What Was Personhood?
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If you're reading this, you're probably a person. Probably, but not definitely. I know you're not an embryo. I know you're not a crocodile. I know you're not a rock. But I can't be totally sure you're not a very young child, or someone with advanced dementia, or someone with a serious mental illness. I can't be entirely sure you're not a stateless person in a refugee camp or an advanced form of artificial intelligence, and though I'm quite sure you're not an extraterrestrial, I also can't rule it out completely.

Yes, you're probably, but not definitely, a person. Not just any person, mind you, but rather a certain type of person. Indeed, some persons are definitely *not* reading this. Westinghouse Electric Corporation is not reading this. Neither is the Government of India. And Mount Taranaki in New Zealand, I can assure you, is not reading this. No, if you're reading this, you're probably a "natural person," as opposed to a "juridical person." That is to say, you're a human being—a human being with personhood status. Probably.

Why so much uncertainty around personhood? Part of it is a simple problem of terminology. There is a difference between how we use the word "person" in an everyday context and how it gets used in a legal context. Colloquially, a "person" is a human. We talk about a four-person vehicle or a two-person tent; first-, second- or third-person point of view in a novel; or our Aunt Beatrice being the "the kind of person who . . . ." In all of these cases, "person" makes sense as a descriptor because it draws on some broadly shared ideas about the physical, cognitive, and behavioral features that make humans humans. In a legal context, however, personhood is a far more extrinsic status. A legal "person" denotes an entity, human or nonhuman, to which a bundle of rights and obligations have been attributed. Legal personhood, that is, might be thought of as a role to be stepped into or a mask to be worn. It is a kind of legal attire in

which an entity is outfitted in order to function within society at a certain level of autonomy, protection, and/or culpability.

In this sense, the etymological links between *person* and words like *personage* ("character" or "role" in French) and *persona* ("mask" in Latin) are instructive.[1] Personhood is not something immanent or ontological, but rather something external, mobile, and social. The fact that personhood is nevertheless an abstraction, something impossible to touch or feel, can make this difficult to grasp. In his classic study of "the notion of person," the anthropologist Marcel Mauss describes how modern legal personhood, which he traces back to ancient Rome, developed gradually out of much more concretely prosthetic ways of thinking about identity.[2] The Zuñi tribe of the American southwest, for example, understands identity exclusively through social roles. Individuals are named according to their function within the collective, and these names/functions are concretized in masks that are used in certain rituals and festivals. As Mauss puts it, for the Zuñi, "the clan is conceived of as being made up of a certain number of persons, in reality characters (*personages*)."[3] Mauss also speaks of the Kwakiutl tribe of the Pacific Northwest, who believe that in addition to simply killing an important warrior or chief, one can "seize from him one of the trappings of ritual, robes or masks, so as to inherit his names, his goods, his obligations, his ancestors, his *person* in the fullest sense of the word."[4] We can see in these contexts how personhood is entirely prosthetic, how it's quite different from selfhood. Personhood has less to do with who you *are* in and of yourself and more to do with what you *do* in a community or other social context. It is active rather than passive, phenomenological rather than ontological.

Hobbes and Locke

One of the clearest articulations of personhood as a role or a mask comes from someone who had never heard of the Zuñi or the Kwakiutl tribes and was long dead by the time Marcel Mauss started writing about them: Thomas Hobbes. In his great work of political philosophy, *Leviathan* (1651), Hobbes developed a theory of personhood derived explicitly from the theater, and more specifically from acting. He describes the relationship like this:

> The word Person is latine: instead whereof the Greeks have *Prosopon*, which signifies the *Face*, as *Persona* in latine signifies the *disguise* or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the Stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a Mask or Vizard: And from the Stage, hath been translated to any Representer

of speech and action, as well in Tribunalls, as Theaters. So that a *Person*, is the same that an *Actor* is, both on the Stage and in common Conversation; and to *Personate*, is to *Act*, or *Represent* himself, or an other; and he that acteth another, is said to beare his Person, or act in his name; . . . and is called in diverse occasions, diversely; as a *Representer*, or *Representative*, a *Lieutenant*, a *Vicar*, an *Attorney*, a *Deputy*, a *Procurator*, an *Actor*, and the like.[5]

