

Encounters with Aristotelian Philosophy of Mind

Edited by
Pavel Gregoric and Jakob Leth Fink

First published 2021
by Routledge
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2021 Taylor & Francis

The right of Pavel Gregoric and Jakob Leth Fink to be identified as the authors of the editorial material, and of the authors for their individual chapters, has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Gregoric, Pavel, 1972–, editor. |

Fink, Jakob Leth, editor.

Title: Encounters with Aristotelian philosophy of mind / edited by Pavel Gregoric and Jakob Leth Fink.

Description: New York, NY : Routledge, 2021. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020058251 (print) |

LCCN 2020058252 (ebook) | ISBN 9780367439132 (hardback) |

ISBN 9781003008484 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Aristotle. | Philosophy of mind.

Classification: LCC B485 .E53 2021 (print) |

LCC B485 (ebook) | DDC 128/.2—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020058251>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020058252>

ISBN: 978-0-367-43913-2 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-77092-1 (pbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-00848-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon

by codeMantra

Contents

<i>List of Contributors</i>	vii
<i>Note on the Bibliography and Abbreviations</i>	ix
Introduction	1
PAVEL GREGORIC AND JAKOB LETH FINK	
PART I	
Methodology	13
1 Δόξα and the Tools of Dialectic in <i>De Anima</i> I.1–3	15
COLIN GUTHRIE KING	
2 In Search of the Essence of the Soul: Aristotle's Scientific Method and Practice in <i>De Anima</i> II.1–2	43
GIULIA MINGUCCI	
3 Method and Doctrine in Aristotle's Natural Psychology: <i>De Anima</i> II.5	65
ROBERT BOLTON	
PART II	
Perception	97
4 Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias on Sight as a Relative	99
KATERINA IERODIAKONOU	
5 Perceiving That We Are Not Seeing and Hearing: Reflexive Awareness in Aristotle	119
PAVEL GREGORIC	

PART III		
Representation		139
6 <i>Eidōla</i> and <i>Phantasmata</i> in Aristotle: Three Senses of "Image" in Aristotelian Psychology	FILIP RADOVIC	141
7 Aristotle and the Cartesian Theatre	VICTOR CASTON	169
PART IV		
Intellect		221
8 <i>Thinking Bodies: Aristotle on the Biological Basis of Human Cognition</i>	SOPHIA CONNELL	223
9 The Νοῦς-Body Relationship in Aristotle's <i>De Anima</i>	ROBERT ROREITNER	249
PART V		
Hylomorphism		281
10 Aristotelian Dualism, Good; Aristotelian Hylomorphism, Bad	HOWARD ROBINSON	283
11 Hylomorphic Mental Causation	CHRISTOPHER SHIELDS	307
12 Appendix: Howard Robinson and Christopher Shields on the Merits of Hylomorphism		325
<i>Bibliography</i>		331
<i>Index of Passages</i>		357
<i>Index of Names and Subjects</i>		371

Contributors

Robert Bolton is Professor of Philosophy at Rutgers University (New Brunswick, USA).

Victor Caston is Professor of Philosophy and Classical Studies at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, USA).

Sophia Connell is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at Birkbeck College (London, UK).

Jakob Leth Fink is Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden).

Pavel Gregoric is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Philosophy (Zagreb, Croatia).

Katerina Ierodiakonou is Professor of Philosophy at the National and Kapodistrian University in Athens (Greece) and Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Geneva (Switzerland).

Colin Guthrie King is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Providence College (USA) and Visiting Professor at the University of Basel (Switzerland).

Giulia Mingucci is Fellow in Ancient Philosophy at the University of Bologna (Italy).

Filip Radovic is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Gothenburg (Sweden).

Howard Robinson is University Professor of Philosophy at Central European University (Vienna, Austria), Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall (Oxford, UK) and Senior Fellow in the Center for Philosophy of Religion at Rutgers University (New Brunswick, USA).

Robert Roreitner is Assistant Professor at Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic).

Christopher Shields is George N. Shuster Professor of Philosophy and Concurrent Professor of Classics at the University of Notre Dame (USA).

1 Δόξαι and the Tools of Dialectic in *De Anima* I.1–3

Colin Guthrie King

1 Introduction

In an influential article on Aristotle's method, G. E. L. Owen observed that Aristotle's notion of the *phainomena* accommodates not simply what we might call empirical observations, but also the very concepts we employ in making them.¹ Owen would go on to claim that, for this particular sense of the *phainomena*, "all dialectical argument can be said to start from the *phainomena*".² This claim proved seminal for a generation of influential scholars in ancient philosophy who would try to show how Aristotle could be justified in applying a dialectical method in various contexts, including scientific ones.³ More recently, the pendulum has swung back again, with several authors denying that Aristotle's "method" is dialectical in certain works.⁴

The primary purpose of this article is not to engage in this particular exegetical controversy concerning "dialectical method". But I do intend to show how the terms of this debate are inadequate for the interpretation of Aristotle's texts. The debate about "dialectical methodology" is obtuse because the treatise in which Aristotle develops a theory of dialectic—the *Topics*—presents a method for training in a particular practice of argumentation (namely: dialectic), and not a theory of Aristotle's own inquiries, which clearly are not instances of two-person, question-and-answer argumentation. We can learn from the first book of *De anima* how elements from the theory of dialectical argumentation are employed by Aristotle in the service of inquiry; and that is the primary purpose of this article. In particular, we may see from Book I of the *De anima* that Aristotle can reject dialectical standards and procedures of argumentation and definition, while at the same time employing the tools developed in his theory of dialectical argumentation.

In the first part of the paper, I locate the main claims of my interpretation in the context of the literature on Aristotle's *De anima*. In the second, I examine what role the search for a definition of the soul plays in setting the agenda of the science sought in *De anima*. In the third part, I consider the criteria and objectives guiding Aristotle's collection of "views" and "opinions" (δόξαι) in *De anima* I.2. In the fourth and

final main part of the paper, I consider the manner in which Aristotle evaluates others' views through various tests.

