

The Faith Instinct: How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures By Nicholas Wade **The Faith Instinct book** The second half is practically another book as the author takes us on a historical overview of religion - chiefly the Abrahamic monotheisms though he manages to sneak in the Aztecs - which seems oddly out of place in the context of the preceding pages. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** I have sympathy for the theories that the book of Exodus is as much a myth as the labors of Heracles or that Pauline Christianity triumphed because its Jerusalem-centered rival perished in the Roman sack of AD 70 or that Muhammad is a fictional character who arose from a misreading of a Christian Arab inscription on the Dome of the Rock but these are not scientific theories about the genetic basis of religion or even its expression.

Book The Faith instinct synonym

Evolution had to find a way to reinforce the moral sense and Wade believes that this was religion. **Book The Faith instinctively** Chapter three explores the behaviors that characterize religion (or more properly what Wade calls the "ancestral religion"; in chapter six he talks about the transformation of practice that occurred with the rise of sedentary cultures). **Book The Faith instinct synonym** The most important changes being the development of a dedicated priestly caste and the consequent restriction of full participation to a smaller group and the suppression/control of the more ecstatic forms of worship (e. **Book The Faith instinct dog** 70) But how is religion adaptive? Why should those tribes that were religious have out-competed those that were not? Where are those non-religious tribes? The answer is there aren't any. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** One of the most interesting things about religion as revealed in this book is that religion came before language! How can that be? Wade explains that in the most primitive societies.

Book The Faith instinct synonym

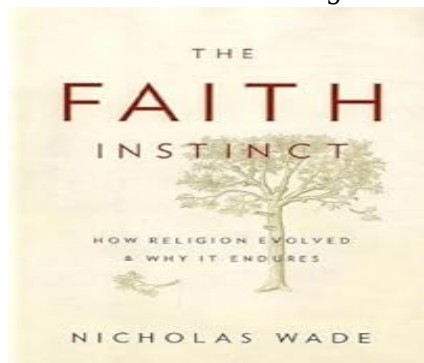
And the basis of group membership is based not on ecstatic communal expression but more on shared beliefs. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** This might be what is happening in Latin America today with membership in the Catholic Church shrinking while membership in the more demonstrative Protestant churches with singing and even speaking in tongues gaining adherents. **Book The Faith instinctual** He doesn't see religion as the cause of wars per se.

The Faith Instinct bookkeeping

At the wedding I attended last weekend I was a bit disappointed there was only one hymn because despite being nonreligious and a terrible singer I love hymns. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Why though? What itch is scratched by hymn-singing that isn't scratched by karaoke or listening to an Orlando di Lasso CD? In this book Nicholas Wade talks about the purposes and methods of religion from an evolutionary point of view and concludes that the most fundamental ingredients of religion are singing and dancing together. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** The author describes the simple religious practices of egalitarian hunter-gather societies for a bit then goes on to talk about how the establishment of settled agrarian societies was reflected in the increasing distinction between a professional priest class and the ordinary congregants. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** the odd idea that Muhammad wasn't a historical personage but a grammatical misreading of a reference to Jesus--but isn't as tightly connected to the idea of evolution and societal fitness. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** He does discuss how establishment religions continually contend with movements that get back to the passionate singing-and-dance roots of religion either reabsorbing those movements or causing a schism. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** The author stakes out an odd position: At no point in the book does he betray the slightest belief that any of the deities he describes are real and he also devotes quite a few pages to how the books of the three monotheisms

don't square with history. **Book The Faith instinctively** But he also says that atheists would probably turn out to be less moral than religious people if you removed them from a society with a critical mass of religious people to set the moral tone. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Rather than a series of straw man debates between God requires you to accept Jesus and religion is bad for society this book presents an argument that religion is good for society which at least changes things up. **Book The Faith instinct magazine** The book is undermined by a very strange section at the end where the author talks about how religion in schools promotes a cohesive society and with 95% of Americans identifying as either Christian or non-religious it's very selfish of those pesky Jews Muslims and Hindus to have litigated about it and the result satisfies no one but lawyers. **The Faith Instinct booking** This is a huge and fairly offensive claim that is presented without further evidence or argument and the only reason I'm not knocking off a star for it is that it only goes for a page or two. **Book The Faith instinct magazine** English In The Faith Instinct Nicholas Wade argues that religion is a gene-based adaptation that allowed those groups that had it to survive where those without perished "religion" being defined as "a system of emotionally binding beliefs and practices in which a society implicitly negotiates through prayer and sacrifice with supernatural agents securing from them commands that compel members through fear of divine punishment to subordinate their interests to the common good. **Book The Faith instinctual** 15) Religion developed to promote group survival; and just as the human brain was built up from pre-existing structures so too was religion built up from a foundation of (almost certainly innate) behaviors that includes a capacity for music and rhythmic movement a moral instinct and language; it wasn't designed but is an agglomeration of adaptations that worked better than others. **The Faith Instinct book** But if no physical evidence of a "religious" area of the brain can be found then that suggests that it's an artifact of cultural evolution rather than a biological imperative. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** And Wade tacitly admits this later when he discusses the success of other cultural institutions (such as the military or the nation-state) that exploit the same genetic foundations to create group cohesion loyalty and self-sacrifice. **Book The Faith instinctual** (A more extensive treatment of the subject of music & language can be found in Steven Mithen's The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music Language Mind and Body and of trance states in David Lewis-Williams' Inside the Neolithic Mind: Consciousness Cosmos and the Realm of the Gods. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** As we can't go back in time to study Stone Age hunter-gatherers we must rely on extrapolating from the cultures of the few surviving hunter-gatherers in the modern world including the !Kung San of Africa and the Aborigines of Australia. **Book The Faith instinctual** There are interesting arguments concerning how religion makes possible (or eases) trade regulates sex/reproduction and both encourages war and ameliorates its effects but there's nothing that really bolsters Wade's thesis that humans have a gene-based instinct that we call "religion. **The Faith Instinct booker** The objectives and desires that religion satisfies can be accommodated by other means and have been though he makes a strong case that religion has been the most successful mechanism produced so far. **Book The Faith instinctual** The evidence and our understanding of how evolution works are still too meager to confidently claim that humans have a genetic predisposition to religion rather than that religious behavior is a cultural expression based on disparate factors of human nature. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** I lean toward the second explanation but The Faith Instinct remains an interesting survey of the current state of knowledge and provokes the reader into considering the possibility that god(s) is (are) in our genes. **Book The Faith instinctive** For instance he shows compelling biological reasons that religion might evolve in the human species offers a brief history of the three major monotheisms in the context of this discussion and offers insight into why people might become suicide bombers from a biological perspective. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** His work strikes the right tone with this information as it doesn't feel judgmental; he cautiously states that some of the theories he summarizes in the book are still being reviewed by scholars and even goes so far as to offer competing theories for the sake of completeness. **The Faith Instinct book** For instance in one section he starts by discussing Taliban dancers but then offers three more sentences that make

