



## *Soul* in Diotima of Mantinea (ca. 440 B.C.E.)

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Diotima presupposes a hierarchical dualism between body and soul, physicality and spirituality, that requires conscious effort to realize our full moral and rational potential. The soul is prioritized as our highest identity, particularly the soul pregnant with wisdom and virtue. Elevated beyond mere procreation on the phenomenal plane, it seeks to give birth to noumenal offspring—poetry, art, inventions, and mostly importantly temperance and justice. The wise and virtuous soul then “finds a fair and noble and well-nurtured soul [...] and to such an [sic] one he is full of speech about virtue and the nature and pursuits of a good man; and he tries to educate him.” A marriage of mind ensues, such that “drawing towards and contemplating the vast sea of beauty, he will create many fair and noble thoughts and notions in boundless love of wisdom.” Fed by this perfect, eternal, absolute beauty, Diotima promises a love that produces “not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue.”

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