

JACK THE RIPPER'S "UNFORTUNATE" VICTIMS: PROSTITUTION AS  
VAGRANCY, 1888-1900

by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE FALLEN WOMAN .....	3
1.2 RIPPERATURE AND RIPPEROLOGY .....	11
1.3 NEW JOURNALISM AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE PRESS....	16
1.4 METHODOLOGY .....	21
CHAPTER 2 “HER POVERTY DRIVING HER TO A SHIFTY MAINTENANCE”: THE VICTIMS OF JACK THE RIPPER AND SEX WORK AS CASUAL LABOUR IN LATE –VICTORIAN LONDON.....	25
2.1 NEW JOURNALISM AND THE DEATH OF THE FALLEN WOMAN.....	27
2.2 “THE LOSS OF TRADE”: PETITIONS.....	30
2.3 “SHE HAD PROBABLY HAD SOME DRINK”: EMMA SMITH AND MARTHA TABRAM .....	34
2.4 “THE STAMP OF THE LAMBETH WORKHOUSE”: MARY ANN NICHOLLS.....	38
2.5 “GET SOME MONEY FROM SOMEWHERE”: ANNIE CHAPMAN .....	42
2.6 “THE POVERTY OF THE DEAD WOMAN”: ELIZABETH STRIDE AND CATHERINE EDDWOES .....	46
2.7 “TO KEEP HERSELF FROM STARVATION”: MARY KELLY .....	51
2.8 CONCLUSION.....	55
CHAPTER 3 GUILTY OF “NOMAD VICIES”: VAGRANTS AS RIPPER SUSPECTS .....	56
3.1 “NOMAD VICIES”: VAGRANTS, TRAMPS, LODGERS .....	59
3.2 “BRITONS FIRST”: FOREIGN RIPPER SUSPECTS .....	65

3.3 “NO ENGLISHMAN DID IT”: LEATHER APRON AND JEWISH SUSPECTS .....	67
3.4 LASCARS, MALAYS AND IMPERIAL SAILORS .....	72
3.5 “I’M LIVING ANYWHERE”: IMPERIAL TRAVELLERS .....	78
3.6 “I AM SUSPECT, THOU ART SUSPECT”: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE INVESTIGATIONS .....	84
3.7 CONCLUSION.....	86
CHAPTER 4 “A CONNECTION NOT TO BE WONDERED AT”: PROSTITUTES AND PAUPERS AS THE VICTORIAN VAGRANT CLASS .....	88
4.1 “UNRULY, IMMORAL, AND OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR”: VAGRANCY IN THE STREETS.....	89
4.2 “THIEVES’ OR PROSTITUTES’ KITCHENS”: VAGRANCY AND THE COMMON LODGING HOUSE .....	98
4.3 “TOWZLED, DIRTY, VILLAINOUS”: VAGRANTS AND THE CASUAL WARD .....	111
4.4 CONCLUSION.....	120
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION.....	122
APPENDIX A.....	134
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	135

## ABSTRACT

In the wake of the series of 1888 murders attributed to the unknown killer called “Jack the Ripper,” Victorian cultural authorities, and newspapers in particular, spent a great deal of time meditating on the social problem posed by the class of low-end, urban prostitutes, from which the Ripper’s victims were drawn. An analysis of the metropolitan press coverage of the Ripper murders shows that journalists treated prostitution as a class problem as much as a moral evil. Newspapers identified the Ripper victims as members of the same class of vagrants from which Scotland Yard drew the majority of their Ripper suspects. Victorians’ conflation of this group of prostitutes with the men who also engaged in unconventional and unreliable forms of work suggests that Victorian prostitution might be reconceptualised not only as a gendered and pathologized form of sexual deviance, but also as a partially normalized form of labour. This thesis therefore analyses the Victorian media furor surrounding the Ripper murders as a means of assessing the importance of class and labour in studies of nineteenth-century prostitution.

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## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The prostitute does not behave like any other commodity; she occupies a unique place, at the centre of an extraordinary and nefarious economic system. She is able to represent all the terms within capitalist production; she is the human labour, the object of exchange, and the seller at once. She stands as worker, commodity, and capitalist and blurs the categories of bourgeois economics in the same way that she tests the boundaries of bourgeois morality.<sup>1</sup>

As Lynda Nead observes, the nineteenth-century prostitute was not only a gendered figure, she was also a casual labourer. The realities of class and labour that Nead's comment encapsulates are often less fully recognised among subsequent Victorian gender historians who draw upon Nead's work. Historians like Timothy Gilfoyle argue that scholars' interest in cultural representations of sex work over the practical realities and experiences of prostitutes in the past is tied to a perceived paucity of primary sources that give the historian access to such realities.<sup>2</sup> This thesis treats the "Jack the Ripper" murders as a historiographical case study in order to demonstrate that the Victorian capitalist market underpinned late-nineteenth-century prostitution and shaped the way prostitutes and their class peers perceived sex work as precisely that – a form of work. Furthermore, this thesis suggests that the historian can, using the products of Victorian print culture, unearth some of the economic realities of prostitution.

In the wake of the series of 1888 murders attributed to an unknown killer called "Jack the Ripper," Victorian cultural authorities, and newspapers in particular, spent a great deal of time meditating on the social problem posed by the class of low-end, urban prostitutes from which the Ripper's victims were drawn. An analysis of the metropolitan

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<sup>1</sup> Lynda Nead, *Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain* (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 99.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy J. Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in History: From Parables of Pornography to Metaphors of Modernity," *American Historical Review* 104:1 (February 1999): 137-138.

press coverage of the Ripper murders shows that journalists treated prostitution as a class problem as much as a moral evil. Newspapers identified the Ripper victims as members of the same class of vagrants from which Scotland Yard drew the majority of their Ripper suspects. Victorians' conflation of this group of prostitutes with the men who also engaged in unconventional and irregular forms of work suggests that Victorian prostitution might be reconceptualised not only as a gendered and pathologized form of sexual deviance, but also as a partially normalized form of labour. This thesis therefore analyses the Victorian media furor surrounding the Ripper murders as a means of assessing the importance of class and labour in studies of nineteenth-century prostitution.

This project engages with two areas of historical scholarship: the history of Victorian prostitution, and Ripper studies. Within both fields of inquiry, the prostitute emerges as the only gendered figure in the exchange of cash for sexual services; the client (or killer) remains largely anonymous.<sup>3</sup> My examination of the media's treatment of the Ripper murders reveals that, on the contrary, press representations of these women's clients, in the form of the Jack the Ripper suspects, had gendered elements. As unemployed and transient men, Ripper suspects deviated from contemporary standards of masculine behaviour. Furthermore, women who engaged in sex work did so for practical and financial reasons that were certainly shaped by their gender identities, but are not reducible to these identities. The Ripper victims and the group of low-end prostitutes from which they were drawn, therefore, should be reconsidered as members of the

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<sup>3</sup> Frances Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution: a study of Victorian Prostitutes in York* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 117-118. Julia Laite, *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens: Commercial Sex in London, 1885-1960* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 43-44.

working poor, taking part in a “makeshift” economy of casual labour.<sup>4</sup> These socioeconomic realities have, however, been de-emphasized by gender historians, in favour of an over-emphasis on the Victorian cultural myth of the fallen woman.

### **1.1 THE HISTORY AND HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE FALLEN WOMAN**

Since the advent of women’s history in the 1970s and 1980s, studies of prostitution in Victorian Britain have oriented themselves in relation to two significant historical themes. First, historians consider the impulse of Victorian cultural authorities to describe the prostitute as a “fallen woman.” Following from this, scholars also examine the implications of the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866 and 1869, as the key pieces of legislation to formalize the prostitute’s “fallen” status by codifying her moral and medical descent from the respectable norm.

Bourgeois tendencies to depict the sex worker in terms of the morality-laden concept of fallenness were consolidated within the medical, legal and evangelical literature of the 1840s. It is this body of literature that several twentieth-century historians draw upon in their analysis of the Victorian prostitute as a morally and sexually symbolic figure. Around mid-century, low-end prostitution became increasingly visible in the urbanizing towns and cities of Britain.<sup>5</sup> In response to this new public presence, physicians and religious commentators attempted to define and quantify the nature of sex work, using the investigative tools of the period, including data collection and medical research.<sup>6</sup> Authors confirmed the fallen status of the prostitute by studying her affliction

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<sup>4</sup> Catherine Lee, *Policing Prostitution, 1856-1886: Deviance, Surveillance and Morality* (London and Vermont: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 19.

<sup>5</sup> Nina Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body: Rewriting Prostitution in Victorian Britain* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2011), 2. Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 101.

<sup>6</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body*, 22.



with venereal disease. While “[m]arriage and motherhood are ... defined as both social and medical norms” for the average Victorian woman, prostitution was medically pathologized.<sup>7</sup> William Tait, chief surgeon at the Edinburgh Lock Hospital, is perhaps the most influential mid-century physician to take on prostitution as a medical problem. His study, *Magdalenism: An Inquiry into the Extent, Causes and Consequences of Prostitution in Edinburgh* (1840) became, as Nead puts it, “a classic reference for subsequent discussions of prostitution.”<sup>8</sup> Tait’s thesis centers on the degraded state of the prostitute as a natural principle of biology and physics, arguing that “[t]he general law in regard to them appears to be, like that of gravitation, always pressing downwards ... till they sink into the lowest state of degradation into which it is possible for a human being to fall.”<sup>9</sup> Drawing upon a compelling combination of statistical data and religious rhetoric, Tait, according to Nead, “provided a powerful representation of the tragic life and death of the contemporary prostitute.”<sup>10</sup>

Parliament’s introduction of the Contagious Diseases Acts in the 1860s codified the idea that the prostitute was biologically degraded by virtue of her fallenness. In the 1850s and 1860s, those in favor of regulating prostitution harnessed associations of sex work with a “downward spiral” into ill health to compel legislators to mandate the state control of prostitution. The first Contagious Diseases Act, passed in 1864, was Parliament’s response, after Britain’s humiliating defeat in the Crimea, to concerns raised that the nation’s military clout had been compromised by the spread of venereal disease through the armed forces. Prostitutes were identified as the sources and vectors of

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<sup>7</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 26.

<sup>8</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 145-146.

<sup>9</sup> Tait quoted in Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 146.

<sup>10</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 145-146.

venereal disease. The 1864 Act, as well as those that followed in 1866 and 1869, provided for the regulation and medical surveillance of prostitutes operating around key military depots and ports in Britain and Ireland.<sup>11</sup>

Social and medical reformers prompted this formal codification of the prostitute as physically “fallen.” They believed that the existing means of addressing prostitution, both legally and medically, were inadequate, premised as they were on a fundamental misunderstanding of prostitution’s causes and effects.<sup>12</sup> William Acton, venereologist and frequent contributor to the *Lancet*, published his own study, *Prostitution Considered* (1857), in order to clarify the true nature of prostitution, and to advocate regulation.<sup>13</sup> Revised and reprinted in 1870, his work became one of the seminal texts on prostitution for the later Victorian period. *Prostitution Considered* countered the established medical opinion that the prostitute, once fallen, descended irretrievably into an altered moral (and representational) state. On the contrary, according to Acton, “the harlot’s progress as often tends upwards as downwards.”<sup>14</sup> *Prostitution Considered* suggests that many women took up sex work only temporarily. Once their situation improved, either through marriage or regular employment, they inevitably returned to the regular workforce, thereby contaminating the health and moral wellbeing of the rest of the working population.<sup>15</sup> In spite of Acton’s rejection of the fallen woman stereotype, *Prostitution Considered* reinforced key elements of the literature on prostitution published before

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<sup>11</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, class and the state* (Cambridge, London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 1-2, 74.

<sup>12</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body*, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> William Acton, *Prostitution Considered in its Moral, Social & Sanitary Aspects, in London and other Large Cities. With Proposals for the Mitigation and Prevention of its Attendant Evils* (London: John Churchill, 1857), v-vi.

<sup>15</sup> Acton, *Prostitution Considered*, 73.

1857.<sup>16</sup> In arguing for the isolation of prostitutes from the general population through medical surveillance, Acton and the Contagious Diseases Acts promoted “[t]he idea that prostitution was a physical and psychological state which set the prostitute apart from respectable women.”<sup>17</sup> Though Acton’s work argued against the “downward progress” of the prostitute, *Prostitution Considered* continued to identify prostitutes as moral and sexual “others” in much the same way as the ideology of the fallen woman. Twentieth-century gender historians pick up on the forms of sexual “othering” that took place in these texts on prostitution.

Following the passage of the 1869 Act, feminists and social reformers initiated a national movement to campaign for the repeal of regulated prostitution. The Ladies National Association, led by Josephine Butler, published a large body of literature on the subject of repeal.<sup>18</sup> In spite of their opposing political goals, Butler’s rhetoric in favour of repeal was similar to Acton’s in favour of regulation. Both Acton and Butler emphasized the prostitute’s morally degraded position and her descent relative to the rest of British society. Butler challenged the sexual double standard implicit within the Contagious Diseases Acts, predicated as they were on the surveillance of prostitutes but not their sexual partners. She argued that, far from being medically culpable in the spread of venereal disease, the prostitute was actually victimised by her customers.<sup>19</sup> As an alternative to this double standard, feminists like Butler “argued for a single code of sexual morality,” modeled on the sexual continence and innocence of the respectable

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<sup>16</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body*, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 101.

<sup>18</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 8

<sup>19</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 92.

Victorian woman. In this way, “feminist campaigners joined the hegemonic discourses of medicine and organized religion in promoting the chaste, virtuous woman as a sign of female superiority.”<sup>20</sup> According to the reasoning of the Ladies National Association, prostitutes “fell” short of the ideal of the respectable women who managed to maintain their sexual purity and femininity. Like Acton, the Ladies National Association, and Butler in particular, shaped subsequent discussions of prostitution in the Victorian period as well as among twentieth-century scholars.<sup>21</sup>

Many historians have concerned themselves with these middle-class depictions of the “social evil” of prostitution. They subsequently engage with nineteenth-century sex work as a series of competing representational frameworks, rather than a tangible reality for a certain class of working women. Lynda Nead is one of the earliest and most foundational scholars of English prostitution and visual culture. In seeking to “uncover some of the ways in which visual culture contributed to the processes of bourgeois hegemony,” Nead detects elements of this discourse on prostitution in representations of the fallen woman in Victorian high art.<sup>22</sup> She takes the literature of the 1840s and 1850s on prostitution by authors such as Tait and Acton as context for a visual analysis of works shown at the Royal Academy.<sup>23</sup>

Frances Finnegan and Judith Walkowitz take opposing positions regarding Acton’s contention that the prostitute was not permanently fallen, and often returned to the fold of “respectable” working-class women. Finnegan’s study of applications for poor relief and poor law records in Victorian York establishes a strong causal connection

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<sup>20</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 22.

<sup>21</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body*, 71.

<sup>22</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 168.

between prostitution and poverty, ill health and early death.<sup>24</sup> She accordingly argues that the cultural myth of the fallen woman has some basis in reality: “we should ask why the popular image of the prostitute as a demoralized creature treading the downward path ending in drunkenness, destitution and disease, was one which was so widely held, if it was untrue.”<sup>25</sup> Finnegan’s scrupulous engagement with quantitative data derived from the York records uses tangible findings to corroborate bourgeois representations of the fallen woman.

Walkowitz’s *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (1980) challenges, according to Amanda Anderson, “the victimological approach to women’s history, the view that takes prominent myths of female helplessness or vulnerability as directly representative of women’s place in Victorian society.”<sup>26</sup> Once again, Walkowitz takes the Contagious Diseases Acts as her starting point, concurring with Acton’s assessment that “prostitution was a transitional stage through which many women passed before being re-assimilated into the ranks of the respectable poor and working classes.”<sup>27</sup> Her analysis of the documents left behind by enforcers of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Plymouth and Southampton emphasizes, according to her feminist agenda, the agency of Victorian women who engaged in sex work. In Walkowitz’s reading, prostitutes emerge in the historical record “as important historical actors, as women who made their own history; albeit under very restrictive conditions. They were not rootless social outcasts but poor working women trying to survive in towns that offered them few employment

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<sup>24</sup> Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, 8.

<sup>26</sup> Amanda Anderson, “Review of *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late Victorian London*, by Judith R. Walkowitz,” *Victorian Studies* 36:4 (1993): 474.

<sup>27</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 34.

opportunities.”<sup>28</sup> While Walkowitz’s conclusion about prostitutes as working women is sound, her argument is supported by the wrong legislation. Her thesis, as we will see, would have been better served if she had drawn upon the nineteenth-century vagrancy legislation that actually treated sex workers as labourers.

More recent scholars such as Nina Atwood and Catherine Lee have attempted to add nuance to the arguments put forward in these seminal histories of Victorian prostitution from the 1970s and 1980s. Atwood’s analysis of nineteenth-century conceptions of the prostitute revises the work of previous scholars who accept the cultural dominance of the ideology of the fallen woman. She engages in a close textual analysis of works by authors such as Acton and Butler in order to demonstrate that “Victorians actively engaged with the mythological narrative, sometimes reproducing, but also altering or challenging it.”<sup>29</sup> Lee examines the implementation of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Kent. She argues that Victorian and modern historiographical debates about the fallen woman posit an “over-simplified dichotomy, in which prostitution was seen either as the inevitable precursor to dissipation, illness and early death on the one hand, or as a casual and temporary occupation that was followed by rehabilitation... on the other.”<sup>30</sup> These revisionist histories nevertheless continue to circle around the subjects already well established in the study of Victorian prostitution: the mythology of the fallen woman and its official expression in the Contagious Diseases Acts.

The preoccupation of historians with the question of fallenness is the result of their treating prostitution as a gendered construct more than a practical form of work.

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<sup>28</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 34.

Study of the Contagious Diseases Acts, lends itself to analysis of how this legislation presents female sexuality as a dangerous entity to be strictly controlled, while simultaneously permitting men sexual access to women.<sup>31</sup> And yet, the vast majority of nineteenth-century prostitutes did not, in fact, fall under the jurisdiction of the Contagious Diseases Acts at all. The Acts were only enforced in certain districts with key military installations. When the first Act was introduced in 1864, it applied only to eleven English and Irish districts.<sup>32</sup> The replacement Acts of 1866 and 1869 expanded the jurisdictional territories of this largely military legislation only marginally, and brought the total of subjected districts up to 15, with two in Ireland (The Curragh, Cork and Queenstown) and 13 in Britain: Aldershot, Canterbury, Chatham, Gravesend and Sheerness, Colchester, Dover, Maidstone, Plymouth and Devonport, Portsmouth, Shorncliffe, Southampton, Winchester, Windsor, Woolwich.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, the Acts were only in place in these 15 districts between 1864 and 1886. This means that this legislation, so central in twentieth-century scholarship, applied only in select areas for a roughly twenty year span over the course of the century.<sup>34</sup> The restricted application of the Contagious Diseases Acts in Victorian Britain suggests that the ideology of the fallen woman has attracted disproportionate attention from historians. In fact, the vast majority of prostitutes were dealt with far more frequently under the rubric of vagrancy.

In the nineteenth century, prostitutes and chronically unemployed men and women were controlled under the same legislation. Well before the introduction of the

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<sup>31</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute's Body*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 5-7

<sup>33</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on the Contagious Diseases Acts; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix* (London: House of Commons, 1882), g2.

<sup>34</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 5.

Contagious Diseases Acts, the 1824 Vagrancy Act was used as a kind of catchall legislation to prosecute “all manner of unruly, immoral and offensive behaviour.”<sup>35</sup> Turning from cultural representation to the realities of public policy, we see that prostitution was defined primarily in terms of its practitioners’ socioeconomic status, not sexual deviance. In the eyes of both the law and the sex workers who fell under its jurisdiction, prostitution was not an exclusively gendered experience; the condition of vagrancy was something prostitutes shared with men of their class. Prostitution can therefore be viewed also as one part of the larger experience of the working poor. The prominence of vagrancy legislation in the lives of sex workers also indicates that Victorian prostitution was a practice in which questions of class and labour are deeply implicated. The experiences of the Ripper victims, both inside the criminal court as legally-defined vagrants and on the streets of London as members of the lowest class of working poor, put a real face on these legislative abstractions.

## **1.2 RIPPERATURE AND RIPPEROLOGY**

Between August and November 1888, four months that came retrospectively to be known as the “Autumn of Terror,” a number of working-class women were murdered and mutilated in the parishes of Whitechapel and Spitalfields, London.<sup>36</sup> Victorians and twentieth-century scholars alike believed the series of unsolved murders to be the work of the same unknown man, nicknamed “Jack the Ripper” by the London press in the autumn of 1888.<sup>37</sup> Mary Ann Nicholls, the first of the canonical five Ripper victims, was killed early in the morning of 31 August. Police discovered Annie Chapman’s mutilated corpse

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<sup>35</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 6.

<sup>36</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Perry L. Curtis, *Jack the Ripper and the London Press* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 21.



shortly thereafter on September 8. Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes were killed a short distance from one another, on the night of 30 September. Mary Jane Kelly was killed on 9 November.<sup>38</sup> Beyond these canonical five victims, some theorists consider Emma Smith (killed 3 April 1888) and Martha Tabram (killed 6 August 1888) to be the first two women killed by Jack the Ripper.<sup>39</sup>

The figure of Jack the Ripper has been studied from myriad perspectives. Those who wish to examine the division of East and West London along class lines argue that the middle classes regarded the 1888 Spitalfields murders as harbingers of working-class revolt.<sup>40</sup> Other historians interested in issues of gender inequality in the past, treat the Ripper murders as a profoundly misogynistic form of violence against the most vulnerable of women.<sup>41</sup> Rarely does Ripper scholarship engage simultaneously with the questions of class and gender brought to the forefront of Victorians' minds in the autumn of 1888.

Ripper scholars have tended to treat the serial murders of 1888 as single-sex crimes. Scholars either engage with the killings as misogynistic crimes committed *against* prostitutes, the most vulnerable of women, or as acts of violence committed *by*

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<sup>38</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 192-193.

<sup>39</sup> Stewart P. Evans and Keith Skinner, eds., *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook: An Illustrated Encyclopedia* (London: Robinson, 2000), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Christopher Frayling "The house that Jack built," in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, eds. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 19-24. Robert F. Haggard, "Jack the Ripper as the threat of outcast London," in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, eds. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 197-214.

<sup>41</sup> Judith Walkowitz, "Narratives of sexual danger," in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, eds. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 179-196. Fiona Rule, *The Worst Street in London* (Hersham, Surrey: Ian Allan, 2008), 98-100.

one man, who is studied in isolation from his victims. Perry L. Curtis describes the phenomenon as “an almost complete failure of communication” between the “male ‘essentialists’” who investigate the identity of Jack the Ripper and the “‘theorized’ feminists” who situate the Ripper murders within a larger context of patriarchal violence.<sup>42</sup>

Ripperologists, authors of the genre of popular history known as “Ripperature,” are rather ahistorically concerned with the mechanics of how the murders were committed. Though they wish to discover the identity of the perpetrator, they are not necessarily interested in the Ripper’s gender identity as a Victorian man.<sup>43</sup> Leonard Matters pioneered the field of Ripperology with his monograph, *The Mystery of Jack the Ripper* (1929), which identifies an English doctor named Stanley as the murderer.<sup>44</sup> Many Ripperologists have also taken an interest in other upper-class Ripper “candidates,” such as Prince Albert, Lewis Carroll, and Dr. Thomas Neill Cream. Mystery writer Patricia Cornwell, for example, has recently presented her case for the candidacy of avant-garde artist Walter Sickert as Jack the Ripper.<sup>45</sup> My research shows that poor and working-class men significantly outnumbered these celebrity suspects in the Scotland Yard police files.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Elyssa Danae Warkentin, “Cherchez les Femmes: Textual Representations of Jack the Ripper’s Victims, 1888-1914,” (PhD diss., University of Alberta, 2007), 4.

<sup>45</sup> Patricia Daniels Cornwell, *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed* (New York: Putnam, 2002).

<sup>46</sup> Casebook.org, one of the more reputable websites devoted to the Ripper mystery, keeps a running list of these famous Ripper suspects. Stephen P. Ryder, “Jack the Ripper Suspects,” accessed 18 May 2015, <http://www.casebook.org/suspects/>.

Matters' combination of historical data with fanciful conjecture has come to characterise the rhetorical style of "Ripperology." Such intellectual gymnastics are often necessary, as enthusiasts aim to solve a crime decades after the fact, utilising the documentary remains of an unsuccessful police investigation.<sup>47</sup> According to Curtis, "the results of this exercise have brought us no closer to the real culprit than did the exertions of Scotland Yard in 1888. Of course, the fact that Jack's identity remains a mystery explains much of his appeal today."<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Kate Lonsdale suggests that the Ripper's anonymity has paradoxically contributed to his twentieth-century notoriety. Lonsdale observes that anonymity "has allowed Jack the Ripper, whoever he was, to become famous... while his victims, the most embodied participants in this history, are virtually unknown, stage props for the performance of this discursive role."<sup>49</sup> Ripperologists are likewise less concerned with the social conditions underpinning the lives of the Ripper's victims, than they are with solving the mystery of their deaths.

With the rise of feminist scholarship in the 1970s and 1980s, historians and theorists such as Jane Caputi, Deborah Cameron, and Walkowitz have resurrected Jack the Ripper among academics by examining the Ripper murders through the lens of Victorian gender imbalances and ideologies.<sup>50</sup> These scholars are concerned with Jack the Ripper's victimization of women, rather than his crime. Examination of their research reveals that, while Ripperologists are not overly concerned with Jack the Ripper as a

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<sup>47</sup> Warkentin, "Cherchez les Femmes," 4-5.

<sup>48</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 1.

<sup>49</sup> Kate Lonsdale, "Rounding Up the Usual Suspect: Echoing Jack the Ripper," in *Functions of Victorian Culture at the Present Time*, ed. Christine L. Krueger (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002), 103.

<sup>50</sup> Warkentin, "Cherchez les Femmes," 35.

gendered figure, feminist Ripper scholars nevertheless treat the victims and their victimization as a gendered and sexualized process.

Theorists and historians in this “highly gendered stream” of scholarship view the Ripper murders as part of the larger context of the patriarchal control of women.<sup>51</sup> Jane Caputi argues that Jack the Ripper is, relative to the twentieth century, the “mythic father of sexual murder,” a tradition which later serial killers, such as Ted Bundy, share.<sup>52</sup> She reasons that sex murder represents the ultimate expression of sexuality as a form of power, an essential element in the patriarchal organization of society.<sup>53</sup> Judith Walkowitz applies such feminist theories more concretely to the Victorian historical context, suggesting that the spectacle of male-on-female violence highlighted by the Ripper murders provided Victorian men with the vocabulary to voice their latent aggression against women.<sup>54</sup> In her later work, she argues that the fates of the Ripper victims were presented in the press as a cautionary tale for independent women about the sexual dangers of the city.<sup>55</sup>

By bringing these two textual tracts together and examining the men suspected of committing the Jack the Ripper crimes alongside the Ripper victims, it becomes clear that the victims cannot be isolated as the “gendered” half of this murder-relationship. Taking our cue from metropolitan press coverage of the Ripper murders, we see that both victim and suspect emerged as twin “folk devils” in the “moral panic” that ensued in the wake of

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<sup>51</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 3. Warkentin, “Cherchez les Femmes,” 35-36.

<sup>52</sup> Jane Caputi, “The Sexual Politics of Murder,” *Gender and Society* 3:4 (December 1989): 446.

