

Gregory of Tours, a court bishop, describes in his *Historiae* foreign queens who grow into strong international negotiators supported by savvy court clerics, while in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica*, the author's monastic condition is reflected in a gendering of diplomacy that favors clerics over queens as marriage negotiators. In contrast to Virgil's silent Lavinia, medieval romances such as Wace's *Brut* highlight a critique of marriage that provides fictional brides with a new voice, while raising the question of feeling and consent as essential elements for the stability of the alliance.

In the second part, Watkins analyzes the influence of the Reformation and printing on the demise of marriage diplomacy and queenly role. While the Reformation undermined traditional marriage diplomacy structures, in Catholic countries the new centralization of royal power and the aristocracy's subordination to a new administration, run by low-born bureaucrats, contributed to deprive royal brides of their original authority. Watkins contrasts Elizabeth Tudor's celibacy to Philip II's and Henry II's complex sixteenth-century marriage alliances through the lens of the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis and the poetry connected to it. Moving from Ronsard to Spenser, Watkins aligns the poets' choices of pastoral or epic poetry to the environment surrounding marriage diplomacy. Elizabeth's mythical virginity corresponds to her country's insular independence from medieval interdynastic negotiations, and Shakespeare's revisionary history of marriage alliances in *King John* and *Henry V* encourages pride in England's freedom from French possessions.

The final chapter is an analysis of the plays of Corneille and Racine in the context of the new bureaucratic state, which saw marriage diplomacy as part of its negotiating activities. Professional diplomats completely excluded royal brides from modern policy-making, which aimed not at a lasting peace, but at more endless negotiations. Barred from public administration, queens' voices are limited to the theatric stage, where they rule as tragic heroines and divas. Watkins writes in a clear, elegant style that unveils the human element amidst literary and political transformations and sheds a new light on diplomatic history.

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Plotting Motherhood in Medieval, Early Modern, and Modern Literature.

Mary Beth Rose.

Early Modern Cultural Studies 1500–1700. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. xiv + 192 pp. \$99.99.

Rose begins her book with Oedipus and Jocasta, citing it as one example in a long tradition of maternal authority as fraught: “unevenly and inconsistently represented” (2). What happens, she asks, if we examine the story not from his point of view, but from hers, from the position of the mother in the plot? This question, across texts span-

ning from medieval to modern literature, drives the book as Rose endeavors to reveal meanings that have previously been ignored, obscured, or overlooked, particularly where plot and collective structures are concerned and where maternal authority has the potential to be transformative. While acknowledging important exceptions, Rose strives to examine the power typically assigned to the maternal body in normative Western literary representation. At the same time she calls attention to “the inability to connect that authority with public power or to create for it enlivened and sustained cultural forms” (4). Her larger project, focusing on dead and living mother plots, is understanding the plotting of maternal authority “as a political and social aesthetic structure: collectively created and recreated” (5).

Chapter 2 (following the introductory first chapter) investigates Saint Augustine’s *Confessions* and how the hero’s relationship with his mother, Monica, informs his education, his choices, and the narrative. Her death, which coincides with his baptism, both facilitates and obstructs his journey. Augustine’s accomplished exploitation of the dead mother plot, Rose argues, “works as the major structuring device that insures his rhetorical success” (17). Chapter 3 charts tales of Griselda from the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, including versions by Boccaccio, Petrarch, Chaucer, and Shakespeare, to consider her motherhood, a little examined aspect of the familiar story. She reads Griselda’s submission to her husband’s authority, and the sacrifice of her children, as an attack on maternal authority. Chapter 4 turns to early modern literature, identifying the period as a structural center for the dead and living mother plots that both proceed and follow it, as well as the period in which modern notions of motherhood, marriage, and family become increasingly prominent. Ideological debate about family structures and relationships evident in legal and religious texts powerfully plays out in literature as motherhood is subjected to new scrutiny. She interrogates Shakespeare’s elimination of mothers from his romantic comedies as well as the ways his tragedies both make motherhood visible and problematize it. Her turn to “mother-authors” (87), the writers of mother’s legacies as well as Elizabeth Cary, sheds light on texts that, rather than eliminating maternal authority, “consistently insist on its immensity, while at the same time render its nature and goals incoherent” (89). Chapter 5 examines Milton’s *Paradise Regained* and its focus on the Virgin Mary and the ways in which her maternal authority is needed to affirm the heroic status of her son. Chapter 6 turns to Oscar Wilde’s representation of maternal authority and the marriage plot in his social comedies, arguing that Wilde understands the powerful potential he has to transform family relationships while not fully succeeding in this experiment. Chapter 7 identifies Tony Kushner’s radical revision of the dead and living mother plots in *Angels in America* and argues that he understands and fully embraces the political and cultural implications.

This book’s considerable strengths include crisp and convincing close readings of well-known literary works; among its achievements, it effectively examines the problematic cultural issue of maternal authority across time periods to reveal how this issue functions in plot both as an expectation and a complication. Rose’s incisive analysis of

a wide range of texts and authors is sharp and elucidating. While the range is impressive, one wonders what the inclusion of and focus on additional texts written by women, or attention to texts by authors of color (especially in modern literature), might have revealed about the patterns and meanings she uncovers. That said, Rose makes a persuasive case for the plotting of maternal authority as an important structural and narrative device and, as a result, makes an important contribution to the understanding of maternity and gender as represented in Western literature across the centuries.

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Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power: The Making of Peace.

Nathalie Rivère de Carles, ed.

Early Modern Literature in History. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. xvi + 240 pp. \$99.99.

Interest in literary depictions of diplomacy has enjoyed renewed vigor in the wake of Timothy Hampton's *Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (2009). The volume currently under review includes several essays that are in dialogue with Hampton's ideas. Hampton himself meaningfully adds to the growing body of work in this field, contributing an engaging analysis of Miguel de Cervantes's *Nuñencia* (mid-1580s) and Pierre Corneille's *Sertorius* (1662). Focusing on the representation of truce in the plays, he argues that the moments when it appears are moments when notions of morality are probed and explored. Several of the contributions focus on tragedy. Jane Newman locates the origins of German *Trauerspiele* in the aftermath of Westphalia. She reads Andreas Gryphius's *Catharina von Georgien* (pr. 1657) as reflecting post-Westphalian anxieties, suggesting that it depicts the letter of the law and the spirit of an agreement as both posing dangers. Valeria Cimmieri also turns to tragedies—written in response to Venetian wars against the Ottomans—in her exposition of representations of failed peace and negative depictions of the Turks. Cimmieri's four plays are fertile grounds for exploring negotiation, not least as they all feature a nuntius character who narrates military action not shown on stage. Dramatic texts are also the subject of the essays by de Carles and Patricia Akhimie. De Carles wants to argue that there were times when indirect characterization was used to identify ambassadors in drama, while Akhimie focuses on diplomacy in the broadest sense of the term in her discussion of Paulina from *The Winter's Tale*. In both cases, negotiation is a strong theme, but some readers will feel that these two authors stretch the definition of ambassador too far.

The volume aims to extend the scope of analysis beyond literary representations of diplomacy to include considerations of the spaces of diplomacy, visual representations of it, and diplomats' own textual presentation of their endeavors. Akhimie, for exam-