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OFFENDERS, ADULTERESSES, AND MURDERESSES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE: FROM THE COLONIAL TO THE POSTMODERN ERA

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This paper examines American female transgressors from the early colonial period to the late postmodern age and their representations in American literature. Its main aim is to identify the most relevant female offenders from each historical era and analyze how authors portray their characters in each literary work. Furthermore, it offers different insights into the social, cultural, political, and jurisprudential contexts of the murder cases of each female perpetrator under discussion. The paper also compares fiction to non-fiction literary texts and the similarities and differences contributing to a murderess's standard representation. The representation of American transgresses is highly contingent on the literary genre of the texts, the type of offense, and the socio-cultural, historical, and ideological context of the time. What they have in common is that they murder people closely related to them. The opposing groups are single and double homicide committers, emotionally driven by victimization and vengeance, and emotionless serial killers, whose murder-prone behavior emanates from deviance. On the one hand, true-crime books offer unprecedented and controversial details about murderesses. On the other hand, crime fiction puts them into an imagined context. The most common depictions of female perpetrators are victimized women who suffer in a patriarchal society, romanticized *femme fatales*, or deviled mental health sufferers.

Keywords: *murder cases, female offenders, somatic or psychological oppression, literary representations, American literature.*

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Introduction

Generally speaking, women are considered not naturally prone to deviant behavior as much as men and not physically capable of murder. The traditional picture of a woman does not fit into a portrait of a delinquent since the quintessence of womanhood is perceived through the role of a nurturer, not a torturer or killer. Consequently, women are more often portrayed as victims than the perpetrators of violence in literary writings. Notwithstanding this common knowledge, by perusing various documented sources, many authors debunk the belief that the female gender is incapable of gruesome murders, averring that this is just one among multiple clichés about women. They, by contrast, focus on the facets that differentiate female homicidal tendencies from their male counterparts' propensities for assassination on the grounds of particular circumstances, motives, methods, or a means used for killing.

Female killers have been a considerably explored topic in American literature nowadays, for example, in *The Murder Mystique: Female Killers and Popular Culture* (2013) by Laurie Nalepa and Richard Pfefferman, a true-crime compilation arranged according to murderesses' motives to kill or Brian Berry's *American Female Serial Killers: The Full Encyclopedia of American Female Serial Killers* (2019), an encyclopedia on deadly American women. However, each recently published compendia of American female killers at least partially refers to Ann Jones' pre-established doctrine surrounding this theme. Jones's lengthy study on female violence in America from the Colonial Era to the twentieth century has its genesis in her book *Women Who Kill* (1980), in which Jones explains the notion of female homicide as an example of the repercussions of cultural distortions, which are thoroughly corroborated by history and sociology. Accordingly, the foci are put on historical and cultural contexts, especially the cultural origin of murders, observed through a feminist lens. Jones' well-researched study further unites feminism and criminology to represent female offenders by providing different perspectives on the concepts of being a female and committing a crime; hence, she draws particular attention to double standards and an abundance of stereotypes imposed on female transgressors who have lived in various American historical periods.

Inspired mainly by serial killers and a firm intention to present largely unknown murderous women, Tori Telfer, the author of *Lady Killers: Deadly Women Throughout History* (2017), reintroduces an enticing compendium of cold-blooded women who plotted murders and left behind a legacy of infamy as

a consequence of an overwhelming urge to assassinate, but who were later forgotten in history. What differentiates this investigation from Jones' inquiry is its specific field of interest concerning ethnicity. It is central to Telfer's study of female serial killers from diverse cultural backgrounds that most murderers are from the European¹ and North American continents who lived during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Analogous to Jones, Telfer, among other things, delves into rebutting misconceptions and misogynistic interpretations through the feminist perspective: her approach to female offenders is witty, more multicultural than transhistorical, and she focuses on refuting the stereotypes of female serial killers specifically.

17th and 18th centuries: patriarchal societies and infanticides

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, nefarious deeds of the *foremothers*, a term Jones (1988) uses to designate female immigrants to the colonies, were mainly infanticides. Such murders became a habit since these were the killing 'maneuvers' to which mothers resorted when they wanted to spare their children from the consequences of bastardy and the unjust nemesis of slavery or when these women wanted to save their reputation and their position in society. Considering that women of the time were forced into this type of murder because of the constraints of colonial society, Jones points out that a patriarchal society imposed the motives for committing infanticide. Women did not have other alternatives back then; therefore, Jones finally ascertains that "infanticide might be some kind of birth control after the fact" during the Colonial Era (1988, p. 54).

19th century: domestic ideology and rebellion

The most frequent kind of murder committed by women in America in the nineteenth century was mariticide², which implies that they were killing either a husband or a lover. Female offenders seemed extremely galvanized into this type of homicide as they generated a magnitude of lethal means to kill. Regarding their deadly methods, almost every murderess had her *modus operandi*; Jones (1988, p. 119) claims that "they choose singularly unladylike means: they shoot, stab, strangle, and slit throats". Most were fond of using poison as their weapon. Despite the general opinion of poison as a "coward's weapon", putting the stress on the arguably trivial argument that man coined this term, Telfer (2017, p. 142)

explains the mental complexity expressed through attitudinal restraint, which is required for such killing stratagem: “You have to play the role of nurse or parent or lover while you sustain your murderous intent [...]. You’ve got to mop up your victim’s vomit and act sympathetic when they beg for water.”

Mariticide was usually performed when a woman could not find other means of escaping or saving her reputation. Interestingly, the *victims* were typically abusive husbands or lovers who rejected marrying them. That being the case, the blame was generally put on mental instability considered particular to women, such as menstrual tension, hysteria, or insanity (Jones 1998).

Besides other litigated claims, these were, at any rate, the arguments that lawyers would usually resort to in court. Indeed, there was much room for inequity, bias, and partisanship, taking into consideration that “for offenses traditionally considered to be masculine [...] women tend to receive *heavier* sentences than men” (Jones 1988, p. 9). For that reason, uxoricide³ was considered a lesser criminal offense than mariticide, which goaded feminists of the day into protesting against double standards in sexual terms.