<sup>53</sup> Caputi, “The Sexual Politics of Murder,” 439.

<sup>54</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz, “Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence,” *Feminist Studies* 8:3 (Autumn 1982): 561.

<sup>55</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 3.

the killings in 1888. The concepts of the folk devil and the moral panic were developed by Stanley Cohen in his study of the media coverage of “mods” and “rockers” on British holiday beaches in the 1960s. According to Cohen,

[s]ocieties appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or groups of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests. ... Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight.<sup>56</sup>

Metropolitan press coverage of the Ripper murders brought into the limelight anxieties that were already circulating around the connection between poverty, homelessness and good governance in the streets. For Victorian readers, both Ripper victims and suspects came to represent the quintessential urban vagrant, who posed a threat to public order in the metropolis.

### **1.3 NEW JOURNALISM AND THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE PRESS**

The sensational depictions of murder, prostitution and vagrancy can be partly attributed to the novel rhetorical style of New Journalism. Indeed, Jack the Ripper and late-Victorian journalism are seen to go hand in hand in existing scholarship. The mythology, iconography and horror of the Ripper figure were manufactured and disseminated within the pages of the press in 1888. Treatment of the Ripper homicides has, therefore, raised issues about the nature of late-Victorian journalism, particularly its sensationalism, and its unprecedented accessibility to all classes and reading publics.<sup>57</sup> In turn, scholars have plumbed press coverage of the Ripper murders for evidence of larger racialised and

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<sup>56</sup> Cohen quoted in Rob Sindall, *Street Violence in the Nineteenth Century: Media Panic or Real Danger?* (Leicester, London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1990), 29-30.

<sup>57</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 65-108. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 121-134.

gendered conflicts.<sup>58</sup> In considering Victorian newspapers as primary source material, it is important to note that the nature of nineteenth-century crime reporting was closely affiliated with the development of the newspaper as a popular print medium earlier in the century. The “democratisation” of the press in the Victorian period is therefore worthy of our attention.

Prior to the middle of the century, English newspapers were expensive and primarily designed for elite consumption.<sup>59</sup> Domestic crimes were of little interest among the mercantile and political concerns of this privileged readership.<sup>60</sup> Significant growth in the circulation in English papers began with the abolition of “taxes on knowledge,” the pejorative term used to refer to state-imposed financial penalties that were placed on the printing, advertising and distribution of the press in 1853 and 1855.<sup>61</sup> The removal of these “artificial financial restraints” converged with contemporaneous technological innovations that facilitated the production and sale of printed materials.<sup>62</sup> Advances included improvements in paper production, leading to reductions in printing costs; the

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<sup>58</sup> Nils Roemer, “London and the East End as Spectacles of Urban Tourism,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 99:3 (Summer 2009): 420. Darren Oldridge, “‘Casting the spell of terror’: the press and the early Whitechapel murders,” in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, eds. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 46-55.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas Boyle, *Black Swine in the Sewers of Hampstead: Beneath the Surface of Victorian Sensationalism* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), 41.

<sup>60</sup> Stephen Donovan and Matthew Rubery, introduction to *Secret Commissions: An Anthology of Victorian Investigative Journalism*, eds. Stephen Donovan and Matthew Rubery (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2012), 12.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher A. Casey, “Common Misperceptions: The Press and Victorian Views of Crime,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XLI: 3 (Winter 2011): 373.

<sup>62</sup> Casey, “Common Misperceptions,” 373.

introduction of the web rotary printer and mechanical typesetting; as well as the ready availability of the railway and the telegraph.<sup>63</sup>

The upshot of these innovations was a dramatic expansion of the English paper in terms of size, geographical distribution, and audience, combined with an overall decrease in price. *The Times*, for example, cost seven pence in 1815, but had come down to three pence by 1861.<sup>64</sup> Regarding the increasing speed of newspaper production, Christopher A. Casey informs us that “During the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the hourly production of the newspaper jumped from 20,000 copies in 1847 to 168,000 after 1870.”<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, an upward trend in circulation is represented in the trajectory of *Lloyd’s Weekly London News*, established in 1842. Between 1849 and 1855, circulation rose from 49,000 per year to 100,000, ultimately becoming the first British paper to reach one million subscribers in 1896.<sup>66</sup>

This new, vastly expanded reading public was, importantly, popular; meaning it encompassed members of all classes. A number of twentieth-century historians, including Harold Perkin and Raymond Williams, are skeptical of the existence of a numerically significant working-class readership in the Victorian period; they look to the unimpressive literacy rates revealed by marriage registers, which are seen to represent a

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<sup>63</sup> Lucy Brown, *Victorian News and Newspapers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 12, 9, 11, 7.

<sup>64</sup> Warren Fox, “Murder in Daily Installments: The Newspapers and the Case of Franz Müller (1864),” *Victorian Periodicals Review* 31:3 (Fall 1998): 273.

<sup>65</sup> Casey, “Common Misperceptions,” 373.

<sup>66</sup> Rosalind Crone, “Crime – and its Fabrication: A Review of New Digital Resources in the History of Crime,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 14:1 (Spring 2009): 129. Matthew Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of the News* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 6.

reliable assessment of the ability of lower-class persons to sign their own name.<sup>67</sup> Current scholarship has, however, been increasingly willing to acknowledge working-class membership in the English community of readers.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, even illiterate individuals took part in the largely oral social milieu produced by newspaper culture: the contents of papers, particularly if they were salacious, were read aloud, gossiped about, and hawked loudly in the streets by brash news vendors.<sup>69</sup> Matthew Rubery concludes, “few members of the general public could be found without a basic familiarity with the day’s news once reduced prices made it accessible to all classes.”<sup>70</sup>

In the “mass media environment” of the second half of the nineteenth century, newspaper editors, in order to offset the cheap prices for which their product sold, endeavoured to appeal to numerically significant populations of readers.<sup>71</sup> This new, circulation-driven model of publication had significant consequences for the content of the medium. Rubery argues that once newspaper proprietors prioritized profit over politics, non-political forms of news were expanded in order to attract more general readers.<sup>72</sup> Earlier innovations in format and production laid the groundwork for, and indeed necessitated, the Victorian newspapers’ overwhelming preoccupation with domestic and human interest news that appealed to large swaths of the population.

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<sup>67</sup> David F. Mitch, *The Rise of Popular Literacy in Victorian England: The Influence of Private Choice and Public Policy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 262.

<sup>68</sup> Rosalind Crone, “Reappraising Victorian Literacy through Prison Records.” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 15:1 (Spring 2010): 3-4.

<sup>69</sup> Rosalind Crone, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2012), 47.

<sup>70</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 6.

<sup>71</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 5.



The newly adapted press had a ready-made audience for their sensational content. Cheap printed accounts of the lives of criminals awaiting the death penalty were sold to the large crowds that gathered on execution days.<sup>73</sup> A widespread and genuine interest in notorious criminal figures, as well as their experiences within the justice system, was reflected in the size of audiences in attendance at public executions: “The executions of Francois Courvoisier (1840) and Frederick and Maria Manning (1849) were attended by 30,000 spectators, while Franz Müller (1864) attracted an audience of around 50,000.”<sup>74</sup> The decline in popularity of the broadside and pamphlet as sources for printed crime narratives was also aided by the abolition of public execution in 1868. Profit-hungry mid-century pioneers like Lloyd fed “violence and sensation back into mass and even respectable culture” through the newspaper, ultimately replacing other print genres as the primary contemporary resource for news on domestic crime and violence.<sup>75</sup>

While Crone contends that, “Most nineteenth-century London newspapers (and even some regional newspapers) allocated a regular column to reporting on [criminal] trials,”<sup>76</sup> there was a perceptible increase in the coverage of particularly violent crimes in the press after mid-century.<sup>77</sup> The use of attention-grabbing headlines, fonts distinct from the rest of the paper’s text, and front-page coverage all served to inform “those who closely read articles about crime and murder” as well as those who took “quick glances at the bold headlines, or a brief skim of several articles.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 228.

<sup>74</sup> Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 81.

<sup>75</sup> Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 211.

<sup>76</sup> Crone, “Crime,” 128.

<sup>77</sup> Casey, “Common Misperceptions,” 368.

<sup>78</sup> Casey, “Common Misperceptions,” 370.

In Thomas Boyle's words, "After 1854-55 we find cheap papers, hotter news, and subversive editorializing."<sup>79</sup> With the abolition of "taxes on knowledge" and the introduction of technological advances in printing and circulation in the 1850s, the lure of high profit margins led newspaper editors to prioritize sensational crime narratives, previously relegated to other print mediums. The democratization of the press should not, however, be conflated with the radicalization of its content. As Catherine Lee argues, "newspapers in this period played a vital role in the propagation of what has been called 'moral politeness'. This was based on the morals and standards of the 'middling sort', such as decent behaviour and moral improvement."<sup>80</sup> Lee's assessment is in line with the views of modern media theorists and cultural critics, who reason that in order to appeal to broad audiences, "prominent news stories ... in newspapers constantly reinscribe the dominant values governing normative behaviour."<sup>81</sup> While the political dispositions of metropolitan papers varied from the moderate to the radical, Victorian news was nevertheless filtered through this normative lens. This thesis attempts to quantify such normative visions of late-Victorian prostitution and vagrancy by examining a sufficiently large body of articles on the Ripper murders.

#### **1.4 METHODOLOGY**

I have examined 300 articles published on the Ripper homicides between 1888 and 1900. In order to accumulate a comprehensive sample for a case study on Victorian press coverage of the Ripper murders, articles were selected based on a keyword search of two databases, The British Newspaper Archive and 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers,

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<sup>79</sup> Boyle, *Black Swine*, 41.

<sup>80</sup> Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 61.

<sup>81</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 48.

both of which draw upon the holdings of the British Library.<sup>82</sup> Using keywords in order to identify relevant articles enabled me to survey the extent of the press coverage, and accumulate a sufficiently large sample of articles from which to draw my conclusions. For example, I randomly selected 2-4 articles from each page of search results in which twenty “hits” were itemized. I also considered how the Ripper articles were situated within the newspapers, and particularly what other kinds of texts surrounded these articles on the pages on which they appear.

I have chosen to focus on papers published in London, as the site of the murders as well as the publishing offices of the national papers. In reporting on the Ripper murders, these London papers drew upon the same sources of police intelligence, which were often provided to them through the same news agencies, particularly the Central News Agency and the Liberal Press Agency.<sup>83</sup> While recognising that the mainstream Victorian press shared sources and a basic moral outlook, I have identified five London papers that represent a diversity of political positions and readerships. These papers are supplemented by lesser metropolitan periodicals which enable me to construct, as much as possible, a representative picture of the metropolitan media’s response to the Ripper murders.

On the Tory end of the political spectrum, Victorian scholars often use *The Times* for establishing the baseline moderate position on a given topic, as contemporaries considered it “a national institution rather than just a leading London paper.”<sup>84</sup> Reports on

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<sup>82</sup> The keywords used in searching these databases were: “East End,” “Jack the Ripper,” “Ripper,” “Whitechapel,” as well as the names of the Ripper victims discussed in this thesis, and the locations of their deaths (i.e. “Buck’s Row,” “Miller’s Court,” etc.).

<sup>83</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 58-59.

<sup>84</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 112.

the Ripper murders from *The Times* were consulted in compiling the sample. As a daily paper, it appealed to middle- and upper-class audiences who could afford to purchase their news multiple times a week. In contrast, *Lloyd's Weekly London News* was a “flagship of the Sunday press,”<sup>85</sup> and was primarily consumed by the lower-class readerships of the weekly papers.<sup>86</sup> Radical newspaper magnate Edward Lloyd founded *Lloyd's* in 1842. Given the size of its readership by the 1880s, I have drawn extensively upon this source.<sup>87</sup> I have also used articles from *Lloyd's* chief competitor, *Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper*, founded in 1850 by George Reynolds. Reynolds was a former Chartist, and his newspaper “flaunted its democratic credo on the front page: ‘Government of the People, by the People, for the People.’”<sup>88</sup> Articles have been taken from *The Illustrated Police News*, a weekly illustrated paper, established in 1864 as a “socially conscious and radical newspaper,” intended to edify the lower classes.<sup>89</sup> I have also studied the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a penny evening paper under the editorship of W. T. Stead, the pioneer of New Journalism.<sup>90</sup> Scholars have therefore identified the *Pall Mall Gazette* as the quintessential sensationalist newspaper of the late-Victorian period.<sup>91</sup> I draw upon the same corpus of articles in each chapter of this thesis.

Looking at these articles in aggregate, I am able to mark the ways in which the press identified the Ripper suspects and victims as easily recognisable, gendered folk

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<sup>85</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 110.

<sup>86</sup> Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 210.

<sup>87</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 6.

<sup>88</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 110.

<sup>89</sup> Linda Stratmann, *Cruel Deeds and Dreadful Calamities: the Illustrated Police News 1864-1938* (London: The British Library, 2011), 8.

<sup>90</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 113.

<sup>91</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 29, 85.

devils of urban vagrancy: paupers and prostitutes respectively.<sup>92</sup> This strategy enables me to demonstrate that through the context of the Ripper murders, Victorian journalists discussed prostitution and vagrancy *together*, as part of larger concerns about gendered poverty, unconventional forms of labour, and public order. In turning to print representations of the Ripper victims in particular, it becomes apparent that journalists could not detach these low-end prostitutes from the socioeconomic context that drove them to engage in sex work. London newspapers were therefore forced to confront the at times violent collisions and interactions that took place between the men and women of the vagrant class.

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<sup>92</sup> Sindall, *Street Violence*, 29-30.

**CHAPTER 2**  
**“Her Poverty Driving Her to a Shifty Maintenance”: The Victims of Jack the Ripper and Sex Work as Casual Labour in Late-Victorian London**

Seven years before Jack the Ripper terrorized London’s East End, suspected prostitute Elizabeth Burley caused a stir in the metropolitan papers. According to press reports, police chased Burley through the streets of Dover, with the intention of registering her under the Contagious Diseases Act as a prostitute. In order to escape “their pursuit and prosecution,” Burley jumped from a pier and threw herself into Dover harbour, an act for which she was charged with attempted suicide.<sup>1</sup> In response to the criminal charges levied against her, social reformer and polemicist Alfred S. Dyer wrote a letter to the editor of *Reynolds’s Newspaper*. Dyer’s pamphlet on *The European Slave Trade in English Girls* had been published just a year earlier.<sup>2</sup> Based on interviews with the matron of the Dover Union Workhouse, the chaplain of the Sailors’ Home in Dover, as well as “the chairman of the bench of magistrates before whom she was brought the day after her leap into the sea,” Dyer asserted that Burley was “unfallen,” and that an apology was owed to “the poor girl” for the damage done to her reputation.<sup>3</sup> What came to be known in Kent as the “Elizabeth Burley Case” “brought the community together in condemnation of the Contagious Diseases Acts.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> “A SAD AND SHAMEFUL CASE,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 15 May 1881, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred S. Dyer, *The European Slave Trade in English Girls: A Narrative of Facts* (London: Dyer Brothers, 1880).

<sup>3</sup> “To the Editor of Reynolds’s Newspaper,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 15 May 1881, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>4</sup> Dennis Grube, *At the Margins of Victorian Britain: Politics, Immorality and Britishness in the Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: Palgrave, 2013), 116.

The Contagious Diseases Acts controversy appeared in *Reynolds's* over the course of several days. Burley's experience highlights the importance of socioeconomic considerations in determining who was and was not a prostitute in Victorian Britain. Historians like Judith Walkowitz have interpreted the passage of the Contagious Diseases Acts as the moment in which the cultural mythology of the prostitute as fallen woman was formally codified: "[t]he acts were not simply an expression of a programmatic and coherent social policy toward the 'fallen woman' and the residuum; they were instrumental in crystallizing and shaping many of these social views."<sup>5</sup> And yet, in the very implementation of these acts, what was at issue for the police and officers of the court in determining whether Burley was a prostitute was her employment status, not her moral or sexual fallenness.

Police officials initially became suspicious of Burley when she was dismissed from her position as a servant. Though Burley's landlady vouched for her respectability, the Dover police surmised that "during the three weeks she was seeking another situation in domestic service, she was leading an immoral life."<sup>6</sup> When Burley's engagement in prostitution was questioned in the press, authorities disclosed that Burley's unemployment was the source of their suspicion. The "special police" must have considered prostitution to be an alternative to domestic service. These practical realities, particularly the tacit recognition of unemployment, casual labour and poverty as causal factors behind the Victorian woman's turn to prostitution, also emerged in print representations of the victims of Jack the Ripper.

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<sup>5</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> "To the Editor of Reynolds's Newspaper," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 15 May 1881, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

## 2.1 NEW JOURNALISM AND THE DEATH OF THE FALLEN WOMAN

As in the Burley case, any attempts to characterise the Ripper victims as fallen women originate in the sensationalist rhetorical style of New Journalism more so than in fact. Judith Walkowitz's *City of Dreadful Delight* is perhaps the most foundational study of Jack the Ripper for those interested in issues of gender and social history.<sup>7</sup> Walkowitz identifies the sexual danger posed, and experienced by, women in the public sphere as the dominant message communicated through press coverage of the murders.<sup>8</sup> For Walkowitz, the terrible violence done to the Ripper's victims, as women of business who traversed the public spaces of the city, "functioned as counterweights to the fantasies of access and movement that also compelled Londoners in this period."<sup>9</sup> It was precisely the mobility of these women, read by contemporaries as a kind of vagrant-like transience, that made them vulnerable to the kind of anonymous street violence typified by the Ripper murders. Metropolitan journalists drew upon these connections between women working in the public sphere and street violence in order to establish the Ripper murders as a "cautionary tale for women."<sup>10</sup> London newspapers utilised the sensational rhetorical style of New Journalism in order to frame the Ripper murders as a confirmation of the downward trajectory experienced by the sexually and morally compromised fallen woman. Such moralising narratives were nevertheless inflected with journalists' more or less conscious recognition of East End sex workers as women of a particular class and of prostitution as a class problem.

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<sup>7</sup> Anderson, "Review," 474.

<sup>8</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 80.

<sup>10</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 3.



At times, discussion of the victims' degraded moral status merge with recognition of the low class status of the women. Reporters consistently utilized the term "unfortunate" with reference to the Ripper victims. In my sample of 300 articles, the more neutral term prostitute appears only on seven occasions, while journalists refer to the Ripper victims as "unfortunate" 123 times. Perry Curtis also notes the heavy use of "unfortunate" in press coverage of the murders, an ambiguous term that he argues came into use in the late eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> A close reading of the specific uses of the concept of the unfortunate suggests that London reporters treated prostitution as represented by the Ripper victims not only as a condition of moral degradation, but also as a class status.

The idea of the "unfortunate" appears early in the "Autumn of Terror." In September, before the body of Polly Ann Nicholls was identified, *Reynolds's* referred to the unknown victim as an "unfortunate creature."<sup>12</sup> One week later, *Lloyd's* makes comment on "the atrocious butchery of the unfortunate creature" known as Annie Chapman.<sup>13</sup> In speaking more generally about the violence against women being committed in the East End, the *Pall Mall Gazette* observed that the victims were "Whitechapel women of the unfortunate class."<sup>14</sup> This sampling of the linguistic choices made by newspaper editors in early September reveals that the term is treated ambiguously. "Unfortunate" is used as a noun to identify impoverished prostitutes, but

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<sup>11</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 93.

<sup>12</sup> "BARBAROUS AND MYSTERIOUS MURDER," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>13</sup> "YESTERDAY'S WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY, LATEST PARTICULARS," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>14</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERER," *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

also as an adjective, as a descriptor of the tragic nature of their deaths. While the notion of “unfortunateness” may have resonated with journalists’ and reader’s knowledge of the downward moral path of the fallen woman, it also speaks to the impoverished conditions in which this “unfortunate class” of women lived and worked.

In describing the women’s corpses, metropolitan reporters drew readers’ attention to the particularly visual spectacle of mortality their bodies presented. A reporter from the *Pall Mall Gazette* who viewed Martha Tabram’s remains observed that, “as the corpse lies in the mortuary it presents a ghastly sight. ... Some of the front teeth have been knocked out, and the face is bruised on both cheeks and very much discoloured.”<sup>15</sup> After Annie Chapman’s death, the *Illustrated Police News* commiserated with the woman who happened upon Chapman’s corpse, adding that “[n]o more horrible sight ever met a human eye.”<sup>16</sup> *Lloyd’s* noted that Nicholls’ body, found “lying in the gutter in Buck’s-row ... presented a horrible spectacle.”<sup>17</sup> In nearly identical language, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that, in discovering Mary Kelly’s body,

[a] most horrifying spectacle was presented to the officers’ gaze, exceeding in ghastliness anything which the imagination can picture. The body of the woman was stretched on the bed, fearfully mutilated. Nose and ears had been cut off, and, although there had been no dismemberment, the flesh had been stripped off, leaving the skeleton.<sup>18</sup>

Editors at the *Telegraph* present Kelly’s corpse as a *memento mori* to those who would follow her downward path. While such colourful descriptions of the Ripper victims’

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<sup>15</sup> “HORRIBLE MURDER IN EAST LONDON,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 31 August 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>16</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 15 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>17</sup> “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>18</sup> “THE EAST END TRAGEDIES,” *The Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 336.

remains may be attributable to simple sensationalism in response to the Ripper's shocking displays of brutality, reporters' interest in the visual spectacle of the prostitute's body after death takes part in a larger tradition of visual representations of the fallen woman. Images of the prostitute in "sepulchral make-up ... always pitiful, and expecting imminent death," were, according to Nina Atwood, "produced and reproduced in both literature and art."<sup>19</sup> Journalists' sensational depictions of the corpses of the Ripper victims replicate the Victorian physical stereotype of the prostitute as the living dead.

In November 1888, as an editorial aside in their reporting on the killing of Jack the Ripper's "final" victim, Mary Kelly, *The Penny Illustrated Paper* described her death in weighty biblical terms: "A sadly chequered career was that of Mary Jeanette Kelly; and its tragic termination gives forcible significance to the Scriptural adage, 'The wages of sin are Death.'"<sup>20</sup> Even in their moments of divine reckoning, then, New Journalists treated the Ripper victims as commercial agents, receiving moral retribution in the form of a salary. Indeed, the very language with which journalists described the murdered women reveals logical inconsistencies in their treatment of these prostitutes as fallen women.

## 2.2 "THE LOSS OF TRADE": PETITIONS

While the sensationalism of the late-Victorian papers may have suggested to some readers that the Ripper victims presented a "cautionary tale" of the fallen woman, the rhetoric of metropolitan journalists was not the only interpretive gloss applied to the Ripper murders. Walkowitz herself observes that print representations of Jack the Ripper

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<sup>19</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute's Body*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> "THE MURDER OF MARY KELLY IN WHITECHAPEL," *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* 17 November 1888, 310, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

were “a far less unified and bounded production than the depiction offered by ... popular renditions.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, Victorian newspaper scholars have suggested that the eclectic, multivocal collage of nineteenth-century print journalism, featuring letters to the editor, correspondence between readers, and a multiplicity of articles, precludes unity of narrative.<sup>22</sup> Matthew Rubery characterises Victorian newspaper print culture as dialogical, dependent as it was on the responses and contributions of readers “who communicated with one another through advertisements, correspondence, and ... conversations about newsworthy events.”<sup>23</sup> In turning to two petitions submitted to the metropolitan press in the autumn of 1888, we see that readers’ contributions to press coverage of the murders undermined the moralizing rhetoric of the New Journalists by describing prostitutes as workers and financial agents.

In October 1888, the Whitechapel Board of Works forwarded a petition to Scotland Yard, requesting greater police presence in their community in light of the murders. *Lloyd’s*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Times*, and *The Morning Post* published the conversations held at the meeting at which the petition was drafted. The papers reported that signatories complained about the loss of business experienced in their neighbourhood, as the scene of the murders. Mr. Catmur, a merchant, bemoaned “the evil effect that had resulted in the district in the loss of trade,” due to the perceived danger of Spitalfields streets. He observed that “[e]vening business had become practically extinct in many trades, women finding themselves unable to pass through the streets without an escort.” Another merchant argued that respectable women should return to their business,

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<sup>21</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 10.

observing that “the fact of four or five murders having taken place was no reason why there should be universal hysteria.”<sup>24</sup> Metropolitan editors and journalists represented the Ripper killings as the predestined fate of fallen women, and subsequent twentieth-century scholars have taken these print representations at face value. Spitalfields residents, however, actually experienced the murders not in the sensationalist terms of print journalism, nor in the gendered interpretation of later observers, but in practical terms as a financial loss.

Later that same month, *Reynolds's*, *Lloyd's* and *The Times* published another petition drafted in Spitalfields. This time, it was signed by the “women of the laboring classes of East London through some of the religious agencies and educational centres.” Addressed to Queen Victoria, the missive requested that Her Majesty stamp out prostitution in Whitechapel, as “the women of East London feel horror at the dreadful sins that have been largely committed in our midst, and grief because of the shame that has fallen on our neighbourhood.”<sup>25</sup> By expressing their disapproval of the sex trade operating in their community, the women of East London marked themselves as separate from their prostitute neighbours. Like the men of the Whitechapel Board of Works, these Spitalfields women describe prostitution in socioeconomic terms. Because the petitioners

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<sup>24</sup> “THE EAST END HORRORS,” *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “SIR CHARLES WARREN DEFENDS THE FORCE,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 4 October 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Times* 4 October 1888, 10, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 2 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>25</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *Reynolds's Newspaper* 28 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE QUEEN AND THE EAST END MURDERS,” *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 28 October 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE QUEEN AND THE EAST END MURDERS,” *The Times* 25 October 1888, 10, in The British Newspaper Archive.

identify themselves as the “labouring” class of women, they implicitly differentiate themselves and their work from the problematic work of the prostitute.<sup>26</sup>

The fact that East-End women felt the need to separate themselves from “their sisters,” the prostitutes, indicates that such distinctions between working women and sex workers were slippery.<sup>27</sup> The Ripper victims belonged to the same class of working poor women as the petitioners, and, as Drew Gray observes, engaged in different forms of casual labour:

[o]ne of the first things anyone reads about the Ripper murders is that all of the victims were prostitutes ... However, it is probably more accurate to say that all of the women killed by the Whitechapel murderer had been selling themselves for sex on the streets shortly before they met with their death.<sup>28</sup>

Ironically, William Acton articulates a similar perspective when he suggests that not all prostitutes were segregated from respectable society by virtue of their fallen status. To make his case for the necessity of regulation, Acton emphasizes the potential for former sex workers to reintegrate into mainstream communities “through the portals of labour.”<sup>29</sup>

A survey of the Ripper killings in the nineteenth-century press suggests the moralizing rhetoric of metropolitan journalists clashed with community visions of the prostitute in their midst. A closer reading of the individual histories of the Ripper victims as they emerged in the press in 1888 shows that some Londoners viewed urban prostitution as a pragmatic solution to destitution taken up by a group of women that were not morally or sexually distinct from their class peers. Investigations conducted by

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<sup>26</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 28 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>27</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 28 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>28</sup> Drew D. Gray, *London’s Shadows: The Dark Side of the Victorian City* (London: Continuum, 2010), 145.

<sup>29</sup> Acton, *Prostitution Considered*, 71.

