



# THE JAYNESIAN

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## What Is the Meaning of Monumental Mortuary Architecture?

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STONES, ROCKS, BRICK, AND PLASTER have been hauled, carved, piled, and spread in such vast quantities to erect monumental structures to the deceased that I am tempted to refer to our species as death-obsessed. And this ancient fixation was in general a universal practice. Of course we can see similar behavior in modern times when we look at cemeteries and the funeral industry. However, no society today is organized around mobilizing their workforce to build massive funerary edifices dedicated to their dead. God-kings or divinely-appointed steward-kings were afforded the most elaborate otherlife dwelling and furnishings. The construction of mansions for gods was incipient in chieftom-level societies but clearly manifest at the height of classic bicameral civilizations.



In or around the internment site were mortuary sculptures or statues representing — or probably identified with in a literal sense that we would find quite alien — the deceased. Regular rituals would ensure that the living dead partook of offerings. Buried along with the dead might be figurines who would act as assistants in the otherlife, sentinels of the enshrined's possessions, or as guardians for the eternal journey. Often this type of architecture was in the form of earthen mounds crowned with some structure that housed or entombed rulers or were the thrones of gods. The primary purpose of such a design, usually pyramid-shaped, was to link the earthly leaders with the

deities, thereby justifying and solidifying communication lines of authorization.

We are so accustomed to looking back in time and encountering cities with monumental mortuary architecture as their hub and tales about the speaking idols and visitations from the dead that we are blind to some very intriguing historical patterns. Merely attributing such practices to ancient superstitions is intellectual evasion.

Surely there is more to the story.

I contend that such massive mortuary architecture is an example of an “exopsychic mechanism,” that is, visible from great distances, such structures triggered hallucinations for peasants toiling in the hinterlands who needed to be reminded of who was in charge (i.e., the gods or their steward-kings).

In other words, death-centered architecture functioned as gigantic *aides memorie* of the theopolitical hierarchy.

The size of these massive monuments, as well as the intense labor needed to build them, also undoubtedly worked exopsychically, awing the populations into submission. The statutory, murals, wall paintings, and divine inscriptions that decorated the architecture also had an exopsychic role, reinforcing the divine transmissions, perhaps even transmitting the gods' auditory commands.

Professor McVeigh will be expanding on these ideas in his new book, *How Religion Evolved: The Living Dead, Talking Idols, and Mesmerizing Monuments*, due out in 2012.

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## BOOK ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Il nostro inquilino segreto: Psicologia e psicoterapia della coscienza (Our Secret Tenant: Psychology and Psychotherapy of Consciousness)

Alessandro Salvini & Roberto Bottini (Editors)

Italy: Ponte alle Grazie, July 2011

256 pgs., 978-886-2202152

For our Italian readers, we are pleased to announce that a new book on consciousness and Julian Jaynes's theory was released in July 2011 in Italy (in Italian). Jaynes's theory continues to remain popular in Italy, where the Italian translation of *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* remains in print.

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*Available at [ibs.it](http://ibs.it) and in bookstores throughout Italy*

***From the Back Cover (translated from Italian)***

In spite of the exponential growth of scientific knowledge, consciousness still represents an elusive and mysterious reality. Although we now know some of the neural mechanisms which make it possible, the knowledge of these mechanisms remain insufficient or inadequate to understand the slippery psychological nature of consciousness. A difficulty that, according to many scholars, is due to an insuperable epistemological problem.

In this book are the contributions of an international group of scholars, constituted of researchers and clinicians inspired by the work of Julian Jaynes. The authors explore the plurality of the possible configurations of consciousness in its relationship with language and action. Consciousness isn't something that exists 'by itself', a psychic object, but the name we give to a class of interactive operations. Among which, for example, the reflex of the relationships we entertain with our selves, with others, and with the world — a systemic 'dialogue' that contributes to shape the different ways of being and feeling conscious.

***Brief Overview of the Chapters (from the introduction by Enrico Molinari, translated from Italian)***

... In the first two chapters, the editors Bottini and Salvini involve the reader in the attempt to give an answer to the question "what is consciousness?" As in a 'zen path', it is more important to be able to see the question from different perspectives than to find a univocal answer. ...

In the third chapter Julian Jaynes presents his fascinating theory on the historical and cultural evolution of consciousness—a theory to which this book owes much.

In the fourth chapter, "Does Language Shape Consciousness?", the role of language in the development of conscious thinking is investigated. Jaynes suggests that language is necessary for consciousness, which is a prerogative of human beings. If consciousness is the product of a cultural evolution, based upon metaphorical processes which arise from linguistic interactions, that means it is not an innate feature of the mind. In other words, we have to learn to be conscious. In the first part

of this contribution, Marcel Kuijsten provides a review of the theoretical proposals that, especially in the last 30 years, support the hypothesis that language is necessary for consciousness. In the second part of the chapter, Roberto Bottini investigates, in the light of the discoveries of cognitive science, the role of language and metaphors in the construction of a 'mental space' functional to conscious thought, as theorized by Julian Jaynes.

