

TOURING FEMALE CRIME: POWER AND PERCEPTIONS

Bailey Ashton Adie (Corresponding Author: bailey.adie@solent.ac.uk)

Solent Business School, Faculty of Business, Law and Digital Technologies, Solent University, Southampton, UK

ORCID: 0000-0002-0309-4511

Twitter: @DrBaileyAdie

Esther J. Snell

Criminology Department, Faculty of Sport, Health and Social Sciences, Solent University, Southampton, UK

ABSTRACT

Popular interest in crime is substantial and longstanding, driving the development of crime-based dark tourism attractions. The appeal of these sites can partly be explained through the understanding of functions of transgression as tours provide their audiences with infotainment. These representations of crime both reflect and shape social and cultural perceptions of the nature of offending and victimisation. There is, however, a significant gap in relation to the discussion of these crime-based dark tourism activities with almost no engagement with gender at these sites. To fill this gap, this paper presents a conceptual discussion on tourism to sites of female criminal activity, drawing parallels to similar male crime locations. Examination of online advertising for murder walking tours in the UK reveals gendered power dynamics wherein traditional, western gender roles are enforced through the removal of agency from women who engage in more violent crimes while simultaneously fetishising women as victims of violence, especially sexual. This is evident in the absence of female serial killers within organized dark tours, which often focus specifically on this sexual violence. Thus, the tourist activities that revolve around dark heritage sites, especially those that deal with violent criminal activity, reinforce gendered stereotypes around “acceptable” transgression.

KEYWORDS: dark tourism; crime tourism; serial killer; gender; murder; walking tour

Bionotes:

Bailey Ashton Adie is a Research Fellow in the Faculty of Business, Law and Digital Technologies at Solent University, Southampton, United Kingdom. Her research interests include World Heritage tourism and management, sustainable heritage tourism for community development, second home tourism, tourism and disasters, tourism branding and marketing, film tourism, overtourism, and visitor management. She has published in number of leading journals including: *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Current Issues in Tourism*, the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, *Tourism Management Perspectives*, and the *Journal of Heritage Tourism*. She is also the author of the Routledge book, *World Heritage and Tourism: Marketing and Management*.

Esther J. Snell is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Solent University, United Kingdom. Her research explores the construction, dissemination and influence of printed representations of crime and justice. Her publications include 'Trials in Print: Narratives of Rape Trials in the Proceedings of the Old Bailey', in D. Lemmings (ed.) *Crime, Courtrooms and the Public Sphere in Britain, 1700-1850* (Farnham and Burlington, Ashgate, 2012); and 'Shame and malice in the eighteenth-century criminal court and community' in D. Lemming and A.N. May (eds.) *Criminal justice during the long eighteenth century: Theatre, representation and emotion* (Routledge, 2018).

INTRODUCTION

While interest in murders and murderers has a long-standing history, in recent years, the commodification and consumption of narratives and depictions of murder have greatly expanded in diversity, quantity, and popularity (Haggerty & Ellerbrok, 2011; Oleson, 2006). In recent years, the ways in which murder can be consumed have expanded to include ever-more immersive and interactive pursuits. One of these consumption activities, the murder tour, allows the consumer to engage in, learn about, and vicariously observe and participate in acts of murder. Murder tours require the consumer to actively participate in the recounting of the case: to attend and view the murder sites, imagining themselves following in the footsteps of the victim, offender and investigator, pouring over evidence, and trying to solve the case. In this way, murder has been reformed as fun and entertaining, at least for those safely looking in from the outside, years later. It is noticeable, however, that these murder tours largely focus on cases in which men are the murderers and females their victims. As in society more widely, the agency of women as killers, and serial killers, in these tours is largely overlooked in favour of their male counterparts. While female perpetrators have a noted absence within actual dark tourism activities, there is an even larger gap in the dark tourism literature.

