Spring 4-2015

From England's Bridewell to America's Brides: Imprisoned Women, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, and Empire

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FROM ENGLAND'S BRIDEWELL TO AMERICA'S BRIDES: IMPRISONED WOMEN, SHAKESPEARE'S *MEASURE FOR MEASURE*, AND EMPIRE

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A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: English

Under the Supervision of Professor Julia Schleck

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 2015

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University of Nebraska, 2015

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This thesis examines the experience of largely single women in London's house of correction, Bridewell Prison, and argues that Bridewell's prisoners, and the nature of their crimes, reveal the state's desire for dependent, sexually controlled, yet ultimately productive women. Scholars have largely neglected the place of early modern women's imprisonment despite its pervasive presence in the everyday lives of common English women. By examining the historical and cultural implications of early modern women and prison, this thesis contends that women's prisons were more than simply establishments of punishment and reform. A closer examination of Bridewell's philosophy and practices shows how it became a model for the use of women's labor in the nation at large, and how women became major actors in the development of the British Empire, which simultaneously devalued and yet relied upon their labors.

In particular, the thesis examines the impact of Bridewell's feminized incarceration policies on individual women, while keeping a close eye on England's class structure by attending to the imprisonment of both aristocratic women and non-aristocratic women. By focusing on the biography of the aristocrat Eleanor Davies, poet and prophet, and by performing an analysis of Shakespeare's character Juliet in *Measure for Measure*, the influence of class on an individual's imprisonment is exposed.

Although the prison served as a mechanism for patriarchal control, the thesis also ultimately shows that individual women could find sufficient agency to resist the system that held them. Finally, it addresses how English designs for mastery in the New World drew upon the Bridewell model, and initially upon Bridewell directly through the transportation of the poorest inmates, sold into marriage and labor. It contends that the continuation of the British Empire depended upon a tenuous balance of patriarchal oppression and the individual agency of poor women and, therefore, depended ultimately upon the model developed at Bridewell.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Julia Schleck, for her many helpful comments, as well as her advice and encouragement throughout my time at the University of Nebraska. I am also deeply thankful to Carole Levin for her mentorship and kindness over the years, and her support of this project. I am also grateful to Stephen Buhler for his years of tutelage as well as Kelly Stage for supporting and reading this thesis. I must also acknowledge my unending thanks for the Department of English and the Department of Medieval and Renaissance Studies at the University of Nebraska, and their continued support of my scholarship.

I also thank my family for their continued support throughout my life and in the development of this project, especially my mother and father. I must also express all my gratitude to my husband and best friend, Bryson, for his unyielding reassurance. Also, thank you to all my dear friends who helped me get through these two years of graduate school, especially Catherine Medici-Thiemann and Alyson Alvarez for keeping me grounded, caffeinated, and motivated to do my best work.

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Introduction

When Margaret White was incarcerated at London's Bridewell prison for "incontinent lyving" and "getting a child in whoredom" in 1602, she claimed "'one Christopher Beeston a player at one [Goodwife] Winter's house . . . had the use of her body, but as she saith he did it forcibly, for, said he, 'I have lain with a hundred wenches in my time.'"[1] White's rape accusations lead the governors of Bridewell to arrest Beeston also though he "utterly denieth [the claim] and saith [the accusation] is done of malice."[2] The court ordered Beeston to pay sureties and appear in court a week later. In this second Bridewell appearance, the player returned with several of his fellow actors from the theatre. Together the players, mostly from Worchester's Men, caused an uproarious scene to protest White's accusation. Despite the disturbance, White stood before all of the men in the court and named her aggressor.

Before she was a prisoner of Bridewell, White was a young widow without any strong familial connections or other traditional means of financial support. The charges brought against her suggest that, in the eyes of the court, a single woman's pregnancy was both an indicator of "incontinent lyving" and "whoredom." Her pregnant body was enough to convict her of her crimes, but there was no such marked evidence against

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[1] Bridewell Court Minute Books, MS 33011/4, fo. 327v. in "Christopher Beeston accused of fornication, 1602," *English Professional Theatre, 1530-1660*, ed. G. Wickham, H. Berry and W. Ingram (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 175. Even though White accuses Beeston of rape, she names Henry Noone as the father of the child. This suggests that she sees a distinction in the kind of fornication that lead to her arrest and that of Beeston's assault. Beeston, therefore, was not put on trial for fathering a child but solely for White's accusations. This is an important distinction, as Garthine Walker shows in *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) it was extremely difficult for women to bring charges of rape against men, and the women who did often faced dire social consequence and future violence even in cases or where the rape was known to have occurred. Walker states that "rape and attempted rape were the most difficult for women to articulate. As an act of sexual and social destruction, rape worked both a literal and figurative silencing of women." 55.

[2] BCBMS 33011/4 fo. 330. in Wickham, Berry, and Ingram, 175.

Beeston and he escaped Bridewell with only a fine. Whether or not the fine was for his assault on White or for the brawl in the courtroom is unclear.

The policing of women's bodies and sexual activity became a central legal problem for early modern London and its prisons. Sexual difference was a main point of patriarchal order, and the gendered bodies of female criminals were "subject to the corporeal power of both family and state: they were publicly disciplined and punished."[3] In this sense, the punishment of illegal sexual behavior was contingent upon the criminal's gender and, I would add, her social status. Poor women without familial networks were susceptible to legal clashes born out of their bodies. Whether her crime was unstable employment, sex-work, or unplanned pregnancy, socially marginalized women often found themselves trapped within the frequent legal conflation of these statuses. Her legal identity and sexual identity are indistinguishable, as a pregnant body criminalizes unmarried women in ways that men avoid.

Patriarchal order, and women's role within it, has been at the center of early modern feminist scholarship for decades. Dymphna Callaghan outlines two avenues of feminist thought that have influenced early modern scholarship; one adopts an institutional analysis that sees patriarchy as victimizing women through their overt oppression within, and exclusion from, spheres of power - be they cultural, political, or otherwise. These institutional perspectives look at women's relationships with men as inherently domineering, emphasizing that through marriage women surrender their legal identity to the husband. [4] On the other hand, a revisionist feminist would assert that

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[3] Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 6.

[4] Dymphna Callaghan, "Introduction" in *The Impact of Feminism in English Renaissance Studies*. Ed. Dymphna Callaghan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 5.

women often found agency within the family by controlling the finances of the household and businesses, as well as the cultural and creative expressions of those entities. In this sense, individual women could exercise influence within a patriarchal system and gain access to power through it.[5] Ultimately Callaghan argues, and I agree, "we need information from both approaches" to best understand early modern women's roles in England.[6]

This study seeks to do just that in its examination of early modern London women in the prison system, and through its focus on the prison to highlight an area of women's lives frequently missed by proponents of both methodologies. Currently, both institutional and revisionist feminist studies tend overwhelmingly to envisage their subjects as married women, even though 40% of early modern London women were unmarried.[7] On one hand, single women were "unfettered by whatever limitations conjugality was alleged to impose" yet they "often struggled to survive: the poorest of the poor were literal 'spinsters' in the textile trades, who did not earn even subsistence wages."[8] By following early modern categorizations of women as maid, wife, or widow, both institutional and revisionist feminist inquiries tend to neglect single women, thus replicating patriarchal power structures in contemporary scholarship. Single women

[5] Women who used patriarchy to gain power were not necessarily working towards empowering all women. Callaghan asserts, in that "everyday forms of women's power and agency was that of being authorized to beat and abuse household subordinates,"6.
[6] Callaghan, 7.
[7] Fiona McNeill, *Poor Women in Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 80.
[8] Callaghan, 3, 6. Callaghan points to this disparity in her examples of the feminist trajectory in the field. However, she does not offer a solution to the problem in this introduction. Because of the legal conflation of single woman with the "lewde" woman, prostitute, vagrant, or witch, they often go unrecognized as a demographic or are bound to other marginalized groups. The critical habit of following early modern tradition in reading women as maid, wife, or widow, therefore, unwittingly collaborates in the conflation of these marginalized groups, and even defines the limits of the internal categories of the marginalized.

were the most marginal in early modern society, and consequently, also the most at risk of imprisonment.

Early modern feminist scholars have encouraged the field to consider, and reconsider, women's roles in a patriarchal society, yet the impact of prisons and imprisonment as a tool of that patriarchy has largely gone unnoticed. In this thesis, I draw attention to the experience of largely single women in London's house of correction, Bridewell Prison, and argue that prison is a means through which institutional patriarchy and women's lived experience meet. Bridewell's prisoners, and the nature of their crimes, reveal the state's desires for dependent, sexually controlled, yet ultimately productive women. These desires had heavy consequences for women who gave birth out of wedlock. The economic expense of the child would be passed on to the mother's parish; this dependency would eventually become a crime through the crown's Poor Laws and Bastardry Laws, which targeted single women who lived outside formal households and worked outside formal employment.[9] Like imprisoned men, women were required to pay for their own confinement by accruing debt or by the income of forced labor inside the prison or contracted out into the community. Such hard work, the prison governors claimed, would reform marginalized women into ideal, productive workers despite the fact that it was the labors of the pregnant, or potentially pregnant, body that lead to her imprisonment in the first place. Patriarchal order necessitated that the labor of childbirth, as well as the labor of housewifery, be found within marriage; women who deviated from this order needed reform in order to fit back into this system, yet the inherent

[9] Whether women worked in formal or informal forms of employment, or inherited wealth, their financial independence was often limited. A familial patriarch could exercise control over a woman's finances or keep them from her completely.

contradiction of (re)productive women's arrest and reform through forced labor reveals a tenuous balance within Bridewell's walls.

