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## **Time Travelling with Jack the Ripper on Page and Screen**

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### **Abstract**

The article discusses time-travelling Jack the Ripper narratives, the majority being short stories and episodes of TV series. Despite their different temporal foci – late-Victorian past, present, distant future – the texts revolve around four ways of depicting the mysterious murderer: as a timeless force, a killer who uses time travel to escape, a killer whose deeds are to be prevented, and, last but not least, a tool in the hands of future generations. They also indicate that creators and consumers of popular culture are not interested in discovering the Ripper's identity as much as want to follow him through centuries.

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According to Jonathan Bignell, time travel narratives offer a temporal transportation to “an imaginary elsewhere and an imaginary elsewhere” (qtd. in Redmond 58). Even though the same can be said about any fiction told on page or screen, the double (or multiple) time plane of these stories not only lets readers and viewers escape their reality, but also seems to present a more pronounced commentary on the ‘here and now.’ Time travel crosses genres and conventions, it “shifts between fantasy and science fiction, magic and technology” (Jones and Ormrod 5), as do the stories about Jack the Ripper, the “best-known, unknown killer ever” (Hodgson 70). And just as people experience time via re-creation, re-enactment, dislodgement, and projection (Jones and Ormrod 10), popular culture re-creates and re-enacts the events of 1888 dislodging both the characters and the audiences, and projecting particular tropes and motifs.

On the one hand, time travelling opens up infinite narrative possibilities. Drawing from various fields – biological, technological, supernatural – it makes use of time loops or rips in space-time and numerous catalysts, such as genes, alien blood, hypnosis, diaries, time machines, et cetera (Jones and Ormrod 6–7). On the other, going back to 1888 limits the narratives due to the inevitability of certain events, for example the murders, and imposes certain tropes and motifs, for example the Ripper's signifiers which are bound with certain emotions: “the fear of fog that robs us of geographical certainty; the fear of a doctor/surgeon that

a medical bag elicits; the gothic trope of a cape that makes us think of Dracula” (Smith 7). Another problem time travelling narratives encounter is the paradoxes, the best known being the “grandfather paradox”: time travellers may kill their own ancestor and thus erase themselves from history; another, more relevant in the context of the present paper, is the “assassinate Hitler paradox”: if the purpose of time travelling is to prevent crimes and it ends with a success, there is/was no need to move back in time (Wittenberg 149, Pratt 68–69).

Out of the time travelling trend of Ripperana, present in genres as varied as adventure, crime, comedy, drama, fantasy, horror, mystery, thriller, romance, and science fiction, emerge a few dominant ways of depicting Jack the Ripper: 1) a timeless force, with no beginning and usually no end, existing alongside humanity; 2) a fleeing killer, who manages to escape his Victorian pursuers into the future; 3) a killer to be beaten, with time travel used as the means of preventing him from committing the murders; and 4) a useful tool in the hands of future generations. What is interesting in these works is that not only hardly ever is he caught and punished for his deeds, but also that his gory legacy seems to be protected and preserved. Their creators and, by extension, the audiences are not really interested in catching the Ripper, but in chasing him.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. A Timeless Force

Although there is no proper time travelling in Robert Bloch’s “Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper” (1943), the story is relevant as the text that freed the Victorian killer “from the constraints of time and place and opened the way for others to do likewise” (Meikle 109); it also became “the basis for the supernatural aspect of the Ripper” (Smith 6). As the story’s anonymous poem informed newspaper readers back in 1888, “[he’s] not a butcher, [he’s] not a Yid / Nor yet a foreign skipper, / But [he’s] your own true loving friend / Yours truly – Jack the Ripper” (Bloch 22). Jack is well and killing in Chicago in the 1940s. Sir Guy Hollis, a child of one of the victims who has studied the killer for thirty years, is convinced Jack is an “ageless pathological monster” (27) whose murders reflect the solar, lunar, and stellar rhythm dictating the sacrifices to some dark gods made in exchange for eternal youth (24–25). He looks ordinary, blends in with the times and places, usually moves in the intelligentsia and artistic circles; the eighty seven crimes he committed in “half the world’s greatest cities” have not been solved (24). The Ripper identifies himself in the last sentence of the story – “Just call me – Jack” (37) and, as the ending suggests, the eighty eighth murder will not be the last one.