For Hobbes, the most important thing about personhood is that it is not an essence, but instead a highly structured representational relationship. This relationship can obtain, for example, when a sovereign speaks for the commonwealth or when an adult speaks for a child: "A Multitude of men, are made *One* Person, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented."[6] The relationship can also obtain among humans and nonhumans: "Inanimate things, as a Church, an Hospital, a Bridge, may be personated by a Rector, Master, or Overseer."[7] In all cases, though, the basic point remains the same: the legal status of person does not accrue from anything cognitively, spiritually, or physiologically intrinsic, but has to do instead with "words or actions" being "considered . . . as his own."[8] That is to say, in Hobbes's account of personhood, there is a space between utterance/action and ownership thereof. The person is at the front of that space, the mask or fiction that owns words and actions and therefore provides an interface of prerogative and accountability for society. On the other side, at the back of this space—a space prior to the question of ownership and social appearing—is the thing we might call selfhood, or even subjectivity. Personhood, therefore, even in the context of a single human being, is a relational and presentational concept, one entirely consistent with Hobbes's more general materialism and nominalism.[9]

It is perhaps because the story of modern personhood usually starts with John Locke rather than Hobbes that we have lost a full sense of how important materiality, collectivity, and relationality are to this key legal and political concept. In *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Locke lays out a theory of personhood that seems diametrically opposed to Hobbes's. Whereas for the latter, personhood denotes a transactional process, for the former, it denotes self-contained psychology. A person, in Locke's words, is an "intelligent" entity "that has reason and reflection," or what he calls "reflective consciousness."[10] Personhood, he continues,

is a forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of law, and happiness, and misery. This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness—whereby it becomes concerned and accountable.[11]

For Locke, only those entities capable of being held accountable for their actions can be accorded the rights that go along with political accommodation. That is to say, only an entity "capable of law" can be a person, and this requires "consciousness." By consciousness, Locke does not mean the basic sensate awareness possessed to a greater or lesser extent by all animals, but rather a uniquely self-sentient and temporally expansive form of cognizance that he accords to rational humans alone. This version of "consciousness" makes personal identity integral to legal personhood. He describes the link as follows:

> For since consciousness always accompanies thinking, and 'tis that, that makes every one to be, what he calls self, and thereby distinguishes himself from all other thinking things, in this alone constitutes personal identity, i.e., the sameness of a rational Being. And as far as this consciousness can be extended backwards to any past Action or Thought, so far reaches the identity of that Person; it is the same self now as it was then; and 'tis by the same self with this present one that now reflects on it, that Action was done.[12]

Hermetic self-sameness, "the sameness of a rational being," is the locus of Lockean personhood. This is very different from Hobbes. Whereas Hobbes places personhood at the interface between actor and society, defining it, therefore, in terms of a relationship, Locke places personhood at the cognitive core of the actor, defining it, therefore, in terms of an individual essence.

These two ways of thinking about personhood, the Hobbesian model and the Lockean model, have different intellectual sources and lay different kinds of foundations for the story of modern personhood from the Enlightenment to the present day. For contemporary scholars, it is Locke who has emerged as the standard-bearer of seventeenth-century thought on personhood. Indeed, within legal scholarship on personhood, historical overviews of the concept almost systematically start with Locke's psychological theories.[13] Hobbes is left out, as are earlier sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources. Of course, there is a certain sense to this. If you are, by default, thinking of personhood in terms of individual identity and tracing a genealogy that runs roughly from the Enlightenment to twentieth-century thinkers like Derek Parfit and John Perry, then there is no place for a materialist and nominalist thinker like Thomas Hobbes.[14] His theatrical, collaborative, and mechanistic account of personhood is misaligned with modern legal-philosophical debates that tend to be concerned with questions of individual moral agency

vis-à-vis issues like dementia, euthanasia, abortion, and artificial intelligence. Locke's theories, on the other hand, fit comfortably with the notions of individuality and interiority that underpin so much post-Enlightenment legal and political thought.

