

Consciousness, Ego, and Personality

Introduction to Gnostic Studies



Do we perceive reality?





Consciousness

1. the quality or state of being aware
2. having mental faculties not dulled by sleep, faintness, or stupor

In esotericism:

- the root of our perception of all phenomena
- the "essence" of the human soul

Ego

1. the self; Latin for "I"
2. an exaggerated sense of self-importance

In esotericism:

- the false "self" which filters our perception
- egotistical desires that give us a sense of self

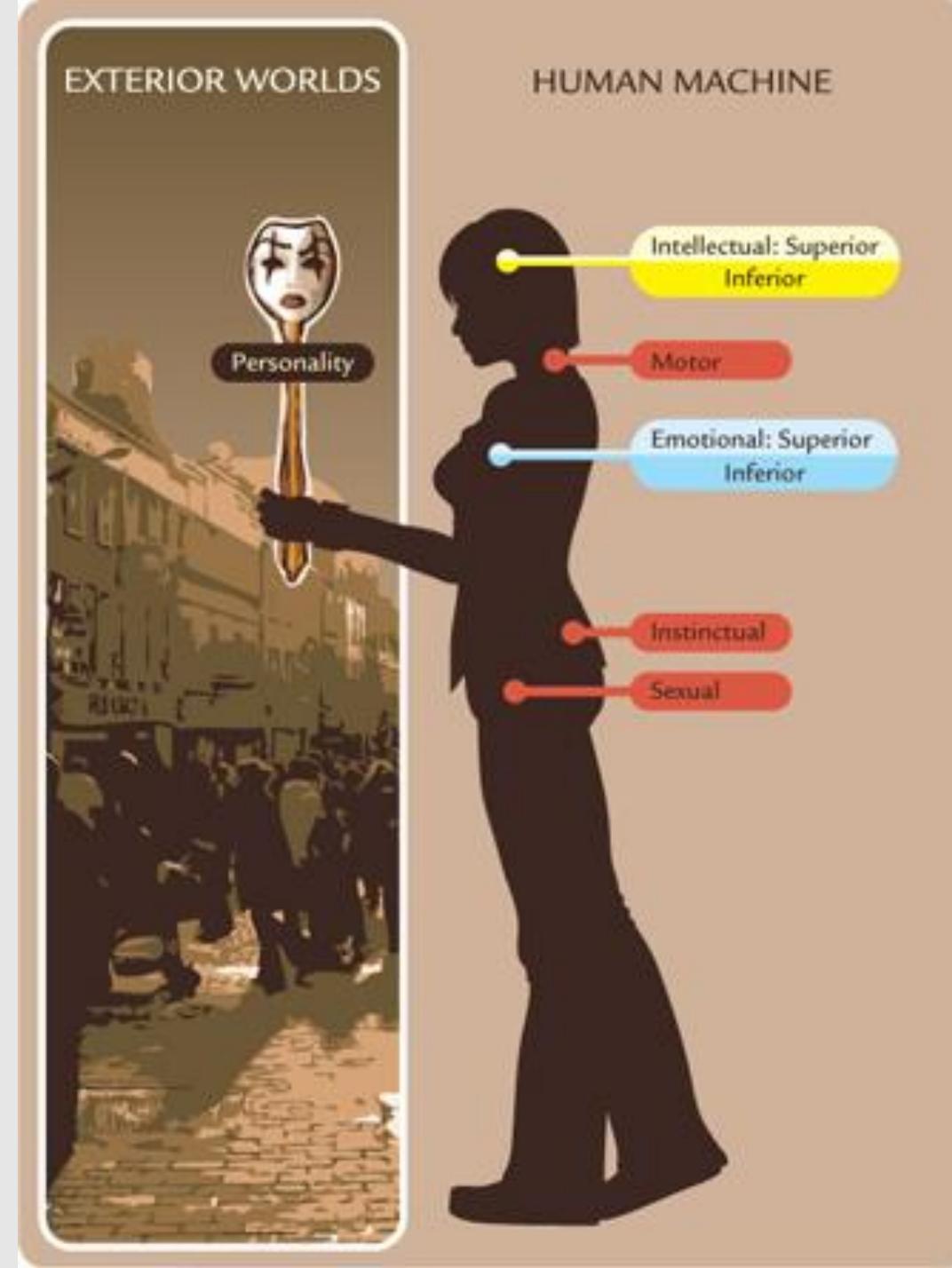


Personality

1. the totality of an individual's behavioral and emotional characteristics
2. from Latin *persona*, meaning "mask"

In esotericism:

- the characteristics we inherit from our family, culture, and society
- our interface with the external world; how we communicate and function in a particular time period and location



The Origin of Consciousness, Ego, and Personality



Ego and Essence

"The revolutionary psychology of the Gnostic movements, in a clear and precise manner, makes an in-depth distinction between the ego and the essence [consciousness].

Only the beauty of the essence manifests through the child during the first three or four years of life. Then, the child is tender, sweet, and beautiful in all his psychological aspects.

However, when the ego begins to control the tender personality of the child, then all the beauty of the Essence begins to disappear and the characteristic psychological defects of every human being bloom in its place."

—Samael Aun Weor, *Fundamentals of Gnostic Education*

Personality and Essence

"Understand: the human being is born with an Essence but not with a personality; thus, it is necessary to create the personality. Nevertheless, the personality and the Essence must be developed in a harmonious and balanced manner. [...]"

In the Essence, we have everything that we own; in the personality, we have everything that we borrowed. That is, in the Essence we have our innate qualities, and in the personality we have the example of our elders, what we have learned at home, in school, and in the streets."

—Samael Aun Weor, *Fundamentals of Gnostic Education*

Balanced Development

"In practicality, we have been able to verify that when the personality is developed in an exaggerated manner at the expense of the Essence, the outcome is a swindler.

The observation and experience of many years have allowed us to comprehend that when the Essence is somehow developed without attending in the least to the harmonious cultivation of the personality, then the outcome is a mystic without intellect, without personality—of noble heart, but inadaptably and incapable.

The harmonious development of personality and Essence brings as an outcome brilliant men and women."

—Samael Aun Weor, *Fundamentals of Gnostic Education*

The Gnostic Stages of Life



The Purpose of Consciousness, Ego, and Personality



The Myth
of Dolos:
Spirit of
Deception





Symbols in This Myth

- Prometheus, "Forethought"
 - Created man from clay
 - Stole fire from the gods to gift to mankind
- Dolos, "Deception"
 - Trickster known for fooling even the gods
- Statues
 - Veritas, "Truth"
 - Pseudologos, "Lie"



Path to Self-Knowledge

- Essence: seed of the human soul
 - Developed through conscious works and upright efforts
- Ego: false self, inner adversary
 - Trains us through psychological tests and temptations
- Personality: mask to external world
 - Allows us to learn about ourselves and perform actions in the school of life

Prometheus

"After the gods have moulded men and other living creatures with a mixture of clay and fire, the two brothers Epimetheus and Prometheus are called to complete the task and distribute among the newly born creatures all sorts of natural qualities.

Epimetheus sets to work but, being unwise, distributes all the gifts of nature among the animals, leaving men naked and unprotected, unable to defend themselves and to survive in a hostile world.

Prometheus then steals the fire of creative power from the workshop of Athena and Hephaistos and gives it to mankind."

–Olga Raggio, *The Myth of Prometheus*

What do we give our life to?

