

# RIPPEROLOGY AND FEMICIDE: VICTIM ERASURE THROUGH PATRIARCHY AND MYTHICIZATION

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**RIPPEROLOGY AND FEMICIDE:  
VICTIM ERASURE THROUGH PATRIARCHY AND  
MYTHICIZATION**

MA Thesis

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Split, 2021

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Odsjek za Engleski jezik i književnost

**RIPEROLOGIJA I FEMICID:  
UKLANJANJE ŽRTAVA KROZ PATRIJARHAT I MISTIZIRANJE**  
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## Table of contents

1.Summary .....	4
2.Introduction.....	5
3.Ripperology .....	6
3.1.Ripperology vs. feminists.....	7
3.2Judith Walkovitz and Victorian double standards.....	12
4.Femicide Machine and Sergio Rodriguez Gonzales.....	14
4.1.Maquillas.....	15
4.2.Similarities between maquillas and East End.....	17
4.3.Machismo as the norm.....	18
5.Whitechapel as a synonym for outcasts.....	20
6.Anonymity of the canonical five .....	25
7.Patriarchy and inherent prejudice.....	27
8.Mythicization.....	34
Conclusion.....	38
Works cited.....	39

## 1. Summary

The idea of how the myth of Jack the Ripper *mirrors our hysterias*<sup>1</sup> put forward by Allan Moore and Eddie Campbell as the authors of *From Hell* can be interpreted and analyzed in many different ways. Whether it is in the writings of Judith Walkovitz where she gave a fair presentation of how it was to live in Victorian England for a common prostitute in her book *City of Dreadful Delight*, or in Halie Rubenhold book *The Five* that is certain homage to Jack the Ripper victims with a detail presentation of the women's downfall, neither offered an examination of the misogynistic society that enables male dominance and female oppression. However, alongside polar opposites as Ripperologists and Feminists who gave much attention to either discovering identity of the unknown killer or trying to give a voice to the voiceless victims, a handful of scholars and historians deciphered and analyzed the femicide machine and the patriarchal society as key elements that enabled the development and implementation of the society's double standards.

**Keywords:** myth, dominance, oppression, ripperologists, femicide machine, patriarchy

## 1. Sažetak

Ideja o tome kako mit Jacka Trbosjeka "odražava naše paranoje" koje su iznijeli Allan Moore i Eddie Campbell kao autori knjige *From Hell* može se tumačiti i analizirati na mnogo različitih načina. Bilo da se radi o knjizi Judith Walkovitz u kojoj je predočila kakav je bio život prostitutke u viktorijanskoj Engleskoj u svojoj knjizi *City of Dreadful Delight*, ili u knjizi Halie Rubenhold *The Five*, kojom je odala počast žrtvama Jacka Trbosijeka s detaljnim prikazom propasti žena, nisu ponudile opis mržnje prema ženama u društvu koje omogućuje mušku dominaciju te progon žena. Međutim, uz polarne suprotnosti kao što su bili ripperolozi i feministice koji su posvetili veliku pozornost otkrivanju identiteta nepoznatog ubojice ili su pak pokušale dati glas žrtvama bez glasa, nekolicina znanstvenika i povjesničara odgonetnula je i analizirala stroj za femicid i patrijarhalno društvo kao ključne elemente koji su omogućili razvoj i provedbu dvostrukih društvenih standarda.

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<sup>1</sup> *Ruth-Ellen St. Onge, Crime, Adaptation and Collective Guilt: Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's From Hell. Open edition Journals, 02. February 2016, <http://journals.openedition.org/rrca/684>, revisited September 2021*

**Ključne riječi:** mit, dominacija, ugnjetavanje, ripperolozi, femicidni stroj, patrijarhat

## **2.Introduction**

The terms Ripperology and Femicide are on the first glance a representation of different spheres of interest where one is interested in revealing the killer's identity while the other is a term defining a hate based crime. However, Ripperology and Femicide are cut from the same cloth, having similarities in its core which has no interest in the victim's identity or circumstantial factors that resulted in murders of numerous women. Therefore, this thesis will initially analyze the biased approach of the Ripperologists who are primarily concerned with the mastermind that evaded justice in Jack the Ripper saga, with no reference to the oppressive system that ostracizes the victims. The creation of the term derives from the Urban Dictionary where Ripperology is defined as being "*the study of the infamous serial killer*"<sup>2</sup> Jack the Ripper. Although in this thesis I will not be focusing on defining the identity of the infamous killer, in order to discuss the opposite approaches of Ripperologists as Martin Fido and Paul Begg and feminists as Judith Walkowitz and Josephine Butler, the thesis will compare and discuss their different standpoints as it is necessary to prove that the fascination with the killer or the victims silenced status does not extract the socioeconomic elements that I define as a main culprit for the crimes committed.

My belief is that one cannot grasp the interest of Ripperology as a study without the discussion on the myth. Moreover, in the writings of Allan Moore and Eddie Campbell in the book *From Hell* the authors gave a fair historical representation of the events that took place in the autumn of terror in 1888. Nevertheless, although not the stereotypical portray of Jack the Ripper, the authors accent on the mythical with reference to the Masonic theory is in my opinion one more theory in the sea of myths surrounding Jack the Ripper which I viewed as a great read that only adds more to the myth not to the victims. As the soul definition of a myth is:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://nghialagi.net/en/r/Ripperology-meaning>, revisited September 2021

“A traditional story, especially one concerning the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernatural beings or events....an exaggerated or idealized conception of a person or thing”<sup>3</sup>.

In the second part of the thesis I will explore the celebration of the mythicization and patriarchy that enhanced and enabled women oppression and vulnerability which led them to their demise. Following the rather feminist approach by Judith Walkovitz in *City of Dreadful Delight* and Josephine Butler, a woman's rights activist, focused on the victims. I view as crucial to remove the stigma of the fallen women/prostitute by revealing the factors that are reflected in their social status and social conditions.

Finally, with the introduction of Femicide "*the gender-based murder of a woman or girl by a man*"<sup>4</sup> I will correlate the elements that connect the Victorian London and Ciudad Juarez as it is my opinion that it is the Femicide Machine, as well as the Victorian society with its double standards and patriarchy the stem of power that is responsible and culpable for enabling sexual violence. The analysis of the similarities between JTR case and femicides that occurred in Ciudad Juarez will provide an insight into the power structure that needs to be obtained in male dominated society so that crime and violence towards women could continue to thrive.

Supported by the Sergio Gonzalez Rodriguez, a journalist/writer, with the portrayal and research of the Femicide *Machine* examination of the historical and cultural context of crime and violence promoting impunity will reveal a climate that encourages criminals to continue the femicides with no repercussions. To support the notion of how the social conditions labeled the victims as outcasts it is necessary to compare the similarities between East End and Whitechapel with Ciudad Juarez to detect the conditions needed for the victim erasure.

### **3. Ripperology**

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<sup>3</sup> *Collins William*, Collins English dictionary – complete and unbridged, 2012  
<https://www.dictionary.com/browse/myth>, revisited September 2021

<sup>4</sup> Cost, Action 1206 - Femicide". Archived from the original on 2019-05-09.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Femicide>, revisited September 2021

The effect of Jack the Ripper phenomenon and the infatuation with the mythical killer resulted in the birth of Ripperologists. It is my opinion that the study is mainly focused on glorifying the elusiveness of Jack the Ripper by debating and writing on the possible identities of the killer and thus prolonging his mythical status while simultaneously neglecting and omitting the importance of the victims. Furthermore, I will reflect on the double standards that Ripperologists are not accustomed to discuss and question a diversity of claims and opinions dealing with the canonical five (Jack the Ripper victims) and interpret the evidence gathered. However, ripperologists although biased do not ignore the mere facts presented and analyzed by the ones who do not agree with their own assessment of the matter.

The impact of Jack the Ripper on the global scale could be seen in the documentation and report of the case even in America, what stands in favor of the claim that the priority of the Victorians was not to solve the case and allow a valid police investigation thus to earn on the incline on the popularity of the phenomenon. We can compare Ripperology to Victorian press due to the reasons for their writing- the allure and mysticism surrounding Jack the Ripper has proven to be more profitable and entertaining read than writing on the flawed society that outcasts the weaker sex for stepping out of prescribed Victorian norms.

