



## “I did not mean to make away with the child, I did not know what I was about”: Autobiographical Traces of Infanticide in Eighteenth-Century Trial Records

Sonja Boon

Memorial University, Newfoundland and Labrador

### ABSTRACT

In this essay, I am interested in the possibilities and limitations of maternal autobiography in court documents. I focus specifically on the trial records of mothers charged with infanticide between 1700 and 1800. Drawing on the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674-1913* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org)), I consider these narratives both through the lenses of legal and social histories of infanticide, and in relation to Marlene Kadar et al.'s notion of “autobiographical traces,” fragmentary stories that emerge when pieces of individual lives are stitched together with the historical, social and political context in which they emerged. I consider not only the limited textual interventions of the accused mothers themselves, as they took the stand to speak in their own defense, but also their silences and erasures. In addition to this, I consider the autobiographical potential of these women's actions and behaviours, as witnessed and deposed by those called to the stand. Finally, I consider the stories of self that emerge from the reproductive and maternal body.

**Keywords:** infanticide, motherhood, autobiographical traces, involuntary autobiography

Some 131 women were tried on the charge of infanticide at London's central criminal court between 1700 and 1800.<sup>1</sup> The remnants of their stories can be found in the logbooks of the Old Bailey, which record, in varying degrees of detail, 250 years of criminal activity in London. Tracing the

stories is challenging on many levels and given the vagaries of both gender and class, it is difficult, if not impossible, to trace the life stories of individual women. Recovering such narratives thus involves careful work, work that both acknowledges and responds to the vast abyss that separated the accused from the legal system, and recognizes the foundational and often oppressive nature of institutions of power such as the courts. But, as the scholarship of Afua Cooper (2006), among others, has demonstrated, trial records are sometimes the *only* spaces in which marginalized women's voices and stories emerge. Indeed, Sean Cadigan (1995) has observed that court records offer important insights into matters related to women of the lower classes. As Carolyn Strange has argued, legal rulings shaped – indeed, defined – social relations and gender distinctions (p. 144). Law, she points out “touches every aspect of life” (p. 144), thus making such records indispensable to the historian. They are of equal interest to the life writing scholar, who peruses and parses them for insight into what Leigh Gilmore (1994) has termed the “autobiographics” of the recorded narratives; that is, those elements that reveal an autobiographical subject's resistance to and disruption of otherwise normalizing discourses of “truth and identity through which the subject of autobiography is produced” (p. 185).

Mining for autobiographical insight, however, requires considerable caution. Trial records, which record selves shaped and formed under extreme duress, can be problematic sites for the articulation and excavation of matters of identity and subjectivity. Considering the life writings of these women, then, requires new lenses, new approaches and careful thought to the politics of life writing. The work of Philippe Lejeune (1989), Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (1996), Marlene Kadar et al. (2005), Liz Stanley (2013) and Sayantani DasGupta (2008) provides useful entry points into these sorts of documents. Lejeune points to the generic specificity of autobiographies of “those who do not write,” considering the problematics of working with individuals whose life stories are narrated orally and then written down by another (pp. 185–215). Smith and Watson, Stanley (2013), and Kadar et al., meanwhile, ask us to move beyond traditional autobiographies to a consideration of a broad range of documents – what Liz Stanley would call “documents of life” (2013, p. 4) and Smith and Watson term “backyard ethnography” (p. 16) – as sources for the narrating of lives. Such materials might include more conventional sites for the staging of self – for example, television interviews, want ads, tattoos, and CVs – but also other materials that gesture more obliquely toward the notion of autobiography as the articulation of a meticulously-crafted life, such as court cases (Suzack), bastardy examinations (Steedman), or a “Nazi camp deportation list” (Kadar, p. 223), documents that

“can ... stand in for the autobiographical where no other finished polished, printed, or published autobiographical or life-writing texts exist” (Kadar, p. 223). For Kadar et al., such documents, which bridge both the auto- and bio-graphical, to follow the work of Liz Stanley (1992), might be considered under the rubric of autobiographical “traces” (p. 1), iterations of selves which, read together through the lens of theories of life writing, allow us to excavate life narratives.

This broad approach to life-writing documents enables scholars to read autobiographically across a range of documents; that is, to acknowledge that the self emerges in the most curious spaces, and further, that we sometimes leave inadvertent and indeed, involuntary, traces of ourselves. As Smith and Watson argue, “we are not autobiographical subjects at every moment of the day, but we are called on to become autobiographical subjects in a variety of situations, a range of temporalities. Thus we move in and out of autobiographical subjectivity, sometimes by our own desire and purposes, sometimes through the exertions and coercion of others” (p. 17).

The possibility of inadvertent and involuntary autobiography – what Carolyn Steedman (2000) refers to as “enforced narratives of the self” (p. 30) – particularly in power-saturated environments like criminal trials, suggests the need to proceed with caution, and to adopt a position that Sayantani DasGupta understands as “narrative humility” (p. 980). Starting from the standpoint of narrative humility:

---

acknowledges that [these] stories are not objects that we can comprehend or master, but rather dynamic entities that we can approach and engage with, while simultaneously remaining open to their ambiguity and contradiction, and engaging in constant self-evaluation and self-critique about issues such as our own role in the story, our expectations of the story, our responsibilities to the story, and our identifications with the story – how the story attracts or repels us because it reminds us of any number of personal stories (pp. 980–1).

---

Narrative humility, in this sense, both reminds me of my privileged position vis-à-vis these mothers, and offers me a space through which to observe with generosity and integrity their tellings of self, no matter how partial and compromised those tellings might be.

In this essay, I am interested in the possibilities of maternal autobiography in court documents. I focus specifically on the trial records of mothers charged with infanticide between 1700 and 1800. Drawing on the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674–1913* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org)), I consider these narratives both through the lenses of legal and social histories of infanticide, and in relation to Marlene Kadar et al.’s notion of “autobiographical traces,” fragmentary stories that emerge when pieces

of individual lives are stitched together with the historical, social and political context in which they emerged. In the words of Penny Russell: “The ‘gabble’ in the archive is ... a record of how that self belongs in, relates to, and seeks to understand her world. Diaries, letters, notebooks, and laundry lists ... lie at a point of interface between the subject and her world – a power-laden domain of imagination and experience, ideology and discourse, negotiation and agency. They are direct evidence neither of the world nor of the self, but a product of continual engagement between the two, representing multiple ways of being” (p. 153). Tracing the narratives that emerge from this encounter between the self and the social is not merely a matter of conceptual interest. It is also one of political urgency. As Kadar observes of the Romany life stories she traces: “If the history ... is lost because we do not have whole, stable, authored, or published accounts ... what are we to do?” (p. 224).

