

# ‘Working Mothers’ in Eighteenth-Century London

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The phrase ‘working mother’ was a mid-nineteenth-century addition to the English lexicon that would have been incomprehensible to the inhabitants of early modern Britain. There were very few circumstances in which a mother did not work, whether in return for income, as a producer for home consumption, and/or as a provider of ‘subsistence services’ (involving unpaid laundry, housework, meal preparation, and the personal care of dependents).<sup>1</sup> The majority of mothers who managed households – either jointly as wives or singly as widows – also undertook responsibility for delegating work to others, especially (but not exclusively) to servants.<sup>2</sup> Illness was as likely a diversion for mothers from income-generating work as either unpaid childcare or leisure. The common perception that women combining motherhood with other employment is a relatively recent phenomenon overlooks a much longer history of maternal duty, understood as much in terms of provision as in terms of a unique and irreplaceable affective commitment to the personal care and socialization of children.<sup>3</sup>

The term ‘working mother’ is, of course, highly problematic both because of its suggestion that mothering is not work and because it implies that mothering should preclude paid work – notions originating in nineteenth-century Anglo-American discourse with the concept of the male breadwinner wage, separate spheres ideology, and the re-categorization of housewives as ‘dependents’.<sup>4</sup> Cross-culturally and over the longue durée, mothering has been (and continues to be) experienced as work,<sup>5</sup> although its characterization within capitalist systems consistently overlooks this dimension, emphasizing instead mothering’s moral or affective characteristics. In response, twentieth-century social reproduction feminism has emphasized both the costs and value of unpaid care work, in terms of its discriminatory consequences for women (within the waged workforce as well as beyond it), and in terms of the accrual of its value within broader capitalist systems which could not function without unpaid care – which, if properly valued, can represent staggering proportions of GDP.<sup>6</sup> Feminist economists have long urged for the inclusion of unpaid care work in Systems of National Accounting alongside subsistence production, to date unsuccessfully (although a broader range of subsistence services, including unpaid care, features in the Satellite Accounts that assess sectors not represented in National Accounts).<sup>7</sup> Questions surrounding the definition of ‘production boundaries’ – the parameters determining what work counts as ‘productive’ to an economy – remain fraught with

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interpretative challenges.<sup>8</sup> The distinction between ‘productive’ and ‘reproductive’ labour is indebted to the nineteenth-century recategorization of the latter as ‘unproductive’, and the very deployment of these terms carries the risk of relegating ‘reproductive’ work to economic insignificance.

To argue that mothers ‘worked’ in the early modern period is, therefore, to claim more than simply confirming the value of unpaid care work as economically essential labour. Care work (paid as well as unpaid) was part of the wide gamut of working activities undertaken by women and men in order to make a living. As such, a great deal of childcare was delegated from mothers to others in ways that maximized the earning capacity of mothers who relied on care services, besides affording income-generating potential to an army of commercial care providers.<sup>9</sup> A significant proportion of nursing and child-rearing in Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries was a waged activity.<sup>10</sup> This was partly owing to an increase in the institutional provision of care services, but it was also fuelled by extensive private demand for a commercial care infrastructure. Both developments were intrinsic to eighteenth-century economic performance.

Historians of early modern women’s work have overturned conventional assumptions that marriage, associated with the legal constraints of ‘coverture’ and with the commonly extensive child-bearing careers that accompanied wedlock, limited the working capacity of wives. Marriage actually may have enhanced rather than diminished women’s economic agency, since it gave them access to and control over many of the combined resources of the household.<sup>11</sup> It is also apparent that *demand* for women’s waged labour was more critical for their labour force participation than factors affecting its *supply* (such as child-bearing or institutional constraints).<sup>12</sup> Historians’ observations of time-use, unlike surveys of occupational labels that systematically under-represent women workers, have demonstrated first, that married women’s engagement in income-generating work as well as subsistence production was far higher than has been estimated by economic historians (when taken into account at all), and secondly, that gendered divisions of labour were less stark than often imagined.<sup>13</sup> As Maria Ågren and her co-authors have argued, a ‘two-supporter model’ rather than a male breadwinner norm was the expectation of most households.<sup>14</sup> That this was readily assumed by early moderns is suggested by Eliza Haywood’s advice in 1744 to servant women that ‘You cannot expect to marry in such a Manner as neither of you shall have Occasion to work, and none but a Fool will take a Wife whose Bread must be earned solely by his Labour and who will contribute nothing towards it herself.’<sup>15</sup>

This begs the question of how mothers in particular, and households more generally, managed the multiple demands of securing a living including and alongside providing care. This question carries further historiographical implications because of the importance attached to women’s income-generating work in Jan de Vries’s theory that an ‘industrious revolution’ over the course of the eighteenth century preceded Britain’s Industrial Revolution. According to de Vries, ‘industriousness’ was inspired by the desire for novel consumer goods and took the form of both a diminishing leisure preference and an increase in

the market-oriented work undertaken by women and children.<sup>16</sup> Historians have subsequently questioned the extent to which 'industriousness' was a product of novel consumer aspirations rather than the rising cost of living which, in both the first half of the seventeenth century and the second half of the eighteenth, made eking a basic living considerably harder for labouring people.<sup>17</sup> More recently, Jan Lucassen has argued that a labour intensive period of 'industriousness' was not specific to north-western Europe but also occurred in large parts of China, Japan and India between 1500 and 1800, similarly involving the re-allocation of women and children's time to market-based work.<sup>18</sup>

What happens to care in all this? In the historiographical analysis of rising labour intensity (whether motivated by workers' needs to sustain or heighten their standard of living, or extracted through the imposition of time discipline and growing wage dependency), labour has traditionally been represented as in tension with leisure, suggesting a zero-sum game between work and rest.<sup>19</sup> Care, however, features as neither work nor leisure. Discounted as a form of provision, care is rendered invisible and insignificant. Yet, as social reproduction theorists and feminist economists have long pointed out, care is not only a form of work; it is also the *precondition* for other kinds of work. Without reproductive labour and social reproduction there can be no workforce, yet standard economic analysis routinely approaches workers as autonomous individuals whose care needs have been met and who have no caring responsibilities of their own. This myopia supports the ringfencing of 'production' as a discrete phenomenon, separate from and unrelated to unpaid care provision, and in doing so underpins the extractive contradiction at the heart of capitalism.<sup>20</sup> As Nancy Fraser has observed, 'capitalism's orientation to unlimited accumulation tends to destabilize the very processes of social reproduction on which it relies'.<sup>21</sup>

It is therefore worth attending to the ways in which care work – that essential resource intrinsic to all economies – was supplied and extracted at a time of economic quickening. My focus in this article is on the myriad ways in which mothers in eighteenth-century London combined the working obligations required both to generate a living and to provide care. As Amy Erickson has shown, London was a place where 'almost all ... wives were engaged in gainful occupations in the eighteenth century'.<sup>22</sup> The majority of these wives were also mothers and must have combined gainful labour with unpaid care work and/or drawn on commercial, voluntary or even state-provided care services.

