



## Celebrating the uninvited

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## Celebrating the uninvited

Most researchers know the frustration of having accepted too many invitations to contribute. Perhaps you just finished an essay for an anthology that you promised a colleague, or a proceeding from a recent conference. Perhaps you finally submitted a report to wrap up a joint research project, or maybe you made a strategic decision to contribute to a special issue being edited by the most important researchers in your field. *Religion, Brain & Behavior* often publishes invited papers, and indeed this issue features invited papers on Ariel Glucklich's recent book, *The Joy of Religion*. Target articles and book symposia are wonderful tools for academic dissemination. Anthologies can have the same quality, and so can any other form of academic publications that focus on a single topic, field, or method. But those invited opportunities quickly add up to a challenging series of professional obligations. If one is working on an invited manuscript out of a sense of obligation, rather than enthusiasm about the research, it often feels like work: discharging a duty before moving quickly on to the next thing.

We would like to pause for moment and contemplate the unique pleasures of submitting uninvited research. Most researchers are driven by passion. The process of designing studies and submitting findings rarely feels like work proper. Submitting a manuscript to a scientific journal with no prior invitation, no prearrangement, no conference proceeding, no ties, no nothing—just a natural end to a study—is a bracing expression of the researcher's passion. The peer-review process can be fraught with anxiety and is occasionally jarring. But there is also excitement at having one's work read and taken seriously by experts from perspectives informed by entirely different methodologies and research traditions. Their comments may lead to completely new analyses and insights, or rejection for reasons you never considered, followed by vital improvements. Responding to reviewers' comments forces you to reflect. It becomes part of the research process, potentially leading to unexpected breakthroughs. The difference between discharging invited obligations and uninvited submissions carries over into the joy of having your work accepted for publication.

This issue of *RBB* features four contributions that beautifully illustrate the joy of a research process that culminates in uninvited submissions, productive peer review, and successful publication.

Amar Annus's "The notion of dyadic morality explains the logic of Zande witchcraft" employs Daniel Wegner and Kurt Gray's theory of dyadic morality to explore Zande witchcraft. Relying on Evans-Pritchard's classic ethnography, *Witchcraft, Oracles, and Magic among the Azande*, Annus shows how dyadic morality explains the distribution and content of witchcraft accusations among the Azande.

Francesco Rigoli's "A computational perspective on faith: religious reasoning and Bayesian decision" offers a unifying computational theory of religious reasoning. Rigoli integrates explanation theories with motivation theories in a Bayesian decision framework to describe in mathematical terms how religious beliefs are formed by prior beliefs, novel evidence, and utility.

Taylor FioRito, Andrea Abeyra, and Clay Routledge's "Religion, paranormal beliefs, and meaning in life" offers new insights into the psychological construct of "need for meaning." While previous research has shown that the need for meaning is positively associated with interest in religion and spirituality, this team showed that need for meaning also predicts paranormal beliefs, even after allowing for other possible predictors.

Anastasia Ejova, Petar Milojev, Everett L. Worthington, Jr., Chris G. Sibley, and Joseph Bulbulia's "Church attendance buffers against longer-term mental distress" revisits the question of how church attendance benefits mental health. Past research has found that the key health benefit of church attendance is mediated by its buffering effects against unhealthy forms of stress. This team's report on a longitudinal population-representative study qualifies this finding: consistent church attendance functions as a buffer against unhealthy stress only for people in distressing situations.

As editors, seeing these submissions through to publication sparks in us vicariously the same excitement and joy that the authors of these uninvited submissions experienced themselves.

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*Editors*