Religion: An Evolutionary Perspective

Jonah Edmundson
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Fossil records of _____ are the earliest signs of religious belief in hominids. These sites were discovered in Qafzeh, Israel, and date back _____ years.

Religious Behaviour Involves Mental Modules

Mental modules are said to accidentally give rise to religious concepts. The term for this is: "_____."

- Agent detection ⟶ this module is adaptive because it prevents _____.

  This module gives rise to religious behaviour by assigning the cause of ambiguous occurrences to supernatural entities.

- Theory of mind ⟶ this module is adaptive because it allows us to _____ with others and _____ their behaviour.

  This module gives rise to religious behaviour by being mis-applied to non-conscious agents, as well as by continuing to run when observing a dead body.

  The test usually used to assess whether someone has properly developed this module is called _____.

- Ritual ⟶ the example given in class of a ritual performed by the Turkana people of Kenya is called _____.

  - Increasing cohesion through practice ⟶ practicing highly scripted, complex actions as a group tends to increase the group's efficacy at future similar tasks.
  - Costly signaling theory ⟶ costly rituals act as reliable displays of commitment to the group, and non-participation exposes free-riders.

    The _____ dilemma is a commonly cited example of how cheating operates in the group context (free-loading).

Why are religious beliefs so successful and widespread?

- Minimally counter-intuitive concepts (MCICs) ⟶ ideas that violate normal ontological categories are memorized for much longer than normal, intuitive ideas. An example of a MCIC would be: _____.

Adaptive Benefits of Religious Behaviour

- Inter-group competition ⟶ religion encourages prosocial behaviour, this is called "_____."

  Groups that are better able to cooperate displace others through _____ and _____.

- Free-rider problem ⟶ omnipresent deities discourage free-loading through punishments (also costly signaling hypothesis!).

- Terror management $\longrightarrow$ consciousness allows us to think about death in the abstract sense, which gives us "_____."

  Religion reduces unnecessary anxiety by promising symbolic immortality via an afterlife.

- Health benefits:

Religious individuals experience lower rates of:	Religious individuals experience better:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Space for other notes and answering the discussion questions: