

**Detective Fiction and Neo-Victorian Sexploitation:
Violence, Morality and Rescue Work in
Lee Jackson's *The Last Pleasure Garden* (2007)
and *Ripper Street*'s 'I Need Light' (2012-16)**

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Abstract:

In *The Last Pleasure Garden* (2007), Lee Jackson re-appropriates the crime fiction genre to portray various stories of gender abuse and violence, as several women become the victims of 'The Cutter' in Victorian London, provoking chaos and disorder. At the same time Jackson recovers aspects of the Victorian cultural archive like London's popular pleasure gardens, to discuss issues of morality, sexual exploitation and reform both in Victorian and contemporary societies. Similarly, sexual abuse and violence in the BBC drama series *Ripper Street* (2012-16), particularly the inaugural episode, repeatedly focus on sexual exploitation and mourning for the abused, as the protagonist Inspector Edmund Reid tries to do justice to the women selling their bodies in London's East End shortly after the Ripper's murders. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's notion of the abject and Judith Butler's theories of gender, violence and mourning, this article explores neo-Victorian representations of the Victorian neglected other, which mirror contemporary concerns about the deaths and suffering of society's vulnerable and dispossessed.

Keywords: the abject, Judith Butler, crime fiction, crime drama, gender violence, Julia Kristeva, mourning, prostitution, sexual exploitation, vulnerability.

Many neo-Victorian fictions and films explore issues of sexual identity and violence in the world of Victorian prostitution and their reflection in (and of) our own contemporary societies. This article analyses representations of sexual abuse within the sex trade milieu in two neo-Victorian literary and visual productions, Lee Jackson's *The Last Pleasure Garden* (2007), a detective novel, and 'I Need Light', the inaugural episode of the BBC's crime drama *Ripper Street* (2012-16, Series 1), created by Richard Warlow. In particular, I focus on the texts' portrayals of the

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victims' (loss of) agency and mourning for the abused, as well as anxieties of moral and physical contamination.

Perhaps best known for his www.victorianlondon.org webpage,¹ Lee Jackson has published several books on the social and cultural history of nineteenth-century London and seven neo-Victorian novels to date, all crime fictions set in the metropolis. *The Last Pleasure Garden* (2007) is the third in a series of novels centred on the work of Inspector Decimus Webb of Scotland Yard, preceded by *A Metropolitan Murder* (2004) and *The Welfare of the Dead* (2005). Jackson's crime fiction revisits issues of Victorian morality and contamination, especially in relation to gendered forms of violence and social abjection. Fittingly, Julia Kristeva defines abjection as "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (Kristeva 1982: 4). Simultaneously, Jackson's novels evoke present-day concerns related to social disorder. In this sense, the role of literature as the vehicle for the production of cultural memory comes to the fore, becoming both the medium for understanding the past and rendering it newly meaningful for the present. As a consequence, historical novels can function as texts of commemoration or texts of contestation (see Erll and Rigney 2006: 111-113), with most neo-Victorian novels arguably exemplifying the latter trend. However the hybridisation of the historical novel and detective fiction genres, especially in *The Last Pleasure Garden*, evinces features of both the commemorative and contestatory strains.

The same can be argued for neo-Victorian visual productions which represent aspects of sexual exploitation and violence in the Victorian past as a mirror-critique of our contemporary and so-called 'civilised' societies. In these screen texts, crimes such as rape, other forms of sexual violence, and the commodification of women's bodies are represented, with the dehumanised victims' identities often destroyed in the process. In *Ripper Street*, the lead protagonist, Detective Inspector Edmund Reid (Matthew Macfadyen), head of the Whitechapel H Division, tries to do justice to his district's citizens, especially the women selling their bodies in London's East End in the aftermath of the 1889 Jack the Ripper murders. Reid aims not only to keep order in his working-class borough, but also to demonstrate and elicit sympathy for the deaths and suffering of the 'prostituted other'.²

Victorian prostitution, famously condemned as 'The Great Social Evil' (see Nead 1988: 93), was intimately linked to the idea of the moral

purity of the British nation and its endangerment. Both Jackson's novel and *Ripper Street* pick up on this latter theme, connecting it to the notion of a better past – prior to contamination – that needs to be restored through the efforts of the police investigators. Nineteenth-century detective fiction arguably played a significant role in the creation of a new figure: the criminal and/or murderer, who became the primary representation of evil for the Victorians. Gill Plain describes the “model of the inexplicable bogeyman” favoured by crime writers today as the “new ‘other’”, a figure that has come “to replace those more familiar others – the predatory homosexual, the marauding black man, the voracious woman – who have historically been used to frighten children and police the boundaries of white hetero-patriarchal society” (Plain 2008: 13-14). In much the same way, the criminal of nineteenth-century detective fiction became the Victorians' new other, “provid[ing] a guilty object, a site of horror, onto which cultural anxieties, fears and above all, guilt, [could] easily be projected” (Plain 2008: 14). In these terms, cultural apprehensions and blame, both in Victorian and postmodern societies, are displaced onto this literary persona, most often male, as a site of dread and disgust. His unnatural unsocial behaviour is considered to contaminate ‘decent’ society and to generate chaos and disorder.

Paradoxically, contamination can also mean constructive exchange, with the detective figure confronting the trespassing of social and moral limits. Contamination, then, is about not respecting limits or borders and is projected onto physical images of filth and dirt that represent immorality. In the case of *The Last Pleasure Garden*, these ideas are intermingled with issues of sexual violence and reform work, so conspicuously present in the Victorian past. The association between purity and contamination becomes especially prominent in Victorian and neo-Victorian detective fiction, as well as other appropriated period genres such as the sensation novel, both genres associated with the Gothic. In this context, Kristeva's notions of abjection and the abject assume particular relevance, due to the presence of death and corpses as objects of investigators' enquiries in detective fiction: “The corpse (or cadaver: *cadere*, to fall), that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool and death” (Kristeva 1982: 3, original italics). At the same time, Judith Butler's approach to the suffering of ‘others’ – here in the sense of the innocent victims rather than criminal others – as casualties of dehumanising violence, past and present, deserving of sympathy and

mourning, becomes an outstanding feature of historical recreations of the Victorian period, which also serve as quasi mirrors reflecting contemporary concerns. In Butler's words, depictions of precarity invite audiences "to consider a dimension of political life that has to do with our exposure to violence and our complicity in it, with our vulnerability to loss and the task of mourning that follows, and with finding a basis for community in these conditions" (Butler 2006: 19). Similarly, these neo-Victorian texts' politics of representation emphasise the interrelations now, as then, between criminality, sexual behaviour and social change, calling into question the very nature of historical progress.