The tensions surrounding the reform of women's productivity at work within Bridewell had a lasting influence on what would become a global system of regulating, exploiting, and capitalizing on the bodies of women. By examining the historical and cultural implications of early modern women and prison, this thesis displays how the prison functioned as more than an place of punishment and reform. Bridewell served as a means of empire by institutionalizing the control of women's work and production. Just as London developed and utilized the rehabilitative prison, so too did England begin to fold Bridewell into a vision of global power. This vision first came to fruition in the American colonies, which relied on women for the permanence they brought to settlements through reproduction as well as their domestic and enterprising labor.

Through the model of Bridewell, women emerge as the major actors in an empire that simultaneously devalues and yet relies upon their labors. I will demonstrate this dynamic in the first section of this essay by uncovering the history of Bridewell and poor women's roles within in it. I will then contrast this experience with how aristocratic women experienced imprisonment by focusing on the biography of Lady Eleanor Davies. Together, these sections highlight how education, wealth, and class created a spectrum of experience for criminalized women despite similarities grounded in gender. I will then examine the impact of Bridewell's feminized incarceration policies on women through an analysis of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure.* Focused on the character of Juliet, this section of the study in part complements the elite experience of Eleanor Davies in that it illuminates how individual women could find sufficient agency to resist the system that

held them. In the final section, I will address how the English design for mastery in the New World drew upon the Bridewell model, and initially upon Bridewell directly through the transportation of the poorest inmates, sold into marriage and labor. I contend that the continuation of the British Empire depended upon a tenuous balance of patriarchal oppression and individual agency of poor women and, therefore, depended upon Bridewell.

As with the work of other scholars interested in the oppressed and marginalized, my study demands the consideration of diverse sources, and consequently, diverse methods of analysis. Here, grounded in feminism, I deploy the techniques of literary critics as well as cultural historians, biographers and social historians, as well as the diverse sources these fields reference. My flexibility in methods allows for both a more fluid analysis and a more comprehensive and concrete image of early modern women's imprisonment to crystalize.

Chapter 1

"Let her have needful but not lavish means": Bridewell's History

The early modern London prison was fundamentally different in ideology and practice than prisons had been in previous centuries, and different from how we think of prisons today. An eye towards these historical conditions enriches, and at times corrects, our reading of marginalized early modern women. However, the historical study I engage in this section does more than provide context. In Bridewell's history, we see an institution of punishment and reform engaged in the perpetual reform of itself. This is due in part to the changing administrative aims in the reforming of the wayward, but also, I would argue, to the reactionary adaptations Bridewell administrators made in response to individual acts of agency by imprisoned women. The overall history of Bridewell signals a continual negotiation of penal goals and policies rather than a strict, linear model of crime and detention.

On the west bank of the Fleet River near the Blackfriar's Bridge, Henry VIII and his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, built Bridewell Palace. The palace was named after the nearby church, St. Bride's, which drew its name from Ireland's Saint Bridget. [10] The land had been the site of a healing spring since the sixth century and had been continually repurposed by the throne since that time. Alfred James Copeland reflected in the nineteenth century that as "Difficult as it may be to realize now, there was a time when this spot was a beautiful, well-wooded retreat, separated from the busy scenes of the adjacent city by the swiftly flowing stream."[11] The property in its entirety was known

[10] Alfred James Copeland cites that St. Bride's owes its name to the Danish Saint Bridget, though it seems more likely that it named for the Irish saint of the same name.
[11] Copeland, *Bridewell Royal Hospital, Past and Present: a Short Account of It as Palace, Hospital, Prison, and School* (London: Wells Gardener, Darton, &Co, 1888) 2.

from these early days as "the Township of Bridewell" or "Bridewell Precincts."[12] Henry VIII's red brick palace and its surrounding grounds served as a London residence to greet dignitaries early in the king's reign. However, Bridewell began its trajectory of neglect after the king's divorce and remarriage to Anne Boleyn.

After Henry's passing, Edward VI donated the property to the city of London. The city hoped to repurpose the precincts so that it could be used as an "orphanage, and, if only suitable buildings could be procured, by establishing a prison, which should also be a house of labour and apprenticeship, and a school for fatherless children."[13] Training and apprenticeships fulfilled a social need for poor relief missing in London since Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.[14] The goal of the Bridewell governors and the city was to convert the palace into a transitional orphanage and place to reform women, and there was the hope of controlling the property itself. This would take some effort, since after Henry had left the property, Bridewell had become a kind of vagrant herself and was defined by the homeless "rogues and disorderly women [who] crept at night for shelter" outside her walls.[15]

At Edward's death, Mary I abandoned the plan of using it as a transitional space and allowed it to become like other London prisons, a holding place for debtors and those

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[12] Although the use of "precinct" to describe the property in these early years may seem to foreshadow the policing of this area discussed throughout this section, the term did not have a connection with law enforcement until the late nineteenth century. Throughout the early modern period, "precint" was synonymous with boundaries, or grounds, for any given area, especially religious houses or places of worship. Perhaps because Bridewell would serve as a religious house and as a detention center it evokes both the religious and criminal qualities of the term. Oxford English Dictionary, "precinct, n." Oxford University Press.

[13] Edward Geoffrey O'Donoghue, *Bridewell Hospital: Palace, Prison, Schools from the earliest times to the end of the reign of Elizabeth* (London: John Lane the Bodley Head Limited, 1923), 137.

[14] Monasteries had been the major source of relief for the poor and without the aid of the Catholic Church, England had only one place to house anyone living on the margins of society: the streets.

[15] O'Donoghue, 140.

awaiting execution.[16] Once Elizabeth I took the throne in 1558, Bridewell's governors resumed the institution's early mission of aiding the poor, especially children and women. However, London would soon have more desperately poor persons living in it than ever before. A combination of factors, including a dramatic rise in population, privatization of common lands, and the mass migration of people moving from country properties to seek work in the cities, lead to widespread unemployment. [17] Despite a booming textile trade, the growing proto-capitalist nation "fostered widespread economic and social uncertainty" and forced many Londoners to live in abject poverty.[18] Homelessness, vagrancy, and crime overran much of London. The poor could be found begging on street corners and were especially dependent upon city parishes for support; so much so that the parishes, in collaboration with the state Poor Laws, created a system to define who could be classified as deserving poor, and who was undeserving. [19] The undeserving poor would come to be called the "Thriftless Poor," and consisted of "idle persons and vagrant women" whose crime was unemployment. [20]

This patriarchal perception of unmarried or unemployed women inherently exiled them to these margins of society. As Jodie Mikalachki has argued, "the female, in her natural state of wantonness, was the type of all vagrants, inclined by nature to a life without discipline, and only to be controlled by the imposition of patriarchal authority."[21]

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[16] William G. Hinkle, *A History of Bridewell Prison, 1553-1700* (Lewiston NY, The Edwin Mellon Press, 2006), 37.
[17] Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth* (New York, Palgrave, 2002), 108.
[18] Hinkle, 5.
[19] Levin, 108.
[20] Hinkle, 21.
[21] "Women's Networks and the Female Vagrant: A Hard Case" in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*: *Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, eds. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56. Mikalachki also shows that even though female vagrancy was "not statistically important" as there are relatively few documented cases of historical female vagrants, they were common figures in rogue literature and popular in legend, 52.

Marriage would enact this authority; or, for single women, manual labor under a master. Elizabeth's early reign "mandated . . . any unmarried woman from fourteen to forty years of age" to work in a London household as a maidservant.[22] Intended to compel employers to hire women as well as motivate women to find employment, "[s]uch a law had particularly harsh effects in periods of low employment, when . . . a woman's failure to find work risked landing her in debtor's prison."[23] Furthermore, there was little protection afforded to women who worked in domestic service or similar fields, as they could be shorted pay or turned out by their masters, and face dire consequences if they were unable to find work quickly. Whether she was a vagrant or not, unemployed by choice or by force, a "masterless" woman was often found to be both undeserving poor and "sexually or gender deviant."[24] Women's "natural state of wantonness" tethered criminal vagrancy to immorality and licentiousness and placed the female body outside the realms of ordered society.[25] As outsiders, masterless women were not only an affront to moral order, they were also on the brink of criminality, and a sexualized criminality at that.

While some poor women pursued work in brothels, all women without a master were subject to accusations of wantonness.[26] They were the manifestation of what the law saw as "dissolute women," a legal status that conflated them with "idlers and persons of

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[22] Ann Rosalind Jones, "Maidservants of London: Sisterhoods of Kinship and Labor" in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*: *Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, eds. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 22.
[23] Jones, 22.
[24] McNeill, 152.
[25] As McNeill reports, this problem complicated the lives of many. Roughly 13% of Londoners were masterless women at the end of Elizabeth's reign. 150.
[26] Paul Griffith, in citing the Bridewell court manuscripts, asserts that Bridewell's governors were primarily concerned with arresting women tied to brothels and dismantling prostitution networks rather than mere individuals on the street, 43. This is a significant observation to bare in mind when examining the role of the bawdy house in *Measure for Measure*.

bad repute."[27] Once arrested, many women would be jailed in Bridewell, which was distinct from other London prisons in that her inmates were known to be debauched women and children, though men could be held there too.[28] Bridewell promoted what Amanda Bailey has called the "redemptive power" of incarceration, acting as a "crucible that transforms the desperate debtor into the insouciant gallant."[29] In the case of Bridewell, the masterless woman would transform into the mastered, if only through her incarceration. However, Bridewell was more than a cage to enclose wrong doers, removing their influence from the public; it was an epicenter of London that would tend to, and reform, any behavior outside convention.

