

“(Labouring Under Strong Mental Derangement) The Wretched Woman”:
Women, Sexuality, and Crime Broadside in Victorian Britain

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The broadside reached its height as a form of literary ephemera and street literature in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Broadside, often (although, as historian of print Andrew Pettegree is careful to note, not always¹) cheaply produced and easily sold and disseminated, were available to a wide range of consumers, making their textual and visual contents pivotal in “the economics of industry and the lives of the reading public.”² Feeding desires for affordable, up-to-date information, broadsides helped form commodity culture,³ and developed public readership of popular culture and information. By making information accessible to many consumers across class and gender lines, broadsides broadened notions of the “public,” literally altering city spaces:⁴ “private had been made public through the medium of print, changing how the space of the public was defined.”⁵ Crime broadsides, more specifically, were fraught with the personal and controversial,⁶ rendering personal, private, and domestic issues publicly available through print. Crime in street literature fed public appetites for violent domestic spectacle; most crime broadsides concerned domestic violence.⁷ A liminal form on the boundaries between the elite and the popular, the written and the oral, and the commercial and the free,⁸ broadsides both revealed and embodied the anxieties of urban life in Britain in the late early modern and

¹ Pettegree, Andrew, *Broadsheets: Single-Sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print* (Boston: Leiden, 2017), 3.

² Ibid.

³ Berg, Maxine and Helen Clifford, “Selling Consumption in the Eighteenth Century,” *Cultural and Social History* 4, no. 2 (2007): 155.

⁴ Eric Nebecker suggests that, in understanding the role of broadsides, it is more useful to conceive of multiple publics than of a single “public sphere.” See “The Broadside Ballad and Textual Publics,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 51, no. 1 (2011).

⁵ Nebecker, 3.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Chassaigne, Phillipe and W. Heppel, “Popular Representations of Crime: The Crime Broadside—a subculture of violence in Victorian Britain?” *Crime, History and Societies* 3, no. 2 (1999): 29.

⁸ Clark, Sandra. *Women and Crime in the Street Literature of Early Modern Britain* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 71.

Victorian periods, as city life transformed social roles, expectations, and fears along class and gender lines.

While 80% of crimes reported in surviving broadsides were committed by men,⁹ crime broadsides about criminal women merit in-depth analysis because they highlighted fears about women's presence in public city spaces, both representing and providing antidotes to such fears. London was rife with anxiety-inducing gender tensions, as middle-class women ventured more regularly alone into city streets, where they were subject to danger from men and commercial temptations (particularly those of the print-shop).¹⁰ Modern British women's historian Judith Walkowitz suggests that women were "equivocal and crucial," endangered and dangerous, becoming bearers of meaning as symbols of urban disorder.¹¹ Women were central to popular conceptions of crime because of their supposed susceptibility to urban dangers. In many crime broadsides, which focused on *crimes passionnels*,¹² young women committed domestic crimes against their intimates. Crime broadsides limited women to the enclosed domestic spaces often conceptualized as the "private sphere." Simultaneously, they transformed this private violence into public spectacle, presenting criminal women as warnings, primarily about the consequences of sexual immorality. As women in broadsides approached their executions, they warned other girls against their own sins.¹³ Yet, by representing women in sensationally violent domestic crime, crime broadsides were not simply moralizing.¹⁴ They established gender norms, warned women consumers against transgressing them, and expressed (masculine) social anxieties about

⁹ Chassaigne and Heppel, 29.

¹⁰ Lynda Nead, *Victorian Babylon* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 67, 157.

¹¹ Walkowitz, Judith, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 21.

¹² Chassaigne and Heppel, 30.

¹³ Clark, 85.

¹⁴ Chassaigne and Heppel, 42.

women's agency. However, they also provided a vehicle for women to resist the prescriptive domestic gender narrative to which they were subject.