It would be an oversimplification to suggest that the intellectual history of personhood can be divided neatly into Hobbesian and Lockean camps. But the difference in their respective reception histories nevertheless offers an object lesson in the way certain currents of thought in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England have been distorted or silenced. Hobbes's model of personhood—relational, collaborative, material—grows much more coherently out of earlier Renaissance reflections on the topic than Locke's does. To be sure, Renaissance personhood is most often imagined in collective terms, as interfaces rather than essences. It is *ir*rational in the sense that it orients itself around bodily processes and transactions rather than intellectual characteristics and capacities. These distinctions are important, for once personhood is untethered from concepts like reason and moral agency, it becomes attributable to a much wider range of entities, both human and nonhuman. In addition, once personhood is recognized as relational rather than essential, the archive of personhood broadens considerably to include the variety of objects and environments through which it is made intelligible.

Personhood without Individualism

The idea at the heart of personhood was, and still is, that certain beings possess some fundamental degree of liberty and that communities work better when that liberty is protected. But personhood does not simply enshrine liberty. More precisely, it instrumentalizes it through basic legal transactions such as litigation, property transfer, and contract. It also balances it off with a set of responsibilities and obligations. This means that personhood is never just about the individual subject and their freedom. Instead, personhood denotes a relationship to one's lived environment, a form of liberty that only makes sense in a transactional context. Personhood describes an interface between self and world and provides scripts of consent, entitlement, and responsibility for managing that interface. Understanding personhood in the Renaissance means recovering a sense of its distributed structure and the wide circle of its franchise. It involves rethinking the idea of "rights" in specifically Renaissance terms, as something collective rather than individual, and as something that makes sense in a

cross-species context. It also involves rethinking the importance of reason in theorizations of personhood, including reason's most concrete legal application in the form of contract making.

A good place to start this rethinking is with the established legal-historical narrative of enfranchisement in Renaissance England. We know that at least since Magna Carta (1215) there existed a baseline guarantee that no free man (*liber homo*) could be harmed save in accordance with the law of the land (*lex terrae*). Magna Carta, along with a subsequent series of related due-process statutes, is the closest we come to something like personhood *doctrine* in pre-modern England.[15] Of course, what constituted a "free man" before the sixteenth century was fairly narrow. A complex system of status and rank—peerage, knighthood, villeinage, and so on.—worked to concentrate liberty among the lords. But over the course of the Tudor period we see a steady widening of the franchise such that legal personality was eventually able to function independent of principles of status and rank. One useful illustration of this is the demise of villeinage, a status of feudal servitude. According to a Gray's Inn moot of the 1520s, "villeinage is an odious thing in law and not to be favoured, for it is merely contrary to liberty and liberty is one of the things which the law most favours."[16] Increasingly, lawyers were willing to include villeins within the category of "free men" on the principle that although technically in a state of bondage, they were still protected from their lord by criminal law. By the end of the sixteenth century, the status had disappeared altogether. A second illustration of the gradual widening of the franchise emerges from the dissolution of the monasteries during the Reformation. Up to that point, the professed religious—monks, friars, and nuns—existed outside the ambit of personhood. When a monk took the habit and swore obedience to a religious order, he officially left the secular world, losing his surname and relinquishing all worldly possessions. He became dead in law (*civiliter mortus*). The dissolution of the monasteries brought with it a general resurrection of the professed religious to legal life. Triggered by a 1539 statute, they were "put at their liberties from the danger of servitude, and condition of their religion and profession" (31 Hen. VIII, c. 6).[17] They were free to purchase land and goods and to pass that property on to their heirs. They could both sue and be sued. They were persons.