Bridget Durgan: the murderous housemaid

American jurisprudence reflected social hierarchy in the second half of the nineteenth century. Germane both chronologically and jurisprudentially to the Borden case⁴, an Irish girl from Sligo (Ir: *Sligeach*), Bridget Durgan, who worked as a domestic servant in Newmarket, New Jersey, was indicted for murdering her mistress, an upper-class physician’s wife who purportedly abused her, in 1867 (Jones, 1988). Her act was proclaimed horrendous, and she was sentenced to death by hanging. The same year, capital punishment was conducted in New Brunswick. Considering that the American social class hierarchy of the time had an Irish woman low on the scale, Jones (1988) indicates that the outcome of this case was highly contingent on Ms. Durgan’s social status. Besides the circumstances under which the Borden case and the Bridget Durgan case were performed, which goes in favor of Ms. Durgan, they, in essence, do not notably differ. Jones suggests that although both committed heinous acts, similar in many aspects except their class, Bridget Durgan was condemned, and Lizzie Borden was acquitted. However, along with double standards regarding social class, the same ideologies could be applied to womanhood and ethnicity, having an Irishwoman, Ms. Durgan, on one side and an American woman, Ms. Lizzie, on the other. The former is considered a

fiendish and beastly lower-class woman who lived an infamous life without proper education, friends, or protection. In contrast, the latter is characterized as a respectable upper-middle-class woman whose traits were considered purely feminine, not to mention that she was under the aegis of her friends and counsel. Accordingly, the foundation of the reliability of these cases might be found in two sets of rules, one for each of these murderesses. Indeed, this comparison provides an accurate picture of the American socio-cultural state of affairs at the time.

Regarding the literary representation of Bridget Durgan, the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century short biography in the form of a murder pamphlet *Life, Crimes, and Confession of Bridget Durgan, the Fiendish Murderess of Mrs. Coriel: Whom She Butchered, Hoping to Take Her Place in the Affections of the Husband of Her Innocent and Lovely Victim* (1867), published by Rev. Mr. Brendan, gives an insight into many aspects of Bridget Durgan's life. The order of information in this booklet does not begin chronologically. It starts with narrating an in-depth third-person point-of-view portrayal of the committed crime, except in the final sentence where the first-person viewpoint 'we' emerges. However, the biography consecutively comprises the first-person narrative of Ms. Durgan's life before she was a domestic worker in a doctor's household, which is written in addition to the period from her arrival to New Jersey and her employment in New Market to the notorious murder, all of which is a precedent of Ms. Durgan's private confession. Following the chronological order, the Simon-pure true-crime account takes in her incarceration and execution, using the first-person 'I' point of view.

Rev. Mr. Brendan's account of this murderess professes vindictive and romantic motives for murder. The former is recognized in Ms. Durgan's discharge as her mistress disrelished her, whereas the affections she felt towards her mistress' spouse are reduced from the latter. Comparing the merciless eruption of the "fiendish woman" when she committed the gruesome crime to "the ferocity of a panther," Ms. Durgan is strictly delineated as a "wretched perpetrator" and "demon girl" (Rev. Mr. Brendan's, 1867, pp. 19-20). In reality, this enormously intensified representation of the evil murderess provided Ms. Durgan's story with morals for other rebellious servants.

Somewhat longer, yet not reaching the size of a novella, R. Barri Flowers's *Murder of the Doctor's Wife: The 1867 Crimes of Bridget Durgan (A Historical True Crime Short)* (2017) is the other non-fiction work that directly begins with

the depiction of the cold-blooded murderess and her crime. Bridget Durgan is represented as a rather attractive woman. Her intentions are with romantic ‘chicanery’, resulting in the paradigmatic notion of the housemaid’s jealousy toward her mistress. The high point of the illustration of Bridget Durgan is achieving the unenviable depiction provided by Elizabeth Oakes Smith, the female writer and women's rights activist. After being among Ms. Durgan’s prison visitors, she wrote a letter about Bridget Durgan that appeared as an article in *The New York Times* in 1867, which, as a consequence, became perniciously detrimental to the prisoner’s already fearsome reputation. Delineations of her countenance and intellect are made by comparison with different animals. Apart from animalistic instincts and faulty intelligence, Oakes Smith (1867, as cited in Flowers, 2017, p. 3) argues, “She is large in the base of the brain, and swells out over the ears, where phrenologists locate destructiveness and secretiveness, while the whole region of intellect, ideality, and moral sentiment is small.” Regarding her physical appearance, she comments, “There is not one character of beauty...nothing genuine, hardly human” (Smith, 1867, as cited in Flowers, 2017, p. 3). Besides these subtleties of the murderess, this true-crime account comprehends the trial in much more detail than the short biography from 1867 and the impact this murder had on the victim’s husband and the community.

Sheila Duane’s true-crime book *Bridget’s Hanging* (2016) provides a more thorough explanation of the life of Bridget Durgan than the previously interpreted literary works. It provides a distinct understanding of capital punishment and execution through the narrative, which is not chronological, given that the themes are arranged. The accounts are corroborated by various written records, usually in official papers with information on Ms. Durgan; Duane (2016) explores the crime based on previously conducted diligent research and thoroughly examined pieces of evidence. That being the case, it is not only revealed that her real last name was Deignan, although infrequently written as Durgan or Dergan, but also that she was falsely accused and convicted for the murder she did not commit and, consequently, unjustly executed. The author of this book refutes the public opinion about her mental and psychical characteristics by explaining the influence of the media’s portrayal of Ms. Durgan as demonic and diabolical and further reveals her accurate profile. Aside from being an odd woman with superstitious thoughts, Ms. Durgan had an Irish brogue, which was hardly understandable to Americans, in addition to a child’s intellect. Surrounded by five hundred people, her hanging was celebrated as a

spectacle with exuberant spectators motivated by a narrow-minded mentality abundant in xenophobic bias and anti-Catholic tendencies. Duane concludes that Ms. Durgan was innocent but was found guilty due to her ethnicity, religion, physical appearance, illiteracy, and, most certainly, her social class.

Lizzie Halliday: the unstoppable multiple offender

Since committing multiple murders was a counter-stereotypical behavior for a woman, the role of a serial killer was thought to be sex-specific, intrinsic to males, to the extent that, in 1998, Roy Hazelwood, an FBI profiler, claimed, “There are no female serial killers” (as cited in Telfer, 2017, xii). However, during the same period of the evocative Victorian era when the ‘Borden craze’ was being honed by the American press, the other malefactor was bringing the nefarious crimes into action, slowly but surely refuting common knowledge of nonexistent female serial killers. Lizzie Borden’s namesake and Bridget Durgan’s fellow countrywoman, Lizzie Halliday, born initially as Eliza Margaret McNally, was an Irish-born American serial killer assassinating in the area north of New York City during the 1890s. Although there were purportedly more victims before and even after her trial, including two of her previous husbands and a nurse from a mental institution she was sent to afterward, she was charged with four blood-curdling murders in Sullivan County in 1894. This murderous woman committed filicide⁵ by incinerating her son, burning their house to the ground, and shooting and burying her husband after using the same strategy to assassinate two other women (Telfer, 2017).

