

Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis, and Philippa Kelly. *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2007. viii + 241 pp. + 5 illus. \$99.95. Review by ELISA OH.

Contributing to the conversation on the early modern subject, Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis, and Philippa Kelly's *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660* examines a welcome variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century texts that construct different kinds of "selves." Though the chapters feature texts ranging from religious writings and travel narratives to diaries, journals, wills, and brief literary examples, the authors consistently ask the same questions: to what extent does each text represent a contingent "early modern" subject defined by collective social structures and institutions, and to what extent does it represent a more autonomous individual "modern" subject? In this study a majority of the works yield consistent evidence of the former kind of identity with occasional glimmers of the latter.

This book introduces a crucial theme of time in early modern English autobiographical writings and develops a concept of "double time" that is echoed throughout the work. Thomas Wythorne's 1576 account of his own life provides an example of an early modern tendency to consider how a "self" succeeds or fails at conforming to a general pattern of humankind. Whythorne's writing "points to the paradox of a socially and theologically determined early modern world whose temporal paradigms are indelibly blue-printed upon every individual, but whose subjects nevertheless seek, through self-representation in diary, journal, life-writing, or portraiture, to discover and measure the extent both of their authenticity and autonomy and of their relation at any given moment to the inevitable succession of birth, maturity, and death"(19). This study claims that an early modern "self" can be found in the life writers' anxious measuring of individual events, thoughts, and actions against that set of universal ideals. Qualified individuality appears in the strategic rhetorical moves of selection, omission, or interpretation that must occur in order to construct a satisfactory narrative of a life and self. This self-construction depends on a constant attention to the simultaneous position of the individual in earthly time and in God's timelessness. Early modern life writing wrestles with the difficulty of representing a self that is subject to the passage of time, because this earthly time will eventually give way to a Chris-

tian eternity, thus jeopardizing the authenticity of the self-within-time. Autobiographical writings counteract the imagined annihilation of the mortal self at the end of life by recording one's double temporal "self-location"(31) in time *and* in God's providence.

The second chapter discusses acts of self-memorialization in texts and portraits, which represent intersections between the human temporal and divine atemporal realms. Records of early modern bereavement, particularly for infants, attempt to locate symbolic patterns in the dates, times, or days of the week of birth and death. The authors assert that this tendency to highlight dying on one's birthday, for example, reveals a conviction that temporal symmetry indicates a significant correspondence with the parallel eternal scheme of God's grace. Visually producing the same kind of alignment through time, portraits' "concern with the generations suggests an individual self portrayed as a kind of palimpsest of faces"(48). That is, early modern portraits construct one person's identity as something that accumulates over time, collectively authored by the generations that came before.

Introducing the genre of travel writing, chapter 3 traces the definition of English selves in relation to foreign people, experiences, and physical hardships. "[T]he self seems to appear most graphically when encountering a cultural other . . . or, in some of the most striking cases, the person whom one was *before* one travelled"(63). Unlike the solitary individual of eighteenth-century travel narratives, the early modern travel writers do not seek subjective detachment or independence; rather, they depict selves that are firmly linked to a social nexus, whether English or other. *The begynnynge and contynuance of the Pilgrimage of Sir Richard Gnylforde* (1511) presents a remarkable illustration of an early modern "corporate experience"(68) of identity represented in a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Gnylforde himself dies halfway through the narrative, which is continued—without comment or change of collective viewpoint—by his servant. In contrast, another narrative of shared selfhood, Robert Couerte's *A True and Almost Incredible Report of an Englishman* (1612), shows a group identity breaking into diverse individual identities as the men on a voyage to India accumulate difficult experiences and opposing opinions. Unpublished travel journals such as Richard Norwood's (1613-1617) also yield evidence of a concept of identity that is in transition from early modern to modern: "[n]either an outwardly focused social character nor an inwardly reflective one can wholly explain his sense of identity to himself"(85).