Dark tourism as an area of study has existed for a little over 20 years, but the number of studies which specifically discuss murder-based dark tourism activities are limited (Dalton, 2015; Gibson, 2006; Heidelberg, 2015; Huey, 2011; Kim & Butler, 2015; Lennon, 2010; Powell & Iankova, 2016; White, 2013; Wilbert & Hansen, 2009). In fact, Gibson (2006), in his call for future research into the topic, emphasised the need for a better understanding of serial killer tourism. Furthermore, none of the previous works fully engage with the gender dynamic of the murder narrative provided, although Huey (2011) and Wilbert and Hansen (2009) do touch on it. Therefore, in order to address these significant gaps in the literature, this article presents a discussion of the presentation of female offending in murder tours. In order to illustrate these gendered narratives, a selection of tours was gathered through the use of an online keyword search which specifically focussed on murder walking tours. Additionally, to further narrow down the results, only verifiable historical murders were included, and the tours were required to present murder as their dominant theme. This resulted in the identification of 51 murder walking tours, 49 of which were regularly offered and two that were singular events. The websites for these tours were then analysed, taking into consideration both murderers and victims highlighted as part of the tour. In addition, the online presence of sixty-five murder cases (representing sixty-nine known murderers: 25 male and 44 female) were identified to show the potential pool for murder tour content.

Through this analysis, it becomes apparent that the focus of these tours is almost exclusively male. Furthermore, while the victims of these male murderers are not always female, overall the cases represented in the murder tours represent the predisposition of modern society to cast men and women in the proactive and passive roles respectively. While it is not suggested that this is done deliberately, nevertheless, in terms of interest, marketing, and understandings of both the nature and frequency of murder, these murder tours reflect modern preconceptions of stereotypical gender roles, unknowingly reinforcing gender stereotypes.

MURDER, THE MEDIA, AND GENDER: A (BRIEF) HISTORY

The public's interest in murder is nothing new. Considered one of the most serious offences, murder was officially punished by execution in England until 1969. In the eighteenth-century, public execution of murderers drew not only large crowds but also significant numbers of people willing to pay for narratives of the heinous acts. Pamphlets, newspaper articles, broadsides, and court accounts were all popular during the period. These narratives reveal considerable interest in female killers. The crimes of murderers Mary Blandy, Elizabeth Jeffryes, Mary Edmondson, and Elizabeth Brownrigg were some of the biggest cases of the period. Part of the horror of these crimes appears to lie in the intimate nature of the relationship between the murderer and victim, and the nexus of threat within the home:

‘What a Shudder must human Nature receive, when it recollects there is no Place where security may be depended upon, but at the same Time Persons are barring their Doors from Thieves without, they are inclosing worse Enemies within’ (Anon, 1752).

The Victorians also loved tales of murder, a fact recognized by the newspaper proprietors of the day. By this time, however, the attitude towards female killers had changed somewhat from regarding them as unnatural monsters to, more often, exploited women deserving of some understanding. Consequently, female murderers were often shown mercy and sentenced to prison rather than execution. The case of Florence Maybrick, convicted in 1889 for murdering her husband, is an example of this.

As Fleming (2007, p. 277) observes, “few crimes elicit as significant a public response as serial murder.” Some cases are so widely publicized and featured in media forms, they become “mega-cases” (Soothill et al, 2002; Fleming, 2007). However, in modern times, this representation appears to be largely synonymous with men. Soothill et al.’s (2002) study of the UK newspaper coverage of mega-cases from 1977 to 1997 reveals only two which featured female killers: The Moors murders committed by Myra Hindley and Ian Brady, and those perpetrated by Rosemary and Fred West. None of the mega-cases featured female killers acting alone. For example, the crimes of Beverley Allitt, who was convicted in 1993 for the murder of 4 children and the grievous bodily harm of 6 more, did not attain mega-case status. Soothill et al. (2002) argue that not all homicides are treated in the same way and that there are hierarchies of cases. The strongest predictor of whether a crime will receive press attention are the number of victims, followed by the number of offenders and whether the offender utilized an unusual method of killing. The murder of women and children are also more likely to be reported, with females featuring significantly as victims, not protagonists (Soothill et al., 2002). The victims identified in the mega-cases included Julie Dart, Rachel Nickell, Lin and Megan Russell, Jasmine

Beckford, and the multiple female victims of the “Railway murderers” John Duffy and David Mulcahy.

The cultural representation of these offences is important. Not only do they serve social functions (Fleming, 2007) but they become the medium through which murder is both viewed and presented in the media (Soothill et al., 2002). Over time such prominent cases become “point[s] of reference for commentary and discussion in response to later murders” (Soothill et al., 2002, p. 420). In short, as narratives of murder are created and consumed, those tropes inform and set boundaries for what is considered of interest and how subsequent cases are understood and interpreted. Media representations of what constitutes both a murder, and one that is newsworthy, serve to inform and impact on what cases are deemed noteworthy and, more broadly, their analysis and future representations. As Haggerty and Ellerbrok (2011, p. 6) state, “serial killing is intimately tied to its broader social and historical settings”. The same is true for its cultural representation. Discourse reflects social, political, and cultural resonances, revealing the themes that are of interest and concern to the audiences as well as what the producers think audiences will want to consume. Those imperatives evolve over time. If female killers are not featured as prominently as men in modern murder tours, then the reason must partly lie in social understandings of gender and crime and its use and representation in the modern world. However, a distorted representation could lead to mistaken understandings of homicide as a social problem, leading to the proliferation of inaccurate stereotypes (Gruenewald et al., 2009).

