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Edited by Pascal Boyer

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How are religious ideas represented, acquired and transmitted? Confronted with religious practices, anthropologists have typically been content with sociological generalisations, informed by vague, intuitive models of cognitive processes. Yet modern cognitive theories promise a fresh understanding of how religious ideas are learnt; and if the same cognitive processes can be shown to underlie all religious ideologies, then the comparative study of religions will be placed on a wholly new footing. The present book is a contribution to this ambitious programme. In closely focused essays, a group of anthropologists debate the particular nature of religious concepts and categories, and begin to specify the cognitive constraints on cultural acquisition and transmission.

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King's College, Cambridge



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