Amassing evidence of care work is notoriously difficult, even in contemporary studies that are specifically designed to record all forms of work, paid and unpaid. Childcare in particular remains under-recorded because of its combination with other work which takes priority in accounts of 'time-use'.<sup>23</sup> The closest that early modern historians can come to compiling time-use data is by collecting observations of work tasks captured in records containing details of quotidian practices – such as court records, letters and autobiographies.<sup>24</sup> My discussion here focuses on the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, which from 1674 reported on the trials held at London's central criminal court relating to crimes ranging from petty larceny to treason.<sup>25</sup> Searching the digitized database of the *Proceedings* yields incidental

observations of care work that received mention in the published accounts of trials. The following analysis is based on a search for variations on the term 'nurse' (e.g. nurse; wet-nurse; nurseling; nurse-child; nursing) which yielded 478 observations of care work between 1675 and 1800. 'Nursing' was a capacious term, covering a range of activities from breastfeeding, to holding an infant, to watching or tending a child, to providing more general sick care, and to long-term personal care, both paid and unpaid, in domestic as well as institutional contexts.<sup>26</sup> Of the references to nurses/nursing in the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, around half (240) referred specifically to childcare, including 51 relating to the period of lying-in associated with the aftermath of a birth. A fifth (98) of references to nursing referred to illness of some kind (ranging from lameness to lunacy), skewed by 37 cases relating to a fatal injury or illness that was the subject of a homicide trial. Around a quarter of observations (128) referred to nurses and/or nursing without detailing its character. If these overall figures are a guide, alongside Jeremy Boulton's observation that the verb 'nurse' increasingly referred to childcare over the course of the eighteenth century, it is possible that the majority of these 128 nurses, nurse-keepers, nurse maids, and women who went 'out a nursing' were tending to children.<sup>27</sup> A further 12 observations were generated by searching for the term 'suck' with reference to breast-feeding.

This evidence affords some glimpses of the range of work undertaken by childbearing women in eighteenth-century London and the ways in which they juggled the multiple demands of making a living with meeting their children's care needs. These cases bring into focus – albeit often fleetingly – the arrangements made by women and families whose experiences are rarely captured in formal records because they neither drew on parochial or institutional relief nor belonged to the elite social ranks whose family papers and/or accounts occasionally shed light on the supply of paid care.<sup>28</sup> The development of institutional sources of care that could be drawn on by impoverished parents – particularly the parish workhouses and London's Foundling Hospital – has been richly detailed by historians.<sup>29</sup> It is clear that the mixed economy of welfare could also on a temporary basis provide some, if not all, of the childcare resources required to enable one or both parents to eke a living, usually as a last resort. In addition, parish relief supported many children (orphaned or abandoned) who had no recourse to parental care, contributing to the demand for commercial care services supplied by labouring women who were often juggling their own childcare obligations with income-generating work. The childcare needs and options of the majority of families were therefore situated alongside and embedded within expanding institutional and state-provided child-welfare structures.

It appears that families in London were smaller than average because of the city's distinctive demographic profile.<sup>30</sup> From the later seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century, the numbers of young and old dependents in relation to those with full earning capacity diminished across England. These dependency ratios were likely to have been even lower in London because of relatively high levels of mortality in the capital and because of London's reliance on young migrants to increase its population, which doubled from half a million to over one million

between 1675 and 1800. Following a rising birth rate from mid-century, children became a more prominent part of the metropolitan population, although it was only from 1775 that London's population began to increase naturally.<sup>31</sup> Childbearing nonetheless placed a considerable strain on a household's resources, especially for those already facing precarity (which was a common threat to the livelihoods of the middle ranking as well as the labouring poor).<sup>32</sup> For those dependent on an economy of makeshifts, the arrival of a[nother] child could tip the balance towards pauperism.<sup>33</sup> It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that women's paid employment levels actually increased during their childbearing years.<sup>34</sup> Childcare resources would have been especially valuable – either if freely obtained (as formal welfare or via neighbours or kin and through reciprocal arrangements) or if paid for at a lower rate than the mother's earning capacity. This was not just the case for those families living on the edge of destitution, or those which had come into being through illegitimate birth, or which had been blighted by a parental death or absence. There was a demand for childcare services throughout the social scale, most commonly in order to facilitate a household's ability to make a living and (in some cases) accumulate wealth. This generated a broad market for childcare services beyond the parochial and institutional employment of nursing care for those drawing on the mixed economy of welfare.

The Old Bailey material sheds some light on the work undertaken by the majority of women who were responsible for the care of children and making a living without recourse to formal relief. The following discussion surveys the income-generating labour performed by mothers who also cared for their own children, as well as the services provided by the many 'nurses' who supplied childcare commercially, sometimes in conjunction with other forms of paid work, sometimes while also looking after their own children, and sometimes in care chains that precluded direct involvement in their own children's care. Beyond the market for care services, it is also possible to glimpse informal and reciprocal care arrangements, as well as the ways in which care services could be negotiated alongside other services (e.g. the provision of lodgings). The complexity of these arrangements makes it clear that there was a wide and varied market for care, and that the command of care resources was used to enable childbearing women's earning capacity and to keep households – and the wider economy – afloat. Supplying care services was also the means by which many women, most of whom were working mothers themselves, provided for their own families. As a result, childcare was broadly dispersed between women (and some men) in a fluid set of relationships that clearly prioritized women's work in making a living above any ideological or practical commitment to the primacy or uniqueness of the mother-child bond.

#### THE WORK OF CARE

Looking after infants and small children was labour-intensive. Before turning to the ways in which mothers combined reproductive and productive labour, it is important to emphasize that the burden of care was neither insignificant (however

invisible in the archive) nor easily managed. Modernization narratives once debated by family historians bequeathed assumptions that pre-modern parent-child relations were characterized by distance and inattention, alongside claims that the eighteenth-century witnessed a shift towards more nurturing approaches to childhood. While such assertions have been convincingly refuted, and while the debate focused principally on the sentiments associated with ‘caring about’ rather than the work of ‘caring for’, it remains necessary to stress that we cannot assume that childcare was relatively limited owing to a culture of indifference.<sup>35</sup> There is as much evidence of parental nurture as neglect in the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey*, and the trauma expressed by some mothers who were unable to combine the care of their own child with making a living might be included as part of the emotional work of care which had an adverse effect on the carer as well as the cared-for.

Mary Johnson, for example, who was indicted in 1746 for stealing a gold ring and several other items from her landlady, recounted a sorry tale of spousal abuse – corroborated by several ‘substantial People’ as witnesses – that had prevented her from caring either for her own infant or the baby whose wetnurse she had become. Claiming to be the victim of a malicious prosecution initiated by her husband, who was reportedly determined to have her hanged or transported, Johnson recalled her desperation:

her Husband had took the Child she had put to nurse out, and would not let her know where it was. All that she wanted of him, was to know where the Child was; she told him, if he would allow her 4s a Week, which he then gave to another, she would not trouble him any more.

