

**In a mad world, only the mad are sane.**

Akira Kurosawa (1910 - 1998)

Peter Barnes

The Ruling  
Class



The English Theatre Frankfurt

2013

*This is a quintessentially '60s fable, as the cruel forces of Conformity transform the eccentricities of a benign free spirit into something truly frightening and malevolent!*

**Teacher`s Support Pa**

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**Alle „Assignments“ in diesen Materialien eignen sich zum Training für monologische und dialogische Fertigkeiten für die Kommunikationsprüfung.**

### **How to apply this material:**

Diese Version ist für die ausführliche Behandlung des Stücks im Unterricht der Gymnasialen Oberstufe gedacht. Sie decken mit den Texten wesentliche Unterrichtsinhalte ab von

- Q 1: Them and Us                      (the One- Track mind, Prejudice, Intolerance)
- Q 2: Extreme Situations              (Love and Happiness, Fight for Survival, Tragic Dilemma)
- Q 3: Power and Politics              (The dynamics of change)

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### 1. The Author and his work

Peter Barnes, (1931 - 2004) was born in Bow, London, but his real inheritance was coastal rather than Cockney. "I grew up," he wrote, "in a downmarket seaside resort on the east coast where my parents worked in amusement arcades on the pier and later owned two cafes on the seafront, along with the cockles and whelks stalls, the deckchairs, Punch and Judy booths and artists who would draw, with a pointed stick, elegant pictures in the wet sand."

That background may explain the carnivalesque element in his work. After education at Stroud Grammar School, Gloucestershire, he served in the Royal Air Force and worked as a civil servant for the London County Council before turning to story editing for a movie production company in London.

But Barnes was also a keen student of history. He not only took a correspondence course in theology but clocked in daily at the British Museum Reading Room which became his study-centre and office. It still seems a slightly incongruous source for plays bursting with songs, dances and comic routines; and one cannot help wondering if the famous ceiling ever echoed to the sound of Barnes's irreverent laughter.

He became a playwright in 1963 with "The Time of the Barracudas," produced in San Francisco, and "Sclerosis," which opened in London. Prolific as a writer for stage, film and television, he skewered the hypocrisy and corruption of the privileged and the despotic with slapstick humor and literary allusion, fusing theatrical styles from tragedy to cabaret.

For British television, he adapted and directed Charles Dickens's "Hard Times" in 1994. The Associated Press reported that he also wrote a screenplay, "Babies," that is headed for the television cameras in Britain. "Babies" was based on Mr. Barnes's experience of becoming a father at 69, to a daughter, followed by triplets two years ago. Since then he had been a frequent television commentator on the subject of senior fatherhood.

He died in 2004, his survivors include his wife, Christie Horn Barnes, their daughter Leela, 4, and their triplets, Abigail, Zachary and Nathaniel, 19 months old.

Peter Barnes was an exhilarating dramatist who never found a secure foothold in British theatre. As a sworn enemy of naturalism and writer of large-cast plays such as "The Ruling Class" and "Red Noses", he was always swimming against the tide. But a Barnes play was always an exciting event; and running through all his work was a passionate belief that a joke can be an instrument of change rather a diversion from reality.

Following "The Ruling Class", Barnes wrote a series of plays offering nightmare visions of climactic moments from history. Leonardo's Last Supper (1969) showed the great artist, prematurely declared dead, achieving Lazarus-like resurrection in a filthy charnel-house. The "Bewitched", produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1974, was about the Spanish state's attempt to produce a rightful heir to the imbecilic and impotent Philip IV. Most daringly of all Laughter! seen at the Royal Court in 1978, was a double-bill that moved from the world of "Ivan the Terrible" to that of Auschwitz and that exposed the mind-numbing bureaucracy that sustained the concentration camps. Only a Jewish writer, like Barnes, could conceivably have treated Auschwitz

as a source of black humour.

Even if structure wasn't his strong point, Barnes was a dramatist of extraordinary vision who deserved better treatment than he received at the hands of the theatrical establishment. His prolific creativity was also accompanied by bountiful fertility in his private life. He became a father at 69 when his second wife, Christie, gave birth to a daughter, followed by triplets two years later. With characteristic energy, Barnes turned the experience of late-life fatherhood into a screenplay, *Babies*, due to be filmed for television.

But one hopes posterity will also re-examine the inordinate comic epics that were Barnes's theatrical legacy.



## 2. Introduction to the play (themes and production history)

### “The Ruling Class”

**The play is a late 20th century little known masterpiece.** While written in 1968, the play is amazingly topical, and the situations are recognizable as current. And Barnes wrote the roles and scenes in a very complex way; the audience never gets too comfortable either theatrically or with the characters. As soon as you think you can understand them, they violate that sensibility.

The 13th Earl of Gurney, avatar of the reactionary British landed aristocracy, has just accidentally hanged himself while engaging in kinky sexual practices. His family, eager to protect the Gurney mansion and immense estates, is concerned about Jack, the late Earl's only surviving son and heir. Jack`s family expect him to use his new position to advance the household's wealth and power, but Jack believes he's the "God of Love" and wants to give the money away. Through increasingly brutal means, his family attempt to cure him of his liberalism with hilarious and terrifying results.

**Info (1)**

**Marguerite Gautier,**

The Lady of the Camellias (French: La Dame aux camélias) is a novel by Alexandre Dumas, first published in 1848, and subsequently adapted for the stage. The Lady of the Camellias premiered at the Théâtre du Vaudeville in Paris, France on February 2, 1852. The play was an instant success, and Giuseppe Verdi immediately set about putting the story to music. His work became the 1853 opera La Traviata, with the female protagonist, Marguerite Gautier, renamed Violetta Valéry.

In the English-speaking world, *The Lady of the Camellias* became known as *Camille* and 16 versions have been performed at Broadway theatres alone. The title character is Marguerite Gautier, who is based on Marie Duplessis, the real-life lover of author Dumas.

Jack is a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic. He imagines himself to be Jesus Christ, the God of Love (he thanks himself when he says grace, and responds attentively when anyone says "Oh, my God"), and believes that he is married to **Marguerite Gautier, Dumas "Lady of the Camellias"**.

Tucker the butler, a closet Bolshevik, is newly enriched by a bequest in the late Earl's will, and continues to serve that family as butler, spitting in their soup, getting drunk and breaking into music-hall songs. Uncle Charles hatches a scheme to marry Jack off to his mistress Grace, dressed as "Marguerite", so that a new heir can be produced and Jack can be permanently committed to a lunatic asylum, his estates and his seat in the House of Lords safely held in trust by the rest of the family.

When the play turns even darker in the second act, and Jack, now cured, assumes a Victorian facade of propriety and periodically descends into an equally Victorian murderous secret self, the stage magically plunges us into the alleyways of Jack's imagination.

The play itself portrays Jack's actions, and those of his increasingly-desperate family as both comical and horrifying. Jack begins the play as a gentle soul - he calls himself the 'God of Love.' His family attempts to change that outlook, which is funny, but the results end up shocking both the family and the audience. Coming from a background of having their wills automatically being made manifest, the family truly are unprepared for what befalls them.

The play is about love, hope, class, nightmares, and monsters. It's a monumental play, and a world class ride. Through a darkly satirical approach, the work explores the themes of class difference and the complexity of the human.

When "The Ruling Class" was first staged in Britain in 1968, it created an uproar. Barnes' play was outrageous in its time not only for its irreverent subject matter but for its language (Jack is diagnosed as having "arbitrary discharge from the speech centre," a.k.a. diarrhea of the mouth) and for its anarchic theatrical freedom. Using a mix of understated wit and mordant savagery, it flailed Parliament, the Church of England, education, the British Empire and, particularly, the upper classes. Mr. Barnes himself preferred to call it "a baroque comedy." It as "an outrageous, lunatic comedy," but a difficult one to stage because of its eclectic style and an onrush of short scenes, characters and startling entrances.

He also wrote the script for the film, directed by Peter Medak, which opened in 1972. It starred Peter O'Toole as the 14th Earl of Gurney, who believes he is Jesus Christ, and Alastair Sim as the man of the cloth who has to put up with his nonsense.

Mr. O'Toole earned an Oscar nomination for his performance, and Mr. Barnes was later nominated himself for the screenplay of "Enchanted April" (1992), a romance set in 1920's Italy, which he adapted from the novel by Elizabeth von Arnim. His stage play "Red Noses," about a gaggle of traveling clowns at the time of the Black Death, earned him an Olivier Award for best play in 1994.

### 3. Characters

#### **Detective Inspector Brockett**

Called in after the murder of Claire, Detective Inspector Brockett discovers Lenin's books in Tucker's suitcase and therefore arrests him for the murder.