Broadsides, like other news literature, reported what society regarded as exceptional,¹⁵ which, in the case of crime broadsides, was domestic violence. They transformed real-life events into loosely adapted fictionalized narratives tailored for public consumption. The growth of the print industry in this period coincided with the growth of the print marketplace,¹⁶ as demand for more accessible, affordable goods grew. Many broadsides were produced without state licenses, characterizing print commodities as transgressive and threatening objects of knowledge circulation.¹⁷ Print shops, particularly, were dangerous sites where obscene content could be circulated to middle-class women venturing into the city to shop.¹⁸ Print-shop windows were marked by sexual desire and transgression; any obscene images displayed there “poisoned” the respectable city, and urban spaces became more associated with sensuality and sexual transgression.¹⁹ Printers were fined for producing “lewde books,”²⁰ as legislators attempted to maintain urban respectability among a developing middle class, despite the unavoidable presence of poverty, crime, disease, and sex in the city.

However, while women were often featured as “victims” of the obscene city in news reports about men ogling women in the street or the dangers of pickpockets,²¹ they were also active participants in the production and consumption of obscene print objects. Consequently, there was a significant “gap between representation and experience of the city” regarding

¹⁵ Clark, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁸ Nead, 67, 183.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

²⁰ Clark, 72.

²¹ Nead, 63.

“belonging in an urban context.”²² Broadsides were linked to traditionally female methods of creative production through their alignment with the ballad.²³ Traditional oral folk-ballads, which preceded print broadsides, were usually passed on through female family members.²⁴ Furthermore, broadsides were tailored to the urban working class; although the educated reading publics of the nineteenth century were presumed to be largely middle class,²⁵ broadsides sold for a penny or half-penny,²⁶ and their extensive use of images and often simple language made them accessible to people with limited financial resources and literacy. Although not all broadsides produced survive, in large part due to their delicate, ephemeral nature, there is evidence that they were not rare objects; several hundreds were produced for sale at public executions.²⁷ While attendees of public executions eagerly bought and consumed crime broadsides, or “gallows literature,” print accounts of crimes and executions also allowed the news to spread beyond the gallows, through the city. Broadsides could be printed rapidly, reporting events up to the minute,²⁸ and, likewise, they were often discarded after public interest in a crime had waned, giving them short life cycles. Printers often registered titles of crime broadsides before the execution had even taken place.²⁹ Particularly popular crimes or notorious criminals might be further explored in plays or pamphlets, but broadsides were usually the first print material regarding criminal cases to appear.³⁰ While the stories reported in crime broadsides were

²² Nead, 77.

²³ Clark, 76.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Walkowitz, 26.

²⁶ O’Brien, Ellen L. “‘The Most Beautiful Murder:’ The Transgressive Aesthetics of Murder in Victorian Street Ballads,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 28, no. 1 (2000): 17.

²⁷ O’Brien, 16.

²⁸ Clark, 74.

²⁹ Clark, 74.

³⁰ Ibid., 98.

plausible, they were also spectacular due to the interdependency of text and image.³¹ In the nineteenth century, particularly after the 1851 Great Exhibition, “capitalism and spectacle became indivisible, a world produced, a world distributed, a world consumed.”³² Spectacle drove consumption. Crime broadsides typically included four main components: a prose description of the violent crime and the perpetrator’s (often tragic) past; content supposedly written by the criminal, including letters to their family; woodcut illustrations of the climactic execution; and some verse component, often a warning to other women, also purportedly penned by the criminal.³³ Narratives about escaped or pardoned criminals were far rarer, and unsolved crimes were almost never published,³⁴ as narratives culminating in sentences and executions fulfilled the public desire for spectacle as well as the social need for justice, to quell fears about violence.

As the guardians of social respectability, yet simultaneously morally fragile and susceptible to temptation, women were of particular interest as social symbols in crime narrative. They were situated at the center of imagined crime narratives, as both perpetrator and victim. Walkowitz conducts an illuminating study of women’s role in public conceptions of crime, morality, and public respectability. Sex workers, criminals of an explicitly sexual nature, became the quintessential female figure as symbols of vice and embodiments of the divided city.³⁵ Both predator and prey of men, the sex worker—and the woman more generally—was at once dangerous and tragic. Vice, specifically the moral failings of lust and gluttony, became public spectacle as the prelude to more sinister crimes.³⁶ Consequently, the nineteenth century saw a

³¹ Berg and Clifford, 146.