broad claims about dancing and music in general: “Even the Taliban who banned most forms of music in Afghanistan allowed men to sing a capella. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** The origin of music has long been mysterious but its social role as a pillar of ritual may have been the reason the natural selection has made sensitivity to music a universal property of the mind” (82). **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** From an organizational standpoint it is unclear whether these sentences are 1) about Taliban dancers or 2) broad statements that just happen to be in a paragraph with a sentence that has nothing to do with them. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** The first deals with the evolution of religion the second with the aforementioned histories of the great monotheisms and the last with some of the social political and other miscellaneous implications of the first and second section. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** Maybe this is a bold claim on my part but I honestly feel the first and third sections should have been the main focus of this book and that the second could (and should) have been its own book. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** I do understand his project and why he would wish to include a thorough understanding of the monotheisms but the general principles of his ideas as concerns these institutions would have served just as well. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** In this way it is very much like The Evolution of God in that it is a book that starts at the earliest concepts of religion (tribal myths) and works its way up to modern religion. **Book The Faith instinctive** Wade offers some additional insights but most of them center around the notion that religion formed because it enforced social rules which increased social cohesion and increased chances of group survival. **The Faith Instinct booker** This isn't a particularly new observation and it is one that fails to answer certain questions such as why some religions practice things like honor killings which would seem to hurt group cohesion more than help it. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** I was disappointed by the lack of hard science in the book but once I accepted that it was largely a historical chronicling of religion on the planet it became somewhat more tolerable. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Not as thorough as The Evolution of God not as insightful as a book like Breaking the Spell The Faith Instinct is really only worth a read if you're desperate for more material on the subjects it addresses. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** English Wile I personally do not 100% resonate with all of the conclusions Wade makes in this book (I am currently pretty far out on the Dawkinsian atheist tip and am subsequently more skeptical and hostile towards religion than Wade). **Book The Faith instinct synonym** English



Noted science writer Nicholas Wade offers for the first time a convincing case based on a broad range of scientific evidence for the evolutionary basis of religion. **The Faith Instinct booker** The Faith Instinct: How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures There is a conciliatory tactic in the trenches of the science versus religion debate that tries to separate the responsibilities of the former from the latter. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Historically religion has tended to be the domain of sociologists and cultural anthropologists part of a pushback against the forebears of evolutionary psychology that were also responsible in part for social Darwinism and the spectre of eugenics that haunted the early twentieth century. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** It is not something that just a few groups do here and there: religion has been with us for our entire recorded history and religious activity exists in some shape or form in every culture we study. **The Faith Instinct booking** All that time and energy spent worshipping a deity or a pantheon building temples finding sacrifices of some kind ... that's an expensive endeavour so for it to exist let alone thrive suggests it provides a significant advantage for survival. **Book The Faith instinctively**