After a few radio appearances in the 1940s and 1950s, the story was moved in time to the 1960s, when it was adapted by its author for one of the TV episodes of the Boris Karloff-hosted *Thriller* (1961). This time sexual elements were added and the artistic/decadent and occult motives were developed: a painter sings the

lyrics of the afore-quoted poem; there are a broken cross, devil's eye, and other ominous signs; the killer is called a "ghoul" and a "vampire." However, the Ripper is presented as less of an agent and more of a dependant governed by the solar, lunar, and stellar rhythms, repeating the murders – the count exceeds ninety – every three years and eight months: "He goes on because he can't stop. If he stops, he dies" ("Yours Truly, ..." *Thriller*). Similarly, to the original story, the ending suggests he will continue killing – the killer identifies himself knifing Sir Guy and leaves the foggy backstreet. The "Yours Truly" Ripper seems truly ours, "simply matter-of-fact, existing without an explanation" (Coville and Lucanio 65). He continues re-enacting the 1888 murders, and the readers and viewers accept that as an integral part of popular culture.

Jack comes back to Chicago in the first episode of *Kolchak: The Night Stalker* entitled simply "The Ripper" (1974). A mysterious murderer haunts the city equipped with a few ominous signifiers, such as a cape with a red lining or a swordstick with a devil's head for the handle, and communicates via rhyming messages, for example: "Now a pretty girl will die for Jack to have his kidney pie" ("The Ripper"). His rhythmical killing spree (over seventy women during the past eighty years in twenty five major cities of the world) continues for no apparent reason. Unaccounted for are also his superhuman skills, such as jumping from rooftops, not being hurt when hit by a car running at thirty miles per hour, or being bullet-proof. For some reason, however, he is afraid of electricity. When the main character, a reporter and narrator of the story, traps and electrocutes the Ripper, the body is nowhere to be found. No evidence means no story to be printed, but it also suggests that when the rhythm dictates it, he may visit another time and place for another set of murders.

In this episode "the original Ripper" is a well-known being, and the detective figure is not hunting the killer for personal reasons. As a journalist, Kolchak has to rely on his research, which includes a book entitled *Ripper Murders throughout the Ages*. And since the story takes place in a different media reality, it is not only a close group of the people he talks to that have heard about the murders – there are nineteen men who claim to be the Ripper and want to be interviewed. All these, together with the choice of theme to introduce the series, highlight the position Jack has already occupied not only in the history of crime, but also in popular culture.

In Robert Bloch's episode of *Star Trek*, "Wolf in the Fold" (1967), our killer boldly goes where no Ripper has gone before. Jack's killing sprees are extended to the year 2267 and Argelius II, a planet inhabited by a hedonistic and peaceful society. A body-switching entity takes control of Scotty, the *Enterprise* crew member, and makes him kill Argelian women, with the first murder happening on a foggy night. It takes a priestess and a séance to discover that the killer is "an ancient terror [...] devouring all life," "a hunger that never dies" called various names by various peoples, including "Redjac," which is a reference to "Red

Jack” from Bloch’s first Ripper text (“Yours truly...” 21). Still, it is the starship computer that discovers his identity and links past crimes committed since 1888, e.g. in 1974 Kiev or 2105 Martian colonies, to the present ones. When the entity takes control of the computer itself, it says: “I am without ending. I have existed from the dawn of time and I shall live beyond its end! In the meantime, I shall feed, and this time I do not need a knife. You will all die horribly in searing pain” (“Wolf in the Fold”). Not surprisingly, Mr Spock and Captain Kirk manage to restore order and send the Ripper into the open space, where “[i]ts consciousness may continue for some time, consisting of billions of separate bits of energy, floating forever in space powerless”; we are told “it will die finally” (“Wolf in the Fold”) but his deeds will most probably be remembered.