Unlike prisoners in later centuries, early modern prisons often allowed elements of freedom. Many maintained contact with their free associates and "were even entrusted with keys, and were allowed to come and go as they pleased."[30] Yet this autonomy has more to do with the expectation that prisoners pay for their own room and board than any humanitarian principle. Prison officials found it much more advantageous if prisoners had contact with the outside world so they could gather money through family, begging strangers for help, or through work. The cost of a stint in prison could be exceptionally oppressive for those placed there as debtors in the first place, and many prisoners tried to engage in business to ease this burden.[31]

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[27] Hinkle, 7.
[28] Hinkle notes that Elizabeth I would frequently jail political or religious offenders in Bridewell, an inconsistency that made many wonder if Bridewell was made to reform its captives or perform the work of other political prisons like the Tower or the Gatehouse.
[29] Amanda Bailey, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 118.
[30] Hinkle, 2.
[31] Richard Byrne, *Prison and Punishments of London* (Grafton; New edition, 1992), 19.

Although Bridewell was held by the city of London it was privately run without much oversight. The crown would utilize prisons, including those intended to operate as a places of welfare, but the prisons' governors were usually "unscrupulous businessmen who cared little for those in need."[32] Bridewell thus oscillated between the conventional practices of a for-profit enterprise, like other prisons throughout the city, and efforts to live up to its loftier goal of redeeming wayward souls. This fluctuated according to what was most advantageous in the moment and, unsurprisingly, corruption permeated Bridewell as bribery and nepotism were common business practices made all the more exploitive by the vulnerable nature of Bridewell's inmates.

For instance, the prison's matron employed at the turn of the seventeenth century, Alice Millet, would end up in the Bridewell court herself, charged for being "false to her trust." [33] According to the court record, Millet was "responsible for the reform of her prisoners," yet she "encouraged them in wickedness, allowing men with money to have access to the female quarters."[34] The women convicted of sexual deviance had their prison turned into a brothel. Millet was convicted and banned from the prison; however, she was not the only practitioner sensationalizing the sexual deviancy of the inmates. Male officials could be just as disreputably opportunistic in capitalizing on the salacious image of inmates. When women were brought into Bridewell, the first step of their sentence was to have their bare backs whipped while chained to a post, the number of lashes dependent upon the will of the judge.[35] These whippings, like the rest of the prison, were open to the public and were so popular that additions were built on to the

[32] Hinkle, 7.
[33] Hinkle, 99.
[34] Hinkle, 99.
[35] Hinkle, 139.

courtroom to house the expansive audience.[36] Situated not far from the theatres, Bridewell became a spectacle and "diversion for the curious and those whose appetites ran to watching the flogging of half-naked women."[37] For Londoners, the "sadistic torment of the 'sexually immoral'" and the "mention of 'Bridewell' conjured up images of . . . prostitutes writhing and cursing under the lash."[38]

The sexual exploitation of women defined Bridewell in the popular imagination yet for the incarcerated, it would only be the beginning of an arduous sentence. The defining feature of Bridewell prison was its use of labor to reform. Though women were convicted for sexual deviancy, such women were also viewed as "masterless", and therefore thought incapable of supporting themselves. They, and any children that they might have, posed a risk to their parish, city, and state of becoming dependents. According to David Cressy, Christian norms, a society built on paternity, and economic instability of single mothers and the parishes they depended upon, led local governments to demand unwed pregnant women to reveal the father of her child. If she refused, her punishment in the prison would be more sever.[39] The 1603 law dealing with bastardry called for the "mother and the reputed father of a bastard" to be imprisoned in order to curb the waves of masterless children plaguing parish treasuries.[40] The early years of James I's reign would witness a rise in unwed mothers. However, it was much easier to

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[36] Byrne, 66.
[37] Byrne, 66.
[38] Hinkle, 139.
[39] David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life- Cycle in Tudor Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 74-5. Furthermore, the prison midwife was charged with leading the pregnant mother to confess the father, sometimes during child labor. This meant that the "midwife's service to the mother was complicated by her obligations to the community, the law, and the church" 79.
[40] 39 Elizabeth I, c.3 (1597) in *Statuates of the Realm. Printed by Command of His Majesty King George the Third* (London:1819), vol IV, part 1, 897. While children could be mastered by apprenticeships, they were also mastered through the presence of their father. Therefore, without a present father, both mother and child were considered masterless until employed by a man.

punish a mother than it was an accused father, as her pregnancy was clear evidence of transgression and his paternity rested on her word.[41]

The Elizabethan bastardry laws that attempted, if half-heartedly, to hold both parents accountable shifted more overtly to the mother in the reign of James. In 1610 James issued a statute "that every lewde Woman which . . . have [sic] any Bastard which may be chargeable to the Parish, the Justices of the Peace shall commit such lewde Woman unto the House of Correction, there to be punished and sett to worke during the terme of a whole yere."[42] Under James, an unwed mother was criminalized by her pregnancy alone. This was a startling shift as only decades earlier, England had continued to practice the legal tradition of women "pleading pregnancy" in order to evade execution for crimes. As Carole Levin has shown, while men frequently escaped condemnation by claiming benefit of the clergy by demonstrating their literacy or performing a prayer, women would claim the "benefit of the belly."[43] Pleading pregnancy would defer the sentence until the birth of the child, and sometimes it offered women several years or even indefinite release.[44] However, under James, the very means through which criminal women had avoided persecution now condemned them, if not to death, then to hard labor for the duration of her sentence. [45]

Once confined and whipped, Bridewell's inmates would be set to work in any number of trades. The most common was strenuous hemp work, breaking and beating it

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[41] McNeill, 95.
[42] 7 James I, c. 4 (1610) in Ibid., vol IV, part 2, 1161.
[43] Carole Levin, "'Murder not then the fruit of my womb': Shakespeare's Joan, Foxe's Guernsey Martyr, and Women Pleading Pregnancy in English History and Culture" in *Shakespeare's Foreign Worlds: National and Transnational Identities in the Elizabethan Age*, eds. Carole Levin and John Watkins (Ithica: Cornel University Press, 2009), 33.
[44] Levin, "Murder not", 33.
[45] McNeill, 95. Women were executed for unwed pregnancy late in James' reign.

with heavy mallets.[46] Other forms of skilled textile work were common and had the potential to be marketable for women in England's booming textile trade. In addition to prisoner room and board, income from these trades was meant to make Bridewell self-sustaining.[47] Yet, due to corruption and market fluctuation, this never came to fruition. "Labor was the defining feature of prison discipline . . . the institution was founded to put idle persons to work in various industries under the supervision of task-masters" and these same industries would prove to be the forebears of the workhouses that would sprout up in the centuries to come.[48] The workday was long, and prisoners were provided with little food or substance. They slept in damp conditions on straw that might not be changed over the entire course of their sentence. By enforcing this hard and tedious labor, the governors believed that work would come to define the inmates.

Bridewell was the mother of other penitentiary institutions throughout the British Empire. They would take her name as "bridewells" and become the common means of dealing with the poor. First appearing in England's countryside, bridewells eventually spread to the New World and other colonies. All of Bridewell's daughters would look to her and imitate her mission, aimed at "the Correction and Punishment of idle, vagrant People, and Strumpets, and for setting them to Work, that they might in an honest way take pains to get their own Livelihood."[49] There is little doubt that her inmates desired "their own Livelihood" as well.

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[46] Hinkle, 41.
[47] Hinkle, 3.
[48] Hinkle, 3.
[49] In Hinkle, 37.

Chapter 2

"The Gates of Hell Shall Not Prevail Against Her":

Elite Women's Detention and Reform

As an aristocratic woman, the imprisonments of Lady Eleanor Davies [*née* Touchet] Douglas (1590- 1652) were different from that of poor single women. Between 1625 and her death in 1652, Lady Eleanor would be arrested and imprisoned at least five separate times. Yet, because of her status, she was not kept with the poor in Bridewell, nor was she made to do hard labor, whipped, or physically punished in any way. Because of her privilege she experienced more manageable captivities and was housed in the Gatehouse Prison, Bethlehem Royal Hospital (Bedlam), The Kings Bench, the Tower, and possibly more. Yet, as I will show in this section, just as Lady Eleanor's crimes and convictions were linked to her gender like those of her poorer counterparts; her bouts of imprisonment were substantially different from what they men of her social status. Furthermore, just as with imprisoned poor women, this gender distinction was linked to issues of labor. However, rather than being made to produce, Lady Eleanor's elite status led her jailers to restrict her labor, in this case writing. Just as the incarceration of poor women grew out of the threat their pregnant or sexually active bodies posed to the state and then endured imprisonments that sought to reform (and then exploit) that criminalized state, Lady Eleanor's crimes also mirror her imprisonment. Yet, her persistence in writing and publishing despite these restrictions demonstrates the ways in which women's autonomous speech could undercut and subvert their oppressors.