DARK TOURISM

While travel to sites associated with death and tragedy is not a new trend (Gibson, 2006; Lennon & Foley, 2000; Seaton, 1996; Stone, 2012; Stone & Sharpley, 2008), the concept of dark tourism is fairly recent, with its roots in heritage tourism (Light, 2017). The term “dark tourism” was first used by Foley and Lennon (1996, p. 198) who defined it as “the presentation and consumption (by visitors) of real and commodified death and disaster sites.” Situated in the same special issue on the general topic of “dark tourism” was Seaton’s (1996, p. 240) conceptualization of thanatourism, which “is travel to a location wholly, or partially, motivated by the desire for actual or symbolic encounters with death, particularly, but not exclusively, violent death.” Thanatourism, as can be noted, includes death as a motivating factor, which is not inherent in Lennon and Foley’s dark tourism concept. However, Lennon and Foley (1996, 2000), when expanding on the concept, stressed that dark tourism is a post-modern construct which was a direct result of the “anxiety” towards the modern world which these sites evoke. Light (2017) notes that, when originally conceived, the main difference between these two concepts was that dark tourism was inherently focused on the supply side of dark sites while thanatourism was based on the demand-side aspects of tourist motivation and behaviour.

Stone (2013, p. 307) further refined the concept of dark tourism as “tourist encounters with spaces of death or calamity that have perturbed the public consciousness, whereby actual and recreated places of the deceased, horror, atrocity, or depravity, are consumed through visitor experiences.” In an effort to expand on the complexity inherent in the dark tourism concept, Stone (2006) developed a dark tourism spectrum, ranging from the darkest to lightest of sites, which identified seven specific sub-types of dark sites: dark fun factories (i.e. the London Dungeon), dark exhibitions, dark dungeons (i.e. Alcatraz in San Francisco, USA), dark resting

places (i.e. Lafayette Cemetery No. 1 in New Orleans, USA), dark shrines (i.e. Elvis's grave in Graceland, USA), dark conflict sites, and dark camps of genocide. While dark tourism has advanced as a concept since 1996, there is still some criticism that has arisen in response to it. Some is due to the concept's focus on Western contexts (Yoshida et al., 2016) or the use of the word "dark" in general as Hartmann (2014) has noted that it may be difficult if not impossible to translate the meaning of the word in other languages. Seaton (2009) has also questioned the use of the word "dark" albeit for a different reason. Seaton (2009, p. 525) has referred to the use of the word "dark" as equating to a moral judgement wherein sites of this type are inherently transgressive, which in turn positions non-dark sites as "light" and morally acceptable. Light (2017) has argued that dark tourism may not even be a distinct subtype of tourism from a demand perspective as dark tourists are often indistinguishable from heritage tourists.

Regardless of the criticism, there has been considerable research on the topic, covering sites of genocide (Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2017; Friedrich et al., 2018), mass murder (Dalton, 2015; Kang et al., 2012), disasters (Yoshida et al., 2016), terrorism (Frew, 2017), slavery (Hanna et al., 2018; Rice, 2009), battles and associated military conflict (Baldwin & Sharpley, 2009; Vanneste & Winter, 2018), assassinations (Foley & Lennon, 1996), as well as lighter dark tourism destinations like the London or York Dungeon (Ivanova & Light, 2018; Stone, 2009). However, there has been little engagement with crime as a dark tourism theme. Crime and dark tourism, when discussed together, often focus on "crimes against humanity" as opposed to crimes against individuals, as was visible in Dalton's (2015) work, *Dark Tourism and Crime*. His case studies included sites of genocide, war crimes, atrocities carried out by political regimes, and terrorism. Only two case studies specifically engage with criminal activity: the memorial to John Lennon in Central Park, New York, and the Port Arthur memorial in Australia. In both instances, the sites memorialize the victims of these crimes, and, in the case of Port Arthur, not only is visitation not promoted as part of the site tour but questions from visitors about the shooting are actively discouraged. In his conclusions, Dalton (2015) does mention another crime-related dark tourism site, Snowtown in Australia, where several murder victims were found. However, this is treated as an "unwanted" site as, although there is noted benefit to the local town, there is no political will to create an official tourism destination.