2 Problems for the Interpretation of *De anima* I

It was long almost a truism in modern scholarship on Aristotle that his "method", or methodology, is "dialectical", in particular when we find him considering the views of others.⁵ And so it is not surprising that this interpretation has been applied to *De anima* I, where we find Aristotle in sustained engagement with the views of earlier philosophers on the nature of the soul.⁶ But the ascription of dialectical "method" to *De anima* I (and several texts like it) raises several objections. It has been observed that Aristotle does not appeal to "popular" conceptions of soul in this text, but instead selects a few authoritative views.⁷ Here as in many other isagogic contexts—i.e., at the beginning of a treatise or the discussion of a problem—Aristotle does not feel obliged to report what is held to be true by all or the majority, nor even by all the wise. He cites and investigates a subset of the views of the "wise", experts or epistemic authorities, selectively, based on what he deems relevant.⁸ Moreover, it may be said that "the preliminary clarifications of basic conceptions and assumptions" is basic to any philosophical enterprise, and not specific to any sort of method.⁹ In another vein, there are those who find in Aristotle's retrospective "clarifications" eristically motivated distortions of the views of others, motivated primarily by fitting these views into a systematic framework that is already at hand. Harold Cherniss, in particular, took Aristotle's retrospective statements on the soul as primary evidence for this sort of attitude on Aristotle's part.¹⁰ Such a criticism of Aristotle's criticism presumes that his isagogical discussions of the views of others is a form of dialectic, but one which is eristic and, above all, tendentious. If we wish to save Aristotle from the charge of being uncharitable in this way, we might like to deny that his arguments are dialectical in this sense. Finally, and on another level of interpretation, the reasonable objection has been raised that the reading of "dialectical method" into Aristotle's works themselves is inappropriate given that he conceives of dialectic as a specific form of rule-governed, inter-personal argumentation, and his extant texts (unlike Plato's dialogues) are not even literary imitations of such a procedure, much less real instantiations of it.¹¹

Given this background in the scholarship, it seems advisable to begin with a clarification of some basic questions that the interpretation of *De anima* I might reasonably be expected to address. Here are two groups of questions to which the literature has repeatedly returned:

1 What motivates the retrospective treatment of the views of others in *De anima* I? Is Aristotle motivated to select and discuss these views

for historical reasons, based on an already formed theory of the soul? Does the discussion of these views contribute directly to the formulation of the theory? Are these two motivations compatible for Aristotle, or strongly associated with one another, or even inextricably linked? And what are the standards Aristotle brings to the selection, formulation, and interpretation of the views of others?

- 2 Is the procedure in *De anima* I dialectical in some way? What would it mean for this to be true? And what epistemological aims are connected with the entire retrospective procedure in *De anima* I?

I will address these questions. In response to the first set, I shall argue that, no, Aristotle is not motivated in *De anima* I by an antiquarian historical interest in the opinions of others.¹² From this, it follows that his procedure in this book is not rightly understood as failing or defective history, since it is not history at all (understanding "history" as a form of inquiry directed primarily at the past). Aristotle does seem to be using a sort of archive, however: a system of information retrieval based upon specific priorities connected to the inquiry at hand.¹³ *Pace* Cherniss, this "citation system" is not based on the theory of the soul that we find in subsequent books of *De anima*, and so it is not helpful to interpret it in this way. It seems rather to yield conditions for a satisfactory account of what soul is—and these conditions are directly connected to what Aristotle deems to be the underlying presuppositions of previous contributions to the theory of the soul in the framework of general natural philosophy.¹⁴

Aristotle's inquiry in *De anima* I is not directed primarily at the views of particular individuals, but foremost to the common background assumptions or presuppositions of those views he deems relevant. Aristotle's inquiry concerns the contours of substantive agreement and disagreement that obtain both between selected views, and on questions that arise from within the views themselves. An interest in implicit agreement and disagreement, both between views and within them, is characteristic also of the *theory* of dialectical argumentation as we find it in the *Topics* and the *Rhetoric*.¹⁵ The interest in investigating common presuppositions and points of disagreement motivates a genuine concern for what Aristotle takes to be the program of natural science before him, to which Aristotle clearly assigns an epistemic value for his own theory of the soul.¹⁶ This will be seen in the way in which he derives from his discussion of previous views substantive conditions for his own explanation of soul.

Notwithstanding this use of tools from the theory of dialectical argumentation for the study of δόξαι, I shall argue in response to the second set of questions that, no, *De anima* I is not a piece or case of dialectical argumentation or even "dialectical methodology". Still, we can

understand the criticism Aristotle exercises here better in light of his remarks on the criticism of definitions and arguments in the *Topics*, in particular through comparing his criticism of views in *De anima* I with his theory of “poorly said” definitions in *Topics* VI, and his remarks on the criticism of argumentation in *Topics* VIII.11.

3 Definition and Dialectic in *De anima* I.1

In *De anima* I.1 Aristotle sets out the objective of his study in the following way (unless otherwise noted, translations are my own):

We seek to theorize and understand the nature and essence of the soul and its attributes, of which some seem to be particular to the soul itself, whereas others seem to belong also to living beings on account of the soul (*DA* I.1, 402a7–10).¹⁷

This project, as Aristotle goes on to describe it, is to say what the soul is (402a12–13). The difficulty with this is that the soul is claimed as the object of several different disciplines, and so we are immediately forced to confront the question of whether there is one single discipline for the pursuit of questions regarding definition, i.e., what something is. If there is not one procedure to investigate the being of things, then it must be established first which procedure is appropriate for each field of inquiry. This latter option can be characterized as the departmental approach to definition (402a16–18). At the beginning of *De anima*, then, we find two problems in the dialectical sense, i.e., questions concerning an object of investigation (θεώρημα) about which there are either no accepted views or about which such views are opposed (*Top.* I.11, 104b1–5).¹⁸ The problems here can be construed in terms of the following two questions: What sort of inquiry would be responsible for determining the definition of the soul? And is there a discipline responsible for all definitional inquiries? The questions are clearly related: if there is one science responsible for all definition-related inquiries, it will be that science to which we must turn for the definition of the soul.