Scotland Yard, medical authorities, and metropolitan journalists into the histories of the Ripper victims reveal that they were, as Annie Chapman's friend Amelia Farmer put it, "industrial wom[e]n."<sup>30</sup> It was their decline in social and financial status, not their moral degradation, that prompted them to turn to prostitution. Both official and informal inquiries into the lives of the victims prior to the murders suggested to newspaper readers that the lack of other kinds of work, the loss of husbands and romantic partners, the loss of a position, the need for food and shelter, preceded their turn to prostitution. In fact, examination of the histories of each of the Ripper victims shows that one or more of these factors contributed to their decision to sell sex. Without using them as symbols or stand-ins, a common problem in histories of prostitution, the experiences of the Ripper victims were also the experiences of other women in their class.

### **2.3 "SHE HAD PROBABLY HAD SOME DRINK": EMMA SMITH AND MARTHA TABRAM**

Emma Smith, "aged 45 years, a widow," is believed by some Ripperologists to be the first Ripper victim, though her attack took place outside of the "Autumn of Terror."<sup>31</sup> Smith was robbed by a group of men on the evening of 3 April, 1888, while returning to her lodgings in George Street, Spitalfields.<sup>32</sup> The assailants brutalized her, penetrating her with blunt objects. Smith died shortly thereafter from "peritonitis" in the Whitechapel infirmary.<sup>33</sup> The body of a second presumed Ripper victim, Martha Tabram, "aged thirty-five, a hawker," was discovered, riddled with stab wounds, inside George-Yard buildings

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<sup>30</sup> "THE INQUEST," *The Times* 11 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>31</sup> Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 3.

<sup>32</sup> "BRUTAL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Illustrated Police News* 14 April 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive. Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 3

<sup>33</sup> Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 4.

on August 8<sup>th</sup>.<sup>34</sup> The goal of the coroner's court was to determine the Ripper victims' cause of death. It was not to unearth the lived experience of Victorian prostitution. Nevertheless, testimony given in court by the working-class men and women who lived and interacted with the Ripper victims continued to challenge middle-class renderings of the murdered prostitutes as emblems of sexual depravity. Their testimony presented prostitution as one more form of casual labour open to women who were the working poor.

Since no Ripper suspect was ever submitted to criminal trial, the coroner's inquest represents the only form of judicial inquiry into the Ripper murders. As Marlene Tromp observes, the dominant mode of criminal investigation in the Victorian period was to scrutinize the personal histories of the individuals involved in a particular crime, with the goal of unearthing the motivations of the perpetrator.<sup>35</sup> The coroner's inquest, with its information-gathering mandate relative to suspicious or violent deaths, furthered this investigative project.<sup>36</sup> The inquests therefore represented, for metropolitan journalists, the most significant source of information on the Jack the Ripper murders. As the coroners' inquests on the bodies of the first Ripper victims unfolded in the pages of the press, both editors and court officials constructed an image of prostitution without consulting the women actually engaged in this form of sex work. While the very nature of

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<sup>34</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 26 August 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 8.

<sup>35</sup> Marlene Tromp, "A Priori: Harriet Buswell and Unsolved Murder Before Jack the Ripper, 24-25 December 1872," *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, 4, accessed 10 November 2014, [http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps\\_articles=marlene-tromp-a-priori-harriet-buswell-and-unsolved-murder-before-jack-the-ripper-24-25-december-1872](http://www.branchcollective.org/?ps_articles=marlene-tromp-a-priori-harriet-buswell-and-unsolved-murder-before-jack-the-ripper-24-25-december-1872).

<sup>36</sup> Ian A. Burney, *Bodies of Evidence: Medicine and the Politics of the English Inquest 1830-1926* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 2-3.



murder inquiries assumes the silence of victims as absent parties,<sup>37</sup> one of the unusual features of the Smith and Tabram cases is the availability of testimony from Smith herself, and Tabram's close friend and fellow street-walker, Mary Ann Connolly, better known as "Pearly Poll." And yet, the validity of their testimony was systematically called into question in the coroner's court.

Emma Smith was the only Ripper victim who did not die during her attack. She lived long enough to return to her lodgings, to point out to her landlady the exact spot where she had been accosted, and to describe to authorities the appearance of her assailants.<sup>38</sup> Jurors and medical professionals nevertheless treated her testimony with skepticism. Dr. Hellier, the surgeon on duty when Smith arrived at the Whitechapel infirmary, testified that Smith "appeared to know what she was about, but she had probably had some drink," thereby casting doubt on her own account of the attack.<sup>39</sup> Later, when Mary Russell, Smith's lodging-house deputy testified, the coroner questioned her about Smith's trustworthiness and sobriety. Russell replied that she "believed the statements made by the deceased were to be relied upon. ... She was not so drunk as to not know what she did."<sup>40</sup>

In spite of being the last person to see Martha Tabram alive, Pearly Poll's testimony was also treated as spurious. Both *Reynolds's* and *The Times* reported that "at the suggestion of Inspector Reid," Pearly Poll "was cautioned" by the coroner prior to

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<sup>37</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> "BRUTAL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Illustrated Police News* 14 April 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>39</sup> "HORRIBLE MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Lloyds Weekly News* 8 April 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>40</sup> "BRUTAL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Illustrated Police News* 14 April 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

being sworn before the court.<sup>41</sup> Reporters at the *East London Observer* further undermined Pearly Poll's credibility through their colourful description of her appearance in court wearing a green shawl with "her face reddened and soddened by drink."<sup>42</sup> In both the Smith and Tabram inquests, the contributions of ostensibly more reliable working-class witnesses took precedence over the experiences of the victims themselves and fellow prostitutes.

And yet, Drew Gray's contention that primary sources on the working classes of Victorian London are missing "the voice of the people of East London themselves" seems too pessimistic in the case of the Ripper murders.<sup>43</sup> The multi-vocal format of nineteenth-century coroners' inquests enabled men and women of the working classes to give their account of events. Juries were drawn from the locality in which the suspicious death occurred, and "in practice these panels tended to be drawn from artisans, shopkeepers, and tradesmen." Evidence was also "taken from a range of witnesses, usually including a relative or friend of the deceased, anyone present at the time of death, and the 'first finder' of the corpse." Finally, "a medical witness might also appear before the tribunal."<sup>44</sup> Jurors were free to question witnesses and, according to Ian Burney, they often did.<sup>45</sup> Such inquiries into the histories of the Ripper victims necessitated, in the public forum of the coroner's court, consultation of the women's friends, family, lovers

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<sup>41</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 26 August 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. "INQUESTS," *The Times* 24 August 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted in Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Gray, *London's Shadows*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Burney, *Bodies of Evidence*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Burney, *Bodies of Evidence*, 5.

and associates, the majority of whom were drawn from the same class of working poor as the victims themselves.

It is from these witness' testimonies that the realities of prostitution and female poverty come to the fore. Martha Tabram's former lover, Henry Turner, claimed that, though "he had been living with the woman Tabran [*sic*] as his wife for about nine years... [t]wo or three weeks previously to this occurrence he ceased to do so" due to Tabram's "drinking habits."<sup>46</sup> After the break-up of her relationship, it is likely that Tabram found it necessary to supplement her income as a hawker through prostitution. Journalists related revelations from the coroner's inquest in papers like *The Times*, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the *Illustrated Police News*, *Reynolds's* and *Lloyd's*, and cast a new light on the Ripper victim's engagement in sex work. Depictions of prostitution as an alternative form of work for impoverished women continued to emerge in witness testimony given at the inquests on the murders of Nicholls, Chapman, Stride, Eddowes, and Kelly.

#### **2.4 THE "STAMP OF THE LAMBETH WORKHOUSE": MARY ANN NICHOLLS**

Mary Ann Nicholls was killed on the 31<sup>st</sup> of August, 1888. Her body was mutilated in the Jack the Ripper style, featuring stab wounds in the neck and abdomen. According to the *Daily News*, it was Nicholls' death that "first drew attention to the probability that the crimes formed a series. ... The butchery of NICHOLLS alarmed all London. It was then

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<sup>46</sup> "INQUESTS," *The Times* 24 August 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER," *Daily News* 24 August 1888, 7, in the British Newspaper Archive. "THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 26 August 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive. "THE BUCK'S ROW TRAGEDY," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 3, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

found that this crime bore a certain family likeness to the others.”<sup>47</sup> At the conclusion of the coroner’s inquest on Nicholls at the end of September, Coroner Wynne E. Baxter gave his own account of the victim’s history:

The deceased has been identified by her father and her husband to have been Mary Anne Nicholls, a married woman with five children, and of about forty-two years of age. She was of intemperate habits and left her husband eight years ago on account of drink. ... She had evidently formed irregular connections, but still lived under her father’s roof for three or four years, and then, either to avoid the restraints of a settled home, or in consequence of her own misconduct, she left her father... From that time until her death it is pretty clear that she had been living an intemperate, irregular, and vicious life, mostly in the horrid common lodging-houses of the neighbourhood.<sup>48</sup>

Embedded within Baxter’s condemnatory editorializing are all the trappings of female poverty, including alcoholism, unstable living situations, and alienation from family. Witness testimonies relayed in the metropolitan press revealed that it was Nicholls’ loss of her position in domestic service, as was the case for many working-class Victorian women, that prompted her turn to casual prostitution.

Baxter’s concluding statement about Nicholls was informed by the facts that emerged in statements given by members of her social circle. Mary Ann Monk, “at present an inmate of the Lambeth workhouse,” was the first to identify Nicholls’ corpse.<sup>49</sup> Monk claimed that she first met Nicholls six weeks prior to her death while they were both living outside the workhouse. The coroner’s inquiries nevertheless left the jury and newspaper readers in no doubt that Nicholls also sought accommodation in the casual ward. Police-sergeant Kirby testified that, at the time of her death, Nicholls was still

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<sup>47</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Daily News* 24 September 1888, 4-5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>48</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 29 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>49</sup> “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

wearing a petticoat which “bore the stencil stamp of Lambeth workhouse.”<sup>50</sup> Papers also gave significant profile to the testimony of William Nicholls, Mary Ann’s estranged husband, which further disclosed the nature of her finances.<sup>51</sup> William acknowledged that the Lambeth Union had summoned him in order to provide for his wife’s maintenance, but he had been able to prove that she was living with another man at the time, and was therefore not entitled to his financial support.<sup>52</sup>

Nicholls’ father, Edward Walker, provided the coroner with his daughter’s employment history. *Reynolds’s*, *Lloyd’s* and the *Penny Illustrated Paper* published in full a letter Walker received from his daughter shortly after she left the workhouse and entered a “decent situation” as a domestic servant in Ingleside, Wandsworth-common. Nicholls’ letter was optimistic about the future. She wrote that the house where she worked was “a grand place inside, with trees and gardens back and front. All has been newly done up.” Her employers were “teetotalers and religious,” so she felt they “ought to get on.”<sup>53</sup> This last portion of Nicholls’ letter contradicts Coroner Baxter’s assessment of her as “intemperate” and “irregular.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>51</sup> “BARBAROUS AND MYSTERIOUS MURDER,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 8 September 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE WHITECHAPEL MYSTERY,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper* 8 September 1888, 151, in the British Newspaper Archive. “THE BUCK’S ROW TRAGEDY,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>52</sup> “THE BUCK’S ROW TRAGEDY,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>53</sup> “BARBAROUS AND MYSTERIOUS MURDER,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “ANOTHER AWFUL

Nicholls left her position shortly after writing her father. According to Monk, “[i]t afterwards became known that Nicholls betrayed her trust as a domestic servant” by stealing three pounds from her employer “and absconding.”<sup>55</sup> No more information about whether she was dismissed or left of her own accord, came forward at the inquest. Julia Laite has, however, argued that many women who worked in domestic service, as “the largest employer of women in this period,” ultimately turned to prostitution after losing their positions.<sup>56</sup>

It is likely that unemployment prompted Nicholls to prostitute herself for an income. *Reynolds’s* and *Lloyd’s* reprinted Monk’s testimony that, after leaving Wandsworth-common, Nicholls was unable to find employment elsewhere, and “[f]rom that time she had been wandering about,” which may be an allusion to her street-walking, or her homelessness and destitution.<sup>57</sup> Here, we see how the distinctions between prostitution and vagrancy could become hopelessly blurred in the histories of the Ripper victims. Metropolitan papers also reported as a matter of interest Nicholls’ last words spoken at her lodging house before going out on the night of her murder. Both *Lloyd’s* and *The Times* drew upon a number of lodgers’ testimony to report that

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MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE WHITECHAPEL MYSTERY,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper* 8 September 1888, 151, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>54</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 29 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>55</sup> “BARBAROUS AND MYSTERIOUS MURDER,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>56</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 33.

<sup>57</sup> “BARBAROUS AND MYSTERIOUS MURDER,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

[i]t was gathered that the deceased had led the life of an ‘unfortunate’ whilst lodging in the house, which was only for about three weeks past. Nothing more is known of her by them, but when she presented herself before her lodging on Thursday night she was turned away because she had not the money. She was then the worse for drink but not drunk, and turned away laughing, saying, ‘I’ll soon get my “doss” money.’<sup>58</sup>

In the cant of working-class Victorian Londoners, “doss” meant rough sleeping accommodations. Editors likely recorded Nicholls’ last statement verbatim because her use of the slang term indicated her low class standing. Individuals described as “dossers” in this period were also known for the degrading forms of work they engaged in. According to Marc Brodie, “dossers” represented the lowest group within the casual workforce, as men and women who had “‘declined’ from their own trades into unskilled work and the lodging house.”<sup>59</sup> That Nicholls went out to prostitute herself on the night of her murder in order to earn money for a night’s lodgings speaks to the kind of hand-to-mouth existence that some Whitechapel women, including later Ripper victims like Annie Chapman, were living.

## **2.5 “GET SOME MONEY FROM SOMEWHERE”: ANNIE CHAPMAN**

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September, 1888, Annie Chapman’s body was found, eviscerated, behind a lodging-house in Hanbury Street, Spitalfields.<sup>60</sup> Chapman’s remains were identified by Timothy Donovan the deputy of the lodging-house she stayed at in Dorset Street, Whitechapel. Donovan testified that “[h]e knew her as an unfortunate, and that she

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<sup>58</sup> “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *The Times* 1 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive. “ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>59</sup> Marc Brodie, “Artisans and Dossers: The 1886 West End Riots and the East End Casual Poor,” *London Journal* 24:2 (1999): 43.

<sup>60</sup> “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

generally frequented Stratford for a living.”<sup>61</sup> Other neighbours and friends confirmed that Chapman often travelled to Stratford in order to sell crochet-work, flowers, and antimacassars.<sup>62</sup> It is interesting to note that Donovan identifies Chapman as a prostitute as well as a hawker in the same breath, as though they were merely different types of casual work. At least five metropolitan papers also reported Amelia Farmer’s leading observation that she was that afraid that Chapman “was not particular how she earned her living.”<sup>63</sup> Farmer’s statement suggests that sex work was a form of labour and a means of survival, as well as a moral state. Press coverage of the Chapman inquest revealed to readers that some women of Chapman’s class took up prostitution out of financial necessity after the loss of a romantic partner.

Like Nicholls, Chapman frequented the workhouse. When not staying in the casual ward, she sold sex in order to pay for her lodgings. Farmer testified that a few days prior to Chapman’s murder, she had encountered her friend near Spitalfields Church. Chapman informed Farmer that she was ill and she had not been able to travel to Stratford to sell her wares. Instead, she had spent the past few nights at the hospital.<sup>64</sup> Donovan reported that on the night of her murder, Chapman requested a bed, but he had

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<sup>61</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END,” *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>62</sup> “THE FIENDISH MURDERS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>63</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 15 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE FIENDISH MURDER,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *The Times* 11 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Daily News* 10 September 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>64</sup> “THE FIENDISH MURDERS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.



insisted, as was policy, on having the fee up front.<sup>65</sup> After her murder, Donovan testified that he discovered in two bottles in Chapman's old room, "one containing medicine, and labeled as follows: 'St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Take two tablespoonfuls three times a day.' The other bottle contained a milky lotion, and was labeled 'St. Bartholomew's Hospital.'" According to the *Daily News*, Donovan's testimony "confirmed [Chapman's] statement that she had been under medical treatment."<sup>66</sup> Farmer further testified that Chapman had said to her shortly before her death, "I am too ill to do anything; it is no use, I must pull myself together and get some money from somewhere."<sup>67</sup> One can assume that this is what she was doing when she was murdered on the streets late at night.

Press reports suggest that Chapman began to prostitute herself after the death of her estranged husband, Frederick Chapman.<sup>68</sup> According to *The Times*,

inquiries soon established that the woman's real name was Annie Chapman, and that she was known by the nickname of 'Dark Annie.' She was the widow of a pensioner, and had formerly lived at Windsor. Some few years since she separated from her husband, who made her a weekly allowance of 10s. at his death she had to do the best she could for a living.<sup>69</sup>

John Evans' statement, as the night watchman of the lodging house in which Chapman had most recently resided, corroborated *The Times*' report. When asked by the coroner whether he knew that Chapman had been "living a rough night life," Evans replied in the

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<sup>65</sup> "ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END," *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>66</sup> "ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Daily News* 10 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>67</sup> "LATEST EAST-END HORROR," *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 September 1888, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>68</sup> "LATEST EAST-END HORROR," *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 September 1888, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>69</sup> "ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END," *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive.

affirmative, but he “hazard[ed] the additional remark, ‘Of course, once she had 10s a week from her people.’”<sup>70</sup> Evans’ observation suggests that when Chapman was receiving financial support from her husband, she did not live so “roughly.”

For members of the working poor, the loss of a romantic partner through separation or death was not only a personal tragedy; without the support of a second income, many newly-single women were left in dire financial straits.<sup>71</sup> Such realities may account for the fact that the majority of Ripper victims took up with other men after their marriages fell apart. Nearly a year after the Ripper murders, *Reynolds’s* printed an article reporting on women’s suffrage, as well as a number of social issues related to women’s freedom and liberties in Britain. On the matter of divorce, *Reynolds’s* quipped:

Do we ever heard of very poor people in the Divorce Court? Never. They cannot afford that luxury. They simply go and live with somebody else. We have seen the result. The man is frequently brought before the police-court for beating the woman whom he has picked up, and with whom he may be living. As for his former wife – why, she is a subject for Jack the Ripper to operate on.<sup>72</sup>

*Reynolds’s* acknowledges the commonplace nature of informal romantic alliances established outside of the bonds of marriage, as well as the vulnerability of single women to the lure of prostitution as a means of income.

As Ginger Frost observes, even among the working classes, husbands were expected to support their wives: “[t]he centrality of men providing was one aspect of

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<sup>70</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 15 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>71</sup> Nancy Tomes, “A ‘Torrent of Abuse’: Crimes of Violence between Working-Class Men and Women in London, 1840-1875,” *Journal of Social History* 11:3 (Spring 1978): 334.

<sup>72</sup> “To the Suffrage of Women,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 18 August 1889, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

marriage on which men and women of all classes could agree.”<sup>73</sup> Shortly after Chapman’s murder, the *Daily News* also noted that the Ripper victims’ loss of romantic partners encouraged them to prostitute themselves:

That marriage means maintenance to thousands of poor women at the East End of London is a fact that has been brought prominently before us by the evidence given at the inquests on the unfortunate victims of the recent atrocities. When the husband dies, the widow is left wholly without means, and the next step taken is usually a downward one. A connection is formed which is neither matrimonial nor permanent. When this comes to an end, the woman takes the lowest step of all, her poverty driving her to a shifty maintenance in the way of which we have heard so much of late.<sup>74</sup>

Reporters and editors at the *Daily News* do speak of a downward trajectory associated with prostitution, but in terms of the economic decline that precedes the turn to sex work, not in terms of a sexual or moral descent.

## **2.6 “THE POVERTY OF THE DEAD WOMAN”: ELIZABETH STRIDE AND CATHERINE EDDOWES**

September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1888, saw an escalation in the frequency of the Ripper’s nighttime attacks when two Spitalfields women were killed on the same night. Elizabeth Stride, identified by *The Times* as “a woman of low character, aged about 35,” was stabbed to death in the yard of the Working Men’s Educational Club in Berner Street.<sup>75</sup> The location of Stride’s murder was highly publicized and must have invited readers to identify urban prostitution with the other forms of low-end labour conducted by male workers of the

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<sup>73</sup> Ginger Frost, “Bigamy and Cohabitation in Victorian England,” *Journal of Family History* 22 (July 1997): 290. Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 223. James A. Hammerton, *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>74</sup> “The Daughters of the Land,” *Daily News* 11 October 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>75</sup> “ANOTHER WHITECHAPEL ATROCITY,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 15 February 1891, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 2 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

same class as the prostitutes.<sup>76</sup> Catherine Eddowes, an “unfortunate” “apparently about forty years of age,” was mutilated by another unknown culprit hours after Stride within the boundaries of the City of London.<sup>77</sup> According to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, after Jack the Ripper’s “double murder,” other topics had “simply been blood-smudged out of the thoughts of men.”<sup>78</sup>

In the first week of October, then, virtually all other news items were submerged by the Ripper media sensation.<sup>79</sup> The intense press coverage of the “double murder” inquests firmly associated Stride and Eddowes, in spite of their engagement in sex work, with working-class forms of subsistence. Testimony given by Eddowes’ friends and family revealed that prostitution was one among many money-making strategies she engaged in, including hop-picking in the country and borrowing funds from relatives. Difficulties in determining Stride’s identity at her inquest also suggested to newspaper readers that her history was interchangeable with those of other women of her class.

During this peak in the coverage of the Ripper murders, metropolitan papers struggled to satisfy readers’ demand for news on the investigations in the absence of insights from Scotland Yard.<sup>80</sup> One strategy utilized by editorial staffs to fill pages was to reflect on the class tensions and social problems that the Ripper murders brought to the

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<sup>76</sup> “MORE MURDERS AT THE EAST-END,” *The Times* 1 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 2 October 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 6 October 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END ATROCITIES,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>77</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 6 October 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>78</sup> “THE MURDERS,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 1 October 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>79</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 140.

<sup>80</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 140.

fore. Early in the “Autumn of Terror,” a journalist at the *Pall Mall Gazette* whom Curtis has identified as William Stead, the famous editor of that periodical, published “a somber and excoriating editorial entitled ‘MURDER AS AN ADVERTISEMENT.’” Stead facetiously praised the Ripper as a “‘Scientific Humanitarian ... a Sociologist PASTEUR,’” for exposing middle-class readers to the realities of life as an impoverished resident of Whitechapel.<sup>81</sup> After the “double murder,” the editorial staff at *Lloyd’s* revealed their radical political affiliations by remarking with satisfaction that, in the wake of the Ripper murders, philanthropists redoubled their efforts to relieve the suffering of communities in the East End. *Lloyd’s* noted that even “Mr. Richard Mansfield, the enterprising lessee of the Lyceum Theatre,” had organised theatrical performances for the benefit of a number of shelters proposed to be constructed in the East End. The article concludes optimistically, remarking that “[r]eformation and ‘amelioration’ are words again in the air, and strange indeed will it be if tragedies which have thrilled the whole of Great Britain should fail to lead to some good and permanent work being achieved for the outcasts of London.”<sup>82</sup>

As part of this call for the alleviation of poverty in the East End, social reformers hoped that other kinds of employment opportunities would be made available to Spitalfields prostitutes in order to keep them off the streets. One of these reformers was E. B. Leach, whose letter to the editor of *The Morning Post* was published on 10 October 1888. Leach observed that employment was the key to putting an end to urban prostitution: “[t]he ‘nothing coming in,’ the ‘nothing doing,’ which shall bring in the next

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<sup>81</sup> “MURDER AS AN ADVERTISEMENT,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 19 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>82</sup> “GOOD OUT OF EVIL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 14 October 1888, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

meal, is the real cause of this terrible degradation of our poor women and a provision of work for them would be both preventive and curative of much misery and much scandal.”<sup>83</sup> In these pieces on philanthropic efforts inspired by the murders, metropolitan papers identified the Ripper victims as members of the working poor. It was the hard-scrabble lives of these women, made so public by the violence of their deaths, that exposed the necessity of intervention into the victims’ impoverished communities.

In response to the paucity of information given to the press by the police, Perry Curtis argues that reporters also “served up human-interest stories about the backgrounds and lifestyles of the victims.”<sup>84</sup> Readers of *Lloyd’s* and the *Daily Telegraph* learned that, prior to her death, Catherine Eddowes shuffled between low-end lodging houses, the workhouse, and, whenever she was in a particularly “impecunious state she ... slept in a shed off Dorset-street, which is the refuge of some 10 to 20 hopeless creatures who are without means of paying for their beds.”<sup>85</sup> Her partner John Kelly deposed that on the evening of her death Eddowes went to find her adult daughter to request a loan, “with a view to obtaining to prevent them walking the streets.” Kelly also disclosed that, in addition to hawking, he and Eddowes took on seasonal labour to earn money. They had returned the week prior to Eddowes’ murder from hop-picking in Kent.<sup>86</sup> In light of such revelations, several papers concluded that Eddowes belonged to “‘the lowest class’ of

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<sup>83</sup> “THE CONDITION OF EAST LONDON,” *The Morning Post* 10 October 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>84</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 140.

<sup>85</sup> “OPENING OF THE CITY INQUEST,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST END TRAGEDIES,” *Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, 2-3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>86</sup> “THE EAST END ATROCITIES,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archives.

unfortunates, who often slept rough for want of money.”<sup>87</sup> Editors at *Lloyd’s*, for example, published Kelly’s testimony under the sub-heading, “THE POVERTY OF THE DEAD WOMAN.”<sup>88</sup>

The slippery distinction between the prostitute and other working-class women was made explicit by Mrs. Mary Malcolm, who wrongly identified Stride’s corpse as that of her sister, Elizabeth Watts.<sup>89</sup> Later in October, however, the Central News Agency informed metropolitan papers that “as the result of inquiries prosecuted by them they have succeeded in finding Elizabeth alive and well in the person of Mrs. Stokes, the hardworking respectable wife of a brickyard labourer, living at Tottenham.”<sup>90</sup> After her “discovery,” Mrs. Stokes spoke at Stride’s inquest in order to address the accusations leveled against her by her own sister. Mrs. Stokes derided her sister in her testimony: “[s]he has put me, a poor woman, to terrible trial, and I want to know if she is allowed to take my character away in such a cruel manner.”<sup>91</sup> In defense of Mrs. Malcolm, the coroner remarked upon the undeniable similarities between the lifestyles and histories of both Stride and Stokes. In concluding the inquest, Baxter observed,

[i]f her evidence was correct, there were points of resemblance which almost reminded one of ‘The Comedy of Errors.’ Both had been courted by policemen; they bore the same Christian name, and were of the same age; both lived with sailors; both at one time kept coffee-houses at Poplar; both were nicknamed ‘Long Liz;’ both were said to have children in charge of their husband’s friends;

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<sup>87</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 152.

<sup>88</sup> “OPENING OF THE CITY INQUEST,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>89</sup> “THE EAST END ATROCITIES,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>90</sup> “ELIZABETH WATTS DISCOVERED ALIVE,” *Illustrated Police News* 20 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>91</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 28 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

both were given to drink; both lived in East-end common lodging-houses ... and both were leading very questionable lives.<sup>92</sup>

Baxter's comments not only cast aspersion on the behaviour of working-class women like Stokes; they also failed to recognise any practical distinctions between women of the labouring poor and their prostitute peers.

