

# LOVE AND THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN NATURE

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## **Abstract:**

This is the love story of human nature, of human culture, and of human cult. This story may scarcely make sense to many who see man, as Nietzsche wrote, 'a thing dark and veiled' (in the first section of his third 'untimely meditation'). Should they concede however to read on, they will know for themselves, and by themselves, whether the half-forgotten 'know yourself' still carries any weight these days. In this most modest contribution to a dignified debate, I argue that the origin of human nature is truly in the love of God. To wit, God's love of humans led to humans' love of God, and we grew fully human as we fell in love with God. 'We love because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19). And, as the Holy Father Benedict XVI said half a century ago, "The clay became man at that moment in which a being for the first time was capable of forming, however dimly, the thought "God"". Now, my working hypothesis is that, far back in time, in times far less sophisticated than our own, to think 'God' was to love God, and this sort of love, for God, love at the first sight, made us human. The origin of human love, to be specific, the origin of myriad human loves of fellow humans, is in the human love of God.

**Keywords:** *creation; cult; culture; evolution; human being; love; nature.*

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'All love is self-surrender'<sup>2</sup>.

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2 'Being in love with God, as experienced, is being in love in an unrestricted fashion. All love is self-surrender, but being in love with God is being in love without limits

**Human.** What is the origin of human nature? This is a simple question. Somehow, the very sort of simple question that has a very complex answer. That sort of question turning into quest. 'A thousand-mile journey begins with a single step'<sup>3</sup>. The question then indeed becomes: which one? Where should we plant our feet, to take the first step to a distant destination? Already caught between what research in social psychology calls the 'need for cognition'<sup>4</sup> and the 'need for closure'<sup>5</sup>, I think that I would rather heed myself a third need, that informally I will call need for definition. This need is no invention of my own; indeed, this need is age-old. Many of Plato's dialogues<sup>6</sup> are engineered in their entirety as successive if not always successful attempts at defining some thing or another<sup>7</sup>. As Plato (or 'Socrates') puts it in the *Phaedrus*: the one who does not define in advance what one is talking about will come to agree neither with oneself nor with others<sup>8</sup>. 'And a definition is a formula which is one not by being connect-

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or qualifications or conditions or reservations. Just as unrestricted questioning is our capacity for self-transcendence, so being in love in an unrestricted fashion is the proper fulfilment of that capacity' (Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ, *Method in Theology*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990<sup>2</sup>, xii + 405 p., 105-106).

3 Hinton, David (Translated and with Commentary by), *The Four Chinese Classics: Tao Te Ching – Chuang Tzu – Analects – Mencius*, Berkeley, Counterpoint, 2013, 575 p., 104 (*Tao Te Ching*, chapter 64).

4 'The tendency for an individual to engage in and enjoy thinking' (John Cacioppo – Richard Petty, 'The Need for Cognition', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42 (1982: 1) 116-131, 116). 'The term need is used in a statistical (*i. e.*, likelihood or tendency) rather than biological (*i. e.*, tissue deprivation) sense' (*ibid.*, 118).

5 'Individuals' desire for a firm answer to a question and an aversion toward ambiguity' (Arie Kruglanski – Daniel Webster, 'Motivated Closing of the Mind: "Seizing" and "Freezing"', *Psychological Review*, 103 (1996: 2) 263-283, 264). 'The term need is meant to denote a motivated tendency or proclivity rather than a tissue deficit (for a similar usage, see Cacioppo & Petty, 1982)' (*ibid.*).

6 Including *Gorgias*, *Euthyphro*, *Theaetetus*, *Hippias maior*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Meno*, *Res publica*, *Politicus*, *Protagoras*, *Sophistes* și *Charmides*.

7 *I. e.*, as attempts to define, respectively: rhetoric, piety, knowledge, beauty, courage, friendship, virtue, justice, statesmen, virtue again, sophists, and moderation.

8 'If you wish to reach a good decision on any topic, my boy, there is only one way to begin: You must know what the decision is about, or else you are bound to miss your target altogether. Ordinary people cannot see that they do not know the true nature of a particular subject, so they proceed as if they did; and because they do not work out an agreement at the start of the inquiry, they wind up as you would expect – in conflict with themselves and each other' (Plato, *Phaedrus*, 237b-d). In the original Greek:

ed together, like the *Iliad*, but by dealing with one object', notes Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*<sup>9</sup>; and again, in his *Topics*, 'a definition is a phrase signifying a thing's essence'<sup>10</sup>. This is, may I say, a 'condition of possibility' (in Kant's terms)<sup>11</sup> for ordered research. And yet, in our sophisticated times, 'essentialism' has essentially become a slur. Applied to human nature, it is deemed even more suspect.

