

social psychology (“Does this description of the Eucharistic rite help its assistants to overcome the discomforts of devotional isolation?”). The New Historicism’s assumption of the right to pressure texts, on grounds of a deconstructive turn inconsistently applied, has probably compromised a number of Whalen’s readings. But the study is remarkably resistant to the cultural materialist inclination to reduce religion to sociology and politics. At one point, Whalen mentions contemporary allegations that New Historicism fails to address poetry as poetry. He replies that “the detailed close readings provided here should allay such concern” (113). Although some problems remain, Whalen has certainly demonstrated that cultural materialist studies do not predictably lack either sympathy or tact.

Jessica Wolfe. *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xi + 305 pp.+ 10 illus. \$65.00. Review by IRA CLARK, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA.

A study of the multiple analogies to machines employed by Renaissance humanists from the late fifteenth-century court of Urbino through the early seventeenth-century court of James I might seem to lack promise. Nevertheless Jessica Wolfe’s inquiry opens up a complex of complementary and contrary concepts that range from rhetoric, compartment, and the arts through pedagogy, ethics, diplomacy, and warfare. Providing force for her intriguing intellectual and cultural history is, aptly for an era dominated by the humanist concentration on language as the center of knowledge, Wolfe’s interrogation of multiplicities signified through a host of interrelated terms that play around humanity-inhumanity, art-nature, reason-passion. Among these are “means and instruments” that include not only machines but also people; “technologia” that refers to methodical study, discipline, and art as well as to artifice, human contrivance, and fraud; “engine” that can denote wit as well as machine and tool, subtle policy and deceit; “ingegno” that can refer to an engine, art, and cunning; “virtù” that signifies both mechanical force and political efficacy; “metis” that indicates cunning intelligence that enables the weak to overcome; and “subtlety” that includes acuity and precision, excessive intricacy, and dishonesty. Such slippages of terms from one linguistic and intellectual domain to another in our view (membership in as yet undefined domains in theirs) suggest the potential in Wolfe’s theme that instruments “distort and confuse as

well as clarify . . . [that] machines are of ‘ambiguous use’ to Renaissance culture, serving alternately as ‘hurt’ and as ‘remedy’ in resolving the culture’s most urgent conflicts and questions” (28).

Wolfe’s introduction to “Renaissance humanism and its machinery,” “Subtle devices,” offers an initial glimpse at an admirable linguistic, cultural, and intellectual range. The book extends across disciplines and includes figures less memorable as well as renowned, the pseudo-Aristotelian *Mechanical Problems* as well as Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier*, John Blagrave’s *Mathematicall Jewell* as well as *Hamlet*, Gabriel Harvey’s commonplace book and annotations as well as Sidney’s *Apology for Poetry*, Roberto Valturio’s *De Re Militari* as well as *The Faerie Queene*. For evidence she ransacks a panoply of texts that include dictionaries, rhetorics, translations, commentaries, emblem books, technical manuals, courtesy and advice books, poems, plays, stage machinery, illustrations, and paintings. The range is vital to understanding the productive conflux of investigations and promulgations more often speculative and less often practical than have since been sorted into disciplines. For the study depicts the fostering of polymathic slippage among intellectual disciplines we now segregate—primarily the gulf we perceive between what we call science, a word which then encompassed all knowledge, and the humanities.

“Automatopoesis: machinery and courtliness in Renaissance Urbino” sets the topic in motion with the Montefeltros’ compelling dual interests in mechanics and mores, the material and the intellectual, political and social negotiations. The guiding concept is a renewed interest in Archimedean mechanics, particularly admiration for the series of levers Archimedes used to distribute weight so he could easily hoist a ship onto land. This image of an ingeniously conceived instrument that employs concealed force to effect difficult tasks with apparent ease, an art that effortlessly manipulates nature, with attendant valorization of “virtù” and “sprezzatura,” is applicable across a range of endeavors material, intellectual, and social. Sponsored by the court at Urbino, Guido Ubaldo and Bernardino Baldi’s treatises on mechanics are integrated with Baldassare Castiglione’s handbook of courtliness as examples of facile empowerment.

