

# The Role of Teachers in Early Modern English Drama

Teachers play an important role in early modern English drama. They are often seen as figures of authority, but they can also be rebels, innovators, and even villains. In this essay, we will explore the different roles that teachers play in early modern English drama, and we will discuss how these roles reflect the changing social and cultural landscape of the period.

## Teachers as Figures of Authority

In early modern English drama, teachers are often seen as figures of authority. They are the ones who are responsible for educating the young, and they are expected to set a good example for their students. In some cases, teachers are even given the power to punish their students. For example, in Shakespeare's play "The Merry Wives of Windsor," the schoolmaster Abraham Slender is given the authority to whip his students if they misbehave.



## Teachers in Early Modern English Drama: Pedagogy and Authority (Studies in Performance and Early Modern Drama) by Jean Lambert

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The authority of teachers is often based on their knowledge and experience. They are the ones who have studied the classics and who are familiar with the latest ideas. As a result, they are often seen as experts in their field, and their opinions are given great weight. For example, in Ben Jonson's play "The Alchemist," the con man Subtle uses his knowledge of alchemy to convince his clients that he can turn lead into gold. His clients believe him because he is a teacher, and they assume that he knows what he is talking about.

### **Teachers as Rebels and Innovators**

While teachers are often seen as figures of authority, they can also be rebels and innovators. They are the ones who are most likely to challenge the status quo and to come up with new ideas. For example, in Christopher Marlowe's play "Doctor Faustus," the titular character is a brilliant scholar who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for knowledge and power. Faustus is a rebel because he is willing to challenge the authority of the church and to explore the forbidden arts. He is also an innovator because he is constantly coming up with new ways to use his knowledge.

Teachers can also be rebels and innovators by teaching their students to think for themselves. They can encourage their students to question the status quo and to come up with their own ideas. For example, in William Shakespeare's play "Hamlet," the titular character is taught by his teachers to be a critical thinker. Hamlet is able to see through the lies and deceptions of the court, and he is able to come up with his own plan to avenge his father's murder.

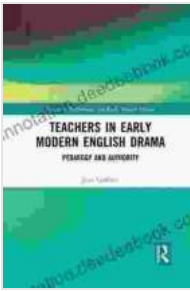
## Teachers as Villains

While teachers are often seen as heroes and role models, they can also be villains. They can use their knowledge and authority to manipulate and control others. For example, in Thomas Middleton's play "The Changeling," the schoolmaster De Flores is a villainous character who murders his students in order to get what he wants. De Flores is a teacher, but he is also a psychopath, and he uses his knowledge and authority to satisfy his own selfish desires.

Teachers can also be villains by teaching their students to be evil. They can encourage their students to commit crimes and to hurt others. For example, in William Shakespeare's play "Macbeth," the three witches teach Macbeth how to become a murderer. Macbeth is a good man at the beginning of the play, but he is corrupted by the witches' teachings. He eventually murders his king and becomes a tyrant.

Teachers play an important role in early modern English drama. They can be figures of authority, rebels and innovators, or even villains. The different roles that teachers play reflect the changing social and cultural landscape of the period. In a time of great upheaval and change, teachers are often seen as the ones who can provide guidance and direction. However, they can also be the ones who lead people astray.

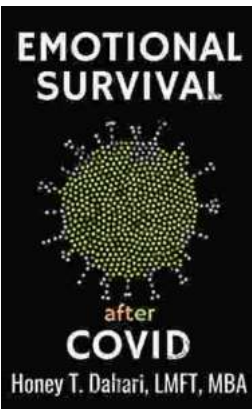
The role of teachers in early modern English drama is a complex and multifaceted one. They can be heroes or villains, role models or rebels. However, one thing is clear: teachers play an important role in shaping the society in which they live.



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