### **3.1 Ripperologists vs. feminists**

The never ending debate between ripperologists and feminists is an influential sub factor and an important element for this thesis not only for its contrasting opinion, yet for prioritizing the formation of the myth rather than searching for the reasons for the murders. As best known Ripperologists, Martin Figo and Paul Begg publish *The Complete Jack The Ripper A-Z - The Ultimate Guide to The Ripper Mystery* as a sort of a collection album of all the suspected men who were later on wrongfully accused as Jack the Ripper. It is not surprising that besides all the immigrants, criminals, and vagabonds, or extracts from the interviews with the inspector Abberline who was leading the case that authors describe with a great detail, giving away a certain sense of pride and even accomplishment, there is no section devoted to the lives of these poor women.



Their lack of interest in victim lives is evident even in the reference to the police work, which obviously did not result in catching the murderer, however "*Scotland Yard can boast that even the subordinate officers of the department will tell tails...*"<sup>5</sup>

The interest of ripperologists in all the aspects that surround the actual murders as well as eye witness reports are all present in the book called rightfully so, because it is in depth the Ripper from A-Z. The only times the victims are actually mentioned is in a sort of passer by mode, where it seems that their names are mentioned only due to the fact they were a part of an interview with a policeman or a neighbor "*There he discussed the murders with women who included Elizabeth Stride*"<sup>6</sup>. I choose to reflect on the Ripperology approach to the murders that can be viewed as a continuation of the Victorian press propaganda, which I consider to be the main weakness in their study, to overlook the main problem that lies in the gender power structure.

Contrary to ripperologists, a study concerned with the actual victims as their treatment in the Victorian era are Hallie Rubenhold and Judith Walkowitz. What Hallie Rubenhold's book *The Five* centers upon is the documentation of the cannocial five with emphasis on the absolute absence of criminal analysis when talking about sexually oriented crimes in the Victorian period. Unlike the ripperologists, Hallie's approach is feminist and unhinged with the infatuation of Ripper identity while as focused on providing the stories of these so-called fallen women. The term so loosely used that it was held in connection to any women found working on the streets with no consideration for her life circumstances or sociocultural context. While Ripperlogy is focused on defining Superman myth by idealizing and worshiping what is almost hero like representation of a serial killer that eluded and escaped justice system, Rubernhold bravely and successfully puts the victims in the spotlight giving them the attention they deserved. Feminist approach is of great importance because it widens our knowledge on social relations towards different classes and gender issues.

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<sup>5</sup> *Stewart P. Evans*, Kosminski and the seaside home, Casebook Jack the Ripper 1996. <https://www.casebook.org/dissertations/dst-koz.html#>, revisited September 2021

<sup>6</sup> Martin Fido, Ripperologist, The Journal of Jack the Ripper, 2019 <http://www.ripperologist.co.uk/pdf/ripperologist164.pdf> revisited September 2021

Rubenholt goes to great lengths to truthfully document the victim's identity and their life journey by removing the stigma of prostitution. Even conventional ripperologists accept the notion of marginalization of sex worker crimes where more than 100 years of research of the canonical five support the claim of the victims as leisure sex workers even though the evidence to support it is non-concrete. The evidence in the period relied heavily on sensationalist journalism and witness statements.

Therefore speculative and circumstantial evidence was taken as truth that has been proven in the case of Polly Nichols (one of the canonical five) who confided in a friend how she was trying to make some money for her shelter which was interpreted as a less derogatory explanation for prostitution. Moreover, the author defends the reasons for prostitution by stating "*they only ended up in the same place. The more I look for evidence of sex work, the more I found that it just simply wasn't there.*"<sup>7</sup> The lack of evidence of sex work on the part of the five women was put aside and overlooked by the society due to the women position in the society/ poor, morally corrupt, and not fitting the imposed standard norm. As Rubenholt states an unaccompanied homeless woman in the wrong part of the city could mean only that she is soliciting. Following the caricaturist presentation in the media along with poor police investigation techniques Hallie Rubenholt firmly dismisses the preconceived notion of five women being merely prostitutes and responsible for their own downfall. She reaches the conclusion that so many women in the nineteenth century lived on the edge of survival mostly due to a lack of job opportunity, illness, tragic loss that pushed them in the downward spiral.

Most of the studies that took on the issue of Jack the Ripper murder saga have the same main theme revolving around the fact he murdered only prostitutes. However, Rubenholt challenges that assumption noting he assaulted women in their sleep. She even points that four out of five of these women were partially homeless, sleeping on the side roads, as the witnesses that saw the women prior to the murders claim they were in a drunken state while Annie Chapman and Elizabeth Stride were reported to be sick. What is interesting and should have been researched

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<sup>7</sup> *Rubenholt Hallie*, "To most people, the women killed by the Ripper are just corpses. I want to tell a different story", History extra November 20, 2019 <https://www.historyextra.com/period/victorian/hallie-rubenholt-jack-ripper-victims-five-book-interview-history-baillie-gifford-prize/>, revisited September 2021

more by the police leading the investigation is the fact that victims showed no signs of struggle which could partially confirm Rubenhold's claims that the victims were asleep at the time.

This belief came in clash with the ripperologists Fido and Begg who do not miss to mention that the "*drunkenness and immorality was to blame*".<sup>8</sup> It has been argued that Rubenhold only presents a feminist approach to the crimes attempting to depict these women as innocent. These claims are stated by Ripperologists as Fido, Begg who proceeded to accuse Rubenhold of being in denial and are concerned more with naming the suspect and the Superman myth. What Hallie did was to revise historical data and bring to life the everyday lives of the victims as well as their historical background without defining them as innocent.

Her examination and detailed historical review suggests that the society does not allow female independence. With the amount of dedication to revive these women through research, Rubenhold succeeded in giving them the voice they did not have, however that resulted in the lack of research on the patriarchal social structures and gender issues.

The theory that the victims were asleep while the murders took place is more plausible than the one where Ripper targeted prostitutes due to his personal issues to woman selling their bodies. The so called opportunity model is what enabled killer to walk away scot free/while the victims were left unprotected, asleep, discarded by the society... summing up all the factors that fit the category. Rubenhold does not ponder or speculate on the motivation for the murders because she does not want to give him any more credit than he already got throughout the years. The fact that she did not offer any theory on the killer's identity can be closely linked to the ripperologist dismissive approach to her research.

What differentiates Rubenhold from the other scholars and writers is her focus on the women not to justify their actions, yet to discuss the experience that Victorian women had to go through when cast away by the society. That alone stands as a breath of fresh air in the sea of the Ripperology killer seekers, as well as giving these women victim status and restoring their identity. What Rubenhold did with her analysis is to give these women a voice that they did not have by presenting them as wives, daughters and not simply prostitutes killed by a famous serial killer.

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Fido, Ripperologist, The Journal of Jack the Ripper, 2019  
<http://www.ripperologist.co.uk/pdf/ripperologist164.pdf> revisited September 2021

Through documentation of their lives up until their unfortunate murders, the author gives a corrected presentation of the distorted image that fallen women held in the Victorian England.

Annie Chapman lived a comfortable life with her husband in the countryside. However, death of her daughter pushed her towards alcoholism. Undoubtedly, if she was assaulted at that time where a killer would break into her house and kill her the police surely would take more look into the case. After all, she did fit the requested profile then as a devoted wife and a caring mother. Subsequently, after tragic loss her life was turned upside down and she became unprotected and a threat luring men just to infect them with some sexually transmitted disease. Rubenhold gives fair representation of these women lives step by step from their birth and their respectable middle class lives until their sudden and horrendous deaths. The author shows the difference in Victorian view on women who are mothers and wives while on the contrary the neglect that follows once they are divorced and left to take care for themselves can lead to one's murder.

Pure example of rags to riches story are Polly and Annie. Both experienced tragedies at a very young age by losing their mothers yet managed to get married and lead a happy and fulfilled life. This is the point where the Victorian society supports and praises their women until they get a divorce which was the case with both women.

The challenges they faced from that moment on is the point where the Victorian society decides that since you are no longer a respectable member of the society and you decided to transgress the norms, you are an outcast and deserve whatever comes your way without any sympathy or protection from the very society that once praised you. Shunned by the society Hallie shows how it was necessary for a woman in this situation to find herself a decent gentleman who would protect her and provide for her. Sadly, in those days for a divorce woman to find a respectable male counterpart was almost impossible because there were many free innocent and decent young women looking for a husband to settle down. Elizabeth was one victim who stood out the most merely because she had a child from a relationship back in Gothenburg.