A timeless killer using human bodies is also depicted in *The Outer Limits* “Ripper” (1999). The episode takes the viewers back to 1888 and offers them an alien force “older than London” (“Ripper”) that possesses people – men and women alike, prostitutes as well as policemen – and makes them murder others. What is of interest here is that although the creature has superhuman powers, it lacks control over its own fate – it appears stranded on the earth and asks rhetorically: “Did Robinson Crusoe choose his island?” (“Ripper”) The attempts at catching him end with a hapless Ripper suspect – a doctor and a detective figure – in a straightjacket, and the alien in its new host, a retiring Scotland Yarder, accompanying the doctor’s fiancée to America.<sup>2</sup> It may be (safely) assumed its undetected murders will continue there.

Although involving an ancient alien, this narrative makes use of the most popular theories about the identity and the puzzle of the Ripper that were circulating in 1888. One is the doctor theory, which was based on the anatomical knowledge the killer was supposed to possess; the other is the foreigner theory, which linked the Ripper with either poor Jewish immigrants that inhabited Whitechapel, or pointed to his American origins on the basis of the analysis of the letters purportedly written by the killer, which also leads to Doctor Francis Tumblety, one of the suspects. The episode also relies on numerous visual signifiers of the “toff”/gentlemen theory, such as the cape, top hat, and swordstick. Dark and empty foggy streets are there as well, thus accounting for all the basic elements listed by Clare Smith (7).

The last example in this group depicts the Ripper as an entity evoked into modern times. *The Sixth Sense* “With Affection, Jack the Ripper” (1972) presents “an accident in time,” “a one in a million chance” – the unexpected effects of scientific research, in which the subject of an extra-sensory perception study becomes dominated by “the psychic energy of one of the most dangerous psychopaths of all time” unleashed via a combination of a harpsichord, a metronome, and a drawing of a gas-lit street. The dislodged man recreates the Ripper’s modus operandi, but also experiences past murders. In the end, the cop’s intuition rescues the would-be victim(s) of both the Ripper and the ESP experiments. “Time is a great healer” (“With Affection, Jack the Ripper”) and will take its course.

Whereas in *The Outer Limits* episode the Ripper signifiers are a fairly natural part of the 1888 scenery, here the double time setting allows for a more playful usage of a few (stereo)typical references, including the “all work and no play” proverb pronounced by Adam, the experiment’s subject. There is also a Gladstone bag, foggy streets, the sound of an approaching hansom, a red-haired prostitute, and letters. The message sent to the police reads: “I’m not a sailor / I’m not a kid / nor yet a foreign / skipper – but I’m / your own fun-loving / lad / Yours truly / Jack the Ripper” (“With Affection, Jack the Ripper”). Regardless whether it is a nod to Bloch’s text or not, it is worth noting how the “kid” replaced the “Yid” and the “lad” the “friend.” And since the series is about paranormal and supernatural crimes and mysteries, it is the unexplained phenomena, such as automatic writing or the reflection of the attacker in the pupils of the victim, that make it possible to trace the killer.

## 2. A Fleeting Killer

The writer of the *Sixth Sense* episode offered one more Ripper tale taking place in two timelines. The *Fantasy Island* “With Affection, Jack the Ripper/Gigolo” (1980) combines two stories of men preying on women, but also comments on academic interest in proving yet another Ripper theory. One of the *Fantasy Island* guests is a successful attorney and criminologist who has solved the mystery of Jack the Ripper’s identity, “the world’s greatest murder mystery,” and her wish is to go back in time to 1888 to prove it and subsequently publish her book. The suspect is Doctor Albert Fell, “a harlot-hating homicide” (Meikle 139) wearing a coat, white gloves, top hat, and carrying a small black bag, as might be expected from an 1888 physician and a Ripper suspect.<sup>3</sup> He escapes the police via what happens to be a time portal and finds himself on the 1980 island, which appears to be a dream location with all the half-naked (at least to a Victorian eye) modern women to harvest. Initially, time travel seems to agree with him – Fell describes himself as being “born out of time” (“With Affection, Jack the Ripper/Gigolo”), and he realises he could accomplish a lot there and then. Meanwhile, “back” in 1888, Miss Peters finds her proof in the form of the doctor’s diary and family papers only to be later kidnapped by him from 1980 to 1888 to prevent her from revealing his identity. Eventually, she is saved by the island “wishmaster,” the doctor dies in an accident, and the Ripper’s identity remains a secret.