The problem of the evolution of consciousness is faced in the fourth chapter "The Evolution of Culture." Angelo Recchia-Luciani outlines a complex synthesis of the evolution of the mind until the unfolding of conscious experience, on the basis of the results obtained in different scientific fields such as neuroscience, ethology, biosemiotics, linguistics, and psychology. The author places himself in the emergentist perspective, ... according to which, even on the basis of the incomplete knowledge we possess, we can understand how consciousness, in his more complex, differentiated and human form, is the result of an evolutionary process.

In the sixth chapter, Brian McVeigh ... reflects on the social genesis of some aspects of human nature such as "volition" and "agency." According to McVeigh, we learn to control ourselves through the interiorization of the relationships of control that we entertain with objects, animals, and other human beings: all our conscious actions or thoughts should have some form of authorization from a social 'actor', even if this social actor is represented as 'I' or 'me'. ...

Often, auditory hallucinations are classified as symptoms of psychosis even though they are not accompanied by other psychological problems. It is not always adequate and useful to apply the classic schemas of "normal and pathological" or "symptom and illness" to the phenomenon of auditory hallucinations. [...] Based on the results of their clinical investigations, in the seventh chapter Salvini and Quarato investigate the particular experience of people who "host" a secret tenant, perceived as "other than me," in the form of a parasite voice. ...

In the last chapter, Giorgio Nardone and Alessandro Salvini present a case study: the psychotherapy of a person persecuted and possessed by voices of mind. ...

**Contributors**

**Alessandro Salvini** is Professor Emeritus of clinical psychology at the University of Padova, and scientific director of the school of Interactionist Psychology and Psychotherapy of Padova and Mestre. In his activity as psychotherapist and researcher he investigated the problem of personal identity and deviant behavior, modified states of consciousness, and the methods of psychotherapy.

**Roberto Bottini** obtained a MA in Clinical Psychology at the University of Padova, and a Ph.D. in Anthropology and Epistemology of Complexity at the University of Bergamo. He is currently working as a post-doctoral researcher at the New School for Social Research of New York. His research interests include the relationship between language and thought, the evolution of consciousness, and the perception and representation of time.

**Julian Jaynes (1920–1997)** is author of the influential and controversial book *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. He taught Psychology at Princeton University from 1966 to 1990, lectured widely, and published numerous academic articles.

**Giorgio Nardone** is co-founder, with Paul Watzlawick, of the Centro di Terapia Strategica (C.T.S.) in Arezzo, where he is a psychotherapist, teacher, and coach.

Recognized as one of the most creative and rigorous scholars and therapists, his most valuable contribution was to create specific protocols of treatment for the most debilitating psychological disorders. He is the author of 28 books that have been translated into many languages.

**Marcel Kuijsten** is Founder and Executive Director of the Julian Jaynes Society. He has published two books on Julian Jaynes's theory, *Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness* and *The Julian Jaynes Collection* (forthcoming).

**Brian J. McVeigh** teaches in the East Asian Studies Department at the University of Arizona. He has written seven books and researched nationalism, bureaucracy, historical psycholinguistics, education, gender, religion, and linkages between psychology and material culture.

**Angelo N.M. Recchia Luciani, MD**, is a neurologist specializing in neuro-radiology. He works as neuro-radiologist at the Città di Bari Hospital S.p.a. in Bari, Italy. Author of many scientific articles on the evolution of consciousness, he is interested in psychotherapy and medical hypnosis.

**Maria Quarato** is a psychologist and psychotherapist and an expert in non-psychotic auditory hallucinations. Together with other psychologists and psychotherapists, she has developed a counseling, research, and intervention project called "I Hear Voices" ([sentolevoci.org](http://sentolevoci.org)).

**Recent Quotes**

"... [Jaynes's] proposal is too interesting to ignore."

— David Eagleman, neuroscientist at Baylor College of Medicine, in *Incognito: The Secret Life of the Brain*