Therefore, only available option after her relocation to London was to become a domestic servant. Shockingly, she had to be registered as a prostitute while pregnant only because she was not married and was not accompanied with a man that provided for her. Eventually she did marry which gave her a sense of security, however she got a divorce due to alleged temper her husband had. Kate was the only exception of the bunch because she was the only one never to get married

yet lived with a common in law husband for years. The terms that depicted women in the press were to sensationalize the story, as well to serve as a warning what is to come if a woman decides to retaliate against the norms.

What would nowadays be considered a struggle with depression and require a psychological assessment was a drunken prostitute polluting London. These women's day to day struggle and lack of any help, left them unprotected so they found a way to blur the reality that was killing them daily by consuming alcohol. Even the medical reports and mental state evaluation used the two key terms in the description of the murders and the killer "*modus operandi ...the killer's MO included attacks on white, female prostitutes, typically between 24 and 45 years old. He preyed on women who were poor*".<sup>9</sup> For lack of a better terminology the women have been summarized down to poor and prostitutes because of their outcast status.

### **3.2. Judith Walkovitz and Victorian double standards**

Through writings of Judith Walkovitz in *City of dreadful delight* I will explore the historical documentation of reasons and ways a Victorian women enter prostitution. In an effort to challenge and refute the belief of prostitutes as deviant vermin of society this section will focus on conditions and reasons for a woman to enter prostitution. Moreover, the author documentation will confirm that prostitution was transient stage in most cases which I will discuss as the result of aberration of the social norms a woman must fulfil. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century literature of social conditions, the spheres of the fallen woman and the wife have surely been amongst the most analyzed themes of woman's duality. Each of the two, the "fallen woman" and the "angel in the house," represents the epitome of the social class she belongs to: immorality vs. morality, privilege vs. desecration and indigence, vice vs. virtue.

To understand the motives of women who choose to enter prostitution, one has to understand and acknowledge their living conditions to unravel the answer. Fallen woman undoubtedly stood

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<sup>9</sup> *Robert D. Keppel, The Jack the Ripper Murders: A Modus Operandi and Signature Analysis of the 1888–1891 Whitechapel Murders, 2005*  
<https://www.fmhac.org/uploads/1/2/3/9/123913996/walter.pdf>, revisited September 2021

as a reflection of the divided Victorian society and a deviation from the ideal concept of womanhood that presents a basis for the analysis of this part of the thesis.

Unlike the majority of historians, whose main preoccupation was the question of a fallen woman as a condition formed by the society, Walkovitz suggests that prostitution was a practical work form that some women choose by themselves: "*She was not innocent victim of middle class seduction and betrayals, nor was she a mere child drugged and entered into prostitution...*"<sup>10</sup> Instead, her entry into prostitution seems to have been voluntary and gradual. Although, one can argue that this claim is partially truthful, however the newspapers of the time failed to stress the fact that due to poverty which came as a consequence of the Industrial revolution many of these women with no employment on the horizon choose prostitution to escape almost certain death.

Due to the fact that the only vacant jobs were maintaining the homes of the middle class and as factory workers with low income and demanding working hours, the only other alternative an impoverished woman could profit from was prostitution with the average age 18 to 22. The main reason why prostitution attracted young women was the personal income that it supplied, and the fact she could provide for herself as well as being independent was certainly one of the main advantages. This newly discovered freedom and autonomy enabled them to attend drinking parties, and public events. Walkovitz asserts that prostitution was often a fiscal choice rather than the moral failing that the evangelical Victorian moralists insisted it was.

Although independent, the life of a prostitute in Victorian London was not simply economically relieving, but also a life full of danger of unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted disease like gonorrhoea or syphilis. With a reputation of being a great social evil, prostitution was typecast into everyday life with inaccurate and outrageous controversy. Moreover, although not illegal at the time, prostitutes were frequently targeted more than an average non law abiding male figure merely because of misconduct or being inebriated.

On the opposite side of the Victorian society stood a model of Victorian woman resembling a flawless image of Queen Victoria with emphasis on motherhood, chastity and family. It could be considered a paradox that the society that based its moral codes on the patriarchal society was a

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<sup>10</sup> Walkovitz, J. (1992) *City of Dreadful Delight, Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, (London:Time Warner Books) p.21

society led by a woman. This same society defined women as intellectually and physically weaker sex subordinate to men. Chastity was of great importance in the period, thus before marriage a woman was expected to be pure and unexperienced. What needs to be referred to is the role Christianity played in the Victorian England.

One of the most religious countries at the time put high emphasis on chastity and morality of a woman soon to be wife and lately a future mother. Once married, the wife should be a devoted mother and a passive counterpart to her husband. Being a perfect wife also meant giving priority to her husband's needs and requests while putting any personal interests or concerns aside. Male domination inside and outside of the household meant that the Victorian wife had her house as her own little sanctuary by simply doing the house chores and raising the children. Furthermore, the role of a woman in male dominated Victorian society was defined by the church that gave a woman the etiquette of a being in need for a spiritual and moral guidance that is only possible by more superior being—a man. The result of those beliefs is a woman whose only purpose is to become a wife and what is biologically predetermined— a mother. As the angel of the house woman was in charge of obtaining religious and traditional moral principles since the society valued her only for: purity, submissiveness, patience, passivity and innocence.

Therefore, the middle class woman was to have no other ambitions except being patientce pleasing others and taking care of children. Moreover, any type of aberration from the norm presented by the society was considered sinful and immoral. Once they entered the union of marriage, these sexually ignorant women were not seen as equal partners yet simply as an extension of the household or a piece of furniture that comes with the house.

As Walkovitz notes: "*Ladies served as status symbol of their husbands' wealth, the specialized personnel whose social labor consisted in making a spectacle of themselves and participating in the pageant of fashionable life.*"<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, with the departure of the woman from her assigned role, she gained a different role defined by criminal acts or sexual misconduct. Although prostitution was not considered illegal at the time, it was scorned by the public resulting in being judged more harshly that the

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<sup>11</sup> Walkovitz, Judith *City of Dreadful Delight, Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, (London:Time Warner Books, 1992) p.47

male for not abiding the rules. Other than the inequality in power and the position in society, there has also been a misconception of a fallen woman to be a prostitute, while the term referred to a wider range of untypical women: adulteress, woman having relations with a married man, delinquent women belonging to a lower class...A woman in public meant one of two things, she was either in danger or a source of danger and contamination.

#### **4.Femicide Machine and Sergio Gonzales Rodriguez**

*"An apparatus that didn't just create the conditions for the murders of dozens of women and little girls, but developed the institutions that guaranteed impunity for those crimes and legalized them"*<sup>12</sup>. In this chapter I will analyze the factors that define and enable male dominance through sexual violence that occurred in Ciudad Juarez in correlation to the murders committed in 1888 attributed to the so called Jack the Ripper. Generally defined as a murder of a woman or a girl because she is a female, femicide has been fairly associated with a city previously known as Paso del Norte and interestingly enough as Ciudad Juarez from 1888 the same year the Ripper murders took place. So why would Sergio Gonzales Rodriguez a journalist/writer write a book where a small *"desert dump"*<sup>13</sup> city plays a vital role? For Rodriguez, the city is located at a perfect crossroads that separates Mexico and United states and unites the convergence of organized crime, social inequalities, and corruption and thus enables the creation of the femicide machine.

In order to understand the femicide machine and the elements that fuel its engine as the reasons why the murders of approximately 400 women from 1993 to present day have remained unsolved. However, Rodriguez offered input to the social motives and problems rooted in misogyny that are present in Ciudad Juarez. *"Femicide is the murder of women, committed by men, for the simple reason of their being women "*<sup>14</sup> This examination will allow better understanding of the similarities that Ciudad Juarez has with Whitechapel district that includes poverty,

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<sup>12</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.7

<sup>13</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.22

<sup>14</sup> Russell, Diana and Roberta Harmes (2006). *Feminicidio: Una Perspectiva Global*, p. 74.  
<https://www.oas.org/es/mesecvi/docs/declaracionfemicidio-en.pdf>, revisited September 2021



overpopulation, crime and police incompetence and inexperience that are the components necessary for a victim to become invisible and disposable.