#### **Detective Sergeant Fraser**

Fraser is Brockett's assistant.

#### **Sir Charles Gurney**

Brother to the late Earl and uncle to Jack, the new Earl, Charles considers it is his family duty to get rid of Jack and take over the estate. He bickers with his wife Claire about how to eliminate his nephew and enlists the aid of his mistress to marry Jack and produce a legal heir he can control. He doesn't mind giving up his mistress, not being "the sensitive type," and is willing to sacrifice anything "for the family" for rather for his own gain. He is blind to his wife's affair with Dr. Herder and his own son, Dinsdale, is a disappointment to him.

#### **Lady Claire Gurney**

Claire is married to Sir Charles, but that doesn't stop her from having an affair with Dr. Herder, which she undertakes to elicit his support in committing her nephew. She also attempts to seduce Jack when he begins to show signs of improvement. She displays a sophisticated, tough exterior when she blandly lets on that she knows of her husband's affairs. Claire is a caricature of the jaded grand-dame; she play-acts the role of a highborn lady while emptily pursuing the goal of saving the family name. She is a woman with no illusions.

#### **Dinsdale Gurney**

The dimwitted son of Claire and Charles who has the knack of upper class snobbishness but none of its class. Dinsdale reveals his father's plot to Jack, not out of honesty or distaste for the ruse but because he had been left out of the planning. Dinsdale's biggest concern is whether Jack's madness will affect his position in Parliament.

#### **Jack Gurney, the Fourteenth Earl of Gurney**

Jack suffers from delusions of grandeur and, already a member of the peerage, the only step up for him is God. Therefore, he calls himself God, Yahweh, the Infinite



Personal Being, and sleeps on a cross. He urges everyone to pray for "love and understanding." When confronted with another paranoid-schizophrenic who also thinks he is the sole divine being, he goes through a metamorphosis, or rebirth, and emerges as Jack. Although his family considers this a cure, he really has exchanged a divine and holy identity for an evil and profane one: **Jack the Ripper (see Info pp.** In his madness can be found a quirky logic that endears Jack to others.

### **Gurney, the Thirteenth Earl of Gurney**

The prototypical British Lord, the Earl is very proper and dressed impeccably, complete with medals of honor on his chest, as he presides over the meeting of the



Society of St. George. He is a judge, a "peer of the realm," and the owner of a huge estate. He is about to marry a common girl, Grace Shelly, in order to provide his estate with an heir. He is eccentric and mentally unstable. He dies accidentally while enacting a hanging ritual, dressed in underwear, a ballet tutu, and a three-cornered hat.

### **Dr. Paul Herder**

A German psychiatric doctor who comes to the Gurney estate at Sir Charles's bidding to assess the possibility of committing Jack to an insane asylum. While at the estate, he seduces Claire so that she will aid him in obtaining funding for his experiments in rat schizophrenia, since Claire's husband sits on the grant board. Herder refuses to commit Jack, preferring instead to observe whether the "harsh dose of reality" of returning to his family will cure him. When that fails, Herder arranges a showdown between Jack and the High Voltage Messiah, another paranoid-schizophrenic. When Jack turns violent and murders Claire, Herder himself goes insane in a classic case of "transference."

### **Bishop Bertram Lampton**

The Bishop, Claire's brother, is an imposing figure at the funeral of the Thirteenth Earl, but without his robes, he is a wheezy, balding old man who collapses after the slightest exertion. He conveniently fails to understand the circumstances of the Earl's death.

### **McKYLE, the High Voltage Messiah**

The High Voltage Messiah, the Electric Christ, the AC/DC God, is clinically insane, a paranoid-schizophrenic who thinks he is the God of electricity. He's been told that Jack thinks he too is God. McKyle has "obliterated hundreds o' dupe-Messiahs" before; now he, being a Vengeful God, disabuses Jack of his megalomaniac pretensions as well.



**Matthew Peake**

The lawyer who reads out the Thirteenth Earl's will to the amazed family.

**Mrs. Piggot-Jones**

One of two church matrons who ask Jack to preside over the opening of their Church Fete. The ladies get swept up into a singing and dancing chorus line with Jack. They are affronted by the sexual innuendoes of his "God is love" litany.

**Mr. Shape**

Mr. McKyle's "assistant," who is really his warden.

**Grace Shelley**

Grace is Sir Charles's mistress, who willingly takes on the role of The Lady of the Camellias, or Marguerite Gautier, (both martyrs for love and important symbolically to Jack) as a way of advancing herself. Charles sets her up with Jack to provide the next Gurney heir. She starts out by using Jack, but his quirky innocence earns her genuine affection.

**Toastmaster**

Every proper British club has its toastmaster, who raps for attention and repeats the toast in a stentorian voice for all to hear. The toastmaster is a well-dressed servant.

**Mrs. Treadwell**

Another of the church matrons offended by Jack's irreverent behavior.

**Kelso Truscott, Q. C.**

Truscott prefers the title "Master of the Court of Protection" over "Master in Lunacy" since his "main concern is property and its proper administration," after all. Things do not go well for Jack's assessment until he breaks into an Eton school song and Truscott joins in. Being old school chums, they share certain values, such as the need for discipline against the barbarians and homosexuals. Truscott's verdict is that Jack is

**Daniel Tucker**

The Earl's personal manservant is aging but knows his place until he learns of the 20,000 pounds the Earl has left him in his will. Unfortunately, he lacks the imagination to leave, and so stays on as the family butler, though now he drinks to excess and makes rude remarks to the "Titled Turds." He has an alternate identity: Alexei Kronstadt, number 243, a dues-paying member of the Communist Party; but he admits, he doesn't "do anything." He becomes an easy scapegoat for Claire's murder, since everyone tacitly agrees that "the butler did it."

## 4. Themes

### 4.1 Insanity

#### Info (2)

##### Definition of **INSANITY**

a deranged state of the mind usually occurring as a specific disorder (as schizophrenia)

Such unsoundness of mind or lack of understanding as prevents one from having the mental capacity required by law to enter into a particular relationship, status, or transaction or as removes one from criminal or civil responsibility

> extreme folly or unreasonableness

> something utterly foolish or unreasonable

##### Usage of **INSANITY**

1. She was found not guilty by reason of *insanity*.
2. His friends thought his decision to quit his job was pure *insanity*.
3. Please, no more violence. It's time to stop this *insanity*.
4. the *insanities* of modern life

According to Dr. Herder, Jack's insanity consists of not believing "what other people believe"; he can't see reality but has his own reality designed to win him love. He is a paranoid-schizophrenic suffering from delusions of grandeur, and, since he is already at the top of British society, he can only satisfy his megalomania by being God himself. His insanity, however, rests on a logical basis. He finds that when he talks to God he is talking to himself. He might have concluded, with the rest of modern western civilization, that God therefore does not exist, but he instead believes that he exists within himself.

As a peer of England with a vast estate, positions of honor, and a personal manservant, Jack is a kind of god. His God before his encounter with the High Voltage Messiah is the God of Love. He is peaceful and peace-loving, harming no one. But because he stands in the way of his family's greed, he either has to be cured or locked up, out of the way. When he transforms into Jack the Ripper, he declares that he has "finally been processed into right-thinking power." He is no longer "the God of Love but God Almighty. God the lawgiver, Chastiser and Judge." This new form of insanity is harder for the other characters to detect, for he acts like one of them. His reactionary speech at the House of Lords, a vitriolic plea to reinstate punishment as a way of controlling "the weak," leads Sir Charles to shout "He's one of us at last." In a sense, he is cured, as the Master of Lunacy has declared him. In fact, his newfound charisma proves irresistible to women both Claire and Grace desire him and Mrs. Tread-well and Mrs. Piggot-Jones follow him slavishly.

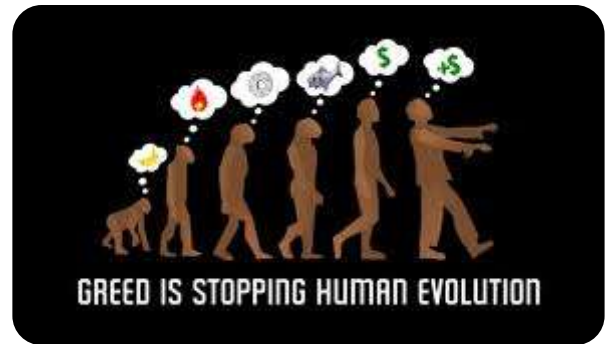
Insanity is often defined in terms of legal responsibility. One who is insane cannot be held legally responsible. Jack as the God of Love was irresponsible and a social misfit.

