more wicked assertion to put into print, without the shadow of evidence, I have seldom seen.¹⁸

Fearing a climate of persecution similar to that experienced by Jews in Russia and Poland, the *Chronicle* repeatedly challenged notions of Jewish involvement in the Ripper murders. The paper noted on 14 September 1888 that “sensation-mongers incur a fearful responsibility when they add to the excitement by giving currency to every idle rumour.”¹⁹ The *Chronicle* was similarly moved to respond to widespread suggestions that the murderer was a Jewish butcher or *shochet* (a person certified by Jewish law to carry out animal slaughter). As the paper detailed on 12 October:

There are not wanting signs of a deliberate attempt to connect the Jews with the Whitechapel murders. A butcher writes to a contemporary to suggest that the character of the incisions is such that they were made by a butcher, and thence he jumps to the conclusion that it was a Jewish butcher.²⁰

¹⁷ Founded in London in 1841, the *Jewish Chronicle* is the world’s oldest Jewish newspaper. Covering a range of social, political, and religious issues, the paper is still running today. For more information, see their website: <https://www.thejc.com/>

¹⁸ “In the Communal Armchair. An Aspersion Upon Jews. Police ‘Theory’ Again,” *Jewish Chronicle*, Friday, 4 March 1910. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/jewish_chronicle/jc19100304.html [15/10/2015].

¹⁹ “Notes of the Week,” *Jewish Chronicle*, 14 September 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/jewish_chronicle/jc880914.html [12/05/2013].

²⁰ “Notes of the Week,” *Jewish Chronicle*, Friday, 12 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/jewish_chronicle/jc881012.html [10/11/2015].

Such suggestions led the *Chronicle's* editor, Asher Myers, to personally take a selection of *shochet* knives to the city divisional surgeon, Dr Gordon Browne, to demonstrate that such knives were unlikely to resemble the murder weapon used by the killer.²¹ Moreover, the *Chronicle* pointed out that the “peculiar horror entertained by Jews of any mutilation of the human body after death is either unknown to, or concealed by, the theorists” and wrote of how “it seems wrong for respectable newspapers to lend their columns to such suggestions, which are the work of ignorance if not of malice.”²² As such the paper offered a crucial dissenting voice to dominant representations of the crimes at a time when public, media and even official antipathy towards Jewish culture was at a dangerous level.

This kind of Jewish opposition to such representations is found, for instance, in the *Chronicle's* “Notes of the Week” column on 5 October. Responding to accusations of supposed “diabolic” Jewish violence against “Christian” women in relation to the Ripper crimes, the *Chronicle* suggested that these allegations were “as dangerous a piece of composition as could be imagined.” The paper went on to detail how:

The impropriety and injustice of the libel is only equalled by the danger involved in telegraphing it. Although it is a Jewish member of Parliament who offered the first reward for the discovery of the murderer, and Jews are active members of the Vigilance Committee, no one knows what an excited mob is capable of believing against any class which differs from the mob-majority by well-marked peculiarities.²³

The column's allusion to a “Jewish member of parliament” refers to the actions of the prominent East End Jewish politician Samuel Montagu, then the Liberal member for Whitechapel, who had offered a £100 reward in relation to the capture of the murderer. Moreover, in an open letter to the press, Montagu had protested the “grave insinuations against the Jews who live in my constituency.” As he put it:

In Jewish history there are frequent record that, when epidemics have occurred, or murders have taken place, false accusations have been made against the Jews, inciting the ignorant and the

²¹ Ibid. As the article noted: “Dr Gordon Browne...has authorised us to state that he is thoroughly satisfied that none of the knives have been used [in the murders]. We may add that the Jewish slaughterers are a very small, learned and respectable number of persons whom nobody acquainted with them would suspect.” See also: David Cesarani, *The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo-Jewry 1841-1991* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 81.

²² Ibid.

²³ “Notes of the Week,” *Jewish Chronicle*, 5 October 1888.

criminal classes to acts of violence... Few have greater experience than I of the Jews of this and other countries, thus I am able to state with confidence that no similar class of human beings is as free from acts of violence as the Jews of Europe.²⁴

As with the *Chronicle's* treatment of these issues, Montagu's comments were, in many respects, characteristic of Anglo-Jewish responses to press coverage of the Whitechapel crimes. Such responses tended to combine a genuine concern for the plight of the East End's Jewish immigrants with a recognition that the wider Anglo-Jewish community's tenuous acceptance within English culture and society was under threat.

Despite a number of cultural and social advances, the position of Anglo-Jews within English society at the time of the Whitechapel murders remained, in many ways, problematic. They had only recently been granted such basic rights as the right to vote, the right to sit in the House of Commons and the right to full degrees at universities such as Oxford and Cambridge. Jewish involvement in parliamentary processes had only been established in 1858, with Lionel de Rothschild becoming the first professed Jewish Member of Parliament. As Michael Clark points out, these early Jewish parliamentarians were routinely regarded as a "breed apart," who "fitted none of the perceived categories but occupied a flexible and ill-defined space somewhere in between."²⁵ Such was the case with Montagu, who was singled out as the "Hebrew candidate" and strongly criticised by his political opponents, who questioned his ability to represent the non-Jewish sections of his constituency.²⁶ Emphasising similar themes of Jewish otherness and apartness, media representations of the Ripper murders therefore reinforced those long-held prejudices and stereotypes that Anglo-Jewish leaders such as Montagu and the *Chronicle's* Myers had long attempted to dispel. As such, close readings of the *Chronicle's* accounts of the murders are hugely revealing, highlighting not only Jewish antipathy towards media portrayals of the crimes, but also the way in which such responses became part of a much larger Anglo-Jewish struggle for cultural identity and a sense of belonging.

²⁴ Samuel Montagu, "In Defence of the Jews: To the Editor of the Pall Mall Gazette," *Pall Mall Gazette*, Monday, 15 October 1888.

²⁵ Michael Clark, "Jewish Identity in British Politics: The Case of the First Jewish MPs, 1858 – 87," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society*, 13, 2 (Winter 2007): 96.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 101.

This climate of anti-Jewish feeling is apparent in an October 1888 letter written by George Lusk, chairman of the “Whitechapel Vigilance Committee,”²⁷ to Home Office secretary George Lushington. Reporting on East End responses to the crimes, Lusk related an incident where a local Jewish butcher, Alec Schiolish, accidentally cut himself at work with one of his own knives. Lusk notes how this event sparked a panic, with “crowds of excited persons” gathering at the location, convinced that the “unfortunate occurrence” has “some connection with the recent crimes.” Clearly, in this case, the simple presence of a (Polish) Jewish butcher, a knife, and the presence of blood was enough to induce a kind of “mass hysteria” in the crowd of several hundred onlookers. Such incidents highlighted the escalating sense of anxiety and fear that was directed towards the East End’s Jewish community throughout this period, with the large numbers of recently arrived Jewish immigrants being a particular source of disquiet, distrust and otherness.

Early press reports which linked the murders to a Jewish “blackmailer”²⁸ of prostitutes known locally as “Leather Apron” similarly emphasised the perceived sinister, exotic otherness of Jewish culture. A shadowy, possibly apocryphal figure – Victor Stapleton suggests he was most probably a “composite figure made up from various encounters between East End prostitutes and their more brutal, menacing and intimidating clients”²⁹ – Leather Apron was variously described by *The Star* as a “crazy Jew” and as a “strange character [who] prowls about Whitechapel after midnight,” evoking “universal fear.” The *Pall Mall Gazette*, meanwhile, characterised him as a man of “sinister” expression and “repellent” grin, with his face being of “a marked Hebrew type.”³⁰ A number of East End Jews were suspected of being the mysterious Leather Apron until police and press suspicion eventually fell upon a Jewish shoemaker named John Pizer. Despite the fact that there was nothing to link Pizer to any of the crimes, he was duly arrested, after being pursued by “a howling crowd” through the streets of the East End –

²⁷ Formed on 10 September 1888, in the wake of widespread public dissatisfaction with official police progress regarding the Ripper crimes, the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee consisted of a disparate number of local figures, from tradesmen to labourers, who effectively acted as an ad-hoc neighbourhood watch group.

²⁸ In this context, the term “blackmailer” applied to someone who extorted money from sex workers under threat of violence, a common occurrence in the East End during this period.

²⁹ Victor Stapleton, *Jack the Ripper: The Murders, the Mystery, the Myth* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2014), 39.

³⁰ “Leather Apron,” *Star*, Wednesday, 5 September 1888, fifth edition, 3, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880905.html [12/09/2014] ; “The Horrors of the East End,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 September 1888, Issue 7326, available from: http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNCN&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=unimelb&docPage=article&docId=BB3200412770&contentSet=LTO&source=gale [25/06/2014].

a vivid display of the kind of heightened anti-Jewish feeling sparked by the murders.³¹ Press descriptions of Pizer following his arrest again emphasized themes of exteriority and sinister “foreignness” – he was described as having “a cruel, sardonic kind of look” and a “thick, guttural foreign accent.”³² As such, the Leather Apron panic – which petered out following Pizer’s subsequent release – highlighted popular prejudices towards the East End’s Jewish community, emphasising the supposed intimidating, menacing nature of Jewish culture, its essential “otherness.” The shadowy “Leather Apron” represented this otherness in much the same way as the soon-to-be-named, equally amorphous figure of “Jack the Ripper” would come to, acting as a personification of the cultural anxieties and prejudices of the day.

The Leather Apron story ably demonstrates the way in which hostility towards the Jewish community intensified in the wake of the murders. Indeed, on several occasions anti-Jewish riots threatened to erupt in response to perceived Jewish involvement in the crimes. As previously noted, Hanbury Street was the site of anti-Jewish demonstrations following the Chapman murder, with an angry crowd proceeding to “threaten and abuse such of the unfortunate Hebrews as they found in the streets.”³³ As the *Jewish Chronicle* noted:

Without doubt the foreign Jews in the East End of London have been in some peril – though happily averted – during the past week owing to the sensationalism of which the district has been the centre.³⁴

These heightened levels of fear and incrimination intensified after the body of the next victim, Elizabeth Stride, was found outside the (Jewish) International Workingmen's Educational Club on 30 September. Founded in 1885 by Jewish Socialists, the Club was a leading centre for Jewish intellectual, political and cultural life in the East End, becoming, in 1886, the publishing house for the Hebrew socialist journal *Der Arbeter Fraint* (The Workers Friend). As Paul Begg and John Bennett note, the Club, with its “strong-willed contributors and bristling editorials,”

³¹ Pizer, who insisted he had never been known as “Leather Apron,” was briefly detained by Police and subsequently cleared of all involvement in the crimes after providing alibis for the nights of the murders. He later sued *The Star* for its role in identifying him as “Leather Apron.” See Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 142-47.

³² “A Reign of Terror in Whitechapel,” *East London Observer*, Saturday, 15 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_observer/el0880915.html [27/11/2016].

³³ “A Riot against the Jews,” *East London Observer*, Saturday, 15 September 1888.

³⁴ “Notes of the Week,” *Jewish Chronicle*, Friday, 14 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/jewish_chronicle/jc880914.html [12/05/2013].

appeared to various commentators “to be sowing the seeds of some great uprising.”³⁵ These concerns are alluded to in S. E. Hudson’s *“Leather Apron”; or, The Horrors of Whitechapel, London, 1888*, one of the earliest studies of the crimes, published in 1888. As Hudson notes:

An interesting fact was brought out by the Berner Street murder, that there is a Jewish Club of anarchical Socialists in the East End of London. This fact had long been suspected, although the Jewish papers stoutly denied it. [The murder] took place, however, at the very door of this Socialist Club, and, when the police proceeded to examine the inmates, they found that they were almost all Jews; while in an office in the basement a Jew was discovered engaged in editorial work on an anarchical newspaper.³⁶

The proximity of Stride’s body to the club led to speculation of a connection between the two, with various commentators advancing theories of the Ripper as a Jewish “anarchist” or radical. Such speculation again highlighted the perceived otherness and criminality of Jewish culture, and its apartness from conventional British morality and values. As Paul Knepper points out, “the image of anarchists in Britain [during this era] was shaped by a racialized conception linking anarchism with Jewishness and criminality.”³⁷ In this way, this image of the Ripper as Jewish radical again strongly invoked popular narratives of Jewish culture as threatening and contaminating other.

A witness statement taken during the Elizabeth Stride investigation once more highlighted questions of Jewish involvement in the crimes. The witness, Israel Schwartz, a Jewish immigrant of Hungarian extraction, told Metropolitan Police of how, on the night of the murder, he had witnessed a man pull a woman into Berner Street (the site of Stride’s murder) and throw her to the ground. Crossing to the other side of the street, Schwartz noticed a second man watching the scene. Noticing Schwartz, the attacker then called out the word “Lipski,” either to Schwartz himself or to this second man. Schwartz then hurried from the scene, apparently convinced that the second man was now following him.³⁸ The term “Lipski,” in this context, likely referred to Israel Lipski, an East End Jewish immigrant executed in 1887 for the

³⁵ Paul Begg and John Bennett, *Jack the Ripper: The Forgotten Victims* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 12.

³⁶ Sam’l E. Hudson, *“Leather Apron”, or, The Horrors of Whitechapel, London, 1888* (Philadelphia: Town Print. House, 1888).

³⁷ Paul Knepper, “The Other Hand: Jews and Anarchists in London before the First World War,” *Jewish History* 22 (2008): 296.

³⁸ For a contemporary overview of these events see Donald S. Swanson, “Murder of Elizabeth Stride at Duffields Yard Berner St.” 19 October 1888. HO 144/221/A4930IC ff. 148-59.

murder of his landlady, whose name was commonly used during this period as an anti-Semitic slur. As Inspector Abberline noted in his report on the incident:

Since a Jew named Lipski was hanged for the murder of a Jewess in 1887 the name has very frequently been used by persons as a mere ejaculation by way of endeavouring to insult the Jew to whom it had been addressed and as Schwartz had a strong Jewish appearance I am of [the] opinion it was addressed to him as he stopped to look at the man he saw apparently ill-using the deceased woman.³⁹

Whilst Abberline's interpretation – that Stride's attacker shouted "Lipski" as a racial insult, designed to scare off Schwartz – is undoubtedly the most plausible and likely explanation of these events, the police offered up an alternative scenario that, again, focused upon notions of Jewish complicity in the crimes. In an official letter to the Home Office, the police suggested that in calling out "Lipski" the attacker was calling to the "second man across the road by his proper name... assuming that the man using the word was the murderer, the murderer must have an acquaintance in Whitechapel named Lipski."⁴⁰ This version of events was endorsed by Godfrey Lushington, Under-Secretary at the Home Office, who wrote in the margin of the official report that the "use of [the name Lipski] increases my belief that the murderer was a Jew."⁴¹ In suggesting that the attacker (and potential murderer) had an accomplice with the recognisably (and notoriously) Jewish surname of Lipski, this report again highlighted notions of Jewish involvement in the murders, with the presence of the accomplice evoking larger notions of Jewish conspiracy and collusion in the crimes.

This tendency to highlight Jewish associations in the Ripper case can similarly be found in one of the most contentious and widely discussed findings in the investigation – the "Goulston Street graffito." Shortly after the murder of the Ripper's next victim, Catherine Eddowes (murdered on the same night as Elizabeth Stride), a piece of her bloodstained clothing, seemingly discarded by her killer, was found in Whitechapel's (heavily Jewish) Goulston Street, next to a chalked message on a wall which read "the Juwes are The men that Will not

³⁹ "Police report: Questioning of Israel Schwartz in Connection to Elizabeth Stride Murder. Metropolitan Police. Subject: Whitechapel Murders. 1 November 1888." Mepo 3/140, 204-6.

⁴⁰ "Draft Letter to Home Office Regarding the Evidence of Israel Schwartz Given at the Inquest. 5 November 1888. Mepo 3/140, 207.

⁴¹ Godfrey Lushington, annotation to Swanston report, HO 144/221/A49301c/8a. National Archives.

be Blamed for nothing [sic].”⁴² Subsequently removed on the orders of Superintendent Thomas Arnold and Police Commissioner Sir Charles Warren – who apparently (and not unreasonably) felt that its inflammatory contents would spark an anti-Jewish riot⁴³ – the message, and its proximity to the bloody piece of clothing, reinforced popular perceptions of Jewish involvement in the crimes. As a much-quoted piece that appeared in the *Daily News* on 13 October stated:

The police authorities attach a great deal of importance to the spelling of the word Jews in the writing on the wall at the spot where the Mitre-square murderer threw away a portion of the murdered woman’s apron. The language of the Jews in the East-end is a hybrid dialect known as Yiddiah [sic] and their mode of spelling the word Jews would be Juwes. This the police consider a strong indication that the crime was committed by one of the numerous foreigners by whom the East-end is infested.⁴⁴

Riddled with factual errors and xenophobic assumptions, this report was typical of a wave of anti-Semitic commentary on the subject. As such, it was strongly contested by the Jewish community, who quickly pointed out that the Yiddish word for Jew was actually “Yidden.” In his official report on the incident, Charles Warren noted that the acting Chief Rabbi had written to him as a result of the article, and had stressed that “in the present state of excitement it is dangerous to the safety of the poor Jews in the East to allow such an assertion to remain uncontradicted.”⁴⁵ In a similar vein, *The Star* reported that “the Jews strongly resent the attempts which have been made to connect a member of their community with the murders

⁴² The message was found above the bloody piece of apron in the doorway of Nos 108-119 Model Dwellings, Goulston St, and was written on the doorway entrance jamb. The exact meaning (and wording) of the message, and the question of whether the Ripper was its author, has been strongly debated ever since. One of the most persistent modern theories regarding the message is that it contains cryptic Masonic allusions. According to such theories, the use of the word “Juwes” relates, within Masonic legend, to Jubela, Jubelo and Jubelum, the three (Jewish) assassins who supposedly murdered Freemasonry’s first Grand Master, Hiram Abiff. However, there is zero evidence that the three men (generally referred to as the “three ruffians”) had ever been collectively known, either “officially or colloquially,” as the “Juwes.” Indeed, as Ripper historian Paul Begg has pointed out, “it is a mystery why anyone ever thought that ‘Juwes’ was a Masonic word.” See Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 254-6.

⁴³ In the words of Thomas Arnold: “knowing that, in consequence of a suspicion having fallen upon a Jew named John Pizer...a strong feeling existed against the Jews generally, and as the building upon which the writing was found was situated in the midst of a locality inhabited principally by that sect, I was apprehensive that if the writing were left it would be the means of causing a riot.” These sentiments were echoed in Warren’s account: “taking into consideration the excited state of the population in London generally at the time [and] the strong feeling which had been excited against the Jews...I considered it desirable to obliterate the writing at once...I do not hesitate myself to say that if the writing had been left there would have been an onslaught upon the Jews, property would have been wrecked, and lives would probably have been lost.” See Report of Superintendent Arnold, 6 November 1888; Report of Charles Warren, 6 November 1888. Found in Home Office Files, HO 144/221/A4930.8c. C ff. 174-81. National Archives.

⁴⁴ *Daily News*, 13 October 1888. Memo 3/14. National Archives.

⁴⁵ Charles Warren, 6 November 1888. Found in: Home Office Files, HO 144/221/A4930.C ff. 174-81.

through the handwriting on the wall... The statement is not only ridiculous, but dangerous, as tending to excite race hatred.”⁴⁶ Despite such protestations, it seems that the police themselves, to some extent, backed these notions of Jewish involvement in the murders. A follow-up *Star* article, published four days later, noted that the police were currently undertaking a “house to house visit among the Jews at the East-end,” demanding “admission to every room,” checking for knives, and looking for information on “friends, relatives, or assistants.”⁴⁷ This last point again evokes notions of Jewish collusion and conspiracy, specifically the popular idea that the killer was known to the Jewish community, and that they were deliberately shielding his identity from the police. This sense of cultural, legal and racial separateness is even evoked in the Goulston Street graffito itself, the wording of the message (“the Juwes are The men that Will not be Blamed for nothing”) drawing upon themes of exteriority, insularity, and otherness.

Significantly, such remonstrations tended to target the entire Jewish immigrant community, rather than any one specific individual. There was a sense of collective blame for the murders, as if the entire Jewish population were somehow complicit in the crimes. As one Jewish correspondent to *The Evening News* noted, upon observing the “slanderous and insulting” attitudes towards the Jewish community found in “almost every thoroughfare” throughout Whitechapel during this period: “were it the case that the actual perpetrator belonged to the Hebrew class, is it not cowardly and unjust [to] calumniate a sect for the sins of one?”⁴⁸ This tendency to view the entire Jewish community in an undifferentiated manner meant that these anti-Jewish denunciations generally evoked themes of national security and social disorder. In a letter sent to the City Police, for instance, a “W.J. Smith” blamed the murders on Jewish “foreigners,” and suggested that London was “doomed to destruction” unless drastic measures were taken to rid the city of its immigrant population. According to Smith, these “foreigners” were a risk not only to British culture and society but to British identity itself: “if it [goes] on much longer we shall indeed have ceased to be English.” Disturbingly, Smith called for a mass setting of hundreds of fires in the East End “at a given signal” – basically, an ethnic cleansing

⁴⁶ “Whitechapel. Extra Police Activity Last Night - Feeling Among the Jews,” *Star*, Saturday, 13 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s881013.html [11/10/2015].

⁴⁷ “Whitechapel. A House to House Search Among the Jews,” *Star*, Wednesday, 17 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s881017.html [11/10/2015].

⁴⁸ “Slaughtering the Jews: to the Editor of the Evening News,” *Evening News* (London) 11 September 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18880911.html [11/10/2015].

of London's "foreign" population.⁴⁹ Such commentaries reflected contemporary fears of the "pure" British self being subsumed by an invasive, contaminating "other" that threatened the boundaries of nation and undermined national security. As Joel S. Migdal notes, boundaries signify the point "at which 'we' end and 'they' begin."⁵⁰ In seemingly blurring and transgressing these clearly delineated boundaries between "us" and "them" and "home" and "alien" territory, these Jewish immigrants therefore became an intense source of anxiety and fear.

With their focus on themes of physical and societal contamination and transgression, these commentaries drew strongly on contemporary fears of degeneration, with the figure of the Jew embodying popular anxieties regarding the corrupting, invasive presence of the degenerate "other" in society. It was commonly believed that Jews showed a marked predisposition towards what the French psychiatrist and early degeneracy theorist Bénédict Augustin Morel classified as "hereditary degeneration."⁵¹ Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Morel held that degenerative traits in mankind were passed on via bloodlines and compounded through generations, becoming progressively more severe, so that "the first generation of a degenerate family might be merely nervous, the second would tend to be neurotic, the third psychotic."⁵² These concepts of hereditary degeneration were routinely applied to London's Jewish immigrant population in the late nineteenth century. Seen as biologically and genetically "tainted" and corrupt, Jewish communities were believed to further "contaminate" the surrounding urban population, acting as a "virulent form of disease within the racial body."⁵³ Such commentaries linked themes of degeneration to these notions of Jewish-borne disease and contamination, with the Jewish body defined as a site of both moral and physical corruption. Seen as both infected and infecting, the fundamentally degenerate nature of the Jew was therefore literally inscribed upon their bodies. Jewish immigrants were routinely depicted as "vermin infested" carriers of diseases like lupus, scurvy, trachoma and, significantly,

⁴⁹ "Letters Relating to the Whitechapel Murders 1888-1890: Letters from Members of the Public to the City Police." CLRO Ref. Police Box 3.17, no. 172. Metropolitan Archives.

⁵⁰ Migdal, "Mental Maps and Virtual Checkpoints," 5.

⁵¹ Morel is often regarded as the progenitor of these theories of degeneration. However, he attributed coinage of the term itself to the eighteenth-century French naturalist George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon. See William Greenslade, *The Concept of Degeneration 1880-1910 With Particular Reference to the Work of Thomas Hardy, George Gissing, and H.G. Wells* (Ph.D., University of Warwick, 1983), 38-40.

⁵² Bénédict Augustin Morel, quoted in *Ibid*, 39.

⁵³ Blair, "Henry James, Jack the Ripper, and the Cosmopolitan Jew," 492.

syphilis.⁵⁴ Jewish culture had long been associated with the incidence and spread of syphilis, dating as far back as the sixteenth century, when the disease was commonly referred to as the “*Peste of the Marranos*.”⁵⁵ As Sander Gilman notes, even the darkness of the Jew’s skin – “the blackness of the Jew” – was “spoken of as if it were a sign of syphilis.”⁵⁶ In late nineteenth-century society, this fixation on the spread of “foreign” blood and skin diseases was bound up with contemporary anxieties concerning degeneration. Indeed, concepts of degeneration and sexual disease were routinely interconnected in late-Victorian culture, with degeneration often becoming an analogy for syphilis (and vice versa).⁵⁷

These interconnected notions of Jewishness, sexual disease and degeneration strongly informed the Ripper narrative. It was commonly believed that the Ripper himself was suffering from “that dreaded disease, syphilis,” with much speculation in the press about the very “specific” nature of his “contagion.”⁵⁸ These allusions to syphilis reinforced notions of the killer as “diseased, perverted Jew,”⁵⁹ seemingly confirming popular links between the murders, Jewishness and the degenerative state of late-Victorian British society. Such themes are evident in Robert Anderson’s contention that the Ripper was a “low class” Polish Jew, a “loathsome creature” whose “utterly unmentionable vices” had “reduced him to a lower level than that of the brute.”⁶⁰ Similarly revealing notions are found in the famous “Macnaghten Memoranda,” an 1894 document included in the official police files of the case. Written by the Assistant Chief Constable of the Scotland Yard CID, Sir Melville Leslie Macnaghten (1889-90), the document names three potential suspects for the murders, including “Kosminski,” a “Polish Jew” with “strong homicidal tendencies,” who had “become insane owing to many years indulgence in solitary vices” (i.e. masturbation) and “been detained in a lunatic asylum.”⁶¹

⁵⁴ Kershen, *Strangers, Aliens, and Asians*, 207.

⁵⁵ Originating in Spain, “*marranos*” was a derogatory term originally applied to baptised Jews. Seemingly derived from the Spanish words for “pig” and/or “swine,” it became, over time, a general racial slur directed against Jews. See: Carol Margaret Davison, “Blood Brothers: Dracula and Jack the Ripper,” in *Bram Stoker’s Dracula: Sucking Through the Century 1897-1997*, eds. Carol Margaret Davison and Paul Simpson-Housley (Toronto & Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1997), 156.

⁵⁶ Sander Gilman, *The Jews Body* (Independence: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 127

⁵⁷ These connections are explored in greater detail in the following chapters.

⁵⁸ D.G Halstead, *Doctor in the Nineties* (London: Christopher Johnson, 1959), 56; Archibald Forbes, “The Motive of the Murders,” *Daily News*, 3 October 1888. Available at: tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5Gjwg4 [28/09/2017].

⁵⁹ Blair, “Henry James, Jack the Ripper, and the Cosmopolitan Jew,” 511.

⁶⁰ Anderson, *The Lighter Side of My Official Life*, 139.

⁶¹ Melville Leslie Macnaghten, “Macnaghten Memoranda,” (23 February 1894), Mepo 3/141, 32-135, National Archives. See also *The Jack the Ripper A to Z*, eds. Paul Begg, Martin Fido and Keith Skinner (London: Headline 1994, revised edition), 282-90. Macnaghten was not a member of the force at the time of the Ripper murders, only taking up his post at Scotland Yard in June 1889. His identification of “Kosminski” as a possible

Various identified by modern researchers as either Aaron Kosminski, a Polish immigrant committed to Colney Hatch Asylum in 1891 suffering from “mania,” or Nathan Kaminsky, a syphilitic East End Jewish bootmaker, Macnaghten’s suspect evokes just about every late-Victorian cultural stereotype of the Jew as a degenerate and polluted “other.” Juxtaposing notions of Jewishness with themes of mental and physical degeneration, violent criminality, moral insanity, and perceived sexual perversity,⁶² Macnaghten’s document was typical of late-Victorian cultural representations of Jewish culture, drawing heavily on concepts of foreign transgression, contamination and threat.

In this way, these depictions of the Ripper-as-Jew represented the most concerted attempt by commentators to displace the Ripper murders onto a foreign and alien other who could act as a convenient scapegoat for the crimes. Such depictions dominated early media and public speculation in relation to the murders, with the “barbarity” of the crimes being aligned with the perceived uncivilised, corrupt and “savage” nature of Jewish culture. Defined as dangerous, menacing, and morally and physically degenerate, the figure of the East European Jewish immigrant represented the kind of suspect that many commentators desperately wanted the Ripper to be – one who would effectively confirm existing prejudices against those “others” who populated the East End, whilst refuting any suggestion of “English” culpability in the crimes. We see this in those early representations of the murderer as “Leather Apron,” a figure of sinister exoticism and threatening otherness, totally divorced from the typical standards, conduct, and moral codes of mainstream British society. Evoking themes of degeneration, conspiracy, ritualism, violence, disease and contagion, these representations essentially sought to reaffirm notions of a coherent or stable British “self” by displacing onto the “other” all those characteristics that undermined this sense of national and personal identity. As a result, these depictions again highlighted the fundamental tension between self and other that characterised

Ripper seems to be based more on hearsay and rumour than any actual police evidence. Indeed, there is no record of the police ever interviewing or detaining anyone by the name of “Kosminski.” If his notes actually referred to Aaron Kosminski (as is generally accepted) then Macnaghten was wrong about certain crucial details of his suspect’s life and detainment. Macnaghten suggests, for instance, that Kosminski was detained in an asylum around March 1889, when he was, in fact, admitted to Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum on 7 February 1891 (more than two years after the final “canonical” Ripper murder). See “Police Views,” *The Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper*, eds. Maxim Jakubowski and Nathan Braud (London: Robinson, 2008), 92-101; Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 397-423; Melville Leslie Macnaghten, *Days of My Years* (New York; London: Longmans, Green; E. Arnold, 1914).

⁶² In Victorian culture, masturbation, like homosexuality, was generally referred to as a form of “sexual insanity.”

late-Victorian culture, with the Jewish immigrant cast as a figure that (like the Ripper) threatened the boundaries, social order and future of society and nation.

CHAPTER THREE

“Man Is Not Truly One, But Truly Two”:

Jack the Ripper, the Divided Self and the Body as Other

With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to the truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two (Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*).¹

The foreigner is neither a race or a nation...foreignness is within us: we are our own foreigners, we are divided (Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*).²

London lies today under the spell of a great terror. A nameless reprobate – half beast, half man – is at large (“Horror upon Horror,” *The Star*, 8 September 1888).³

Whilst early public and media speculation in relation to the Ripper crimes largely focused on these notions of the murderer as a foreign and alien other, an alternate and seemingly contradictory narrative began to emerge. It was a narrative which moved away from concepts of exteriority and foreignness to instead focus upon the disquieting idea of the Ripper as a successful, respectable, British “gentleman” leading a double or “divided” life. Disputing and undermining the popular assumption that “no Englishman” could have perpetrated the murders, these perceptions of the Ripper as British gentleman instead focused attention upon the hidden “otherness” of the English masculine self, drawing upon a number of late-Victorian cultural anxieties in relation to the body and selfhood. In tracing this shift through press reports of the era, this chapter therefore examines the extent to which contemporary fears of the “other in society” were connected to deeper anxieties concerning the hidden self and the “other within.” It argues that these “Ripper as gentleman” representations revealed the deep sense of dualism and division inherent in late-Victorian culture and society. Drawing upon an extensive range

¹ Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 76.

² Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 138.

³ “Horror upon Horror,” *Star*, 8 September 1888, 2, available from http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880908.html [22/05/2014].

of nineteenth-century sociological, anthropological, philosophical, and psychological viewpoints, it examines how these anxieties of the “uncontrolled” body and the “unstable” self increasingly came to play a crucial role in the development of the Ripper narrative.

This shift of focus away from theories of the Ripper as “external other” is discernible in an influential editorial penned by the *Pall Mall Gazette*’s W.T. Stead and published on 8 September 1888. Written in the aftermath of Annie Chapman’s murder, Stead described the crime as a “renewed reminder of the potentialities of revolting barbarity which lie latent in man.” He suggested that the perpetrator was a “Mr Hyde of Humanity,” and a “Savage of Civilisation,” motivated by a “mania of bloodthirsty cruelty which...springs from the unbridled indulgence of the worst passions.”⁴ In Stead’s article we find many of the themes and preoccupations that would dominate subsequent public and press speculation about the crimes. With its focus upon the idea of a latent self that contained savage or barbarous traits, Stead’s article drew attention to those hidden impulses that potentially lay beneath the surface of the “civilised” British masculine self. As with earlier representations of the crimes (as documented in previous chapters), Stead focuses upon a dualistic tension between “savagery” and “civilisation,” yet he turns this dualism inwards, depicting the British masculine body as a site of crisis and conflict. Furthermore, in suggesting that the killer’s “mania” springs from “unbridled indulgence,” he evokes the fear that the latent animalistic “passions” of the human body, if unleashed, have the potential to undo the civilising customs of modern society.

These themes of dual personality and the “beast in man” are evoked most clearly in Stead’s reference to the murderer as a “Mr Hyde of Humanity.” Such allusions to Robert Louis Stevenson’s 1886 novella *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* would become increasingly commonplace throughout 1888, as speculation regarding the crimes increasingly focused on the idea of the murderer as a divided gentleman hiding a bestial, savage second self within. Such themes are evident, for example, in *The Star*’s characterisation of the murderer (published on the same day as Stead’s article) as “a nameless reprobate - half beast, half man.”⁵ These themes were reiterated in a follow-up article published several days later; in language echoing Jekyll’s contention that “man is not truly one, but truly two,” the paper proposed that

⁴ Stead, “Another Murder – And More to Follow?” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1.

⁵ “Horror upon Horror,” *Star*, 8 September 1888, 2, available from http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880908.html [22/05/2014].

the murders were the work of a “Mr. Hyde,” who “seeks in the repose and comparative respectability of Dr Jekyll security from the crimes he commits in his baser shape.”⁶ Similar references are found in a 14 September *Pall Mall Gazette* article; noting how the murderer did his “bloody work” with the lust “of the savage but with the skill of the savant,” the paper again suggested that such “facts” pointed towards a “Mr. Hyde.”⁷ The *Philadelphia Inquirer* took up the theme in its 10 October issue, intimating that the London Police themselves “have started the theory that the Whitechapel murders are the result of a case in real of ‘Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.’” The report went on to note that, having been “brought to this astounding position,” the police now had a particular suspect in view:

A well-known prosperous resident of Grosvenor Square...has been tracked and traced until it is absolutely established that he does lead a double life. This ‘Dr Jekyll’ lives for the eminently respectable world in which he moves. The other self, like ‘Mr. Hyde,’ lives mysteriously, revoltingly. This latter self has been tracked to the Whitechapel district, and has been seen...skulking stealthily along dark corners and alleys.⁸

Found in the heart of the West End, in the affluent district of Mayfair, Grosvenor Square stood as a testament to the wealth success, and prosperity of Britain in the late nineteenth century. The suggestion that the murderer could be found amongst its residents was hugely controversial, directly challenging dominant characterisations of the West End as a cradle of civilisation and progress, representing the very peak of British culture and society. In undermining such representations, the Ripper reportage, either consciously or unconsciously, therefore challenged the whole issue of late-Victorian British cultural supremacy and superiority. The extent to which these “Ripper as gentleman” characterisations displaced earlier (racial) assumptions about the murders is evident in a 13 October article in the *East London Advertiser*, which noted how this “Jekyll and Hyde” explanation of the murderer as “a man leading a dual life, one respectable and even religious, and the other lawless and brutal,” had

⁶ Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 76; What We Think,” *The Star*, London, Tuesday, 11 September 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880911.html [02/04/2015].