In comparable fashion, a TV series like *Ripper Street* acknowledges the identity crises of contemporary societies, often rooted in the wrongs and abuses that lie hidden within glorified national pasts. As Kohlke states, "[b]y projecting illicit and unmentionable desires onto the past, we conveniently reassert our supposedly enlightened stance towards sexuality and social progress" (Kohlke 2008: 56); to these, ethnicity and social class could be added. This assumed advancement, however, glosses over the opposite of sexual empowerment and liberation, with an exponential increase in the number of victims of a now globalised sex industry, including sex tourism, sexual slavery, trafficking, pornography, and paedophilia, not to mention the transnational spread of sexually transmitted diseases.

Arguably, the main victims of today's global sex trade, besides children, are women.³ Issues of sexual assault and exploitation have become part of our everyday lives,⁴ and women still lack equal power to assert their liberated and self-determined identities. Working through the history of female sexploitation via the Victorians, *The Last Pleasure Garden* and *Ripper Street*'s 'I Need Light' repeatedly link the absence or loss of female agency to sexual violence. In particular, they highlight the prostituted body as a site of extreme precarity, through which past and present gendered abuses are both commemorated and contested.

1. Detective Fiction and the Neo-Victorian

The fascination of contemporary audiences with Victorian crime, sexuality and gender violence is facilitated by the proliferation of detective fiction and TV crime dramas set in the period (see Ascari 2009: 5). The detective literary genre emerged in the early to mid-nineteenth century and has to be

understood within the social and historical context when the genre acquired both its main aesthetic and ideological values. Early detective fiction reflected a culture in which crime and punishment assumed increasing sociopolitical and ideological significance. This meaning was made evident through complex ways of disciplining deviant subjects and their submission to surveillance and segregation, not just in prisons but also in lunatic asylums, as later theorised in Michel Foucault's work about the relation between discipline and power (see Foucault 1990: 92-98). The nineteenth century was also the time when "new legal institutions and judicial procedures" appeared, in particular "the formation of the detective police, the rise of forensic science, and the development of trial by evidence" (Marcus 2006: 246). To all this can be added the use of incipient photographic techniques in the last decades of the nineteenth century (see Gold 2002: 2). The Metropolitan Police was founded in 1829 and the detective department in 1842, but detective fiction only became a distinct literary genre in the 1880s and the 1890s.⁵ At this stage, detective fiction wanted to detach itself from its origins in earlier sensation fiction (see Ascari 2009: 1), including works by popular writers like Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. This timing is no coincidence, because it was also in the last decades of the nineteenth century that public morality and purity became primary sociopolitical concerns.

However, the genre of detective fiction has had an odd and intricate status in the literary field, having been traditionally considered as an inferior form of narrative that typically encompasses a double plot, in which the story of a crime is reformulated through the subsequent story of its investigation (see Marcus 2006: 245). Elements of suspense, associated with signs and secrets, display the city as the stage for all manner of violence, as an urban landscape of death and corruption which, re-imagined in neo-Victorian media, also comes to represent the contemporary context of the present-day audience. The double plot of detective fiction, then, is echoed in neo-Victorianism's own double perspective, which juxtaposes historical investigation, cultural meaning-making and critique with sensationalist fantasies of the period. The same prevailing impulses – the quest for order, reason, and understanding, on the one hand, and the fascination with enigma, fantasy, and horror, on the other – arguably underlie both detection and neo-Victorian practice. These opposing inclinations are further accentuated by neo-Victorianism's typical postmodern affinities, which,

akin to much detective fiction, devalue traditional master narratives (See Llewellyn 2009: 34; Bowler and Cox 2009/2010: 6). All this renders detective fiction a highly appropriate medium for neo-Victorian fictional histories.

Besides drawing on sensation fiction, detective fiction, in both its textual and visual forms, is closely related to another Victorian/neo-Victorian genre already touched on: the Gothic. Neo-Victorian Gothic productions work to unfold decentred and uncertain subjectivities like those of the prostitute/fallen woman and the victim of sexual violence. Today, the Gothic invades every aspect of our consumer, social and political lives, not just as a style preference (for instance, in fashion or jewellery), but also as a symbol of instability and decline in postmodern culture. Even the political arena is invaded by the Gothic, with the drama of violent conflict and the ghosts of historical traumas ever-present in nations' geo-political agendas. Neo-Victorian productions share many generic aspects with the Gothic, such as dense intertextuality, questions of historical omission and lack of representability, as well as tropes of haunting and spectrality. Deconstructionist activities to approach relevant political matters, of course, are not alien to the detection genre either (see Ascari 2009: xiii), while "the neo-Victorian's ethical imperative of 'working through' unresolved traumas of the period" is never-ending in detective fiction (Kohlke and Gutleben 2012: 4). Through recourse to the Gothic, 'Otherness' therefore moves to the centre of neo-Victorian detective fiction, and the 'prostituted other' in particular inhabits the re-imagined Victorian cityscape as the paradigmatic trauma victim and a symbol of sexual exploitation. Her presence poses a challenge to contemporary communities' sense of historical progress, functioning somewhat as do terrorists today (see Butler 2006: 20). Any secure identity and subjectivity constructions are put at risk, since constantly undermined by fears about crime, violence, radicalisation, and terrorism, on the one hand, and human trafficking, prostitution, and child abuse, on the other. Indeed, the former frequently result in incidences of the latter. TV series focused on crime and detection, not just *Ripper Street* but also *Whitechapel* (2009-2013), *Penny Dreadful* (2014-2016), or *The Frankenstein Chronicles* (2015), clearly encode these present-day insecurities in images of the Victorian past.

The complementary strains of Gothic and sensation fiction coincide in the trope of the neo-Victorian serial killer – a contemporary criminal

figure first conceptualised after the Victorian period⁶ – who seeks to deprive not just one, but multiple, often female victims of their lives and agency. In a classical sense, of course, detection has to do with the discovery of the processes by which a crime is committed, the criminal's identity is uncovered, and law and order are restored, providing justice for the victim. Still, in many contemporary historical fictions concerned with criminal violence, the boundaries between criminal and victim are not always clearly demarcated. This has important implications for the disentangling of the actual (criminal) plot behind the narrative (see Marcus 2006: 245, 248), and in turn for understanding the sometimes violent responses of victims and investigators. This is the case of Reid in *Ripper Street*, who, as the series progresses, exerts more violence, resorting even to killing. Moreover, female victims may be protagonists in their own right, taking an active role in the process of restorative justice or, alternatively, revenge, as does Sugar in Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002).

