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Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism ...

Available now at [AbeBooks.co.uk](#) - Free Shipping - ISBN: 9780812247510 - Hardback - University of Pennsylvania Press - Book Condition: New - New copy - Usually dispatched within 4 working days. Katherine Eggert explores the crumbling state of humanistic learning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the benefits of relying on alchemy despite its recognized flaws.

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In *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England*, Katherine Eggert explores the crumbling state of learning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even as the shortcomings of Renaissance humanism became plain to see, many intellectuals of the age had little choice but to treat their familiar knowledge systems as though

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By using alchemy as a guiding thread, she reveals how each domain points up the limits of humanism in the early modern period. A delicately balanced, timely study that will be widely of interest to scholars of literature, science, medicine, and intellectual history more broadly."—Henry S. Turner, Rutgers University

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Disknowledge | Katherine Eggert

Katherine Eggert, *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) 368 pp. Hb, EPUB, PDF \$55.00. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4751-0. Katherine Eggert's examination of early modern alchemy and epistemic practices begins with a seemingly irrational proposition; namely, it is "possible not to know what one knows" (2).

Katherine Eggert, *Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and ...*

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Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism ...

Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England U of Penn Press, 2015 Svenn-Arve Myklebost, Volda University College Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England is a varied, somewhat eclectic collection of discussions revolving around a complex central tenet.

Katherine Eggert. Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and ...

Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England. By Katherine Eggert (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015) 368 pp. \$55.00

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Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism ...

Katherine Eggert, Disknowledge. by Jessica Wolfe. Katherine Eggert. Disknowledge. Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England. U of Pennsylvania P, 2015. ix + 351pp. ISBN: 978-0812247510. \$51.00 cloth. Disknowledge is not, in spite of its title, a book about alchemy. It is, rather, an ambitious study of the *waning* of the Renaissance, to borrow Johan Huizinga's famous phrase, a provocative and broadly ranging meditation on the epistemological fissures that open ...

Katherine Eggert, Disknowledge

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Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism ...

Covering a wide range of authors and topics, Disknowledge is the first book to analyze how English Renaissance literature employed alchemy to probe the nature and limits of learning. The concept of disknowledge—willfully adhering to something we know is wrong—resonates across literary and cultural studies as an urgent issue of our own era.

'Disknowledge': knowing something isn't true, but believing it anyway. In this book, Katherine Eggert explores the crumbling state of learning in the 16th and 17th centuries. Even as the shortcomings of Renaissance humanism became plain to see, many intellectuals of the age had little choice but to treat their familiar knowledge systems as though they still held. Humanism thus came to share the status of alchemy: a way of thinking simultaneously productive and suspect, reasonable and wrongheaded.

"Disknowledge": knowing something isn't true, but believing it anyway. In Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England, Katherine Eggert explores the crumbling state of learning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Even as the shortcomings of Renaissance humanism became plain to see, many intellectuals of the age had little choice but to treat their familiar knowledge systems as though they still held. Humanism thus came to share the status of alchemy: a way of thinking simultaneously

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productive and suspect, reasonable and wrongheaded. Eggert argues that English writers used alchemy to signal how to avoid or camouflage pressing but discomfiting topics in an age of rapid intellectual change. *Disknowledge* describes how John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, John Dee, Christopher Marlowe, William Harvey, Helkiah Crooke, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare used alchemical imagery, rhetoric, and habits of thought to shunt aside three difficult questions: how theories of matter shared their physics with Roman Catholic transubstantiation; how Christian Hermeticism depended on Jewish Kabbalah; and how new anatomical learning acknowledged women's role in human reproduction. *Disknowledge* further shows how Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and Margaret Cavendish used the language of alchemy to castigate humanism for its blind spots and to invent a new, posthumanist mode of knowledge: writing fiction. Covering a wide range of authors and topics, *Disknowledge* is the first book to analyze how English Renaissance literature employed alchemy to probe the nature and limits of learning. The concept of disknowledge—willfully adhering to something we know is wrong—resonates across literary and cultural studies as an urgent issue of our own era.

People have always been xenophobic, but an explicit philosophical and scientific view of human racial difference only began to emerge during the modern period. Why and how did this happen? Surveying a range of philosophical and natural-scientific texts, dating from the Spanish Renaissance to the German Enlightenment, *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference* charts the evolution of the modern concept of race and shows that natural philosophy, particularly efforts to taxonomize and to order nature, played a crucial role. Smith demonstrates how the denial of moral equality between Europeans and non-Europeans resulted from converging philosophical and scientific developments, including a declining belief in human nature's universality and the rise of biological classification. The racial typing of human beings grew from the need to understand humanity within an all-encompassing system of nature, alongside plants, minerals, primates, and other animals. While racial difference as seen through science did not arise in order to justify the enslavement of people, it became a rationalization and buttress for the practices of trans-Atlantic slavery. From the work of François Bernier to G. W. Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, and others, Smith delves into philosophy's part in the legacy and damages of modern racism. With a broad narrative stretching over two centuries, *Nature, Human Nature, and Human Difference* takes a critical historical look at how the racial categories that we divide ourselves into came into being.

