

## Enchantment

### A Critical Primer

by Ian Alexander Cuthbertson

#### DESCRIPTION:

This book provides an overview of the various ways the concepts enchantment, disenchantment, and re-enchantment have been used both within religious studies scholarship and in related fields. Despite the prevalence of these concepts in recent scholarship, no introductory text on the subject of enchantment has yet been written. The first half of the book provides a concise overview of theoretical work on disenchantment, a critical exploration of empirical evidence for premodern enchantment and modern disenchantment, and an account of how enchantment has been used in scholarly and popular works to mark specific beliefs and practices as unacceptable, dangerous, or delusional. The second half of the book explores recent scholarship on re-enchantment and distinguishes between two main varieties: rational re-enchantment, which involves heightened emotions that are free from negative appraisals of premodern belief in magic and spirits, and spiritual re-enchantment, which involves the recovery of premodern beliefs and practices or the development of new alternative spiritual paths. The final chapter outlines a novel theoretical model for explaining modern enchantment as a variety of playful half-belief. This book will be useful for scholars and students working on a variety of topics including religion in modernity, theories of secularization, conflicts between science and religion, new religious movements, new materialisms, and immanent justifications for environmentalism.

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Further Reading

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