Jack as the God of Justice is eminently responsible, a leader in the highest social and legal circles of the land. The question of his sanity raises the question of the sanity of England's social system.

## 4.2 Greed

Greed is evident in all of Barnes's characters save the insane Jack. In the first half of the play, he represents the opposite of greed: Christian charity and "the unity of universal love." Alas, this unrealistic solution to life's challenges defines him as

clinically insane. The so-called sane members of the Gurney family, who vie for control over Jack's ownership of the estate, are all driven by greed. Sir Charles hopes to commit his nephew so that he can manage the estate and reap its power and riches himself, Claire compromises her integrity by staying with Sir Charles even though they both have other lovers, and the Bishop seems more concerned about the late Earl's promise of "the Overseas Bishopricks Fund" than about guiding the family spiritually.



When Sir Charles hears the reading of the will, which transfers the Gurney estate to Jack, he complains that his brother has "let his personal feelings come before his duty to his family." Charles would never let love get in the way of money. By contrast, Jack seems singularly disinterested in the value of his inheritance, spending his time meditating on his personal cross and urging the others to pray to the God of Love. In his madness, Jack adheres to better values than do his sane family members. In Grace the greed that drove her to adopt the persona of the Lady of the Camelias contests with her growing love for a man who treats her unlike her other lovers have done. As Claire announces nastily, Grace has made her living "on her back," trading sexual favors for social advancement and money. But Jack's "insane" insistence on love, his refreshing perspective, and his ingenuous love begin to win her away from greed to true love. Eventually, Grace doesn't want Jack "cured" out of fear that he will simply become another Gurney.

On the other hand, Tucker, who revels in his inheritance of 20,000 pounds, wants "more, more, more." He is caught red-handed with stolen silverware; this petty theft libels his character enough to make it easy to pin Claire's murder on him. Here is where the classes divide in Barnes's world: Tucker's greed sends him to prison, while the Gurney family's greed lands them in Parliament.

## 5. Extract from the play 1 (Act I, Scene 3)

### SCENE THREE

*A plain white backing lowered immediately Down Stage Centre into the spot, cutting the EARL OF GURNEY from view. SIR CHARLES and DR PAU HERDER, a thin man with a cold manner, enter from Wings Left and stand in front of it.*

### **Assignment 1: Getting behind the text!**

How should the following dialogue be spoken and acted out?

Which attitude about insanity and greed do we want to display?

DR.HERDER: His lordship is a paranoid--schizophrenic.

SIR CHARLES: But he's a Gurney.

DB. HERDER: Then he's a paranoid-schizophrenic-Gurney who believes he's God.

SIR CHARLES: But we've always been. Church of England.

DR HERDER: In paranoid-schizophrenia the patient's relationship with reality is disturbed. His idea of the world we live in is determined solely by his feelings. What he feels is *-is*. SIR CHARLES: If my nephew's bonkers, why the blazes did you let him out?

DR HERDER: He's a voluntary patient in a private clinic, free to leave when he chooses. His father insisted on no official certification. If you want him permanently detained here, bring him before the Board of Control or get the Master in Lunacy to sign an order.

SIR CHARLES: Er -later when we've got a few things settled.

DR HERDER: From the medical point of view a plunge into the waking world won't do the Earl any harm.

SIR CHARLES: Won't do him any harm. What about the rest of us?

DR HERDER: He's not dangerous. Provided he's left relatively secluded it shouldn't be too difficult. It'll be a very interesting experiment. A harsh dose of reality can sometimes help towards a cure.

SIR CHARLES: Cure! You've had him here for seven years already, and look at him. What've you been doing?

DR HERDER: Exercising patience and understanding. Something he'll need from his family.

SIR CHARLES (*testily*): Yes, yes, but why haven't you used the knife?

DR HERDER: Because lobotomy is irrelevant and dangerous in this case. He showed classic schizophrenic symptoms by withdrawing from his environment. Then, of course, he never forgot being brutally rejected by his mother and father at the age of eleven. They sent him away, alone, into a primitive community of licensed bullies and pederasts.

## 6. Historical context

### The Liberal 1960s

The 1960s were a time of defiant liberation in society, from politics, art, and music to dress, hairstyles, and morals. The “Liverpool poets” reflected the mood of elation and questioning in its poetry of pop culture, while music throbbed to a new beat and students took to the streets to protest all forms of oppression. Alongside the monolithic publishing houses, small presses sprang into being and thrived, producing avant-garde works in a distributed network of artists.



Inroads were developing into every aspect of culture; power was being redistributed. In England, where the noble class had always enjoyed prestige, the attitude of the middle class toward gentility (and toward the whole concept of gentility) moved from muffled but tolerant resentment to active disrespect. While much of the rhetoric of the 1960s was rancorous, Barnes's “The Ruling Class” introduced comedy to question the status quo. While the play does not urge social reform or raise an angry protest, it does prod the conscience—comedy being a gentle vehicle of

liberation.

The liberated 1960s valued sexual freedom as a natural right, a legitimate form of expression for those who rejected the rigid morals of the previous generation and of the conservative "establishment." The Ruling Class's protagonist, Jack, in his God-is-Love state expresses complete sexual freedom, courting his mate like a bird and successfully impregnating her. As Grace attests, "His mind may be wonky, but there's nothing wrong with the rest of his anatomy." His sexual freedom is of a part with his innocence and open-heartedness. But his naive attachment to an idealistic and impractical philosophy of "love and understanding" makes him unfit to "take his proper place in the world. He is "living in a dream world" (but then, according to Tucker, so are all rich people).

Jack's family desperately explores legal avenues of removing him, while he further terrifies them with his entreaty that they pray together. He defines prayer as "to ask, to beg, to plead." Of course, pleading is distasteful to those who command, who "kick the natives in the back streets of Calcutta." Jack cannot take his place in the ruling class until he accepts its systematic and brutal oppression of other classes and leaves off pleading to God or anybody else.

In 1969, in England as in the United States, young people deepen the chasm between their generation and their parents' generation. In dress, hair styles, speech, music, and politics, young people express their opposition to the status quo.



"Free love" and "love power" are mottoes of the hippie generation, who seek to cure the ills of society through acceptance and love. Sexual freedom, a natural outgrowth of their philosophy, is made viable through the introduction and wide availability of birth control.

### 7. Extract from the play 2: ACT I, Scene 6

EARL OF GURNEY (*advancing after them*): Mrs Pamela Treadwell, can you love? Can your blood bubble, flesh melt, thighs twitch, burst for love?

MRS TREADWELL: Your lordship, I'm a married woman.

EARL OF GURNEY: Sexual perversion is no sin.

DINSDALE (*voice off*): I say, have you seen my father?

EARL OF GURNEY (*advancing*): Remember the commandment I gave you, love one another as loved you.

MRS PIGGOT-JONES (*retreating*): Stay back! My husband is a Master of Hounds!

EARL OF GURNEY: Fill your hearts, let your eyes sparkle, your soul dance. Be *bird-happy*!

## 8. Production Reviews: "The Ruling Class"

### 8.1 Production at the Athenaeum Theatre, Chicago 2013 / Review by Lawrence Bommer

It's tricky not to give too much away. If anything, Peter Barnes' durable satire of the British aristocracy is even more trenchant 40 years later. Worse than ever, America has its equivalent—the 1%. Plus the inexplicable nostalgia over the late Margaret Thatcher, who divided and conquered England by crassly favoring the rich over the rest, proves that "trickledown" defenses of socialism for the affluent and austerity for the destitute continue to corrupt the body politic. Though louder than life and a bit blatant, Goat Song Theatre's revival puts Barnes' protest play where it belongs—in your face for all it's worth.

Barnes first presents the 13th Earl of Gurney as a cross-dressing suicide, which doesn't give us much hope for the 14<sup>th</sup> heir. True to the clan's played-out genes, Jack (a supple Evan Sawdey), an ex-monk now returned to the family demesne, turns out to be a sweet schizophrenic. Consistent in his assumption of unearned privilege, this likable but loony lad fancies himself Jesus Christ (the source of a lot of self-referential humor here). To the dismay of his venal relations, including his cousin Dinsdale (Jerico Bleu), a Conservative Party twit running for office, flower-child Jack likes to relax on the cross, delivers Franciscan-style speeches to the birds and buds, and pines for his true, if imaginary, love Marguerite Gauthier, la "dame aux camellias" from Dumas.