³² Richards, Thomas, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 16.

³³ Chassaigne and Heppel, 24.

³⁴ Clark, 24.

³⁵ Walkowitz, 21.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

push for public decency which included the condemnation of “unrespectable streets” marked by poverty or visible crime like prostitution.³⁷ While historians may be tempted to invoke the notion of “separate spheres” regarding women’s urban presences, women had been present in urban publics since the early modern period. Respectable women could venture to alehouses, accompanied by men if they exercised moderation in drinking and spending.³⁸ Their public presences were thus policed, but not denied. Indeed, city planning, including the installation of gas lights, helped make urban spaces more accessible to women.³⁹ Significantly, women played a large part in the denotation of a street as “respectable” or otherwise: children playing outdoors, gossiping women, doors of houses left open, or visible violence were all markers of unrespectable streets.⁴⁰ Women produced such children; as cultural historian Eleanor Hubbard notes, “gossip” played a large part in women’s social lives and doors marked the entry point into the domestic, “feminine” space.⁴¹ Public streets were not inherently “masculine.” Rather, they presented a tense variety of possibilities for women, including urban mobility, moralizing influence, and the potential for danger and crime. Yet, women’s actual criminal or immoral behavior was less important in forming the imagined figure of the female criminal than men’s anxieties. Walkowitz suggests that women, thus imagined, contributed to urban instability, creating fragmented spaces that led to “growing skepticism among men of letters about their ability to read the city and to sustain a coherent vision of a structured public landscape.”⁴²

³⁷ Walkowitz, 24, 29.

³⁸ Hubbard, Eleanor, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 155.

³⁹ Nead, 87.

⁴⁰ Walkowitz, 34-35.

⁴¹ Hubbard, 152.

⁴² Walkowitz, 39.

But to suggest that crime discourse was purely gender-focused would be not only an oversimplification of the city's complicated social dynamics, but also a historical inaccuracy. Class played an equally important role in criminal discourses and intersected with gender to exacerbate social anxieties about the nebulosity of the city where "women...brush[ed] up against obscenity *and* respectability."⁴³ Respectability was a distinctly middle-class concept. Poverty, and the crime presumed to accompany it, threatened middle-class respectability. Fears of women in urban spaces differed based on class: middle-class women, beacons of respectability, were endangered when venturing into the city alone.⁴⁴ Women's historian Ellen L. O'Brien suggests that these respectable middle classes considered the poor a "foreign realm;"⁴⁵ yet in the city, the classes existed in disturbing proximity. Discourse in other forms of popular print culture separated the poor from the middle and upper classes: "Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders," declares Lord Henry Wotton in the popular 1891 novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the common Victorian trope of the fallen middle-class woman⁴⁷ suggests fears over the corrupting influence of the lower classes on the upper classes when they came into close contact. In fact, broadsides' association with the lower classes was a key part of their danger. Broadsides descended from folk-ballads and street singers who "fostered crime and glorified immorality."⁴⁸ They were also easily portable, simplifying information access among the lower classes.⁴⁹ Significantly, broadsides were both read or sung aloud and read privately as literacy

⁴³ Nead., 182.

⁴⁴ Walkowitz, 67.

⁴⁵ O'Brien, 17.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ward, Ian. *Sex, Crime, and Literature in Victorian England* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2014), 31.

⁴⁸ O'Brien, 16.

⁴⁹ Rooney, Paul Raphael and Anna Gasperini, *Media and Print Culture Consumption in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Victorian Reading Experience* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 139.

tools in poor households.⁵⁰ As such, they played a disturbing role in transforming “the image of the ignorant and criminal scaffold crowd into the image of a literate and literary public.”⁵¹

The following three crime broadsides, all produced during the nineteenth century, offer a brief survey of female crime as represented in broadside publications. Analyzing consistencies and discrepancies between the broadsides’ textual and visual content, I examine how these broadsides characterize women’s violent criminality, and the ways in which these narratives both fueled and assuaged public anxieties about urban space and women’s presence therein. Each narrative presents a criminal spectacle of domestic upheaval prompted by women’s moral failings; usually centered on sexual temptation, leading to a gruesome murder and ending in tragic but just execution, these broadsides exhibit tensions between their own moralizing function as warnings for women, and their more complex representations of women’s stories.

