



## Murder after Death Literature and Anatomy in Early Modern England

By Richard P. Sugg

Cornell University Press. Hardcover. Book Condition: New. Hardcover. 280 pages. Dimensions: 9.4in. x 6.3in. x 1.0in. Just as museum exhibits of plastinated corpses, television dramas about forensics, and books about the eventual fate of human remains provoke interest and generate ethical debates today, anatomy was a topic of fascination and autopsies a spectator pastime in England from the mid-Elizabethan era through the outbreak of civil war. Rather than regard such preoccupations as purely macabre, Richard Sugg sees them as precursors of a profoundly new scientific and cultural discourse. Tracing the influence of continental anatomy on English literature across the period, Sugg begins his exploration with the essentially sacralizing aspects of dissection as expressed, for instance, in the search for the anatomical repository of the soul before detailing ways in which science and religion diverged from and eventually opposed each other. In charting this transition, Sugg draws his evidence from the fine detail of literary language, moving from sermons to plays, medical textbooks to sonnets, and from sensational short tales to Thomas Nashe's proto-novel *The Unfortunate Traveller*. As Sugg shows, the study of anatomy first offered to positively revitalize many areas of religious rhetoric. In time, however, the rising forces of early scientific enquiry transformed the...



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