In accordance with the Victorian sensation genre, women fall prey to patriarchal victimisation as a result of female transgressive behaviour rather than merely on account of male seduction and abuse. The focus on nineteenth-century gender politics, albeit often subverted, is a prominent feature of neo-Victorian literary and visual productions, clearly present in *The Last Pleasure Garden* and *Ripper Street*. Yet this fact does not mean that women always triumph over their male perpetrators and achieve agency in neo-Victorian narratives. In many cases, gender and sexual violence, as it does in the real extradiegetic world, ends with the murder of the female victims. In the context of neo-Victorian displays of women's dead and mutilated bodies however, "murder may ironically become a form of social critique" (Kohlke and Gutleben 2012: 28).

2. Violence and Rescue Work in *The Last Pleasure Garden*

It is no coincidence that most of the plot of Jackson's novel revolves around one of the last pleasure gardens of the Victorian period, Cremorne Gardens. Located in Chelsea on the banks of the river Thames, the Gardens opened as late as the 1840s, with easy access from King's Road, and were open fifteen hours a day throughout the season for an entrance fee of one shilling. The Gardens are presented as the ideal setting for the growth of immorality: their "omnipresent radiance" dispenses "a garish, cheerful glow that, from the Thames, suggests a magical kingdom hidden from view" (Jackson 2007: 8).

It is a place where “men and women seem to lounge in an easy intimacy” (Jackson 2007: 9). In other words, it provides a pleasant setting to foster courting and sexual encounters away from the observation of ‘moral authorities’. People from all social backgrounds could enjoy “pleasant walks in beautiful grounds, for only a small fee, music, and – for the men – women” (Flanders 2007: 277). Innocent young women also felt the lure of the place, due to its more innocent entertainments, such as tableaux, pageants and balloon ascents during the day and even fireworks shortly after dawn (see Picard 2006: 249-250). Additionally, the grounds featured a theatre, a banqueting hall and an American bowling saloon.

In the novel, the Cremorne Gardens provide the setting for flourishing immorality, which becomes one of the text’s most important concerns. The Garden’s temptations are intimately connected with the novel’s main plot-line concerning the crimes of ‘the Cutter’, who attacks lone women, cutting off some of their hair. Perceived by self-appointed moral guardians as “the place for loose women” (Jackson 2007: 9), the Gardens became a focal point of the fight against ‘impurity’ and ‘moral contamination’, which was a prominent feature of the last decades of the Victorian period (see Bartley 2000: 155-157). It is above all sexual ‘contamination’ that so worries the campaigning Reverend Featherstone and his wife, embarked on the fight against promiscuity and handing out pamphlets at the entrance of the Gardens with titles such as “CREMORNE: THE CURSE OF THE NEW SODOM” or “Dancing to Satan’s Hornpipe in Chelsea” (Jackson 2007: 16, 36). Featherstone arguably bears a resemblance to the puritan Edward Casaubon in George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871-72), rejecting all bar intellectual and religious pleasures. Meanwhile Mrs. Featherstone is a member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice linked to the emergence of the National Vigilance Association (see Hall 2013: 38-39), which was part of the wider Social Purity Movement. At one point, she proudly proclaims that her husband, a member of the same organisation, “is planning a charity bazaar at the College, in aid of the Society for the Suppression of Vice” (Jackson 2007: 15).⁷

The Featherstones’ and their Society’s activities, promoting a single repressive moral code, are closely associated with nineteenth-century anxieties about sexual crimes and the social uproar provoked by historical figures like Jack the Ripper and other less popular serial murderers operating at the time.⁸ Although employing a different modus operandi, the

fictional character of the Cutter follows in the tracks of the Ripper, whose identity famously could never be established. The mysterious assailant becomes the main object of the detective investigation in a murder case. Having already attacked several women to cut away some of their hair, the Cutter eventually seriously injures one of his victims, rendering a further escalation likely. As did the Victorian newspapers' sensationalist reporting of real-life cases of murder and criminal assault, the press's lurid coverage of the Cutter's offences in the novel feeds both the public's fear and fascination.

Such news items became very popular in the second half of the nineteenth century when cases of rape and sexual violence especially attracted a wide audience among the middle-class, as well as the increasingly literate working-class. The questions of consent and complicity were particularly relevant in this context, as well as in cases of elopement. Decent working-class women or young middle-class ladies, who innocently attended the Gardens only to find themselves compromised, demanded the sympathy of newspaper readers who felt a powerful attraction for these sensational stories. This is reflected in the novel, and the attacks of the Cutter are no exception. Thus, Inspector Decimus Webb reads in *The Times*:

OUTRAGE AT CREMORNE. A young woman is now lying at the Chelsea Union Infirmary having suffered a brutal assault at the hands of an unknown assailant. Sarah Hookey, a servant who resides at 23, Worthing Terrace, Pimlico, was in the Gardens on Saturday evening last when her person was attacked with a sharp instrument, which cut her dress, and penetrated her side. A number of men, attracted by her cries, hastened to the scene. The woman lapsed into an unconscious state and was carried by Constable 104T to the King's-road, where she was conveyed in a cab to the infirmary. There is every hope of a recovery, but the perpetrator of this peculiar sanguinary outrage remains at large. (Jackson 2007: 19)

However, servant girls in public gardens could be suspected of soliciting on the premises, not least as 'dollymops' frequented these places to ply the trade. Victorian prejudices regarding prostitutes were quite conspicuous, and

the reputation of the girl was essential to elicit sympathy from the readers of articles such as this.

The prevalent attraction to sex crimes also marks contemporary society, with present-day audiences craving coverage of ever new offences while simultaneously condemning them. Today's newspapers regularly feature crimes of sexual violence and/or murder, as do TV news and investigative programmes, as well as crime dramas, all of which function as important vehicles for the discussion of sexual violence. The persistence of such crimes is often taken to indicate a wider moral decline and creeping sociocultural corruption.⁹ On many occasions, the discovery of sex crimes and the identification and prosecution of the perpetrators become questions of national debate and concern. The morbidity and excitement that these cases provoke are features which contemporary societies share with their nineteenth-century antecedents, suggesting the existence of trans-historical, perhaps even universal patterns of deplorable behavior and response. Jackson's novel's own sensational focus on sexploitation suggests that technological advances and other modern innovations have not significantly changed human nature.

In the case of *The Last Pleasure Garden*, two subsequent assaults show similar hallmarks of the Cutter: a Miss Mansell from Belgrave Square suffers a slash at her dress and a cut in her backside, but no serious injury, although the location – the Prince's Ground – is different, and Miss Emma Wilmington, an eighteen-year-old lady from Brompton, suffers the tearing of her dress and numerous wounds and scratches as well as serious shock. The second assault, following a different script, occurs where the Society for the Suppression of Vice is celebrating a charity ball, attended by innocent girls from the middle-class looking for potential husbands, accentuating the moral danger to purity. Inspector Decimus Webb attributes all these aggressions to the workings of a lunatic, but his assistant Sergeant Bartleby, the press, and the general public suspect a serial criminal behind the attacks. Yet the Cutter's weapon of choice and symbol of his dreadful acts – a pair of scissors – plays a misleading role.

