



Approximate Bodies: Gender and Power in Early Modern Drama and Anatomy

Maurizio Calbi

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The early modern period was an age of anatomical exploration and revelation, with new discoveries capturing the imagination not only of scientists but also of playwrights and poets. *Approximate Bodies* examines, in fascinating detail, the changing representation of the body in early modern drama and in the period's anatomical and gynaecological treatises.

Maurizio Calbi focuses on the unstable representation of both masculinity and femininity in Renaissance texts such as *The Duchess of Malfi*, *The Changeling* and a variety of Shakespeare plays. Drawing on theorists including Foucault, Derrida and Lacan, these close textual readings examine the effects of social, psychic and cultural influences on early modern images of the body. Calbi identifies the ways in which political, social, racial and sexual power structures effect the construction of the body in dramatic and anatomical texts. Calbi's analysis displays how images such as the deformed body of the outsider, the effeminate body of the desiring male and the disfigured body parts of the desiring female indicate an unstable, incomplete conception of the body in the Renaissance.

Compelling and impeccably researched, this is a sophisticated account of the fantasies and anxieties that play a role in constructing the early modern body. *Approximate Bodies* makes a major contribution to the field of early modern studies and to debates around the body.

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