Published in 1819, “An Account of the Execution of Margaret Harvey” tells the dramatic story of a young woman “murdering her male bastard child.”⁵² The story details how she cut the child’s throat before attempting to burn the body on her bedroom fire, where it was discovered by a female servant. The publication, as was typical, includes a lengthy portion in verse, supposedly written by Harvey herself, which implores female readers to “pity me;” details her sin, as “the sixth commandment I have broke;”⁵³ and meditates on God’s mercies in the next world. Notably, unlike many broadsides, this example includes only one small woodcut illustration of Harvey’s body, but the opening lines, which describe in gruesome detail the murder and punishment, serve the same purpose as more extensive illustration by presenting the spectacle of violence for consumers. The broadside closes with a letter supposedly written by

⁵⁰ Rooney, 141.

⁵¹ O’Brien, 16.

⁵² Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Murder and Executions folder 6 (18).

⁵³ Ibid.

Harvey to her mother while in prison, where Harvey expresses remorse for her violent actions and again reflects on religion and hope for heaven.

Although the broadside opens with a vivid description of the murder, Harvey's story is more important than that of her unnamed victim. Harvey, the broadside explains, was a native of Durham who was "well-educated" by her parents; upon moving to London, she "[put] trust in a false young man, / little thinking he would me trepan."⁵⁴ The man in question, Harvey's verse claims, seduced the young woman (who was "only eighteen years old"⁵⁵) with promises of marriage, then impregnated and abandoned her. For Harvey, London is the catalyst for sexual sin and domestic ruin: she is the fallen woman, corrupted by the temptations of urban obscenities. Furthermore, though Harvey, begging for pity, was plainly taken advantage of, her verse acts "as a caution to young women,"⁵⁶ as Harvey bears the brunt of punishment for sexual transgression: "To take its life Satan tempted me, / I'm left in sin, grief, and misery."⁵⁷ Conversely, no mention is made of her male lover's fate. This broadside depicts the female criminal as both pitiable and despicable, the perhaps avoidable result of urban threats and male violence who nevertheless must repent for her actions and be punished for disrupting domestic order. "Of all murders, that of a mother shedding the blood of her own child is the most shocking,"⁵⁸ reads the opening line, presenting Harvey not as a subject with whom to sympathize, but as a moralizing example of "how human nature can be debased."⁵⁹ Female readers should avoid Harvey's crimes by avoiding the corrupting influence of men and city life.

⁵⁴ Bodleian Library, 6 (18).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Bodleian Library, 6 (18).

At about the same time, (the publication is dated sometime in the 1810s) another broadside emerged about another eighteen-year-old murderess. Jessy Dalton fell in love with a “wild and dissolute young man,”⁶⁰ and after the love affair was forbidden by Dalton’s mother, Dalton mixed “a quantity of Arsenic in some broth which she prepared for her mother’s supper, of which she died in a few hours.”⁶¹ Like Harvey’s broadside, “An interesting and heart-rending account of an Unnatural MURDER committed by Jessy Dalton on the body of her OWN MOTHER” opens with a narrative description of events, includes a letter to family (Dalton’s sister), and closes with a “Warning to All Young Women” in verse.⁶² This publication, however, is far more elaborately illustrated, including visual depictions of the house where Dalton was staying when she met her lover, her illicit meetings with the man in the garden, the planning of the murder, and Dalton preparing the poison.⁶³ A detailed image of Dalton’s execution is the broadside’s centerpiece, emphasizing the punishment over the crime itself, and the bottom of the broadside includes four uncaptioned images. The series of detailed illustrations made plotting, violence, and domestic discord into a tangible, visible spectacle for even illiterate consumers. Combining text and image not only heightened the spectacle of broadside crime narratives, but also contributed to the growing significance of printed graphic popular culture.⁶⁴ Despite the elaborate detail of this broadside compared to Harvey’s, it would have been reasonably affordable for most literate inhabitants of London. This story, too, does not highlight the dangers of urban life, but rather depicts an idyllic, rural fall from grace. Dalton lived “in the hamlet of Allan-side, near Leeds,” where “she was obedient and dutiful towards her mother” until she met

⁶⁰ Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Broadside: Murder and Executions folder 10 (32).