What all these attacks actually have in common is that they target seemingly respectable young women who demonstrate an inclination to enjoy life with all the potential moral risks that such an inclination involves. In other words, the women almost seem to 'invite' the transgressions against them – evoking the sexist argument often put forward to mitigate

perpetrators' actions today. The women are the Cutter's prey and, in this context, Dr. Malcolm's erroneous description of the Cutter as a serial killer is inadvertently revealing:

It is quite straightforward. The man has yielded to some primitive impulse to wound these women; it doubtless gives him some unnatural form of satisfaction. Unless you catch him, Inspector, that basic instinct which drives him on – which atrophies the will further with each assault – will only increase. (Jackson 2007: 169)

These words evoke sex crimes, although the women are not sexually attacked as such. The Cutter, like most serial killers, feels an unnatural pleasure in his attacks on women. In line with Malcolm's prognostication, women in the novel continue to fall victim to sexual aggressions and even murder in an ever increasing spiral of violence. Unexpectedly, however, the assumed connection between the Cutter's assaults and the sanguinary murders simultaneously taking place in London proves spurious.

While purity and contamination are two notions that the Victorians were very familiar with, they are not alien to contemporary societies either. Neo-Victorian crime narratives and detective fiction more generally are not just about 'good' society's contamination, but could, in a sense, be said to embody it. Moral contamination in the form of sexual promiscuity and prostitution, of course, became synonymous with social evil in Victorian culture. Analogously, the neo-Victorian setting of a novel like *The Last Pleasure Garden* provides its fictional killer with an environment that conveniently displaces his guilt – at least in part – upon his victims. Even though the women's actions might not be deemed transgressive or reprehensible today, the narrative still implicates them in the perpetrator's immorality. Something more insidious seems at work here than the mere replication of historical misogyny.

As Saverio Tamaiuolo points out, 'Victorian' associations between moral dirt, female sexuality, and societal pollution are still in force today, and the prostitute still serves as the visible symbol of degradation and pollution in the urban context (Tamaiuolo 2016: 107). She represents the 'dirty' commercialisation and exploitation of sexuality; in other words, she remains 'the other' and, as such, poses an on-going threat to liberal and

progressive civilised countries like the United Kingdom. Thus, there are “repeated attempts by London councils to eradicate prostitution from their neighbourhoods as a ‘blight for the local environment’” (Tomaiuolo 2016: 111). Local London authorities are constantly regulating the use of public spaces to eradicate prostitution, accompanied by the utilisation of cameras and private security in areas where the population does not want to mix with contemporary social outcasts like migrants or prostitutes (see Tomaiuolo 2016: 114, 111). Similarly, although human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation has become a major issue in British society as Dominic Casciani illustrates (Casciani 2014: n.p.), current debates centre primarily on how best to regulate and control the influx and prevent the illegal movement of these ‘deviant’ individuals across national borders, rather than on providing victim support: the ‘prostituted other’ is deemed part of the problem to be controlled and, in the case of undocumented aliens, to be quickly deported wherever possible. Any sense of genuine mourning for these women seems lacking from the public discourse of politicians and authorities, who prefer to address the problem of trafficking and forced prostitution in terms of security, crime, and economics rather than its human costs. The overriding objective, once again, is to ‘purify’ the British nation and eliminate all ‘contaminant’ residents.

Ironically, in *The Last Pleasure Garden*, the Cutter is fulfilling a similar mission: to put an end to depravity and degeneracy. On a physical level, contamination also implies that violence can spread through a whole community akin to an infectious disease, and late-Victorian discourses about degeneration and eugenics contributed to the view of society as bearing the visible traces of moral ‘dirt’ and impurity. It is therefore the role of the detective to restore cleanliness and order (see Pittard: 2011, 2, 5-6), simultaneously functioning as society’s moral policeman. Yet this was also the aim of Victorian religious fanatics, represented in the novel by Reverend Featherstone and his wife. The former calls Cremorne Gardens “the new Sodom upon the Thames” and takes up the crusade to have it closed down:

It is a hard path I have chosen, but I am sure it is the right one. This place is a cancer in the very heart of our fair suburb. I have seen young persons – many of them of respectable families, mind you – corrupted time and again. And now we have this business of The Cutter – I consider it

the fruit of this social evil, which we have allowed to flourish quite unchecked. (Jackson 2007: 142)

In this passage, the gendered and the Biblical connotations of Featherstone's description of immorality are evident, evoking the Original Sin and associating it with the Victorian notion of the 'Great Social Evil'. Also, the process of feminisation of Cremorne in Featherstone's mind puts the emphasis on its significance as a sort of 'femme fatale' against whom 'decent' society has to fight. The bourgeois Victorians' prurient obsession with the purported immorality of the poor and the "corrupted" of their own class can be compared to the interest of today's audiences in represented Victorian spectacles of exploitation.

Similarly, Victorian audiences were eager for stories of crime, and the novel reflects this interest. A series of murders occur, which some attribute to the Cutter. At the same time, the reform work of Reverend Featherstone suffers a quite unpredictable turn. The first corpse to appear is that of Jane Budge, a working-class servant for the Featherstones at St. Mark's Training College, "an institution for the instruction of Christian school-masters" (Jackson 2007: 31). Presumed 'working-class' traits like promiscuity or alcoholism are associated with Jane and with her family environment. Her respectability is questioned as she is shown as deserving her social punishment for her immoral behavior. Her mother is a baby-farmer, a common occupation of working-class women in the nineteenth century (see Perkin 1994: 192), which often helped cover up illegitimate births via such children's 'adoption' or sometimes deaths hastened by 'calming' drugs, like "Godfrey's Cordial" (Jackson 2007: 48), or lack of proper nourishment. Meanwhile Jane's father passes his time in the pub till he returns home in a state of drunkenness.