The first thing we should notice in this narrative is that English common law was, at least at a theoretical level, oriented toward liberty.[18] This predisposition underpinned the gradual broadening of the franchise and reinforced a notion of legal personality that was

distinct from status and rank. It is important to note, though, that in the Renaissance, liberty was not associated with individuality and personal freedom, as it would be later. On the contrary, liberty was understood first and foremost in collective terms, and this made ideas about interdependence and commonality central to Renaissance personhood. Anti-tyrannical writings, for example, carry this collectivist notion of liberty forward from the Greco-Roman tradition, frequently embedding it within a larger discourse of natural rights. Mary Nyquist notes how this linkage has been sidelined in modern intellectual historical work:

> Whether owing to . . . liberalism's individualist legacies, or to Cold War anxieties about positive freedom when associated with a collectivity, the extent to which early modern anti-tyrannism maintains the Greco-Roman emphasis on collective rather than individual agency and interests is frequently obscured.[19]

To be a free subject of the law, with rights and obligations, is not necessarily to be a rational self-reflective individual, as Locke describes it, but rather, in the largest sense, to be part of a transnational and transhistorical community, bound together by a common Greco-Roman lineage. Algernon Sidney, writing around the same time as Locke, describes "liberty" as

> The principle in which the Grecians, Italians, Spaniards, Gauls, Germans, and Britains, and all other generous Nations ever lived, before the name of Christ was known in the World; insomuch as the base effeminate Asiaticks and Africans, for being careless of their Liberty, or unable to govern themselves, were by Aristotle and other wise men called Slaves by Nature, and looked upon as little different from Beasts.[20]

Legal, religious, colonial, and even proto-evolutionary ideas converge around this collectivist notion of liberty in the Renaissance. Europeans are heirs of the Greeks and Romans and all coexist within a biblical historical arch. Non-Europeans, including especially Africans and Amerindigenes, are entirely outside this historical frame and its circle of accommodation.[21]

The idea of ancient liberties constitutes a kind of early modern identity politics, articulating strict lines of membership along ethnic, religious, and, gradually, national axes. These different vectors of liberty converge in anti-tyrannical writing, which had at its core an emerging notion of citizens' rights. As David Wootton has explained, citizens'

rights in this period were not, of course, about the right to vote, but rather about the right to revolt, the simple idea that all citizens have a God-given prerogative to overthrow a tyrannical government because God created Man free.[22] Imagined as natural and collective, citizens' rights in the Renaissance described the entitlements of the political community, which were always framed by broader entitlements of Christian community. In *A Short Treatise of Politique Power* (1556), for example, John Ponet discusses how the law of nature permits the killing of tyrants. This allowance, he declares,

> is no private Law to a few or certain people, but common to all: not written in Bookes, but grafted in the hearts of men: not made by man, but ordained by God: which wee have not learned, received, or read: but have taken, sucked and drawne it out of nature.[23]

Nyquist describes this as "the principle of collective liberty-preservation": "not the individual, but the political collective stand in need of preservation."[24] Later, in the seventeenth century, this principle would combine with Protestant antipathy toward idolatry to bolster the radical political writings produced in the context of the English Civil War and the execution of Charles I. Consider Richard Overton who insists in *An Arrow Against All Tyrants* (1646) that "Every man by nature" is "a King, Priest and Prophet in his own natural circuite and compasse";[25] or John Milton who asserts, more bluntly, in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) that "No man who knows aught can be so stupid to deny that all men naturally were born free, being the image and resemblance of God himself."[26] Each of these writers invokes a divine framework to assert baseline rights and liberty. They conjure something we might think of as a commons of personhood, formed by all those living within God's dispensation.