The very act of writing and publishing demonstrates Lady Eleanor's agency, and through that agency a radical affront to patriarchal order and the state that imprisoned

her. Her skill in performing this act is bound to her formidable character as well as her status and education as an aristocratic woman. Lady Eleanor was highly literate, and could afford to publish her texts on her own. In one sense, it is her *act of writing* alone, not necessarily *what she writes*, that proves her agency. However, Lady Eleanor does not spend much time explicitly writing about herself throughout tracts. Rather, she saw writing as an outlet for the visions that rose from her connection with the prophet Daniel and her own biblical interpretations. She would apply these visions and readings to an analysis of contemporary politics, sometimes to the dismay -- or even anger – of the crown. Because the government and the church were a unified entity, an affront to either entity was an affront to both, and Lady Eleanor's antagonistic religious prophecies were, in part, treasonous acts. They were also, as we will see, crimes thought outside the realm of appropriate/conceivable female behavior. By transgressing religious, civic, and gender roles, Lady Eleanor's contemporaries concluded that she was mad. Sir John Lambe, Dean of the Arches, re-appropriated her famed used of anagrams when he wrote his own anagram of "Dame Eleanor Davies" as NEVER SOE MAD A LADIE. Reading her texts today, a reader might conclude something similar. Even when equipped with a familiarity with seventeenth century politics and biblical texts, readers are likely to find Lady Eleanor's prose often broken, incoherent, and obscure. However, at other times she can be remarkably clear and straightforward. Because it is her prison experience and writing experience rather than the content of her prose that pertain to the focus of this section, I will primarily provide a biographical analysis with pieces of her own writing woven through rather than focusing on the texts themselves.

Lady Eleanor was born into the large family of George Touchet, eleventh Baron Audley and first earl of Castlehaven, and his wife Lucy Mervin. Her early years were spent in Ireland due to her father's earldom, where she was well educated alongside her many brothers and sisters. She was well read in Latin, and was adept with law, yet Protestant theology would always be her dominate interest. Throughout her life, Lady Eleanor also took great pride in her lineage and the prestige it afforded her. As Esther Cope observes in her book *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never Soe Mad a Ladie,* she understood her father's baronage, though not as great as others, as still part of an ancient line that entitled her the highest respect of her peers. She "expected the patriarchal world in which she lived to accord her the recognition that was her due from birth and complained when it did not."[50]

What is known of her early life is conventional for a woman of her status. In 1609 she married Sir John Davies, a poet and attorney-general for Ireland, at the age of nineteen. He was born sometime before 1569, and was at least twenty-one years older than she was. Together they had three children, a daughter, Lucy Davies (later Hastings) born in 1613, and two sons, Richard and Jack. Richard died as an infant. Jack, who was possibly autistic and struggled to speak, would drown as a young boy in 1617. Although Sir John had had some success with his poetry, he was primarily interested in political advancement.[51] He also had a "violent temper and was, according to his contemporaries, ugly and exceedingly overweight."[52] The family moved from Ireland to London in 1619

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[50] Cope, 9.
[51] Cope, *The Prophetic Writings Of Lady Eleanor Davies*. Ed. Ester Cope. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. xi.
[52] "Davies , Lady Eleanor (1590–1652)," Diane Watt in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, eee ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

so they could be nearer to the court and, hopefully, advance. In London, John and Eleanor also ensured that their only surviving child, Lucy, would have an exceptional education. She was educated in their home with the aid of tutors in "Latin, French, Spanish, Greek, and Hebrew, and inherited her mother's interest in religion."[53] However, Lucy would leave the Davies household early. In 1623, at the age of eleven, she was married to Ferdinando, Lord Hastings, with a dowry of £6500.[54]

In 1625, not much had changed for Sir John and Eleanor Davies, though they now were without Lucy.[55] Through the court, Eleanor met the thirteen-year-old Scottish boy George Carr who was celebrated as "the dumb Boy or Fortune Teller."[56] Though he was deaf and mute, he had impressed the court with his prophetic abilities. Eleanor took him into her protection and with her help, the boy began to speak a little and prophesize more. This "had a profound effect on his patron" even after the boy's talents dwindled later that year and he ran away to sea.[57] Soon after he fled, Lady Eleanor was, in her words, "Awakened by a voyce from HEAVEN" which declared, "'There is Nineteen yeares and a halfe to the day of Judgment and you as the meek Virgin.'"[58] She believed this voice to be from the Old Testament prophet Daniel, who came to her with heavenly insights about the end of the world and, soon, court politics. Her connection with Daniel allowed her to

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Cope also provides a thorough account of the many people who wrote on either his unpleasantness or his striking looks, 17.

[53] "Hastings , Lucy, countess of Huntingdon (1613–1679)," Tania Claire Jeffries in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, January 2008.

[54] "Hastings , Lucy, countess of Huntingdon (1613–1679)."

[55] Lucy Hastings would stay close with her mother for several years through her first several bouts of imprisonment, and become a poet like her parents. However, Lady Eleanor had many disputes with Lucy's mother in-law, Elizabeth Stanley, Countess of Huntingdon, primarily over property ownership. Elizabeth Stanley was also a writer and patron of the arts, and was of nobler blood than Davies was.

[56] Cope, 29.

[57] "Davies , Lady Eleanor (1590–1652)."

[58] Davies , Lady Eleanor, "Her Appeal to the High Court"(1641) in *The Prophetic Writings Of Lady Eleanor Davies*. Ed. Ester Cope. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. 80-81.

claim that she too was a prophet, and she soon took to writing her name, styled as Eleanor Audeley, backwards with the anagram REVEAL O DANIEL writ below.[59]

After this first revelation, Lady Eleanor took her new role as prophet in stride, and immediately wrote out her interpretation of the books of Daniel and Revelations. She delivered this text to Archbishop Abbot of Canterbury. Later that year she would expand on this text and publish her first pamphlet, *A Warning to the Dragon and All his Angels*.[60] John Davies was so upset by her writing that he seized one of her manuscripts and threw it into the fire. Rather than submitting to her husband's will, she turned her prophetic eye to him. He earned his very own anagram, JOHN DAVES became JOVES HAND, and she declared that within three years he would die, and began dressing all in black to mourn his future passing.[61] In November of 1626, Lady Eleanor wept one night at dinner, grieving for the husband who sat at the same table while he cried back, "'I pray weep not while I am alive, and I will give you leave to laugh when I am dead.'" Within a week, he died; just a year into Lady Eleanor's revelation.

She married again that spring, this time to Sir Archibald Douglas, a soldier. Some of Lady Eleanor's friends at court were impressed by her newfound prophetic talent, and she consulted with Queen Henrietta Maria about her first pregnancy.[62] She also foretold the death of the Duke of Buckingham, which angered the King. This hostility from Charles led Douglas to make the same mistake as his predecessor and he burned her

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[59] Cope, 12. She often used anagrams, even before this incident, to interpret the world around her. According to Cope, John Donne once named her the author of *Vacation Exercises . . . on the Art of Forming Anagrams approximately ture and posies to engrave on Rings*, 17. John Davies, her husband, was the published author on the piece, and it was clearly an interest that they shared.

[60] "Davies , Lady Eleanor (1590–1652)."

[61] Cope, 42.

[62] Generally, Lady Eleanor disliked Henrietta Maria. She feared the Queen's Catholicism threatened England's Protestantism.

manuscripts. While her response was not quite as drastic, she did claim that God would judge him for this assault. Yet by 1631, the couple was consumed with defending Lady Eleanor's brother, Mervin Touchet, second Earl of Castlehaven, when he was charged and eventually found guilty of rape and sodomy. Both Lady Eleanor and Douglas were deeply traumatized by the event. Soon after Douglas began to suffer from madness, and Lady Eleanor saw his "mania" as retribution for burning her writing. His condition also gave her an excuse to travel to the continent. Under the guise of attending a spa, Lady Eleanor went to a printer in Amsterdam and then smuggled the pamphlets back into England. [63] However, she was not shy about distributing the books, and gave a handwritten copy with Archbishop Laud. According to Cope, "just as the handwriting on the wall in Daniel 5 had notified Belshazzar of what would happen if he did not turn from idolatry, hers informed Laud what his fate would be."[64]

Laud seized her books, burned them, and protested to the King. Lady Eleanor was arrested and tried by the High Commissioner. Her crimes, according to the *Book of Acts of the Court or High Commission*, were "For publishing certain fanatical pamphlets." [65] She was fined £3,000 and was "ordered to make a public submission, and committed as a close prisoner to the Gatehouse during the king's pleasure."[66] This sentence was particularly harsh. Punishments assigned by the High Commissioner around the same time as Lady Eleanor's trial were far less demanding, even though their crimes were similar. For example, a "Frederick Waggoner, of Leigh, Essex" was found guilty of "Profane speeches of the Lords Supper and contumely towards the clergy" for which he

[63] Cope, 42-57. "Davies , Lady Eleanor (1590–1652). She did not have a license to print in England.
[64] Cope, 65.
[65] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.2 479 "Book of Act of the Court or High Commission."
[66] Cope, 70.

was fined only £100.[67] Another incident of heretical speech is found in the trial of Nathaniel Barnard who was convicted of "Seditious preaching at St. Mary's, Cambridge" and was fined £1,000.[68] If Lady Eleanor's crime was indeed heretical speech through "fanatical pamphlets," her fine was at least three times that of her male contemporaries.

Other women tried by the High Commissioner at that time present a separate problem faced by women in the court system, sexual deviancy. Amy Wytham was found in "Contempt in not appearing to answer articles concerning adultery."[69] Amy Green Holland was fined £2,000 "for notorious adultery."[70] Wytham and Holland are the only two other women to appear in this court at this time, and both of their alleged crimes were the result of sexual behavior, though not deviant enough to be sent to Bridewell. The only man convicted of a crime for a sexual act was that of John Willyams, of Parke, Brecon who was found guilty of "Incest with brother's son's wife" and was fined only £500.[71] Of course, Lady Eleanor's brother, the earl of Castlehaven, had been another exception to this trend.

