
Murder as a Theatrical Performance: Problematising the Figure of the Female Serial Killer in The Limehouse Golem

Debalina Mondal

Postgraduate Student, Jadavpur University, India

Villanelle from Luke Jennings' *Codename Villanelle* (2017) has received tremendous appreciation which has led to four successful seasons of its television adaptation, *Killing Eve* (2018-2022). The insane popularity of X and Pearl, featuring Mia Goth as a ghastly murderer in the 2022 movies, justifies society's current obsession with female serial killers. Similarly, Juan Carlos Medina's 2018 murder mystery, *The Limehouse Golem*, adapted from Peter Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994) features a female murderer situated in 19th century London. Elizabeth Cree played by Olivia Cooke is presented as a malevolent villain, literally personifying the Jewish legendary figure of the 'golem'. The peculiarity of the story lies not only with its depiction of a woman as a serial killer during a period when English bourgeoisie was consciously limiting women to the household, but with women's relation with the public theatre that emerged to empower them, providing them with an authorial voice. Situating Elizabeth Cree on the Victorian stage as a female clown makes the character apt for a feminist reading. Hence, the paper shall critically analyse the figure of the female serial killer in the screen adaptation of *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*. The author shall be comparing the primary text with the film while discussing the politics of Victorian theatre from a feminist lens.

Biography:

Debalina Mondal is a postgraduate student of English Literature at Jadavpur University. Her research and career interest lies at the nexus of Crime Fiction in relation to Postcolonial politics.