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Sommario/riassunto

Authorial studies, or 'career criticism' is a new and distinctive branch of interpretive methodology that explores various paths of European careers, particularly literary careers. In this first book-length study in the field various specialists from Italian, French, English, and Spanish studies collectively discuss literary careers spanning from classical antiquity through the Renaissance. They argue that the idea of a literary career evolves slowly, derives centrally from Virgil, and that the periodization from classical, medieval and Renaissance culture helps to elucidate the details of that evolution. Including authors from Theocritus to Spenser, the contributors correlate an author's sense of a career to the period of history in which he or she is writing, foregrounding his or her role in the multi-sphered life of the nation, especially its institutions of family, state, and church. Authorship and agency, genre and genre patterning, imitation and intertextuality, politics and religions, sexuality and gender all become part of the complex template for defining the idea of a literary career. Unique in both scope and topic, this study breaks new ground in current critical theory, allowing for complex interrelations between models of authorial agency and models of social construction.

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