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THE CRITIQUE OF INTUITIVENESS AND NATURALNESS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS WITHIN CSR*

Summary: Religious beliefs within cognitive science of religion (CSR) are interpreted as a natural phenomenon which is a result of cognitive biases. Alleged cognitive effortlessness of religious beliefs is associated with cognition which strictly correlates with specific religious or overall "supernatural" contents. However, it seems that the role played by cognition in the process of acquisition of religious beliefs is not able to explain their origin and transmission. Acquisition of religious beliefs is a domain of the impact of cultural inputs and particular pragmatic usefulness of religious beliefs. Rational background may be more important than an intuitive one for the development of religious beliefs. Here the intention is to show that religious beliefs are a domain of the rational route to action and the impact of culture more than a domain of intuitiveness.

1. Introduction

The Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) assumes a fundamental importance as regards the cognitive mechanisms and processes for the acquisition and transmission of religious beliefs. Its new quality in the study of religion is the exploration of the cognitive roots of religious beliefs. However, we can doubt its originality when we look at approaches developed in the past by Lucretius in ancient Greece, then by the philosophers of the Enlightenment or by Sigmund Freud. They have explored the psychological bases of religious beliefs and they have found, like CSR scholars today, stable cognitive tendencies in human cognition which used to generate religious beliefs. CSR assumes the immutability and homogeneity of cognitive mechanisms which are independent of cultural diversity (Lech & Visala, 2011, p. 554). CSR explains religious beliefs, ideas, and behaviours by looking for their cognitive roots (Ben-

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