While refusing to reveal the whereabouts of her own child, her husband had also gone about complaining that ‘she had cost him 30 l. within these three Years’, with illness and apothecary’s bills, and that he had ‘only entailed a Chamber-pot upon her’, having taken away all the furniture from the room where she lodged. He called her a ‘d[amne]d B[itc]h’ and set her up to face a charge of robbery so that he might be spared any further expense. In the meantime, Johnson had lost her employment as a wet nurse, since because of ‘the Uneasiness with her Husband . . . the Child did not thrive’. Johnson’s milk – which was more valuable to her family economy when commodified than bestowed on her own child – had dried up with the stress of not knowing where her own child was and in the face of her husband’s vindictiveness.<sup>36</sup>

The work of care entailed considerably more than emotional labour, of course, although the physical burden of supplying care – the birthing, lifting, feeding, carrying, washing, watching, soothing, and clothing – could also be emotionally draining, particularly when these tasks left no respite for the carer.<sup>37</sup> The bodily demands of gestation, lactation, and tending infants and small children can occasionally be glimpsed in the *Proceedings*. An expectant mother, Mary Patmore (whose husband was indicted for murdering her through neglect and abuse) was reported to complain that ‘I’m very hungry, the child gnaws me.’ Another witness

in the case, who lodged in the same building, testified that she had heard moaning coming from a back garret a few times. Married to a plasterer who was himself ill, and with five children to care for, she admitted that she had only gone once to investigate the source of the noise: 'I had no time; my husband being so bad, and the children so heavy upon me.'<sup>38</sup>

Mothers and nurses occasionally mentioned being awake in the middle of the night to suckle or tend children (often as witnesses contributing details to establish the time of suspicious events, or for providing a suspect with an alibi). Sarah Woodrow, married to a tailor, recalled that she was 'sitting up in my bed giving my child suck' at two in the morning when she heard the yard door flapping in the wind, which prompted the discovery that the clothes she had left on the ironing board had been stolen, along with more wet clothes on the line from her wash the previous day. She had been the last in the house to go to bed, having locked the yard door and fastened the window just before midnight.<sup>39</sup> Edward Close, giving evidence in a murder trial, recalled that his wife was 'tainting the child at the fire' when they heard a commotion in the lodgings below them. When the court asked for clarification of what this meant, he explained that his wife was 'Changing a clout'.<sup>40</sup>

The laundry that routinely accompanied childcare was also frequently mentioned. Jane Benson evoked the demands of attending to her child who was 'a little cross vixen Thing' which had 'befoul'd itself lamentably'. An offer of help by Jane Johnson (a friend of one of Benson's lodgers) was very beguiling: 'Mother Benson, says she, you look as if you was very weary and sleepy: I would have you go and take a Nap, and lay the Child by you, and I will wash its Things the while.' Upon waking, Benson found that Johnson had disappeared with various clothes belonging to Benson and her child.<sup>41</sup> Observations of the work undertaken by nurses include washing clothes, and dishes, and floors – all arduous tasks involving the fetching, carrying and disposing of water.<sup>42</sup>

The demands of care escalated further when a child was unwell. Lucy Acor, married to a compositor, had taken in a nurse child shortly after the death of its mother and had struggled to care for it alongside looking after her own four children aged nine and below (one of whom had also died). The nurseling, according to one witness, 'smelt very disagreeable' and when she prompted Acor that 'it wanted nursing', Acor replied that 'the child was ill and would not bear nursing'. Dr Vaux, called to assist by Acor's landlady Barbara Cass (an ink maker), judged that more specialist care was required. Barbara Cass herself took over the child's care two weeks before its death, when it was seventeen months old. By this point 'the bones were through the skin' and the state of the child's head was so bad that Cass 'was obliged to sit up with it all night, to get it clean enough to take it into bed', adding that Acor had never taken the child to bed with her, leaving it instead on a stuffed pillowcase in a drawer. Another witness, who had helped Cass to clean the child's head, claimed that 'the cap was eat into the head' and that she was 'forced to cut it with the scissars', adding that 'it was very disagreeable, and quite devoured with vermin'. They cleaned and dressed the child's head according to Dr Vaux's directions. Whilst critical of

Acor's care, Cass acknowledged that the child struggled with 'victuals': 'when it had any thing that was nourishing, it was worse'. Tipping the verdict in Acor's favour, Dr Vaux concluded that the child's death was attributable to 'the constitution with which it was born' (derived from 'diseased parents') rather than insufficient care.<sup>43</sup> The women carers' descriptions of the emaciated state of the baby's body, the smells emanating from her, and the impossibility of feeding or soothing her over a period of at least three months, attest to the demands of caring for a sick child.<sup>44</sup>

Nursing care could also be required during a child's illness to protect other members of the family. Mrs Leake, for example, in her testimony against Sarah Sharpe (accused of theft), declared that 'My Child had the Small-Pox, and the Apothecary told me it was a bad Sort, and if I nurs'd it, I should be in Danger of my Life; so I got this Woman to look after it, and left her in Charge.'<sup>45</sup> It is worth remembering that child illness was ubiquitous, and most especially so in London.<sup>46</sup> When child mortality rates peaked in the mid-eighteenth century, nearly two-thirds of all metropolitan children (rich and poor) died before reaching the age of five.<sup>47</sup> Caring for young children was hard work, requiring time and physical and emotional energy. Even the most basic demands of care provision associated with keeping children warm, dry, fed, clean and clothed could be challenging, and they became especially so when a child was sick and/or when a carer was overburdened with other demands. For most women, the main claim on their time and energy was generating a living. It is to the combination of mothering with earning that we now turn.

### WORKING MOTHERS

In July 1760, Elizabeth Roberts (wife of Francis) recalled the day a few weeks earlier when Ann Ward had come to her house to sell Roberts a pair of shoes. Uninterested in the shoes, Roberts 'had occasion to go out to sell things in the street', not returning home until 10 pm. She 'was getting supper' when Ward reappeared, this time offering a handkerchief for sale and pleading that she had a sick husband and a child out at nurse to support. Roberts refused to buy the handkerchief, but, as Roberts 'stripp'd my children to wash their little things', Ward offered to stay and help in return for 2*d.* an hour. Instead of helping, Ward took off with the children's gowns, a bonnet, a pair of old stays, an apron, and a copper saucepan.<sup>48</sup> Here were two 'working mothers': one combining the care of her own children with retail on the streets, drawing on ad hoc care; the other hawking second-hand clothes having placed her own child out to nurse, taking on piecemeal care work as the opportunity arose. Mothers mixed the care of their own children with many other forms of work, some of which included providing commercial care services to enable the productive work of other mothers in a complex distribution of care work between myriad women in a variety of capacities.

