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0521858518 - Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture

Will Fisher

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Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture

Through examining some of the everyday items that helped establish a person's masculinity or femininity, this book offers a new analysis of gender identity in early modern English literature and culture. Individual chapters focus on items such as codpieces, handkerchiefs, beards, and hair. Fisher argues that these seemingly peripheral parts were in fact constitutive, and consequently that early modern gender was materialized through a relatively wide range of parts or features, and that it was also often conceptualized as being malleable. The book deliberately brings together sexual characteristics (beard growth and hair length) and gendered accessories (codpieces and handkerchiefs) in order to explore the limitations of using the modern conceptual distinction between sex and gender to understand early modern ideas about masculinity and femininity. *Materializing Gender* engages with a range of historical materials including drama, poetry, portraiture, medical texts, and polemical tracts, and a range of theoretical issues.

WILL FISHER is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at Lehman College, The City University of New York. He works primarily on the history of gender and sexuality. His articles have appeared in *Renaissance Quarterly*, *ELH*, *Shakespeare Studies*, and *Textual Practice*.

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For Valerie, Phyllis, and Peter

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