Though it is not called out by name here, we can be sure that at least one procedure with a pretense to being responsible for all definitional inquiry was dialectic. We find this stated explicitly in a passage from the catalogue of difficulties for the science of substance in *Metaphysics* III. There, a similar problem as that in *De anima* I.1 is put to question:

And we must also investigate whether (πότερον) the inquiry is exclusively about substances, or if it also concerns the *per se* attributes of the substances, and in addition to this about the same and different, similar and dissimilar, and contrariety, and about the prior and the posterior and all the other things about which dialecticians

undertake their inquiries upon the basis of acceptable premisses alone—and whose task it is to theorize about all of them (*Metaph.* III.1, 995b18–25).

The question of whether a certain inquiry (θεωρία) of substances is limited to them, or also includes the study of their attributes, is raised here explicitly, and then supplemented with an example of a form of inquiry which investigates everything.¹⁹ As representative of such a universal form of inquiry, Aristotle cites the dialecticians who make their inquiries upon the basis of “acceptable premisses alone” (ἐκ τῶν ἐνδόξων μόνων, 995b24).²⁰ We can therefore reasonably assume that the question-problem of whether there is one procedure for inquiry or many in *De anima* I.1 is a reference, albeit an indirect one, to dialectical procedures and their appropriateness for the inquiry at hand.

This corresponds also with the way in which Aristotle conceives dialectical procedures in the *Topics*. The purpose of this treatise is to train the student in dialectical argumentation; and so the scope of the treatise tells us something (albeit indirectly) about the purposes of such argumentation. At the beginning of the *Topics* we are told that the purpose of the treatise is to find a method from which we shall be able to argue on “any problem put forward” upon the basis of acceptable premisses (*Top.* I.1, 100a18–20). The purpose of the *Topics* is to prepare the student to argue, quite literally, about anything. The theory of dialectical argumentation is organized around definitions (ῥοι) and what in the dialectical moots of the Academy were discussed as their components: genus, *proprium*, specific difference, and those items that may be predicated to any given subject as an “attribute” or “property” (συμβεβηκός). Together, these form the so-called “predicables”, by which the core books of the *Topics* are organized.²¹ In particular, the τόποι of the *Topics* are sorted by predicable, and generally they serve to test or construct conclusions in contexts where a definition of the form “genus + differentia” is the object of dialectical disputation. Defining an item through identifying its appropriate genus is a preliminary to the procedure of division, which was one of the central procedures in (at least one of) Plato’s conceptions of dialectic.²² The procedure of division is referred to in *De anima* I.1 as a first step in the questions to be considered:

First perhaps it is necessary to determine through division (διελεῖν) in which genus [the soul] is and what it is, I mean whether it is a certain determined thing and a substance, or a quality, or a quantity, or some other one of the categories which have been determined by division (*DA* I.1, 402a23–25).

The text here identifies two procedures: determining through division in which genus the soul is, and determining what the soul is. The steps

are mentioned in order of ontological dignity, not in order of procedure, for we first need to know what something is before we can determine its genus. And for determining what something is, seeking to place the item in the correct category is a necessary first step. Both types of procedure are of central concern in Aristotle's theory of dialectical argumentation: *Topics* IV includes τόποι to test the claim that an item belongs to a certain genus, *Topics* I.9 introduces the categories. The practice of making divisions into genus and species seems to have been a standard Academic definitional procedure. We find indications of such operations throughout Plato. Thus, in *Sophist* 217a8ff. we find a division of things with certain names into appropriate genera, and in *Politicus* 285a4ff. we find a division of things that differ by species (κατ' εἶδη). The character of procedures that make "divisions" is also illustrated by a text that comes down to us as *Divisions of Aristotle*.²³ Though this text may be spurious, there are several traces of similar procedures in Aristotle's *Topics*.²⁴ Arguably, Aristotle's *Categories*—also known in antiquity by the title *The things before the Topics*—is itself a work that contributes to the theory of dialectical argumentation by elucidating on the preliminary matter of placing a *definiendum* in a category.²⁵ At the beginning of *De anima* II.1, where Aristotle exhorts us to "take up the question anew and try to define what the soul is and what its most general definition is" (412a4–6), we are given an answer to the question of the definition of the soul in terms of genus and category:

We say that there is some one genus of things which is substance; and of this, one kind is like material, which is not in itself a certain determined thing, another is shape and form, in accordance with which a certain determined thing is said to be, and the third is that which is composed of these (*DA* II.1, 412a6–9).

There follows the initial definition of the soul, the end of which is marked by the words: "it has now been said in general what the soul is: for by definition it is a substance" (*DA* II.1, 412b10–11). In *De anima* II.1, the burden of stating genus and category of the soul is discharged by giving the category of the soul as a certain genus of things (γένος ἐν τι τῶν ὄντων, 412a6), albeit with significant qualifications. The further qualification of how the soul relates to potentiality and actuality, which was raised in *De anima* I.1 (402a25–b1), is also addressed in *De anima* II.1 (412a9ff.).

In this way, the *démarche* of Aristotle's discussion in *De anima* I references procedures identified as dialectical both in Plato's *Sophist* and Aristotle's *Topics*. One reference to dialectical procedure concerns the use of division. Another reference is to dialectical τόποι concerning definitions and ways to test them. In *De anima* I τόποι are

employed in the quest for a definition of the soul, and several existing accounts are entertained before a positive attempt at formulating a definition is made. One significant difference between *De anima* I and properly dialectical contexts is that dialectical discussions are not expected to yield definitions that are explanatory, whereas scientific definitions are expected to be explanatory. And Aristotle clearly means his definition of the soul to explain the properties typically associated with those entities that have life.

