serait à creuser, en gardant à l'esprit que les modèles italiens de l'Espagne venaient essentiellement de Naples ou de Gênes.

Il serait malséant de reprocher à André Turcat de n'avoir pu apporter une réponse définitive à des problèmes aussi complexes. Il était assurément trop tôt pour le tenter. Mais par la riche documentation qu'il apporte, son ouvrage permet désormais de les poser, et il restera indispensable pour quiconque voudra tenter de les résoudre.

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Linda Woodbridge. *The Scythe of Saturn: Shakespeare and Magical Thinking*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994. Pp. vi, 390.

In 1984 — an age ago — Philip K. Bock's *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Culture: An Anthropological View* applied anthropological methods to the texts, cautioning that selection of facts and levels of abstraction can distort history, and warning us to recognize our antagonisms to Renaissance sensibility. Woodbridge cites anthropological observations from numerous cultures to place together a cultural backdrop against which Shakespeare will *not* be "our contemporary." Whereas Bock, and Kirby Farrell in his 1975 *Shakespeare's Creation* — both are glancingly cited by Woodbridge —, approve the magic of Shakespeare's creativity, Woodbridge, denying that he could transcend his cultural limitations, situates Shakespeare in "magical thinking," produced when Renaissance rationalism drove medieval magical structures into the unconscious (p. 5). For Bock and Farrell the art "which stirs us to wonder" (Farrell, p. 4) is not diminished by Shakespeare's use of "magical thinking." Woodbridge separates this concept from "conscious magical belief" (p. 12) by invoking Freud and followers. Nothing is said of the aristocratic and learned magicians with whom Shakespeare probably was acquainted. Were they all too conscious? Woodbridge describes "magical thinking" as "like a concrete wall that remains standing after the forms into which it has been poured — true magical belief — have been knocked away" (p. 13); as "steel girders holding up the very edifice of [Shakespeare's] plays" (p. 20); "mental girders that structured the mind of the age" (p. 82), and so on.

A chapter canvassing theoretical positions to be subsequently deployed seems designed to display eclectic even-handedness, sharing Foucault's wariness of "totalitarian theories" (p. 41). The concept of steady progress toward rational modernity — Whig history — seems to be balanced by a theory of historical oscillation (p. 36). But this merely holds us "in false gaze," for the book's slant is contemporary cultural-moralism: moderns rout ancients. Sir James Fraser (*The Golden Bough*) is the most notable scapegoat. Guilty of "butterfly collecting" methods (p. 18), he is also condescending (p. 94), dubious (pp. 133, 153) and

embarrassingly ethnocentric (p. 14); an elderly authority lacking solid theory (p. 91), and a contributor to "colonial paternalism" (p. 14).

Woodbridge proposes to "tease out" (*passim*) deep, unconscious mental structures, and enunciate their principles. Striking insights achieved when Woodbridge closely reads Shakespeare contrast with passages which wonder at the art of the deep theorists. One instance may serve for many: "A binary image of Rome, almost Levi-Straussian in its precise mirror inversion, haunted the European imagination for a thousand years" (p. 48). Often the theorists are centre-stage, while Shakespeare, off-stage, writes as well as he can validating them. The patchwork of cultural studies' sources frequently produces only portentous or banal pronouncements. There is a triumphant tone, for example, when a linguist's findings are said to "dovetail" with anthropological theory: our bodies "are three-dimensional containers into which we put certain things (food, water, air) and out of which other things emerge (food and water wastes, air, blood, etc.)" (p. 47).

Representations of the body are "perhaps the most prominent strain in recent literary study" (p. 17). A significant portion of *The Scythe of Saturn* treats body/society analogies as sites of much submerged magical thinking. Thus Shakespeare's England is concerned with preventing penetration and pollution of its body. As the nation is a body, so it follows that it also has a psyche — mostly dysfunctional. Obsession is ubiquitous in Shakespeare's mentality: obsessed with "sexually besieged wives" (p. 71), with "endangered chastity" (p. 67), etc. The early modern period, obsessed by many things (actually common concerns anytime), is, finally, "age obsessed" (p. 274). Shakespeare's England is paranoid with a "palisading" mentality to guard against penetration, which, under James I's pacific inclinations, becomes a colonizing mentality disguised by the pacific term "plantation." Colonizing — rape of the virgin — is severely condemned.