That generally speaking women were convicted of sexual crimes and men convicted of speech crimes presented a predicament for the court who found Lady Eleanor guilty of printing "fanatical" pamphlets. Ester Cope describes this dilemma as a "special problem", namely, "in contrast to . . . many of the women who appeared there, she did not appear in connection with either alleged adultery or a suit for alimony . . . Those appearing on charges of printing or distributing unlicensed books were men."[72]

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[67] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.2 479 "Book of Act of the Court or High Commission."
[68] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.2 479 "Book of Act of the Court or High Commission."
[69] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.2 479 "Book of Act of the Court or High Commission."
[70] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.2 479 "Book of Act of the Court or High Commission."
[71] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.2 479 "Book of Act of the Court or High Commission."
[72] Cope, 73.

This, according to Cope, was the guiding force in the court's "determining an appropriate sentence" with her most appalling crime being that "they saw her as a violator of gender order."[73] The records of High Commission reveal that Lady Eleanor did not dispute the crimes brought against her, "she had stood out in contempt without offering any submission or acknowledging her offence."[74] Cope argues that, in comparison to the limitations placed on women in marriage and in society, Lady Eleanor would not have been too fearful of prison; although "they believed that they were curtailing her liberty they were replacing the imprisonment of her spirit with the imprisonment of her body . . . She had [been] confined by the authority of [men] . . . when she exchanged those bonds for physical constraints . . . she moved from the hell of everyday life."[75] Indeed, she had faced many troubling and oppressive relationships. However, this first imprisonment would prove challenging.

In terms of early modern London's many prisons, the Gatehouse would have been relatively comfortable. It was near the courtrooms of Westminster and designed to house political prisoners of status. Sir Walter Raleigh was kept there the evening before his execution in 1618. Penelope Rich was also housed within its walls while her brother, Walther Devereux, the Earl of Essex, was on trial for treason in 1601. John Taylor described Westminster in 1623 as "affording good lodging rooms and diet" and was a reasonable place to imprison a woman of Lady Eleanor's rank.[76] However, after visiting her mother in 1634, Lucy Hastings wrote to the King, appalled by the conditions of her mother's cell. She complained of the bedding, insisted that Lady Eleanor should have a

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[73] Cope, 73.
[74] CSPD, Reign of Charles I (1633-4) SP 16/261 f.72 175 "Acts of the Court of High Commission, during the Month of July 1634."
[75] Cope, 75.
[76] Richard Byrne. *Prisons and Punishments of London*. (London: Harper, 1989) 80.

maidservant to attend her, and that she should have more time outdoors.[77] Lady Eleanor, too, petitioned against aspects of her imprisonment including, being "'made subject to the base behavior of the Keeper and his officers (such an unchristianlike estate as is not fit to be named by takeing advantage of that lowe estate of hers, she being allowed neither pen nor inke, nor to have the Bible."[78]

Lady Eleanor's time in the Gatehouse cannot be overlooked as merely one of her many misadventures; rather, the first two years she spent in the Gatehouse altered her, and her writing. While Cope and other biographers acknowledge that little writing still exists from Eleanor's Gatehouse imprisonment, it is possible that she was not able to produce any writing due to lack of resources.[79] Merely because she publishes during later bouts of imprisonment, her biographers have considered the Gatehouse writings as lost to history. This is in spite of the fact that she states, near her release date, that the Gatehouse governors forbade her from reading and writing. If she was denied "pen [and] inke, nor to have the Bible" as she claims she was, she may have been kept in more seclusion than has previously been acknowledged.

By restricting Lady Eleanor's access to a pen and a Bible, the Gatehouse not only denied her primary mode of personal expression, they also showed a determination to stop the production of her writing. It was the production and distribution of texts, of course, that had led to her arrest in the first place; and in this sense, by restricting her writing the Gatehouse was reforming Lady Eleanor as much as confining her. By denying her access to a pen and a Bible, her jailers enacted the same ideals of reform on her as they did on women of a lower status. In both instances, prison forced women from their

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[77] Cope, 77.
[78] Eleanor Davies, House of Lords Records Office, Main Papers, 22 September 1647. In Cope, 77.
[79] Only one letter exists from this period. It was sent to her sisters and predicted that London would burn.

former lives and molded them into women who were more convenient. While Bridewell forced women to produce, the Gatehouse stopped Lady Eleanor. Though she had an excellent education, was an avid reader and writer all her life and outspoken about her prophesies for years, it was only when she published her works (albeit without a license) that Lady Eleanor was arrested and imprisoned. Perhaps she recognized that her will to publish, and the power that came from writing, frightened those who persecuted her. She kept a transcript of the trial by the High Commissioner that led to this incarceration and wrote across the top, "The gates of Hell shall not prevail against her."[80] Lady Eleanor went on to publish almost seventy more tracts after she was freed. While she would be in and out of London prisons across the years, those bouts of confinement never silenced her in the same way as this first instance at the Gatehouse.

After her release in 1635, Lady Eleanor caused another stir while with friends at Lichfield Cathedral. When the women were refused the right to sit where the wives of cathedral dignitaries sat, Davies returned, sat in the bishop's throne, and then proceeded to pour tar over the altar "telling worshippers that she was sprinkling it with holy water as preparation for their next communion."[81]She was quickly arrested, and this time sent to Bethlehem Royal Hospital, or Bedlam. She would be there for three years and continued to write. Bedlam was reserved for the mentally unwell, or "distracted persons," and was generally committed to nursing rather than reforming.[82] Lady Eleanor would continue to have her own room and servants to aid her, and there would be significantly less oversight than there had been at the Gatehouse, which may have freed her to write more.

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[80]Ester Cope, *Handmaid of the Holy Spirit: Dame Eleanor Davies, Never Soe Mad a Ladie.* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992) 75.

[81] "Davies , Lady Eleanor (1590–1652)."She later explained this incident in her 1652 tract "Bethlehem Signifying the House of Bread" as a prophetic act.

[82] Robert Rentoul Reed, Jr. *Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952. 19.

Yet, Bedlam was also, in many ways, a sister institution to Bridewell. In 1557, it came "under the management of Bridewell Hospital . . . to reduce the cost of administration."[83] Unlike Bridewell, Bedlam began as a priory in the thirteenth century, and primarily served as a place to care for the poor and the sick. The crown seized and maintained it until Henry VIII sold it to the city of London. Lack of funds, corruption, and neglect were a constant problem and in 1598 an inspection party from the Bridewell governors deemed it "'so loathsomely and filthily kept that it was not fit for any man to come into said house.'"[84] Even though the king intervened in 1618 and appointed court physician Dr. Hilkiah Crook to oversee the hospital, Bedlam was in such decay and so overrun with corruption and neglect that patients frequently starved throughout the 1630s as the corrupt governors aimed to keep the funds to themselves. As a woman of some means, Lady Eleanor had more success paying for her stay and the governor's neglect allowed Lady Eleanor the freedom to write.

Lady Eleanor's political criticism and bizarre behavior continued to unsettle the crown, and she was moved from Bedlam to the Tower in 1638, where she stayed for two years. The cost of all of this confinement became great, even for the aristocratic Lady Eleanor. She had very little income and struggled to keep the properties she had maintained with her husbands. Before her death in 1652, she would be arrested at least three more times, only now for debt. Furthermore, she was well aware of the corruption of prison officials. When she was still in the Gatehouse she had gone head to head with the keeper Aquila Weeks. Weeks "complained to the Council that Lady Eleanor had no means to support herself (and thus no means to pay Weeks) and [he] probably had little

[83] Reed, 16.
[84] Reed, 16.

inclination to make his prisoner . . . comfortable."[85] Lady Eleanor "took revenge" in later publications when she "made the most of his name, Aquila, the Latin word for eagle, which was also a symbol of Rome."[86] She did not forget his mistreatment of her even though it would be years before her voice against him would find an audience.

Lady Eleanor often refers to her imprisonments in her published works. These references are never pleas for release or forgiveness. In fact, they are defiantly consistent and reaffirm her role as a prophet. In 1649, for example, she publishes an earlier letter to Charles I in her tract "The Blasphemous Charge Against Her" that,

> Upon a reference from you . . . to these your Commissioners, I being Sentenced by them . . . because [I] took upon me to be a Prophetess; first was Fined, and then to make publique Submission at Pauls so many times; that Jericho for ever cursed, and farther a close prisoner to continue at your pleasure. So be it known, you are hereby required to make a publique acknowledgement of such your capital Trespass and high Offence; and first Ask me foregiveness, if so be you expect to finde Mercy in this world or the other.[87]

Years of the Gatehouse, Bedlam, and the Tower had only cemented Lady Eleanor in her role as a "Prophetess," so much so that she demanded that King publically apologize to her. She could also be critical of the law itself. For instance, in her 1646 text "Je le Tien" she criticizes the "privledge of Parliament" "who fleeing . . . run upon gross contempt" and "being subverted, or infringed more . . . anything destructive thereto."[88] Parliament, at this time, controlled who had the privilege to print their works and who did not.

Although heretical speech and the production of writing was Lady Eleanor's crime, she never once chose to relent after her experience in the Gatehouse. As an educated and elite woman, writing and publication provided her an autonomy that neither

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[85] Cope, 77-8.
[86] Cope, 78.
[87] Davies, "The Blasphemous Charge Against Her" in Cope, *Prophetic Writings*, 250.
[88] Davies, "Je le Tien" in Cope, *Prophetic Writings*, 208.

her jailor, parliament, nor the King allowed her. The more they persecuted her, the more she wrote. And like Daniel imprisoned in the lion's den, she always maintained her faith, especially in herself. Over time, imprisonment drained her wealth, position, and relationships, yet she continued to proclaim, "So Gates and Prison Doors be no more shut, The King of Glory comes, your soul lifts up."[89]

[89] Davies, "Gatehouse Salutation," *Prophetic Writings*, 219.