A further difference is the following: In *De anima* I, Aristotle identifies and formulates the questions that an explanatory account of the soul must answer, but does not answer them himself. The interesting thing about this procedure is that it employs instruments developed in the theory of dialectical argumentation, while rejecting a dialectical approach to the definition of the soul. When he assembles, in *De anima* I.1, 401b23–402a16, a catalogue of problem-questions concerning the definition of the soul, we see the use of a tool from the theory of dialectical argumentation: the identification and formulation of "problems". This comes in a context that itself is central to the theory and practice of dialectic, namely the construction and testing of definitions.²⁶ As interpreters have noted and we can already see, this passage sets an agenda that the treatise as a whole attempts to address.²⁷ And so at least the dialectical tool of formulating problem-questions is clearly in use at the outset of *De anima*. However, when Aristotle formulates in this chapter a standard of adequacy for formulating the definition of the soul, he has this to say about the dialectical manner of doing so:

If we are able to make explanation of the attributes of soul—either all or most of them—according to what seems right to us, then we shall also be able to give an account of the essence (οὐσία) very nicely. For the starting-point of every demonstration is a statement of what something is (τὸ τί ἔστιν), and definitions which do not conduce us to know the attributes of a subject, and which do not even help us infer about them, are clearly all made in a way which is dialectical and vacuous (*DA* I.1, 402b22–403a2).

This is an unequivocal and clear rejection of dialectical procedures of definition for the matter at hand. It comes as an aside to the larger point Aristotle is making in this passage: that the definitions worth pursuing are informed by knowledge of attributes, or, as he puts it in the line just before the beginning of our passage, "attributes contribute a great part to knowing the essence" (402b21–22). Dialectical procedures for generating definitions are ones that are less concerned with understanding and explaining the attributes of items, even if they do supply arguments about them.

Later on in this same chapter, we are given an example of a dialectical definition of the passion anger as well as a further, physical definition of this passion. The purpose of this exercise in the comparative study of definitions is to illustrate the importance of the physical components of mental phenomena, and to show how the dialectical definition fails to take them into account. Aristotle maintains that affections of the soul such as anger, mildness, fear, compassion, and courage, as well as loving and hating, all involve the body (403a5–8; 403a16–19). This is why affections of the soul are said by Aristotle to be “*formulae in matter*” (λόγοι ἐνυλοῖ, 403a25); feelings such as fear can occur even in situations where there is no perceivable threat, whereas in other subjects and at other times the same environmental factors elicit no response (403a19–24). But the affections of the soul as they are popularly conceived—and, thus, as they might be dialectically defined—do not include reference to this fact. In drawing a conclusion from the “*formulae in matter*” approach to psychic affections, Aristotle draws the following first, preliminary conclusion²⁸ about the domain of study that could be responsible for the study of the soul as a whole:

And so (ὥστε) the definitions [of the affections of the soul] are of such a kind as “being angry is a certain motion of a body of this sort, a body-part of this sort or its power, caused by this sort of thing for the sake of that”. This is why it is the business of the natural scientist to investigate the soul, either all of it or this part of it. The natural scientist and the dialectician define each thing differently, for example, what anger is. For the dialectician will say that it is a desire for revenge or something like that, whereas the natural scientist will define it as a boiling of the blood and heat around the heart. Of these, one of them defines the matter, the other defines the form and essence. For this account is indeed of the thing at hand [viz. anger], but it is necessary for it to occur in a material of this specific kind, if it is to occur at all (*DA* I.1, 403a25–b3).

The conclusion regarding the metaphilosophical question mentioned above, i.e., concerning the domain-responsibility of the study of the soul, is not answered here; Aristotle opens it but does not give a definite answer at the end of this chapter (403b11–16). But when he does re-open the question, the dialectician is no longer a contender. This passage indicates one way in which the dialectician’s definition fails to be viable for an explanatory or knowledge-producing account of the soul and its affections (or, for that matter, attributes). Given that such affections are “*formulae in matter*”, the dialectician’s definition of anger as desire for revenge can capture only a part of this psychic affection, namely the motivation associated with this particular emotion.

The few lines that follow the elimination of the dialectician are important; they introduce the hylomorphic approach to definition with the example (of all things) of a house (403b3–7). Aristotle compares three approaches to defining “house”. This first is: “A shelter which prevents decay by wind and rain and heat” (403b4–5). The second definition states that a house is “stones and bricks and wood” (403b5–6). The third has it that a house is “the form in these things on account of those other ones” (403b6–7). The third definition is synthetic, as it were, since it combines the formal and material ones. Which of these definitions (if any) may be considered dialectical? None of them would seem to be particularly endoxic or obviously acceptable in a non-scientific context. Perhaps that is why, in Aristotle’s ensuing consideration of what sort of person is responsible for making each of these three types of definition, the dialectician doesn’t even come into play (403b7–16). Another reason might be that the candidates for giving hylomorphic definitions are all experts of some sort, and Aristotle denies that a dialectician is a type of expert, since the dialectician is not a knower in a determined domain.²⁹ His expert candidates for hylomorphic definition are the φυσικός or natural scientist (403b11), the craftsman (τεχνίτης, e.g., a builder or a doctor, 403b13), the mathematician (403b15), and the first philosopher (403b16). The task of identifying the relevant type for our study is important, because Aristotle ends the chapter by recalling a commitment to this type of definition in the case of the soul:

We asserted, then, that the affections of the soul are in this way inseparable from the natural matter of animals, insofar as there are such things as anger and fear present in it, and not like line and plane (403b17–19).

The assertion that psychic affections such as anger and fear are not separable in the way in which mathematical objects are separable will presumably exclude the mathematician as the relevant expert for definitions of such psychic affections. But the mathematician is mentioned for a reason: on Aristotle’s considered view of mathematical objects, they do not exist separately from the sensible objects in which they are instantiated, but are considered *qua* separable.³⁰ So the mathematician’s approach to the definition of her objects is not completely *malapropos* to the study of the soul, since her definitions at least reliably specify a form of a thing in matter. Still, her approach is not strictly analogical to that required for the definition of affections such as anger or fear, which Aristotle deems to be inexplicable as separable, and only explicable as “enmattered”.