#### **4.1.Maquilas**

Firstly, Rodriguez gives an overview of the historical and economic expansion of Ciudad Juarez from the *desert dump* city to the gold mine for drug trafficking covered up with the pretest of industrialization process and birth of maquilas or manufacturing duty free plants. Due to this rapid industrialization and modernization the city saw immediate increase in population of immigrants in search for a better life. Unfortunately, all the other components that are required for a normal living situation like safety, healthcare, transportation, justice were neglected. Exploitative wages for the factory workers were well below the average monthly income so "*the immediate consequence were increased poverty, marginalization and a scarce quality of life*"<sup>15</sup>. As a direct effect of these impoverished conditions consisting of lacking water, shelter or healthcare the system or the machine forced the poor to search for ways to earn additional income which meant putting themselves in potentially dangerous and life threatening situations.

The exploitative environment that multiplied for more than ten years was the cause and effect of the increase in violence against women. Patriarchal culture that offered minimal wages to women and pressured them to work in maquilas made them vulnerable and subjected to poor safety. Being a woman working in maquila created similar conditions to the ones of the Victorian England living in East End. This repetitive regime filled with hatred and machismo violence once again put a woman in situations where she was not only physically endangered, yet deemed as responsible for her own demise. While prostitutes in the Victorian England were considered as a walking infection praying pm innocent men, the poor women of Ciudad Juarez were no more than industrial waste. Moreover, femicide machine is simply a representation of their disposability in the society. I would agree with feminist scholars who dissected police interpretation of the crimes as women's issue and not public issue, justifying it by saying it is an individual decision to turn to prostitution or drug involved criminal activities.

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<sup>15</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.8

The ability of a society to distance and exclude itself from any implications in the violent acts that occur against women exudes double standards that were present in the Victorian England and still continue to prosper. Be it the protection of certain individuals via impunity or class and gender discrimination, classifying femicide as a private and individual issue, the society grants itself immunity. When Rodriguez states that "*the murdered women were accused of somehow having collaborated with their victimizers*"<sup>16</sup> it is the exact public perception and scrutiny that the Ripper victims went through that relieved the society of any responsibility. As he continues "*The gravity of these event was minimized by attributing the murders to family dysfunctionality*"<sup>17</sup> one cannot but notice a pattern than the Victorian society tested and modern state continued to use- the victims are not victims yet result or outcome of their poor choices. Sergio Gonzales findings on women being blamed and the horrific working conditions stand in support of my claims on inequality present in the Victorian era.

#### **4.2 Similarities between Maquilas and Victorian East End**

Secondly, after determining similarities in victim's social status and their place in the society, to execute a murder and suffer no consequence another key factor is a lawless and corrupt district or a town. Rodriguez invites the reader into the realms of the city plagued with economic asymmetry, cultural differences, human trafficking, money laundering, and prostitution. Most likely to highlight the status of the city as a place where anything and everything can happen, a perfect symbiosis for for crime between locals and US he refers to Ciudad Juarez as a "*backyard city for US*"<sup>18</sup>. In a place where a certain form of crime is an everyday occurrence with a dominant patriarchal ideology where a woman who works has no need for male protection and is not being controlled by men is an antithesis of a pure woman therefore her life has no value whatsoever. Typically in patriarchal societies as Mexico, violence against women or even murder became a norm, cultural standard and viewed acceptable and tolerable.

The issue of femicide is not an isolated problem related to Ciudad Juarez, mass murders of women occurred in states of Guerrero, Chiapas, Oaxaca...

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<sup>16</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.13

<sup>17</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.13

<sup>18</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.22

Severity of the problem did not faze the authorities, but prompted the similar actions as with the Ripper saga-untangling the mystical identity of the killer resulting in multiple theories. Initially, the police had a theory which included a drug lord, then a pimp however, as the years passed by and the murders still continued the theories lost their credibility.

This part of research explores the presence and implementation of control over women by controlling their independence. Another issue to analyze is old patriarchal problem with the ratio of control and independence between a man and a woman. According to the Victorian beliefs an angel in the house as a proud mother and devoted wife had the freedom to raise her children and to take care of her household as she pleases. However, any transgression of her role that was beyond her husband control was unimaginable.

Extension of the same male control began losing power when maquiladoras started hiring women as more diligent and financially profitable than men. Once breadwinners of the family men were being replaced by the weaker sex resulting in a shift in power and a birth of anomaly in the society that does not allow women to be independent. According to Rodriguez "*they were deprived of their human rights just as they were previously deprived of their public, political and civil rights*"<sup>19</sup>. Were these women being murdered for trying to be independent which threatened macho man status? My answer is most likely they were, amongst other factors that enabled the murders to take place.

Most importantly, equal to existence of different social classes there are different levels of control and dominance. Surely, a poor woman working in an assembly industry cannot rule the world however, losing dominance over her could empower her to strive for a better life. Once empowered, a women could surpass her poor class and climb up the latter which could eventually lead her to infiltrate herself into political sphere and potentially influence the law and woman's rights, resulting in the dethroning of men from the reign.

### **14.3 Machismo as the norm**

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<sup>19</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.85

Another similarity in public perception between century apart murders is the sense of sarcasm with no regard or respect toward the victim's identity and individuality. Public frenzy in 1888 prompted newspapers to plaster the sketches and mutilated pictures of women on display meanwhile in 2010 US cosmetic company MAC introduced lipstick and eye shadows line inspired by the raped and murdered victims in Ciudad Juarez. Rodriguez concludes ... "*an abuse and profit as cruel as those of the murderers. In this way MAC joins the drug traffickers, the economically and politically powerful...*"<sup>20</sup>

Women oppression and sexual harassment is associated with machismo that was the norm of male behavior in Mexico for decades. There are many ways of interpreting machismo where one can be connoted to an honorable and respectable man or a man that provides for his wife and children. Regardless of the positive connotations, machismo is a form of patriarchal dominance and in Mexico for a young boy, future husband it did mean imitating fathers behavior. Father figure in the household was dominant, powerful and frequently violent towards the other member of the family.

The attitude of the law enforcement is shocking regarding the cases of domestic violence, as such was the case of Rosa Maria Castillo when she filled a complaint that her husband has been beating her and the response she got was that it is the matter of husband and wife, not police.

This is a clear example of suppression of woman's rights with no regard to their past, present or future state or well-being. To vouch for that is a increased number of disappearances "*which have increased by 400 percent in Ciudad Juarez, from 2008 until the present*".<sup>21</sup> reports of which did not got any further than the police desk.

Furthermore, police incompetence and failure of the authorities as in Jack the Ripper case make one more factor attributing to the femicide machine to continue to oppress and dominate impoverished and replaceable woman. The number of cases that have occurred are not been defined by the police, as well as the dates of the murders, ability to specify the cause of death has also been proven questionable in the investigations led by the local police. In the palpable atmosphere of violence factors such as drug smuggling, immigration cannot be directly linked to

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<sup>20</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.92

<sup>21</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*,(New York: Semiotext, 2013) p.87

the femicides of more than 400 women however they certainly contribute to the negative climate surrounding the crimes. Furthermore, drug trafficking including cocaine and heroin and overpopulation generate chaos leading to violence all due to poverty, unemployment, lack of conditions that provide normal living conditions.

I agree that there is a direct link between between maquilas and femicide because these women were in the same social position as JTR victims: oppressed, underpaid, unprotected. The combination of newly gained independence with men losing their power over women increased the level of hatred and ended up in harassments in work environment, violence and femicide. With a sudden increase of crime, Ciudad Juarez took the leading role as the country's murder capital with shockingly over 500 gangs functioning every day and increasing crime rate even more.

## **5. Whitechapel as a synonym for outcasts**

After defining the woman by her status, does her surrounding increase the possibility of sexual attack? Over population, poverty in a place inadequate for a normal everyday becomes synonymous with its inhabitants. The marginalized view of a woman living on the streets has been subjected to constant criticism to evade responsibility and introduce new restrictions to substantiate control. Therefore, I will compare the dichotomy of West and East End to demonstrate that class restrictions are reasons for inefficiency and negligence towards women.

While poverty and discontent ruled the city of London that was no more „the metropolis of the world “yet as Jack London called it “*A huge man-killing machine*”<sup>22</sup>, a division amongst classes was becoming more evident than before dividing the city of London into two opposite spheres: the extremely rich and the poor. Crippled by disease, desperation and everyday crime, life

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<sup>22</sup> *Jack London, The People of the Abyss: Chapter V—Those On The Edge*  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/london/abyss/ch05.htm>, revisited September 2021

for 900.000 inhabitants of the East End was close to unbearable, creating a sense of despair and infirmity. In this period of economic uncertainty, the tensions between East and West End that were already present and palpable had been reinforced even more after the murder saga of Jack the Ripper took place. Accordingly, even though the Whitechapel murders which included five women did occur in the year 1888, the so-called „*reign of terror* „,<sup>23</sup> eventually took on the characteristics of a myth.