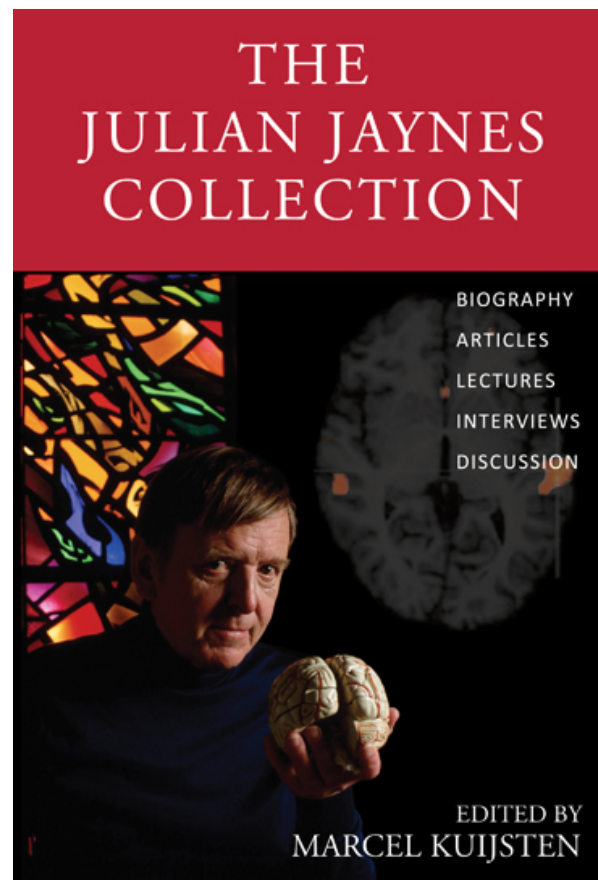
"When I was an undergraduate one of my teachers, Julian Jaynes, a peculiar but wonderful man, was a research associate at Princeton. Some people said he was a genius; I didn't know him well enough to know. He was given a South American lizard as a laboratory pet, and the problem about the lizard was that no one could figure out what it ate, so the lizard was dying. Julian killed flies, and the lizard wouldn't eat them; blended mangoes and papayas, the lizard wouldn't eat them; Chinese take-out, the lizard had no interest. One day Julian came in and the lizard was in torpor, lying in the corner. He offered the lizard his lunch, but the lizard had no interest in ham on rye. He read the *New York Times* and he put the first section down on top of the ham on rye. The lizard took one look at this configuration, got up on its hind legs, stalked across the room, leapt up on the table, shredded the *New York Times*, and ate the ham sandwich. The moral is that lizards don't copulate and don't eat unless they go through the lizardly strengths and virtues first. They have to hunt, kill, shred, and stalk. And while we're a lot more complex than lizards, we have to as well. ... We have to indulge our highest strengths in order to reach eudaemonia."

— Martin Seligman, Professor of Psychology, University of Pennsylvania, in *The Mind: Leading Scientists Explore the Brain, Memory, Personality, and Happiness*, edited by John Brockman

COMING SOON

## The Julian Jaynes Collection

Edited by  
Marcel Kuijsten



Princeton University psychologist Julian Jaynes’s revolutionary theory on the origin of consciousness or the “modern mind” remains as relevant and thought-provoking as when it was first proposed. Supported by recent discoveries in neuroscience, Jaynes’s ideas force us to rethink conventional views of human history and psychology, and have profound implications for many aspects of modern life. Included in this volume are never before seen lectures, interviews, and in-depth discussions that both clear up misconceptions as well as extend Jaynes’s theory into new areas such as dreams, the nature of the self, the consequences of consciousness, and much more.

*The Julian Jaynes Collection* will be available in hardcover exclusively through the Julian Jaynes Society and will be announced to our mailing list subscribers.

Subscribe to the Julian Jaynes Society mailing list at [julianjaynes.org](http://julianjaynes.org) to be the first to receive the new book!

## ESSAY

Jaynes contra Nietzsche  
Affinities and Digressions Among Two Seminal Thinkers

James Barlow

## I.

Julian Jaynes and Friedrich Nietzsche are kindred spirits for more reasons than one might obviously suppose. As fully conscious men, each wondered, tantalized, about the origins and meaning of what we call ‘consciousness’ in similar ways. Jaynes as psychologist, etymologist, physiologist and cultural historian; Nietzsche as psychologist, etymologist, physiologist and cultural historian. Both ruminated upon decisive questions regarding human nature and were not worried about the hypothetical nature of their insights. Nor were they overly concerned about reporting said insights in an adventurously theoretical way. They wrote from a beguiling sense of certainty as their theories were proposed, and honored insightfulness in general in a profoundly humanistic way; a way contradistinctive to what we stylistically apprehend as typical of ‘academic literature.’ Challenging and engaging simultaneously, borderline ingenious while stridently pleading for further research, each sought new avenues of approach toward the problem of the history of the mind with just that allusion to conclusiveness existence of the mind itself so adamantly, in action and reflection, suggests:

“We knowers are unknown to ourselves, and for a good reason: how can we ever hope to find what we have never looked for? There is a sound adage which runs: ‘Where a man’s treasure lies, there lies his heart.’ Our treasure lies in the beehives of our knowledge. We are perpetually on our way thither, being by nature winged insects and honey gatherers of the mind. The only thing that lies close to our heart is the desire to bring something home to the hive. As for the rest of life — so-called ‘experience’ — who among us is

serious enough for that? Or has time enough? When it comes to such matters, our heart is simply not in it — we don’t even lend our ear. Rather as a man divinely abstracted and self-absorbed into whose ears the bell has just drummed the twelve strokes of noon will suddenly awake with a start and ask himself what hour has actually struck, we sometimes rub our ears after the event and ask ourselves, astonished and at a loss, ‘What have we really experienced?’ — or rather, ‘Who are we, really?’ And we recount the twelve tremulous strokes of our experience, our life, our being, but unfortunately count wrong. The sad truth is that we remain necessarily strangers to ourselves, we don’t understand our own substance, we must mistake ourselves; the axiom, ‘Each man is farthest from himself,’ will hold for us to all eternity. Of ourselves we are not ‘knowers’....” [*Genealogy*, Preface, I]