Ms. Halliday gained a notorious reputation as the first woman on whom the death penalty was imposed via electric chair, yet her sentence underwent commutation. Compared to the case of Bridget Durgan, the fact that both criminal offenders were Irish might contribute to the further corroboration of the perpetuation of ethnic stereotypes of the time, ergo ethnic bias in the court, putting their origin as their impediment. The circumstance that Ms. Halliday had been sentenced to death in the same way as Ms. Durgan and the capital punishment was not eventually put into action brings into discussion her medical condition of insanity, which had previously been determined as the rationale behind the final decision of the commuted sentence. However, Ms. Durgan’s mental health problems were dismissed despite the testimony of two physicians claiming that she was “hysterico-epileptic” (Jones, 1988, p. 214). As was the case with the Borden-Durgan comparison, the underlying reason for taking Ms.

Durgan's life and commutating Ms. Halliday, although the latter murdered more people, might lie behind the fact that the former killed an upper-class lady, along with the gravity of her mental health.

In terms of literary works that represent Lizzie Halliday, the non-fiction book *Killing Time in the Catskills: The Twisted Tale of the Catskill Ripper Elizabeth Lizzie McNally Halliday* (2019) by Kevin Owen provides the accurate story of her inexcusable malfeasance by way of disregarding various instances of hearsay and unearthing the correct information, both of which were mostly gleaned from newspaper articles. This true-crime book provides a range of Lizzie Halliday's blatant transgression at an early age, covering the scope of crimes from minor offenses such as defrauding an insurance process to more severe crimes of being a perpetrator of a macabre series of murders. In addition, it embraces the trial and the period when she was held under lock and key to show that even henceforth, she did not hesitate to kill cold-bloodedly. Together with the crimes above, she is also depicted as a bigamist, horse theft perpetrator, arsonist, and female tormentor who transgressed the boundaries of sex-specific crimes in general.

Unlike the well-researched factual content that amplified the trustworthiness of thoroughgoing biographical records on the female transgressor in Owen's book (2019), John Dumon's non-fiction true-crime account *Lizzie Halliday: Serial Killer* (2019) provides a cursory glance of Lizzie Halliday's misdeeds, which is imbued with a sense of verisimilitude. As in Owen's narrative, Ms. Halliday is pictured as a deranged murderess and habitual lawbreaker. Still, the emphasis in her representation is put on the portrayal of a murderess with psychopathological issues. However, the profile of psychopath is not accentuated as a justification for committing violent and cruel murders. The fictional character based on real-life Lizzie Halliday has not been revived⁶.

Alice Christiana Abbott: the abused revenger

Speculations of other patricides⁷ committed in the Victorian period could not rely on oral history, as with Lizzie Borden, since they were not contentious, or more precisely, did not trigger the public as much, and thence were not passed into myths. Although these murders were patently forgotten, not to say obliterated, Jones (1988) reminisces of a very young female offender and the incident that took place right before the onset of the Gilded Age. In 1867, a couple of months before Bridget Durgan's homicide, Alice Christiana Abbott was only a

seventeen-year-old girl whom her stepfather sexually abused. Since he persistently violated her and threatened to commit her to an asylum in case she revealed it to anyone, she seemed to have no other alternative to thwart her assailant but to poison him. On a closer inspection of the possible literary coverage of this event, it appears that it is very little known and not investigated enough. Under those circumstances, Ms. Abbott's character is not paradigmatically, or in any other way, represented in fiction or nonfiction literary works.

Margaret Hossack: the sound-asleep housewife

The murder case of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century markedly germane to Lizzie Borden considering homicide and the means of committing it, on the one hand, and the immortalization of the case in literature, hence the discussion of the literary representation of the murderess as a consequence, on the other hand, is the Hossack case. Margaret Hossack, often called "Lizzie Borden of Iowa" due to almost the same aura of mystery of the case, along with the similarities above, was convicted of killing her husband with an ax at their home in Indianola, Iowa, in 1900 (Bryan & Wolf, 2005). Unlike Ms. Borden, Ms. Hossack was in her late fifties. According to other people's testimonies, she had five children and a discernible motive for mariticide since her husband was violent. Despite the reasonable shreds of evidence indicating her guilt, she consistently claimed that an assailant attacked her spouse. Still, her sleep was so sound that she did not hear anything and resolutely professed that she was innocent in court. Eventually, the jury found her claims non-sequitur, and Ms. Hossack was convicted of first-degree murder. Yet, her conviction was overturned after one year of imprisonment, and she was freed in 1902.

With regards to Ms. Hossack's literary representation, the non-fiction book *Midnight Assassin: A Murder in America's Heartland* (2005), written by Patricia L. Bryan and Thomas Wolf, whose genre belongs to the category of true crime accounts, thoroughly covers the whole Margaret Hossack case. This historical study, with a strong hint at the mystery genre, is also observed through the socio-political context's perspective. Although the book is not precisely informative on whether Ms. Hossack killed her husband, it covers many aspects of the trials. For instance, real-life murder matters are revealed, especially evidence against Ms. Hossack, including the discordance between her testimony and the testimonies of other family members, her garment floating in water full of blood, etc. The

analytical part of the book puts forward the non-existent social help of the day to cope with an abusive husband properly and the biased rules of jurisprudence about femininity, in addition to the female issues of the time.

Comparably to Lizzie Borden's aftermath demeanor, this accurate account (Bryan & Wolf, 2005) highlights that it was shocking that the wife did not mourn the death of her husband, which instantly strengthened suspicions of her being a murderer. In addition, there are also many referrals to the prosecutors' emphasis on how Ms. Hossack deviates from the paradigm of an ideal wife and her feminine traits as her defenders' chief arguments, including the issue of the all-white and male jury, just like in the Borden case. Following these crucial points, an intriguing doubt is suggested through the speculations that Ms. Hossack was protecting a murderer, which does not dismiss the possibility that one of her offspring killed their father. Finally, these also indicate many differences between the real Margaret Hossack and the fictional character better known in popular culture.

