

“I mentioned before about *fate* and *accident* in man’s life. We will now take the meaning of these words in more detail. Fate also exists but not for everyone. Most people are separated from their fate and live under the law of accident only. Fate is the result of planetary influences which correspond to a man’s type. We will speak about types later. In the meantime you must grasp one thing. A man can have the fate which corresponds to his type but he practically never does have it. This arises because fate has relation to only one part of man, namely to his *essence*.

“It must be understood that man consists of two parts: *essence* and *personality*. Essence in man is what is *his own*. Personality in man is what is ‘not his own.’ ‘Not his own’ means what has come from outside, what he has learned, or reflects, all traces of exterior impressions left in the memory and in the sensations, all words and movements that have been learned, all feelings created by imitation--all this is ‘not his own,’ all this is personality.

“From the point of view of ordinary psychology the division of man into personality and essence is hardly comprehensible. It is more exact to say that such a division does not exist in psychology at all.

“A small child has no personality as yet. He is what he really is. He is essence. His desires, tastes, likes, dislikes, express his being such as it is.

“But as soon as so-called ‘education’ begins personality begins to grow. Personality is created partly by the intentional influences of other people, that is, by ‘education,’ and partly by involuntary imitation of them by the child itself. In the creation of personality a great part is also played by ‘resistance’ to people around him and by attempts to conceal from them something that is ‘his own’ or ‘real.’

“Essence is the truth in man; personality is the false. But in proportion as personality grows, essence manifests itself more and more rarely and more and more feebly and it very often happens that essence stops in its growth at a very early age and grows no further. It happens very often that the essence of a grown-up man, even that of a very intellectual and, in the accepted meaning of the word, highly ‘educated’ man, stops on the level of a child of five or six. This means that everything we see in this man is in reality ‘not his own.’ What is his own in man, that is, his essence, is usually only manifested in his instincts and in his simplest emotions. There are cases, however, when a man’s essence grows in parallel with his personality. Such cases represent very rare exceptions especially in the circumstances of cultured life. Essence has more chances of development in men who live nearer to nature in difficult conditions of constant struggle and danger.

—G. I. Gurdjieff, as quoted by P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search Of The Miraculous*, pp. 161-162, Paul H. Crompton, Ltd. 2004

This material is under applicable copyrights and is reproduced here for research purposes only.