The public opinion and discourse surrounding the murder of John Hayes by his wife, Catherine Hall Hayes, and her two accomplices, Thomas Billings, and Thomas Wood spans across primary accounts of the trial, newspaper articles, and fictional criminal biographies - making Ms. Hayes a notorious criminal in eighteenth century London. One of the most significant primary documents which elevated the early, criminal, and imprisoned life of Catherine Hayes, as well as over two thousand other criminals during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, are the Ordinary’s of Newgate’s accounts. The Ordinary of Newgate, or chaplain of Newgate Prison, was responsible for providing spiritual assistance to criminals during their time in prison, documenting their biography, confessions, last dying speeches, and behaviors, and publishing these documentations as an example for the general public on the repercussions of moral sin (Cockburn 246-70). The authentic and morally instructive testimonial of Ms. Hayes, specifically, is important for understanding the convolution of the social, religious, and political institutions of Victorian England and their support of a society “where women were subordinated to men, and husbands ruled over and dominated wives” (Foyster 9).

In 1726, Catherine Hayes - convicted of petty treason, or the murder of a husband by a wife, a master by a servant, or an ecclesiastical superior by their inferior - convinced a young Thomas Billings and Thomas Wood to kill her husband with a hatchet, take apart his limbs, and dispose of them in Whitehall River (Defoe 405-6). Although she claims the murder as a defense against the domestic violence she suffered which threatened her life, Ms. Hayes was found guilty and was consequently sentenced to death by being burnt at the stake in Tyburn, the principal location of execution for criminals in London. Although the blood of her husband, John Hayes, was not literally on her hands, the criminalization and disapproval towards Hayes’ early life and crime which suffuses the Ordinary’s account, reflects the expectations and limitations dictating womens’ roles in marriage and society that shaped law in England during the eighteenth century. While this critical edition includes Thomas Billings’ Ordinary account as a point of comparison, it will mainly focus on elucidating the account of Catherine Hayes whose particular narrative offers an in-depth depiction of the consequences for a woman who violates lower class, female propriety and power restrictions in Victorian England.

To understand the harsh condemnation by both the Ordinary and the general public of Ms. Hayes’ crime as a consequence of her gender and class, it is important to first socially contextualize her early life within London society and the actions and reactions which would lead to her fate. Her defiance of social conventions began with her marriage to John Hayes, which left her an outsider in society and placed her in a lower economic class. The haste of the Hayes’ courtship, agreeing to marriage after only eight days, and the astonishingly young age of twelve or thirteen at which Catherine married, left her isolated from her family and friends - “[throwing] off all respect and obedience to her parents” (Defoe 404) and “giving loose to her passions” (Defoe 404) without “Consent of Friends” (Guthrie 3) - leaving her without the option to seek out help from a family member, the most common refuge from marital violence during this time (Foyster 16). Furthermore, born in Warwickshire, a rural county in the midst of urbanization due to the booming city, Birmingham (Olsen 76), Catherine began a part of the rising middle class. However, upon marrying John Hayes from Worcestershire, a smaller rural county in the midlands of England (Olsen 76), she would come into a lower middle class bind, receiving a mere sixteen pounds per year from Mr. Hayes’ father (Defoe 405) after an unfortunate incident which prevented John Hayes from providing sufficient economic support. This economic strife disrupts the couples ability to perform their socially prescribed gender roles
- the male as the “economic sustenance for their wives and families” and the women as the “carers and managers of the home” (Foyster 10).

In combination, Hayes’ lower class, rural upbringing and condemned elopement hinder her representation within the Ordinary account in two ways: 1. It instills doubt towards her proper religious and social education and 2. It creates anxieties surrounding her inability to fill the proper role as a woman in society before she is even found guilty of murder. Coming from the rural countryside of the labouring poor, the male dominated upper class of London- to which the Ordinary and all law officials would belong - would likely be skeptical towards Catherine’s lack of knowledge and Faith in the Church of England, prohibiting a belief that she could be redeemed to uphold standards of society (Linebaugh XXII). This suspicion is only supported by her impulsive marriage, deeming her unfit to maintain expected female characteristics of “compassion, patience, tenderness, and charity” (Foyster 10) that are learned from popular culture, a “range of prescriptive and advice literature,” (Foyster 10), and the “elements of Christianity” (Guthrie 5).