⁷ “Occasional Notes,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Friday, 14 September 1888, Issue 7331. Available at Gale, 19th Century Newspapers: <http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?markListId=127078&userGroupName=unimelb&prodId=BNCN&type=markList&version=1.0&source=gale> [08/05/2015].

⁸ “The Whitechapel Murders: Theory Started That It Is a Jekyll and Hyde Case,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Wednesday, 10 October 1888, reproduced in: *Jekyll and Hyde Dramatized: The 1887 Richard Mansfield Script and the Evolution of the Story on Stage*, eds. Martin A. Danahay and Alex Chisholm (Jefferson and London: McFarland and Company Inc., 2005), 186.

become the “most in favour” theory amongst public and press commentators alike in regard to the crimes.⁹

These concepts of Jekyll and Hyde and the “beast in man” reflected and reinforced a number of late-Victorian anxieties in relation to masculinity and its problematic relationship to the body. In her influential study of Victorian London, *City of Dreadful Delight*, Judith Walkowitz argues that notions of Victorian masculinity were largely defined by concepts of “self-control, self-discipline” and an absence of overt “emotional expression.”¹⁰ With this came a distrust of the bodily and the corporeal, and a belief that spiritual and moral purity could only be attained by rejecting the base, essentially animalistic, appetites of the human body. The human body, in such estimations, was defined by its “otherness,” becoming a “dangerous, private place” through which “all kinds of (largely unspoken) desires” were formulated.¹¹ Such concepts built upon the kind of mind/body, soul/nature dualism espoused by Descartes in the seventeenth century, with its “elevation of consciousness...above corporeality.” According to Descartes, the mind as “thinking substance,” as “soul or consciousness,” had “no place in the natural world,” i.e. the world of the body.¹² In late-Victorian culture, such ideas were intertwined with more recent post-Darwinian conceptions of the “animal within man.” As such, the mind/body, self/other debate was reconfigured into one in which human existence was divided between “higher” and “lower” selves, as shown in W.S. Lily’s 1885 article “The New Naturalism”: “The great criterion of elevation in the order of existence is whether the higher or lower self... is dominant: the self of the appetites and passions, or the self of the reason and moral nature.”¹³ In this way, these debates focused on the body as a site of potential corruption and contamination, wherein the base demands of the human body had the power to corrupt the mind and soul of even the most apparently civilised of gentlemen.

Such themes are evident in *Psychopathia Sexualis*, a hugely influential treatise on sexual pathology, crime and murder written by the European psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing

⁹ “The Mysterious Atrocities in Whitechapel: Here and There,” *East London Advertiser*, Saturday, 13 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_advertiser/ela881013.html. [15/06/2015].

¹⁰ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 17.

¹¹ Smith, *Victorian Demons*, 21.

¹² Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 6-7.

¹³ W.S. Lily, “The New Naturalism,” *Fortnightly Review* xxxvii (August 1885): 252.

and originally published in 1886.¹⁴ According to Krafft-Ebing, man's "natural instincts" put him "on a level with the animal" and with primitive, "savage" races (he gives the examples of Australia, Polynesia and the Philippines). To reach a "nobler" level, it was therefore necessary for civilised man to rise above such innate bodily "passions" and "animal propensities." As he puts it:

In spite of all the aids which religion, law, education, and morality give civilized man in the bridling of his passions, he is always in danger of sinking [to a lower level] ...in order to maintain one's self on such a height, a constant struggle between natural impulses and morals, between sensuality and morality, is required.¹⁵

The aim of human existence, therefore, became one of "policing"¹⁶ and controlling the body, of containing its destructive "animal" urges, its essential "otherness." This control over such bodily "passions" was seen as a quintessentially "English" attribute and an archetypal characteristic of the civilised masculine self. As such, the "civilised" body in Victorian culture became the culturally policed body, defined by concepts of control and restraint, and by how well it adhered to the demands of society, nation and empire. It is the image of the "imperial prude" that Foucault evokes in his *History of Sexuality* – the restrained, contained English body as symbol of Victorian progress.¹⁷ As such, representations of the Ripper as a kind of unrestrained "beast," motivated by an instinctual and uncontrollable "mania," destabilised this Victorian self-image, whilst acting as a warning of the corrupting, distorting powers of mankind's "lower self."

These representations of the Ripper as "half beast, half man," "fit companion of the vulture and the ape," and the suggestion that the murders were the work of "a bloodthirsty beast in human shape...like a case of Jekyll and Hyde,"¹⁸ shocked because they seemingly confirmed popular

¹⁴ Krafft-Ebing's work was one of the first texts to clinically examine concepts of sexual pathology and "lust murder." In a later edition of the work, he suggested that the Ripper belonged in the category of "psycho-sexual monsters." Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: With Especial Reference to Contrary Sexual Instinct, A Medico-Legal Study*, trans. Charles Gilbert Chaddock (Philadelphia and London: The F.A. Davis Company, 1894), 64 [originally published 1886].

¹⁵ Ibid, 1-6.

¹⁶ Inga Bryden, "Cut 'n' Slash: Remodelling the 'Freakish' Female Form," in *Controversies in Body Theology*, ed. Marcella Althaus-Reid and Lisa Isherwood (NSW: SCM Press, 2008), 32.

¹⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 3.

¹⁸ "The Murder Fiend of East London," *People* (London), Sunday, 14 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/people/18881014.html [12/09/2016]; "Whitechapel Startled by Fourth Murder," *New York Times*, 9 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/new_york_times/nyt880909.html [12/09/2016].

anxieties in relation to nineteenth-century theories of evolution and degeneration. As Greg Buzwell notes, late-Victorian society was a culture “haunted by the implications of Darwinism.”¹⁹ As detailed in such controversial works as *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin’s contention that humans and animals shared common biological and evolutionary origins – the belief that “man bears in his bodily structure clear traces of his descent from some lower [animal] form”²⁰ – unsettled Victorian society, undermining and erasing previous scientific, moral, theological and sociological certainties. As Daniel Pick observes, Darwin’s theories of evolution disconcertingly suggested that there was “no absolute evolutionary separation from the world of the animals, no escape from the stigma of that descent.”²¹ In the post-Darwinian late-Victorian cultural landscape, this blurring of the boundaries between the human and animal worlds strongly evoked themes of degeneration and social decline and deterioration. As Thomas Boyle observes in his examination of Victorian cultural mores, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead* (1990), these man/beast tensions directly challenged the “hierarchical scale” that governed all facets of Victorian life. This “great chain of being” was one which placed “respectable men” close to the apex of existence, with “inferior races” languishing near the bottom and “wee beasties” at the very base.²² The idea that “respectable” man could descend to this bestial level therefore reflected the contemporary fear that “civilised” late nineteenth-century British society could devolve or degenerate into a state of primeval savagery. The apparent animality of the Ripper crimes seemed to confirm these fears; the belief that, as one correspondent put it, an “Englishman” could “loose [sic] all civilised restraint on such matters” and revert to a kind of primitive, bestial animalism highlighted popular anxieties of the transgressive, contaminating potential of degeneration on the English male body.²³

In referring to the Ripper as a “Savage of Civilisation,” Stead’s article highlights the way in which these discussions of the body were linked to broader concepts of national and civic

¹⁹ Greg Buzwell, “Gothic Fiction in the Victorian Fin de Siècle: Mutating Bodies and Disturbed Minds.” Available at: <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gothic-fiction-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle#sthash.98Nd6ZeB.dpuf> [09/12/2016].

²⁰ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981, originally published 1871), 34.

²¹ Pick, *Faces of Degeneration*, 16.

²² Thomas Boyle, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead: Beneath the Surface of Victorian Sensationalism* (London, New York, Australia, Canada: Penguin, 1990), 114; 138.

²³ “Whitechapel Murders Papers.” CLRO Ref Police Box 3:14, no. 78. Fiche 07. Metropolitan Archives.

identity, state power, race and imperialism. Fears of the “animal in man” led to fears of bodily and, by extension, social degeneration. As Andrew Smith points out, the “image of the male subject battling against his own base instincts suggests that what really is at issue is Britain's future.”²⁴ The masculine body, in such formulations, became an “index of the welfare and security of the whole state.”²⁵ As Mary Douglas notes in *Natural Symbols*, her classic 1970 study of the body in culture and society, “bodily control” becomes an “expression of social control.”

The human body is always treated as an image of society and there can be no natural way of considering the body that does not involve at the same time a social dimension...If there is no concern to preserve social boundaries, I would not expect to find concern with bodily boundaries.²⁶

As such, “self” and “environment” were intimately connected in nineteenth-century culture, with the “sick” body evoking a “sick” society. Indeed, late-Victorian ideas about degeneration juxtaposed concepts of physical and mental deterioration, involving a “decline from a higher to a lower form of being,”²⁷ with images of incipient societal collapse and fragmentation. Such attitudes are found in leading London-based Professor of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy Edwin Ray Lankester’s 1880 work *Degeneration, A Chapter in Darwinism*, which intertwines concepts of physical degeneration (“a loss of organisation making the descendent far simpler or lower in structure”) with broader societal concerns: “High states of civilisation have decayed and given place to low and degenerate states.”²⁸ In this way, these theories of degeneration undermined Victorian assumptions of “universal progress” and “unreasoning optimism” – what Lankester refers to as the widely-held nineteenth-century conviction that culture and society had “necessarily...arrived at a higher and more elaborated condition than that which our ancestors reached” and were “destined to progress even further.”²⁹ As such, representations of the Ripper as both gentleman and beast, in highlighting themes of bodily degeneration and animality, seemed to refute these nineteenth-century notions of progress and evolution. As Stead himself noted, the “revolting barbarity” of the crimes comes as a “salutary shock to the complacent optimism which assumes that the progress of civilisation has rendered unnecessary

²⁴ Smith, *Victorian Demons*, 21. For a fuller account of these theories of degeneration see Smith, 14-41.

²⁵ Thais Morgan, “Victorian Effeminacies,” in *Victorian Sexual Dissidence*, ed. Richard Dellamora (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 111.

²⁶ Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (London and New York: Routledge, 1970), 74.

²⁷ Henry Maudsley, *Body and Will: Being an Essay Concerning Will in Its Metaphysical, Physiological and Pathological Aspects* (New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1884), 237.

²⁸ Lankester, *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*, 30, 58.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 59-60.

the bolts and bars, social, moral, and legal, which keep the Mr. Hyde of humanity from assuming visible shape among us.”³⁰ This image of the Ripper as a kind of “savage” urban degenerate, loosened from the “social, moral, and legal” restraints of civilised culture, therefore embodied late-Victorian fears of the uncontrolled, uncontained self, invoking notions of degeneration, social disorder, chaos and national decline.

Furthermore, these representations of the Ripper as a “savage of civilisation” directly aligned the degenerate British self with those perceived “savage” (foreign) races outside of the boundaries of mainstream British society. As such, both the interior (the animal within) and exterior (the savage outside) “other” were joined together in a symbiotic relationship, eroding and transgressing those clearly delineated boundaries that separated the British “self” from the foreign, alien “other.” This blurring of the boundaries between self and other is evident in the *Evening Standard’s* contention that the “monstrous and wanton brutality” of the crimes “is what we might expect of a race of savages.”³¹ Such reports seemed to confirm popular fears about the contaminating potential of degeneration, specifically the belief that these degenerative influences could transgress biological, racial, class and societal borders and come to “infect” wider society. In blurring these lines between the civilised and savage, the self and the other, this image of the Ripper as a “savage of civilisation” therefore evoked themes of transgression, contamination, degeneration and cultural deterioration.

Significantly, criminality, particularly violent or homicidal criminality, was itself seen as strongly indicative of degeneration in late-Victorian culture. According to Cesare Lombroso’s deeply influential *Criminal Man*, criminality marked “a return to the characteristics peculiar to primitive savages.” He suggested that the “the germs of moral insanity and criminality are found normally in mankind in the first stages of his existence,” and postulated that the criminal was an “atavistic” being who “reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals.” According to Lombroso, these “primitive instincts” lay “dormant in every individual,” and were usually “kept in check by sound moral training,” but could “awaken” suddenly under certain “morbid conditions.”³² Such concepts echoed Darwin’s notions of violence and criminality as evolutionary throwbacks, involving the “reappearance

³⁰ Stead, “Another Murder – And More to Follow?” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1.

³¹ “Murder in Whitechapel, *Evening Standard*, 1 September 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_standard/18880901.html [14/05/2015].

³² Lombroso and Ferrero, *Criminal Man*.

of primitive instincts” that revealed mankind’s “animal descent.”³³ Similar themes are found in “mania specialist” Dr George Savage’s 1888 article “Homicidal Mania.” Published at the height of the Ripper crisis, Savage referred to “Professor Benedikt of Vienna’s” contention that “the brain of a murderer may resemble that of a lower animal in certain definite ways.” Savage himself compared “morally insane” criminals to “savages” and similarly suggested, in language that echoed both Lombroso and Darwin, that such criminals were “allied in habits to the lower animals.”³⁴ As such, the Ripper, in evoking these interrelated themes of violent criminality, atavism, savagery, and degeneration, strongly embodied late-Victorian fears of the uncontrolled, unrestrained degenerate self.

At the heart of these degeneration anxieties was the fear that the “civilised,” advanced, English masculine self – as the visual embodiment of Victorian progress and national identity – was a kind of unstable, ephemeral façade. The fear was that, hidden deep beneath the “civilising” customs of modern society, man was essentially just another animal, driven by brutal, instinctual, primitive bodily urges beyond his conscious control. The idea that an English gentleman could himself degenerate, with the “lure of the jungle [becoming] greater than that of money, culture, and social responsibility”, was profoundly shocking to British society.³⁵ Stead’s suggestion that the Ripper was a “Mr Hyde of humanity” seemed to confirm such fears. This idea of the murderer as a Mr. Hyde shocked because it located the untamed, unrestrained, degenerate “other” not just within British society but within the British body itself. Disputing and undermining the popular assumption that “no Englishman” could have perpetrated the murders, it instead raised the disquieting possibility that, figuratively at least, *any* Englishman, regardless of racial background, education, position, wealth or rank could have committed the murders.

These concepts of the body as site of corruption and otherness had strong sexual overtones, with fears of degeneration closely linked to notions of sexuality and sexual disease and threat. As Linda Dryden notes, “physical appetites, unchecked by moral consciousness, were seen as evidence of a primitive self.”³⁶ Unrestrained sexuality, like violence, represented the kind of

³³ Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (London: John Murray, 1872), 245; 253. Available at: <http://darwin-online.org.uk/> [03/05/2015].

³⁴ G.H. Savage, “Homicidal Mania,” *New Zealand Herald*, Volume XXV, Issue 9220, 24 November 1888, Supplement. Available at: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH18881124.2.64.20> [14/11/2016].

³⁵ Smith, *Victorian Demons*, 70.

³⁶ Dryden, *The Modern Gothic*, 9.

“animal behaviour” that was unacceptable in “civilised” British society.³⁷ Such themes are evident, for instance, in a letter sent to the Metropolitan Police on 3 January 1889, wherein the anonymous correspondent suggests that the Ripper’s “mania” derives from his adherence to “sensual” indulgences and his surrender to “animal passions”:

During the mania time the animal passions are intensified, and when there is added the excitement of sensual indulgence this pleasure is suddenly developed into homicidal mania, and all humane or moral consequences are for the moment blotted from the mind and conscience.³⁸

Sexuality therefore represented all those corporeal, bodily, “animal passions” that could potentially lead to corruption and degeneration. These interconnected themes of sexuality, corruption, and degeneration are found in popular representations of the Ripper as “diseased” West End gentleman. As with representations of the Ripper-as-Jew, concepts of sexual disease and contamination (specifically syphilis) were used to evoke larger notions of physical and social entropy and decay. We see this in “A Mania for Blood,” an account of the case by British Parliamentarian Colonel J.C. Hughes-Hallett. Published in the American newspaper *Atlanta Constitution* on 7 October 1888, Hughes-Hallett’s article theorised that the Ripper was evidently a “West End man” of “high education,” “finesse” and “intellectual qualities,” who periodically degenerated into a kind of uncontrolled, frenzied beast, marked by a “homicidal mania bred in him by disease, most likely contracted from some of the unfortunate women to whom he confines his horrible revenge.” According to Hughes-Hallett, the killer’s actions were the result of a “brain bias superinduced [sic] by the disease alluded to,” which drove him into a frenzied mania “at stated intervals.”³⁹ With their themes of transgression, infection, and spread, these depictions of the Ripper as syphilitic gentleman both metaphorically and literally evoked degeneration, drawing upon concepts of physical, mental, and social decline, entropy and disorder.

As such, these gentleman/beast theories essentially employed the same set of motifs, themes and cultural anxieties that had characterised earlier, racially driven representations of the

³⁷ Boyle, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead*, 194.

³⁸ CLRO Ref Police Box 3.15 no 108-16/127. File 10. Whitechapel Murder Papers. No 111. Received 3 Jan 1889. London Metropolitan Archives.

³⁹ “A Mania for Blood. The Murderer Evidently a Gentleman with High Education,” *Atlanta Constitution*, Sunday, 7 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/atlanta_constitution/881007.html [19/12/2016].

Ripper murders. As with those depictions of the Ripper as alien other, themes of degeneration, savagery, primitivism, and sexual pollution and contagion were used to evoke the apparently precarious, divided nature of late-Victorian British society. In acknowledging these similarities, commentators were forced to confront the fact that such psychological and social concerns could not simply be displaced onto an external, exotic other, one who could conveniently take the blame for both the Ripper murders and the disordered, fractured state of the society in which they occurred. In *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, Richard Kearney observes that the human psyche projects onto others “those unconscious fears from which we recoil in ourselves. Rather than acknowledge that we are deep down answerable to an alterity which unsettles us, we devise all kinds of evasion strategies.”⁴⁰ Blaming the Ripper murders on an alien, foreign “other” was late-Victorian society’s evasion strategy, its unsustainability ultimately inducing commentators to examine their own alterity, their own “otherness.” As Kearney notes, “what we most fear in the demonized other is our own mirror image: our othered self.”⁴¹ Characterisations of the Ripper as a divided gentleman therefore embodied these fears of the “othered self,” suggesting that what was truly “other” or “alien” in British society could be found within, in the primal, repressed desires and motivations of the unconscious self.

These “Ripper-as-gentleman” representations therefore compelled commentators to re-examine their own basic prejudices and preconceptions, in the process drawing deeper psychological fears and uncertainties to the surface. Reconfiguring those “British self vs alien, external other” fears that had pervaded earlier media coverage of the Ripper crimes, these perceptions of the Ripper as a divided gentleman instead located such “otherness” within, in the hidden motivations and primal instincts of man’s “lower self.” In doing so, these dualistic “half beast, half man” representations were indicative of late-Victorian culture’s highly problematic relationship with the bodily and the corporeal, focusing attention upon the human body as a site of potential corruption and degeneration. Undermining Victorian notions of progressive selfhood and national advancement, such depictions reflected the late nineteenth-century anxiety that the latent animalistic “passions” and impulses of the human body had the potential to undo the “civilising” customs of modern society. Therefore, those fears of racial and cultural “otherness” that had permeated the earliest stages of the Ripper narrative gradually became subsumed into a larger dialogue concerning individual and cultural identity in late-

⁴⁰ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 75.

Victorian society. In this, the image of the Ripper as a dualistic, divided figure evoked greater anxieties of social degeneration, division and collapse, with the fragmentation and dislocation of the British “self” mirroring and portending a wider fragmentation of the culture. These dualistic gentleman/beast theories would go on to play a leading role in the Ripper narrative, coalescing in what became the most enduring image of the murderer – the Ripper as divided doctor.

CHAPTER FOUR

“Educated Men and Wild Beasts”:

Jack the Ripper, Medical Science and the Divided Gentleman in Late-Victorian Culture

The theory which Mr. Wayne [sic] E. Baxter,¹ the coroner, put forward yesterday respecting the motives which probably prompted the murderer of Annie Chapman, in Hanbury-street, a few weeks ago, adds an even deeper tinge of horror to what was already one of the most atrocious crimes that has ever shocked a civilized community...He tells us that the cuts, none of which are meaningless, must have been made by some person who possessed a high degree of anatomical skill and knowledge...His conclusion is, therefore, that they must have been performed by some one [sic] familiar with post-mortem dissection - in other words, by a man of education, skill, and professional position ('Horror on Horror's Head,' *The Evening News*, 27 September 1888).

On the 27 September 1888, the London newspaper *The Evening News* published an article, “Horror on Horror's Head,” commenting on the recent murder of Ripper victim Annie Chapman. Referring to the growing perception of the murderer as someone “familiar with post-mortem dissection...a man of education, skill, and professional position,” the writer expressed horror at the thought that “the terrible crime under notice was the work of an educated man, and not that of one of the ignorant wild beasts of the East-end.”² This chapter examines how these perceptions of the murderer as an “educated” medical professional came to dominate the Ripper discourse, seemingly confirming those “divided gentleman” anxieties that had increasingly marked popular discussion of the crimes. Drawing upon a wide range of contemporary articles on the murders in publications like *The Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Star*, *The Evening News*, and *The Lancet*, it argues that these representations of the Ripper-as-doctor undermined and subverted contemporary notions of the civilised, progressive British self, linking themes of otherness, degeneration, and the “animal within” to contemporary anxieties surrounding medical science and the biological reality of the human

¹ The coroner's name was Wynne E. Baxter.

² “Horror on Horror's Head,” *Evening News*, 27 September 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18880927.html [4/03/2015].

body. I argue that, in doing so, these representations questioned those fundamental notions of progress and cultural advancement that Victorian society was built upon, intertwining concepts of physical and mental decline with a larger sense of social decline, division, and enervation.

In suggesting that an “educated man” could be reduced to the level of a “wild beast,” these representations of the Ripper as a medical professional struck at the heart of Victorian culture, challenging and undermining prevailing notions of Victorian progress and civilisation. By the late nineteenth century, the figure of the doctor not only embodied, as Andrew Smith suggests, “a particular model of middle-class masculinity,”³ but also, in many ways, represented the perceived cultural and social advancements of the Victorian era itself. As Ruth Harris notes in *Murders and Madness: Medicine, Law, and Society in the Fin de Siecle* (1989):

Medical men were...not seen simply as doctors healing the sick, but were rather discussed – favourably and unfavourably – as the embodiment of certain moral and social philosophies, ideals, and aspirations. Physicians were prophets of progress...Science provided an optimistic perspective, a rationale for interventionist procedures to improve the health of the ‘social organism.’⁴

The cultural and social importance of doctors had risen steadily throughout the course of the nineteenth century, with breakthroughs in the study and treatment of illnesses and disease (coupled with the growing use of anaesthetics and antiseptics in controlling pain) leading to a greater prominence for medical professionals. By the time of the Ripper murders, earlier nineteenth-century notions of the doctor as a lowly artisan or unregulated “quack”⁵ had largely disappeared, as medical men enjoyed a new pre-eminence as “professional” gentlemen. As Keir Waddington notes, such developments reflected the growing cultural legitimacy of the middle-class British “professional” in the late nineteenth century, wherein the image of the

³ Andrew Smith, “The Whitechapel Murders and the Medical Gaze,” in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, 121.

⁴ Ruth Harris, *Murders and Madness: Medicine, Law, and Society in the Fin de Siecle* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 11. Although the major focus of Harris’s work is on late-nineteenth century French culture, her comments in relation to medical science, crime, and degeneration can similarly be applied to British society within the same time-span. Indeed, British medical culture was, during this period, heavily influenced by French models, as I discuss in chapter seven.

⁵ As the *Lancet* put it in an 1858 editorial: “Quackery...is the curse of the age, and the besetting sin of our civilization...the canker in the bud of our progress...A short cut has been opened to fortune and to fame...a real advance in medicine is to be won only by toils and pains, self-denial, and perseverance...homoeopaths, mesmerists, hydropaths and the like, they are men who have sacrificed science and debased morality by embracing falsehood and practising deception. The members of an honourable profession cannot, therefore, hold any terms with them.” “Homeopathic Quackery,” *The Lancet*, Volume 71, Issue 1811 (15 May 1858): 483-85. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(02\)62607-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(02)62607-8). [12/10/2017].

“gentleman” was no longer bound by notions of aristocracy and birth, but instead referred to an “educated, courteous, and well-spoken man who was morally and intellectually superior.”⁶ The increased legitimacy and cultural standing of the doctor in late-Victorian culture is evident by the passing of the Medical Act of 1886, which demanded that all registered practitioners had certified proficiency in all “essential branches” of medical practice.⁷ Embodying the “shifted perception of professional medical authority” and the increased “lay respect for what medical practitioners were thought capable of achieving,” this Act consolidated the growing public reputation of the doctor as an honourable and respectable “man of science.”⁸ With these developments came a “transfer of prestige” that saw medicine joining with science in becoming a “fourth estate”⁹ of cultural authority in nineteenth-century society, encroaching upon those religious, legal and aristocratic institutions that had traditionally governed British life and determined its future. As such, the figure of the doctor came to represent this sense of social and cultural forward movement, this “*capacity for progressive elevation*.”¹⁰ According to Robert Louis Stevenson, writing in 1887, the Victorian doctor represented “the flower...of our civilisation,” a person who “most notably exhibited the virtues of the race.”¹¹ Such attributes were particularly embodied in the figure of the cultivated, urbane, affluent West End doctor. Late-Victorian representations of the West End doctor combined these notions of medical men as “prophets of progress” with larger concepts of the “West” as a symbol of British prosperity, imperialism, social advancement, and civilisation. As such, representations of the Ripper as educated West End medical professional therefore directly challenged such dominant cultural assumptions, blurring and undermining those West/East, self/other, civilised/savage distinctions that increasingly pervaded Victorian culture and society.

⁶ Keir Waddington, “Mayhem and Medical Students: Image, Conduct and Control in the Victorian and Edwardian London Teaching Hospital,” *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (2002): 49-50. See also Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002, originally published 1989), 84.

⁷ This act, which made it compulsory for all registered doctors to have a “triple qualification” in “medicine, surgery, and midwifery,” built upon earlier efforts (notably the Medical Act of 1858) to monitor standards of professional training in medicine. See “Medical Acts Amendment Bill,” *The British Medical Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 1329 (June 19, 1886): 1174-76. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25268308>. [12/10/2017].

⁸ M.J.D. Roberts, “The Politics of Professionalization: MPs, Medical Men, and the 1858 Medical Act,” *Medical History*, January 2009, 53(1): 37-54. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2629176/> [12/10/2017].

⁹ Nicolaas Rupke, “Pro-vivisection in England in the Early 1880s: Arguments and Motives,” in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicolaas A. Rupke (London, New York, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), 200-1.

¹⁰ W.B. Carpenter, “The Ethics of Vivisection,” *Fortnightly Review*, vol. 31 (1882): 242. It should be pointed out, however, that despite the growing prestige of doctors in late-Victorian culture, certain underlying anxieties concerning the role and function of medical science persisted. These contradictions are explored later in this chapter.

¹¹ Robert Louis Stevenson, “Dedication,” in *Underwoods* (London: Chatto and Windus 1898, Ninth Edition, originally published 1887), v. Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/438/438-h/438-h.htm> [19/07/2017].

In being aligned with the “wild beasts of the East-end,” these representations of the Ripper-as-doctor therefore became part of the larger conflict between West and East that characterised late-Victorian culture. In this, the Jekyll and Hyde analogy seemed particularly apposite, with Stevenson’s depiction of a West End doctor who periodically degenerated into a “raging, raving wild beast”¹² eerily anticipating those Ripper-as-doctor theories that came to dominate popular discussion of the crimes. It is significant that Stevenson chose the East End as the site of his character’s degeneration and moral descent. In Stevenson’s novel the degenerate, threatening otherness of the East End acts as an analogue to his protagonist’s “other” self, becoming a place where man’s hidden impulses and desires awaken to frightening proportions, reflecting contemporary views of the area as a “playground for the worst passions, the most bestial impulses.”¹³ This tension between West and East is similarly apparent in the Ripper narrative, with the idea of the degenerate West End doctor, “infected” and “corrupted” by a fatal immersion in East End culture, soon becoming a recurring motif in public and press speculation about the crimes. The presence of West End doctors in the East End was by no means uncommon during this period; as Tony Williams notes, it was a place where “they could show the extent of their philanthropy, and visit the area to ‘do good works’, before returning to their comfortable homes.”¹⁴ A number of doctors who lived and/or held private practices in affluent central London/West End areas like Marylebone, for instance, also worked at the London Hospital, located on Whitechapel Road, in the heart of Whitechapel.¹⁵ In *Doctor in the Nineties*, an autobiographical account of London medical practice in the late-Victorian era, D.G. Halstead detailed his experiences working at the London Hospital during the period of the Ripper crimes. He described a climate where “no medical man, however high his character or reputation, could be entirely exempted from suspicion, and naturally those of us at the London Hospital...were in the limelight.”¹⁶ The London Hospital (and, by extension, the entire Whitechapel area) therefore acted as a point of intersection between West and East, a point where two distinct (and seemingly mutually exclusive) worlds converged and collided. As

¹² “Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,” *Marion Daily Star*, Ohio, U.S.A, 15 February 1889. See also: Judith Flanders, *The Invention of Murder: How the Victorians Revelled in Death and Detection and Created Modern Crime* (London: Harper Press, 2011), 445.

¹³ “The East End Murders: Detailed Lessons,” *British Medical Journal*, 6 October 1888. *The Ultimate Compendium of the Legacy and Legend of History’s Most Notorious Killer Jack the Ripper: Fact, Fiction, Legend*, ed. Otto Penzler (London: Head of Zeus Ltd), 71.

¹⁴ Tony Williams with Humphrey Price, *Uncle Jack* (London: Orion Books, 2005), 129.

¹⁵ One such figure was Thomas Horracks Openshaw, the Pathologist Curator of the London Hospital, who lived in Wimpole St, Marylebone during this period. Openshaw’s role in the Ripper story is detailed later in this chapter.

¹⁶ D.G Halstead, *Doctor in the Nineties* (London: Christopher Johnson, 1959), 51.

such, the area became a “gateway” into the corrupting “otherness” of the East End, a place where even the respectable, progressive figure of the West End doctor could potentially degenerate.

These theories of the Ripper-as-doctor were given widespread credence by the testimony of Dr George Bagster Phillips, the medical examiner in the Annie Chapman case, who suggested that her murder was the work of an “expert” who had “such knowledge of anatomical or pathological examinations as to be enabled to secure the pelvic organs with one sweep of the knife.” Moreover, he was quoted as stating that the “mutilation of the body was of such a character as could only have been effected [sic] by a practiced hand.”¹⁷ Although these suggestions of medical knowledge were heavily disputed by other examiners,¹⁸ Phillips’s disclosures, as found in his 19 September testimony,¹⁹ seemed to confirm the public’s worst fears about the murders. As London’s leading medical journal, *The Lancet*, noted, in response to Phillips’s findings: “the public have supped full of horrors, and now there is added thereto a suggestion which, in spite of its plausibility, is almost too horrible to be credited.”²⁰ In many respects, Phillips’s testimony marks the point at which these doctor/gentleman theories superseded earlier notions of the Ripper as foreign other. As Christopher Frayling notes in his article “The House That Jack Built,” the idea of Ripper-as-doctor would thereafter prove to be the most widely-discussed and enduring theory, both “in the press, and among commentators from the reading public.”²¹ For many such commentators, Phillips’s findings seemed to

¹⁷ “The Whitechapel Murders,” *The Lancet*, 29 September 1888, 637, available from Science Direct: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/01406736/132/3396> [14/05/2014]; See also: “Chapman Murder,” *The Lancet*, 29 September 1888. London Hospital Archives.

¹⁸ These medical examiners largely played down, refuted or made no mention of this issue of the killer’s supposed medical knowledge. Dr Rees Ralph Llewellyn, during the Nichols inquest, suggested that the killer might have possessed “some rough anatomical knowledge.” See Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 41. Doctor Thomas Bond, police surgeon to A Division, strongly refuted these suggestions of surgical knowledge in a general report submitted to Robert Anderson in early November, stating that “in my opinion he does not even possess the technical knowledge of a butcher or horse slaughterer.” See: “Reply by Bond to Anderson on Re-Examination of Bodies on Anderson’s Suggestion. 10 November 1888.” Royal London Hospital Archives.

¹⁹ Phillips’s testimony on the 19 September was the second time he had been called upon to give evidence during the inquest proceedings. He originally testified on 14 September and was only recalled by coroner Wynne Baxter on the 19th because of his initial refusal to disclose the full details of Chapman’s injuries. In his original testimony, Phillips had merely noted that Chapman’s killer displayed “some anatomical knowledge.” On the 19th, Phillips amended these conclusions, suggesting instead that the mutilations to Chapman’s body showed “great anatomical knowledge” and were “obviously the work of an expert.” It’s therefore possible that Phillips’s initial reluctance in disclosing these details was, in part, an attempt to downplay any perceived links between the murders and the medical profession. See Begg, Fido, Skinner, *The Jack the Ripper A to Z*, 356-61.

²⁰ “Chapman Murder,” *The Lancet*, 29 September 1888.

²¹ Christopher Frayling, “The House That Jack Built,” in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, and History*, 17.

substantiate and validate those “gentleman as beast” representations that had increasingly come to dominate popular discussion of the Ripper crimes. Subverting and undermining traditional Victorian representations of the civilised, culturally advanced, progressive British self, these suggestions of anatomical knowledge served to fix the murderer in the public imagination as a divided medical professional, outwardly respectable, even genteel, hiding a violent, savage, primitive “second self” within.

These theories were further consolidated by the inflammatory comments of Wynne E. Baxter, the coroner presiding over the Annie Chapman inquest, who proposed that the killer was most likely a physiologist looking for “specimens” to experiment upon. Building upon Phillips’s earlier statements, Baxter similarly suggested that the crimes were the work of somebody “who had considerable anatomical skill and knowledge...some one [sic] accustomed to the post-mortem room.”²² Building on his theme, Baxter related how he had personally been informed by “an officer of one of our great medical schools,” that a suspicious “medical man” had recently visited the school attempting to “procure a number of specimens of the organ that was missing in the deceased” (i.e. the uterus) for a price of “20 pounds apiece for each specimen.”²³ The response of *The Lancet* to Baxter’s unsubstantiated and provocative story of the “specimen collector” conveys something of the fraught atmosphere of the period. Noting how Baxter’s story “brings into question the discretion of the officer of the law who could accept such a statement and give it such wide publicity,” the journal suggested that:

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 while to subside...We believe the story to be highly improbable.²⁴

Whilst medical professionals and certain sections of the press and public were quick to denigrate the story – described by one correspondent to *The Times* as a “gross and unjustifiable calumny on the medical profession...calculated both to exert an injurious influence on the public mind and defeat the ends of justice”²⁵ – the damage was already done. The idea of the

²² “The Whitechapel Murders. Summing Up and Verdict. Important Statement by the Coroner,” *Daily News*, 26 September 1888. Available at: tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5FT6S5 [2/07/2017].

