

Impact on Pre-Reflective Self-Consciousness

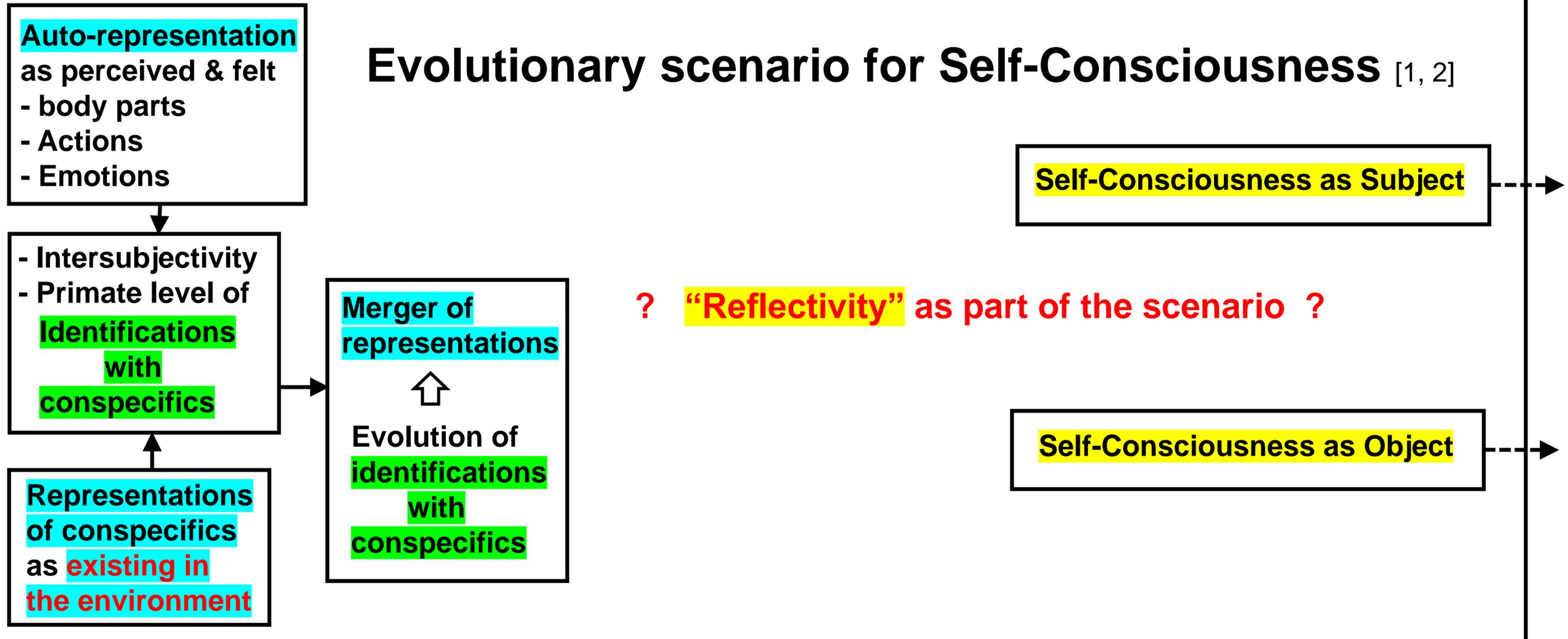
Non self-conscious
Pre-Human Primates
(about 6 M years ago)

Evolution

[C. Menant](#)

Humans

Evolutionary scenario for Self-Consciousness [1, 2]



- * Scenario starts when our **non self-conscious** ancestors (comparable to today great apes) could:
 - Only have an **auto-representation** made of perceived and felt body parts, actions and emotions.
 - Represent their **conspecifics** as global entities **existing in the environment**.
 - Have a limited capability of **identification with their conspecifics** like today chimpanzees seem to have.
- * **Evolution of the identifications with conspecifics** => elements of **auto-representation** to merge with the corresponding elements of **conspecifics** represented as **existing in the environment**.

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Non self-conscious Pre-Human Primates (about 6 M years ago) ----- Evolution -----> Humans

Elements of **auto-representation** becoming felt as entites **existing in the environment**

Auto-representation as perceived & felt
 - body parts
 - Actions
 - Emotions

Elementary feeling of being an entity **existing in the environment** that can be thought about => **Elementary reflectivity**

Elementary reflectivity and **elementary feeling of being an existing entity** => "Ancestral Self-Consciousness"

- Intersubjectivity
 - Primate level of **Identifications with conspecifics**

Merger of representations
 ↑
 Evolution of **identifications with conspecifics**

Representations of conspecifics as existing in the environment

- * **Merger of the representations** => elements of **auto-representation** became felt as **existing in the environment**, like were felt the corresponding elements of the **representations of conspecifics**.
- * => Progressive build up in the mind of our ancestors of an **elementary feeling of being an existing entity**. Could be thought about, thus generating an **elementary reflectivity**.
- * An "**ancestral self-consciousness**" characterizes that **elementary reflectivity** associated to a latent and implicit feeling of **being an existing entity**. Is still active in our human minds, mostly unconsciously.