The fragments I explore in this essay include not only the limited textual interventions of the accused mothers themselves, as they took the stand to speak in their defense, but also their silences and erasures. In addition to this, I consider the autobiographical potential of these women’s actions and behaviours, as witnessed and deposed by those called to the stand. Finally, and perhaps, most provocatively, I consider the stories of self that emerge from the reproductive and maternal body; that is, I am interested in the ways that bodily stories and understandings inevitably complicate textual and behavioural narratives.

## SITUATING INFANTICIDE

At its most basic level, infanticide – as an indictable offense – was the murder of a child, most often a newborn. Targeting new mothers, infanticide was, along with witchcraft, “a woman’s crime” (Rabin 2003, p. 45) and one of the only sex specific laws on the books (Dickinson and Sharpe, p. 35). It was also extremely common: Sauer (1978) observes that it was understood to be the most common form of murder in the early eighteenth century, and even a century later, constituted 34% of all statistically documented murder cases between 1838 and 1840, a number which is likely much lower than the actual incidence (p. 81).

English law in this area dates originally from 1624 and places the full burden of proof on the women accused of the crime. During this early period, women accused of infanticide were understood to be morally reprehensible creatures who would stop at nothing to hide evidence of the most egregious of crimes: the murder of their very own child. As the following extract, from the 1679 trial of Katherine Tumince makes clear,

the seventeenth-century court could almost not fathom the possibility of maternal violence. Infanticide was, in the words of the court: “a Crime in it self [sic] so horrid and unnatural, as one would think no person, especially of that Sex, which is counted the most tenderhearted and merciful, could be guilty of such an inhumane Impiety ...” (qtd. in Hoffer and Hull, p. 67). A conviction for infanticide was punishable by death.

Laws changed over the course of the Old Bailey’s records. By the early nineteenth century, the courts required the prosecution to prove guilt and introduced a new charge: concealment of birth. This lesser charge carried with it a jail sentence, and, in some cases, a fine. But even before the formal change of law, it appears that some leniency was applied throughout the eighteenth century. While seventeenth century records reveal a strict interpretation of the law, eighteenth-century juries were more likely to take other considerations into account (Beattie, Jackson, Rabin, Sommers).<sup>2</sup> By the mid-nineteenth century, the landscape had changed dramatically. Ann Higginbotham notes that, “after 1849, no woman was hanged for the murder of her own infant under one year old, legitimate or illegitimate” (p. 323). Instead, those mothers who were charged and forced to stand trial were sometimes acquitted if it could be proven that they had prepared for the child’s birth.<sup>3</sup> Other defendants, meanwhile, were able to successfully argue medical incapacity, miscarriage, premature delivery or stillbirth.<sup>4</sup>

All of this suggests, as Aeron Hunt (2006) has observed, that infanticide was complex, pitting the probable social and economic vulnerability and victimization of the mother against the apparent callousness of her actions. These tensions between feminine virtue and maternal violence challenged the very foundations of the social order: “How could a mother allow economic necessity to overwhelm her feelings for her child?” (Hunt 2006, p. 72).<sup>5</sup> As such, criminalized mothers needed to navigate social and legal expectations with care, and these careful negotiations inevitably shaped the autobiographical possibilities available to them.

Court cases were complex. Juries and judges were offered many different kinds of evidence, from defendant and witness testimony, to material artefacts and medical and forensic examinations and assessments. It is from this data – these autobiographical traces – that the life stories of women charged with infanticide emerge. But this data is fragmentary. While some women were able to marshal considerable evidence in their defense – thus leaving the autobiography scholar a relatively rich archival record to work with – others had far less at their disposal. The court records of Anne Wheeler and Elizabeth Stevens, for example, are scant, and offer little insight into the subjectivities of the accused (t17110112-20; t17110516-9).<sup>6</sup> Other records, like those of Elizabeth Arthur, charged

with the murder of her “Male Bastard Infant” in 1717, are rich in detail (t17170911-50).<sup>7</sup> We learn that Arthur hid her labour and delivery at first, giving only vague responses to those who queried her bodily suffering. However, after being presented with the evidence – the body of a child found in the toilet – Arthur brought other elements of her story to the fore, constructing herself as a virtuous mother-to-be who had prepared diligently and carefully for the birth of her child. Not only had she been in contact with a midwife, but she had also “provided Necessaries for it” (idem.). Furthermore, she had been in contact with the Bailiff to “arrest one who she said she was with Child by, in order that having by that means secured him she might oblige him to provide for it” (idem.). In other words, while she was unmarried and while her child was dead, her actions demonstrate a continued, longterm commitment to her child’s health and welfare.

Most Old Bailey trial accounts offer only limited access to the spoken words of the charged mother herself. Rather, her story – her identity – emerges in fits and starts, not only from the words she speaks – for sometimes she says absolutely nothing at all – but from the things she does and the way she is perceived by those around her. Autobiographical traces exist in the ways that others in her environment perceived her burgeoning body, her physical comportment, her attitudes, her work habits, and her actions. They also come to the fore in relation to her social and economic status, and in the ways she was able to respond to the legal and social conditions that shaped her reality.

In addition to this, autobiographical traces emerge in a series of tropes common to a majority of the trial records. These include the narrating of a quick and unexpected labour, stories of seduction and abandonment, claims of sexual purity, assertions of bodily illnesses, aches and pains unrelated to pregnancy, and claims of miscarriage and stillbirth. Such tropes – whether constructed, factual, or a combination of the two – allowed women to navigate the vagaries of their precarious social and economic positions and to shape stories that might enable the most positive possible outcomes. Indeed, as Clare Brant has observed, women’s words were not interpreted in a vacuum; rather, their meanings were profoundly shaped by what she terms “off-the-page” assumptions about normative femininity, class and reasonability (p. 61). In other words, while seemingly objective data tells stories, the interpretation of these stories is dependent on broader social, cultural and political narratives. What an accused individual said, did or wrote, or did not say, did not do or did not write, was filtered through “assumptions about gender, and to some extent, class .... [and] old-fashioned ideas about Providence” (Brant 2006, p. 64). Nevertheless, it is also important to consider the question of compassion. The work of Tanya Evans (2005b), for example, reveals that even the most

marginalized women were able to draw on the compassion of their immediate community, and the evidence of the trial records, while only partial in this regard, does show that juries sometimes took mitigating circumstances into account. Taken together, these autobiographical traces shape stories of lives lived, of selves struggling in the face of sometimes overwhelming challenges. The identities that emerge in these trial transcripts and summaries are partial, fragmentary. But they are all we have to go on.

### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TRACES

The archival records suggest that mothers charged with infanticide came from the lowest social classes, occupying positions as cooks, servants, maids and charwomen (Rose). Some lived at their place of work; others, meanwhile, took up lodgings in rooming houses. In some instances, they even shared a bed with another woman, a point of some importance in relation to questions of labour and delivery.<sup>8</sup>

Many indicted mothers were unmarried or widowed. A woman's marital status was important for both legal and moral reasons and autobiographical traces suggest that married and widowed women asserted their status when possible, shaping their narratives to conform to a reading of heteronormative feminine virtue even in the face of child death. First of all, a woman's marital status determined both the legitimacy of her child, and her status in relation to the statute under which she was charged. Thus, Ann Hasle, a widow indicted for the murder of her "Male Bastard-Infant," asserted that the Statute against the murder of illegitimate children did not apply to her for she was married when she conceived (t17170717-18).<sup>9</sup> Witnesses confirmed not only Hasle's marital status, but also the apparent affection and care that marked this union: "others depos'd, they liv'd together for some time at Clerkenwell, and that the said Edward Wingate upon his Death-bed expressed his Concern in leaving her six Weeks gone with Child" (idem.). In this way, Hasle constructed herself as a respectable wife and mother-to-be, a woman whose pregnancy was the result of a loving and caring domestic relationship. Similar arguments were put forward by Mary Bristow, who was able to provide evidence that her husband was in the "East-Indies" (t17180110-62), and Diana Parker, who, according to numerous witnesses, had been married for some time to a husband who was abroad (t17940917-46).<sup>10</sup> In both of these cases, the evidence of marriage fundamentally altered the conventional narrative of the infanticidal mother "guilty ... of inhumane Impiety" as cited in Hoffer and Hull (p. 67). As married women, they could not be found guilty of the murder of an illegitimate child. Other women, like Ann Leak, left traces of troubled marriages: "Her Mistress own'd that she hir'd her as a married

Woman. A Master and Mistress with whom she had liv'd before deposed, That a Person had several Times came to demand her away as his Wife, and had been very troublesome; that she had owned she was his Wife, but that he was so great a Rogue to her she could not live with him, he having 2 or 3 other Wives." (t17230116-37).<sup>11</sup> This testimony served a dual function: in the first instance, it suggested that Leak's child was born within the bounds of marriage and thus, that Leak was not a "lewd woman" and could not be tried under the Statute against the murder of illegitimate children.<sup>12</sup> But this statement also did something more: by making public the violence of this relationship, Leak's witness troubled accepted understandings of heteronormative marriage as the proper site of domestic virtue. These narrative constructions positioned Leak not as a monstrous mother, but rather, as a virtuous victim of circumstance.

Kerry Evalyn Dobbins observes that unmarried mothers, by their very presence, transgressed social norms and conventions: "because of its 'ordinary' nature, childbirth was also associated with established social norms ... Women who gave birth to illegitimate children often did not take part in these socially accepted rituals. By breaking community norms, they transgressed against their neighbors in a way that was distinct but related to their unmarried status. Hiding a pregnancy and birth was such an antisocial behaviour that it immediately aroused suspicion that a woman had even more malicious intent" (p. 29). Even as such women could anticipate some modicum of compassion, as Evans (2005b) has observed, Laura Gowing nevertheless notes that: "For unmarried women, the state of pregnancy ... was an active problem for the household and the community" (p. 87). This fraught social and legal position would inevitably have shaped the narratives such mothers constructed for themselves. Dobbins and Gowing point to the watchful eyes of the woman's immediate community, members of which were quick to query suspected pregnancies. This community surveillance is evident in the case of Jane Lyne. Indicted in 1704, Lyne looked so "big" that she was questioned on her marital status:

---

The first Evidence deposed, That the Prisoner lodged in the House, and perceiving that she was with-Child, askt her if she was a Wife, or a Widow, by reason she looked so big? and whether she was with-Child? And she replied, No; and told her, that she was troubled with a Timpany and Dropsie (t17040308-35).<sup>13</sup>

---

In this instance, Lyne needed to navigate not only her own bodily experiences, but also the interpretations of those in her immediate vicinity, whose questions were shaped by Brant's "off-the-page" assumptions and understandings.

As Lyne's rebuttal suggests, women who were questioned offered numerous alternative possibilities for their bodily changes and sufferings; thus Ann Mabe stated that she was suffering from a toothache (t17180227-25), Phebe Ward claimed she had colic (t17111205-21), and Christian Russel said she was feeling unwell (t17020114-7).<sup>14</sup> On the one hand, such explanations allowed for the rewriting of narratives of pregnancy and the construction of an unmarked bodily self, in the process enabling accused women to affirm what Brant would term a reasonable or believable narrative. On the other hand, however, they might also, as Tanya Evans (2005a) and Laura Gowing have observed, be more transparently read: it is entirely likely that unmarried women had "little or no access to the shared knowledge and accumulated experience of local mothers" (Gowing, p. 97). As such, the accused women may well have honestly believed the bodily stories they were telling, whether or not such stories were, in fact, "true."