When Jane is found dead, her burnt body represents the flames of hell that condemn social outcasts. The vision of her death throes evokes the figure of 'the abject' for the reader, emphasising "the full horror of Jane Budge's face as she tumbles from the blazing inferno, her body writhing in agony, her hands scratching senselessly at the floor, as the flames dance gaily on her back" (Jackson 2007: 94). In the process of the investigation, her character is likewise blackened and associations are made with her lack of respectability. The scene of the crime may also be read through the lens of abjection, as Kristeva explains: "Any crime, because it draws attention to

the fragility of the law, is abject, but premeditated crime, cunning murder, hypocritical revenge are even more because they heighten the display of such fragility” (Kristeva 1982: 4). Jane’s dead body represents the abject and the fragmentation of identity due to the violation of social boundaries and norms: she walks on her own late at night and visits Cremorne attracted by the allure of the Gardens and the possibility of meeting men. This abjection is taken to the limit when her corpse is kept in her mother’s house awaiting Christian burial. The scene is described in a manner seemingly intended to provoke readers’ sympathy for the victim. In Kristeva’s words, the corpse is “the utmost in abjection. It is death infecting life” (Kristeva 1982: 4). When Jane’s corpse is examined by the coroner, its abjection is displayed to an eager audience in a process of dehumanisation, the verdict being one of “willful murder” (Jackson, 2007: 273). Jane becomes ‘the prostituted other’, since “society needs to identify and demonise non-conforming figures, those made different through gender, race, class or sexuality” (Plain 2008: 8). At the same time this society “defines the other as monstrous, or in some way feminine, and in consequence knows what to fear or avoid” (Plain 2008: 8). Likewise today images of dead women’s bodies, and sometimes naked bodies of the victims of sexual exploitation, are exhibited in newspaper pages and TV news; viewers become familiar with the public spectacle of dehumanisation and commodification of female bodies. Paradoxically, however, ‘the abject’ also encourages the reader’s sympathy towards those who represent ‘otherness’ and ‘deviancy’: “The abject is the violence of mourning for an ‘object’ that has already been lost” (Kristeva 1982: 15).

Butler advocates for an ethical model that fosters the end of violence and respect for ‘the other’: “The question that preoccupies me in the light of recent global violence is, Who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And, finally, What *makes for a grievable life?*” (Butler 2006: 20; original emphasis). The lives that must also count as human are those of the discriminated and silenced because of sexual, racial or class differences. These ideas are very much in line with the neo-Victorian project that seeks to give voice to the marginalised and ‘deviant’. Deviancy and marginalisation are subtly the topic of crime fiction, which not only contaminates ‘high’ culture but also bears witness to the tropes of infection, pollution and disease so typical of Victorian discourses about the working-classes. This is also a prevalent feature of neo-Victorian Gothic as a

“cultural contaminant” (Plain 2008: 3) that encompasses contemporary instability and defilement. Both Victorian and postmodern societies were and are constantly negotiating and re-negotiating moral boundaries which are continuously shifting (see Plain 2008: 7). This shifting of boundaries can be found in Jane herself, who is presented as a victim of rape and sexual violence at the hands of the villain of the story, George Nelson. Jane’s murder suggests the necessity of showing sympathy for the sufferers of sexual violence in the framework of Butler’s theories about mourning and violence.

The next murder victims, Bertha Featherstone, the Reverend’s wife, and Jane’s mother, Margaret Budge, bear some connection with the previous murder, but their deaths also show different characteristics. Each woman shares Jane’s abjection in the representation of the corpse as ‘the other’ which expels its refuse to become normative (see Kristeva 1982: 3-4). Both victims are found surrounded by fluids like blood or vomit, and in the case of Margaret Budge by an unbearable stink: ““Ah. Vomit, sir, dried on the floor here’. ‘And on her sleeve, Sergeant”” (Jackson 2007: 292). This stink comes from her daughter’s coffin, which is still above ground, so that the smell of putrefaction pervades the atmosphere. Contamination is everywhere, and these fluids represent the blurring of borders between normative and non-normative identities.

The novel similarly supports neo-Victorian ideas about restitution concerning crimes of the past, and their consequences for our contemporaneity are present in the plot. After Jane’s mother’s death the identity of the Cutter – Reverend Featherstone – is revealed. However, he is not the murderer; the murderer – or better murderess – is Mrs. Perfitt, Rose’s mother, seeking to hide a secret past of adultery, illegitimacy and intrigue which explains all the events in the plot. Both villains die as a fair punishment for their criminal activities and are discovered by the indefatigable zeal of the police in the disclosure of truth and restitution of order. As a consequence, healing takes place, as all the evil characters in the plot who overstep the limits of normative society die one way or another, and restoration and justice for their victims are achieved. The novel points to the fact that in an ideal community all crimes against human beings should be punished, no matter the social class of the victims. Also, the novel complies with the characteristics of detective fiction as a genre, trying to re-establish normality in and ‘purification’ of society. *The Last Pleasure*

Garden, then, makes evident the preoccupation that both Victorians and modern readers share about atrocities committed in past and present communities, providing readers with a signification and an interpretation of national and social relations throughout history. The Victorian ideas about purifying the nation identify with the aim of detective fiction of restoring order and are projected onto our contemporary turbulent times when sexual crimes and violence proliferate.

3. Sexploitation and the *Ripper Street* Series (2012-16)

Sexual violence and its disturbance of social order also feature prominently in the BBC series *Ripper Street*, focusing on the years immediately after the Ripper murders in London, particularly so in the first episode of Series 1. Aspects such as prostitution, violence, sexual exploitation – including pornography and sadomasochism – and crimes and murders are shown to the audience in an attempt to establish parallelisms with the violence that characterises our contemporary societies. In the Gothic setting of the neo-Victorian landscape on screen, these crimes are usually doubly discriminatory, because the victims suffer gender and class exploitation, compounding their sexual violation. The physical abuse of the victims makes evident the lack of sympathy and the absence of a sense of mourning for the fate of the most vulnerable, implicitly deprived of human rights. Nevertheless, physical abuse is also what arouses commiseration and interest from the detectives and initiates the quest for bringing the perpetrators to justice.

The story begins in April 1889, six months after the last Jack the Ripper's murder, and the Whitechapel area H-Division is in charge of policing the part of the metropolis where the first murder occurs.¹⁰ The East End neighbourhood is populated by 67,000 citizens, many of whom belong to the social category of the poor and dispossessed. The Ripper has never been identified conclusively, and in this neo-Victorian re-imagining of his one-time killing grounds, women are still murdered in the streets and alleys. Unsurprisingly, the police wonder if 'Jack' is the author of these new killings also. The protagonists of the series, Detective Inspector Reid, Detective Sergeant Bennett Drake (Jerome Flynn) and former US Army surgeon Captain Homer Jackson (Adam Rothenberg), work together to investigate the murders and keep order in the district. Factories, rookeries, pubs, shops and brothels are the settings where most of the action takes

place. In this series, elements common to other forms of literature, such as the Gothic and detective fiction, together with visual representations of cultural history define the neo-Victorian narrative, intermingling to produce a contemporary constellation that reflects anxieties shared by Victorians and contemporary viewers.

