ORIGINS OF HUMANKIND
“When I view all beings, not as special creatures, but as descendents of some few beings which lived long ago, they seem to me to become ennobled.”

Charles Darwin

*Origin of Species*
“Human nature is characterized by a vast potentiality that can be fashioned by social influences into a variety of forms. Aggression is not inevitable, but it is a product of aggression promoting influences.”

Albert Bandura
Anthropologist
Homo habilis  Homo habilis  Homo habilis  Homo habilis  Homo habilis  Homo habilis  Homo habilis  Homo habilis
Sites where fossil remains of Human Family Tree have been found
Rift Valley, East Africa, Place of origin of Human species
Oldavi Gorge, East Africa
59 Footprints of Australopithecus Afarensis found at Laetoli near Oldavi gorge in Northern Tanzania
3. THE FIRST EUROPEAN TOOLS

A collection of representative artefacts dating from 700–120,000 BP.

Unfortunately, owing to their great age, these sites are often difficult to date and poorly understood, and the archaeologist frequently has to rely on artefact type to identify the traditions and approximate age.

A. Two Levallois flakes from Baker's Hole, England. Flint, left height 11cm, right height 12.5cm. B. Levallois core from Baker's Hole, England. Flint, height 16cm. C. Pointed handaxe from Swanscombe, England. Flint, height 16.5cm. D. 'Ficron' handaxe with long shaft from Burnham, England. Flint, height 19cm. E. A yew-wood spear point discovered in the river deposits at Clacton, Essex, one of the few surviving wooden tools discovered at this early date. C. 400,000 BP, length 36cm. F. An antler pick with one broken tine and another damaged on the tip by use from Bitzingsleben. C. 350,000 BP, length 30cm.
Homo Erectus discovered how to generate fire and used it for cooking, warming, fending off predators, and light at night.
Blood markers have been used to trace the early migration of Homo Sapiens Sapiens to Australia about 40,000 years ago.
Fertility figurine dating to Homo Erectus or Archaic Homo Sapiens found in Morocco
Fertility figurine dating back to Homo Erectus found in Ukraine
Upper Paleolithic Dwelling
Homo Neanderthalis
Neanderthal Burial
Upper Paleolithic figurines
The Agricultural Age around 10,000 BC gradually led to the Rise of Civilization in Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and India around 3,000 BC. These changes brought new ways of organizing society. People settled down to farm land and build cities. They acquired the notion of private ownership of their own property, women bore twice as many children, and the population grew. This meant the open expanses of land that hunters and gatherers knew became the fixed borders of settled people and transformed feelings of abundance to feelings of scarcity and insecurity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PICTOGRAPHIC SIGN c. 3100 BC</th>
<th>⭐️</th>
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<th>☻️</th>
<th>⚡️</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTERPRETATION</td>
<td>star</td>
<td>?sun over horizon</td>
<td>?stream</td>
<td>ear of barley</td>
<td>bull's head</td>
<td>bowl</td>
<td>head + bowl</td>
<td>lower leg</td>
<td>?shrouded body</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUNEIFORM SIGN c. 2400 BC</th>
<th>⭐️</th>
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<th>☻️</th>
<th>⚡️</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHONETIC VALUE*</td>
<td>dingir, an</td>
<td>u, ud</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>še</td>
<td>gu₄</td>
<td>nlg, ninda</td>
<td>ku₂</td>
<td>du, gin, gub</td>
<td>lu₂</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEANING</td>
<td>god, sky</td>
<td>day, sun</td>
<td>water, seed, son</td>
<td>barley</td>
<td>ox</td>
<td>food, bread</td>
<td>to eat</td>
<td>to walk, to stand</td>
<td>man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some signs have more than one phonetic value and some sounds are represented by more than one sign. U₄ means the fourth sign with the phonetic value u.
Hammarabi’s Code
This transformation from hunter-gatherer life to life in civilizations had consequences for conflict.

It meant, while in hunter-gatherer societies people may have had small quarrels, with the rise of civilization, farmers needed enough land to grow food and herders needed enough animals to make a livelihood. These were fixed resources. If these resources were threatened, their survival was at stake and this created potential for intensified conflict.
In addition, so many people living in close proximity created the challenge of coping with conflicts inherent in large and dense groups. Crowding created tensions and stress unless people were socialized to learn to live in such close proximity.

Finally, the third side mediator became less available. The open network of cooperative ties that linked everyone in a hunter-gatherer band or in a small village weakened. Boundaries which had been relatively open and porous became increasingly fixed and closed. Outsiders became “strangers” and there were fewer people who knew the conflicting parties in order to be able to understand them and help them resolve their conflict. Traditional structures for resolving conflict were undermined by the new ways of organizing society.
Thus new ways of organizing society meant dramatic changes in relationships between people. Slavery, social classes, and patriarchy emerged and, with these changes, came compulsion and coercion as ways of relating to one another. For the first time in human history it became useful to treat other people as slaves, servants, or subordinates. Instead of using natural stamina and good health to survive in nature, people exerted power over other people. Because rigid organization was needed when more people lived together, force was needed, and there was no going back to a simpler, freer existence. With the institution of monarchy, rulers had absolute power and ruled with divine right. Force and compulsion became organizing principles of society.
Power over others became something to be fought for, and possessing power became an end in itself. Kings and emperors strove to accumulate more and more power, usually at the expense of others. They were spurred on by ambition and greed and also by the fear that if they didn’t seek power for themselves they would be surpassed and conquered by someone else.

Just as the pressure of geological forces makes flat ground buckle up into a mountain, so the pressure of conflict forced the relatively egalitarian relationships of hunter-gatherer times into a hierarchy of classes and castes in which each group lorded over the larger group below it. This kind of hierarchy was a rigid stratification of people based on force and coercion.
Status and power came to determine relationships among people, not common ties of kinship and friendship. What had been networks of negotiation between hunters and gatherers became pyramids of power. This was a complete revolution in human relations.

Large scale wars waged by permanent military classes meant plundering, destroying and conquering. Whether it was charioteers from Assyria or nomadic raiders from Central Asia, barbarians were at the gates. The emergence of civilization meant rulers could order a man on pain of death to go into battle to kill or be killed. Brute force became the ultimate arbiter.

So this is why some people believe violence, domination, and war are inevitable and are automatic responses of human nature itself.
In truth, however, the violence and domination we have known are the product not so much of human nature but of the complex historical phenomena of settling down on land, growing crops, building cities, increasing populations, weakening of the third side, development of authoritarian hierarchies, the growth of the state, and the contagion of war. Even if one group wanted to cooperate, it may have grown afraid another group would take advantage of its goodwill. Each group exposed to a warring group would need to defend itself or risk its own survival.

An image comes to mind of an enormous squeeze. After millennia of roaming freely, our ancestors were squeezed into one spot and resources were scarce. Humans used force under these circumstances because force made sense.
At Swartkrans cave in South Africa archeologist Bob Brain discovered a 1.3 million year old hearth which was the earliest sign that early humans had mastered fire. This hearth was in a cave inhabited by the species Homo Erectus. “It’s a long path from this hearth discovery to the radioactive blazes their descendents set off in 1945,” says William Ury.