

Religion Paranormal Beliefs And Distrust In Science

This important multivolume work sheds light on current—and future—research on cultural universals and differences in personality in their evolutionary, ecological, and cultural contexts. • Uniquely brings together diverse topics and theoretical viewpoints related to personality across cultures, including cross-cultural, cultural, indigenous, evolutionary, and neuroscientific perspectives • Provides a thorough picture of current knowledge as well as directions for future research • Comprises 31 chapters by leading international researchers discussing their respective areas of expertise • Addresses personality broadly defined to include universal and indigenous traits, personality types, the self, emotion, motivation, values, beliefs, and life narratives • Draws on cultural samples from every continent except Antarctica

Religion in Personality Theory makes clear the link between theory and research and personality and religion. Presently, most personality texts have a limited discussion of religion and reference few theorists other than Freud and Maslow in relation to the subject. This book reviews the theory and the empirical literature on the writings of 14 theorists. Every chapter concludes with a summation of the current research on the theorist's proposals. Reviews: "Frederick Walborn has written an excellent text that explores the degree to which classical personality theorists were personally influenced by and focused upon religion in developing their personality theories. Each theorist is presented in sufficient detail so that their personal views of religion are seen to influence the theories they developed. In addition, the current status of the empirical evidence in the psychology of religion is explored in the context of the theorist and theory to which the data is most relevant. Current and up to date, this text is appropriate for either a course in Personality or as an introduction to the Psychology of Religion. The author's own comprehensive theory of religion and spirituality creatively integrates the positive contributions of the classical personality theorist to the contemporary psychology of religion." -Ralph W. Hood Jr., Professor of Psychology, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga "In this interesting and accessible book, Frederick Walborn thoughtfully probes the place of religion and spirituality in the writings of a broad range of classical psychological thinkers and offers an insightful critique of current empirical research on the complex relation of religion and spirituality to individual well-being." -Michele Dillon, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology, University of New Hampshire, Durham, New Hampshire Identifies what major personality theorists say about religion Investigates whether evidence supports or refutes predictions made by different theories Concludes with a comprehensive integrative theory on religion and spirituality

A rapidly growing number of Americans are embracing life outside the bounds of organized religion. Although America has long been viewed as a fervently religious Christian nation, survey data shows that more and more Americans are identifying as "not religious." There are more non-religious Americans than ever before, yet social scientists have not adequately studied or typologized secularities, and the lived reality of secular individuals in America has not been astutely analyzed. American Secularism documents how changes to American society have fueled these shifts in the non-religious landscape and examines the diverse and dynamic world of secular Americans. This volume offers a theoretical framework for understanding secularisms. It explores secular Americans' thought and practice to understand secularisms as worldviews in their own right, not just as negations of religion. Drawing on empirical data, the authors examine how people live secular lives and make meaning outside of organized religion. Joseph O. Baker and Buster G. Smith link secularities to broader issues of social power and organization, providing an empirical and cultural perspective on the secular landscape. In so doing, they demonstrate that shifts in American secularism are reflective of changes in the political meanings of "religion" in American culture. American Secularism addresses the contemporary lived reality of secular individuals, outlining forms of secular identity and showing their connection to patterns of family formation, sexuality, and politics, providing scholars of religion with a more comprehensive understanding of worldviews that do not include traditional religion. Data Analyses Appendix Instructor's Guide

This groundbreaking primer illuminates contemplative methods that can improve mental and physical health. * Foreword by renowned author and scholar Huston Smith, subject of the five-part PBS special, The Wisdom of Faith with Huston Smith * Contributions from 13 expert authors * Case studies showing how contemplative practices are being used to cope with modern stress and disorders among groups as diverse as caregivers, pregnant women, people living with HIV, and veterans dealing with PTSD

The two-volume Cambridge History of Atheism offers an authoritative and up to date account of a subject of contemporary interest. Comprised of sixty essays by an international team of scholars, this History is comprehensive in scope. The essays are written from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, including religious studies, philosophy, sociology, and classics. Offering a global overview of the subject, from antiquity to the present, the volumes examine the phenomenon of unbelief in the context of Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish societies. They explore atheism and the early modern Scientific Revolution, as well as the development of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and its continuing implications. The History also includes general survey essays on the impact of scepticism, agnosticism and atheism, as well as contemporary assessments of thinking. Providing essential information on the nature and history of atheism, The Cambridge History of Atheism will be indispensable for both scholarship and teaching, at all levels.