Like the original savior, Jack's Jesus clearly sympathizes with the lower orders, thus disgracing the Gurney name. (It's as if Downton Abbey became a co-op.) Assisting Jack's crack-brained schemes is his Sancho Panza-like manservant Tucker (an overly loud Rory Jobst), a secret Marxist who loves to cock a snoot at the snobbish Gurneys. Jack's devious uncle Charles (Larry Garner in fine fettle) orders his mistress (persuasive Echaka Agba) to impersonate Camille in the hope that Jack will sire an heir who can be exploited after Jack is successfully committed for insanity. But the Minister of Lunacy (David Coupe), recognizing Jack as a fellow Etonian, can't believe that an upper-crust twit could ever be balmy. Undeterred, Jack's shrink (John Wilson) intends to cure him of this obsession by

#### Info (3) AVATAR

The Sanskrit word **avatar** literally means "descent."

It refers to the descent of divinity from heaven to earth, and is typically used to describe an incarnation of God.

Paramhansa Yogananda explained that the term *avatar* refers to a soul who has been freed from maya (delusion) and is sent by the will of God back into manifested existence to help others.

Examples include the founders of major world religions, such as Jesus Christ, Buddha, and Krishna. Yogananda said that an avatar "is born not to show us how great *he* was, but to give us hope that the state of consciousness he had attained, we too can attain."

confronting him with the "electronic messiah," an even crazier **Jesus Christ avatar**. The result, which is where any synopsis must stop, backfires in the old "Beware what you wish for" manner. Jack is altered all right—but into a more fascist form of bogus privilege. Barnes' abiding irony is that a Jesus Christ amidst the House of Peers would indeed be a fish out of water—but another

sort of leader can fit in all too easily. The God of Love can easily become his vicious and homicidal Old Testament predecessor. The casting is well-targeted and the pace brisk enough, considering the overlong second act that seems to be desperate for an ending. The Ruling Class has earned its right to relevance in 2013 and, sadly and certainly, for many years beyond.

## **8.2 Production at the Backstage Theatre, Chicago 2011**

**by Rory Leahy, Centerstage.net**

For all the underlying strength of the material and talent of its ensemble, the Backstage Theatre's production of Peter Barnes' 1968 play "The Ruling Class," directed by Brandon Bruce, suffers from a surprisingly laborious pace in its first act, but rebounds impressively over time as it develops into an intriguing and enriching narrative.

The play begins deceptively as a witty but plodding drawing room farce, in which the stuffy Gurney family (headed by David Elliott and Meredith Siemsen), following the suicide of their patriarch, attempts to retain control of the family fortune by manipulating Jack, his sole heir (the fearless Stephen Dunn). Unfortunately Jack is crazy, having spent the last several years in a private mental hospital being treated for his belief that he is God. The first act focuses on the charming and lovable nature of Jack's delusion, as he is a benevolent God, "the God of Love," as he terms himself. He is compassionate, charming and joyous. His none too approving family enlists the aid of stern Dr. Herder (Christopher Kaye) to use a form of shock therapy to bring Jack back to sound mental health. This plan is put in motion at the climax of the first act, when Jack is forced to confront "the electric messiah," another patient who believes himself to be the Almighty (Sean Sullivan, who also designed the show's excellent scenery).

The second act finds Jack cold, ruthless, puritanical and contemptuous of women and the lower classes, in other words, "normal" for a British aristocrat. However, we quickly learn that Jack's madness has not left him but simply taken on a far more sinister form, as he now considers himself to be "the God of vengeance" and begins to behave in increasingly disturbing ways towards those around him.

Bruce directs with a surrealism that illuminates the unstable protagonist's unhinged state of mind, enhanced by the use of masks and musical numbers. This is a quintessentially '60s fable, as the cruel forces of conformity transform the eccentricities of a benign free spirit into something truly frightening and malevolent. But Bruce and his cast go beyond the clichés of the time and place to explore the deepest and darkest territories of this fascinating play. Early pacing problems aside, this is a gripping, amusing and ultimately haunting piece of theater.

### ***Assignment 2: Analysis and creative writing!***

How do the authors evaluate

a) the play

b) the artistic achievement of the actors and the director?

Write a review on the production at the ETF!

## 9. Film



### The Ruling Class: Peter O'Toole's Forgotten Comic Masterpiece !

Peter Medak Directs.  
Marvellous Supporting Cast.  
Film Based on Play by Peter Barnes

I can't figure out why The Ruling Class isn't more well known among movie classics, particularly since it stars Lawrence of Arabia legend Peter O'Toole. Maybe it's too brilliantly absurd for its own good? The film starts out with some pretty aggressive physical comedy: while trying to relax before his nightcap after a successful speech before Parliament, the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Gurney (played by Harry Andrews) dons his favorite military jacket, cocked hat, and tutu to indulge in a little auto-erotic strangulation.

The Earl goes about this bit of business as though he's awfully familiar with the ritual, but tonight he slips up and accidentally hangs himself. The reaction of his manservant Tucker (Arthur Lowe), as he enters only slightly too late to save the day with the Earl's intended whiskey on a tray, sums up the film's darkly comic yet bedrock-earnest take on life and death: Mozart's Requiem plays on the sound track, but Tucker just gasps "Bleedin' bloody hell!" before he slams back the dead Earl's drink.

The Gurneys themselves give great reaction shots to the death themselves; instead of grieving, they simply marvel at the shameful circumstances; the dead Earl's sister-in-law hints that Nr. 13 was always a bit artistic, to which his brother Charles snaps: "He was willful, stubborn, and this time he did go too far, but he was my brother -- well, half-brother -- and I will not have you calling him 'artistic'!"

Seems 'art' runs in the blood: at the reading of the will, the entire family recoils in disgust as the old Earl's son is named main heir. But the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl misses their initial reactions: the newly minted Lord Jack (Peter O'Toole's role), already having missed the funeral, finally wanders late into the reading of the will. He's dressed as Jesus, and apologizes for his tardy arrival with the vague explanation that his 'community' lives a bit disconnected from the rest of the world. As the film was made in 1972, the first explanation that comes to mind is that he lives in a hippie commune. But it quickly becomes clear that Lord Jack has been living in a mental home, because he's

#### **Assignment 3:**

#### ***Collecting information and coming to an agreement!***

Click and see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=me16f258RKY>

Decide whether you would like to watch the whole film and compare it to the theatre version at the ETF!



suffering under the very vivid delusion that he's Jesus.

The rest of the two-and-a-half-hour comic voyage (Peter O'Toole seems to send directors into epic mode, I guess) depicts this 'superior' family's talent for cunning, nasty, and ridiculous plots, from Charles's relentless attempts to lock Jack up for good and take over the family helm, to the plot to convince Jack to enter an arranged marriage by dressing his betrothed up as his favorite opera character, to Jack's own devious cover-up of the murders he commits after a psychiatrist is enlisted. The Master in Lunacy looks like he should heal himself first. to 'cure' him of his delusion that he's the God of Love (and only succeeds in turning him into a misogynistic hate-killer). Nearly every scene, no matter how dark, is stuffed with one-liners like "He's not only mad, he's Bolshie!" and "He's Sherlock Holmes's brother, you illiterate oaf."

The acting is a delight; although they never 'break,' you get the distinct feeling the actors are having wonderful fun with their parts. Arthur Lowe is alternately hilarious and oddly tragic as Tucker, the drunken, secretly socialist manservant to the head of the Gurneys who inexplicably sticks around (to the family, anyway; he's working on his Commie plot, which never quite gets off the ground) long after he nets the 30 grand which the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl left him (a gift apparently meant just to spite the rest of the Gurney clan).



The ever-vampirish Peter O'Toole (gotta love those protruding canine teeth) is by turns marvelously creepy and disturbingly sexy as the mad heir to the family fortune. And the female actors, particularly Coral Browne as Lady Claire, play their parts with just enough unbearable ruling-class bitchiness to make Lord Jack's second major delusion -- that he's the reincarnation of Jack the Ripper -- believable, at least within the wacked-out satirical fabric of the film.

### 10. Extract from the play 3: Act I, Scene 6

(cf. Info 1 p. 4)

SIR CHARLES: If Jack had a son, Sir Humphrey says we could have him certified quietly, because everything could then pass to the heir. We'd administer the estate till the boy came of age. That way everything'd remain in the family.

CLAIRE (*sarcastically*): Oh, brilliant. A small point, but before he can have an heir, our lunatic nephew has to be married.

SIR CHARLES: Exactly. And the sooner the better!

*The EARL enters Up Stage Centre playing a flute.*

EARL OF GURNEY: Married?

SIR CHARLES: Yes, J.C., you should take a wife.

EARL OF GURNEY: Who from?