“O what a world of unseen visions and heard silences, this insubstantial country of the mind! What ineffable essences, these touchless rememberings and unshowable reveries! And the privacy of it all! A secret theater of speechless monologue and prevenient counsel, an invisible mansion of all moods, musings, and mysteries, an infinite resort of disappointments and discoveries. A whole kingdom where each of us reigns reclusively alone, questioning what we will, commanding what we can. A hidden hermitage where we may study out the troubled book of what we have done and yet may do. An introcosm that is more myself than anything I can find in a mirror. This

consciousness that is myself of selves, that is everything, and yet nothing at all — what is it? ...And where did it come from? And why?” [*Origin*, Introduction, p. 1]

“Of ourselves,” said Nietzsche, “we are not knowers.”

Of Nietzsche and Jaynes, at the beginning of their ruminations, perhaps it is enough to say that each in their own way are rhapsodically succinct? The glorious opening paragraph in Jaynes’ work reminds one instantly of Nietzsche; the strained protopsychological assertions of Nietzsche mirror the strident adventures in hypothesis of Jaynes. And yet: Nietzsche for his own reasons, as a philosopher, is interested in the origins of conscience (‘morality’); Jaynes is interested in the origins of consciousness. Where Nietzsche finds the origins of what we today call ‘consciousness’ the origination of conscience, Jaynes finds in the birth of what we today call conscience something that began with the origins of consciousness. Both rely upon a great deal of historical imagination, both rely upon a similar method of introspective apprehension of comparison and analogy: we are to feel the veridical nature of the conclusions so drawn upon an objectification of our own experience of life and consummately exhumed ‘objective knowledge’, gathered in, subjectively. This paper is merely an attempt to comprehend what two very diverse consciousnesses have to say about consciousness as such, to pinpoint affinities and digressions (without seeking particularly to identify their sources). Both writers seem to obey a certain *obiter dictum* which says, ‘of ourselves we are not knowers.’ This skeptical approach belies a version of intellectual honesty conducive to all apprehensions of self, although Freud once wrote of Nietzsche that no person who ever lived had ever understood himself as well as he had.

For to ‘know oneself’ is not, properly speaking, to know the causes behind why the way you think and act as you do as you do. That is a misunderstanding. Nor is it to know oneself as a person who knows he ought and should do, or refrain from doing, such-and-such, and rather ought to do instead this-and-that. To know oneself is to believe wholeheartedly in who and what you

are, and what you seek to do. Everything else is hypothesis. And an hypothesis already contains within itself the typology of illusion, does it not? To become a ‘knower,’ says Nietzsche, i.e. to seek objective knowledge for its own sake as an inevitable description of what it means to know oneself — does that endeavor as the definition of self-knowledge render the impossibility of self-knowledge? Does it not destroy the veridical prospect of introspection? And yet throughout his essay there are constant appeals to more than common human experience, to what can be apparently known by ourselves about ourselves as *prima facie* consideration as substantial knowledge in a common-sense way.

But Nietzsche is being quasi-ironic, (i.e. “hypothetical”), just as Jaynes is at the beginning of his foray. Of course he understands, already, that a man who seeks an objective assessment of himself does not truly know himself! Nietzsche already knows himself! This is far different from the approach to oneself of Jaynes, who seeks by the sheer objective criterion of objective knowledge an objective knowledge of consciousness as the irreducible definition of a self as a self!

And yet after florid opening salvos meant to design a justification for their respective theses, each author follows with an immediate qualifier both autobiographical in tenor yet appealing to love of knowledge generally, in elongated, expressive ways.

“Few questions have endured longer or traversed a more perplexing history than this, the problem of consciousness and its place in nature. Despite centuries of pondering and experiment, of trying to get together two supposed entities called mind and matter in one age, subject and object in another, or soul and body in still others, despite endless discoursing on the streams, states, or contents of consciousness, of distinguishing terms like intuitions, sense data, the given, raw feels, the sense, presentations and representations, the sensations, images, and affections of structuralist introspections, the evidential data of the scientific positivist, phenomenological fields, the apparitions of Hobbes, the phenomena of Kant,

the appearances of the idealist, the elements of Mach, the phanera of Peirce, or the category errors of Ryle, in spite of all these, the problem of consciousness is still with us. Something about it keeps returning, not taking a solution.” [*Origin*, pp. 1-2]