In studying eighteenth century literature, the woman’s aforementioned expected social values and place among society cannot be separated from the religious “Salvation which is to be obtain’d, only in and through Jesus Christ” (Guthrie 4). In her Ordinary of Newgate account, Catherine Hayes’ inversion of the social responsibilities and characteristics of a woman, are remarked on “in and through” (Guthrie 4) spiritual language, which also suffuses the language used to describe her in criminal biographies, recounts of her trial, and newspaper articles - all “key indicators of respectability, reputation, and corresponding innocence or guilt” (Foyster 27). Catherine’s physical demeanor is described as “exceedingly bold” (Fielding 65), her “life and conversation” are declared “wicked” (Daily Journal Issue 1652), and neighbors and friends claim her to have had a “violent and turbulent temper...never free from quarrels in the neighborhood” (Defoe 404). These brute and demonic behavioral traits elevate the public’s social anxieties towards Hayes as a threat to female conventions through the universal spiritual language. This permeation of religion throughout all aspects of social life and its texts explains the Ordinary’s prescribed solution to “her compliance in any degree with such a horrid action” as a cure of her “gross ignoran[ce] in religious matters” (Guthrie 4).

These social and religious gender roles culminate into the oppressive injustices of women in eighteenth century law, which can be exemplified by the laws of petty treason and domestic violence presented in Catherine Hayes’ Ordinary account. In discussing the gender injustices surrounding the punishment of petty treason, it is significant to compare the sentence of Thomas Billings, Thomas Wood, and Catherine Hayes. Although compliant in the same murder, of the three criminals only the males performed the physical act of murder, but only Catherine Hayes was sentenced to be burnt at the stake. Convicted of homicide, Billings and Wood, were to be hung at Tyburn, the former of whom is recorded to have died “a young fellow of a simple, easy persuasion” (Gutherie 3). This inequality in which, “the stake was the penalty for women - and only women - convicted of petty treason” (Campbell 45), remained a form of capital punishment until the late eighteenth century - symbolic of the subordination of women in all aspects of English society.

The treatment of domestic violence is also emblematic of the implementation of gender roles in the justice system. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, English common law “endorsed conceptions of male dominance over women’s bodies” (E. and C. Buzawa 60), making women the property of their husbands. This male ownership of women
gave men legal rights to violently enforce female subordination and differentiated punishments given to women who obstruct these power roles. Catherine Hayes, a victim of domestic violence as well as a transgressor of gender power roles is a prime example in which this “male [domestic] violence did not excuse female violence, or act as an identifiable legal provocation to killing” (Foyster 105). In the case of domestic violence, the husband may “keep [his wife] by force within the bounds of duty, and may beat her, but not in violent or cruel manner” (Foyster 40). However, if a wife believes her husband’s violence to be “violent” and “cruel,” she must be able to provide evidence of physical violence that caused harm to physical health. This vague barrier of legal domestic violence can be used to interpret the effectiveness of the defense of Catherine Hayes who claims:

“Mr. Hayes was a very unkind husband, beating and mortifying her upon every trivial Occasion in a cruel Manner; and that when she was with Child, he would never suffer a Midwife to be call’d but once, which with his other ill Usuages prov’d the cause of abortion, and commonly put her in hazard of her Life.” (Gunthrie 3)

