



# **Stage Mothers: Women, Work, and the Theater, 1660-1830 (Transits: Literature, Thought & Culture, 1650-1850)**

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*Stage Mothers* explores the connections between motherhood and the theater both on and off stage throughout the long eighteenth century. Although the realities of eighteenth-century motherhood and representations of maternity have recently been investigated in relation to the novel, social history, and political economy, the idea of motherhood and its connection to the theatre as a professional, material, literary, and cultural site has received little critical attention. The essays in this volume, spanning the period from the Restoration to Regency, address these forgotten maternal narratives, focusing on: the representation of motherhood as the defining female role; the interplay between an actress's celebrity persona and her chosen roles; the performative balance between the cults of maternity and that of the "passionate" actress; and tensions between sex and maternity and/or maternity and public authority. In examining the overlaps and disconnections between representations and realities of maternity in the long eighteenth century, and by looking at written, received, visual, and performed records of motherhood, *Stage Mothers* makes an important contribution to debates central to eighteenth-century cultural history.

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