Chapter 3

"I do repent me as it is an evil, And take the shame with joy": Shakespeare's Other Juliet

Similar to the case of Lady Eleanor, Bridewell inmates otherwise limited by their arrest, beatings, and forced labor were sometimes able to use labor, a tool of their subjugation, to resist the patriarchal systems working against them. As seen in the case of Margaret White, court records may be able to attest to this kind of resistance. However, popular literature also indicates how Bridewell influenced the culture and the place of Bridewell inmates therein. In this section, I turn away from the primarily historical and biographical methods of the pervious sections to a literary analysis of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* to show how poor women experienced and spoke back in prison. I will primarily focus on the character of Juliet, who is the most visible woman prisoner in the text, though not the only one. In some ways it is problematic to group Juliet with the poor women of Bridewell because Juliet, Isabella tells us in Act I scene iv, is not exactly poor but an adopted member of their elite household. This distinction allows Juliet and Claudio's relationship to be relatively free of class conflict while still being ambiguous enough so that Juliet could be imprisoned in a house like Bridewell. This type of situation was a reality for similarly classed early modern London women; for instance, one woman, the wife of writer and courtier William Fowler, found herself in hot water after she accused her husband of treason in front of the Star Chamber in 1600. When the "fowle Matter" was found false, "she was carried in a Cart to Bridewell, and whipped" despite the fact that "They say she is of good Birth, had good Education, and as modest a Behaviour and Cowntenance outwardly; so it is pittied, soe faire a Creature shuld have

soe fowle a Mind."[90] Without the extreme aristocratic status of women like Lady Eleanor, non-aristocratic women were subject to Bridewell's influence.

Measure for Measure features many notable imprisonments, but scholars often overlook Juliet's detention. This silence is surprising given that Juliet's pregnancy and subsequent imprisonment is the center of the play's drama. Once she is visibly pregnant and the secret union between her and Claudio is public and punishable by the state, other troubles ensue. *Measure for Measure*, written and performed in 1603/4, gives voice to imprisoned women through the characterization of Juliet.[91] In this section, I highlight her experience within the play as an instance of systematic, patriarchal subjugation, as well as her ability to resist such oppression, and argue that Juliet's imprisonment is neither an endpoint for her transgressions nor a place to preserve her away from society and the action of the play. By examining the ways in which the ensemble of *Measure for Measure* condemns her, I show how prison induces labor as atonement for sexual and economic deviancy. Rather than portraying manual labor such as textile work, Juliet's labor is bound to the body that revealed her crime; her labor is the birth of her child. While prison's inducement of labor is effective in birthing the child, Juliet retains some sense of agency, manifested as a positive sexual identity despite attempts to shame and

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[90] "Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney, 14 June 1600" in *Letters and Memorials of State in the Reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, Charles the First*. Ed. Arthur Collins. Osborne, London. 1746. 202.

[91] In her chapter "Reading, Writing, and Other Crimes" Frances Dolan argues for the use of women's testimony in early modern courtrooms even though the documents were controlled by men and therefore may represent the masculine gaze. Similarly, Shakespeare's portrayal of Juliet is mitigated by male influence, as the hand of a prisoner of Bridewell does not write it. However, by accounting for this bias, I use these texts as representations of incarcerated women's voices and how others heard their voices in their time. In *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, eds. Dymphna Callaghan, Valerie Traub, and Lindsay Kaplan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 142-167.

reform that identity. This both reveals the ineffectiveness of the prison reform model as well as illuminates the nature of such an experience.

As Fiona McNeill has shown, when the audience first encounters Juliet she is the embodiment of the paradoxical "pregnant maid" who was interpreted by early modern onlookers "as formless, unhoused vagrant body parts that literally do not fit into the household and must therefore end up on the streets or in jail".[92] She is exposed in the streets, lagging behind Claudio, displaying an illegitimate body that "cannot be confined to a single identity" and thus "no longer fits into the community. . . The only place for her to go as a pregnant maid who has been exposed, is to jail".[93] For McNeill, Juliet is indicative of a larger semantic crisis at work in early modern London as unwed mothers defied the legal system that recognized women as either unmarried virgin, wife, or widow. Juliet's body forbids the possibility of any one of these categories. Perhaps more importantly, her presence on the street indicates a vagrant like status that suggests dependence on the community, therefore prompting the community's judgment.

Once arrested, a woman like Juliet would be carted through the streets and humiliated for her moral offences. For the same crime a man would be fined, but a woman "is set up as spectacle, taken to Bridewell, to be whipped 'naked before the populace.' The woman alone becomes the object of the spectators' . . . voyeuristic gaze."[94] Although critic Laura Lunger Knoppers cites these incidences as evidence for

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[92] McNeill, 105.
[93] McNeill ,107.
[94] Laura Lunger Knoppers, "(En)gendering Shame: *Measure for Measure* and the Spectacles of Power" in *English Literary Renaissance* 23.3 (1993), 458. In her analysis of early modern England's use of shame rituals, Laura Lunger Knoppers adds that the use of public shaming by law enforcement may have been disproportionately used against women, especially in cases of sexual transgression. Quoting a visiting German man's stay in London, Knoppers reveals the harsh disparity between men's and women's punishments.

the ways in which Isabella experiences rituals of shaming before the Duke at the play's close, Juliet enacts a far more literal rendition of these same rituals. Her pregnant body is evidence of her crimes, her belly is the notation to be read, and judged, by the public. Natasha Korda echoes McNeill's concerns over Juliet's public body by pointing out that it is only her pregnancy "that makes her visible, and therefore subject to the state."[95] For McNeill and Korda, with the fear of economic dependency, it is surprising that Juliet is not charged in court with any crimes of her own.

Though Juliet is the starting point of *Measure for Measure*'s action, she has hardly any stage time, the least of all the female characters aside from Kate Keep-Down who, as another unwed mother and known prostitute, is only the subject of conversation and has no stage time or voice of her own. Korda describes Juliet as a "specter of the placeless singlewoman," who is absent due to her "lack of social space and identity."[96] By recognizing Juliet's precarious economic status as a woman whose dowry is being withheld, the economic threat of pregnancy that criminalizes her is "nothing more than a romantic fiction . . . a temporary obstacle impeding marriages that appear all the more miraculous when they are achieved."[97] According to this line of thinking, if only Juliet's dowry was restored then the "temporary obstacle" would be vanquished and she would be free to marry Claudio. With the relative openness of Juliet's situation, the narrative does seem to suspend, or even "preserve" Juliet offstage until she is needed by the male characters.[98] While Korda's analysis of Juliet shows the ways in which she is ostracized

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[95] Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philidelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 180.
[96] Korda, 181.
[97] Korda, 184.
[98] Natasha Korda, "Singlewomen and the Properties of Poverty in *Measure for Measure*" in *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in Economic Criticism*, ed. Linda Woodbridge (New York: Palgrave Macmillian,

from play's action, where exactly Juliet goes is not discussed because much of her story is ambiguous. She is visible in Act I, silently brought through the streets. She is back in II.iii as the Duke, disguised as the Friar, interrogates her in her prison cell. She appears again in Act V, silently brought in with the male prisoners, Barnardine and Claudio. Like the historical women jailed as unwed mothers, Juliet's imprisonment would likely include beatings and forced labor or, as in the Jacobean period, even execution, yet Shakespeare fails to provide a clear indication of what is in store for Juliet.

Claudio's imprisonment, however, is quite clear. As they are brought through the streets, he resists Provost, if only long enough to give Lucio instructions to reclaim Isabella from the cloister. At this moment, Juliet does not need to speak to communicate her predicament, her "character too gross is writ on" her vast belly (I. ii. 152). This public shaming is the first step in what will be an arduous experience parallel to Claudio's imprisonment. Before Juliet and Claudio are on stage, the first person to speak of their crime is Mistress Overdone, the bawd, who laments Claudio's prison sentence "for getting Madam Julietta with child" (I.ii.69-70). Because it is Mistress Overdone, Claudio and Juliet's situation is instantly associated with sex work. Mistress Overdone laments the loss of Claudio, a man "worth five thousand of you all" (I.ii. 60), yet when Pompey talks of the crime, he emphasizes the loss of Juliet's virginity:

> Bawd: Well what has he done?
> Pompey: A woman.
> Bawd: But what's his offense?
> Pompey: Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.
> Bawd: What? Is there a maid with child by him?
> Pompey: No but there's a woman with maid by him. (I.ii.84-89).

2003), 237-250. Here Korda compares Juliet to Mariana in the moated grange as both being in a place to be "preserved until such a time as she can be repositioned as wife and thereby serve as a vehicle of patrilineal property transmission," 241.

Indeed, there cannot be a "maid with child by him" because "maid" implies virginity, a status that only the unborn child can claim. Furthermore, neither recognizes Juliet and Claudio's relationship as permanent; it will be over fifty lines before Claudio asserts, "She is fast my wife" (I.ii.144). Before Claudio tries to legitimize the pregnancy, Pompey informs Mistress Overdone that all of the brothels or "houses in the suburbs . . . must be / plucked down" (I.ii.92-3).