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Berg and Clifford, 158.

Henry Johnson, with whom she had a three-month relationship until Johnson asked Dalton's mother's permission to marry.⁶⁵ Here, male influence and sexual awakening are dangerous for women, turning them against their families, as Johnson and Dalton planned the murder together.

While, after the murder, Dalton was overcome with guilt and turned herself over to the authorities, Henry "absconded, and has not yet been heard of—it is believed he fled to the Americas."⁶⁶ Dalton, like Harvey, is presented as remorseful, turning her violent tale into a tragedy: "I cannot, I dare not complain--- my crime is of the blackest dye--- I have murdered the best, the kindest of mothers,"⁶⁷ states the letter to her sister. She also focuses on God, lending a religious thrust to the broadside's moral impetus, looking forward to heaven where "pain and sorrow will be no more."⁶⁸ Dalton's verses warn young women against falling in love, as "my virgin heart / made an easy prey."⁶⁹ Although nefarious men are, again, the cause of female criminality, Dalton is the leader in the murder plot; Johnson merely "did not endeavor to dissuade her from it."⁷⁰ While perhaps more threatening in the city, this broadside suggests that women's crime existed in the countryside as well, prioritizing the dangers of sexual awakening from men over the dangers of the city in regards to tempting women to violence. However, the production of such a story for primarily urban consumers could also serve to assuage anxieties about urban life and public spaces' influences on women. Cities were not the problem, suggests Dalton's story; unrespectable men and susceptible women were.

In 1821, Ann Barber became perhaps the emblematic embodiment of social anxieties about female violence, when a broadside detailing her trial and execution for the murder of her

⁶⁵ Berg and Clifford, 158.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

husband, James Barber, appeared. Without an included letter or verse portion, and with only one small woodcut illustration of Barber's execution, the bulk of this broadside is devoted to the prose narrative of Ann Barber's violent crime. Narrative prose, it seems, was enough spectacle for this publication, perhaps because "the trial was unusually long and interesting."⁷¹ Further, by focusing on the trial, the Barber broadside represents a gradual shift in broadside narratives from the criminal act itself to the inquest,⁷² suggesting that audiences' fascination with crime stemmed from a preoccupation with just punishment; social transgression by violence needed violent remedy by execution, emphasizing broadsides' role in counteracting perceived "moral corruption." Married to James Barber in 1805, the broadside notes that "from the evidence it appears [Ann] had formed an improper connexion with a person of the name of Thompson, which in all probability has brought her to her untimely death."⁷³ Like Dalton, Barber's weapon of choice was "mineral poison (white arsenic)," which Barber mixed with "warm ale and sugar with the intent to kill [her husband]."⁷⁴ Both women, using their domestic duties as cooks and their domain in the kitchen as means to violence, threaten the social order by using their feminine roles as vehicles for murder.

Where Harvey and Dalton were presented as being in desperate straits which drove them to murder, Barber was merely "stalled (tired)" of her husband.⁷⁵ The broadside's narrative presents much of the evidence from Barber's trial, particularly testimonies given by the doctor who performed the autopsy, the chemist who sold the poison, and nearby witnesses including neighbours and family. Doing so, the object brings the legal proceedings to the public, making

⁷¹ Bodleian Library, University of Oxford: John Johnson Collection: Broadside, Murder and executions folder 4 (8).

⁷² Chassaing and Heppel, 40.

