

1 Beliefs and means of persuasion coexist in critical ways. If anticlericalism, anxiety
 2 over one's salvation, and despair over the injustice of the world led one to build
 3 an "atheistic" worldview, then Nietzsche's "God is dead" should have been pro-
 4 claimed long before. Religious anger and anxiety were always there. What was
 5 new? Printing and the rapid increase in the number of publishers, the exponential
 6 growth of primary and secondary education, and the rising tide of laymen among
 7 those educated, all created a dramatically more secular reading public. Debates
 8 that Christian theologians dealt with *intra muros* were now extramural. Travel lit-
 9 erature, wildly popular, introduced new European readers not only to function-
 10 ing non-Christian cultures but also to cultures that some missionaries themselves
 11 described as atheistic (thereby creating the bestsellers of missionary literature).

12 Ryrie trumpets at the outset a desire to account for a culture without God
 13 only to conclude with an "atheism" indistinguishable from an anti-Christian crit-
 14 ical deism or various heterodox theisms. Atheism in its fullest sense—a disbelief
 15 in God—is not simply a variety of heresy, but a belief that one lives in a world
 16 without design, plan, or care for its creatures. Why did some readers and listeners
 17 reach that belief and disbelief? To answer that question in terms of both emotions
 18 and thought, from the outside looking in, would require a unified field theory of
 19 cognition. I'll wait.

20 —Alan Charles Kors

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 25 **Emmanuel Alloa, *Partages de la Perspective* (Paris: Fayard, 2020), 228 pp.**

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 27 Abraham Bosse (c. 1604–76) was a well-known French printmaker and a zeal-
 28 ous propagator of Desargues's perspectival technique, which basically was an
 29 elaboration of the linear perspective invented by Florentine painters of the fif-
 30 teenth century. For a book of 1647 called *The Universal Technique of M. Desargues*,
 31 Bosse made an etching, untitled but commonly referred to as *Les perspectiveurs*, in
 32 which we see an almost empty space with three well-dressed men placed at dif-
 33 ferent distances and in different orientations. They seem to look for something
 34 to paint, since they are represented each with an "eye pyramid." The top of the
 35 pyramid—Desargues called it "le rayonnement de la vue" (the radiation of the
 36 gaze)—is the point between the two eyes. That point is connected by straight
 37 lines to the four corners of the supposed visual field of the viewer. This pyramid
 38 is meant to help the artist to calculate the right proportions for the objects in his
 39 paintings.

40 Emmanuel Alloa uses this image to illustrate a problem often associated
 41 with perspectivism in philosophy: in Bosse's etching, the men do not see one

1 another; their gazes do not meet; each seems to live in a separate world. Those
2 men embody the “banal” or “weak” conception of perspective that Gilles Deleuze
3 criticizes. Instead of connecting people, the notion of perspective as an eye pyra-
4 mid, a kind of tunnel, induces them to avoid encounter. It corresponds to the
5 notion of perspective used to put an end to discussion by saying that we all have
6 our different viewpoints, thereby dissolving a disagreement instead of learning
7 from each other’s standpoints.

8 Contrary to the “perspectivers” depicted by the printmaker, Alloa asks
9 whether we can try to “share perspectives.” By examining that question in
10 response to Deleuze’s challenge, Alloa develops a stronger version of perspectiv-
11 ism. He emphasizes that any perspective is a perspective of someone on some-
12 thing—on *some* thing, *quelque chose*, not *all* things, *toutes choses*—which means
13 that a perspective, intrinsically limited, always cries out for completion by other
14 perspectives. Inspired by Nietzsche (“the more eyes, various eyes we are able to
15 use for the same thing, the more complete will be our ‘concept’ of the thing, our
16 ‘objectivity’”), Alloa constructs in other ways and independently an epistemol-
17 ogy akin to that of Sandra Harding and other proponents of “standpoint theory.”
18 Against recent objections to a perspectivism that is too closely linked to relativ-
19 ism, Alloa advances a “new perspectivism” that demands and even celebrates plu-
20 rality without abandoning the notions of truth and objectivity.

21 —*Thibault De Meyer*

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26 **Kevin Binfield, ed., *Writings of the Luddites***
(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 279 + xxviii pp.

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29 When I mentioned to a friend that I was going to review this book, he replied:
30 “Luddites? You mean, the Flat Earthers?” There is a distinction, I reminded
31 him, between science and technology, and the Luddites had no problem, *qua*
32 Luddites, with modern science, really only with problems with a few machines
33 that were ruining their lives as artisans in the English textile industry. I could
34 have added that Jeffrey Burton Russell’s book *Inventing the Flat Earth* demon-
35 strates that, “with extraordinarily few exceptions, no educated person in the his-
36 tory of Western Civilization from the third century BC onward believed that the
37 Earth was flat” and that even the belief that people had believed the Earth was flat
38 did not arise until around 1870, in a time of controversy between scientists and
39 the general culture over the theory of evolution. My friend is not a historian or
40 scientist (but then neither am I), and I concluded that his remark meant no more
41 than “It’s high time you got a cell phone.” When reading an article on historiog-