

## Christian Early

Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR), as conducted by Pascal Boyer and others, is an attempt to provide a sweeping evolutionary and neuroscientific account of the pervasiveness of religion in human history and experience. It does so, however, as is common in the Enlightenment tradition by reducing religion to fear, counterintuitive beliefs, and wasteful rituals. By contrast, Jonathan Haidt argues that there may be more to religion. He points to the (equally) pervasive sense of the sacred in secular societies as well as the powerful emotion of awe as a unifying experience (think of Edgar Mitchell, the astronaut, describing what he called the "Big Picture Effect" of seeing earth in space). Extending these insights, Haidt imagines a three-dimensional space of emotions and morality: those relating to the individual (fairness), those relating to the group (care), and those relating to divinity (sacred).

These are two contrasting scientific accounts of religion each grounded in neuroscience, anthropology, and evolution. How are we to adjudicate between them? While Haidt's (post-Enlightenment?) positive understanding of religion and religious emotions seems to have greater explanatory power than Boyer's, we may not need to choose between them if we allow for the possibility that religion, and human nature, is diverse and plastic (they too are undergoing an evolutionary process).

This paper proposes to analyze the human religious experience in terms of two modes of being-in-the-world—love and fear—each drawing on and cultivating broad clusters of emotions, beliefs, and rituals. In the mode of fear, humans organize themselves in terms of an agonistic Us-or-Them. They deploy rituals of magic or technology in order to gain control of an otherwise uncontrollable world. Often, images and metaphors of war, sacrifice, and purity dominate the religious imagination. God or the gods participate in those wars on the side of Us-against-Them. In the mode of love, however, humans organize themselves in terms of an eirenic Us-and-Them. They deploy rituals that seek to enter into conversation with that which is different, larger, and outside. Images and metaphors of reconciliation and breaking down barriers in order to preserve life together dominate the religious imagination. God or the gods participate in that process of becoming one with the other.

There are a number of advantages of this analytic distinction, which has much in common with Martin Buber's distinction between I-it and I-Thou. First, it allows us to see that most religions have aspects of both modes of being. Christianity, to give an example, can be engaged in as a religion oriented around love as well as around fear. Second, it allows us not to have to choose sides in terms of the scientific study of religion (Enlightenment or Post-Enlightenment). Third, it opens us a space in which an inter-and intra religious conversation can begin to take place that is honest about what Jungians would call the "shadow" of religion, appreciative and non-competitive about the human religious experience, and curious about what it is unfolding within the dyadic, evolutionary relationship between humans and the nature of the planet and the universe that is our home.