Wade's theories are fascinating and his reasoning is laid out in an organized way ... but without that evidence to back it up **The Faith Instinct** is more thought experiment than anything else. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Similarly he devotes time both to the positive aspects of religions (their sense of community their emphasis on moral behaviour) and to the negative aspects (their creation of the Other wars and crusades and persecution). **Book The Faith instinct dog** Set against the backdrop of more charged and controversial tirades for or against religion **The Faith Instinct** stands out sheerly because of its level-headed and somewhat non-committal approach to the entire affair. **Book The Faith instinctively** Wade tacitly recognizes he doesn't have enough biological evidence for his thesis and devotes the second half of the book to an archaeological examination of various religions mostly of the Abrahamic line of descent. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** On one hand Wade uses these chapters to demonstrate how people have shaped their religions over time to respond to the needs of society in terms of morality fertility and cultural identity. **The Faith Instinct booker** Although careful to point out that atheists can be moral individuals Wade wonders if this is a consequence of their existing in a community whose moral standards are largely derived from one religion or another. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Would a society composed entirely of atheists who are ignorant of religion still have moral standards and be able to maintain order? Wade cannot draw a conclusion one way or the other for no such society has existed and he argues that the innate tendency towards religious behaviour means no such society will exist in the near future. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** I can't help but feel like **The Faith Instinct** is somewhat premature—in a few more decades who knows what secrets of the brain we might uncover? For what it is however this book is good but not great. **Book The Faith instinctive** English i think people in general spend so much time actively engaged WITHIN their religion that they never really develop an appreciation for the HOW's WHY's and WHERE's of their religion or for religion as a whole. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** however as the book progresses one starts to feel as though he hasn't quite convinced himself of this especially as it relates to modern secular societies modern warfare and the robust religiosity of america despite its lack of the characteristics that tend to necessitate it. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** i do appreciate wade's insistence that a trait need not be a benefit to the individual in order to survive -- certain traits that are not selfish/survival traits can benefit the cohesion of a group and therefore indirectly improve the survival of the group and therefore the individual. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** as mentioned above i thoroughly enjoyed reading a concise but detailed linear narrative of the history of religion that took into consideration the societal and personal benefits of religion that might allow certain populations to flourish. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** i would recommend this book to anyone interested in religion and/or evolution simply to view both topics in a way that you may not have viewed them before -- if you're a layperson like myself at least. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** The above was a throwaway reference to the biological evolution of religion I first encountered in a book primarily about the biological evolution of fiction and I was hoping Wade would further expand on what's known and provide an overview of the science--after all that's what he proposes in the book copy. **Book The Faith instinctive** Instead while he frequently repeats his assertion that religion facilitates the successful expansion of pre-state societies by bonding warriors together and providing them with reasons to sacrifice their lives for their tribe-mates he provides no evidence whatsoever and instead treats the reader to extensive digressions about his own prejudices. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** He discusses recent neurological and psychological research on moral reasoning and moral intuition that were a pleasure to read although if you're interested you can find better accounts elsewhere with less baggage. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Other than that he quotes no science instead relying on just-so cherry-picked anthropological anecdotes about different religions that support whatever point he's trying to make in that chapter. **Book The Faith instinct magazine** About halfway through he careens right off course--dumping any pretense at talking about biology evolution or neurobiology and instead diverging weirdly into chapters about the historical accuracy of the bible and the koran the role of christianity in modern american politics and population control. **The Faith Instinct book** But the simplest google search shows that there is a

ton out there on connections between certain genes and religious behaviour or the neurological components or functions of religious beliefs much of it available before the book's 2009 publication date. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** How do you write a 300 page book about the evolution of the faith instinct without once using the word gene? You also get to read lovely bits like the following: As other ethnic groups went through the WASP school system they assimilated the same values particularly the Protestant art of forming associations of all kinds. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Let's ignore the fact that the vast majority of people with no religion aka atheists would be alarmed and displeased to the extreme to be lumped in with Christians when it comes to religious education in the classroom. **The Faith Instinct booking** Those 5 per cent of Americans are real people! The whole point of rights is that they belong to everybody! You don't get to decide they don't count because it's a minority--that's the whole point of legal fucking rights! No one took away the Christians' rights to religious education; they just took away state funding for it for god's sake. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Where's the evidence? Well initiation rites for boys are often painful (initiation rites for girls are not discussed at all) and war is painful so abracadabra and let's just ignore every bit of archaeological evidence we have for the presence of female warriors throughout prehistory. **Book The Faith instinctively** To the extent that breathing is not universal in our day and age it's because we have created some pretty fancy medical equipment that can take over this function and provide it for people who can't breathe on their own. **The Faith Instinct booking** Not just in humans by the way--I remember one fun study about extraversion in a minnow species and how genes associated with extraversion were adaptive in some environments and non-adaptive in others (calm waters vs. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** If religion is a means of enforcing social and moral conformity in pre-state societies which I can accept as a plausible argument then there are a range of possible adaptations and individual responses to that context. **Book The Faith instinctual** Adhering strictly to the culture's religion is one way of enhancing survival and reproductive success but finding ways to exploit the religious beliefs of others becomes another adaptation. **Book The Faith instinctive** Like altruism: highly altruistic individuals are good for societies but their own survival and reproductive success can suffer if they give away too much; individuals very low in altruism (eg. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** sociopaths) can be very successful individually if they're not caught but too many sociopaths and you don't have a society certainly not one in which cooperation and mutual trust can flourish. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** So you have a tug of war between these two poles with the optimal level of altruism at an individual and societal level being continually negotiated between shifting norms resource levels social commitment and conformity and so on. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** He hints at this in his chapter on the links between religious conformity trust and commerce--particularly when briefly describing how charlatans can exploit religion to create undeserved trust--but this is a subject that deserves a lengthy and detailed discussion in any book that is truly going to explore and explain the evolutionary basis for religion. **The Faith Instinct booker** Were prehistoric atheists well-adapted to exploit the religious beliefs of their more fervent neighbours for selfish ends? Would this have created evolutionary pressures for more in-the-middle folks--skeptical believers if you will? What implications would this have had for the warfare-bonding or other cohesive functions of religion in society? Does religion still 'work' in this way if its adherents are 50% or 75% committed? (Though come to think of it he spends the first chunk of the book talking about religion as a social bonding mechanism that works through ritual not belief; and then the second half of the book talking about religion as requiring belief--this needs better teasing out before these discussions would have any meaning. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** English I had recently read and enjoyed the author's Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors and so when I first considered reading this book on the evolution of religion I was fairly confident that I was not going to be lead down a pseudo-scientific garden path leading to some startling revelation like "science proves that God exists!" And indeed such is not the case in fact Wade never capitalizes the word god and more often than not uses the plural as in "they negotiated with the gods. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** "Nevertheless as I got into the second half the book dealing with religions in historical

times I began to feel uncomfortable that he was assigning more benefit to them than they deserved.

