

# **Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception** in Early Modern England

Chris Laoutaris



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## **Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception in Early Modern England**

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Shakespearean Maternities: Crises of Conception in Early Modern England Chris Laoutaris This study explores maternity in the 'disciplines' of early modern England. Placing the reproductive female body centre-stage in Shakespeare's theatre, Laoutaris ranges beyond the domestic sphere in order to recuperate the wider intellectual, epistemological, and archaeological significance of maternity to the Renaissance imagination. Focusing on 'anatomy' in Hamlet, 'natural history' in The Tempest, 'demonology' in Macbeth, and 'heraldry' in Antony and Cleopatra, this book reveals the ways in which the maternal body was figured in, and in turn contributed towards the re-conceptualisation of, bodies of knowledge. Laoutaris argues that Shakespeare resists a monolithic concept of motherhood, presenting instead a range of contested 'maternities' which challenge the distinctive 'ways of knowing' these early disciplines worked to impose on the order of created nature.



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