TOURING THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Snowtown is an interesting case as, regardless of infrastructure, there is a consistent influx of dark tourists interested in the murders (Kim & Butler, 2015). This illustrates what Timothy (2018, p. 386), has noted in his study on dark heritage in the USA, namely that "people are morbidly fascinated by mass murders and serial killings." However, violent crime, and more specifically murder, are discussed much less frequently than other forms of dark tourism within the literature. Dark tourism at sites of murder often occurs following media coverage of the event. This is not a new trend, as was visible in the ad-hoc visitation which occurred at several murder locations in the US and UK in the 19th century and continues to this day (Gibson, 2006). However, as these sites develop extemporaneously, they can often cause issues for local governments whose constituents may be personally connected to the victims or have other memories of the criminal events (Heidelberg, 2015; Kim & Butler, 2015; Lennon, 2010). Lennon (2010) highlights that management of recent sites often includes demolition to deter visitation, emphasizing the importance of temporal distance from the event when considering development

of murder-related dark tourism sites. Additionally, while not all murder sites become lasting dark tourism destinations, those that do may face issues when local governments refused to manage the visitor narrative, if only to mitigate potential damage to the local reputation. This is visible in Amityville in New York, whose public image has been eclipsed by the Amityville Horror narrative, in part due to its popularity within popular culture (Heidelberg, 2015). Local control of the narrative can also avoid the development of dark tourism *kitsch* which may be viewed as insensitive responses to criminal events (Kim & Butler, 2015).

One way to shift the interest from a geographical location is through the movement of artefacts to museum contexts. Murder within a museum provides a blend of education and entertainment, creating more controlled narratives which allow visitors “to explore fears in ways that are not only physically and ontologically safe but also allow for the conversion of fear in pleasure” (Huey, 2011, p. 397). While there are multiple crime museums around the world, the most common murder-based, organised dark tourism activity which is discussed in the literature are walking tours (Powell & Iankova, 2016; Wilbert & Hansen, 2009). While both Powell and Iankova (2016) as well as Wilbert and Hansen (2009) discuss Jack the Ripper tours in London, Powell and Iankova (2016) present these as part of the dark tourism fabric of London, which also includes attractions like the London Dungeon, Madame Tussaud’s, and the Tower of London. They note that, in London at least, dark tourism is increasing in popularity and “much more mainstream and commercialized than in many other comparable cities” (Powell & Iankova, 2016, p. 349). However, this commercialisation would appear to be problematic as it has, in its memorialization of the unknown perpetrator, erased the identities of the victims (Wilbert & Hansen, 2009). While Jack the Ripper is infamous both for his actual crimes as well as his fictional characterisations, other murders or serial killings may be less well embedded in the global, public consciousness but still of interest to certain groups who are curious about this niche area of dark murder tourism.

The popularity of dark tourism activities around murder, especially Jack the Ripper, was visible in the 51 tours analysed of which 29 were located in London and 23 featured the crimes of Jack the Ripper, making this the most commonly covered case and emphasising the enduring popularity of the Whitechapel murders. While the original “Jack the Ripper Tour” has been running since 1982 (Discovery Tours & Events, 2020a), the variety of tours has expanded significantly, with some providing food and drink while another blends the real-life murders with the exploits of the fictional Sherlock Homes. One tour comes with “Ripper Vision”, where 5-foot projections of stills and moving film enhance the experience (TripAdvisor, 2020). This fascination with serial murder is also visible in the USA where dark tourists can visit sites associated with the Zodiac Killer, Jeffrey Dahmer, H.H. Holmes, and the Manson Family. For a more global experience, there is even a serial killer app which allow users to find serial murder sites around the globe and potentially develop self-directed murder tours (Bolan & Simone-Charteris, 2018). These types of attractions often sell themselves as family fun that is entertaining, educational, and well-researched. Using Ferrel’s (2004) conceptualization of crime as a response to boredom with the modern world, murder tours allow individuals to consume mediated vicarious engagement in criminal offending that fits the context of pre-arranged, exciting yet safe encounters with criminal actions and their perpetrators, as was observed in Huey (2011). This pursuit of excitement is, Ferrell (2004) argues, a desire for human

engagement. Following the footsteps of societies' most despised and feared, but also fascinating, killers allows for a voyeuristic participation that is titillating but ultimately safe.