CLAIRE: I'm sure we'll be able to find you a suitable young goddess.

SIR CHARLES: Most appropriate, eh-eh?

*They chuckle to themselves.*

EARL OF GURNEY: But I can't marry a second time.

*They immediately stop chuckling.*

SIR CHARLES: A second...

CLAIRE (*skeptically*): Second wife? You believe you're already married?

EARL OF GURNEY: On August 28th in the year of me, 1961.

SIR CHARLES *looks across doubtfully at CLAIRE who shakes her head.*

Somerset House records will confirm. Father wanted it kept secret for some reason.

*He walks away to Wings Right playing the 'Drinking Song' from 'La Traviata' on the flute.*

SIR CHARLES: This wife of yours? What's her name?

EARL OF GURNEY: Marguerite Gautier.

SIR CHARLES: French.

DINSDALE (*slowly*); Marguerite Gautier?... Gautier?... I say, isn't that the 'Lady of the Camelias'?

EARL OF GURNEY: You know her too? Wonderful!

*He exits playing the aria. DINSDALE and SIR CHARLES exchange looks and rush after him. Blackout.*



### SCENE SEVEN

*Spot up on white screen lowered down Stage Left to show CLAIRE and DR HERDER talking.*

DR HERDER: Of course there's no question of marriage. He has no wife, but he believes he has, which is the same thing.

CLAIRE: Why did he pick on Marguerite Gautier?

DR HERDER: Another martyr for love. His delusions ate of a piece. Marguerite is the only person he trusts.

CLAIRE: Why does he keep on about love?

DR HERDER: Because he hasn't had any. Or wasn't shown any, which is just as bad. He wants us all to love goodness. To love goodness is to love God, to love God is to love the 14th Earl of Gurney.

CLAIRE: That's very clever. Is it the truth?

DR HERDER: Lady Claire, don't come to me for the truth, only explanations.

CLAIRE: Does any of his talk mean anything?

#### **Assignment 4: Madness or Method? Punishment? - Open discussion/Drama -**

Prepare a written statement on the objective truth and the subjective meaning of the behaviour of weird people!

Discuss in class:

Is Jack`s conduct clever strategy or madness?

Compare his conduct and speech to "Hamlet" (see Info p.17)

Find a new ending to the play!

Make up a trial at court :

Should Jack be imprisoned sentenced to death?

**Info (4)** Shakespeare, Hamlet

HAMLET [sarcastically] (3,4,203-209)  
Make you to ravel all this matter out,  
That I essentially am not in madness,  
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let  
him know;  
For who, that's but a queen, fair,  
sober, wise,  
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a  
gib,  
Such dear concernings hide? who  
would do so?

LORD POLONIUS (2,2,221-227)  
[Aside] **Though this be madness, yet  
there is method  
in 't.** Will you walk out of the air, my  
lord?  
HAMLET  
Into my grave.  
LORD POLONIUS  
Indeed, that is out o' the air. [note:  
pun on air/heir]

## 11. Murderers and Cult leaders - when personalities grow erratic

### 11.1 The DuPont case

John Eleuthère duPont (November 22, 1938 – December 9, 2010) was an American billionaire and member of the prominent du Pont family who was convicted of murder in the third degree (of Freestyle wrestler Dave Schultz). He was also known as an amateur ornithologist and conchologist, philatelist, philanthropist, coach, and sports enthusiast. Prior to his arrest and conviction, he was an American ornithologist, a former coach and financial sponsor of sport wrestling, and a philanthropist. John du Pont graduated from the University of Miami in 1965 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology. In 1983, he married occupational therapist Gale Wenk but emotional instability was already evident and the difficult marriage ended in a 1985 divorce.

On 26 January 1996 he shot dead Olympic gold medalist wrestler David Schultz at the wrestling facility of du Pont's Team Foxcatcher on du Pont's estate in Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, outside Philadelphia, without apparent provocation and with Schultz's wife among several

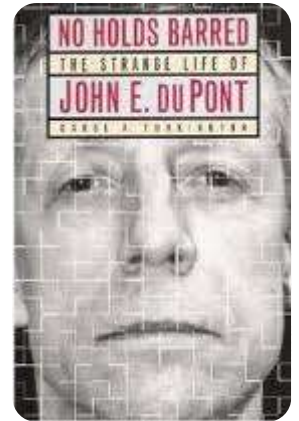
witnesses. After the shooting, the multimillionaire locked himself in his mansion for two days, while he negotiated with police on the telephone. Police turned off his power, and were able to capture him when he went outside to fix his heater.

Those who knew duPont well said the shooting was uncharacteristic behavior for him. For example, Joy Hansen Leutner, a triathlete from Hermosa Beach, California, lived for two years on the estate. Dupont helped Leutner through a stressful period in the mid 1980s. She later said, "with my family and friends, John gave me a new lease on life. He gave more than money; he gave himself emotionally." She expressed incredulity about the killing. "There's no way John in his right mind would have killed Dave."

Newtown Township supervisor John S. Custer Jr. said, "at the time of the murder, John didn't know what he was doing." Charles King, Sr., a duPont stable hand and manager for 30 years, knew duPont well throughout his life. King's son Charles "Chuckie" King Jr. considered duPont his friend during his childhood. Charles King Sr. still blames Patrick Goodale, an ex-Marine and duPont security consultant, for influencing what happened. "I don't think John could shoot someone unless he was pushed to or was on drugs," he says. "After that guy [Goodale] starting hanging around him, my son always said Johnny changed. He was scared of everything. He was always a little off. But I never had problems with him, and my son never had problems."

Expert psychiatric testimony described du Pont as a paranoid schizophrenic who believed Schultz was part of an international conspiracy to kill him. On February 26, 1997, a jury found him guilty of murder but mentally ill.

He was first eligible for parole January 29, 2009; however, it was denied. DuPont's maximum sentence would have ended on January 29, 2026, when DuPont would have been 87. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the verdict in 2000. In 2010 the 3rd Circuit U.S. appeals court in Philadelphia rejected all but one issue raised on appeal (involving his use of a Bulgarian prescription drug, scopolamine, before he fatally shot Schultz in 1996), and requested written briefs. However, DuPont died in prison on December 9, 2010.



### 11.2 Press Coverage

John E. du Pont, Heir Who Killed an Olympian, Dies at 72

By JERÉ LONGMAN, New York Times (December 9, 2010)

John E. du Pont, an heir to the du Pont chemical fortune whose benevolent support of Olympic athletes deteriorated into delusion and ended in the shooting death of a champion wrestler, died Thursday in a western Pennsylvania prison. He was 72.

Mr. du Pont was found unresponsive in his cell at Laurel Highlands State Prison near Somerset, Pa., a prison spokeswoman told The Associated Press.

“He had had some illnesses, so we are considering it natural,” Susan McNaughton, the spokeswoman, told The A.P., adding that the Somerset County coroner would make the final determination of the cause of death.

In 1997, Mr. du Pont was found guilty but mentally ill in the shooting death the previous year of Dave Schultz, 36, who had won a gold medal in freestyle wrestling at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics and was training for the 1996 Atlanta Games. Mr. du Pont was sentenced to 30 years in prison.

The shooting occurred at Mr. du Pont’s estate in Newtown Square, Pa., West of Philadelphia, where Mr. Schultz lived and trained. After the shooting, Mr. du Pont barricaded himself inside his home for two days but was taken into custody when he left his mansion to fix a boiler that the police had shut off.

Mr. du Pont was a great-great-grandson of and one of more than 1,000 descendants of the industrialist E. I. du Pont, who in 1802 built gunpowder mills in Delaware that evolved into the family’s giant chemical corporation.

John Eleuthère du Pont was born Nov. 22, 1938, in Philadelphia and lived a lavish and eccentric lifestyle. He built the Delaware Museum of Natural History to house his renowned collections of 66,000 birds and two million seashells. And on his rolling 800-acre estate, he built a \$600,000 training center for pentathletes, swimmers and wrestlers, who competed under his sponsorship as Team Foxcatcher.

On occasion, Mr. du Pont ferried athletes to competitions in his helicopter. But his behavior changed from unconventional to troubling over the years, athletes who had trained with him said at the time of the shooting.



Mike Gostigian, a former Olympic pentathlete who knew him from childhood, said in 1996 that Mr. du Pont's personality seemed to grow more erratic after three incidents in the 1980s: an automobile accident that curbed his vigorous life as a sportsman, a brief marriage that failed and the death of his mother, Jean Austin du Pont.