Juliet's pregnancy is further conflated with sex work through the male characters' discussion of Mistress Elbow, the wife of constable Elbow who entered the bawd house " great bellied, and longing . . . for prunes" (II.i.106-7). That she is pregnant and in a brothel calling "for prunes," which were thought to stave off venereal diseases, questions her monogamy and implies that she was not a virgin at the time of marriage. Despite Elbow's attempts to guard her reputation, saying, "Varlet, thou liest; thou liest, wicked varlet! The time is yet to come that she was ever respected with man, woman, or child" Pompey only quips, "Sir, she was respected with him before he married with her" (II.i.175-9). Another instance of pregnancy, though not referred to until act V, is between the known prostitute Kate Keep-Down and Lucio. When the Duke condemns Lucio to marry the mother of his child he cries "I beseech your Highness do not marry me to a / whore . . . do not recompense me in / making me a cuckold" adding "Marrying a punk . . . is pressing to death, / whipping, and hanging" (V.i.588-91, 596-7). For Lucio, marriage to Kate Keep-Down suggests many of the same tortures that Kate would receive during imprisonment for an unwed pregnancy. These two pregnancies reveal the degraded status that any unwed mother would face, and show that her status is irreconcilable. Even once Mistress Elbow and Kate Keep-Down are wed they are still the subject of jokes and

gossip by the men. So while Claudio claims Juliet "is fast his wife" and will eventually be permitted to marry her, this resolution will not alter the condemnation that Juliet will receive.

Although shaming is a form of conviction in and of itself, Juliet must also face a criminal conviction from the state. Juliet's crime is two-fold in that, like Claudio, she is convicted of immorality; yet, she is also subject to the economic crime that Claudio is not held accountable for in producing a child. Fittingly, it is because of financial instability that Claudio and Juliet are in this position. They delayed "denunciation," or a public wedding ceremony, "for propagation of a dower / Remaining in the coffer of her friends, / From whom we thought it meet to hide our love / Till time had made them for us" (I.ii.145-150). Whether Juliet's "friends" are her relatives or executors of an estate that retains her dowry, Juliet is not in control of her own wealth. Denied financial independence and access to income, she is unable to wed Claudio. While Juliet may not have been driven to vagrancy yet, her situation calls up the many women who had a lack of financial independence that led to vagrancy and prostitution.

Because Juliet's finances are not in her control, by becoming pregnant she also becomes guilty of dependence. Through her arrest, Juliet has become a problem: as Provost asks Angelo "What shall be done, sir, with the groaning Juliet? / She's very near her hour" to which Angelo replies "Dispose of her / To some more fitter place, and that with speed" adding "See you the fornicatress be removed. / Let her have needful but not lavish means. / There shall be order for 't" (II.ii. 21-24, 32-34). At the height of her pregnancy, Anglo can only instruct Juliet be removed, or "Dispose[d]" of, away from the

mass of other inmates in order to have the baby. Other prisoners or a prison midwife may attend her, and there would be quarters in Bridewell to accommodate childbirth.

The goal of prison and imprisonment, especially for wayward women like Juliet, was to reform criminals into productive London workers. The "groaning" Juliet, of course, encounters another kind of labor behind bars, birthing labor. "Labor" was a term to describe the birthing process by the late fifteenth century, and was gaining popularity in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The King James Bible would adopt the word to describe Rachel, saying she "traueiled, and she had a hard labor" in childbirth.[99] While the audience does not see Juliet engage in any other type of reformative labor, her birthing labor is the defining factor of her imprisonment and the nature of that labor is transformative, if not reformative.

Here, in childbirth, the Duke comes to confess Juliet. In a sense, the sheer immediacy of her situation gives Juliet's confession a kind of comedy. As the Duke asks, "Repent you, fair one, of the sin you carry?" (II.iii.20) it is almost certain that, in labor and the emergence of the "sin" that she "carr[ies]", Juliet is indeed ready to repent, or at least move past it. Yet she adds that she "bear[s] the shame most patiently" (II.iii. 21). While this is in part a reference to her first appearance being shamed through the streets, the child itself has become the embodiment of that "shame" and "sin" and she awaits its arrival "most patiently." Juliet is both appeasing the Duke's desire to confess her without actually acknowledging any crime or guilt. Rather, she duplicitously adopts his terms of "sin" to refer to the child and therefore circumvents any wrongdoing. The same is true of the Duke's statement, "Then was your sin of heavier kind than his" to which she replies, "I do confess it and repent it" and, indeed, the child "sin" is tangibly "heavier" than any

[99] "labor, n." OED Online. June 2014. Oxford University Press.

sin that Claudio may bear (II.iii.31-2). The urgency of giving birth demands that she interrupt the Duke during a speech of condemnation, crying out "I do repent me as it is an evil, / And take the shame with joy" (II.iii. 39-40). By pushing the baby "sin" or here "evil" from the body that served as evidence of her crime and badge of her character, she separates herself from any condemnation and is able to reclaim, or "take" the child "shame" with "joy." In the eyes of the community and the law, the child may be a crime but Juliet actively reclaims her child, and her body, by renaming the child "joy."

Juliet asserts her agency from within the confines of the prison via the very aspect means that led to her conviction. Her process of taking back her body and her child from the state and community is committed alongside her consistently positive sexuality:

> Duke [as friar]: Love you the man that wronged you?
> Juliet: Yes, as I love the woman that wronged him.
> Duke [as friar]: So then it seems your most offenseful act / Was mutually committed?
> Juliet: Mutually. (II.iii. 26-30)

Juliet adopts the discourse of the Duke in order to address him directly and provide him with the answers he desires, however, like the double-talk about her child, she does not confess to his crimes. Rather the repetition of "wronged" in lines 26 and 27 represents her rhetorical prowess in turning the Duke's meaning to reflect her own. The same can be said of the repetition of "Mutually" in lines 29 and 30. This passage also shows Juliet's active and positive sense of her own sexuality in that she is not only parallel and equal to her male confessor, the Duke, but "mutual" to her partner, Claudio. Although Juliet has the rhetorical prowess and agency to empower her personal identity, there is little she can do about her imprisonment except speak out, and speak back against the Duke. Her body may have been jailed by the community and state and made to do labor, but it is once she

is in the belly of the system that she has voice, and uses that voice, to reclaim herself and sexuality.

Chapter 4

"Her plenteous womb Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry": Juliet and the New World

The American colonies presented an opportunity to English authorities unavailable at the time of Bridewell's founding. They could serve as a place that both isolated women offenders yet depended upon the fruits of their offenses. Considered detrimental in London, unwed pregnancy in the Americas signified potential, as the all-male colonies demanded women and their labor be brought to the New World. In this final section, I will show how the expansion of Bridewell prison into a transatlantic trade of laboring poor women became the model for how a patriarchal, productive, and ordered society should respond to single women. The ideal of reform from Bridewell was redesigned to capitalize on women's labor and reproductive labor across the burgeoning empire.

This transition is evident in *Measure for Measure* when Lucio is sent to retrieve Isabella from the cloister. She is initially resistant to the news he shares but once he is willing to diminish his usual uncouth behavior he is persuasive, saying:

> Your brother and his lover have embraced;
> As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time
> That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
> To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb
> Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry. (I.iv. 42-46).

Unlike Pompey and Mistress Overdone's conversation in I.ii and the men's discussion in II.i, Lucio's characterization of Juliet is not entirely unlike her own description of "mutual" consent. However, Lucio then employs the metaphor of agricultural work in which impregnating Juliet's "plenteous womb" becomes the tenor trapped in the vehicle

of land. It is only because of Claudio's effective "husbandry" that she can now be cultivated. The agency to "embrace" that Juliet had in line 42 is lost to fertility and she is the epitome of potential life as Lucio repeats "feed grow full" "blossoming" "seedness" "teeming foison" and "plenteous" to capture the abundance she may produce.

Lucio's use of "husbandry" not only retracts Juliet's sexual agency, it also represents the emerging connotations of the word in the early seventeenth century. "Husbandry" had been a part of the middle English vocabulary meaning, "the administration and management of a household; domestic economy."[100] In essence, it was a masculine equivalent to housewifery. Husbandry evolved over the centuries to refer more directly to agricultural labor and the "tillage or cultivation of the soil; agriculture, farming."[101] Yet, the *Oxford English Dictionary* points out a slightly different use of the word in Thomas Dekker's 1604 *Magnificent Entertainment* which describes the "Dutch country people, toyling at their Husbandrie; women carding off their Hemp, the men beating it."[102] By the time of Dekker's writing, husbandry was wavering between gendered domestic work and industrial labor. That Dekker uses the term to describe the very work of Bridewell captures the omnipresence of laboring prisoners by 1604. Women perform husbandry in their labor, yet also companion it through housewifery and, as in the case of Juliet, are the object upon which husbandry is performed by a man. It is Claudio's "full tilth and husbandry" that allowed Juliet's fertility to be capitalized upon. Without his husbandry, Juliet would have remained a "bare fallow" of unused land.

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[100] "husbandry, n." OED Online. June 2014. Oxford University Press.
[101] "husbandry, n." OED Online.
[102] "husbandry, n." OED Online.

In the early seventeenth century, the Virginia Company viewed the Americas much in the same way that Lucio represents Juliet. As early as 1596, Sir Walter Ralegh described Guiana as a "Country that hath yet her Maydenhead, never sackt, turned, nor wrought, the face of the earth hath not been torne, nor the virtue and salt of the soyle spent."[103] Without husbandry, this land would remain as "fallow" as Juliet, prompting first a variety of noble patrons and then the Virginia Company to attempt to occupy and cultivate American lands. In her study of England's colonization of America, Jess Edwards analyzes the ways in which the English transferred what had been a domestic debate on the nature of common land and labor to the lands of the New World. English New World cultivation depended on the understanding of Native American land uses as wasteful. Mid-Atlantic tribes had more in common with England's older system of common land than it did with the emerging idea of an "individual's right to unconditional private property" which simultaneously championed private industry.[104] Private land represented calculated, productive control, unlike the chaos of common land. Edwards shows this abhorrence of common land through often used metaphors, where common lands are likened to a "'common prostitute' . . .[like] the public woman, available to every man . . . They are the void-ness of the empty womb."[105]

Whether in England or the Americas, for land to be properly improved it must be held and husbanded by one man. Similarly, for the Virginia Company, the privately held

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[103] Sir Walter Ralegh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich and Bewtiful Empire of Guiana, with a Relation of the Great and Golden Citie of Manoa (which the Spanyards call El Dorado) And of the Provinces of Emerica, Arromaia, Amapaia, and other Countries, with their rivers adioyning* (Imprinted at London : By Robert Robinson, 1596), 95. Ralegh is specifically referencing Guiana here, though it can and is often considered representative of his larger perception of the New World.