The combination of productive and reproductive labour – alongside the broad dispersal of care between a wide range of women (and a few men) – was commonplace, most obviously because it was essential for securing the livelihoods of

most London households. Women worked around pregnancy and birth as well as childcare. Mary Kelly, having accused Mary Kenchley of stealing money from her room, testified that she and Kenchley 'were partners together, in buying and selling cloaths'. At the time of the theft, Kelly had not been able 'to go about the streets on my business' because she was 'with child', and so instead she had taken in a woman to nurse in the house where Kelly and Kenchley both lived. Kelly deposed that Kenchley had stolen the money while Kelly was 'up and down stairs, nursing the woman', adding that 'it is a publick-house, and there was no servant to attend business but myself'. Kelly was delivered three days later in the Lying-in Hospital. Although she had not been able to hawk second-hand clothes on the streets as she approached her term, this did not stop her from selling nursing services and serving in the public house where she lived.<sup>49</sup>

Mary Gulliver also attempted to limit the impact of pregnancy and birth on her income-generating capacity. Accusing her lying-in nurse (Elizabeth Williams) of theft, Gulliver told the court about how she had lain in for a fortnight, after which Williams's stint as a nurse was up. After this point, Williams had returned on an occasional basis to run some errands for Gulliver who 'could not go out'. Williams was expected to light the fire and do some washing, not in order to allow Gulliver to rest or tend to her infant, but so that she could go 'up stairs to work' – explaining that '[m]y husband is a shoe-maker, and I close upper leathers'. (Gulliver complained that instead of undertaking the tasks required, Williams first 'took a book and went to reading' and then ran off with clothes, shoes and money belonging to Gulliver, including a gown that she had left in the baby's cradle).<sup>50</sup>

Mothers undertaking a range of work alongside breastfeeding seem to have been unremarkable and were likely to have been far more commonplace than their explicit mention in the *Proceedings*. Two witnesses in a trial from 1765, relating to an obdurate customer at the Three Lemons who claimed he had been a victim of theft, referred to 'the gentlewoman of the house' (Mrs Dutfield) mediating between John Majour (the prosecutor) and her waiter, with whom Majour refused to settle his reckoning, alleging that his pocket had been picked. When Majour returned later, 'in liquor', the waiter recalled that 'my mistress had her little child at her breast'. Mrs Hussey, a mantua-maker who was with Mrs. Dutfield in the fore room of the house, recounted that as she 'was giving suck to her young child; the prosecutor catch'd hold of her arm, and said, You b[ite]h of hell-flames, if you don't deliver me four guineas and a moidore, that was taken from me, I will destroy you, and blow up the house'. According to Hussey, Dutfield had recently lain in. Dutfield's testimony, however, as reported at length in the *Proceedings*, made no reference at all to the infant in her arms as she sought to manage the dispute (and her establishment), which she did by judging that it was 'better to lose the reckoning, than have an uproar'.<sup>51</sup> It is likely that nursing children was so ubiquitous, and so routinely performed in conjunction with other work tasks, that it did not occur to participants in court to mention it. Other glimpses of mothers breastfeeding while undertaking productive work include Ann Jones (accused of the fraudulent production of stamps) who was discovered 'set facing the door

suckling a child, and making some silk laces'; Mary Till, who breastfed her child while running the chandler's shop that she kept in Scotland Yard; and Elizabeth Brady who had a child suckling in her arms as she showed two prospective lodgers the accommodation she had advertised to let. On discovering that her watch had disappeared from its hook above the fireplace, she pursued one of them in the street, her babe still in arms. Going back indoors she 'laid the child down' before returning outside to grab hold of the man whom she believed had taken her watch.<sup>52</sup>

In these cases, maternal breastfeeding was facilitated by the co-location of care and income-generating work. We should not assume, however, that co-location was a precondition for mothers combining care with other kinds of work.<sup>53</sup> In other examples, mothers recounted undertaking productive labour and suckling their infants in different locations. Having been hired to do some charring work for Mrs Smith, Elizabeth Ginsell was excused by her employer 'to go home to suckle a child', at which point Mrs Smith 'missed a great number of things'. It turns out that Ginsell 'had no child to suckle' but it had been a believable and unremarkable expectation that she might well leave her place of work to feed an infant.<sup>54</sup> Even when infants were put out to nurse, they might nonetheless be breastfed by their own mothers in between other working commitments. Sarah Barnard explained that she had left a linen shift (an undergarment) at Mrs Armstrong's, where her child was at nurse, when she had 'shifted myself there, in order to suckle the child'. When Barnard returned again, her shift and her child's dimity robe had been stolen. Mary Emery, a witness in a different case, deposed that she had had a nurse child whose mother (Mrs Sware) 'used to come at proper Times to suckle'.<sup>55</sup> Occasionally it is possible to assess the distance between mothers and their children out at nurse. When they were placed in close proximity – within the same lodgings, next door, with a neighbour, or 'nearby' – the continuation of some maternal breastfeeding would have been feasible.<sup>56</sup>

Occupational data for women is notoriously difficult to recover, both because it was rarely supplied and because women workers (like many men) often undertook a wide variety of tasks that defy categorization under a single occupational label.<sup>57</sup> The income-generating work glimpsed in the *Proceedings* of the mothers who drew on paid care services included service, care work, retail (both keeping shops and selling items on the streets), manufacturing, and cleaning, washing and ironing: in other words, all the categories of work in which we know women more generally were engaged.<sup>58</sup> Care work could be fitted around some of these tasks; others ruled out time for 'nursing' children. One woman's description of her working life suggests that its demands would have left little room for childcare:

My Name is Mary Lee; and tho' I say it, there is never a Woman in the Parish that takes more Care for an Honest Livelihood than myself. I turn my Hand to any Thing to get a Penny: Sometimes I sell Things in Leadenhall Market; and sometimes I do an odd Char at one House, and sometimes at another. We Market-Women are up early and late, and work hard for what we have. We stand all Weathers, and go thro' thick and thin.

Lee asserted that she was 'never the Woman that spared my Carcass' and defended her right to 'spend three Farthings now and then', honestly got, on 'something to cheer the Spirits between whiles, and keep out the Wet and Cold' while admitting to wondering how her drinking companion and fellow market woman (accused of theft) had been able to spend so much on French brandy when 'we had had but a very indifferent Market that day'.<sup>59</sup> Lee wanted the court to have no doubt about how time-consuming and physically demanding retail could be. Many of her fellow market women would have been mothers who were also having to provide and/or find funds for childcare.

Mothers depended upon a range of care provision to assist their endeavours. Many mothers placed their children out with nurses, often for periods of months if not years. A witness providing a character for Elizabeth Wilcox (accused of shoplifting some printed cotton) confirmed that she had known Wilcox for nineteen years, during which time Wilcox had borne eleven children. Wilcox also kept a public house and 'followed Needle-Work and Quilting'. The witness (unnamed) had nursed the youngest child for three years. Wilcox's husband was 'Clerk to one Mr. Jordan, who fits Men out for the Sea'.<sup>60</sup> Many of these arrangements precluded regular contact between parents and children. For example, Hannah Mosely, a hired servant, worked from lodgings in St James Street, Westminster, while her child was at nurse two miles away with Mrs Terry at Newington, where it had been placed for about a year.<sup>61</sup> Children might also be farmed out on a temporary basis during periods of maternal illness. Silvanus Hill, for example, was burgled while he was getting supper at a public house. There was no one at home because his wife was ill in hospital and his children were 'at nurse'.<sup>62</sup> Not all such arrangements involved small children. Margaret East, the mother of a nine-year-old victim in a rape case, explained that she had put her child Jane to nurse with the prisoner's wife, 'as I am in service'. She generally saw her daughter once a week but had not seen her on the Sunday after the assault, so Jane had eventually confided in a grocer's wife (her 'Mammy' having not come) rather than tell her mistress. It's possible in this case that Margaret East's deployment of the language of 'nursing' emphasized a duty of care, whereas Jane East's references to her master (her abuser) and her mistress betrayed the reality of a service-like arrangement, although the grocer's wife, who knew Jane from 'coming on errands', also referred to 'the people that she was at nurse with'.<sup>63</sup> On the few other occasions that the ages of nurse children were mentioned in court, they ranged from infants to the age of eleven.<sup>64</sup>