**Nature.** 'You are imagining that there is something called human nature that will be outraged by what we do and will turn against us. But we create human nature. Men are infinitely malleable'<sup>12</sup>. Such was the dream of totalitarianism, that 'novel form of government' depicted by Hannah Arendt<sup>13</sup>,

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Περὶ παντός, ὃ παῖ, μία ἀρχὴ τοῖς μέλλουσι καλῶς βουλευέσθαι: εἶδέναι δεῖ περὶ οὗ ἂν ἦ ἡ βουλή, ἢ παντός ἀμαρτάνειν ἀνάγκη. Τοῦς δὲ πολλοὺς λέληθεν ὅτι οὐκ ἴσασι τὴν οὐσίαν ἐκάστου. Ὡς οὖν εἰδότες οὐ διομολογοῦνται ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς σκέψεως, προελθόντες δὲ τὸ εἰκὸς ἀποδιδόασιν: οὔτε γὰρ ἑαυτοῖς οὔτε ἀλλήλοις ὁμολογοῦσιν'.

9 Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1045a. In the original Greek: 'ὁ δ' ὀρισμὸς λόγος ἐστὶν εἶς οὗ συνδέσμῳ καθάπερ ἡ Ἰλιάς ἀλλὰ τῷ ἐνὸς εἶναι'.

10 Aristotle, *Topica*, 101b.

11 'Space is a necessary representation, *a priori*, which is the ground of all outer intuitions. One can never represent that there is no space, although one can very well think that there are no objects to be encountered in it. It is therefore to be regarded as the condition of the possibility of appearances, not as a determination dependent on them, and is an *a priori* representation that necessarily grounds outer appearances' (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, xi + 785 p., 158; A24/ B 39). In the original German: 'Der Raum ist eine notwendige Vorstellung *a priori*, die allen äußeren Anschauungen zum Grunde liegt. Man kann sich niemals eine Vorstellung davon machen, daß kein Raum sei, ob man sich gleich ganz wohl denken kann, daß keine Gegenstände darin angeltroffen werden. Er wird also als die Bedingung der Möglichkeit der Erscheinungen, und nicht als eine von ihnen abhängende Bestimmung angesehen, und ist eine Vorstellung *apriori*, die notwendigerweise äußeren Erscheinungen zum Grunde liegt' (Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, Hamburg, 1956, 67).

12 George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, edited with an Introduction and Notes by John Bowen, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021, xxxviii + 250 p., 209.

13 'Apart from such considerations – which as predictions are of little avail and less consolation – there remains the fact that the crisis of our time and its central experience have brought forth an entirely new form of government which as a potentiality and an ever-present danger is only too likely to stay with us from now on, just as other forms of government which came about at different historical moments and rested on different fundamental **experiences** have stayed with mankind regardless of temporary defeats

that 'Gnostic' movement<sup>14</sup> and 'political religion'<sup>15</sup> depicted by Eric Voegelin, the dream (or was it rather nightmare?) of millions and billions living under its crude and cruel rule. Beyond the dream and nightmare, it is only easy to see that 'human nature' is permanently, across history, pervasively, across geography, chiselled by human culture. Not *changed* if change means sudden metamorphosis; but 'changed' indeed if change means subtle modification. And I might even go so far as to argue that the whole scope and purpose of our human culture is to help alter human nature in order to help us better adapt to our environment. I certainly do not mean thereby only our natural environment, but also our social environment – and, above all, may I say, our sacred environment, where the human perception of a divine presence, or of the presence of the sacred at the very least, forms and informs our most important existential choices:

Accordingly, we suggest a definition of religion which considers man in his totality, ontological and ontic, and highlights the nature of the sacred, transcendent and incarnated in history: '*religion is the*

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– monarchies, and republics, tyrannies, dictatorships and despotism' (Hannah Arendt, 'Ideology and Terror: A Novel Form of Government', *Review of Politics* 15 (1953: 3) 303-327, 327).

