

Ashley Attwood

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AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION & COMPETENCE

Area of Specialization: Ancient Greek Philosophy, Philosophy of Science

Areas of Competence: Philosophy of Medicine, Philosophy of Disability, and Philosophy of Education

EDUCATION

Stanford University

expected May 2024

Ph.D. in Philosophy (Joint Program in Ancient Philosophy), Advisor: Alan Code

– Dissertation: “Aristotle and his Predecessors: the Argument of *De Anima* I”

University of California, San Diego

2014

B.A. in Philosophy (*Highest Honors*), Advisor: Monte Johnson

– Thesis: “Visualizing Universals: an Aristotelian account of diagrammatic reasoning”

AWARDS

- Stanford Humanities Center Dissertation Prize 2023–2024
- Suppes Dissertation Prize 2022–2023
- Phi Beta Kappa 2014

TALKS

(*Invited)

“Exploring Logical Space: The Structure of *De Anima* 1.2”

**UC San Diego History of Philosophy Roundtable*

2024

“Glaucou and Adeimantus Want Different Things: Interruptions in Plato’s *Republic*”

**Stanford Humanities Center Interdisciplinary Research Workshop*

2023

“Predication and Progress: How Aristotle Defines the Soul”

**Stanford Ethics and Politics, Ancient and Modern Workshop*

2023

“Questioning Patterns and Medical Expertise”

Stanford School of Medicine, Intersections with the Humanities Workshop

2018

TEACHING AND TRAINING

- **Co-Primary Instructor** for Philosophy through Sports 2024
Stanford University
- **Instructor Training-** CTL Teaching in the Humanities 2023
Stanford University
- **Teaching Assistant** for The Greeks and Beyond 2021, 2022, 2023
Stanford Summer Humanities Institute

- **Teaching Assistant** for History of Ancient Greek Philosophy
Stanford University 2019, 2020, 2022
- **Teaching Assistant** for Introduction to Philosophy
Stanford University 2017, 2022
- **Teaching Assistant** for Ethics in a Human Life
Stanford University 2019
- **Teaching Assistant** for Introduction to Moral Philosophy
Stanford University 2018
- **Primary Instructor** for Philosophy Circle
Stanford Pre-Collegiate Studies 2018
- **Teaching Assistant Training-** Graduate Teaching Methods
Stanford University 2016-2018

SELECTED COURSEWORK

- Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* (Alan Code)
- Aristotle's *Prior Analytics* (Alan Code and Reviel Netz)
- Aristotle's *Physics* 1 (Alan Code)
- Aristotle's *Metaphysics* [A, B, Z, Θ] (Alan Code)
- Ancient Skepticism (Alan Code)
- Plato's *Republic* (Terry Irwin)
- Aristotle's *Ethics* (Terry Irwin)
- Aristotle's *Protepticus* (Chris Bobonich)
- Plato's *Philebus* (Chris Bobonich)
- Feminist Philosophy of Science (Helen Longino)
- Topics in Philosophy of Science (Tom Ryckman)
- Philosophy of Education (Eamonn Callan)

ACADEMIC SERVICE

- Zephyr Institute Reading Group Leader 2023–2024
- Stanford Philosophy Graduate Admissions Committee Member 2022–2024
- Stanford Philosophy Teaching Development Committee Member 2021–2024
- Stanford Pre-Collegiate Summer School Admissions 2021–2024
- Stanford Philosophy Undergraduate Mentor 2016–2019
- WoGeM Reading Group Co-Coordinator 2016–2018
- Stanford Graduate Workshop Organizer 2016–2017

LANGUAGES

Ancient Greek, Latin, and Spanish

REFERENCES

- **Alan Code**, Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University (acode@stanford.edu)
- **James Lennox**, Professor *Emeritus* of Philosophy, University of Pittsburgh (jglennox@pitt.edu)
- **Christopher Bobonich**, Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University (bobonich@stanford.edu)
- **Lanier Anderson**, Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University (lanier@stanford.edu)
- **Krista Lawlor**, Professor of Philosophy, Stanford University (klawlor@stanford.edu)

“Aristotle and his Predecessors: The Argument of *De Anima* 1”

Many of Aristotle’s scientific investigations begin with an extended historical survey. In these surveys, Aristotle devotes significant attention to organizing, examining, and criticizing the views of his predecessors. Yet commentators, both old and new, regularly find these surveys to be unsystematic, uncharitable, and most importantly, superfluous to the methodology and content of Aristotle’s own investigations. Contrary to this received view, I aim to show that these surveys are indispensable to Aristotle’s own scientific inquiries and to his understanding of proper scientific practice. This dissertation details a case study of the historical survey carried out in *De Anima*, Aristotle’s scientific investigation of the soul as a first principle of life.

The first paper (“Exploring Logical Space: The Structure of *De Anima* 1.2”) develops a close reading of the historical survey in *DA* 1.2 and details the procedures by which Aristotle divides the views of his predecessors into distinct camps. In addition to articulating precisely how this chapter directs the critical examinations that follow, I differentiate Aristotle’s historical survey from the then-standard doxographies by showing how he implements his newly developed syllogistic to group the predecessors by argumentative strategy rather than by doctrinal similarity. Because of his developments in logic, I argue, Aristotle can now access his tradition’s landscape through a lens that was wholly unavailable to his predecessors, and which further allows him to locate the assumption implicitly directing and actively hindering his predecessors’ theorizing about the soul.

The second paper (“Lessons in Theory-Building from *De Anima*’s Critical Review”) continues the reading of the first while further showing how Aristotle uses these argument schemas to reformulate his criticisms of the predecessors into systematic, positive conclusions that fundamentally orient his own theorizing about the soul. By attending to these shared argument schemas, Aristotle diagnoses the mistaken assumption identified in *DA* 1.2 as stemming from an insufficient range of posited metaphysical relations and explanatory principles. Additionally, he recognizes that his predecessors’ selection of overly narrow starting points when inquiring into the soul, and its connection to life, indicates a deeper failure to reflect generally on the explanatory demands of scientific theories and the corresponding norms that ought to guide their construction. Overcoming these shortcomings, I show, drives Aristotle’s investigative approach and final view.

The third paper (“Predication and Progress: How Aristotle Defines the Soul”), bridges Aristotle’s conclusions from the survey (*DA* 1.2-1.5) and the defense of his own proposal (*DA* 2.1). I argue that he leverages the simple analysis of a living thing (i.e. an ensouled body), shared among his predecessors, to conclude that soul is the form of a natural body that is minimally suited to support a nutritive capacity. Having developed the first theory of predication, Aristotle shows that the soul must be related to the body predicatively rather than spatially. Through his expanded scientific conception of parts, wholes, and their relations coupled with scope-appropriate starting points about life, he concludes that soul is non-accidentally predicated, and is the form, of a natural body suited for life. I show Aristotle to have advanced a comprehensive and explanatorily robust theory of soul that overcomes the highlighted challenges faced by earlier views.

While these papers jointly yield a self-contained project that defends an interpretation of *De Anima*’s historical survey which is both novel and programmatic for inquiries into Aristotle’s other surveys, they set the stage for a significantly larger project on theory change, continuity, and scientific progress—topics which have received very little attention in Aristotelian scholarship. Specifically, I propose that understanding the significance which Aristotle places on conducting a historical survey is essential to understanding his conception of scientific progress and, in turn, successful scientific inquiry.