

## Abstract

The thesis examines the representation of personhood and property in eighteenth-century satiric literature. The main tenet of the thesis is that the literary constructions of proprietorship rehearse philosophical, scientific and legal tensions between aggregate and unitary notions of personhood. Although embedded in different discursive practices, what characterizes the literary satiric avatars of eighteenth-century possessive personhood is their aggregate nature, their tendency to fall to bits with the loss of their properties and their precarious position as assembled fictions or material compositions.

The dual status of personal effects as both illusory surfaces and material possessions is explored in analytical discussions of satiric literature ranging from *The Memoirs of the Extraordinary Life, Works and Discoveries of Martinus Scriblerus* (1741) through Jonathan Swift's dressing room poems and satirical dressings and undressings in Mary Evelyn's *Mundus Muliebris* and Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712; 1714) to it-narratives such as *The Adventures of a Quire of Paper* (1779). Revisionist readings of contemporary notions property and personhood in - among others - John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1758) are used as points of departure in uncovering the pressures exerted on unitary constructions proprietorship satiric versions of the aggregate self.