

Herbert within the framework of that “consensus,” but also, to study Donne, Bacon, and other seventeenth-century conformists in this illuminating middle way.

Wendy Beth Hyman, ed. *The Automaton in English Renaissance Literature: Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011. x + 210 pp. \$99.95. Review by JESSICA WOLFE, UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, CHAPEL HILL.

This collection of nine essays, published by Ashgate’s Literary and Scientific Cultures of Early Modernity series, examines automata, automaticity, and “literary fantasies of animation” in early modern English literature. The essays helpfully contextualize the study of automata in a range of early modern philosophical, aesthetic, and religious discourses and practices: Cartesian metaphysics and Lucretian atomism, botany and hylozoism, the Protestant distrust of liturgical set forms, royal pageantry, and anti-theatrical sentiment. They also speak, in varied and (for the most part) admirably subtle ways, to recent critical trends such as animal studies, “thing theory,” speculative materialism, and posthumanism. Hyman’s marvelous introduction ensures a strong cohesiveness throughout the volume and also provides a useful introduction to automata both real and fictional in early modern English culture, objects she astutely describes as provoking ambivalent, perplexed, and conflicting reactions of “exhilaration and terror.” As Hyman observes, “the animation of material is the *Ur*-narrative of the western imagination.” The volume does an especially nice job of illustrating the bifurcation of that narrative into fantasies of “poetic triumph over the limits of material” and corresponding nightmares of “devolution and disassembly of personhood” (3-4).

The volume is divided into three parts. Part 1, “Creations, Creatures, and Origins” is the least unified of the three, principally because Scott Maisano’s lead essay, “Descartes avec Milton: the Automata in the Garden,” has so little to do with the kinds of automata (speaking statues, mechanical birds, iron grooms) that populate the rest of the book’s chapters. Instead, Maisano makes an ambitious yet deeply flawed argument that Milton’s theodicy in *Paradise Lost* is rooted in

the “psycho-physical dualism” of Descartes, an argument that fails to address compelling, pervasive evidence of Milton’s monism and also misreads Adam as a kind of automaton lacking free will simply because he has sprung to life fully formed (this *might* make Milton a preformationist, but it certainly doesn’t make him a Cartesian dualist). The other two essays in this opening section, Justin Kolb’s “‘To me comes a creature’: Recognition, Agency, and the Properties of Character in Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*” and Lynsey McCulloch’s “Antique Myth, Early Modern Mechanism: The Secret History of Spenser’s Iron Man,” are more persuasive as well as more on target with the volume’s principal subject. Kolb’s essay reads Hermione and her statue in terms of the interactions between “human and non-human actors” on the early modern English stage; it makes an especially convincing case that children in that play are semi-rational automata who occupy an indeterminate midpoint between living creatures and non-living objects (51). McCulloch’s attempt to recuperate the “much maligned” Talus in book 5 of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* is refreshing even in its occasionally excessive enthusiasm to read the legend of Justice and its odd metal man through lenses other than Spenser’s involvement in the English colonization of Ireland (61).

The essays by Leah Knight, Brooke Conti, and Michael Witmore in Part 2, “Motions,” conform more to each other and to the volume as a whole, and all three are a pleasure to read: original, learned, and persuasive. Knight’s “Orpheus and the Poetic Animation of the Natural World,” perhaps the strongest essay in the collection, brings together an impressive array of Elizabethan poems, rhetorical handbooks, and scientific (especially botanical) texts as it explores early modern representations of the Orphic animation of the landscape in light of contemporary beliefs about the vivency and mobility of plants. Conti’s “The Mechanical Saint: Early Modern Devotion and the Language of Automation” is admirable for its attention to the ambivalent religious implications of early modern culture’s preoccupation with automata: despite the Protestant condemnation of “mechanical saints” as Catholic trickery and associated condemnations of “mechanical” or rote forms of Catholic prayer and worship, Conti’s reading of a 1616 sermon by Lancelot Andrewes offers surprising evidence of the positive religious connotations that at least one (admittedly high church) English Prot-

estant could attach to automata or pneumatic machinery. Witmore's study of mechanical and acrobatic motions in Tudor civic pageantry (especially the 1547 coronation pageant for Edward VI) draws upon humanist ideas of movement and dance to explain the aesthetic logic of the pageant's "moving parts" as well as the "kinesthetic sympathy" of its audience (125; 111).