Apart from referencing the 1888 Ripper theories and signifiers, the episode may be also read as a comment on Ripperologists. Intent upon discovering the killer’s identity and/or proving themselves right, they may easily fall prey to ignoring, or even bending, facts to support their theories and thus become further, more figurative victims of Jack. The criminologist almost literally fell prey to Fell of her own volition. Leaving the island, she leaves her fantasy, the wish to publish

the book, behind – apparently, “[j]ust knowing the truth is enough” (“With Affection, Jack the Ripper/Gigolo”). It seems only a matter of time before another Ripperologist, writer or academic will make another attempt at uncovering the identity of Jack the Ripper.

A very intentional time-travelling escape from the police is presented in *Time After Time* (1979), which is also the first text to link Jack the Ripper and H.G. Wells.<sup>4</sup> The action moves from 1893 London to 1979 San Francisco, which hosts an exhibition entitled “H.G. Wells: A man before his time.” Even though the 1893 Wells thinks of himself as a man belonging to the future, which he pictures as a social utopia with no crime, no poverty, and no disease, but with men-women equality, it is the Ripper who truly belongs there. Wells is as disappointed with the people of the future as the Traveller from *The Time Machine* (1895) was: the news, cartoons, sports, rock concerts, movies – everything he is shown on TV drips with violence, and that is what makes the Ripper realise he is “home.” The “modern” serial killer tells the “so Victorian” Wells: “I belong here completely and utterly. [...] The world has caught up with me and surpassed me. 90 years ago I was a freak – today I’m an amateur. [...] The future isn’t what you thought, it’s what I am” (*Time After Time*).

By the time the film was made, the USA is said to have become “the country for serial killers” (Smith 103), and one of the police officers in the movie complains: “first Zodiac, now this” (*Time After Time*).<sup>5</sup> The Ripper blends “seamlessly into the dark heart of the urban jungle where he hunts anew and afresh, becoming yet another in the list of atrocities that the film shows to have defined twentieth-century American life” (O’Brien 90). But *Time After Time* also offers “the first screen Ripper who combines the nineteenth-century medical/upper class Ripper [...] with the twentieth-century concept of the serial killer” – “articulate, adaptable, rational in his own way, intelligent and daring” (Smith 105). The last we see of him, he is about to infinitely wonder through time in what might be read as a form of punishment; however, his murders, past and present, will remain a mystery, and he will be remembered as a killer who was never caught.

It seems that pop cultural infinity is not limitless. Thirty years after *Time After Time*, a sequel brought Jack back, this time however, as a woman. *Jacklyn the Ripper* (2009) does not recreate or re-enact past crimes, but offers a rather mindless killing spree and a serial killer “*playing artiste with the blood of others*” but “*not enjoying it*” (154, original emphasis), melancholically recollecting past murders. Even though initially the Ripper is not pleased with the accidental chromosome alteration, he discovers certain perks to being a seductive murderess. S/he refers to the “Jack and Jill” rhyme, but chooses a more sophisticated name for himself and becomes Jacklyn. The year is 2010, the place is Los Angeles, where the Wells exhibition was moved on its world tour. The Ripper is seeking revenge on Wells and his wife, and that is what propels the action. The gender swap, with subsequent female emotions, alters the Ripper’s motifs and the murders, much unlike

the 1888 or 1979 ones, seem to just happen. The final confrontation, although reminiscent of the one from *Time After Time*, seems definitive, and this time it is the killer who feels out of time and place and offers some hope that, unlike in *The Time Machine*, human kind may be evolving instead of devolving – before being shot by Wells, s/he says: “What if my crimes in the last few days have sickened enough people to side with other sickened people? And together they influence future generations to think twice about their headlong rush toward self-destruction? Don’t you see, Wells? There is hope for your kind. Just as there is no hope for mine” (319).