## **2.7 "TO KEEP HERSELF FROM STARVATION": MARY KELLY**

Mary Kelly's murder occurred early in the morning of the 9<sup>th</sup> of November, 1888. It was the only Ripper killing that took place indoors, in Kelly's rooms off Dorset Street in Spitalfields.<sup>93</sup> The horror of this domestic intrusion may have contributed to the fact that, according to Walkowitz, of all the Ripper victims, "[t]he thickest layer of fantasy settled around the life and death of Mary Kelly."<sup>94</sup> Both witness testimony and press coverage suggested that Kelly was of a higher class than the majority of urban prostitutes operating in Spitalfields, as the youngest and reportedly prettiest victim. Allowance for such class variations among prostitutes suggests that the sex worker, according to her peers, operated within a complex class hierarchy that cannot be mapped onto the dichotomous moral divide between the respectable woman and her fallen sister.

According to Kelly's biography, as related posthumously to the coroner's jury by her lover, Joseph Barnett, personal tragedy precipitated her turn to prostitution. Kelly claimed that she was born in Ireland; at sixteen, she married a collier, who died shortly

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<sup>92</sup> "THE MURDERS IN WHITECHAPEL," *Illustrated Police News* 3 November 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>93</sup> "YESTERDAY'S MURDER," *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 November 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>94</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 181.



thereafter in an explosion.<sup>95</sup> It was Barnett's understanding that, after the death of her husband, Kelly became an upper-class prostitute. First, she accompanied a wealthy man to France as his mistress.<sup>96</sup> Upon returning to Britain, she resided for a time in a "disorderly house" in the West End of London, an area notorious for its high-end brothels.<sup>97</sup> Barnett testified that eventually, however, Kelly "drifted from the West-end to the East-end, where she took lodgings."<sup>98</sup> Kelly's decline in social and sexual status, moving from the West End to the East is, according to Frances Finnegan, typical of the downward trajectory experienced by nineteenth-century sex workers as they aged and their health deteriorated:

[i]t is a fact well recognised by reliable investigators of the 'social evil' at the time that the active life of a top-class prostitute was relatively short, and that as such girls sickened, took to drink, or became physically less attractive they inevitably took the downward path leading to ... houses of ill fame, and finally to the streets or the workhouse.<sup>99</sup>

Here, Finnegan describes the decline of the high-end prostitute in terms of the declining dignity of her labour, as she moves from aristocratic prostitution to street-walking and, ultimately, to toiling in the workhouse for her lodgings. Walkowitz contends that "Joseph Barnett's narrative of her life history, based on Kelly's version of her own story, reads like a penny-dreadful rendition of the harlot's progress."<sup>100</sup> And yet, Barnett's testimony spatially maps the "harlot's progress" in terms of movement from West London to the

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<sup>95</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL HORROR," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 11 November 1888, 8, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>96</sup> "THE EAST END MURDERS," *The Morning Post* 12 November 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>97</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 18.

<sup>98</sup> "THE EAST-END MURDERS," *The Morning Post* 12 November 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>99</sup> Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, 17.

<sup>100</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 181.

East that clearly suggests a decline in socioeconomic status as much as it does the mythic moral and sexual decline of the fallen woman.

Perhaps inspired by Kelly's beginnings in the brothels of the West End, a number Spitalfields residents remarked that among her peers, prostitutes of the "humblest circumstances," Kelly was "by no means the lowest of her fallen class."<sup>101</sup> One London City missionary observed that the "poor woman was neater in her appearance than many of her class." His testimony revealed that, like others who sought to distinguish themselves as respectable members of the working poor, Kelly attended religious service some Sundays at the lodging houses in her neighbourhood.<sup>102</sup> Kelly's landlord, Mr. McCarthy, also conceded that, prior to her death, "she was to all appearance fairly well conducted."<sup>103</sup> Such comments suggest that even among low-end prostitutes, class distinctions, predicated on the dress and comportment of the women, emerge.

In spite of neighbours' perceptions of Kelly's elevated class status, the fact that she prostituted herself out of sheer financial necessity emerged in testimony given by fellow lodger and prostitute, Lizzie Albrook. *The Morning Post*, *The Penny Illustrated Paper* and *Lloyd's* reprinted Albrook's statement that she did not believe Kelly "would have gone out as she did if she had not been obliged to do so in order to keep herself from starvation." According to Albrook, Kelly "had often spoken to me in this way, and warned me against going on the streets as she had done. She told me, too, she was heartily sick of the life she was leading, and wished she had money enough to go back to

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<sup>101</sup> "THE EAST END TRAGEDIES," *The Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 336.

<sup>102</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS," *Illustrated Police News* 10 November 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>103</sup> "THE EAST END TRAGEDIES," *The Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 336.

Ireland, where her people lived.”<sup>104</sup> In earlier Ripper inquiries, we have seen that reporters and court officials dismissed testimony given by other prostitutes, including Emma Smith and Mary Ann Connolly. The fact that three metropolitan papers chose to reproduce Albrook’s testimony, then, suggests that editors may have found significance in the pathos of Kelly’s return to prostitution out of absolute financial need.

Joseph Barnett’s account of his partnership with Kelly indicated that their relationship was pragmatic and premised on their mutual survival, though it was not without affection. Responding to the coroner’s inquiries about how he first connected with Kelly, Barnett replied that they had met “[i]n Commercial-street. We then had a drink together, and I made arrangements to see her on the following day... . On that day we both of us agreed that we should remain together.”<sup>105</sup> Barnett suggested that their recent separation prompted Kelly to return to the streets, claiming, perhaps to preserve his own masculine pride, that “Marie never went on the street when she lived with me.”<sup>106</sup> At the time of her death, Kelly was in arrears with her landlord for 29 shillings.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> “THE EAST END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 12 November 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE MURDER OF MARY KELLY IN WHITECHAPEL,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* 17 November 1888, 310, in The British Newspaper Archive. “ANOTHER WHITECHAPEL HORROR,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 11 November 1888, 7, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>105</sup> “THE EAST END HORRORS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 18 November 1888, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>106</sup> “THE EAST END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 12 November 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>107</sup> “THE EAST END HORRORS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 18 November 1888, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive

## 2.8 CONCLUSION

In an editorial report, the *Daily Telegraph* situated Kelly's history in the physical space of Dorset Street, as though this social and material context explains her turn to prostitution. *Telegraph* editors describe her neighbourhood as one which

abounds in those whose features, language, and behaviour are such that the smallest vestige of self-respect, if any remained in Mary Jane Kelly, would be sufficient to distinguish her from the more degraded of her associates... It is the uniform testimony of local authorities that these evil surroundings are only remedied by wholesale demolitions, and that while they exist moral agencies are almost hopeless. They are whirlpools, and the poor and wretched are dragged into them.<sup>108</sup>

The *Telegraph* makes sense of the low-end prostitution engaged in by Kelly and the other Ripper victims as a logical extension of the practices of the men and women of their class. Women of the working poor selling their bodies is presented as one feature of a larger landscape impoverishment. By looking at the absence of functional distinctions between prostitution and female poverty in the histories of the Ripper victims, this research suggests that prostitution should be considered by historians, as it clearly was by the Victorians, as a class problem rather than just a moral evil. In reconsidering nineteenth-century prostitution not only as a gendered behaviour but also as a function of poverty, we will now turn to the other "folk devil" that emerges in press coverage of the Ripper murders: the male vagrant.

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<sup>108</sup> "THE EAST END TRAGEDIES," *The Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 336.

### CHAPTER 3 GUILTY OF “NOMAD VICES”: VAGRANTS AS RIPPER SUSPECTS

Even as late as October 1890, Scotland Yard and the metropolitan press were still in search of Jack the Ripper. That month, *Reynolds's* published a piece of correspondence from one Mr. Albert Backert, chairman of the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee, an association of residents who had patrolled the streets of Spitalfields, on the lookout for Jack the Ripper during the “Autumn of Terror.”<sup>1</sup> Backert asserted to editors at *Reynolds's* that he alone knew the identity of the East End killer, based on a confession made to him by a landlady who claimed that the Ripper had occupied rooms in her home. This anonymous woman divulged that her young tenant had no occupation, and “had not the appearance of a working man.” The lodger nevertheless “always seemed to have plenty of money,” as he had an allowance from his family who “would have nothing to do with him, as he had been a scapegrace.” After the last of the Ripper murders in 1888, the young man disappeared, “and has never returned,” though “he left a pair of silent shoes,” and a few blood-stained articles of clothing.<sup>2</sup>

A number of London papers published Backert's account of the strange lodger.<sup>3</sup> And yet, the treatment of the Ripper-lodger by editors at *Reynolds's* seems the most suggestive. Their article on Backert's Ripper suspect appears on the front page of *Reynolds's*, alongside a piece entitled, “THE UNEMPLOYED AGITATION.” This

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<sup>1</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 213-214.

<sup>2</sup> “THE JACK THE RIPPER SCARE,” *Reynolds's Newspaper* 12 October 1890, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>3</sup> “‘JACK THE RIPPER.’ A RIDICULOUS SCARE,” *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 19 October 1890, 9, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “HAVE JACK THE RIPPER'S LODGINGS BEEN FOUND?” *Pall Mall Gazette* 11 October 1890, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive. “‘JACK THE RIPPER' IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 18 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

second article reported on a recent demonstration of unemployed men in London which was summarily suppressed by one hundred City policemen.<sup>4</sup> This strategic juxtaposition of two seemingly disparate pieces of news suggests that, as unemployed men, both Ripper suspects and protesters posed a similar threat to the social and public order.

In Backert's account, two elements of the accused man's identity mark him as a vagrant and a plausible Ripper suspect. First, he was a lodger. In a city populated with low-end boarding houses, envisioned by critics as emblems of transience and urban vice, the lodger was a culturally suspect figure even prior to the Ripper murders.<sup>5</sup> Second, he was unemployed. His unemployment was a rejection of the Victorian masculine ideal of the middle-class breadwinner.<sup>6</sup> These two characteristics of transience and unemployment mark him as representative of the majority of the Ripper suspects identified by the police and the press in the wake of the killings. Indeed, I argue that Scotland Yard's investigation into the identity of the Ripper killer reveals Victorians' profound suspicion of vagrants, as those who are both transient and unemployed, in the metropolitan context.

Historians of the Whitechapel murders have tended to examine only Victorian conceptions of *female* sexuality. In particular, they suggest the brutal victimization of sex workers forced contemporaries to confront prostitution as one of the most fraught social

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<sup>4</sup> "THE UNEMPLOYED AGITATION," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 12 October 1891, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>5</sup> Amy Robinson, "Tinker, Tailor, Vagrant, Sailor: Colonial Mobility and the British Imperial State," (Ph.D diss., Stanford University, 2005), 10.

<sup>6</sup> Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, New Jersey and Oxford, England: Princeton University Press, 2004), 61.

problems of the period.<sup>7</sup> Little has been said, on the other hand, about the ways in which the search for Jack the Ripper brought anxieties about problematic male figures to the fore. One of the best-known features of the Ripper case is that no one was ever convicted for the killings. The *Daily News* complained in September 1888 that Scotland Yard's investigation had yielded little result, as "[t]he evidence they have offered is of the most elementary description. It hardly extends beyond the finding of the body."<sup>8</sup> Chief Inspector Donald Swanson was forced to concur in a confidential police report that "[t]he absence of motives which led to violence and of any scrap of evidence direct or circumstantial, left the police without the slightest shadow" of a clue as to the identity of the culprit.<sup>9</sup> In light of this paucity of evidence, Victorians defaulted to biases and stereotypes of threatening male behaviour that were already circulating in the public sphere. While many Ripperologists are intrigued by the "celebrity" Ripper candidates, drawn from the royal family and the Victorian literary elite, very few of these men appear in Scotland Yard's suspect files.<sup>10</sup> What actually appears in the evidence are accusations of men of virtually every class, creed and nationality. Just as Victorians viewed low-end urban prostitutes as a homogenous group, this diverse group of men were all tarred with the same brush of vagrancy.

While the five "canonical" Ripper victims were killed in the Autumn of 1888, possible culprits and suspicious deaths continued to be investigated by the police and the

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<sup>7</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 88-93. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 2. Warkentin, "Cherchez les Femmes," 26-33.

<sup>8</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS," *Daily News* 24 September 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>9</sup> Chief Inspector Donald S. Swanson, Police Report, 19 October 1888 in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 29.

<sup>10</sup> Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 592.

press until the turn of the century. In consulting 300 articles on the Ripper murders published in London papers between 1888 and 1900, in combination with police files on the Scotland Yard investigations, I have accumulated a sample of 95 Ripper suspects named in these sources (see Appendix). In identifying the groups of men regarded as suspect in the wake of the Ripper murders, it becomes apparent that the social problem of prostitution brought to the fore by the deaths of the Ripper's victims had its masculine equivalent in the folk devil of male vagrancy. Victorians accordingly accused men who exhibited the threatening vagrant behaviours of transience and unemployment in their search for Jack the Ripper

### **3.1 “NOMAD VICIES”: VAGRANTS, TRAMPS, LODGERS**

A full 45 percent of British men identified in my sample of Ripper suspects belonged to the amorphous “vagrant class,” populated by the unemployed, casual workers, and transient men. Victorians were immediately suspicious of these mobile populations, who circulated between cities, but also between the workhouse, the lodging house, and the streets. As early as September 1888, the editor of the *Times* observed that the nature of the Ripper murders led many to the conclusion that the killer must reside in one of the local lodging houses, “frequented by the poorest class of the ‘casual’ community.” Officials clearly shared in this suspicion. Police and press reports reveal that inmates of low-end lodging houses, workhouses, and asylums were routinely questioned as to their whereabouts on the nights on which the murders took place.<sup>11</sup> Investigators targeted these spaces because they represented points of contact between the murdered sex workers, who resided in low-end rented rooms, and the vagrant men who were regarded as

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<sup>11</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END,” *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive. Swanson, Police Report, 28.



potential killers. Victorians viewed men of the vagrant class with suspicion because, in the Victorian context, simply being unemployed and transient constituted criminal behaviour.<sup>12</sup>

While police questioned inmates of London workhouses and lodging houses, both institutions became self-policing during the hunt for Jack the Ripper. *The Times* reported in October 1888, for example, that the master of a workhouse in Elham, Kent, “had his suspicions excited over a casual who answered the description of the man wanted. . . . He gave three or four different names and most contradictory statements as to where he came from.” This unnamed casual inmate was detained by Scotland Yard purely on the basis of the workhouse master’s suspicions.<sup>13</sup> In November, after detectives “made a thorough search of casual wards in the East-end,” administrators at the Holborn workhouse communicated with police concerning the behaviour of one of their “rough-looking” inmates, Thomas Murphy.<sup>14</sup> At low-end lodging houses, too, residents turned in fellow lodgers to the police as possible Jack the Rippers if a man’s behaviour “aroused their suspicions.”<sup>15</sup>

Homeless men operating outside of the confines of the workhouse and the lodging house posed an even greater threat to public order. While workhouse inmates could be hidden and sequestered in the casual wards, outdoor vagrants made poverty visible to the

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<sup>12</sup> Mark Freeman and Gillian Nelson, introduction to *Vicarious Vagrants: Incognito Social Explorers and the Homeless in England, 1860-1910*, eds. Mark Freeman and Gillian Nelson (Lambertville, NJ: True Bill Press, 2008), 19.

<sup>13</sup> “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Times* 12 October 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>14</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER,” *London Standard* 12 November 1888, 3, in the British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>15</sup> “MORE MURDERS AT THE EAST END,” *The Times* 1 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

general population. In the summer of 1887, Sir Charles Warren, the Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, was confronted with this reality when large numbers of homeless people took up residence in Trafalgar Square.<sup>16</sup> Londoners were clearly anxious about the optics of the homeless settlement. One correspondent declared that the scene in Trafalgar Square was “about the most terrible sight of open-air human misery to be met with in Europe: and this under the eyes of the wealthiest visitors to London!”<sup>17</sup> Warren dispersed crowd of vagrants in a show of police violence that papers dubbed “Bloody Sunday.” This, too, was criticised by the press and the general public.<sup>18</sup> Drew Gray argues that police inquiries into the Ripper murders must be viewed as an extension of the Trafalgar Square debacle. The metropolitan police “entered the late summer of 1888 as targets of press criticism [as] a result of their mishandling of ... Trafalgar Square.”<sup>19</sup> Viewing the Ripper murders as part of a larger context of the police’s project to suppress the visibility of poverty – in the form of both prostitution and vagrancy – may account for the suspicion that was leveled against street vagrancy in the search for Jack the Ripper.

Living on the streets in London certainly left men exposed to police and community surveillance during the “Autumn of Terror.” Several men were arrested under the vague and all-encompassing rubric of “suspicion” after authorities or local residents deemed their behaviour to be irregular.<sup>20</sup> Police took into custody one man whose

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<sup>16</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 117.

<sup>17</sup> MEPO 2/181 letter to CW regarding the homeless in TS from Cavanaugh (29/7/1887) quoted in Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 117.

<sup>18</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 141.

<sup>19</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 118.

<sup>20</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS: OFFICIAL INQUIRIES AND NUMEROUS ARRESTS,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

movements “created suspicion among various persons.” *The Times* detailed the items found on his person when searched at the police station. His belongings included

a heap of rags, comprising pieces of fabrics, old and dirty linen, two purses of a kind usually used by women, two or three pocket handkerchiefs ... two small tin boxes, a small cardboard box, a small leather strap, which might serve the purpose of a garterstring, and one spring onion.<sup>21</sup>

While the press recorded these details as a curiosity, or a matter of “a singular character,”<sup>22</sup> it seems likely that this unknown man carried around his belongings as a matter of necessity, not knowing where he would sleep from one night to the next.

In addition to being exposed on the streets, vagrants and tramps were suspect more broadly because of their tendency to move from place to place. Changes in the prosecution of vagrancy that took place in the first quarter of the nineteenth century meant that men who strayed from their birthplace became a problem for the courts. A provision of the 1824 Vagrancy Act abolished the ancient tradition of returning men arrested as vagrants to their home parishes to be tried, convicted and jailed. Subsequent changes in the poor law also curtailed the “intensely local affair” of parish relief for vagrancy in favour of nationally administered poor relief.<sup>23</sup> These legislative shifts, Laura Croley argues, transformed poor relief and the prosecution of vagrancy from a local issue to a national concern, as it

created the impression of a roving band of rogues too large and unmanageable to settle. Parochial identity was replaced by criminal identity, and those convicted of

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<sup>21</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *The Times* 15 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE FIENDISH MURDER,” *Reynolds’s* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “LATEST EAST-END HORROR,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 September 1888, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>22</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *The Times* 15 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>23</sup> Robinson, “Colonial Mobility,” 64.

vagrancy became a faceless class rather than a group of individuals with a particular birthplace and history.<sup>24</sup>

The 1824 Vagrancy Act and poor law crystallized popular perceptions of vagrants' transience by removing their legal connections to their home communities. While parishes prior to 1824 may have objected to bearing the financial burden of local vagrants, the Vagrancy Act further detached vagrants from these communities, making them an even more isolated class within the Victorian popular imagination.

On a more practical level, statements given by men continually on the move carried less weight than those given by men rooted within their communities. When John Foster was questioned as a Ripper suspect, for example, he informed the police that

he had no fixed address. He arrived in [Belfast] from Greenlock, where he had spent two days, but he could not say where he stopped. Previous to that he was in Glasgow for four days, and before that he was in Edinburgh. He did not know how long he was there, nor did he know anyone living there.<sup>25</sup>

Foster's transience meant that no one was able to corroborate his version of events. The fact that he was discovered in a low-end lodging-house did not help his case.<sup>26</sup>

All of this conspired to make unemployed and transient men likely suspects in the Ripper investigations. Edward Quinn, identified by *Lloyd's* as a labourer, was brought to a London police station to be questioned on suspicion of being connected with the Ripper murders. When the police found no evidence to support this suspicion, they charged him with public drunkenness for his behaviour at the station. Quinn's testimony in court suggests that some Londoners accused vagrant men on the flimsiest of grounds. He

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<sup>24</sup> Laura Sagolla Croley, "A Working Distinction: Vagrants, Beggars, and the Labouring Poor in Mid-Victorian England," *Prose Studies* 18:1 (1995): 78-79.

<sup>25</sup> "THE EAST END MURDERS. MITRE SQUARE VERDICT," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 14 October 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>26</sup> "THE EAST END MURDERS. MITRE SQUARE VERDICT," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 14 October 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

complained before a Woolwich magistrate that he had been detained as Jack the Ripper by a man he encountered in a bar, simply because he “stumbled over something in the street just before, and had ... bled a good lot.” The same article reports of another complaint made by a man wrongfully accused of being Jack the Ripper. Thomas Mills, “a cabinet maker, with no fixed abode,” argued, when he was brought up at the Worship-street police court, also for public drunkenness, that he had turned to drink because he could get no work in light of the Ripper murders. Mills claimed that whenever he ventured outside, crowds accused him of being Jack the Ripper simply “because the *Police News* published a portrait of the man, and I’m like it. I was out looking for work, and whenever I go they say ‘That’s him!’ and I can’t get work, and I get a drop to drink, and then I get angry.” The fact that both men were well known in London police courts for earlier public nuisance charges did not earn them much sympathy from the magistrates.<sup>27</sup>

Nearly one fifth of all the Ripper suspects identified in my sample were explicitly drawn from the vagrant class of Victorian men. Furthermore, police and London press reports note that the majority of the other men accused of being Jack the Ripper shared in the “vagrant-like” characteristics of unemployment (or casual labour) and transience. It is these two behaviours that caused Victorians to view vagrants as a threat to public order and social stability. As scholars such as Croley and Rob Sindall have observed, transients, unemployed men and casual labourers engaged in “the ‘nomad’ vices that ran counter to middle-class, capitalist norms.”<sup>28</sup> Even among men not explicitly of the

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<sup>27</sup> “THE EAST END MURDERS,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 23 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>28</sup> Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 85. Sindall, *Street Violence*, 6.

vagrant class, those identified as potential Jack the Rippers generally shared in the vagrant behaviours that posed a threat to bourgeois ideals of settled domesticity.

### 3.2 “BRITONS FIRST”: FOREIGN RIPPER SUSPECTS

Within my sample of 95 men identified as Ripper suspects, 39 percent of the suspects were British, 40 percent were noted to be “foreign,” while the remainder are of unknown nationality. It is important to note that non-British born Londoners were still a minority population in the late-Victorian period.<sup>29</sup> The number of foreign Ripper candidates in this sample is therefore disproportionately large. Other historians have also noted the preponderance of non-British Ripper suspects, and have argued that racist, and particularly anti-Semitic, attitudes motivated many accusations against foreign men.<sup>30</sup> In making their case, historians draw upon Victorians’ claims in the coroners’ courts and the London press that no Englishman could be responsible for the murders.<sup>31</sup> Robert Haggard, for example, cites Chief Inspector Abberline’s feeling that “[s]exual maniacs of the type of the ‘Ripper’ were more to be found on the continent of Europe, or in Asia, than in Britain.”<sup>32</sup> Haggard utilizes these comments made by cultural authorities like Abberline as evidence of the anti-Semitism and xenophobia that came to the fore in Spitalfields in the wake of the murders.

While this thesis primarily explores questions of class and sexuality, there were undeniably racially-charged moments in the Victorians’ search for Jack the Ripper. In one bizarre instance in November 1888, the *Illustrated Police News* reported that London

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<sup>29</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 87.

<sup>30</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 127, 204.

<sup>31</sup> Nicholas Rance, “‘Jonathan’s Great Knife’: ‘Dracula’ Meets Jack the Ripper,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 30:2 (2002): 443. Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 244.

<sup>32</sup> Abberline quoted in Haggard, *Jack the Ripper*, 206.

police had arrested a man “with a blackened face” after a mob assembled and threatened to “lynch” him as Jack the Ripper.<sup>33</sup> There is no question that Victorians accused foreign men because they were racially distinct, and allowed them to believe that Jack the Ripper was a foreign import and bore no reflection on the British character. However, examination of the groups of foreign men that were identified as Ripper suspects reminds us that Victorian racial identities were strongly associated with particular labour identities. Native Britons experienced immigration to London in this period chiefly in these economic terms. While London in the 1880s did experience a spike in immigration, domestic workers viewed this influx in the worst terms possible, as unskilled and casual foreign workers flooded the market with cheap labour, deflating wages and increasing competition for work. As Gray observes, the “cry of ‘Britons first’ was commonly heard in the depressed economy of the 1880s.”<sup>34</sup> One of the predominant images of the Ripper provided by witnesses testifying at coroners’ inquests was that of a man of generally “foreign” appearance. Whitechapel resident Elizabeth Long testified to having seen a man speaking to a woman who might have been Annie Chapman as she passed through Hanbury-street early on the morning of 8 September. Long was questioned closely about the man’s appearance by the coroner:

Did he look like a working man, or what? – He looked like a foreigner.  
Did he look like a dock labourer, or what? – I should say he looked what I should call shabby-genteel.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> “ANOTHER WHITECHAPEL HORROR,” *Illustrated Police News* 17 November 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>34</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 70.

<sup>35</sup> “THE EAST END MURDERS.” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 23 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

Interestingly, when questioned about the man's labour status, Long replied with an assessment of his race, as though the two markers of identity were conflated in her mind. In equating foreignness with unskilled labour, Victorians conflated one threat to middle-class settled domesticity with another. Those who accused non-British men of being Jack the Ripper did so because these men often engaged in unreliable forms of work, so often associated in Victorians' minds with the folk devil of vagrancy.

### 3.3 "NO ENGLISHMAN DID IT": LEATHER APRON AND JEWISH SUSPECTS

Historians such as Haggard have been attentive to the fact Jewish men in particular were vilified by their neighbours for their suspected involvement in the murders.<sup>36</sup> Reported cries from East-End mobs in the wake of the murders, such as, "It was a Jew who did it!" and "No Englishman did it!" suggest that Jewish men were convenient scapegoats for anxious working-class populations.<sup>37</sup> In the sample of Ripper suspects used in this thesis, however, only 6 percent of accused foreign men were Jewish. Nevertheless, my own examination of the press coverage of the Ripper murders bears out this anti-Semitic argument, though to a lesser degree than what has perhaps been proposed by scholars like Haggard. In October 1888, *Lloyd's* published two articles investigating the killer's possible history and motivations. *Lloyd's* Vienna correspondent stated that

among certain fanatical Jews there existed a superstition to the effect that if a Jew became intimate with a Christian woman he would atone for his offence by slaying and mutilating the object of his passion. Sundry passages of the Talmud were quoted which ... expressly sanctioned this form of atonement.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Haggard, "Jack the Ripper," 199.

<sup>37</sup> "YESTERDAY'S WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY, LATEST PARTICULARS," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>38</sup> "AN AUSTRIAN PARALLEL," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.



A week later the paper speculated further on the collision of Old World mysticism with the industrialized metropolis: *Lloyd's* referred to a superstition held among German thieves that candles made of tallow rendered from the uterus and other female organs would “throw those upon whom it[s light] falls into the deepest slumbers, and they may, consequently, become a valuable instrument of the thieving profession.”<sup>39</sup> Such outlandish claims were publicly dismissed by Rabbi Hermann Adler in the press, and one wonders how seriously contemporaries treated these sensational stories.<sup>40</sup>

The most famous Jewish Ripper suspect among Victorians and twentieth-century scholars is John Pizer. Reporters referred to Pizer by the derogatory nickname, “Leather Apron,” which he wore in order to perform tasks in his occasional occupation as a boot finisher.<sup>41</sup> The fact that Pizer was given such a nickname suggests that reporters attempted to depict him as a kind of celebrity and folk devil, like Jack the Ripper himself. Early in the investigation of the murders, a number of Spitalfields prostitutes interviewed by the police identified Pizer as a likely candidate for Jack the Ripper. They “freely denounced” Pizer as a pimp and a bully; he extorted a portion of their earnings through sex work with the threat of physical force.<sup>42</sup> Such accusations resonated among contemporaries, who believed many Jewish men to be engaged in pimping and male

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<sup>39</sup> “A GERMAN SUPERSTITION,” *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 14 October 1888, 3, in the British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>40</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 237.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Ackroyd, introduction to *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 15.