Material Aggregation and Taxonomical Pluralism

There are two different ways to think of *collectivity* in the context of personhood, and fleshing them out will give us an opportunity to extend the discussion beyond anti-tyrannical writing. One is as material aggregation (the assemblage of various human and nonhuman things into a whole); the other is as taxonomical pluralism (the embrace of multiple life forms under a single status). The first category is best exemplified by the Renaissance corporation, which takes a wide variety of forms: parish churches, hospitals, towns, universities, colonies,

joint-stock companies, chanceries, guilds, and so on.[27] Corporations have their roots in Roman law and were widespread in England by the sixteenth century. Corporate personhood was cemented in two important cases, *Calvin's Case* (1608) and *Sutton's Hospital* (1612), which are still cited by lawyers today. In his report on *Sutton's Hospital*, Edward Coke defines the corporation as follows:

> A Corporation aggregate of many is invisible, immortal, & resteth only in intendment and consideration of the Law . . . They may not commit treason, nor be outlawed, nor excommunicated for they have no souls, neither can they appear in person, but by Attorney . . . A Corporation aggregate of many cannot do fealty, for an invisible body cannot be in person, nor can swear . . . it is not subject to imbecilities, or death of the natural body, and divers other cases.[28]

This description of corporate personhood evokes what Henry S. Turner calls the "uncanny presence" of the corporation. The corporate person is both one and many, both there and not there, and to this extent "seems like a confusion of categories, if not a grotesque distortion of common sense."[29]

On the other hand, as Turner also points out, Coke's account of corporate personality fits well with Hobbes's model of the person. A corporation is a person that cannot "appear in person," but depends instead on representation for presence. Like Hobbes's actor-character, the corporate person is only materially apprehensible in relational terms. A corporation must be spoken into being by a proxy since it cannot speak for itself, much like "the King" or "a Clown" in a stage play must be spoken into being by an actor. Indeed, the assemblage-like structure of corporate personhood raises ontological questions about voice, presence, agency, and what for lack of a better term we might call "realness" that are as germane to theories of literary character as they are to issues of legal responsibility.[30] Elizabeth Fowler has coined the term "social persons" to describe how character functions in late medieval and Renaissance literature:

> Social persons provide a shorthand notation that gives us enormous leverage in reference. Indeed, literary characters are largely cobbled together out of allusions to a number of social persons. In this way, social persons are like genres: they are abstract conventions that never actually "appear" in any pure form, but are the implied referents by which characters are understood. They are the collective imaginative technology that allows language to make literary character . . ., but, like

chisels, scaffolding, and plans that have left their marks on a monument but since disappeared, social persons must be inferred from their artifactual traces if characterization is to be understood.[31]

Many elements of the framework Fowler develops for social persons in a literary context could easily be applied to the corporation in a legal-philosophical context. Both hover between presence and absence. Both are fundamentally interdependent systems of meaning. In this sense, too, both have something in common with Renaissance understandings of Incarnational personhood, the way Christ holds in suspension, without combining into a single substance, two distinct natures (human and divine) and three distinct entities (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost).[32] As Richard Hooker puts it in Book V of his *Of the Lawes of Ecclesiastical Politie* (1597), "Christ is a person both divine and human, howbeit not therefore two persons," but rather "two natures, humaine and divine conjoined in one and the same person."[33] Incarnational personhood does not quite fit the category of "material aggregation" I designated above since it is ultimately a metaphysical concept. But it shares with corporate personhood a core sense of multiplicity—a conceptual structure that depends on a relationship between parts and whole—which is essential to Renaissance personhood more generally.