Many of the upper class living in the West End had ingrained negative perception of the East End as a place where thieves ruled while crime and prostitution spread like a disease. Such negative perception was not completely unfounded when taking into consideration that almost 40 percent of East End population was below poverty line.

Unfortunately, the horrors of vice and drunken people, men working over 12 hours per day, inhumane living conditions and streets filled with filth and disease on every corner was an everyday scene.

Walkowitz emphasizes: "*The East End suffered from declining male employment in the London docks and shipbuilding industries, from overcrowded and unsanitary living conditions, and from noisome and sweated industries that mostly employed women and girls*".<sup>24</sup>

However, poverty was sadly not the only problem that led to social unrest. What increased the concern was the sudden rise in immigrants into the city of London as well as the surrounding areas that created animosity and strengthen anti-semitic riots. The rise of newcomers, which included mostly Jews and Russians caused concern for the possible lack of job opportunities.

The number of Jewish immigrants in London alone reached 60,000, of which more than 80 percent lived in the East End. The rise in immigrants that were entering the country prompted the police officers to conduct a survey amongst the outlands of the East End questioning if they had any lodgers as well as their names and the reasons for their stay. It was not surprising that they

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<sup>23</sup> Ben Johnson, Jack the Ripper, Historic UK

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Jack-the-Ripper/>, revisited September 2021

<sup>24</sup> Walkowitz, Judith *City of Dreadful Delight, Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, (London:Time Warner Books, 1992) p.28

were not welcomed with open arms, as "*even London established Anglo-Jewish community was not particularly welcoming to the newcomers*"<sup>25</sup>. Surprisingly, in the midst of the brutal environment such as East End, the Jewish immigrants succeeded against all odds in what Englishman could not in his own town- rise in the social scale by becoming tailors, book makers...

However, one must take into consideration that a place like Whitechapel, a center of culture for immigrants and refugees is easily accessible. This supports my notion where accessibility of the victim is not to be neglected. Although a synonym for the poor, homeless thieves and prostitutes, Whitechapel also attracted the rich and young upper class gentlemen in search for entertainment and thus had a double role of feeding the poor and entertaining the wealthy. Living against the rules in the world led and dominated by men against all the society conventions only to be equal and sexually free as men was inconceivable.

Even by just uttering the idea of women ruling the world made Dr.Gull (Queen's doctor) nauseate: "*Could you, for instance, tolerate a world where females ruled? With men bound to their whims and governed by their scorn?*"<sup>26</sup> Not only were the laws formed by men, yet for their benefit, to justify their own behavior and expected women to tolerate and to stay submissive and passive without demur not even taking into consideration their point of view. It is not to ponder on why Moore deliberately put so much emphasis on ever going debate on women/male position in the society. Gull's necessity and urge to dominate and ultimately to kill is a twisted result of Victorian male dominance propaganda that is set as a stepping stone towards prosperity and progress. Already defined as mentally and physically „weaker sex“, women roles were narrowed to mother on one side or a prostitute on the other. Women identified as prostitutes introduced the issues of sexual hierarchy in which they challenged already established sexual division of womanhood.

Is it possible that the underlying instability of male power surfaced as a theme of many novels only because it reflected the notion of all men considering women to be the object of their sexual desires/ prostitutes? In the period of social unrest it is difficult to pin point the exact time

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<sup>25</sup> David Englander, *Policing the Ghetto: Jewish East London, 1880-1920*  
<https://journals.openedition.org/chs/1141>, revisited September 2021

<sup>26</sup> Moore, Alan: *From Hell: Master Edition*, Eddie Campbel comics (United states:Top Shelf Productions, 1999)

when prostitution as a trade began to flourish in the East End nonetheless it caught public attention with the contagious disease act in 1864 spurring the battle between men activists seeking to control the spread of venereal disease through forced woman examination and activists like Josephine Butler who condemned them as being gender biased.

My overall conclusion is that the ideology of the Act was not identical to its implementation. The act was a part of a grand plan which Josephine Butler called moral and sanitary utopia. The First Act was passed by the parliament and was directed towards women who were identified as prostitutes to undergo a forced examination and a several months stay in hospital.

A feminist historian Catherine Mackinnon argues that "*prostitution subordinates, exploits and disadvantages women as women in social life*"<sup>27</sup> It was truly degrading and discriminating for women to be subjected to invasive and intrusive medical examinations put forward by the Contagious diseases acts while men on the other hand were liberated of any such process that would invade their personal entity. Regarding their living conditions, for prostitutes common lodging houses were a way of seeking refuge by spending a night on a warm bed, so the perception of relating common lodging houses and prostitutes was created.

According to the data at the time 1200 prostitutes were active which resulted in growth of lodging houses. Considering that Whitechapel alone had over 60 brothels it is safe to say that London was hospitable place for the world's oldest trade.

Most Victorian cities had well known districts that became notorious for the prostitutes that would street walk in the area. Supporting the fact that these women were fairly independent Walkovitz renames the trade as: "*a trade organized neither by women nor by men.*"<sup>28</sup> Unlike the closed minded British public there have been men who tried to resolve the problem of prostitution without any denomination as William Tait, Greg and Acton who led a survey on prostitutes in Paris with a conclusion that prostitution was only a transient stage for the women and not their permanent solution. Furthermore, Tait gave an insight on poverty, prostitution and unemployment

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<sup>27</sup> Catharine A. MacKinnon: *Trafficking, Prostitution, and Inequality*, 2009  
<https://harvardcrcl.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2009/06/MacKinnon.pdf>, revisited  
September 2021

<sup>28</sup> Walkovitz, Judith: *City of Dreadful Delight, Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London*, (London:Time Warner Books,1992) p.21



which was on economic basis, enlisting environmental and natural reasons for woman falling into prostitution.

In this way he was also mocking the double standard of social norms which could be supported just by saying that even tea party could have a seductive undertone and who can guess what could happen afterwards. Does that mean that the women present were deviant, frigid, or prostitutes? Adding to the claims is Andrea Dworkin, a woman's right activist when she writes that "*prostitution comes from male dominance not from female nature*"<sup>29</sup>.

Moreover, only a year prior to the murders due to the government actions, around 200 brothels were closed which resulted in hundreds of woman left homeless and helpless to possible violent attack. These actions did not help to regulate the system yet it left prostitutes without their only source of income and now vulnerable with no one to lean on. By leaving them on the streets or forcing them to stay in lock hospitals was the way state decided to control the prostitutes. In doing so, it seemed that the very city of London was the master of their fate, determining what was to come by depriving them of their only occupation and throwing them away like disposable parts.

Following the public scrutiny and state regulations, although still not considered illegal, prostitution was defined as the biggest vice of the nineteenth century and associated with the criminal and problematic impoverished population.

Hence, with public solicitation the prostitute became a recognizable and visible figure in the Victorian era. Subsequently, only with the spread of sexual infections, or the lifestyle of prostitutes which interfered with the middle class models of family did the problem of prostitution arise as an issue to be dealt with. What Walkovitz managed and those prior to her failed is to construct a profile of a prostitute unlike the blurry contemporary description of the Victorian prostitute. Her representation of a fallen woman included her age, background, clientele and her working hours. Using this style of reference she make the character of a fallen woman into a living human being with most likely problematic family ties and other issues that cause empathy.

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<sup>29</sup> *Andrea Dworkin*, Prostitution and Male Supremacy, Michigan Journal of Gender & Law, Volume 1, Issue 1  
<https://repository.law.umich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1191&context=mjgl>, revisited September 2021

Contrary to her approach, in the time of the murders, the media and the public caused mass paranoia instead of focusing on resolving the crimes without judging on the morality and life choices of the victims. Suddenly, the problems that were neglected as crime and poverty were put in close relations to prostitutes which according to Lamarckian theory of urban degeneration diagnosed the murders to be a product of a disease environment whose neglected human refuse bred crime. Therefore, the general opinion of the upper class involved a creature so malicious and deranged that it could have only been a part of the East End population. As a side effect of all the chaos surrounding prostitution and murders, prostitutes were branded as a villain and held responsible and immediately convicted guilty for debilitation of men.

