



# **Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England (Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture)**

*Mark Breitenberg*

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To recent studies of Renaissance subjectivity, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* contributes the argument that masculinity is unavoidably anxious and volatile in cultures that distribute power and authority according to patriarchal prerogatives. Drawing from current arguments in feminism, cultural studies, historicism, psychoanalysis and gay studies, Mark Breitenberg explores the dialectic of desire and anxiety in masculine subjectivity in the work of a wide range of writers, including Shakespeare, Bacon, Burton, and the women writers of the "querelles des femmes" debate, especially Jane Anger. Breitenberg discusses jealousy and cuckoldry anxiety, hetero and homoerotic desire, humoural psychology, anatomical difference, cross-dressing and the idea of honor and reputation. He traces masculine anxiety both as a sign of ideological contradiction and, paradoxically, as a productive force in the perpetuation of Western patriarchal systems.

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