

This is still a rewarding study, though. Nandi's book is written in a crisp, interesting style, often with felicitous distinctions, and with clear argumentation throughout. It's a little hard to tell whether scholars specializing in Hoby, Clifford, Josselin, and Pepys will find much to surprise in this study, and early modernists will want more by way of cultural conversation than this book has to offer. But certainly, Nandi illuminates the early modern diary, and her analytical work is richly suggestive and worth the reading.

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Renaissance Personhood: Materiality, Taxonomy, Process. Kevin Curran, ed.
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Responding to and participating in what one may term a posthumanist turn in literary studies, *Renaissance Personhood* contains exciting essays that interrogate the modern legal category of personhood originating from John Locke's idea of person as a rational individual with moral agency. The shared starting point of the collection is captured by the assertion of Steven Wise, founder of the Nonhuman Right Project, that "human-being is not a synonym for person and person is not a synonym for human being" (118). The contributors discern alternate reflections of personhood in early modern culture—ideas of personhood with less anthropocentric and more collective orientations, such as the kind articulated by Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan*. Kevin Curran has elucidated that this "theatrical, collaborative, and mechanistic" (4) theory offers more room to extend personhood for nonhuman beings, to animals, plants, and things.

The volume is divided into three parts, as indicated in the subtitle, *Materiality, Taxonomy, Process*. The three chapters in the first part, "Materialities of Personhood: Chairs, Machines, Doors," examine how early modern social existence and actions are shaped and construed by one's relationship with things and objects. In "Daughters, Chairs, and Liberty in Margaret Cavendish's *The Religious*," Stephanie Elsky focuses on a chair that a female character of the play's subplot cherishes over marriage and husband, contextualizing such attachment with the changing ideas surrounding property ownership. In Cavendish's play, Elsky argues, the movable object itself becomes "something that shares the status of personhood in its own right," which redefines personhood "not in the permanence of land but rather in the mobility of objects" (37).

Similarly, Wendy Beth Hyman highlights the complexity of Renaissance ideas about humans' relationships with things in "The Inner Lives of Renaissance Machines." Hyman excavates a view that sees continuities and "interanimation" between human and machine. Interestingly, Hyman's focus is writing, an activity considered most uniquely human, one of "the most creative endeavors" (48), and she makes a provocative argument that even such a creative activity was seen to have a machine-like quality.

Examining early modern figurations of writing, Hyman shows that Renaissance writers construed the act of writing as a mechanical process, a process of hammering and machining language into poetic form like a blacksmith. At the same time, early modern notions of machine and its related word engine allow some sort of interiority. In the final chapter of part 1, “Two Doors: Personhood and Housebreaking in *Semayne’s Case* and *The Comedy of Errors*,” Colby Gordon situates Shakespeare’s comedy in the context of the emerging legal principle of the sanctity of the home, illuminating how the play stages a householder’s personhood as fluidly shaped by his control over his dwelling.

The essays in the second part, “Taxonomies of Personhood: Status, Species, Race,” examine the Renaissance figurations of non- or quasi-human categories: trees (“Should [Bleeding] Trees Have Standing?” by Joseph Campana), apes (“Aping Personhood” by Holly Dugan), and non-Anglo peoples (“Race, Personhood, and the Human in *The Tempest*” by Amanda Bailey). The chapters in part 3, “Processes of Personhood: Eating, Lusting, Mapping,” highlight Renaissance reflections that complicate a simple dichotomy of human interiority and material environment. In “Liquid *Macbeth*,” for example, David B. Goldstein examines the continuities of matter and actions dramatized in Shakespeare’s tragedy through the image of liquidity in its unfixed fluidity and uncertainty. Particularly, he highlights the use of the word “ingredience” as a marker that captures “continuities among human and nonhuman actors” (166). Like Goldstein’s piece, John Michael Archer’s “Things in Action: Shakespeare’s Sonnet 129, *Macbeth*, and Levinas on Shame” and Gregory Kneidel’s “Edward Herbert’s Cosmopolitan State” foreground the inter-embeddedness of subject, object, and environment, found in Renaissance ideas of personhood.

The particular strength of the collected essays is their skillful combining of present-day concerns with richly contextualized historicist scholarship. For example, Holly Dugan’s “Aping Personhood” examines a wide-ranging archive of early modern encounters with apes. She investigates “the deep roots for our fascination with and anxiety about our resemblance to chimpanzees,” which trouble “our scientific categories of species difference” (131); her work is informed by the affliction of chimpanzees in our time and the recent failed efforts in US courts to have one of them recognized as a legal person, not property, and granted the protection of habeas corpus.

Engaging with the current conversations in animal studies, new materialism, and ecocriticism, the essays in *Renaissance Personhood* are excellent examples of literary analysis in which theoretical frameworks underpinned by contemporary concerns are dexterously borne out through rich and historically grounded studies. This is an exciting and pleasant book to read, a welcome addition to Renaissance studies.

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