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0521020336 - The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760

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Through detailed examination of a wide variety of novels, plays, sermons, songs, popular engravings, portraiture, and propaganda, Toni Bowers examines the eighteenth-century struggle to develop new ideals for virtuous motherhood. She shows how popular representations of mothers codified and enforced a model of motherhood naturally and inevitably removed from participation in the public world, and presented other ideals as monstrous. At the same time, she points out, some of the most influential texts resisted the newly reduced vision of maternal excellence by imagining alternatives to domesticity and dependence. Addressing broad social and cultural issues, and drawing radical comparisons between past and present, Bowers argues that Western culture continues to be limited by its commitment to the contradictory maternal ideals established in eighteenth-century discourse.

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# THE POLITICS OF MOTHERHOOD

*British writing and culture, 1680–1760*

TONI BOWERS



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*For my son,  
Graham*

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PHILADELPHIA

*July, 1995*

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### *Note on texts*

In choosing editions from which to cite eighteenth-century texts, my first concern has been to make it possible for readers easily to examine the evidence for themselves. I make citations, therefore, to inexpensive and readily available editions wherever these exist.

There is no satisfactory and easily obtained modern edition of both parts of Richardson's *Pamela*, so citations are to the four-volume 1742 edition at the Huntington Library, unless otherwise noted.

The first edition of *Clarissa* is widely available in the 1985 Penguin edition (ed. Angus Ross), and the third edition has recently been produced in facsimile by AMS Press (ed. Florian Stuber, 1990). My citations are to the third edition, by volume and page number, with corresponding page references to the Penguin. In the few cases where quoted material appears in the first edition of *Clarissa* but not in the third, I have made note of that fact.

All scriptural quotations are from the Authorized Version. Translations from languages other than English are my own unless otherwise noted.

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## *Abbreviations*

<i>DNB</i>	<i>The Dictionary of National Biography</i>
<i>JHC</i>	<i>The Journals of the House of Commons</i> . London: 1803.
<i>MGC</i>	<i>The Marlborough-Godolphin Correspondence</i> . Oxford: 1975.
<i>MP</i>	<i>A Selection of Papers of the Earls of Marchmont</i> . London: 1831.
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>PH</i>	<i>The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803</i> . ( <i>Cobbett's Parliamentary History</i> .) London: 1806–1820. Vol. 6, 1810.
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>