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ *The Lancet*, 29 September 1888. Royal London Hospital Archives.

²⁵ Jas. Risdon Bennett, “To the Editor of the Times,” *Times*, Friday, 28 September 1888, 4, Issue 32503, available from Times Digital Archive:

<http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupN>

killer as an “educated medical man” whose object in committing the murders was to “secure certain organs, which were always dissected and carried away,” proved irresistible to newspaper reporters of the day.²⁶ As Jas. Risdon Bennett noted in London’s *Echo* newspaper, whether “true or untrue,” Baxter’s story of the mystery anatomist was a “scandal”²⁷ for the medical profession, one which exerted an unwelcome influence on a “public mind” already predisposed towards anti-medical rhetoric in relation to the crimes. Indeed, these notions of the Ripper as specimen collector soon gained worldwide notoriety, with Sydney’s *Evening News*, for example, writing of how the British police apparently possessed “conclusive evidence” that the murderer was a “medical man resident in London” who “committed the murders for the purpose of obtaining morbid specimens.”²⁸

The ensuing popularity of the “Ripper as doctor” theory is similarly evident when examining the London Metropolitan Archives’ “The Whitechapel Murders Papers,” which collates all the available letters sent from members of the public to the London City Police during the general period of the crimes. Of some 320 letters, nearly half (approximately forty-six per cent) advance the theory that the Ripper was likely to be a doctor or some kind of “medical man.”²⁹ These letters are full of references to an array of “strange mannered” and “gentlemanly looking” suspects who resembled doctors or medical professionals.³⁰ Indeed, as Robin Odell points out, the way that doctors typically dressed inadvertently created the “stereotypical Ripper of fiction” (dark clothing, silk hat and Gladstone bag).³¹ The Gladstone bag, commonly known as a “doctor’s bag,” was used by doctors as a means of carrying about their medical “kit” (containing items like scalpels, needles, chloroform and surgical knives). This bag would become a ubiquitous feature in Ripper mythology, and featured heavily in letters from the public about the crimes, with various commentators advancing theories of potential suspects

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²⁶ “Civilization and Murder,” *Daily Picayune*, Thursday, 13 October 1892.

²⁷ “Letter from Jas. Risdon Bennett,” *Echo* (London), 29 September 1888.

²⁸ “The Whitechapel Murders. Jack the Ripper a Doctor,” *Evening News* (Sydney), Thursday, 3 October 1889 [1888?], 6. Trove: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title508> [24/02/2018].

²⁹ “Whitechapel Murders Papers: Letters Relating to the ‘Jack the Ripper’ Killings.” London Metropolitan Archives. Corporation of London Records Office. CLA/048/CS/02. See also L. Perry Curtis Jr, “Letters to Old Jewry,” in *Ripperology*, 184-96.

³⁰ See, for example, CLRO Ref Police Box 3.13, no. 41; Police Box 3.13/34-50, fiche 5; CLRO Police Box 3.15, no. 92. London Metropolitan Archives.

³¹ Robin Odell, “Introduction,” in *Jack the Ripper: The Terrible Legacy*, edited by the Whitechapel Society (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2013), 10.

seen with “black shiny” bags which they “carried [with them] at all times.”³² Such themes are found, for instance, in a letter from one “N. Hollander” to the City Police, describing a suspicious “surgeon” who “always carries a black bag” and is therefore “the exact stereotype of man” suspected of the crimes.³³ Similar allusions are found in the Ripper reportage, with the *Evening News* recounting the arrest, in connection to the murders, of a “mysterious looking person” carrying a “black bag,” who looked “like a doctor or doctor’s assistant.” According to the article, this suspect was overheard talking of how he was “used to cutting people up, and [putting] them back together again.”³⁴ Such reports turned the standard accoutrements of the medical professional into objects of horror and suspicion, firmly establishing the idea of the Ripper as the outwardly respectable “divided gentleman” in the public consciousness.

These were representations that drew upon a number of late nineteenth-century anxieties in relation to medical science, in particular its avowed interest in examining the biological and anatomical reality of the human body. This emphasis on the physical and the corporeal reflected a general trend within late-Victorian medical culture, as breakthroughs in the study of disease and bacteria (as developed by such key figures as French microbiologist Louis Pasteur and German physician Robert Koch) led to a greater focus on the physiological workings of the body. With this came a breaking down of what George Eliot had referred to in *Middlemarch* as the “irrational severance between medical and surgical knowledge” that had governed medical practice earlier in the century.³⁵ These earlier divisions between “gentleman” physicians (who prescribed medical treatment, yet rarely had any direct contact with bodies) and lower-class surgeons (who performed the “rough, bloody” and “manual” tasks of surgery and anatomical dissection) had largely dissolved by the late nineteenth century, as surgeons enjoyed a new pre-eminence as “middle class professionals and cultured gentlemen.”³⁶ With these developments came a heightened interest in exploring the “secret workings”³⁷ of the

³² Police Box 3.13/34-50, fiche 5 ; Police Box 3.13 151-14/66, fiche 6.

³³ CLRO Police Box 3.15, no. 92.

³⁴ “Strange Incident – A Black Bag and a Dagger,” *Evening News*, 18 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18881018.html [04/03/2016].

³⁵ George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (North Carolina: Lulu Press, 2013), 97 [originally published 1871-72].

³⁶ Keren Rosa Hammerschlag, “The Gentleman Artist-Surgeon in Late Victorian Group Portraiture,” *Visual Culture in Britain*, 2013, 14:2, 154-55. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14714787.2013.780828> [10/03/2016].

³⁷ Nineteenth-century writer (and co-founder of the Victorian Street Society for the Protection of Animals liable to Vivisection) Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904), quoted in: Mary Ann Elston, “Women and Anti-vivisection in Victorian England, 1870-1900,” in *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, 279. Cobbe’s role in the anti-medical debate (and the Ripper narrative) is discussed in the following chapter.

body, with medical dissection and vivisection seen as crucial methods in advancing the state of medicine, and, by extension, society itself. Moreover, as Thomas Laqueur points out, the Victorian era was “the great age of the post-mortem, of pathology’s ascendancy,”³⁸ with the number of autopsies performed by medical practitioners throughout Britain increasing exponentially. A strong anatomical focus similarly informed general medical procedures, with women’s bodies (and, in particular, the female reproductive organs) coming under intense scrutiny throughout this period. Indeed, as Ann Dally notes in *Women Under the Knife*, the recently introduced and highly dangerous procedure of ovariectomy (the surgical removal of the ovaries) became, during this era, “the operation by which a surgeon’s skill and worth were assessed.”³⁹ These developments contributed to popular (albeit complex and somewhat contradictory) conceptions of the doctor as a “gentleman” obsessed by “bloody” anatomical dissection and surgical experimentation.

This increased focus on the bodily and the anatomical was controversial in that it seemed to go against the accepted (and acceptable) order of things. As Thomas Boyle points out, Victorian society was a culture “infused by ‘immutable’ laws which promised healthy forward movement in all matters.” Somewhat contradictorily, this sense of forward movement was one “based on the maintenance of a fixed, hierarchical system. The ‘progress’ that was so happily trumpeted was grounded in the status quo.”⁴⁰ This tension between these two contradictory impulses is evident in late-Victorian representations of the doctor. On the one hand, doctors were lauded as progressive figures, embodying notions of Victorian cultural advancement and social evolution. On the other hand, late-Victorian developments in medical science were often viewed with a certain amount of popular disquiet and distrust. In this, there was a general fear that medical professionals had gone too far in their pursuit of scientific knowledge, and in doing so had transgressed the acceptable boundaries of both self and society. Theories of the Ripper-as-doctor reflected this sense of ambivalence and disquiet, drawing upon a number of prevalent late-nineteenth century fears of surgeons, vivisectionists, anatomists, gynaecologists, physiologists, and medical dissection in general. Such theories reflected the belief that medical science, in its fascination with biological reality and the human body, had “stripped away

³⁸ Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 188.

³⁹ Ann Dally, *Women under the Knife: A History of Surgery* (London, Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg: Hutchinson Radius, 1991), 139. As Thomas Laqueur points out in *Making Sex*, ovariectomy had only become a common medical practice in the 1870s. Laqueur, *Making Sex*, 178-81. These concerns are dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter.

⁴⁰ Boyle, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead*, 76.

Victorian defences against the life of the emotions, revealing man as no more than another wild animal.”⁴¹ As W.S Lilly put it in a strongly anti-medical science/vivisection 1885 article: “The New Naturalism eliminates from man all but the ape and the tiger. It leaves of him nothing but the *bête humaine*, more subtle than any beast of the field, but cursed above all beasts of the field.” According to Lily, this “new naturalism” was one that, in “declining to recognize in nature anything which cannot be analyzed, or dissected, or vivisected,” excessively focused upon the “study of the human animal...subject to the action of its environment, the compulsion of heredity, the fatality of instinct.”⁴² Such commentaries suggested that the line between “progress” and degeneration was disconcertingly fragile, and that medical science, in focusing upon the bodily and the corporeal, unwittingly left itself open to the kind of debilitating, destructive influences that could potentially lead to degeneration and social enervation and decay.

These concerns strongly informed the Ripper reportage; parallels were drawn between the mutilated bodies of the Ripper's victims and the “horrors” of medical dissection, with commentators advancing theories about the murderer as a “crazed biologist” who was “so infatuated by [his] pursuits as to cause murder to be committed” or a “fanatical vivisectionist” following in “the steps of Darwin in studying the origin of species.”⁴³ Echoing Wynne E. Baxter’s notion of the Ripper as “specimen collector,” one *Times* correspondent suggested that the murders were committed:

At the instigation of some seeker after knowledge who may have been half maddened by reflections as to the limitations of his opportunities for experiments on tissue or organ gratification, and who resorted to what appeared to him the only method of obtaining living material from a healthy subject.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Richard D. French, *Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 387.

⁴² Lily, “The New Naturalism,” 241-56.

⁴³ *Star*; 16 September 1888, quoted in Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 206; “Who is the Murderer and How May He Be Caught? An Epitome of the Suggestions from the Public,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Tuesday, 2 October 1888. Available from British Library Newspapers: http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNCN&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=unimelb&docPage=article&docId=BA3200413226&contentSet=LTO&source=gale [11/10/2016].

⁴⁴ Thomas Bolas, “The Whitechapel Murder: A Theory as to Motive. To the Editor of the Times, 16 September 1888.” Copy of letter delivered at the *Times* office on Sunday, 16 September 1888, but not inserted. Found in: CLRO, Police Box 3.13/18A-33, Fiche 04, London Metropolitan Archives.

Similar themes are found in Sam'l [sic] E. Hudson's "*Leather Apron*," with its suggestion that the murderer was a "medical" man "without moral sense," whose studies had "led him to desire a certain female organ, and who wanted them fresh and flaccid."⁴⁵ In this, there was the suggestion that any kind of excessive or prolonged focus on the body and the corporeal had a corrupting, degenerative effect on even the most seemingly "advanced" of minds. Indeed, for such commentators, the Ripper's practice of extracting certain body parts of his victims⁴⁶ seemed like an extreme simulation of extant medical procedures, with the post-mortem mutilations of their bodies seemingly bearing a disturbing resemblance to medical autopsies.⁴⁷ As one correspondent to *The Star* noted, in relation to the Annie Chapman murder: "I am struck by the fact of the viscera being taken out and placed alongside of the unfortunate victim, as if for inspection by the demonstrator at a post-mortem examination."⁴⁸ The *Pall Mall Gazette*, meanwhile, in reference to the Chapman murder, wrote of the "ease with which the murderer conducted his dissection," and, in a later issue, compared the mutilated body of Mary Kelly to "one of those horrible wax anatomical specimens which may be seen in surgical shops."⁴⁹ Such surgical allusions are even apparent in Dr Phillips's testimony during the Annie Chapman inquest, with his usage of terms like "dissection" and "operation" to describe her murder.⁵⁰ Similar medical allusions are also found in the "Ripper letters" – the large body of letters purportedly written by the killer himself. A letter sent on 8 December 1888, for instance, refers to the killer's victims as "specimens," whilst a letter sent on 18 October 1889 uses terms like "delicate work" and "my third examination of the human body" to describe the killer's actions.⁵¹ A "Ripper" letter sent to Dr Thomas Horrocks Openshaw, the Pathologist Curator of the London Hospital, who had recently examined the human kidney (purported to be from

⁴⁵ Hudson, "*Leather Apron*," 4.

⁴⁶ In the Annie Chapman murder, the killer had removed "the uterus and its appendages with the upper portion of the vagina." With Catherine Eddowes, the left kidney and the womb had been extracted and taken away. In the case of Mary Kelly, her heart had been removed and carried away. "Autopsy Reports," *The Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper*, 69-88.

⁴⁷ These themes are dealt with more fully in the next chapter.

⁴⁸ "A New Suggestion," *Star*, London, Monday, 10 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s880910.html [10/11/2016].

⁴⁹ "Occasional Notes," *Pall Mall Gazette*, Friday, 14 September 1888. Available at: <http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?markListId=127078&userGroupName=unimelb&prodId=BNCN&type=markList&version=1.0&source=gale> [08/05/2015]; "The Inquest in Whitechapel: Viewing the Body and the Room," *Pall Mall Gazette*, Monday, 12 November 1888. Available at: tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5Gk8W5 [29/08/2016].

⁵⁰ "Editorial," *Daily Telegraph*, Tuesday, 11 September 1888, 3; "Editorial," *Daily Telegraph*, Thursday, 13 September 1888, 3. Both articles available at: http://www.casebook.org/official_documents/inquests/inquest_chapman.html [31/08/2016].

⁵¹ "Ripper Letters," Mepo 3/142, National Archives.

Ripper victim Catherine Eddowes) that had been posted to the head of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, George Lusk,⁵² made similar use of medical language: “it was the left kidney I was going to hopperate agin close to your ospital [sic].” The writer of this missive even signed off with a piece of medical doggerel:

Have you seen the devle
With his mikerscope and scalpul
A lookin at a kidney
With a slide cocked up [sic]⁵³

This use of medical language – microscope, scalpel, dissection, specimens, examination, operation – exploited popular anxieties surrounding medical science, drawing parallels between the Ripper’s knife and the doctor’s scalpel. As Andrew Smith points out, this “proximity of the killer’s actions to ‘normal’ medical procedure” helped contribute to a “widespread cultural distrust” of doctors, and, by extension, the entire medical profession, throughout this era.⁵⁴

These Ripper-as-doctor narratives drew upon pre-existing anxieties in relation to dissection and the human body; The *Pall Mall Gazette*, for instance, had published an article, “The Horrors of the Dissecting Room,” earlier in 1888 denouncing the kind of treatment paupers’ bodies received at the hands of doctors, wherein “the Act of Parliament which provides that no body be mutilated beyond a certain inevitable extent is systematically ignored and broken.”⁵⁵ The Ripper murders seemed to validate and prove the reality of these anxieties of medical dissection; an article that appeared in the *Cincinnati Medical Journal* in the wake of the murders pointedly asked the question “Is There Any Relation between the Dissecting Room and Homicide?” Referencing theories of the Ripper as an “insane medical student,” the article questioned whether surgical dissection robbed medical practitioners of “a true valuation of

⁵² Lusk had received a parcel on the 16 October containing part of a human kidney. The infamous letter that accompanied the kidney was addressed “From Hell” and the writer boasted of sending “half the Kidne I took from one woman [Eddowes] prasarved it for you tother piece I fried and ate it was very nise [sic].” The question of whether the kidney was genuine, and whether it did, indeed, come from the body of Catherine Eddowes has been debated ever since, with some commentators suggesting the parcel was a medical school prank. See Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, 118-21.

⁵³ “Original Photographs of Letter and Envelope Sent to Thomas Horrocks Openshaw, London Hospital, 29 October 1888.” Royal London Hospital Archives, ref. LH/X/97/1.

⁵⁴ Smith, “The Whitechapel Murders and the Medical Gaze,” 111-16.

⁵⁵ “Horrors of the Dissecting Room,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 January 1888. Available at: tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5Gk5L9 [4/03/2016].

human life,” and whether it tended to “unnecessarily blunt their finer sensibilities.” Moreover, the article suggested that, in instances of violent murder, the “homicidal tendency turns, for the instruments of its demonstration, to those objects or agencies with the legitimate and professional use of which the homicidal mind is most familiar in its intervals of normality.”⁵⁶ This idea of the doctor as someone performing unregulated and immoral medical experimentation and mutilation (evoking a seemingly endemic culture of medical violence and cruelty) played a crucial role in theories of the Ripper-as-doctor, suggesting that the Ripper’s own actions were motivated by similar impulses and desires.

In this, there was a suggestion that such medical experimentation, with its perceived monomaniacal focus on the anatomical and the physical, had the power to unleash the latent animalistic, homicidal passions buried deep within “civilised” man. Such representations linked Jekyll and Hyde-like themes of degeneration and the “animal within” to contemporary anxieties surrounding surgical dissection and medical experimentation, specifically the belief that medical science engaged in “experimentation for its own sake rather than towards the alleviation of human pain and suffering.”⁵⁷ These themes are found in the *Pall Mall Gazette* article “Murder as an Advertisement,” which proposed that the Ripper was a “scientific” experimentalist who was “absolutely indifferent to the sufferings of the individual.”⁵⁸ Reflecting the perceived distance between morality and scientific authority, these representations fixed the Ripper in the public imagination as a divided “medical man” who had gone too far in pursuit of medical and scientific knowledge, favouring the “lower” (i.e. corporeal and bodily) aspects of life over “higher” moral concerns. In doing so, such accounts seemingly confirmed all those dualistic gentleman/beast, self/other, progress/degeneration, higher/lower, mind/body, West/East representations that had dominated the Ripper reportage. In *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead*, Boyle writes of Victorian society as a culture that “often appears to be teetering, privately, on the brink of madness, while presenting to the outside world an image of buttoned-up respectability.”⁵⁹ This tension between outer respectability and inner madness is at the heart of all these Ripper-as-doctor characterisations,

⁵⁶ “Ethics and Politics: Is There Any Relation between the Dissecting Room and Homicide?” *Cincinnati Medical Journal*, March 1896, Vol. XI, Number 3, 174-78. Available at: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/> [05/03/2016].

⁵⁷ Tabitha Sparks, *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel: Family Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 112.

⁵⁸ “Murder as an Advertisement,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 September 1888, Issue 7335. Available at tinyurl.galegroup.com/tinyurl/5FT8E5 [8/9/2015].

⁵⁹ Boyle, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead*, 34.

with the figure of the doctor reflecting and embodying the seemingly perilous, divided, and fragile state of late-Victorian society itself.

All of these social and cultural anxieties surrounding the self, the body and the medical profession coalesced in what became one of the defining representations of the Ripper – the “syphilitic doctor” theory. This theory was first advanced by Archibald Forbes, the foreign correspondent of the *Daily News*, in early October 1888, who suggested that the killer was a “medical” man suffering from a “specific contagion,” who was now “avenging” himself on prostitutes.⁶⁰ Similar associations are found in a story published in *The Star* several days later, which likewise suggested that the killer was a “monomaniac with medical knowledge” whose “mania” resulted from a “blighting hurt” from a “Whitechapel loose woman.”⁶¹ The theme was again taken up by a “Sir James Frasier” in a letter sent to the Metropolitan Police, wherein he too suggested that the Ripper could be found amongst the “medical men of London” and postulated that the culprit had “been badly disfigured by disease – possibly had his privy member destroyed – and is now revenging himself [emphasis in original].”⁶² These suggestions of syphilis again focused attention on the body – and its base, “animal” appetites – as a site of potential corruption and otherness. Such representations linked notions of the doctor as medical experimentalist with concepts of sexual experimentation and contamination. In both cases, a perceived adherence to the bodily and the animalistic was believed to lead to mental and physical decline and debilitation. Again, this degeneration of “self” had wider social and cultural implications. As Robert M. Kaplan points out in his essay “Syphilis, Sex, and Psychiatry,” such concepts of syphilis “fitted perfectly into the theory of degeneration” that was prevalent during this era. With their themes of transgression, infection, and contamination, depictions of the Ripper as syphilitic doctor both metaphorically and literally evoked degeneration, drawing clear parallels between notions of the corrupt body and the corrupted society. Syphilitic infection, leading inexorably to bodily deterioration, insanity and ultimately death, seemed the logical end result of these degeneration anxieties, seemingly confirming popular fears about the degenerative state of late nineteenth-century British society.

⁶⁰ Archibald Forbes, “The Motive of the Murders,” *Daily News*, 3 October 1888.

⁶¹ “A Doctor’s Clue,” *The Star*, 6 October 1888. Available from: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s881006.html [08/09/2014].

⁶² “Letter from Sir James Frasier,” CLRO Ref Police Box 3.17, no 166, London Metropolitan Archives.

Furthermore, by placing syphilis within the body of the West End doctor, and in suggesting that his “blighting hurt” was contracted from an East End “loose woman,” such reports again referenced the West/End, self/other dichotomy that was at the heart of the entire Ripper narrative, with the East End again portrayed as a locus of degeneration and threat. In these depictions, the figure of the prostitute represented the corrupting potential of the East End, acting as a “gateway” into the contaminating, transgressive otherness of the area. Defined as the great Victorian “social evil,” and seen as conduits of “moral corruption and physical disease,”⁶³ prostitutes were believed to be both physically and morally responsible for the spread and incidence of venereal disease.⁶⁴ The prostitute’s body, therefore, like the body of the Jew, represented the degenerate, contagious otherness of the East End, and its capacity to reduce even the most “educated” of men into a “wild beast.” In doing so, such representations paralleled notions of the “other in society” with the “interior” other (the hidden self, the animal within), thereby hinting at perceived commonalities between the two. These speculations of syphilis provided a critical linkage, with syphilis’s contamination and poisoning of the “healthy British male body” mirroring the perceived wider contamination of English society by “foreign” and “transgressive” elements within the culture. Consequently, this image of the syphilitic West End doctor drew together a whole series of late-Victorian anxieties in relation to the self and other, effectively marking the point as which these two concerns coalesced and merged into one another.

These representations of the Ripper-as-doctor therefore highlighted a whole series of late-Victorian anxieties in relation to selfhood and identity, consolidating and seemingly confirming those “divided self” anxieties that had increasingly marked popular discussion of the crimes. Drawing upon Jekyll and Hyde-like themes of duality and de-evolution, these depictions served to fix the Ripper in the public imagination as an outwardly-respectable medical professional hiding a primitive, degenerate, “other” self within. In suggesting that a successful, educated, urbane West End “gentleman” could harbour degenerate tendencies, these characterisations ran counter to those overwhelmingly optimistic representations of English selfhood traditionally seen throughout the nineteenth century, which had tended to focus on concepts of the civilised, advanced British self as a symbol of national identity and cultural progress. By the time of the Ripper murders, the figure of the doctor had increasingly come to embody this sense of cultural

⁶³ Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 93-109.

⁶⁴ These concepts are dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter.

advancement, with medical science seen as a crucial contributing factor to the continued wellbeing and progress of British society. As such, these representations of the Ripper-as-doctor fatally destabilised this positivist Victorian self-image, undermining and challenging such (overly simplistic) notions of respectability and progress, whilst exposing a number of popular misgivings and anxieties in relation to medical science itself. Linking themes of degeneration and the “other within” to contemporary anxieties concerning anatomical dissection, vivisection, medical experimentation and the biological reality of the human body, these characterisations therefore questioned not only the role and function of medical science in contemporary culture, but all those associated notions of individual progress and social advancement embodied in late-Victorian representations of the doctor. In doing so, these Ripper-as-doctor characterisations again drew attention to the conflicted, fragmented nature of both self and society in late-Victorian Britain, evoking themes of physical, social, and cultural division, contamination and decline.

CHAPTER FIVE

“The Victim’s Victim”:

Jack the Ripper, Self, Other and the Female Body

Hither comes

The haggard harpy of the pavement, she
 The victim’s victim, whose delirious glee
 Makes mirth a crackling horror; hither slink
 The waifs of passion and the wrecks of drink.
 Multiform wretchedness in rags and grime,
 Hopeless of good and ripe for every crime;
 A seething mass of misery and vice

(Excerpt from “Blind Man’s Bluff,” *Punch*, 22 September 1888). ¹

With their focus on themes of sexual contamination and disease, depictions of the Ripper as divided doctor highlighted the way in which such representations portrayed the female body as a subversive and corrupting influence on the English masculine self. Utilising concepts of otherness, threat and moral and physical infection, these representations of “transgressive” femininity played a crucial role in the development of the Ripper narrative, complementing – and reinforcing – those dualistic self/other concerns found throughout public and media discourses around the crimes. This chapter examines the way in which these characterisations of the female body were a key feature in representations of the Ripper as both “gentleman doctor” and “alien foreigner,” and argues that these concepts of female “otherness” and threat were used to advance those wider social and psychological concerns found throughout the Ripper narrative. Documenting the way in which these responses to the crimes were dominated by male perspectives, it details how the Ripper was depicted as the “victim” of a “feminised” East End culture of degenerate sexuality and contaminating otherness. Furthermore, it looks at the way in which these representations were strongly contested by a smaller number of female commentators, who instead saw the murders as the inevitable consequence of an endemic

¹ “Blind Man’s Bluff,” *Punch*, 22 September 1888. A reproduction of the article is available at: <https://lit41spring2013.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/blindmansblufftext.jpg> [09/10/2014].

culture of masculine violence and medical cruelty. In this way, it argues that these representations once again drew attention to the fundamental schisms and ruptures of late-Victorian society, highlighting the sense of instability, liminality and incoherence that lay behind late nineteenth-century conceptions of the British self.

In *Doctor in the Nineties*, D.G. Halstead wrote of his belief that the murderer was most likely “a victim of that dreaded disease, syphilis,” and recounted how he:

Used to imagine the half-crazed sufferer, his bones being gnawed away by this terrible ailment, determining to revenge himself on the class of women from whom he had caught it. It must have been...an almost moral urge to purify the East End of these plague-bearing Harpies.²

With its evocations of syphilis and reference to “plague-bearing Harpies,” Halstead’s account was typical of late-Victorian representations of the crimes in placing the onus of blame for the killings directly onto the women themselves, with the Ripper himself cast as a “victim” of female sexuality and disease. Indeed, according to Halstead, the horrific mutilations of the bodies of the women constituted a “destructive orgy of collective vengeance” directed against the perceived polluting otherness of the prostitute’s body.³ Similar attitudes are found in a number of contemporary letters from members of the general public regarding the crimes. A 27 September 1889 letter addressed to the Lord Mayor of London and attributed to “Robert,” for example, suggested that the murderer “must have once been respectable” but, as a result of his association with “that class of woman to which his victims belonged” his “health of body and mind [emphasis in original]” was destroyed. Robert goes on to speculate that, having been “reduced to desperation and frenzy by disease” the murderer is now “running a muck [sic] against the entire class to whom his misfortune may be attributed.”⁴ The transgressive female body, in such estimations, became a conduit of infection, corruption and disease, infecting and disfiguring the “healthy” male self. Polluted by the “otherness” of the female body, the male “victim” therefore in turn becomes “other” himself – animalistic, degenerate, uncontrolled and at the mercy of instinctive bodily impulses beyond his autonomous control.

² Halstead, *Doctor in the Nineties*, 56.

³ Ibid, 56.

⁴ “Letter Addressed to the Lord Mayor of London” in: “The Whitechapel Murders Papers,” Police Box 3.16, no. 148. Metropolitan Archives.

These concepts of pollution and contagion were characteristic of late-Victorian representations of prostitution. Associated with notions of transgression, contamination, death and social disorder, prostitution was regarded as the ultimate manifestation of moral and physical degeneration in late-Victorian British society, threatening the health, strength and future of both self and society. Such concepts are evident, for example, in the nineteenth-century minister Ralph Wardlaw's series of lectures on the subject:

We are borne out in the assertion that the prevalence of this vice [prostitution] tends, in a variety of ways, to the deterioration of national character...and to the consequent exposure of the nations among whom it abounds to weakness, decline, and fall.⁵

With its allusions to "national character," Wardlaw's account was typical of the period in linking themes of physical deterioration and sexual transgression to a wider sense of imperial decline and social degeneration. Similar concepts are evident in an influential letter written by the Reverend Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne (writing under the pseudonym "S.G.O"), published in *The Times* at the height of the Ripper period. Osborne uses the example of the murders to comment on what he sees as the "bestial," "morally corrupted," and contaminating "harlotry" of Whitechapel, suggesting that such women have become "altogether unsexed, [having] no one element in character with female feeling." Moreover, he advises that the spread of such "moral sewage" would "develop into a form of danger far more serious than any political disturbance," and that it would result in "the utter subversion of the very commonest principles of civilisation."⁶ Osborne's letter was typical of late-Victorian attitudes in linking the issue of female morality to wider concerns in relation to national health and social progress. As Lynda Nead points out, women were believed to play a crucial role in the formation of public morality, with the "moral condition of the nation," linked to the physical health and "moral standards" of its female inhabitants.⁷ These themes are evident, for example, in the writings of the nineteenth-century British physician Edward Tilt. Writing of how the health of the individual was made up of three crucial aspects – the mind, body and heart (or "moral principle") – Tilt suggested that:

⁵ Quoted in Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 94.

⁶ Whilst Osborne's letter is ostensibly a general attack on East End culture, he seems to reserve most of his vitriol for its female inhabitants. "At Last: To the Editor of the Times," *Times* (London), Tuesday, 18 September 1888, 11, Issue 32494, available: <http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=unimelb&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS186044210&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [24/08/2015].

⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 92.

The great means of improving the human race must be sought in the improvement of the health of woman, for she is the matrix in which the human is cast. Improve her health of body, of mind, and of heart, and the human race will advance to perfection, deteriorate her, on the contrary, and in the same ratio does it degenerate.⁸

In this way, the transgressive female self was strongly evocative of both physical and social degeneration, with the prostitute's perceived immorality acting as a threat to individual and national identity.

In emphasising the perceived "profligacy" of the victims' lives, and the threat this apparently posed to "civilised" society, Osborne's missive was therefore characteristic of contemporary press reports on the murders, which routinely focused more upon the perceived "impure" lives of the victims, rather than the horrific nature of their deaths. The prominent Anglican cleric and East End social reformer Reverend Samuel Barnett went so far as to suggest in *The Times* that the "degraded and depraved lives" of the Ripper's victims were more "appalling than [their] actual murders."⁹ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, meanwhile, directly responding to Osborne's letter, suggested that they were "drunken, vicious, miserable wretches" to "whom it was almost a charity to relieve of the penalty of existence."¹⁰ Both press and official police reports on the murders were full of references to the victims' "low and degraded" and "sinful" lives, with commentators linking themes of sexual transgression to concepts of disease, criminality and social disorder. As the *Times* noted:

We seem to have listlessly acquiesced in the existence of these kitchen-middens of humanity; to have treated them as though society must keep a receptacle for the collection of its waste material...Can we doubt that neglected human refuse...inevitably breeds crime, and that crime reproduces itself like germs in an infected atmosphere, and becomes at each successive cultivation more deadly, more bestial, and more absolutely unrestrained...there can be no doubt of the existence of the disease and of its well-nigh unlimited capacity to bring forth fruits of almost unimaginable

⁸ Edward Tilt, *Elements of Health, and Principles of Female Hygiene* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blackiston, 1853), 13.

⁹ Samuel Barnett, "What Is to Be Done? To the Editor of the Times," *Times* (London), Friday, 16 November 1888. Available at Times Digital Archive: <http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupName=unimelb&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS68079472&type=multimage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [06/09/2015].

¹⁰ "Murder as an Advertisement," *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 September 1888.

evil. The more we purify society at large, the more certainly does its impure remnant sink to the bottom and form a sediment [sic] of concentrated depravity.¹¹

Emphasising themes of impurity, infection and spread, such representations depicted prostitution as a polluting and debilitating “disease,” corrupting and subverting the civilised English masculine self and leading inexorably to physical and social disintegration and decay.

Significantly, from the earliest stages, public and press speculation in relation to the Ripper crimes was almost entirely informed by male perspectives. As Judith Walkowitz notes in *City of Dreadful Delight*, women were substantially “marginalized from the public telling of the [Ripper] story.”¹² Given the overwhelmingly “masculine make-up”¹³ of the local and national media, London’s medical culture and the police force – the three major disseminators of the story – this was, arguably, inevitable. As such, the bodies of the Ripper’s victims were discussed, scrutinised, objectified by and subjected to a “male gaze” that drew upon a series of pervasive nineteenth-century cultural assumptions about women’s bodies and the nature of female identity. If the healthy masculine body essentially embodied the health of both self and nation in late-Victorian society, then the female body occupied a more contentious, ambivalent place within the culture. Seen as impulsive, unstable, unrestrained and “incomplete” – as “chaos in need of mastering” – female identity tended to be defined in direct opposition to the perceived “autonomy and coherence” of the “normative male subject.”¹⁴ This was particularly the case with “immoral” or “fallen” women, wherein concepts of “fallenness” were used to emphasise themes of fracture, incoherence and threat, with the sexually transgressive female cast as dangerously uncontrolled and “irredeemably other.”¹⁵ This “otherness” was therefore seen as a threat to dominant (masculine) notions of selfhood and identity, undermining prevailing late-Victorian ideals of rational self-control and autonomous action. As Amanda Anderson notes, in such representations this perceived “absence of virtue” was depicted in terms of a fundamental absence of “character” itself, with the failure to maintain “an authentic,

¹¹ “The Forcible Letter We Printed Yesterday,” *Times* (London), Wednesday, 19 September 1888, 7, Issue 32495, available from The Times Digital Archive: <http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/ttda/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=TTDA&userGroupN=unimelb&tabID=T003&docPage=article&searchType=BasicSearchForm&docId=CS117886771&type=multipage&contentSet=LTO&version=1.0> [15/08/2014].

¹² Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 192.

¹³ Curtis Jr, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, 214.