The social and economic precarity of women charged with infanticide would have had profound implications in relation to questions of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood. Indeed, the autobiographical traces suggest that such women would have been ill-placed to support a child, and further, given their limited access to medical care and proper nutrition, much more likely than their wealthier counterparts to suffer both the traumas of miscarriage and stillbirth, as well as the complications of unassisted delivery, frequently cited by midwives as a contributing factor. As Tanya Evans has argued, "Female bodies were a constant source of misfortune for malnourished, overworked and underpaid women, particularly if they underwent difficult pregnancies, and were unable to rest in the final stages of pregnancy or the first month or so after their child's birth" (2005a, p. 138). Furthermore, given their often close living conditions, such women – whose infants were often found hidden in toilets, slop buckets, boxes, and soiled linens – would have found it challenging to conceal not only their pregnancies, but also their labours and deliveries. Finally, the autobiographical traces suggest also that such women may have lacked the resources to ensure a proper burial for a stillborn child. Jane Plintoff, unlike many accused mothers, was open about her pregnancy (t17180709-5).<sup>15</sup> However, she later denied giving birth and placing her child in the toilet. It was only when the child's body was found that she elaborated on the situation: the child was born before term and stillborn. While this might have been enough to convict another woman, the court took mitigating circumstances into account: "It did appear that she had ... provided some Linnen for it, but said she put it into the Vault being poor and not able to bear the expence of burying it." (idem.). Such stories demonstrate that the conditions required for the reasonable performance of feminine virtue – performances, in other

words, that would meet off-the-page assumptions normative femininity – relied on classed narratives which many of the accused women could never hope to achieve.

The words of Elizabeth Arthur speak evocatively to the vulnerability of the unmarried mother or mother-to-be during this period: “The Constable and others deposed, that at her Apprehension she first deny’d the Fact, but afterwards owned it: and being asked why she put her Child [in a House of Office], she replied, Because she did not know where else to put it; that she did it to conceal her Shame, and that by so doing she had brought her self to more, and was now heartily sorry for it” (t17170911-50).<sup>16</sup> Numerous issues come to the fore here: not only feminine modesty and shame, but also ignorance, a lack of knowledge about how to deal with a situation that had gone completely awry.

### TELLING PREGNANCY

As the case of Elizabeth Arthur demonstrates, many mothers did not disclose their pregnancies, labours and deliveries. Like Rebecca Cowley, who told a fellow lodger that “she was not with child” (t17810530-42) and went about her business as usual,<sup>17</sup> the majority offered denials in the face of questioning. Some women, like Phebe Ward, even denied having known a man in a carnal way: “She said, no, never in her life” (t17111205-21).<sup>18</sup> Given the previously-cited observations of Evans (2005a) and Gowing regarding maternal knowledge, it is entirely possible that some women did not believe they were pregnant at all. Even for those who were fully aware of their condition, silence offered protection and the seductive possibility of being able to go on as though nothing had happened. But this security was illusory. Having told nobody about their pregnancies, such women were later unable to call upon witnesses to back up their stories of stillbirth or miscarriage.

Indeed, speech sometimes offered more protection than silence. After all, within the context of normative femininity, it would be reasonable to expect women to disclose a pregnancy. Women who acknowledged their pregnancies – to a friend, fellow lodger, employer, midwife or family member – could position themselves as caring, loving, morally virtuous women (t17421208-4).<sup>19</sup> As a witness in the trial of Elizabeth Davis testified: “As she is a young Body, and an ignorant Person, I hope the Court will take it into Consideration. She always behav’d well; I never saw her concerned in Liquor all the while she liv’d with me” (idem.). This portrait is eminently flattering, with the witness drawing on accepted understandings of good maternal behaviour – “I never saw her concerned in Liquor” – as proof of virtue.

Other mothers, like Diana Parker, were able to assert a virtuous maternal self through remorse and regret; that is, through the articulation of clear moral suffering in the face of their actions (t17940917-46).<sup>20</sup> Two witnesses at her trial indicated that Parker suffered deeply as a result of her actions. John Harris stated: “I have known the prisoner between six and seven years; she told me that she had had a child, and had put it down the privy, and that it was born alive; she said, she wished to be brought to justice. I did not mean to make away with the child, I did not know what I was about. Here are some things that I made for the child; a shift, cap, &c.” (idem.). His words were later confirmed by George Sanders, who stated: “That was what I was going to mention. When she went up stairs she shewed me a vast quantity of child bed linen, plates, clothes, and money; you see, says she, Mr. Sanders, I want for nothing; but I am an unhappy wretch; and I want to be out of the world. She asked me if I thought God would forgive her, and take her back again, if she took a book and prayed? I told her no doubt, my dear, God forgives every person that truly repents of their sins” (idem.). Here, while Parker has clearly admitted to her guilt, she is nonetheless able to recuperate her failed virtue through clear evidence of maternal remorse: not only did she express her remorse verbally, but she also showed it in her actions; that is, in the preparations she made for her child’s arrival.

### THE ACTS OF MOTHERHOOD

In the absence of words, maternal stories emerge also through actions and behaviours. Making provision for the child, for example, was a key element in many trials. These activities, which included collecting linens, bedclothes and clothing for the infant, demonstrated to the courts the active engagement of the mother-to-be in her own pregnancy. In this way, they might be seen as socially-accepted rituals of pregnancy and new motherhood. Thus, Mary Tudor, Christian Russel and Ann Hasle were all saved by their preparations.<sup>21</sup> By contrast, Ann Gardner, Mary Forest and Phebe Ward, who could make no similar claims, were all found guilty.<sup>22</sup> Ann Morris’s defense is almost tragically naïve: “No indeed, Mrs. Cooper, I’ve provided nothing. I would not tell a lie for the world” (t17220907-5).<sup>23</sup> In this instance, the accused’s insistence on truth telling condemned her to death.

Interestingly however, careful nesting was not always positively received. The various items gathered by Mercy Hornby, for example, were seen by one witness as a form of willful deception, a sham meant to protect her from the possibility of conviction. When asked by the accused if she had

seen “Child-Bed-Linnen,” the witness, Mary Fauks, replied, “Yes; a Shirt, a Blanket, and a Night-Cap, a Biggin, and a long Stay; but these I did not see till Monday, and it’s much to be fear’d, that you did not put them there; for indeed I was inform’d they were borrow’d of a Neighbour” (t17340424-21).<sup>24</sup> These contradictions – virtue vs. deception – suggest that accused women walked a tightrope in presenting themselves to the courts. Autobiographical self-positioning was tenuous; rather, their identities were wholly dependent on the jury’s off-the-page interpretations of their autobiographical traces.