[104] Jess Edwards, ""Nature in Defect": Yielding Landscapes in Early Modern Discourses of Enclosure and Colonization" *Studies in Travel Writing* 4, no. 1 (2000): 1-28, 9.

[105] Edwards, 9.

woman stands a better chance of improvement than a masterless woman does. Both the land and women are barren without husbandry, and both present the opportunity for masculine-controlled (re)production. Patricia Akhimie supports Edwards' argument concerning the relationship of the land and women, stating that the "notion of agricultural improvement was deeply entangled with the country estate system" adding that such a system "appropriated women's domestic labor and reproductive capacity."[106]Akhimie represents the desire to plant and reform the land as at once "unrealistic" and "underwritten by common sense notions of home and family as the heart of the commonwealth, and planting with the goal of improvement."[107] Edwards, however, would point out that this form of "improvement" is the result of England's specific understanding of what it means to be useful, and not a representation of the land itself. The same could be said of the women sent to the colonists, women who were formerly the epitome of wastefulness.

The feminization of American lands, whether "Mayden" or "common prostitute", is an overt reflection of how the Virginia Company and England more broadly sought to define women. Yet this binary system of defining women would prove problematic once women began participating in colonial ventures rather than being merely a means of discourse through which colonial ventures were imagined. In the traces of Bridewell, founded well before the Virginia Company, there was a similar struggle with similar semantic problems. Could women consistently be defined as maid, wife, or widow? Would it be better to find women as either virgin or whore, or "fallow" or "fertile"? The

[106] Patricia Akhimie, "Travel, drama, & domesticity: colonial huswifery in Philip Massinger's *The Sea Voyage*" *Studies in Travel Writing*. 13, no. 2 (2009): 154.
[107] Akhimie, 155.

inconsistency of patriarchal naming systems mimic the fallibility that such a scheme could ever work.

Early efforts to colonize Virginia had been a male venture. There had been a few women living in the Roanoke Colony, yet after its disappearance by 1590, no women were sent for nearly thirty years.[108] However, women remained essential in that the colonists increasingly requested that English women be provided to perform domestic labor. The colonists tried to utilize the labor of Native American women, though they were often too busy with their own work, or were not interested in working with the settlers. The company worried that women would be a distraction, potentially undermine class order, and they "questioned the value of women's domestic production in a colonial economy" that put a premium on tobacco and nothing else.[109] Over time, the Virginia Company relented to the colonists, hoping that women and families would make the settlement permanent.[110] Husbandry of the feminized land was no longer enough to achieve colonial goals; the colony needed to cultivate women in much the same way.

By 1619, it seemed that this plan might finally come to fruition when Company leader Sir Edwin Sandys wrote of the colonists' wish "that a fitt hunderth might be sent of woemen, Maide young and uncorrupt to make wifes to the Inhabitante[s] and by that meanes to make the men there more settled & lesse moueable."[111] The Company would pay for the women's transport and keep until a settler wished to marry one of them, at

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[108] Even these earliest women echo the Bridewell precinct. The first known English child born in the Roanoke Colony was Virginia Dare, daughter of Eleanor and Ananias Dare and granddaughter of John White, colonist and artist. Before the Dares left London to found the Roanoke colony they were parishioners at St. Bride's, and a bronze sculpture of the girl memorializes her in the church still today.
[109] Brown, 81.
[110] Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 80-81.
[111] Sir Edwin Sandys, "November the Third 1619" *Records of the Virginia Company: The Court Book*, Ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906) vol. 1, 256.

which point he would have to pay the company 120 pounds (later 150 pounds), of tobacco for her hand.[112] The company was "well aware that the venture could be misrepresented as a human auction, [and] . . . tried to soften the impression of a marriage market."[113] Yet, it was a market in which young women would be sold into housewifery. Feminist historian Selma R. Williams poignantly remembers these women for how the company saw them, referring to the poorest Bridewell cargo in her book *Demeter's Daughters: the Women Who Founded America 1587-1787* as "breeders." Unlike the opportunities afforded to boy apprentices indentured in the New World, women would not receive a land grant or any other property. They could only inherit in the same way that they would, or would not in, England.[114]

As the poorest, least connected women in Bridewell, very little is known about the identities of the women who made these early voyages to the Americas. In 1619, the Virginia Company financed the voyage of twenty-five girls alongside seventy-five boys between the ages of eight and sixteen from Bridewell to the colony.[115] The boys were indentured to plantations producing tobacco for the company. The girls do not appear to have had a fate any different from the slightly older women who would follow a year later to become brides. "Thus" according to McNeill, "began what turned out to be an enduring practice of empire – the transportation of those women – and men – who did not fit easily into the new workspaces of early industrialism to the New World, where they might be imagined as finally corrected."[116] There was little diversity in the means and

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[112] Brown, 81. And David R. Ransome, "Wives for Virginia, 1621" *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, vol.48 no.1 (1991), 6.
[113] Ransom, 6.
[114] Hinkle, 139.
[115] Hinkle, 139.
[116] McNeil, 179.

class of the transported women. A few women went freely for the prospect of finding a husband, a few were given to the Virginia Company by a parent or master, and some were kidnapped and sold into the company. Many would come from Bridewell Prison. However, all were without prospects in England.

By capturing and shipping these women to the colony, the Virginia Company began to participate in the same system of reform that Bridewell had been attempting for decades. Marginalized women would be captured, shipped, and once married and reproducing through labor in the colony, they would be considered reformed. Like Juliet, many women from Bridewell were neither "maid" nor wife nor widow. The first Bridewell women sent to the colony were said to be "of soe bad choyse as made the Colony afraide to desire any others."[117] The failure of Bridewell brides to please encouraged the Virginia Company to make an effort to attract women who were not incarcerated as well as rebrand those who had been.

Through the Virginia Colony, England attempted to reform the same women it had pushed out of its economy into saving it. They had been unable or unsuccessful at the appropriate forms of labor in Bridewell, and so their labor sentence was extended across the ocean. These women would go on to birth a new nation. As they labored, they continued to run the risk of being imprisoned in one of the daughter bridewells throughout the New World. Yet, successes in avoiding captivity created the illusion that empire had succeeded where Bridewell had failed: finally, it seemed, masterless women had been mastered. Such an illusion would inspire the British Empire to continue to incorporate the Bridewell model across the globe, and systematize poor women's worth and role for centuries to come.

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[117] Chatsworth Manuscript, 146/3, p.6. in Ransom, 5.

Conclusions

While the early modern English prison was committed to controlling women's labor, the prison also worked to produce an ideal of femininity that was deeply bound to class. Social status absolutely dictated what was acceptable labor and production for women. For elite women in the early modern era, like Lady Eleanor Davies, the prison would strive to bind her production. For women lower in the social order, whose standing could fluctuate and be ambiguous, like Juliet, deep moral and economic anxiety lead to outlawing the body's labor. Yet, for the poorest and most criminalized women, the body's labor would play a pivotal role in developing and sustaining England's colonial enterprise.

However, despite these civil constraints and prison walls, no patriarchal structure could entirely cage or curb individual women's resistance. For Lady Eleanor, resistance meant relentless writing. For Juliet, it meant speaking back to the Duke. And, for women shipped and sold into American housewifery, a newfound colony and eventual nation would need their labor more than ever. Continual resistance as well as continual labor and production would eventually bring them more rights over the centuries.

Prison systems for women would also continue to evolve alongside gender expectations. But the continuation of the British Empire, and eventually the American empire, would rely on women's subjection and labor. The constant constrictions of patriarchal order countered by the extensions of women's abundant labor would alter the global political landscape, first by birthing empire, but possibly undoing it as well by deconstructing the inherent misogyny and patriarchal order on which colonialism stands.

Further inquiry is needed to explore this relationship more fully. Answers may be found by investigating the individual acts of resistance of poor, imprisoned, women. A richer study of other forms of labor and captivity would also help froward this analysis. An examination across early modern drama, not just *Measure for Measure*, has the potential to deepen and complicate this study; the prison appears in many plays from the period, yet it is not often analyzed with bridewells in mind.[118] What other intricacies of the prison system did the theatres reflect? In the Americas, how would a more formal system of indentured servitude alter this earlier one? What influence would race based slavery play? How would England continue to deal with marginalized women and what role would the prison, or captivity, play?

The imprisonment of early modern English women was not only a problem for the early moderns; it is a problem for us still today not only in the prison system but also in the persistent anxieties and hardships around women's sexuality and work. Bridewell and her daughter prisons are a locus of patriarchal order and women's lived experiences. By turning our attention to the nuances of this space and the philosophy which governed it, we can see the repercussions which radiated through gender and global politics for centuries to come.

[118] Ruth Ahnert mentions bridewells and houses of correction as a form of imprisonment in her article "The Prison in Early Modern Drama" but does not address the gender implications of the prisons nor their specific representations on stage. *Literature Compass* 9.1 (2012).

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