

self-understanding, the psy disciplines are core contributors. Knowledges constructed in the psy disciplines, practiced in and through institutions, train people into thinking of and experiencing themselves in a particular set of ways as individuals responsible for the moral and practical production of their own lives and behaviors, responsible for their own personhood, and responsible for their own self-regulation. For Rose, this operation of the psy disciplines is inextricably bound with the neoliberal politics associated with contemporary western democracies. Individuals are required to understand themselves as responsible, autonomous, and choice-making subjects. The psy disciplines train people in particular configurations of “self” and “other,” to have expectations, capacities, and understandings of normativities and to be equipped to fit with requirements of society. Notably, for Rose, a critique of the psy disciplines is not necessarily a critique of inappropriate technologies and practices but an explication of a set of means which enable people to live with the burden of “liberty,” “autonomy,” and “self-realization” which have become the valued forms of living in contemporary western neoliberal politics (Rose). For others, the politically expedient disciplinary power of the psy knowledges also creates exclusions, marginalizations, and capacities and means for oppressions.

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## Psyche

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## Introduction

The question of the nature of the psyche and its relation to the body is one of the most important problems of philosophy and psychology. This question has excited the attention of philosophers and scientists that investigate it from radically different points of view.

The word “psyche” has a long history and its meaning has been transformed in different socio-cultural settings. The psyche, as all psychological concepts, is not a natural kind, but historically constituted. Initially, the term “psyche” referred to breathing, vital force, etc. Later, this term was used to represent spiritual, immaterial substance. The term “psyche” was used as the controlling concept of psychology as a discipline (the logos of the psyche or the study of the psyche).

The Greek term “psyche” has been translated into Latin as “anima,” in English as “soul,” in German as “Seele,” in French as “âme,” and in Russian as “dusha.”

## Definition

The psyche can be defined as a property of the most highly organized forms of matter that emerged and was transformed in a long natural and cultural history. The psyche constitutes

a specific kind of active reflection and orientation of the subjects in the world. It is formed in the context of practical interaction of subjects with the world (Leontiev, 1981).

The psyche emerged within an evolutionary process as an orientational and meaning function. It constitutes the orienting activity of subjects involved in situations with unique and non-standardized tasks. The psyche serves to overcome the system of fixed responses of subjects and their orientation in complex environments. From this perspective, the psyche is connected with the ability of the subjects to learn and develop (Tolman, 1994).

The emergence of social relations and human communication marks a new stage of the development of the psyche. Consciousness as a specific form of human psyche is socially mediated and is transformed in the cultural history. The development of the human psyche is associated with two major mutually connected processes: human labor engaged in the transformation of the material world and the linguistically and symbolically mediated activity which promotes the communication between people and control of psychological processes.

## Keywords

Psyche; soul; phylogenetics; consciousness; activity theory; history; ontogeny

## Traditional Debates

The Greek word “psyche” (or “psychein”) means breathe or blow. In the Homeric Poems composed in the second half of the eighth century BC, the psyche was identified with the vital force linked to the individual body. Psyche was closely connected with bodily locations (diaphragm or lungs, heart) and processes (breath) (Rohde, 1987). In the context of Homeric Poems, the psyche as purely spiritual, immaterial substance was impossible.

A mythical image of the psyche could also be found in the myth of Eros and Psyche (or Cupid and Psyche) created by Lucius Apuleius in the second century AD in which the psyche was a beautiful princess who fell in love with Cupid.

In ancient Greek philosophy, the appearance of materialistic and idealistic approaches to the psyche and its connection with the body coexisted with the idea of spontaneous, dialectical interconnection of body and psyche and psyche and nature. In Aristotle’s (384–322 BC) essay “Concerning the Psyche” (Greek: “Peri psyches,” Latin: *De Anima*), the psyche is presented as the form of a material living body. The psyche is not an independent, immaterial substance and could not exist separated from the living body (MacDonald, 2003).

In the context of Christian discourse, the meaning of the term “psyche” has been transformed from a vital force into the “soul” as immaterial, immortal, spiritual substance as part of a person (Graumann, 1996).

The radical shift in understanding of psyche came with R. Descartes (1596–1650). He used not only the term “soul” (“âme”) but also the term “mens” or mind. In contrast to Aristotle’s examination of the soul as organically connected to the natural body, R. Descartes regarded the mind as a thinking thing (*res cogitans*), a rational, incorporeal, immortal existence (MacDonald, 2003). All mental processes of humans (sensations, thoughts, feelings, imagination, will, etc.) were presented as individual expressions of thought. However, Descartes’s concept of cogito is much broader than just thinking as a psychological concept.

In accordance with materialistic, mechanistic theories [T. Hobbes (1588–1679), J.O. La Mettrie (1709–1751), etc.], the psyche is a function of the brain and nervous system. The psyche can be explained in the terms of psychical states of body (brain, nervous system, etc.). La Mettrie considered all psychological processes as products of the underlying bodily machine.

In contrast with materialistic, mechanistic theories, idealistic approaches [G.W. Leibnitz (1646–1716), C.Wolff (1679–1754), etc.]

focused on the active character of the psyche (soul) and its independence from the body state. The soul and its activities became the object of Wolff's empirical and rational psychology. Empirical psychology focused on the study of the soul and its activities by direct introspection. Rational psychology produced a priori and deductive judgments about the soul. I. Kant (1724–1804) criticized the “paralogisms” of rational psychology's claims about the soul as an immaterial, spiritual, immortal substance (Richards, 1980).

