

Pascal Boyer argues that religion is largely an illusion. The anthropologist traces religion's cognitive and evolutionary aspects. By "religion" he means a kind of existential and cognitive "package" that includes views about supernatural agency (gods), notions of morality, particular rituals and sometimes particular experiences, as well as membership in a particular community of believers. The package, however, does not really exist as such. Notions of supernatural agents, of morality, of ethnic identity, or ritual requirements and other experience, all appear in human minds independently. This implies that there is no such thing as a conflict between science and religion. Boyer takes the reader onto a journey through science and the dissolution of religion.

The author

Pascal Boyer, PhD, is Henry Luce Professor of Individual and Collective Memory at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

The editors

Thomas M. Schmidt, PhD, is Professor of the Philosophy of Religion at Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University in Frankfurt.

Michael G. Parker, PhD, is philosopher of religion living in Frankfurt.

Wolfgang Achtner, PhD, is Associate Professor of Theology and Science at Gießen and Frankfurt University.

Elisabeth Gräß-Schmidt, PhD, is Professor of Systematic Theology at Gießen University.