14 Cf. Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1952, 193 p.; *id.*, *Science, Politics, and Gnosticism: Two Essays*, Washington, Regnery, 1997, 114 p.; and Alain Besançon, *Les origines intellectuelles du léninisme*, Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1977. 327 p. The standard translation of the Gnostic gospels is: Marvin Meyer (editor), *The Nag Hammadi Scriptures: The International Edition*, New York, Harper, 2007, 844 p.

15 Eric Voegelin, *Die politische Religionen*, Stockholm, Berman-Fischer, 1939<sup>2</sup>, 67 p. This concept should however not be used without qualification: 'Into this context belong the studies that I published under the title *Die politischen Religionen* in 1938. When I spoke of the *politischen Religionen*, I conformed to the usage of a literature that interpreted ideological movements as a variety of religions. Representative for this literature was Louis Rougier's successful volume on *Les Mystiques politiques*. The interpretation is not all wrong, but I would no longer use the term religions because it is too vague and already deforms the real problem of experiences by mixing them with the further problem of dogma or doctrine. Moreover, in *Die politische Religionen* I still pooled together such phenomena as the spiritual movement of Ikhnaton, the medieval theories of spiritual and temporal power, apocalypses, the *Leviathan* of Hobbes, and certain National-Socialist symbolisms. A more adequate treatment would have required far-reaching differentiations between these various phenomena' (*id.*, 'Autobiographical Reflections', *Collected Works*, 34 volumes, Columbia, University of Missouri Press, 1990-2009<sup>2</sup>, volume 34, p. 9-148, 78-79). However, Professor Voegelin's concept gained traction and was applied, *inter alia*, to communism, fascism, and National-Socialism.

link allowing man contact with the Ultimate and Transcendent Reality, that man believes that he existentially depends upon, and the cultic and theoretical relations that the believer forges with this reality'. Our definition distinguishes, without radically separating them, the sacred from the divine, the ontological and ontic dimensions. The case of Eliade's work is different, where these concepts are collapsed. As a matter of fact, should one try to follow the road of being in Eliade's thought, one will end in contradiction, for Eliade knows no concept of analogy, and in the realm of thought, as he said himself so many times, any conciliation is impossible<sup>16</sup>.

**Origin.** Plato and Aristotle would have certainly agreed. Certainly not with Nietzsche ('The more insight we possess into an origin the less significant does the origin appear'<sup>17</sup>), but rather with each other. 'When I was a young man I was wonderfully keen on that wisdom which they call

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16 'În sensul acesta, propunem o definiție a religiei care consideră omul în totalitatea sa, ontologică și ontică, și evidențiază natura sacrului transcendent și întrupat în istorie: "religia este legătura care permite omului un contact cu Realitatea Ultimă și Transcendentă, de care omul crede că depinde în mod existențial, și raporturile culturale și teoretice pe care omul credincios le stabilește cu realitatea aceasta". Definiția noastră deosebește, dar nu separă în mod radical sacrul de divin, dimensiunea ontologică de cea ontică. Diferită este situația în opera lui M. Eliade unde noțiunile în discuție se confundă. De fapt, dacă cineva încearcă să parcurgă drumul funței din gândirea eliadiană, în cele din urmă sfârșește în contradicție, căci Eliade nu cunoaște conceptul de analogie, iar în planul gândirii, el însuși a spus-o de nenumărate ori, concilierea este imposibilă' (Wilhelm Dancă, *Mircea Eliade: Definiție sacri*, Iași, Ars Longa, 1998, 108).

17 'Origin and significance. – Why is it that this thought comes back to me again and again and in ever more varied colours? – that formerly, when investigators of knowledge sought out the origin of things they always believed they would discover something of incalculable significance for all later action and judgment, that they always presupposed, indeed, that the salvation of man must depend on *insight into the origin of things*: but that now, on the contrary, the more we advance towards origins, the more our interest diminishes; indeed, that all the evaluations and "interestedness" we have implanted into things begin to lose their meaning the further we go back and the closer we approach the things themselves. *The more insight we possess into an origin the less significant does the origin appear*: while *what is nearest to us*, what is around us and in us, gradually begins to display colours and beauties and enigmas and riches of significance of which earlier mankind had not an inkling' (Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, edited by Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter, translated by R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, xlii + 247 p., 30-31).

natural science, for I thought it splendid to know the causes of everything, why it comes to be, why it perishes and why it exists”<sup>18</sup>. ‘Knowledge is the object of our inquiry, and men do not think they know a thing till they have grasped the “why” of it (which is to grasp its primary cause)’<sup>19</sup>. Yet Nietzsche’s jadedness reverberates throughout our postmodernity, while Plato’s and Aristotle’s lasting legacy of love for origins (‘for all causes are origins’<sup>20</sup>) now courts controversy.