What it has in common with the Borden case is its fascinating character, which caught the eye of a prominent American female literary author, Susan Glaspell, who ensured that this case would not fade into oblivion. Along with the true-crime book, the fiction works that were inspired by this case were retold twice: in Glaspell's drama *Trifles* (1916) and her short story "A Jury of Her Peers" (1917). Initially, the Margaret Hossack case had been the story that marked the author's transient career as a journalist before she became a writer (Ben-Zvi, 1922). Her fiction texts were not a rehash of the case but an alternative view among various possibilities; thus, they are loosely based on the actual murder. For instance, owing to the prevalent indication of psychological wife abuse, a mild inquietude in the female character, based on Margaret Hossack, is insidiously suggested in addition to the subtle insinuation of her solitude and the uneasy environment in which she dwelled overall, which does not comply with the real-life account. Also, unlike real-life events, the wife strangles her husband in both the dramatic text and the short story. It is more plausible not to hear someone strangling one's spouse with a rope than ax-murdering them.

In terms of the portrayal of the female murderess, Mrs. Wright, or Minnie Foster, representing Margaret Hossack, is a silent character, and the reported discourse of her speech is usually given in her short answers such as "I don't know," "I didn't wake up," or "I sleep sound" (Glaspell, 1926, p. 98, 1918, p. 264). This fictional character's analysis dramatically depends on Mrs. Wright's

living circumstances. The feminist rereading of *Trifles* and “A Jury of Her Peers” in the 1970s, and later on, point out the environment in such a remote rural home, depicting what life could have been like in complete isolation, especially for a woman (Hedges 1995). Given the better understanding of the hardships of farm life, empathy among female characters from both fiction texts made it clear to them that Mrs. Wright had not killed her spouse out of ennui. Therefore, whereas two male investigators were unsuccessfully searching for shreds of evidence, the female intuitiveness, supported by an increased perceptibility to trifles, covertly solved the case. The investigators’ wives found out Mr. Wright heartlessly strangled her pet canary, probably the *icing on the cake* after the years of lamentable life with her spouse. Both the drama text and the short story stress that the male investigators failed to notice what the contemplation of the two women did. In addition, this plot might also suggest that gender bias is not only present in the court but also among sleuths.

20th century: adulteresses and romantic motives

The academic works of the twentieth century, such as Otto Pollak’s *Criminality of Women* (1950) or *Sisters in Crime: The Rise of the New Female Criminal* (1975), which Frida Adler wrote, had been outlined as relevant to thorough studies on female crimes. Yet Jones (1988) finds them immensely anti-feminist because they were infrequently published as reactions to the movements for women’s rights. These studies were the compendia of anecdotal evidence and reminisce, whose initial aim was to discredit women from Jones’ point of view. Contrary to their objectives, some academic studies of the twentieth century intended to dismiss the distorted opinions of female offenders, which further stimulated Jones to discuss these intentions as an integrally defensive part of her doctrine. Among other concepts, she introduces a shibboleth of white men who were notable upper-class gentlemen and to whom Jones refers throughout her study as *social fathers*. Women who were considered a threat to society, particularly sexual transgressors who were deemed hazardous to the status quo, used to be judged by this “small body of ‘expertise’ that is alarmist, reactionary, antifeminist, and wrong” (Jones, 1988, p.5); albeit lives of many women were dependent on their usually misogynic and not at all even-handed judgments.

Ruth Snyder: the love-and-murder accomplice

The presence of double standards in terms of gender was interwoven with modern cases of murderesses, which social fathers ruthlessly rebuked. One of the self-made victims of these upper-class gentlemen is Ruth Brown Snyder, an American woman from New York who was convicted of slaying her reportedly ill-tempered husband in 1925 with her paramour Judd Gray (Jones, 1988). Consequently, both Ms. Snyder and her lover went on trial and were sentenced to death. Nevertheless, she was contentiously labeled as deviant and thus condemned for mariticide and adultery, whereas Mr. Gray was convicted solely for the murder. Ms. Snyder's sentence is underpinned by playwright Willard Mack, who, among other *social fathers*, symbolically argued that "Ruth Snyder had wanted 'one bed' with her lover," so "let her have 'one chair'" (Jones, 1988, p. 280), suggesting that both Ms. Snyder and Mr. Gray should be electrocuted. Indeed, both were executed in the electric chair in 1928. Eventually, the integral paradoxicality of the trial is found in the disproportionate gender bias of the time. To show other women how not to behave, the press would publish interviews with Ms. Snyder in which she says, "Many women would change if they could come here and see my punishment" (as cited in Jones, 1988, p. 282). Jones (1988) argues that this is the exact message that *social fathers* wanted to announce throughout America amidst her execution so that other women would not venture into a similar course of immoral action.

When it comes to the literary representation of Ruth Snyder, she was the inspiration of numerous authors. The non-fiction book *The "Double Indemnity" Murder: Ruth Snyder, Judd Gray, and New York's Crime of the Century* (2006), written by Landis MacKellar, is a classic murder case of a husband killed by his wife and her lover. It incorporates a well-documented account, consisting of newspaper reportage, interviews, confessions, etc., into a suspense novel of considerable length featuring lucid prose and gripping story-telling. The first part of this true-crime story covers the incentive of the gruesome slaying and the crime itself, followed by an unsuccessful whitewash of a burglary. Interestingly, the ineptness at the crime scene offered purely established alibis and shreds of evidence not overlooked by the police's rigorous investigation. The next part details the electrifying trial, which "was the event of New York spring social season" (MacKellar, 1988, p. 112). Finally, the third part is concerned with the execution, in which the "death-photo idea" is the most widely known issue of the book because she was recorded while dying (MacKellar, 1988, p. 332). The

representation of Ruth Snyder was not initially unpleasant considering her depiction of a “thirty-three” woman “of medium height” with “a good figure” (as cited in MacKellar, 1988, pp. 103-104) who “likes to dance and laugh” (MacKellar, 1988, p. 64). However, “after ten years [of] dealing with her husband, Ruth was going a bit crazy” (MacKellar, 1988, p. 31), and her portrayal gradually switched to an example of a woman with sociopathic tendencies who effortlessly strived to preserve the housewife’s reputation.