But women’s actions and behaviours could also explain something else: maternal ignorance; that is, their narratives of their experiences could demonstrate that they did not know what was happening to them, and as such, could not be guilty of wilful crime. Martha Miller, tried in 1790, stated in her own defense that “the child dropped from me at the necessary” (t17901027-78).<sup>25</sup> Catherine Griffin, the midwife called in to testify, drew on her professional expertise in women’s health in her defense of Miller’s testimony:

---

I am a midwife. I know the prisoner, by attending her when called on, the 17th of September; I found her on the bed not quite delivered, and I finished my business; the child was born, but she was not quite delivered; I saw the child; it was taken from a water-closet; it appeared to be a full grown child, and perfect in every respect: it appeared that the prisoner went to this necessary from the common feelings of every woman that is delivered; and that from ignorance of her state, she went there to relieve herself; and that the child might have been still born, from her ignorance of rendering it proper assistance; there was not the least mark of violence; some little things were provided for it. (*idem.*)

---

Griffin’s arguments offer considerable support to Miller’s protestations of innocence. By stating that she knew the defendant, Griffin established that Miller sought some professional medical advice during her pregnancy. Griffin then expanded on a narrative common to infanticide defenses: the unexpected and quick labour that resulted in the accidental birth of a child into the toilet. Griffin developed this argument further by commenting on the defendant’s lack of knowledge about labour and delivery. The midwife’s final comment – “some little things were provided for it” – cemented her conclusions: Miller was not a child-murderer; rather, she was a caring mother-to-be caught in a situation for which she was completely unprepared. Such cases bolster both Evans (2005a) and Gowing’s claims about the isolation of unmarried women with regard to questions of maternal knowledge. They also allowed juries to respond with compassion; that is, to acknowledge the difficulties and challenges

faced by the accused. Miller's autobiography – here told in both words and actions – was convincing enough for the jury, and she was acquitted.

### TELLING THE MATERNAL BODY

In the records of the Old Bailey, it is the body – and its workings – that provides perhaps the most effective vehicle for autobiographical storytelling. Bodies, as numerous scholars have observed, are evocative sites of meaning making (Avrahami, Cook, Crowe, Grealy, Hustvedt, Raoul, Wexler et al.). This is certainly true of the trial records. Sometimes defendants create their own body narratives; in other cases, bodies reveal autobiographical narratives that might otherwise have remained hidden. Consider, for example, the testimony of Francis Bolanson:

---

The Prisoner in her Defence pleaded that she having been very much affrighted at the extraordinary Thunder and Lightning, fell very Ill of a Feaver and Measle, and that her Fright and Illness she did believe occasion'd the Death of the Child within her; for she did not feel it stir for some considerable time before its Birth, and that she came 6 Weeks before her time, it being Still-born, and in the time of her illness; she brought Evidences to prove her Illness, and also that she had made Provision for the Child; upon which the Jury acquitted her (t17181015-16).<sup>26</sup>

---

While this defense, with its appeal to the medical effects of fear occasioned by a storm, sounds wildly implausible to contemporary ears, it was nonetheless an intrinsic part of a larger body narrative that also included probable fetal death followed by a premature stillbirth. During the eighteenth century, such a narrative was not out of place given contemporaneous understandings of bodily health and well being, and as such, it would have passed the test of “reasonableness.” In other words, it was a believable narrative that fulfilled the requirements of the autobiographical pact. Bolanson's tale is further bolstered by her actions: “she had made Provision for the Child.” Ultimately, the jury found her not guilty.

Many women accused of infanticide refused to tell their bodily stories; in these cases, the maternal body – together with that of the infant – told their stories for them. By their very natures, labour, delivery and new motherhood leave extensive bodily traces (Williams). In some instances, the evidence of the reproductive body – the autobiography of the body, if you will – could corroborate spoken testimony. Thus the surgeon called in to testify in the case of Ann Hasle observed that: “he was of the Opinion that no human Body could be drowned without receiving some Quantity

of Water into the Body, consequently the Child could not be alive when put into the Copper” (t17170717-18).<sup>27</sup> Such testimony supports protestations of innocence, in the process also sustaining the requisite performance of feminine virtue.

We might also consider, in relation to questions of bodily truth, women’s common bodily need to defecate during labour, which was marshalled as a defense for accidental delivery while in the “necessary” or outhouse in three separate cases during the 1750s. Jane Trigg, who was found moaning and groaning in the necessary, stated that she had “been prodigious bad all night with the cholic and pain in my bowels” (t17500912-76).<sup>28</sup> Even as the possibility that she could accidentally give birth was challenged by a self-declared surgeon, his own authority was later undermined when he confirmed, under cross-examination, that he was not a man-midwife (*idem.*). The possibility of accidental birth was central to the case of an unnamed woman tried in February 1754.<sup>29</sup> John Jones, the accused’s landlord, testified that a baby was found in the necessary with a broken – rather than cut – umbilical cord (t17540227-51). He observed further that there was a lot of blood (*idem.*). Both of these clues were suggestive of an accidental fall rather than willful child murder.<sup>30</sup> Later, Jones’ wife told him that, “it was possible that the child might insensibly slip from her in her pain as she was on the vault, and it is usual for women to want to go to the close-stool oftener at such a Time than usual” (*idem.*). The cross-examinations of a midwife and surgeon in the case of Frances Palser are also revealing (t17550702-21).<sup>31</sup> Both witnesses were asked directly about the relationship between labour and the need to defecate, and from there, asked to consider the possibility of accidental delivery while in the necessary. Consider the testimony of the surgeon, Benjamin Colebourn:

---

Q. Have not women always a tendency to go to stool when in strong labour pains?

Colebourn. The major part have: I believe 18 in 20.

Q. Might not that be a reason of her going there?

Colebourn. I can’t say what were her reasons. (*idem.*)

---

In each of these cases, bodily “truth” hinges on bodily ambiguity; that is, on the notion that a body’s signs can be confused and confusing. Perhaps unsurprisingly, all three women were acquitted.

In other cases, however, the body challenged women’s stories. Ann Gardner claimed to be suffering from the “dry Gripes.” Her stained, damp clothes, however, gave her away: Gardner was not sick; rather, she was lactating (t17080115-1).<sup>32</sup> Jane Lyne, too, found her story thwarted by bodily

evidence: the midwife testified that there was breast milk on her linens (t17040308-35).<sup>33</sup> Mary Morgan insisted that her child was premature and stillborn. Bodily evidence, however, revealed a full term infant with “two Stabs in the Belly of it” (t17240226-72).<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, in a bizarre turn of events, Mary Bristow – whose story included a nailed up door, “a Cry as of a Woman in Labour,” and apparently damning commentary from her co-defendants – was ultimately exonerated by her body’s story: fully five midwives called in to testify asserted that it had been several years since Bristow had given birth (t17180110-62).<sup>35</sup> In each of these cases, bodily evidence serves as a vital autobiographical trace. However, while bodily narratives might appear, at least on the surface, to reveal irrefutable biological truths, when read in conjunction with other autobiographical traces, they actually further complicate our understandings of maternal subjectivity during this period.

