Intimate Violence and Victorian Print Culture

This page intentionally left blank

Intimate Violence and Victorian
Print Culture
Representational Tensions

Suzanne Rintoul

palgrave
macmillan

INTIMATE VIOLENCE AND VICTORIAN PRINT CULTURE

Copyright © Suzanne Rintoul, 2015.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2015 978-1-137-49326-2

All rights reserved.

Versions of some sections have been published in the following journals:

Chapter 1; Conclusion: "Intimate Violence and the Tenuous Boundaries of Class in Victorian Street Literature." *Victorians Institute Journal*. 36 (2008): 79–102.

Chapter 3: "Botanical Language and Discursive Subject Production in Caroline Norton's *Woman's Reward*." *Women Writers*. 19.4 (2012): 451–466.

Chapter 4: "'The Mysterious Woman and Her Legs': Partially Visible Violence and the Public Gaze in *Barchester Towers*." *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*. 7.1 (2011): n. pag. Web.

Chapter 6: "'My Poor Mistress': Domestic Violence in *The History of Mary Prince*." *English Studies in Canada*. 37.3–4 (2012): 41–60.

"Murder in the Borough," "The Sussex Tragedy," and "The Body of Hannah Brown, Mangled by Greenacre, Her Intended Husband" are printed here with permission from the British Library.

"Murder in the Borough" image provided courtesy of the British Newspaper Archive: www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

Thanks to the publishers and to the British Library for permission to reprint.

First published in 2015 by

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®

in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-69701-4

ISBN 978-1-137-49112-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137491121

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rintoul, Suzanne, 1979–

Intimate violence and Victorian print culture : representational tensions /

Suzanne Rintoul.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. English literature—19th century—History and criticism. 2. Women in literature. 3. Violence in literature. 4. Mass media and women—Great Britain. 5. Women—Violence against—Great Britain. 6. Mass media—Great Britain—History—19th century. I. Title.

PR468.W6R45 2015

820.9'928709034—dc23

2015000271

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: July 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	vii
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
Introduction: The Struggle to Represent Intimate Violence against Women	1
Part I Intimate Violence and Understandings of Class	
1 Sensational Crime Street Literature, 1817–1880	23
2 <i>Oliver Twist</i> , Journalistic Discourse, and the Working-Class Body	41
Part II Intimate Violence and Authorship	
3 Unfixing Identity and Resisting Violence in Caroline Norton's Pamphlets and Fiction	61
4 Sensational Sympathy in <i>The Woman in White</i>	95
Part III Intimate Violence and Institutional Authority	
5 Scrutinizing the Disabled Body in <i>Barchester Towers</i>	119
6 Marital Cruelty in <i>The History of Mary Prince</i>	137
Conclusion: The Limits of Oppositionality through Victorian Representations of Intimate Violence	153
<i>Notes</i>	161
<i>Bibliography</i>	173
<i>Index</i>	187

This page intentionally left blank

Illustrations

1.1	“Murder in the Borough”	39
2.1	“The Sussex Tragedy”	50
2.2	“The Body of Hannah Brown”	52

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

Writing a book about intimate violence throws into relief my own privilege, and I am compelled to express gratitude here for women who came before me—those affected directly by gendered violence and those who have done far more than I have to challenge the systems that encourage and tolerate it. Most of all, though, I want to acknowledge the women I refer to in these pages: Mary Ashford, Maria Marten, Celia Holloway, Hannah Brown, Caroline Norton, Mary Prince, and the countless unnamed women I encountered in the archives of the British Library. I am sorry for your suffering. I hope that you would approve of what this book tries to accomplish through exploring the records of your pain.

While writing this book in its various incarnations, I have benefited from the insights of several scholars who have read and discussed portions of my work. Sarah Brophy and Melinda Gough each provided indispensable guidance during the project's early stages. Grace Kehler, who has been perhaps the greatest influence on my writing to date, gifted me with conversation, counsel, and a munificence of energy that I aspire to capture as an educator. Shawna Ferris, Kaley Joyes, Emily Johanson, Andrew Griffin, and Stephanie Morley have all in different ways and at different times shared intellectual work and friendship after which my own efforts at both are modeled.

I want to thank my husband, Dan Atkins, for unwaveringly reminding me that yes, I can, and more importantly, that yes, I should. I am grateful for his patience and for his capacity to fold my aspirations into his own.

Months before finishing the final edits of this book, I gave birth to our daughter, Nora. This has impressed upon me more than ever the need to consider how representations of gendered violence produce meaning. This book is for her, and for any more children who might bless our family.