In her confession of marital violence, the requirement for violent behavior, defined as inappropriate or illegitimate behavior, is present in the claim that he “beat and mortif[ied] her upon every trivial occasion.” His cruel behavior, defined as life threatening verbal, physical, or sexual abuse, and/or economic deprivation, is explained by his “ill Usuages [proving] the cause of abortion” and the threat of life is overt in her statement that John Hayes “commonly put her in hazard of her life.” However, the lack of physical evidence which caused harm to physical health, makes Hayes’ defense insufficient, whether neglected from the Ordinary’s account or non-existent. In either regard, the dismissal of Catherine’s justification for murder as a defense, the subjectivity of what characterizes “violent” and “cruel” domestic violence, and unrefuted popular opinion that John Hayes was a “sober, honest, peaceable man,” (Defoe 404) presents the hauntingly oppressive power of social and religious gender roles on the voice of women in the criminal justice system.

Ultimately, the Ordinary account of Catherine Hayes highlights strict gender narratives, which were prominent in all aspects of eighteenth century society in England. When reading this critical edition, it will be helpful to use these narratives as frames for uncovering the intentions of the Ordinary within his subjective language and understanding the social pressures which may have pushed Catherine Hayes to her fate.
 Ordinary's Account, 9th May 1726.

THE ORDINARY of NEWGATE his ACCOUNT, Of the Behaviour, Confession, and dying Words of the Malefactors, who were Executed on Monday, the 9th of this Instant May, 1726, at Tyburn.

Thomas Billings and Thomas Wood, of St. Mary le Bone, were Indicted for the Murder of John Hayes, the former by striking and bruising the said John Hayes on the hinder part of the Head with a Hatchet, on the 1st of March last, of which he instantly died, and the latter for being accessory to the said Murder; to which Indictment they both pleaded Guilty.

**THOMAS BILLINGS**, (as Mrs. Hayes affirm'd some Days before their Execution) Son to John Hayes and Catharine Hayes, between 19 and 20 Years of Age When he was a Child, he did not live with his Father and Mother, but with some of their Relations in the Country; he was put to School in his younger Years, and taught to read his Mother Tongue, to write, and instructed in the Knowledge of the Christian Religion. I ask'd him if he knew what Parents he was of? he said, he did not, but believ'd himself to be a Bastard, but a near Relation of Mrs. Hayes, but what way he could not tell; that he was put to a Taylor in Worcestershire; and that there was a Country Shoemaker in that County, now dead, with whom he stay'd when he was young, who always pass'd for his Father, I ask'd what mov'd him to murder Mr. Hayes? he said, that he was cruel and barbarous in beating and abusing his Wife; that he threaten'd to murder himself, and said, some time or other he should kill his Wife; and that he was an avow'd Atheist, frequently Blaspheming in a manner which ought not to be express'd, denying the immortality of the Soul, and alledging that Men and Women were in the same Condition with the Beasts that perish. Upon such foolish Pretences Wood and he conceived a false Notion, that it was no more a Sin to kill him than a Dog, or a Cat. I told him, that if he was such a wicked Man as he represented him to have been, there was so much the less shadow of Reason to murder him suddenly and unexpectedly, since it was more reasonable upon that very Account to suffer him to live, that he might have time to think upon the evil of his Ways, and repent of his crying Sin, God being always willing to receive into Favour all penitent Sinners, however notorious their Guilt might be. All this he acknowledg'd, adding, that he had never done it, if he had not been sottishly intoxicated with Liquor, so that he knew not what he was doing. He own'd that there was no Cause for so villainous a Murder; and that whatever Punishment was inflicted upon him, was