WHITHER THE WICKED WOMEN?

While the popularity of cultural representations of murder might be explainable, why male killers, especially serial killers, are covered more frequently than female killers is not so evident. It could, perhaps be linked to the academic pre-occupation with male killers, which has led to traditional typologies of killers that were, due to their restricted definitions, neglectful of women. In fact, the very definition of serial murder, which emphasized sexual motivation (an aspect women do not tend to share), served to exclude female killers (Farrell et al., 2011). The result of this is that female actions have "been misconstrued, overlooked, and underestimated" (Harrison et al, 2015, p. 384). It is unlikely, however, that it is just this traditional lack of understanding of female killers that has led to their neglect in modern murder tours. A growing body of research focusing on female killers has led both to the development of broader definitions and typologies that better include women, as well as greater knowledge of their motivations, *modi operandi*, and targets. Studies suggest that while men tend to target strangers, women often choose victims who are older than those selected by men, vulnerable, and for whom they have a care-giving role. Women take longer to entrap their victims; are active for longer periods of time; accrue more fatalities; are less ostentatious, sadistic or sexual in the act, which is frequently achieved via poison; and their motivation is often financial. They also tend to be educated, married at some point, and Caucasian (Farrell, et al., 2011; Farrell, et al. 2013; Harrison, et al, 2015; Hellen et al., 2015).

Similarly, while it has been often noted that female killers are rarer than their male counterparts (Farrell et al., 2011), there still exist a significant number of them who could populate murder tours. Between 1674 and 1913, the Central Criminal Court in London (the Old Bailey) heard 5382 cases of homicide, of which 1192 defendants were women. Of those trials, 494 women were found guilty of murder. From a low of nine trials in the 1700s, the 1840s and 1850s witnessed a noticeable increase in the numbers of female defendants, with 62 and 82 trials respectively, with numbers reaching a high of 126 in the 1880s before falling to 27 in the 1910s (Hitchcock et al., 2012). There are numerous other notable cases tried around the UK that could be used to populate several murder tours. To illustrate, Mary Ann Cotton, executed in Durham in 1873, was thought to have used arsenic-laced tea to poison up to 21 people, including three of her husbands and 11 of her children. Curious sightseers still visit her house in West Auckland, and the Beamish museum claims to have her teapot, enticing potential visitors (Hutchinson, 2016; Beamish, 2016). Still, there is no evidence that she is included in any organised tour. In another example, Kate Webster, an Irish servant, murdered her mistress in 1879; proceeded to dismember, burn and scatter her remains; and then assumed the mistress's identity for two weeks. This cause-celeb resulted in pamphlets, newspaper reports, and ballads, and yet, despite the rediscovery of the victim's head in 2010, today is largely forgotten.

Notwithstanding the numerous potential cases, most of the killings featured in the online marketing of UK murder tours are those committed by men. Of the 51 tours analysed, only five commercial and regularly organised tours, and a further one unique event, advertised murders committed by women in their online marketing (See Table 1). Together these tours featured six

female murderers, five of whom were directly named: Myra Hindley, Ruth Ellis, baby farmers Amelia Sach and Annie Walters, and Constance Kent (constituting 11% of the 44 female murderers identified in the online sample). Two tours also featured the murders committed by Christiana Edmunds in 1871. Edmunds, the so-called Chocolate Box Poisoner or Chocolate Cream Killer, poisoned numerous people, including four-year-old Sidney Baker, with strychnine-laced chocolates. However, neither of the Brighton-based tours directly named Edmunds or identified her gender in their marketing. Although this was a significant case at the time and one which featured in the 1970 television series, *Wicked Women*, today it is largely forgotten, and we can see that these tours preferred to utilise Edmund's criminal moniker. Of course, to have a pseudonym at all is to suggest the original public appeal of the case. Two further female murderers Mary Pearcey (proposed as a possible Jack the Ripper suspect) and Mary Ann Britland were both discussed on the supplementary webpages belonging to two tours. However, neither women were identified as being a part of the actual walking tours or mentioned in their direct marketing on the homepage.

