

Mapping human consciousness via the justification hypothesis

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Human self-consciousness and the rapid evolution of culture remain unexplained phenomena in evolutionary biology and there is a concomitant explanatory gap between the natural and social sciences. To fill this gap in understanding, the Justification Hypothesis (JH) has been proposed, which the idea that the evolution of language created the adaptive problem of social justification and this in turn drove the evolution of the human self-consciousness system. Analyzing human self-consciousness as a reason giving system provides an insight that integrates many different domains. In this presentation, I will articulate the idea and explain how the JH: a) matches the design features of the human self-consciousness system to a unique adaptive problem faced by our hominid ancestors; b) integrates and illuminates a broad range of phenomena in psychology, and c) provides a framework for understanding the rapid evolution of human culture in a way that aligns with a multitude of theoretical and empirical investigations in the social sciences. Stemming from the framework provided by the JH, a new map of human consciousness has been developed, specifically one that divides human consciousness up in three different domains. This map will be shared and the implications of this map for mental health, including conditions like depression, anxiety and autism will be articulated.

Biography

Gregg Henriques is Director of the Combined Clinical-School Doctoral Program at James Madison University. He graduated with his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Vermont and completed his postdoctoral training and the University of Pennsylvania. His main focus is on the conceptual unification of psychology and psychotherapy as described in his recent book, *A New Unified Theory of Psychology* (Springer, 2011). As a clinical psychologist, he has expertise in integrative psychotherapy and the treatment of depression, personality disorders, and suicidal behavior. He is an expert blogger on *Psychology Today*.

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