“Because of a qualm peculiar to me and which I am loath to admit, since it refers to morals, or rather to anything that has ever been cried up as ethics — a qualm which, unbidden and irresistible, put me so at variance, from my earliest childhood, with environment, age, precepts, tradition that I feel almost entitled to call it my *a priori*—both my curiosity and my suspicions were focused betimes on the provenance of our notions of good and evil. Already at the age of thirteen I was exercised by the problem of evil. At an age when one’s interests are ‘divided between childish games and God’ I wrote my first essay on ethics. My solution of the problem was to give the honor to God, as is only just, and make him the father of evil. Was this what my *a priori* demanded of me—that new, immoral, or at any rate non-moral *a priori*—and that mysterious anti-Kantian ‘categorical imperative’ to which I have hearkened more and more ever since, and not only hearkened? Fortunately I learned in good time to divorce the theological prejudice from the moral and no longer to seek the origin of evil behind the world. A certain amount of historical and philological training, together with a native fastidiousness in matters of psychology, before long transformed this problem into another, to wit, ‘Under what conditions did man construct the value judgments good and evil?’ And what is their intrinsic worth? Have they thus far benefited or retarded mankind? Do they betoken misery, curtailment, degeneracy or, on the contrary, power, fullness of being, energy, courage in the face of life, and confidence in the future? A great variety of answers suggested themselves. I began to distinguish among periods, nations, in-

dividuals; I narrowed the problem down; the answers grew into new questions, investigations, suppositions, probabilities, until I had staked off at last my own domain, a whole hidden, growing and blooming world, secret gardens as it were, of whose existence no one must have an inkling....How blessed are we knowers, provided we know how to keep silent long enough!” [*Genealogy*, III]

To be sure, Jaynes is more reportive, overarching, cognitive; Nietzsche is nevertheless more autobiographical, questioning, personal. Both report an overriding concern about the significance and meaning of consciousness as such from a psycho-philosophical, *qua* historical, point of view. “What is the history of consciousness?” In this they are brothers.

## II.

Nietzsche seeks the psycho-historical origin of what he calls ‘the bad conscience,’ and begins his discussion of the first appearance of this phenomenon in history by implicating a concomitant presence of divinity in a vague way [*Genealogy*, p. 218], and this should be read off as a contradistinction to Jayne’s fundamental thesis about ‘divinities’: for this phenomenon as the genesis of an historical occurrence Nietzsche depicts as “the phenomenon of an animal soul turning in upon itself, taking arms against itself, was so novel, profound, mysterious, contradictory, and pregnant with possibility, that the whole complexion of the universe was changed thereby. This spectacle (and the end of it is not yet in sight) required a divine audience to do it justice. It was a spectacle too sublime and paradoxical to pass unnoticed on some trivial planet. Henceforth man was to figure among the most unexpected and breathtaking throws in the game of dice, played by Heraclitus’ great ‘child,’ be he called Zeus or Chance. Man now aroused an interest, a suspense, a hope, almost a conviction—as though in him something were heralded, as though he were not a goal but a way, an interlude, a bridge, a great promise....”



To be sure, in this majestic half-paragraph Nietzsche confesses and evokes simultaneously an allusion to his doctrine of Will to Power (*via* Heraclitus), the *Übermensch* (“...as a bridge, a great promise...”) and a rhetorical humanism. Something, a transformation of man had occurred that was paradoxical, “breathhtaking,” a *nonpareil*. He explains immediately as section XVII of Essay 2 of the *Genealogy* begins: “My hypothesis concerning the origin of bad conscience presupposed that this change was neither gradual nor voluntary, that it was not an organic growing into new conditions but rather an abrupt break, a leap, a thing compelled, an ineluctable disaster, which could neither be struggled against nor even resented.”

Here Julian Jaynes would agree: the sudden and unprecedented confrontation with new realities by bicameral man the result of the natural catastrophes of the second millennia B.C.E. resulted in what Nietzsche refers to as an unprecedented transformation of human consciousness that was both immediate and irrevocable, an “ineluctable disaster,” a “thing compelled,” an “abrupt break,” a psycho-historical eventuality “that could neither be struggled against nor even resented.” But in terms of Jaynes’ thesis his insight that it was likewise “not an organic growing into new conditions” does not quite ring true, and in fact it is a surprising thing for Nietzsche to have intimated as part of his explanation. In the previous section Nietzsche describes the origin of ‘bad conscience’ that would be the reverse of Jaynes’ contention about the birth of consciousness; or is it? “I take bad conscience to be a deep-seated malady to which man succumbed under the pressure of the most profound transformation he ever underwent—the one that made him once and for all a *sociable and pacific creature*.” And yet the description he gives of humanity suddenly having to become something other than semi-animal warriors and adventurers sounds remarkably like Jaynes’ description of the end of bicamerality: “Of a sudden they found all their instincts devalued, unhinged. They must walk on legs and carry themselves, where before the water had carried them: a terribly heaviness weighted upon them. They felt inept for the simplest manipulations, for in this new, unknown world they