Many mothers bought in care to their households in a variety of forms. Some had resident nurses, who were not exclusive to the family lives of the better off. Mary Hogg, for example, who sold peas and beans for her living, was away from her home for extensive periods of the day, and dependent upon carters to transfer her and her sacks of goods between her home and the market. One particularly recalcitrant carter, taking advantage of Hogg's husband's absence, refused to leave her house with a load of peas until he was given 'a dram'. At this point the presence of Hogg's nurse comes into focus, because Hogg sent the nurse out to fetch a dram for the carter, having extracted her pocket-apron from beneath her

child's sleeping head to find the money to pay for it. (Next time Hogg checked, she found that her pocket had gone.)<sup>65</sup>

Some mothers depended on the help of teenage girls to assist with care work. In 1730, Rebecca Crywater, aged twelve or thirteen, was taken into the house of Moses Piver and his wife several times 'to do Work' and 'to wait upon a Child'. The Piver household also contained a nurse (who testified in the case), so it seems that Crywater was recruited on an occasional basis as an additional pair of hands to supplement a range of the household's labour needs.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, young girls could be called on to help care for nurse children taken in by mothers to look after alongside their own children. Anna Dixon, a twelve-year-old, was hired to help a married woman, Mrs Coates, with a nurse child that her husband had taken in. John Coates declared that 'my wife could not do without a girl', having an infant of her own to care for alongside the nurseling, which had prompted him to hire Mr Dixon's daughter (who subsequently accused Coates of rape). In the meantime, Mrs Coates had been beaten and 'turned out' by her husband. She had taken the nurse child with her but left her own infant, possibly because the nurseling represented her only ongoing source of income, and possibly to protect the child from her husband's abuses.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, Sarah Brown, the wife of a shoemaker, declared that she had taken in Priscilla Saunders (accused of theft) about a year previously 'to look after a nurse child that I have'.<sup>68</sup> Older siblings rarely appear in the *Proceedings* as providers of care; as in these cases, teenage girls more often feature working for others than providing unpaid care within their families of origin. General servants were also tasked with childcare, such as the maid (accused of theft) who had been sacked by her mistress, Mary Raworth, who kept a haberdasher's shop in Islington with her husband. Raworth confirmed that her former maid had 'a good character' but was given notice because 'I had a young child and she did not like nursing'.<sup>69</sup>

Mothers called upon other forms of occasional care, like Ann Skeele, who went to serve some people in her shop, leaving Maria Hutchinson in her parlour for about ten minutes, 'rocking of my child'. Skeele subsequently accused Hutchinson of stealing her shawl, which she identified 'by the particular dirt I made in it when I left it off, and by my suckling my child when I had it on, because it is dirtied with it'.<sup>70</sup> London workplaces and lodgings were generally densely populated, and it is likely that many of the people who flowed in and out of them were called upon on occasion to hold or rock a baby, freeing up its mother or nurse for momentary tasks. Some might volunteer their services, such as the widow Mary Jones, who took a gift of tea and crumpets to her friends John Smith and his wife. After breakfasting with the Smiths, Jones offered to take their seventeen-month-old infant with her 'to buy him a cheesecake'. She was later spotted with the child at the sign of the Hovel where she sat with a pint of beer, the infant 'at play in her arms', before getting up, kissing the child and saying 'my dear, you are sleepy, I will take you home'. (Jones did not take the child home, but instead drowned him in the Serpentine River in Hyde Park.)<sup>71</sup>

Nurses also relied on voluntary and/or familial help with their charges. Ann Sheen was a lying-in nurse for Mrs Chant who provided an alibi for Mrs Chant's

husband, Francis, who had been indicted for stealing iron bars. Sheen deposed that Mrs Chant had had twins (one of whom Sheen had carried with her to court). Attesting to Francis Chant's presence during the entire night in question, Sheen confirmed that she had seen the Chants retire to bed; that she had seen him in bed later that night when attending Mrs Chant with caudle; and that he could not have left the bedroom without coming through the room where Sheen slept 'with the twins and three small children'. Sheen had been up 'very often' with the twins 'as they did not suck'. Francis Chant's presence was further attested to by Sheen's son, John, who had called in to fetch the key to Sheen's dwelling. John, aged 14, recalled that he had 'staid there a long while nursing the baby' and had both seen Francis Chant go up to bed (before John left) and come down again the following morning when he returned the key to his mother on his way to work.<sup>72</sup>

Fathers can also be glimpsed providing care, although fairly infrequently, and performing a far narrower range of tasks than mothers. Fathers could be involved in making nursing arrangements – both finding a nurse for their own child(ren) and securing nurselings for their wives. Fathers travelled to pay nurses for the care of their children and were occasionally referred to as spending time with their children at nurse, one taking 'biscakes' and wine with him.<sup>73</sup> Fathers also took food to their children at home during the working day. Garret Cavenagh, accused of coining alongside his wife and another couple, was observed by his landlord coming home 'two or three times a Day, to bring Subsistence to his Children'. Jeremiah Bailey (convicted of highway robbery) sought witnesses – including 'the woman who look'd after his children' – to prove that he had come home at about six in the evening of the robbery to give his children some bread and butter.<sup>74</sup> Jon Senor was dispatched by a midwife (Sarah Mimms, who had been called to the labour of Senor's wife) to take food to Mimms' children. Mimms deposed that she had 'sent him home to my room to give my children some sheep's head and bread, and as my child Alice Mimms told me, he us'd her very ill'. Senor protested that he had stayed 'no longer than I could break off the jaw-bone of the sheep's head, and went down stairs directly'.<sup>75</sup>

While the data is too patchy to support quantitative analysis, the density and complexity of references to mothers engaging commercial childcare services suggests that the care of children by others than mothers was extremely common, and perhaps more predominant than unpaid familial care.<sup>76</sup> References to maternal nurture as a virtue in the *Proceedings* were mostly particular to cases involving infanticide.<sup>77</sup> In the material generated by this search, motherly devotion was more generally represented in terms of *providing for* children, rather than *caring about* or directly tending them. Character witnesses for Mary Shirley (a seamstress married to a periwig maker), for example, described her as 'an industrious Woman', who 'always worked hard for her bread'. Shirley had three small children, two of whom had been nursed by another witness, and a further witness asserted that Shirley 'work[ed] hard for her Children'.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, the landlady Jane Watson, who had taken in several nurse children over the years, was described in her defence as 'a hard working woman to bring up her family' and 'a very honest industrious woman'.<sup>79</sup>

## COMMERCIAL CARE SERVICES

What of the girls and women who provided paid care services? Even within the incidental evidence explored above, it is clear that they were a deeply embedded and important part of London's economy in the eighteenth-century. According to Peter Earle's analysis of occupational data supplied by women witnesses in the London church courts between 1695 and 1725, one fifth of all women were employed in direct care provision ('nursing/medicine') and indirect care services ('charring/laundry') combined. These proportions rise when single women are removed from the sample, the majority (62 per cent) of whom were in domestic service. Over one quarter (27 per cent) of ever married women (that is wives and widows combined) provided nursing and/or medical care and/or laundry and cleaning services.<sup>80</sup> Care work features less prominently in the occupations of married women who appeared in the Old Bailey between 1695 and 1800, as analysed by Amy Erickson: just over 9 per cent of the sample were engaged in nursing/medical care or charring/laundry work, compared with 45 per cent employed in retail and 28 per cent in manufacturing. Erickson attributes this difference to the business of the courts, with the church courts focusing more on disputes in domestic settings and the criminal courts focusing more on incidents (especially theft) in commercial contexts.<sup>81</sup> It is also clear from the incidental detail gleaned from the *Proceedings* that there was overlap between these categories with several women gaining a piecemeal living from multiple sources of income that could involve a combination of manufacture, retail and paid care provision.