<sup>42</sup> “THE BUCK'S ROW TRAGEDY,” *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

prostitution.<sup>43</sup> Such accusations of Jewish men as sexual deviants were also directed at male vagrants, who, in rejecting the middle-class ideal of the self-sufficient male worker and breadwinner, were also suspected of rejecting bourgeois sexual mores.<sup>44</sup>

It was not only Pizer's Jewishness, however, that left him vulnerable to suspicion in the eyes of the authorities and the general public. *The Pall Mall Gazette* identified Pizer as a transient figure, reporting that he "no settled place of residence, but ... slept oftenest in a fourpenny lodging-house of the lowest kind in a disreputable lane leading from Brick-lane."<sup>45</sup> Other papers took note of Pizer's itinerancy in a more fantastical way, passing on reports from neighbours that, though "[h]e ranges all over London," his footsteps are completely silent.<sup>46</sup> *Lloyd's* reported that East-End prostitutes said that "he moves noiselessly. His uncanny peculiarity to them is that they never seem to know of his presence until he is close by them."<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, Pizer's alibi for the night of the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, when Mary Ann Nicholls was murdered, consolidated his association with the mobile population of lodging-house residents. Pizer testified that on the night in question, he stayed "in a common lodging-house called the Round House, in Holloway-road."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Anne J. Kershen, "The immigrant community in Whitechapel at the time of the Ripper murders," in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 92.

<sup>44</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 61.

<sup>45</sup> "THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END," *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>46</sup> "THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END," *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>47</sup> "THE BUCK'S ROW TRAGEDY," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. "THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END," *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>48</sup> "THE FIENDISH MURDER," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

Pizer's residence in London lodging houses, those "emblems of transience,"<sup>49</sup> only confirmed for newspaper readers cultural associations that already existed between Jewish immigrants and lodging house culture. During the fall of 1888, *Reynolds's* reported that police made house-to-house visits among Jewish families in the East End. Officers asked

the following questions: Have you any lodgers? How many? What are their names? How long have they been living with you? Are they your friends, relatives, or assistants in your work? Are they respectable? Can you give the names of the lodgers that left you, and the cause of leaving? Did they leave friendly or otherwise? Were they respectable? All the answers to these questions are entered in a small note-book.<sup>50</sup>

These interrogations suggest that Scotland Yard suspected that Spitalfields Jews were earning extra money by lodging tenants, and possibly Jack the Ripper. The majority of the East End Jewish community, however, engaged in "seasonal, casual, semi-skilled sweated trades."<sup>51</sup> Landlords and other officials regarded these working-class Jews as among the least desirable and most impoverished lodging-house tenants.<sup>52</sup> When Joseph Isaacs, a "Polish Jew" and lodging-house resident, was arrested on suspicion of being Jack the Ripper in December 1888, the story was picked up by the *London Evening News*, *Reynolds's*, and *Lloyd's*.<sup>53</sup> This single arrest may have received such heavy

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<sup>49</sup> Robinson, "Colonial Mobility," 10.

<sup>50</sup> "THE EAST END MURDERS," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 21 October 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>51</sup> Kershen, "The immigrant community in Whitechapel," 85.

<sup>52</sup> Kershen, "The immigrant community in Whitechapel," 74-75

<sup>53</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS," *London Evening News* 8 December 1888, in the British Newspaper Archive. "THE EAST END MURDERS," *Reynolds's Newspaper* 9 December 1888, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive. "THE EAST END MURDERS," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 9 December 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

coverage in the London press because it confirmed bourgeois stereotypes about the Jewish lodging house tenant

The pre-existing visions of the Jewish vagrant lodger were sufficiently negative that, by 1885, Anglo-Jewish philanthropists in Whitechapel had founded the Poor Jews Temporary Shelter in Leman Street, near Whitechapel Road. The shelter was established in order to “prevent their making demands on the public purse via institutions such as the workhouse” and the lodging house. The shelter was primarily used by Jewish travellers who stopped temporarily in London but were ultimately looking to settle in North America and South Africa.<sup>54</sup> Native Britons perceived the Jewish immigrants who settled in London to be contributing to the vagrant class in Britain. Jewish migrants who simply passed through on their way to other locales, on the other hand, may also have been viewed in negative terms as transitory populations.

Such suspicions of continental Jewish communities were exacerbated by the murder of Elizabeth Stride, whose body was found behind the International Workmen’s Educational Club. Several London papers made note of the fact that the club was “an offshoot of the Socialist League and a rendezvous of a number of foreign residents, chiefly Russians, Poles, and Continental Jews of various nationalities.”<sup>55</sup> Jewish East-enders who lived and worked at the club were questioned closely at the inquest on Stride’s body.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Kershen, “The immigrant community in Whitechapel,” 71.

<sup>55</sup> “MORE MURDERS AT THE EAST-END,” *The Times* 1 October 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 2 October 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 6 October 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END ATROCITIES,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>56</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 6 October 1888, 2, in the British Newspaper Archive.

The spectre of socialism was certainly racialised as a continental Jewish phenomenon in the Victorian period.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps more importantly in this context, however, the conflation of Judaism with socialism, concerned as it was with social justice for members of the working poor, further consolidated Victorian perceptions of Jewishness and race more generally as a labour category.

### **3.4 LASCARS, MALAYS, AND IMPERIAL SOLDIERS**

The impulse to identify Jack the Ripper as “foreign” drew upon the growing visibility of imperial immigration and labour mobility in London as the hub of Empire. According to Amy Robinson, “[t]he mounting utilization of imperial spaces and imperial infrastructure by a diverse and growing number of people contributed to an atmosphere of border anxiety” in the late-Victorian period.<sup>58</sup> One figure became increasingly visible in taking advantage of the opportunities for mobility throughout Britain and the Empire: the imperial sailor.

While, as Jonathan Hyslop observes, the racial diversity of the Merchant Marine was “pivotal to holding together the [imperial] economy,”<sup>59</sup> the fallout from the Ripper killings reveals discomfort with the heightened visibility of foreign seamen in the metropole. Over one quarter of non-British Ripper suspects identified in my sample were noted to be sailors. The number of seamen identified is not surprising, given the spatial proximity established between sailors, public houses, and prostitution with the

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<sup>57</sup> Gray, *London's Shadows*, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Robinson, “Colonial Mobility,” 40.

<sup>59</sup> Jonathan Hyslop, “Steamship Empire: Asian, African and British Sailors in the Merchant Marine c. 1880-1945,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44:1 (2009): 53.

construction of the “vast modern docks complex” in east London earlier in the century.<sup>60</sup> British police and Victorians more generally drew upon common racial stereotypes in giving voice to such suspicions. One correspondent informed readers of the *Pall Mall Gazette* that Jack the Ripper must be a “Malay,” a term used as a catch-all for Asian and East African seamen.<sup>61</sup> The correspondent’s speculation was based on the word of so-called authorities who characterized the “Malay race” as “extremely vindictive, treacherous, and ferocious, implacable in their revenge, and on the slightest, or imaginary insult, will commit murder.”<sup>62</sup>

And yet, closer examination of how Victorians talked about the imperial sailors accused of being Jack the Ripper suggests that Londoners viewed these exotic figures through the lenses of class and labour, rather than in purely racial terms. Martin Wiener has observed that, over the course of the century, crews of British ships were increasingly manned by colonial subjects, as employers were attracted to their cheap labour and perceived docility. The introduction of the steam ship accelerated this trend, as the expertise of the British seaman in the age of sail gave way to the ready and “unskilled” labour of the Lascar and the Malay.<sup>63</sup> On board ship, then, foreign sailors were treated as casual workers. Once in dock in London, these men were also transient. Native Britons therefore saw imperial sailors as posing a similar threat to public order posed by other vagrant men.

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<sup>60</sup> John Marriott, “The imaginative geography of the Whitechapel murders,” in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 44-47.

<sup>61</sup> Hyslop, “Steamship Empire,” 54

<sup>62</sup> “IS THE MURDERER A MALAY?” *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 November 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>63</sup> Martin J. Wiener, *An Empire on Trial: Race, Murder and Justice under British Rule, 1870-1935* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 22-23.

In October 1888, a number of metropolitan papers reprinted a telegram from Reuters to the Central News Agency.<sup>64</sup> An English sailor in New York by the name of Dodge claimed that upon arrival in London from China, he encountered, at a popular music-hall, a Malay cook named Alaska. Like the *Gazette* correspondent, Dodge emphasized the proclivity of the Malay race for violent forms of revenge: “The Malay said he had been robbed by women of bad character in Whitechapel, and swore that unless he found the thief he would murder every Whitechapel woman he met.” Dodge gave a physical description of Alaska, observing that he was “of course, very dark.”<sup>65</sup> No further inquiries into the identity of Alaska or Dodge were reported. Press interest in Dodge’s sordid account can likely be attributed to the fact that the story of Alaska confirmed perceptions of the imperial sailor that were already in place before the Ripper murders. Additionally, as a ship’s cook, Alaska would have taken on some of the most menial and unskilled tasks available on board ship.<sup>66</sup> His engagement in unskilled labour aligned him with the vagrant class in which Victorians grouped other foreign sailors.

Scotland Yard’s investigation of the Ripper murders seems to have been informed by similar ideas about foreign sailors. In the absence of concrete leads on the identity of the East End killer, officers were instructed by their superiors to question as a matter of course “sailors on board ships in the Docks or river.” “Extended inquiry” was also made

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<sup>64</sup> “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *Morning Post* 6 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive. “STORY FROM NEW YORK,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 7 October 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “STRANGE STATEMENT FROM NEW YORK,” *Illustrated Police News* 20 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>65</sup> “THE EAST END MURDERS,” *Morning Post* 6 October 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>66</sup> Wiener, *Empire on Trial*, 29-30.

“as to asiatics present in London” at a number of refuges for Asian labourers in the city.<sup>67</sup> For example, early in September 1888 a Japanese sailor named Sopiwajan was accused of assault occurring outside Stranger’s Home for Asiatics, a lodging-house in the East End used by foreign sailors. The “prosecutrix” Ellen Norton testified that she was in the Coach and Horses beershop when she heard her friend screaming from the nearby Stranger’s Home. Norton stated that Sopiwajan was harassing her friend; he reportedly said to her, “If you go away from me tonight I will rip you up the same as the woman was served up in Whitechapel-road.”<sup>68</sup> Such conflicts between these two gendered communities of sailors and prostitutes were not uncommon in the shared spaces of the East End. Stories of seamen who turned violent after being fleeced of their earnings by sex workers were common in this period. Charles Booth’s famous multi-volume statistical analysis of poverty in East London *Life and Labour of the People in London* refers to so-called “land-sharks’ – crimps and loose women – who subsist by plundering” the sailor’s wages.<sup>69</sup> In January 1889, for example, John Henry Gubee, ship’s steward and native of Delhi, was tried at the Thames Police Court for “attempting to murder Rose Elizabeth Payne, an unfortunate,” after she called him a “coolie.”<sup>70</sup> As the result of all this, and with the weight of prejudice, Sopiwajan’s nationality, vocation, and

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<sup>67</sup> Donald Swanson, Report to Home Office, 19 October 1888, in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 125.

<sup>68</sup> “Police-Courts Columns,” *The Times* 14 September 1888, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London vol. VII: Population Classified by Trades* (London and New York: 1896), 359.

<sup>70</sup> “ATTEMPT TO MURDER A WOMAN,” *Illustrated Police News* 19 January 1889, 3, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.



presence in London were sufficient cause for suspicion in the eyes of Scotland Yard: he was questioned as a Ripper suspect.<sup>71</sup>

As the number of colonial sailors increased after the Napoleonic Wars, desertion became an issue as many sailors decided to become permanent immigrants, never returning to their ships after shore leave in London.<sup>72</sup> In response, Parliament legislated, through the Merchant Shipping Act of 1823, that “Indian seamen were not British subjects and were not entitled to become so. Its successor Act of 1854 went further and required Asians hired for voyages henceforth to agree to return afterwards to their country of origin.”<sup>73</sup> The establishment of the Stranger’s Home was in fact intended to solve the “problem” of vagrancy associated with foreign sailors in London. According to Rozina Visram, the Home

served a triple purpose. First it was a lodging house for foreign sailors ... Second, it was a repatriation centre, providing employment on ships returning to the East for any wandering Asian sailor. And finally, it was used as a centre for propagating the Christian gospel among the sailors.<sup>74</sup>

The idea of founding such a home was first discussed in 1855, when a group of “gentlemen” met to discuss the possibility at the London Tavern in Bishopsgate Street.<sup>75</sup>

The gentlemen at the Tavern acknowledged that foreign sailors “were ‘brought in the service of our merchants to navigate our ships, and to contribute to swell the tide of

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<sup>71</sup> “Police-Courts Columns,” *The Times* 14 September 1888, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive. Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 90

<sup>72</sup> Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: Indians in Britain 1700-1947* (London and Sydney: Pluto Press, 1986), 40.

<sup>73</sup> Wiener, *An Empire on Trial*, 23.

<sup>74</sup> Visram, *Indians in Britain*, 49.

<sup>75</sup> “Stranger’s Home,” *The Sailor’s Magazine and Naval Journal* XVII (August 1855): 37-39.

wealth poured upon our shores.”<sup>76</sup> They nevertheless recognised at the same meeting that ““Asian mendacity”” was a social evil exacerbated by the influx of imperial seamen in London.<sup>77</sup> In June 1857 the “Strangers Home for Asiatics, Africans, and South Sea Islanders and others occasionally residing in the Metropolis” opened in Limehouse. The Home was an essential mechanism in the repatriation of imperial sailors in London.

In addition to such perceptions of “Asian mendacity,” imperial seamen, even when actively employed as sailors, were vulnerable to suspicion. The visibility of their movements to and from London on board ship meant that Victorians strongly associated even their employment, paradoxically, with the “vagrant-like” quality of transience. The possibility that the murders could have been committed by sailors regularly in port at London was pointed to on a number of occasions in the press, as it was observed that the dates of the killings, which tended to occur at the beginning or end of the month, formed a pattern mimicking the movements of vessels of trade.<sup>78</sup> In 1892, *Reynolds’s* published the views of an anonymous “gentleman” who believed the culprits to be Portuguese seaman. This informant observed that “the murders invariably occurred just after two vessels, trading cattle from Oporto to London, had arrived in the docks, and at no other times, except in one instance.”<sup>79</sup> Such theories were taken seriously enough by Victorian authorities that as late as 1889 the Thames Police continued to board vessels in the

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<sup>76</sup> *Report of a Meeting for the Establishment of A ‘Stranger’s Home’ for Asiatics, Africans, and South-Sea Islanders and Others, Occasionally Residing in the Metropolis* (March 1855), 19, quoted in Visram, *Indians in Britain*, 34.

<sup>77</sup> *Report of a Meeting*, 9, quoted in Visram, *Indians in Britain*, 48.

<sup>78</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 18 July 1889, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 21 February 1892, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>79</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 21 February 1892, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

Thames and in dock, in search of Jack the Ripper, paying particular attention to “cattle boats from Spain and America.”<sup>80</sup> Although technically imperial seamen were employed by the British Navy in the Merchant Marine, Victorians still defined their vocation in terms of transience and unskilled labour.

### 3.5 “I’M LIVING ANYWHERE”: IMPERIAL TRAVELLERS

As we have established, many Ripper suspects were identified as “foreign,” or, perhaps most importantly, men who were not British. Many of these men nevertheless shared a masculine status defined in class and labour terms, rather than simply along racial lines. Whether as sailors, travellers, or immigrants, they were strongly associated in newspaper accounts and police reports with unemployment and transience, both vagrant behaviours. Among *British* Ripper suspects, too, transient figures were over-represented. Roughly one quarter of the British Ripper suspects identified between 1888 and 1900 had histories of movement throughout the British Empire, as travellers, immigrants, and workers. The preponderance of men with imperial connections among Ripper suspects is consistent with contemporary perceptions that the imperial project was a largely masculine one in the era of New Imperialism. As Bradley Deane observes, “[m]en made the Empire [and] the Empire made men. ... the two were mutually constitutive, they both made and reaffirmed each other.”<sup>81</sup> While men comprised about 60 per cent of all emigrants from Britain over the course of the century, John Tosh notes that after midcentury, the proportion of single men emigrating to the colonies rose at the expense of families and

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<sup>80</sup> *The New York Herald* quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 489.

<sup>81</sup> Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Literature, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 1.

couples.<sup>82</sup> Recent scholarship on New Imperialism has emphasized the Victorian tendency to lionize the manly imperial adventurer.<sup>83</sup> This “masculinisation” of emigration enabled the performance of an approved masculine identity: “the act of emigration itself required a convincing display of masculine attributes – the qualities of self-reliance and perseverance which were integral to popular understandings of ‘manliness.’”<sup>84</sup> However, study of the Ripper suspects with histories in the colonies problematises this laudatory narrative, as these men were also treated as vagrant figures whose forays into imperial adventure threatened the Victorian ideal of settled domesticity.

The purported threat that emigration posed to Victorian domesticity can be seen in the “agony columns” of London newspapers that, interestingly, appeared alongside the press coverage of the Ripper murders in the late-Victorian period. After the popularization of the press with the abolition of taxes on knowledge, many high-circulation papers began to feature sections in which readers could correspond with one another, or seek out missing family and friends.<sup>85</sup> Consultation of these personal columns reveals that many of the individuals being sought were single men who left Britain for the colonies. In the 14 October, 1888, edition of *Lloyd’s* for example, the same edition in which a report on the Catherine Eddowes inquest was printed, there is a personal column, titled “LONG LOST RELATIVES.” Here, the reader learns that news was sought of

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<sup>82</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-century Britain: Essays on Gender, Family and Empire* (Harlow, England: Pearson Education, 2005), 176.

<sup>83</sup> Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism*, 6-7. See, for example, J.A. Mangan, “Duty unto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of New Imperialism,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 27:1-2 (January-February 2010): 124-149. Brad Beaven, “The Provincial Press, Civic Ceremony and the Citizen-Soldier During the Boer War, 1899-1902: A Study of Local Patriotism,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37:2 (June 2009): 207-228.

<sup>84</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 177.

<sup>85</sup> Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers*, 16.

George Ray, “who left Dover in the Down for Sydney in 1876,” by his relations. Such notices were commonplace in the press after mid-century; they publicised not only the distress and dispersal of individual families, but also the extent of movement throughout the Empire among British men. In rejecting their families in favour of imperial adventure, these men also rejected the family values espoused by the Victorian ideal of settled domesticity.

Among politicians and imperial administrators, colonization was justified as a “civilising mission,” as colonized populations were made to conform to Western moral standards. One of the central emblems of British moral superiority over colonized peoples was the treatment of women. Practices such as *sati* and prostitution in India and other colonies were treated as evidence of the necessity of British intervention.<sup>86</sup> The spectacular victimization of a class of informally tolerated prostitutes in the heart of the metropole unsettled Victorians’ self-image as protectors of female chastity. Critics compared the Ripper murders to the infamous Indian Uprising of 1857, in which – at least in the British popular imagination – British women and children were raped and brutalized by “savage” rebels.<sup>87</sup> H. J. Tibbatts drew a comparison between the two events in a letter to the editor of the *City Press*: “[t]hirty years ago one used to read with a shudder the barbarities practised during the Indian Mutiny upon defenceless women and children; but nothing can be much worse than what has happened here in Christian

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<sup>86</sup> Philippa Levine, “‘A Multitude of Unchaste Women’: Prostitution in the British Empire,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15:4 (Winter 2003): 160.

<sup>87</sup> Nancy L. Paxton, “Mobilizing Chivalry: Rape in British Novels about the Indian Uprising,” *Victorian Studies* 36:1 (Autumn 1992): 6.

England.”<sup>88</sup> The killings destabilised Victorians’ understanding of the relationship between masculine honour and Empire.

My sample of Ripper suspects suggests that collective suspicions of masculine imperialism crossed class boundaries, as unskilled labourers and middle-class professionals alike with histories in the colonies were identified as potential murderers. On the lower-class end of the spectrum, in July 1889 William Wallace Brodie, described as “a tall, powerfully-built man” with “no occupation or fixed abode” confessed to a number of the Ripper killings, as well as the recent murder Alice McKenzie. *Reynolds’s* observed that Brodie had served fourteen years’ of penal servitude for larceny and had worked in a diamond mine in South Africa before returning to Britain.<sup>89</sup> Gray investigated the veracity of Brodie’s own account of his past. While he could find no record of William Brodie appearing at the Old Bailey in the 1870s, he did find a William Broder, who was sentenced to fourteen years for theft. Interestingly, the trial records of the Broder case reveal that William may have been a prostitute as well as a thief. According to Gray, “[i]n the previous case Broder had met a man, Frederick Hebden, at the Alhambra Palace and accompanied him back to his chambers near Leicester Square. Hebden expressed surprise to find Broder in bed with him in the morning.”<sup>90</sup> Once it was discovered in 1889 that Brodie had also confessed to murders he did not commit in Kimberley, South Africa, the police dropped the murder charges against him, but ultimately arrested him for fraud.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Tibbatts quoted in Marriott, “The imaginative geography,” 56.

<sup>89</sup> “JACK THE RIPPER,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 28 July 1889, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>90</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 50.

<sup>91</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 50.

Another suspect popular among “Ripperologists” today is Thomas Haye Cutbush. Cutbush’s status as a “recently detained lunatic who stabbed and attempt[ed] to stab two women in Kennington,” may have been sufficient to warrant police investigation: he was detained as an inmate of Broadmoor Asylum between 1891 and 1903.<sup>92</sup> His time in the colonies was, nevertheless, also noted as a source of suspicion. According to police reports, Cutbush “had been employed as a clerk and traveller in the Tea trade at the Minories.” It was there that he apparently contracted syphilis around 1888 and, since that time, he had “led an idle and useless life.”<sup>93</sup>

Cutbush’s colonial migrant background prior to his descent into syphilitic madness highlights the fact that the behaviour of respectable Britons in the colonies, too, was subject to suspicion. In October 1888 metropolitan papers picked up a story of Jack the Ripper told by Thomas Ryan, who operated a Cabman’s refuge in London. A man who identified himself in the refuge’s register as “J. Duncan, doctor,” gave his history to Ryan: he had spent time in India, but, in his words, he “came back from India and got in trouble at once” with women. While scholars such as Christopher Frayling argue that Victorians immediately suspected that the killer must be a doctor, it is interesting to note that Dr. Duncan is in fact one of only a handful of medical professionals identified in my sample of Ripper suspects.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, one of the most chilling details of Ryan’s tale was not Duncan’s professional status, but the way in which he proudly claimed his

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<sup>92</sup> Sir Melville McNaghten, Police Report, 23 February 1894, in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 583. For modern-day discussions of Cutbush’s Ripper candidacy, see Wendy Moore and Ben Leach, “Broadmoor files could unmask Jack the Ripper,” *The Telegraph* 8 November 2008, online. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstoppers/howaboutthat/3407268/Broadmoor-files-could-unmask-Jack-the-Ripper.html>.

<sup>93</sup> Sir Melville McNaghten, Police Report, 583.

<sup>94</sup> Frayling, “The house that Jack built,” 16-17.

rootlessness. When asked why he did not record his address in the register, Duncan “replied, ‘I have no fixed place of abode at present. I’m living anywhere.’”<sup>95</sup>

Frederick Bailey Deeming took the masculine fantasy of starting life afresh in the colonies and turned it into a horrific justification for murder. In 1891 Deeming killed his wife and children in Liverpool, burying their bodies under the floorboards of their home in Rainhill, Liverpool. He shortly thereafter emigrated to Australia with his new wife. He was executed for his crimes in Australia in 1892.<sup>96</sup> As with many of the infamous British murderers to follow after Jack the Ripper, London papers suggested that Deeming was likely responsible for the Ripper killings as well.<sup>97</sup> In retrospect, *The Graphic* observed of the Rainhill and Ripper murders that “[t]here was no similarity whatever between the two series of crimes; they differed entirely in every detail. Where the resemblance came in was in both being the work of some monster to whom all human feeling was absolutely dead.”<sup>98</sup> At the height of the publicity over the Deeming case, *Lloyd’s* devoted its entire front page to plotting out minutely Deeming’s movements between Britain and the colonies, in order to establish him as a plausible Ripper suspect. Deeming’s transience was mapped onto his history of fraudulence, as though the two were inextricably linked. To begin with, *Lloyd’s* observed that Deeming “went to sea at an early age,” so that his

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<sup>95</sup> *Newcastle Chronicle* quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 300-301.

<sup>96</sup> Evans and Skinner, *Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 577. “FREDERICK BAYLEY DEEMING,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 27 March 1892, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>97</sup> Evans and Skinner, *Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 577. It was reported that Deeming also confessed to killing Alice McKenzie and Frances Coles, two murders which were attributed by some contemporaries to Jack the Ripper. “DEEMING CONFESSES TO TWO WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 27 March 1892, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>98</sup> “THE RAINHILL MURDERS,” *The Graphic* 26 March 1892, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive.



association with mobility was established early. The article reports that Deeming was also suspected of theft and fraud in Sydney, Adelaide, Cape Town, Durban, and South America. His whereabouts during 1888, the year of the Ripper murders, it is noted in bold capitals, are “UNKNOWN.”<sup>99</sup>

### **3.6 “I AM SUSPECT, THOU ART SUSPECT”: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE INVESTIGATIONS**

Of the 95 suspects surveyed, 32 percent were identified solely by the police, but 35 percent of suspects were brought to Scotland Yard’s attention by ordinary men and women, particularly members of the Whitechapel community. Another 21 percent of Ripper candidates were suggested to authorities by the press. This roughly equal distribution between police authorities, working-class East Enders and journalists is suggestive. It suggests that that this profile of the violent Victorian man was not one constructed solely by the authorities, nor by representations in the press, but was also equally accepted and propagated by members of the general public.

Journalists and police officials actually expressed frustration at citizens’ outpouring of advice and identifications in the pursuit of Jack the Ripper. *The Morning Post*’s report of 2 October 1888 reflects the extent to which Jack the Ripper had captured the popular imagination, observing that “[t]heories, of course, abound, and everybody who can twist the most ordinary occurrence so that it may appear to have the remotest connection with the crime hastens to communicate it to a police officer.”<sup>100</sup> *The Graphic*, one of London’s weekly illustrated papers, likened the search for Jack the Ripper to a

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<sup>99</sup> “FREDERICK BAYLEY DEEMING,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 27 March 1892, 1, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>100</sup> “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Morning Post* 2 October 1888, 2, in the British Newspaper Archive.

kind of witch-hunt not seen since the French Revolution, quipping, “[i]t is as during the Reign of Terror in France, – ‘I am suspect, thou art suspect, he is suspect!’”<sup>101</sup> Concerned citizens from outside of London, too, took part in the search for the Ripper by correspondence. In October 1888, *Lloyd’s* reported that

London has been suffering from a plethora of amateur detectives, the authorities being harassed with the best of intentions by a legion of correspondents. As many as 80 communications from every possible part of the country have arrived daily at the East-end District Police office.<sup>102</sup>

Newspaper readers from all over Britain, but particularly London, took an avid interest in the Ripper murders, seeking out the perpetrator.

