

Commentary

Brief Comment on Gregory Nixon's Myth and Mind

Joseph McCard*

ABSTRACT

Nixon brings to our attention that consciousness changes and is of many kinds. Consciousness studies focus on only one kind of consciousness, ego consciousness also termed self-consciousness. Nixon's essay may cause some to re-think that issue.

Key Words: myth, mind.

Nixon (2010) writes, "By accepting that the formal structure of human language is the key to understanding the unicity of human culture and consciousness...I am free to focus on the causes that led to such an unprecedented threshold crossing." (p291). We find similar conclusions about the varieties of consciousness in other studies. In his book, 'The Discovery of the Mind', Bruno Snell investigates the structure of the literature of the writings of the Early Greeks, beginning with Homer. Snell says, 'European thinking begins with the Greeks...this type of thinking was an historical growth.' (p.v). and 'how radically the experience of Homer differs from our own.' Snell looks closely at early Greek literature and also concludes that language is a key to understanding human culture and consciousness, 'For the existence of the intellect and the soul are dependent upon man's awareness of himself.'(p.ix), for example. In 'Greece and the Hellenistic World' (Boardman et al) trace the same pathway of development through the artistic and sculptural creations of the early Greeks, culminating in the evidence of self-reflection found in the Kouros, 'Kritian Boy' (480 B.C.). Additionally, Charles Taylor, in, "The Dialogical Self", points out another change in consciousness, monological to dialogical consciousness.

Snell, Boardman, and Taylor point out that human consciousness has changed. Our thinking and experience changes and is directly related to our various states of consciousness.

In saying, "I conclude that pre-humans underwent an existential crisis that could be resolved only by the discovery-creation of the larger realm of symbolic consciousness we call the sacred." (p291), Nixon brings to our attention that consciousness changes and is of many kinds. Consciousness studies focus on only one kind of consciousness, ego consciousness also termed self-consciousness. Nixon's essay may cause some to re-think that issue.

References

Nixon, G. M. (2010) Myth and mind: the origin of human consciousness in the discovery of the sacred. *Journal of Consciousness Exploration & Research*. 1(3): 289-337.