In the past, museums often changed the meaning of icons or statues of deities from sacred to aesthetic, or used them to declare the superiority of Western society, or simply as cultural and historical evidence. The last generation has seen faith groups demanding to control 'their' objects, and curators recognising that objects can only be understood within their original religious context. In recent years there has been an explosion of interest in the role religion plays in museums, with major exhibitions highlighting the religious as well as the historical nature of objects. Using examples from all over the world, Religious Objects in Museums is the first book to examine how religious objects are transformed when they enter the museum, and how they affect curators and visitors. It examines the full range of meanings that religious objects may bear - as scientific specimen, sacred icon, work of art, or historical record. Showing how objects may be used to argue a point, tell a story or promote a cause, may be worshipped, ignored, or seen as dangerous or unlucky, this highly accessible book is an essential introduction to the subject.

A few years ago, a debate between atheists and religious believers spilled out from the halls of academia and the pews of America's churches and into the public spotlight. A crop of atheist manifestos led the charge, surmounting and holding the tops of the nonfiction bestseller lists. This offensive brought on an outpouring of religious rebuttals. As both sides exchanged spirited volleys, accusations were leveled; myths, stereotypes, and strawmen arguments were perpetuated; and bitter hostility filled the air. Today many of these misconceptions and myths linger on, along with the generally acrimonious spirit of the debate. In America's

Blessings, distinguished researcher Rodney Stark seeks to clear the air of this hostility and debunk many of the debate's most widely perpetuated misconceptions by drawing from an expansive pool of sociological findings. Looking at the measurable effects of religious faith and practice on American society, Stark rises above the fray and focuses exclusively on facts. His findings may surprise many, atheists and believers alike. Starting with a historical overview, Stark traces America's religious roots from the founding of the country up through the present day, showing that religiosity in America has never been consistent, static, or monolithic. Interestingly, he finds that religious practice is now more prevalent than ever in America, despite any claims to the contrary. From here, Stark devotes whole chapters to unpacking the latest research on how religion affects different facets of modern American life, including crime, family life, sexuality, mental and physical health, sophistication, charity, and overall prosperity. The cumulative effect is that when translated into comparisons with western European nations, the United States comes out on top again and again. Thanks in no small part to America's rich religious culture, the nation has far lower crime rates, much higher levels of charitable giving, better health, stronger marriages, and less suicide, to note only a few of the benefits. In the final chapter, Stark assesses the financial impact of these religious realities. It turns out that belief benefits the American economy—and all 300 million citizens, believer and nonbeliever alike—by a conservative estimate of \$2.6 trillion a year. Despite the atheist outcry against religion, the remarkable conclusion is clear: all Americans, from the most religious among us to our secular neighbors, really ought to count our blessings.

Certaines expériences fortes peuvent entraîner une transformation soudaine dans la façon de penser et de voir les choses. Cette modification du paradigme se fait de façon parfois brutale, selon une structure cognition-émotion précise baptisée «syndrome du bernard-l'ermite». Parmi ces expériences, les phénomènes paranormaux – de par leur nature exceptionnelle et souvent traumatisante – sont un terrain favorable à un changement dans la structure d'appréhension du réel qui pourrait être une des clés de compréhension de l'émergence d'une personnalité schizotypique. Plus d'un jeune sur deux rapporte avoir vécu au moins une fois dans sa vie une expérience paranormale. Cet ouvrage s'adresse non seulement à eux mais à tous ceux qui ont le souci ou la charge d'encadrer des adolescents: parents, éducateurs et thérapeutes. S'il s'adresse à un public universitaire, il est néanmoins abordable pour toute personne intéressée par ces questions.

In a world where science faces challenges from creationists and climate change deniers, and where social media is awash with wild conspiracy theories, it is no longer enough for scientists, pundits, and activists to simply ask the public to trust science. Rather, all must better understand how science works, and why science is essential. By exploring many of the odd beliefs embraced by large sections of the public that are rejected by the scientific mainstream, *Weirdness!* makes a case for science that goes beyond popular slogans. It takes seriously claims that paranormal phenomena, such as psychic abilities and magical creatures, might be real, but demonstrates how such phenomena would extend beyond the laws of nature. It rejects a sharp boundary between science and religion, while explaining how to negotiate their real differences. Denials of science cause no end of trouble, but so too does placing blind trust in science. As *Weirdness!* reminds readers, science should not be seen as a mechanism that takes in data and spits out truth—indeed, what we get wrong about how the world works is often as interesting as what we get right.