Apart from the genuine and in-depth presentation of the whole case, MacKellar’s book (1988) touches upon the cultural, social, and political context of the time, including the scope of issues from the disreputable life in New York City during the Jazz Age to the capital punishment of the day. It also explores the impact of incessant press coverage of every facet of the Ruth-Judd case. For example, the author comments on the photo of Ms. Snyder’s electrocution, which became a spectacle in the media, and questions the reasons behind the high level of interest in this crime in American popular culture. In contrast to MacKellar’s piece of work, the other non-fiction book that does not deal with speculative matters but instead provides the most accurate information on this murder case is Karl W. Schweizer’s *Seeds of Evil: The Gray / Snyder Murder Case* (2001). The trial is, in fact, the fulcrum of this well-researched study, which contains genuine historical records from the courtroom, as well as proceeding details, evidence, dialogues, hearings, essential arguments, etc.; hence, it is considered a more authoritative actual crime book than the previously discussed one.

James Mallahan Cain’s classic noir thriller *Double Indemnity* (1936), which is referred to in MacKellar’s true crime, embodies the Ruth Snyder persona in a cliffhanging narrative of *Roman noir* intrigued by the all-consuming relationship that resulted in overflowing deceitfulness and self-destructive love. The characters inspired by Ruth Snyder and Judd Gray are Phyllis Nirdlinger and Walter Huff. Phyllis Nirdlinger is a thirty-two-year-old blond woman, depicted as a stereotypical *femme fatale* whose seductive deftness persuaded her insurance salesman lover into arranging Mr. Nirdlinger’s murder for mutual benefit. However, even though they realize their plan, the murderers’ dissatisfaction is emphasized through the narrative, especially Mr. Huff’s, who is the narrator withal, “I had killed a man, for money and a woman. I didn’t have the money, and I didn’t have the woman” (Cain, 1936, p. 90).

Compared to this fictionalized version of the real-life occurrence, the plot is altered regarding the murder plan: the lovers wanted to make it appear that Mr.

Nirdlinger had died in a railroad accident. Also, the accomplices' intentions to kill each other after being discovered allude to blaming each other in the trial; hence, Walter Huff confesses, "I had known I would have to kill, for what she knew about me, and because the world isn't big enough for two people once they've got something like that on each other" (Cain, 1936, p. 95). Unlike the actual events, Cain put on paper their escape and, eventually, their suicides. In addition to this crime-fiction novel, the film adaptation of the same title, which Billy Wilder and Raymond Chandler wrote, was aired in 1944.

The other novel portraying the lovers' crime is *A Wild Surge of Guilty Passion: A Novel* (2011) by Ron Hansen. The author fictionally re-created the past event of puzzling marital infidelities interspersed with lust and desire and combined with a homicidally-oriented crime. Ruth Snyder is portrayed as a passion-driven, incautious, and alluring woman who purposefully insisted on her husband's murder, "She is endowed with an exceptionally voluptuous nature, the demands of which are ceaseless, imperious and utterly beyond control" (Hansen, 2011, p. 196). Being in a loveless marriage as well, Judd Gray's character of the lingerie salesman who was neat in appearance enhances the possibility of indulging in a love affair with Ms. Snyder and committing sexual transgression.

The vividly-written plot of this literary work is much more analogous to the actual event than Cain's novel (1936), although there are many artistic divergences and romantically-enriched facts. Case in point, in the course of their communication and surreptitious rendezvous, an enticing prospect of eroticism is subsumed, "Judd whispered, 'This is sheer happiness, just being with you.' She took the fleeting opportunity to kiss him, and Judd's palm cherished his lover's sensuous hip as they went down to the dining room" (Hansen, 2011, p. 96). Indeed, this thrilling crime fiction follows the murder plan, including Ms. Snyder's numerous attempts to kill her husband before Mr. Judd strangled him, the investigation process, their attempt at a getaway, and their despair, which ended with electrocution. Hansen (2011) paid particular attention to the cultural context at the time presented through unconventional social circumstances of delving into a loose-living and sybaritic lifestyle in New York City during the Jazz Age, which raised the illusive credibility of this historical fiction.

Last but not least, the fictionalized version of the Snyder-Gray murder was converted into a dramatic text of expressionism by Sophie Treadwell under the title *Machinal* (1928). Young Woman, who is an embodiment of Ruth Snyder, is a stenographer who is suffocated by societal rules that force her to marry a man

she doesn't love and to have a child with him, "Your skin oughtn't to curl—ought it—when he just comes near you—ought it? That's wrong, ain't it? You don't get over that, do you—ever, do you or do you?" (Treadwell, 1928, p. 19). The suffocating life of women in the day resulted in Young Woman's affair with another man, killing her husband, and finally, being executed in an electric chair. Ultimately, Treadwell's *Machinal* shows the other, more innocent side of Ms. Snyder's fictional character, which opposes the other authors' temptress-oriented representation of the real-life murderess.

Alice Crimmins: the high-profile prolicidal blonde

The other instance of double standards regarding gender is reintroduced in the case of Alice Crimmins, who was an American murderess, a working-class New Yorker as well, ergo Ms. Snyder's compatriot, who was accused of committing the gruesome act of killing her offspring, a girl and a boy, in 1965 (Jones, 1988). She had been tried many times before the final verdict, which featured the indictment of manslaughter of her daughter. Still, the prolicide⁸ seemed inconsequential compared to the enticing discussion of her sexual misconduct and lack of morals. Owing to the different social norms for female sexual offenders and their male counterparts, Ms. Crimmins was claimed to be convicted because she was a woman "like that" (as cited in Jones, 1988, p. 292). Her portrayal in the media substantially highlighted her representation of a promiscuous woman with exceedingly adulterous proneness insomuch that the word of her children's assassination in the press went under the shadow of criminal absurdness, which was aggravated by their mother's disreputable image of a sexual offender. From Jones' (1988) point of view, both Ruth Snyder and Alice Crimmins were the victims of sexual politics of the day, thence were charged with murder and incarceration for being adulteresses in a much greater degree than for committing the act of familicide, the former for the deed of mariticide and latter for performing prolicide.

