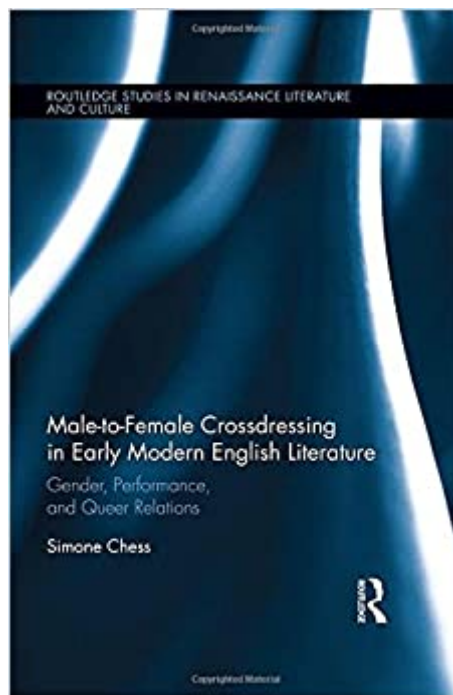




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Male-to-Female Crossdressing In Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, And Queer Relations (Routledge Studies In Renaissance Literature And Culture)



Synopsis

This volume examines and theorizes the oft-ignored phenomenon of male-to-female (MTF) crossdressing in early modern drama, prose, and poetry, inviting MTF crossdressing episodes to take a fuller place alongside instances of female-to-male crossdressing and boy actors—crossdressing, which have long held the spotlight in early modern gender studies. The author argues that MTF crossdressing episodes are especially rich sources for socially-oriented readings of queer gender—that crossdressers' genders are constructed and represented in relation to romantic partners, communities, and broader social structures like marriage, economy, and sexuality. Further, she argues that these relational representations show that the crossdresser and his/her allies often benefit financially, socially, and erotically from his/her queer gender presentation, a corrective to the dominant idea that queer gender has always been associated with shame, containment, and correction. By attending to these relational and beneficial representations of MTF crossdressers in early modern literature, the volume helps to make a larger space for queer, genderqueer, male-bodied and queer-feminine representations in our conversations about early modern gender and sexuality.

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Customer Reviews

Simone Chess is an Assistant Professor of English and an affiliate of the Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies Program at Wayne State University in Detroit. Her research interests are

in Early Modern literary and cultural studies, queer studies, and gender and sexuality studies. She has published articles and book chapters on the topics of crossdressing, bathroom activism, ballads, and blindness.

This is a terrific book that brings important new thinking to the study of early modern literature. Previous studies have looked at the topic with a focus on boy actors dressing as women on the English stage. This book, however, looks at depictions of men who dress as women -- in plays, poems, and life writing. What emerges is a rich and complex sense of what it means dress in the clothing of another gender during the age of Shakespeare. To add even more nuance to the discussion, the author weaves in connections to issues within the trans community today. A fascinating read. Highly recommended.

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