The other way to think about the collective nature of Renaissance personhood is in terms of what I have called taxonomical pluralism, the embrace of multiple life forms under a single status of accommodation. Once we free personhood from the individual (as in the discourse of anti-tyrannism), and once we free it from the human (as in theories of incorporation), it becomes easier to think of *personation* as a legal and political capacity afforded to creatures across taxonomical thresholds. The Lockean inheritance has made nonhuman personhood a thornier legal and conceptual issue in our own day than it would have been in the Renaissance. True to their Enlightenment roots, modern theories of personhood tend to be embedded in contract-based definitions of political life in which rational consent is the engine of accommodation. Locke provides a good example of this idea in *Two Treatises of Government* (1689):

> Men being, as has been said, by Nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this Estate, and subjected to the Political Power of another, without his own *Consent*. The only way whereby any one devests himself of his Natural Liberty, and *puts on the bonds of Civil Society* is by agreeing with other Men to joyn and unite into

a Community, for their comfortable, safe, and peaceable living one amongst another, in a secure Enjoyment of their Properties, and a greater Security against any that are not of it.[34]

In this passage, personhood—legal accommodation involving both protections and constraints—is an arrangement one arrives at only by passing through the portal of consent. Personhood starts, in other words, with the rational individual who can act and choose; and because the community of choosers is exclusively human within liberal political philosophy (and even then, not automatically inclusive of children, the severely mentally handicapped, or those with advanced neurodegenerative impairments), there is a rhetorical and technical burden placed on those wishing to argue for animal entitlements. Such an argument typically needs to be made in terms of "animal rights," which, as Laurie Shannon has pointed out, derives "awkwardly from '*human* rights'" rather than from any foundational doctrine of cross-species egalitarianism.[35] Nor is there much in the way of an active principle of care in modern theories of personhood for litigants, activists, and policy-makers to draw on.[36]

During the sixteenth century, the imaginative landscape was decidedly different. There was, in Julia Reinhard Lupton's words, "a theological conceptualization of natural phenomena" grounded in scripture, especially Genesis and its related commentary tradition.[37] Viewed from this perspective, justice, law, entitlement, and government were far less anthropocentric ideas than they were in narrowly juridical contexts. Justinian's *Institutes*, for example, which influenced a range of sixteenth-century English theologians and legal theorists, asserts that

The law of nature is that which nature teaches all animals. For that law is not proper to the human race, but is common to all animals which are born on the earth and in the sea, and to the birds also.[38]

Animals were not, of course, considered equal to humans in everyday contexts, but they possessed personhood to the extent that they were imagined to inhabit a space of shared polity with the other beings of God's Creation. To quote Shannon again, "when early moderns describe relations between humans and nonhumans," they deploy an "unabashedly political vocabulary," referring "to rule and tyranny, liberty and bondage, obedience and rebellion, contingency and negotiation, and transgression and entitlement; they refer to citizenship."[39] Consider, for instance, Guillaume Du Bartas, who in Joshua

Sylvester's 1605 English translation of *The Devine Weekes*, refers to nonhuman creatures as "Sea-*Citizens*," "the *people* of the water," and "slimie *Burgers* of this Earthly ball."[40] We do not need to think that animals possess reason or rights or the ability to consent or make contracts to see them as persons, since personhood for much of the Renaissance depended on none of these things. The sixteenth-century lawyer Christopher St. German maintained that "The lawe of nature . . . is referred to all creatures, as well reasonable as unreasonable: for all unreasonable creatures lyve under a certayne reule to them given by nature."[41] Instead, personhood expressed a natural, God-given liberty held in common with a collective; it denoted a certain relational status to other beings and things; and it ushered the bearer of that status into the ambit of co-dependent justice.

This Volume

If we trace the conceptual itineraries of personhood in the Renaissance, through statutes and legal cases, political philosophy and poetics, theology and theater, a map begins to emerge of a network that stretches far beyond the cloistered spaces of the human, the individual, and the rational mind. This map provides a shared starting point for contributors to this volume, each of whom guides the reader through a more detailed case study of personation in relation to chairs, machines, doors, trees, animals, race, food, the body, or land. Common to all these case studies is an interest in pushing personhood outside the closed perimeter of essence into the embedded world of substance. Starting with the objects, environments, and physical processes that made personhood legible in the Renaissance, the chapters that follow generate a new account of personhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by re-reading one of our most cherished legal fictions from the outside in rather than from the inside out.

