

Preface xxi

Introduction: Biocultural Frameworks for the Study of Religiosity 1

Religion's Family Resemblances 2

Religion, Spirituality, and Religiosity 2

Overview of Book 3

1 ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION 5

Introduction: The Anthropological Study of Religion 6

Anthropology and the Biocultural Approach 6

Anthropological Approaches and Perspectives: Becoming Aware of Our Biases 7

Western Perspectives on Religion 8

Early Christian Thinking: "There Is But One Path to God" 8

Rationalist Thinking: "There Are Many Paths to God" 9

Comparative Thinking: "Religions Are Objects for Study" 10

The Development of Anthropological Approaches to Religion 11

Historical Particularism and Cultural Relativism: The Foundations of American Anthropology 12

Cultural Relativism 14

The Four-Field Approach of Anthropology 15

Cultural Anthropology 15

The Components of Culture 15 ■ *Methods of Cultural Anthropology: Ethnography and Ethnology* 16

■ *The Emic and Etic Distinction* 16 ■ *Universal Expressions of Religiosity* 17

Archaeology 18

Ethnographic and Ethnological Analogy 18

Linguistic Anthropology 19

Unique Features of Human Language 19 ■ *Language and Experience: The Sapir—Whorf*

Hypothesis 20 ■ *Historical Linguistics* 21

Biological Anthropology 22

How Humans Differ 22 ■ *Genes and Religiosity* 23 ■ *Key Evolutionary Concepts* 24

■ *Side-Effects of Evolution* 25 ■ *Evaluating Adaptations, Exaptations, and Spandrels* 26

■ *The Importance of Evolutionary Side-Effects for Understanding Religiosity* 27

Conclusions: The Biocultural Approach to the Study of Religion 27

2 OUR WORLD AND HOW WE KNOW IT 31

Introduction: Science and Religion as Ways of Knowing 32

A Very Short History of the Universe 32

The Mind: How We Know the World 33

Sensation and Perception: Our Windows on the World 34

Cognition: Making Sense of the View 35

The Limitations of Our View of the World 36

Five Kinds of Human Reality 37

The Universe 37 ■ *The Species World* 37 ■ *The Perceptual World* 38 ■ *The Cultural World* 39 ■ *The Personal World* 39

Summary: Our Knowledge of the Universe 40

Science, Religion, and the Universe 40

Analogies and Metaphors as Models for Thought 41

Is Science Rational and Religion Irrational? 41

The Nature of Scientific and Religious Assumptions 42

Analyzing Scientific and Religious Models of Reality 45

Science and Religion as Open and Closed Systems of Thought 48

Science and the Experimental Method 49

Mysticism as Science 50

Neurophenomenological Perspectives on Transpersonal Development 52

Neurotheology: Looking for God in the Brain 53

Conclusions: Comparing Science and Religion 55

3 CONSCIOUSNESS AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES 60

Introduction: The Experience of Religion 61

Understanding Religion as Experiences: The Universality of Mysticism 62

What Is Consciousness? 65

The Four Basic Modes of Human Consciousness 65

The Waking Mode as "Baseline" Consciousness 66

The Autonomic Nervous System and the Continuum of Consciousness 66

The Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Nervous Systems 67

Altered States of Consciousness as Extreme Variation in the Autonomic Nervous System 67

The Biological Bases of Spiritual Consciousness: The Integrative Mode of Consciousness 69

Religious States in the Integrative Mode of Consciousness 70

The Shamanic State 71 ■ *The Meditative State* 72 ■ *The Possession State* 73

Is Possession Pathological? 74

Spirituality and DSM-IV "Spiritual Emergencies" 75

Temporal Lobe Syndromes: A Religious Personality? 76

Origins of Religious Experiences: Natural Induction of the Integrative Mode of Consciousness 76