In Germany at the end of nineteenth century, W. M. Wundt suggested the foundation of a “new psychology” as a discipline of consciousness (*Bewusstseinswissenschaft*) referring to interior, self-contained states of individuals (Graumann, 1996). However, W.M. Wundt attempted also to create a “second psychology” (*Völkerpsychologie*) focused on the analysis of the cultural and historically developed dimensions and products of the psyche (i.e., myths, language, art, customs). It is worth noting that in different European languages (English, Russian, Greek, etc.), the word “consciousness” refers to mutual knowledge, knowing with others.

S. Freud (1856–1939) and C. Jung (1875–1961) used the German word “Seele” as a synonym of “psyche” which was enlarged to include not only conscious possession as in Wundt's works but also unconscious. According to Carl Jung, the psyche is the totality of psychological processes, conscious as well as unconscious (The C.G. Jung page, The C.G. Jung page, 2012).

At the end of the nineteenth century with the rise of “new psychology,” the perspective of the establishment of a science of psyche was defeated. The term “soul” has been gradually replaced by other terms (mind, behavior, etc.). The word “mind” lost the spiritual, transcendental connotation of the term “psyche” and focused mainly on the intellect and cognitive processes.

Before the advent of Watson's behaviorism, German philosopher, sociopolitical theorist, and psychologist F.A. Lange (1828–1875) developed a program of psychology without a soul. F.A. Lange argued that the soul is an empty concept,

an “old myth,” and psychology should focus on actions and other manifestations of life (Teo, 2002).

J. Watson (1879–1958) and B. Skinner (1904–1990) from the perspective of radical behaviorism eliminated the term “soul” and other concepts of rational and empirical psychology (consciousness, self, etc.). Psychology was transformed into a discipline of behavior focused on the study of external, observed, measured stimulus and reactions.

One of the paradoxes of contemporary psychology is that despite fabricating and widely using psyche-rooted neologisms (psychedelic, psychotherapy, psychopathology, psychosis, psychoanalysis, etc.), the term “psyche” is marginalized in mainstream North-Atlantic Psychology (Rollins, 1999). It can be defined as the paradox of “psychology without psyche.” In recent years, there has been talk of reintroducing the concept of “psyche” into the domain of psychology as a result of dissatisfaction with positivism and behaviorism.

In traditional academic psychology, the question of relationships between body and mind (psyche, consciousness, etc.) arises again and again. The first serious limitation of traditional psychological discourse on psyche and its relation with the body was connected with the focus on isolated individuals and the underestimating of sociocultural dimensions of the psyche (mind, consciousness, etc.). The second serious limitation of traditional psychological discourse is the naturalization of the psyche and the ignoring of the historical character of psychological processes and psychological concepts.

## Critical Debates

Cultural-historical psychology and activity psychology emerged as an attempt to overcome the dualism of traditional psychology. This dualism was between the psychology of consciousness, representing the psyche in the domain of individual, inner, internal mental states and the behavioristic total rejection of the psyche and consciousness. In accordance with cultural-historical psychology and activity

theory, the psyche and psychological processes have a social character and are formed through a long historical development. L. Vygotsky (1896–1934) raised the issue of the reconstruction of the history of the human psyche in phylogenetics, in the history of civilization, and also in ontogeny (Ballantyne, 2004).

A. N. Leontiev, from the perspective of activity theory, established a classical theory of the origin of psyche, discovering the basic stages of its development. Psyche (he used the term “psychika”) was presented by A. N. Leontiev (1981) as the orientation of a subject in a heterogeneous environment. Psyche is involved in the control and regulation of activity in organisms. A. N. Leontiev distinguished three stages of the development of psyche in animals (sensory psyche, perceptive psyche, animal intellect). Human consciousness differs from animal psyche in its capacity for a reflection of material reality in its separateness from the subject’s actual attitudes to it. Consciousness as a specifically human form of subjective reflection of objective reality was presented by A. N. Leontiev (1978) as a product of relations that arise in the process of the development of society. Moreover, human consciousness offers the possibility of developing self-observation of the subject in his/her own inner world.

K. Holzkamp (1927–1995), the founder of German Critical Psychology, regarded the psyche as the most fundamental category of psychology as science. K. Holzkamp, following A. N. Leontiev (1903–1979), attempted to reconstruct the development of the psyche, by using analysis of categories based on a functional-historical method. K. Holzkamp developed a project about historicization of human psyche on the basis of empirical evidence of various sciences (sociology, history, biology, physiology, ethology, anthropology, archaeology, etc.). Following the evolutionary history of the psyche, he developed a system of categories for a conceptualization of the subject matter of psychology. In contrast to reductionist approaches, Holzkamp focuses on *qualitative* transitions in the development of psyche: the transition from prepsychical to psychical organisms, the

evolution of the capacity for learning and individual development, and the emergence of the societal-historical form of development (Tolman, 1994; Teo, 1998).

Overcoming dualisms in traditional psychology (mind-body, individual-social, natural-social, etc.), matching different psychological processes and psychological concepts are some of the main tasks of psychology. The historical reconstruction of the psyche raised by cultural-historical psychology, activity theory, and German critical psychology remains as a fundamental, open-ended issue of psychology as science.

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