

Launched in Finland and touring Norway and Italy (and Taiwan), the book hereby reviewed documents a significant artistic project exploring the many facets of dehumanisation and inhumanity, which the participants wish to consign to “history” in *lieu* of “a new, more inclusive era”, as the introduction spells out for the reader (5).

Emblematically, the introduction is followed by the text of the speech delivered by Cécile Kashetu Kyenge, Italian member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, at the inauguration of the “Museum of Nonhumanity”—in truth a complex video-installation or multi-media exhibition—at the Festival of Santarcangelo di Romagna on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016. A Modenese black woman of Congolese origin, Kyenge has been the target of much misogynistic and racist rhetoric from Italy’s right-wing parties and their supporters, who have been continuing *ipso facto* some of the forms of dehumanisation addressed in the “museum” and, *a fortiori*, in this book.

Other forms are mentioned in the ensuing text, i.e. the speech delivered by the Finnish parliamentarian Silvia Modig, who recalls “child labour”, “the defenceless and the disadvantaged” and sentient or intelligent “animals” themselves as the victims of inhumane behaviours in contemporary societies, where the “tendency to categorize” them into “two camps: ‘us’ and ‘them’” is far from absent, and the reduction or removal of any bond of “empathy” made possible (9). The deeper ground of this process of dehumanisation and inhumanity in contemporary world nations is also touched upon, as the speaker refers to the “economic game” ruling over all lives, whether human or non-human, such that “our rights and opportunities are defined” on the basis of “our value to the economy, much in the same way as livestock are treated as mere numbers” with “a price tag that determines how well they are looked after.” (10)

The volume continues with a series of high-quality photographs showing the installation from a variety of different angles, as well as a detailed catalogue of the printed, artistic and other sources utilised therein (“The Archive of Nonhumanity”, 56-247). This thorough catalogue is sub-divided into twelve conceptual categories that thematise and/or problematise debated forms of non-humanity, i.e. “person” (primarily on the long-lived practice of slavery, i.e. ownership in people, contrasted with the “*persona ficta*” of the corporation; 72), “potentia” (*in nuce*, on the contested ontological status of the embryo *qua* person or non-person), “monster” (essentially on imprisonment and death penalties),

“resource” (primarily on the little-remembered murderous sack of colonial Congo by the Belgian Crown), “boundary” (a clever juxtaposition of the management of wolves in Finland and the internment and extermination of the “Reds” in the 1918 Finnish civil war), “purity” (on the transformation of care for the mentally ill in Finland during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, from Christian charity to eugenic control and sterilisation), “disgust” (on the colonial history and civil war of Rwanda and the rhetoric of ‘vermin’ and ‘cockroaches’ accompanying the latter), “anima” (on select philosophical sources for the sharp qualitative distinction and separation between humans and animals), “tender” (on the many cruelties of meat production and consumption), “distance” (on the technology and ideology of Nazi extermination camps), “animal” (on the etymology of the word itself), and “display” (on the Belgian Museum of Central Africa).

Two essays integrate and expand upon the previous and largest section of the book: some “condensed speculations” by Giovanna Esposito Yussif and “Empathy is part of our deepest nature” by Salla Tuomivaara. While the former explains how museums can reinforce or challenge existing ideologies, the latter shows how the cruelty of “othering practices” (256) can be countered by the kindness of our natural propensity to empathise with the living. Seemingly apt for an academic event or a scholarly journal, these two essays are very much *à propos*: seminars, lectures, public readings and other learned activities have been accompanying the “museum of nonhumanity” in its Nordic and Mediterranean (and south-east-Asian) itinerary.

The programme of the related events, a comprehensive list of references, credits and acknowledgments, as well as the standard colophon conclude the volume. Since the exhibition must have been missed by all who failed to attend it, this book is going to be of potential interest to this very large audience. In particular, however, persons keen on reflecting about penology, animal rights and bioethics, Finnish and colonial history, gender and minority studies, Holocaust studies, or the interplay between art and philosophy, can all find something stimulating in this volume, which is freely available worldwide on the internet as an [e-book](#).