

PERSON

PSYCHE, MIND, AND SELF

Zbigniew Pleszewski

This monograph presents personalism that counters reductionist perspectives of behaviourism, neuroscience, and cybernetics. It delves into the mysteries of the psyche and mind: awareness, consciousness, selfhood, introspection, empathy, and communication. From a phenomenological angle, a person comprises psyche, mind, and self; ontologically, body and mind; existentially, a unique and formidable blend of the sacred, profane, spiritual, material, temporary, and eternal.

The psyche, with its awareness, relies on the brain. The mind, equipped with consciousness, reflects the occurrences within the psyche but operates independently of both. As a spiritual entity, the mind remains conscious even when the brain is split in two or rendered inactive in clinical death.

The mind is inborn; the psyche develops later. The mind makes intuitive decisions that the psyche subsequently rationalizes. An artist's mind prepares creations before articulation, while scientists often formulate intuitive theories before documenting them. The mind detects emotions before the psyche can express them, reacting swiftly in dangerous situations while the psyche takes time to catch up. Our mind intuitively grasps abstract, symbolic meanings not only in formal concepts but also in metaphors, stories, jokes, and rhetorical questions. In theatre, the human audience may laugh upon comprehension, while an AI robot or a monkey remain indifferent. Our thoughts and feelings are visceral, a quality that remains inaccessible to robots.

Zbigniew Pleszewski, Ph.D., is an Adjunct Professor of Psychology at McGill University in Montreal. Prior to his appointment at McGill, he was actively engaged in clinical practice, research, and teaching throughout Europe (Clinical Psychology Department at Poznań University, Psychosomatic Medicine Department at Hamburg University), Japan (as a visiting professor at the Psychosomatic Medicine Department at Kyushu University), and Canada (Psychology Department at Concordia University). His research interests centre on long-term emotional functioning preceding heart attacks, markers of immunocompetence in hemodialyzed patients with and without depressive traits, as well as psychotherapy and hypnotherapy. His areas of teaching encompass psychosomatic medicine, personality, motivation, and the philosophical foundations of psychology. He has worked as a clinical psychologist on the Crisis Team in the Emergency Room at the Douglas Institute, a psychiatric teaching hospital in Montreal, for several years. He has also travelled extensively throughout Europe, the Middle East, Egypt, Asia, Australia, South America, and North America.