Shortly after the shooting of Mr. Schultz, friends and relatives of Mr. du Pont said he had abused drugs and alcohol. They also described a man whose behavior had grown extremely strange. At the 1995 world wrestling championships in Atlanta, Mr. du Pont wore an orange jumpsuit and asked to be introduced as the Dalai Lama. By early 1996, he had begun to grow more isolated and delusional, acquaintances said.

"Dave was the person closest to John," Mr. Gostigian said at the time, referring to Mr. Shultz. "He was a calming influence, a confidant. But Dave wasn't a yes man. If John said he saw things coming out of the walls, Dave said nothing was coming out of the walls. I think John might have harbored some delusional fear of him." After the shooting, some wrestlers who had trained at Foxcatcher said they blamed themselves for not demanding that Mr. du Pont seek professional help, fearing they would lose his sponsorship money.

"People saw it coming; no one did a damn thing about it," Kurt Angle, who won a gold medal in freestyle wrestling at the Atlanta Olympics, said at the time. On Thursday, Mr. Schultz's father, Philip, told The A.P. that in many ways "John du Pont died for me the day he took my son's life."

"So," he added, "the fact that he's officially gone is almost a moot point. I did forgive the man for what he did. I never forgave the act."

#### **Assignment 5: Comment**

How did the press deal with the DuPont Case? Was he judged in a fair way?

How do you feel about a person like DuPont?

### **11.3 Marshall Herff Applewhite Jr.**

Applewhite (May 17, 1931 – March 1997) was an American religious leader who founded what became known as the Heaven's Gate religious group and organized their mass suicide in 1997. It was the largest mass suicide to occur inside the U.S. A native of Texas, Applewhite attended several universities and

served in the United States Army as a young man. After finishing school, he taught music at the University of Alabama. He later returned to Texas, where he led choruses and served as the chair of the music department at the University of St. Thomas in Houston. He left the school in 1970,

citing emotional turmoil. His father's death a year later brought on severe depression. In 1972, he developed a close friendship with Bonnie Nettles, a nurse; together, they discussed mysticism at length and concluded that they were called as divine messengers. They unsuccessfully attempted to open a bookstore and teaching center, and then began to travel around the U.S. in 1973 to spread their views. However, they only gained one convert. In 1975, Applewhite was arrested for failing to return a rental car and was jailed for six months. In jail he further developed his theology.

After his release, Applewhite traveled to California and Oregon with Nettles, eventually gaining a group of committed followers. Applewhite and Nettles told their followers that they would be visited by extraterrestrials that would provide them with new bodies. Applewhite initially stated that he and his followers would physically ascend to a spaceship, where their bodies would be transformed, but later, he came to believe that their bodies were mere containers of their souls, which would be placed into new bodies. These ideas were expressed with language drawn from Christian eschatology, the New Age movement, and American popular culture.

The group received an influx of funds in the late 1970s, which it used to pay housing and other expenses. In 1985, Nettles died, leaving Applewhite distraught and challenging his views on physical ascension. In the early 1990s the group took more steps to publicize their theology. In 1996, they learned of the approach of Comet Hale-Bopp and rumors of an accompanying spaceship. They concluded that this spaceship was the vessel that would transport their spirits aboard for a journey to another planet. Believing that their souls would ascend to the spaceship and be given new bodies. As the Hale-Bopp comet drew closer to Earth in 1997, Applewhite and his followers prepared to make their exit from this world. On March 21, they ate a last supper of sorts at a restaurant, all ordering the same thing: turkey pot pie, cheesecake with blueberries and iced tea. A day or two later, when the comet was closest to the planet, Applewhite and his followers took their own lives by drinking a mixture of vodka and barbiturates thus committing mass suicide in their mansion.

A media circus followed the discovery of their bodies. In the aftermath, commentators and academics discussed how Applewhite persuaded people to follow his commands, including suicide. Some commentators attributed his followers' willingness to commit suicide to his skill as a manipulator, while others argued that their willingness was due to their faith in the narrative that he constructed.

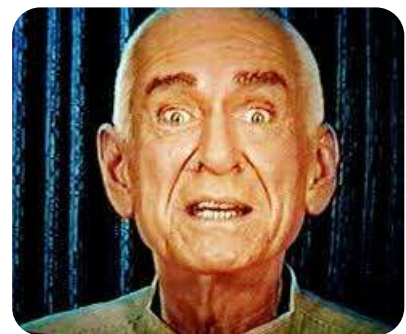
#### **Assignment 6: Character study**

Listen to Marshall Applewhite:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqSZhwu1Rwo>

Compare his way of speaking to Jack Gurney in the presentation by Peter O`Toole in the movie:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KOCJ338qYno>



## 5.4 Jack the Ripper

If, as is generally believed, Jack the Ripper had only five victims then he wasn't a particularly prolific murderer compared to many who have come since, and the fact that his so-called reign of terror lasted a mere twelve or so weeks means that he wasn't at large for a particularly long period of time. Yet there is little doubt that he is the world's most famous serial killer. Why should this be?

Several factors combined to help make this series of crimes famous all over the world. Not least amongst them was the fact that the newspapers of the day gave a huge amount of coverage to the crimes and provided their readers with daily updates on them with the result that Jack the Ripper effectively became a menacing media figure.

Secondly, the area in which the killings occurred was perceived as being a hotbed of vice and villainy, and a breeding ground for social unrest, squalor and disease. The Whitechapel Murderer, in the eyes of the wider Victorian society, came to be seen as the personification of all the evils with which the East End of London was associated.

Finally, there was, of course, the name by which the killer came to be known - Jack the Ripper. It was this name - which was probably the invention of a journalist - that had the effect of turning five sordid East End murders into an international phenomenon and of catapulting the unknown miscreant responsible into the realm of legend.

### HOW MANY VICTIMS WERE THERE?

It is generally believed that there were five victims of Jack the Ripper.

- Mary Nichols, murdered on 31st August 1888.
- Annie Chapman, murdered on 8th September 1888.
- Elizabeth Stride, murdered on 30th September 1888.
- Catherine Eddowes, also murdered on 30th September 1888.
- Mary Kelly, murdered on 9th November 1888.

### EAST END HISTORY

But the Jack the Ripper murders also serve as a reminder of a not too distant past when a whole section of London society fought a daily battle against poverty and starvation.

As such they provide us with a window through which we can look back on a bygone age when the eyes of the world were focussed on the daily lives and struggles of the East Enders who were most affected by the crimes.

Thanks to newspaper reportage on the case, coupled with the records and musings of philanthropists and reformers who wished to bring the plight of the East End's poor to the

### **Assignment 7:**

#### **Listening Comprehension**

Click and listen to:

<http://www.jack-the-ripper.org/victims-of-jack-the-ripper.htm>

Report in class !



attention of the wider Victorian society, we have an unrivalled opportunity to, literally, peer into the very streets where the Whitechapel Murders occurred at the time they were occurring and to observe the impact the killings had on those who dwelt in the area.

#### THE POLICE INVESTIGATION

Of course the murders were also the focus of a huge criminal investigation that saw the Victorian police pit their wits against a lone assassin who was perpetrating his crimes in one of London's most densely populated and crime ridden quarters.

As a result of official reports and the efforts of journalists to keep abreast of the progress (or, perhaps more accurately, lack of progress) that the police investigation was making, we are able watch that investigation unfolding. We can analyze the methods that the police used to try and track the killer and compare them with the methods that the police would use today. We can also ask - and hopefully answer - the question why didn't the police catch Jack the Ripper?

The Victorian police faced numerous problems as they raced against time to catch the killer before he could kill again. A major one was the labyrinth-like layout of the area where the murders were occurring, made up as it was of lots of tiny passageways and alleyways, few of which were lit by night. And, of course, the detectives hunting the killer were hampered by the fact that criminology and forensics were very much in their infancy.

#### JACK THE RIPPER SUSPECTS

Despite the fact that no-one was ever brought to justice or charged with the crimes, there have, over the years, been more than a hundred named suspects who may or may not have been Jack the Ripper. Some of those suspects are fascinating. Others are downright ridiculous.

Yet one thing is certain. No matter how unlikely the names of those that appear on the ever expanding list of suspects might be, the ongoing challenge of "nailing" the ripper has helped keep this series of crimes at the forefront of criminal and social history for over 120 years.

#### PRESS COVERAGE OF THE CASE

One of the more intriguing aspects of the Jack the Ripper murders is the amount of worldwide newspaper coverage that they generated. Journalists converged on the streets of the East End to report on the murders, and were often appalled by the diabolical living conditions that they encountered.

Pages and pages were given over to reporting on the inquests into the deaths of the victims; local residents were interviewed at length; police officers were followed, and sometimes even bribed, as reporters endeavoured to secure that all too elusive exclusive that might help sell more newspapers.

