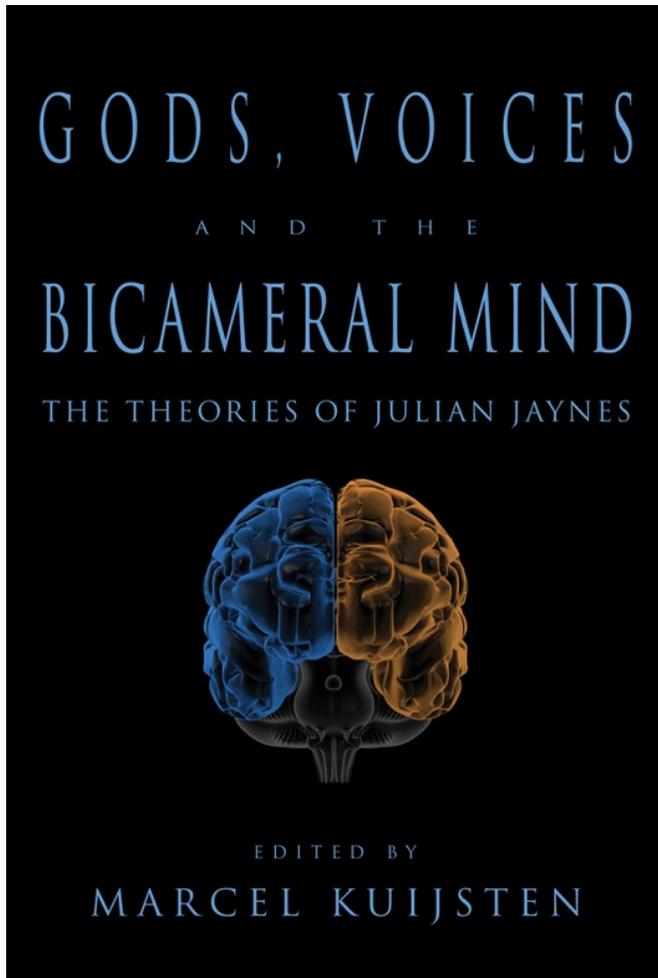


# Gods, Voices, and the Bicameral Mind: The Theories of Julian Jaynes

Edited by Marcel Kuijsten



Does consciousness inevitably arise in any sufficiently complex brain? Although widely accepted, this view — inherited from Darwin’s theory of evolution — is supported by surprisingly little evidence. Offering an alternate view of the history of the human mind, Julian Jaynes’s ideas challenge our preconceptions of not only the origin of the modern mind, but the origin of gods and religion, the nature of mental illness, and the future potential of consciousness. The tremendous explanatory power of Jaynes’s ideas force us to reevaluate much of what we thought we knew about human history.

*Gods, Voices, and the Bicameral Mind* both explains Julian Jaynes’s theory and

explores a wide range of related topics such as the ancient Dark Age, the nature of dreams and the birth of Greek tragedy, poetic inspiration, the significance of hearing voices in both the ancient and modern world, the development of consciousness in children, the transition to consciousness in early Tibet, the relationship of consciousness and metaphorical language, and how Jaynes’s ideas compare to those of other thinkers.

## PRAISE FOR JULIAN JAYNES'S THEORY

“... [O]ne of the most thought-provoking and debated theories about the origin of the conscious mind.”

— Andrea Cavanna, M.D., in *Consciousness: Theories in Neuroscience and Philosophy of Mind*

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

— David Eagleman, Ph.D.,  
in *Incognito: The Secret Lives of the Brain*

“... I sympathize with Julian Jaynes's claim that something of great import may have happened to the human mind during the relatively brief interval of time between the events narrated in the *Iliad* and those that make up the *Odyssey*.”

— Antonio Damasio, Ph.D., in *Self Comes to Mind*

“.. Scientific interest in [Jaynes's] work has been re-awakened by the consistent findings of right-sided activation patterns in the brain, as retrieved with the aid of neuroimaging studies in individuals with verbal auditory hallucinations.”

— Jan Dirk Blom, M.D., Ph.D.,  
in *A Dictionary of Hallucinations*

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## CONTRIBUTORS

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**MARCEL KUIJSTEN** is Founder and Executive Director of the Julian Jaynes Society. In 2013, he co-chaired (with Rabbi James Cohn) The Julian Jaynes Society Conference on Consciousness and Bicameral Studies. His previous books are *The Julian Jaynes Collection* and *Reflections on the Dawn of Consciousness: Julian Jaynes's Bicameral Mind Theory Revisited*.

**EDWARD PROFFITT** (1938–2012) was a poet and professor at Manhattan College. He published extensively on writing, literature, and poetry. His books include *Reading and Writing About Short Fiction*, *Reading and Writing About Literature*, and *The Organized Writer*.