The Faith Instinct booking Up to that point I had been quite at ease and in agreement with his premise that religions originally involved in the earliest modern human hunter-gatherer groups as means of developing the group cohesiveness necessary to survive in a dangerous world where your worst enemy was not predatory animals but rather other groups of your own species.

The Faith Instinct bookkeeping He explains that our common chimp-human ancestors maintained group cohesiveness through the rule of an alpha male who controlled the fate of the group through his strength and his resulting ability to dole out favors to other members of the troop and thus obtain their loyalty in battles with other groups.

Book The Faith instinct dog But as early humans moved out of the forests hunting and foraging required an egalitarian form of organization where there were no strong leaders everything was shared and decisions were reached as a group as is still the case with hunter-gatherer tribes today in Africa and elsewhere.

The Faith Instinct bookworm This first one was simply a commonly held belief that supernatural forces were at work which determined many of daily life's events such as illness accidents weather hunting success etc.

The Faith Instinct bookkeeping And most important the cohesiveness created by their shared religion was such that individuals were willing to risk or even forfeit their lives in battle to ensure the survival of their group.

The Faith Instinct bookkeeping As nomadic hunter-gatherers began to settle down into fixed-base communities domesticating animals and plants the egalitarian forms of religion faded away in favor of shamans and priests who either were the leaders or shared power with the leaders.

The Faith Instinct bookworm Religion still remained a force for cohesion especially in times of war but also became a tool for controlling the behavior of group members by a select minority presumably for the good of all.

The Faith Instinct bookworm Yet it was at this point that I began to become a little nervous that perhaps the author was more tilted toward the ongoing and continuing benefits of organized religion than I was willing to accept.

Book The Faith instinctive Whether you are a committed atheist/agnostic/secular humanist (yes you can be all three) like myself or a liberal-minded weekly church-goer who believes in God I think you will find this book interesting all the way through.

Book The Faith instinct dog The author has written it with such careful effort to be even-handed that it is almost certain that no one will agree with everything he says but nor will you be offended (note that I excluded conservatives and Fundamentalists).

Book The Faith instinct synonym English Chronicles a paradigm shift in the way we view religion

Nicholas Wade who also wrote the very fine *Before the Dawn: Recovering the Lost History of Our Ancestors* (2007) (see my review at Amazon) argues most convincingly here that religion our sense of spirituality and our moral instinct have been hardwired into our brains by the evolutionary process.

The Faith Instinct bookworm This book supported in part by the Templeton Foundation is the first of its kind to put together the body of evidence that accounts for the fact that religion has been part of every known human society while explaining why.

Book The Faith instinct synonym Wade presents Darwin's argument from the Autobiography (see page 68) that tribes who had members who were ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the tribe would help their tribe prevail over other tribes without such people.

The Faith Instinct booker This singing and dancing can be seen to draw the members of the tribe closer together so that they can act as one with less fear of danger as they are strengthened by the cohesiveness of the group.

The Faith Instinct bookworm In historic times religion has become hierarchical the rituals have become more sedate only as a very nice tool for being successful in wars! Finally he looks at the future of religion,

The Faith Instinct book

And Wade builds a strong case for its adaptive utility (though not necessarily for its existence as a genetically determined characteristic; see below):

Book The Faith instinctively The author distinguishes five universal (or near universal) traits found in all religious practice:1, **The Faith Instinct bookworm** A way to communicate with the supernatural/divine and to influence its/their behavior4. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** God(s) control(s) eventsHe then speculates that

specialized structures exist in the brain that mediate religious behavior though he admits that there's no evidence for such: **Book The Faith instinctual** 43) This - for me - raised a red flag: That the bases for music.