The dichotomy amongst the rich and the poor was present in every aspect of life in Outcast London. Sadly, these horrific crimes did not bring the whole of East and West End together yet the gap that separated them expanded even more. The atmosphere and the dynamics of life in the East End let the poor to despair resulting in riots, double the crime rates and rage outburst. The inhabitants of London were served and taught to believe only what came out in the newspapers because that became the equivalent for the truth. Following the murders, a new distorted picture of women as sexually deviant, immoral and prone to abuse of illegal substances like opium or alcohol came to public attention.

Walkovitz does not fail to mention the dehumanizing treatment of the victims as members of the community and as individuals, however she does not continue analysis of their representation in the later period. It is astonishing that from the very first murder lives of the victims presented a sensationalist reading with no respect or regard for the victims. Was the Victorian society directly responsible for their murder by presenting them as the evil of the society and not condoning the killer yet the victims? The answer is self-implied: be a part of a state regulated system or be erased.

## **6. Anonymity of the Canonical Five**

In this stage of my research I will discuss how male dominance and double standards imposed by the society alongside with socioeconomic conditions stand as the next phase for victim erasure is to silence them. More precisely, sexually related women crimes ranged from

insignificant and frowned or condoned upon to voiceless women scrutinized by the flawed society for not being sexually and morally immaculate in complacent with the biased media coverage are left powerless and voiceless figures. Lack of importance given to women who did not fit the given norms and standards transgressed from to semi fair treatment or even more lack thereof by the justice system..

Interestingly enough, prior to the Whitechapel murders, cases of sexual assault or even rape were seen as regular assaults. Double standards of the Contagious Diseases Acts allowed examination and control of prostitutes yet not their sexual counterpart serial killers and copycat inspired murders or assaults. Elements that define sexual assaults and related crimes are dominance, power and all can be connected to patriarchal society. Moreover, while women had been identified as passive, emotive and submissive interestingly enough men were graced with reason, independence and action.

According to such principles 19th century society regarded and classified women as „the sex“ or mere sexual object, which: *"occurs whenever a woman's body, body parts, or sexual functions are separated out from her person, reduced to the status of mere instruments or regarded as they were capable of representing her"*.<sup>30</sup>

The anonymity of the canonical five only cemented their role as extras in a movie, nameless and with no real importance other than the moral evil of the pure society, whereas the anonymity of Jack the Ripper gave him notoriety and only enforced preexisting Victorian gender imbalance. Scholars and historians that have studied and analyzed JTR, put the Victorians ideologies under a magnifying glass by stressing the issues of patriarchal control of women rather the evasive figure of the perpetrator.

Furthermore, these women roaming the streets at night by themselves in the eyes of the cruel Victorian society were now a far cry from the angel in the house and deserved only one thing a punishment for their moral degradation. Dismissive approach to sexually related crimes while glamourizing the killer whether it is Jack the Ripper or Zodiac, Boston killer or Ted Bundy only

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<sup>30</sup> Fredrickson, B. L., & Roberts, T. A. (1997). Objectification theory. *Psychology of women quarterly*, 21(2), p. 173  
<https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/>, revisited September 2021

condemns prostitution as a trade and a choice with no regards to the fact that it was the only choice and the way to survive. A punishment that prostitute deserves is a response out of fear of losing dominance and power to once submissive female population that stepped out of the boundaries set by the regime by independently trying to improve their living conditions. This transgression facilitated the male driven upper class to push forward patriarchal agenda and encourage violence towards women prostitutes. Clear separation of the links between the terms woman and victims were made early on in the investigation led by the Metropolitan police with no mention or reference to the women as victims, yet prostitutes that was not just degrading and manipulating with their bodies by exposing them to the public scrutiny yet with their moral status. Considered as non-angelic and uninhibited, viewed as reason enough for any violence to be justified and for her to lose a status of a victim.

Sadly, legal system at the time failed to protect women from violent crimes based on their class and gender. Sexist attitudes towards women was omnipresent if the assumed victim did not fit the profile the society imposed. This notion points to the fragility of the male psyche in the attempt to control women's lives. One cannot point out directly and refer to these treatments as a culprit, but defining them as crucial and "*necessary conditions*"<sup>31</sup> like the time and place where the murders occurred fill the gap.

## **7.Patriarchy and inherent prejudice**

Despite the key role women have historically assumed as victims of sexual assaults and murder crimes there has been lack of focus on the socio economic issues that influence the gender power structure. Whereas, crimes as sexual assaults rooted in gender have been deemed as insignificant, prostitution was seen as a category of women not worth any consideration and deeper analysis. Ignoring the notion of victimization without consideration for individual circumstances and sociocultural context can be applied to canonical five and over 300 victims from Ciudad

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<sup>31</sup>Diane Aiken: Victorian Prostitution, British Literature Wiki 2009  
<https://sites.udel.edu/britlitwiki/victorian-prostitution/>, revisited September 2021

Juarez. The murders as a sexual violence act can be seen as a less malicious and evil than the societal violence and lack of empathy the women had to endure prior to their death.

From a different standpoint, one cannot but question the potential moments where any intervention from the local authorities could have prevented the crimes ever happening. Ironically, the police files that are found in the period categorized crimes and women on innocent or non-innocent based on their lifestyle, class.... It is arguable that these inherent prejudice ingrained in the Victorian mind were camouflaged as facts revealing more on the overall state of the society than of the victims themselves. What is remarkable that the police spent millions of pounds searching for a unknown immigrant while it is more likely that the culprit was one of the locals sharing their own viewpoint? Now, historically visible, but invisible in their own time is the failure of the overall system to protect them and a disregard of the connections of violence, gender inequality and power relations.

In connection with this notion lies a Victorian belief that defines a prostitute by her vice. Control of women physical space, not only their bodies meant the possibility of denial of women sexuality and therefore easier to control and direct. Additionally, ratio of power and dominance has been shifting through ages where in the fifteenth century it was believed that due to the fear of female control over fertility and female sexuality witches were burned alive. That power over female sexuality over the centuries got only a different and more profane shape where non acceptable sexual conduct led to an outcast status.

The problem with the issue of sex trade lied in the concern for all the men who come in contact with prostitutes not the prostitutes themselves. Lack of sympathy for the canonical five is easily linked to this core belief that women who were involved in sex trade as such were enjoying sinful pleasure while making a profit with no regards or any concern for the male population they were probably infecting. In short, the Victorian norms were no more than regulatory and controlling act for women. The problem of the poor and the reasons for the prostitution were not solved yet put under a magnifying glass with new medical and sanitary examinations women had to endure.

Perceived as a weaker sex, even when married and after becoming mothers, women were dependent on men who were admired as a provider, therefore the imbalance in power and inequality of sexes never shifted because the philosophy of the separate spheres was never to be

equalized. In this way, women were submissive to male dominance with their biggest achievement being a fulfilled mother and a wife. After analyzing and deciphering the regulations and norms present in the Victorian era we can summarize the key factors that defined the patriarchal society. Firstly, the view of women as naturally inferior to men and a part of male property. Secondly, feminine sexuality as well as any sort of sexual pleasure is not her own yet is a beneficial instrument for men pleasure. Last but not the least important is the accountability of women for any kind of male transgression either of moral or sexual nature.

The objectification of women on prospect of their sexuality and their bodies could be linked with the term male gaze introduced by Laura Mulvey with emphasis on the problem of seeing women as sexual objects. Moreover, the victims of the Whitechapel murders were all mutilated with their uterus and breasts removed were all subjected to the killers gaze.

Following the murders, the sketches and the pictures of the unfortunate victims were plastered all over the newspapers and exposed to the public gaze. The aim or reasoning for such deeds could be viewed as a reference to disposability of fallen women. It is like the killer knew that the society would be more infatuated with the theatrical symbolism of a fallen women than the cruel reality of their treatment by those in power nor the concern of catching the killer. It is remarkable how well the killer knew the prevailing misogynistic agenda of Victorian England. What he did was dispose the city of the vermin and infestation that threatened the esteemed gentlemen. It is my belief that it is because of their vulnerability or the time or place the women were killed, they were selected to restore the natural imbalance that started to shift gradually.

Trying to have their own voice outside the imposed norms turned lethal and their voice was passive again with the last place in the hierarchy. The significance of gender dynamics and inequality can be correlated with the patriarchal power structure that exhibits male dominance through violence over women as the need for power and control. Consequently, when discussing violence and sexual assaults gender based behaviors and a question of masculinity in male violence are put in comparison. The analysis of the Victorian society only confirms that patriarchy is naturalized as a dominant factor in gender hierarchy.

