

## **Lluís Oviedo**

A systematic review on the published theories and proposals aimed at explaining religion's evolution offers a broad panorama comprising several disciplinary fields, methods, and theoretical models. The question arises about pre-eminence and order: which theories could be considered as more powerful, from a heuristic point of view; or perhaps more parsimonious and simple; or even more fitting to religion's own characteristics. Witnessing to this plurality, scholars can only try to classify and examine merits and flaws in each case, a point I share with my colleague Konrad Szocik. However, that task could become too difficult when such a complex phenomenon is observed. For instance, biological explanations can account for biological factors, but not for other variables apparently involved; the same happens for the cognitive or for the cultural levels. The resulting outcome, from that review, can only find some accommodation into a multi-level theory, similar to the one proposed in Jablonka and Lamb famous book *Evolution in four dimensions* (2005) regarding human evolution; an analogical line can be drawn when dealing with the study of religion's evolution. Then, it appears that a sort of Cognitive pluralism (Horst 2016) is unavoidable and needs to be accounted for, again as a methodological frame for such a wide issue. This presentation will offer an attempt at ordering in a more systematic way the different approaches so far developed, trying to explain the evolution of religion, trying to show how much each one is justified and where it might be placed from a plural and multilevel understanding of religious processes. This move clearly points, at the same time, towards the multi-dimensional character of religion, beyond any reductionist program. In a second move the paper will try to show the pertinence of some recent explanations on human features which can clearly be applied to religion's evolution as well, enriching an already abundant supply. As a concluding remark, the emphasis will fall in the necessary role played by beliefs and their content, as an unavoidable factor weighing into that evolution. This program has been at the center of the *Creditions* project