**Love.** ‘Power, like love, is easier to experience than to define or measure’, quipped Joseph Nye in 1990<sup>21</sup>. ‘Power, like love, is a word used continually in everyday speech, understood intuitively, and defined rarely’, had already quipped Roderick Martin in 1971<sup>22</sup>. If my kind reader has a distinct feeling of *déjà lu*, she will be easily forgiven. I share myself this feeling. Notwithstanding, I am not mainly at this juncture concerned with how Professor Nye sounds not very unlike Professor Martin. Nor with power. Not even with how close or not so close indeed is the relation between power, love, love of power, and power of love. Instead, I am specifically concerned with how Professors Nye and Martin, finding themselves specifically concerned with how to better grapple with a concept, that is, power, picked love from countless other concepts available to English speakers as epitome of ‘easier to experience than to define or measure’, and of ‘used continually in everyday speech, understood intuitively, and defined rarely’. Seen from this scenic standpoint, love almost becomes the stuff of dreams, or daydreams. Not the proper study of, say, theology, nor of philosophy. Certainly not of science. Thus, this love is, dare I say, a dream for her practitioner, a night-

18 Plato, *Phaedo*, 96a6-10. In the original Greek: ‘ἐγὼ γάρ, ἔφη, ὃ Κέβητος, νέος ὢν θαυμαστῶς ὡς ἐπεθύμησα ταύτης τῆς σοφίας ἣν δὴ καλοῦσι περὶ φύσεως ἱστορίαν: ὑπερήφανος γάρ μοι ἐδόκει εἶναι, εἰδέναι τὰς αἰτίας ἐκάστου, διὰ τί γίγνεται ἕκαστον καὶ διὰ τί ἀπόλλυται καὶ διὰ τί ἔστι’.

19 Aristotle, *Physica*, 194b17-20. In the original Greek: ‘ἐπεὶ γὰρ τοῦ εἰδέναι χάριν ἢ πραγματεία, εἰδέναι δὲ οὐ πρότερον οἴομεθα ἕκαστον πρὶν ἂν λάβωμεν τὸ διὰ τί περὶ ἕκαστον (τοῦτο δ’ ἔστι τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν πρώτην αἰτίαν)’.

20 Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, 1013a18. In the original Greek: ‘πάντα γὰρ τὰ αἴτια ἀρχαί’.

For Aristotle’s four causes, cf. *Physica*, II.3 and *Metaphysica*, V.1-2.

21 Joseph S. Nye, ‘The Changing Nature of World Power’, *Political Science Quarterly*, 105 (1990, 2) 177-192, 177.

22 Roderick Martin, ‘The Concept of Power: A Critical Defence’, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 22 (1971, 3) 240-256, 241.

mare for her theorist. One may remember Simon May's experience of exasperation, and its backhanded expression: 'Isn't love indefinable – a matter of feeling, not thought?'<sup>23</sup>. 'Elementary', as the saying goes.

Or so it seems. But is it so? 'We have to allow ourselves to be astounded by facts that any sane person would take for granted', would quip John Searle in 1998<sup>24</sup>. This distinct line of argument had also been advanced before, for instance, in theology by Father Bernard Lonergan, SJ<sup>25</sup>, in philosophy by Aristotle<sup>26</sup>, and in science by

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23 'I have repeatedly encountered these questions, along with scepticism, even hostility, towards the very idea of a *philosophy* of love. A philosophy of love, so this view goes, is either futile (love cannot be defined) or self-defeating (to define it is to degrade it). The motive for such a project is not only naïve but suspect: one philosophises about love because one cannot experience it; but if one cannot experience it then how can one possibly philosophise about it?' (Simon May, *Love: A History*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2011, xiv + 294 p., x).

24 John R. Searle, *Mind, Language and Society: Philosophy in the Real World*, New York, Basic Books, 1998, x + 175 p., 114.