Trauma and Near-Death Experiences 77

Fasting as a Natural Inducer of Altered States of Consciousness 78

The Roles of Dreams in Religious Experiences	78
<i>The Psychobiology of Dreaming</i>	79 ■ <i>Lucid Dreaming</i>
79	
The Handsome Lake Revitalization Movement	80
Psychoactive Substances and Spiritual Experiences	82
<i>Neurotransmitter Bases of Psychedelic Effects</i>	83
Hypnosis and Mystical Experience	83

Adaptive Aspects of the Integrative Mode of Consciousness 84

Conclusions: Religious Experience as Personal Experience of Biology 85

4 RITUALIZED ANIMAL BEHAVIORS AND THE ROOTS OF RELIGIOSITY 88

Introduction: Ritualized Behavior in the Animal World 88

 Why Study Ritualized Animal Behaviors? 89

 The Animal Roots of Human Religiosity: Ritualized Behaviors 91

What Are Rituals? 91

 Basic Elements of Ritualized Animal Behaviors 92

Sequences of Ritualized Behavior 93

The Triune Brain and Ritualized Behavior 95

 Animal Brains and Ritualized Animal Behaviors 96

Ritualized Animal Behaviors 96

 Reptiles 97

 Mammals 99

Wolves 99

 Chimpanzees 101

Grooming 101 ■ *Mating Behavior* 102 ■ *Dominance and Aggression* 104 ■ *Communication Mechanisms: Vocalizations and Drumming* 104 ■ *Threat Displays as Graded and Maximal Chimpanzee Ritualized Behaviors* 105 ■ *Reassurance Behaviors: Grooming and Reconciliation* 107

The Evolution of Ritual Behaviors 108

 Group and Intergroup Ritualized Behaviors in the Great Apes 109

Emotional Vocalizations 109 ■ *Alpha Male Displays* 109

 Primate Preadaptations for Human Religiosity 109

Adaptive Features of Chimpanzee Threat Displays 112

 Identifying the Roots of Human Religiosity in Ritualized Behaviors 112

Comparing the Minimal Elements of Chimpanzee Ritualized Behaviors and Human Rituals 113

Is There a "Family of Resemblances" Link with Chimpanzee Ritualized Behaviors? 113

Conclusions: The Animal Roots of Human Ritual Activity 114

5 THE ORIGINS OF SHAMANISM AND THE FLOWERING OF RELIGIOSITY 117

Introduction: Evidence for the Emergence of New Forms of Ritual 117

 Interpretation in Archaeology: Ethnographic and Ethnological Analogy 119

What Are Shamans? 119

 Shamanic Universals in Biological Perspective 121

 Shamanic Continuities with and Differences from Chimpanzee Ritualized Behaviors 122

