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After more than 150 years after Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, scholars discuss some methodological topics in the field of evolutionary theory like levels and units of selection, adaptationism, or evolution of cooperation. For this reason, it is not strange that an idea of application of evolutionary theory to the study of religion can generate similar controversy and include various approaches.

In this paper, I would like to propose a pluralistic approach that would combine explanatory advantages of cognitive and evolutionary approaches to the study of religion but that would avoid their reductive and limited explanatory capacity. I assume that there is no need to choose between only cultural or biological evolutionary approaches. Cultural evolution has its own mechanisms and processes of transmission of cultural traits and it seems that at least some of them correspond with biological evolution. Nevertheless, the Darwinian approach that is effectively and broadly applied to the study of culture seems to be too much reductive and methodologically limited. Some scholars assume that Darwinian account cannot explain the transmission of acquired traits, invention, and human creativity. Other ones point out that biological approach towards religion and looking for similarities between humans and non-human animals should be applied very carefully and has insurmountable limits. Despite the fact that comparison between humans and non-human animals including not only primates but also social insects can show some similarities by homology and/or analogy and evolutionary continuity, animal populations were not affected by culture, especially not by such specific traits like religion and religious components. For this reason, some principles and regularities that are observed in the animal world perhaps cannot be applied to the humans which are affected especially by culturally and socially inherited traits, including religious and non-religious norms, habits, and beliefs. In this theoretical landscape, it can be assumed that evolutionary biological account can find and explain some strategically basic similarities between humans and non-human animals but fails to explain the so-called human uniqueness.

This and many other points show that mechanisms and rules of cultural transmission work in an alternative way to how genetic transmission works. However, they overlap in many ways. Cultural traits including religious ones have built many niches that affected human evolution. One of the most important and most discussed topics is the evolution of cooperation and altruism. This topic combines among many others evolutionary biological, evolutionary cultural, cognitive and experimental accounts, and is a good example of effective application of the pluralistic explanatory framework. Altruism is a combined result of many various factors and forces. In a similar way as with the study of altruism, we need to account for the study of religion's evolution with several variables that contribute to this feature and its change.

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