The unclosed case of Jack the Ripper leaves space for the combination of fiction and reality, and the failures and misconceptions of the investigation in the nineteenth century have left blanks for contemporary writers and TV producers to fill in. In the case of visual productions, viewers' fantasies are engaged too, and the story's fictionalisation benefits from the audience's conditioned taste for televisual representations of violence and sexual exploitation. Thus, on-screen Victorian spectators and series viewers alike shape the way in which the violent Victorian past can be formulated to cater for their own tastes. This can be seen in the episode in the sensationalist reporting of the prostitutes' murders in *The Star*, which reverberates with the contents of contemporary tabloids. The degeneracy of the late Victorian period is the perfect setting for the public to contemplate the contemporary violence that they continually see on the news, read about, and find reflected in neo-Victorian works and productions (see Duperray 2012: 168). Indeed, "versions of fictional killers self-evidently inspired by Jack have featured among a whole tide of crime fiction of every description [...] as well as in neo-Victorian fiction" (Duperray 2012: 175), the same as on cinema and television screens.

Arguably, one of the aims of visual productions about historical detection is to establish a contrast between violent corrupted societies and an idyllic mythological idea of a splendid past when justice and order supposedly reigned. A connection might be established here with 'heritage' cinema and television more generally, as in *Chariots of Fire* (1981), *Howards End* (1992) or *The King's Speech* (2010), which have become very popular among British audiences as a celebration of a golden past. Neo-Victorian detective narratives, however, problematise notions of a 'splendid' past, instead depicting a nation traumatised by having lost its identity in a downward spiral of modern crime and violence. Thus, the figure of the criminal becomes representative of 'the other' in the process of negotiating the meaning of a cultural identity for the British nation (see McCaw 2012: 1). In particular, historical TV series like *Ripper Street* enact a binding of

social relations across time and space, potentially providing large numbers of viewers with a sense of meaning and a social context:

These adaptations can be seen as a symptom of and also a medium for that process, with popular television interwoven into the daily, commonplace ‘domestic and national rituals’ by which British culture shapes and comes to know itself ‘in reciprocal relations’. (McCaw 2012: 3)

Sexploitation and violence presented in a Victorian scenario provide the setting for the discussion of contemporary violence and simultaneously question that idyllic idea of a golden past. Historical TV series can then be considered as adaptations and cultural readings as well as “a source of mediation between past and present” (McCaw 2012: 5), sharing this function with the neo-Victorian agenda. Neo-Victorian productions have among their aims to recover the voices of the marginalised and dispossessed, so they act as intermediaries between past and present forms of social exclusion. In this sense, the past is not innocently reinvented by the present, but engages in a larger social and cultural critique that reflects the continuous social change of past and contemporary communities. Therefore, neo-Victorian metafiction mingles fictionalised stories with historical records. The key lies in a kind of individual/collective psychosis/madness that increases the viewer’s fascination for the victimised female (see Duperray 2012: 177).

In *Ripper Street* the Ripper’s Whitechapel killings are recreated as historical fact, as part of the neo-Victorian project of filling in the interstices in the historical record and hearing the voices of the marginalised. The inaugural episode, entitled ‘I Need Light’, starts with a Whitechapel tour, with a group of middle-class ladies and gentlemen being shown “the haunts of Jack the Ripper” (Smallwood and Warlow 2012: Episode 1: 0:00:33). The dichotomy between East End and West End, poor and rich, deprived and civilised, working-class and middle-class is made evident. However, the group comes across another murdered woman, who initially looks like one of the Ripper victims, as she lies on the ground with a cut in her throat and two crosses on her closed eyes. At the same time, on the wall behind her, one can read “Down on whores” (Smallwood and Warlow 2012: Episode 1:

0:05:18-0:05:56). Significantly, the scene of the crime evokes Jack the Ripper's *modus operandi*.

All the disgusting aspects that surround her violent death, such as blood, bruises, and mutilation, are presented to the viewer, who becomes a witness to the discovery and subsequent police investigation. This investigation, with the help of advances in science and medical research, reveals the truth about the woman's tragic fate. Maud Thwaites (Sarah Gallagher) is not a prostitute but a married woman, who, due to financial precariousness, has been entrapped in a network of production of pornographic materials. Her unemployed husband, Mr. Thwaites (Steven Robertson), is unable to bear this appalling reality, attempting to put an end to his life. The plot is closely connected with the development of photography and the invention of film, which is foreseen as a prominent feature of future cultures. During the forensic examination of the woman's corpse, the neo-Victorian spectacle of blood and violence is presented as contributing to the visual thirst of a contemporary audience. This is done via extended dissection scenes, in line with the ones we expect to see as part of police procedurals in series such as *CSI*, *Silent Witness*, *Bones* or *Dexter*. The autopsy results reveal that the woman was first strangled and thereafter cut in the throat to make the police believe that she was another victim of Jack the Ripper, although she actually died of asphyxia. Both visual images of mutilated bodies and, as in *The Last Pleasure Garden*, of human fluids again become representative of the abject in Kristeva's terms. These images, bearing witness to human depravity and misery, attract television audiences, but they simultaneously blur the limits between decent and 'deviant' identities. The murderer seems to be laughing at both his Victorian and television audience, as though sexualised women's moral transgression deserves to be punished with death.

The way in which the police investigation develops tries to showcase the means and methods available by the late 1880s: clues and artefacts at the crime scene, bloodhounds, house-to-house enquiries, the collection of victim and witness statements, interrogation of suspects, police and newspaper informants, plaster castings of footprints, autopsy reports, limited use of photography, and very incipient use of blood testing and fingerprint detection (see Gold 2012: 2). In the first episode, the use of the telegraph is another example of modernity and progress in Victorian culture, which mirrors the advances of today's communication and information age. Also

the press provides prominent coverage of the events, creating implicit parallels with the often sensationalist reporting of violence and sex crimes nowadays,¹¹ which may contribute to a gradual audience desensitisation, not only towards these crimes but also towards some of their victims. Arguably, this is in part of what Jackson's novel and *Ripper Street* are trying to counter and denounce.