“Artificial motions: machinery, courtliness, and discipline in Renaissance England” transfers concern with the relationships of mechanics and courtliness to the spheres of influence around Leicester-Sidney, Essex, and Northumberland. It introduces the influence of Italy on English thinkers so

that technical tracts from John Dee's to Thomas Blundeville's claim that instruments can win success at court, as well as handbooks on courtly comportment, such as Henry Peacham's, rely on mechanical analogies to describe social subtleties. But because the influence of Italy on England was vexed, and since the intervention of human techniques into nature is problem-filled, analogies that could promote good could also be viewed as devolving into ill. Mechanical analogies can thus be heralded by stoics as methods for attaining rational discipline, but also condemned by cynics as modes of deceitful perversion.

"Inanimate ambassadors: the mechanics and politics of mediation" investigates how mechanical objects and practices bring about mediation in Renaissance thought and politics. Natural philosophers such as John Wilkins sought to employ instruments of discovery such as telescopes and of concealment such as cryptographic devices for political ends; meanwhile literary texts and paintings explored correspondences between animate and "inanimate ambassadors" perfecting and perverting, effecting and obstructing, the aims of their masters. The portraits in Hans Holbein's *The Ambassadors* represent instruments for diplomacy amid a still life of those for interrogation and communication. The painting's prominent anamorphism, moreover, simultaneously offers the promise of transmission and the threat of distortion—both "in ambage," as in circuitous, ambiguous, and ambushing.

"The polymechany of Gabriel Harvey" describes the methodical reading and applications from technical treatises to rhetoric, politics, moral philosophy, and courtesy theory that the scholar diligently employed to transform himself into an admired courtier and valued politician. Failing for obvious methodicalness and lack of "sprezzatura," he did make himself into an anti-courtly Ramist pedagogue—portrayed by himself as a prudent pragmatist and by Thomas Nashe as a knit-picking pedant.

"Homer in a nutshell: George Chapman and the mechanics of perspicuity" describes a different method of reading and writing based in part on the poet, playwright, and translator's interest in Thomas Hariot's manufacture of telescopes and in Robert Hues' manufacture of globes. These constitute visual instruments that abet perspicuous because far-searching magnification by the same instrumentality they distort and obscure. These dual aspects of interpretation inform Chapman's mode of allegorical composition and the demands as well as insights it confers on his readers. Globes indicate addi-

tional complications in instruments that represent much in little, “multum in parvo,” and consequently of texts such as epigrams and Chapman’s translation of *Achilles’ Shield*.

“Inhumanism: Spenser’s iron man” recapitulates and reconstitutes the promises and problems of mechanistic analogies during the era by focusing on fusions of the human and the mechanical in fantasies of war automata and machines. Talus, the instrument of justice in Book V of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, becomes from one perspective the ideal martialist and consummate stoic perfected beyond passion; from another the horrific dominion of the warrior, method, and instrument from which all humanity has been extracted. The animate has been replaced by the inanimate, the soul by iron.

In *Humanism, Machinery, and Renaissance Literature* Wolfe offers a panorama of Renaissance humanist culture at a productive nexus from an unusual perspective. Students will find a multitude of suggestive contexts within which to consider their own projects, ideas from which they can extrapolate topics, and models for investigating domain sharing and productively ambiguous analogies. Valuable too is Wolfe’s reminder of the treasure trove in language subtly investigated. Precisely because our understanding is embedded in language and analogy, our inquiries therein can reveal vistas and delve depths.

Adam Smyth. *“Profit and Delight”: Printed Miscellanies in England, 1640-1682*. Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 2004. xxii + 246 pp. \$39.95. Review by A.H. DE QUEHEN, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO.

“*Profit and Delight*” is based on a study of forty-one printed miscellanies published between 1640 and 1682, a carefully chosen group out of the very large number of verse (or verse-with-prose) collections that the seventeenth century produced. Adam Smyth is not directly concerned with manuscript miscellanies, or with printed volumes of political or university verse, or with commonplace or songbooks, all of which he mentions from time to time. His chosen books are of a certain compact size, “usually octavo or duodecimo publications of between 100 and 300 pages,” and their favourite verse forms are “the epigram, the comic epitaph, the ballad, the epistle, the lyric, the mock, and the dialogue. ... The material was altered to suit the envisioned purposes of readers; was often set in an educative, generally Royalist, frame; and was