As autobiographical traces, bodily and material evidence also speak eloquently the isolation and secrecy that shaped many defendants’ experiences of labour and delivery. In numerous cases, midwives and doctors cited the lack of assistance during childbirth as a cause of death, again pointing to the isolation experienced by many defendants. Consider, for example, the case of Mary Lewis, a servant who gave birth – on her own – in her lodgings, and whose dead infant was found with a ribbon tightly bound around its neck (t17930220-38).<sup>36</sup> As her landlady testified, Lewis asserted that she used the ribbon to help deliver her infant:

---

I could then see a ribbon about its neck; says I to Mrs. Gibbs, what is that ribbon about its neck? undo the ribbon; Mrs. Gibbs did undo it and I was present, and then the prisoner threw herself on the side of the bed and laid down, and I asked her what she put that ribbon about the neck of the child for? to draw it from me, says she; it was a slip knot and Mrs. Gibbs took hold of it in one end, and undid it, it was very easily taken off, it was tight about the neck, we could not see a bit of the ribbon about the neck it was so tight but the bow .... the trace of the ribbon was very visible in the neck, and the skin was a little raised with the tightness of the ribbon on one side of it; it was a man child; with that we took the child up stairs from the fire and put it where we found it, I and Mrs. Gibbs, and laid it down as we found it; with that I had her put to bed; I told her to go to bed for shame of her; after I had her put to bed I locked the room door, she went to bed in the same room ... and I went down for a man midwife to look at the child.” (idem.)

---

The later testimony of a surgeon corroborates the landlady’s story:

---

I wished to know of her what was the reason for applying it; she said, she applied it to bring the body of the child from her; she found herself in great

pain and that it stuck at the shoulders; she was pulling for about ten minutes before she could get it away from her; the child was remarkable large and it appeared to me that she could not have got it away without some such assistance. (idem.)

The ribbon, as autobiographical trace, gestures towards this woman's need to hide her labour and delivery, to somehow manage the situation entirely on her own. It is a tragic reminder of the isolation experienced by many of the women whose stories are detailed in the Old Bailey's records, material testimony to their ignorance, isolation, and vulnerability.

## CONCLUSIONS

What can we make of these stories? The divide that separated these women from the law was immense. In their day-to-day lives, such women continually struggled with profound social inequalities and were, as a result of their class and gender, especially vulnerable to the vagaries of unwanted and concealed pregnancy and later, child death. It is conceivable that for many of these women the death of a child – whether by natural causes or as a result of legally-defined murder – did not so much occasion sorrow as it did relief. Now delivered of their reproductive burdens, these mothers could hope to rest in the knowledge that their positions were, at least for the moment, secure, their stories carefully wrapped up and hidden from public view. From this perspective, infanticide was, as Backhouse observes, a troubling gesture which, while transgressive, also simultaneously highlights the precariousness of their socio-economic positions and the narrow limits of self determination available to them (pp. 477–478). As Laura Gowing has argued: “Infanticide is, it is generally argued, a product of exceptional mental conditions. But it was also ... a product of unexceptional economic and social circumstances, where unmarried women might very well see no way in which they could bear and keep a child” (p. 88). While murdering one's child was understood by the courts as a refusal of divine will, for the mothers themselves it was a gesture of reparation, a way of undoing the shame of bastardy and getting on with their lives. Nevertheless, infanticide can also be seen as a form of acquiescence, an overt acknowledgement of the limited choices available to them.

In the face of this, I find myself echoing the commentary of Tamar Hager, who, researching the life story of a woman charged and convicted of infanticide in 1877, discovers that she is unable to pinpoint the motivations that shaped her subject's decisions. “Ellen of the documents – the testimonies, the indictment – is a faceless, vague figure,”

she writes. “I keep seeing her differently: sometimes strong and persistent, sometimes cowering, sometimes crazed. These images intertwine producing in me complicated, conflicted feelings of compassion, understanding, and contempt” (para. 20). The need for subterfuge – which affected many of these women from pregnancy through childbirth and death – means that these narratives, shaped and massaged by the limited tropes available to them – are inevitably compromised. We will never know how these children died, and the only individuals well placed to tell us – their mothers – often evaded this question entirely, offering partial, contradictory and sometimes completely false information in order to protect themselves. This part of the story, then – the crux of the crime itself – has gone with them to the grave. It can never be recovered. We are left only with the judgments of the court.

And yet, these are some of the only sources available to us. Antoinette Burton has observed that, “the autobiographical project is an ever-elastic archive, not simply of women’s lives or even of the conditions of their production, but of social, cultural, political, and economic histories of all kinds” (p. 186). But this autobiographical project is not without its hazards. Autobiography, as Carolyn Steedman has observed, is “not a straightforward telling of the self .... Eighteenth-century enforced narratives and the invented voices of the fictionalised poor ... show autobiography to be something that was often demanded: a thing that could be fashioned according to requirement, told and sold, alienated and expropriated” (p. 36). An attentiveness to DasGupta’s notion of “narrative humility” can allow the life writing scholar to work both critically and ethically through the complex web of gender, power, and privilege as these emerge in collections like the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*.

A careful reading of the Old Bailey trial records offers an opaque window into the lived experiences and subjectivities of mothers charged with infanticide. The stories of these mothers resist easy tellings. Shaped by the oppressive power of the law and by the weight of classed and gendered moral ideals, these narratives are challenging to read, and equally challenging to analyze. And yet, in their resistant tellings, they trouble the law, the moral frameworks on which the law was based, and the off-the-page assumptions through which it was read. A close reading of these records, one that is attentive not only to textual cues, but also to behavioural, material and bodily cues, can offer insight into the complexity of maternal experience during this period, situating it not solely within the framework of nature, but rather as a profoundly gendered and embodied social and political experience.

