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The Truth About the Soul!

The lynchpin of virtually every world religion, the concept of the human soul is the focus of a new book to be released in June 2004. The author, John J. McGraw, a 1998 graduate of Stanford University with degrees in psychology, philosophy & religious studies, has taken an eminently personal issue—his lifelong struggles with the Christian faith—and used these experiences to highlight the history of an idea: the idea of the soul.

Brain & Belief: An Exploration of the Human Soul possesses a compelling structure; the first part of the book chronologically traces the history of the soul from its basis in prehistoric thought to its canonical placement at the center of Western theological traditions, the second part of the book—in jarring contrast—outlines the developments in neuroscience and psychopharmacology that put traditional ideas about the soul to the test, and the final section of the book illustrates the ramifications of this intersection between the old and the new, the consequences of that perennial clash between science and religion. In the introduction, McGraw writes:

Why bring up the debate about the human soul once again? If thousands of years of careful thinkers could not resolve the arguments, why should we expect anything more? We can now expect better answers—or at least better arguments—because science has provided us with new tools and new information about this all-important matter.

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From the visionary art of the prehistoric caves at Chauvet and Lascaux to the latest findings from The Salk Institute in La Jolla, McGraw deftly weaves history and science in an effort to understand the meaning, significance, and future of this all-important concept, crucial to so many religious traditions. Topics in the book range from “The Soul of Plato,” to “Psychoactivity”—a thorough chapter on the significance of psychoactive drugs in human history—to “After Life?”—a fascinating exploration of the conceptions of life after death. From prehistory to postmodernity, *Brain & Belief* seeks to understand humankind’s obsession with life, death, and the afterlife. The ambitious scope of the book is balanced by a deeply personal voice whose sympathy for both science and religion is resonant.

Brain & Belief: An Exploration of the Human Soul is distributed by Biblio whose clients include Ingram and Baker & Taylor. For more details visit <http://www.theaegispress.com>

About the author: John J. McGraw, a native of Tulsa, Oklahoma was educated in Catholic schools, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Stanford University. In 1998 he graduated from Stanford with degrees in psychology, philosophy & religious studies. Currently, McGraw is working on a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Cognitive Science at the University of California at San Diego.

Book Statistics

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