It is not completely clear to me (though it seems to be clear to most commentators) that Aristotle here excludes as relevant expert for hylomorphic-type definitions a craftsman such as a doctor. Ancient

medicine was invested in precisely the kind of enmattered accounts that Aristotle postulates for the affections of the soul. And Aristotle famously emphasizes the close connection between medicine and natural science.³¹ But perhaps, for this reason, we can subsume this particular kind of craftsman to a wider conception of the φυσικός, who most likely is responsible for both matter and form. The dialectician falls by the wayside, for dialectical definitions are marked by their acceptability and are not bound to truly treat matter and form. Still, one particular tool from the theory of dialectic—the identification of problem-questions—is in full evidence in this chapter. And there is a resemblance to dialectical procedure at least in the respect of setting up the inquiry as an inquiry concerning definition, and taking a selection of authoritative and apparently acceptable views as the basis for that inquiry.

So in *De anima* I.1, the dialectician is excluded as the person responsible for defining the soul. But as we have seen, this need not and does not exclude the use of tools from Aristotle's own *theory* of dialectical argumentation in the course of the discussion. In the following chapters of *De anima* I, we see another tool from the theory of dialectical argumentation in evidence: the identification and collection of relevant δόξαι. This is also a procedure that is treated as part of the theory of dialectical argumentation (in *Top.* I.14).³² To the interpretation of this chapter we now turn.

4 Collecting δόξαι in *De anima* I.2

The search in *De anima* I for the type of expert responsible for the study of the soul is indicative of the particular historical situation in which Aristotle found himself when developing a science of the soul. As he notes in reference to the methods of division and demonstration, there were several contending models for pursuing research on essences and definitions, and this plurality was noted as a difficulty, for one must determine the correct and appropriate model for the matter at hand (I.1, 402a16–18). But though there were several competing accounts of the soul, there was not an established method or discipline for its study.³³ Had there been one, the question as to the relevant expert for such study would have been moot. In a situation in which it was unclear which domain of knowledge or expertise was (most) pertinent, Aristotle was confronted with the problem of developing criteria for determining which existing views on the soul should be considered relevant.

In considering our text as evidence of how he did this, we should note that Aristotle was not the first ancient philosopher to confront existing views on the soul and sort through them. Plato's *Phaedo* does this too. But Plato does this in a way which is remarkably different. Unlike Aristotle, Plato cites selected views (besides Socrates') by beginning with an allegedly *popular* concern about the soul and its *post mortem* state.

He has Cebes give this reply to Socrates' expression of unflinching confidence in an afterlife:

Socrates, I agree with most of what you say, but in that which concerns the soul there is much uncertainty for people, who fear lest the soul simply be nowhere at all any more when it is separated from the body, that it perish and be destroyed on the very day a person dies as soon as it escapes the body and, in passing out like breath or smoke, that it go out, fluttering and scattered, and be no more (*Phd.* 69e7–70a6).

The arguments that ensue concerning the immortality of the soul are intended to defeat this popular concern.³⁴ The first is based on a "certain ancient doctrine" that souls go to Hades after the death of a person, and come about from the dead (70c5–8). This doctrine is then subjected to successive stages of interpretation, criticism, and elaboration. The procedure yields a many-faceted defense of the claim the the soul survives the death of the body. Plato's discussion of contemporary theories of soul functions as a vehicle for his interpretation and defense of this piece of traditional Greek eschatology.

The contrast to Aristotle's procedure is instructive. Unlike Plato, Aristotle does not address psychological motivations for popular beliefs concerning the soul or its fate after death. In argument there may always be an element of persuasion, but the persuasive objective of Aristotle's arguments are not as looming. Instead of treating a single doctrine at length, he cites and interprets several doctrines that he attributes to their authors by name. *The main interest in the investigation is not primarily in the persons who held these views, but the views themselves.*³⁵ And the progression of thought in *De anima* I.2 shows that the temporal relation of the views is also not a concern or even really an organizing principle in Aristotle's treatment of them.

The beginning of *De anima* I.2 puts the reason for reviewing previous views like this:

In embarking on an investigation of the soul we must raise difficulties about the very things on which we need to attain clarity (εὐπορεῖν) in going forward, while at the same time including in our account the views (δόξαι) of those who came before us, as many as have given some account of it, in order that we may take on what has been said well (τὰ μὲν καλῶς εἰρημένα) and, if something was not said well, we may beware of that (*DA* I.2, 403b20–24).

Through the coordination of the two participles in this sentence (by the adverb ἅμα, 403b20) it is clear that the two verbal ideas they express are closely coordinated: raising difficulties, and including accounts of

the views of those who came before us, go hand in hand. They serve a specific epistemic purpose, that of knowing what was said well and being wary of what is not "said well". As noted already by Han Baltussen, the criticism of how something is said is a marker of contexts in which Aristotle considers the views of others.³⁶ Aristotle expresses a similar thought in somewhat more length in *Metaphysics* III.1, where we are told that the solution (εὐπορία) of previous difficulties cannot be accomplished in ignorance of what they are (*Metaph.* III.1, 995a28–30). In both passages, reviewing the views of others are means to an epistemic and zetetic end: knowing the difficulties, the problems to be solved, in the investigation. There is a dialectical tool for part of this procedure: it is the instrument of "acquiring premiss-questions" (προτάσεις), which Aristotle describes in *Topics* I.14. There the well-known exemplification of ἔνδοξα as views seeming true to all, the majority, and the wise is applied to δόξαι in an extended version, which will also include the views of the established arts (δόξαι κατὰ τέχνας), the negation of things which are opposed to ἔνδοξα, and δόξαι which are similar to ἔνδοξα (*Top.* I.14, 105b1–5). But the collection of such premiss-questions is even in dialectic an instrument, not an end.