## REFERENCES

- Avrahami, Einat. *The Invading Body: Reading Illness Autobiographies*. Charlottesville, London: University of Virginia Press, 2007. Print.
- Backhouse, Constance B. "Desperate Women and Compassionate Courts: Infanticide in Nineteenth-Century Canada." *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 34.4 (1984): 447–478. doi: 10.2307/825592. Print.
- Brant, Clare. "Murder She Wrote? The Real and Imagined Letters of Mary Blandy." *Women's Writing* 13.1 (2006): 60–72. doi: 10.1080/09699080500436117. Web.
- Burton, Antoinette. "An Assemblage/Before Me': Autobiography as Archive." *Journal of Women's History* 25.2 (2013): 185–188. doi: 10.1353/jowh.2013.0022. Web.
- Cadigan, Sean. "Whipping Them into Shape: State Refinement of Patriarchy among Conception Bay Fishing Families, 1787–1825." Eds. Carmelita McGrath, Marilyn Porter and Barbara Neis. *Their Lives and Times: Women in Newfoundland and Labrador: A Collage*. St. John's: Killick Press, 1995, 48–59. Print.
- Cook, Kay. "Medical Identity My DNA/Myself." Eds. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson. *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 63–88. Print.
- Cooper, Afua. *The Hanging of Angélique: The Untold Story of Canadian Slavery and the Burning of Old Montréal*. Toronto: HarperCollins, 2006. Print.
- Crowe, Christine. "Giving Pain a Place in the World: Aboriginal Women's Bodies in Australian Stolen Generations Autobiographical Narratives." Eds. Marlene Kadar et al. *Tracing the Autobiographical*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005, 189–204. Print.
- DasGupta, Sayantani. "Narrative Humility." *The Lancet* 371.9617 (2008): 980–981. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(08)60440-7. Web.
- Dickinson, R. and J.A. Sharpe. "Infanticide in Early Modern England: The Court of Great Sessions at Chester, 1650–1800." Ed. Mark Jackson. *Infanticide: Historical Perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550–1800*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, 35–52. Print.
- Dobbins, Kerry Evalyn. *Infant Murder in Early Modern England: Realities and Perceptions*. Diss. University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2010. Web.
- Evans, Tanya. "'Unfortunate Objects': London's Unmarried Mothers in the Eighteenth Century." *Gender & History* 17.1 (2005a): 127–153. doi: 10.1111/j.0953-5233.2005.00375.x. Web.
- Evans, Tanya. *"Unfortunate Objects": Lone Mothers in Eighteenth-Century London*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005b. Print.
- Gilmore, Leigh. *Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. Print.
- Goc, Nicola. *Women, Infanticide and the Press, 1822–1922: News Narratives in England and Australia*. Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2013. Web.
- Gowing, Laura. "Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England." *Past & Present* 156 (1997): 87–115. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/651179>. Web.
- Grealy, Lucy. *Autobiography of a Face*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2003. Print.
- Hager, Tamar. "Chasing Shadows: A Journey in the Footsteps of a Woman Who Murdered Her Baby Daughter in 1877." *Thirdspace: A Journal of Feminist Theory & Culture* 4.2 (2008). <http://journals.sfu.ca/thirdspace/index.php/journal/article/view/hager/147>.
- Higginbotham, Ann. "'Sin of the Age': Infanticide and Illegitimacy in Victorian London." *Victorian Studies* 32 (1989): 319–337. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3828495>. Web.
- Hitchcock, Tim, Robert Shoemaker, Clive Emsley, Sharon Howard, Jamie McLaughlin, et al. *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674–1913*. Version 7.1, April 2013. [www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org). 3 September 2014.