Defining the patriarchal ideology involves the need for power and dominance as giving more value to male interests and goals and devaluing feminine. Furthermore, upon any resistance or getting out of the embedded norms imposed by the society intimidation or use of force and violence

was seen as the logical solution. Interestingly enough, any such act of violence is frowned upon as an individual transgression rather than a blue print of the society that promotes male dominance and power over women.

Thus, the power of men over women can be dissected into layers and levels depending on their age, race, ethnicity, class so that the oppression of women can be more advantaged or disadvantaged depending on her status on the latter. By just identifying any of the stated factors in any woman's life she can fairly be seen as many feminists argued a victim due to the unfair treatment of the society. Moreover, the canonical five ticked almost all the boxes that denote inequality and what is more, all the factors led them to their deaths and yet they are not defined as victims. The double standards of the public sphere of the Victorian period where it was acceptable behavior when a man would abuse or exhibit any form of domestic violence toward his wife while ironically a woman killed outdoors is unacceptable behavior from the women's part.

Although the killer of the canonical five did portray the control and gender biased model that society build its foundation on, the society itself is not the only one to blame. The philosophy of the proper families and male power structure where man would provide for his family outside of his household and woman was with the children inside taking care of her family was crumbling. Once easy to control and command, now men were slightly losing their power over women's mind and their bodies. Jack the Ripper case therefore reflects men desire to stigmatize and disempower women for slipping outside of the mold.

The question of women sexuality was a one way street that was the submission of their physical body to male dominance only for reproductive purpose or the fulfilment of the husband's needs. Until 1870s English Common Law even stated that female body once married belongs to her husband and is no longer her own. The hypocrisy of the ideology that allows male promiscuity while clearly defining and allowing only one norm for women as chastity only promotes the idea that deviant sexual behavior outside of marriage is acceptable only for the male figures.

JTR reflects the public voice that viewed women frolicking streets alone as a moral infection threatening society and should be held fully accountable. The agenda that alleged JTR as a professional surgeon due to the precision with which these women were mutilated prompted the conclusion that whoever performed the crime was in a way trying to convey a message of how the transgression of chastity ends up. By dictating their appearance upon their murder was it

intentional theatrics to mutilate and display the victims to public view as a warning to what happens to women who endanger men wellbeing try to earn money by selling their own body which in fact is not their own. The point of men ownership of women virtue and body was largely discussed throughout history. This ownership and male dominance did surely influence how women were expected to behave and conduct. The control of male counterpart over his wife after marriage is seen as another piece of his property to protect. Furthermore, if the women does not abide by the rules his property is diminishing and losing value. Andrea Dworkin explains the general Victorian belief of woman as an asset in the words *“Women are interchangeable as sex objects; women are slightly less disposable as mothers. The only dignity and value women get is as mothers”*<sup>32</sup>

The sphere women were inhabiting was a private one where they could work like a house servant or a housekeeper while men were present in both sphere with emphasis on the public spheres. This ranged from pursuing women and courtship to spending their time outside the household visiting pubs or gentleman clubs. Since women were paid less than men any respectable middle class married women who wanted to earn money or find an occupation outside her own household had only few alternatives to choose from including mostly charity work and similar projects. The only difference between upper or middle class woman and the lower or working class one lies in the bigger responsibility of the latter one. Middle class women did not have to do all the house chores and maintain the household, yet guide her children through society and obey her husband. Her household was taken care of by the lower working class woman working as a domestic servant who in most cases had to take care of her own and others.

In regards to education women were expected merely to be morally upright with strong Christian upbringing without including themselves into discussions or debates on socio economic background reserved for man only. Pure, innocent and compliant were the women’s virtues while those women who dared to work in workshops and factories were seen as fallen and disgraceful.

Excluded from the power structure comprising a man and a woman in a unity of matrimony were the outcaste social minority working on the streets. The disparity among the women living or working on the streets was visible not only in the average income they earned and the way they

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<sup>32</sup>Andrea Dworkin, Right-Wing Women

[https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/23879.Andrea\\_Dworkin?page=3](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/23879.Andrea_Dworkin?page=3), revisited  
September 2021



lived their everyday lives yet in the law restrictions forced upon them. I would have to agree to the statements where prostitution is a reflection of the unfair social order and treatment of women based on the reports of their arrests on solicitation merely if they were found on the streets more than two times simply roaming around. To simplify it further, once on the street earning their own money with the use of their bodies they are still dependent on men so genuine freedom and the ability to choose for themselves is limited by male power not only to have intercourse with his female counterpart, the wife, yet to dominate once again the women on the streets. The only thing that is changed is that it requires payment and the surroundings that is taking place at.

Consequently, this review proves that a prostitute was a mirror representation of the pits and lows an unchaste women might fall into. Reflection of a women who succumbed to the sexual animalistic urges while losing her virtue. This is exemplified by the categorization of women by their class and and status in the society ranks where firstly there stands a married women devoted to her husband and her family, secondly there stands a working woman usually a domestic servant waiting to be married and continue her life in the working class family and last but not the least important is the women that dwells in brothels. Most importantly, bellow all these three groups of women there lies unnamed category only referred to as a Great Social Evil which is the low prostitute infesting low neighborhoods of London.

To prove and analyze the real reasons for women entering prostitution as surrounding factors that influence their decision a number of surveys with both women in the streets as in prisons have been done at the time. Thus, these recordings proved over 50% of women being semi-skilled, previous servants and sadly a large majority of them entered prostitution at the ages ranging from sixteen to eighteen. There have also been instances of young women being interviewed by the police officers where they repeatedly tried to lie about their real age and pretended to be 18 and over. Most likely these incidents happened because of fear of being removed from the streets which meant not being able to provide for themselves nor food nor shelter. Due to their social position and economic regime at the time as Walkovitz asserts "*some women may have found the shorter hours and better pay of prostitution a temporary solution*"<sup>33</sup>.

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<sup>33</sup> Walkovitz, Judith: *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State*, p. 15

This can be supported by the facts that in a way a working class woman living without a man and trying to provide for herself had no other option than to sell her own body. Proof for this harsh piece of reality lies in the different wages ration for a woman working in the industrial class that got paid far less than an average men. In fact, her monthly salary could barely cover her monthly food spending so the assumption of a woman selling her body to survive was almost not a choice yet the only solution. Hence, the opposition of a married women with social and economic security and divorced or poor woman entering prostitution due to the limited options and job opportunities enabled by the double standard ideology is created. The same ideology was made public with the Ripper victims with no sense of empathy for their lives. The main argument was their pollution of the society and the status of the Great social evil so either a disease or even their death was a punishment for their unchastity or sin.

The question that needs to be answered is did the society with the CD act that promoted invasive examination of women private body find yet another way of making prostitutes an outlaw in a society? I would like to agree to disagree....This can be viewed in two ways, one of which condemns prostitutes as outlaws and pushes them under the carpet as the problem that does not exist, however the second way to define it would not be an outlaw status of the prostitutes as much as the need to control them. To understand the issues revolving prostitution one must first come to the terms that prostitution was never against the law as well as the fact that they will never be fairly treated by the law. Unfairly, the CD act gave the police force the upper hand by allowing them to incarcerate women under suspicion of solicitation as well as forcing them to a medical examinations related to venereal disease and even placing them into Lock Hospitals for three months for further examinations.

With the exertion of this type of control over questionable of possible soliciting nationwide made these women guilty before proven innocent and with no one by their side to rely on. Considering the issue of a woman wondering the streets alone in certain hours one cannot escape the conclusion that the focus of the prostitution issue was not for the women well-being. The role that they previously held as walking disease switched to a public villain figure that is endangering male population.

Not only could they be apprehended for suspicion of solicitation and held against their will for up to nine months yet the difference between the treatment of men and women under suspicion

of contagion was substantial. Once marked incompetent and unable to take care of their own sexual health, the process of so called rehabilitation consisting of imprisonment and forceful examination could be prolonged depending on doctor or judges opinion. When talking about CD act implementation I would talk of obvious and intentions abuse of power and lack of any interest in women well-being. The total exclusion of the male counterpart in the problem of prostitution is astounding yet a harsh social reality.

