



Magic: A Very Short Introduction

By Owen Davies

Oxford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Magic: A Very Short Introduction, Owen Davies, Defining 'magic' is a maddening task. Over the last century numerous philosophers, anthropologists, historians, and theologians have attempted to pin down its essential meaning, sometimes analysing it in such complex and abstruse depth that it all but loses its sense altogether. For this reason, many people often shy away from providing a detailed definition, assuming it is generally understood as the human control of supernatural forces. 'Magic' continues to pervade the popular imagination and idiom. People feel comfortable with its contemporary multiple meanings, unaware of the controversy, conflict, and debate its definition has caused over two and a half millennia. In common usage today 'magic' is uttered in reference to the supernatural, superstition, illusion, trickery, religious miracles, fantasies, and as a simple superlative. The literary confection known as 'magical realism' has considerable appeal and many modern scientists have ironically incorporated the word into their vocabulary, with their 'magic acid', 'magic bullets' and 'magic angles'. Since the so-called European Enlightenment magic has often been seen as a marker of primitivism, of a benighted earlier stage of human development. Yet across the modern globalized world hundreds...



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