**BRIAN J. MCVEIGH** studied Asian Studies and Political Science at the State University of New York at Albany, from where he received his Master's degree. He was awarded his Ph.D. in anthropology from Princeton University and was a student of Julian Jaynes. A psychological anthropologist and specialist in Japanese, he has lived and worked in Asia for almost 17 years. He is the author of eleven books and is now training in mental health counseling. His recent books include *A Psychohistory of Metaphor* and *How Religion Evolved*.

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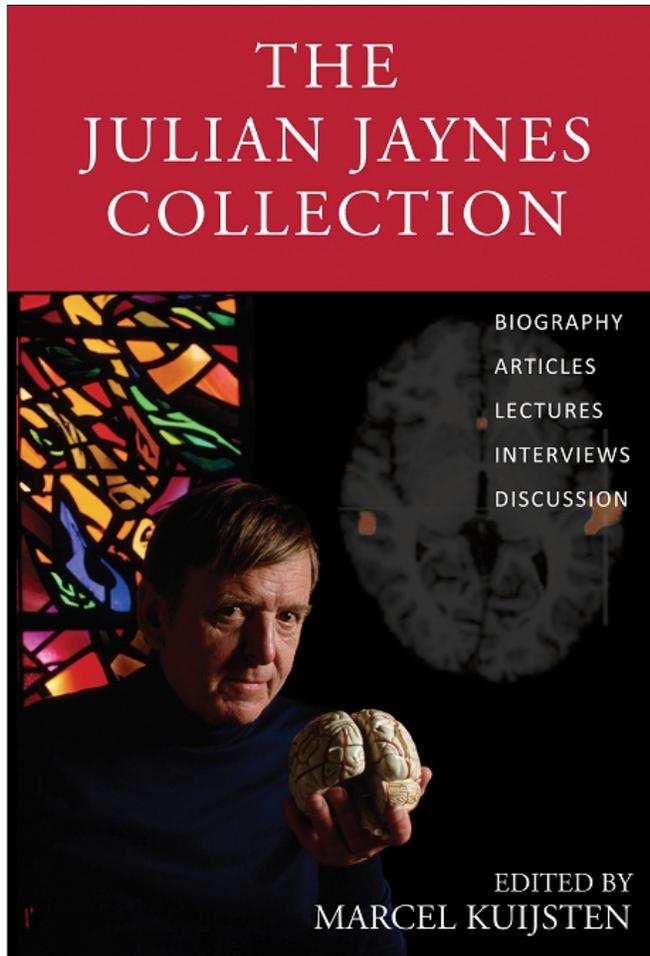
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**LAURA MOONEYHAM WHITE** is the John E. Weaver Professor of English at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her publications include two monographs and a critical edition on Jane Austen; she has also published broadly on interdisciplinary nineteenth-century topics. White's recent work includes a monograph on Lewis Carroll and a data-mining project on Austen's use of free indirect discourse.

## ALSO FROM THE JULIAN JAYNES SOCIETY

### The Julian Jaynes Collection

Edited by Marcel Kuijsten



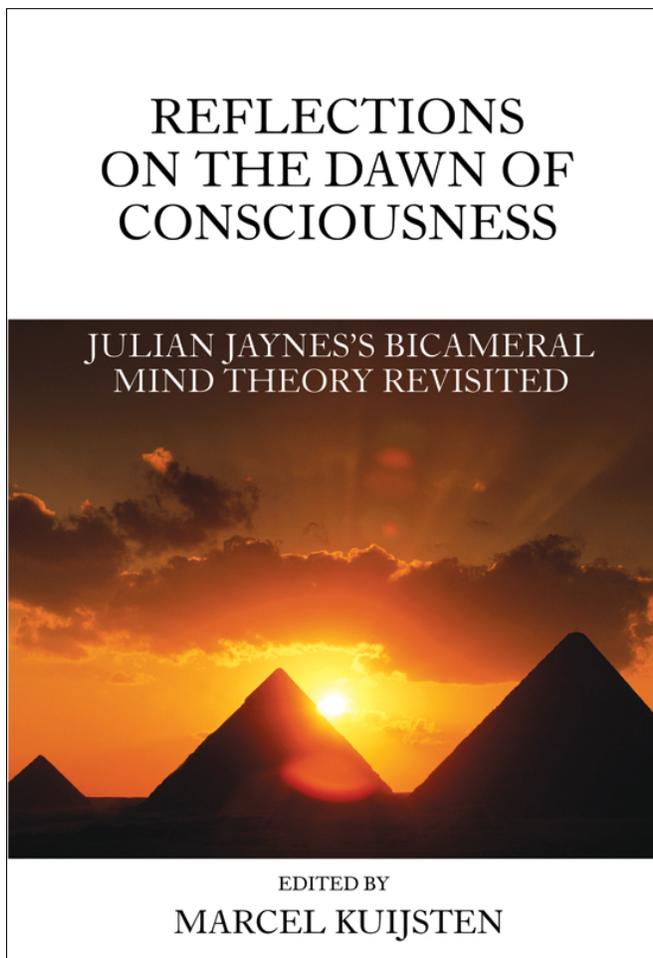
Princeton University psychologist Julian Jaynes's revolutionary theory on the origin of consciousness or the "modern mind" remains as relevant and thought-provoking as when it was first proposed. Supported by recent discoveries in neuroscience, Jaynes's ideas force us to rethink conventional views of human history and psychology, and have profound implications for many aspects of modern life.

