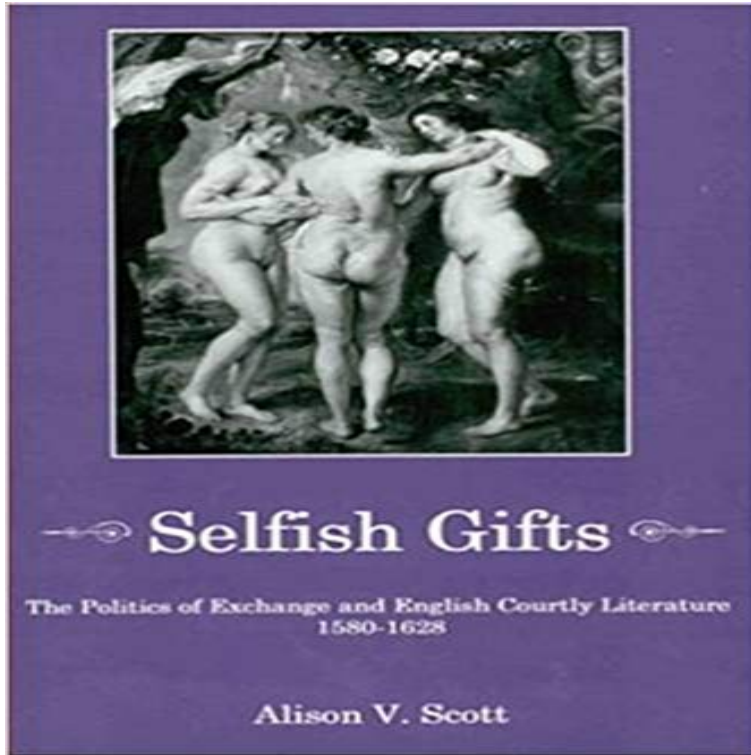


# Selfish Gifts: The Politics of Exchange And English Courtly Literature, 1580-1628



The impact of any gift is heightened when it appears not to expect a counter-gift or a reward. Within the patronage systems of early modern England, the language of altruism, drawing upon Seneca's model of benefits, was a paradoxical but pivotal means of persuasion used by literary clients seeking recompense for their labors and by patrons seeking to present themselves as noble givers. *Selfish Gifts* investigates the relationship among gift-exchange practices, ideal cultural models of giving, and literary representations of gift giving at the late Elizabethan and early Stuart courts, demonstrating the centrality of gift-theory to the patronage literature and culture of the times. With a particular focus on the interplay between gender politics, power, and giving, the book offers new readings of canonical texts by Shakespeare, Jonson, Donne, and Daniel, and combines these with fresh work on lesser-read texts by canonical and non-canonical writers alike. Alison V. Scott teaches at Macquarie University.

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