1 In Hayes’ criminal biography, Wood is close friend from the countryside of Worcestershire. Lodged with the Hayes’ in London for a brief period. (Defoe 405)
2 An Anglican Parish Church in London. Parish refers not only to the church, but the people of its congregation as well.
3 A formal charge; record of the verdict and punishment.
4 Thomas Billings was not raised by Catherine and John Hayes, but rather by a country shoemaker said to be his godfather. (Defoe 405) Catherine claims in her “Last Dying Speech” to have given up her son to find a proper husband. (Hayes)
5 In this case, English.
6 Given the divine right of the King and Queen of England, defaming God or the Church of England was considered an offense against the King. (Beattie 108)
7 Foolishly. Often in reference to the overindulgence of liquor.
infinitely less than what he deserv'd. He said, that no sooner was the Thing done, but immediately his Conscience was seiz'd with such horrible Guilt, that he would have given the World to have it undone, but that was impossible; and that Mrs. Hayes and he wept and mourn'd most bitterly all that Night. He denied himself to have been upon the first contrivance of the Murder, but that Mrs. Hayes and Wood first consulted about it; and that when it was communicated to him, he agreed to it, and being overcome with Drink, he was so far left of God, as to commit the Murder. Mrs. Hayes deny'd that she ever advis'd Wood or him to make away with him, or that she knew any thing of it till the Fact was done. Wood, who the second Day after Sentence was confin'd to the Hold, and could not come to Chappel, because of a violent Indisposition of which he died, went to Death with it, that Mrs. Hayes press'd upon him for some time to murder Mr. Hayes, but he refus'd; and Billings, when it was propos'd to him, readily comply'd. He also said, that Mrs. Hayes held the Candle whilst he cut off the Head, and advis'd to the cutting his Body in Pieces, in order to carry it off with the greater Conveniency, and was present at the doing of it; but this, as a dying Woman she denied. Wood appear'd to be mightily concern'd and very Penitent. I ask'd Billings, if he knew that Mr. Hayes was his Mother. He said, that she had told him something of it, but that he knew nothing of Mr. Hayes's being his Father. Having formerly upon several Occasions 'em the heinousness of the Sin of Murder, I took opportunity to inform him, that had his Judges known his Relation to the deceas'd, a more painful and ignominious Punishment had been appointed him; and that his Crime was much greater than what the World had been appriz'd of, Parricide, the murdering of a Father, to whom (under God) we owe our all; being in the esteem of all Men thought a much more barbarous and unnatural Act, than the murder of a Stranger, upon whom one had no dependance. This he own'd, but that then he was ignorant of Mr. Hayes's being his Father; and as to the Punishment, he declar'd himself heartily sorry for his Sin; and that he was content to have his Body disjointed, and all his Bones broken Bone by Bone, or to suffer the most painful Death the Wit of Man could invent, since his Punishment was greater than he could bear, &c. Billings said, that from his Infancy he had always liv'd in the Fear of God, that he had studied and practis'd Religion, and of which indeed he wanted not a competent Knowledge for one of his Station; and that, excepting the barbarous Crime of Parricide for which he died, he had never committed any heinous Sin, neither had he been addicted to any of those Vices, either of Whoring, Drinking, Lying, &c. to which too many young Men do incline. He told also, that he had once taken the Sacrament. I told him, that by that one mortal Sin of Parricide he had lost all his former Righteousness. He hop'd the Seed of Grace was left in him. I said, that it appear'd very ill in such hellish Fruits and Effects, however God was able, if he sought him sincerely, to renew him again by Repentance, to which I earnestly exhorted him, his Crime not being a common Murder but Parricide, by his own Confession; for he knew Mrs. Hayes to be his Mother, and consequently Mr. Hayes her Husband to have paternal Relation to him. He declar'd himself most penitent for his Offence, hop'd that God had renew'd him by a true Repentance, and an unfeigned Faith in Christ, and that he car'd not what he suffer'd in this World, so that his Soul might have everlasting Happiness in the World to come. He seem'd to have been a young Fellow of a simple, easy, foolish Temper, and to have been seduced into the Commission of this unheard of Cruelty by the persuasion of Wood, or some way or other, which we shall leave the World to judge upon. He expected Salvation only through the Merits of Jesus Christ, whose Blood speaks better Things than that of Abel; and in all appearance he was very penitent for his Sins, and died in Communion of the Church of England, of which he own'd himself an unworthy Member.
2. Catherine Hayes was indicted for Petty-Treason, in being traiterously present, comforting and maintaining the said Thomas Billings in the Murder of the said John Hayes her Husband.