There are things in this world that we cannot explain, and occurrences that make us ponder the very nature of our existence. *True Tales of the Paranormal* is an intriguing examination of reincarnation, premonitions, and other spooky inexplicables from a scientific perspective, exploring modern scientific theories and current research. The author also provides suggestions on how to deal with paranormal experiences and where to go for help and information. Even readers who have never had psychic experiences will be drawn into the lives of those who have and will be left questioning the world as we know it.

America is in civic chaos, its politics rife with conspiracy theories and false information. Nationalism and authoritarianism are on the rise, while scientists, universities, and news organizations are viewed with increasing mistrust. Its citizens reject scientific evidence on climate change and vaccinations while embracing myths of impending apocalypse. And then there is Donald Trump, a presidential candidate who won the support of millions of conservative Christians despite having no moral or political convictions. What is going on? The answer, according to J. Eric Oliver and Thomas J. Wood, can be found in the most important force shaping American politics today: human intuition. Much of what seems to be irrational in American politics arises from the growing divide in how its citizens make sense of the world. On one side are rationalists. They use science and reason to understand reality. On the other side are intuitionists. They rely on gut feelings and instincts as their guide to the world. Intuitionists believe in ghosts and End Times prophecies. They embrace conspiracy theories, disbelieve experts, and distrust the media. They are stridently nationalistic and deeply authoritarian in their outlook. And they are the most enthusiastic supporters of Donald Trump. The primary reason why Trump captured the presidency was that he spoke about politics in a way that resonated with how Intuitionists perceive the world. The Intuitionist divide has also become a threat to the American way of life. A generation ago, intuitionists were dispersed across the political spectrum, when most Americans believed in both God and science. Today, intuitionism is ideologically tilted toward the political right. Modern conservatism has become an Intuitionist movement, defined by conspiracy theories, strident nationalism, and hostility to basic civic norms. *Enchanted America* is a clarion call to rationalists of all political persuasions to reach beyond the minority and speak to intuitionists in a way they understand. The values and principles that define American democracy are at stake.

The Psychology of Religion Routledge

This important two-volume contribution to the field of secular studies offers the first comprehensive examination of atheists and non-religious people around the world. • Includes essays by 19 top sociologists and psychologists who study atheism and secularity • Offers extensive bibliographies for each chapter

Based on ethnographic research, this book examines the paranormal investigation subculture in the US. Presenting interviews with investigators as well as extensive field observations, it explores their reasons for getting involved, their use of different investigative methods, the interpretive processes by which they individually and collectively 'sense' spirits, the ways in which these processes are influenced by small group power dynamics, and what paranormal investigation ultimately means to those who participate. While focusing on the practices by which investigators 'sense' spirits in small groups, the author also situates paranormal investigation within a broader cultural context and attends to how investigators attempt to legitimize their practice despite being marginalized by both science and religion. A fascinating study of ghosts as an inherently social phenomenon, *Sensing Spirits* will appeal to sociologists with interests in ethnography, interactionism, cultural studies and subcultures.

Conspiracy theories are inevitable in complex human societies. And while they have always been with us, their ubiquity in our

political discourse is nearly unprecedented. Their salience has increased for a variety of reasons including the increasing access to information among ordinary people, a pervasive sense of powerlessness among those same people, and a widespread distrust of elites. Working in combination, these factors and many other factors are now propelling conspiracy theories into our public sphere on a vast scale. In recent years, scholars have begun to study this genuinely important phenomenon in a concerted way. In *Conspiracy Theories and the People Who Believe Them*, Joseph E. Uscinski has gathered forty top researchers on the topic to provide both the foundational tools and the evidence to better understand conspiracy theories in the United States and around the world. Each chapter is informed by three core questions: Why do so many people believe in conspiracy theories? What are the effects of such theories when they take hold in the public? What can or should be done about the phenomenon? Combining systematic analysis and cutting-edge empirical research, this volume will help us better understand an extremely important, yet relatively neglected, phenomenon.

