



Magic: A Very Short Introduction

Owen Davies

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Magic is a much-used term with a complex and controversial history. As a concept and a practice, it has attracted the attention of theologians, anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists, artists, and historians over the centuries. This *Very Short Introduction* explains why. Magic has been defined in terms of the false religions of others, as an evolutionary stage in human thought, a universal state of mind, and a liberating expression of the imagination. For hundreds of millions of people today, no matter their religious persuasion, magic is a real force that helps them to overcome misfortune, poverty, and illness. Indeed, with magic as relevant today as it ever was, it raises questions about the meaning of human progress.



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