**CATHERINE HAYES**, born in Warwickshire,\(^8\) of honest and respected Parents, aged (as she said) about 34 or 36 Years, educated in the Faith of the Church of England; but what good Instructions she received in her younger Years were mostly forgotten; for she married Mr. John Hayes, Son to a Countryman in Worcestershire,\(^9\) within four Miles of the City of that Name; who had an Estate in Land of forty or fifty Pounds per Annum,\(^10\) as she said, when twelve or thirteen Years old, but as some of her Friends said fifteen or sixteen, upon eight Days acquaintance; for travelling by Mr. Hayes's Father's House, and asking the Way, old Mrs. Hayes desired her to come in, and young Mr. Hayes fell deeply in Love with her, and married her suddenly without Consent of Friends, she having left her Mother's House upon some Discontent; and as she affirm'd, Mr. Hayes her Husband was so intent upon the World, that he would not suffer her to apply to reading of her Book,\(^11\) or religious Exercises; such as Praying, &c. and that all the time of her Marriage, which was twenty Years and eight Months, he would never suffer her to go to Church but two or three times, namely, twice at London with Billings the Murderer her Son, whose true Name upon the Words of a dying Woman, she assur'd me to be Hayes; and that when she went to Church, it was without her Husband's Knowledge, and contrary to his Consent. They liv'd in Worcestershire upon a Piece of Land of their own, and some which they farm'd\(^12\); but she complain'd that Mr. Hayes was a very unkind Husband, beating and mortifying her upon every trivial Occasion in a cruel Manner\(^13\); and that when she was with Child, he would never suffer a Midwife to be call'd but once,\(^14\) which with his other ill\(^15\) Usuages prov'd the Cause of Abortion, and commonly put her in hazard of her Life. Five or six Years ago, upon Discontents and Grudges arising in the Family between Mr. Hayes's Father and Mother and her, and her Husband and her, they sold all off they had in the Country, and came to Town, where they kept a Chandler's Shop,\(^16\) and liv'd in different Places, till lately they took an House in the Parish of St. Mary le bon, where this unfortunate Accident of her Husband's Murder happen'd. When I first visited her, asking the Cause, why they murder'd Mr. Hayes in such a barbarous Manner? She told me, that Thomas Wood, one of the Murderers, alledg'd, it was no more Sin to kill him than a Dog or Cat, because of the cruel Usuage\(^17\) he gave her, and his blasphemous\(^18\) Expressions which he too frequently us'd, declaring that he believ'd nothing about a God, and that the Souls of Men and Women died like the Brutes, &c. Wood, when I told him this, cast the

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\(^8\) A rural, midland county of England which doubled in population due to urbanization of one of its cities, Birmingham. (Olsen 67)
\(^9\) A small rural, midland county in England. (Olsen 67)
\(^10\) 40-50 pounds per year; considered a middle class income in the countryside. (Olsen 67)
\(^11\) Likely referring to her Bible
\(^12\) Shared common lands with their village in the country for sustenance farming; a common rural practice before the process enclosure, in which these lands were privatized
\(^13\) A legal category; must be life threatening violence
\(^14\) The refusal to provide trained assistance from a nurse during and after childbirth. About 33 percent of births were unsuccessful in the eighteenth century without a midwife. (Thorn 72)
\(^15\) Immoral; wicked
\(^16\) A shop whose trade is to make or sell candles
\(^17\) A recognized mode of action, conduct, practice
\(^18\) Impiously irreverent; defamatory
whole Blame upon her; saying that twenty Days before the Murder happen'd, Mrs. Hayes advis'd and frequently press'd him to murder her Husband, upon doing of which he should be Master of all her Money, which was of a considerable Value; that he would not consent to do it; but that afterwards she proposing to her Son Billings, he too easily agreed to it. Wood held to this Confession till his Death; for two or three Days before he died, as I visited him lying sick in the Hold, he affirm'd the same; adding that she advis'd to the cutting off his Head, Legs, and Arms; and that she held the Candle while it was a doing, &c. All this Mrs. Hayes constantly deny'd, and by all the Arguments I and several who spoke to her could make use of, either from Scripture, as that by confessing her Sins she glorify'd God, &c. or the Reason of the Thing itself, since the grievous Sin, tho' principally committed against God, yet thereby a terrible Offence and Injury was also given to Man; and that without an ingenious Confession, she could not die in the Peace of the Church, &c. By these and many other Reasons she could not be in the least mov'd to make any farther Confession; only, that three Days before the unlucky Time to her, and the other two, Thomas