could no longer count on the guidance of their unconscious drives. They were forced to think, deduce, calculate, weigh cause and effect — unhappy people, reduced to their weakest, most fallible organ, their consciousness! ... This is what I call man’s interiorization; it alone provides the soil for the growth of what is later called man’s *soul*.” Jaynes saw a similar process taking place, the result of physiological change in the brain. Bicamerality for Jaynes nearly parallels, descriptively, what Nietzsche called ‘the faculty of oblivion’ in primitive peoples: “Oblivion is not merely a *vis inertiae*, as is often claimed, but an active screening device, responsible for the fact that what we experience and digest psychologically does not, in the stage of digestion, emerge in consciousness any more than what we ingest physically does. The role of this active oblivion is that of a concierge: to shut temporarily the doors and windows of consciousness; to protect us from the noise and agitation with which our lower organs work for or against one another; to introduce a little quiet into our consciousness so as to make room for the nobler functions and functionaries of our organism which do the governing and planning.” For Jaynes, this will have been the bicameral voices. What Nietzsche saw as ‘custom and the social strait-jacket,’ Jaynes saw as the irrepressible commands of gods.

Why is Nietzsche’s insistence that this sudden transformation of consciousness is “not an organic growing into new conditions” a surprising thing for Nietzsche to have intimated as part of his explanation? For Nietzsche, ‘an organic growing into new conditions’ always implied an ‘as-is’ of historical development in social-psychological terms, always recognizes a transformative property of centers of power as accommodation, assimilation, and opposition in purely naturalistic, non-abstract terms. By Nietzsche’s own metaphysical and anthropological criteria, the transformation of consciousness both he and Jaynes suggests would delineate said consciousness transformation as something ‘organic growing into new conditions’. For Nietzsche, given the fatalism inherent in the unitary explanatory applicability of the Will to Power, the development of a new consciousness out of an old dependent upon conditions is,

*ipso facto*, a development of organic life by means of conditions, 'new conditions.' And this assessment preserves a feature of undeniability which would have hardly surprised him: even Nietzsche's strident insistencies were hypotheses issued as challenges. Jaynes may not have agreed with Nietzsche's use of an obsequious 'Will to Power' as ostensible explanatory device for virtually all psycho-historical phenomena, but Nietzsche's metaphysic is something utterly applicable to Jaynes' theory: a world of obedient humanoids carrying out their duties with Pavlovian reflexivity rather than conscious of their power relationships vis-à-vis all other beings does not refute a Will to Power as fundamental. Nietzsche saw this superintending will as dictating everything whether organic or inorganic, the sole reduction of all that is from rocks to anthills. Awareness of the extent this is so is of no account, because the principle fact as both principle and fact is irreducible. What Nietzsche has to say of ancient tyrants, analogous to what Jaynes has to say of the early bicameral and immediately post-bicameral kings, could just as easily be descriptive of bicameral man: "Suddenly they are here, like a stroke of lightning, too terrible, convincing and 'different' for hatred, even. Their work is an instinctive imposing of forms. They are the most spontaneous, most conscious artists that exist. They appear, and presently something entirely new has arisen, a live dominion whose parts and functions are delineated and interrelated, in which there is room for nothing that has not previously received its meaning from the whole. Being natural organizers, these men know nothing of guilt, responsibility, consideration [p. 220]." Of course Nietzsche's commentary is meant for such retrospective pervaders as ourselves. For us, bicameral man is someone strikingly aloof, conscienceless, abrupt, peculiar, unprecedented and most certainly unimaginable. But Nietzsche's next statement regarding these men, that they "are actuated by the egotism of the artist," we think could not be descriptive of a bicameral nature, where 'egotism' as such does not exist. But then again, for Nietzsche, what really is the egotism of the artist? For Nietzsche, this consists of unconscious elements commanding the ego: the artist is, for him, someone who "is the vampire of his talent," and makes

it clear that consciousness, even self-consciousness, has little to do with it. Poets say, "the writing hand thinks of itself." The overriding work of the unconscious in all artistic work is well-attested. And the *source* of the spontaneity Nietzsche alludes to as fundamental, has nothing to do with the 'egotism' of the artist!

Nietzsche goes on to say in section XVIII of his *Genealogy* that the bad conscience, and feel for lack of self-worth thereby, has "given birth to a wealth of strange beauty and affirmation." It is highly debatable whether the birth of beauty resides in what he termed "bad conscience," or if beauty first took active, conscious pursuit after certain kings had acknowledged their own ugliness. And when Nietzsche insists that "contradictory terms such as *selflessness*, *self-denial*, *self-sacrifice* may intimate an ideal, a beauty," he is speaking of conscious man, seeking a return to a bicameral past; thus when he states that self-denial was from the outset, "from the very start, a cruel joy," he reads too much of an overgeneralization about human nature into his anthropological comprehension. In Jaynesian terms, a fundamental egotism per individual is less in the offing. Nietzsche dismisses altruism as a moral value on this basis alone; Jaynes admits the situation is much more complicated and subservient to *bona fide* explanation: Nietzsche seems anxious to conclude, as he does, that even altruistic values, past, present and future, are utterly subservient to a fundamental metaphysical principle of the "Will to Power." Nietzsche concludes section XVIII of the *Genealogy* by saying: "Bad conscience, the desire for self-mortification, is the wellspring of all altruistic values." Of course, this statement may be true, as far as it goes. But it is irrelevant to Jaynes' thesis.