In the television series, the pictures of the Ripper's victims and the image of the murdered woman in an area of London exemplifying the darkest side of Victorian poverty and destitution provoke feelings of sympathy for the sufferers of sexual violence in the framework of Butler's theories about mourning and violence. According to Butler, in our contemporary societies, vulnerability and dependency are used to promote a form of authoritarian and violent sovereignty to suppress dissident elements like prostitutes or the victims of sexual exploitation (see Butler 2004: 20). These victims become 'the other', or better, 'the prostituted other', as they represent immorality. In her chapter entitled 'Violence, Mourning, Politics', Butler affirms that the experience of vulnerability can differ greatly from one culture to another, and she analyses the notion of humanity to call its universality into question, underlining the fact that this quality is attributed to some but also withheld from others: "Lives are supported and maintained differently, and there are radically different ways in which human physical vulnerability is distributed across the globe" (Butler 2004: 32). Thus, those in power seek to justify violence against those who have been relegated to the status of 'non-subjects' due to growing religious, sexual, racial and ethnic discrimination. All these individuals, whose lives are not the object of public mourning, are the protagonists of deaths that lack social relevance. In this frame of thought, "the graphic face of crime (rape, torture, sadism, mutilation, etc.)" (McCaw 2012: 127-128) is displayed to promote empathy for the suffering of victims of trauma and their families. Significantly, in the *Ripper Street* episode, the investigators show a certain reluctance to violate the victim via forensics. Jackson is depicted as gentle and careful with the body, and Reid shows his anger at the slogans daubed at the wall. The victims are individuated with a sympathy-evoking back story. It is also relevant that the first victim, Maud, is not a streetwalker but a married woman saved from the slums.

Mrs. Thwaites's murder hides two Victorian traumas that can also be discerned in contemporary societies: women and children become victims of

the corruption of the upper-classes, and pornography is a means of sexual exploitation and commodification of women's bodies. As in the case of the victims in *The Last Pleasure Garden*, the prostitutes' bodies in *Ripper Street* carry bodily inscriptions that are representative of their status as 'deviant' and 'other'. Distinctions between sexual harassment and sexual initiation, between intercourse and rape become blurred, making sexuality the primary site of women's oppression. For example, at the end of the episode, the prostitute Rose Erskine (Charlene McKenna) is obliged to participate in an orgy and then forced to engage in sadomasochistic acts with her aristocratic punter, Sir Arthur Donaldson (Mark Dexter). The acts and the subjects involved clearly reproduce the dominant social order, so that the use, consumption and circulation of women's bodies make prostitution the arena where men's desires are performed and "female sexuality is entirely constructed as an object of male desire" (Bell 1994: 80). Donaldson's sadomasochistic practices constitute the realisation of his male fantasies, captured on film, which leave no room for female agency. Like his previous female victims, Rose is tied, raped and nearly asphyxiated. Here, the rescuers' outrage at the perpetrator is evident, and both Reid's and Drake's commitment to and care for Rose as a human being worth saving are very significant. Drake's gentleness towards the prostitute, taking her back 'home' to the brothel, is particularly telling in relation to Butler's ideas about humanity. However, Reid, like Drake, is increasingly drawn into the very urban violence that he contests, resorting to criminal acts himself and hence perverting the course of justice.

According to Kohlke, neo-Victorian 'sexsation' "artificially inflates desire only to reveal the impossibility of its sustainability and satisfaction in reality" (Kohlke 2008: 6). In her opinion, "a voyeuristic victimisation of female characters" is at odds with neo-Victorianism's ethical and liberationist agenda (Kohlke 2012: 222). In part, this is what happens to Rose in this episode of *Ripper Street*. The perversions and secret vices of the aristocratic villain lead to sexual crimes associated with pornography, sadomasochism, and early 'snuff' movies, graphically rendered on screen. The last decades of the nineteenth century saw the emergence of technology linked to the invention of motion pictures, the development of which is anticipated in 'I Need Light'. Earlier, several pictures of women half naked or having sex with men are found by Reid and his confidant Jackson, who lives at a brothel where some of the action takes place, run by his one-time

partner, the madam Long Susan (MyAnna Buring). Among the pictures, Maud Thwaites appears as a model for the camera. Aristocratic perversion is taken to its extremes with the killings of the prostitutes, who act as models in the sadomasochistic scenes immortalised by the motion picture camera.¹² In this milieu, women's liberation is still to be achieved.

Following the characteristics of detection, Inspector Reid makes reparation to the victims by exposing the criminal Donaldson, who is eventually killed at the very moment when he tries to strangle Rose, while raping her. Donaldson's cameraman, Cecil Creighton (Julian Bleach), also dies, burnt by the flames as he sets alight the motion picture camera and 'evidence' in his hands. Interestingly, Reid expresses his fascination for what is presumably Creighton's invention, mirroring the voyeuristic fascination of the audience. But he also wants the truth to be known and the story of Mrs. Thwaites' murder to be published in the press. He knows that the Ripper is still out there, but this murder cannot be attributed to him. In a way, Reid does not want the shadow of the Ripper to lurk in the city when he says, "He will rule my life no more" (Smallwood and Warlow 2012: Episode 1: 0:57:43-0:57:46). In other words, he does not want us, the audience, to become hostage to our fascination with sexual violence.

Detective Reid together with Sergeant Drake and Captain Jackson want to offer the victims public mourning and recognition. Early on in the episode, Rose claims that "it was safe again" (Smallwood and Warlow 2012: Episode 1: 0:55:03), thinking that she and other women are safe in the sense that the Ripper, though not caught, was no longer murdering prostitutes. Her mistaken assumption and subsequent near-death indicate the radical vulnerability to sexual violence of marginalised subjects such as sex workers, which continues to this day. These fictional women's identities and agencies are depicted as fragmented and abjected; however, they sometimes exert control over their sexualities and their bodies. For example, at one point, Rose describes her resort to prostitution as a strategic, well considered choice. She also appears to take pleasure in aspects of her work, as when she flirts with Drake and has sex with Jackson. Although at Donaldson's private orgy Rose continues to be presented as the helpless passive victim of male desire and sexual fantasies, she is also author of her own desires. The view of prostitutes as 'deviant' and 'other' still predominates in neo-Victorian representations of the past, but also pervades twenty-first century societies, where women likewise remain prey to abjection and dispossession (see Bell

1994: 76). Accordingly, sex-workers on screen are not always allowed to exert power and agency in the way expected by a feminist agenda, for instance as espoused by sex work feminists, who promote agency in women entering the sex trade on a voluntary basis and advocate for the legalisation of prostitution to improve the women's working conditions and enable their access to health care and social security (Limoncelli 2009: 262).

4. Conclusion: Restitution and Mourning for the Abused

In postmodern societies, we still feel under the obligation to bear witness to violence exerted against the body, to brutality, physical pain, and exploitation. As twenty-first century readers/viewers, we only “grasp those aspects of texts that our cultural position and subjectivity enable us to recognise and to relate to other data” (Ascari 2009: xi). The same can be said of a postmodern discourse which promotes the idea of a female subject capable of resistance to sexual exploitation. However, in both *The Last Pleasure Garden* and *Ripper Street*'s ‘I Need Light’, this assumption proves, at least in part, a fallacy. Victims of sex crimes do not ‘automatically’ achieve agency despite our postmodernity and, what is worse, they do not always receive appropriate public mourning and restoration.

