The Emotional Center

<https://www.meditationsonthetarot.com/category/gnosis>

Traditional psychology is not based on the so-called “scientific method” of experimentation and hypothesis formation. Rather it is based on direct observation of one’s own self. This is the meaning of the maxim “Know Thyself”. It is the essential first step in any path of spiritual development.

In its most basic form, traditional psychology has recognized three souls in living beings:

Vegetable Soul or Motor Center. The mechanical, automatic, vital, sensual, and instinctive processes of life reside in this center. All plant, animal, and human life has this soul.

Animal Soul or Emotional Center. This is the center of feelings and passions. Animal and human life has an animal soul.

Intellectual Soul or Center. This is the center of thinking, judging, evaluating, deciding, and so on. This is unique to human life.

Of course, there is more to this story. Each center has a positive part and a negative part. Moreover, the centers compenetrate each other. For example, there is an intelligence that is part of plant and animal life. And, there are automatic mechanisms in the intellectual center, so that thoughts and images seem to spontaneously arise.

In normal human life, the intellectual center should be dominant and regulate the other two centers. However, in our current state of being, that is not the case. Mechanical and emotional processes will cloud our intellectual judgment.

It is obvious that the world regards the emotional center, and not the intellectual center, as the true center of the human being. Examples are easily found.

For now, we will focus on the emotional center. The positive part of the emotional part are mostly contrived. Clearly, this applies to popular attempts to incite religious emotions. Those unable to experience true religious emotions are really missing out.

Aesthetic emotions are within reach of some. They manage to keep some semblance of High Culture alive. Unfortunately, much contemporary art is geared to excite negative emotions. Note how people pride themselves in eliciting negative reactions from others. Besides art, this is prevalent in political commentary.

Nervous giggling is a mechanical expression and is disturbing in men.

Moral emotions, of the Social Justice Warrior type, may feel good, but they are mostly manifestations of mechanical personal emotions. Justice is the highest natural virtue. It not only requires an objective Conscience, but also an intellectual understanding of what is just.

With all the negativity in the news, popular culture, books, and so on, the negative parts are absorbing a lot of material. If conscious efforts are not made, these parts absorb energies that may be spontaneously discharged in unexpected ways. Instead, you can use this energy to remember yourself. This is the spiritual meaning of handling snakes and drinking poison.

Maurice Nicoll gives us this overview of the emotional center in his Psychological Commentaries:

The mechanical part [of the emotional center] consists of the cheapest kind of ready-made humor and the rough sense of the comic, love of excitement, spectacular shows, pageantry, sentimentality, love of being in a crowd, all kinds of crowd-emotions, and all kinds of lower half-animal emotions unconscious cruelty, selfishness, cowardness, envy, jealously, and so on.

The emotional part may be very different in different people. It may include in itself religious emotion, aesthetic emotion, moral emotion, and may lead to Conscience, but with identification on its negative side it may be something quite different – it may be very cruel, obstinate, and cold, and jealous, only in a less primitive way than the mechanical part.

The intellectual part (with the help of the intellectual parts of the Moving/Instinctive center) includes in itself the power of artistic creation. In cases where the intellectual parts of the Moving/Instinctive Center, which are necessary for the natural manifestation of the creative faculties, are not educated enough or do not correspond to it in their development, it manifests itself in dreams. This explains the beautiful and artistic dreams of otherwise quite inartistic people.

There is plenty of material here to work on for the next few weeks. Work on resisting negative impressions that spontaneously arise. See how you react to what the world considers normal. Be sure you want to change. There is a certain sweetness to the mechanical parts of the emotional center that you may not want to forego.

Emotional Center Intellectual Part Positive Chief seat of Magnetic Center and Artistic Creation

Negative

Emotional Part Positive Religious emotions, aesthetic emotions, moral emotions, may lead to Conscience

Negative Cruelty, obstinacy, coldness, jealousy

Moving Part Intellectual Part Resultant of small desires, little daily “wills”

Emotional part Positive

All emotions relating to one’s likes and dislikes. Personal emotions

Negative

Jealousy, envy

Moving part Mechanical expressions of emotions, laughing and crying. Cheap humor.