The Ripper dies, but in spite of two time travels to the future, twenty- and twenty-first-century people are none the wiser as far as the 1888 murders are concerned. The 2010 setting allows for a comment on the Ripper industry that has developed. Its first instance mentioned in the text is a non-fiction book, *Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper – Case Closed* (2002), whose author claims to have solved the mystery with the help of DNA research and identifies Walter Sickert, the painter, as the Ripper. Jaelyn finds it among bargain books and cannot resist flipping through its pages: “she read further, growing more and more annoyed with this Patricia Cornwell, a forensic scientist turned author [...] *I might just look up this Patricia Cornwell and prove to her that despite gender, I am who I am*” (123; original emphasis). The other example is the Scotland Yard’s reaction to the request by the LA police for the Ripper’s original files – they are transferred to public affairs and receive it immediately: “Between publishers and film production companies, [they] hadn’t been the first to ask” (271). One may wonder whether the *Fantasy Island* Miss Peters’s Doctor Fell theory would have been as easily discredited as Cornwell’s, and who is the next producer that will ask for the Scotland Yard’s source materials.

### 3. A Killer to Be Beaten

Attempts at identifying and catching the Ripper seem doomed, as even the texts depicting him as a killer to be beaten demonstrate. In Félix J. Palma’s *The Map of Time* (2008), Wells’s time machine is also used – not for the killer to escape, but rather for a man to prevent the murder of his beloved. For Andrew Harrington, the autumn of 1888 was not a time of terror, but of love and happiness – that is until Marie Kelly was alive. After keeping her room at 13 Miller’s Court frozen in time for eight years, he chooses it as the place to commit suicide; his cousin, however, manages to avert it with a lure of travelling back in time to kill the Ripper before he kills Marie. Together they convince Wells to let them use his time machine and Andrew sets on his mission. He shoots the Ripper, but then discovers that the 1888 newspaper cutting still relates the brutal murder and a subsequent capture of the Ripper (a sailor, one Brian Reese) by the Whitechapel Vigilance Committee.



Wells expertly explains this paradox with “a split in time,” “a sort of alternative universe, a parallel world” in which the couple live happily (187). What Andrew does not know is that the entire time travelling experience was a hoax organised solely to save his life. What the readers do not know at this point is that the reality they are reading about is itself a result of a time split – after all, “nobody should ever have captured Jack the Ripper” and “the mystery of his identity [...] [should] become the favourite pastime of researchers, detectives, and amateurs” (448–449), and audiences alike.

If going back in time to kill the Ripper and save his victim is not possible, what about going back to “save” the Ripper and his “legacy”? TV series *Timecop* presents time travel as a reality and, as its consequence, history being at risk. It is the job of a special time police branch, with its Chief Historian, to make sure it is not being tampered with.<sup>6</sup> In “A Rip in Time” (1997), timecops discover a manipulation in the past – the body of Sir William Gull (one of the popular Ripper suspects) is found next to Catherine Eddowes’s, the fourth canonical victim – and Officer Logan is sent to 1888 to investigate that. Since the aim of the timecop team is preserving history, the killer has to stay alive and murder Mary Kelly. The appearance of a modern American in Victorian London results in a few gags and a few sources of inspiration for Herbert, the nephew of the Scotland Yard Inspector Wells, but also in revealing a megalomaniac “surrogate Ripper” (Meikle 180), who not only kills the “original,” but also believes himself to be “a visionary” “improving history”: “Jack the Ripper was nothing but a side-show freak. I intend on killing 5 times as many women as he did. And when I’m finished, history will remember the Ripper as one true homicidal genius” (“A Rip in Time”). Timecops restore order, which again means that Jack the Ripper kills Mary Kelly and is never caught.

The impossibility of erasing the canonical Ripper murders from history is highlighted also in “Ripper’s Curse” (2011), a comic story accompanying the Eleventh Doctor from the most popular time-travelling British TV series *Doctor Who*. Despite, or because of, his constant visits to different times and places, the Doctor is known for not wanting to interfere in the time line, being especially careful about the past. His companions, however, tend to care more about the people/races they meet and if there is a chance to help them, they more often than not try to do so. Amy Pond is no exception, and when the Tardis finds itself pulled into the 1888 Ripper haunted Whitechapel shortly before the ‘double event,’ she is bound to save Mary Kelly. His natural reservations aside, the Doctor decides to join her. History, however, should not be tampered with, and saving one life might mean sacrificing another.

In a rather Whovian manner, the Ripper turns out to be a lizard-like alien – an escaped Re’nar who wants to put the blame on his enemy, a representative of another alien species, Ju’wes. Thus, the narrative incorporates the 1888 Goulston Street graffito Sir Charles Warren is said to have had removed to avoid anti-

Semitic riots; it said “The Juwes are the men that will not be blamed for nothing” (qtd. in Jones 26). The comic, being a part of the Whovian narrative, also makes extensive use of other (pop)cultural references, for example Amy and her husband Rory introduce themselves to the Victorian police as Miss Marple and Inspector Clouseau (Part 1), and Johnny Depp is quoted as a preferable version of Inspector Abberline (Part 1). There is also a 2011 Jack the Ripper tour and the story ends on a familiar note: the 1888 investigation will not be forgotten and neither will the Ripper (Part 3).

#### 4. A Useful Tool

This set of time-travelling Ripper stories depicts a killer who remains undetected for the Victorians and “us,” living here and now, and serves as a very useful tool for future humans and aliens alike. The title of the series, *Babylon 5*, refers to the last of the neutral space stations offering commerce and diplomacy for aliens and humans in the Third Age of mankind. In the episode “Comes the Inquisitor” (1995), the ambassador for one of the planets is put to a test so as to confirm she is the right person for the job. The eponymous inquisitor is introduced step by step: we hear the sound of the stick, we see his shoes, then his hat and old-fashioned outfit; his face is pale and clean-shaven; his name is Sebastian, and he lived in London in 1888. On November 11, he was “found by the Vorlons [one of the alien species], taken, and transported, and brought into their service. [...] They call upon [him] when [he] is needed and preserve [him] when [he] is not” (“Comes the Inquisitor”). What makes him a perfect inquisitor is his own past and pride, for which he is doing a four hundred-year penance. He committed the murders believing he was not only right, but that he was “the divine messenger” saving London: “The city was drowning in decay, chaos, immorality. A message needed to be sent, etched in blood for all to see” (“Comes the Inquisitor”). The interrogation of the ambassador proves her to be adequate, and the Ripper’s only hope is that the Vorlons “will finally let [him] die” (“Comes the Inquisitor”), which they might, since his last (?) mission has been accomplished.

The Ripper from *Dangerous Visions* (1967) is not that lucky. Robert Bloch makes him travel in time again, but this time Jack, whose name appears in the very last sentence of “A Toy for Juliette,” is abducted and transported to an era after thermonuclear wars. The Victorian killer becomes the eponymous plaything for an angelic-looking girl of eighteen who is named after one of De Sade’s characters. She has been brought “toys” from the past for sadistic sex play and killing by her grandfather for seven years now, and her bedroom is a cleverly designed torture chamber. The new toy is a physician with a little black bag – “very prim and proper,” with “an air of an embarrassed repression,” but also fairly attractive. The new setting seems unreal to him, almost heavenly until

Juliette makes her advances. Unfortunately for her, “the big knife with the long, cruel blade” she was planning to use is intercepted, and the hunter becomes the prey. Since this time she does not allow her grandfather to peep, the remains of her body are discovered only a number of days later: “Back in London, after the final mysterious murder in the early morning hours, they never did find Jack the Ripper [...]” (Bloch, “A Toy for Juliette”).

The sequel to Bloch’s story written by Harlan Ellison not only complements the narrative, but also provides an apt summary of our interest in Jack the Ripper. In “The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World,” “beneath the crude and shocking allusions to Eros and Thanatos is the meaningful portrayal of the Man Obsessed – the Violent Man whose transition from the past to the future leaves us with a deeper insight into the Violent Man of *today*” (Bloch, “Introduction”). The killer, having “ripped” Juliette, is lurking in the city, reminiscing about his previous murders. The setting makes him think of heaven again, and the abduction seems an ascension, a reward for completing his mission of drawing attention to the need for reform in the East End. However, the flashbacks he is experiencing are nothing but a source of titillation for a few inhabitants of the city who, eager for amusement, invade the Ripper’s mind and feed on his bloody memories. Even his killing spree, which lasts “numberless days” and during which he dismembers countless bodies of adult residents in revenge for being made to kill Juliette for irrelevant reason, turns out to be a planned entertainment (“The Prowler...”). It is brought to an end when the audience decides he no longer amuses them.

In Ellison’s words, Jack presented in his story is “in all of us,” it is “the Jack that we need” because “[w]e are a culture that needs its monsters. [...] We are a culture that *creates* its killers and its monsters and then provides for them the one thing Jack was never able to have: reality. [...] That is the message of the story. *You* are the monsters” (“Afterword”; original emphasis).

## 5. The Chase Through Time

The “imaginary elsewhere” (Bignell, qtd. in Redmond 58) of the Jack the Ripper time travelling stories spans from late-Victorian times to a distant future. Even if the murderer is identified as an ancient being, as in “Ripper” (1999), the story of “Red Jack” begins in 1888 and continues beyond the year 2267, as the “Wolf in the Fold” (1967) suggests. These two texts, as well as “Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper” (1943) and its TV adaptation (1961), “With Affection, Jack the Ripper” (1972), and “The Ripper” (1974), depict the Whitechapel killer as a timeless force feeding on humans, but also accompanying them, following “where no man has gone before.” Bloch’s stories, including the *Star Trek* episode, do not utilise the (stereo)typical Ripper’s signifiers because, on the one hand, the reader/viewer has to be kept in suspense, but also due to depicting a killer contemporaneous with

the setting. The other three do, either because at least one of the time planes is 1888, or because the murderer himself prefers Victorian props. The second set of narratives – “With Affection, Jack the Ripper/Gigolo” (1980), *Time After Time* (1979), and *Jacklyn the Ripper* (2009) – offers time travel as a means for the killer to escape his Victorian pursuers. The Victorian costume makes Jack conspicuous when he finds himself on an exotic island, but once he dons a modern suit or a pair of jeans, he becomes almost unremarkable; it is the legend of the autumn of terror that survives in non-fictional references that defines him. As the third set – “A Rip in Time” (1997), *The Map of Time* (2008), and “Ripper’s Curse” (2011) – demonstrates, the Ripper’s bloody deeds have received such a canonical status that they have to be protected from attempts at going back to 1888 and erasing them from history. And the final set – “A Toy for Juliette” (1967), “The Prowler in the City at the Edge of the World” (1967), “Comes the Inquisitor” (1995) – shows that the perpetrator himself may be needed in the future: he is abducted from 1888 by representatives of future generations to be used as an inquisitor, an assassin, and a source of entertainment.

It seems that the paradoxes which threaten other time-travelling narratives do not apply here; what is more, the “assassinate the Ripper” paradox is highly unlikely to occur because the attempts at travelling back in time to prevent any of the murders cannot succeed – Jack’s menacing legend lives on, as viewers appear to want it to. Being unidentified and yet well-known, the Victorian killer, as a character, is capable of adjusting to new times and settings and blending in, and very few of the time-travelling texts presented here do not refer to his familiar signifiers. Both his crimes, past and ‘present,’ and the means and mechanisms of time travel matter as triggers for the chase after him; however, past failures at catching the Whitechapel murderer cannot be translated into future successes. Jack the Ripper endures attempts at overwriting and remains a legendary killer, even if sometimes is being dressed up as a TV series “monster of the week.”