The involvement of the working classes in bringing forward Ripper suspects may seem surprising, as informants were essentially turning in their class peers to the authorities. The work of Gareth Stedman Jones and Laura Croley suggests, however, that working-class Londoners may have identified potential Jack the Rippers as a means of acquiring social capital. According to Jones and Croley, “respectable” working-class men and women in this period sought to distinguish themselves from their disreputable neighbours and peers by vilifying them as rootless vagrants.<sup>103</sup> Working men in Spitalfields also attempted to differentiate themselves from the class of vagrant men through a kind of vigilante policing of the public spaces in their community. In the autumn of 1888, Spitalfields men established a number of Vigilance Committees to assist in the search for Jack the Ripper. From the moment that authorities identified the string of killings as the work of a serial killer, men in Spitalfields expressed “a genuine desire” to

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<sup>101</sup> “MURDER-PANIC,” *The Graphic* 13 October 1888, 4, in the British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>102</sup> “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 14 October 1888, 1, in the British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>103</sup> Stedman Jones paraphrased in Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 75-76.

help capture Jack the Ripper.<sup>104</sup> In covering these groups' activities, London papers noted that they were populated by "tradesmen," suggesting that they were all working men.<sup>105</sup> Ripper suspects identified by police, press and populous between 1888 and 1900 all engaged in threatening vagrant behaviours. In contrast, the respectable men of the Vigilance Committees were distinguished by their engagement in honest work.

### 3.7 CONCLUSION

Victorians' suspicions of the class behaviours of male vagrants were not exceptional to the Ripper murders. Rather, press coverage of the Spitalfields murders offers a case study of these suspicions. This study highlights how contemporaries viewed vagrant men *and* prostitutes (as vagrant women) as sexualised folk devils, capable of committing, or being the victims of, "lust murder."<sup>106</sup> Vagrant men were overrepresented among Ripper suspects because they, like prostitutes, posed a threat to the public and sexual order of Victorian society throughout the period. In identifying suspicious characters who could plausibly be Jack the Ripper, Victorians drew upon latent prejudices against men who failed to meet masculine standards of work and settled domesticity. Beyond the realm of representations offered by the press, transient and unemployed men were treated as social problems in national and metropolitan legislation well before 1888. In the next chapter, we will move beyond our examination of the popular cultural representations of Ripper suspects and victims to a social historical account of why these twin folk devils of the late-Victorian press must be studied together in order to properly understand the origins of the Ripper media sensation: both victim and suspect belonged to the same class of

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<sup>104</sup> Haggard, "Jack the Ripper," 213.

<sup>105</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER," *The Times* 12 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>106</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 8.

working poor and were controlled under the same legislation, as male and female vagrants.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**“A CONNECTION NOT TO BE WONDERED AT”: PROSTITUTES AND  
PAUPERS AS THE VICTORIAN VAGRANT CLASS**

Victorians imagined prostitutes and vagrant men together, as gendered members of avagrant class, in more than just the popular cultural space of the London press in the wake of the Ripper murders. Beginning with the Vagrancy Act of 1824, and continuing throughout the century, British public policy systematically treated sex workers and unemployed transient men as vagrants and, therefore, as threats to public order. Three spaces in particular were imagined by nineteenth-century legislation to be the domain of vagrants: the streets, the common lodging house, and the workhouse. In examining the experiences of men and women of the working poor in these culturally loaded spaces, we must now turn from popular cultural imaginings of vagrancy to representations of gendered poverty offered up by the Victorian legal system.

Tracing the legal policies put in place over the course of the century reveals a threefold process of dealing with vagrant populations that can be mapped onto the spaces which vagrants were imagined to share. First, between 1824 and 1839, changes in both the poor law and criminal law built upon existing definitions of vagrants as a distinct class by locating them in the streets, as a problem for the public sphere. Second, sanitary and housing legislation introduced around mid-century recognised the common lodging house as an extension of the streets, where men and women of the vagrant class sporadically resided. Sanitary reformers attempted to transform the transient world of the boarding house into an acceptably bourgeois, domesticated space. Third, a more radical Victorian legislative impulse was to force vagrants into such domestic environments through the workhouse. Attempts to identify and spatially segregate the vagrant lend to a

harsher criminalisation of vagrant behaviours toward the end of the century, with the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 and the 1898 amendment to the Vagrancy Act.

#### **4.1 “UNRULY, IMMORAL, AND OFFENSIVE BEHAVIOUR”: VAGRANCY IN THE STREETS**

National vagrancy and poor laws enacted in the first third of the nineteenth century formed the basis for many of the common experiences shared between the prostitute and the vagrant throughout the Victorian period. The 1824 Vagrancy Act was “conventionally viewed as ‘the penal side of the poor laws,’”<sup>1</sup> and defined pauperism and prostitution, practiced to the annoyance of others, as a public nuisance. As discussed in Chapter Two, the Act did away with the legal convention of returning men and women arrested as vagrants to their home parishes for prosecution.<sup>2</sup> This alteration reflected Victorian legislators’ shifting definitions of poverty and vagrancy. No longer part of the larger social fabric of local communities, vagrancy was defined as a class apart from simple poverty. As members of this new vagrant class, prostitutes and paupers were treated as a distinct socioeconomic type and as a national social problem.

Definitions of who belonged to this vagrant class were, nevertheless, hazy. The 1824 Act enabled the courts to prosecute sex workers and homeless men for engaging in disorderly conduct in public. The ambiguity of what constituted disorderly or “unruly, immoral, and offensive behaviour”<sup>3</sup> gave police latitude in terms of who they could prosecute, such that the Act “has been described as ‘one of the most flexible, useful, and

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<sup>1</sup> M. J. D. Roberts, “Public and Private in Early Nineteenth-Century London: The Vagrant Act of 1822 and Its Enforcement,” *Social History* 13:3 (October 1988): 281.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson, “Colonial Mobility,” 64. Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 78-79

<sup>3</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 6.

criminal-making statutes of the century.”<sup>4</sup> M. D. R. Nelles has observed that the Act’s broad definition of vagrancy “significantly reshaped the legal definition of a ‘vagrant.’ The term now implied a lengthy catch-all of crime, and enabled authorities to apprehend a broad spectrum of undesirables.”<sup>5</sup> Victorians, then, had an imprecise and broadly encompassing sense of what constituted vagrancy. Julie-Marie Strange notes “the expansive nomenclature for the vagrant” in the Victorian vocabulary, and argues that these definitions carried different moral significances, but were also fluid.<sup>6</sup> The tramp, the pauper, the vagabond, the homeless, and even the prostitute were interchangeable figures that all represented the same cultural anxieties about the idea of vagrancy. Whatever name was given to vagrancy, in series of legislative maneuvers, Parliament identified prostitutes and male vagrants as gendered manifestations of the same form of public disorder.

As a legally-defined vagrant and an undesirable, “any prostitute behaving in a riotous or indecent manner in a public place was liable to a fine or imprisonment” under the 1824 Act.<sup>7</sup> The Metropolitan Police Act of 1839 followed shortly thereafter. Robert Peel’s Police Act further consolidated the 1824 Act’s association of prostitutes or paupers with public disorderliness. The Police Act designated solicitation as a public nuisance, as it prohibited “any ‘common prostitute’ from soliciting to the annoyance of inhabitants” or passers-by.<sup>8</sup> Paupers who disturbed public order could also be charged under the

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<sup>4</sup> Roberts, “The Vagrant Act of 1822,” 289.

<sup>5</sup> M.D.R. Nelles, “Vagrancy in Hampshire and the Unsuccessful Response of the Authorities, 1770-1870,” *Southern History* 35 (2013): 90.

<sup>6</sup> Strange, “Tramp,” 243.

<sup>7</sup> Julia A. Laite, “Taking Nellie Johnson’s Fingerprints: Prostitutes and Legal Identity in Early Twentieth-Century London,” *History Workshop Journal* 65 (2008): 98.

<sup>8</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 6.

Vagrancy or Metropolitan Police Act.<sup>9</sup> At the very moment of the foundation of the Metropolitan Police and the very idea of policing, then, their mandate to regulate the behaviour of vagrants (including prostitutes) in the streets was established.

Newspapers perpetuated this association between prostitution and public nuisance in the streets in their coverage of the Ripper murders. My sample of 300 metropolitan press articles on the subject reveals that, in 64 different articles between 1888 and 1900, or in roughly one fifth of the reports, explicit reference was made to the Ripper victims and the prostitutes of their class operating in the streets. In August and September 1888 alone, 12 different articles talked about the Ripper victims in the context of the streets and thoroughfares of Spitalfields. In August, *The Times* observed that Martha Tabram, prior to her death, “walked the streets.”<sup>10</sup> *The Illustrated Police News* also made reference to street-walking in their reportage on the Annie Chapman murder.<sup>11</sup> Several papers also noted that Chapman used to frequent “the streets of Stratford” as a hawker.<sup>12</sup> So strong were print associations between low-end prostitution and street-walking that one *Daily News* reporter qualified his observation that the victims tended to reside in lodging houses, stating that they only “sometimes slept in them, for it would be more accurate to say that their home was the street.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Andy Croll, “Street disorder, surveillance and shame: regulating behaviour in the public spaces of the late Victorian British town,” *Social History* 24:3 (Oct 1999): 253.

<sup>10</sup> “INQUESTS,” *The Times* 24 August 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>11</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 15 September 1888, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>12</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END,” *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE INQUEST,” *The Times* 11 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>13</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Daily News* 24 September 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers



The legal definition of the prostitute as a public nuisance was, according to Louisa A. Jackson, borne out in real encounters between London sex workers and the metropolitan authorities, as “[t]he overtly ‘public’ worlds of Whitechapel’s destitute women, who inhabited the streets, sleeping rough or making use of lodging-houses, brought them under close scrutiny and into frequent contact with the police.”<sup>14</sup> Prosecutions against women for prostitution-related offences were actually relatively rare, as police officers were disinclined to act as “moral censors.”<sup>15</sup> The metropolitan police nevertheless took their mandate to “regulat[e] behaviour in the streets” seriously.<sup>16</sup> Women like the Ripper victims appeared regularly before the Thames police court as public nuisances in the period leading up to the autumn of 1888. Jackson reports that

In the months of July, August and September 1888 a total of 2,174 defendants appeared before the Thames police court magistrates ... . Around 30 per cent of cases involved public order offences, 27 per cent involved interpersonal violence ... and 23 per cent concerned property [while] [t]he largest category of offences (around 30 percent) involved minor public order offences, mostly related to drunkenness.<sup>17</sup>

East-end women formed nearly half of those prosecuted for drink-related public order offences, and among these women were a number of the Ripper victims.<sup>18</sup> Prior to her death, Elizabeth Stride “was well known to East Arbour Street magistrates” for drunkenness charges, which authorities treated as a public offense.<sup>19</sup> “Mary Jane Kelley”

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<sup>14</sup> Louisa A. Jackson, “Law, order and violence,” in *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 120.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, “Law, order, and violence,” 120.

<sup>16</sup> Croll, “Street disorder,” 253.

<sup>17</sup> Jackson, “Law, order and violence,” 114-115.

<sup>18</sup> Jackson, “Law, order and violence,” 118.

<sup>19</sup> David Beckingham, “Gender, Space, and Drunkenness: Liverpool’s Licensed Premises, 1860-1914,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102:3 (2012): 648.

[sic] was “fined for drunk and disorderly behaviour” on 19 September 1888, shortly before her death.<sup>20</sup>

Catherine Eddowes was the most notorious among the Ripper victims for her clashes with the police on public order offenses. Three London papers published the findings of the Eddowes inquest which revealed that on the night of her murder, “[t]wo City policemen ... took her into custody at Aldgate for being drunk.”<sup>21</sup> Constable Lewis Robinson gave the following testimony, reprinted in full in *Lloyd’s*:

About half-past eight on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> I was on duty in High-street, Aldgate. I saw there the woman since recognised as the deceased. She was drunk, lying in the footway. I turned round to the crowd, and asked if there was anyone who knew the deceased, but I got no answer. I then picked her up, and carried her to the side by the shutters. I raised her up against the shutters, but she fell down again. I did not do any more until I got assistance. Another policeman came, and she was taken to the station.<sup>22</sup>

Eddowes’ obstruction of a public thoroughfare, combined with the fact that her behaviour, according to Constable Robinson, attracted a crowd of on-lookers, likely motivated the City policeman to take her into custody.

Witness testimony given at the inquests on deaths of the Ripper’s victims that was republished in the London papers suggests that these women, like other low-end urban prostitutes, used the public house as a space for socialization and solicitation. *The Times* reported, for example, that Martha Tabram was last seen entertaining prospective clients

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<sup>20</sup> Jackson, “Law, order and violence,” 118.

<sup>21</sup> “OPENING OF THE CITY INQUEST,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *Morning Post* 12 October 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST-END MURDERS,” *The Times* 12 October 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>22</sup> “THE EAST END MURDERS,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 14 October 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

at a public house on the night of her death.<sup>23</sup> Mary Kelly's landlord John McCarthy similarly testified that he saw Kelly on the night of her murder entertaining men at the Britannia public-house.<sup>24</sup> David Beckingham rightly observes that the drinking-related criminal charges brought against Victorian prostitutes exemplified their status as public women. While drinking was a commonplace activity among members of the working poor, many working-class women imbibed in the privacy of their homes; only women who were forced to solicit in the streets and in public houses were vulnerable to prosecution for public drunkenness.<sup>25</sup>

Press coverage of the Ripper murders suggested that many Spitalfields prostitutes treated the streets as their home as well as place of work. The *Daily Telegraph* reported that when Catherine Eddowes could not afford lodgings, she resorted to sleeping in a warehouse at 26 Dorset Street, which was by reputation "the nightly resort of poor homeless creatures, who went there for shelter."<sup>26</sup> In October 1888 a *Lloyd's* reporter accompanied men from the Whitechapel Vigilance Committees on their overnight patrol of the Spitalfields area. *Lloyd's* observed that "the most dangerous hour in this locality was between three and four. The regular passers of the street had reached their homes, and those remaining were mostly outcast and homeless women."<sup>27</sup> Speaking of Buck's

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<sup>23</sup> "INQUESTS," *The Times* 24 August 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>24</sup> "THE MURDER OF MARY KELLY IN WHITECHAPEL," *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* 17 November 1888, 310, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>25</sup> Beckingham, "Gender, Space, and Drunkenness," 649-650.

<sup>26</sup> "THE EAST END TRAGEDIES," *Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 339.

<sup>27</sup> "THE EAST END TRAGEDIES," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

Row, where Mary Ann Nicholls was killed, the *Pall Mall Gazette* identified Nicholls with the local community of homeless prostitutes, reporting that

it was rare, even before the murder, to find any pedestrians in Buck's-row after midnight; it always had a bad name for robberies and assaults; and it was given up by general consent to the cluster of houseless unfortunates who were in the habit of sleeping there.<sup>28</sup>

“Sleeping rough” brought prostitutes into close contact with other impoverished Londoners. In attempting to expose the depths of poverty that existed in Whitechapel, the *Pall Mall Gazette* printed the statement of a Salvation Army officer who claimed that

he counted in the space of a spare quarter mile, with Whitechapel Church as the centre, no less than 150 homeless persons sleeping as best they could in the streets. In one coal-shed in that district he found sixty men, women and children huddled together, shivering too much to sleep.<sup>29</sup>

Cohabiting in makeshift sleeping accommodations was but one of the ways in which the prostitute and the pauper shared the streets.

The same pieces of legislation used to control prostitutes as public nuisances, including the 1824 Vagrancy Act and the 1839 Metropolitan Police Act, were utilized in regulating the movement of male vagrants. The establishment of the metropolitan police force meant that henceforth, “public spaces were to be monitored on a regular basis, and any activities that were deemed inappropriate were to be suppressed.”<sup>30</sup> The introduction of a formal police force to “clear the streets, enforce public order and regulate behaviour”<sup>31</sup> clearly had negative implications for London’s population of male vagrants. Cultural critics at midcentury like George Sala and W. F. Stevenson took note, according

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<sup>28</sup> “MURDERLAND REVISITED,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 2 October 1890, 1 in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>29</sup> “THE DISTRESS IN THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 24 December 1890, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>30</sup> Croll, “Street disorder,” 253.

<sup>31</sup> Crone, *Violent Victorians*, 8.

to Laura Croley, of the “palpable shift in attitudes towards begging from the 1810s and 1820s to the 1850s and 1860s.” Sala lamented in Dickens’s *Household Words* that the advent of the “New Policeman” meant “purging the London streets of beggars: ‘Where... I say, are all these long-established and long-remembered public characters now? Gone, all gone ... The beggar has nightmares now; his blue lettered and numbered enemy haunts him in his dreams.’”<sup>32</sup>

London newspapers’ coverage of the Ripper investigations gave readers a glimpse into how the Metropolitan Police functioned, and revealed that homeless men were among the targets of police surveillance. In September 1889, the dismembered torso of a woman was discovered under a railway arch in Pinchin Street, in a poor neighbourhood “just off Cable-street, near Leman-street Station, on the Great Eastern line.”<sup>33</sup> While the Pinchin Street torso did not belong to one of the canonical Ripper victims killed in the autumn of 1888, contemporaries treated the murder as a potential Jack the Ripper case. At the coroner’s inquest, conducted by Mr. Wynne E. Baxter, Inspector Charles Pinhorn informed the court that the arch under which the body was found was a notorious resort for male “tramps and casuals” sleeping out of doors. Officers patrolled the area regularly and “as far as possible,” the police prevented vagrants from sleeping in these public spaces.<sup>34</sup> Finding a place to sleep outside of the confines of a private residence was an increasingly difficult task in the Victorian period. Interestingly, the 1892 London municipal park by-laws prohibited “lying on any of the seats, or lying, sleeping, sitting,

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<sup>32</sup> Quoted in Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 76-77.

<sup>33</sup> “ANOTHER HORROR IN WHITECHAPEL,” *London Daily News* 11 September 1888, 5 in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>34</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *The Pall Mall Gazette* 11 September 1889, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *The Times* 12 September 1889, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

or resting in an indecent posture, or being disorderly or designedly doing any act which outrages public decency,” to not only prevent vagrants from sleeping in such public spaces, but also to curb the practice of prostitution in London parks.<sup>35</sup>

Official efforts to control the circulation of vagrants in public spaces were connected to concerns about the prevalence of “street crime” committed by public threats like the vagrant man. According to Robert Sindall, “[i]n the second half of the nineteenth century the safety of the highway was measured in terms of what was referred to colloquially as ‘street violence’. This term related to any forms of criminal violence against the person which occurred in public places.”<sup>36</sup> Newspapers’ preoccupation with these forms of street violence inflated Victorians’ sense of danger in public,<sup>37</sup> and Spitalfields, home to many male vagrants and Ripper suspects, was “most notorious for its relationship with street crime.”<sup>38</sup> In 1870, the *Report to the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis* said of Flower and Dean Street in Spitalfields that

there is no street in any other part of this great Metropolis that has for its inhabitants a like number of the dangerous class. ... For to its tenements resort mostly that class of criminals the most daring and the most to be feared – the men who commit robberies accompanied with acts of violence.<sup>39</sup>

Attributions of street crime to the inhabitants of Spitalfields stemmed from the levels of poverty and homelessness in the area. As Robert Haggard observes, 39.2 percent of the 79,000 residents of Whitechapel lived on or below the poverty line.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Nan H. Dreher, “The Virtuous and the Verminous: Turn-of-the Century Moral Panics in London’s Public Parks,” *Albion* 29:2 (Summer 1997): 256.

<sup>36</sup> Sindall, *Street Violence*, 9.

<sup>37</sup> Casey, “Common Misperceptions,” 377-380.

<sup>38</sup> Jerry White, *Rothschild Buildings: Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887-1920* (Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 7.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in White, *Rothschild Buildings*, 7-8.

<sup>40</sup> Haggard, “Jack the Ripper,” 198.

The imagined prevalence of prostitutes and male vagrants in the streets of London troubled contemporaries' sense of cultural superiority. As Croll notes, city streets were regarded as "extremely sensitive indicators of the condition of the population. If, however, the streets were the venue for violent interactions then the idea of civilization was itself called into question."<sup>41</sup> Concerns for safety and ordered behaviour in the streets were exacerbated by the fact that, thanks to a series of recessions, the homeless population in Britain doubled between 1865 and 1905.<sup>42</sup> In light of the burgeoning populations of the vagrant class, simply maintaining order in the streets proved to be insufficient in mitigating the threat posed by prostitutes and paupers as the "folk devils" of public disorder. Analysis of legislation dealing with the problem of vagrancy passed around mid-century suggests that legislators sought not only to police the public sphere, but to domesticate the semi-private spaces in which vagrants congregated, like the common lodging house.

#### **4.2 "THIEVES' OR PROSTITUTES' KITCHENS": VAGRANCY AND THE COMMON LODGING HOUSE**

Victorians referred to low-end lodging houses as "common" houses, in order to distinguish them from other middle-class boarding establishments. Members of the working poor were the most frequent residents, as low-end lodging houses "were marked out by their low fees, limited accommodation and no-questions-asked policy as regards character or occupation."<sup>43</sup> As Drew Gray observes, the cheapest lodging houses "were

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<sup>41</sup> Croll, "Street disorder," 252.

<sup>42</sup> Julie-Marie Strange, "Tramp: Sentiment and the Homeless Man in the Late-Victorian and Edwardian City," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 16:2 (August 2011): 244.

<sup>43</sup> Jane Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution: Material Life in Asylums, Lodging Houses and Schools in Victorian and Edwardian England* (Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2015), 111.

not ‘homes’ but simply shelters: they offered ... merely protection from the streets and the horror of the workhouse.”<sup>44</sup> In this sense, the lodging house represented an informal component of the larger Victorian social welfare network. London authorities came to recognise that these lodging houses represented a continuation of the vagrant world of the streets in that they offered only temporary respite to otherwise homeless men and women. In the 1850s and 1860s, legislators accordingly subjected these rented rooms, like the streets, to regulation and policing.

As Mary Poovey and Jane Hamlett argue, the incorporation of domestic values into nineteenth-century sanitary reform “allowed the ‘bureaucratized apparatuses of inspection, regulation and enforcement that we call the modern state’ to attempt to reconstitute working-class social domains.”<sup>45</sup> Over the course of the Victorian period, “more people than ever before lived in spaces and places outside conventional family homes and households.” In response, government and charitable bodies adopted the home environment in these unconventional spaces through “the expansion of the military, the relief of the poor, the punishment of criminals, the treatment of the mentally and physically ill, and the education of children.”<sup>46</sup> Sanitary and housing legislation from this period provides us with evidence of legislators’ attempts to bring the common lodging house under the control of middle-class domesticity.

The Common Lodging Houses Act of 1851 required local authorities to register each common lodging house with the police, to better enable their regulation and

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<sup>44</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 131.

<sup>45</sup> Poovey quoted in Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution*, 115.

<sup>46</sup> Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution*, 1-2.



supervision.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, it is difficult to estimate the number of working-class East-Enders who rented rooms in such establishments. The Chief Commissioner of Police's 1889 report on registered lodging houses stated that 1000 common lodging houses were currently registered London and the City, with accommodation in all for 31,651 persons.<sup>48</sup> In a similar approximation, Marc Brodie estimates that in London in the 1880s "[t]here were around 8,500 beds for males in common lodging houses registered in the East End ... with an occupancy rate of 80 per cent." Such figures are unable to account, however, for the "'floating' population who spent some of their time in the lodging houses, part in casual wards or other shelters and the rest on the streets" from which many prostitutes and male vagrants were drawn.<sup>49</sup>

In spite of difficulties in collecting data, prostitutes and vagrant men were nevertheless the most visible lodging house tenants in the eyes of middle-class observers. R. A. Valpy declared the same in his contribution to Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the London People* (1889).<sup>50</sup> In his article on common lodging houses in London, Valpy stated that "[f]or these places no better title can be found than thieves' or prostitutes' kitchens, but they afford shelter also for beggars."<sup>51</sup> Reportage on the Ripper murders in the London papers suggests that associations between male and female vagrancy and lodging house culture were only confirmed in the media furor of 1888. In the 300 articles

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<sup>47</sup> Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution*, 112. Alison C. Kay, "A Little Enterprise of her Own: Lodging-house Keeping and the Accommodation Business in Nineteenth-Century London," *London Journal* 28:2 (2003): 50.

<sup>48</sup> R.A. Valpy "Common Lodging Houses," in *Life and Labour of the People* [1889], ed. Charles Booth (London: G. Norman and Son, 1891), 336.

<sup>49</sup> Brodie, "Artisans and Dossers," 44.

<sup>50</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Valpy, "Common Lodging Houses," 62.

consulted for this thesis, London lodging houses were mentioned in connection with the Ripper victims and suspects on 247 occasions.

Prior to the Ripper murders, cultural authorities condemned common lodging houses as sites for mixing of the sexes and classes, two kinds of promiscuous socialisation in which the prostitute and the male vagrant were implicated. First, middle-class commentators deplored the intermingling of respectable members of the working poor with vagrants and criminals that took place inside the lodging house. Typically, common lodging houses “catered for a lower class of visitor, migrants newly arrived to the capital, the disreputable, the transient.”<sup>52</sup> Overcrowding in London in the 1880s, however, “forced the poor to live side by side with other ‘deviant’ types.” While the respectable poor man could be segregated from the work-shy vagrant in the workhouse, Drew Gray observes that the mixing of these groups in less formal lodgings tapped into the “underlying fear that the ‘respectable members of the working class could be infected by the so-called “residuum.””<sup>53</sup>

Bourgeois commentators also believed sexual promiscuity and prostitution to be rife in London’s common lodging houses. In December 1884, the *Pall Mall Gazette* reported that London’s Church Penitentiary Association met in order to discuss the rescue of fallen women. Trustees of the association declared that “[t]he evil influence of the low lodging houses was found to be one of the greatest obstacles to purity or [the] recovery” of fallen women.<sup>54</sup> A journalist at the *Morning Post* also acknowledged the common lodging house as the refuge of the urban prostitute, bemoaning the fact that “[h]undreds

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<sup>52</sup> Kay, “Lodging-house Keeping,” 50.

<sup>53</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 124.

<sup>54</sup> “THE EAST LONDON MISSION,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 1 December 1884, 10, in The British Newspaper Archive.

of women in this sad East-end lead their degraded lives of sin for daily bread or to secure a night's shelter in a fourpenny lodging-house."<sup>55</sup> Jane Hamlett argues that the material conditions of lodging houses, which many of which offered "double beds that a couple could rent for a night" both encouraged and symbolized "brief sexual encounters."<sup>56</sup>

Legislative attempts to police behaviour inside common lodging houses focused on these physical sanitary issues as the keys to moral rectitude. The Common Lodging Houses Act of 1851 as well as the 1866 Sanitary Act mandated that lodging house keepers were "to cleanse the premises, to limewash the walls and ceilings twice a year, and to give immediate notice of an outbreak of infectious disease."<sup>57</sup> These acts "also sought to control the allocation of space within the lodging house, tackling overcrowding and regulating sexuality."<sup>58</sup> Keepers were required to allocate 300 cubic feet per bed to prevent illicit relations between sleepers.<sup>59</sup>

In addition to regulating the material conditions of low-end lodging houses, the 1851 Act required that "the police inspector appointed for the duty" have "free access" to registered houses "at all times."<sup>60</sup> In practice, police inspections of registered lodging houses occurred infrequently.<sup>61</sup> The looming threat of visitation, combined with the willingness of keepers "to assist the police with information," however, meant "inmates [were] under police supervision to a greater extent than they

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<sup>55</sup> "THE CONDITION OF EAST LONDON," *Morning Post* 10 October 1888, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>56</sup> Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution*, 132.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Richard Dennis, "Common lodgings and 'furnished rooms': housing in 1880s Whitechapel," *Jack the Ripper and the East End*, ed. Alex Werner (London: Chatto & Windus, 2008), 162.