In section XIX of the second essay in *The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche next considers: "Early societies were convinced that their continuance was guaranteed solely by the sacrifices and achievements of their ancestors and that these sacrifices and achievements required to be paid back. Thus a debt was acknowledged which continued to increase, since the ancestors, surviving as powerful spirits, did not cease to provide the tribe with new benefits out of their store. Gratuitously? But nothing was gratuitous in those crude and 'insensitive' times.

Then how could they be repaid? By burnt offerings (to provide them with food), by rituals, shrines, customs, but above all, by obedience — “And here Jaynes would point out that said obedience was unconscious, reflexive, absolute — the voices of gods commanding beings unconscious of themselves as selves, so hardly conscious of themselves as ‘debtors’.

As it was the debt to ancestors could never fully be repaid. The result, according to Nietzsche, was ritual, sacrifice, customs, shrines, the whole gruesome retinue of activities that became *in essentia* ‘the religious impulse’: “Given this primitive logic, the fear of the ancestor and his powers and the consciousness of indebtedness increase as the power of the tribe increases, as it becomes more successful, independent, and feared.” For Nietzsche, this dynamic is the explanation for the origin of all religion: increased sense of indebtedness to ancestors as the power of the tribe increases. For Jaynes, no consciousness of ‘indebtedness’ to ancestors or even consciousness as such occurs. And yet: the mutual and several *sensation* of obligation in bicameral man may be due to an element of mutually recognizable conscience before consciousness itself took place! Nietzsche’s theorizing is utterly and blatantly based upon an all-permeating facticity about a will to power, the interaction of varying centers of power. He even goes so far as to say that when the power of the tribe and its success diminish, then “every step leading to the degeneration of the tribe, every setback, every sign of imminent dissolution, tends to diminish the fear of the ancestral spirits, to make them seem of less account, less wise, less provident, less powerful. Following this kind of logic to its natural term, we arrive at a situation in which the ancestors of the most powerful tribe have become so fearful to the imagination that they have receded at last into a numinous shadow: the ancestor becomes a god.”

Nietzsche’s employment of a dynamic of fear, based upon a universal explanatory device of a will to power as fundamental, has provided an imaginary construction of primordial eventualities, for which in any case there is even less *direct* proof than there is for Jaynes’ case for bicamerality. “The sense of indebtedness,” wrote Nietzsche [XX], “to the gods continued to grow through

the centuries, keeping pace with the evolution of man’s concept of duty.” Here Jaynes would say that the sense of *loss* of the gods, their diminishment as palpable authorities, resulted in their actual creation. For him, the psychology of creditor/debtor was a later development: a consequence of consciousness, not an origin for conscience.

But both Jaynes and Nietzsche say that the transformation of man into consciousness was due to a sudden break with the past, rather than it having been a long-term development, a gradual thing. Some of the insights of Nietzsche mirror Jaynes; little of what Jaynes has to say on these matters is mirrored in Nietzsche. For just as future generations may find in Nietzsche something anachronistic, dated, and peculiar in terms of Jaynes...so too those generations may find in Jaynes something equally tantalizing, aloof, and implausible according to its sentiments about such notions as ‘universal conscience,’ and consciousness.

### III.

Albert Camus once wrote that “logic is the opposite of thinking” (which, as a thought, means he meant more than the *logical* opposite of thinking). The nature of ‘proof’ for both Jaynes and Nietzsche is not deductive, but involves a preponderance of evidence for the sake of more comprehensive perspectives. And they did share a fundamental apprehension of what constitutes thinking in surprisingly similar ways: “Consciousness is a much smaller part of our mental life than we are conscious of, because we cannot be conscious of what we are not conscious of.” [*Origin*, p. 23] In the opening chapter of his book Jaynes devotes several sections deploying irreducible insight about the nature of consciousness. For it turns out that consciousness is (1) not a copy of experience, (2) not necessary for concepts, (3) not necessary for learning, (4) not even necessary for thinking. “Thinking,” he concludes, “is not conscious. Rather, it is an automatic process following a struction and the materials on which the struction is to operate.” Consciousness is not even necessary for reason (5). The locus of consciousness is actually but a construct, a metaphor

and supposition about an existent self who *concludes* 'I am' based upon a plethora of experience. The moving, doing, thinking 'analog I' has for its consistency over time nothing other than the imagination. "In consciousness," writes Jaynes, "we are always seeing ourselves as the main figures of the stories of our lives."

