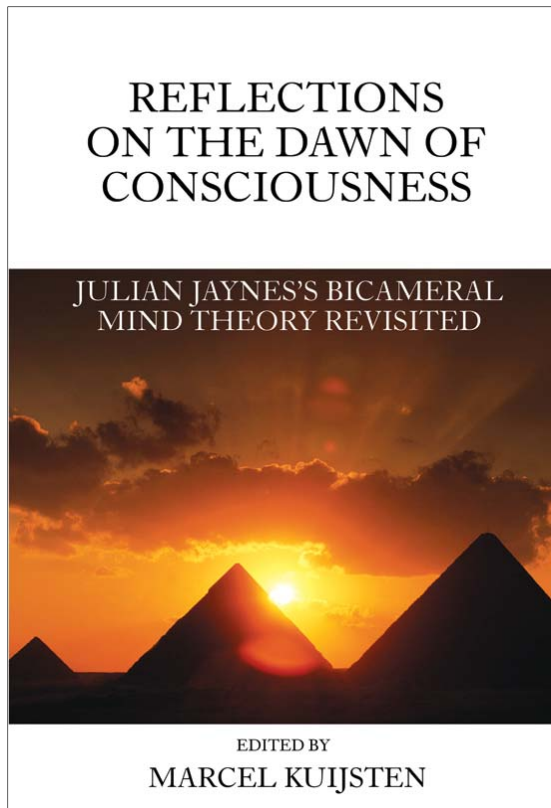


Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness: Julian Jaynes's Bicameral Mind Theory Revisited



Edited by Marcel Kuijsten (2006)

Why are gods and idols ubiquitous throughout the ancient world? What is the relationship of consciousness and language? How is it that oracles came to influence entire nations such as Greece? If consciousness arose far back in human evolution, how can it so easily be altered in hypnosis and “possession”? Is modern schizophrenia a vestige of an earlier mentality? These are just some of the difficult questions addressed by Julian Jaynes’s influential and controversial theory of the origin of subjective consciousness or the “modern mind.” This book includes an in-depth biography of Julian Jaynes, essays by Jaynes, and the discussion and analysis of Jaynes’s theory from a variety of perspectives such as clinical psychology, philosophy, neuroscience, anthropology, linguistics, and ancient history.

From the Foreword by Dr. Michael A. Persinger, Professor of Behavioral Neuroscience, Biomolecular Sciences Program, Laurentian University:

“In this book Marcel Kuijsten and his colleagues have integrated a quintessential collection of original thoughts concerning Jaynes’s concepts as well as some of Jaynes’s original essays. I have rarely read a manuscript that so eloquently and elegantly examines a complex and pervasive phenomenon. The contributors of this volume have integrated the concepts of psychology, anthropology, archaeology, theology, philosophy, the history of science, and modern neuroscience with such clarity it should be considered an essential text for any student of human experience.”

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Reviews

“Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness is ... an accessible re-introduction to Julian Jaynes, whose wondrous and wonderful *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* first brought to public awareness the ‘invisible mansion of all moods, musings, and mysteries ... the introcosm’ that is consciousness.”

— Richard M. Restak, Clinical Professor of Neurology
George Washington Hospital University, School of Medicine and Health Sciences
author of *The Naked Brain* and *Mozart’s Brain and the Fighter Pilot*

“Blending biography with analytical and critical discussions and evaluations, this volume presents a rounded picture of Jaynes as an individual and scholar, while not shrinking from controversial and difficult issues.”

— Klaus J. Hansen, Professor Emeritus
Dept. of History, Queen’s University, Ontario
author of *Mormonism and the American Experience*

“Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness explains, extends, and expands many of Julian Jaynes’s most provocative ideas. For readers who finished *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* and wondered ‘What comes next?’, this collection provides answers. Gathering together both additional writings by Jaynes himself, along with thoughtful essays by scholars from a wide range of disciplines, the book both explores ways in which Jaynes’s thought can be applied in specific fields of study and serves as a testimony to the centrality of the issue of consciousness to all fields of intellectual endeavor. This worthy sequel to Jaynes’s original book has been a long time coming, but the wait has been worth it.”