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These examples stand in contrast to the many murder tours in which the names of featured male killers are listed prominently. Of twenty-five UK male murderers analysed twelve (48% of the online sample of murderers) were directly named in murder tour marketing with two more advertised by their criminal monikers. Such marketing utilises the names associated with prominent and renowned cases to draw the attention of potential customers. Therefore, it is noteworthy that these tours predominantly promote male-dominated cases to the exclusion of female ones. It indicates that female-focused cases are not believed to be as prominent in the popular consciousness or as capable of attracting customers as male murderers. In many instances, as is the case with Jack the Ripper in the UK and Jeffrey Dahmer and Ted Bundy in the USA, the tours may solely be about the murderous exploits of one male killer. In comparison, no female murderer in the sample was given exclusive attention. Another interesting point to note regarding these tours, is that, when the murderer is unknown, the mystery murderers are presumed to be male. Thus, even without a specified gender, the narratives of these tours could be presumed to have masculine gender role-driven undertones. This is visible in the case of "Jack the Ripper" where it has been suggested that the killer could have been female, but they are generally viewed as having been male and are represented as such in popular culture.

It needs to be noted that both the act of murder and the murderer themselves are socially and legally constructed, through notions of culpability, victim vulnerability, and blame (D'Cruze, et.al., 2006). According to Davidson and Chesney-Lind (2009, p. 76, emphasis in original), murder is largely understood as a male phenomenon, with women often being considered "*the invisible offender*". The notion of hegemonic masculinity recognizes the maleness of crime, in general, and of murder, in particular. The emergence of such ideas derives from the social dominance of men wherein there is male agency and female passivity (D'Cruze, et al., 2006, p. 40). It has been suggested that male killers might be given greater attention than female killers because they are viewed as a greater threat to society (Gruenewald et al, 2009). However, D'Cruze et al (2006) argue that women's violence is rationalized within sexist understandings of femininity, womanhood and motherhood as well as the framework of existing beliefs regarding acceptable female behaviour. Thus, due to their deviation from patriarchal gender roles, women

who commit violence are “othered”, labelled as monstrous, abnormal, or even as no longer truly a “woman” (Farrell et al., 2011; Davidson & Chesney-Lind, 2009). For example, when discussing Moors Murderer Myra Hindley, King and Cummins (2017, p. 209) emphasise that “the female as child killer and the challenge posed to social constrictions of femininity is central to the conceptualisation of Hindley as the most evil woman in Britain or, at best, under [Ian] Brady’s spell”.

This stands in stark contrast to male killers who are often presented as compelling, featuring characteristics that appeal to popular audiences and, consequently, are transformed into celebrities to be lauded and worshipped (Oleson, 2006). Such popular discourses relate to accepted narratives of power dynamics within which the male killer is playing out culturally acceptable scripts that form part of modern beliefs (Tithecott, 1997). As such, demonstrations of the male killers’ monstrosity both deny the killers’ connection with normal life while simultaneously celebrating his ‘perceived transcendence of normality’ (Tithecott, 1997, p. 9). The result of which is both attractive and repulsive (Oleson, 2006; Tithecott, 1997). Far from the mysterious, enigmatic, talented male killer, violent women are Frankensteinian (Picart, 2006) and so truly monsters. This is clearly visible in the Kriminallmuseum in Vienna, Austria where Huey (2009, p. 390) found that representations of women were either as perpetrators or victims and that “when they are shown as offenders, their crimes, no matter how pedestrian, are treated as exceptional”, which reinforces the gendered stereotype of “woman as nurturer”. Non-stereotypical homicides, such as those committed by women, receive less cultural attention than those committed by men. While characteristics other than gender are also important, nevertheless men receive greater coverage than women (Gruenewald et al, 2009). Thus, given the general absence of female murderers within the murder tour advertisements, they can be seen as reinforcing this dichotomy wherein men are powerful and have agency in contrast to women who are frail and inactive

This is particularly evident through the more prevalent presence of the female figure as victim. While it should be noted that there are male victims for some of the male killers included in the tours, many of the victims in these cases are women. Ten of the tour websites mention female murder victims, although only two of these tours are located outside of London. The other eight are focussed on the case of Jack the Ripper. Five of these don’t explicitly name the victims with two referring to them merely as “prostitutes”. While the original Jack the Ripper tour does name all five victims, this information is only located on supplementary pages, not on the homepage (Discovery Tours & Events, 2020b). In contrast, and perhaps unsurprisingly given the tour’s name, the Feminist Jack the Ripper Tour not only identifies all five victims but also promotes itself as unique in that it focuses on the lives of the victims, bringing them “centre stage” (Look Up London Tours, n.d.). However, this tour was noted as being an outlier as the vast majority of tours fail to mention the female victims at all, and those that do often describe them in pejorative terms or use them as theatrical props.