One might reasonably ask: if this dialectical instrument is in play here, why does Aristotle speak of δόξαι and not ἔνδοξα?³⁷ The passage in *Topics* I.14 shows how these two concepts relate and differ. The notion of ἔνδοξα is illustrated by three ideal types of acceptable views (that is, views held by all, by the majority, and by the wise, etc.); the notion need not be explicitly invoked when we are engaged in considering particular views (δόξαι), but is useful for sorting them. In such sorting, Aristotle seems to give precedence to commonly held views, or perhaps rather to prevailing presuppositions and background assumptions. At least in *De anima* I.2, what takes precedence are in fact two presuppositions about the soul that, in Aristotle's account at least, explain why the predecessors gave the accounts they did of it but were not explicitly held by them. We read at the conclusion of *De anima* I.2, "The things passed down about the soul, and the reasons they say them so, are these" (405b29–30). We may take this as an indication that Aristotle is interested in explaining what motivates the accounts he has collected. These are the presuppositions he identifies at the very beginning of the survey of δόξαι as "what most seems to belong to the soul by nature":

The beginning of the inquiry is to set out what most seems to belong to the soul by nature. The ensouled seems to differ from that without soul in two respects particularly: in motion and perception. And indeed from the predecessors we have taken on, in general, these very two things about the soul. For some say that the soul is

most and foremost what moves, and thinking as they do that what does not move itself could not move something else, they assumed that the soul belongs to those things which are moved (*DA* I.2, 403b23–31).

It is important to note that Aristotle ascribes neither of these presuppositions explicitly to either of the positions he goes on to discuss in *De anima* I.2, but gives us to understand that they somehow motivate each of them. Democritus' theory of soul as fire-atoms is an instantiation of the presupposition that the soul is a moved mover, since fire-atoms themselves are, in the Atomist account, best suited for moving and inducing motion (403b31–404a9). The thesis of certain Pythagoreans that the soul moves itself is a further instance of this background assumption (404a16–25). Anaxagoras is said to posit a particular psychic function, namely νοῦς, as a mover (404a25–27, 404b1–6). The other major presupposition, that soul is the agent of cognition and perception, is born out by the theories of Empedocles (404b11–15) and Plato's *Timaeus* (404b16–27). The two presuppositions then meet in a long list of views that seem to be motivated by both of them. To these belong the theorists of the soul as self-mover (404b27–405a7) and, again, Democritus (405a8–13) and Anaxagoras (405a13–19), followed by what appears to be a cramped list of further theories that relate the soul to motion or perception and cognition, or both. Thales' theory of the soul as magnet presupposes that the soul is an agent of motion. Diogenes' posit of the first principle as air is an instance of both presuppositions, since air, being lightest, is deemed most apt for motion and cognition. Heraclitus' statement that the soul is an "exhalation" is motivated by (γάρ), again, the presupposition that the lightest thing will most impart motion.

We can see by the mixing of both theses in Aristotle's descriptions of these theories (whether his testimony is accurate or not) that we have a method by which presuppositions are to be identified, presuppositions that Aristotle applies in the interpretation of the views he cites. He cites them as examples of theories motivated by these very presuppositions, which in turn motivate the theories by providing them their *explananda*. In identifying common *explananda* for a variety of theories, he is seeking to do what he says he has done at the close of the chapter, namely to provide the reasons for why the predecessors (i.e., those he identified as relevant predecessors) say things as they do. He is not adducing an explicit consensus, but an implicit "program". The theories he cites are largely incompatible with one another, but converge in what they presuppose as the explanatory purpose of a theory of soul.³⁸ By collecting them through the lens of a common explanatory framework, he is in fact recognizing their relevance, for he is trying to understand

them *as* explanations. This genuine hermeneutic intention is in evidence even in highly compressed descriptions of previous views he merely notes and does not discuss, such as this:

Others say that [the soul] is blood, like Kritias, since they think that the thing most proper to soul is perception and cognition, and that this property belongs to soul on account of the nature of blood (405b5–8).

Aristotle will later be critical of views that posit that the soul is identical to some particular body.³⁹ But here we find no indication of an objection to this view. The identification of soul with a body is said to be motivated by the general presupposition that the soul is an agent of perception, given certain assumptions about how such agents must be bodily constituted. In *De anima* I.3, Aristotle goes on to directly attack the shared presupposition that the soul must be moved in order to move. In the course of this attack, he understandably illustrates the problems with this presupposition by showing how they lead to difficulties in certain particular views (in Plato's *Timaeus* in particular). But we will have reason appreciate that the proper object of that critique in *De anima* I.3 is an attack on what Aristotle deems to be a shared explanatory program of the predecessors, and this is his primary interest—not the critique of particular views. Interpreting them in light of such a coherent and comprehensive explanatory program is the object of *De anima* I.2, and evidently also the epistemic objective of reviewing their views. Explaining “the reasons for which they say things so” (405b30) is, thus, accomplished by identifying the common presuppositions and explanatory aims of such views.

But this locution does not mean, *pace* Carter 2019, that Aristotle is considering the views of the predecessors as “middle-term causes that can function in putative demonstrations of the soul's *per se* attributes”.⁴⁰ It rather shows that he is interested in understanding why the predecessors say the things they do. As we have noted, Aristotle is engaged in a causal inquiry concerning their views, but not, say, a psychological inquiry concerning what motivates this or that particular view. It is an impersonal inquiry into what motivates all views considered worthy of attention. Aristotle's background assumption in the causal inquiry of others' views is that the truth, or at least some truths, motivate them. Thus, for example, in *Metaphysics* I he will claim that Parmenides was forced by the φαινόμενα to admit, at least in practice, several principles and not just “the One” (986bff.). When, near the end of *Metaphysics* I, Aristotle comes to the conclusion that the project of first philosophy among the predecessors “resembled an indistinctly speaking [philosophy?]”, he reveals an important presumption guiding his selection and discussion of the predecessors. It is the presumption that these views are part of a

larger context to which they contribute, and that studying their causes will reveal the proper contours of a program of research. Thus, the investigation of particular views yields the picture of a large, non-personal domain of knowledge.

These same background assumptions inform the discussion of the predecessors in *De anima* I. When Aristotle goes on to criticize particular views within this paradigm in *De anima* I.3–5, we find that this procedure, too, is largely impersonal; Aristotle is motivated by criticizing theories that are sometimes, but not always, associated with a name. We will better understand these passages with a view to the procedure of *De anima* I.2, not so much as a collection of critical notes on individuals' views and individual theories, but as a critical investigation of a core of assumptions that Aristotle thinks they hold in common. We should probably resist the understandable temptation to call this bit of text (or any other part of *De anima* I) a “doxography”, because Aristotle's purpose here is not to report views, but to collect them with the explanatory purpose of understanding the bounds of the science to which they are contributions.