Wood sitting beside Mr. Hayes in the House, and holding his Hand over Mr. Hayes's Shoulder, said, Mr. Hayes, I think it no more Sin to kill you than a Dog or Cat. Why? says Hayes. Wood answer'd, Because you are so cruel to that poor industrious Woman, and because you are so atheistical and wicked. Mr. Hayes said, that as to his striking his Wife, he had a Giddiness in his Head at some times, that he knew not what he was doing: and that he believ'd some time or other he should kill his Wife in his Passion, which he could not help. Notwithstanding this, Billings said, that his Mother and Wood first plotted the Murder, altho' when she was present, he stood in awe, and would say nothing of her. What past betwixt Wood and Mr. Hayes is all she would confess, that she knew of any forethought or design of murdering Mr. Hayes her Husband. I told her, suppose she knew nothing of a premeditated Intention, yet her concealing the Murder, and abetting the Murderers, &c. made her equally guilty of the Crime in the Eye of the Law; that she acknowledg'd, and said, she desired not to live, but thought she should not be Burnt, &c. I told her, that Burning was the particular Punishment appointed by the Law of England, for Women who were concern'd in the Murder of their Husbands. She wept and fretted when she thought on this. Asking her, why she conceal'd her Husband's Murder? she said, that the ill Usuage he always gave her cool'd her Affection towards him, and her only Son being concern'd, she could not think of delivering him up to public Justice. She spoke much of Mr. Hayes's beating and mortifying her, and sometimes breaking her Ribs and Bones, and of his having murder'd two new-born Children of her's, and burying them, one under an Apple-Tree, another under a Pear-Tree, at two different Places, where they liv'd in Worcestershire; a Note of which a Neighbour of her's in that Country, who