Although there was clearly a massive market for care services, care provision was rarely undertaken either as specialist work or as the basis for a career. In a few instances, care work was recognized as involving skill and expertise that was acquired through long-term experience, with relatively lucrative rewards. For most providers, however, it was undertaken alongside other forms of labour, on a piecemeal basis, and for limited remuneration compared with the gains within some women's reach in retail and manufacture. Rather like the difference between a jobbing seamstress and a mantua maker who catered to genteel clients, the gap between an occasional nurse and/or charwoman and a specialist nurse employed to serve an elite family over the long term was considerable in terms of status, working conditions, and pay.

We have already encountered the teenage girls who were engaged on a short-term basis to provide nursing care.<sup>82</sup> Elizabeth Bull, aged 14, under examination (as the main witness against the accused) was questioned about why she had had 'so many places' (six or seven) at such a young age. Bull replied that she 'went chiefly to nurse children' and insisted that she had not been turned away from any position because of bad conduct. In one case her mistress 'had a daughter come home' and therefore no longer needed Bull.<sup>83</sup> Girls might be placed from the workhouse into care work, such as Mary Tollin who declared in 1789 that 'I am going on thirteen; I belong to the parish of Old Brentford; I came out of Ealing work-house to go out nursing'.<sup>84</sup> Girls who were deployed to run errands or do minor tasks could be recruited for ad hoc cover, like Mary Thompson who had

been employed by Mr Yates (a murder victim) to brush his coat and clean his shoes while also helping out her mother who was unwell in a position in another household. Thompson described how Mr Yates had told her that 'his wife was coming to town, and he should want a girl to nurse his children'.<sup>85</sup>

Many of the women who described themselves as nurses or went out nursing did so in a similarly piecemeal way. Women combined commercial nursing with a wide range of other work tasks, many of which fell under the general category of 'charring' – the performance of 'washing and scouring' often undertaken by the day or week. Eleanor Dove took in washing alongside tending to a child she nursed; Elizabeth Roberts looked after Margaret Larney's children for four or five months before leaving to go and wash and iron for a laundress; and Ann Matthews, in response to the question 'What are you?' responded, 'I take in a little washing, and nurse children.' She had also been working as a lying-in nurse.<sup>86</sup> Providing a character witness for Amy Brown (accused of theft), Sarah Barber declared, 'She has been my Chare-Woman many Years, and she has look'd after me in two or three Lyings-in, and I always found her to be a very honest Woman . . . she has a young Child sucking at her Breast, and she is an industrious Woman and takes in washing.'<sup>87</sup> Charring and nursing were clearly interchangeable. Joseph Houghton recounted how Ann Spooner had been hired after he 'sent my wife to Spitalfields to look for a woman to nurse the child, or to do about the house'. Spooner had a child of her own in the workhouse, and also left off her work for the Houghtons to go 'into the country a fortnight to hay-making'.<sup>88</sup>

As this last example shows, nursing and charring were also combined with a range of other work, rather than neatly confined to the occupational categories deployed by historians. Commercial nursing was combined with retail and manufacture, either simultaneously or in succession. The recent working history of Sarah Sharpe, whose husband was a mariner, included nursing a child with small-pox, charring, working at a shop, and carrying meat for another witness.<sup>89</sup> Other nurses combined care work with selling fruit, selling linen, selling laces, and selling 'old cloaths in a cellar'.<sup>90</sup> Deborah Sheene, suspected of theft, declared that she had a husband at sea and did 'any handy work that a woman can do', which in her case included quilting petticoats and nursing sick people. Other 'handiwork' undertaken by women who also offered commercial nursing services included mending linen, mending stockings, winding silk, and mantua-making.<sup>91</sup> Others took on manual labour, such as Ann Cotton, a widow, who declared that 'I . . . work sometimes on the dust-hill, and sometimes go a nursing'.<sup>92</sup> Lying-in nursing was similarly, and by its very nature, intermittent and combined with other activities. Servants undertook lying-in work in gaps between other contracts, such as Hannah Waterman, suspected of theft, who had nursed one of her character witnesses during her lying-in when Waterman had been 'out of place', before moving to a position in service to a tailor.<sup>93</sup>

Landladies were active in the provision of commercial childcare, and it is possible that for some it was included in the services that they offered to lodgers, as a way of boosting income. There are examples of landladies providing nursing

care for the children of former lodgers, such as Elizabeth Bosworth who nursed a child for a couple who had rented a room in her house for two months.<sup>94</sup> The widow Priscia Allmet rented an entire house and filled the upper floors with lodgers, keeping the ground floor for her own quarters (a single room) and for a school-room where she taught children their catechism during the day. Once the children had gone home, she took up her sewing, making linen shifts and muslin caps, presumably for sale. She had offspring of her own, who were elsewhere – possibly at nurse – on the day that Allmet was burgled. She was out at the time (between 6 and 8 pm) because she ‘had occasion to go for my children’.<sup>95</sup> Service relationships between landladies and lodgers could also work in reverse. One landlady relied on a lodger to provide childcare for her, which enabled her to go ‘out a nurse-keeping’ and undertake other tasks (including making ‘passover cakes for our Jews’). Abigail Osaview ‘took the prisoner in my house on this condition, that she’d do a little for my children’. Instead, Abigail and her husband David suspected their lodger of stealing some clothes.<sup>96</sup>

Only a few women in the *Proceedings* conveyed a sense of occupational identity attached to their nursing work. Hannah Griffiths, a witness, declared that ‘I nurse lying-in ladies’.<sup>97</sup> A witness in a different case referred to the wife of the accused as ‘a worthy reputable woman’ and a ‘principal friend’ who ‘at this time nurses the most respectable people in Birmingham, nurses lying-in ladies’.<sup>98</sup> Nursery maids, and nurses who were long-term fixtures in elite families, conveyed a firmer occupational identity than the women who went ‘out a nursing’ in conjunction with various other kinds of work. A few parish nurses, both within London and increasingly over the course of the eighteenth century in locations on the outskirts of London (such as Enfield and Epping Forest), built up relatively substantial enterprises caring for multiple children.<sup>99</sup> Care work could also earn recognition of certain kinds of expertise: nurses were called upon in various kinds of medical emergency and relied upon to give evidence in court, although the weight of their testimony was limited in comparison with that of male physicians.<sup>100</sup> Women’s expertise in looking after children was occasionally acknowledged as a particular skill, underlining the point that it was far from universal or essentialized. The defence of Henry Staker, a labourer from Enfield (accused of burglary), depended upon several of his neighbours who attested to his presence at home on the night in question. His wife had been called upon in the middle of the night by Elizabeth Arnold to tend a sick child. It was a nurse child, that did ‘not suckle’, and was ‘very bad’ possibly because Arnold ‘had been out at the harvest, and over heated her milk’. Arnold’s calls for Mrs Staker’s help were also witnessed by Mrs Morris, a near neighbour whose house overlooked the Stakers’. Both women were known for their skills, not least through their designation as ‘Mistress’ – an uncommon honorific for wives of labouring men.<sup>101</sup> According to Arnold, ‘Mrs. Morris attended my children, and Mrs. Staker also; I always called her on any occasion that required assistance; if she gave suck, she suckled them, if not as a dry nurse; she is counted skilful in children’. Sarah Morris, the wife of a master-sawyer and mother of eleven of her own children (seven of whom remained living, five – although ‘not young