Chapter 4 takes up early modern mirrors and the artistic tropes of specular self-reflection in visual art, sermons, drama, and life writing texts. Representations of mirrors provide a rare early modern vocabulary for individual introspection about “moral development or direction, standards of ideal conduct, and reflections of sins such as vanity and worldliness”(98). Mirrors also foster a consciousness of existential paradoxes such as the coexistence of temporal and eternal identities and socially contingent and independent “selves.” Shakespeare’s sonnet 24 and Montaigne’s reference to “My looking glass” depict this combination of self-knowledge and separation from a stable self, as does Francesco Mazzola Parmigianino’s *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror* (c.1523–4). Mirrors in the writings of Walter Devereux and Robert Devereaux “affor[d] both father and son . . . a means of self-scrutiny that combines intimacy and display . . . [and] suggest the multiplicity of perspectives from which a self can be known, and the diversity of functions that it serves”(115).

The comparatively short chapters 5 and 6 consider competing accounts of the failed expedition to Cadiz in 1625 and siege narratives from the civil war years. Upon returning from Cadiz, three different writers negotiate the public construction of a self in their published descriptions of a disastrous military mission: John Glanville writes a dry, factual report as the official Secretary to the Lord Admiral, though other texts show him to have been an unwilling participant in the voyage; the Lord Admiral of the Fleet, Edward Lord Cecil, writes his own self-defensive version; and a Richard Peeeke [sic] or Pike produces a description of his solid English heroism in a work of popular propaganda that owes much to contemporary theater and fiction. Unsurprisingly, each man selects “facts” and manipulates generic expectations to present himself in the best possible light. Chapter 6 makes the somewhat self-evident point that an early modern self is threatened by literal siege attacks that dismantled the locations, institutions, and social hierarchies that informed the construction of that self.

Despite the emphasis on socially constructed selves in the autobiographical writings of Lady Grace Mildmay, Lady Margaret Hoby, and Lady Anne Clifford, chapter 7 also detects aspects of individual inwardness. Mildmay celebrates details of her life that affirm how she fits into divine and secular “blue-prints” for a good woman’s life. So strong is her desire to align her temporal life with a greater preordained ideal, however, that at times she “practices a willful concealment or ‘alternative construction’ of events”(169).

In contrast, Hoby's record of her detailed but subjectively opaque daily activities anxiously measures her distance from a template of a well-lived Christian life. In Clifford's diary, worldly affairs outshine the spiritual events, and, unlike Mildmay and Hoby, she often considers her spiritual life only in reaction to her secular troubles. The final chapter on women's wills similarly comprises the textual intersection of an individual gendered self's desires and the mediations of legal, ecclesiastical, and community discourses of inheritance. Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* (c. 1605), Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West* (1603), and excerpts from a few wills and mothers' advice books comprise related instances of "early modern individuality as social identity in action" (211).

The study is strongest in its analysis of travel texts, mirrors, and portraits. The authors also have astute observations about how early modern self-representation attends to secular time within providential timelessness. The work might have asserted whether there was a noticeable change in the individuation of the subject in textual and pictorial representation during the designated time period, 1500-1660, but this book will nevertheless be of use to early modern scholars interested in various genres of life writing and how they portray the nature of the early modern subject.

Elizabeth Teresa Howe. *The Visionary Life of Madre Ana de San Agustín*. Woodbridge: Tamesis, 2004. xiii + 131pp. + 16 illus. \$90.00. Review by GRADY C. WRAY, UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA.

The Visionary Life of Madre Ana de San Agustín functions as a good introduction to the life of Ana de San Agustín (1547/55-1624), and it provides a faithful and accessible edition of her writings. In a broader sense, it contextualizes the lives lived by women religious in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spain. More specifically, it deepens the understanding of the life of one of the most famous figures of the period, Saint Teresa of Ávila, and the events that surround the Teresian reform and struggles of the order of the Discalced Carmelites. Because Ana survived Teresa, readers of Howe's edition can follow the events that occurred after Teresa's death. This text will be useful to scholars of history, women's studies, religious studies, and Hispanic cultural, linguistic, and literary studies because it touches on several issues of importance to these disciplines.