The First World War was a transformative event, affecting international culture, economics, and geopolitics. Though often presented as the moment heralding a new secular era of modernity, in actuality the war experience was grounded in religious faith and ritual for many participants. This Element examines how religion was employed by the state to solicit support and civic participation, while also being subordinated to the strategic and operational demands of the combatant armies. Even as religion was employed to express dissent, it was also used as a coercive tool to ensure compliance with the wartime demands of the state on civilians.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • “The single most important explanation, and the fullest explanation, of how Donald Trump became president of the United States . . . nothing less than the most important book that I have read this year.”—Lawrence O’Donnell How did we get here? In this sweeping, eloquent history of America, Kurt Andersen shows that what’s happening in our country today—this post-factual, “fake news” moment we’re all living through—is not something new, but rather the ultimate expression of our national character. America was founded by wishful dreamers, magical thinkers, and true believers, by hucksters and their suckers. Fantasy is deeply embedded in our DNA. Over the course of five centuries—from the Salem witch trials to Scientology to the Satanic Panic of the 1980s, from P. T. Barnum to Hollywood and the anything-goes, wild-and-crazy sixties, from conspiracy theories to our fetish for guns and obsession with extraterrestrials—our love of the fantastic has made America exceptional in a way that we’ve never fully acknowledged. From the start, our ultra-individualism was attached to epic dreams and epic fantasies—every citizen was free to believe absolutely anything, or to pretend to be absolutely anybody. With the gleeful erudition and tell-it-like-it-is ferocity of a Christopher Hitchens, Andersen explores whether the great American experiment in liberty has gone off the rails. Fantasyland could not appear at a more perfect moment. If you want to understand Donald Trump and the culture of twenty-first-century America, if you want to know how the lines between reality and illusion have become dangerously blurred, you must read this book. **NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE** “This is a blockbuster of a book. Take a deep breath and dive in.”—Tom Brokaw “[An] absorbing, must-read polemic . . . a provocative new study of America’s cultural history.”—Newsday “Compelling and totally unnerving.”—The Village Voice “A frighteningly convincing and sometimes uproarious picture of a country in steep, perhaps terminal decline that would have the founding fathers weeping into their beards.”—The Guardian “This is an important book—the indispensable book—for understanding America in the age of Trump.”—Walter Isaacson, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Leonardo da Vinci*

Christopher Hitchens, described in the *London Observer* as “one of the most prolific, as well as brilliant, journalists of our time” takes on his biggest subject yet—the increasingly dangerous role of religion in the world. In the tradition of Bertrand Russell’s *Why I Am Not a Christian* and Sam Harris’s recent bestseller, *The End Of Faith*, Christopher Hitchens makes the ultimate case against religion. With a close and erudite reading of the major religious texts, he documents the ways in which religion is a man-made wish, a cause of dangerous sexual repression, and a distortion of our origins in the cosmos. With eloquent clarity, Hitchens frames the argument for a more secular life based on science and reason, in which hell is replaced by the Hubble Telescope’s awesome view of the universe, and Moses and the burning bush give way to the beauty and symmetry of the double helix.

The number of nonreligious people has increased dramatically over the past several decades, yet scholarship on the nonreligious is severely lacking. In response to this critical gap in knowledge, *The Nonreligious* provides a comprehensive summation and analysis of existing social scientific research on secular people and societies. The authors present a thorough overview of existing knowledge while also drawing upon ongoing research and suggesting ways to improve our understanding of this growing population. Offering a research- and data-based examination of the nonreligious, this book will be an invaluable source of information and a foundation for further scholarship. Written in clear, accessible language that will appeal to students and the increasingly interested general reader, *The Nonreligious* provides an unbiased and thorough account of relevant existing scholarship within the social sciences that bears on lived experiences of the nonreligious.

Can science, psychology, and biology explain miracles? This three-volume set attempts to answer that question, presenting the latest, as well as classic, thinking and research regarding miracles from fields that include psychology, psychiatry, theology, biology, and history. We have all heard of what seem miraculous events, which have surfaced across history. They range from stigmata and bleeding icons to deadly tumors that disappear and healers who succeed just by laying hands on the afflicted; from people who can predict unexpected events to so-called mediums and those who can allegedly see and speak with the dead. These books, led by an eminent scholar who serves as series editor for the Praeger series *Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality*, examine miracles of body, mind, and spirit, presenting the most recent research and writing on these uncommon events, aiming to bring hard science to some of the most persistent and peculiar phenomena associated with the human race. Can science, psychology, and biology explain miracles? This three-volume set attempts to answer that question, presenting the latest, as well as classic, thinking and research regarding