25 'The principal chapters in this book give a very beautiful illustration of man's discovery that he has a mind. The book recounts the manner in which the Greek poets and philosophers gradually came to objectify and state the fact that they had minds and wills, bodies and souls. Because it is obvious to us, we may be inclined to take it for granted that the same facts must always have been obvious to everyone. My point in spending what may seem a disproportionate amount of time on this mere illustration is that it introduces very effectively the notion of historical development and historical perspective' (Bernard J. F. Lonergan, SJ, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, edited by Robert C. Crocken, SJ, Frederick E. Crowe, SJ, and Robert M. Doran, SJ, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 6, Toronto, Buffalo, and London, University of Toronto Press, 1996, xv + 278 p., 245). This excerpt is taken from the lecture given by Professor Lonergan at the Thomas More Institute in Montreal on 1 October 1964, titled 'Theology as Christian Phenomenon', that begins by that lovely, tongue-in-cheek quip of the accomplished theologian: 'Believers are one thing, theologians another. Often enough, it is difficult not to think of the theologians as a group of parasites that, if not utterly odious, at least do more harm than good' (*ibid.*, 244).

26 'Not every problem, nor every thesis, should be examined, but only one which might puzzle one of those who need argument, not punishment or perception. For people who are puzzled to know whether one ought to honour the gods and love one's parents or not need punishment, while those who are puzzled to know whether snow is white or not need perception. The subjects should not border too closely upon the sphere of demonstration, nor yet be too far removed from it; for the former cases admit of no doubt, while the latter involve difficulties too great for the art of the trainer' (Aristotle, *Topica*, 105a3-9). In the original Greek: 'Οὐ δεῑ δὲ πᾶν πρόβλημα οὐδὲ

Max Weber<sup>27</sup>. Yet, this contrarian argument should give us pause for thought. For this is absolutely not a matter of taking simple things and making them sound complicated. Indeed, this rather would be sloppy science, sloppy philosophy, sloppy theology, that seeks to split hairs as a way of life.

Theology, philosophy, and science should take concerted action in pursuit of truth. *Not* in pursuit of falsity, or falseness. Truth will be better served by taking complex things, things that sound complicated, and making them simple. To my mind, at the very least, this and no other is the point of theory. Provided that a theologian respects Professor Lonergan's position in this matter, a philosopher Aristotle's, a scientist Professor Weber's, she should indeed strive to help cast new light on old conundrums, never artificial light. There are indeed ten thousand ways to carve a statue in a block of marble, a lovely statue for that matter. There is but one way to define a concept. Or, should I rather put it, there is but one proper way to strive and tend toward such a difficult purpose among ten thousand different ways that open lush and lavish on all sides, in all directions, and extend throughout a given field of study, some of them going far and wide, others crisscrossing in intricate patterns, still others turning on themselves in loops. The choice of one of these myriad ways so often riveting that lead to error is so much easier indeed than the choice of the single way that unassuming leads to truth. Each one of us can take a step on one way or on any other as she pleases, yet all the ways that are and that can be are not made equal. There is this single way that leads to truth in science, in philosophy, and also in theology (al-

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πᾶσαν θέσιν ἐπισκοπεῖν, ἀλλ' ἦν ἀπορήσειεν ἄν τις τῶν λόγου δεομένων καὶ μὴ κολάσεως ἢ αισθήσεως· οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἀποροῦντες “Πότερον δεῖ τοὺς θεοὺς τιμᾶν καὶ τοὺς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν ἢ οὐ” κολάσεως δέονται, οἱ δὲ “Πότερον ἢ χιῶν λευκῆ ἢ οὐ” αισθήσεως. Οὐδὲ δὴ ὢν σύνεγγυς ἢ ἀπόδειξις, οὐδ' ὢν λίαν πόρρω· τὰ μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἔχει ἀπορίαν, τὰ δὲ πλείω ἢ κατὰ γυμναστικὴν’. My kind reader will not have missed the crucial use of the verb ἀγαπάω in ‘τοὺς γονεῖς ἀγαπᾶν’.