5 The Examination of δόξαι in *De anima* I.3

Having elicited the presuppositions of those views or δόξαι that he considers relevant together with the views that they give rise to and that they “cause”, Aristotle now confronts these presuppositions, above all: the conception of the soul as a mover under the presupposition that what moves must be moved, and the presupposition that the soul acts in a way that is reducible to physical terms. It will be helpful, in discussing this chapter, to begin with a concise summary of its first string of arguments, so that we can immediately test some various interpretations about what these arguments actually achieve.

The overall argumentative structure *De anima* I.3 has five parts: 1. the introduction of the view that the moving soul itself participates in motion or change (405b31–406a12); 2. a discussion of this view in six main points (406a12–b25); 3. the introduction of the view of the *Timaeus* on the motions of soul and body and their inter-relation (406b26–407a2); 4. a discussion of that view (407a2–b11); and 5. concluding remarks on tendencies in earlier views concerning the relation of soul to body (407b12–26). The twice recurring pattern in this chapter is: a theory is introduced and is then subjected to scrutiny. Here I will focus in particular on the passages that scrutinize the views in question, i.e., Parts 2 and 4. Part 2 (406a12–b25) may be laid out as follows:⁴¹

406a12–406b25: *Six considerations concerning the premiss that the soul, as agent of motion, is also in motion.* (i) If soul moves itself non-accidentally (μη κατά συμβεβηκός), motion/change (κίνησις)

belong to it by nature (φύσει); it must move itself in one of four kinds of motion—qualitative change (ἀλλοίωσις), growth (αὔξησις), decay (φθίσις), or local motion (φορά); and it must be in place (ἐν τόπῳ) (406a12–22). (ii) If the soul is moved by nature, it is moved also by force; and if it is moved by force, it is moved by nature. The same will hold for rest: that into which the soul changes by nature will be its natural state of rest; that into which it changes by force will be the forced state of rest. But what could such forced changes and states of rest be? (a22–27). (iii) If the soul is moved upwards, it will be fire; if it moves downwards, it will be earth; for these are the motions of those bodies. The same account holds for the motions in between (b27–30). (iv) Since the soul manifestly causes the motion of the body, it stands to reason that the soul moves the body by the motions with which it moves itself. Inversely, then, the body's motions may be presumed to apply to the soul. On this assumption it is possible for the soul to leave and re-enter the body, causing resurrection of the dead (406a30–b5). (v) A motion can be accidental even when it is caused by something else, as when an animal is pushed by force. But it cannot hold for a thing which is moved by itself of its essence that it is moved by another, except accidentally, just as one thing is good in itself or on account of itself, and another is good on account of something else and for the sake of something else. But if the soul is moved by anything, it is moved by the objects of perception (which are clearly external) (b5–11). (vi) Some think that the soul is in the body and moves the body by moving itself. This is like the story that Daedalus made a wooden Aphrodite move by pouring molten silver into it. Just so Democritus says that the indivisible spheres, because they cannot remain at rest, move and pull along the body as a whole. But how will the body remain at rest, then? The soul seems to move the body rather by decision and thought (than by such means) (b11–25).

This dense set of objections are all directed, ultimately, against one thesis: the claim that the soul, in its essence (οὐσία), is such as to move itself or be able to move itself (τὸ κινεῖν ἑαυτὸ ἢ δυνάμενον κινεῖν, 406a1–2). As many commentators have noted, Aristotle's formulation of this claim is a paraphrase of *Laws X*, where the Athenian affirms that the soul's essence (again: οὐσία) is "to be able to move itself with its own motion" (τὴν δυναμένην αὐτὴν αὐτὴν κινεῖν κίνησιν, 896a1). What kind of objections are these and what are they meant to achieve? There are four main interpretations on offer in answer to these questions. One interpretation has it that Aristotle is here reducing the stated definition of the soul as "that which by essence moves itself" to consequences that are either absurd or inimical to the proponent of the definition.⁴² The purpose of the objections would then be to simply disqualify these

views by showing their implausible consequences. Another interpretation has it that this is an exercise of Aristotle's version of the Socratic cross-examination, and that the criticism of the predecessors consists in a dialectical refutation, but conducts this dialectical procedure in such a way as to yield true results.⁴³ In another version of the dialectic interpretation, these and other passages in *De anima* I.3–5 serve to construct a "counter-model" to Aristotle's own theory of soul; the purpose of constructing such a counter-model is to refute it and, in doing so, to establish Aristotle's own concept of νοῦς.⁴⁴ Finally, a more recent interpretation has it that Aristotle is engaging previous views with a "demonstrative heuristic" in order to test them as "putative demonstrations of soul's *per se* attributes".⁴⁵ The purpose of formulating these objections is to show that the putative definition fails to identify the proper causal element, or "middle term", which is explanatory of why soul's essence is as it is.

What this last interpretation gets right, in my view, is the commitment of the procedures in *De anima* I to finding true propositions concerning the soul. The accommodation of only true propositions is a feature Aristotle points out as a distinguishing feature of non-dialectical procedures, whereas accommodation of propositions on account of their acceptability, or "endoxicality", is a distinguishing feature of dialectical procedures.⁴⁶ Thus, demonstration proceeds from true, primary, and knowledge-conducive premisses, whereas dialectic is concerned with what is acceptable (*Top.* I.1, 100a27–b26). He makes a similar point in claiming that deduction with a view to the truth is based upon "what is the case" (ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων), whereas dialectical deduction proceeds with a view to credence (δόξα) and is concerned that the argument be based on assumptions that are as acceptable as possible (ἐξ ὧν ἐνδέχεται ἐνδοξοτάτων) (*APo.* I.19, 81b18–23).⁴⁷ Aristotle is considering the definition of the soul as self-moved not on the basis of what seems to be true to all, or the majority, or the community of experts, etc., but upon the basis of assumptions he deems *prima facie* worthy of scrutiny. It is for this very reason that many interpreters have found his discussion unkind. But it is also why interpretations of this passage and its context in terms of dialectic are implausible, at least if we are considering dialectic in Aristotelian terms. His discussion of the view begins with a statement that this view is "false" and that attributing motion/change (κίνησις) to the soul is perhaps even impossible (*DA* I.3, 405b31–406a2). This contention in these terms, combined with the fact that none of the premisses Aristotle introduces to support it are in any way qualified as merely apparent, exclude the interpretation of our passage as dialectical. Still, there may be aspects of this discussion that can be understood with the help of his theory of dialectical argumentation.