Taken together, the chapters in this book constitute the first sustained materialist study of Renaissance personhood. That said, we also build on important scholarship devoted to law, theater, slavery, ecology, animals, and corporations that address personhood in ways that are relevant to the concerns of this volume. Amanda Bailey and Mary Nyquist, for example, have both explored the relationship between personhood and the body—Bailey in relation to debt law and Nyquist in relation to slavery.[42] Julia Reinhard Lupton has discussed the way a specifically Shakespearean account of personhood emerges

at the intersection of thought about politics and life in *The Tempest*.[43] Monique Allewaert, Laurie Shannon, and Henry S. Turner, meanwhile, have commented in various ways on personhood as a form of collective life.[44] This volume extends and develops the insights of these studies, but does so from within a uniquely pluralistic critical framework, one that draws eclectically on animal studies, ecocriticism, and food studies, and models new ways of entering these posthumanist approaches into conversation with legal theory, cultural history, and literary analysis. The result, we hope, is a volume that makes a distinct contribution to both early modern studies and the interdisciplinary humanities by retelling the story of Renaissance personhood as one of material relations and embodied experience rather than of emergent notions of individuality and freedom.

The subsequent chapters are divided into three sections signaled in the subtitle to this book, "Materiality, Taxonomy, Process." Each term offers a different conceptual frame for thinking about personhood in physical and experiential terms. Part I, "Materialities of Personhood: Chairs, Machines, Doors," features chapters by Stephanie Elsky, Wendy Beth Hyman, and Colby Gordon, which together show how the world of objects provided Renaissance men and women with a language for thinking about liberty, agency, and entitlement. Elsky's "Daughters, Chairs, and Liberty in Margaret Cavendish's *The Religious*" zeroes in on the striking centrality of a beloved chair in a little-known seventeenth-century closet drama. Her analysis raises new questions about the conceptual and physical boundaries of moveable goods in the Renaissance, which in turn challenge received understandings of the relationship between person and property. In "The Inner Lives of Early Modern Machines," Hyman recovers various theatrical, intellectual, and rhetorical contexts in which humans and machines shared properties and functionalities, or were otherwise coextensive or inter-animated. By replacing modern notions of agency with something that looks more like automaticity, this archive helps us see more clearly how personhood was understood in mechanistic rather than psychological terms in the Renaissance. Gordon closes the section with "Two Doors: Personhood and Housebreaking in *Semayne's Case* and *The Comedy of Errors*," a chapter that looks for the first time at how domestic space formed an integral component of the lived structure of personhood in the Renaissance. In Gordon's analysis, personhood provides legal scripts for the material and spatial practice of dwelling.

Part II, "Taxonomies of Personhood: Status, Species, Race," offers three test cases in the powerful, but consistently problematic, way

in which personhood has developed alongside ideas of humanness. Chapters by Joseph Campana, Holly Dugan, and Amanda Bailey approach the topic from arboreal, simian, and racial perspectives, showing how personhood has both generated and challenged conventional hierarchies of life. Taking Christopher Stone's landmark 1972 essay, "Should Trees Have Standing?," as a jumping-off point, Campana explores the emotionally, and sometimes verbally, responsive trees of the Renaissance literary tradition in his chapter, "Should (Bleeding) Trees Have Standing?" This *topos*, he argues, helps us understand core attributes of personhood—rights, inclusion, protection—beyond the parameters of sentience and anthropomorphism. Moving from trees to apes, Dugan's chapter, "Aping Personhood," presents a fascinating account of the Renaissance sources for modern legal debates about simian personhood. The implications of this neglected legal and natural-historical genealogy are far-reaching, offering new perspectives on the emergence of the idea of "human rights" and the history of species definition. In the final chapter in this section, "Race, Personhood, and the Human in *The Tempest*," Bailey takes up the relationship between personhood and humanness from another perspective: Renaissance conceptions of race. Focusing on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Bailey considers personhood in relation to the "genres of the human" in the Renaissance.

