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0521661811 - The Performance of Nobility in Early Modern European Literature

David M. Posner

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This valuable study illuminates the idea of nobility as display, as public performance, in Renaissance and seventeenth-century literature and society. Ranging widely from Castiglione and French courtesy manuals, through Montaigne and Bacon, to the literature of the Grand Siècle, David M. Posner examines the structures of public identity in the period. He focuses on the developing tensions between, on the one hand, literary or imaginative representations of “nobility”, and on the other, the increasingly problematic historical position of the nobility themselves. These tensions produce a transformation in the notion of the noble self as a performance, and eventually doom court society and its theatrical mode of self-presentation. Situated at the intersection of rhetorical and historical theories of interpretation, this book contributes significantly to our understanding of the role of literature both in analyzing and in shaping social identity.

David M. Posner is Associate Professor of French and Comparative Literature at Loyola University Chicago. He studied in France, Germany and Italy as well as his native United States, and has received fellowships and grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Villa I Tatti, the Newberry Library, the Lila Acheson Wallace Fund and the Almanor Scholarship Fund. Amongst his published work are essays on Montaigne, Rabelais and Corneille.

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Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature and Culture 33

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