The Evolutionary Origins of Spiritual Experiences	123
Bipedalism and Mystical Experience: The Runner's High	123
Opioids in Human Evolution	124
Opioid Evolution in Humans	125
<i>Adaptive Advantages of Opioid Systems</i>	125
Psilocybin-Containing Mushrooms as Sources of Spiritual Experiences	126
<i>Features of Mushroom Uses and Effects</i>	126
<i>Human-Chimpanzee Divergences in Serotonergic Binding</i>	127
Toolmaking and the Emergence of Hominan Culture	128
The Implications of Mimesis for Religion	128
<i>Dance</i>	129
The Domestication of Fire	130
Cannibalism	130
Early Hominan Ritual and Spirituality	131
The Expansion of Religiosity Among the Later Hominans	132
<i>Burial and Death Rituals</i>	132
<i>Art and Adornment</i>	133
<i>Cave Rituals</i>	134
Summary: Religiosity Among the Late Hominans	135
Shamanism and Human Cultural Evolution	135
Cave Art as Evidence of Shamanism	135
<i>The Cave as the Shamanic Lower World</i>	136
■ <i>Animal Representations</i>	137
■ <i>Human Representations</i>	137
Cave Art and Shamanic Consciousness	137
Human Cognitive Evolution: The Emergence of Specialized Intelligences	138
The Emergence of Cognitive Fluidity	139
Cognitive Fluidity and Shamanism	141
<i>Ritual Displays and the Dream World: Accessing Presentational Symbolism</i>	142
■ <i>Shamanic Flight as Neurognostic and Symbolic Reference</i>	142
■ <i>Animal Powers as Personal and Social Identities</i>	143
■ <i>Human Identity in Nature</i>	143
■ <i>The Networks of Perception and Consciousness</i>	143
Summary: Cognitive Adaptation in Shamanism	144
"Complex Hunter-Gatherer Religions": The Rise of Ancestor Cults and Priests	144
Fertility Cults	144
Animal Cults and Ancestor Worship	145
Commodity Items	145
Public Feasting	146
Megalithic Architecture	146
Elite Initiation	146
Summary of "Feasting Religions"	146
The Socioeconomic Transformation of Shamans and Shamanistic Healers	147
<i>Priests</i>	147
■ <i>Witches and Sorcerers</i>	148
■ <i>Shaman/Healers</i>	148
■ <i>Mediums</i>	148
■ <i>Healers</i>	148
■ <i>Shamanistic Healers</i>	148
Conclusions: The Evolutionary Origins of Religion	148
6 THE ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS OF RELIGIOUS HEALING	150
Introduction: Religious Healing as a Cultural Universal	151
Universals of Religious Healing: Shamanistic Healers	152
Scientific Evidence of the Effects of Religion on Health	153
<i>Religion as a Natural Healing Mechanism</i>	154

The Co-evolution of Community Healing and Religiosity	154
Evolution of the “Sickness and Healing” Response	155
Healing Through Community Ritual Bonding and Opioid Release	155
<i>The Health Effects of Social Support</i>	156
Spirit Beings as a Mechanism for Coping with Stress	158
Symbolic Effects on the Autonomic Nervous System and Stress Responses	160
The Roles of Meaning in Coping and Stress Management	161
Religious Production of Healing Emotions: “Psychophysiological Symbolism”	162
Music and Healing	163
Music and the Brain	163
Healing Processes in Music	164
Hypnosis and Placebo Effects as a Foundation for Religious Healing	165
Religious Healing as the Placebo Effect	166
<i>Placebo Mechanisms</i>	167
■ <i>Information and Meaning as Placebo Mechanisms</i>	167
Adaptive Mechanisms in Pre-shamanic Healing Systems	169
Shamanic Expansion of Religious Healing Adaptations	170
Meaning and Metaphoric Processes in Religious Healing	171
Shamanistic Religious Rituals as Self- and Emotional Healing	172
<i>Soul Loss and Recovery</i>	173
■ <i>Possession</i>	173
■ <i>Meditative Detachment</i>	173
Healing Through Ritual Transformation of the Self	174
<i>Healing Through Spirit Attachment</i>	175
Conclusions: Shamanic Healing Process	177
7 RELIGION AND COGNITION: HOW RELIGION SHAPES THE WAY WE THINK	178
Introduction: Religious Ideas and the Structure of the Universe	179
Cosmology: Religious Models of the Universe	181
<i>Pantheon</i>	181
■ <i>Myths</i>	181
■ <i>Substantive Beliefs</i>	182
Animism: The Belief in Spirit Beings	185
What Are Spirits?	186
Why Do Humans Believe in Spirits?	186
<i>Animacy Detection</i>	186
■ <i>Spirits as Models of “Self” and “Mind”</i>	187
■ <i>Concepts of “Others”</i>	187
Are Spirits Just Exaptations?	187
<i>Spirits as Counterintuitive Principles</i>	188
Summary: The Adaptive Advantages of Spirits	188
Myths and the Universe	189
Early Ideas About Myths	190
<i>Functional Perspectives on Myths</i>	190
■ <i>Symbolist Perspectives on Myth</i>	191
Myth and Ecological Relations	191
<i>Food Taboos and Religion</i>	193
Mircea Eliade and the Language of Myth	194
Myths and Archetypes	194