Whereas the serial killer figure is inscribed with power, their victims, often women, especially sex workers, are viewed as weak and lacking cultural presence (Tithecott, 1997). Davidson and Chesney-Lind (2009) note that this lack of power is what leaves women vulnerable to violence and male domination. The prevalence of violence against women then is a manifestation of gender inequality (Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005). Given that this is a serious contemporary issue,

the general depersonalization of the victims can be viewed as especially problematic, particularly through the use of the terrorization of women at the hands of men as entertainment often masquerading as education. For example, one tour (Murder Mile Walks) advertises itself with photographs of clients gleefully pretending to strangle each other. When discussing the Jack the Ripper walks, Wilbert and Hansen (2009, p. 201) highlight the problematic nature of their narratives which “ignore issues of gender politics by fetishizing and trivializing male violence towards women.” Similarly, Huey (2009) noted that, at the Kriminalmuseum in Vienna, there is a specific portion of the museum which focuses on sex and violence wherein images of dead and mutilated female forms are displayed without context, resulting in the fetishization of sexual violence against women. The murder tours then can be seen as entrenching traditional gender roles, where women are passive, powerless victims in the face of male agency and sexual violence. They depict men as those who act upon others, and women as those who have things done to them. This reinforcement of gender roles is then compounded by treating female murders as both extraordinary and gender norm transgressive while also minimizing their narratives within these dark tourism activities.

CONCLUSIONS

This work has outlined the issues around the gendered presentation of murder within the context of dark tourism. As has been noted, the relative rarity of female killers, especially serial killers, has created challenges in understanding them. This has been further compounded by restrictive definitions that serve to exclude female serial killers in favour of male ones. Given the academic and criminological association between men and murder, it may be unsurprising that women are often overlooked in murder-related dark tourism activities. However, as has been observed, there have been noted shifts towards the greater inclusion of female killers within the literature (Farrell et al., 2011), and the historical record has a substantial, if not significantly large, pool of potential female subjects for murder tours. Therefore, the absence of female perpetrators within the narratives of existing murder tours potentially points to a separate issue wherein women are often confined to the role of faceless victim, a casualty of male sexual violence. Given this decontextualization and fetishization of female victims as well as the paucity, when compared to their male counterparts, of female killer narratives in murder tours, it can be observed that murder tours may be transgressive in their apparent memorialisation of killers, but they are, in many ways, conforming to societal expectations of gendered behaviour, reinforcing narratives of what constitutes traditional male and female roles.

Additionally, while it was not the purpose of this work to dispute the terminology “dark tourism”, it would appear that tourism to sites of crime, particularly violent transgressions, may differ from visits to sites of memorialized tragedy, such as Auschwitz in Poland or Ground Zero in New York. These sites function as a tool for the remembrance of the victims of these events. In contrast, violent criminal tourism activities memorialize the perpetrator, often in an almost celebratory manner, while generally de-humanizing the victims. Given the very clear narrative difference, as well as the difficulty around the use of the term dark tourism in a non-English speaking context (Hartmann, 2014), it is proposed that visitation to these criminal murder sites may be better labelled “transgression tourism”. This removes the dark-light dichotomy (Seaton, 2009) and instead situates these activities within specific socio-cultural and legal contexts. Afterall, what is transgressive for one culture may not be for another. Furthermore, it highlights a

tourism environment which covers both transgressive acts and is in itself transgressive through its celebration of the perpetrators.

It should be noted that this work is theoretical and draws conclusions based on marketed dark tourism attractions associated with murder, and it is possible that there are dark tourism activities which are female perpetrator-focused but lack significant marketing. Additionally, the tours that discuss male killers may also present female examples within the actual context of the tour and merely not publicise this aspect. The analysis of the content of these tours is thus recommended as an area of future research. Moreover, while there have been several studies on motivations of dark tourists, the difference in narrative at murder tourism sites may elicit different responses which could validate the distinction between dark tourism and what we have termed transgression tourism. Furthermore, as there are infamous female killers in other parts of the world, it would be relevant to perform a study on the narratives at tourist sites associated with their crimes in order to see if they support the same traditional gender roles as were observed in this work. Similarly, it would be of interest to determine whether or not dark tourism to murder sites occurs outside of the context of the Western, predominantly English-speaking, world, and, if so, if their own cultural gender norms are reinforced at these sites.