miracles from fields that include psychology, psychiatry, theology, biology, and history. From news of a crippled woman who left her wheelchair and walked after an evangelist prayed over her, to stories of people who died on the operating table only to be revived to tell of bright lights and the pathway to the afterlife, we've all heard of what seem miraculous events. They have surfaced across history. They range from stigmata and bleeding icons to deadly tumors that disappear, and healers who succeed just by laying hands on the afflicted; from people who can predict unexpected events to so-called mediums and those who can allegedly see and speak with the dead. Some miracles are intricately tied to religious beliefs, but there are millions of people who ascribe to no particular religion, yet still believe that things happen that defy all laws of nature, and thus defy scientific explanation. In these books, eminent scholar J. Harold Ellens and his team of expert contributors examine miracles of body, mind, and spirit, presenting the most recent research and writing on these uncommon events as they aim to bring hard science to some of the most persistent—and peculiar—phenomena associated with the human race.

Apocalyptic Anxiety traces the sources of American culture's obsession with predicting and preparing for the apocalypse. Author Anthony Aveni explores why Americans take millennial claims seriously, where and how end-of-the-world predictions emerge, how they develop within a broader historical framework, and what we can learn from doomsday predictions of the past. The book begins with the Millerites, the nineteenth-century religious sect of Pastor William Miller, who used biblical calculations to predict October 22, 1844 as the date for the Second Advent of Christ. Aveni also examines several other religious and philosophical movements that have centered on apocalyptic themes—Christian millennialism, the New Age movement and the Age of Aquarius, and various other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century religious sects, concluding with a focus on the Maya mystery of 2012 and the contemporary prophets who connected the end of the world as we know it with the overturning of the Maya calendar. Apocalyptic Anxiety places these seemingly never-ending stories of the world's end in the context of American history. This fascinating exploration of the deep historical and cultural roots of America's voracious appetite for apocalypse will appeal to students of American history and the histories of religion and science, as well as lay readers interested in American culture and doomsday prophecies.

- Shares hundreds of real-life stories, and uses hundreds of sources, many of them forgotten
- Provides a bibliography of authoritative books and articles, both in support of and arguing against beliefs in the supernatural

Ever since the Society for Psychical Research was founded over a hundred years ago, parapsychologists have been attempting to prove the existence of paranormal phenomena - things like clairvoyance, telepathy, precognition, and remote viewing. This research into what is now often called psi has become increasingly technical. Controlled laboratory experiments have replaced systematic surveys of spontaneous occurrences; complicated statistical analyses have replaced anecdotal data. In short, psychical research has aspired to the standards of hard science. With what results? Ray Hyman is supremely qualified to say. A research psychologist held in the highest esteem by both parapsychologists and skeptics, Ray Hyman here reviews the history and methods of psychical research. The Elusive Quarry is Hyman's fascinating, fair-minded critique of the field, a book designed not to debunk but to discern. In Part 1, Parapsychology, Hyman gives us a historical overview: Over the past hundred years, what have been the strongest claims made for the paranormal? Hyman gives close scrutiny to what have been called ganzfeld experiments, a body of research considered by parapsychologists to be especially compelling. Part 2, Scientists and the Paranormal, focuses on the scientists themselves - from Michael Faraday and Sir William Crookes in the last century to Helmut Schmidt and his recent work with random-event generators. Scientists have been interacting with an admittedly unique group of people: psychics. Are their methods of testing and reporting appropriate for the phenomena under examination? Hyman steps outside of the laboratory for his book's third part, Psychic Phenomena, and evaluates the claims of water witching, occult healing, and remote viewing. In doing so, he demonstrates that one's interpretation of scientific data is strongly affected by one's underlying belief - or lack of belief - in paranormal phenomena. In Part 4, The Psychology of Belief, Hyman vividly explains cold reading - that ability psychics have to convince strangers that they know all about them. It's an ability anybody can develop, Hyman says. The psychology is common, not psychic.