Thus Nietzsche [*Beyond Good and Evil*, §6, p. 19]: "It has gradually become clear to me what every great philosophy has hitherto been: a confession on the part of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir..." Regarding the famous *cogito, ergo sum*, Nietzsche intones [*Beyond Good and Evil*, §17, p. 28]: "As for the superstitions of the logicians, I shall never tire of underling a concise little fact which these superstitious people are loath to admit – namely, that a thought comes when 'it' wants, not when 'I' want; so that it is a *falsification* of the facts to say: the subject 'I' is the condition of the predicate 'think'. *It* thinks: but that this 'it' is precisely that famous old 'I' is, to put it mildly, only an assumption, an assertion, above all not an 'immediate certainty'. For even with the little 'it thinks' one has already gone too far: this 'it' already contains an *interpretation* of the event and does not belong to the event itself. The inference here is in accordance with the habit of grammar [and see what Jaynes has to say about the origin of language]: "thinking is an activity, to every activity pertains one who acts, consequently—."

And Nietzsche anticipates Jaynes when he questions *τελός* as fundamental in an etiology of consciousness, at the end of § 666 of *The Will to Power*:

"Finally: why could a 'purpose' not be an epiphenomenon in the series of changes in the activating forces that bring about

the purposive action — a pale image sketched in consciousness beforehand that serves to orient us concerning events, even as a symptom of events, *not* as their cause? — But with this we have criticized the will itself: is it not an illusion to take for a cause that which rises to consciousness as an act of will? Are not all phenomena of consciousness merely terminal phenomena, final links in a chain, but apparently conditioning one another in their succession on one level of consciousness? This could be an illusion" [p. 352]

There is something metaphysically fundamental in the philosophizing of Nietzsche and the psychologizing of Jaynes. Nietzsche sought out a badly needed reassessment of the *meaning* of consciousness for the future of philosophy; Jaynes sought out a reassessment of the *origin* of consciousness in order to provide a rightful meaning for its place in our lives. Consciousness of consciousness is a mission and task germane to that ideal endeavor that constitutes anthropology as the study of man as man. That ideal will persist through recognition of the surprising affinities of thought shared by two epochal thinkers who lived a century apart. Perhaps Nietzsche's fundamental, almost mythopoetic humanism is best expressed in Jaynesian terms that allude to the long, sad story of our inveterate compulsion to return to bicamerality:

"Man appears most human to us," wrote Nietzsche, "when he is seen on his knees, praying."

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#### THE JAYNESIAN

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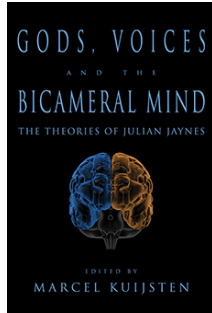
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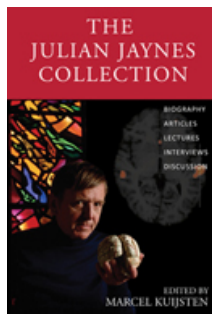
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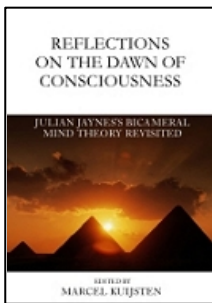
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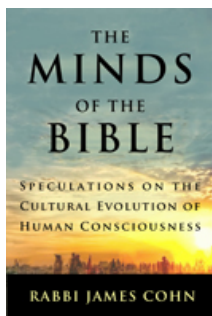
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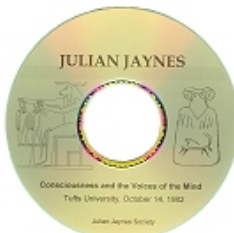
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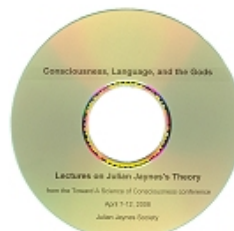
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In 1976, Julian Jaynes hypothesized that as recently as 2,500–3,000 years ago, human beings were non-introspective. Jaynes said that while we are acculturated from infancy on, to understand our mental life as a narratized interior mind-space in which we introspect in a ceaseless conversation with "ourselves," our ancestors were acculturated to understand their mental life in terms of obedient responses to auditory prompts, which they hallucinated as the external voice of God. Although these "bicameral" people could think and act, they had no awareness of choices or of choosing — or of awareness itself. Jaynes claimed that one could trace this cultural transformation over the course of a scant millennium by analyzing the literature of the Hebrew Scriptures... (read more at [julianjaynes.org](http://julianjaynes.org))



### **Consciousness and the Voices of the Mind, Julian Jaynes**

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Eight lectures on Jaynes's theory presented at the "Toward A Science of Consciousness" conference, April 2008 plus bonus material. Contains over 3 hours of lectures and interviews on Jaynes's theory. Each lecture has been carefully edited to improve the overall quality.