



# Mothers and meaning on the early modern English stage

*Felicity Dunworth*

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Mothers and meaning on the early modern English stage' is a study of the dramatised mother figure in English drama from the mid-sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries. It explores a range of genres: moralities, histories, romantic comedies, city comedies, domestic tragedies, high tragedies, romances and melodrama and includes close readings of plays by such diverse dramatists as Udall, Bale, Phillip, Legge, Kyd, Marlowe, Peele, Shakespeare, Middleton, Dekker and Webster.

The study is enriched by reference to religious, political and literary discourses of the period, from Reformation and counter-Reformation polemic to midwifery manuals and Mother's Legacies, the political rhetoric of Mary I, Elizabeth I and James VI, reported gallows confessions of mother convicts and Puritan conduct books. It thus offers scholars of literature, drama, art and history a unique opportunity to consider the literary, visual and rhetorical representation of motherhood in the context of a discussion of familiar and less familiar dramatic texts.

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