Deemed as a vice that only women succumb to resulted in the legal actions that had impact only on female counterpart. "*It is not sex discrimination to have a law that punishes only women*"<sup>34</sup> Mackinnon defined the sexual double standards to the point. CD Act went even a point further by liberating any and all men of the mere possibility to be legally charged with the section that protected the homosexual community involving in private sexual intercourse by not labeling it as an act of prostitution which excluded them from possible arrest or charges.

The targeting of prostitutes is the realization of the fallen women belief that got its legal confirmation and power momentum with the implementation of the CD act because a belief is exactly what it says it is, only a belief but when it is written in the law then it must be true. The perception of a prostitute as a criminal was now legally justified which supports my argument on the police that led the JTR murder case. The mistreatment and neglect of the victims can be named as a inevitable social norm. Moreover, why would police put all their energy of catching a murdered and a criminal who murdered other five criminals when they can participate in the creation of a media frenzy orchestrated by the ones in power to teach all the women who do not follow the social norms a lesson?

## **8. Mythicization**

Accordingly, even though the Whitechapel murders which included five women did occur in the year 1888, the so-called „reign of terror „eventually took on the characteristics of a myth. Throughout this research paper I will try to detect, analyze and elucidate the sheer deviations in

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<sup>34</sup> Catharine E. MacKinnon, Equality, 1991  
[https://www.jstor.org/stable/48563042?seq=1#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/48563042?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents), revisited September 2021

A. Moore and E. Campbell coherent vision of Jack the Ripper alongside with the different theories that existed in the period to detect their impact on the victims themselves.

The location where the murders happened East End, the lawless part of London, amid never ending suspects, all of which supposedly Jack the Ripper along with the press coverage of the case all contributed to the complexity of the legend and the myth itself. Due to the fact that it has been studied, analyzed and reviewed by thousands it is no wonder that on the very mention of the name Jack the Ripper no one is left indifferent. However, the case as the killer is covered with the veil of mystery to this day. For this reason writers like Stephen Knight, Alan Moore, Robert Bloch, Trevor Marriott, R. Mitchell Gordon are just amongst the dozen of writers who were motivated enough to dedicate their work to research and bold enough to question the truth behind the mystery of Jack the Ripper. The one to marvel upon is surely Patricia Cornwell, a well-known crime author who spent almost 3 million £ in order to determine the real identity of the killer.

In her own words, it is indubitable that the person responsible for the murders was Walter Richard Sickert: *"I do believe 100 percent that Walter Richard Sickert committed those serial crimes"*<sup>35</sup>. Moreover, as the time passed by, the number of possible suspects raised and it is no surprise that almost 500 individuals have been accused, charged and puzzled on. It is irrefutable that whereas the case was never officially closed and resolved, the thin line, which separates the myth and reality got blurred and shifted attributing to the appeal of the mystery. Moore has managed to elevate a crime case to an entirely new fictional dimension and it could be considered as art of depicting madness of the Dr. Gull as the main forces that impels him to do the horrific deeds.

From Hell is not simply an eight year collaboration between Allan Moore and Eddie Campbell, but it is finding a fictive villain that could be as deviant and malicious as the one responsible for the actual murders. Besides the text, a picture speaks a thousand words and black and white world of a graphic novel offers a new aspect to the myth. By rejecting all the conventions of the comic art the author succeeded to allude to all the social and historical reasons that are lurking in the demended mind of what will become to be known as the most notorious killer of the 20th century. By grappling with historical evidence and providing multitude of actual

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<sup>35</sup>Patricia Cornwell, Jack the Ripper, case closed, 2002  
<https://www.jack-the-ripper.org/walter-sickert.htm>, revisited September 2021

locations, names and dates Moore artfully shifts the reader's attention from the myth as a social and a worldwide phenomenon on the reasons that prompt an individual to perform such ghastly deeds.

The theory that stood out the most is related to the culprit as being someone outside of English superior society and shedding the light on the immigrant population in the East end. Did this notion bring into question the national identity?

Portraying Ripper as being a savage and animalistic individual, the media sensationalism put the crimes as a turning point in perfect English society, which was prior to the events, optimistic and respectable yet now became contaminated with the foreign presence roaming around and polluting their own streets. Whilst the majority of the press as The Evening News, The Times, The Daily Telegraph, The East London Observer informed the vast English population on the daily events following the case it also exposed the nature of the racist sentiments hidden in the heart of England London. Certain sentiment of xenophobia was palpable in the air towards the Jewish community and in a way it did justify the enhancement of attack directed toward the immigrant population inhabiting the East End.

Even though there was no physical evidence that could link the killer and immigrant population member directly, newspaper headlines referred to the murders as being foreign in character. All the media hype along with preexisting racism only put the Jews in the spotlight and made them an easy target. The anti-Semitic feeling that was the result of the bottled anger and job competition towards the immigrants who were lowering their pay rates.

The Jewish Chronicle was the only newspaper at the time that expressed dissatisfaction and concern with such representation of Jewish culture by naming other daily publications as racist and biased.

The rich West Enders saw the saga only as attempt of the lower class to draw attention in need for a revolutionary change of their living condition having no real empathy for the victims themselves. Thus resulting in introducing working men clubs which could be seen as an act of charity to silence already brewing public voice and to quiet down their own guilt. In the aftermath of press domination the revelation by the medical examiner that dealt with the corpses stated that

the murders were surely a work of an expert who had certain knowledge of anatomical and pathological examinations.

This theory was short lived due to the fact that it surely suggested an educated well respected member of British society, a certain Mr. Hyde who had a manic episode and had a killing spree.

Furthermore, alongside with this theory probably to justify or put aside the theory of the killer being of English origin, a question of a mere possibility that a killer could in fact be an Englishman was due to the fact that his character and persona was most likely corrupted or contaminated by a man of Jewish background.

Was this so called doctor or immigrant doing anything outrageous or invasive to these women that the society already did not....or is he following the guidelines given by the society? The implementation of the act that prompted invasive procedures on women offered a new view of women as not being in control nor ownership of their own bodies. What is the importance and influence of the theories and myths on the killer's identity? My argument is that the focus of the issue shifts from the unknown identity to blaming the victims. I consider continuous mythicization of an unknown criminal as a problem that stands as a reminder of a male fear of losing his power over the weaker sex. The way the myth took the voice of his victims is not the question of how Jack the Ripper really looked like, yet the way society created and reflected his identity. *"This allows one to perceive that myth cannot be an object, a concept, or an idea. It is a mode of signification, a form...not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message."*<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, 1957  
<https://www.atlasofplaces.com/essays/mythologies/>, revisited September 2021

## Conclusion

The gathered evidence for this study points forward the idea of social norms guided by patriarchy and mythicization as the key factors responsible for the victim erasure. Findings of this research supported the feminist approach that acknowledged the victims and centered their methods on detail historical revision of the canonical five. Sergio Gonzales also managed to pin point the Femicide Machine *that operates through an ultra-contemporary criminal power, enjoying resources, firearms, safe houses, logistics, hi tech communication devices, spy networks, and police complicity*<sup>37</sup> as a main force in the modern day history that succeeded in outcasting its victims.

Other observations led by Ripperologists point out the importance of the killer's identity. Their approach is an extreme way of idealizing and celebrating the flawed system that focused on the male dominance which I consider as biased and harsh. This paper has highlighted the living conditions in Victorian England for a woman living on the streets through the writings of Walkovitz and Rubenhold. The authors have demonstrated the downfalls of Victorian society once

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<sup>37</sup> Gonzales, Sergio *The Femicide Machine*, (New York:Semiotext 2013) p.89

she is homeless, divorced or trying to take care of herself. By taking into regard their research this thesis underlines the importance of disinterest of the society for its female members in need.

In the second part of the thesis a considerable insight has been given to exploring the similarities between Ciudad Juarez and East End to highlight the impact that oppression, inequality, social surroundings have on erasure of the victims. This thesis stressed the idea of conditions necessary for criminal acts such as Whitechapel and Ciudad Juarez that are a government orchestrated lawless neighborhoods. The findings of this study indicate that through web of circumstances promoted by the state it is important to comprehend that the real culprit is not the infamous killer, yet the patriarchal system that pushed forward sensationalistic story of evasive killer in the black cloak. By doing so, the focus and the guilt was moved from the ones in power to a single man. The aim of this research was to give back the victims their voice by acknowledging the life conditions and social treatment that presented them as both the victims and a perpetrator.

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