¹⁴ Bryden, “Cut ‘n’ Slash,” 61; Amanda Anderson, *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press), 1.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 1; 18.

private, or self-regulating identity” becoming a form of psychological and social self-annihilation.¹⁶ Such themes are evident in Osborne’s claim that such women had become “altogether unsexed [having] no one element in common with female feeling.”¹⁷ Unable or unwilling to conform to dominant masculine conceptions of female virtue and identity - the Victorian “angel in the house” ideal of the passive, pure female self - the transgressive female was therefore depicted as “unsexed,” abject, abhuman and threateningly other.¹⁸

In highlighting such themes, these representations drew strongly upon a number of prevalent late-Victorian cultural anxieties concerning the perceived “animality” of the female body. As discussed in chapter three, this conception of the human body as a site of animalistic “appetites and passions” was a particular source of anxiety in the post-Darwinian cultural landscape, wherein the boundaries between the human and the animal worlds had become increasingly blurred.¹⁹ However, whilst men were believed to be capable of transcending the innate animality of their bodies via “moral and spiritual purity,” women were instead “defined by and entrapped within their bodies.”²⁰ As such, there was a common perception that women were at a lower stage of evolutionary development than men. As Kelly Hurley points out in *The Gothic Body*, according to dominant late nineteenth-century cultural traditions, women were seen as only “partially evolved” from the state of “animalism”: “Woman’s consciousness does not transcend physicality; her consciousness rather is enmeshed in and determined by the fact of her overwhelming physicality.”²¹ Bound by the corporeal and the bodily, women were therefore seen as more intrinsically animalistic than men, and, as such, more susceptible to those latent animalistic impulses and desires that could lead to moral and physical degeneration, fragmentation and collapse. These associations were particularly overt in relation to representations of prostitution, with Bracebridge Hemyng noting in Henry Mayhew’s seminal nineteenth-century social study *London Labour and the London Poor* how the

¹⁶ Ibid, 36; 2.

¹⁷ “At Last: To the Editor of the Times,” *Times*, 18 September 1888

¹⁸ The term “abhuman” was coined by early twentieth-century British author William Hope Hodgson and refers to what Hurley describes as “a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other...disrupted by drives and desires that testify to the tenuousness of a ‘civilized’ human identity.” Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 3-4; 142.

¹⁹ Lily, “The New Naturalism,” in: French, *Antivivisection and Medical Science*, 387.

²⁰ Ibid, 386; Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 119.

²¹ Ibid, 119-20.

“animal” instincts and “passions” are the “main agents in producing [this] class of women.”²² Indeed, these ideas were so deeply ingrained within Victorian culture that even certain female commentators made such comparisons. The female-driven Moral Reform Union, for instance, in their “Fallen Woman” pamphlet, suggested that “when the beast and the harlot have taken the woman’s place, there is no depth of shameful sensuality into which she is not prepared to sink.”²³

These associations between “harlots” and “beasts” are found in much of the Ripper reportage, from press accounts (*The Star*’s assertion that the body of Catherine Eddowes was “ripped up like a pig in the market”) to the “hoax” Ripper letters sent from the general public to the police and press (“no animal like a nice woman, the fat are best”; “pig sticking I call it”; “I am so pleased to see another chance of ripping up a dear creature”).²⁴ Similar associations are evident in the *Daily News*’ description of the Ripper victims as “debased creatures” who were “absolutely as the swine in regard to every habitude of life.”²⁵ A suggestion from a “Charles M. Phater,” as found in the “Whitechapel Murder Papers,” that the Ripper was “waging a war of extermination” against prostitutes took these allusions even further, reducing the victims to the status of diseased, polluted vermin.²⁶ Such depictions were, again, characteristic of the period, with the Victorian journalist and social investigator John Binny writing of how the sex workers who populated the East End were living:

In the greatest poverty, covered with rags and filth, and many of them [are] covered with horrid sores and eruptions on their body, arms, and legs, presenting in many cases a revolting appearance. Many of them have not the delicacy of females and live as pigs in a sty.²⁷

²² Hemyng goes on to suggest that “literally every woman who yields to her passions and loses her virtue is a prostitute.” Bracebridge Hemyng, “Prostitution in London,” in Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (New York: Dover Publications, 1968, originally published 1861), 212-15.

²³ Moral Reform Union, “The Fallen Woman,” quoted in: Lucy Bland, *Banishing the Beast: Sexuality and the Early Feminists* (New York: The New Press, 1995), 116.

²⁴ “Whitechapel. The Murder Maniac Sacrifices More Women to his Thirst for Blood,” *The Star*, 1 October 1888 (evening edition), available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/star/s881001.html [7/06/2014]; “Bolton Oct 4th 1888,” in *Jack the Ripper: Letters From Hell*, eds. Stewart P. Evans & Keith Skinner (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2001), 221; “Jack the Rip,” 19 July 1889, Mepo 3/142, National Archives; CLRO Ref Police Box 3.23 no. 396A, Metropolitan Archives.

²⁵ “The Murders,” *Daily News*, 2 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_news/18881002.html [18/08/2015].

²⁶ “Whitechapel Murder Papers, fiche II, CLRO Ref Police Box 316, no. 142. Metropolitan Archives.

²⁷ Quoted in Paul Roland, *The Crimes of Jack the Ripper* (London: Arcturus, 2006), 16.

In suggesting that such women “have not the delicacy of females,” Binny’s account echoes Osborne’s “altogether unsexed” notions of deviant female behaviour. Such accounts highlighted what Kelly Hurley refers to as the “Thing-ness” of the transgressive female body, linking themes of animality to concepts of disease, impurity, and threat.²⁸ In doing so, the transgressive female self is de-humanised, rendered as a “creature,” a “beast,” a “seething mass of misery and vice,” a “thing.”

In this respect, both the Ripper and his female victims were described in strikingly analogous terms – animalistic, bestial, uncontrolled, both corrupt and corrupting. Contemporary commentators played upon these similarities, with the “syphilitic” Ripper cast as a product of the same immoral and sexually transgressive East End culture as the sex workers he preyed upon. As such, as Sander L. Gilman observes, the paradigm for the relationship between the Ripper and his victims could “be taken from the popular medical discourse of the period: *Similia similibus curantur*, ‘like cures like’...The scourge of the streets, the carrier of disease, can only be eliminated by one who is equally corrupt and diseased.”²⁹ Indeed, such was the pervasiveness of this misogynistic viewpoint that a number of female commentators even adopted it – a Mrs L. Painter, for instance, in writing to the City Police about the murders, suggested that “a violent disease [i.e. prostitution] requires a violent remedy.”³⁰ Such commentaries drew the Ripper and his victims together in a symbiotic relationship of corrupt and corrupting otherness, reflecting *The Times*’s contention that “human refuse inevitably breeds crime, and that crime reproduces itself like germs in an infected atmosphere.”³¹ In highlighting these perceived similarities, these characterisations suggested that the Ripper had, in a sense, been “unmanned” and “feminised” by his association with East End sex workers. Such allusions are found, for example, in James Frasier’s suggestion (referenced in the preceding chapter), that the Ripper was a medical man who “had his privy member destroyed” by disease and was now “revenging himself on the [female] Sex.”³² Here the Ripper was

²⁸ As Hurley notes, within such classifications “bodies are without integrity or stability; they are instead composite and changeful. Nothing is left but Things: forms rent from within by their own heterogeneity, and always in the process of becoming-Other.” Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 9.

²⁹ Gilman, “Who Kills Whores? I Do,” 215.

³⁰ “L. Painter,” in “Letters Relating to the Whitechapel Murders 1888-1890: Letters from Members of the Public to the City Police.” See also L. Perry Curtis Jr, “Letters to Old Jewry,” in *Ripperology* (London: Magpie, 2007), 191.

³¹ “The Forcible Letter We Printed Yesterday,” *Times*, 19 September 1888.

³² “Letter from Sir James Frasier,” CLRO Ref Police Box 3.17, no 166, Metropolitan Archives.

imagined as both literally and figuratively emasculated by transgressive feminine sexuality, in the process taking on those characteristics – animality, incoherence, a lack of control – traditionally associated with the disordered female self. As a result, the Ripper was depicted, like his female victims, as something abhuman, liminal and inverted. This “feminisation” of masculine identity was a source of anxiety in that it seemed to erode those clear male/female, self/other, human/beast distinctions that governed nineteenth-century British life. As Kelly Hurley points out, a “fully human” identity requires the “subject to be one thing or another, male or female, the essential qualities of each defined through their relation of contradistinction. To take on the non-identity of a Thing is...to become an IT.”³³ These representations therefore highlighted the tenuousness of normative masculine identity, suggesting that, like the transgressive female in Victorian culture, the masculine self could all too easily degenerate into something essentially inhuman or “Thing-like” when exposed to similar “corrupting” influences. Therefore, these depictions undermined the perceived superiority of the “civilised” male subject, revealing masculinity identity to be ultimately as permeable and unstable (and subject to the same debilitating environmental and psychological factors) as the transgressive female self.

These conceptions are perhaps best illustrated by examining those characterisations of the Ripper as a syphilitic West End medical gentleman “infected” by Whitechapel sex workers. Linking themes of mental and physical corruption to a wider sense of social contamination, these depictions positioned the East End sex worker as a “logo of the divided city.”³⁴ The prostitute’s body, in such representations, became literally the point at which “East” and “West” met and connected, acting as a gateway into a “feminised” East End culture of vice, illicit sexuality and otherness. In *The Crimes of Jack the Ripper*, Paul Roland estimates that there were around 63 brothels and more than 1,200 sex workers active in Whitechapel at the time of the murders.³⁵ As such, the figure of the prostitute was seen to represent and personify the threatening, infecting atmosphere of the East End itself and its deleterious effect on the

³³ Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 149.

³⁴ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 21

³⁵ Roland, *The Crimes of Jack the Ripper*, 18. He also suggests that there were in excess of 80,000 sex workers in London during this period. Similar figures are evoked in *London Labour and the London Poor*: “The assumed number of prostitutes in London [is] about 80,000, and large as this total may appear, it is not improbable that it is below the reality rather than above it. One thing is certain...the real number is swollen every succeeding year, for prostitution is an inevitable attendant upon extended civilization and increased population.” Hemyng, “Prostitution in London,” in Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, 213.

wider culture. This sense of linkage between person and place is evident throughout media accounts of the Ripper murders. The term “seething mass,” for example, was routinely applied to both the East End sex worker – “a seething mass of misery and vice” – and Whitechapel itself – “a seething mass of moral filth and corruption.”³⁶ In this way, the prostitute was depicted as a kind of “conduit” through which all those corrupting, degenerative East End influences could spread and infect the broader community. As Lynda Nead points out, these representations therefore shifted “the focus away from the question of the effects of prostitution on the woman herself and [instead] emphasised its effects on respectable society,” with the prostitute cast as a symbol of “the dangerous forces which could bring about anarchy and social disintegration.”³⁷ As such, the image of the West End doctor, seduced and corrupted by “transgressive” female sexuality, evoked a series of larger anxieties in relation to selfhood and society, namely the belief that such contagion would “sweep beyond [its] geographical containers and submerge civilized society.”³⁸ The figure of the prostitute therefore evoked these themes of social disorder and degeneration through discourses of sexual disease, infection and spread, literally contaminating the body and mind of the “civilised” masculine self and, by extension, British society itself.

Moreover, in drawing upon these themes of transgression, otherness and threat, the female body was defined in terms analogous to the kind of racial stereotyping that was applied to the East End’s “foreign” communities. Indeed, the Jewish body and the prostitute’s body were defined in a strikingly similar fashion, with both seen as conduits of moral and physical contamination and disease. Furthermore, both were used to evoke a threatening and alien East End culture of immorality, degeneration, vice and corruption. As Sander Gilman notes, the Jew and the prostitute came to represent “the polluting force of the Other,” functioning as “outsiders whose sexual images [evoked] all the dangers felt to be inherent in human sexuality.”³⁹ In this, there was a particular focus on concepts of venereal disease (particularly syphilis), with both the Jew and the prostitute seen as “carriers” of sexually transmitted diseases who subsequently transmitted them to the rest of the community, infecting the “pure and innocent” and thereby

³⁶ See “Blind Man’s Bluff,” *Punch*, 22 September 1888; “To the Editor of the Times,” *Times*, 29 September 1888.

³⁷ Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 106.

³⁸ Paul Begg, *Jack the Ripper: The Definitive History* (Pearson Longman Harlow, 2004), 1.

³⁹ Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*, 120.

creating “new polluters.”⁴⁰ Significantly, the foreign Jews that made up the East End’s immigrant community were strongly associated with prostitution, and, in particular, with pimping, brothel-keeping and sexual trafficking.⁴¹ The author Beatrix Potter, for instance, in a contemporary report found in Charles Booth’s multi-volume *Life and Labour of the People of London*, suggested that the professional procurers or “runners” found at London’s docks were “usually of the Hebrew race.”⁴² Moreover, there was a common belief that the East End functioned as the centre of an international “white slave trade” that was “entirely in the hands of [Jewish] foreigners.”⁴³ As such, the Jew and the prostitute were indelibly drawn together, with both representing an insidious East End culture of clandestine sexuality and disease that purportedly endangered the “healthy” body politic. In this way, issues of gender and race became inexorably linked in the Ripper case, with both evoking the transgressive “otherness” that threatened and undermined “normative” (i.e. Anglo-Saxon, masculine) English identity and selfhood.

These depictions of the female body as polluting threat therefore offered a crucial link between conceptions of the “alien other” and the “divided self.” They linked concepts of the “other” as a corrupting force to notions of the “self” as inherently corruptible, with the figure of the East End sex worker embodying all the perceived dangers and contaminating influences of the late-Victorian cityscape. In transgressing all those carefully delineated self/other, West/East, male/female cultural boundaries, these women undermined dominant “public morality and social purity” objectives, becoming the embodiment of what the nineteenth-century writer George R. Sims described as “the great evil which lies like a cankerworm in the heart of this fair city.”⁴⁴ This message of social purity was one espoused by the many social “vigilance” groups that sprung up in the wake of the Ripper murders. Once again focusing on the allegedly “impure” and “immoral” lives of the victims, these groups used the example of the murders to

⁴⁰ Ibid, 124-7.

⁴¹ See, for instance, Knepper, “British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire,” 61-79.

⁴² Beatrix Potter, “The Jewish Community (East London),” in Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People of London*, volume 3 (London: Macmillan, 1902), 166-92.

⁴³ National Vigilance Association, “Fifth Annual Report of Executive Committee,” 1890, quoted in Lloyd P. Gartner, “Anglo-Jewry and the Jewish International Traffic in Prostitution 1885-1914,” *AJS Review*, 7/8 (1982): 150. In response to these allegations of sexual trafficking, the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGW) was established in London in 1885 (originally under the name of the “Jewish Ladies Society”). See: Paul Knepper, “‘Jewish Trafficking’ and London Jews in the Age of Migration,” *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* Volume 6, No. 3 (November 2007): 239-56.

⁴⁴ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, 102; George R. Sims, *How the Poor Live and Horrible London* (Piccadilly: Chatto & Windus, 1889), 3.

highlight the need for a “purification” of both the public and private spheres within late-Victorian society. The “Central Vigilance Committee for the Repression of Immorality,” for instance, used the Ripper scare as an opportunity to denounce the sexual “immorality” that “is so rife as to be eating out the nation's life, sapping the sources of our greatness, and provoking the indignation of that Power which may either preserve our prosperity or pronounce our destruction.”⁴⁵ This language of social and moral purification hugely influenced public and media portrayals of the Ripper murders, contributing to a dominant discourse wherein the deaths of the Ripper’s victims became “unfortunate but necessary punishments for deviant female behaviour.”⁴⁶

Indeed, to certain observers, the Ripper’s attempts to, essentially, “de-sex” his victims (with the removal of their sexual and reproductive organs) seemed like an extreme enactment of these beliefs. The *Pall Mall Gazette*’s suggestion that the Ripper was a “scientific sociologist” who targeted those “whose habits in life afforded the most ghastly illustration of the vicious horrors” of East End life was one that similarly dwelt on themes of decontamination and purification, with the killer (absurdly) cast as a “humanitarian” with “such a supreme devotion to the welfare of the community, that he cannot for a moment hesitate in sacrificing a few worthless lives.”⁴⁷ As such, the Ripper’s actions were interpreted as an attempt to “purify” society at large through eradicating the polluting, sexually threatening, feminine “other.” In this way, the killer’s horrific mutilations of the bodies of his victims acted as both a specific “punishment” for the prostitute and as a general warning to all women who transgressed the boundaries of “acceptable” society. These interpretations therefore reaffirmed dominant, masculine conceptions of identity and behaviour, with the transgressive female cast as dangerously, irredeemably “other” and a threat to Victorian selfhood and society.

However, far from dispelling these social anxieties, the Ripper murders instead magnified them. If the healthy masculine body symbolised national progress and social advancement, then the mutilated corpses of the Ripper’s victims represented the exact opposite, evoking the

⁴⁵ “The Central Vigilance Committee: An Important Circular,” *Evening News*, 8 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18881008.html [12/11/2015].

⁴⁶ Elyssa Warkentin, “Jack the Ripper Strikes Again,” *Feminist Media Studies*, Volume 10, Number 1 (2010): 38, *Communication & Mass Media Complete*, EBSCOhost [16/05/2014].

⁴⁷ “Murder as an Advertisement,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, 19 September 1888.

deep sense of fragmentation and fracture within British life during this period. In her essay “Cut ‘n’ Slash: Remodelling the ‘Freakish’ Female Form,” Inga Bryden writes of how the “misshapen forms of the female body” are seen to embody western culture’s fears and anxieties about “our secret selves.”⁴⁸ This is certainly true within the Ripper narrative, wherein the mutilated bodies of his victims evoked not only the “ensemble of representations” that had governed nineteenth-century public and official attitudes towards prostitution (i.e. the prostitute as polluting threat, as carrier of disease, as animal, as “thing”) but also seemed to highlight the “epistemological incoherence” and psychological dysfunction within late-Victorian society and culture.⁴⁹ In his writings on the “grotesque body,” the twentieth-century cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin notes that:

The grotesque ignores the impenetrable surface that closes and limits the body as a separate and completed phenomenon. The grotesque image displays not only the outward but also the inner features of the body: blood, bowels, heart and other organs. The outward and inward features are often merged into one.⁵⁰

The grotesque, mutilated corpses of the Ripper's victims, in blurring the line between these concepts of the “interior” and “exterior” body, therefore acted as a kind of “visceral analogue”⁵¹ to those self/other anxieties engendered by the crimes, (literally) revealing the hidden “otherness” that lay beneath the surface of Victorian society. The fact that these horrific mutilations were inflicted upon female bodies and, in particular, the bodies of sex workers, only deepened this sense of anxiety and crisis. In this, the disgust and horror felt at the killer’s “revolting and sickening” breeches of the boundaries of the human body was juxtaposed with the sense of ambivalence and disquiet felt towards the transgressive nature of the bodies themselves.⁵² As such, the victims’ disfigured, exposed and grotesque bodies symbolised not only the perceived “filth” and “corruption” of East End life, but apparently signified some kind of imminent degeneration of British civilisation itself.

Whilst these representations of the transgressive female body as a polluting threat and symbol of social disorder dominated the Ripper narrative, they were strongly contested by a smaller

⁴⁸ Bryden, “Cut ‘n’ Slash,” 30.

⁴⁹ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 198-9.

⁵⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, “The Grotesque Body and Its Sources,” *The Body: A Reader*, ed. Mariam Fraser and Monica Greco (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 93.

⁵¹ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 198.

⁵² “Murder in Whitechapel,” *Evening Standard* (London), 1 September 1888.

but significant number of female commentators. Consisting of various female newspaper correspondents, journalists, libertarians, and anti-vivisectionists, these commentators regarded prevailing depictions of female pollution, corruption and culpability in the Ripper reportage as part of an endemic culture of masculine surveillance and control. In a contemporary letter to the editor of the *Daily News*, the journalist and lecturer Florence Fenwick Miller suggested the murders were indicative of a worsening wave of male violence and brutality, that they were “part and parcel of a constant and ever-increasing series of cruelties perpetrated on women.”⁵³ For these early feminists, the Ripper’s violations of the boundaries of the human body evoked Victorian society’s policing and subjugation of the female body, its attempts to “define a stable self” through its mastering of the “chaos” of the female form.⁵⁴ In this respect, the Ripper murders reflected the coercive and intrusive efforts of patriarchal society to impose its own will on the female body, thereby reaffirming traditional masculine notions of selfhood and identity. As one (anonymous) sex worker put in when interviewed during this period: “It is men, only men, from the first to the last that we have to do with...Men police lay hands on us. By men we are examined, handled, doctored...we never get out of the hands of men till we die!”⁵⁵ This culture of surveillance and control was therefore one that perpetuated male agency at the expense of female liberty and autonomy, with themes of “social purity” being evoked to justify such measures. As the twentieth-century cultural anthropologist Mary Douglas points out in *Purity and Danger*:

When the principle of male dominance is applied to the ordering of social life but is contradicted by other principles such as that of female independence, or the inherent right of women as the weaker sex to be more protected from violence than men, then [a belief in] sex pollution is likely to flourish.⁵⁶

These notions of pollution were refuted in the pages of the *Women’s Penny Paper*, a small London-based periodical established in October 1888 at the height of the Ripper period and billed as “the only paper in the world conducted, written, printed and published by women.”⁵⁷ Created as an attempt to provide a public forum for women, and to advance issues related to women’s rights and female identity, the paper derided the “sensationalism” of the mainstream media’s treatment of the female body in the Ripper case. In its first issue, the paper published

⁵³ Florence Fenwick Miller, “Woman Killing No Murder: To the Editor of the Daily News,” *Daily News*, 2 October 1888. Available at: www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_news/18881002.html [08/09/2015].

⁵⁴ Bryden, “Cut ‘n’ Slash,” 29.

⁵⁵ Quoted in: Smith, *Victorian Demons*, 97.

⁵⁶ Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger* (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 142.

⁵⁷ Warkentin, “Jack the Ripper Strikes Again,” 41.

an article, “Our Policy,” which suggested that such sensational reportage of “terrible crimes” was both “morally bad” and actively “dangerous.” As the article noted:

The law of conscience and common sense teaches us that no sensational crime may legitimately be described in a newspaper unless it is to exhibit some underlying circumstance of a practical and urgent nature. Thus we shall not shrink from our duty of alluding [to such topics] if it points to some law relative to women requiring reform, but some immediate practical outcome is the necessary condition.⁵⁸

As opposed to the kind of victim blaming that regularly cropped up in populist media reports of the crimes, the *Penny Paper* instead used the example of the murders to highlight themes of masculine violence and control, and what they perceived as the legal system’s failure to adequately protect women from violent crime.⁵⁹ In doing so, the paper rejected dominant notions of the prostitute as polluted body, instead stressing the need for the “protection” of their “defenceless sisters” from male violence.⁶⁰

These concerns are evident, for instance, in an article concerning Sir Charles Warren’s resignation, published in the paper on November 24th. Noting that the “terrible murder” of Mary Kelly was one which “made a rift in the dense veil that conceals from us the lives of our poorer sisters,” the paper used Warren’s resignation⁶¹ as an opportunity to discuss the “dark and painful” lives of Whitechapel sex workers and the need for better legal protection for women:

We women can assure Sir Charles Warren that there is nothing for him to be afraid of. He is a man and has all the protection and security of the law. Men have devoted the most careful attention to making themselves safe in the minutest particulars during ages past and Sir Charles Warren is surrounded by this... We women, who have not been supplied by our protectors with any means of protection at all, can assure him that he is perfectly safe, and so are his friends. Neither mad dogs, nor angry mobs, nor Whitechapel murderers should trouble his night’s rest. And if women have not

⁵⁸ “Our Policy,” *Women’s Penny Paper*, volume 1, no. 1, Saturday, October 27, 1888, 1. *Women’s Penny Paper*, volume 1, no. 1 (Oct. 27, 1888) - volume 3, no. 114 (Dec. 27, 1890). London: Women’s Printing Society, 1888-1890 [microform] archived at Melbourne University [Accessed 02/06/2014].

⁵⁹ In the same issue, for example, the *Paper* lambasted what it saw as the “farcical” nature of the English legal system: “In cases of assault by men on women the magistrate makes the stereotyped remark that nothing could justify the outrage... But he immediately proceeds to justify the assault, and to show the philosophic calmness with which he can view the suffering of others, by imposing a fine so ridiculously small in proportion to the offence that it is but nominal.” “Leaderettes,” *Women’s Penny Paper*, October 27, 1888, 3.

⁶⁰ “Sir Charles Warren’s Resignation,” *Women’s Penny Paper*, November 24, 1888, 4.

⁶¹ Warren’s resignation, on October 10, 1888, shortly after the murder of Mary Kelly, was widely seen as stemming from his perceived incompetence and his failure to apprehend the Ripper.

the same cause for a happy sense of security, they are at least realizing that they had better begin to take care of themselves, and each other.⁶²

With its emphasis on themes of female solidarity and interconnectedness, the article challenged notions of the prostitute as transgressive “other.” It instead built open an emergent feminist agenda which linked violent crimes such as the Whitechapel murders to a seemingly systematic masculine culture of brutality, subjugation and control. The paper even used the term “moral vivisection” to describe what they saw as patriarchal culture’s attempts to “define the aims” and “limit the experiences” of women.⁶³ As such, the paper offered a crucial voice of dissent to the mainstream media’s objectification and subjugation of the female body.

Moreover, with its reference to “moral vivisection,” the *Penny Paper* highlighted the way in which female responses to the crimes tended to draw upon themes of medical violation and control. To these commentators, representations of the Ripper as a divided doctor evoked a long history of women as “victims” of medical science. As Mary Ann Elston observes, these views reflected female critiques of “masculine” science as being “permeated with patriarchal assumptions” about the nature of women’s bodies, whilst “systematically denigrating” the female viewpoint and “controlling women’s lives.”⁶⁴ These commentaries focused particularly on the brutal and invasive medical procedures that sex workers had routinely been forced to undergo throughout this era, procedures that the nineteenth-century women’s rights advocate Josephine Butler had famously referred to as “surgical rape.” Butler had herself campaigned against the “Contagious Diseases Acts,” a British government initiative introduced in 1864 aimed at controlling the spread of venereal disease.⁶⁵ According to these Acts,⁶⁶ any woman suspected of being a prostitute could be forced to undergo an invasive internal medical examination and, if found to be infected, could be forcibly detained in a hospital for up to a year. In such cases, these women could be arrested for failing to comply, and, under the Acts, had no right of appeal and no rights to a trial by jury.⁶⁷ This law was therefore one that

⁶² Ibid, 4.

⁶³ Mrs Alfred C. Osler, “Moral Vivisection,” *Women’s Penny Paper*, 8 December 1888, 5.

⁶⁴ Mary Ann Elston, “Women and Anti-Vivisection in Victorian England, 1870-1900,” *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, ed. Nicolaas A. Rupke (London, New York, Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), 262.

⁶⁵ The Act was initially targeted at a limited number of English Garrison towns (and aimed to curtail sexually transmitted diseases amongst British army officers). However, by 1869, these Acts covered a total of 138 towns and parishes within England.

⁶⁶ Alterations and editions to the original CD Act were made in 1866 and 1869.

⁶⁷ See: Anne Summers, “The Constitution Violated: The Female Body and the Female Subject in the Campaigns of Josephine Butler,” *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 48 (1999): 2.

persecuted the female sex worker, rather than her male clients, for the spread of venereal disease, privileging “male preference and pleasure” over female health and safety.⁶⁸ As an 1870 petition from the “Ladies’ National Association For the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts” pointed out:

Unlike all other laws for the repression of contagious diseases, to which both men and women are liable, these...apply to women only, men being wholly exempt from their penalties. The law is ostensibly framed for a certain class of women, but in order to reach these, all the women residing within the districts where it is in force are brought under the provisions of the Acts.

Moreover, the petition condemned the way in which, in these circumstances, a woman could “have her person outraged by the periodical inspection of a surgeon.” According to the petition, such “forced surgical examination[s]” were “punishments of the most degrading kind...violating the feelings of those whose sense of shame is not wholly lost, and further brutalizing even the most abandoned.”⁶⁹ Finally abolished in 1886, only two years before the outbreak of the Ripper murders, the Contagious Diseases Acts cast a long shadow over the Ripper narrative, firmly establishing the image of the doctor as a brutal, invasive examiner of the female body in the public consciousness.

Indeed, to female commentators, the Ripper’s violation of the bodies of his victims specifically evoked medical science’s perceived contemporaneous violations of the female body. These views are found, for instance, in a letter printed in the *Evening News* shortly after the murder of Annie Chapman, wherein the female writer (an “ex-medico’s daughter”) suggests that the murderer could be a “medical maniac” practising “human vivisection” in order to conduct “minute research” into the “mysteries” of the “female sex.”⁷⁰ Such “research” into the “secret” or hidden workings of the female body was central to the practises of medical science during this era, with dissection and sexual surgery seen as crucial techniques in advancing the state of medicine, and, potentially, British society itself. As such, the Ripper’s removal of the “inner” reproductive organs of his victims seemed like an extreme simulation of existent medical practices, particularly the highly dangerous procedure of ovariectomy. As Mary Ann Elston observes, the initial death rates resulting from ovariectomy were so high that a number of female

⁶⁸ Bland, *Banishing the Beast*, 102-11.

⁶⁹ “The Ladies’ National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts 1870 Petition.” Available from: <http://www.historyofwomen.org/cdactspetition.html> [30/05/2018].

⁷⁰ “Ex-Medico’s Daughter: To the Editor of ‘The Evening News,’” *Evening News*, 17 September 1888. Available from: www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18880917.html [17/05/2014].

opponents had suggested that the procedure was “an experiment for the benefit of the surgeon not the woman.”⁷¹ These criticisms therefore focused on the way in which women became the “raw materials” on which doctors practiced their art, reaffirming traditional notions of masculine control and identity. Reinforcing binary distinctions between the masculine and the feminine, with the male cast as “the subject” and the female as “object of power,” medical science was therefore seen by such commentators as an institutionalised form of masculine violation and control.⁷² As Elaine Showalter pithily notes:

Men do not think of themselves as cases to be opened up. Instead, they open up a woman as a substitute for self-knowledge, both maintaining the illusion of their own invulnerability and destroying the terrifying female reminder of their impotence and uncertainty. They gain control over an elusive and threatening femininity by turning the woman into a ‘case’ to be opened or shut.⁷³

In this way, the killer’s knife and the surgeon’s scalpel became analogous to one another – both acting as potent symbols of male incursion, violation and self-validation; as such, the Ripper murders seemed to evoke what late nineteenth-century feminist writer (and *Women’s Penny Paper* contributor) Frances Power Cobbe referred to as the new “vice of scientific cruelty,” a disturbing trend arising not from the “brutalized classes” but from “the cultivated, the well-fed, the well-dressed, the civilized and (it is said) the otherwise kindly-disposed and genial men of science, forming part of the most intellectual circles in Europe.”⁷⁴ An outspoken critic of both the Ripper investigation and contemporaneous developments in medical science, Cobbe was also an ardent antivivisectionist, co-founding the Victorian Street Society for the Protection of Animals Liable to Vivisection (VSS) in 1875; as such, she highlighted the way in which female responses to the Ripper murders were reflective of a contemporary anti-medical agenda that “connected the fate of animals and women as victims of medical violence.”⁷⁵ These themes are evident, for example, in “ex-medico’s daughter’s” reference to the Ripper as a “human

⁷¹ Elston, “Women and Anti-Vivisection in Victorian England,” 278. It should be pointed out the dangers of ovariectomy did not go unchallenged within medical circles. This practise was resisted by a number of conservative obstetricians for its invasiveness and high level of risk. The British obstetrician Robert Lee, for example, was an early opponent of the procedure. In his “An Analysis of 108 Cases of Ovariectomy,” he documented the alarming mortality rates resulting from ovariectomy (from an overall total of 162 cases): “In 60 the ovarian disease could not be removed; 19 of these proved fatal. Of the remaining 102 cases in which the operation was completed, 42 terminated fatally. The present condition of the 60 patients who recovered is very imperfectly known.” Robert Lee, “An Analysis of 108 Cases of Ovariectomy Which Have Occurred in Great Britain, With Appendix,” *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions* (1851): 10-35.

⁷² Summers, “The Constitution Violated,” 13. Summers also writes of how medical science reinforced “binary representations” of the sexes, defining “the masculine as strong and constant, the feminine as weak and volatile; masculine as intellectual and rational, feminine as instinctual and emotional.”

⁷³ Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, 134.

⁷⁴ Frances Power Cobbe, *Life of Frances Power Cobbe* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co, 1904), 664.

⁷⁵ Walkowitz, *City of Deadly Delight*, 210.

vivisectionist.” In aligning themselves with animals as victims of masculine violence and cruelty, these commentators addressed dominant fears of female otherness, “animality,” pollution, and transgression. Refuting such representations, they instead suggested that the real “threat” to mankind lay in the hands of the kind of violent and sadistic masculinity that was exemplified by both the Ripper and contemporary medical science. As Cobbe herself noted in the *Daily News*, following reports that the police were considering using bloodhounds to try and catch the Ripper: “Should it so fall out that the demon of Whitechapel prove really to be...a physiologist delirious with cruelty, and should the hounds be the means of his capture, poetic justice will be complete.”⁷⁶ As such, in focusing suspicion and blame back onto patriarchal society itself, these female responses to the murders refuted and subverted dominant assumptions of female culpability in the crimes.

These responses therefore highlighted the essential fragility and tenuousness of the late-Victorian male psyche, revealing masculine attempts to dominate and control women as desperate exercises in self-validation and self-actualisation. This is apparent throughout the Ripper narrative, wherein themes of female transgression and sexuality ultimately reveal more about the highly unstable and dysfunctional state of late-Victorian masculinity than they do about the female self. As with representations of the Ripper as alien foreigner, concepts of pollution, disease, and animality were used to highlight themes of danger and social disorder, with the transgressive female cast as a threat to “normative” Anglo-Saxon English masculine identity. These themes of female “otherness” played a crucial role in the Ripper narrative, serving to support and reinforce popular perceptions of the murderer – the syphilitic doctor, the diseased Jew – whilst creating a dialogue wherein the crimes became a kind of “punishment” for transgressive female behaviour. However, these attempts to displace blame onto the victims themselves only served to further expose the sense of fragmentation and chaos that, in many ways, permeated late-Victorian life. In this sense, the crimes were symptomatic of a deeper malaise within Victorian society, exposing a “hidden” culture of masculine violence and cruelty that fatally undermined dominant perceptions of the civilised, self-regulating English self. Ultimately, these representations of transgressive femininity therefore reflected

⁷⁶ Frances Power Cobbe, “To the Editor of the Times,” *Times*, 11 October 1888. Times Digital Archive, Gale Cengage [16/06/2014].

the sense of division, incoherence, and instability that lay behind traditional late-Victorian conceptions of selfhood and identity.

