volume, with its sections on the “emergence” and “twilight” of the favorite. As net liabilities, minister-favorites were largely jettisoned in the later seventeenth century. M. Fumaroli’s contribution on Louis XIV’s undoing of Fouquet meticulously traces the signal instance of how and why this was done. But the sense that the *privado* was the creature of a historical moment is counterbalanced by the notion that the political favorite is a recurrent phenomenon: James M. Borden writes on the favorite *avant la lettre* in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain, and Brockliss (pp. 301–2) points to the favorite’s afterlife in the eighteenth and even nineteenth centuries.

The numerous contributions gathered here are necessarily and often commendably brief, although a few could have done with more development. Inevitably, the contributors disagree, and at times the editors allow them to descend into logomachies, as well as substantive disputes, that engender confusion about the subject itself. The only proposition that seems never to be denied is that the *privado*/favorite/minister was a patronage boss. (Peck is especially instructive on this point.) Some readers may regret that there is surprisingly little treatment, for an Anglophone volume, of the British side of this phenomenon, particularly the case of Buckingham. But the volume is admirably tied together by the one extended contribution, Brockliss’s “Concluding Remarks.” Thanks to these, the volume may hold the scepter over the subject for as long as Bérenger’s article has done.

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Zakiya Hanafi. *The Monster in the Machine: Magic, Medicine, and the Marvelous in the Time of the Scientific Revolution*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000. Pp. xii, 272.

Zakiya Hanafi’s study of the monstrous in the early modern period is as difficult to categorize as its subject itself: the abnormal and liminal, the marginally or wholly unclassifiable “bodies” produced by the cultural categorization of nature. Its inspiration seems to lie in the growing interest in the material dimension of culture rooted in the body, and in medical discourses about the body, that has grown up alongside the New Historicism. Its contribution to these areas of investigation is a solid one, especially since it focuses on relatively neglected scientific discourses mostly, if not wholly, grounded in early modern Italy. It also includes a medical/biographical study of Giambattista Vico, the one major figure discussed.

The book’s opening survey of the prehistory of the monstrous in the early modern period provides a useful introduction to the subject, although in too small a space to produce a truly thorough exploration of the transition from the sacred monster of antiquity and the early works of Aristotle, Pliny, Cicero, and Augustine to the rationalistic discourses of the new science. As a result, it fails to provide a sufficient foundation for a truly systematic consideration of the category of the monstrous, which readers will not find in Hanafi’s somewhat erratic and occasion-

ally whimsical treatment of her subject. Although this approach no doubt comes with the territory, the author often seems to exaggerate its discontinuities, in part by opening each chapter with anecdotes that have even less clear connections to the main argument than one typically finds in New Historicist works of this kind.

Hanafi's second chapter on "Monstrous Matter" is particularly troubling in this regard, since its opening description of a "Dantesque" party given by the Rucellai family of Florence in 1536 (pp. 17–18) seems to bear no relation whatsoever to the methods of the early physicians and natural magicians discussed later, apart from an association with gardens. No doubt, connections could be made, but it is left wholly up to the reader to make them. This failure properly to foreground and contextualize her material may lead Hanafi's readers to suspect either that she is self-indulgently interested in curiosities for their own sake or that she expects those who do not share her particular interests simply to appreciate her text as itself a scholarly example of the curio cabinets it so often describes.

These faults are largely absent, however, from Hanafi's third chapter on "Monstrous Machines," which is not only the book's most clearly developed section but also the one with the broadest general appeal. Suggestively tracing the intersection of the material and the spiritual in western culture "from the earliest written records to the present," it shows that since "a necessary condition for defining a sacred monster is *that which is inanimate yet moves of its own accord*," the danger of monstrosity will arise "whenever spirit is called into or forcibly inhabits formed matter" (p. 54). Although the insight is not entirely original, many of the details are. Once again, there are some drawbacks, for by embracing everything from physiologically abnormal bodies to culturally constructed "monsters" like René Girard's scapegoats, the discussion creates problems of definition not addressed here. Nevertheless, by connecting bodily to mechanical technologies, the chapter ultimately produces a very useful meditation on the Pygmalion myth, which should prove important to scholars working on such diverse topics as early modern utopias, Gothic "monsters," and science fiction. Its final sections on optical "magic," automata, and "The Origins of Idolatry" will also be useful to scholars working on the both the figurative or metaphysical and the literal or spectacular "machinery" so often featured in the art of the period.

Although it may perhaps be unreasonable to expect the remaining three chapters to be as good as this central essay, the falling-off in theoretical and historical relevance is problematically precipitous. Again, readers interested in curiosities for their own sake will not be disappointed, but those seeking to understand the changing attitudes that accompany the later phases of the scientific revolution should look elsewhere. In this respect, the title of the fourth chapter, "Medicine and the Mechanized Body," is especially misleading, since the chapter contains very little (and nothing at all new) on evolving ideas about the body-as-machine. Although there is some discussion of this topic, it is treated very superficially in comparison to an extended and poorly contextualized discussion of the early modern "science" of physiognomy. This is especially unfortunate:

since much of this lore was as antiquated and/or suspect in its own time as it is in our own, the reader needs to know what its audience and applications were.

The next chapter on “Vico’s Monstrous Body” adds even less to the book’s treatment of early modern science, since it primarily deals with details of Vico’s life and his obsession with controlling his bodily imbalances. While this obsession could in fact shed much light on the philosophy, history, and culture outlined in his *New Science*, once again it is left to the reader to make most of the connections. Like other sections of the book, this chapter also suffers from serious problems of proportion. After thoroughly exploring Vico’s relationship to his own bodily malfunctions and those of his “hero,” Angiola Cimini, Hanafi leaves little or no space to set up the potentially important subject of chapter 7: the contemporary Italian debates over the proper uses of emblematic and verbal “wonders.” This approach not only effectively isolates Vico’s linguistic theories from the concluding discussion of “Monstrous Metaphor” but leaves the reader with the impression that these debates were largely provincial matters, when they were actually pan-European in scope.

The typically New Historicist fondness for historical minutiae at the expense of historical connection demonstrated throughout the chapter also weakens the book’s concluding sections, where we find only some relatively superficial and predictable gestures toward the well-worn theme of the “disenchantment of the world.” Ironically, then, the final section on “The Strain of Holding the I Together” could easily be misread as “The Strain of Holding It All Together,” which in fact seems to be the real subtext both of this section and of the final chapters of the book.

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Natalie Zemon Davis. *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000. Pp. x, 185.

In the Acknowledgments to *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France*, Natalie Zemon Davis identifies two factors which first led her to her subject in the early 1980s. The first was its interdisciplinary nature: the study of gifts presented “a superb opportunity for connecting history and anthropology.” Accordingly, Davis’s book is cast as an ethnography, bringing ideas developed by the likes of Marcel Mauss, Marshall Sahlins, and Annette Weiner to the analysis of early modern culture. The second factor was the climate of the Reagan era in America, which made gifts seem “if not a panacea, then at least a critical option to the commercial and individualistic sensibility celebrated everywhere in the media” (p. 175). So this is a book which aims to change our way of thinking about the modern as well as the early modern; and in this, remarkably, it succeeds.

Davis prefers not to talk about the “Gift,” but about the “gift mode” or “gift register.” For her, gift exchange is “an essential relational mode, a repertoire of