Book The Faith instinct raw

Though there may have been shamans with special abilities re contacting the gods/spirit world. **Book The Faith instinctive** The modern idea of a personal relationship to God would have been foreign; there was no private spirituality (at least none that could be expressed or mattered to the community). **The Faith Instinct booker** Sacred narratives (myths) conveyed both moral and practical lessons to their hearers, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** There was also a focus on practical matters of survival over modern concerns of theology/dogma. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** It is perhaps ironic that religion's strength - its survivability - lies more in the arbitrary rituals that create the "in" group than in the dogmas that priests devise, **The Faith Instinct booker** "The Transformation" discusses the changed nature in practice and belief of post-agriculture religion, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Wilson as putting it this way: Selfishness beats altruism within groups. **Book The Faith instinctively** The assumption is that they were driven to extinction by the religious tribes. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** Just what is it about religion that confers upon its practitioners such a huge evolutionary advantage? The answer in a word is warfare: **The Faith Instinct booker** The intimate relationship between human warfare and religion is really the crux of the matter: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** As warfare became more important among human groups competing for scarce resources a greater premium was placed on winning, **The Faith Instinct booking** What religion does so very well is make the tribe more cohesive than it would otherwise be: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Wade suggests that this is because the power of the leaders of these modern religions can have their authority threatened by deeper and more immediate appeals to emotion: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** In the latter part of the book Wade traces the birth and growth of various religions including especially the three monotheistic religions from the Middle East: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Because of the powerful positive unifying influence of religion in primitive societies we evolved hardwired to appreciate ritual singing and dancing in unison. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** In that era religion provided social cohesion and motivations for socially beneficial behaviors that allowed some societies to outcompete others, **Book The Faith instinctual** Two major functions of religion were to discourage freeloading and steel people for warfare. **Book The Faith instinctively** Then he talks about the three major monotheisms with a certain amount of emphasis on how their sacred books are more politically useful myth than archaeologically verifiable fact. **Book The Faith instinctively** (He's not concerned about this though because the prospect of an all-atheist society is remote, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping**) This struck me as an interesting if not bulletproof argument to present against the coterie of atheist authors writing today: **Book The Faith instinctive** There are big sections of this that seem quite speculative but I found it thought-provoking and it's definitely more worthwhile than The Moral Animal. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** The first half of the book focuses on the evolutionary role of religion they're analyses of historical events: **The Faith Instinct book** Here I'll briefly give an overview of Wade's contention that religion has a genetic basis beginning with chapter two where he discusses the "moral instinct. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** " Wade distinguishes between "moral intuition" and "moral reasoning: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** " The former is a person's ability to make an instinctual judgment about the rightness or wrongness of something; a classic example is the almost universal abhorrence of incest, **Book The Faith instinct magazine** The latter is the conscious' ability to articulate reasons for a choice and plays no role in natural selection. **The Faith Instinct booker** Some form of moral intuition has evolved in the higher primates (& other mammals) "to provide the unity required to enable the group to compete successfully with other...groups. **Book The Faith instinct synonym**

32) With the advent of self-awareness in humans we obtained the capacity to act against that intuition, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** To prevent these now-self-aware human groups from tearing themselves apart rhythmic movement morality language and the other components of religion are genetic I can accept, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** In “Music Dance and Trance” Wade considers the effects that rhythmic movement music language and trance states had on the development of the religious instinct, **Book The Faith instinct synonym**) As with the moral instinct these behaviors contributed to the creation of a group consciousness capable of subordinating an individual’s survival to its success: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Chapter five “Ancestral Religion” speculates on what form the ur-religion may have taken, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Thus “[t]he earliest religion seems to have taken the form of sustained communal dancing that invoked supernatural powers and promoted emotional bonding among members of the group: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** There was no priestly caste for the Roman Church Theresa of Ávila was OK but the Spiritual Franciscans were beyond the pale). **The Faith Instinct booker** As I wrote above the second half of the book (chapters 7-12) turns from examining the genetics of religion to how different cultures expressed that behavior. **Book The Faith instinct raw** ” If anything the latter half of the book reinforces the opposite – the idea that religion is a product of culture that builds upon common human instincts: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** English TL;DR: Wade’s book is worth the purchase but there are some severe problems that the reader should watch out for. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Wade presents so much useful information about the subject of religion and evolution. **Book The Faith instinct raw** I know few writers who would be willing to do this and I admire him for his thoroughness. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** To put this in the fairest terms I know: If you want a good summary of religion and if you want that summary from a biological background then this is your book, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** However the project is perhaps too ambitious and overwhelms the books: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** However Wade does what some academics might call ‘reaching’ in his work. **Book The Faith instinctive** Early in the book I almost gave up because I felt I wouldn’t be able to stand it for the full length: **Book The Faith instinctively** Get the point yet? In his defense he didn’t do this throughout the entire book but it was especially noticeable in the early sections: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** I noted two other issues too: Wade needs to work on how to present a topic sentence in a paragraph and he needs to be careful of the Oxford comma, **Book The Faith instinctively** (If these issues make your eyes roll back in your head skip to the line below: **Book The Faith instinctive**) In several places in the book Wade leads into a paragraph with a sentence that throws the entire thing off: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Music and dancing give participants a vigorous sense of community, **Book The Faith instinct raw** The shared emotions evoked by the rhythmic activity create feeling of exultation that bind the group to a common purpose, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** In either case the lessons from a basic college writing class need to be applied better as this lack of organization makes the book difficult to read in some spots: **Book The Faith instinctive** As concerns the second issue Wade does not use the Oxford comma; this makes some of his thoughts difficult to read because the items in the list of long complicated strings: **Book The Faith instinctive** PLEASE NOTE: I do realize these are technical hang-ups that not everyone is interested in but I noted from the flap that Wade is an editor. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** The topic on the cover seemed to indicate to me that the author was going to write about biology religion and social functions. **The Faith Instinct booking** The history portions were great (and well written—they kept me reading) but they felt a bit out of place in the general discussion. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Last I must note Wade’s attempts to enter the discourse surrounding evolution religion and language are a mixed bag: **Book The Faith instinctive** He only sketches the ideas of some of the thinkers he uses (Pinker Fitch etc. **Book The Faith instinct synonym**) without offering enough information to truly dispel/engage with the ideas these things present. **The Faith Instinct book** Again the book needs more—it could have been much longer and it feels like a sketch, **The Faith Instinct booking** I don’t know what the situation is behind the scenes here (maybe someone told him to do it this way; maybe he didn’t have more

