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Bernd-Christian Otto and Michael Stausberg (eds), *Defining Magic: A Reader* (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2013); xiii, 281 pp., $44.95 (paperback).

This anthology is an ambitious undertaking, as the "General Introduction" makes clear. The complexities and disagreements in the academic study of magic, many of which are relevant to other "category" words like religion and science are in the foreground. Editors Otto and Stausberg place "magic" in quotation marks and provide lists of phenomena that are grouped under the term, indicating the pluses and minuses of a Wittgensteinian "family resemblance" classification. The book is in four parts: the first is a representative sample of primary sources from Plato (427–347 BCE) to Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831–1891); the second is four essays by Edward B. Tylor, James G. Frazer, Marcel Mauss and Henri Hubert, and Emile Durkheim that are foundational to academic debates on magic; the third part is six mid-twentieth century essays by Gerardus van der Leeuw, Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, Bronislaw Malinowski, Robin Horton, Stanley J. Tambiah and Edmund R. Leach; and the fourth section is five new studies by the contemporary scholars Susan Greenwood, Christopher Lehrich, Jesper Sørensen, Kimberley B. Stratton, and Randall Styers.

The compilation is entertaining and enjoyable, but without familiarity with the primary sources and the history of the academic disciplines of religious studies and anthropology, general readers or modern Pagans seeking to learn more of the history of magic and the theoretical frameworks used to interpret it, will find reading *Defining Magic: A Reader* a struggle. Otto and Stausberg provide a short introduction to each primary text, and the selections are commendably brief, but the extracts from Plato's *Alcibiades* and *Laws*, Pliny the Elder, Plotinus, Augustine of Hippo, Isidore of Seville, the *Suda*, Thomas Aquinas, Agrippa of Nettesheim, Denis Diderot and Madame Blavatsky are not easily comprehended as stages in the evolution of magic. The academic articles will be more familiar to scholarly readers, although the strategy of extracting small sections from lengthy books like Tylor's two volume *Primitive Culture* (1871) or Frazer's multi-volume *The Golden Bough* (1890) is questionable. These works are rarely appreciated as a whole by contemporary readers who have lost patience with long-form texts and adhere to a

model of knowledge that privileges mid-twentieth century learning above all that precedes it.

Part three shifts attention to those articles that date from the mid-twentieth century, and each theorist is given a great deal of page space and the emerging narrative is that of the internal logics or rationality of magic as it is encountered in specific contexts (for example, the Zande of Evans-Pritchard), and of the ways in which magic connects to Western science, covered by Horton in his research among the Kalabari of Nigeria. The fourth part opens with Greenwood's positing of magic as a "legitimate form of knowledge" (197), which takes into account the role of imagination, communication, and the links between spirit and matter. This contribution leads the way in signaling the main theme as working out the relationship between magic and science in modernity. Lehrich and Sørensen make claims that are important: Lehrich says that "We need definitions of magic … to reject them is to pretend they have no power" (228); and Sørensen argues that magic is "a non-systemic and context-dependent interpretive strategy" (239). Stratton returns focus to the ancient world, with a refreshing interest in gender and sexuality, and Styers explores the "play of power" (255) as a core interest in the history of magic. I recommend this book to all who are interested in the history of magic. However, for those readers who are not familiar with the academic debates concerning the history of magic in the Western world, Otto and Stausberg's carefully selected anthology will prove challenging.

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