27 “The specific function of science is in my opinion exactly the opposite one: it should see a *problem* in anything that is conventionally self-evident’ (Max Weber, *Collected Methodological Writings*, edited by Hans Henrik Bruun and Sam Whimster, translated by Hans Henrik Bruun, London and New York, Routledge, 2012, xxxiii + 563 p., 311-312).



though the truth of science, the truth of philosophy, and the truth of theology are different kinds of truth, founded, respectively, on evidence, on reasoning, on revelation). And it is not indifferent whether the steps we choose to take lead us toward our common purpose, or astray. This I believe, and yet I am aware that this belief (or any, for that matter) is scarcely fashionable in our time, and so it has been for a long time.

**Morality.** Recent research in paleoanthropology conducted by Jean-Jacques Hublin and his colleagues<sup>28</sup> has pushed back the recorded age of our species by some 120,000 years, from approximately 195,000 years ago<sup>29</sup> to approximately 315,000 years ago<sup>30</sup>. ‘Until now, the common wisdom was that our species emerged probably rather quickly somewhere in a “Garden of Eden” that was located most likely in sub-Saharan Africa,’ quips Hublin; ‘I would say the Garden of Eden in Africa is probably Africa – and it’s a big, big garden’<sup>31</sup>. This claim prompts us to both refine and redefine Michael Tomasello’s ‘basic puzzle’<sup>32</sup> in cultural psychology and Lord

28 Jean-Jacques Hublin *et al.*, ‘New Fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco and the Pan-African Origin of *Homo Sapiens*’, *Nature*, 546 (7657) 289-292.

29 Cf. Ian McDougall *et al.*, ‘Stratigraphic Placement and Age of Modern Humans from Kibish, Ethiopia’, *Nature*, 433 (2005: 7027) 733-736; *id.*, ‘Sapropels and the Age of Hominins Omo I and II, Kibish, Ethiopia’, *Journal of Human Evolution*, 55 (2008: 3) 409-420; and Francis Brown *et al.*, ‘Correlation of the KHS Tuff of the Kibish Formation to Volcanic Ash Layers at Other Sites, and the Age of Early *Homo Sapiens* (Omo I and Omo II)’, *Journal of Human Evolution*, 63 (2012: 4) 577-585.

30 Daniel Richter *et al.*, ‘The Age of the Hominin Fossils from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, and the Origins of the Middle Stone Age’, *Nature*, 546 (2017: 7657) 293-296. This (very) early date is not particularly perplexing; indeed, recent research in genetics, published last year by Professor Meyer and colleagues, suggests that ‘the population split between archaic and modern humans occurred between 550,000 and 765,000 years ago’ (Matthias Meyer *et al.*, ‘Nuclear DNA Sequences from the Middle Pleistocene Sima de los Huesos Hominins’, *Nature*, 531 (2016: 7595) 504-507, 506). More perplexing perhaps is the location of Professor Hublin’s find-spot in the Jebel Irhoud massif near the Atlantic coast of Morocco.

31 Quoted in Ewen Callaway, *Oldest Homo Sapiens Fossil Claim Rewrites Our Species’ History*, <http://www.nature.com/news/oldest-homo-sapiens-fossil-claim-rewrites-our-species-history-1.22114>.

32 ‘The basic puzzle is this. The 6 million years that separates human beings from other great apes is a very short time evolutionarily, with modern humans and chimpanzees sharing something on the order of 99 percent of their genetic material – the same

Renfrew's 'sapient paradox'<sup>33</sup> in cognitive archaeology: *religion is the basic puzzle, and the sapient paradox is morality.* The importance of religion and

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degree of relatedness as that of other sister genera such as lions and tigers, horses and zebras, and rats and mice. The fact is, there simply has not been enough time for normal processes of biological evolution involving genetic variation and natural selection to have created, one by one, each of the cognitive skills necessary for modern humans to invent and maintain complex tool-use industries and technologies, complex forms of symbolic communication and representation, and complex social organizations and institutions. And the puzzle is only magnified if we take seriously current research in paleoanthropology suggesting that (a) for all but the last 2 million years the human lineage showed no signs of anything other than typical great ape cognitive skills, and (b) the first dramatic signs of species-unique cognitive skills emerged only in the last one-quarter of a million years with modern *Homo sapiens*' (Michael Tomasello, *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2000, 248 p., 2-4).