The authorities were subjected to a constant barrage of press criticism, both for the inability of the police to bring the killer to justice, and the appalling social conditions that they had allowed to develop unchecked right on the doorstep of the City of London, the wealthiest square mile on earth.

Plus, most importantly, and as mentioned earlier, the name *Jack the Ripper* was most probably the invention of a journalist.



## JACK THE RIPPER'S LONDON TODAY

Given the passage of 125 years since the murders occurred it's amazing how much of the area has managed to survive since 1888. Although the murder sites themselves have long since vanished, there are numerous streets and buildings that have survived and which are, more or less, the same now as they were in the late 19th century.

The Ten Bells Pub, which is linked to several of the victims is still going strong - albeit it is trying to distance itself from its ripper related past.

### 5.5 Prostitution

In 1885 Parliament passed the Criminal Law Amendment Act. It was intended as:-

"An Act to make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls, the suppression of brothels, and other purposes."

Two of the more far reaching aspects of the Act were the raising of the age of consent from thirteen to sixteen and the criminalization of male homosexuality, which would remain criminalized until the 1960's

Of immediate impact on the victims of Jack the Ripper was the Act's tougher stance on brothels and prostitution. Combined efforts by Social Purists and the National Vigilance Association saw a determined effort to bring into operation and give effect to the Criminal Law Amendment Act, in particular with respect to discovering and checking "...the causes of criminal vice..." and "to prosecute offences against the law, and to expose offenders to public censure..."

The attitude of these organizations was that by working the streets and other locales frequented by "respectable" citizens prostitutes made life intolerable for the community in which they plied their trade. As a result the consensus was that they should be treated as public nuisances. One observer complained of:

"the fearful prevalence ...of a gross state of street prostitution attended by features of a very disgusting character, particularly between the hours of 10 and 12 at which it is not fit for any respectable female to walk about and young men cannot do so without molestation..."

Another commented that:

"there is only one remedy - repression. By the joint action of policeman and citizen, it can be repressed."

Although the purists and the Vigilance Associations were dependent on the police to enforce the law the police themselves were often reluctant to do so.

If a particular organization suspected a house was being used as a brothel they would report their suspicion to the local Parish Vestry who in turn would instruct the police to keep the premises under surveillance in order to obtain the necessary evidence to prosecute the owners.

However, when Sir Charles Warren became Metropolitan Police Commissioner he decided that, since watching known brothels was not officially part of their duty, his men were no longer to undertake this activity for the Parish Vestries.

Warren's main objection was that deploying policemen to watch houses of ill-repute was effectively a waste of both the time and resources of his force as it diverted officers away from crime prevention and the detection of serious crimes.

Furthermore, he noted that when the Vestries were given information by the police their response was often to caution rather than prosecute the brothel keepers, who in turn simply moved elsewhere.

Warren's belief was that it was better to contain rather than repress prostitution. In a letter to St. George's Vestry Clerk dated October 31st 1888 Warren complained that the vigilance societies were:

"...in the habit of routing out the brothels from the back slums and driving them into respectable places... and as long as there is a demand for prostitutes on the part of the public there is no doubt they will exist in spite of the Vestries and Vigilance Societies, and themore they are driven out of their brothels back slums, the worse it becomes for law and order and decency..."

By adopting a policy of containment the Metropolitan Police believed that they could confine the problem to an area they would be able to police effectively.

As for prosecuting individual prostitutes for soliciting, the police found themselves restricted by the constraints of the law, since prostitution in itself was not an offence. Soliciting was, but to prove that a woman had been soliciting was extremely difficult. Magistrates proved suspicious of convicting on the uncorroborated evidence of a police constable. As a result, the arrest, charging and convicting of a prostitute on a charge of soliciting, as far as individual constables were concerned, was problem laden. As one confidential police report stated:

"Action is attended by much trouble, by very likely a scuffle, by cross-examination by the Station Inspector, by the necessity of making out a written report, by the loss of at least four hours rest next day at the police court, by risk of blame by the magistrate and of other consequences...excessive zeal in this direction would at one arouse the suspicion of his superiors that he was paying too much attention to this class of case to the neglect of other duties."

Constables genuinely feared the consequences on both their reputation and career prospects and thus refused to arrest a prostitute unless absolutely compelled to do so. In June 1887 the press had had a field day over a sensational case involving a respectable milliner by the name of Miss Elizabeth Cass. Police Constable Endacott had arrested 23 year old Miss Cass on Regent Street and charged her with soliciting.

Although the Magistrate, Mr. Newton, discharged her, he noted her occupation as prostitute and cautioned her about her future conduct. He observed that no respectable woman should be walking on Regent Street at 9pm in the evening!

Supported by her employer Miss Cass protested her innocence and insisted she was merely on her way to purchase a pair of gloves. Indignant Members of Parliament and the Press took up her case and the resultant publicity ensured a humiliating censure of both the Police and the Home Secretary when the case against her was overturned.

Sir Charles Warren's reaction to the Cass case was to issue an order prohibiting his officers from arresting street walkers unless a direct complaint had been made by a member of the public or without corroborating evidence.

The direct result of this order was that police arrests of street prostitutes declined dramatically between 1887 and 1889. As far as individual constables were concerned it was

safer to ignore prostitutes than to attempt to repress them. Thus by 1888 street walkers had become so emboldened by this official attitude that it became almost impossible to walk along certain London streets without being constantly and publicly solicited. Even the National Vigilance Association was forced into a climb-down complaining that, since the Metropolitan Police were withholding any assistance and were doing so little to suppress street prostitution, curbing it was now an impossible task.

When, just over a year later, Jack the Ripper began his killing spree the everyday beat constables in the area had long been turning a blind eye to the presence of prostitutes on the streets and thus little attention was paid to them as they attempted to seek out a living by soliciting strangers to go with them into the dark corners and passageways of Whitechapel and Spitalfields.

**Assignment 8: Essay Writing**

One of the things that puzzles many people about this particular long ago murder spree is quite why the crimes are still so famous, even though over a hundred and twenty years have elapsed since they occurred.

Write an essay offering your explanation!

### **Additional Info (5)**

#### **The Church of England**

is the officially established Christian church in England and the Mother Church of the worldwide Anglican Communion. The church considers itself within the tradition of Western Christianity and dates its formal establishment principally to the mission to England by St Augustine of Canterbury in AD 597.

As a result of Augustine's mission, the church in England came under the authority of the pope. Initially prompted by a dispute over the annulment of the marriage of King Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon, the Church of England separated from the Roman Catholic Church in 1534 and became the established church by an Act of Parliament in the Act of Supremacy, beginning a series of events known as the English Reformation.<sup>[6]</sup> During the reign of Queen Mary I and King Philip, the Church was fully restored under Rome in 1555. Papal authority was again explicitly rejected after the accession of Queen Elizabeth I when the Act of Supremacy of 1558 was passed. Catholic and Reformed factions vied for determining the doctrines and worship of the church. This ended with the 1558 Elizabethan settlement, which developed the understanding that the church was to be both Catholic and Reformed.

- **Catholic** in that it views itself as a part of the universal church of Jesus Christ in unbroken continuity with the early apostolic church. This is expressed in its emphasis on the teachings of the early Church Fathers, as formalized in the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds.
- **Reformed** in that it has been shaped by some of the doctrinal principles of the 16th century Protestant Reformation, in particular in the *Thirty-Nine Articles* and the Book of Common Prayer.<sup>[7]</sup>

During the 17th century, political and religious disputes raised the Puritan and Presbyterian faction to control of the church, but this ended with the Restoration. The contemporary Church of England still continues to contain several doctrinal strands, now generally known as Anglo-Catholic and Evangelical. This reflects early divisions. In recent times, tensions between theological conservatives and progressives find expression in debates over women's ordination and homosexuality within the church. The Church of England has ordained women as priests since 1994. A proposed measure which would have allowed the consecration of female bishops was lost by a narrow margin in the General Synod of the Church in 2012.

### **Additional Info (6)**

#### **General history of British nobility**

The nobility of the four constituent home nations of the United Kingdom has played a major role in shaping the history of the country, although in the present day even hereditary peers have no special rights, privileges or responsibilities, except for residual rights to stand for election to the House of Lords, dining rights in the House of Lords, position in the formal order of precedence, and the right to certain titles .

In everyday speech, the British nobility consists of peers and their families, however in a more strict legal sense it includes both the titled and the untitled nobility. Members of the peerage carry the titles of Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount and Baron. Peers ranked from Baron up to Marquess are frequently referred to generically as Lords.