children' – still at home), confirmed the story. When cross-examined about whether Mrs Morris was 'very skillful about children', Arnold clarified that 'Mrs. Morris is the first, and Mrs. Staker is the second; they occasionally attend my children. . . I generally put my children to Mrs. Staker, because she can give suck, and Mrs. Morris cannot'.<sup>102</sup> By contrast, the widow Mabel Hughes, who, as a resident of Aldgate workhouse in her dotage (having lost her husband and her two children), was appointed to oversee the children's work, was judged to have been 'as unfit to have management of children, as to tame lions'.<sup>103</sup>

A nurse child could be a valuable source of income in the economy of make-shifts, suggested by the forty women who responded to an advertisement seeking a wetnurse and took their turn to be examined by one Mr Rowley in a public house – much to the amusement of the assembled company.<sup>104</sup> The rates of pay occasionally cited in court for nursing a child ranged from 2s. to 4s. per week. The lower end of this scale was in line with rates paid by the London Foundling Hospital and parish officials to nurses, which were 2s. or 2s. 6d. per child, rising to 2s. 6d or 3s. per child by the later eighteenth century.<sup>105</sup> This was roughly comparable to the pay received by an 'ironer to a laundress' in 1761 which was 3s. a week.<sup>106</sup> Private wet-nurses might command up to 5s. a week.<sup>107</sup> Specialist nursing could be more highly rewarded, as in the case of the nurse who looked after a crippled child (aged eight) whose father, a cabinet maker and joiner, paid 8s. a week in 1790 for her services.<sup>108</sup> In general, however, childcare services were less well rewarded than women's work in either retail or manufacture.<sup>109</sup>

All of this evidence confirms the impression that women provided childcare on a commercial basis alongside multiple other employments, just as mothers deployed a range of childcare services in order to undertake varied work tasks. The overlap between the two groups was extensive in a piecemeal system that supported the widespread dispersal of childcare well beyond families of origin. Providing paid childcare could be a valuable source of income, just as receiving childcare, especially if freely provided by the parish or an institution, could itself form part of the economy of makeshifts. The extent to which such arrangements were reciprocal, depending on household structure and life-course stage, is difficult to gauge. In many circumstances, the kinds of care chains that resulted from childcare provision compounded existing social inequalities, especially when wetnurses' reproductive labour was co-opted by wealthier women at the expense of a wetnurse's own infant's care.<sup>110</sup> However, the evidence from the *Proceedings* is striking in showing the extent of interchangeability between women's care work and other forms of work (both paid and unpaid) and the broad dispersal of care work between women of roughly equal status. Mothers' income-generating work was for the most part prioritized above unpaid care work, particularly when there was more to be lost from limiting their participation in retail or manufacturing work than to be gained by undertaking care work, either paid or unpaid. Although mothers most often bore overall responsibility for the welfare of their children, the notion that practical infant care and childcare should be provided either exclusively or primarily by the birth mothers of the children

concerned would have seemed preposterous to the inhabitants of eighteenth-century London.

The 'industriousness' of women in eighteenth-century London was therefore underpinned and indeed partly comprised of a web of childcare services that were expanding and diversifying, alongside a range of welfare initiatives aimed at infants and children designed both to foster a future workforce and as a contribution to the economy of makeshifts of struggling parents.<sup>111</sup> This article has focused on the commercial care services supplied often on a piecemeal basis by women, not least to support the enterprise of other women. Childcare was routinely dispersed among a range of women (and in a far less systematic way by a few men) in myriad arrangements which depended on general expectations of practical competence in care provision in women, from their early teens onwards. Expectations of exclusive or even primary maternal care (i.e. care of one's own children) did not feature in the *Proceedings* – despite the growing celebration of maternal sentiment (exclusively focused on a mother's own children) in other forms of print culture by the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>112</sup> Mothers in the Old Bailey were more likely to be credited for their industry and care in providing for their family than for their nurturing capacity. I have argued elsewhere that genteel objections to wet-nursing on the grounds that maternal devotion was irreplaceable shaped emergent class divisions over the course of the eighteenth-century.<sup>113</sup> The celebration of maternal nurture in such terms – as non-transferable – ran counter to the economic realities of metropolitan life, which wholly depended on very broad-based provision. The wide dispersal of childcare between working women was part of the economic infrastructure that served an expanding economy, even if it did not necessarily serve the care-providers themselves given the relatively limited remuneration attached to care work.

A distinction between productive and reproductive labour would have made little sense to labouring women in this context; the very concept of 'social reproduction' is a historically contingent product of industrial capitalism. Eighteenth-century capitalist development therefore rested on a very different understanding and structuring of care provision than that envisaged by the male breadwinner norm that took hold in the nineteenth century (notwithstanding the many exceptions to the male breadwinning rule).<sup>114</sup> Care work featured extensively as a commercial endeavour, not only in the context of expanding welfare provision, with the state as a major employer of care workers, but also in the context of working women's income-generating endeavours. The distribution of care work should not be represented from a twenty-first century vantage point as simply a series of makeshifts dictated by misfortune. Care was understood as a form of pragmatic provision; as with other forms of work, its broad dispersal and combination with other work activities would have made sense to early modern people. In the metropolitan context, the capitalist extraction of care work was based on a complex (and mostly poorly paid) care economy rather than on the unpaid labour of married women. This extensive distribution of

care work both facilitated and was part of the industriousness that grew the eighteenth-century British economy.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

An award from the Leverhulme Trust (MRF-2017-157) funded the research and writing of this article. I am grateful to Amy Erickson, Karen Harvey, Sarah Knott, and members of the Centre for Gender History Research Seminar at the University of Glasgow for their comments on earlier drafts.

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33 Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 177.

34 Peter Earle, 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries', *Economic History Review* 42: 3, 1989, p. 338.

35 The distinction between 'caring about' and 'caring for' is drawn by Oja, 'Childcare and Gender'. On the history of the family approached as an affective arena, see Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800*, London, 1977; Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900*, Cambridge, 1983; Keith Wrightson, 'The Family in Early Modern England: Continuity and Change', in *Hanoverian Britain and Empire: Essays in Memory of Philip Lawson*, ed. S. Taylor, R. Connors and C. Jones, Woodbridge, 1998.