Considering Alice Crimmins' representation in pieces of literature, Kenneth Gross's *The Alice Crimmins Case* (1975) is a non-fiction book based on prodigious research on Crimmins' case. This true-crime narrative embraces factual information from the prosecution and numerous trials, additional interviews, together with the commentary on the truth that lies behind witnesses' claims. Alice Crimmins seems unbiasedly represented, contrary to her portrayal by authorities and the press. Yet the book's author, a reporter on the spot,

indicates the police's biased approach towards the suspect and their determined claims that "the bitch killed her kids" (as cited in Gross, 1975, p. ix). As examples of extensive surveillance and privacy assault, the pre-determined conclusions, as well as the misconduct of the police when interrogating Ms. Crimmins and her husband, are brought out in this book, "I'll take that bitch" (as cited in Gross, 1975, p. 17). Consequently, the not-at-all even-handed investigation and prosecution were influenced by social mores similarly. Given that Gross leans toward the innocent side of Ms. Crimmins, he points out that the case was, in fact, unresolved since there was no actual evidence increasingly speculative about the possibility that she did not kill her children.

The other non-fiction book on this case is *Ordeal by Trial: The Alice Crimmins Case* (1972) by George Carpozi, which features the thoroughly collected and objectively presented unprecedented information. Despite its detailed exploration, it lacks a deeper analysis of either the physical or mental representation of the main suspect – Alice Crimmins. However, Carpozi (1972) concentrates on many elusive aspects of the case instead of the murderess' characteristics. In his loyalty to the straight-forward true-crime reportage without any biases, the author does not tilt towards the guilty-or-innocent perspective in the close observation of this case, "I'm not convinced that Alice Crimmins killed her children. Nor am I convinced that she didn't" (Carpozi, 1972, p. 330). Still, he admits that enough evidence did not corroborate the accusations. In either case, both Gross and Carpozi provided elaborate precedent-setting data.

Dorothy Uhnak's novel *The Investigation* (1977) is among the literary works inspired by the Alice Crimmins case. Kitty Keeler, the fictional character based on Alice Crimmins, is an attractive and robust woman whose psychological profile is well-depicted. She had two sons instead of a daughter and a son, as in the real-life story, and they both were found dead. Considering her profile as an uncommonly-behaved young mother, she was accused of the murders primarily because of public opinion. Being aware of it, Ms. Keeler confesses, "After all, I haven't behaved the way 'people' think I should, the way a 'mother' should have reacted [...]" (Uhnak, 1977, p. 206). She became a high-profile woman due to gaining excessive media attention, which emphasized her extraordinary life of indulging in socially unacceptable behavior considered uncommon for a female gender at the time. The leading investigator of the case, who falls for Ms. Keeler, believes in her innocence, but his belief is interspersed with some suspicion. However, he loses himself in the complexity of the case. Along with the

narrative about the not-so-epitome middle-class woman with offspring, this novel belongs to the police procedural type because it shows the role of politics in decision-making policies. Additionally, the play written on this topic, Neal Bell's *Two Small Bodies* (1977), appeared in the same year as Uhnak's piece of writing. The play's plot is set "in and around the apartment of Eileen Maloney" (Bell, 1977, p.4), an enticing woman inspired by Alice Crimmins. It revolves around their love-and-hate relationship marked by ambivalent sexual attraction.

The suspense novel by Emma Flint, *Little Deaths* (2017), is the other the-Crimmins-case-based work of noir fiction. The embodiment of Alice Crimmins is Ruth Malone, a cocktail waitress, and a single mother engaged in a custody battle whose children, a boy and a girl, were found brutally murdered. Based on what police found in her apartment, including consumed bottles of liquor, letters from various men, and inappropriate clothes, Ms. Malone was a prime suspect in the plot. Police's insistence on her guilt from the first night of investigation, especially emphasized by a lead detective, has reached public proportions: her culpability was the common judgment among the people, prosecutors, and the press. Therefore, similar to Uhnak's heroine, Ms. Malone is a victim of public opinion who is portrayed as a *femme fatale* with questionable morals – "a bitch in heat" (Flint, 2017, p. 1). The novice in tabloid reporting, the narrator, passes through different stages of his understanding of the crime: he explores the case, becomes obsessed with Ms. Malone, even though their face-to-face interaction is minimal throughout the novel, and eventually begins to believe in her innocence. The portraits of shady characters in Flint's noir fiction and compelling details throughout the plot provide a sense of reality as they do in Uhnak's previously discussed police procedural.

Nannie Doss: the cheerful self-made widow

Driven by melancholy after reading *The Awakening*, *The House of Mirth*, and *The Bell Jar*, a student complained to the author of *Women Who Kill*, "Isn't there anything a woman can do but kill herself?" Jones (1988, xv) responded, "She can always kill somebody else." Indeed, the presentation of a female serial killer of twelve alleged victims proves this claim true. In the 1920s and the middle of the twentieth century, Nancy Hazel, alias Nannie Doss, an American serial killer, confessed to multiple mariticides but reputedly killed many other members of her immediate family (Telfer, 2017). Her quadruple homicide, or it might even be regarded as androicide, was achieved by the most common female means of

killing – using poison. As pathologists of the time discovered, one of her poisoned husbands “had enough arsenic inside him to kill eighteen part-time Free Will Baptist ministers” (Telfer, 2017, p. 25). The other interesting point is her sobriquets: for her poisoning skills, she was named the ‘Black Widow’; due to her high spirits and laughter when talking about the murders that she committed, she was nicknamed the ‘Giggling Granny’; because of killing one husband after another, she is also known as ‘Lady Bluebeard’; and finally, she received the nickname the ‘Lonely Hearts Killer’ owing to her obsession with romance magazines, which were a means of contacting her victims in search for a soulmate.

Although Nannie Doss’s character is not illustrated in fiction, three true-crime stories represent her as a serial killer whose crimes were discovered after more than thirty years of reiteration of victimizing her other halves. In the non-fiction book by Ryan Green, *Black Widow: The True Story of Giggling Granny Nannie Doss* (2019), she is initially shown as a woman who committed filicide when she killed her two daughters. Unlike the other murderers who carried out multiple murders to quench their thirst for killing, the representation of Ms. Doss is prevalently romanticized through the portrayal of a woman searching for the love of her life. She was seemingly a woman with an ebullient mood and a cyclical mariticide habit whose murders were generally fueled by a reservoir of arsenic poison in the shape of a pie (Green, 2019). Rat poison was commonly a lethal *coup de grâce* to each of her husbands’ inappropriate behavior towards her. Her cheerfully portrayed character adds piquancy to the book about a romantic serial killer who put an end to many lives due to minor inconveniences. Besides chronologically arranged narration, the omnipresent point of view of the narrator and Ms. Doss’ unwavering inner thoughts, which vouchsafe what was in the murderer’s mind before and after she carried out the misdeed, contribute to the reliability of the plot in this book.