Why is reality television flourishing in today's expanding media market? Religion and Reality TV: Faith in Late Capitalism argues that the reality genre offers answers to many of life's urgent questions: Why am I important? What gives my life meaning? How do I present my best self to the world? Case studies address these questions by examining religious representations through late capitalist lenses, including the maintenance of the self, the commodification of the sacred, and the performance of authenticity. The book's fourteen essays explore why religious themes proliferate in reality TV, audiences' fascination with "lived religion," and the economics that make religion and reality TV a successful pairing. Chapters also consider the role of race, gender, and religion in the production and reception of programming. Religion and Reality TV provides a framework for understanding the intersection of celebrity, media attention, beliefs, and values. The book will be of interest to students and scholars of religion and media studies, communication, American studies, and popular culture.

Americans have long been suspicious of experts and elites. This new history explains why so many have believed that science has the power to corrupt American culture. Americans today are often skeptical of scientific authority. Many conservatives dismiss climate change and Darwinism as liberal fictions, arguing that "tenured radicals" have coopted the sciences and other disciplines. Some progressives, especially in the universities, worry that science's celebration of objectivity and neutrality masks its attachment to Eurocentric and patriarchal values. As we grapple with the implications of climate change and revolutions in fields from biotechnology to robotics to computing, it is crucial to understand how scientific authority functions—and where it has run up against political and cultural barriers. Science under Fire reconstructs a century of battles over the cultural implications of science in the United States. Andrew Jewett reveals a persistent current of criticism which maintains that scientists have injected faulty social philosophies into the nation's bloodstream under the cover of neutrality. This charge of corruption has taken many forms and appeared among critics with a wide range of social, political, and theological views, but common to all is

the argument that an ideologically compromised science has produced an array of social ills. Jewett shows that this suspicion of science has been a major force in American politics and culture by tracking its development, varied expressions, and potent consequences since the 1920s. Looking at today's battles over science, Jewett argues that citizens and leaders must steer a course between, on the one hand, the naïve image of science as a pristine, value-neutral form of knowledge, and, on the other, the assumption that scientists' claims are merely ideologies masquerading as truths.

With a New Preface by the Author Scientists have raised questions about religious belief since the earliest development of scientific thought. Over the centuries, as science has become ever more sophisticated and answered many of the questions previously in the domain of religion, more and more people have developed a skeptical point of view regarding religion. Today, many scientists are nonbelievers with a secular, science-based perspective. In this wide-ranging overview, physicist and acclaimed science writer Taner Edis examines the relationship between today's sciences and religious nonbelief. Beginning with a brief history of science and philosophical doubt, Edis goes on to describe those theories in contemporary science that challenge spiritual views by favoring a naturalistic conception of the world. He provides a very readable, nontechnical introduction to the leading scientific ideas that impinge upon religious belief in the areas of modern physics and cosmology, evolutionary biology, and cognitive and brain science. He also shows how science supplies naturalistic explanations for allegedly miraculous and paranormal phenomena and explains widespread belief in the supernatural. Finally, he addresses the political context of debates over science and nonbelief as well as questions about morality. Complete with an historical chronology, an extensive annotated bibliography, and selections from primary sources, *Science and Nonbelief* is an indispensable and accessible reference work on the subject. Taner Edis (Kirksville, MO) is assistant professor of physics at Truman State University.

Individual Differences and Personality, Third Edition provides a comprehensive overview of research on personality. The book begins with the main approaches to the study of personality, basic principles of personality measurement, the concept of personality traits, and the major dimensions of personality variation. Further chapters review personality change and stability, biological causal mechanisms, genetic and environmental influences and evolutionary adaptive function. Personality disorders are examined as are life outcomes—such as relationships, work, health, and others—that are predicted by personality characteristics. The book additionally examines important individual differences, such as mental abilities, vocational interests, religious beliefs, political attitudes and sexuality. The third edition is updated with new findings on age-related differences in personality, on sexual orientation and personality, on socially desirable responding in personality assessment, and on the biological and social origins of mental ability differences. Treatments of several topics have been streamlined, including reliability and validity, developmental change, genetic and environmental influences and the structure of mental abilities. Organized by issues in personality research rather than by theorists Identifies main traits in personality and explains personality assessment Examines the impact of personality on life outcomes Explores developmental, genetic and evolutionary aspects of personality Includes other psychological characteristics (abilities, interests, beliefs and attitudes)