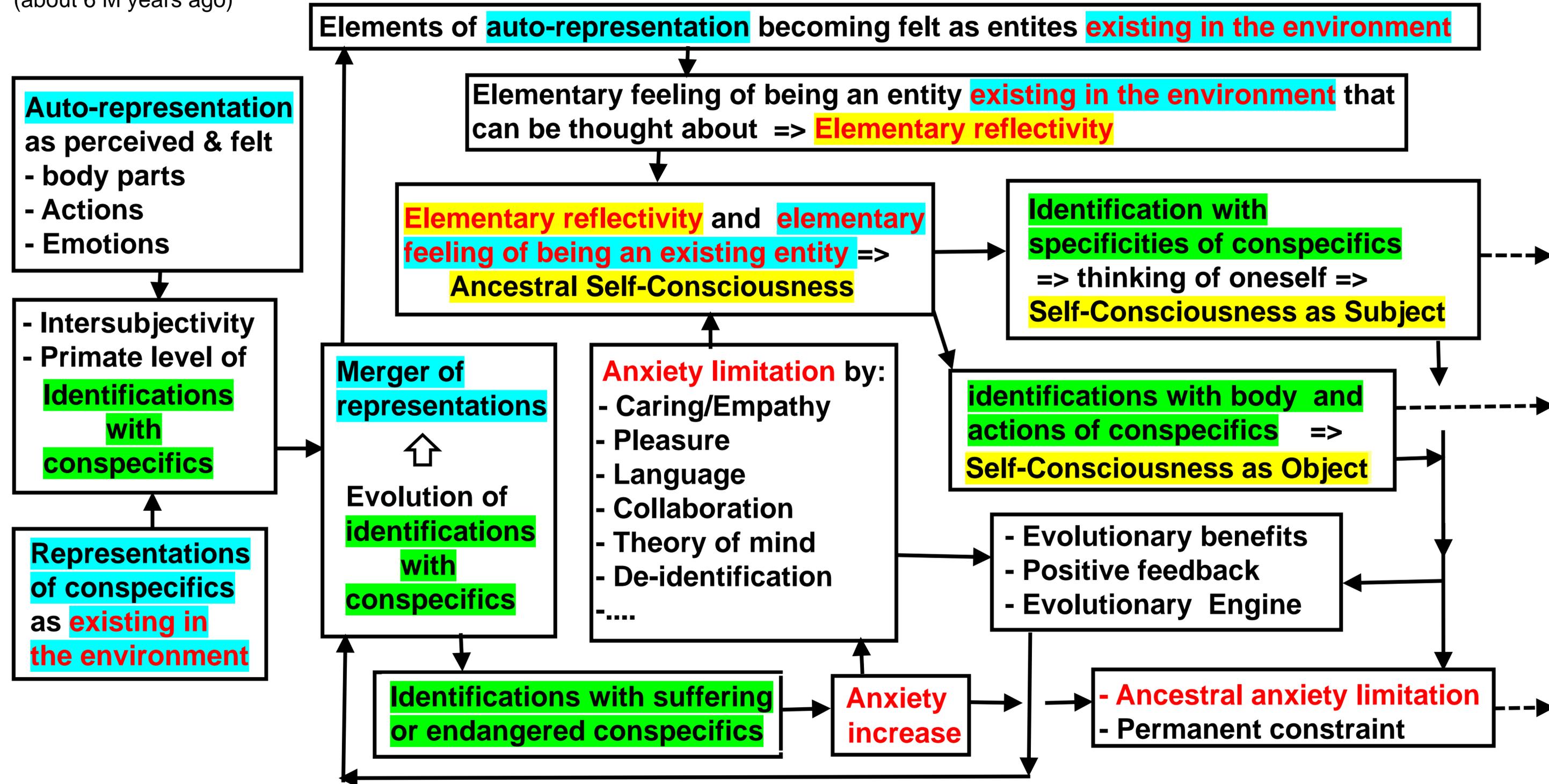
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* Ancestral self-consciousness led to self-consciousness as subject and as object.

* Introduction of an ancestral anxiety limitation constraint. Details at [3] <https://philpapers.org/rec/MENPFA-4>

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[C. Menant](#)Conclusions:

- * The hypothesis about the possibility for an evolutionary scenario to integrate **reflectivity** into **self-consciousness** has been validated.
- * That scenario introduces an **elementary reflectivity** as a natural part of the **evolution of self-consciousness**.
- * That **elementary reflectivity** comes with a latent **feeling of being an existing entity**. Both constitute an **“ancestral self-consciousness”**, still present in our human minds mostly at an unconscious level.
- * The evolutionary sourced **reflectivity** could be a candidate to replace the postulated **pre-reflective self-consciousness**.

Continuations:

- * Look at the compatibility of the **evolutionary sourced reflectivity** with the philosophical usages of **pre-reflective self-consciousness**.
- * Better understand the nature and evolution of **identification with conspecifics**.
- * Reword the evolutionary scenario in terms naturalizations.
- * Present the scenario as a possible evolution of an animal self.

References:

- [1] Menant, C. (2011). *Computation on information, meaning and representations. Proposal for an evolutionary approach*. <http://philpapers.org/rec/MENCOI>
- [2] Menant, C (2014). *Consciousness of oneself as object and as subject. Proposal for an evolutionary approach*. <https://philpapers.org/rec/MENCOO>
- [3] Menant, C (2018). *Proposal for an evolutionary nature of self-consciousness linked to a human specific anxiety*. <https://philpapers.org/rec/MENPFA-4>

***** **Thank you for your attention** *****