

Abstract

The thesis is primarily an attempt to argue for the claim that human self-conception has undergone substantive changes over the course of human history. This goes counter to the position that human mentality remained the same since the origin of the species. Further, the thesis takes cudgels against the view that the inner, privately accessible world can be explained in terms of brain processes. The thesis argues that mere physical approach is insufficient for unravelling the origin of inner self-experience because we are ontologically unique and irreducible, and further inner self-experience is a matter of cultural and historical factors. This claim is called a modified form of liberal naturalism (Baker, 2013). It claims that entities such as the self are ontologically non-reducible to physical phenomena, and such phenomena emerge under certain conditions.

The aim of the thesis is to shed light on the conditions required for the emergence of the inner self. It considers primarily (a) cultural and historical factors and (b) metaphorical language. Thus, the thesis argues that the modern-day self-conception is a later development in human beings rather than an innate biological trait accompanying our species since its dawn.

The link between metaphorical language and developing an inner world is crucial because it might throw new light on the parallel development of language and the inner subject. Metaphors are not merely a matter of non-literal usage or a linguistic device; they structure and organize our psychological states in a 'cognitive unconscious' manner. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The inner self is experienced as more than a physical thing. It is experienced as having multiple attitudes. Using propositional attitude establishes that the user understands itself as a subject. The nature of propositional attitudes, as complex intentional states, involve first-person concepts and, eventually, a robust first-person perspective. Therefore, the development of propositional attitude with metaphorical language is explored.

To argue that there was a different mentality in the past from a phylogenetic perspective; Julian Jaynes's bicameral hypothesis has been used in its weaker sense. He proposes that a transition from a bicameral mentality to a self-conscious mentality took place with language sophistication and other factors. The thesis tries to extend a weaker version of the bicameral hypothesis cross-culturally by looking into an ancient *Sanskrit* text, namely *Rigveda-Saṃhitā*. It analyses the linguistic usage with respect to the reference to the 'self' in the first twenty *sūktas* of it.

...