⁷³ John Johnson Collection: Broadside, Murder and executions folder 4 (8).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ John Johnson Collection: Broadside, Murder and executions folder 4 (8).

the process accessible through text. Barber, unlike Dalton and Harvey, is not immediately depicted as repentant; at her trial, she states, “I have done what I have done,” and does not confess, but claims, “I am innocent, and leave it to God to clear my conscience.”⁷⁶ Whether Barber was actually innocent is unimportant; the broadside presents her as a cruel and unfeeling murderess until the scene of her execution, when she makes continued “protestations of her innocence.”⁷⁷ The broadside, hawked by loud vendors on street corners, evoking “feelings such as repulsion, horror, compassion, etc....to be collectively experienced,” united the community against the criminal, not only moralizing, but also socializing.⁷⁸ Described as an “unhappy Female,” Barber’s final words are “oh, my God, oh, my God,”⁷⁹ as she, like the previous women discussed, makes final invocations to religious authority. Notably, although the broadside’s introduction implies Barber’s adultery as the cause of her crime, Thompson is not directly involved with the planning or the murder itself. He “promised [Ann] marriage if anything ailed James,”⁸⁰ but Barber herself is presented as the sole guilty party. Like other texts, this broadside absolves the men involved in violent crime and emphasizes women’s violence in the domestic sphere as a threat that must be addressed with violent punishment. A woman killing her husband might symbolize both sexual transgression and chaos in the family; the just punishment of such women in broadside narratives helped soothe anxiety over women’s violence.

Working in tandem to transform social relations, the development of consumer urban spaces and the presence of women in those public spheres fueled anxiety in a time of social change. The ephemerality of broadsides allowed cheap knowledge transfer across nebulous

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Chassaigne and Heppel, 40.

⁷⁹ John Johnson Collection: Broadside: Murder and executions folder 4 (8).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

spaces. Texts could be easily purchased and were easy to transport; and their dramatic language, vivid imagery, and exaggerated plots appealed to reading publics: “the era of spectacle had begun.”⁸¹ Just as broadsides were accessible for purchase by a diverse audience, they (and other literary ephemera) also provided a vehicle for unlearned voices.⁸² Their specific focus on crime allowed anxieties about change and instability to manifest in plausible acts of violence. “Gallows literature” reached its height from 1850-1860,⁸³ and was often read alongside or in place of the newspaper, meaning that the stories disseminated in them, no matter how factually accurate, were read and received not only as popular entertainment, but also as news media. Like other forms of news media, broadsides were anonymous, making them functionally non-authored.⁸⁴ Not quite “literary” and not quite nonfiction, broadsides as commodities filled the roles of art, entertainment, and journalism for the reading urban public.

Representations of women in crime broadsides were likewise simultaneously diverse and formulaic. Although popularly interpreted as morality tales, broadsides were, in some capacity, less didactic than male-centered and male-authored crime pamphlets which circulated in the same period.⁸⁵ However limited or mediated, verses and letters included in broadsides at least purported to include women’s voices. As cultural historians Phillipe Chassaigne and W. Heppel astutely observe, “broadsides allowed dissenting opinions to be heard, a fact which vastly diminishes their importance as a supposed means of social control.”⁸⁶ More significantly, although women played narrower roles as broadside criminals than their male counterparts,

⁸¹ Richards, 3.

⁸² Clark, 5.

⁸³ Rooney and Gasperini, 137.

⁸⁴ Clark, 15.

⁸⁵ Clark, 105.

⁸⁶ Chassaigne and Heppel, 42.

representation in broadsides did allow women to win notoriety as public personae,⁸⁷ which was otherwise difficult. While broadside often directed themselves directly towards women as moral warnings, they also frequently represented women's criminal motivations in ways which highlighted their mistreatment or manipulation by men. Women usually bore the punishment for their own misfortune, but the presence of these stories in the public eye is not insignificant. Readers could hear women's voices, or at least echoes of them, in crime broadsides, even when they were, inevitably, brought to criminal justice and permanently silenced through execution. In many ways, therefore, broadsides, although manifestations of masculine anxieties, not only represented women's transgression of domestic boundaries, but allowed women's voices to transcend those same boundaries, emerging in public life. As Hubbard notes, women defied silencing; their lives were not wholly defined by their gender,⁸⁸ nor even their class. Even in print, "women gained public influence through their tongues."⁸⁹ The women criminals of these and other crime broadsides were both victims and perpetrators, and their stories were far more complex than simple warnings against the dangers of sexual immorality.

⁸⁷ Clark, 84.

⁸⁸ Hubbard, 2.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.

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