CHAPTER SIX

“After the Same Stile”:

Jack the Ripper, the Divided Self and the Alien Other in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Popular Culture

I should be the Last to think because A man take A dretfull Part he is therefore Bad...but when I went to See Mr Mansfield Take the Part of Dr Jekel and Mr Hyde I felt at once that he was *the Man Wanted* [sic] (“Letter to City of London Police, Naming Mansfield as Murderer,” 5 October 1888).¹

The real horrors of Whitechapel have just now put the sham horrors of the stage to shame (“Actors and Acting: ‘Spectator’s’ Notes on the Dramatic Week,” *Star*, Saturday 13 October 1888).²

On 5 October 1888, the City of London Police received a letter from an anonymous (and semi-illiterate) correspondent, claiming that the Ripper was none other than Richard Mansfield, an American actor who was starring in a West End theatrical production of Stevenson’s *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* at the time of the Ripper murders. Noting that the murders were “clearly something after the same stile” [sic, original emphasis] as the play, the correspondent wrote of how “*I do not think there is A man Living So well able to disguise Himself in A moment as he Does in front of the public* [sic].” This chapter examines the way in which dominant public and media representations of the Ripper crimes, in being “after the same stile” as Stevenson’s story, drew heavily upon themes gleaned from nineteenth-century literature and popular culture. In doing so, it argues that the Ripper reportage became part of a wider late-Victorian existential discourse centring on issues of identity, duality and the nature of the “self.” Examining the concurrent rise of “sensation” journalism within this period, I detail the way in which press accounts of the Ripper murders reconfigured these literary/intellectual/philosophical concepts for a contemporary urban readership, incorporating recognisable motifs from a variety of literary and populist sources (Gothic fiction, “Sensation” literature, “penny dreadfuls”) in

¹ “Letter to City of London Police, Naming Mansfield as Murderer, October 5, 1888,” Corporation of London Records Office, Police Box 3:16, No. 155. London Metropolitan Archives.

² “Actors and Acting. Spectator’s Notes on the Dramatic Week.” *Star*, Saturday, 13 October 1888, reproduced in *Jekyll and Hyde Dramatized*, 190.

evoking the essential “otherness” of the crimes. I argue that, in doing so, the Ripper narrative acted as an important intersection between “high” and “low” culture in late-Victorian British society, allowing commentators (and the greater population) to engage with the leading moral, intellectual, medical, sociological and psychological concerns of the period.

As discussed in previous chapters, the literary work most frequently referenced within the Ripper discourse was Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In many ways Stevenson’s 1886 novel acted as a fictional analogue to the crimes, presaging many of the themes and concerns that would come to dominate public and media discussion of the Ripper crimes. The novel’s central concern with exploring the “thorough and primitive duality of man” drew upon the same late-Victorian anxieties concerning degeneration, medical science, the divided self and the “other within” that later informed reportage of the Ripper case. As with the Ripper discourse, Stevenson’s work examined the problematic nature of identity in late-Victorian society, focusing upon a dualistic conflict between the “civilised” conscious self (embodied in the figure of Dr Jekyll) and an oppositional, primal “other” (Mr Hyde). In the novel, these “polar twins” represent the two warring sides of the protagonist’s own personality, bound together “in the agonised womb of consciousness.”³ In this way, Hyde, as Jekyll’s latent “second self,” acts as the embodiment of Jekyll’s own repressed “animal” instincts – “my devil had been long caged, he came out roaring.” The novel goes on to relate how Jekyll, in having stripped himself of “all those balancing instincts by which even the worst of us continues to walk...amongst temptations,” loses hold of “his original and better self” and becomes overtaken by his “second and worse.”⁴ This sense of the conscious self as unstable and erratic, as something forever undermined by the latent “animal” passions of a “worse” second self, was a source of profound disquiet to Victorian audiences. Upon reading the novel, Stevenson’s friend, the poet, historian and literary critic John Addington Symonds, wrote to Stevenson of how it:

Makes me wonder whether a man has the right to scrutinize the ‘abysmal deeps of personality’...viewed as an allegory, it touches one too closely. Most of us at some epoch of our lives have been upon the verge of developing a Mr Hyde. Physical and biological Science on a hundred lines is reducing individual freedom to zero, and weakening the sense of

³ Stevenson, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 77.

⁴ Ibid, 83-85.

responsibility...Your Dr Jekyll seems to me capable of loosening the last threads of self-control in one who should read it while wavering between his better and worse self.⁵

These anxieties concerning “individual freedom” and “self-control” reflected the late-Victorian fear that an individual’s actions were determined less by conscious, autonomous choice than by those secret, hidden desires and instincts that undermined the “better” self and led ultimately to disaster.

Furthermore, in referencing these psychological concerns in relation to concepts of physical and “biological” science, Symonds alludes to the same kind of degeneration and atavism anxieties that later played such a crucial role in the Ripper narrative. Indeed, the “apelike,” “troglodytic” and “bestial” Hyde, with his “squat fingers” covered with “a swart growth of hair,”⁶ evoked Victorian anxieties of atavism in much the same way as the “half beast, half man”⁷ Ripper would some two years later, acting as a disquieting reminder of the potentialities of physical and social decline within late-Victorian culture. In this way, Stevenson’s novel reflected the “social, moral and scientific” climate of the era, engaging with the same concerns that “were occupying the most influential thinkers of the time and the population at large.”⁸ In repeatedly referencing *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the Ripper reportage therefore similarly evoked all these attendant social and cultural concerns. However, whilst Stevenson’s work articulated the psychological and sociological anxieties of late-Victorian culture, the Ripper crimes, by their very existence, seemed to conclusively prove the *reality* of such fears. Thus, whilst Stevenson succeeded in “displacing perceived social...dangers on to the horror story,”⁹ the Ripper case went further in seemingly establishing firm links between these social anxieties and the occurrence of violent crime.

These parallels between Stevenson’s fiction and the reality of the Ripper murders were highlighted by Mansfield’s production of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Beginning its West End run on 4 August 1888 (days before the murder of Martha Tabram and the same month as the murder

⁵ John Symonds, *The Letters of John Addington Symonds*, ed. Herbert M. Schueller and Robert L. Peters (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1969), 120-21.

⁶ Stevenson, *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 77; 41; 81-82.

⁷ “Horror upon Horror,” *Star*, 8 September 1888.

⁸ Dryden, *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles*, 1.

⁹ Daniel Pick, “Terrors of the Night: Dracula and ‘Degeneration’ in the Late Nineteenth Century,” *Critical Quarterly*, Vol 30, no. 4, (Winter 1988): 75. Whilst Pick is specifically referring to Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* here, the above quote works equally well as a summation of Stevenson’s work (and its relation to the Ripper case). The relevance of *Dracula* to both the Ripper case and Stevenson’s work is explored later in this chapter.

of the first “official” Ripper victim Mary Ann Nichols),¹⁰ Mansfield’s non-authorised version of Stevenson’s novel located Hyde’s “nightly transgressions” more firmly in an East End culture of violence and prostitution.¹¹ Moreover, whilst the precise nature of Hyde’s crimes is only hinted at in Stevenson’s original version, the stage script’s references to killing for “the mere sport of killing”¹² and its scenes of sexualised violence against women (with Hyde assaulting Jekyll’s fiancée) more explicitly anticipated the Ripper murders. Indeed, Mansfield’s nightly transformation into Hyde – relying “solely on changes in posture, facial expression and gait” – seemed to confirm pervading fears that a civilised man could easily transform into a kind of violent, savage beast (see Figure 3).¹³ This belief that a man could, as the aforementioned correspondent put it, utterly “disguise Himself in A moment” [sic]¹⁴ therefore reflected larger Victorian fears of what Richard French describes as the “dark and terrible ‘lower self’ lurking within man.”¹⁵ In such cases, any acknowledgement of this “lower self” could have drastic consequences. Reviewers at the time even suggested that the “horrible animal vigour” of Mansfield’s performance could itself “transform” audiences, that it had the power to “awaken strange sensations in the spectator.”¹⁶ A number of commentators went so far as to propose that the Ripper’s crimes were themselves precipitated by a viewing of the play, as if the very act of witnessing such staged acts of violence was enough to activate the Ripper’s own latent “primitive instincts.” A correspondent to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, for instance, speculated that the killer was “an army doctor suffering from sunstroke” whose murderous instincts were awakened by having “seen the horrible play.”¹⁷ In a similar vein, a *Daily Telegraph* correspondent proposed that the murderer was most likely someone “whose diseased brain has been inflamed by witnessing the performance of the drama of ‘Dr Jekyll and

¹⁰ Martha Tabram was killed on Tuesday, 7 August, whilst Mary Ann or “Polly” Nichols was murdered on Friday, 31 August 1888.

¹¹ Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, “What Kitty Knew: George Moore’s John Norton, Multiple Personality, and the Psychopathology of Late-Victorian Sex Crime,” *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 59, No. 3 (December 2004): 372-403, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncl.2004.59.3.372> [10/03/2015].

¹² Stevenson, *Jekyll and Hyde*, 151.

¹³ Flanders, *The Invention of Murder*, 445.

¹⁴ “Letter to City of London Police, Naming Mansfield as Murderer, October 5, 1888.”

¹⁵ French, *Antivivisection and Medical Science in Victorian Society*, 386.

¹⁶ Quoted in Curtis Jr, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, 78; Michael Connor, “The Strange Case of Jack the Ripper,” *Quadrant*, Volume 54 Issue 3 (March 2010): 76.

¹⁷ “How to Catch the Murderer – More Suggestions from the Public,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, London, Wednesday 3 October 1888, issue 7347. Gale, 19th Century Newspapers, http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNCN&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=unimelb&docPage=article&docId=BB3200413251&contentSet=LTO&source=gale [12/04/2015].

Mr. Hyde.’”¹⁸ In such depictions, the latent, instinctual lower self was one characterised by violent impulses and dark, destructive desires. These themes are found in both Stevenson’s novel and the Ripper reportage, wherein the “savagery” of both men’s crimes was believed to result from a fatal inability to control the destructive, primal urges of their unconscious desires and drives.



Fig. 3 – Richard Mansfield as Jekyll and Hyde, c.1888

Double-exposure publicity photograph by Van der Weyde (courtesy of the Library of Congress).

These concepts were very much at the forefront of late-Victorian intellectual culture. The nineteenth-century neurologist George Miller Beard, for example, wrote of how “every human being lives two lives, the voluntary, in which he acts more or less under the control of the will, and the involuntary, in which he acts automatically, and over which the will has but limited power or none at all.”¹⁹ Similar concerns can be traced back at least a century earlier; writing in the second half of the eighteenth century, the French naturalist (and early degeneration theorist) George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, for instance, had suggested that:

¹⁸ “Letters from the Public,” *Daily Telegraph*, Wednesday, October 3, 1888.

¹⁹ George M. Beard, “The Involuntary Life,” *Archives of Electrology and Neurology*, Volume 2 (1875): 220. See also Edward M. Brown, “Neurology and Spiritualism in the 1870s,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 57 (1983): 573–74.

The internal man is double. He is composed of two principles, different in their nature, and opposite in their action. The mind, or principle of all knowledge, wages perpetual war with the other principle, which is purely material. The first is a bright luminary...the salutary source of science, of reason, and of wisdom. The other...shines only in tempest and obscurity, an impetuous torrent, which involves...nothing but passion and error. [This is the] animal principle.²⁰

This division of the self into two opposing “principles” – one of reason and science, the other of animalistic “passions” – strongly resembles the kind of dualistic self/other, high/low, mind/body, gentleman/beast, masculine/feminine, civilised/savage representations that later informed the Ripper reportage. Such views had become increasingly prevalent over the course of the nineteenth century. Commenting on Buffon’s theory in the preface to Charles Asselineau’s 1858 work *La Double Vie (The Double Life)*, the French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire noted: “Who among us is not a *homo duplex*...always double...one always harming the other...one always usurping the other’s share.”²¹ In his journals, Baudelaire similarly wrote of how there “are in every man two simultaneous postulations, one towards God, the other towards Satan.”²² The former he ascribed to “Spirituality” and the “desire to climb higher,” the latter to “animality” and a “delight in descent.”²³ These views reflected a general “philosophical and cultural” shift from earlier Enlightenment indebted concepts of “rational unity,” pointing instead towards a late nineteenth-century obsession with “psychological fragmentation.”²⁴ As Karl Miller notes in *Doubles* (1985), the final two decades of the nineteenth century marked “duality’s heyday,” with the idea of an inherent conflict between “autonomous and adversary selves” informing the cultural, psychological, philosophical, and literary developments of the day.²⁵

These themes of duality and fragmentation are evident, for instance, in the work of many of Stevenson’s contemporaries. Examining the poetic and literary output of this period, the critic

²⁰ George-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Natural History: General and Particular, by the Count de Buffon, Translated into English. Illustrated with Above 260 Copper-plates, and Occasional Notes and Observations by the Translator. Volume Three* (Edinburgh: Printed for William Creech, 1780-85). Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Library. <http://name.umd.umich.edu/004880992.0001.003>. As noted in chapter two, coinage of the term “degeneration” is attributed to Buffon, with Morel, for example, highlighting Buffon’s key influence. See Greenslade, *The Concept of Degeneration*, 38-40.

²¹ Quoted in: Francoise Meltzer, *Seeing Double: Baudelaire’s Modernity* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 21.

²² *Ibid*, 22.

²³ Charles Baudelaire, *Intimate Journals*, trans. Christopher Isherwood (Hollywood: Marcel Rodd, 1947), 73.

²⁴ Kimberley Jackson, “Non-Evolutionary Degeneration in Arthur Machen’s Supernatural Tales,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2013): 41, 125–35.

²⁵ Karl Miller, *Doubles: Studies in Literary History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), vi.

Richard Ellmann notes how the late nineteenth century marked a decisive move away from the “Byronic archetypes” of the passionate, autonomous self that had dominated earlier literary forms. Citing Oscar Wilde’s famous maxim that the “first duty in life is to assume a pose,” he notes how the writing and thought of this period – as exemplified by the work of such writers as Arthur Symonds, Lionel Johnston, W.B. Yeats and, particularly, Wilde himself – was instead characterised by a sense of internal division and divided consciousness.²⁶ Addressing themes of duality and psychological disturbance, these writers’ work examined the problematic nature of self-identity in Victorian society and the attendant distance between “public” and “private” selves – between the “cultivated” and the “true” self. Ellmann suggests that, for the artist in society, “to pose before the world as something different to what he was, to hide his secret self, had come to the point where he saw himself as *divided into two parts*.”²⁷ Refracting contemporary anxieties through a literature of disassociation and duality, such writing suggested that such psychological, social, and cultural division was, in effect, a fundamental condition of modern life. As such, prevalent notions of the Ripper as a dualistic Jekyll/Hyde figure tapped into these contemporary intellectual/philosophical/existential concerns, becoming part of an “identifiable fin de siècle discourse”²⁸ centring upon the problematic nature of self and identity in late-Victorian culture and society.

Indeed, a work like Wilde’s 1891 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* clearly draws upon the same dualistic anxieties and concerns that had characterised public discussion of the Ripper crimes. If Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* in many ways seemed to anticipate the events of 1888 in its preoccupation with “the beast within,” then Wilde’s novel, with its central contention that “each of us has Heaven and Hell in him,”²⁹ can be read as a kind of addendum to the Ripper story. As with both the Ripper reportage and *Jekyll and Hyde*, Wilde’s work evokes themes of duality, self-identity and self-division, with Dorian Gray’s portrait acting as a kind of mirror to his hidden “other” self in much the same way as Hyde does to Jekyll in Stevenson’s novel. As Claire Rosenfield points out, in late-Victorian literature such “double novels” became “devil novels,” with the “devil” in question being “simply the projection into the external world of man’s buried instinctual life.”³⁰ In the case of *Dorian Gray*, this “buried instinctual life” (as

²⁶ Richard Ellmann, *Yeats: The Man and his Masks* (London: Faber and Faber, 1960), 73-74.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 73.

²⁸ Heilmann and Llewellyn, “What Kitty Knew,” 375.

²⁹ Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 122.

³⁰ Clare Rosenfield, “The Shadow Within: The Conscious and Unconscious Use of the Double,” in *Stories of the Double*, ed. Albert J. Guerard (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1967), 321.

represented by the painting itself) is presented as something monstrous, grotesque and corrupt that needs to be kept “hidden” from society and civilisation. As with the Ripper narrative, Wilde depicts the hidden self as one dominated by “savage and animal” passions, divorced from the conventions and restraining influences of “civilised” society. As the novel notes:

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organised forms of existence.³¹

This late-Victorian “terror” of these instinctual “passions and sensations”³² is, in many ways, also at the heart of the entire Ripper narrative. In its allusion to “less highly organised forms of existence,” Wilde references the same kind of self/other, external/internal, savage/civilised, evolution/degeneration tensions found throughout media accounts of the Ripper crimes. This sense of parallel is heightened by the fact that Wilde places his protagonist’s moral descent (leading to murder) on the very streets where the Ripper story had played itself out three years earlier:

He was very nearly blackballed at a West End club...it was rumoured that he had been seen brawling with foreign sailors in a low den in the distant parts of Whitechapel...his mysterious absences became notorious, and, when, he used to reappear in society, men would whisper to each other.³³

This account strongly resembles depictions of the Ripper as the respectable West End gentleman, absenting himself from society in order to indulge his “hidden” appetites in the slum districts of Whitechapel. In using the same kind of dualistic West/East notions found in media representations of the Ripper crimes, Wilde draws similar parallels between the psychological and the geographical, with the duality of Gray’s life mirrored by the divided cityscape around him. As in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Ripper press accounts, the degenerate, threatening otherness of the East End³⁴ therefore acts as an analogue to Gray’s own interior “other” self.

³¹ Wilde, *Dorian Gray*, 104.

³² Wilde recognised the counter-intuitive futility of denying such instincts: “It appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission...There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear, and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape.” Ibid, 104.

³³ Ibid, 112.

³⁴ Echoing Stevenson’s depiction of Hyde as bestial and ape-like, Wilde describes the inhabitants of the East End as behaving “like monstrous apes.” Ibid, 76.

Moreover, as with *Jekyll and Hyde*, it is Dorian Gray's failure to reconcile these dualities that ultimately leads to his death, his attempt at eradicating his other self (the self of his portrait) becoming a form of suicidal self-annihilation. As David Punter notes, in reference to Stevenson's novel; "once the beast is loose, it can resolve itself only in death."³⁵ Such concepts are similarly evident within the Ripper narrative, with Assistant Chief Constable Sir Melville Macnaghten, for example, proposing that, following the "awful glut" of the final murder (that of Mary Kelly),³⁶ the Ripper's "brain gave way altogether and he committed suicide."³⁷ Suicide, in such cases, becomes the inevitable end result of a prolonged and destructive inner conflict between the "baser" and "nobler" parts of man's own identity.³⁸ In *Rewriting the Self*, Roy Porter notes how popular ideas of identity presuppose a "whole" self – "a 'divided self' is seen as sick."³⁹ This sense of "sickness" permeates both media representations of the Ripper case and Stevenson and Wilde's work. In such narratives, the dualistic self is portrayed as not simply "sick" but actively dangerous, associated with notions of insanity, violence, murder, and, ultimately, complete self-destruction. It is an essentially pessimistic view of late

³⁵ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror, Volume Two: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (London: Routledge, 1996), 5.

³⁶ Taking place indoors, within her room in Miller's Court, Dorset Street, Mary's death was, by far, the most horrific of the Ripper murders. As Macnaghten himself attested, the mutilations to Kelly's body were "almost indescribable in their savagery... a scene was enacted which nothing seen by Dante in his visit to the infernal regions could have surpassed." Whilst it is commonly accepted that Kelly was the final Ripper victim, a number of commentators, then and now, have suggested that there were later murders. The killings of Alice McKenzie (on 17 July 1889) and Frances Coles (on 13 February 1891), for instance, have often been linked with the Ripper crimes. Melville L. Macnaghten, *Days of my Years* (New York; London: Longmans, Green; E. Arnold, 1914), 60-1.

³⁷ Ibid, 61. In suggesting that the Ripper was a man from a "good family" who became "sexually insane" and committed suicide, Macnaghten draws upon the life story of Montague John Drutt, a 31-year-old barrister and schoolteacher, whose body was found floating in the Thames on 31 December 1888. Drutt had been dismissed from his teaching position at Blackheath Boys' School in November for undisclosed reasons (various biographers have suggested some kind of sexual impropriety with his students). His mother had been institutionalised in July 1888 due to mental illness, and Drutt was evidently worried that he was going to end up the same way. A search of Drutt's lodgings revealed a note that read, "Since Friday [the date of his dismissal from the school] I felt I was going to be like mother, and the best thing for me was to die." As with so much of what Macnaghten wrote about the Ripper case, his account of Drutt is full of inaccuracies and baseless conclusions. He incorrectly states, for example, that Drutt was a doctor, that he was 41 years old, and that he committed suicide immediately after the Mary Kelly murder on 9 November (the most likely date of Drutt's death was 1 December, some three weeks after Kelly's death). Despite Macnaghten's claim that he possessed "private information" that pointed towards Drutt's guilt, there has never been any solid or even circumstantial evidence linking Drutt to the Ripper murders, and it seems that Macnaghten based his claims on nothing more than hearsay and idle conjecture. His incorrect identification of Drutt as a doctor, meanwhile, seemed designed to explicitly connect Drutt to a dominant cultural narrative wherein the Ripper crimes were committed by a divided, degenerate medical man who had subsequently committed suicide. See "Macnaghten Memoranda," Memo 3/141, 32-135, National Archives. See also Eddleston, *Jack the Ripper: An Encyclopedia*, 208-11.

³⁸ These quotations reference Henry James's view that *Jekyll and Hyde* "deals with the relation of the baser parts of man to his nobler, of the capacity for evil that exists in the most generous natures." Henry James, *Partial Portraits* (London: MacMillan, 1894), 169-71.

³⁹ Porter, ed., "Rewriting the Self," 1-2.

nineteenth-century British life, one which depicts this “sickness” as a pathological state deriving from the very conditions of modern civilisation. It is interesting to note how closely such representations mirror the various stages of (mental and physical) degeneration as outlined by Bénédict Augustin Morel in the mid-nineteenth century. According to Morel, in such instances degeneration begins as a “disturbance of the emotional faculties,” and moves through a series of ever-worsening phases (from nervousness, to neurosis, to psychosis) before reaching a “terminal” stage that results in death.⁴⁰ However, Morel suggests that such changes take place slowly, over the course of several generations, and are usually hereditarily passed down through familial inheritance. The kind of self-fragmentation and deterioration depicted in the Ripper narrative and in Stevenson and Wilde’s fiction is clearly more accelerated and advanced than this, reflecting late-Victorian concerns that such degeneration could become a “rapid and fatal”⁴¹ process, leading swiftly and inexorably to self-destruction. These depictions help explain the sense of terror that the Ripper crimes generated within British society, and the way in which these concepts of dualism, degeneration, and the fragmented self were indicative of social disorder and decay. As William Greenslade observes, notions of “pathological man” and “a pathological society” became “mutually reinforcing” throughout this era.⁴² As such, these concepts of the divided self evoked the larger image of a society potentially spiralling towards its own self-destruction.

This nineteenth-century fascination with these notions of duality, psychological fragmentation, the second self, and the “other within” drew heavily upon Gothic concepts of the “double.” This motif of the double or *doppelgänger* – an “other” who seems to uncannily mirror oneself – is one found throughout the literature and popular culture of this period. Again, whilst such ideas had a long history – in her *Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles* (2003) Lynda Dryden traces the “double” motif back to the book of Genesis and the story of the fall of Satan, with Satan acting as an adversarial mirror-image of God⁴³ – it was in the nineteenth century that these notions of the dual self truly took hold. In his work on the subject, Karl Miller suggests that a “craze for duality” spread across Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, influenced by what he classifies as the “pseudo-sciences” of mesmerism, animal magnetism and phrenology, with their interest in the unconscious mind and the “experimental

⁴⁰ Morel, quoted in Greenslade, *The Concept of Degeneration*, 39.

⁴¹ Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 66.

⁴² Greenslade, *The Concept of Degeneration*, 39.

⁴³ Dryden, *The Modern Gothic*, 38.

separation of the second self.”⁴⁴ He notes how such ideas influenced the “gothic strain” of writing and thought that flourished in the closing years of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.⁴⁵ Exemplified by the works of such writers as Ann Radcliffe (*The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, *The Italian*, 1797), Monk Lewis (*The Monk*, 1796), Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*, 1818) and, somewhat later, Edgar Allan Poe (“The Fall of the House of Usher,” 1839, “William Wilson,” 1839, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” 1841), the Gothic fiction of this era was characterised by themes of psychological terror, “social inversion,” and mental fragmentation and dislocation; it was a literature of “transformations,” where identity was “unstable” and “sanity a debatable state of being.”⁴⁶ In these works, the heightened psychological states of the characters were mirrored by the geographical landscapes around them. Such stories were traditionally set in a series of remote crumbling castles and foreign haunted ruins that seemed to reflect the fractured, divided interior lives of the protagonists themselves, with the ubiquitous labyrinths, dungeons, and catacombs of Gothic fiction evoking those hidden desires and drives that lay beneath the surface of everyday consciousness.

In using standard horror tropes to examine deeper psychological issues relating to identity and the self, such fiction therefore pre-empted the Ripper narrative, with its similar focus on themes of mental and psychological division and fragmentation. A quintessentially Gothic work like *Frankenstein*, for example, depicts its monster as a distorted mirror image of its creator, a “monstrous projection” of Dr Frankenstein’s own desires and actions.⁴⁷ As the monster states: “My form is a filthy type of yours, made horrid even from the very resemblance.” Or as Frankenstein himself puts it: “The being whom I had cast among mankind... [is] my own vampire, my own spirit let loose from the grave.”⁴⁸ Moreover, in combining these dualistic themes with contemporary concerns in relation to medical science, Shelley’s novel tapped into the same anxieties that would reappear, some sixty years later, within the Ripper discourse. A late-period Gothic tale like Poe’s “William Wilson,” meanwhile, which tells of the relentless

⁴⁴ These themes (the unconscious, mesmerism etc) are dealt with in much greater detail in my next chapter. Miller, *Doubles*, 49.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 49.

⁴⁶ Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 196; Dryden, *The Modern Gothic*, 10.

⁴⁷ Rosemary Jackson, “Narcissism and Beyond: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Frankenstein and Fantasies of the Double,” in *Aspects of Fantasy: Selected Essays from the Second International Conference on the Fantastic in Literature and Film*, ed. William Coyle (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), 45-53.

⁴⁸ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*, ed. M.K. Joseph (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 203; 77 [originally published 1818].

pursuit of the titular character by a “singularly alike” rival, a “twin” self⁴⁹ who acts as his conscience, similarly pre-empted the whole late-Victorian obsession with duality, otherness and the “Bi-Part Soul”⁵⁰ that later informed *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Dorian Gray* and the Ripper reportage.

In examining the influence of these quintessentially Gothic themes of duality and “the double” on the Ripper narrative, it is also necessary to examine the rise of “Sensation” literature in Britain in the middle of the nineteenth century. Taking their cue from Gothic literary forms, these “Sensation” novels typically featured scenes of murder, violence, rape, suicide and other “mysterious happenings,” usually within a setting of “winding corridors, dark stairways, trapdoors, [and] abandoned estates.”⁵¹ However, Sensation literature departed from earlier, more overtly supernatural, Gothic traditions in several crucial respects. Gothic fiction was typically set in a variety of exotic foreign landscapes and earlier time periods, the “horror” of the writing alleviated by a reassuring sense of distance, one that served to separate the events described therein from the everyday lives of its readers. Sensation novels, on the other hand, tended to be set in recognizable and modern English settings, thereby locating the “horror” that existed in the familiar and the everyday. In doing so, as Henry James noted in reference to Wilkie Collins’ *The Woman in White*, these novels:

Introduced into fiction those most mysterious of mysteries, the mysteries which are at our own doors. This innovation gave a new impetus to the literature of horrors...Instead of the terrors of ‘Udolpho,’ we were treated to the terrors of...busy London...there is no doubt that these were infinitely the more terrible...The intense probability of the story is constantly reiterated. Modern England - the England of today’s newspaper — crops up at every step.⁵²

⁴⁹ Edgar Allan Poe, “William Wilson,” in Edgar Allan Poe, *Selected Tales*, ed. Julian Symons (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 84-5 [originally published 1839].

⁵⁰ Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” in *Ibid*, 109 [originally published 1841]. These themes of doubleness and duality were traditionally associated with the masculine self; as Karl Miller notes, comparatively “few women” were “awarded doubles” in the literature of the era. Miller, *Doubles*, 52.

⁵¹ Boyle, *Black Swine*, 120-1. In his overview of Sensation fiction, Thomas Boyle includes works by such authors as Wilkie Collins (*The Woman in White*, 1860, *The Moonstone*, 1868), Charles Dickens (*Great Expectations*, 1861, *Our Mutual Friend*, 1865) and J.S. Le Fanu (*The House by the Churchyard*, 1863, “Green Tea,” 1869).

⁵² Henry James, “Miss Braddon,” in Henry James, *Notes and Reviews: A Series of Twenty-Five Papers Hitherto Unpublished in Book Form* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Dunster House, 1921), 108-16 [article originally published 1865].

Stressing themes of proximity and closeness, Sensation fiction drew more obviously on the fears and concerns of modern, urbanised Victorian society. Moreover, in its juxtaposition of the Gothic and the everyday, it tapped into the same metaphysical and psychological anxieties that would later permeate the Ripper narrative. As Jonathan Rosen points out, at the heart of such fiction was the fundamental existential question “Who am I?”⁵³ A typical example of the genre like Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s short story “Green Tea” (1869), for example, clearly anticipates both *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Ripper narrative in dealing with psychological/metaphysical concepts of dualism and division and the attendant conflict between the civilised self and the primal, animalistic other in modern society. The story tells of the relentless persecution of an English clergyman, the Reverend Mr. Jennings, by a “satanic” black monkey of “unfathomable malignity,” who interrupts his thoughts with “dreadful blasphemies,” “orders” him about, and urges him to commit “crimes.”⁵⁴ Le Fanu’s story opens itself up to fairly obvious psychological interpretations, with the “bestial” monkey acting as an external manifestation of Jennings’s own latent “primal” urges and compulsions.⁵⁵ The narrator of the story – the “medical philosopher” Dr. Martin Hesselius – seems to suggest as much, noting that Jennings’s mental deterioration is one that “paralyses the tissue that separates those cognate functions of the senses, the external and the interior.”⁵⁶ In this way, these themes of duality and the “beast within,” were therefore aligned with the medical, metaphysical, sociological and philosophical concerns of the day. This use of literary motifs to highlight broader social concerns would similarly characterise the Ripper narrative, significantly informing both media and public representations of the crimes.

The Ripper reportage drew heavily upon the themes, imagery, and conventions of these “Gothic” and “Sensation” genres. The *Star*, for example, compared the “mysterious personages” of the crimes to the “shadowy and awful figures in POE’S and STEVENSON’S novels,” and referred to the killer as an “a ghoulish-like creature who stalks the streets of

⁵³ Jonathan Rosen, “Doubles: Wilkie Collins’s Shadow Selves,” *New Yorker*, 25 July 2011. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/07/25/doubles>. [12/02/2018].

⁵⁴ Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan, “Green Tea,” 1869, University of Adelaide Library, <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/lefanu/green/index.html> [10/10/2017].

⁵⁵ In his commentary on the story, Thomas Boyle suggests that the monkey represents Jennings’s “animalistic subconscious” and his “suppressed passions.” Boyle, *Black Swine*, 176-81.

⁵⁶ Le Fanu, “Green Tea.”

London...drunk with blood.”⁵⁷ In describing the murderer’s “deeds of darkness” the paper suggested that:

Nothing so devilish, so inhuman – or, rather non-human...has ever happened outside the pages of Poe...the unravelled [sic] mystery of ‘The Whitechapel Murders’ would make a page of detective romance as ghastly as ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’...The murderer must be a Man Monster.⁵⁸

The *East London Observer* drew upon similar Gothic imagery in a 6 October article entitled “A Thirst for Blood,” writing of how:

It is so impossible to account, on any ordinary hypothesis, for these revolting acts of blood that the mind turns as it were instinctively to some theory of occult force, and myths of the Dark Ages arise before the imagination. Ghouls, vampires, blood-suckers ... take form and seize control of the excited fancy.⁵⁹

The *Daily Chronicle*, meanwhile, described the murderer as a “monster – half man, half brute...prowling around Whitechapel like the ‘werewolf’ of Gothic fable.” The article went on to ask where “this process of hideous evolution [will] stop. Are the resources of civilisation powerless against it?”⁶⁰ Such reports therefore juxtaposed Gothic imagery and dualistic themes – “half man, half brute” – with more immediate late-Victorian concerns in relation to degeneration and evolutionism. In doing so, this press reportage reconfigured modern, urban, metropolitan London as a Gothic landscape, portraying the East End as a site of Gothic foreboding, duality, degeneration, threat and horror, a “bewildering labyrinth” of “strange and repulsive” otherness and insidious, contaminating evil.⁶¹ Echoing Sensation literature’s blend of the uncanny and the everyday, these news reports stressed themes of proximity and closeness in their treatment of the crimes, creating “Gothic monsters out of the very conditions of modern metropolitan life.”⁶² Such themes are evident, for example, in “The Nemesis of Neglect” a poem written in response to the murders. Accompanied by an appropriately ghoul-like image (see Figure 4), the poem was published in *Punch* on 29 September 1888:

⁵⁷ “What We Think,” *Star*, Friday, 14 September 1888. Reproduced in *Jekyll and Hyde Dramatized*, Appendix E: Jack the Ripper, 172; “Horror Upon Horror,” *Star*, 8 September 1888.

⁵⁸ “What We Think,” *Star*, Saturday, 1 September 1888.

⁵⁹ “A Thirst for Blood,” *East London Advertiser*, Saturday, 6 October 1888.

⁶⁰ *Daily Chronicle*, 10 September 1888.

⁶¹ “What We Think,” *Star*, Friday, 14 September 1888.

⁶² Dryden, *The Modern Gothic*, 31-32.

Here [in the East End] the sole joys are those of the man-ghoul.

Thirst-thrill and ravin-rapture.

Held DANTE'S Circles such a dwelling-place?

Did primal sludge e'er harbour such a race?

It is not Hades, nor that world of slime

Where dragons tare and man-shaped monsters fought.

Civilisation's festering heart of crime

Is here, and here some loathly glimpse is caught

Of its barbaric beating, pulsing through

Fair limbs and flaunting garb wherewith 'tis hidden.

Mere human sewage? True, O Sage!⁶³ most true!

Society's kitchen-midden!

But hither crowd the ills which are our bane:

And thence in viler shape creep forth again...

When will men heed the warning that it utters?

There floats a phantom on the slum's foul air,

Shaping, to eyes which have the gift of seeing,

Into the Spectre of that loathly lair.⁶⁴



THE NEMESIS OF NEGLECT.

Fig. 4 – “The Nemesis of Neglect”

Image from *Punch*, 29 September 1888.

⁶³ The “Sage” referred to here is the aforementioned (see chapter five) *Times* correspondent Reverend Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne (“S.G.O”).

⁶⁴ “The Nemesis of Neglect,” *Punch*, 29 September 1888, available at: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-nemesis-of-neglect-from-punch> [16/11/2016].

Drawing upon a phantasmagorical and distinctly Gothic lexicon – “man-ghoul,” “the Spectre of that loathly lair” – the poem allies such language with concepts of degeneration, evolutionism and social decay (the term “kitchen-midden” refers to a prehistoric refuse heap), whilst emphasising themes of proximity and threat – “Civilisation's festering heart of crime/Is here.” In such accounts, Gothic motifs were therefore used to emphasise themes of urban anxiety and division, exploiting popular concerns in relation to both self and society whilst evoking the sense of horror and threat that lay beneath the surface of modern metropolitan British life.