Archetypes as Neurognostic Structures	197
<i>Summary of Archetypes</i>	198
Myth-Telling as an Adaptive Feature of Human Nature	198
Substantive Beliefs	199
Sympathetic Magic as Substantive Belief	200
<i>Sympathetic Magic as Adaptive Cognition with Survival Value</i>	200
Empirical Approaches to Substantive Religious Beliefs and Experiences	202
Psychical Research: The Science of Spiritual Experiences	203
<i>Anomalous Experiences as Substantive Religious Beliefs</i>	203
Conclusions: Spirit Concepts as Indigenous Psychology	206

8 RELIGION AND EMOTIONS: HOW RELIGION SHAPES HOW WE FEEL 209

Introduction: Religion and Socialization	209
Religion as an Emotional Response	210
<i>Sacred Emotions</i>	211
The Emotional Adaptiveness of Magic and Religion	211
The Domains of Magic	212
The Origins of Magic	213
The Emotional Adaptiveness of Magic in Human Life	213
<i>Management of Death Anxiety</i>	214
Sigmund Freud and the Roles of the Unconscious in Religion	214
Freud's Psychoanalytic Model: The Unconscious and Dreams	215
<i>Dreams: The Royal Road to the Unconscious</i>	215
■ <i>Misattributing Individual Dynamics to Society</i>	215
The Oedipal Complex: The Patricidal Origins of Religion and Society?	216
Religion, Sex, and Gender	220
The Religious Regulation of Sexual Behavior	220
<i>Marriage Rituals: Controlling Sexuality and Reducing Aggression</i>	221
How Religion Shapes Our Development	222
The Human Life Cycle in Biological Perspective	224
The Cultural Entrainment of Biology	225
<i>How Religious Rituals "Work"</i>	226
■ <i>The Roles of Myth in Socialization</i>	226
Religion in Emotional Socialization	227
<i>Emotional Coherence</i>	227
Rites of Passage	228
Welcoming a New Person into Society	229
<i>Rituals of Social Identity</i>	229
Rituals of Adult Transition: Becoming a Man or Woman	231
<i>Adolescence as an "Experience Expectant" Period for Religious Transmission</i>	232
■ <i>Gender-Specific Adolescent Socialization</i>	232
Religion as an Evolutionary By-Product? Attachment Theory and Religion	233
God as an Attachment Figure	236
Summary: The Adaptive Emotional and Socialization Practices of Religion	236
Conclusions: The Religious Shaping of Our Emotions	237

9 RELIGION AND SOCIETY: HOW RELIGION SHAPES OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS 240

Introduction: The Social Bases of Religion 241

Religion, Power, and Society 241

A Sociobiology of Religion? 243

The Evolutionary Origins of Human Social Organization and Religion 243

The Emergence of Human Political Organization 244

Our Egalitarian Heritage 244

Shamanistic Healers as Informal Political Leaders 244

The Rise of Inequality: Transegalitarian Political-Religious Evolution 245

Durkeim and the Social Symbolic Approaches to Religion 247

Totemism as the Origin of Religion 248

Animal Species in Human Thought and Social Classification 248

Functionalism: What Has Religion Done for You Lately? 249

Structural Functionalism in the Anthropology of Religion 249

Religion as a Cultural System 250

Symbol System 251 ■ *Moods and Motivations* 251 ■ *Worldview: A General Conception of Existence* 251 ■ *Socialization: Giving Conceptions an Aura of Factuality* 251 ■ *Conviction: Making Religious Motivations Realistic* 252

Summary 252

Religion and Social Control 252

The Formal Leadership of Priests 253

Conflict Perspectives: Religion as Social Control and the “Opiate of the Masses” 254