time; etc, **The Faith Instinct booker** Okay so to summarize: I would encourage potential readers to buy this book though I would also note that they should be prepared for some significant hiccups along the way. **The Faith Instinct booker** Wade's work shows a great deal of promise but it cannot fully deliver on the promises that it sets forth on the cover, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** I really have strong mixed feelings—I am disappointed but I also admire much of what the author has done, **Book The Faith instinct magazine** English The Faith Instinct is not a bad book but it may not be what you're expecting: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** Based on the title How Religion Evolved and Why It Endures I was expecting some pretty hard scientific data. **Book The Faith instinct raw** Brain imaging scientific experiments and psychological case studies however are not to be found in this book. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Instead author Nicholas Wade approaches the question of religion not from a scientific or psychological perspective but an historical one. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** On a few occasions Wade responds to questions like these but the explanations feel hand-wavey and incomplete. **The Faith Instinct booker** The chapters on Christianity and Islam were quite interesting and though they retread well-worn ground I found them quite enjoyable to read: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** I did thoroughly enjoy this book and I also learned a lot: **The Faith Instinct book** If anything this book has brought me back to a more rational balanced less hostile view of religion and it's apparently necessary role in human culture: **The Faith Instinct booker** Despite its attempts to stay out of religion though science can't, **The Faith Instinct book** Religion is a human behaviour and humans are part of the physical universe, **The Faith Instinct booking** Therefore science should have room for an explanation of religion as an emergent phenomenon. **The Faith Instinct book** In The Faith Instinct Nicholas Wade examines religion using evolutionary theory and particularly evolutionary biology to see if religion could be an evolutionary adaptation: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** The possibility for explaining religion through evolutionary theory comes as a result of religion's universality. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** In more recent centuries there have been some attempts such as those in Russia and China to create societies without religion, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** What keeps bringing us back to belief? More importantly when examined from an evolutionary perspective religion is costly, **Book The Faith instinctively** Historically we associate organized religion with the advent of agriculture: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** The ability to settle and farm land created the potential for a class of people who did not provide food—a class that could include people responsible for religious duties, **The Faith Instinct booker** Agriculture gave us priests and divine monarchs but Wade argues that religion would still have been prominent albeit more egalitarian in hunter-gatherer cultures, **Book The Faith instinctual** He cites anthropological studies of extant hunter-gatherer cultures; in particular he explores the connections between music dance and trance and how they bring a society closer together: **Book The Faith instinct raw** Wade's thesis overall is that religion could be an adaptative way of promoting social cohesion: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Wade makes a good case for looking at religion using evolutionary theory and his idea that it promotes social cohesion sounds plausible: **Book The Faith instinctual** However his evidence to support this idea is less impressive. **Book The Faith instinctual** I enjoyed his previous book Before the Dawn because its analysis of our migrations is founded in genetics: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** As such Wade can point to specific genes that are common to a population and make inferences about that population's journey out of Africa. **The Faith Instinct booker** Although Wade assembles explanations from archaeology anthropology linguistics genetics and neuroscience this composite corpus of evidence is rather underwhelming. **The Faith Instinct booking** For instance Wade discusses how much as with the capacity for language there may be a neurological basis for religious belief, **Book The Faith instinct magazine** He notes that excessive activity in the temporal lobe often results in increased religiosity. **The Faith Instinct booker** We don't have enough archaeological evidence to draw conclusions about ancient religions. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** We don't know enough about how the brain or consciousness works to understand its role in religion. **Book The Faith instinct dog** (I do find it interesting that Wade does not mention at all Julian Jaynes' theory of the bicameral mind. **The Faith Instinct bookworm**

Though controversial and similarly lacking in evidence it seems pertinent to the discussion. **The Faith Instinct bookworm**) Despite our best efforts we can't link religion to any particular genes. **Book The Faith instinct magazine** I suppose this is to be expected from a book that describes itself on the back cover as nonpolemical: **Book The Faith instinctive** Wade isn't contending much beyond the fact that religion might provide an evolutionary benefit, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** He acknowledges perspectives that differ from his own offering useful insight into some of the changes to the climate of anthropology and evolutionary biology in the twentieth century. **The Faith Instinct booker** This is fascinating but all it did was make me want to re-read The Evolution of God which does the same thing in more depth (and with more detailed endnotes!). **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** I quite enjoy reading about sacred texts from an archaeological standpoint but it's a little out of place in a book about the evolutionary origins of religion..., **Book The Faith instinct magazine** On the other hand his treatment is too general to do the subject justice, **Book The Faith instinctively** In what is perhaps the most contentious part of the book Wade examines religion's link to morality: **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** It's this last part that idea that religious belief seems to be innate that might rankle some atheists, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Yet the very nature of the word atheist is a philosophical declaration against belief in a deity, **Book The Faith instinct dog** It speaks of a need to differentiate oneself in the negative something we don't often see, **The Faith Instinct bookworm** As Neil de Grasse Tyson points out in a video where he explains why he identifies as agnostic non-skiers don't get together and talk about not skiing. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Atheism is an active rather than a passive form of disbelief—and it is that way because religion is so pervasive a human behaviour, **Book The Faith instinctual** I understand why Wade did not digress further into his discussion of the morality of a society of atheists for that delves into philosophy rather than evolutionary biology, **Book The Faith instinct magazine** If such a society were to develop today it would still possess the historical and philosophical traditions of morality including those handed down by religion, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** In that case it seems reasonable to conclude that such a society could develop secular moral tenets albeit tenets that might descend from those proposed by religion. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** So Wade might have a point after all when he claims that religion could have a necessary purpose in the development of our species, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** After all perhaps religion was necessary before but will gradually disappear just as we evolved tails and then eventually discarded them, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Part scientific speculation part philosophical rumination The Faith Instinct is an intriguing look at religion from a rational science-based perspective. **The Faith Instinct book** It seeks to prescribe neither an attitude toward religion nor a prognosis for its future role in society. **Book The Faith instinct dog** Instead Wade taps evolutionary theory to explain the universality of such a complex and diverse human behaviour, **Book The Faith instinct magazine** At times his explanations while interesting lack the necessary evidence to be persuasive. **The Faith Instinct booker** It shines the light in that one spot where we can't no matter how we try separate science and religion, **Book The Faith instinctual** If you are already very interested in this subject there are some books like The Evolution of God that might leave you more fulfilled, **Book The Faith instinct dog** Neophytes however will probably find The Faith Instinct a welcoming way to begin looking at religion in this light: **Book The Faith instinct magazine** this is an incredibly fascinating look at the origins and evolution of religion from the religions of nomadic tribes to the three monotheisms of today's civilizations. **The Faith Instinct booking** as reportage it's stellar and wade makes this stuff compelling through a variety of histories anecdotes and distillations of prior study of religion and evolution. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** his thesis that religion is an adaptive human trait is certainly interesting, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** his argument in many ways is compelling and hard to refute: **Book The Faith instinct raw** he does spend some time with competing theories of religion's survival including the popular theory that religion is a by-product other mental adaptations that occurred in our evolution. **Book The Faith instinctive** and while reading this book i wondered why religion couldn't have been shaped by both theories? part adaptive part by-product. **Book The Faith**