With its emphasis on these Gothic/Sensation themes of horror, dualism and social decay, the Ripper reportage was characteristic of what was termed “sensation journalism,” a melodramatic, sensationalist form of late nineteenth-century press reportage which catered towards what W.T. Stead referred to, in an August 1888 editorial entitled “The Blood Thirst of the Day,” as the public’s “craving for sensation,” its “longing to be thrilled.” Published just before the outbreak of the Ripper murders, Stead’s article suggested that:

There is nothing so sensational as death, which is the climax and end of all sensation. Literature, painting, the theatre, our exhibitions, journalism, all bear witness to the fact that murder, suicide, or sudden death—that is to say, bloodshed in some form or another - is the master spell for enchaining human attention...What is known in the suggestive slang of the profession as a ‘good, first-class bloody murder,’ will sell more papers than the most brilliant article that was ever penned. A newspaper circulation is a very accurate gauge of the taste of the public...Judged by this test, the average man or woman prefers bloody murders served up hot...How far will this sanguinary appetite carry us?⁶⁵

The popularity of such journalism reflected the emergence of a “mass newspaper culture” in Britain in the 1870s, propelled by advances in printing technology, lower printing costs and retail prices, and a general surge in working-class literacy.⁶⁶ The rapid growth of the newspaper industry during this period transformed the cheap, mass produced “penny” newspaper into the “most dynamic and profitable of all products of the printing press,” becoming “securely

⁶⁵ W.T. Stead, “The Blood Thirst of the Day,” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Tuesday, 28 August 1888, Issue 7316.

Available at:

http://find.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/bncn/infomark.do?docType=LTO&docLevel=FASCIMILE&prodId=BNCN&tabID=T012&type=multipage&version=1.0&retrieveFormat=MULTIPAGE_DOCUMENT&userGroupName=unimelb&docPage=article&docId=BB3200412526&contentSet=LTO&source=gale [19/01/2017].

⁶⁶ Curtis, Jr, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, 57.

implanted into the cultural landscape as an essential reference point in the daily lives of millions of people.”⁶⁷ As L. Perry Curtis Jr points out, by the time of the Ripper murders, this “literature for the masses” had become the predominant form of “social knowledge” in British culture, with thirteen morning and nine evening newspapers published daily in London alone.⁶⁸ Combining lurid headlines and a sensationalist style with clinical, often explicit, descriptions of violent death and murder, much of this reportage betrayed the influence of Gothic and Sensation literary forms, sharing their interest in provoking palpable mental, physical and emotional reactions (horror, tension, excitement) in their readership. Moreover, as with those Gothic and Sensation archetypes, this journalism regularly used this framework of horror and sensationalism to explore deeper psychological, moral, and sociological concerns. As Thomas Boyle notes, during this period, the “low” culture of popular journalism “began to bring to bear a radical intelligence on the same concerns which obsessed the ‘high’ culture of poetry, criticism, and science.”⁶⁹ This intersection between “low” and “high” culture is evident in media representations of the Ripper crimes, with commentators using classic Gothic tropes of duality, horror and monstrosity to highlight deeper issues and anxieties in relation to the self and society. In couching these “high” metaphysical, philosophical and sociological concerns within a populist Gothic/Sensation format, sensation journalism therefore made these ideas accessible to a mass audience, shaping and directing the opinions of a populace reared on the bloody, the violent and the sensational. Indeed, in many ways the shadowy, mythologised figure of the Ripper was himself, as Clive Bloom suggests, a “creation of journalism,”⁷⁰ with the Victorian press projecting onto the unknown killer a whole series of literary and cultural motifs in order to address specific social concerns and anxieties.

In doing so, sensation press reports were heavily indebted to what was known as “penny dreadfuls,” a form of cheap, serialised, pamphlet literature that flourished in Britain in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Published in weekly instalments, these penny dreadfuls or “penny bloods” took their cue from classic Gothic literature, packaging sensational tales of violence, murder and the supernatural in a strongly visual, pictorial format designed for mass

⁶⁷ Aled Jones, *Powers of the Press: Newspapers, Power and the Public in Nineteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1996), 49.

⁶⁸ Curtis, Jr, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press*, 57-63.

⁶⁹ Boyle, *Black Swine*, 60.

⁷⁰ Clive Bloom, “The House that Jack Built: Jack the Ripper, Legend and the Power of the Unknown,” *Nineteenth-Century Suspense from Poe to Conan Doyle*, ed. Clive Bloom et. al. (London: MacMillan, 1988), 123.

consumption. In similarly employing “elaborate illustrations and descriptions of gruesome violence”⁷¹ to attract readers, the Ripper reportage borrowed freely from the imagery and content of such literature. Indeed, the first extended examination of the Ripper murders, *The Whitechapel Murders or the Mysteries of the East End*, published anonymously in 1888, was itself a prime example of the penny dreadful format, being printed by the same publishers (G. Purkess) as many of the most popular works in the genre. Visual representations of the crimes as found in popular publications like the *Illustrated Police News*, the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, *Punch*, and the *Illustrated London News*, meanwhile, similarly referenced the form and content of penny dreadfuls, with lurid illustrations (the Ripper as Gladstone bag carrying medical maniac, as bestial savage, as foreign, exotic other) serving to powerfully underscore dominant representations of the crimes (see Figures 5, 6 and 7).

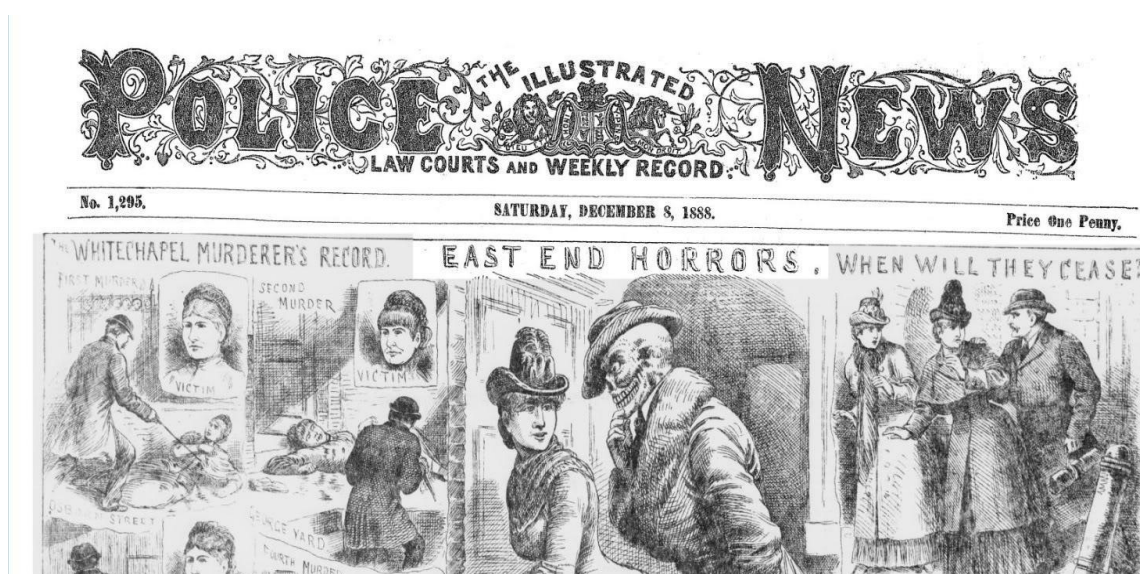
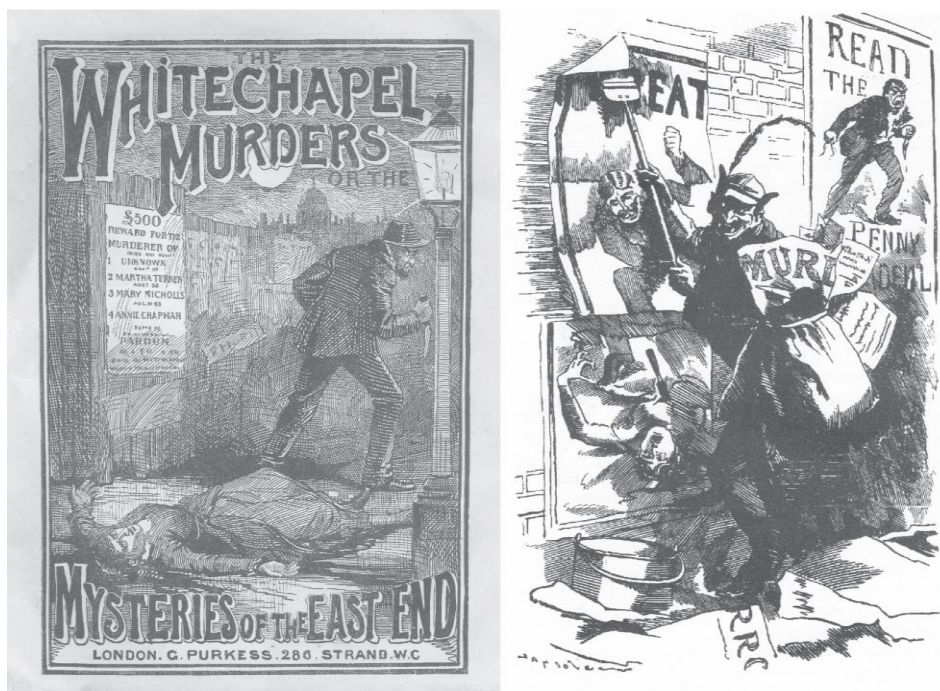


Fig. 5 – “East End Horrors”

Illustrated Police News, Saturday, 8 December 1888.

⁷¹ Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 181.



Figs. 6 and 7 – Cover of *The Whitechapel Murders or Mysteries of the East End*; and “Horrible London”
The Whitechapel Murders or Mysteries of the East End (London: G. Purkiss, 1888); *Punch*, 13 October 1888.

These “penny bloods” also anticipated media accounts of the Ripper murders in their examination of the psychological and sociological mores of “modern” British society. In such long-running, highly popular serials as *The Mysteries of London* (1844), *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (also known as *The String of Pearls*, 1846), and *Spring-Heeled Jack: The Terror of London* (1863), modern-day London was portrayed as a locus of otherness, duality, degeneration and serial murder, antedating the Ripper coverage’s focus on similar themes. With its contention that the capital was a city of made up of “two worlds...totally, distinct the one from the other,” George William McArthur Reynolds’ hugely popular long-running Gothic serial *The Mysteries of London* (with its title evoking both Anne Radcliffe’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the aforementioned *Mysteries of the East End*), clearly pre-empted those dualistic West/East, self/other representations of London found throughout the Ripper reportage. As in the Ripper press, Reynolds depicted London as a city of “fearful contrasts,” where “the most seducing luxury is only separated by a narrow wall from the most appalling misery,” a place where all “virtues are summed up in the one and all vices in the other.”⁷²

⁷² George William McArthur Reynolds, *The Mysteries of London*, Volume 1 (1884), available at: <http://www.victorianlondon.org/mysteries/mysteries-00-chapters.htm> [23/01/2017].

Once again anticipating press reports of the Ripper crimes, these themes of geographical, mental, and physical division and duality were used to frame a story of serial murder, focusing on the exploits of a killer dubbed “the Resurrection Man,” a reference to the nineteenth-century practise of “body-snatching” – digging up corpses to sell to medical practitioners for anatomical dissection and study. These “resurrectionists” were a particular source of fear and anxiety in nineteenth-century British culture largely as a result of the infamous crimes of William Burke and William Hare, a pair of body-snatchers who committed multiple murders as a means of supplying fresh corpses to medical schools in Edinburgh in the 1820s.⁷³ Such concerns again informed the Ripper narrative, wherein similar characterisations of the Ripper as an “organ procurer” were used to buttress notions of the murderer as a divided medical man, conducting crazed experiments on the human body (as examined in chapter four). Indeed, *The Star* suggested as much in commenting on coroner Wynne Baxter’s theory of the “specimen collector” at the Chapman inquest, noting that the “case of BURKE and HARE will occur to everyone as almost identical in the motive which the Coroner suggests in the Whitechapel case.”⁷⁴ As such, in merging these themes of duality and murder with contemporary medical anxieties, Reynolds’s work offers a clear precedent for media interpretations of the Whitechapel crimes, evoking the same cultural and psychological concerns that would go on to play such a crucial role in the Ripper narrative.

Similar connections between these psychological anxieties and the social conditions of Victorian London can be found in two of the defining tales of the “penny bloods” genre – *Spring-Heeled Jack* and *The String of Pearls*. These works again focused upon nineteenth-century London as a site of duality, degeneration, otherness and horror, reflecting the concern that “bestial” acts of violence and murder could occur, hidden “under the dark cloak of the metropolis,” in the centre of modern civilised society.⁷⁵ Such concerns are evident in *Spring-Heeled Jack: The Terror of London*, a hugely popular, long-running serial based on the legend of a “nocturnal miscreant” who had, according to various newspapers reports, terrorised London society over the course of the mid-to-late nineteenth century,⁷⁶ committing a series of “gross,” “disgraceful” and violent “outrages” on “unprotected females” throughout the city. A

⁷³ See Colin Wilson, *A Criminal History of Mankind* (London: Grafton Books, 1986 [third edition], 466-67.

⁷⁴ “What We Think,” *Star*, Thursday, 27 September 1888.

⁷⁵ Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 186-88.

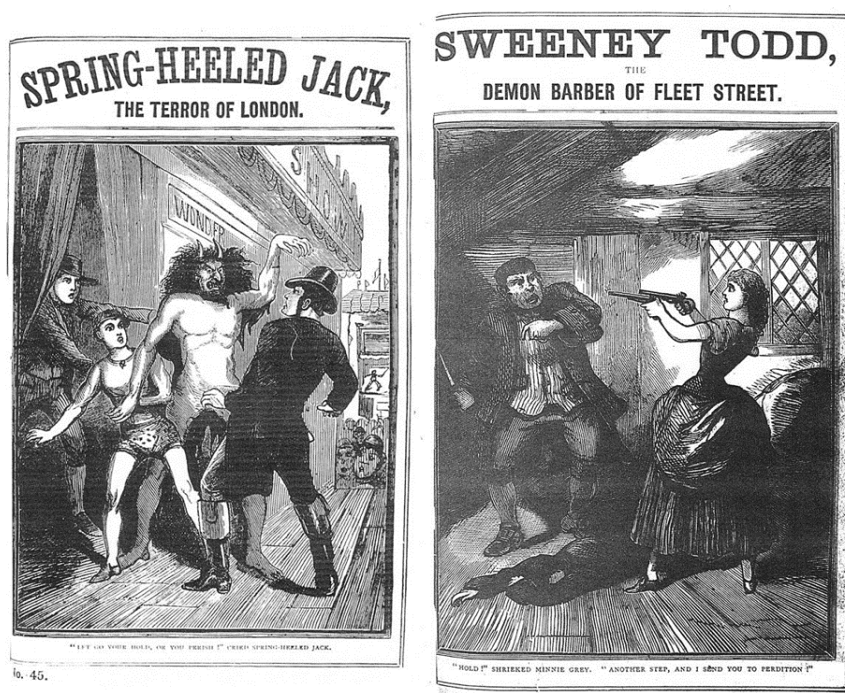
⁷⁶ The first sightings of “Jack” were reported in 1837 and continued well into the latter stages of the 1800s.

bizarre human/animal hybrid with eyes like “red balls of fire” and sharp talons or claws, variously described as a mysterious cloaked phantom of “gentlemanly appearance,” an “unmanly brute,” a “suburban ghost,” a “baboon, a bear or a devil,” “Jack” was said to be a “hideous and frightful” figure, who vomited balls of blue and white fire at terrified onlookers, before escaping with huge, spring-like leaps.⁷⁷ Whatever the truth of such reports, Spring-Heeled Jack soon became an urban legend and folkloric figure, a popular Victorian “bogeyman” or “bugaboo,” and a favourite subject for the penny dreadful publishing industry, who used the story to convey a sense of modern London as a place of degeneration, psychological dislocation, irrational violence (particularly against women), Gothic otherness and social disorder. The parallels with the Ripper story are striking. Indeed, as writer and expoliceman Donald Rumbelow speculates in his authoritative *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, it is possible that the very name “Jack the Ripper” (long held to be a journalistic construction, rather than originating from the killer himself)⁷⁸ was inspired by the Spring-Heeled Jack story. As Rumbelow notes, it’s likely that the sobriquet “Jack” was chosen to capitalise on its “well-known notoriety” and “connotations of terror,”⁷⁹ consciously evoking that other, equally disturbing, “Jack” of Victorian legend. In doing so, the seemingly commonplace (and distinctly English) name of “Jack” was invested with hidden layers of meaning and threat, drawing the Ripper reportage into an evolving “modern Gothic” dialogue wherein the everyday merged with the horrific and identity was unstable and erratic. As with dualistic representations of the Ripper as both gentleman and beast, the unstable liminality of Spring-Heeled Jack – shifting between human and animal, ghost and corporeal being – was used to evoke the instability and schisms of modern metropolitan London, and the attendant potential of civilised society to degenerate into animality and primitivism.

⁷⁷ See “Outrage on a Young Lady, by ‘Springheeled Jack,’ the Nocturnal Miscreant,” *Weekly True Sun*, 25 February 1838. *Nineteenth Century Collections Online* <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/tinyurl/5eVjt0> [11/12/2017]; “Spring Heeled Jack - Outrage on a Young Lady,” *York Herald*, 3 March 1838. *British Library Newspapers* <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/tinyurl/5eVhL9> [11/12/2017]; “Spring-Heeled Jack Again,” *Sunday Times*, 11 March 1838, 2. *The Sunday Times Digital Archive* <http://tinyurl.galegroup.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/tinyurl/5eVeu6> [11/12/2017]. See also See Mike Dash, “Spring-Heeled Jack: To Victorian Bugaboo from Suburban Ghost,” 2-15. Available at: <http://www.mikedash.com/> [22/01/2017].

⁷⁸ Rumbelow suggests that the Central News Agency journalist Tom Bulling and his boss Charles Moore were responsible for the writing of the original “Jack the Ripper” letter (the “Dear Boss” letter), and for coinage of the name. Both men are named as such in a contemporary letter from Chief Inspector John George Littlechild, head of the Secret Department (Special Branch) at Scotland Yard during the general period of the crimes. See Rumbelow, *The Complete Jack the Ripper*, 122.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 122-23.



Figs. 8 and 9 – Spring-Heeled Jack and Sweeney Todd

Nineteenth century editions of *Spring-Heeled Jack* and *Sweeney Todd (The String of Pearls)*, publication details unknown.

These concerns are similarly found in another key penny dreadful of the period, *The Strings of Pearls*, which introduced the character of the murderous barber Sweeney Todd to nineteenth-century British culture. Generally attributed to James Malcolm Rymer and/or Thomas Peckett Prest,⁸⁰ *The String of Pearls* follows the exploits of the “demon barber of Fleet Street” and his accomplice, the pie-shop owner Mrs Lovett, as they murder Todd’s customers and turn them into the “secret ingredient” in Lovett’s famous meat pies. The story details how the fame of these pies had “spread far and wide” over London and beyond:

High and low, rich and poor, resorted to [them]...And well did they deserve their reputation, those delicious pies; there was about them a flavour never surpassed, and rarely equalled...the small portions of meat which they contained were so tender, and the fat and the lean so artistically mixed up, that to eat one of Lovett's pies was such a provocative to eat another...some of her more enthusiastic admirers went on consuming the pies until they were almost ready to burst.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Penny Dreadfuls were often published anonymously, making it hard to definitively ascribe authorship to many of these works. *The String of Pearls* was originally published in serial form between November 1846 and March 1847.

⁸¹ *The String of Pearls: The Original Penny Dreadful Featuring Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (London, C. Fox, 1846-7).

This image of a society (unwittingly) in thrall to cannibalism pre-empted those anxieties of the degenerate, primitive, savage self that would later play such a crucial role in the Ripper reportage. Indeed, cannibalism was seen as the ultimate taboo, the ultimate signifier of savagery and de-evolution in nineteenth-century British culture. William Booth, for instance, highlighted themes of cannibalism in describing the essential savagery of “primitive” races outside of Britain, writing of cannibalistic “human baboons...possessed with a perfect mania for [human] meat” in his *In Darkest England and the Way Out*.⁸² Similar cannibalism anxieties informed the Ripper narrative; on the 16 October 1888, following the murder of Catherine Eddowes (whose left kidney had been removed and taken by the killer), George Lusk, chairman of the Mile End Vigilance Committee, had received a gruesome parcel containing half a human kidney in the post. Alongside the kidney was a letter, addressed “from hell,” which stated: “I send you half the Kidne [sic] I took from one woman prasarved [sic] it for you tother [sic] piece I fried and ate it was very nise [sic].”⁸³ Whilst the provenance of the kidney was never definitively ascertained (some commentators thought it a medical school prank, others maintained that it was a genuine communication from the killer himself), these suggestions that the Ripper was a “cannibal assassin” horrified late-Victorian society, strongly evoking the spectre of Sweeney Todd and *The String of Pearls*.⁸⁴ Indeed, as Dick Collins points out, this image of the Ripper “prowling the streets at night in search of cannibalistic delights...comes straight from Todd’s barber shop in Fleet Street.”⁸⁵ Appearing under such headlines as “The Whitechapel Horrors. Is the Murderer a Cannibal? Shocking Revelations,” and “The East End Murders. Horrible Story. Alleged Cannibalism,” these evocations of cannibalism seemed to confirm commentators’ worst fears about the “beast within” and the degenerative state of late nineteenth-century British society.⁸⁶ Similar fears are evident, for instance, in “Those London Horrors: He is a Veritable Mr Hyde,” an article published in the *Williamsport Sunday Grit* in October 1888, which suggested that the Ripper murders were:

⁸² William Booth, *In Darkest England*, 11-12.

⁸³ For a good overview of the Lusk story see Sugden, *The Complete History of Jack the Ripper*, 263-67.

⁸⁴ “Mitre Square Murder. Startling News,” *Evening News* (London), Friday, 19 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18881019.html [05/12/2016].

⁸⁵ Dick Collins, “Introduction,” in *Sweeney Todd or the String of Pearls: Tales of Mystery and the Supernatural* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, circa 2004).

⁸⁶ “The Whitechapel Horrors,” *East London Observer*, Saturday, 20 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_observer/el0881020.html [05/12/2016]; “The East End Murders. A Horrible Story,” *People* (London), Sunday, 21 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/people/18881021.html [05/12/2016].

A return to the animal passions of the lowest cannibalistic savage races. Cannibalism is shown in a thirst for blood and these animal passions come to the surface when the checks imposed by centuries of civilization are removed either by disease or by the defects inherited from degenerate parents.⁸⁷

In equating the latent “animal passions” of the civilised self with the perceived cannibalistic tendencies of “savage races” outside of mainstream British society, the article again draws parallels between “self” and “other,” linking such notions to concepts of bodily degeneration, disease, and contamination. Moreover, as with *The String of Pearls*, these concepts of cannibalism and degeneration framed a story of serial murder – in both cases, the depraved, bestial actions of a murderer were used to evoke an unstable, divided society, a society seemingly on the brink of disintegration and collapse.

Furthermore, in suggesting that the Ripper killings were motivated by “a thirst for blood,” the aforementioned article is characteristic of the tendency to draw upon the conventions and motifs of Gothic fiction in evoking these themes of cannibalism, degeneracy, and otherness in relation to the Ripper crimes. Utilising the kind of Gothic language found in penny dreadfuls, the article referred to the Whitechapel murderer as a “sanguinary monster,” and went on to compare his crimes to the “vampirism of the middle ages.”⁸⁸ An article that appeared in the *Atchison Daily Globe* several weeks later took these allusions even further, suggesting that the killer’s apparent cannibalism was comparable to “old notions of human vampires, ghouls, weir wolves [sic] and demoniacs.”⁸⁹ With their references to vampires, werewolves, and monsters, these depictions were reflective of a modern Gothic fascination with shifting selves and altered personalities, wherein the line between the human and the non-human or “animal” became increasingly blurred or disappeared altogether.

As with similarly dualistic characterisations of Spring-Heeled Jack, these liminal representations of the Ripper as both human and monster, man and animal, disconcertingly suggested that human identity was not so much “stable and integral” as “fragmented and permeable.”⁹⁰ Such notions are particularly evident in late-Victorian media depictions of the

⁸⁷ “Those London Horrors. He is a Veritable Mr. Hyde,” *Williamsport Sunday Grit*, 7 October 1888. http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/williamsport_sunday_grit/881007.html. [12/01/2017]. See also “London’s Ghastly Mystery,” *Daily Graphic*, 3 October 1888. *The Ultimate Compendium*, 67-8.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ “The British Ghoul: Mysterious Murder and Mutilation of Eight Women,” *Atchison Daily Globe*, 27 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/atchison_daily_globe/881027.html [12/01/2017].

⁹⁰ Hurley, *The Gothic Body*, 3.

Ripper as a “vampire, “with a “ghoulish thirst for human blood...blazing within him.”⁹¹ The archetypically Gothic figure of the vampire, found throughout nineteenth-century Gothic fiction (John William Polidori’s *The Vampyre*, 1819), penny dreadfuls (*Varney the Vampyre*, 1846-7)⁹² and Sensation literature (J.S. Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*, 1872),⁹³ was routinely portrayed as a creature of shifting, unstable identity, equal parts gentleman and “wild animal” and, as such, provided a metaphor for the social and psychological schisms of nineteenth-century British life.⁹⁴ This was especially true in media accounts of the Ripper murders, wherein evocations of vampirism were used to highlight those themes of dualism, degeneration, otherness, and social contamination that were at the heart of the entire Ripper narrative.

The Ripper reportage drew explicit parallels between vampirism and degeneracy in defining the essential otherness of the killer’s actions. The *East London Advertiser*, for instance, in describing the Ripper as a vampiric figure “stealthily moving about a great city, burning with a thirst for human blood,” suggested that “natural heredity has much to do with these bloodthirsty propensities... the brain of a murderer frequently resembles that of a lower animal.”⁹⁵ In juxtaposing concepts of vampirism with allusions to degeneracy and atavism, these reports reflected popular perceptions of the degenerate as a kind of social and cultural vampire, feeding off (and contaminating) the “blood” of the nation. Lombroso’s work provided a scientific explanation of this phenomenon. He wrote of the degenerate self as one characterised by an “irresistible craving for evil for its own sake, the desire not only to extinguish life in the victim, but to mutilate the corpse, tear its flesh, and drink its blood.”⁹⁶ This idea of the degenerate as a kind of monstrous, contaminated and bloodthirsty animal is found throughout media accounts of the Ripper case. As Daniel Pick observes, this was a discourse that was reflective of the late nineteenth-century “social moral panic” regarding the perceived

⁹¹ This quote (one of many comparing the Ripper’s actions to those of a vampire) is found in Sam’l E. Hudson’s *Leather Apron*, one of the earliest extended accounts of the Ripper crimes, published in 1888. Hudson, *Leather Apron*, 60-1.

⁹² One of the most popular penny dreadful serials, the authorship of *Varney the Vampyre* is generally attributed to the same writers - James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest – as *The String of Pearls*.

⁹³ John William Polidori, *The Vampyre* (Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, 1990, originally published 1819); *Varney, the Vampyre; or the Feast of Blood, A Romance* (London: E. Lloyd, 1847). Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/14833>; Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, *Carmilla*, ed. Kathleen Costello-Sullivan (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2013, originally published 1872).

⁹⁴ *Varney the Vampyre*, 10. Representations of the vampire as a gentleman are found throughout the literature of the period, as the vampiric figures in both *Varney* and Polidori’s *The Vampyre* – Sir Francis Varney and Lord Ruthven respectively – demonstrate.

⁹⁵ “A Thirst for Blood,” *East London Advertiser*, Saturday, 6 October 1888. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_advertiser/ela881006 [04/05/2015].

⁹⁶ Lombroso and Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man*.

degeneration of the British nation and the attendant “poisoning of good bodies and races by bad blood.”⁹⁷ Moreover, with their focus on themes of blood pollution and its spread, these notions of vampirism provided an apposite metaphor for concepts of syphilitic infection, again drawing the Ripper narrative into a larger dialogue concerning the contamination of the “healthy” British body and the ensuing decline of the “imperial race.”

How vampirism as a concept functioned in this context is, perhaps, best illustrated by comparing the “vampire as degenerate” allusions found in the Ripper narrative to those found in another key text of the period, Bram Stoker’s modern Gothic classic *Dracula*. Originally sketched out in 1888,⁹⁸ and eventually published in 1897, Stoker’s novel was written in the aftermath of the Ripper case and evokes the crimes in a number of crucial ways. Indeed, Stoker himself seemed to admit as much, noting in a 1901 preface that his protagonist’s actions “originate from the same source” and evoke “as much repugnance” as “the notorious murders of Jack the Ripper.”⁹⁹ As with those gentleman/beast representations of the Ripper, Dracula is depicted as a dualistic figure, embodying the “dark secret drives” that Victorian society feared in themselves.¹⁰⁰ Accordingly, like the Ripper, he becomes an “other” upon which the dominant culture can project its own fears and displaced anxieties. As with media representations of the Ripper case, these anxieties are shown to be strongly related to concerns about degeneration and social decay. Dracula is depicted throughout the novel as a degenerate, even atavistic, being, a figure of primitive “unrestrained” appetites and desires. Echoing Stevenson’s description of the animal-like Hyde, Stoker describes the Count’s hands as “coarse – broad, with squat fingers,” and with “hair in the centre of the palm” – clear signs of atavism and degeneracy.¹⁰¹ Stoker even references Lombroso and fellow degenerate theorist Max Nordau¹⁰² in describing Dracula’s manifold physiological and psychological characteristics: “The Count is a criminal and of the criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him, and *qua* criminal he is of an imperfectly formed mind...he came to London to invade a

⁹⁷ Pick, “Terrors of the Night,” 80.

⁹⁸ See Barbara Belford, *Bram Stoker: A Biography of the Author of Dracula* (New York: Knopf, 1996).

⁹⁹ Author introduction, 1901 Icelandic edition of *Dracula*, quoted in Davison, “Blood Brothers,” 48. See also: Robert Eighteen-Bisang, “Dracula, Jack the Ripper and a Thirst for Blood,” *Ripperologist*, 60 (July 2005).

¹⁰⁰ Kathleen L. Spencer, “Purity and Danger: Dracula, the Urban Gothic, and the Late Victorian Degeneracy Crisis.” *ELH*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Spring, 1992): 213. Available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2873424> [24/04/2015].

¹⁰¹ Stoker, *Dracula*, 17.

¹⁰² Austrian author and social critic. Author of *Degeneration*, a worked highly indebted to Lombroso’s theories of degeneration and cultural decay. Alongside Edwin Ray Lankester, Nordau was one of the primary exponents of degeneration literature during this era.

new land.”¹⁰³ In highlighting these themes of atavism, degeneration and foreign “invasion,” the East European Dracula bears a close relation to earlier representations of the Ripper as “alien other.” As with the Ripper, popular prejudices against East European culture could be exploited to emphasise themes of foreign threat, corruption and infection. Significantly, the physical form the Count adopts upon entering London is stereotypically Jewish – “a tall, thin man, with a beaky nose and black moustache and pointed beard” – whilst, later in the novel, Dracula’s hiding place is described as smelling of “ole Jerusalem.”¹⁰⁴ As such, Stoker’s work (consciously or unconsciously) utilises the same kind of “strange, menacing and dangerous” stereotypes of East European and Jewish culture that were prevalent during the Ripper crisis.¹⁰⁵ As with representations of the Ripper-as-Jew, Dracula therefore becomes a symbol of corruption and pollution, “infecting” the blood of the dominant culture and contaminating its inhabitants.

In this way, Stoker’s work evokes late-Victorian anxieties of a society threatened by “waves of degenerate blood and moral contagion.”¹⁰⁶ In placing Dracula in “the crowded streets of your mighty London...in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity,”¹⁰⁷ the novel enters into the larger nineteenth-century debate surrounding East End culture and the perceived contamination of “Western” British civilisation. This dualistic East/West tension is apparent from the novel’s earliest stages, with the character of Jonathan Harker noting, *en route* to the Count’s castle in the Carpathian Mountains, how “the impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East.”¹⁰⁸ The “East” that Harker encounters is one characterised by threatening, transgressive sexuality (embodied by Dracula’s three “sisters”),¹⁰⁹ exoticism, animalism (his “children of the night”), primitivism and violence. His observation that the natives of the area are “just like the peasants at home,” meanwhile, draws a direct line between these anxieties of “Eastern” culture and the social conditions of late-

¹⁰³ Stoker, *Dracula*, 329.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 165.

¹⁰⁵ Knepper, “British Jews and the Racialisation of Crime in the Age of Empire,” 72.

¹⁰⁶ Pick, “Terrors of the Night,” 79.

¹⁰⁷ Stoker, *Dracula*, 19.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 1.

¹⁰⁹ Dracula’s “devils of the Pit” are defined in terms (i.e. sexually voracious, animalistic, corrupt, and contaminating) highly reminiscent of those representations of prostitution found throughout the Ripper story. Take, for example, the following passage: “There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear...with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood...There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal.” *Ibid*, 51; 36.

Victorian London.¹¹⁰ In doing so, the novel draws upon the same kind of self/other anxieties that fuelled the Ripper story. We see this in Dracula's ensuing corruption/infection of the character of Lucy Westenra and her subsequent metamorphosis into a vampire. As her (seemingly pointed) surname implies, it is possible to see Lucy as a kind of embodiment of the "Western" self. In being gradually "poisoned" and overtaken by a vampiric, polluting force, Lucy literally becomes "other" herself – animalistic, primal, monstrous. As with the Ripper narrative, the novel therefore juxtaposes anxieties of the "other outside" (the foreign as alien, transgressive threat), with deeper psychological anxieties related to self-identity, specifically the fear of being overtaken by an "other" second self, and of consequently losing control of one's own conscious personality. In this way, concepts of vampirism were connected to late-Victorian anxieties of the unconscious self, evoking (later) Freudian notions of the *unheimlich* (uncanny) monster as personification of "that which has broken out of the subterranean basement or the locked closet where it has been banished from consciousness."¹¹¹ Depictions of the Ripper as a "drunk with blood" vampiric monster therefore similarly evoked these social and psychological concerns, drawing upon a nexus of anxieties concerning degeneration, foreign "invasion," and the contamination of self in late-Victorian society.¹¹²

Thus, the Ripper narrative was one which actively engaged with the leading intellectual, literary and populist concerns of the day, with the press drawing upon a series of Gothic and sensation-horror archetypes to define and underline the essential otherness of the crimes. In doing so, the Ripper reportage became part of an identifiable late-Victorian existential discourse revolving around issues of identity and selfhood. However, it is not enough to suggest that the Ripper discourse simply reflected the sociological and psychological preoccupations of the period – in many ways the Ripper case actively contributed to the cultural landscape of late-Victorian society. Indeed, if *Jekyll and Hyde* seemed to eerily anticipate the Ripper murders, then such later novels as *Dorian Gray* and *Dracula* seemed to draw their inspiration from the issues raised by the Ripper crimes themselves. As such, whilst the work of writers such as Stevenson had succeeded in articulating those underlying social and psychological anxieties that, in many respects, pervaded nineteenth-century British life, the Ripper case, in all its horrible, unedifying *realness*, seemed to mark the point at which those inchoate social

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 3.