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Table 1. UK Murder Walking Tour Sample

<i>Tour Location</i>	<i>Historical Murderers Featured</i>	<i>Tour Name</i>	<i>Female Murderers Featured: # and Name (N) or Pseudonym (P)</i>	<i>Female Victims Featured: Named (N) or Anonymous (A)</i>
London	Whitechapel Murders only	Jack the Ripper the Original Terror Tour	1 (N)	Yes (N)
		Jack the Ripper Guided Walks in London	0	Yes (A)
		Jack the Ripper interactive Ghost Hunts		Yes (A)
		Jack the Ripper and Sherlock Holmes Tour of Haunted London	0	No
		Jack the Ripper and Haunted London Tour	0	No
		Jack the Ripper Tour, with Ripper Vision (comparison with Yorkshire Ripper)	0	No
		Free Tours by Feet	0	No
		Jack the Ripper Tour: On the trail of a killer	0	No
		Free Jack the Ripper Tours	0	Yes (N)
		Jack the Ripper Murder Mystery Tour	0	No
		Art and Murder in Whitechapel	0	No
		Jack the Ripper, Haunted London and Sherlock Holmes Tour	0	Yes (N)
		Jack the Ripper's Wicked London	0	Yes (A)
		Murder, Medicine and Missionaries: The hidden East End	0	No
		Jack the Ripper and Haunted London Tour (by Evan Evans)	0	No
		Jack the Ripper Tour	0	No
		Jack the Ripper Walking Tour	0	No
		London: Grim Reaper Walking Tour	0	Yes (A)
		The Jack the Ripper Tour: A walk worth investigating	0	No
		The Feminist Jack the Ripper Tour	0	Yes (N)
	Ghost Bus Tour of London	0	No	
	Multiple (incl. Whitechapel)	Murder Mile Walks – Guided walk of Soho's most notorious murder cases (12 murderers)	0	No
		The Blood and Tears Walk: Serial killers and other creepy London Horror Stuff (16 murderers)	3 (N)	No
	Ratcliffe Highway Murders	Ratcliff highway Murders (True Crime) Walking Tour	0	No
	None specified	Bleeding Hearts and Body Parts: A London guided walk	0	No
		Medicine, Monks and Murder Walking Tour	0	No

		Ghastly Ghost Walking Tour in London	0	No
		The Cloak and Dagger Tour	0	No
		London Ghost and Infamous Murder Tour	0	No
<i>Brighton</i>	Multiple (all incl. the Trunk Murders)	Murder Most Foul (unique tour by The Insurance Institute of Sussex) (2 murderers)	1 (N)	Yes (N)
		The Bad Murder Tour: Brighton After Dark (2 murderers)	1 (P)	No
		Murder, Malice and Mystery: Brighton's free murder tour (3 murderers)	1 (P)	No
<i>Kent</i>	None specified	Rochester Ghost, Murders and Secrets Tour	0	No
		Rotten Ramsgate Tours	0	Yes (N)
<i>Edinburgh</i>	William Burke & William Hare	Edinburgh's Dark Side Tour	0	No
		Free Ghost Tour	0	No
	Covenanters murdered	Edinburgh Horror Tours	0	No
	James Douglas, 3rd Marquess of Queensbury	Doomed, Dead and Buried	0	No
	None specified	Edinburgh Murder and Mystery Walking Tour	0	No
		The Ladies and Witchery Tour: The Murder and Mystery Tour	0	No
		Hidden and Haunted	0	No
		Gory Stories: The Kids' Tour	0	No
		Ghastly Underground	0	No
<i>Dundee</i>	None specified	Who Dun It? Crimes of Passion Murder Tours	0	No
		Dark Dundee	0	No
<i>Other locations</i>	Harold Shipman; Myra Hindley & Ian Brady	The Dark Side of Manchester	1 (N)	No
	James Colder	Suffolk Walking Festival (Polstead, Suffolk)	1 (N)	No
	None specified	Spirit of Glasgow, Horror Walk	0	No
		Hangman's Hill Ghost walk: The Original (Epping Forest, Loughton)	0	No
		Chocolate and Death: A tour of Bristol	0	No
		The Bloody Bourton Walking Tour (Burton-on-the-Water, Gloucestershire)	0	No

Note: Tours in bold include featured female figures, either as murderers or victims.