

ENCHANTMENT

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On Charisma and the Sublime
in the Arts of the West

C. Stephen Jaeger

PENN

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*This book is dedicated to
Hannah and Zoe Jaeger*

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“O Shahrazad, that was a noble and admirable story! O wise and subtle one, you have taught me many lessons . . . I have listened to you for a thousand nights and one night, and how my soul is changed and joyful, it beats with an appetite for life.”

—King Shahryar to his wife, Shahrazad, as she finishes
the last story of the *Thousand and One Nights*

Utilitarian economists, skeletons of schoolmasters, Commissioners of Fact, genteel and used-up infidels, gabblers of many little dog-eared creeds, the poor you will have always with you. Cultivate in them, while there is yet time, the utmost graces of the fancies and affections to adorn their lives so much in need of ornament; or, in the day of your triumph, when romance is utterly driven out of their souls, and they and a bare existence stand face to face, Reality will take a wolfish turn, and make an end of you!

. . . The dreams of childhood—its airy fables; its graceful, beautiful, humane, impossible adornments of the world beyond: so good to be believed in once, so good to be remembered when outgrown, for then the least among them rises to the stature of a great Charity in the heart, suffering little children to come into the midst of it.

—Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

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