¹¹¹ Timothy Beal, paraphrasing Freud, in: Timothy K. Beal, *Religion and its Monsters* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), 8.

¹¹² "Horror upon Horror," *The Star*, 8 September 1888, 2.

anxieties became an actuality. Indeed, the shadowy, amorphous figure of the Ripper soon became a horror archetype himself, acting as the ultimate personification of all the evils inherent in late-nineteenth-century life. Moreover, in evoking those “horrors” that lay beneath the surface of modern “civilised” society, the Ripper narrative seemingly confirmed all those dualistic fears of the “unconscious” self and the other within that had increasingly permeated the literary, medical, cultural and philosophical output of the period.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“Unconscious Mania”:

Jack the Ripper, the Subliminal Mind and the Unconscious Self

The stream of consciousness in which we habitually live is not the only consciousness which exists in connection with our organism... The Self manifests through the organism; but there is always some art of the Self unmanifested (Frederick Myers, “The Subliminal Consciousness”).¹

His mind had acted strangely for several months...there were lapses of time for which he could not account...That he was guilty of the Whitechapel killings, however, filled the doctor with awe and repugnance. But he would not deny the possibility of its being true. He told the physicians that occasionally he would find himself sitting in his room as if aroused from a long stupor...without being able to remember the passing of evening. In one instance he had found blood on his shirtfront, which he couldn’t account for... An exhaustive inquiry before a commission in lunacy developed the fact that...while, in one mind, he was a prominent and respected doctor of medicine, in the other, he was an inhuman beast, with an insatiable urge to slit the throats and mutilate the bodies of women who prostitute themselves for a price (Hereward Carrington, “The Inside Story of Jack the Ripper”).²

Published in *Fate Magazine* in 1949, Hereward Carrington’s article “The Inside Story of Jack the Ripper” recounted the story of the Victorian “clairvoyant” Robert James Lees, and his alleged role in identifying and capturing Jack the Ripper in 1888. According to the article, Lees, a prominent British spiritualist and medium, had gone to the police in 1888 after experiencing a series of visions and premonitions of the murders. Agreeing to psychically “track” the killer, Lees ultimately led police to the residence of “one of the most celebrated physicians of the West End.” Confronted by Lees and the police, this doctor “of prominent and impeccable reputation” purportedly confessed to the Ripper crimes, and was subsequently deemed insane

¹ Frederick Myers, “The Subliminal Consciousness,” 1892, 301. Excerpt available at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/deviance/unconscious1/TheUnconsciousPsychicalResearch/Myers1/index.htm> [29/03/2016].

² Hereward Carrington, “The Inside Story of Jack the Ripper,” *Fate Magazine*, May 1949. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/ripper_media/rps.carrington.html [12/02/2016].

by a panel of London physicians and institutionalised.³ This seemingly apocryphal story of Lees and the West End doctor, which had originally come to public attention in a series of articles published in the 1890s,⁴ is revealing of the way in which dominant representations of the crimes drew upon deeper psychological and sociological concerns related to selfhood and identity. With its suggestion that the suspect's mind had "acted strangely for several months" and that he had been suffering from "lapses of time for which he could not account," the Lees story connects themes of duality and the divided self to late-Victorian conceptions of the human mind and the unconscious. This chapter examines these notions of the unconscious mind, documenting the way in which dominant representations of the Ripper as "divided self" or "alien other" built upon a number of nineteenth-century medical and philosophical discourses in relation to concepts of subliminal consciousness and the perceived conflict between the conscious and the unconscious self. Examining the Ripper narrative in relation to contemporary developments in the emergent fields of psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology, it argues that these anxieties about the unconscious mind played a crucial role in the development of the Ripper narrative, underpinning all those self/other concerns I have documented and traced in previous chapters.

Once again focusing upon the idea of the Ripper as a divided West End doctor, the Lees story was typical of a number of Ripper press reports in suggesting that the murderer was driven by unconscious impulses beyond his conscious control. The *New York Weekly Tribune*, for instance, similarly proposed that the murderer was likely someone who was "subject to fits of unconscious murder mania." Such sentiments were echoed in an article written by the psychiatrist, amateur detective and self-proclaimed Ripper expert, L. Forbes Winslow, who

³ Ibid.

⁴ The provenance of this story, which appeared in a number of British, American, and Australian newspapers throughout 1895, is somewhat sketchy. Whilst Lees' own diary entries for October 1888 suggest that he went to both Scotland Yard and the City of London Police to offer his assistance in capturing the Ripper, there is no record in any official police documents of Lees' active involvement in the case. From what source the 1895 story originated from is similarly unclear, but it seems likely that variants of the story had been circulating since 1888. The Lees story ultimately became a vital piece of Ripper lore, particularly in the 1970s, when the account of Lees' identification of the "prominent West End doctor" was seen by modern researchers as evidence of the guilt of the royal surgeon, Sir William Gull. For a sample of newspaper reports and articles covering the Lees story see: "London's Jack the Ripper," *Williamsport Sunday Grit*, 12 May 1895. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/williamsport_sunday_grit/950512.html [12/02/2016]; "Jack the Ripper: How His Identity was First Made Known," *Hayward Review*, 17 May 1895. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/hayward_review/18950517.html [12/02/2016]; "Jack the Ripper," *The Maitland Daily Mercury* (N.S.W.), Wednesday, 2 October 1895, 4. Trove: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title492> [26/01/2018]; "I Caught Jack the Ripper," *Daily Express*, 16 March 1931. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/daily_express/310316.html [12/02/2106]. More information on Lees himself is available at: <http://rjlees.co.uk/>

suggested that the murderer was a “gentleman” suffering from “homicidal mania who, during lucid intervals, is calm and forgetful of what he has been doing in the madness of his attack.”⁵ Similar terminology is found in an article published in the *Warwick Examiner and Times*, which proposed that the murderer was a “highly honoured physician of London,” who “became a slave to an uncontrollable impulse for blood butchery.”⁶ A “psychic” by the name of Jonathan F. Hunt, meanwhile, wrote to the City Police of his conviction that the killer was most likely a man suffering from a kind of “recurrent periodical mania...much like menstruation [sic] in females.”⁷ Such concepts are again evident in another letter found in the City Police files, which suggested that the killer was a “monomaniac” with a “murderous propensity which he cannot control” and was therefore “not responsible for what he does.”⁸ With their themes of unconscious mania and subsequent amnesia, these narratives suggested that the murderer’s actions and motivations were unknown even to himself. The idea of a latent “second self” acting independently from, and in direct opposition to, the conscious will anticipated later developments in medical science and psychology, predating Freudian and Jungian theories of the unconscious and twentieth-century investigations into mental disorders such as schizophrenia (a term coined in 1908).⁹ However, it also reflected a general nineteenth-century fascination with issues relating to the mind and the interior self, building upon almost a century of medical, philosophical and sociological discourse in relation to such concepts as dual consciousness, multiplex personality, the double brain and the subliminal mind.

In this way, representations of the Ripper as a West End doctor, driven by “unconscious” desires and motivations, tapped into contemporary developments in the emergent fields of psychoanalysis and psychology. Coinage of the actual term “unconscious” is generally traced back to the eighteenth-century German Romantic philosopher Friedrich Schelling, and the idea of the unconscious or “subconscious” mind was popularised by nineteenth-century writers like

⁵ “Is He the Murderer?” *New York Weekly Tribune*, 13 February 1889. Available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/new_york_tribune/18890213.html [04/05/2016]; L. Forbes Winslow, quoted in: Hudson, *Leather Apron*, 76. The proprietor of two mental asylums in London, Winslow was a tireless self-promoter and “expert” witness at many of the major murder trials of the era. As Judith Walkowitz notes, his omnipresence as a Ripper commentator led Scotland Yard detectives to begin to suspect him of the crimes. See Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 173-89.

⁶ “Jack the Ripper,” *Warwick Examiner and Times*, Saturday, 26 January 1895. Trove: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title259> [24/02/2018].

⁷ Quoted in: L. Perry Curtis Jr, “Responses to the Ripper Murders,” 193.

⁸ “Whitechapel Murder Papers,” CLRO Police Box 3.15, no. 104.

⁹ Usage of the term as a diagnostic category is generally attributed to Swiss psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler (1857 - 1939).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (in his 1817 autobiographical/philosophical work *Biographia Literaria*) and his friend and contemporary Thomas de Quincey (whose literary usage of the term “subconscious” can be traced back to 1834).¹⁰ Usage of the phrase “double consciousness” to denote divided personality can meanwhile be traced back to the American physician Samuel L. Mitchell in the early part of the nineteenth century. In his 1817 article “A Double Consciousness, or a Duality of Person in the Same Individual,” Mitchell tells the story of a Pennsylvanian servant girl, Mary Reynolds, who displayed evidence of a dual personality, noting how she was “as unconscious of her double character as two distinct persons are of respective separate natures.”¹¹

The usage of such terminology reflected the growing nineteenth-century awareness of, and interest in, the internal workings of the human psyche and the attendant “conflict between the expression and repression of conscious and unconscious states.”¹² In Europe, ground-breaking studies by such pivotal figures as the French neuroanatomist Pierre Paul Broca (*On the Phenomena of Hybridity in the Genus Homo*, 1864), neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (*Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*, 1877) and psychologist/philosopher Pierre Janet (*Psychological Automatism*, 1889) focused attention on the relationship between unconscious behaviour and such conditions as hysteria, epilepsy, degeneracy and mental illness.¹³ In Britain, meanwhile, influential works by, amongst others, physician and physiologist William Benjamin Carpenter (who coined the term “unconscious automatism” in the 1850s to describe dream-states and hallucinatory episodes), psychiatrist Henry Maudsley (*The Physiology of Mind*, 1876, “The Double Brain,” 1889), author Samuel Butler (*Unconscious Memory*, 1880), and, in particular, essayist, literary critic and poet Frederic W.H. Myers (“Multiplex Personality,” 1886, “The Subliminal Consciousness,” 1892) helped advance these concepts of

¹⁰ Markus Iseli, “Thomas de Quincey’s Subconscious: Nineteenth-Century Intimations of the Cognitive Unconscious,” *Romanticism*, Volume 20, Issue 3 (2014): 294-305. Available online at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/rom.2014.0193> [30/03/2016].

¹¹ Samuel L. Mitchell, “A Double Consciousness, or a Duality of Person in the Same Individual,” *Medical Repository*, 3 (1817): 185-6. See also: S. Weir Mitchell, *Mary Reynolds: A Case of Double Consciousness* (Philadelphia: WM. J. Dornan, 1889).

¹² Ann Heilmann and Mark Llewellyn, “What Kitty Knew,” 376.

¹³ Pierre Paul Broca, *On the Phenomena of Hybridity in the Genus Homo*, ed. C. Carter Blake (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1864); J.M. Charcot, *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*, trans. George Sigerson (London: The New Sydenham Society, 1881, originally published 1877); Pierre Janet, *L'Automatisme Psychologique: Essai de Psychologie Expérimentale Sur les Formes Inférieures de l'activité Humaine* (Paris: Alcan, 1889).

dual personality, the subliminal mind and the unconscious self.¹⁴ Commenting on decades of research and investigation into these areas Myers noted:

Recent experiments and observations have thrown fresh, but scattered and perplexing lights upon the workings of that part of ourselves which lies below the threshold of ordinary consciousness...it is now recognised...that two or more distinct trains of memory, feeling, will, may co-exist in the same personage.¹⁵

Such concepts were assimilated into the Ripper narrative, fitting perfectly with the kind of dualistic self/other, Jekyll/Hyde, gentleman/beast concepts that characterised much of the Ripper reportage, with its attendant anxieties of the hidden self and the “other within.”

The correlation between these concepts of the unconscious mind and dominant theories of the Ripper as “divided self” are evident, for instance, when examining Frederick Myers’s influential article on “Multiplex Personality,” originally published in leading monthly journal *The Nineteenth Century* in November 1886. Myers was the co-founder and one of the leading figures of the Society for Psychical Research, founded in London in 1882.¹⁶ An eclectic group of academics, physicians, philosophers and spiritualists, the Society was dedicated to investigating how the possibility of a spiritual afterlife overlapped with certain aspects of “contemporary, more mainstream, psychology and its exploration of unconscious aspects of identity.”¹⁷ Discussing the “unrecognised modifiability” and “multiplex and mutable character of what we know as the Personality of man,” Myers’s article describes the contemporary case of a French psychiatric patient (“Louis V”).¹⁸ Having suffered a psychological trauma at the

¹⁴ William Benjamin Carpenter, *Principles of Mental Physiology: With Their Applications to the Training and Discipline of the Mind and the Study of its Morbid Conditions* (London: Henry. S. King Co. 1875); Henry Maudsley, *The Physiology of Mind* (London: Macmillan and Co. 1876); Henry Maudsley, “The Double Brain,” *Mind: A Quarterly Review*, No. 54 (April 1889): 161-87; Samuel Butler, *Unconscious Memory* (London: A. C. Fifield, 1910, originally published 1880).

¹⁵ Myers, “The Subliminal Consciousness,” 299.

¹⁶ The society was co-founded by Dublin physicist Professor W. F. Barrett and Finchley spiritualist Edmund Dawson Rogers. Many of its members were drawn from the “elite spiritualist circles” of London and from the academic circles of Trinity College, Cambridge. For more information see: Rhodri Hayward, *Resisting History: Religious Transcendence and the Invention of the Unconscious* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 44-46.

¹⁷ Matthew Ffytche, “Introduction: Unconscious - the Double Mind, the Subliminal Mind, the Subconscious.” Available at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/deviance/unconscious1/TheUnconsciousPsychicalResearch/Myers1/index.htm> [28/03/2015].

¹⁸ Frederick Myers, “Multiplex Personality,” *The Nineteenth Century* (November 1886): 648. Available at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/deviance/unconscious1/TheUnconsciousPsychicalResearch/Myers3/index.htm> [29/03/2016].

age of fourteen (a “great fright from a viper” that, according to Myers, “threw him off his balance and started the series of psychical oscillations on which he has been tossed ever since”), Louis began to manifest multiple personalities thereafter, at one moment seeming “a mere lunatic or savage,” whilst at other times acting as a perfect embodiment of “decorous manhood.” According to Myers, these sudden shifts in personality were connected to the functions of “the right and left hemispheres of the brain.” As he points out in the article:

Inhibit his left brain (and right side) and he becomes, as one may say, not only left-handed but *sinister*; he manifests himself through nervous arrangements which have reached a lower degree of evolution...Inhibit his right brain, and the higher qualities of character remain...intact. There is self-control; there is modesty; there is the sense of duty – the qualities which man has developed as he has risen from the savage level.¹⁹

This splitting of the personality into “higher” and “lower” hemispheres – one ruled by reason, self-control, and restraint, the other by primitive, savage, and violent instincts, strongly resembles the kind of “half beast, half man” theories espoused throughout the Ripper narrative. Indeed, the terminology used in Myers’s account – “lower degree of evolution,” “the savage level,” “higher qualities” – is almost identical to those dualistic civilised/savage distinctions found throughout media accounts of the Ripper case.

Moreover, such ideas also bear a close resemblance to the kind of terminology found in those literary works (discussed in the previous chapter) that helped influence and shape the Ripper narrative. It is undoubtedly significant, for instance, that Myers’s account of Louis V’s “multiplex personality” was published in the same year as Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and shares its central concern with investigating the “thorough and primitive duality of man.”²⁰ As in Stevenson’s novel and, by extension, the Ripper discourse, Myers defined man in essentially dualistic terms – right/left, higher/lower, civilised/savage – and examined the conflict between the voluntary will and those hidden, unconscious drives and desires that

¹⁹ Myers, “Multiplex Personality,” 649; 651–52.

²⁰ Stevenson, 77. Myers corresponded with Stevenson over the subject matter of *Jekyll and Hyde* after its publication, and even suggested several changes to the novel, such as recommending that Jekyll should suffer a loss of consciousness at the point of his transformation into Hyde. Myers also sent Stevenson a copy of his essay on “Multiplex Personality” in 1886, as Stevenson himself mentioned in an 1893 interview. See: “Mr. R. L. Stevenson on Reading and Literature: An Interview,” *Argus*, 11 April 1893, quoted in Richard Dury, “Crossing the Bounds of Single Identity: *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and a Paper in a French Scientific Journal,” in *Robert Louis Stevenson, Writer of Boundaries* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 237–51, 237. See also Anne Stiles, “Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain,” *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, Volume 46, Number 4 (Autumn 2006): 879–900.

undermine the waking self and lead to “morbid disintegration” and “demented oblivion.”²¹ As such, Myers’s account shares with the Ripper discourse an anxiety of what the nineteenth-century neurologist George Miller Beard classified as the “involuntary life” – those primal, automatic urges and compulsions over which the conscious will “has but limited power or none at all.”²² This sense of a self “cloven in twain”²³ between conscious and unconscious impulses was a source of deep anxiety in late nineteenth-century culture, undermining traditional Victorian notions of self-control and self-identity – what Joel Peter Eigen refers to in his 2004 work *Unconscious Crime* as “the well-documented Victorian passion for order, discipline, and authority.” As he points out, these concepts of double personality and divided consciousness challenged Victorian culture’s “paramount goal of fostering an ethic of self-mastery among all British citizens,” instead evoking a disquieting sense of fragmentation, incoherence and disorder.²⁴ In this way, these notions of the unconscious mind complemented and seemingly reinforced those “divided self” anxieties found in the Ripper narrative, lending such depictions a scientific credibility and validity they might have otherwise lacked.

These “double brain” theories therefore linked notions of duality and “otherness” to the neurological processes of the human brain. In splitting the brain into “left” and “right” hemispheres, these classifications echoed the West/East, masculine/feminine, civilised/savage distinctions found throughout the Ripper narrative, whilst reinforcing traditional late-Victorian racial and gender biases. Whereas the left brain was associated with “masculinity, whiteness, and civilization,” the right hemisphere of the brain – representing the unconscious, the instinctual, the irrational and the primitive – was seen to be dominant in the brains of women, savages, criminals, and the mentally-ill (i.e. all those who popularly represented the “other” in Victorian culture).²⁵ In this way, “otherness” was associated with “right brain” characteristics, thereby providing a scientific, neurological foundation for popular concepts of “deviant” or “aberrant” behaviour. These left/right distinctions were similarly used by the leading degeneration theorists of the era. Lombroso, for example, likewise proposed that in criminals, women, lunatics and “primitives” the “right lobe predominates very much more often than in

²¹ Myers, “Multiplex Personality,” 648.

²² Beard, “The Involuntary Life,” 220.

²³ Myers, “Multiplex Personality,” 652.

²⁴ Joel Peter Eigen, *Unconscious Crime: Mental Absence and Criminal Responsibility in Victorian London* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 15-17.

²⁵ Ann Stiles, “Robert Louis Stevenson’s Jekyll and Hyde and the Double Brain,” 885-86. See also: Anne Harrington, *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain: A Study in Nineteenth-Century Thought* (Princeton, 1987), 166-205.

normal persons...while the healthy man thinks and feels with the left lobe, the abnormal, thinks, wills, and feels more with the right.”²⁶ As such, popular representations of the Ripper as a divided gentleman, torn between two competing and contradictory impulses, strongly evoked these ideas of cerebral duality, whilst aligning him with those “others” (the alien foreigner, the transgressive female, the mentally unstable degenerate)²⁷ who similarly evoked this sense of physiological, psychological and neurological disorder and decay.

This conflation of the psychological with the neurological is likewise found in L. Forbes Winslow’s suggestion that the Ripper was most likely a “man of good position” living in the West End of London who suffered from a form of “masked epilepsy.” According to Winslow:

I imagined that Jack the Ripper suffered from this malady [epilepsy], and that, during the seizure, he might perform the most extraordinary and most diabolical actions, and upon his return to consciousness would be in perfect ignorance of what had transpired when the attack was on him, and would conduct himself in an ordinary manner before people.²⁸

Believing that these “paroxysms” would only occur at intervals, and that such seizures were “frequently accompanied by a form of erotic frenzy,” Winslow suggested that once “the paroxysm which prompted him to his fearful deeds had passed off, he most likely returned to the bosom of his family” and to relative normalcy.²⁹ With its focus on dual personality and unconscious impulses, Winslow’s theory bears a close resemblance to Myers’s investigations into the double brain and multiplex personality, whilst the notion of the Ripper as a West End gentleman, suffering from a kind of periodic unconscious mania, clearly echoed the Robert Lees story and a number of other Ripper accounts. Similar associations are found, for instance, in an article on the murders found in the *Morning Advertiser* on 2 October 1888, which again puts forward the “epilepsy” theory, noting how this “common affliction” is “also a very common origin of murderous impulses,” with the sufferer “irresistibly drawn to the

²⁶ Lombroso, quoted in Howard L. Kushner, “Cesare Lombroso and the Pathology of Left-Handedness,” *The Lancet*, Volume 377 (8 January 2011): 119.

²⁷ As Elaine Showalter observes, “individuals in whom the right hemisphere predominated had to be low on the human evolutionary scale.” Many scientists of the era therefore argued that “the intellectual inferiority and social subordination” of, for example, women and certain “foreign” races could therefore be attributed to their “weak left brains.” Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, 114.

²⁸ L. Forbes Winslow, *Recollections of Forty Years: Being an Account at First Hand of Some Famous Criminal Lunacy Cases, English and American; Together with Facsimile Letters, Notes, and Other Data Concerning Them* (London: John Ouseley Ltd, 1910), 258.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 261.

commission of homicide” under the “uncontrollable influence” of “mental disease.”³⁰ These themes are again evoked in an 1889 article, “Is the Famous Whitechapel Murderer an Epileptic?”, that quotes from the American physician Otto Juettner, who likewise suggested that the murderer was suffering from a kind of periodic “epileptic” mania, and was “unconscious of every thing [sic] that transpired in the interim.”³¹ Such themes are similarly evident in English psychiatrist Dr George Savage’s “Homicidal Mania,” an article written in an attempt to categorise and contextualise the Ripper murders, published in the *Fortnightly Review* in September 1888. Noting that the “skill with which the murders were perpetrated, and the skill of the mutilation point to someone with some anatomical knowledge,” Savage draws heavily upon themes of subliminal consciousness and perceived epilepsy in defining the kind of mental and psychological factors that lead to such “murderous attacks”:

Probably some of the most brutal crimes have been committed by epileptics...A fit of fury may precede a fit of epilepsy, or, what is much the more common, may follow it, or, according to some, may take the place of the fit...yet the epileptic taken red-handed may deny all knowledge of his acts...It is almost certain that the epileptic criminal is ignorant of his act, which may have been started by some impression or thought at the moment of the onset of the fit; he is started like an automaton by this impression...The patient passes into a state analogous to that of the sleep-walker...Murders are perpetrated by epileptics in fury, and they may be carried out with skill in the automatic state.³²

With its references to “automatic” states, Savage’s article references Jean-Martin Charcot’s theory of “ambulatory automatism,” a kind of unconscious fugue state wherein those afflicted “walk about automatically and do not show any external signs that their walking is unconscious.”³³ In ascribing certain types of homicidal behaviour to these automatic or unconscious impulses, these characterisations again played upon Victorian anxieties of the “hidden” dualistic self, depicting the unconscious mind as both threatening and dangerous, as a place of primitive, violent impulses and dark, uncontrollable desires.

³⁰ *Morning Advertiser* (London), 2 October 1888, available at:

http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/morning_advertiser/18881002.html [07/04/2016].

³¹ “Is the Famous Whitechapel Murderer an Epileptic?” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 23 July 1889.

³² G.H. Savage, “Homicidal Mania,” in *Fortnightly Review*, Volume XLIV. July to December 1, 1888 (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd. 1888). See also: G.H. Savage, “Homicidal Mania,” reproduced in *New Zealand Herald*, Volume XXV, Issue 9220, 24 November 1888, Supplement. Available at: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/NZH18881124.2.64.20> [14/11/2016].

³³ Jean-Martin Charcot, quoted in Ian Hacking, *Mad Travelers: Reflections of the Reality of Transient Mental Illnesses* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 36.

This conflating of “epilepsy” with aspects of dual personality was very much characteristic of the era; in a contemporary report presented to the Society for Psychical Research, “A Case of Epilepsy with Double Consciousness”, its Australian-born member Richard Hodgson examined a case of suspected epilepsy wherein the subject periodically revealed a “violent and abusive” second personality/self.³⁴ According to Hodgson, this condition would generally last “five to ten days” before the patient reverted to his “normal” conscious self. As Hodgson explains:

When in his normal condition, the man is of a pleasant disposition...When questioned in regard to his sensations during the periods of ‘second self’ he says he can tell nothing except that everybody and everything is strange to him, and that he knows nothing of what he says or does.³⁵

Similar characterisations are found in Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*; he writes that due to certain “cerebral changes,” epileptics are “unable to resist their impulses, by reason of a disturbance of consciousness,” and describes a case study in which a “previously healthy” man of “good heredity” has an epileptic attack which turns him “wildly maniacal and destructive.” According to Krafft-Ebing, this man remained for several days “confused, and finally came to himself with no memory of the events of his attack.”³⁶ Clearly, the symptoms described in these cases seem, from a modern standpoint, closer to schizophrenia or some kind of similar dissociative disorder, rather than epilepsy. As Joel Peter Eigen points out, whilst “conceived today to be restricted to convulsive muscular attack,” epilepsy revealed to nineteenth-century writers “a transformation in the afflicted’s personality.”³⁷ According to the influential nineteenth-century neurologist John Hughlings Jackson, epilepsy and other such disorders could even dissolve mankind’s evolutionary processes, particularly those whereby the “higher” structures of the brain restrained the “lower” physical and emotive functions.³⁸ These concepts of transformation, reversal, dissolution and devolution clearly echo the themes and concerns found in media representations of the Ripper story, with their anxieties of degeneration, duality and the unconscious self.

³⁴ Born in Melbourne in 1855, Hodgson joined the Society in 1882.

³⁵ Richard Hodgson, “Reports of Cases of Double Consciousness: A Case of Epilepsy with Double Consciousness,” (circa 1888-1892). Available at: <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/deviance/unconscious1/TheUnconsciousPsychicalResearch/Hodgson/index.htm> [24/03/2016].

³⁶ Kraft-Ebbing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 364-5.

³⁷ Eigen, *Unconscious Crime*, 18.

³⁸ See Kushner, “Cesare Lombroso,” 118.

In this way, these suggestions of epilepsy reflected wider concerns in relation to the unconscious mind and the occurrence of violent crime in Victorian society. As Ruth Harris points out in *Murders and Madness: Medicine, Law, and Society in the Fin de Siecle*, epilepsy figured prominently in medico-legal discourse during this period, with “doctors constantly enquiring whether or not its presence could explain periods of amnesia or lack of control.”³⁹ Significantly, there was a widespread belief that, after an “attack” many epileptics “were liable to commit violent crimes of which they had no memory.”⁴⁰ These themes of unconsciousness, criminality and epilepsy are found in the landmark 1876 trial of Elizabeth Carr, the first time a defendant was found “not guilty on the ground of unconsciousness” in a London courtroom. Accused of maiming her infant daughter (who subsequently died) with a knife whilst in an apparently epileptic state, Carr was ultimately acquitted of the charge, with her lawyer successfully arguing that she had been “absolutely unconscious of what she was doing,” and that her crime was a “purely automatic act.”⁴¹ The Carr trial therefore illustrates how these conceptions of the unconscious mind had become part of mainstream legal discourse by the late-Victorian era, with defence lawyers drawing upon themes of automatism and somnambulism in explaining (and exonerating) criminal behaviour.

Similar connections are found, for instance, in an 1886 article, “Automatic Homicide,” published in the *British Medical Journal*. Detailing the contemporary case of Harry Patrick, sentenced to death for the murder of his “mistress” Rachel Bailey, the article foreshadows many of the concerns which would be found, two years later, in the Ripper reportage. As with the aforementioned Ripper press articles, “Automatic Homicide” examined the perceived links between the unconscious mind, “epileptic” episodes and uncontrollable murderous impulses. The article suggested that Patrick was subject to periodic attacks of “brain fever” and “epileptic mania,” and that, as a result, his crime (that of slitting his girlfriend’s throat) could be considered a “mere automatic atrocity, an insane act indicative of a temporary mental disorder after an epileptic paroxysm.” As the article goes on to suggest:

The epileptic seizures to which this man is liable are of a kind that are induced by emotional disturbance, and it is therefore easily conceivable that a fit was brought on by sexual excitement, which is particularly apt to explode an unstable nerve-centre, and that, in a state of partial

³⁹ Harris, *Murders and Madness*, 42.

⁴⁰ Ian Hacking, *Mad Travelers: Reflections of the Reality of Transient Mental Illnesses* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 34.

⁴¹ Joel Peter Eigen covers the case at length in *Unconscious Crime*. Eigen, *Unconscious Crime*, 129-52.

unconsciousness following the fit, he cut the throat of the girl who lay beside him with the Japanese dagger which he had about him, and without any intention of injuring her.⁴²

This kind of linkage between unconscious mania, an “unstable nerve-centre,” sexual impulses, violent crime and homicidal urges is highly reminiscent of subsequent Ripper press reports, reflecting medical examiner Dr Thomas Bond’s view that the Whitechapel murderer “must in my opinion be a man subject to periodical attacks of Homicidal and erotic mania.”⁴³ Similar linkages are found, for instance, in Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Krafft-Ebing writes that, in certain cases of “imperfect consciousness” and “epilepsy” the “sexual instinct is very intense,” and goes on to note that these “acquired states of mental weakness” can lead to a “reckless satisfaction of the sexual impulse.” He suggested that cases of “lust murder” often result from such neurological and psychological factors, and, in a later edition of his work, stated that the Ripper murders belonged in this “psycho-sexual” category.⁴⁴

In linking concepts of “imperfect consciousness” with themes of impulsive sexuality, such classifications again evoked late-Victorian anxieties concerning syphilis and the perceived “syphilisation” of British society during this era.⁴⁵ This correlation between syphilis and epilepsy is found, for example, in an article, “The Whitechapel Murders. A Doctor’s Clue,” originally published in *The Star* and subsequently reproduced in the Australian paper the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser* in December 1888. The article quotes from an unnamed “medical gentleman” the theory that the Ripper was a medical man with “a certain amount of anatomical knowledge” who “had assisted at operations, including ovariectomy.” According to the article, this “dissolute man...fell victim to a specific contagion” from a “Whitechapel loose woman” which ruined his physical health and caused “mischief to one of the lobes of [his] brain.”⁴⁶ In aligning concepts of sexual contagion and pollution with these mental and neurological concerns, these reports linked epilepsy and associated

⁴² “Automatic Homicide,” *The British Medical Journal*, Saturday, 2 January 1888, 26-7. Available at: <http://www.bmj.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/thebmj> [27/07/2016].

⁴³ “Reply by Bond to Anderson on Re-Examination of Bodies on Anderson’s Suggestion,” 10 November 1888. London Hospital Archives. This document is a general report on the Ripper murders by Dr Thomas Bond, police surgeon to A Division (Westminster).

⁴⁴ He writes that the “presumption of a murder out of lust is always given when injuries of the genitals are found...and still more, when the body has been opened, or parts (intestines, genitals) torn out.” Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis*, 64, 364-5, 385-98.

⁴⁵ Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siecle* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 188.

⁴⁶ “The Whitechapel Murders: A Doctor’s Clue,” *Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser*, Saturday, 1 December 1888. Trove: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title65> [24/02/2018].

unconscious behaviour to those wider fears of contamination found throughout the Ripper narrative. The connection between syphilis and perceived epilepsy was very much a product of the era; John Hughling Jackson, for instance, wrote of the apparent relationship between tertiary syphilis and epileptic fits in such influential articles of the period as “Syphilitic Affections of the Nervous System: Cases of Epilepsy Associated with Syphilis” (1861). As such, these representations of the Ripper as someone suffering from unconscious epileptic impulses fit perfectly with those self/other concerns documented in previous chapters of this thesis.

This is perhaps most evident when examining these concepts of the unconscious mind in relation to late-Victorian theories of degeneration. Jean-Martin Charcot himself connected concepts of unconscious behaviour to popular theories regarding degeneration, suggesting that such diseases as epilepsy and syphilis functioned as “*agents provocateurs*,” agents that “provoked the manifestation of latent [degenerative] pathological states.”⁴⁷ Reinforcing existing social, cultural and racial anxieties (Charcot reportedly held that Jews showed a marked predisposition towards these kind of pathological states), this linkage between notions of the unconscious and degeneration was symptomatic of a wider nineteenth-century “psychophysiological malady,” becoming part of a general late-Victorian conceptual system for describing “the moral and social implications of racial debilitation, nervous exhaustion, and cultural despair.”⁴⁸ According to Lombroso, there were even direct “anatomical, skeletal, physiognomical, psychological, and moral” links between degeneration, epilepsy, and violent or homicidal criminality:

Epileptics [display] the same anomalies as criminals...it was shown that epilepsy frequently reproduced atavistic characteristics, including even those common to lower animals... the physical and psychic characteristics of born criminals coincide with those...of another class of degenerates, known to the world as epileptics...Epilepsy represents the genus of which criminality and moral insanity are the species...The criminal is only a diseased person, an epileptic, in whom the cerebral malady...produces, together with certain signs of physical degeneration in the skull, face, teeth, and brain, a return to the early brutal egotism natural to primitive races, which manifests itself in homicide, theft, and other crimes.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Toby Gelfand, “Charcot’s Response to Freud’s Rebellion,” *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (April – June 1989): 298-300. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2709736> [17/07/2016].

⁴⁸ Gelfand discusses this at length in his article. Ruth Harris, *Murders and Madness*, 47; 12.

⁴⁹ Lombroso and Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man*.

Therefore, depictions of the Ripper as an “unconscious” criminal, one who “belongs to the middle or even the upper classes,” who has “studied anatomy,” and who “suffers from a form of epilepsy,” drew together these interconnected anxieties in relation to social and physical degeneration, duality, medical science, and the corrupting influence of the hidden, unconscious “other” self.⁵⁰

Whilst these representations of the Ripper as “unconscious” murderer drew strongly upon such scientific, medical, and sociological concerns, they also reflected a wider late nineteenth-century cultural fascination with concepts of the hidden mind and with what lay beyond the parameters of ordinary, everyday consciousness. As Eigen notes:

From mesmerism to somnambulism, from animal magnetism to hypnotism, from autonomous mental reflex to autonomous behavioural excess, nineteenth-century London was awash in a host of altered states of consciousness.⁵¹

This cultural preoccupation with these “altered states of consciousness” can be traced back at least as far as the late eighteenth century, with the German physician Franz Friedrich Anton Mesmer’s investigations into what he termed “animal magnetism” (essentially the belief that the human body was subject to invisible natural forces and magnetic energies that could be manipulated or harnessed in order to produce specific physical and/or psychological responses, thereby transforming the subject into a kind of “living marionette”).⁵² Subsequently dubbed “mesmerism,” the practice soon spread throughout Europe, ushering in a nineteenth-century culture of trance states, hypnosis (a process developed in 1842 by the London surgeon James Braid) and mesmeric séances. Alongside these developments, the mid-nineteenth century also witnessed the rise of the spiritualist movement, with its avowed interest in exploring, alongside a whole range of psychic and supernatural phenomena, the hidden depths of human consciousness. By the time of the Ripper murders, these practises (mediumship, clairvoyance, telepathy, automatic writing, occultism) had become deeply ingrained within popular culture, reflected in the formation of such esoteric organisations as Madame Blavatsky’s Theosophical Society (founded in 1875), and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn (whose Isis-Urania

⁵⁰ “Latest Details,” *East London Observer*, Saturday 15 September 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/east_london_observer/elo880915.html [24/03/2015].