The shorter accounts, which were not related to minutiae as in the case of Green’s non-fiction book, are *The Giggling Granny: Serial Killer Nannie Doss* (2017) by Annette Rice and the recently published Lanell Trusso’s *Nannie The Giggling Granny: Life Of Alabama’s Most Prolific Female Serial Killer: A True Female Serial Killer* (2021). What they have in common with the previously discussed literary work is the rendering of a romantic serial killer. Given that the former provides an accurate biographical timeline, it is somewhat contentious since it focuses more on Nannie Doss’s childhood and life before her first

marriage than other books under consideration. For example, this narrative about the real-life murderess overtly implies that Ms. Doss might have killed her sister before other victims (Rice, 2017). On the other hand, the latter is more analogous to Green's book in terms of providing information on the main character. By way of comparison, Telfer (2017) claims that Ms. Doss murdered her mother, father, two sisters, two of her children, and a step-grandson; however, in Trusso's (2021) version of the real-life account, she killed one more grandson, her mother-in-law, and not her father. The former and the latter reckon without the main character's musing and thought conveyance from Green's inconsiderably more extended account.

20th century: domestic violence and battered women

Domestic abuse did not uncommonly beget women's violence: female victims of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse usually resort to atrocious acts out of desperation. However, intimate violence might not be the sole trigger for a woman to kill but also the *battered woman's syndrome*⁹, a foundation of women's impulsive reaction to defend themselves after coping with torture from their assailants over a long period (Jones, 1988). Jones (1988, p. 300) argues that, naturally, "at the time wife-beating was a growing feminist issue, following close on the heels of feminist attacks upon rape, a crime it resembles in many ways". Whether under a deranged or rational mental state or suffering a battered woman's syndrome, domestic violence was increasingly the major incitement among women to commit patricide in the twentieth century.

Francine Hughes: the victimized murderess

One of the American women who suffered persistent intimate abuse is Francine Hughes. She lived under insidious circumstances of domestic violence for thirteen years before she dispatched her ex-husband, whom she had already divorced. Still, he moved back after he had suffered a car accident. The incident in Dansville, Michigan, in 1977 was preceded by the refusal of the police to arrest Ms. Hughes' abuser on the same day (Jones, 1988). By setting fire to their home, or more precisely, to the bed in which her ex-husband was asleep, "tired from beating Francine," the violated woman could finally escape with her children (Jones, 1988, p. 299). Even though she was immediately accused of first-degree murder, the trial resulted in her acquittal by consequence of the

notion of temporary insanity, having particularly the battered woman's syndrome as a mental disorder defense. This was one of the first cases to acknowledge post-traumatic insanity for exoneration. Finally, it is also important to mention that American feminists strongly supported this case.

Concerning Ms. Hughes' literary representation, shortly after her acquittal, Faith McNulty, the children's author, wrote the true-crime book *The Burning Bed: The True Story of Francine Hughes, a Beaten Wife Who Rebels* (1980). This book emerged as an explanation of feminist retaliation in honor of the woman living in trepidation about her husband's next move and to prevent such contingencies. It captures her early life, encompassing her parents' portrayal and family affairs. Namely, it covers the occurrences with her alcoholic and abusive father, followed by her 'survival' with an even more abusive husband. Eventually, the murder and trial reportage coalesce into this compelling story. Her ordeal is additionally emphasized with conspicuous depictions that elaborately permeate this feminist classic.

Ms. Hughes, whose maiden name is Francine Moran, is also incorporated in the account. She is represented as a battered woman, which she indeed was, who heroically endured many years of intimate violence. Her spouse's bad temper erupted after their first child was born, yet it gradually exacerbated after each newborn, and they had four children. Mr. Hughes belabored and sexually assaulted her, threatening to kill her if she dared to run away from him. Reminiscing with disgust, the victim confessed that "he lunged and hugged her" while she "fought and pleaded," terrorizing her mentally as well, "I'm gonna keep it up [...] until you're sorry you were born" (McNulty 1980, p. 130). Ms. Hughes felt anguished about his volatile behavioral pattern, which would infrequently begin with drinking alcohol and watching television; consequently, it would lead to rape. Afterward, she admitted that she "felt dirty" (McNulty 1980, p. 137), filled with abysmal emotions of self-pity and self-loathing.

Apart from recurring beating, raping, and death threats, Mr. Hughes was a child abuser as well. Their pets were not spared either: he maltreated their dog and killed their cat. Illustratively, the misdeed mentioned above resembles the fictional motive for killing in Glaspell's *Trifles* (1916) and "A Jury of Her Peers" (1918). The other factor that made her mind foment an arson attack is the highly inefficient behavior of the civil authority of the government. Women at the time had no assistance from the police; what's more, they would usually turn a blind eye to domestic violence, although it was not a minor issue. Sticking to the facts,

McNulty (1980) draws attention to the fact that the investigation of physical abuse in a marriage, supported by the in-depth study from 1974, showed that 55 percent of the families in which physical abuse had been suspected confessed to wife-beating.

Overall, the behavior of Ms. Hughes' husband exceeded her suffering's limits. By the time Francine doused the bed with gasoline, she was already a 31-years-old woman with a history of the battered-woman experience; hence, she reassured herself never to regret her action, "Get in the car and go. Drive all night. Drive all tomorrow. Don't think about what happens after that! Don't think of anything except going! Go! And never turn back" (McNulty 1980, p. 193). Indeed, she never looked back because she was vindicated by the battered woman syndrome evidence and saved from a then-foreseeable second-degree murder. In addition to this accurate crime account, in 1984, the film adaptation of McNulty's book was released, titled *The Burning Bed*. Rose Leiman Goldember wrote the screenplay. It gained immense popularity, followed by many awards; this film aired a feminist slogan, "The Burning Bed," alluding to intimate violence and helping others familiarize themselves with it.