In the early seventies, “[l]ike the rest of his kind, Jack the Ripper had been homogenised into another standby for the fantasy factory, a mass-produced monster suit which could be tailored to fit any occasion” (Meikle 130). Four decades later, writers and filmmakers keep using this “mass-produced monster suit,” but not to express contemporary fears or anxieties. The time travel to 1888 is not for Jack to be beaten or caught – it is for the viewers’ entertainment: “[W]e are the stalkers as we chase Jack across the ages. [...] We are ‘the dark gods’ of whom Bloch spoke in ‘Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper’; it is to us the Ripper appeals for immortality, and we grant that immortality. All the Ripper is required to do is keep us entertained with his knife tricks on the stage of our choice” (Coville and Lucanio 83, 108).

## Notes

- 1 Fifteen texts are discussed here, some were written or co-written by the same person (four by Robert Bloch, two by Don Ingalls); comparing them and/or tracing the evolution of the character and the settings would be interesting, but it is beyond the scope of the present paper.
- 2 David Warner, who plays the detective-turned-host, has already had an opportunity to act as the Ripper in *Time After Time* (1979), a film which is discussed in the next part.
- 3 Meikle also notes that the choice of name is “a blatant steal of the Ripper’s surname from *Room to Let*” (139), a 1950 film about Jack the Ripper who comes back in 1904 to continue his work; it is also a reworking of Marie Belloc Lowndes’s *The Lodger*, a novel exploiting ‘the lodger’ Ripper theory.
- 4 The film is based on the novel of the same title by Karl Alexander published in 1979 as well.
- 5 Zodiac is another unidentified serial killer whose moniker comes from messages sent to the police; he was active in the late 1960s to early 1970s.
- 6 Poetic licence and time manipulations are acceptable, even welcome, but taking into account numerous factual mistakes that appear in this episode, one may wonder about the qualifications of the Chief Historian and the ambitious goals of the time police branch.

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## Filmography

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"Comes the Inquisitor." 1995. Episode 2. 21. Dir. Michael Vejar.
- Kolchak: The Night Stalker*. 1974–1975. Created by Jeffrey Grant Rice. Prod. Francy Productions, Universal Television.  
"The Ripper." 1974. Episode 1. Dir. Allen Baron.
- Fantasy Island*. 1977–1984. Series 1–7. Created by Gene Levitt. Prod. Spelling-Goldberg Productions, Columbia Pictures Television.  
"With Affection, Jack the Ripper/Gigolo." 1980. Episode 4. 6. Dir. Michael Vejar.
- The Outer Limits*. 1995–2002. Series 1–7. Created by Leslie Stevens. Prod. Alliance Atlantis Communications, Atlantis Films.  
"Ripper." 1999. Episode 5. 11. Dir. Mario Azzopardi.
- Star Trek*. 1966–1969. Series 1–3. Created by Gene Roddenberry. Prod. Desilu Productions, Norway Corporation.  
"Wolf in the Fold." 1967. Episode 2. 14. Dir. Joseph Pevney.

*The Sixth Sense*. 1972. Series 1–2. Created by Anthony Lawrence. Prod. Universal Television.

“With Affection, Jack the Ripper.” 1972. Episode 2. 4. Dir. Robert Day.

*Time After Time*. 1979. Dir. Nicholas Meyer. Prod. Orion Pictures, Warner Bros.

*Timecop*. 1997–1998. Created by Mark Verheiden. Prod. Lawrence Gordon Productions, December 3rd Productions, Dark Horse Entertainment, Universal Television.

“A Rip in Time.” 1997. Episode 1. Dir. Allan Arkush.

*Thriller*. 1960–1962. Series 1–2. Created by Hubbell Robinson. Prod. Hubbell Robinson Productions, National Broadcasting Company.

“Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper.” 1961. Episode 1. 28. Dir. Ray Milland.