Part III, "Processes of Personhood: Eating, Lusting, Mapping," includes chapters by David B. Goldstein, John Michael Archer, and Gregory Kneidel devoted to the way things (food, bodies, land) are re-presented as processes (eating, lusting, mapping). Their collective aim is to show how aspects of personhood that, post-Descartes and post-Locke, we tend to associate with inner life—things like agency, sentience, and even the primordial capacity to feel shame—were for most of the Renaissance viewed in environmentally embedded terms. Goldstein's chapter, "Liquid *Macbeth*," conducts its investigation of Renaissance personhood by means of the *topos* of "liquidity," a motif which is pervasive in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and indicative of less well-defined ways of conceiving the distinction between subjects and objects than would emerge in the later seventeenth century and beyond. In "Things in Action: Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, *Macbeth*, and Levinas on Shame," Archer draws on literary and philosophical sources to show how shame is both a primordial legal mechanism and a bodily experience. Shame sits at the crossroads of individual physiology and communal ethical norms and, as such, offers a unique starting point for thinking about personhood since it dispenses from the outset with hierarchies of reason and reflection. Finally, Kneidel's

chapter, "Edward Herbert's Cosmopolitan State," considers political accommodation as a spatial phenomenon in the Renaissance. At the center of Kneidel's analysis is Edward Herbert's 1608 verse satire, "The State progress of Ill," which, he shows, offers a rich imaginative inventory of how perspectival representation changed ideas about land, property, and personhood.

The mission of this volume is to recover for the first time the way Renaissance personhood was shaped by ideas about the material world, both human and nonhuman. The work presented here should remind us that one of the core legal fictions of liberal modernity, a legal fiction that we now tend to associate with Enlightenment notions of agency, reason, and individuality, has other sources in the physical experiences, creaturely lives, and material encounters of the Renaissance.

Notes

1. "person, *n.*" *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, February 2019).
2. Marcel Mauss, "A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person, the Notion of Self," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, ed. Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1–25.
3. Mauss, "A Category of the Human Mind," 4–5.
4. Mauss, "A Category of the Human Mind," 9.
5. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard E. Flathman and David Johnston (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), 88.
6. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 90.
7. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 89.
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12. Locke, *An Essay*, 138.
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14. Derek Parfit, "Personal Identity," *The Philosophical Review* 80 (1971): 3–27; John Perry, "The Problem of Personal Identity," in *Personal Identity*, ed. John Perry (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 3–30 and "The Importance of Being Identical," in *The Identities of Persons*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 67–90.

15. See especially Sir John Baker, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England, Volume VI: 1483–1558* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 597–627, on which this paragraph draws heavily.

16. HLS MS 47, ff. 59–60v, 114 (tr.), quoted from Baker, *Oxford History*, 600.

17. *Statutes of the Realm, 1101–1713*, ed. A. Luders et al., 11 vols. (London, 1810–28).

18. See further, Sir John Baker, "Personal Liberty under the Common Law of England, 1200–1600," in *The Origins of Modern Freedom in the West*, ed. R. W. Davis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 178–202.

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24. Nyquist, *Arbitrary Rule*, 65.

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38. Justinian, *Institutes* I:1.2, qtd. in Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdman, 2005), 346.

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41. Christopher St. German, *The Dialogues in Englysshe, bytwene a Doctour of Dyvynyte and a Student in the laws of Englande* (London, 1543), fol. 4.

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44. Monique Allewaert, *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood, and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Shannon, *Accommodated Animal*; Turner, *Corporate Commonwealth*.