<sup>58</sup> Hamlett, *At Home in the Institution*, 116.

<sup>59</sup> Dennis, "Common lodgings," 163-164.

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Dennis, "Common lodgings," 162.

<sup>61</sup> Valpy, "Common Lodging Houses," 335.

would be if they were driven to live elsewhere.”<sup>62</sup> This kind of police surveillance of lodging houses facilitated Scotland Yard’s investigation of Ripper suspects in common houses in the East End in 1888. Indeed, one wonders if the London police targeted Spitalfields lodging houses in their investigations because they were so easily surveilled by authorities.

Whatever the reason, contemporaries’ abhorrence of common lodging houses was only exacerbated by the revelations brought forward in the press coverage of the Ripper murders. As the *Pall Mall Gazette* put it early on in the Autumn of Terror,

[t]he glimpses of life which the evidence in this case discloses is sufficient to make us feel that there is much in the nineteenth century civilization of which we have small reason to be proud; but you who are constantly called together to hear the sad tale of starvation, or semi-starvation, of misery, immorality, and wickedness which some of the occupants of the 5,000 beds in this district have every week to relate to coroner’s inquests, do not require to be reminded of what life in a Spitalfields lodging-house means.<sup>63</sup>

The distinction between genuine poverty and contemptible “wickedness” is left uncertain in this sensational description of common lodging houses in the East End. The Gazette’s allusion to 5,000 lodging house beds in Spitalfields also invokes anxieties about overcrowding and associated sanitary issues.

London papers’ coverage of Annie Chapman’s murder in the yard of 29, Hanbury Street, “let out to various lodgers,” may have motivated the *Pall Mall Gazette*’s observation.<sup>64</sup> Five of the London papers reported on the conditions of the lodging house in Hanbury Street over the period of nearly twenty days until the inquest was concluded

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<sup>62</sup> Haggard, “Jack the Ripper,” 199-200.

<sup>63</sup> “THE MURDER IN HANBURY-STREET, WHITECHAPEL,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 27 September 1888, 10, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>64</sup> “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September.<sup>65</sup> The lodging house deputy was Mrs. Emilia Richardson, who lived at the back of the house and also ran a business as a packing-case maker with her son.<sup>66</sup> Mr Harderman, who occupied the front room, carried “on the business of a seller of catsmeat,” a kind of horseflesh sold as food for cats.<sup>67</sup> John Davies, a carman, lodged in one of the upper rooms. Davies reasoned at the coroner’s inquest that Chapman must have led her killer into the yard before her death, using the enclosed passage from the front to the back of the house that was “always open for the convenience of the lodgers.”<sup>68</sup> While Mrs. Richardson denied any knowledge of the passage or yard being used for nefarious purposes, her son testified that local prostitutes used the house for their assignations, and “[h]is mother had heard him speak of finding people acting immorally in the passage.”<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September, 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “YESTERDAY’S WHITECHAPEL TRAGEDY,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 9 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END,” *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER,” *The Times* 13 September 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive. “ANOTHER MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Illustrated Police News* 15 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive. “THE FIENDISH MURDERS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE EAST END MURDERS,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 23 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. “THE MURDER IN HANBURY-STREET, WHITECHAPEL,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 27 September 1888, 10, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>66</sup> Alexander Chisholm, Christopher-Michael DiGraxia and Dave Yost, *The News from Whitechapel: Jack the Ripper and the Daily Telegraph* (Jefferson, North Carolina and London: McFarland & Company, 2002), 52, note 38.

<sup>67</sup> “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September, 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>68</sup> “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>69</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER,” *The Times* 13 September 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

Metropolitan papers also showed readers the prevalence of prostitution in Dorset Street, a thoroughfare in which “nearly every house in the street is a common lodging-house,” in the wake of the Ripper murders.<sup>70</sup> Dorset Street appears, almost as a character of its own, on 94 different occasions in the 300 Ripper articles consulted from London papers. In August, *The Times* reported that “Pearly Poll” stayed in one of the 600 registered beds in Dorset Street around the time of Martha Tabram’s murder.<sup>71</sup> A few weeks later, the press informed readers that Annie Chapman, “known as one of the unfortunates ... has been in the habit of living in a common lodging-house at 35, Dorset-street.”<sup>72</sup> The most famous prostitute-tenant was Mary Kelly, found mutilated in her “cheerless and dismal-looking room on the ground floor of No. 26, Dorset-Street.”<sup>73</sup>

Statements made by Mary Kelly’s neighbour Elizabeth Prater at the inquest on Kelly’s body indicate that some of these lodging houses functioned as informal brothels. Prater testified that she saw Kelly with a man on the night of the murder, but “[i]t was a common thing for women living in the tenements to bring men home with them. They could do as they pleased.”<sup>74</sup> In spite of the fact that the papers made Kelly’s engagement in prostitution public knowledge, her funeral was funded in part by contributions made by

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<sup>70</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *The Times* 11 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>71</sup> “THE EAST END TRAGEDIES,” *Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 339. “INQUESTS,” *The Times* 24 August 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>72</sup> “THE HORRORS OF THE EAST END,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 8 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>73</sup> “ANOTHER WHITECHAPEL HORROR,” *Illustrated Police News* 17 November 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>74</sup> “THE EAST END TRAGEDIES,” *Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 338.

“the murdered woman’s associates in Dorset-street.”<sup>75</sup> Indeed, the reported testimony of those who shared lodgings with the Ripper victims suggests that they accepted how these women earned their money. Timothy Donovan, deputy of the common lodging house at 35 Dorset Street, in which Chapman resided, identified her corpse, deposing blandly that “[h]e knew her as an unfortunate.”<sup>76</sup> At Elizabeth Stride’s lodging house in Flower and Dean Street, occupants described Stride “as a good-natured, hard-working, clean woman, who only took to the streets when she was unable to obtain employment as a char-woman.”<sup>77</sup> In the permissive working-class community of the common lodging-house, prostitutes, according to the *Daily Telegraph*, “made no secret of [their] way of gaining a livelihood.”<sup>78</sup>

The moral panic produced by the spectacles of vagrancy and prostitution centering around the lodging houses in Jack the Ripper’s East End transformed into a panic about housing.<sup>79</sup> Jerry White’s study of the Flower and Dean Street area in Spitalfields identifies the autumn of 1888 as an accelerating point in the destruction of East-End tenements, concluding that “Jack the Ripper had done more to destroy the Flower and Dean St rookery than fifty years of road building, slum clearance and unabated pressure from police.”<sup>80</sup> In order to remedy the problems of vagrancy exposed by the Ripper murders, metropolitan authorities and sanitary reformers advocated slum

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<sup>75</sup> “MURDEROUS OUTRAGE IN WHITECHAPEL,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper* 25 November 1888, 12, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>76</sup> “ANOTHER MURDER AT THE EAST END,” *The Times* 10 September 1888, 6, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>77</sup> “THE EAST-END ATROCITIES,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>78</sup> “THE EAST END TRAGEDIES,” *Daily Telegraph* 10 November 1888, quoted in Evans and Skinner, *The Ultimate Jack the Ripper Sourcebook*, 338.

<sup>79</sup> Dennis, “Common lodgings,” 141.

<sup>80</sup> White, *Rothschild Buildings*, 27.

clearance and the construction of subsidized housing units, known as model dwellings.

According to Richard Dennis, while

the source of the problem lay in a low-wage, casual labour market, the quick-fix solution involved surveillance and the inculcation of discipline and order among the poor; and one way of achieving this was to replace the labyrinth of alleys and courts of ill-managed lodgings with more easily policed straight streets and efficiently supervised model dwellings.<sup>81</sup>

Authorities misidentified the suffering of prostitutes and paupers as a problem of physical environment when it was actually a problem of the labour market.

From 1888 to the end of the century, model dwellings steadily replaced common lodging houses in Spitalfields. Dennis' examination of the lodging house registries indicates that "[b]y 1900, there were 3,748 model dwelling apartments in Whitechapel, for 15,494 inhabitants. The number of common lodging-houses correspondingly declined: from 149 in 1889, to 141 in 1890, 101 in 1892 [and] 73 in 1897."<sup>82</sup> Similarly, White observes that by "the end of 1894 virtually all of the old Flower and Dean St had been destroyed."<sup>83</sup>

Depictions of model dwellings in the Victorian press indicate that cultural authorities conceived of these improved affordable lodgings as the kind of idealised domestic spaces one would find in the middle-class home. In November 1888, the *Daily News* had one of its investigative journalists venture out into the streets of Spitalfields to assess the feelings of East Enders living in the midst of the Autumn of Terror. The article devoted a surprising amount of time to contrasting the moral and material living conditions of the working poor in the common lodging house and the model dwelling.

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<sup>81</sup> Dennis, "Common lodgings," 142.

<sup>82</sup> Dennis, "Common lodgings," 177.

<sup>83</sup> White, *Rothschild Buildings*, 29.



The reporter brings the reader along into the dark and heterogeneously-populated kitchen of one of the poorest lodging houses in the neighbourhood, inviting us to imagine

the huge coke fire, the sleek-looking, sprawling cats basking in its glow, the dark, uncouth shadows in the background, the men stretched in sleepy indifference on the kitchen forms, the rows of women with bandaged heads, and gaunt, haggard figures seated under the flaring gas.

He next takes us

away again up into the comfortable, clean, and tidy little room in a block of model dwellings. Here is an exceedingly respectable looking young woman, who has been helped out of this lodging house life... here she is in a decent little home and work found for her.<sup>84</sup>

Happiness in the model dwelling is characterised by cleanliness, work, respectability, and the single, nuclear family.

The Metropolitan Board of Works sold cleared slum land to developers at reduced rates to encourage the construction of improved housing for lodging-house residents.<sup>85</sup> Impoverished Londoners like the Ripper victims and suspects, however, continued to reside in the few affordable lodging houses that remained. Even during the Autumn of Terror, the *Pall Mall Gazette* took note of the disconnect between the charitable auspices under which model dwellings were built and their ultimate exclusion of former tenants:

‘Every one in China,’ we are told, ‘who had accumulated a large quantity of benevolent impulses, which have had no opportunity for their gratification is accustomed once a year, on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month, to make the most liberal donations to all comers of the very cheapest and poorest quality of soup, during about twelve hours’. ... Very often, it is added, no one applies for the soup; but ‘all the same the donors advertise their intentions to practise virtue; and when the day ends and no one has asked for a bowl of soup it is put into broken jars out of which the pigs are fed, and the benevolent man closes his door feeling that he has been virtuous for the year.’ Is not this a cruelly close analogue of benevolence elsewhere than in China? For instance, in the matter of improved dwellings,

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<sup>84</sup> “THE EAST-END ATROCITIES,” *Daily News* 12 November 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>85</sup> White, *Rothschild Buildings*, 12.

which has been much insisted on as the chief thing necessary for the plague-spots of the slums. Model dwellings are put up; but too none of the population of the slums come into them.<sup>86</sup>

While the neighbourhoods around the model dwellings “took on a veneer of respectability,” Anne Kershen argues that “the loafers, semi-criminals and prostitutes such as the Ripper victims” were “confined to the few squalid lodging-houses that remained on the edges of the renovated East End.”<sup>87</sup>

Aside from being able to extract higher rents from a better class of tenants, model dwellings companies were, according to Richard Dennis, “reluctant to accept the most marginal for a variety of reasons.”<sup>88</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the perceived transience of impoverished renters like prostitutes and vagrants meant narrower profit margins for landlords. Tenants who remained in their rented rooms for extended periods of time saved companies the costs of limewashing and repapering between tenants, as stipulated in the Sanitary Act.<sup>89</sup> Men and women drawn from the class of Ripper victims and suspects, on the other hand, “moved when times were hard and rent difficult to find, often at night to avoid the landlord or his collectors.” Gray notes that bourgeois observers “misunderstood this behaviour as ‘shiftless’ and ‘transitory.’”<sup>90</sup>

Consultation of the London papers suggests that the settlement patterns of the Ripper victims and their paramours prior to the murders seemed to confirm for newspaper readers that they belonged to the class of men and women who “come at night

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<sup>86</sup> “THE POLITICAL MORAL OF THE MURDERS,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 24 September 1888, 1, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>87</sup> Kershen, “The immigrant community,” 76.

<sup>88</sup> Dennis, “Common lodgings,” 144.

<sup>89</sup> Dennis, “Common lodgings,” 144-145.

<sup>90</sup> Gray, *London’s Shadows*, 125.

and disappear in the morning.”<sup>91</sup> Martha Tabram’s lodging house keeper, Mrs. Mary Brousfeld, claimed that Tabram “left without giving notice, and owed two weeks’ rent.”<sup>92</sup> At the inquest on Annie Chapman’s body, her paramour, Edward Stanley, testified that he tended to reside at “No. 1, Osborn, Street, Brick-lane, one of the most commodious registered lodging-houses in the East-end of London,” but often stayed with Chapman at her lodgings in Dorset Street.<sup>93</sup>

Elizabeth Stride and Catherine Eddowes, the “Double Murder” victims, also regularly changed accommodations. While Eddowes and her partner John Kelly considered the lodging house at no. 55 Flower and Dean Street their home, Eddowes had not spent a night there in the week prior to her death: she had been hop picking in Kent, and then spent a number of nights at various London casual wards.<sup>94</sup> Elizabeth Stride resided with her paramour Michael Kidney in Dorset Street, but Kidney testified at the inquest on her body that “[d]uring the three years he had known her she had been absent different times amounting to some five months.”<sup>95</sup>

Finally, Mary Kelly’s erstwhile lover Joseph Barnett deposed that the couple had previously lived

in George-street, then in Paternoster-court, Dorset-street; but we were ejected from our lodgings because we went on a ‘drunk’ and did not pay our rent. We

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<sup>91</sup> “ANOTHER WHITEHCAPEL HORROR,” *Illustrated Police News* 17 November 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>92</sup> “INQUESTS,” *The Times* 24 August 1888, 4, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>93</sup> “THE FIENDISH MURDERS,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 16 September 1888, 5, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>94</sup> Dennis, “Common lodgings,” 144.

<sup>95</sup> “THE EAST-END ATROCITIES,” *Reynolds’s Newspaper* 7 October 1888, 5, in The British Newspaper Archive.

took lodgings afterward in Brick-lane; and finally, about four months ago, in Miller's-court, where the murder occurred.<sup>96</sup>

Such revelations prompted the *Illustrated Police News* to describe Dorset Street, the area in which Barnett and Kelly resided as “one perpetual moving mass of humanity.”<sup>97</sup> In light of the irregular lifestyles of the Ripper victims and their impoverished paramours, prostitutes and male vagrants were denied accommodation in the new model dwellings. The pressure placed on these remaining low-end lodging houses led to rent increases and overcrowding.<sup>98</sup> Slum clearance and model dwellings therefore perpetuated men and women's circulation between the lodging house, and, when they could not afford lodgings, the workhouse and the street.

#### **4.3 “TOWZLED, DIRTY, VILLAINOUS”: VAGRANTS AND THE CASUAL WARD**

Press coverage of the Ripper murders reveals that both populations of prostitutes and male vagrants moved between the lodging house and the workhouse, depending on what their means allowed. Valpy made this interchange of accommodation between the workhouse and lodging house explicit in his contribution to Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the London People*. According to Valpy, impoverished men and women

would seem to spend their lives interchangeably between the common lodging-house, the night shelter, the casual ward, and the workhouse. ... Herein we find the connection between the inmates of common lodging-houses and the pauper class, a connection not to be wondered at.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> “THE MURDER OF MARY KELLY IN WHITECHAPEL,” *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times*, 17 November 1888, 310, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>97</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS,” *Illustrated Police News* 10 November 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>98</sup> Haggard, “Jack the Ripper,” 198-200.

<sup>99</sup> Valpy, “Common Lodging Houses,” 341-342.

Valpy supports his claims with statistics collected from the Central London Union workhouse, which show that “out of the 1518 persons admitted to the workhouse during the first nine months of 1889, no less than 746 came direct from common-lodging houses.”<sup>100</sup>

If members of the working poor could not afford their rented lodgings, and preferred not to sleep on the streets, their only recourse was to enter the workhouse. This funneling of vagrants into workhouses began earlier in the century, with the introduction of the 1834 New Poor Law. The Poor Law, along with subsequent laws dealing with British workhouses, shared in the Victorian impulse to bring “undomiciled” vagrant populations under the influence of the civilised and domesticated private sphere.<sup>101</sup> This stream of vagrancy legislation, however, represented a more radical strain, as it actively forced vagrants into domestic environments like the workhouse. Nineteenth-century Poor Law addressed the procedures for dispensing of relief among applicants. For the first third of the nineteenth century, much state charity was given to poor men and women living outside of state institutions, like the workhouse.<sup>102</sup> The 1834 Poor Law curtailed this form of “outdoor relief,” and facilitated the corralling of vagrants into workhouses, since state charity could now only be obtained through admittance into these institutions.<sup>103</sup>

Segregation of vagrants as a distinct class within the larger body of impoverished workhouse inmates began with the introduction of the casual ward system for housing

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<sup>100</sup> Valpy, “Common Lodging Houses,” 342.

<sup>101</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 71.

<sup>102</sup> Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 78. Freeman and Nelson, introduction to *Vicarious Vagrants*, 14-16.

<sup>103</sup> Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 77-78.

unemployed, underemployed and homeless men in 1842.<sup>104</sup> These special wards were attached to workhouses,<sup>105</sup> but functioned differently than the rest of the institution: casual wards segregated “work shy” vagrants from those who were deemed to be legitimately unemployed. Freeman argues that casual wards not only spatially separated vagrants from more permanent inhabitants of workhouses, they were also intended to be punitive, as “there was a gradual attempt to impose harsher conditions in casual wards.”<sup>106</sup> The casual ward system made physically manifest Victorians’ conceptions of vagrancy as something distinct from simple poverty, and as something far more menacing and reprehensible.

While efforts to remove vagrants from public view were initiated at the beginning of Victoria’s reign, the process was accelerated in London with the Metropolitan Houseless Poor Acts of 1864-1865. The Acts required London poor law officials to provide relief for vagrants residing in the city regardless of their place of birth or settlement.<sup>107</sup> As Seth Koven has observed, Parliament’s passage of the Acts was motivated less by the desire to mitigate homelessness in the city than to maintain the optics of propriety in the public sphere. Sponsors of the Acts

never pretended that it would solve the fundamental social and economic problems that produced vagrancy. Rather, by forcing poorhouses to make room for the homeless, the act aimed to clear the streets, doorways, and alleys of the very poor, whom many Londoners abhorred as an unsightly and foul-smelling nuisance.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Strange, “Tramp,” 243.

<sup>105</sup> Croley, “A Working Distinction,” 77

<sup>106</sup> Freeman and Nelson, introduction to *Vicarious Vagrants*, 17.

<sup>107</sup> Freeman and Nelson, introduction to *Vicarious Vagrants*, 15.

<sup>108</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 34.

Bringing vagrants into the workhouse was part of Victorian sanitary reformers' larger efforts to inculcate middle-class domestic values among the working classes as a matter of social policy.

Press coverage of the Whitechapel murders shows that women of the class from which the Ripper victims were drawn frequented the London casual wards as inmates, invalids, and visitors.<sup>109</sup> In September 1888, newspapers made Mary Ann Nicholls' history of poverty and homelessness public knowledge when her body was discovered clothed in a petticoat that bore the stamp of the Lambeth Workhouse.<sup>110</sup> The commonplace nature of Nicholls' experience is demonstrated by the fact that the matron of that workhouse could not distinguish Nicholls from any of the other female inmates, "and said that the clothing might have been issued at any time during the past two or three years." Mary Ann Monk, a current inmate of the Lambeth Workhouse, did identify the body as belonging to her friend "Polly" Nicholls, "as they were inmates of the Lambeth workhouse together in April and May last, the deceased having been passed there from another workhouse."<sup>111</sup>

Like Eddowes and Nicholls, Annie Chapman took refuge in the Whitechapel casual ward, a workhouse that had "beds for 44 men and 25 women who were fed on a very basic diet of bread, gruel and cheese for which they were expected to work picking

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<sup>109</sup> "AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 22 February 1891, 2, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>110</sup> "ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers. "THE WHITECHAPEL MYSTERY," *The Penny Illustrated Paper and Illustrated Times* 8 September 1888, 151, in The British Newspaper Archive. "THE MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Illustrated Police News* 8 September 1888, 2, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>111</sup> "ANOTHER AWFUL MURDER IN WHITECHAPEL," *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 2 September 1888, 7, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

oakum, carrying coal and cleaning around the wards.”<sup>112</sup> Several days before her death, Chapman informed her friend Amelia Palmer that she “was very ill and should go into a casual ward and pull herself round,” which suggests that she took advantage of the hospital facilities available at the workhouse.<sup>113</sup>

Outside of the canonical Ripper victims, women of their class who saw themselves as under threat by the spectre of Jack the Ripper were also known to have spent time in London workhouses. In May 1889, 34-year-old hawker Margaret Lanvin was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Lanvin acknowledged that she “has been in the workhouse as an insane person, but was discharged under some weeks.” Perhaps in order to disrupt the proceedings, Lanvin testified that she was the last person to see Jack the Ripper prior to the death of Mary Kelly. She claimed that “she should not want the casual ward long” as “[h]er turn would come next” with Jack the Ripper.<sup>114</sup> It is interesting to note that Lanvin places herself within the casual ward, the designated space for vagrants. Some court officials also agreed that the casual ward is the appropriate place for these women. Later the same year, an unnamed “poorly-clad” homeless woman testified before the Bow Street police court that she had been attacked by a man carrying a knife whom she suspected of being Jack the Ripper. When the presiding magistrate learned that the woman was homeless, he sent her to one of the local workhouses until she could be questioned further.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Gray, *London's Shadows*, 132.

<sup>113</sup> “THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 10 September 1888, 8, in 19<sup>th</sup> Century British Library Newspapers.

<sup>114</sup> “A Reminiscence of ‘Jack the Ripper,’” *Illustrated Police News* 11 May 1889, 3, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>115</sup> “A ‘JACK THE RIPPER’ SCARE,” *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* 3 November 1889, 4, in The British Newspaper Archive.



This was not the first time the metropolitan press had subjected the London casual wards to public scrutiny. In January 1866, the *Pall Mall Gazette* ran James Greenwood's (brother of Frederick Greenwood, editor of the *Gazette*) serial piece, "A Night in the Workhouse." "A Night" details Greenwood's experiences disguised as a vagrant in the men's casual ward in Lambeth in order to investigate the impact of the Houseless Poor Acts on such institutions.<sup>116</sup> Koven attributes the popularity of "A Night" to its depiction of "the male casual ward of Lambeth Workhouse [as] a male brothel. According to Greenwood, public authorities were using public money to create conditions that encouraged the most vicious male members of the metropolitan underclass to engage in sodomy."<sup>117</sup> While the affiliations of women like Nicholls and Monk with London's workhouses were publicised in the autumn of 1888, in 1866 it was male inmates whom journalists depicted as the sexualised spectacles of poverty.

Greenwood first sets the scene for the subsequent sexual interactions between male workhouse inmates by describing the material conditions of the ward that encouraged such behaviour:

No language with which I am acquainted is capable of conveying an adequate conception of the spectacle I then encountered. Imagine a space of about thirty feet by thirty feet enclosed on three sides by a dingy whitewashed wall, and roofed with naked tiles which were furred with the damp and filth that reeked within. ... This far too airy shed was paved with stone, the flags so thickly encrusted with filth I mistook it first for a floor of natural earth.<sup>118</sup>

This conflation of sanitary with moral conditions in the casual ward is reminiscent of legislators' treatment of material conditions in the lodging house as the key to cultivating

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<sup>116</sup> Freeman and Nelson, introduction to *Vicarious Vagrants*, 27.

<sup>117</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 27.

<sup>118</sup> James Greenwood, "A Night in the Workhouse," in Freeman and Nelson, *Vicarious Vagrants*, 57.

respectability among inhabitants. Greenwood's portrayal of the ward's occupants parallels the physical filth of the space they inhabit:

Towzled, dirty, villainous, they squatted up in their beds, and smoked foul pipes, and sang snatches of horrible songs, and bandied jokes so obscene as to be absolutely appalling. Eight or ten were so enjoying themselves – the majority with the beck shirt on and the frowsy rug pulled about their legs; but two or three wore no shirts at all, squatting naked to the waist, their bodies fully exposed.<sup>119</sup>

Consistent with intimations that the male casual ward functions as a kind of brothel, Greenwood's description of the inmates is reminiscent of conventional depictions of the lewd and loudmouthed female prostitute, lacking shame in the display of her body. As Acton himself observes in *Prostitution Considered*, the stereotypical prostitute behaves like a “dirty, intoxicated slattern, in tawdry finery and an inch thick of paint.”<sup>120</sup>

The blood-stained mattress on which Greenwood is forced to sleep is suggestive not only of physical filth, but invokes the possibility of sexual violence.<sup>121</sup> Even more explicit reference to homosexual acts is made when Greenwood observes that he “could not help thinking of the fate of Sodom; as, indeed, I did several times during the night.”<sup>122</sup> As dawn breaks, Greenwood concludes, “[h]alf a dozen factory bells announced that it was time for working men to go to labour; but my companions were not working men, and so snored on.”<sup>123</sup> In this way, “A Night” conflates unemployment with sexual deviance.

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<sup>119</sup> Greenwood “A Night,” 58.

<sup>120</sup> Acton, *Prostitution Considered*, 53.

<sup>121</sup> Greenwood, “A Night,” 57.

<sup>122</sup> Greenwood “A Night,” 60.

<sup>123</sup> Greenwood, “A Night,” 67.

“A Night” was reprinted in *The Times*, and in cheap pamphlet form.<sup>124</sup>

Greenwood’s investigative journalism held such cultural resonance because it tapped into contemporary anxieties about the moral implications of life outside the middle-class domestic sphere. Koven argues that

[n]one of Greenwood’s readers ... seems to have suggested that the inmates of the Lambeth Casual Ward were part of a group of persons defined by their sexuality. ... it was their moral and economic status and undomestic lives, not their sexual identities, that defined them as a distinct class of persons: they were tramps or vagrants, not sodomites or mariannes.<sup>125</sup>

In fact, the “moral and economic status” of vagrants merged and overlapped with Victorian perceptions of their sexuality. Subsequent emendations to the Vagrancy Act of 1824 suggest that men’s sexual activity and their relation to labour were inextricably intertwined. In 1898, Parliament passed an amendment to the Vagrancy Act “that soon became one of the twin pillars of the Victorian state’s draconian regulation of all forms of sex between men” – the other “pillar” being the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885, which formally defined homosexuality as criminal.<sup>126</sup> The 1898 amendment stipulated that “every male person who in any public space persistently solicits or importunes for immoral purposes shall be deemed a rogue and vagabond and may be dealt with accordingly.”<sup>127</sup> It formally codified popular judgments that the vagrant, being unemployed, was an “unsexed” man and therefore prone to sexual deviance.<sup>128</sup> As Angus McLaren observes, the vagrant’s moral state was connected to his labour: “[t]he image of the feckless vagrant ... ran completely counter to bourgeois moralizing on the uplifting

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<sup>124</sup> Freeman and Nelson, introduction to *Vicarious Vagrants*, 27.