They enjoy no privilege other than a position in the formal orders of precedence in the United Kingdom. The largest portion of the British aristocracy have historically been the landed gentry, made up of baronets and landowners.

The Peerage is a term used both collectively to refer to the entire body of peerage titles, and individually to refer to a specific title. All modern British honours, including peerage dignities, are created directly by the British monarch, taking effect when letters patent are affixed with the Great Seal of the Realm. The Sovereign is considered the fount of honour, and as "the fountain and source of all dignities cannot hold a dignity from himself", cannot hold a peerage.

Before the twentieth century, peerages were generally hereditary and (with a few exceptions), descended in the male line. The eldest son of a Duke, Marquess or Earl almost always uses one of his father's subsidiary titles as a courtesy title. For example, the elder son of the Earl of Snowdon is called Viscount Linley.

The modern peerage system is a vestige of the custom of English kings in the 12th and 13th centuries in summoning wealthy individuals (along with church officials and elected representatives for commoners) to form a Parliament. The economic system at the time was manorialism (or feudalism), and the burden or privilege of being summoned to Parliament was related to the amount of land one controlled (a "barony"). In the late 14th century, this right (or "title") began to be granted by decree, and titles also became inherited with the rest of an estate under the system of primogeniture. Non-hereditary positions began to be created again in 1867 for Law Lords, and 1958 generally.

In 1958 the government introduced (non-hereditary) life peers and from then on the creation of hereditary peerages (except for members of the Royal Family) rapidly became obsolete, almost ceasing after 1964. Life peerages are only bestowed in order to give a person a seat in the House of Lords for their life alone and not otherwise. This, however, is only a convention and was not observed by former prime minister Margaret Thatcher who had the Queen create three hereditary peerages (two of them, however, to men who had no heirs) and whose husband also received the hereditary non-peerage, non-noble dignity of baronet.

**Until 1999 possession of a title in the English peerage entitled its holder to a seat in the House of Lords, once of age.** The holder of the position of Lord Great Chamberlain also sits automatically in the House. The position is held in gross and one of a number of persons will hold it. The Lord Great Chamberlain is Her Majesty's representative in Parliament and accompanies Her Majesty on certain state occasions.

Titles, while often considered central to the upper class, are not always strictly so. Both Captain Mark Phillips and Vice Admiral Timothy Laurence, the respective first and second husbands of HRH The Princess Anne do not hold peerages. Most members of the British upper class are untitled.

**Assignment 9: Politics and Power**  
**Today`s Ruling Class? - research and discuss!**

In Peter Barnes Play "the Ruling Class" the nobility and the church of England are often mocked at.

Why?

Are the Church of England and the House of Lords really politically still powerful institutions?

How about the Media, the Secret Service, the Financial World?

Cf. article from THE GUARDIAN pp.30

Which is Today`s Ruling Class?



## 12. Edward Snowden – Hero or Culprit?

**Surveillance and the state: this way the debate goes on**

**Thanks to Edward Snowden, the world now has a debate about the dramatic change in the contract between state and citizen**

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- **Editorial**
  - [The Guardian](#), Friday 23 August 2013
- 

"Spies spy! Who knew?" Thus the world-weary shrug from too many people who ought to know better over the revelations deriving from the material leaked by [Edward Snowden](#) about what goes on inside the west's major intelligence agencies in 2013. We have all read our Le Carré, they sigh. We spy on them, they spy on us. Except in fiction, it must remain a secret world. The secrecy has to remain near-absolute because our national security depends on it. The best way for the state to ensure such secrecy is to have an armoury of criminal and civil laws – backed by punitive sanctions – to deter any leakages. This used to work. But the nature of spying has changed: this much we have learned from Mr Snowden. What was once highly targeted has now become virtually universal. The evident

ambition is to put entire populations under some form of [surveillance](#). The faceless intelligence masters may say they are still searching for needles, but first they want the entire haystack. And thus countless millions of entirely innocent (in every sense) citizens are potentially being monitored. Their phone calls, web searches, texts and emails are routinely intercepted, collected, stored and subjected to analysis.

Did the governments involved ever stop to think about the notion of consent? Did any engineer, spy chief, minister, congressman or president ever wonder whether such a dramatic change in the contract between state and citizen required some form of debate?

### **Secrecy and openness**

Thanks to Mr Snowden they have now got a debate – one that is rippling around the world. President [Barack Obama](#) says he welcomes that debate. That much is encouraging, even if it seems unlikely to be true because it is not going to be a comfortable debate for any government – nor for those in intelligence, nor for anyone running a major technology or telecommunications company. The world was simpler when the law could be used to prevent any meaningful and informed discussion of what was involved. The laws crafted before and during the first world war (the [Espionage Act](#) in the US, the Official Secrets Act in the UK) saw to that.

Secrecy and openness must collide. Governments and spies will place the greater emphasis on security: that is inevitable. Individuals who treasure free speech, an unfettered press, the capacity for dissent, or an individual's rights to privacy or protection against the state, will have equal, or greater, concerns.

It is obvious that virtually anyone with a digital life – any user of Google or Verizon or BT or Facebook or Skype – is entitled to know quite how much privacy they can reasonably expect. This is the coming debate.

Who will hold the debate, and how is it to be informed? To date, there has been a vigorous discussion on these matters in the US and European legislatures and media. In the UK, the number of MPs or peers who have said anything at all is tiny. Much legal oversight of intelligence matters happens in closed courts. Parliamentary oversight is a similarly shadowy affair. In the UK, Sir Malcolm Rifkind, who is supposed to be a kind of regulator, too often sounds like a cheerleader. In the US, the same can alas be said of Senator Dianne Feinstein, who heads the Senate intelligence committee.

### **Responsible reporting**

What role does a free press have in assisting and informing this debate? In late May, Mr Snowden gave this newspaper a volume of documents from his role as one of 850,000 intelligence employees cleared to read and analyse top-secret material. It is difficult to imagine any editor in the free world who would have destroyed this material unread, or handed it back, unanalysed, to the spy agencies or the government. The Guardian did what we hope any news organisation would do – patiently analysed and responsibly reported on some of the material we have read in order to inform the necessary public debate.

Some time after our first disclosures we were contacted by the cabinet secretary, who said he spoke on behalf of the prime minister. He acknowledged that we had behaved responsibly, expressed concerns about the security of the material we held and requested the return or destruction of the documents. We explained that complying with the request would destroy our ability to report. At this stage there was no threat of law, but nevertheless we took the precaution of sharing some of the material with news

organisations in America, where we consider there to be more robust protections for serious journalism of public importance.

Some weeks later the tone of these and other discussions changed. There was, by mid-July, an explicit threat that the government would, after all, seek to stop the Guardian's work and prevent publication of further material by legal means. To have resisted such action would have involved handing over ultimate control of the material to a judge and could have meant that no stories could have been published for many months, if at all. The first amendment of the American constitution guarantees its press protections of which British editors can only dream. For more than 40 years – since the publication of the so-called Pentagon papers in 1971 – it has been accepted that the state will not succeed in trying to obtain prior restraint of the press. So we will in future report this story from New York. We have shared some material with, and will collaborate with, the [New York Times](#).

It is, we believe, inconceivable that the US government would try to obtain, or the US court grant, an injunction against publication by the NYT. The US attorney general has recently given an assurance that he will not prosecute any journalist "for doing his or her job". So the debate about the mass collection of data on populations, the links between the state, the intelligence services and large corporations, and the uses and limits of oversight can continue.

Meanwhile in the UK, the police – with the apparent knowledge of the government – misused a law designed to combat terrorism to detain a member of the Guardian's team for nine hours and to confiscate his material. The former lord chancellor, Lord Falconer, has confirmed that there was no intention that the 2000 Terrorism Act should be used against people like [David Miranda](#), the partner of the Guardian columnist Glenn Greenwald. "The state may wish that journalists would not publish sensitive material," [he wrote in these columns last week](#), "but it is up to journalists, not the state, to decide where to draw the line."

### **Civil liberties and security**

These are words that should be heeded by the British government official who told us that the Guardian had "had our debate" and that there was no "need" to write any more. It is not the role of politicians or civil servants to determine the limits of public discussion. Nor should the debate be circumscribed by attempting to criminalize the act of journalism – without which, in this instance, there could be no debate.

Citizens of free countries are entitled to protect their privacy against the state. The state has a duty to protect free speech as well as security. Fundamental rights, as we say, collide. Journalists have a duty to inform and facilitate a debate and to help test the consent of people about the nature of any trade-offs between civil liberties and security. A democratic government should seek to protect and nourish that debate, not threaten it or stamp it out.