19 Wood died of a natural fever before his execution date. (Defoe 405)
20 Not believing in any God
21 Vertigo; an uncontrollable thoughtlessness; flightiness
22 A suffering or affliction of some kind
23 premeditated; plan
24 The penalty of women convicted of petty treason to be strangled to death and then burnt at the stake. “Catherine Hayes, unhappily, was one of these who, ‘by accident,’ was burnt alive: her fire was lit before she was ‘deprived of sensation by strangling’” (Campbell 45)
25 To lose excitement, passion, or emotion towards something or someone
26 Paternal murders of newborn to young children was a “working class phenomenon” (Thorn 75) of eighteenth century England. Often result of inability of a father to support children or an innate hostility. (Thorn 72)
lives near to these Places took, and was to dig about the Trees, to see if he could find any of the Bones, &c. and was to write an Account of it to Town, if any such thing could be found. Being ask'd the Reason, why she malign'd and spoke so much to her Husband's Disadvantage, now that he was dead, and murder'd in so barbarous a Manner? She said, that she had no Malice in her Heart to him, but that her being so ill treated by him, was the Cause why she conceal'd the Murder, and was so indifferent about it; and that she could not die in Peace, till she open'd her Mind to me or some Body about the two Children; otherwise, that she entertain'd no grudge against any Person. She seem'd to be a Woman of good natural Parts, but grosly ignorant in religious Matters, which (it may be fear'd) was the cause of her compliance in any degree with such a horrid Action. I was always very pressing upon her to consider her latter end, and to improve the Knowledge of God, and the Salvation which is to be obtain'd, only in and through Jesus Christ, &c. She frequently affirm'd, that she had no doubt of her being happy in another World, and the Reason she gave for this assertion was, because she had been just and upright in her Dealings, 27 charitable to the Poor, careful in Household Affairs, faithful and dutiful to her Husband, &c. As to conjugal Duties, I told her, that although she did not actually imbrue her Hands in her Husband's Blood, yet by potronizing 28 and supporting such execrable 29 Murderers, she declar'd herself a very ill Woman, and deserving the Punishment appointed her. At which she sigh'd and groan'd, confessing herself faulty in part; for which she beg'd God and the World Pardon, and declar'd that she heartily repented for the Murder, so far as she was concern'd in it. I inform'd her also, that if she relied upon any good Work of her own for Salvation, she would fail of attaining the end of her Faith, &c. so I advis'd her only to depend upon the Merits and Intercession 30 of Jesus Christ, &c. She said, that she believed in Jesus Christ her only Saviour, upon whose account alone she expected eternal Life and Salvation. By frequent Instructions both before and after her Tryals I brought her to understand some of the first Elements of Christianity; but was greatly troubled to see her much less concern'd than what I desired; for when I spoke to her about the great Concerns of her Soul, she was too ready to bring in some little Story nothing to the purpose: for which, when I reprov'd her, she acknowledg'd her Error. She declar'd herself of the Communion of this Church, of which she was an unworthy Member. When in Chappel I preach'd, or pray'd, or discours'd about Murder, she commonly faint'd away, which she acknowledg'd to proceed from the Thoughts and Apprehensions of her Husband's horrible Murder, which still harass'd and distracted her Mind Night and Day, ever since it happen'd. She hop'd to be sav'd only by the Merits of Christ Jesus, and declar'd that she died in Peace with all Mankind.

27 To be friendly and fair in business. Although speculated in her criminal biography that she was “never free from quarrels in the neighborhood. (Defoe 404)
28 To do business with
29 abominable
30 To pray on someone else’s behalf.
31 Became cowardly or shy


Fielding, Henry. Examples of the interposition of providence in the detection and punishment of murder. Containing, above thirty cases, in which this dreadful Crime has been brought to Light, in the most extraordinary and miraculous Manner; collected from various authors, antient and modern. With an introduction and conclusion, both written by Henry Fielding, Esq.: Dublin, M,DCC,LII. [1752]. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. Georgetown University. 13 Nov. 2014: 65.


Hayes, Catherine Hall. “The last speech confession and dying words of Mrs. Catherine Hayes, who was burn'd alive at Tyburn, for the murder of her husband, on Monday the 9th, of this instant May 1726. In a letter to a particular friend.” Dublin, 1726. Eighteenth Century Collections Online. Gale. Georgetown University. 13 Nov. 2014


Suggestions for Further Reading


A primary source document, containing a fabricated recount of the life and crime of Catherine Hayes. Offers a look into the literary fiction which arose from real criminal trials and how the historical facts were altered for their reader.


Foyster’s argument chronicles the shift in marital relations and the female subordinate role through the changes in law regarding domestic violence. Her chapter on the alternate options for women to escape marital violence emphasizes the limitations of women in eighteenth century England.

3. Hayes, Catherine Hall. “The last speech confession and dying words of Mrs. Catherine Hayes, who was burn'd alive at Tyburn, for the murder of her husband, on Monday the 9th, of this instant May 1726. In a letter to a particular friend.” Dublin, 1726. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online.* Gale. Georgetown University. 13 Nov. 2014

The written account of Catherine Hayes’ final speech before her execution at Tyburn. A unique account of her confessions and life in her own words, including the reasons why she abandoned her son for further research on marriage, children, and infanticide.


Covered only briefly in this critical edition, Thorn expands upon the statistics, stigmas, and punishments for infanticide in eighteenth century England and the gendered laws which surround the crime.