The third and final part, "Performance and Deception," covers more well-trodden ground in three essays examining representations of automata in English Renaissance literary texts by Robert Greene (Todd Borlik on Friar Bacon and his speaking head), Thomas Nashe (Wendy Hyman on mechanical birds in *The Unfortunate Traveller* and other Elizabethan texts), and Edmund Spenser (Nick Davis on the mechanized pseudo-Edenic landscape of the Bower of Bliss). All three essays provide new insight about the ethical and aesthetic implications of machines in texts that are, in various ways, preoccupied with the legitimacy or illegitimacy of artifice. Borlik cleverly reads Greene's speaking head as a mechanical clock, Hyman plots the range of attitudes towards the mechanical birds that populate Renaissance gardens and literary representations of them, and Davis' essay offers a compelling account of what artificial gardens have to do with unbridled hedonism for Spenser, while also reminding us about an often-overlooked model for Spenser's bower in the medieval French garden of Hesdin.

On the whole, the essays offer skillful, often original interpretations of English Renaissance literary works in which some of the most delightful, disturbing, and downright bizarre automata (and related fantasies of animation) can be found. I did find the collection too Anglo-centric, particularly since the vast majority of automata and other mechanical devices that gripped the English Renaissance imagination were European or Arabic in origin: the Strasbourg clock; the hydraulic garden machinery of Pratolino; the metal men of the Alexander romances; even Hermione's statue is purportedly sculpted by an Italian, Giulio Romano. It might also have been nice to include more scholarship by scholars working in other disciplines, particularly the history of art, a field likewise currently preoccupied with questions of lifelikeness, vivency, artifice, and verisimilitude. But the narrower focus does allow the authors of this volume to carry on a sustained

set of conversations with each other, and the editor has done a very good job of nurturing those conversations and cross-currents both in her introduction and throughout the volume as a whole.

Lara Dodds. *The Literary Invention of Margaret Cavendish*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2013. viii + 317 pp. \$58.00. Review by LISA HOPKINS, SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY.

Margaret Cavendish asserted that she read no English books, but Lara Dodds' exploration of Cavendish's engagement with her English literary predecessors comprehensively disproves that and shows that Cavendish read, in Dodds' words, "widely, if not deeply" (2). The book has six chapters, focusing on Cavendish's reading of Plutarch's Lives; of Donne; of Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"; the tradition of Utopian literature exemplified by Lucian, Cyrano, and Bacon; of Shakespeare and Jonson (whom Dodds sees her as reading in a way informed by the influential tradition of syncrisis); and of natural philosophy, principally in the shape of Hobbes, though the chapter in question also contains an extremely interesting tracing of Cavendish's place in the history of engagement with Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd to his Love*. Dodds considers the way in which Cavendish's self-proclaimed envy and emulation of successful male authors such as these (a coda explains that Dodds, to her regret, can detect no similarly sustained engagement with female ones) acted as stimuli to her own literary creativity.

Dodds identifies her own project as being to "[correlate] empirical questions about what Cavendish read with theoretical and historical questions about how early modern women and men used their reading in the service of personal and literary invention" (4), and she consequently pays sensible attention to questions of bibliography and the practicalities of publishing as well as to those pertaining to more strictly literary approaches. Implicitly and more generally, she also aims to rehabilitate the investigation of what authors read as a legitimate form of critical enquiry, one which is neither theoretically naïve about the status of the author nor plays down the achievement of women writers by tracing them reductively and simplistically to a male source.