When we catastrophize, we think the worst. We make too much of too little, or something of nothing. Yet what looks simply like a bad habit, Gerard Passannante argues, was also a spur to some of the daring conceptual innovations and feats of imagination that defined the intellectual and cultural history of the early modern period. Reaching back to the time between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Passannante traces a history of catastrophizing through literary and philosophical encounters with materialism—the view that the world is composed of nothing but matter. As artists, poets, philosophers, and scholars pondered the physical causes and material stuff of the cosmos, they conjured up disasters out of thin air and responded as though to events that were befalling them. From Leonardo da Vinci's imaginative experiments with nature's destructive forces to the fevered fantasies of doomsday astrologers, from the self-fulfilling prophecies of Shakespeare's tragic characters to the mental earthquakes that guided Kant toward his theory of the sublime, Passannante shows how and why the early moderns reached for disaster when they ventured beyond the limits of the sensible. He goes on to explore both the danger and the critical potential of thinking catastrophically in our own time.

Witchcraft, Witch-hunting, and Politics in Early Modern England offers a wide-ranging and

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original overview of the subject of witchcraft and its place in English society, covering the period from the beginning of witch trials in the early years of the reign of Elizabeth I through to the repeal of the Witchcraft Statute in 1736. In contrast to other approaches to the subject, which have tended to focus on the origins of witchcraft in gender and/or socio-economic explanations, this volume situates belief in witchcraft and witch-hunting within the context of the political and religious debates of the period, shedding new light on the subject through a series of original case studies based on extensive archival research.

In *The Body in Mystery*, Jennifer R. Rust engages the political concept of the mystical body of the commonwealth, the *corpus mysticum* of the medieval church. Rust argues that the communitarian ideal of sacramental sociality had a far longer afterlife than has been previously assumed. Reviving a critical discussion of the German historian Ernst Kantorowicz's 1957 masterwork, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Rust brings to bear the latest scholarship. Her book expands the representation of the *corpus mysticum* through a range of literary genres as well as religious polemics and political discourses. Rust reclaims the concept as an essential category of social value and historical understanding for the imaginative life of literature from Reformation England. *The Body in Mystery* provides new ways of appreciating the always rich and sometimes difficult continuities between the secular and sacred in early modern England, and between the premodern and early modern periods.

Forbidden Passages is the first book to document and evaluate the impact of Moriscos—Christian converts from Islam—in the early modern Americas, and how their presence challenged notions of what it meant to be Spanish as the Atlantic empire expanded.

The first full study of the life of Margherita Datini illuminates the role and social standing of wives in early modern Italian society

Indecorous Thinking is a study of artifice at its most conspicuous: it argues that early modern writers turned to figures of speech like simile, antithesis, and periphrasis as the instruments of a particular kind of thinking unique to the emergent field of vernacular poesis. The classical ideal of decorum described the absence of visible art as a precondition for rhetoric, civics, and beauty: speaking well meant speaking as if off-the-cuff. Against this ideal, Rosenfeld argues that one of early modern literature's richest contributions to poetics is the idea that indecorous art—artifice that rings out with the bells and whistles of ornamentation—celebrates the craft of poetry even as it expands poetry's range of activities. Rosenfeld details a lost legacy of humanism that contributes to contemporary debates over literary studies—singular but deeply ambivalent commitment to form. Form, she argues, must be reexamined through the legacy of figure. Reading poetry by Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and Mary Wroth alongside pedagogical debates of the period and the emergence of empiricism, with its signature commitment to the plain style, Rosenfeld offers a robust account of the triumphs and embarrassments that attended the conspicuous display of artifice. Drawing widely across the arts of rhetoric, dialectic, and poetics, *Indecorous Thinking* offers a defense of the epistemological value of form: not as a sign of the aesthetic but as the source of a particular kind of knowledge we might call poetic.

Drawing on the generous semantic range the term enjoyed in early modern usage, *Experimental Selves* argues that 'person,' as early moderns understood this concept, was an 'experimental' phenomenon—at once a given of experience and the self-conscious arena of that experience. Person so conceived was discovered to be a four-dimensional creature: a composite of mind or 'inner' personality; of the body and outward appearance; of social

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relationship; and of time. Through a series of case studies keyed to a wide variety of social and cultural contexts, including theatre, the early novel, the art of portraiture, pictorial experiments in vision and perception, theory of knowledge, and the new experimental science of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the book examines the manifold shapes person assumed as an expression of the social, natural, and aesthetic 'experiments' or experiences to which it found itself subjected as a function of the mere contingent fact of just having them.

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