Despite the much vaunted 'end of religion' and the growth of secularism, people are engaging like never before in their own 'spiritualities of life'. Across the West, paranormal belief is on the rise. The Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures brings together the work of international scholars across the social sciences and humanities to question how and why people are seeking meaning in the realm of the paranormal, a heretofore subjugated knowledge. With contributions from the UK and other European countries, the USA, Australia and Canada, this ground-breaking book attends to the paranormal as a position from which to critique dominant forms of knowledge production and spirituality. A rich exploration of everyday life practices, textual engagements and discourses relating to the paranormal, as well as the mediation, technology and art of paranormal activity, this book explores themes such as subcultures and mainstreaming, as well as epistemological, methodological, and phenomenological questions, and the role of the paranormal in social change. The Ashgate Research Companion to Paranormal Cultures constitutes an essential resource for those interested in the academic study of cultural engagements with paranormality; it will appeal to scholars of cultural and media studies, popular culture, sociology, cultural geography, literature, film and music. *Reflexive Religion* examines the rise of alternative spiritualities of the self in contemporary Brazil. Combining late modern theory and multi-site ethnographies of the New Age, it explains how religion is being transformed under globalization, reflexivity and individualism processes. This handbook is a pioneering edited volume, exploring atheism - understood in the broad sense of 'an absence of belief in the existence of a God or gods' - in its historical and contemporary expressions. It probes the varied manifestations and implications of unbelief from an array of disciplinary perspectives and in a range of global contexts.

Leading scholars report on current research that demonstrates the central role of cultural evolution in explaining human behavior. Over the past few decades, a growing body of research has emerged from a variety of disciplines to highlight the importance of cultural evolution in understanding human behavior. Wider application of these insights, however, has been hampered by traditional disciplinary boundaries. To remedy this, in this volume leading researchers from theoretical biology, developmental and cognitive psychology, linguistics, anthropology, sociology, religious studies, history, and economics come together to explore the central role of cultural evolution in different aspects of human endeavor. The contributors take as their guiding principle the idea that cultural evolution can provide an important integrating function across the various disciplines of the human sciences, as organic evolution does for biology. The benefits of adopting a cultural evolutionary perspective are demonstrated by contributions on social systems, technology, language, and religion. Topics covered include enforcement of norms in human groups, the neuroscience of technology, language diversity, and prosociality and religion. The contributors evaluate current research on cultural evolution and consider its broader theoretical and practical implications, synthesizing past and ongoing work and sketching a roadmap for future cross-disciplinary efforts. Contributors Quentin D. Atkinson, Andrea Baronchelli, Robert Boyd, Briggs Buchanan, Joseph Bulbulia, Morten H. Christiansen, Emma Cohen, William Croft, Michael Cysouw, Dan Dediu, Nicholas Evans, Emma Flynn, Pieter François, Simon Garrod, Armin W. Geertz, Herbert Gintis, Russell D. Gray, Simon J. Greenhill, Daniel B. M. Haun, Joseph Henrich, Daniel J. Hruschka, Marco A. Janssen, Fiona M. Jordan, Anne Kandler, James A. Kitts, Kevin N. Laland, Laurent Lehmann, Stephen C. Levinson, Elena Lieven, Sarah Mathew, Robert N. McCauley, Alex Mesoudi, Ara Norenzayan, Harriet Over, Jürgen Renn, Victoria Reyes-García, Peter J. Richerson, Stephen Shennan, Edward G. Slingerland, Dietrich Stout, Claudio Tennie, Peter Turchin, Carel van Schaik, Matthijs Van Veelen, Harvey Whitehouse, Thomas Widlok, Polly Wiessner, David Sloan Wilson

Why did the third World Trade Center building (WTC7) collapse on September 11th, even though it was not struck by any aircraft? Why did Princess Diana's "drunk" driver look sober as he climbed into the car minutes before their deadly accident? Could a slender birch tree really have caused the plane crash which killed the President of Poland in 2010? 'Conspiracy thinking' – the search for explanations of significant global events in clandestine plots, suppressed knowledge and the secret actions of elite groups – provides simple and logical answers to the social doubts and uncertainties that occur at times of major national and international crises. Contemporary social psychology seeks to explain the human motivation to create, share and receive conspiracy theories, and to shed light on the consequences of these theories for people's social and political functioning. This important collection, written by leading researchers in the field, is the first to apply quantitative empirical findings to the subject of conspiracy theorizing. The first section of the book explores conspiracy theories in the context of group perception and intergroup relations, paying particular attention to anti-Semitic conspiracy stereotypes. It then goes on to examine the relationship between an individual's political ideology and the degree to which they engage in 'conspiracy thinking'. The concluding part of the book considers the explanatory power of conspiracy, focusing on the link between social paranoia and digital media, and highlighting the social, political, and environmental consequences of conspiracy theories. *The Psychology of Conspiracy* will be of great interest to academics

and researchers in social and political psychology, and a valuable resource to those in the fields of social policy, anthropology, political science, and cultural studies.