Included in this volume are rare and never before seen articles, lectures, interviews, and in-depth discussions that both clear up misconceptions as well as

extend Jaynes's theory into new areas such as the nature of the self, dreams, emotions, art, music, therapy, and the consequences and future of consciousness. Expanded to include a new, never-before-seen 30-page radio interview with Julian Jaynes.

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

Edited by Marcel Kuijsten



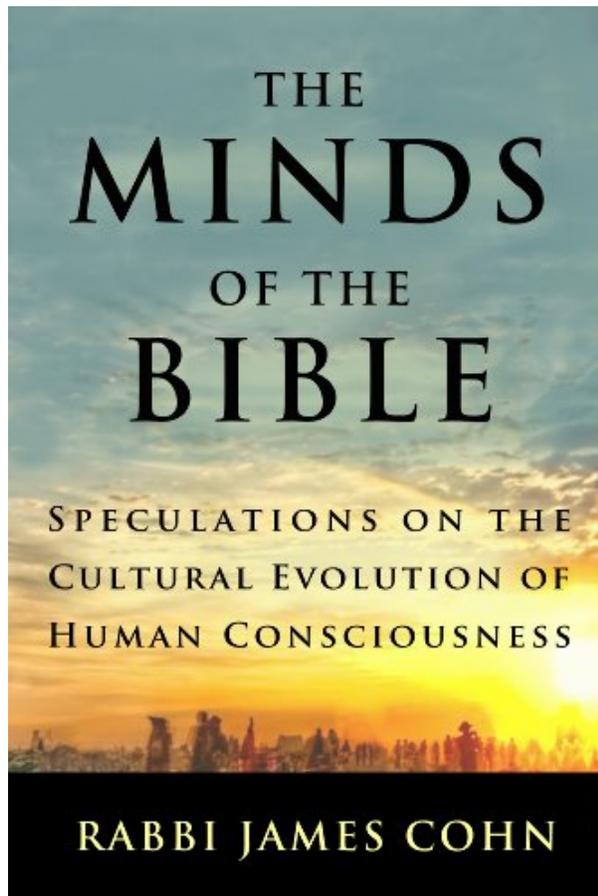
Why are gods and idols ubiquitous throughout the ancient world? What is the relationship of consciousness and language? How is it that oracles came to influence entire nations such as Greece? If consciousness arose far back in human evolution, how can it so easily be altered in hypnosis and “possession”? 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.

# The Minds of the Bible: Speculations on the Cultural Evolution of Human Consciousness

By Rabbi James Cohn



Two developments in the history of the Bible are deeply related, and not merely coincidental. One is the lamentation of the loss of the experience of hearing God’s voice. The other is the rise of the language of introspection: an interiorized subjective dialogue with oneself

In our own time, 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, however, were acculturated to understand their mental life in terms of obedient responses to auditory prompts, which they projected outwards 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.

In 1976, Julian Jaynes proposed that that as recently as 3,000 years ago, human beings were non-introspective. Jaynes claimed that one could trace this cultural transformation over the course of a scant millennium by analyzing the literature of the Hebrew Scriptures (“Old Testament,” OT). This book tests Jaynes’s assertions by examining the OT text in Hebrew,

as seen through the lens of the Documentary Hypothesis and modern critical historical scholarship.

Did the writers of the oldest biblical texts have words in their cultural lexicon to correspond to our words such as “mind” or “imagination” or “belief?” Or do the translations into English that employ such mentalistic words (such as the King James Bible) tell us more about the minds of the translators than the minds of the biblical authors?

In sharp contrast to the early OT texts, the later texts of the OT display a lexicon of profound interiority. The writers have become acculturated to experience their mental life as a rich introspective consciousness, full of internal mind-talk and “narratization,” and perceiving their own actions as the result, not of obedience to an external voice, but of self-authorized, internal decisions.

This study includes observations about emerging understandings of the neurology of auditory hallucinations, and supports Jaynes’s idea that while the brain’s structure has changed little in three millennia, culture can and will determine whether a child’s mental life is bicameral or introspectively conscious.

For more on Julian Jaynes’s theory of the origin of consciousness and the bicameral mind, please visit the Julian Jaynes Society at [www.julianjaynes.org](http://www.julianjaynes.org).