

What was the role of the collection in the contemporary society? What were its setbacks and positive impact? Has the collection added to the development of specifically qualified readers? Michiel van Groesen does not omit these problems and presenting his findings makes a clear suggestion about his opinion on the impact of this collection.

The Representations of the Overseas World in the De Bry Collection of Voyages is fascinating for a reader interested in the early modern prints or in the representations of the outside world based on the writings of contemporary writers. What I found especially inspiring were the fragments that point to the development and change in the public opinion of those times—discovery and colonization led to an expansion of the European consciousness about these unknown, new found lands. If one is looking for a detailed explanation and interpretation of De Bry's presentation of the overseas world, one may be somewhat frustrated by the scarcity of such an approach. But on the other hand, Michiel van Groesen's comparative analysis and interpretation of the images of travel writing has given us a lot of material for further study.

Jen E. Boyle. *Anamorphosis in Early Modern Literature: Mediation and Affect*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2010. ix + 165 pp. + 18 illus. \$99.95. Review by LARA DODDS, MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY.

Anamorphosis is a trick of perspective that allows two images to be inscribed within a single viewing area. Stand here and observe two Renaissance gentlemen at the height of their influence; move slightly and the skull appears, shadowing the worldly concerns of the painting with an imminent and inevitable mortality. Since the publication of Greenblatt's analysis of Holbein's *The Ambassadors* in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, anamorphosis has served as a convenient trope for representing the instabilities of early modern subjectivity. Jen Boyle's *Anamorphosis in Early Modern Literature* returns to this well-traveled ground with a study of anamorphosis as a cultural practice that anticipates the critical problems posed by new media. Boyle is particularly interested in the way that anamorphosis, like more contemporary forms

of mediation such as “games, satellites, webs, and interfaces” (7), can serve as the catalyst for what Bryan Reynolds describes as “transversal effects,” which “make social change possible because they occupy and de-stabilize multiple conceptual and affective registers at once” (4). The burden of the project is thus to examine sites of anamorphosis in order to uncover alternatives to a post-Cartesian understanding of perspective as a rationalizing and disciplining formation.

The book is structured as a series of six chapters that span the second half of the seventeenth century and the first two decades of the eighteenth. The first chapter introduces the popular genre of the “mathematical recreation” or perspective manual. These works, often translated from Continental sources, include a varied collection of mathematical tricks and games, demonstrations of anamorphosis and other perspective techniques, and theoretical discussions of perception. Boyle argues that these books are significant because they demonstrate that perspective during the seventeenth century should not be understood solely or even primarily in terms of the production of the “points” or “subjecting gazes” of a Cartesian or Euclidean representational system (17). Rather, these texts suggest that perspective produces a richer and more varied “interface between the body and technology” (16). In these manuals Boyle finds a definition of perspective as an embodied and craft practice that provides a model for the function of perspective “*techne*” that she examines in the second half of the chapter. In works by Lucy Hutchinson and Thomas Hobbes, the Lucretian legacy is determinative: the image or *simulacra* functions to “re-produce” and also “transform” biopower (42).

The following three chapters look more specifically at the function of anamorphosis within literary texts during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Two chapters on Milton examine the function of anamorphosis in *Paradise Lost*, first as an alternative to the panoptic or controlling perspective of God and Satan and second as a way of rethinking the problem of allegory. The second of the two Milton chapters is probably the best in the book. Here Boyle argues that “perspective is not just a metaphor in the poem, but an interactive system and procedural aesthetics that requires a continual renegotiation with a formal and technical limits of perception, and the means by which such *techne* mediate embodied agency and authority” (95). Boyle fol-

lows Karen Edwards in identifying Eve as a “historian-philosopher,” and suggests that the Fall, initiated by Satan’s appearance in her dream, is the fulcrum that divides the “anamorphic” Eve, fully embodied in the garden, from the disembodied dreams of the poem’s final books. The second half of this chapter provides a truly innovative reading of the anamorphic aspects of the allegory of Sin and Death by showing how the spatial dimensions of the episode allow Sin to function as an invitation to participate in the bodily and temporal disjunctions of anamorphosis.

For all of its strengths, however, this chapter also demonstrates the characteristic shortcomings of this book. The focus of each chapter is often dispersed and the argument hard to follow and sometimes insufficiently developed. In this case, the two topics of the chapter are not integrated or resolved. The attention to Eve and Sin implicitly raises the question of gender and anamorphosis, but Boyle does not address her reasons for linking these subjects in this chapter even though, as she acknowledges, the connection between Eve and Sin is an important topic in Milton scholarship. Throughout the book, there is an unfortunate tendency for Boyle’s interest in new media theory to swamp the historical and textual specificity of her materials. For instance, the opening of chapter 2 begins with a citation of Hobbes’s fascinating description of Davenant’s *Gondibert* as having an “affect in the imagination” not unlike that created by a “curious kind of perspective, where he that looks through a short hollow pipe upon a picture containing diverse figures sees none of These that are painted, but some one person made up on their parts” (45). Yet Boyle moves very quickly from this passage to a discussion of the image technologies of contemporary cognitive science and digital humanities, without interrogating the relationship between anamorphosis and the debates about the appropriate style and content of the Christian epic that provide the context for Hobbes’s comments. Thus Boyle misses an opportunity to show how her insights about the mediating powers of anamorphosis contribute to the scholarly debates that she herself raises in the argument about prolepsis in Milton’s epic that follows.

Sandwiched between the two Milton chapters is a discussion of Margaret Cavendish’s *Blazing World* in the context of the writing of

English contemporaries such as Robert Hooke and as an anticipation of Leibniz and later theorists. Focusing on the Empress's "Cabbala," Boyle suggests that this text models a "methodology and history that defies the prevailing empiricism" (82). Boyle's approach yields insightful observations about the multiple mediations of a text such as *The Blazing World*, which is, Boyle points out, anamorphically joined to its philosophical companion, *Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy*.

The final two chapters extend the discussion of perspective technologies and anamorphosis into the eighteenth century through a discussion of Defoe's novels *The Journal of the Plague Year* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Here Boyle returns to the perspective manuals and handbooks that she discussed in the first chapter. By the 1680s these books have a new function through their association with commercial and military applications. Drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari's concept of deterritorialization, Boyle argues that Defoe's novels use techniques of narration to posit a space resistant to such forms of control.

The greatest success of *Anamorphosis in Early Modern Literature* is to bring contemporary new media studies into contact with the technologies of mediation that were increasingly significant throughout the seventeenth century. In an anamorphosis of history, Boyle suggests in the conclusion of her study, recent developments in neuroscience, the discovery of mirror neurons, offer "ghosts" of the Lucretian form of perception enabled by early modern anamorphosis (147).