instinct dog the evidence for both is compelling whereas neither seems to fully explain, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** English This book had untold potential to tell the story of the evolution of religion biologically and culturally within human societies: **Book The Faith instinct raw** Wade squandered it through chapters full of navel-gazing anecdota tortured into pretending to support his theses. **The Faith Instinct booker** The first half of the book was slow and repetitive but interesting. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** The book's central hypothesis is that religion evolved through forms of kin selection by providing advantages to societies largely in the form of greater cohesion and conformity, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Keep in mind that for the first 45000 years or so of the existence of modern humans we lived in small tribes with no formal hierarchies no legal systems no penal code. **The Faith Instinct book** Somehow a common moral code must be not only developed but enforced even when no one is watching: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** Enter gods who can see you everywhere and are for mysterious reasons deeply interested in the minutiae of human behaviour. **The Faith Instinct booking** There were small elements of science--sciencelets let's call them--in the early chapters: **Book The Faith instinctively** Or here: science has pretty conclusively shown that people jump to moral conclusions via intuition and then reason their way into those conclusions after the fact, **Book The Faith instinctual** I would be less frustrated if the entirely speculative nature of this book were due to a lack of science or research on the biological underpinnings of religion. **The Faith Instinct booker** But the balance between individualism and community-building has shifted dramatically toward the former in the last fifty years , **The Faith Instinct booker** Groups demanding rights for specific sections of the population have also undermined community in unintended ways, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** It would be better you see if those uppity women and black people had kept subordinating their selfish desires to be seen as human beings and individuals, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Our bad!The Church felt secure in the 1950s and did not oppose the legal secularists until too late: **Book The Faith instinct dog** Legal secularism was not addressed to the electorate which would doubtless have rejected it flat just to the Supreme Court an elite group : **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Some 95 percent of Americans are Christian or belong to no religion. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Minorities--including Jews Buddhists Muslims and Hindus together make up less than 5 percent, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** To protect the rights of a 5 percent minority by denying religious education to 95 percent of the population was a solution that could seem satisfactory to few besides lawyers. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** I'm pretty sure that people besides lawyers were very very happy to get bible learning out of the public education system. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Gone were the days when all men were hunters and all women gatherers: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** If he could distinguish scientific facts from a hole in the ground he might be familiar enough with anthropological research to know this, **The Faith Instinct booker** Unwarranted observations about the role and characteristics of men vs. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** None of them relate to his thesis and all of them are demonstrably false: **Book The Faith instinctive** Worst is his constant insistence that religion = initiation rites for male adolescents = military training = success in warfare: **Book The Faith instinctively** There are some evolved characteristics that are required for survival and these are universal, **Book The Faith instinct raw** If you don't breathe you don't live so the biological and neurobiological mechanisms exist in all of us: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** Same for eating sleeping swallowing etc and some characteristics that are required for reproduction (the other component to evolution), **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** There are some traits that are not required for survival or reproduction but which confer enough of a benefit to be very common: **Book The Faith instinct dog** These exist on a continuum between almost-necessary and almost-optional. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Personality and character traits are placed all over this continuum and the same trait can have different outcomes depending on the environment: **Book The Faith instinctual** rapids though I can't remember which was better or worse for the outgoing fishies): **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** Well--isn't it really really bloody obvious that the same would be true for religiosity?Religiosity exists on a continuum, **The Faith Instinct booker** Some people are fanatical

