

# Psychē Encyclopedia Article

## Psychē

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# Psychē

"Psychē" in Homer first means life and later means a departed life or ghost. The first identification with soul in the sense of the conscious self is found perhaps in Ionia, and the earliest full identification with the rational as well as with the emotional side of personality has been attributed to Socrates. In all this there was no opposition between soul and body. The doctrine that the soul is a prisoner in the body that Plato took from Orphic doctrine had reached Greece, perhaps from Scythia, before the time of Pythagoras, probably in association with a doctrine of transmigration. Plato, in the *Phaedo*, while recognizing that most people do not believe in survival after death (80D), propounded a view that combines the Socratic and Orphic attitudes. In the tripartite soul of the *Republic*, however, it is the rational part alone that is immortal; this was also Aristotle's view.

The majority of the pre-Socratics regarded the universe as a quasi-living organism, and this view also found expression in Plato's doctrine in the *Timaeus* of a world soul as a source of orderly motion in the universe. Aristotle presented a developed human and animal psychology in his analysis of the soul in the *De Anima* and elsewhere. Whereas Plato regarded the soul as a substance separate from the body, Aristotle's final view treated it as the form of a living body. For the Stoics the soul is an aspect of the all-pervading cosmic logos, while for the Epicureans it is a combination of especially smooth atoms. Within Christian theology Augustinians follow an essentially Platonist view, while Thomists prefer Aristotle's approach.

## See Also

Aristotle; Augustinianism; Epicureanism and the Epicurean School; Homer; Orphism; Plato; Platonism and the Platonic Tradition; Pre-Socratic Philosophy; Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism; Socrates; Stoicism; Thomism.

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