



# Disenchanted India: Organized Rationalism and Criticism of Religion in India

*Johannes Quack*

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India is frequently represented as the quintessential land of religion. Johannes Quack challenges this representation through an examination of the contemporary Indian rationalist movement, which affirms the values and attitudes of atheism, humanism, or free-thinking. Quack shows the rationalists' emphasis on maintaining links to atheism and materialism in ancient India and outlines their strong ties to the intellectual currents of modern European history. At the heart of *Disenchanted India* lies an ethnographic study of the organization "Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti" (Organization for the Eradication of Superstition), based in the Indian State of Maharashtra. Quack gives a nuanced account of the rationalists' specific "mode of unbelief," describing their efforts to encourage a scientific temper and combat beliefs and practices they regard as "superstitious". Quack also shows the role played by rationalism in their day-to-day lives, as well as the organization's controversial position within Indian society. *Disenchanted India* provides crucial insights into the nature of rationalism in the intellectual life and cultural politics of India.

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