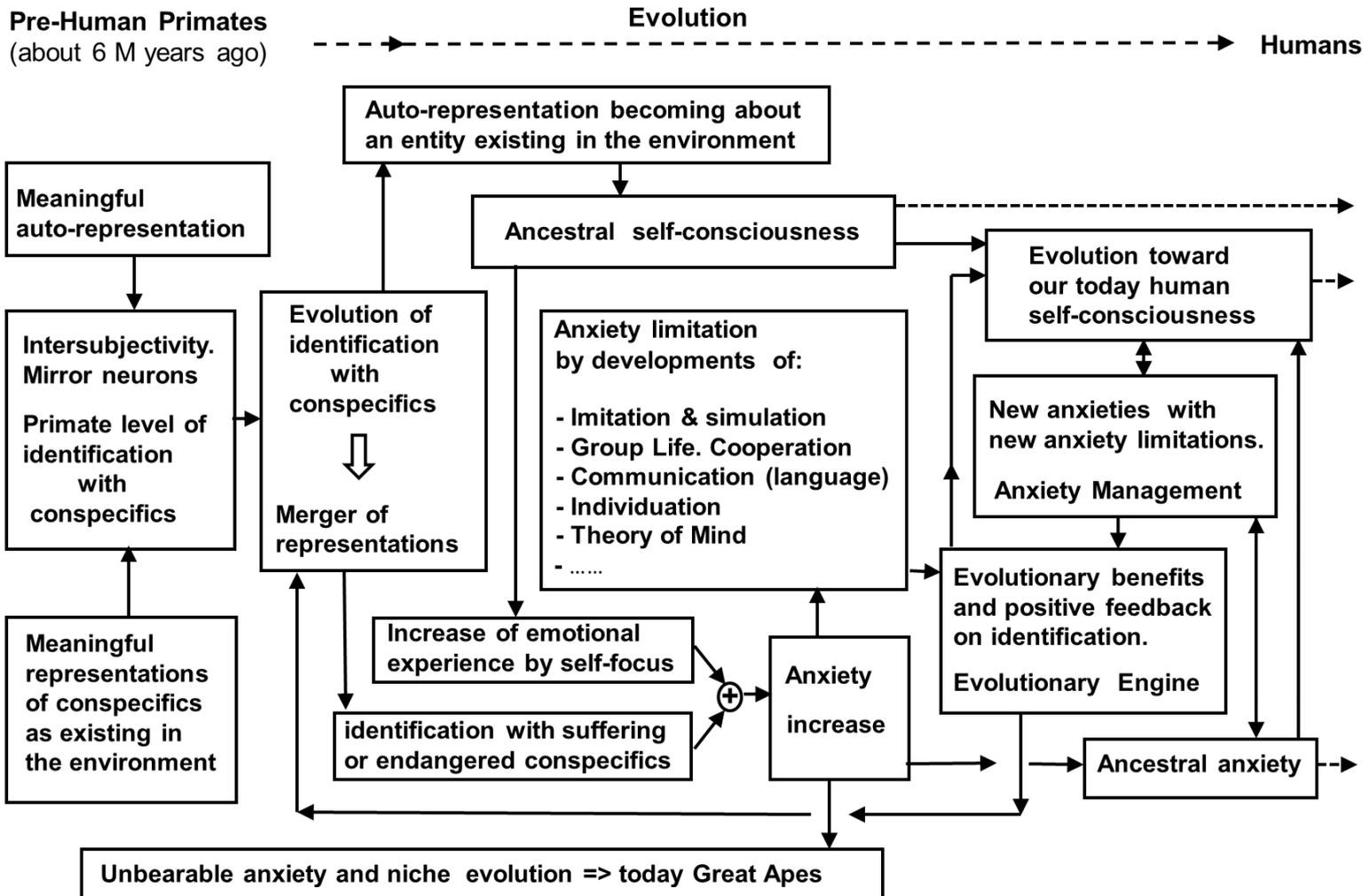


Evolutionary Scenario linking the Nature of Self-Consciousness to Anxiety Management (Dec 2017)



- 1) Our pre-human primate ancestors were capable of identification with conspecifics, like are today great apes.
- 2) Evolution of that identification has generated in the mind of our ancestors an ancestral version of self-consciousness where first elements of self-focus have increased and dramatized emotional experiences.
- 3) Identifications with suffering or endangered conspecifics have produced a huge anxiety increase.
- 4) That anxiety may have been unbearable to some primates who have rejected the evolution of identification (and with it ancestral self-consciousness). They may have found an ecological niche leading to today great apes.
- 5) Our pre-human ancestors may have limited that anxiety increase and taken advantage of that by developing performances that brought in evolutionary benefits (imitation, cooperation, communication, individuation, ToM,..)
- 6) These performances have produced new anxieties, partly limited with new evolutionary advantages.
- 7) Overall, anxiety management processes have created an evolutionary engine that has accelerated the evolution toward human self-consciousness, linking its nature to anxiety management.
- 8) Many human mental and behavioral characteristics can probably be related to anxiety management processes.
 - * Human morality rooted in anxiety management.
 - * Pascalian type diversions (for good or evil) to keep the mind away from too anxious mental states.
 - * Neurosis, psychosis as unconscious escapes from too anxious mental states (relations with life/death drives).
 - * Human sexuality developed during human evolution as a multidimensional escape from anxiety.
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- 9) These anxiety management processes are critical to human psychological well-being. Their dis-functioning can be source of mental disorders and illnesses.
- 10) Overall, the proposed evolutionary scenario positions anxiety management at the core of human mind and introduces new evolutionary links between the nature of self-consciousness and human mental health.
- 11) Evolutionary advantages that could be attributed to self-consciousness may come from the evolutionary engine based on anxiety management processes.
- 12) The scenario has been introduced in philosophy of mind (<http://philpapers.org/rec/MENPFA-3>) but has not been so far explicitly part of primatology nor of psychology/psychiatry/ethics.
More work is needed on these proposed evolutionary links between human mind and anxiety management.