33 'From a distance and to the non-specialist anthropologist, this Sedentary Revolution looks like the true Human Revolution. It was then that patterns of living changed directly and trajectories of development were initiated which in some areas soon led to the rise of urban life and of state societies and indeed to the rise of literacy. Why did it all take so long? If the sapient phase of human evolution was accomplished some 60 000 years ago, why did it take a further 50 000 years for these sapient humans to get their act together and transform the world? That is the sapient paradox. I believe that it presents a significant challenge to the neuroscientist. The hardware was there 60 000 years ago (in the sense of the genetically inherited component represented by the human genome). Why did it take the software – the (phylogenetically) accumulating skills along each trajectory of growth, transmitted to each new generation through the ontogenetic learning process – so long to develop?' (Lord Colin Renfrew, 'Neuroscience, Evolution and the Sapient Paradox: The Factuality of Value and of the Sacred', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 363 (2008: 1499) 2043). For a detailed discussion, see *id.*, *Prehistory: The Making of the Human Mind*, London, Phoenix, 2008, 254 p., 79-100. For a nuanced defence of a much earlier dating of the 'Human Revolution', cf. Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind: A Search for the Origins of Art, Religion and Science*. London: Phoenix, 1998. 357 p., 172: 'It is quite easy to think of the Middle/Upper Palaeolithic transition as a cultural explosion, or a big bang – the origins of the universe of human culture. Indeed a 'big bang' is the shorthand description I will use in this chapter. Yet if we look a little more closely at the boundary between Scenes 1 and 2 we see that there is not so much a single big bang as a whole series of cultural sparks that occur at slightly different times in different parts of the world between 60,000 and 30,000 years ago'. For a yet earlier dating of the 'Human Revolution', and its identification with the so-called Mode 3, Middle Palaeolithic (rather than Mode 4, Upper Palaeolithic), technologies, cf. Robert Foley – Marta Mirazon Lahr, 'Mode 3 Technologies and the Evolution of Modern Humans', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 7 (1997: 1) 3-36.

morality for human societies, indeed, cannot be overestimated. 'Religion made us human,' quips in turn Matt Rossano<sup>34</sup>. Whereas Charles Darwin wrote: 'I fully subscribe to the judgment of those writers who maintain that of all the differences between man and the lower animals, the moral sense or conscience is by far the most important'<sup>35</sup>.

**Categories.** It is an unsolved problem in philosophy whether Aristotle meant his categories to describe the workings of respectively, mind, language, or reality:

Of things said without any combination, each signifies either substance or quantity or qualification or a relative or where or when or be-

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34 "The evidence I present and the evolutionary scenario I outline lead to an important conclusion about the nature of religion: Religion is about relationships. In other words, religion is a way that humans relate to each other and to the world around them. Our ancestors half-devised and half-stumbled-upon this way of relating about 70,000 years ago because it offered significant survival and reproductive advantages. Thus, contrary to what most researchers believe, I strongly contend that religion is (or maybe was) an adaptation. It emerged as our ancestors' first health care system, and a critical part of that health care system was social support. This had important ramifications for group solidarity and cooperation. As we shall see, religiously bonded groups tend to be far more cohesive and competitive than 'secular' ones. I'm well aware that, for some folks, calling religion an adaptation amounts to nothing less than heresy. But I think the evidence warrants even stronger conclusions. For example, religion is vitally important to morality. No, religion is not the origin of morality, but religion does make us more moral (of course, here it is critically important to define 'morality'). I will also make the case that religious ritual was critical in the evolution of our uniquely human cognitive endowment. To put it (too) simply, but (intentionally) provocatively: Religion made us human' (Matt Rossano, *Supernatural Selection: How Religion Evolved*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, 294 p., 2). Cf. Mircea Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969, 180 p., VI: 'in other words, to be – or, rather, to become – a man means to be "religious"'.  
35 Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, London, Murray, 1874<sup>2</sup>, 688 p., 97. Morality is at the heart of our humanity's self-definition since very early childhood, as suggested by Carol Dweck: 'Moreover, in my work with toddlers, I have seen that very young children are obsessed with goodness and badness. They are highly concerned with what makes a child good or bad – whether the things they do, the mistakes they make, or the criticisms they receive mean they are good or bad – and what will happen to them if they are good or bad' (Carol Dweck, 'Forum,' in Michael Tomasello (with Carol Dweck, Joan Silk, Brian Skyrms, and Elizabeth Spelke), *Why We Cooperate: Based on the 2008 Tanner Lectures on Human Values at Stanford*, Cambridge MA, Boston Review, 2009, 206 p., 125-134, 133).

ing-in-a-position or having or doing or being-affected. To give a rough idea, examples of substance are man, horse; of quantity: four-foot, five-foot; of qualification: white, grammatical; of a relative: double, half, larger; of where: in the Lyceum, in the market-place; of when: yesterday, last-year; of being-in-a-position: is-lying, is-sitting; of having: has-shoes-on, has-armor-on; of doing: cutting, burning; of being-affected: being-cut, being-burned.