In a similar vein, defilement and contamination in a Kristevan sense blur the boundaries between the Victorian past and our contemporaneity when it comes to the represented bodies of women who are victims of sexual violence and exploitation. The disgusting aspects of physical aggression and death continue to satisfy audiences' attraction to these kinds of literary and visual icons. However, this display of abuse does not necessarily lead to women victims' healing or give them rights as human beings either on the page/screen or in a contemporary feminist context. They become ‘the prostituted other’, and the city becomes the setting for the process of their commodification and dehumanisation. Detectives in both productions show some sympathy for the victims. While *The Last Pleasure Garden* evokes some sympathy in the readers through the accurate detailed description of dead bodies, it is in *Ripper Street*'s ‘I Need Light’ where, thanks to the graphic visual impact, the images elicit a more complex viewer's sympathy for the victims.

Although in western societies violence is not accepted or justified, there are some forms of violence, such as rape, paedophilia, and sex

trafficking, that have become, if not naturalised or tolerated, at least accepted as an inevitable and ineradicable, reprehensible by-product of modern civilisation. Even in liberal cultures, the lives and deaths of prostitutes and victims of sexual violence are often granted limited value or social relevance. Instead, such women's bodies are still exhibited as examples of contamination and moral depravity, as was the case in Victorian times. The role of neo-Victorian literature and visual productions dealing with sexploitation is to argue for a rethinking of the kinds of visibility culture affords such victims and its implications for viewing practices. It is essential to give new visibility to female bodies that have been abused and to find new ways to read those bodies. Thanks to this, some form of recognition and symbolic restitution may be afforded the victims via an implicit unmasking, mourning, and contestation of the histories of oppression and inequality that have been and continue to be inscribed on these dead bodies. By this means, depicted sexploitation can provide a critique of precarity rather than just titillation for audiences, bringing the victims' humanity squarely back into view.

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Notes:

1. The website features Jackson's *Victorian Dictionary* (also published in book form), primary sources on the Victorian metropolis, excerpts taken from period newspapers, diaries, maps, advertisements, and other historical documents, and reproductions of some period books.
2. This is my own coinage. The prostitute is a woman who plies the trade and simultaneously becomes 'the other' because of her condition as a social outcast, as an outsider, as an individual outside the norm. This situates her as the 'prostituted other'.
3. This is the case with the children that arrive as asylum seekers in Europe, especially when they are unaccompanied minors. Some of them are

sexually abused and extorted: “Traffickers saddle girls and young women with up to €50,000 (£43,000) in ‘debt’ for the cost of their journeys across the Mediterranean before forcing them into prostitution and hard labour to pay it off. Boys are forced into similar schemes, subjected to child labour and criminal activity including theft and drug dealing by gangs” (Dearden 2016: n.p.).

4. An example of this could be Donald Trump’s backers’ assertion in 2006 that kissing women without consent or grabbing their genitals was not sexual assault. Trump himself had boasted of being able to treat women like this on account of being a well-known celebrity (Redden 2016: n.p.).
5. Texts by Arthur Conan Doyle and especially by Edgar Allan Poe are considered the founding texts of the detective fiction genre (Ascari 2009: 1-2). These include the collection of short stories *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892) and the novella *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) by Doyle, and ‘The Purloined Letter’ (1844), ‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’ (1841), ‘The Gold Bug’ (1843) and ‘The Mystery of Marie Rogêt’ (1842-43) by Poe.
6. Serial killers require another frame of thought: “Serial-killer fictions depend upon a charismatic symbiosis which fundamentally challenges the integrity of the detective” due to “the ambivalent proposition that to catch the killer you must think like a killer” (Plain 2008: 9). This is what we can find in Sergeant Bartleby’s and Inspector Reid’s inquiries, although Reid eventually becomes a killer himself.
7. The Social Purity Movement’s membership included women who wanted to combat prostitution and other forms of public immorality; it was born in the 1860s and promoted temperance, believing in the Evangelical precept of individual morality and the superiority of women’s spirituality. As a consequence, there was a strong preoccupation about working-class respectability. In this sense, the National Vigilance Association was born out of the Society for the Suppression of Vice; its fundamental objectives were the elimination of pornography in all cultural productions as well as the suppression of forms of public entertainment connected with vice. However, the association’s activities were coercive and discriminated against women, despite its promotion of a single standard code of morality (see Hall 2013: 30-36; Mort 2000: 101-106; Romero Ruiz 2012: 130-133).
8. Some other serial killers of the time were Edward H. Ruloff, Edward William Pritchard (known as ‘Dr. Death’), Thomas Neill Cream (known as

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- ‘the Lambeth Prisoner’), and William Palmer (the so-called ‘Prince of Poisoners’).
9. An example may be found in Anthony Browne’s 2008 report for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation entitled ‘Has there been a decline in values in British society?’, part of organisation’s ‘The social evils’ series. Also see the Foundation’s *Contemporary Social Evils* (2009).
 10. The H-Division was created in 1830 and serviced the area of Whitechapel in the East End of London (Waterson 2011: 1). At the beginning the H Division premises were located in the old Watch Houses at Denmark Street (now Crowder Street) and Spitalfields, and in Leman Street and Bethnal Green Road as section houses. Later, another police station was constructed at 37-39, Leman Street. In the case of *Ripper Street*, the headquarters is located at 72 Leman Street.
 11. In an increasing number of cases, violence and sex crimes are directly connected. According to a *Daily Mail* article, for the fourth year running, England and Wales have seen a 27 per cent increase in the number of rapes (Hickley 2017: n.p.). Similarly, other sex crimes are frequently associated with violence, including child sexual abuse, rape in prostitution and physical assault in prostitution (see Farley et al. 2003: 44).
 12. Victorian pornography was a flourishing trade that had been traditionally associated with radicalism and free thought in the working classes, but by the middle of the nineteenth century it had become a middle- and upper-class business. The production of pornographic books was transformed into an expensive commercial activity with a very limited market that only the literate and the rich could afford (see Porter and Hall 1995: 152-153). Thus obscenity became one of the most important objects of concern in metropolitan culture as many London shop-windows displayed pornographic images that offended the sexual prudery of the women of the respectable classes. Holywell Street, just off the Strand, became the most visible place where pornographic materials were exhibited and could be purchased, becoming the focus of persecution under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857 (see Nead 1999: 33-41).

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