⁵¹ Eigen, *Unconscious Crime*, 15.

⁵² Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian Britain* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 3.

Temple was founded in London in 1888).⁵³ What all these developments had in common was a central belief that the human mind was more complex, more unknowable, than conventional wisdom might attest. Moreover, as Henri F. Ellenberger detailed in his seminal 1970 work *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, these concepts of mesmerism and spiritualism had a profound influence on the development of “dynamic psychiatry,” with Mesmer’s pioneering investigations into animal magnetism helping shape the “official corpus of neuropsychiatry” as developed by Charcot and his contemporaries a century later.⁵⁴ The advent of spiritualism had a similarly galvanising effect on psychiatry, with the development of such processes as automatic writing and trance states providing psychologists and scientists with new approaches to exploring the mind and the unconscious.⁵⁵

These links between the unconscious, psychology and spiritualism are found throughout the letters sent to the London Police in regard to the Ripper crimes; from “sensitives” and “clairvoyants” offering to solve the crimes via “occult and abnormal means” to suggestions that the Police should find themselves a “first class mesmerist” in order to find the murderer, these letters reflected the general late-Victorian interest in notions of subliminal unconscious and the hidden mind.⁵⁶ These preoccupations are similarly evident throughout media representations of the Ripper story, with *The Illustrated Mirror*, for example, posing the question “Is Jack the Ripper a Mesmerist?” in a July 1889 headline. At the other end of the spectrum, *The Star* suggested in a September 1889 article (“Another Theory of the Whitechapel Crimes: Marvellous Mesmerism. Jack the Ripper an Instrument”) that the Ripper himself may

⁵³ The notorious writer, mystic, philosopher, and medium Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, a Russian émigré and author of such occult works as *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), founded the Theosophical Society, dedicated to the study of spiritualism, magic, and the occult, in New York at the age of forty-four. A London chapter of the society, the Hermetic Lodge, opened in the 1880s. The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was a similar mystical society that rose to prominence in the final two decades of the nineteenth century. Its members included such prominent figures as W. B. Yeats, Maud Gonne, MacGregor Mathers (author of the 1887 work *Kabbala Unveiled*) and infamous “magician” Aleister Crowley. For more information, see Beckson, *London in the 1890s*, 317–43.

⁵⁴ See chapter two, “The Emergence of Dynamic Psychiatry,” in Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 53–109. As Hayward notes: “It is easy to see how the philosophies of mesmerism and hypnotism appealed to [psychical researchers like] Myers. They offered both a language for reconceptualising spiritualistic experience – such episodes revealed the edge of consciousness rather than the death of the personality – and a possible technology (hypnotism) for undoing such episodes of self-annihilation.” Hayward, *Resisting History*, 48.

⁵⁵ Despite this, more conservative psychiatrists were often hostile towards concepts of spiritualism during this era. Interestingly, as Judith Walkowitz notes, these psychiatrists routinely drew upon a lexicon of unconsciousness in denouncing spiritualism, suggesting that spiritualist communications and trance states were the product of “local lesions of the brain or unconscious cerebration.” Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 173.

⁵⁶ See “Whitechapel Murder Papers,” CLRO, London Metropolitan Archives, fiche 3, police box 3.13 no. 5; fiche 6, police box 3.13 151 – 14/66; police box 3.15 no. 96; police box 3.15 no. 101; police box 3.15 no. 105; police box 3.15 no. 107.

have been prompted to commit “unconscious murder” under the influence of mesmerism.⁵⁷ These themes can also be seen in a letter published in the *Evening News* on 16 October 1888, which speculated that the Ripper could be a “pseudo-scientific man” in a “mesmeric trance.” Appearing under the heading “The Whitechapel Murders: Has the Miscreant Been Hypnotised?” this letter suggested that “it is well known to scientists that a person who has been thrown into the perfect hypnotic state will...proceed to execute any crime, no matter how terrible.”⁵⁸ Drawing these themes of mesmerism, hypnotism and the unconscious together with the ever-present doctor theory, another correspondent suggested that the murderer was an “Electro-Biologist” who mesmerised his victims before killing them.⁵⁹ All of these accounts reinforced the “otherness” of the crimes, and located this “otherness” within the hidden workings and unconscious motivations of the human mind itself.

In doing so, these reports ultimately inverted earlier fears of the Ripper as external, foreign, “alien other,” instead focusing upon what Julia Kristeva refers to as the “stranger within.”⁶⁰ Interestingly, psychiatrists were generally known as “alienists” in Victorian culture, reflecting the view that their patients had become “alienated from both society and themselves.”⁶¹ These delineations reflected the Victorian belief that, in cases of psychological or mental aberrance or division, the human mind became inexorably alienated from itself. Such ideas were deeply disturbing to Victorian commentators. The nineteenth-century English psychiatrist, neurologist and psychologist James Crichton Browne, for instance, wrote of how:

Amongst the most fundamental principles of the mind is the conviction that man continues to be always himself, that he is at any given moment the same person as he was the moment before and that he has always been since he came into existence. This belief, in fact, is the very essence of mind.⁶²

⁵⁷ “Murder and Mesmerism - Another Theory of the Whitechapel Crimes: Marvellous Mesmerism. Jack the Ripper an Instrument,” *Star*, Issue 6662, 30 September 1889, 2. Available at: <http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/paperspast?a=d&d=TS18890930.2.6> [03/07/2016].

⁵⁸ “The Editor’s Drawer. The Whitechapel Murders. Has the Miscreant Been Hypnotised?” *Evening News*, 16 October 1888, available at: http://www.casebook.org/press_reports/evening_news/18881016.html [29/08/2016].

⁵⁹ Quoted in L. Perry Curtis Jr, “Responses to the Ripper Murders: Letters to Old Jewry,” 190.

⁶⁰ Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*.

⁶¹ Dinesh Bhugra, “Alienated Alienists: A New Hope?” *The Lancet Psychiatry*, Volume 1, Issue 4 (September 2014): 257-59. [S2215-0366\(14\)70283-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(14)70283-4) [12/07/2016].

⁶² J. Crichton Browne, “Personal Identity and Its Morbid Modifications,” *Journal of Mental Science*, Volume 8, Issue 44 (January 1863), 537.

These concepts of the divided self and unconscious action therefore challenged such assumptions. Moreover, in cases of divided consciousness, there was a fear that this aberrant “second state” would eventually overtake the afflicted personality entirely, and that this “other” state would become “permanent and this way cause a transformation of the personality.”⁶³ This idea of the conscious self being overtaken by an “alien” other self, a “hidden” self of violent, primitive impulses and animalistic desires, permeates the Ripper narrative, with its fixation on the idea that a “well known London physician” could suffer from “mental aberrations,” wherein he “lived some other life,” and thereafter “degenerated into an inarticulate beast.”⁶⁴ In such depictions the human unconscious was portrayed as a place of foreign, dangerous impulses, capable of undermining and overriding the conscious will.

These concerns were therefore a source of anxiety in late-Victorian culture in that they seemed to question long-held beliefs in relation to free will and moral choice. The exercise of willpower was regarded as the “central criterion for mental health” in nineteenth-century culture; an inability to control one’s own will was perceived as a classic symptom of insanity.⁶⁵ Seen as the crucial element in enabling “normal individuals to inhibit their automatic urges and adapt positively to their environment,” this willpower required, for its actualisation, a “perfect hierarchical co-ordination of the lower reflexive and instinctual urges with higher intellectual and moral development.”⁶⁶ Or, to put it another way, a perfect balance between the “left” and “right” brain hemispheres. According to Darwin himself, as posited in *The Descent of Man* (1871), it was this capacity to exercise free will that separated modern civilisation from its animal predecessors. Noting that man possesses the “same senses” as those of the “lower animals,” and that “his fundamental intuitions must be the same,” Darwin suggests that these primitive “instinctive actions” are only superseded with the aid of “the free will,” which he associates with the “moral sense or conscience.”⁶⁷ Without willpower, man therefore becomes just another animal, at the mercy of primitive, automatic, instinctual urges. Again, such concerns had social implications. As Roger Smith observes in *Free Will and the Human Sciences in Britain 1870-1910* (2016), within Victorian culture it was the individual’s capacity

⁶³ Ian Hacking, *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Sciences of Memory* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1998), 129.

⁶⁴ “Jack the Ripper,” *Maitland Daily Mercury*, Wednesday, 2 October 1895. Trove: <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title492> [24/02/2018].

⁶⁵ Hayward, *Resisting History*, 40.

⁶⁶ Harris, *Murders and Madness*, 40-41.

⁶⁷ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selections in Relation to Sex* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, originally published 1871), 34-7.

to exercise free will that was believed to make “possible the organization of society on the basis of duty and responsibility. To question the will therefore appeared to question social order.”⁶⁸ In acting as a “reminder of the potentialities of revolting barbarity which lie latent in man,” the Ripper therefore represented not only the ungoverned, primitive, animal self, devoid of willpower, morality, or restraint, but also the potential of society to slide into anarchy and chaos.⁶⁹ Such depictions raised the disturbing possibility that mankind was ultimately governed less by conscious will and moral choice – what Smith refers to as the Victorian belief in the individual’s “power to impose a life of reason and purpose”⁷⁰ – than by unconscious urges and instinctive motivations beyond their understanding and control.

In doing so, these characterisations also questioned long-held beliefs in relation to the self and identity. Victorian conceptions of the self were, in many ways, still indebted to the seventeenth-century English philosopher John Locke’s theory that:

Self depends on consciousness...since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and it is that which makes every one [sic] to be what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone consists personal identity i.e. the sameness of a rational being.⁷¹

As Kurt Danziger notes, these ideas, which “dominated English-language discussions of the self for at least two centuries,” emphasised themes of “wholeness, of coherence, or unity” in relation to self-identity, whilst suggesting that “consciousness alone unites remote existences into one Person.”⁷² Highlighting a critical linkage between “self” and “consciousness,” these theories focused upon the “unified” self as an “entity that observes, evaluates, and controls itself.” In this, the conscious self essentially acted as a mirror of society, with the criteria for self-evaluation being derived from “the individual’s social environment” and their relationships with other people.⁷³ With its themes of unconscious mania, split selves, fractured

⁶⁸ Smith suggests that these concepts of the will were endemic in Victorian culture, so much so that “the word ‘Victorian’ is now almost synonymous with a moralistic emphasis on the power of will.” He notes that this language of the will was one that “differentiated a world split by class, by men and women, by elite education and ignorance and by an empire of civilized English people and colonized natives.” Roger Smith, *Free Will and the Human Sciences in Britain 1870-1910* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2016), 1-7.

⁶⁹ Stead, “Another Murder – And More to Follow?” *Pall Mall Gazette*, Saturday, 8 September 1888.

⁷⁰ Smith, *Free Will*, 1-2.

⁷¹ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Humane Understanding, Volume I* (London: Printed by Eliz. Holt, for Thomas Basset, at the George in Fleet Street, near St. Dunstan’s Church, 1694, second edition).

⁷² Kurt Danziger, “The Historical Formation of Selves.” *Self and Identity: Fundamental Issues*, ed. Richard D. Ashmore and Lee Jussim, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 141-8; Locke, *An Essay*.

⁷³ Danziger, “The Historical Formation of Selves,” 144-7.

psyches and dual consciousness, the Ripper narrative therefore destabilised these traditional conceptions of identity, undermining what Myers refers to as the widespread nineteenth-century belief in “unitary consciousness.” He defines this belief as the conviction that there is only “one single unitary conscious state,” with “each single part of the brain-process [contributing] something to its nature. None of the brain processes split themselves off from the rest and have a separate consciousness of their own.”⁷⁴ In suggesting that the Ripper was motivated by an unconscious mania beyond his rational control, these depictions of the murders therefore directly challenged such widely recognised cultural assumptions, reflecting Myers’s contention that the “conscious” self is “but a fragment of a larger Self – revealed in a fashion at once shifting and limited through an organism not so framed as to afford it full manifestation.” This belief that there were aspects of the self and consciousness that were “operating in an environment of which hitherto we have been wholly unaware” was unsettling to late-Victorian observers in that it seemed to question their fundamental ability to understand their environment and to govern their own lives and control their fates.⁷⁵ The Ripper crimes therefore highlighted this sense of fracture and split, pointing towards a radical disordering of both self and society, with the fractured self evoking a fractured society, a society that had seemingly lost all sense of coherence, that had lost its moral compass.

In this way, these depictions of the Ripper as an “unconscious” murderer drew together all those anxieties of the hidden self and the “other within” that had come to mark popular discussion of the crimes. With its themes of “unconscious mania” and “uncontrollable” criminality, the Ripper discourse questioned long-held beliefs in relation to moral choice and the human will, undermining traditional nineteenth-century conceptions of behaviour, thought and identity. In evoking the fear that “civilised” man was ultimately governed less by autonomous choice than by primal, unconscious “passions,” these depictions suggested that the crimes could not simply be blamed on cognisant wrongdoing or a failure of the will. Instead, they seemed to almost preclude the *possibility* of conscious choice, thereby reducing man to little more than an automaton, or worse, an animal or “beast of the field.” These representations therefore intimated that the supposedly civilised, self-actualising English masculine self was, in reality, no better (and possibly even worse) than those purportedly “inferior” and animalistic

⁷⁴ Frederick Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, ed. Leopold Hamilton Myers (London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1918, fifth edition). Available at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/38492> [04/02/2018].

⁷⁵ Myers, *Human Personality*.

others (the primitive “savage,” the degenerate Jew, the transgressive female) that English society judged and defined themselves against. With this came the secret fear that all those associated concepts of social advancement, purposeful action and cultural progress were unsustainable illusions. The Ripper crimes therefore brought these psychological, neurological, medical and sociological anxieties to the foreground of late-Victorian society, challenging and seemingly overturning those positivist, progressive representations of English life and identity that had previously dominated nineteenth-century British culture.

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CONCLUSION

It is beginning, Netley. Only just beginning. For better or worse, the twentieth century. I have delivered it.

Your past is pain and iron! Know yourselves! With all your shimmering numbers and your lights, think not to be inured to history. Its black root succours you. It is inside you...See me! Wake up and look upon me! I am come amongst you! I am with you always! ("Jack the Ripper," in Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, *From Hell*, 1999).¹

The repercussions of the Ripper story continue to reverberate through modern culture. The crimes themselves remain a source of intense speculation, conjecture and debate, fuelling a massive, seemingly insatiable, "Ripperology" industry that promises, year after year, to offer some kind of "final solution" to the murders. Every passing year presents some new suspect, some new twist, some new supposedly incontrovertible clue to the Ripper's identity. An endless parade of long-dead prominent Victorians, from impressionist painter Walter Sickert, to Queen's physician William Gull, to the Queen's own grandson Prince Albert Victor have been accused of the murders, whilst the popular image of the killer as a kind of phantasmagorical, malevolent, top hat and cape-wearing bogeyman, prowling the fog-shrouded back alleys of Whitechapel has, if anything, become more fixed in recent years, propelled by such films as the 2001 Johnny Depp vehicle *From Hell*. This thesis has sought to move beyond such conventional interpretations of the Whitechapel murders, focusing instead upon what the crimes can tell us about late-Victorian culture and society, on what they reveal about the late nineteenth-century English mindset. In examining how these crimes were reported and interpreted within late nineteenth-century English culture, it has therefore attempted to dispel much of the mythology and hyperbole that continues to surround the case. Rather than concentrating upon the "whodunnit" aspects of the murders, it has sought to reveal the deeper psychological and sociological anxieties and concerns that lay behind public and media representations of the crimes.

¹ These quotes are both taken from Alan Moore's *From Hell*, a graphic novel account of the Ripper case, originally published in serial form from 1989 to 1996 and collected in 1999. Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell, *From Hell: Being a Melodrama in Sixteen Parts* (Marietta, GA: Top Shelf Publications, c2006).

In evaluating these issues, this thesis has therefore documented the way in which the Ripper crimes reflected, and impacted upon, English life within this period. In examining the perception that “no Englishman” could have committed the Ripper murders, it has sought to document the way in which the Ripper crimes represented a threat to dominant notions of Englishness in late-Victorian society. In doing so, it has sought to address one of the major issues that surrounds the Ripper case – the question of why the crimes generated such deep social, cultural and psychological anxiety within nineteenth-century society. The horrific nature of the crimes themselves, of course, partially explains this, but this alone cannot entirely account for the overwhelming sense of crisis and deep-seated panic that followed in the wake of the murders. Indeed, what is most striking about press reports of the crimes is the extent to which the murders were viewed as portents of imminent social collapse and deterioration, rather than as simply the aberrant acts of one highly disturbed individual. In article after article, the crimes were portrayed in terms of the fundamental threat they posed to civilisation itself, with commentators using the example of the murders to expound on the seemingly terminal state of British society.

Such views ran counter to the kind of self-confident representations of British culture traditionally seen throughout the nineteenth century, which tended to stress themes of progress, imperial power and expansion, social advancement and financial success. These representations offered a fixed, even idealised version of “Englishness,” one which focused on the civilised, cultivated masculine English self as symbol of national identity and cultural evolution. It was this sense of national certitude that lay behind the conviction that “no Englishman” could have perpetrated the Whitechapel murders. Yet, by the time this statement appeared in the September 1888 edition of the *East London Observer*, such confidence seemed, at best, misplaced, carrying with it an air of desperate self-delusion. This thesis has argued that both self and society in late-Victorian culture were instead characterised by an unmistakable sense of internal division and crisis, as those certainties that had previously governed British life in the nineteenth century began to fragment and break down. In exploring these issues, it has therefore documented the way in which the Whitechapel murders brought these themes of duality, fragmentation and split to the forefront of English culture, with the media drawing explicit correlations between the crimes and these larger social and psychological anxieties and concerns.

In documenting these connections, this thesis has focused on the complex relationship between “self” and “other” in late-Victorian culture and society. Tracing these self/other themes through seven chapters, it has shown how these concepts played a crucial role in the development of the Ripper narrative. The opening chapter (“East Vs West”: Jack the Ripper, Self and Other in Late-Victorian Society) examined the inherent duality of late-Victorian society, documenting the way in which English selfhood and identity were constructed through a series of oppositional representations – self and other, civilised and savage, English and foreign, West and East. It analysed how these boundaries and demarcations were reflective of dominant Victorian concepts of progress, order, self-control and social advancement, with English society projecting onto an alien, foreign “other” all those characteristics and behaviours that undermined this sense of national and personal identity. It therefore argued that the Ripper crimes, in transgressing these clearly-defined boundaries, destabilised this English self-image, forcing commentators to confront the intrinsic “otherness” within their own borders. These themes were developed in a second chapter (“The Men That Will Not Be Blamed for Nothing”: Jack the Ripper, Jewishness and the Other as Threat), that documented how this tension between “self” and “other” was manifested in media and public representations of the Ripper as an East European Jewish immigrant. Evaluating late-Victorian representations of Jewish culture as a contaminating, polluting force, it connected these anxieties to wider concepts of degeneration, disease and criminality. Consequently, it argued that the figure of the Jew represented the kind of suspect that many observers desperately wanted the Ripper to be - an “other” who could act as a convenient scapegoat for the crimes whilst dispelling any suggestion of “English” complicity in the crimes.

Chapter Three (“Man Is Not Truly One, But Truly Two”: Jack the Ripper, the Divided Self and the Body as Other), traced the way in which these characterisations of the Ripper as an “alien” other were gradually superseded by the infinitely more disturbing prospect of the murderer as an English “gentleman.” In documenting this shift in public and media perceptions, this chapter connected those earlier “other as threat” fears to deeper psychological and sociological anxieties in relation to English identity and selfhood. Evaluating late-Victorian discourses of masculinity, it argued that the Ripper narrative, in focusing on concepts of the “beast within,” highlighted the tenuous, divided nature of the late-Victorian “civilised” self. These gentleman/beast themes were also explored in Chapter Four (“Educated Men and Wild Beasts”: Jack the Ripper, Medical Science and the Divided Gentleman in Late-Victorian Culture) which detailed how these dualistic anxieties ultimately coalesced in representations of the Ripper as

a divided doctor. It examined the multifaceted and problematic status of doctors in Victorian culture, analysing the way in which the figure of the doctor acted as both a symbol of Victorian progress and advancement and as a source of suspicion and disquiet, reflecting prevailing cultural anxieties in relation to medical research, dissection and experimentation.

Chapter Five (“The Victim’s Victim”: Jack the Ripper, Self, Other and the Female Body) further explored these medical concerns, focusing upon the pathologisation of the “transgressive” female body in Victorian culture. It detailed how concepts of female corruption, disease, otherness and threat played a significant role within the Ripper narrative, reflecting and advancing wider medical, scientific and social issues relating to identity, behaviour and the body. Chapter Six (“After the Same Stile”: Jack the Ripper, the Divided Self and the Alien Other in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Popular Culture), meanwhile, detailed how these “self” and “other” themes were disseminated via the media of the day. Highlighting the key role that the British press played in creating and perpetuating the Ripper narrative, it proposed that media coverage of the murders consciously evoked a number of literary and cultural modes and traditions (Gothic fiction, Sensation literature, penny dreadfuls). As such, it documented how the Ripper reportage functioned as an important intersection between “high” and “low” culture in late-Victorian culture, couching important psychological, sociological, scientific and intellectual concerns within populist and easily recognisable forms and formats. Finally, Chapter Seven (“Unconscious Mania”: Jack the Ripper, the Subliminal Mind and the Unconscious Self) focused on representations of the Ripper as an “unconscious murderer” and argued that these concepts of the unconscious mind were crucial to the Ripper discourse, underpinning all those self/other anxieties documented throughout the thesis.

This correlation between nineteenth-century theories of the unconscious and the Ripper discourse represents a fertile area for further discussion and study. As noted in the introduction, it is a topic that has been largely overlooked by previous researchers of the Whitechapel murders, who have tended to downplay or sideline these psychological considerations.² Since the publication of Ellenberger’s ground-breaking *The Discovery of the Unconscious* in 1970,

² Andrew Smith’s article “The Whitechapel Murders and the Medical Gaze,” is a notable exception, with its suggestion that “what is truly horrific is that [Jack the Ripper] represents a kind of male collective unconscious.” Smith, “The Whitechapel Murders and the Medical Gaze,” in *Media, Culture, History*, 116. Even though Smith does not really elaborate on these concepts of the unconscious, this quote influenced my own work, leading me to explore the connections between Victorian masculinity and the unconscious mind in greater detail.

however, there has been a heightened academic interest in examining pre-Freudian conceptions of the unconscious, with writers like Hayward, Eigen, Harrington, Winter and Hacking exploring at length the connections between such issues as mesmerism, spiritualism, neurology and psychiatry in nineteenth-century society. In highlighting the way in which the Ripper discourse intersected with these nineteenth-century psychological and psychiatric developments, this thesis therefore situates the Ripper narrative within a larger body of recent academic work whilst offering several potential new avenues for further research.

With its anxieties of the unconscious mind and automatic behaviour, the Ripper discourse was therefore reflective of the fact that, by the late nineteenth-century, new ways of perceiving the mind were coming into play, disputing and dispelling long-standing conceptions of behaviour, thought and “unified” identity. Whilst these ideas of the unconscious self and multiplex personality were a source of fascination to the likes of Myers, Jackson and Hodgson, to larger English society they were often a cause for concern and disquiet. Calling into question Victorian beliefs in purposeful action, moral willpower, stability and self-control, these concepts of unconscious behaviour instead evoked a sense of fracture, duality and disorder. They seemed to portend some kind of imminent psychological and sociological breakdown within English life, an *unravelling* of the self and, by extension, society itself. It was precisely this sense of fragmentation and collapse that was highlighted by the Ripper crimes. The Whitechapel murders seemed to confirm that these notions of the divided self and the “other within” were not simply abstract ideas but could instead have a palpable bearing on the future direction of English life. In this way, the Ripper crimes pointed towards the destructive, deleterious potential of the uncontrolled, unbound self in British society.

These concepts of mental and social fracture and collapse help explain why early commentators were so insistent on the fact that “no Englishman” could have committed the murders. To admit otherwise would be to acknowledge that the seemingly orderly, tightly-controlled Victorian world around them, if it ever existed, was disintegrating. Blaming the murders on some external foreign other was therefore easier than facing the alternate truth that “civilised” English society could produce its own “monsters,” and that such monsters could arise out of the psychological and sociological conditions of modern British life itself. In *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, Kearney observes that the monsters that we create out of our own unconscious fears and neuroses are “tokens of fracture within the human psyche.” He writes of the way in which:

They speak to us of how we are split between conscious and unconscious, familiar and unfamiliar, same and other. And they remind us that we have a choice: (a) to try to understand and accommodate our experience of strangeness, or (b) to repudiate it by projecting it exclusively onto outsiders.³

This was certainly the case within the Ripper narrative, with the media and the public projecting onto the unknown killer all those hidden fears and anxieties that they were seemingly unable to confront in themselves. This thesis has therefore looked at the way in which these representations of the Ripper essentially held a mirror up to English society, refracting and exposing those deep-rooted psychological and social anxieties that lay beneath the surface of late-Victorian life.

In exploring these themes, I have placed necessary limits on the parameters of my research. As stated in the introduction, I had no real interest in theorising about who the Ripper potentially was, with my interest in this only extending as far as examining what nineteenth-century speculation about his identity could tell us about the culture and society of the day. Moreover, there are other facets of the Ripper story, and of late-Victorian life in general, that warrant more attention than I could provide here. Important aspects of Victorian culture and society – economic and class considerations, the increased urbanisation of English society, legal and political issues – are only explored in this thesis in relation to the direct role they played in the Ripper case. Whilst I feel that any further elucidation on such matters is beyond the scope of this thesis (and would ultimately detract from the overall focus of my argument) these topics certainly warrant future investigation, having the potential to further our understanding of both the crimes themselves and Victorian society in general. Untangling all the complexities behind such pivotal issues as degeneration, Victorian representations of masculinity and femininity, and nineteenth-century attitudes towards medical science has been a similarly daunting task. Whilst my work strongly engages with these issues, and uses them to illuminate the Ripper narrative itself, these topics similarly require full-length treatments of their own. What this thesis has instead focused on is the way in which these concerns were incorporated into the Ripper discourse, and the role they played in shaping popular perceptions of the crimes.

This thesis is intended as a contribution to the intellectual and cultural history of the late-Victorian period. It has sought to further popular and academic understanding of the Ripper case, and, more significantly, to provide a vital insight into English life and culture within this

³ Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 4.

period. It has used the example of the Whitechapel murders to trace and analyse late-Victorian conceptions of the mind and the self, whilst examining the relationship between English self-identity and civic and national identity. By focusing upon the fundamental tension between “self” and “other” that increasingly permeated English life during this era, it has argued that the Ripper narrative represented a pivotal moment in late nineteenth-century British history, essentially marking the point at which Victorian optimism began to falter and fragment. It has proposed that the Ripper crimes instead evoked and embodied those secret fears and neuroses that lay beneath the surface of everyday consciousness. In tracing the evolution of public and media representations of the murderer – from “alien other” to “divided self” – this thesis has suggested that the Ripper discourse provides a profound insight into these psychological and sociological insecurities. Consequently, it has argued that, in bringing these latent, inchoate anxieties of mental and social dislocation and disorder to the foreground of English culture, the Whitechapel murders both reflected and contributed to late-Victorian conceptions of identity, selfhood and thought.

APPENDIX

Chronology of the Whitechapel Murders and Related Events

1888:

17 January: The first issue of London's halfpenny evening paper *The Star* is published. Billing itself as "a people's newspaper...reflecting the views of the people," the paper would go on to play a major role in disseminating the Ripper story.⁴

3 April: Emma Elizabeth Smith, 45, of Spitalfields, is attacked by a group of men and raped with a blunt instrument. She dies the next day, seemingly of peritonitis. Although there is little in common with her assault and the later Ripper crimes, she is listed in the official police files as a possible early victim of the Whitechapel murderer.

4 August: Richard Mansfield's stage version of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* opens at London's Lyceum Theatre.

7 August: Martha Tabram, 39, a Spitalfields sex worker, is found murdered on a stairway in George Yard, Whitechapel, having been stabbed some 39 times, possibly by two weapons. Described by coroner Dr Timothy Killeen as "one of the most brutal [crimes] that had occurred for some years," Tabram's death is often linked to the Ripper murders.⁵

31 August: The first "official" Ripper victim, Mary Ann "Polly" Nichols, 43, is found murdered in the early hours of the morning in Buck's Row, Whitechapel. Her throat had been cut, and there were injuries to her abdomen – both of which would become key signatures of the Ripper murders.

5 September: The mysterious "Leather Apron" is identified as a suspect by *The Star*.

⁴ Neil R. Storey, *A Grim Almanac of Jack the Ripper's London 1870 – 1900* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2004), 264.

⁵ "Martha Tabram Inquest," HO/144/220 [microfiche]. Archived at National Archives of London.

8 September: Annie Chapman, 47, is found murdered in the back yard of 29 Hanbury Street, Spitalfields. Her body had been horribly mutilated, with the abdomen laid open, and her intestines placed on the ground above her right shoulder. Her uterus and parts of her vagina and bladder had been removed and taken by the killer. Her death was the result of strangulation and asphyxia.

10 September: The “Whitechapel Vigilance Committee” forms in response to the murders.

15 September: Publication of the article “A Riot Against the Jews” in the *East London Observer*, detailing the heightened state of anti-Jewish feeling in the wake of the Chapman murder.

19 September: Dr George Bagster Phillips gives testimony in the Chapman inquest, suggesting that the killer possessed expert medical and anatomical knowledge.

26 September: The Chapman inquest proceedings conclude on this day, with coroner Wynne Baxter detailing his theory of the murderer as organ procurer. Baxter and Phillips’s findings are widely reported in the press, firmly establishing the theory of the Ripper as medical professional in the public imagination.

27 September: The “Dear Boss” letter, responsible for coinage of the “Jack the Ripper” *nom de plume*, is received by the Central News Agency. This letter, later reproduced and published in newspapers around the world, sparked off a deluge of similar correspondence. The letter reads in full:

Dear Boss, I keep on hearing the police have caught me but they wont [sic] fix me just yet. I have laughed when they look so clever and talk about being on the right [original emphasis] track. That joke about Leather Apron gave me real fits. I am down on whores and I shant [sic] quit ripping them till I do get buckled. Grand work the last job was. I gave the lady no time to squeal. How can they catch me now. I love my work and want to start again. You will soon hear of me with my funny little games. I saved some of the proper red [original emphasis] stuff in a ginger beer bottle over the last job to write with but it went thick like glue and I cant use it. Red ink is fit enough I hope ha. ha [original emphasis]. The next job I do I shall clip the ladys [sic] ears off and send to the police officers just for jolly wouldn't you. Keep this letter back till I do a bit more work, then give it out straight. My knife's so nice and sharp I want to get to work right away if I get a chance. Good Luck.

Yours truly, Jack the Ripper

Dont mind me giving the trade name

PS Wasnt [sic] good enough to post this before I got all the red ink off my hands curse it No luck yet. They say I'm a doctor now. ha ha [original emphasis].⁶

30 September: The “double event.” At one in the morning, the body of Elizabeth Stride, 44, was discovered in Dutfield’s Yard, Whitechapel, by Louis Diemschutz, steward of the International Workingmen’s Educational Club. Her throat had been cut, and it’s possible that the killer had been disturbed by Diemschutz’s entrance. A witness, Israel Schwartz, had apparently seen Stride in an altercation with a man in Berner Street, approximately 15 minutes before her body was discovered. A mere 45 minutes after the discovery of Stride, the body of Catherine Eddowes, 46, is found by PC Edward Watkins in Mitre Square, Whitechapel. Her throat had similarly been cut, her face mutilated and her abdomen exposed, with her intestines placed over her right shoulder. The cause of death was hemorrhage from the left carotid artery. Her left kidney and a section of womb were apparently taken by the killer. At 2.55am, PC Alfred Long discovered a blood-stained piece of Eddowes’s apron in the entry to a staircase in Goulston Street, Whitechapel. A chalked message, “The Juwes are The men that Will not be Blamed for nothing,” [sic] was written in white chalk on the edge of the doorway.

16 October: George Lusk, chairman of the Whitechapel Vigilance committee, receives a parcel containing a letter, addressed “From Hell,” and half a human kidney. Initially believing it to be a hoax or medical school prank, Lusk took the kidney to Dr Thomas Horrocks Openshaw, Curator of the Pathological Museum at the London Hospital, who confirmed that it was half of a left human kidney. However, he couldn’t definitively state whether it was Catherine Eddowes’s missing kidney, and debate about the provenance of the organ continues today.⁷

9 November: Thomas Bowyer, collecting rent for landlord John McCarthy at 13 Miller’s Court, Whitechapel, discovers the horrifically mutilated body of tenant Mary Jane Kelly, the final “official” Ripper victim. Kelly, 25, was the youngest Ripper victim, and the only woman to be killed indoors (in her own lodgings). Her remains are examined by both Dr Thomas Bond and Dr Phillips and their post-mortems make for harrowing reading. Kelly’s throat had been cut down to the spinal column, and her face had been mutilated beyond recognition. Her breasts,

⁶ “Dear Boss,” Mepo 3/142, National Archives.

⁷ Jakubowski and Braund, “Just the Facts,” *Mammoth Book of Jack the Ripper*, 46-8.

uterus, kidneys, liver, intestines and spleen had been removed and were placed around her body. Her heart was missing. Bond would subsequently write a separate report on all the murders wherein he suggested that:

All five murders were no doubt committed by the same hand...The mutilations in each case excepting the Berner's [sic] Street one were all of the same character and showed clearly that in all the murders the object was mutilation...In each case the mutilation was inflicted by a person who had no scientific nor anatomical knowledge. In my opinion he does not even possess the technical knowledge of a butcher or horse slaughterer or any person accustomed to cut up dead animals.⁸

Mary's murder essentially marked the end of the crimes. In the years following Kelly's death, the murders of several women (including Alice McKenzie in July 1889 and Frances Coles in February 1891) would be linked to the Ripper case. However, in both cases, Dr Phillips (and key members of the police) disputed these connections, and there has never been any truly compelling evidence to link these murders with the earlier crimes. The police files on the Whitechapel murders were officially closed in 1892.

⁸ "Reply by Bond to Anderson on Re-Examination of Bodies on Anderson's Suggestion. 10 November 1888." Royal London Hospital Archives.

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