<sup>125</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 71.

<sup>126</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 73. F. B. Smith, “Labouchere’s amendment to the Criminal Law Amendment Bill,” *Historical Studies* 17:67 (1976): 165.

<sup>127</sup> Quoted in Koven, *Slumming*, 73.

<sup>128</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 72-73.

nature of work and thrift” and functioned as an ideological counterpoint to the sexually healthy male.<sup>129</sup> In the same way that the prostitute’s work blurs the distinction between sexuality and labour, the male pauper’s problematic work status makes him sexually suspect.

The process of legally identifying and institutionally isolating vagrant men and women as a threat to public order that took place over the nineteenth century culminated in the harsher criminalisation of what Victorians perceived as vagrant-like behaviours. Male vagrancy was both sexualised and further criminalized with the 1898 Vagrancy Act amendment and the Criminal Law Amendment Act. The original intention of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was actually, however, to enable the prosecution of brothel keepers. Thanks to the successful public campaign of social reformers such as W. T. Stead and Josephine Butler against child prostitution in the pages of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the Criminal Law Amendment Act raised the age of sexual consent from thirteen to sixteen.<sup>130</sup> While the actual prevalence of child prostitution in Victorian London was minimal, the Act had very real implications for London prostitutes, as it empowered authorities to search any dwelling suspected to be a brothel, under the guise of rooting out underage girls.<sup>131</sup> Furthermore, the Act “made keeping a brothel a summary offense ... and made procurement for the purposes of prostitution illegal.”<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Angus McLaren, *The Trials of Masculinity: Policing Sexual Boundaries, 1870-1930* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997), 27-28.

<sup>130</sup> Haggard, “Jack the Ripper,” 201.

<sup>131</sup> “THE NEW CRUSADE,” *Pall Mall Gazette* 17 August 1885, 11, in The British Newspaper Archive.

<sup>132</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 2.

Many sex workers were forced to ply their trade in the streets, as two hundred brothels in the East End were closed in 1887 alone.<sup>133</sup> As a result of the Criminal Law Amendment Act,

[p]rostitutes who had depended on lodging houses as both a home and a workspace came to rely more heavily on notoriously squalid and considerably less sociable furnished rooms, and on alleys and open outdoor spaces, not only as their workplace, but also their night's shelter.<sup>134</sup>

In the wake of the Act's passage, East End sex workers actually became more vulnerable to the kind of opportunistic street violence typified by the Ripper murders, as they lost not only their places of work, but their homes and refuges. The further criminalization of the sexual behaviours associated with male vagrancy in the 1898 amendment to the Vagrancy Act also rendered vagrant men plausible suspects in the Ripper investigations.

#### 4.4 CONCLUSION

The day after Mary Kelly's body was discovered, the *London Standard* reported on the festival atmosphere prevailing in Kelly's neighbourhood in Dorset Street:

a crowd blocked up the narrow street opposite Miller's-court, and the remainder of the street was filled with an excited and thoughtless lot of people, the public-houses being densely thronged until closing time... drunken women rolled about the streets shouting and jesting in shameless fashion. There are also six common lodging-houses in the street, accommodating from a hundred to three or four hundred men and women; and the patrons of these houses contributed largely to the crowded character of the street.<sup>135</sup>

Seen through the eyes of the middle-class journalist, the overcrowded lodging and public houses of Spitalfields cannot seem to accommodate their occupants. Men and women flood and overwhelm the streets, and disorder reigns. Here, the Ripper murders are

<sup>133</sup> Haggard, "Jack the Ripper," 201.

<sup>134</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 67.

<sup>135</sup> "THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER," *London Standard* 12 November 1888, 3 in *The British Newspaper*

depicted as catalysts for the eruption of chaos in the public sphere. The killings of 1888 were, however, discrete events. As members of the disreputable poor, prostitutes and vagrants, Ripper victims and suspects, represented much larger and more systematic threats to public order than Jack the Ripper himself.

Journalists and newspaper readers conflated the victims and suspected perpetrators of the Jack the Ripper murders as the two gendered sides of the same coin of urban poverty. This close relationship between the sex worker and the work shy had a more substantial reality outside of the representational realm of print. The social and material living conditions of the London poor demonstrate that pauper and prostitute interacted, cohabited and coexisted with one another in the same spaces. In an effort to mitigate the threat posed by the prostitute and the vagrant as figures of undomesticated public life, Victorian authorities attempted to legislate and control the areas in which they interacted, to bring them into the regulatory framework of the middle-class home.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

This thesis addresses the response of the metropolitan press to the Ripper murders in order to suggest a new direction for scholarship on Victorian prostitution. Chapter One demonstrates that the Ripper victims and their peers viewed prostitution as an economic necessity in the “makeshift” economy of the working poor. I therefore suggest that historians might conceive of Victorian prostitution as one more form of casual labour taken up by working-class women. Chapter Two brings male vagrants into the scholarly conversation on the Victorian media furor surrounding the Ripper murders. This research suggest that, while nineteenth-century prostitutes must be considered in economic as well as sexual terms, the Victorian vagrant’s relationship to threatening forms of sexuality must be considered as much as his relation to labour. Chapter Three in turn examines how low-end urban prostitutes shared spaces and experiences with these vagrant men. Furthermore, bourgeois cultural and political authorities vilified both groups as threats to public order. The representational and experiential parallels that existed between prostitutes and vagrants ultimately suggests that nineteenth-century sex work cannot be fully understood in terms of the women’s gender and gendered sexuality alone. Victorian prostitutes were more than female sexual deviants; they also belonged to a heterogeneous class of men and women living alternatively to the bourgeois middle-class ideal.

In the context of Victorian bourgeois ideology, the moral implications of prostitution meant that it was like no other occupation available to nineteenth-century women. Outside of such moral abstractions, however, the Victorian sex worker was much like the female hawker, charwoman, and domestic servant who were her peers.

Spitalfields prostitutes, along with other lower-class working women, engaged in sex work temporarily as a means of producing an income. Ironically, it is precisely these practical realities that made the prostitute so threatening to middle-class commentators, steeped in the moral ideology of the fallen woman. As Lynda Nead observes, in the Victorian economic system, the prostitute's body collapses the distinction between the capitalist seller and the product for sale.<sup>1</sup> She carries her work on her back, and, in passing in and out of the sex market, she is able also to pass as any other working-class woman. The Ripper murders gave Victorian audiences snapshots of these otherwise untraceable commercial encounters between prostitutes and their likewise invisible client. Like the vagrant men accused of being Jack the Ripper, the Ripper murders exposed the fact that all women of a certain class were sexually suspect as former or potential prostitutes.

Historians of masculinity have called for similar studies of gender as a relational construct operating between men and women in the past. John Tosh and Michael Roper argue that, within women's history and masculinity studies, men and women must be studied together "[i]f we are to unravel the complex ties between power and identity [and] how gender inhabits social structures, practices and the imagination."<sup>2</sup> To a certain extent, historians of Victorian prostitution have taken up Tosh and Roper's relational understanding of gender and have compared the experiences of female prostitutes to those of their clients. The interest of these scholars in Victorian views of the prostitute's sexual morality has led them, however, to compare representations of male and female

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<sup>1</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 99.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Roper and John Tosh, introduction to *Manful Assertions: Masculinities in Britain since 1800*, eds. Michael Roper and John Tosh (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 2, 11.



sexuality alone. Many historians take their cue from Josephine Butler, exploring the sexual double standard implicit within the Contagious Diseases Acts, which normalized the sexual needs of men while pathologizing the women who sold themselves for sex.<sup>3</sup> Walkowitz, for example, argues that “regulationists reinforced a double standard of sexual morality, which justified male sexual access to a class of ‘fallen’ women and penalized women for engaging in the same vice as men.”<sup>4</sup> Walkowitz summarizes the position shared by nineteenth-century feminist reformers and twentieth-century historians alike on the sexual conspiracy they perceive as surrounding Victorian prostitution.

Victorian gender historians have explored sexual difference between men and women, and prostitutes in particular, but there has been, as Perry Curtis astutely observes, a “failure of communication” with labour historians.<sup>5</sup> Very few historians of Victorian prostitution have considered these groups using the lenses of class and labour. Julia Laite’s *Common Prostitutes and Ordinary Citizens* (2012) is one of the only works to address this comparison. While Laite suggests that the Vagrancy Act is potentially more valuable to discussions of prostitution than the Contagious Diseases Acts, her work focuses on the twentieth century.<sup>6</sup> Looking at the Victorian period in particular, cultural

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<sup>3</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute’s Body*, 45. Finnegan, *Poverty and Prostitution*, 9. Sue Morgan, “‘Wild Oats or Acorns?’ Social Purity, Sexual Politics and the Response of the Late-Victorian Church,” *Journal of Religious History* 31:2 (June 2007): 151- 168. Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 22. Claudia Nelson, “Sex and the Single Boy: Ideals of Manliness and Sexuality in Victorian Literature for Boys,” *Victorian Studies* 32:4 (Summer 1989): 525-550. Anne L. Scott, “Physical Purity Feminism and State Medicine in Late Nineteenth-century England,” *Women’s History Review* 8:4 (1999): 625-652. Anne Summers, “*The Constitution Violated: The Female Body and the Female Subject in the Campaigns of Josephine Butler*,” *History Workshop Journal* 48 (1999): 1-16. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 23. Walkowitz, “Male Vice and Feminist Virtue,” 84.

<sup>4</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 3.

<sup>5</sup> Curtis, *Jack the Ripper*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Laite, *Common Prostitutes*, 72-75, 96.

responses to the Ripper murders indicate that the unstable labour identities of impoverished men and women are key to understanding the folk devil status of both male vagrants and prostitutes in the Victorian period. The male vagrant's perceived rejection of the masculine ideal of self-sufficiency through labour causes them to be seen as feminized and sexually suspect. Representations of vagrants in Victorian journalism and legislation aligned this group of men with homosexuality and male prostitution.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, cultural authorities and other Victorians regarded those suspected of committing the Ripper murders, as vagrants or vagrant-like men, capable of committing "lust murder."<sup>8</sup> The working-class prostitute's commodification of her sexuality makes her a simultaneously hyper-sexualised and "unsexed," or androgynous figure.<sup>9</sup> Working outside the home as an independent commercial agent, the urban Victorian prostitute is an uncomfortably masculinized kind of city worker.<sup>10</sup> The prostitute's engagement in a form of public labour unconventional for Victorian women made her vulnerable to the kind of anonymous street violence typified by the Ripper murders.

In other words, the poor man's lack of work makes him sexually suspect, while the prostitute's commoditized sexuality makes her work and her character morally questionable. The distinctions between work, sex, and sex work are hopelessly blurred in Victorian logics of prostitution and male vagrancy. Vagrants and prostitutes, as male and female members of an impoverished urban class, both participate in this complex sex/work nexus. This indicates that something essential about the nature of Victorian

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<sup>7</sup> Koven, *Slumming*, 73.

<sup>8</sup> Perry Curtis, "The Pursuit of Angles," in *Jack the Ripper: Media, Culture, History*, eds. Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 38.

<sup>9</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 23.

<sup>10</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 99.

prostitution is lost when studied as an exclusively gendered subject, relevant only to women of the past.

Reconsideration of Victorian prostitution in these socioeconomic terms illuminates the quotidian realities of low-end urban sex work. Treating the Ripper victims' engagement in prostitution as a form of casual labour gives us access to the rituals of daily life that these women shared, from running into friends in the street or paying a visit to family, to having a drink in the pub, to planning where their "doss money" for that night would come from. These prostitutes' experiences do not fit easily into the frameworks afforded by scholarship on Victorian gender, concerned as it is with cultural representations of sexuality and morality rather than such mundane realities. Gender historians, as Timothy Gilfoyle has argued,<sup>11</sup> may indeed find a paucity of primary source evidence dealing with the practical, lived realities of prostitution if they seek confirmation of gender history's current understanding of Victorian prostitution as a primarily moral and sexual condition, not a form of work. And yet, a closer examination of the press coverage of the Ripper murders demonstrates that issues of class and labour emerge even within these spaces of cultural representation, within the bourgeois ideology of the fallen woman itself. The body of Victorian print culture used in this thesis suggests that the historical evidence can and does indeed enable historians to study prostitution in terms of class and labour.

It is worth noting that both Lynda Nead and Judith R. Walkowitz, perhaps the two most foundational historians in the study of Victorian prostitution, acknowledged prostitution as a form of labour initially. It is true that both scholars played essential parts

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<sup>11</sup> Gilfoyle, "Prostitutes in History," 137-138.

in articulating the concept of the fallen woman as an interpretive framework for subsequent research, thereby directing scholarship toward the realm of cultural representation, with the prostitute as a negative exemplar of the construct of Victorian femininity.<sup>12</sup> Nead and Walkowitz nevertheless simultaneously argue that Victorian prostitutes were economic as well as moralized and sexualized figures. Nina Atwood identifies high art and cultural discourse as Nead's chief interests in *Myths of Victorian Sexuality* (1988). Nead's contention that the Victorian use of the term prostitute "actively constitutes a group which is both socially and *economically* specific," namely lower-working-class women,<sup>13</sup> suggests that her understanding of prostitution is more grounded in socioeconomic realities than Atwood's work and that of later gender scholars would have us believe.

The title of Walkowitz's doctoral dissertation, which formed the basis of her first monograph, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* (1980), is explicit about her interest in labour history. Published as an article with her husband, Daniel, Walkowitz's thesis is entitled "'We Are Not Beasts of the Field': Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts."<sup>14</sup> Similarly, *Prostitution and Victorian Society* utilizes the Contagious Diseases Acts as a lens through which to study both "class and gender relations in Victorian Britain."<sup>15</sup> Walkowitz treats the implementation of the Acts in Plymouth and Southampton.<sup>16</sup> Her interest in the

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<sup>12</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 9. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 94.

<sup>14</sup> Judith R. Walkowitz and Daniel J. Walkowitz, "'We Are Not Beasts of the Field': Prostitution and the Poor in Plymouth and Southampton under the Contagious Diseases Acts," *Feminist Studies* 1:3/4 (Winter/Spring 1973): 73-106.

<sup>15</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, vii.

<sup>16</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 9. Atwood, *The Prostitute's Body*, 9.

Contagious Diseases Acts, which were enforced only in select areas in Britain and Ireland, necessitates this kind of analysis of specific locales outside of London, which never fell under the jurisdiction of the Acts.<sup>17</sup> In examining why certain women engaged in prostitution, Walkowitz turns to questions of economic necessity and casual labour, concluding that “[f]or poor prostitutes, street-walking was a highly casual and seasonal occupation – much like the alternative legitimate occupations open to the class of women who moved into prostitution.”<sup>18</sup> Walkowitz’s general observations about Victorian prostitutes certainly resonate with what we have learned of the experiences of the women killed by Jack the Ripper.

Nead and Walkowitz’s interest in class and labour issues is typical of Marxist and feminist historical scholarship of the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>19</sup> Walkowitz’s treatment of prostitution in her later work, *City of Dreadful Delight* (1992), however, signifies a sea change in the research interests of gender historians. While *Prostitution and Victorian Society* presents a social history of the mid-Victorian prostitute, *City of Dreadful Delight* is concerned with the “dense cultural grid” of textual representations of prostitution and sexual danger.<sup>20</sup> According to Walkowitz, within the late-Victorian context, the prostitute “was the embodiment of the corporeal smells and animal passions that the rational bourgeois male had repudiated and that the virtuous woman, the spiritualized ‘angel in the house,’ had suppressed.” In this later work, therefore, the London prostitute functions

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<sup>17</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 1-2, 74.

<sup>18</sup> Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Geoff Eley, *A Crooked Line: From Cultural History to the History of Society* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 13-17.

<sup>20</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 5.

as more of a discursive symbol than an actual historical figure, as “a central spectacle in a set of urban encounters and fantasies.”<sup>21</sup>

Walkowitz’s intellectual evolution between *Prostitution and Victorian Society* and *City of Dreadful Delight* is part of a contemporaneous historiographical trend among scholars of gender. After its peak in the 1970s and early 1980s, fewer historians identified with the kind of Marxist and labour-oriented feminism that had motivated the early work of scholars like Nead and Walkowitz. Indeed, Judith Bennet retrospectively argues that both women’s and gender history have been increasingly depoliticised in the wake of what she identifies as the “seamless union” that existed between feminism and history in the 1970s.<sup>22</sup> In making women’s history palatable within the academy, Bennet argues, historians sanitised their feminist- and Marxist-inflected views of the past.<sup>23</sup> As a result, the study of Victorian class dynamics and labour relations, which was of great interest and import to feminist historians, has fallen out of favour.

In softening the ideological underpinnings of women’s and gender history, historians of Victorian prostitution took part in the larger “cultural turn” in history that occurred between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s. Geoff Eley outlines the key methodical shifts of this movement away from social history toward cultural history: “new social historians stressed material life, class, and society, while their culturalist successors refocused on meaning and the forms of perception and understanding that people make and display.”<sup>24</sup> In their preoccupation with the fallen woman as an emblematic *rendering*

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<sup>21</sup> Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 21.

<sup>22</sup> Judith M. Bennet, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 1.

<sup>23</sup> Bennet, *History Matters*, 13-14.

<sup>24</sup> Eley, *A Crooked Line*, 10.

of the prostitute, historians of Victorian Britain clearly participated in this cultural turn. Their research emphasizes the prostitute's discursive and representational presence in the nineteenth century over the social and material presence of the working-class women who constituted the majority of Victorian sex-workers.<sup>25</sup> In so doing, historians have moved away from the study of the socioeconomic realities of nineteenth-century prostitution that the historical evidence, as Nead and Walkowitz's work intimates, actually supports.

Bennet observes that something critical has been lost, or at least pushed to the periphery, with history's cultural turn. What has been lost is an interest in

[t]he hard lives of women in the past; the material forces that shaped and constrained women's activities; the ways that women coped with challenges and obstacles – all these things disappear from our histories of the contradictory and contested meanings of gender.<sup>26</sup>

In treating metropolitan press coverage of the Ripper moment as a case study of the intersection between the representations and the realities of Victorian prostitution, I have attempted to emphasize the hard lives of women operating in the makeshift economy of late-nineteenth-century London. I have argued that the Ripper victims and other low-end urban prostitutes belonged to Spitalfields' sizeable population of casual workers, a class status that they shared with Ripper suspects and vagrant men. Recognition of the Victorian prostitute's class status, as well as her moral and sexual identities, is key to

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<sup>25</sup> Atwood, *The Prostitute's Body*, 7. Lee, *Policing Prostitution*, 34. Nead, *Myths of Sexuality*, 9. Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in Nineteenth-Century London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000). Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight*, 23, 50, 75, 87-89. Walkowitz, "Jack the Ripper and the Myth of Male Violence," 544, 552, 556, 563-564. Walkowitz, "Male Vice and Feminist Virtue," 80-81, 88. Warkentin, "Cherchez les Femmes," 77, 105-107, 113.

<sup>26</sup> Bennet, *History Matters*, 24.

understanding her place in society not only as a gendered figure, but also as a casual worker in the nineteenth-century urban economy.

Like Bennet, Geoff Eley makes a case for bringing the interests of Marxist social history, such as class and labour, into the cultural historical conversation. Eley contends, “we can hold onto all the gains of the new cultural history without having to abandon everything we learned as social historians,” namely “the tasks of social significance or social analysis.”<sup>27</sup> Indeed, reincorporating economics into historians’ expansive discussion of the gender, sexuality and representations of the Victorian prostitute may result in productive comparisons with other research currently being conducted on sex work in other periods and locales. A survey of historical scholarship produced on prostitution in the last 15 years reveals that, outside of Victorian history, many researchers situate sex work within larger contexts of labour migration, tourism and market economies.<sup>28</sup>

Caroline Norma, in her study of sex work in 1960s Japan, expands the borders of what can be considered prostitution, taking into consideration its inextricable associations with commerce of all kinds. She defines sex work not as the simple sale of sexual services, but as sexual contact that takes place “in commercial settings” in order to “fully

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<sup>27</sup> Eley, *A Crooked Line*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Jonathan Cordero, “White Girls for Red Lights: The Procurement of American and European Girls for the Purpose of Prostitution in San Francisco, 1860-1900,” *Journal of the West* 51:1 (Winter 2012): 20-29. Ingrid Kummels, “Love in the Time of Diaspora. Global Markets and Local Meanings of Prostitution, Marriage and Womanhood in Cuba,” *Iberoamericana* 5:20 (2001): 7-26. Dalia Marcinkeviciene and Rima Praspaliauskiene, “Prostitution in post-war Lithuania,” *Women’s History Review* 12:4 (2007): 651-660. Holly Sanders, “Panpan: Streetwalking in Occupied Japan,” *Pacific Historical Review* 81:3 (2012): 404-431. Christiana Schettini, “South American Tours: Work Relations in the Entertainment Market in South America,” *IRSH* 57 (2012): 129-160.



capture the extent of men's patronage of sex industry venues in the context of business."<sup>29</sup> In her examination of regulated prostitution in the late-Ottoman Empire, Müge Özbek observes that many of the women who ended up as registered prostitutes participated in a larger pattern of migration away from the rural interior, seeking job opportunities in urban centres like Istanbul.<sup>30</sup> Elizabeth Sinn has recently quantified the profitability of brothel-keeping in nineteenth-century Hong Kong, detailing the costs and profits associated with running this kind of business.<sup>31</sup> This perceptible interest in the economy of prostitution may well be tied the Western world's "discovery" of the booming business of sex tourism in the late-twentieth-century, particularly in southeast Asia.<sup>32</sup>

Academics and laymen alike readily acknowledge the economic underpinnings of modern-day prostitution and sex tourism, from the profits made by pimps and procurers to the capital brought into prostitution markets by tourists. And yet, historians of nineteenth-century prostitution have been so concerned with unpacking the contested meanings of the prostitute as a fallen woman that we have failed to give appropriate

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<sup>29</sup> Caroline Norma, "Prostitution and the 1960s origins of corporate entertaining in Japan," *Women's Studies International Forum* 34 (2011): 509.

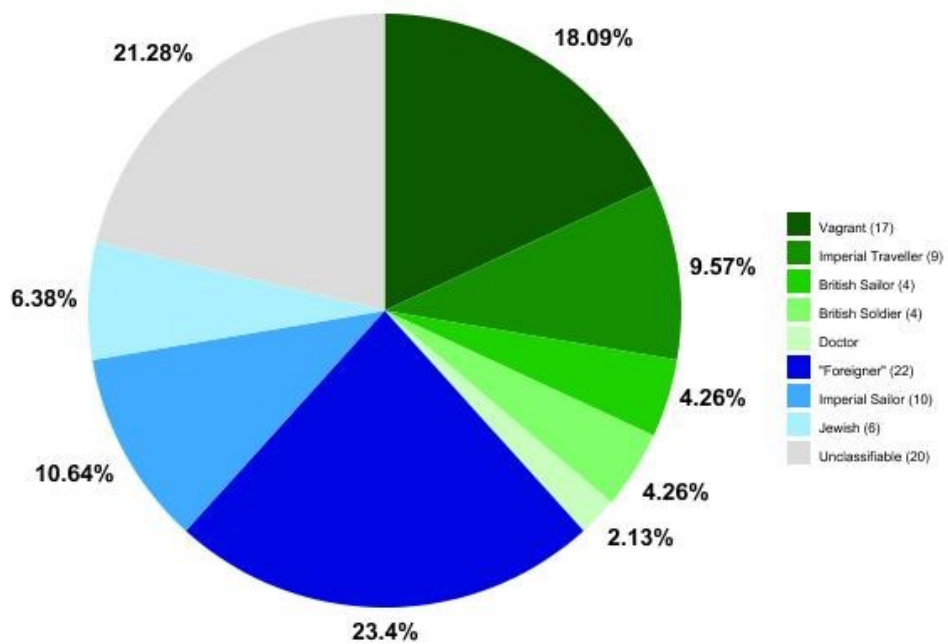
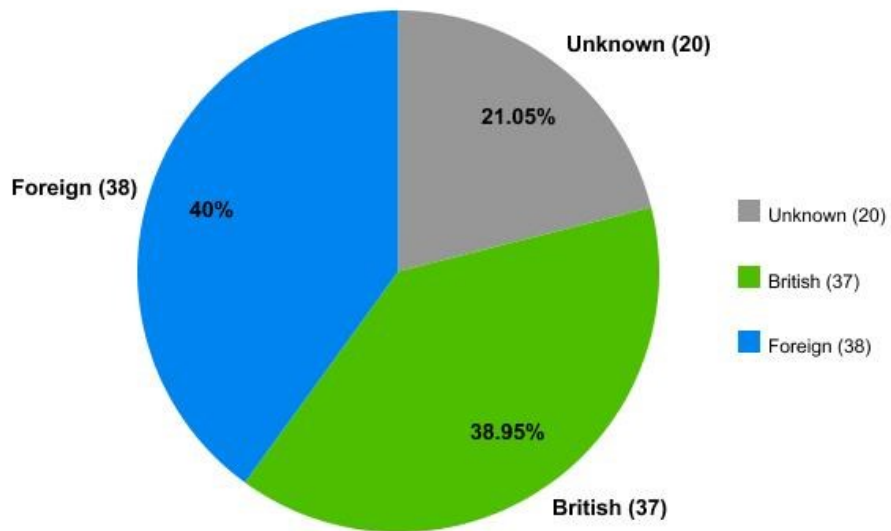
<sup>30</sup> Müge Özbek, "The Regulation of Prostitution in Beyoğlu (1875-1915)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 46: 4 (July 2010): 555-568.

<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Sinn, "Women at Work: Chinese Brothel Keepers in Nineteenth-Century Hong Kong," *Journal of Women's History* 19:3 (Fall 2007): 87-111.

<sup>32</sup> Denise Brennan, *What's Love Got to Do With it? Transnational Desires and Sex Tourism in the Dominican Republic* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004). Leslie Jeffrey, "'Because They Want Nice Things': Prostitution, Consumerism, and Culture in Thailand," *Atlantis* 26:2 (Spring/Summer 2002): 4-13. Wanjohi Kibicho, *Sex Tourism in Africa: Kenya's Booming Industry* (Farnham, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2009). Mark Liechty, "Consumer Transgressions: Notes on the History of Restaurants and Prostitution in Kathmandu," *Studies in Nepali History and Society* 6:1 (June 2001): 57-101. Zosa Olenka De Sas Kropiwnicki, "The Politics of Child Prostitution in South Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 30:2 (April 2012): 235-265.

weight to the work component of Victorian sex work. In demonstrating the importance of work and class identity in the lives of London prostitutes, I am not advocating a return to ideologically-motivated Marxist feminist history or to early social history. One need not be a devout Marxist to recognise that when Victorians spoke about prostitution in the press coverage of the Ripper murders, they talked about the Ripper victims as workers, and as members of a class of men and women who posed a threat to public order by virtue of the irregularity of their work, both actual and moral. This research suggests that it may be time to put aside our interest in the symbolism of the fallen woman and resurrect Nead and Walkowitz's interest in prostitution as a very real part of the Victorian economy. Indeed, considering prostitution as part of the spectrum of experiences and opportunities available to the class of resourceful working women from which prostitutes were drawn invites not only a reconsideration of Victorian prostitution, but a reexamination also of the sexual mores and practices of the working poor.

### APPENDIX A DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF RIPPER SUSPECTS



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