None of the above is said just by itself in any affirmation, but by the combination of these with one another an affirmation is produced. For every affirmation, it seems, is either true or false; but of things said without any combination none is either true or false (e. g. man, white, runs, wins)<sup>36</sup>.

I suggest that there are seven categories of our world:

- ♦ 1. matter;
- ♦ 2. energy;
- ♦ 3. information;
- ♦ 4. life;
- ♦ 5. conscientiousness<sup>37</sup>;
- ♦ 6. consciousness; and –
- ♦ 7. conscience.

I further suggest that these are not only categories of reality, but also of both mind and language. Of the seven, *conscience* emerges with humans. To take a further step, I also suggest that there are seven classes of religion:

- ♦ 1. Prototheism (for instance, shamanism, animism, ancestor worship, totemism, and *mana*);

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36 Aristotle, *Categoriae*, 1b-2a. In the original Greek: ‘Τῶν κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων ἕκαστον ἤτοι οὐσίαν σημαίνει ἢ ποσὸν ἢ ποιὸν ἢ πρὸς τι ἢ πὸν ἢ ποτὲ ἢ κεῖσθαι ἢ ἔχειν ἢ ποιεῖν ἢ πάσχειν. ἔστι δὲ οὐσία μὲν ὡς τύφω εἶπεῖν οἶον ἄνθρωπος, ἵππος· ποσὸν δὲ οἶον δίπηχυ, τρίπηχυ· ποιὸν δὲ οἶον λευκόν, γραμματικόν· πρὸς τι δὲ οἶον διπλάσιον, ἡμισυ, μείζον· πὸν δὲ οἶον ἐν Λυκείῳ, ἐν ἀγορᾷ· ποτὲ δὲ οἶον χθές, πέρυσιν· κεῖσθαι δὲ οἶον ἀνάκειται, κάθηται· ἔχειν δὲ οἶον ὑποδέδεται, ὥπλισται· ποιεῖν δὲ οἶον τέμνειν, καίειν· πάσχειν δὲ οἶον τέμνεσθαι, καίεσθαι. ἕκαστον δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων αὐτὸ μὲν καθ’ αὐτὸ ἐν οὐδεμιᾷ καταφάσει λέγεται, τῇ δὲ πρὸς ἄλληλα τούτων συμπλοκῇ κατάφασις γίγνεται· ἅπαντα γὰρ δοκεῖ κατάφασις ἢτοι ἀληθῆς ἢ ψευδῆς εἶναι, τῶν δὲ κατὰ μηδεμίαν συμπλοκὴν λεγομένων οὐδὲν οὔτε ἀληθὲς οὔτε ψευδὸς ἐστίν, οἶον ἄνθρωπος, λευκόν, τρέχει, νικᾷ’.

37 A brief note is in order here: I use ‘conscientiousness’ not as the psychological trait, but rather as a metaphor for the vertical transmission of features (including genes) defended by Carl Woese.

- ✦ 2. Polytheism (for instance, in Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, and Mesoamerica);
- ✦ 3. Ditheism (for instance, Zoroastrianism, Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Paulicianism, and Catharism);
- ✦ Monotheism (for instance, Atenism, Judaism, Christianity, Pagan Monotheism, and Islam);
- ✦ Cosmotheism (for instance, in Egypt after Akhenaten, in Stoicism and Neoplatonism, in Spinoza and Einstein);
- ✦ Transtheism (for instance, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Mohism, and Taoism); and –
- ✦ Atheism (for instance, the Cult of Reason during the French Revolution, Communism, Fascism, National-Socialism, and New Atheism).

What similarities and what differences exist between these seven classes of religion regarding the fundamental function of love? Further research is needed in order to answer this question. What remains is the fundamental human right to live a life respecting human nature. And in so far as love truly did make us human, the human right to live a life in a society promoting and protecting human love.

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