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Davis, Nick.

Early Modern Writing and the Privatization of Experience.

London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Pp. 235. ISBN 978-1-4411-6682-1 (hardcover) US\$110.

Each of the three sections of Nick Davis's *Early Modern Writing and the Privatization of Experience* interrogates a distinct aspect of early modern subjectivity depicted in the literature of the period: the life of the individual relative to that attributed to the cosmos; the collective identity constructed by symbolic narrative; and selfhood as a function of festive communal membership. All three sections contain a critical introduction to the topic followed by two chapters, each of which provides a detailed reading of how a particular author or text negotiates subjectivity relative to various forms of community. The book jacket describes the study's concern with tracing early modern culture's movement away from tendencies that predominantly privilege the self's shared, publicly acknowledged, or mediated experience toward those advocating for the individual, self-scrutinizing mind as the primary locus of authentic perception, thought, and feeling, but Davis seems less interested in outlining the historical rise of privacy than in considering how selected writings produced in the midst of that centuries-long transition negotiate ongoing tensions between modes of communal and individual experience. Davis duly organizes his study topically rather than chronologically, freely moving from discussions of Donne's early poetry, *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, and Shakespeare's *King Lear* in the initial section on cosmomorphic fracture (Part A), to treatments of the first three books of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Hobbes's *Leviathan*, and Bunyan's *The Holy War* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the subsequent section on symbolic narrative and collective representation (Part B), to interrogations of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, *I Henry IV*, and *The Winter's Tale* in the final section on reconfigurations of community and festivity (Part C).

In an introductory chapter, Davis initially contemplates the tensions between "cosmomorphic" subjectivity—which he defines as an individual self, formed on the basis of its assumed continuities with the surrounding world (including human others)—and its gradual displacement via the rise of both urban life and manufacturing as a source of wealth. In Part A, Davis argues that Donne's early poetry and Shakespeare's *King Lear* mutually address perceived threats to the integrity and survival of cosmomorphism and thus participate

in the very transformation of cultural belief that they interrogate. While Donne captures the sheer contingency of individual experience set against the solidarities and continuities of group experience, Shakespeare's *King Lear* tests the limits of cosmological order, astrological influence and determinism, human-to-cosmos relationships, and fundamental human connection. In Part B, Davis considers the projects accomplished by allegory in Spenser, Hobbes, and Bunyan, arguing that while Spenser's expansiveness, by comparison with earlier medieval allegories, offers widened access, multiple paths, and relative freedom of individual thought and choice, Hobbes's and Bunyan's texts constitute more radical attempts to promote collective experience as a means of self-understanding via individual acts of comprehension. Finally, Part C considers, by focusing on distinctions between different types of community in relation to various modes and methods of seeing, how three of Shakespeare's plays offer material insights into the dissolution and creation of communities. For Davis, *Richard II* and *I Henry IV* offer multiple ways of looking at Richard, Bolingbroke, and Falstaff that bear comparison with perspectival developments in the visual arts, while an increasing emphasis on the individual spectator and manipulation of the distinctions between nature and artifice—observable in both *trompe l'oeil* art and the statue scene that concludes *The Winter's Tale*—reconceptualizes communal experience as a view capable of integrating, even privileging, individual, private perception.

Davis's book displays several strengths, not least of which is engaging a wide variety of premodern materials, including the visual arts, to contextualize its claims. In his discussion of the introspective isolation of melancholia depicted in Donne's poetry, for example, Davis analyzes Albrecht Dürer's painting *Melencolia I* to illustrate how the melancholic mentality of solipsistic insight lacks the hierarchical, teleological organization attributed to the cosmos and thus posits—like the painting's black sun—introspective subversion and disconnection. Davis makes further interpretive uses of the frontispieces to Hobbes's and Bunyan's texts; the Westminster Abbey portrait of Richard II; Pieter Bruegel the Elder's *The Peasant Dance*; and Daniel Myten's portrait of the Earl of Arundel. Unfortunately, the book's failure to number, list, or caption these illustrations is a hindrance, as is its being equipped with a very meagre index. Davis's prose, meanwhile, tends to be excessively complex, filled with dense jargon and marred by technical errors, all of which conspire to hinder reader comprehension. Compounding these editorial oversights, the book

contains no conclusion, abruptly ending after a belaboured discussion of how *The Winter's Tale* reflexively redefines spectator-action relations. And yet, despite its failings, Davis's study successfully illuminates premodern literature's conspicuous negotiations of the continuities, disjunctions, and tensions between cosmic, individual, and communal experience.

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De L'Estoile, Pierre.

Journal du règne de Henri IV. Tome 2 : 1592–1594 (transcription Ms fr. 10299 et 25004 de la BnF). Dir. Gilbert Schrenck, éd. Xavier Le Person, glossaire par Volker Mecking.

Textes littéraires français, 630. Genève : Droz, 2014. 550 p. ISBN 978-2-600-01774-9 (broché) s.p.

Ce second tome du *Journal du règne de Henri IV* ne décevra pas le lecteur : il se retrouvera plongé dans le Paris des années 1592–1594, celui des derniers jours de la Ligue, peu de temps avant l'entrée d'Henri IV dans la capitale le 22 mars 1594, moins d'un an après s'être converti au catholicisme. Débutée en 1992 sous la direction de Gilbert Schrenck — voir les six premiers volumes consacrés au règne d'Henri III —, la réédition du journal du célèbre mémorialiste est toujours très utile pour les historiens et les littéraires, et tous les chercheurs qui s'intéressent à l'histoire du livre, à l'histoire des religions ou à l'histoire des mentalités. Particulièrement savoureuse, la chronique de Pierre de L'Estoile, grand audiencier à la chancellerie de Paris, de tendance « Politique » (c'est-à-dire catholique royaliste et modéré), permet d'explorer de l'intérieur le Paris des guerres de religion. Dans ce récit vibrant écrit au jour le jour, on retrouve à la fois les bons mots du roi, certains grands noms de la vie intellectuelle (Scaliger, Bodin, Du Vair, Desportes, Vigenère — dont l'orthographe « Viginair » aurait pu être modernisée, 107) ou religieuse (Génébrard ou Duplessis Mornay), mais on rencontre aussi de parfaits inconnus comme l'épicier Tartarin ou le meunier Baudoin. L'Estoile multiplie les anecdotes sur le milieu parlementaire qu'il connaît intimement, mais aussi sur les curés ligueurs, dont le plus célèbre, Jean Boucher, officiant dans la paroisse de Saint-Benoît, ou encore sur René