The Social Origins of God-Concepts and Sacred Morality 256

Totemism as a Source of Deity Concepts 257

The “Birth of the Gods” in Sovereign Groups 257

Ancestor Worship: Kin as Gods 258

Gods and Morality 259

Morality as an Evolved Capacity 260

Religion as Extensions of Ritualized Functions of Enhancing Cooperation 261

Religion as “Family Values” 261

Religion as an Adaptive Social Mechanism 262

Religion as a Group Selection Mechanism 263

Judaic Adaptations: Group Exclusion Mechanisms 264 ■ *Christian Adaptations: Group Inclusion Mechanisms* 265

Religion’s Effects on Survival 265

Summary: The Adaptive Social Features of Religion 267

Conclusions: Durkheim’s Legacy in Understanding Religion as a Social and Symbolic Phenomenon 268

10 SUPERNATURAL EVIL 270

Introduction: Supernatural Evil as a Religious Universal 271

Anthropological Views of Sorcery and Witchcraft 271

Witchcraft and Sorcery Among the Zande	272
Witchcraft and Sorcery Among the Dobu	272
Can a Hex Kill? The Biological Bases of "Voodoo Death"	273
Symbolic Effects on the Nervous System: Stress and Nocebo Phenomena	275
<i>The Physiological Response to Stress: The General Adaptation Syndrome</i>	275 ■ <i>Nocebo Effects</i> 275
Supernatural Human Evils and Social Conditions	276
Functional and Evolutionary Assessments of Beliefs in Supernatural Evil	278
The Sorcerer/Witch as a Social Universal of Religion	279
The Shamanic Roots of Sorcery and Witchcraft	280
<i>The Dark Side of Shamanism</i>	280
Linguistic Roots for the Shamanic Origins of Witchcraft	281
Witchcraft and Heresy in Europe	282
The Inquisition Begins	283
The Spanish Inquisition	284
The Salem Witchcraft Trials	285
<i>The Ergot Hypothesis</i>	287
Summary: Supernatural Evil and Outside Groups: The Limits of Religious Adaptation?	288
Human Sacrifice	291
Cross-Cultural Assessments of Human Sacrifice	293
Aztec Human Sacrifice in Cross-Cultural Perspective	294
Asante and Modern Perspectives: Sacrament or Capital Punishment?	294
Summary: Biological and Social-Ecological Determinants of Human Sacrifice	295
Conclusions: The Limits of Religious Adaptations?	296

11 CONCLUSIONS: RELIGION IN EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE 297

Introduction: Does Religion Have a Future?	298
The Conceptual Frameworks of Evolution	299
The Emergent Nature of the Universe	299
<i>Religiosity as an Emergent Phenomena</i>	300
<i>Symbolism and Spirituality</i>	301
Multilevel Selection Processes in Evolution	302
Evaluating Adaptations, Exaptations, and Spandrels	303
<i>Proximate and Ultimate Mechanisms</i>	303
Assessing the Evolutionary Status of Religious Features	304
Ritualized Animal Behaviors: The Preadaptations and Origins of Religiosity	304
Mystical Experiences and Altered States of Consciousness	305
<i>Managing Consciousness</i>	306
<i>Spirits as Spandrels of ASC</i>	307
Shamanism	307
<i>Healing Functions</i>	309
Religion as an Emotional Adaptation	309
The Supernatural as a Cognitive Adaptation	311
<i>Supernatural Agent Concepts</i>	311 ■ <i>Supernatural Concepts as Social Mechanisms</i> 312
■ <i>The Explanatory Functions of Religiosity: Myth and the Structure of the Universe</i>	312
■ <i>Socialization</i>	313

Social Politics and Religion 313

Witchcraft, Voodoo Death, and Human Sacrifice: Adaptation or Maladaptation? 314

Why Must We Learn to Disagree? 314

The Five Warning Signs of a “Bad Religion” 317

Moving Beyond Exclusivism 319

Joseph Smith and the Birth of Mormonism 320

Bahá'u'lláh and the Rise of the Bahá'í Faith 320

Finding a Way to Disagree: Pluralism 321

Conclusions: A Universalist Perspective 322

Appendix 324

References 326

Photo Credits 338

Author Index 339

Subject Index 343