In *Practicing Safe Sects* F. LeRon Shults provides scientific and philosophical resources for having “the talk” about religious reproduction: where do gods come from – and what are the costs of bearing them in our culturally pluralistic, ecologically fragile environment?

"*Religion, Supernaturalism, the Paranormal, and Pseudoscience*" provides a comprehensive rejoinder to the challenges posed to science, scientific anthropology, evolutionary theory and rationality by the advocates of supernatural, paranormal, and pseudoscientific perspectives and modes of thought associated with the current rise of irrationalism, antiintellectualism, and emboldened religious fundamentalism and violence. Drawing upon H. Sidky's scientific anthropological background and ethnographic field research of supernatural and paranormal beliefs and practices in several cultures over three decades, the book answers several important questions: Why do humans have a proclivity for the supernatural and paranormal thinking? Why has humanity remained shackled to sets of ideas inherited from a violent past that have no basis in reality and which bestow an illusionary solace, promote bloodshed, endless cruelties and fervent hatreds, and have come at a high cost? Why have ancient superstitions been held as sacred, inviolate truths while other aspects of the archaic belief systems of which they were a part have long been discarded? Why have not humans outgrown religion and paranormal beliefs?

The paranormal has gone mainstream. Beliefs are on the rise, with almost half of the British population, and two thirds of Americans, claiming to believe in extra sensory perceptions and hauntings. Psychic magazines like *Spirit* and *Destiny*, television shows such as *Fringe*, *Ghost Whisperer* and *Most Haunted*, ghost-cams and e-poltergeists, bestselling books on mind, body and spirit, and magicians like Derren Brown have moved from the outer limits to the centre of popular culture, turning paranormal beliefs and scepticism into revenue streams. *Paranormal Media* offers a unique, timely exploration of the extraordinary, unexplained and supernatural in popular culture, looking in unusual places in order to understand this phenomenon. Early spirit forms such as magic lantern shows or the spirit photograph are re-imagined as a search for extraordinary experiences in reality TV, ghost tourism, and live shows. Through a popular cultural ethnography, and critical analysis in social and cultural theory, this ground-breaking book by Annette Hill presents an original and rigorous examination of people's experiences of spirits and magic. In popular culture, people are players in an orchestral movement about what happens to us when we die. In a very real sense the audience is the show. This book is the story of audiences and their participation in a show about matters of life and death. *Paranormal Media* will be a highly interesting read for undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as academics, on a wide range of television, media, cultural studies, and sociology courses.

This thought-provoking study of paranormal phenomena traces the impact of supernatural beliefs on popular culture and, conversely, examines the influence of new communication technologies on research being conducted in the field.

Religion in the contemporary west is undergoing rapid change. In *Predicting Religion* twenty experts in the study of religion present their predictions about the future of religion in the 21st century - predictions based on careful analysis of the contemporary religious scene from traditional forms of Christianity to new spiritualities. The range of predictions is broad. A number predict further secularization - with religion in the west seen as being in a state of terminal decline.

Others question this approach and suggest that we are witnessing not decline but transformation understood in different ways: a shift from theism to pantheism, from outer to inner authority, from God to self-as-god, and above all from religion to spirituality. This accessible book on the contemporary religious scene offers students and scholars of the sociology of religion and theology, as well as interested general readers, fresh insights into the future of religion and spirituality in the west. Published in association with the British Sociological Association Study of Religion group, in the *Ashgate Religion and Theology in Interdisciplinary Perspective* series.

Does religion positively affect well-being? What leads to fundamentalism? Do religious beliefs make us more moral? *The Psychology of Religion* explores the often contradictory ideas people have about religion and religious faiths, spirituality, fundamentalism, and atheism. The book examines whether we choose to be religious, or whether it is down to factors such as genes, environment, personality, cognition, and emotion. It analyses religion's effects on morality, health, and social behavior and asks whether religion will survive in our modern society. Offering a balanced view, *The Psychology of Religion* shows that both religiosity and atheism have their own psychological costs and benefits, with some of them becoming more salient in certain environments.

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