Conclusion

Albeit both books explore the crimes: potential motives to kill, methods and means which were used, as well as final verdicts and punishments, Telfer's and Jones' representations of murderesses evoke different conclusions. Telfer, on the one hand, puts forward women who prove the veracity of arguments regarding females being predators and having an insatiable appetite for murder. Jones, on the other hand, insightfully delivers on being a female and living in a threatening patriarchal world with dread, generally ranging from victimization and chastity to vengeance and deviancy. However, both confirm that women usually kill people closely related to them, rarely strangers. Female serial killers committed more vicious and calculated crimes than women who performed single or double crimes due to cold-blooded murders that were uninduced and not directly contingent on any emotional suffering, except the occasional example of mental illness. In opposition to that, women who committed homicide were sufferers of either somatic or psychological oppression or were detrimentally dissatisfied with their relationship with their victims. Whether one previously pondered the issue of killing or not, female homicide was, in most cases, an indication of female liberation.

Regarding socio-cultural aspects, various prejudices regarding female perpetrators were double-edged swords. The concepts of gender, class, and ethnicity might have degraded or benefitted a female offender. The idea of the fairer sex, and womanhood in general, was either an asset or a liability. From one point of view, the weaker-sex stereotypes would generally help serial killers to go unnoticed and homicide committers to be perceived as incapable of a gruesome murder. Observed from the other viewpoint, whether exonerated or indicted, prosecuted women's private lives mainly were widely questioned by the press and the public. They would be pilloried or subjected to persistent stigmatization and ostracism, whether convicted or acquitted. Also, higher-class women of American ethnicity were considered less prone to crimes, whereas lower-class women, usually immigrants, were highly prone to offenses. Additionally, in politico-jurisprudential terms, legal policies of various historical periods legislatively differ, and some of those lead to the deprivation of equality and an even-handed approach. Indeed, both socio-cultural and politico-jurisprudential issues that were not considered equitable for female offenders were severely criticized by feminists.

Literary texts that were based on murder cases and provide a particular characterization of a murderess are mostly post-mortem writings. True-crime books and biographies are ubiquitous among non-fiction accounts concerning genres. In fiction, crime-fiction novels and historical fiction, accompanied by suspense novels and mysteries, prevail, but dramatic texts are also present. Although non-fiction literary works predominate compared to very few pieces of fiction, the prime purpose of these literary writings has proved to exhibit dual or triple function. On the one hand, non-fiction works, including those texts that are non-analogous, slightly homologous, or almost compatible, transpire accurate and unprecedented information, as well as controversial fuel details. Still, their lack of findings on a particular crime issue might have left some questions unanswered. On the other hand, the fiction-work narratives, which consist of invented non-crucial aspects of the crime itself but follow the plot, setting, or some other event-specific notions or are designed freely to resemble the murder case, provide the more compelling aspects of the narrative and use various narrative techniques to display a more coherent but partially imagined story.

The representation of murderesses in American literature varies according to the type and degree of their offenses, as well the other matters of crimes, various circumstances involving the social and cultural context of the historical period in

which they lived, together with common ideologies of the time, non-fiction and fiction dichotomy, literary genres and its specifications, etc. From a real-life point of view, the depiction of characters in non-fiction writings is usually conditioned by the author's claim of guilt or innocence. From the make-believe viewpoint, fictional characters are highly victimized, romanticized, or devilled. Murderesses who commit a single or double murder are portrayed in three ways. The first representation is the picture of vindictive women who rebel because of having tortured psyche or physique. They are victims of their intimate partners or patriarchal society, as worn-out housewives and battered women are driven to despair and mental health problems. The second type of character representation is a romantic *femme fatale* with questionable morals driven by emotions and passion. They are also victims of mass media, public opinion, and common prejudices. Finally, the third kind of murderesses are serial killers depicted as devilish with certain mental instability, who appear to be undercover psychopaths featured with diabolical intentions. Those female offenders are highly inspirational to American authors; hence, their representations in American literature are heterogeneous and allow various interpretations of female violence.

Notes

1. European female killers are not included in our analysis because they fall outside the scope of this discussion.
2. The killing of one's spouse.
3. The killing of one's wife.
4. Lizzie Andrew Borden was an American woman accused of axe-murdering her father, Andrew Borden, and her stepmother, Abby Borden, in Fall River, Massachusetts, on the 4th of August, 1892 (Jones, 1988). After being tried and acquitted in 1893, she became a legendary figure and this double homicide gained an infamous reputation as one of the most famous crimes in American history. Moreover, the Borden case has not ceased to be a popular topic in American culture until the present day.
5. The killing of one's son/daughter.
6. Real-life Lizzie Halliday should not be confused with the fictional character of the same name in Nora Perry's romantic short story "Dick Halliday's Wife", which had been published before the American cognizance of Ms. Halliday and her crimes.

7. The killing of one's father.
8. The killing of one's offspring.
9. A mental health condition which is characterized by serious psychological symptoms of a woman who experiences constant violence from her intimate partner (McCleennen et al., 2016, pp. 184-186).

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ԿԻՆ ՀԱՆՑԱԳՈՐԾՆԵՐՆ ՈՒ ՄԱՐԴԱՍՊԱՆՆԵՐԸ ԱՄԵՐԻԿՅԱՆ
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ՊՈՍՏՄՈՂԵՌՆԻԶՄ

Ելենա Կնեժնիչ
Ալեքսանդրա Նիկչևիչ-Բատրիչևիչ

Հոդվածում ներկայացվում են ամերիկյան գրականության մեջ պատկերված կին իրավախախտների կերպարները վաղ գաղութատիրական շրջանից մինչև ուշ պոստմոդերնիզմ: Բացահայտվում են յուրաքանչյուր պատմական դարաշրջանին բնորոշ կին հանցագործներին բնութագրող որակներն ու հատկանիշները տարբեր գրական ստեղծագործություններում, ինչպես նաև դրանց հեղինակների պատկերացումները կին հանցագործների կողմից իրականացված սպանության դեպքերի սոցիալական, մշակութային, քաղաքական և իրավական համատեքստերի վերաբերյալ: Վեր են հանվում նաև գեղարվեստական և ոչ գեղարվեստական գրական տեքստերի նմանություններն ու տարբերությունները, որոնք նպաստում են կին մարդասպանի կերպարի ներկայացմանը՝ ըստ գրական տեքստի ժանրային, հանցագործության տեսակի և ժամանակի սոցիալ-մշակութային, պատմական և գաղափարական համատեքստի:

Բանալի բառեր՝ կին իրավախախտներ, հանցագործություն, մարմնական կամ հոգեբանական ճնշում, գրական ներկայացում, ամերիկյան գրականություն: