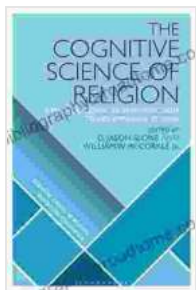


# Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission: Cognitive Science of Religion

The Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission (CTRT) is a theory in the cognitive science of religion that argues that religious beliefs and practices are transmitted through cognitive processes. CTRT is based on the idea that humans have a natural tendency to believe in supernatural beings and forces, and that this tendency is shaped by our cognitive architecture.

CTRT was first proposed by Pascal Boyer in his book *Religion Explained: The Cognitive Science of Religion* (2001). Boyer argued that religious beliefs are not simply the result of wishful thinking or social conditioning, but rather are the product of our evolved cognitive capacities.

Boyer identified a number of cognitive biases that he believes contribute to the transmission of religious beliefs. These biases include:



## Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission (Cognitive Science of Religion)

by Harvey Whitehouse

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3164 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 208 pages



- **Agency detection bias:** The tendency to perceive agency (i.e., intention and purpose) in inanimate objects and natural events.
- **Teleological bias:** The tendency to see purpose and design in the natural world.
- **Anthropomorphism:** The tendency to attribute human-like qualities to non-human entities.
- **Essentialism:** The tendency to believe that there is a single, unchanging essence that defines a particular category of things.

Boyer argued that these cognitive biases make us more likely to believe in supernatural beings and forces. For example, the agency detection bias may lead us to see intention and purpose in the movements of the stars, while the teleological bias may lead us to see design in the complexity of the natural world.

There is a growing body of evidence to support the claims of CTRT. For example, studies have shown that:

- **Children are more likely to believe in supernatural beings than adults.** This suggests that religious beliefs are not simply the result of social conditioning, but rather are the product of our evolved cognitive capacities.
- **People who are more likely to experience agency detection are also more likely to believe in supernatural beings.** This suggests that the agency detection bias is a key factor in the transmission of religious beliefs.

- **People who are more likely to see purpose and design in the natural world are also more likely to believe in supernatural beings.** This suggests that the teleological bias is another key factor in the transmission of religious beliefs.

CTRT has a number of implications for our understanding of religion. First, it suggests that religious beliefs are not simply the product of wishful thinking or social conditioning, but rather are the result of our evolved cognitive capacities. This means that religion is a natural part of human experience, and that it is unlikely to disappear anytime soon.

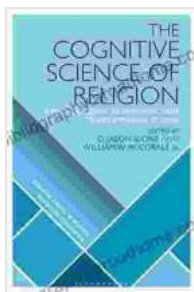
Second, CTRT suggests that religious beliefs are not necessarily irrational. While some religious beliefs may be based on faulty reasoning, others may be based on sound cognitive processes. This means that it is possible to be a religious person and also a rational person.

Finally, CTRT suggests that religious beliefs can be changed. If religious beliefs are the result of cognitive processes, then it should be possible to change these beliefs by changing our cognitive processes. This means that it is possible to deconvert from religion, and that it is also possible to convert to religion.

The Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission is a promising new theory that has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of religion. CTRT provides a natural explanation for why humans are so prone to believe in supernatural beings and forces, and it also suggests that religious beliefs are not necessarily irrational or immutable.

Further research is needed to test the claims of CTRT, but the evidence to date is promising. If CTRT is correct, it will have a major impact on our

understanding of religion and its role in human society.

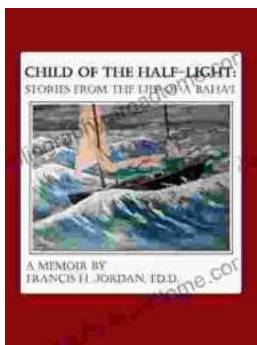


## Modes of Religiosity: A Cognitive Theory of Religious Transmission (Cognitive Science of Religion)

by Harvey Whitehouse

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 3164 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 208 pages



## Stories From The Life Of Baha: A Must-Read For Spiritual Seekers

Discover the Inspiring Teachings and Enriching Stories of Baha'u'llah In this captivating book, readers embark on a profound journey through the life and teachings of...



## **An Editor's Guide to Adobe Premiere Pro: Master the Art of Video Editing**

Discover the Power of Premiere Pro, Your Key to Captivating Visuals In the realm of video editing, Adobe...