



**From Tricks
to Truth?**

Source: Dominique Gérard

The Lerner Workshop in Religion and Society at NYU

FROM TRICKS TO TRUTH? MAGIC AS RELIGIOUS METAPHOR

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2015 | 5:00 - 6:30 PM
The Torch Club | 18 Waverly Place



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Magic and religion have a close but complicated relationship. At times, they seem to be complementary frameworks of belief, at others, antagonistic rivals. Scholars have often focused on comparisons involving forms of magic that are conspicuously religion-like, such as occult rituals with clear supernatural overtones. But what about magic as a form of entertaining trickery? Might this kind of sleight-of-hand spectacle that dramatizes tensions between belief and disbelief, rationality and irrationality have religious connotations all its own? In this talk, I explore shifting definitions of magic as a cultural category and scholarly concept, rethinking its connections to religion with a particular interest in the tensions between ritual and entertainment magic. Drawing purposely on examples that blur boundaries between enchantment and disenchantment—from interreligious magic performances in the colonial contact zone of nineteenth century Algeria to the use of magic tricks as a medium for religious messages by Evangelical gospel magicians in the contemporary United States—I consider the complex variety of ways that magic can function as a religious metaphor. Join us for a magical evening!

Sponsored by The Religious Studies Program, NYU. Co-sponsored by The Center for Religion and Media and Dean of the College of Arts and Science, NYU. For further information contact religious.studies@nyu.edu Event is open to the public.