The body-orifice-rape-pollution concepts applied to historical events and geographical entities yield stimulating insights, allowing the reader to feel that disparate, recalcitrant matters have been brought into focus. Yet this cultural-historicist treatment, inherently judgemental of the past in terms of a modern liberal agenda, must be at odds with the account that historians would typically offer. For instance, a palisading obsession fuelled by magical rites to ward off penetration and pollution is viewed in an historian's causal account as a rational national defense policy against real military, ideological and economic enemies. Deep structures or fanciful generalisations? There may be no mediation possible between these viewpoints, but it would be useful to turn again to Sir Karl Popper on historical analysis and inference by analogy in *The Poverty of Historicism*.

An important part of the historical collision Woodbridge maps is the growing ascendancy of rationalism within religious belief and practice. Given a "culture dominated by . . . religion" (p. 286), there is remarkably little said about religion,

especially as conscious thought. RELigion is assimilated to magic, as is theology, pictured here as continuous with magic. Magical beliefs may be incoherent, but that is “no worse than the systematically unified structure of unempirical illusions that is Christian theology” (p. 39). That this is ahistorical could be argued from Eamon Duffy’s *The Stripping of the Altars* (1992), which shows Renaissance theologians meticulously distinguishing between lay Christians applying sacramentals (including charms and incantations) to this-worldly concerns, and paganism and magic. The early modern world took seriously distinctions which Woodbridge elides. Being unsympathetic to the claims of religion is fair enough — the author’s prerogative — so long as the early moderns’ own engagement with these claims (including rejection, by some forward wits) is not discounted. Woodbridge’s Shakespeare cares much more for the legacy of Rome than scripture and Christian doctrine. Valuable insights are offered this way, such as the notion of James I’s Augustan ideology. Jacobean “official ideology” (p. 73) is, however, more complex, for James cultivated his image as both a David and a Solomon to his people. Nor was Jacobean ideology simply pacifist: Prince Henry’s court exuded Protestant bellicosity.

Among the new readings Woodbridge presents is *Measure for Measure* in terms of saturnalia. The “world-upside-down” topos adds invigorating new understanding of struggles between youth and age, liberty and repression. But seeing the play only in saturnalian terms renders invisible the great religious question with which Shakespeare engages: the tension between the demands of Christianity and ineluctable imperatives of law and polity. That the play probes the question, “Can there be a ‘Christian’ polity?” is signalled powerfully in its language. Woodbridge’s saturnalian account, highlighting sexual repression, concludes that the play’s strategy “backfires” and that the moral chaos of its ending may be permanent. Taking Shakespeare’s grasp of the religious-political dilemma, however, allows one to see why such a conclusion is not the whole truth.

Treatments of specific passages are often as exhilarating as the “bricolage” (p. 41) of academic opinion is dull. Among the best is the account of “evil eye” magic in *Othello*, demonstrating also the play’s metaphorical richness. The discussion of fertility/sterility associations and the regenerative power of dismemberment in *Titus Andronicus* really does display the deeper structures of a play whose surface is strewn with puzzles. A fine treatment of deer-slaying in *As You Like It* reveals a subtle and complex debate, as does the discussion of *Realpolitik* in tension with magic ritual framework in *Richard II*.

This is a longer book than necessary. The final chapter “Owning up to Magic,” perhaps a carnivalesque inversion, imputes magical thinking to the modern world as a pretext for castigating, as in a charivari, disapproved contemporary politics. This rebarbative exercise should have been omitted. The idea is much better realised in Lewis Lapham’s “Elfland,” in a recent *Harper’s*. The proff-reading leaves also much to be desired: there are errors of fact and grammar. The writing

often seems provisional and cluttered with jargon. Pity that a book on Shakespeare and magic should be charmlessly written.

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