— Ted Remington, Assistant Professor, Department of English and
Foreign Languages, The University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, Indiana

“An indispensable resource for ideas on consciousness, religion, and theory of ancient civilizations. Includes various authors including some important but lesser known articles by Julian Jaynes himself. Interdisciplinary, insightful, provocative, in the original spirit of Jaynes’ seminal work, *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, but goes well beyond mere support and evidence of that work. Contains profuse notes and bibliographies for each article.”

— John Hainly, Dept. of Philosophy
Southern University, LA

“... Offers insights into otherwise inexplicable aspects concerning the pharaoh Tutankhamun and dragon-motifs in Shang China ... Jaynes’ theory merits in my view the reassessment by the scientific community urged in this volume.”

— Ilkka Kallio, Statistics Finland, Helsinki
in the *Journal of Consciousness Studies*

“A book which ... after 30 years and in light of new research and ideas, introduces again Jaynes’s theory to a scientific world that, now, may be ready to accept it.”

— Roberto Bottini, Dept. of Human Sciences
University of Bergamo, Italy

“In 1972, the Pioneer 10 spacecraft rocketed into space carrying a plaque carved with symbols meant for the “eyes” of extraterrestrials. Those symbols included two naked human beings, one male and one female, and a sketch of the solar system they came from. Four years later, Julian Jaynes launched a bold new theory into the postwar scientific atmosphere — a theory that defamiliarized the human beings of a scant 3,000 years ago, making them out to be as strange as space aliens. According to Jaynes, the oldest books of the Hebrew Old Testament depicted characters who could neither reason nor reflect on their experiences, but instead heard hallucinated voices that commanded their actions — voices they attributed to gods.

“Scientists knew it would take tens of thousands of years for Pioneer 10 to approach a star that might support an alien life form. In the meantime, the craft hurtled on alone through the silent stretches of space. And, for a while, so did Jaynes’s trailblazing theory. Though it earned a National Book Award nomination the year after its publication, few scholars stepped forward to endorse it. Marcel Kuijsten, in his Introduction to this edited collection, explains why: The politics of securing academic tenure and bureaucratic grants prevented researchers from risking their careers on an unproven theory. In an age of specialization, few scholars were familiar with more than one of the disciplines spanned by Jaynes: neuroscience, psychology, religious studies, anthropology, archaeology, linguistics, and poetry, to name just a few. And, of course, new ideas that shake up the status of human beings relative to their world have never gone down easily, from Galileo to Darwin to Jaynes.

“Yet, over the past three decades, a dozen or so scholars have gambled their reputations on the possibility that Jaynes may be right. Gathered in this volume, **their research provides hard data in support of Jaynes’s claims.** Like radio signals beamed back to Earth thousands of years in the future, such information holds the power to restore mystery and wonder to the world we thought we knew.”

— Julie Kane, Associate Professor, Dept. of
Language & Communication, Northwestern State University

“Anyone who has read Jaynes’s book should read *Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness* for a greater appreciation of the work. Whether one agrees in whole or part, it is a testament to Jaynes’s research and work that this collection ... either agrees with him in total or does not find a great deal to dispute concerning his theories. In the thirty years since *Origin* was released a great deal of research has in the main proven the man to be remarkably prescient.”

— John Holt, in *California Literary Review*

“This is a beautifully arranged tribute to Jaynes with a broad mix of contributions about aspects of his theory. In new and convincing linguistic evidence, Chinese characters evolve in form and meaning as the ritual for accessing ancestral voices devolves from ‘serene’ personators to ‘frenzied’ shamans to ‘drunken revelry.’”

— Carole Brooks Platt, Ph.D., independent scholar

“Long awaited and worth the wait. ... For three decades I have been enthralled by the ideas put forth in Julian Jaynes’s *The Origin of Consciousness In the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* and have been waiting in vain (until now) for a follow-up volume. *Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness* is a collection of incisive essays by Julian Jaynes himself and by others, commenting on and extending his previously published work.”

— Bruce Trinqu, Amston, CT

“A commendable follow-up to *The Origin of Consciousness* ... Anyone fascinated and moved by *Origin* will find much of interest in this collection...”

— Scott Driver, Tucson, AZ