36 *OBO*, t17461205–24. Johnson was acquitted. This was not the only case in which a mother seems to have been coerced by the father of her child into working as a wetnurse. See also t17430413–36; and t17560915–62. Jonas Hanway suggested that a private nurse could command up to 5s. a week (which would have been in addition to payments in kind if she was a live-in servant), whereas wet-nursing at the cheaper end of the spectrum might have cost as little as 2s. a week, amounting to a net gain of 3s. per week for the nurse at the top of this care chain. Jonas Hanway, *Letters to the Guardians of the Infant Poor; And to the Governors and Overseers of the Parish Poor*, London, 1767, pp. 66, 90; Jonas Hanway, *Letters on the Importance of the Rising Generation of the Labouring part of our Fellow-subjects*, vol. 1, London, 1767, pp.11, 205, 227. On the market for private wetnurses, see Marissa C. Rhodes, 'Domestic Vulnerabilities: Reading Families and Bodies into Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Atlantic Wet Nurse Advertisements', *Journal of Family History* 40:1, 2015, pp. 39–63.

37 On the variety of such tasks, see Sarah Knott, *Mother: An Unconventional History*, London, 2019.

38 *OBO*, t17890225–1. See also Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England*, New Haven, 2003.

- 39 *OBO*, t17840707-104. For nurses being up all night, see t17300408-66; t17830723-118.
- 40 *OBO*, t17480115-30.
- 41 *OBO*, t17250513-12.
- 42 See, e.g., *OBO*, t17860531-56; t17940716-20; t17351210-8; t17960511-17; t17920329-19.
- 43 *OBO*, t17900424-26.
- 44 Hannah Newton, *The Sick Child in Early Modern England, 1580–1720*, Oxford, 2012. See also Margaret Pelling, 'Child Health as a Social Value in Early Modern England', *Social History of Medicine* 1: 2, 1988, pp. 135–64; David Turner, 'Impaired Children in Eighteenth-Century England', *Social History of Medicine* 30:4, 1997, pp. 788–806.
- 45 *OBO*, t17421208-53.
- 46 Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690/1800*, Cambridge, 2015, p. 253.
- 47 Peter Razzell and Christine Spence, 'The History of Infant, Child and Adult Mortality in London, 1550–1850', *London Journal*, 32: 3, 2007, pp. 271–92. See also Lucia Pozzi and Diego Ramiro-Fariñas, 'Infant and Child Mortality in the Past', *Annales de Démographie Historique* 129: 1, 2016, pp. 55–75.
- 48 *OBO*, t17600709-8.
- 49 *OBO*, t17591205-31.
- 50 *OBO*, t17720715-45.
- 51 *OBO*, t17651016-26.
- 52 *OBO*, t17850112-50; t17330912-10; t17940716-62.
- 53 See, e.g., Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century, With a New Introduction by Amy Louise Erickson*, London, 1992.
- 54 *OBO*, t17640607-59.
- 55 *OBO*, t17720715-13; t17291015-80.
- 56 See, e.g., *OBO*, t17380113-10; t17470909-21; t17480115-30; t17790217-33; t17890909-60; t17420603-18; t17590425-14.
- 57 *Whole Economy*, ed. Macleod, Shepard and Ågren. See also Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth and Social Status in Early Modern England*, Oxford, 2015; K. Tawny Paul, 'Accounting for Men's Work: Multiple Employments and Occupational Identities in Early Modern England', *History Workshop Journal* 85, Spring 2018, pp. 26–46.
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- 59 *OBO*, t17250513-12. On women combining market work with childcare, see Danielle van den Heuvel, 'The Multiple Identities of Early Modern Dutch Fish Wives', *Signs* 37: 3, 2012, pp. 587–94.
- 60 *OBO*, t17400416-4.
- 61 *OBO*, t17620421-30.
- 62 *OBO*, t17720603-12.
- 63 *OBO*, t17780916-12.
- 64 The legal definition of a 'nurse child' in the eighteenth century, determining place of settlement, was under the age of seven, after which point a child could gain its own settlement through apprenticeship or be treated as a vagrant. Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 9.
- 65 *OBO*, t17641017-20.
- 66 *OBO*, t17300228-1.
- 67 *OBO*, t17720715-52.
- 68 *OBO*, t17451016-23. See also t17640912-30.
- 69 *OBO*, t17670715-17. See also Carolyn Steedman, 'A Boiling Copper and Some Arsenic: Servants, Childcare, and Class Consciousness in Late Eighteenth-Century England', *Critical Inquiry* 34: 1, 2007, pp. 36–7.

- 70 *OBO*, t17950701-47.
- 71 *OBO*, t17680518-39. This case is discussed in Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, p. 261.
- 72 *OBO*, t17990505-49.
- 73 *OBO*, t17380113. See also t17800223-3; t17820911-22; t17820220-50.
- 74 *OBO*, t17430114-41; OA17571123.
- 75 *OBO*, t17410828-63.
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- 77 Mark Jackson, *New-Born Child Murder: Women, Illegitimacy and the Courts in Eighteenth-Century England*, Manchester, 1996; Anne-Marie Kilday, *A History of Infanticide in Britain c.1600 to the Present*, Basingstoke, 2013. See also Garthine Walker, 'Child Killing and Emotion in Early Modern England and Wales', in *Death, Emotion and Childhood in Premodern Europe*, ed. Katie Barclay, Kimberley Reynolds and Ciara Rawnsley, Basingstoke, 2017, pp. 151–72.
- 78 *OBO*, t17420714-18.
- 79 *OBO*, t17580222-23.
- 80 Earle, 'Female Labour Market', p. 339. See also Shepard, 'Crediting Women', p. 14.
- 81 Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations', p. 277.
- 82 See also Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, p. 38.
- 83 *OBO*, t17921215-21.
- 84 *OBO*, t17890909-96.
- 85 *OBO*, t17960914-5.
- 86 *OBO*, t17710703-14; t17580113-32; t17810110-4. See also t17860222-46; t17530607-31; t17960222-7.
- 87 *OBO*, t17451204-13.
- 88 *OBO*, t17940917-69.
- 89 *OBO*, t17421208-53.
- 90 *OBO*, t17770910-21; t17561208-21; t17580222-27; t17600416-25. See also t17881022-65.
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- 92 *OBO*, t17660116-15.
- 93 *OBO*, t17631207-27. See also t17900113-29.
- 94 *OBO*, t17390718-17. See also t17380113-10.
- 95 *OBO*, t17890225-17.
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- 98 *OBO*, t17941208-3.
- 99 Boulton, 'Welfare Systems'; Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, pp. 45–72.
- 100 Cathy McClive, 'Blood and Expertise: The Trials of the Female Medical Expert in the Ancien-Régime Courtroom', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 82: 1, 2008, pp. 86–108; Sharon T. Strocchia, 'Women and Healthcare in Early Modern Europe', *Renaissance Studies* 28: 4, 2014, pp. 496–514.
- 101 Amy Louise Erickson, 'Mistresses and Marriage: or, a Short History of the Mrs', *History Workshop Journal* 78, Spring 2014, pp. 39–57.
- 102 *OBO*, t17860830-78.
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104 *OBO*, t17800628-77. See also t17430519-6 for a servant being sent by her mistress to get her a nurse child.

105 Levene, *Childhood of the Poor*, pp. 49–50, 65.

106 *OBO*, t17430413-36.

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