

Česká společnost pro religionistiku, o.s.
Vás srdečně zve na veřejnou přednášku, kterou prosloví
dne 5. 11. 2009 od 18:00 ve velké zasedací místnosti děkanátu
(budova C, 2. patro)

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Reconceptualizing Magic: Cognitive Representations of Ritual Efficacy

The concept of magic has a long and disputed past in the Scientific Study of Religion, as well as in neighboring disciplines such as Anthropology and Sociology. Used as a concept to categorize a particular type of ritual practices (rituals falsely believed to contain an automatic effect), magic has a history as a polemical concept used to denigrate other peoples' ritual behavior as well as to separate authorized from non-authorized ritual practices. This dubious background has led many scholars to abandon the concept as a scholarly category and few works on magic have been produced within the last two decades. However, phenomena do not disappear with concepts, and most people still have the intuition that the concept points to a particular class of phenomena and that we need theories that account for these.

This lecture will present a new way of understanding magic based on findings from the cognitive sciences. It will be argued that magic is based on quite ordinary and basic cognitive processes found in all humans; that these processes are crucial in representing rituals as having an effect on the world; that ritual actions contain characteristics that evoke representations of magical efficacy; and that such representation are more basic and compete with theologically informed interpretations. This will lead to a renewed discussion of the relation between magic and religion as categories pointing to different aspects of how humans understand ritual behavior and relate these to their immediate context.

Přednáška bude proslovena v angličtině, tlumočení nebude zajištěno.