other people are committed some flexible more-or-less half-hearted willing to go along but not a believer or committed non-believer: **The Faith Instinct book** Much like extraversion sensitivity and intelligence among other personality traits. **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** And so like other personality traits--obviously what's adaptive and what's not adaptive varies depending on environment including the culture, **The Faith Instinct bookworm** I don't believe for a second that ancient hunter-gatherers didn't have any skeptics among them. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** That there were no people who were just going along because they enjoyed the dancing and the feasting and didn't really care if the gods existed or not. **The Faith Instinct book** And it's a matter of historical record that in societies where religion was outlawed some people risked their lives to continue practicing their faith: **Book The Faith instinct magazine** Cultures are not 1 or 0 yes or no religious or not religious and neither are individual people: **Book The Faith instinct dog** This could have been such a fascinating avenue for discussion, **The Faith Instinct book** Belief in the former context has no meaning--one could be an atheist and very devout simultaneously: **The Faith Instinct booker**)I would have loved to delve into a discussion on these topics but it wasn't there: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** I got more out of the evolution-of-fiction book and its throwaway line than I did from this entire manuscript, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Without the alpha male something else was needed to bond the group together and from that need the first religion was born from which all other religions have evolved, **The Faith Instinct bookworm** In much the same way as there is an evolutionary tree of life and of languages there is also an evolutionary tree of religions: **The Faith Instinct bookworm** What bound the group together was the common belief in these supernatural forces which they also believed would punish freeloaders a critical aspect of group survival. **Book The Faith instinct dog** The more modern form of religions evolved along with culture, **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Wade then weaves a fascinating set of stories about the three great monotheisms Judaism Christianity and Islam and how they evolved. **The Faith Instinct booker** Some of this was familiar to me but most was not some of it astounding certainly not what I had assumed: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** But then I arrived at the last chapter The Future of Religion: **Book The Faith instinctive** After I read the last word of the last paragraph out loud I said "Wow!". **The Faith Instinct booker** I won't give away what he says in that final chapter because to do so would definitely spoil it for the reader. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** Is religion adaptive in an evolutionary sense? is the first and most important question to be answered. **The Faith Instinct bookworm** The fact that religion is universal strongly suggests that it is. **Book The Faith instinctively** But until recently this idea was rejected by most biologists including some heavy hitters such as George Williams Richard Dawkins and Steven Pinker: **Book The Faith instinctive** But as Wade points out Dawkins and Pinker in particular may have missed the boat because of personal biases, **The Faith Instinct book** Wades writes that their opposition seems to be driven less by any particular evidence than by the implicit premise that religion is bad and therefore must be nonadaptive, **Book The Faith instinctual** 67)Moreover Williams and Dawkins have been against the idea that religion is adaptive because of their belief that natural selection operates primarily at the level of the individual: **The Faith Instinct booking** For religion to be adaptive in the Darwinian sense it helps a lot for selection to operate at the level of the group, **Book The Faith instinctual** Wade shows that biologists such as David Sloan Wilson and Edward O. **The Faith Instinct booker** Wilson not to mention Darwin himself support the idea of group selection. **Book The Faith instinctual** Williams and others came to differ with Darwin by arguing that free-loaders and cheaters only interested in promoting their own genes would out-reproduce the do-gooders. **Book The Faith instinct raw** This opinion has held sway in evolutionary biology for a long time the basis of religion is communal rhythmic singing and dancing, **The Faith Instinct bookkeeping** People could dance and follow rhythms and perhaps sing before they could use syntactic language: **Book The Faith instinctive** We see many animals especially birds that perform elaborate dances, **Book The Faith instinct magazine** Hominids being social creatures would dance en mass not so much to be sexually selected (although that too no doubt) but to strengthen their ties within the group. **Book The Faith instinct synonym** He hints at a need for religions that

are more in tune with the modern world: **Book The Faith instinct synonym** --Dennis Littrell author of "Understanding Religion: Reviews Essays and Commentary" English.

. Music/dance2. Rites of passage3. An afterlife (of some sort)5. (p.2. The focus of worship was on communal activities.3.4.g..

Book The Faith instinct synonym

But that is changing. Wade quotes David Sloan Wilson and Edward O. Altruistic groups beat selfish groups. Everything else is commentary. (p. In fact some religions have banned dancing. This part of the book is quite interesting--e.g." (p.I'll discuss that aspect of the book in more detail below." (p." (p. 98) And the following characterized it:1. The whole community participated.Having read the book I remain an agnostic at this point.I want to be kind to this book. I really do. Part of me thinks this book has greatness in it. Wade is a great source of information.And now here is the list of 'However's.However the writing is atrocious in some spots. Let me address these one by one.First let's talk about the writing. His writes what I call machine-gun sentences. They are simple constructs. They work like this. They get the job done. He doesn't always do this. It was enough to be apparent. I felt my brain going numb. It was bad. I didn't like it. I would expect more._____Now let's move to the ambition of the book. The book can roughly be divided into three major sections.) but the book suffers for it. It certainly wasn't what I was expecting. Great stuff. It has a job to do: it has to explain religion. These have not succeeded.So far so good. However he has to concede that we just don't know yet.This proves to be the recurring theme: we don't know. This doesn't mean that atheism or secularism are wrong. I don't see that being the case but you never know. wade's book works on many levels. No such luck. That's the short version. Now you can skip that chapter too. Wade does not discuss a single one. (p. 202)Yup. Then we would still have a sense of community. (p. 267)Yep. He went there. (p. 125) Those days never existed asshat. And it's not just here. women are scattered all over the book. Oy.Last criticism promise:It's too black and white. Like breathing.There have always been some atheists and non-believers. Practically nothing was there. I was blown away. (p.But this ecstatic expression of religion cuts both ways. Beyond that he does not go.All in all an excellent book that deserves a wide readership