- Hoffer, Peter and N.E.H. Hull. *Murdering Mothers: Infanticide in England and New England, 1558–1803*. New York: New York University Press, 1981. Print.
- Hunt, Aeron. "Calculations and Concealments: Infanticides in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain." *Victorian Literature and Culture* 34.1 (2006): 71–94. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25058737>. Web.
- Hustvedt, Siri. *The Shaking Woman or a History of My Nerves*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2009. Print.
- Jackson, Mark. *New-Born Child Murder: Women, Illegitimacy and the Courts in Eighteenth-Century England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. Print.
- Kadar, Marlene. "The Devouring: Traces of Roma in the Holocaust: No Tattoo, Sterilized Body, Gypsy Girl." Eds. Marlene Kadar et al. *Tracing the Autobiographical*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005, 223–246. Print.
- Kadar, Marlene et al., eds. *Tracing the Autobiographical*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005. Print.
- Lejeune, Philippe. *On Autobiography*. Trans. Katherine Leary. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989. Print.
- Masciola, Amy L. "'The Unfortunate Maid Exemplified': Elizabeth Canning and Representations of Infanticide in Eighteenth-century England." Ed. Mark Jackson. *Infanticide: Historical Perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550–1800*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002, 52–72. Print.
- Rabin, Dana. "Beyond 'Lewd Women' and 'Wanton Wenches': Infanticide and Child-Murder in the Long Eighteenth Century." Ed. Jennifer Thorn. *Writing British Infanticide: Child-Murder, Gender, and Print, 1722–1859*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003, 45–69. Print.
- Raoul, Valerie et al., eds. *Unfitting Stories: Narrative Approaches to Disease, Disability, and Trauma*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007. Print.
- Rose, Lionel. *The Massacre of the Innocents: Infanticide in Britain, 1800–1939*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986. Print.
- Russell, Penny. "Life's Illusions: The "Art" of Critical Biography." *Journal of Women's History* 21.4 (2009): 152–156. <http://muse.jhu.edu/>. Web.
- Sauer, R. "Infanticide and Abortion in Nineteenth-Century Britain." *Population Studies: A Journal of Demography* 32.1 (1978): 81–93. doi: 10.2307/2173842. Web.
- Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1996. Print.
- Sommers, Sheena. *Bodies, Knowledge and Authority in Eighteenth-Century Infanticide Prosecutions*. MA Thesis. University of Victoria, 2005. Web.
- Stanley, Liz. *The Auto/Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/Biography*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992. Print.
- Stanley, Liz, ed. *Documents of Life Revisited: Narrative and Biographical Methods for a 21st Century Critical Humanism*. Farnham, UK, 2013. Web.
- Steedman, Carolyn, "Enforced Narratives: Stories of Another Self." Eds. Tess Cosslett, Celia Lury and Penny Summerfield. *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000, 25–39. Print.
- Strange, Carolyn. "A Case for Legal Records in Women's and Gender History." *Journal of Women's History* 22.2 (2010): 144–148. Web.
- Suzack, Cheryl. "Law Stories as Life Stories: Jeannette Lavell, Yvonne Bédard, and *Halfbreed*." Eds. Marlene Kadar et al. *Tracing the Autobiographical*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005, 117–42. Print.
- Wexler, Alice. "Mapping Lives: 'Truth,' Life Writing and DNA." Ed. Paul John Eakin. *The Ethics of Life Writing*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2004, 163–73. Print.
- Williams, Samantha. "The Experience of Pregnancy and Childbirth for Unmarried Mothers in London, 1760–1866." *Women's History Review* 20.1 (2011): 55–72. doi: 10.1080/09612025.2011.536386. Web.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sonja Boon is Associate Professor of Gender Studies at Memorial University (St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada). She is the author of *The Life of Suzanne Necker: Sin, Redemption and the Parisian Salon* (Pickering & Chatto, 2011) and *Telling the Flesh: Life Writing, Citizenship and the Body in the Letters to Samuel Auguste Tissot* (McGill-Queen's University Press, September 2015), the research for both of which was supported by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Her work has also appeared in *Life Writing*, *International Journal of Communication*, *Journal of Women's History*, *SubStance: A Review of Theory and Literary Criticism*, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, and the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, among others. She has research interests in life writing, corporeal feminisms, auto/ethnography, bodies and embodiment, identity, and gender history.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Tim Hitchcock et al., *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674–1913*. version 7.1, April 2013 ([www.oldbailey.org](http://www.oldbailey.org)). In-text citations of the *Proceedings* include the trial reference number only. Full bibliographic detail is provided in endnotes.
- 2 These shifts can be traced in the *The Proceedings of the Old Bailey* as well. Thus, while 131 women were tried on the charge of infanticide between January 1700 and December 1799, well over half (64%) of these women were tried in the first half of the century. The first half of the century also saw a far higher proportion of guilty verdicts: 24% of indicted women were found guilty in between 1700 and 1749; just under 11% were found guilty between 1750 and 1799.
- 3 See, for example, Mary Tudor, who called witnesses to show that she had “provided things fitting for her Lying-in” (*Old Bailey Proceedings Online [OBP]*, 8 March 1704, trial of Mary Tudor, t17040308-30).
- 4 See, for example: *OBP*, 11 January 1712, trial of Anne Nichols, t17120111-9; *OBP*, 2 July 1755, trial of Frances Palser, t17550702-21; *OBP*, 17 January 1728, trial of Sarah Dickenson, t17280117-43.
- 5 Nicola Goc develops this point further in *Women, Infanticide and the Press 1822–1922: News Narratives in England and Australia*. Farnham and Burlington: Ashgate, 2013.
- 6 *OBP*, 12 January 1711, trial of Anne Wheeler; *OBP*, 16 May 1711, trial of Elizabeth Stephens.
- 7 *OBP*, 11 September 1717, trial of Elizabeth Arthur.
- 8 See, for example, the case of Sarah Harwood, who shared a bed with one of the witnesses called to testify (*OBP*, 16 April 1729, trial of Sarah Harwood). In such close quarters, women struggled to hide evidence of their pregnancies and laboured in silence. As the witness in Harwood's case states: “she heard neither Sigh nor Groan, nor any such thing, made by the Prisoner” (idem.).
- 9 *OBP*, 17 July 1717, trial of Ann Hasle, t17170717-18.
- 10 *OBP*, 10 January 1718, trial of Mary Bristow, Mary Rut, Ann Douglass and Jane Whitfield; *OBP*, 17 September 1794, trial of Diana Parker.
- 11 *OBP*, 16 January 1723, trial of Ann Leak.
- 12 The 1624 Statute was specifically directed toward “lewd women that had been delivered of bastard children” (qtd. in Masciola, 61).

- 13 *OBP*, 8 March 1704, trial of Jane Lyne.
- 14 *OBP*, 27 February 1718, trial of Ann Mabe; *OBP*, 5 December 1711, trial of Phebe Ward; *OBP*, 14 January 1702, trial of Christian Russel.
- 15 *OBP*, 9 July 1718, trial of Jane Plintoff.
- 16 *OBP*, 11 September 1717, trial of Elizabeth Arthur.
- 17 *OBP*, 30 May 1781, trial of Rebecca Cowley.
- 18 *OBP*, 5 December 1711, trial of Phebe Ward.
- 19 *OBP*, 8 December 1742, trial of Elizabeth Davis.
- 20 *OBP*, 17 September 1794, trial of Diana Parker.
- 21 *OBP*, 8 March 1704, trial of Mary Tudor, t17040308-30; *OBP*, 14 January 1702, trial of Christian Russel, t17020114-7; *OBP*, 17 July 1717, trial of Ann Hasle, t17170717-18.
- 22 *OBP*, 15 January 1708, trial of Ann Gardner, t17080115-1; *OBP*, 6 September 1710, trial of Mary Forest, t17100906; *OBP*, 5 December 1711, trial of Phebe Ward, t17111205-21.
- 23 *OBP*, 7 September 1722, trial of Ann Morris.
- 24 *OBP*, 24 April 1734, trial of Mercy Hornby.
- 25 *OBP*, 27 January 1790, trial of Martha Miller.
- 26 *OBP*, 15 October 1718, trial of Francis Bolanson.
- 27 *OBP*, 17 July 1717, trial of Ann Hasle.
- 28 *OBP*, 12 September 1750, trial of Jane Trigg.
- 29 *OBP*, 27 February 1754, trial of [M.].
- 30 See also *OBP*, 15 September 1779, trial of Elizabeth Gwatkin (t17790915-78).
- 31 *OBP*, 2 July 1755, trial of Frances Palser.
- 32 *OBP*, 15 January 1708, trial of Ann Gardner. See also: *OBP*, 21 October 1761, trial of Frances Whaley (t17611021-23) and *OBP*, 21 October 1761, trial of Esther Rowdon (t17611021-27).
- 33 *OBP*, 8 March 1704, trial of Jane Lyne.
- 34 *OBP*, 26 February 1724, trial of Mary Morgan.
- 35 *OBP*, 10 January 1718, trial of Mary Bristow, Mary Rut, Ann Douglass, and Jane Whitfield.
- 36 *OBP*, 20 February 1793, trial of Mary Lewis.