It would be hasty to infer from the fact that this is not a piece of dialectical argumentation to the conclusion that it is a demonstrative one,

i.e., a form of argumentation designed to identify certain features that are not only true but fundamental and explanatory.⁴⁸ There is a salient difference between testing a claim's truth and testing its explanatory value. In particular, a given claim about the soul might fail to be explanatory for, or relevant to, its essence while still being true. In this passage, Aristotle is not just contesting that it is explanatory of soul's relation to body to contend that the soul moves itself; he is contesting the truth of the claim that the soul moves itself. It is, however, still legitimate to see in Aristotle's discussion an attempt to understand previous views as explanatory; but prior to this in order of investigation is to investigate their truth. For if it is shown that a previous view is false or implausible, it will, *a fortiori*, fail to be explanatory.

The existing interpretation most faithful to the character of Aristotle's actual argumentation here is that of Bonitz, viz. that the purpose of this discussion is to drive the definition under consideration *ad absurdum*. Aristotle does this using premisses that are not at all shared by the Platonic standpoint, as we would expect them to be in a "dialectical" setting, but that are specific to Aristotle's own theories of motion and change.⁴⁹ The six points brought against the definition of the soul as a self-mover do not aim at showing its explanatory failure so much as its problematic consequences. Therein lies the aspect of Aristotle's argument that can properly be deemed dialectical: in showing that the definition of the soul as self-mover has, at least in Aristotle's own assumptions, consequences that are repugnant to those who would espouse the definition, he engages in an argument against a particular position or addressee.⁵⁰ As Aristotle states in *Topics* VIII.1, the dialectician is engaged in the sort of argumentation that is crafted with a view to another (*πρὸς ἕτερον*) and, for this reason, the arrangement (*τάξις*) of premisses—which Aristotle treats in *Topics* VIII.1–3—is a particular concern. Thus, even if the premisses of Aristotle's discussion are not dialectical, the addressee-oriented character of the argument is a shared feature of Aristotle's procedure and dialectical argumentation.⁵¹ But the arrangement of premisses in this passage of *De anima* I.3 rather resembles a manner of premiss-taking which Aristotle *contrasts* with that of the dialectician. This contrast-character is "the philosopher", i.e., the "solitary researcher":

For the philosopher, that is (*καί*) the one engaged in inquiry by himself, there is no concern that, if his deduction proceeds from what is true and known, the answerer will not concede these things because they are too close to the proposition at issue and he will foresee what the consequence will be. The philosopher is rather concerned that the principles of his demonstration be as known and closely related as possible, for from these principles knowledge-conducive deductions are made (*Top.* VIII.1, 155b10–16).

This style of premissing holds also for the third and fourth parts of *De anima* I.3, in which Aristotle expositis the view of the *Timaeus* (406b26–407a2) and subjects it to criticism (407a2–b11). These arguments are not based on a "common ground in dissent", for they do not appeal to grounds that Plato or the main speaker in the *Timaeus* would presumably recognize as reasons. The critical passage on the *Timaeus* in particular invokes densely formulated and closely related propositions that Aristotle holds to be true. These passages may be seen as a continuation of the critical discussion of the Platonic theory of the soul under consideration of the *Timaeus*.

Before we consider them, it would be good to recall that the purpose of the discussion of previous views as Aristotle stated it earlier was to identify what was well said and what was not said well, in order to be wary of that (*DA* I.2, 403b20–24: the operative phrase is τὰ καλῶς εἰρημμένα). The beginning of the criticism of the view of the *Timaeus* echoes this language: "First of all, it is not correct (οὐ καλῶς) to say that the soul is a magnitude" (407a2–3). This locution does not reflect a gentle manner of criticism,⁵² but rather refers to a specific set of grounds for criticizing a definition. These are specified in *Topics* VI under the rubric "not having been defined well" (μὴ καλῶς ὄρισται, *Top.* VI.1, 139a34–35), and Aristotle specifies two main parts of the study of poorly stated definitions: one that deals with obscure manner of expression (τὸ ἀσαφεῖ τῆ ἔρμηνείᾳ κεχρησθαι), and another that considers definitions that exceed their scope (*Top.* VI.1, 139b12–18). Criticizing a definition as "not said well" will not involve, for example, a mere stylistic or more sympathetic critique, but will imply that the definition needs to be disambiguated or revised in scope before its truth or falsehood can even be evaluated.⁵³

The dialectical theory of how definitions are poorly stated thus informs Aristotle's approach to the account of the soul in the *Timaeus*. That theory also exhibits a certain perspective on language and truth that is tangible in his critique of that account. The perspective assumes that statements containing homonymous expressions must be disambiguated in order to be truth-apt. Since antiquity, criticism of Aristotle's criticism has sometimes involved a charge of excessive "literalism" on Aristotle's part. This might have something to do with the use of linguistic tools from the theory of dialectical argumentation for criticizing definition. But it is wrong to characterize this approach as "literalist", since Aristotle is primarily interested in understanding what motivates the account. Thus, also in the criticism of the *Timaeus*, his description of this account is focused on extracting a definition of the soul from it (i.e., "the soul is a magnitude"), and it is this definition that is subject to scrutiny. In extracting this definition from the account, Aristotle elicits a presupposition of it, not an explicit statement (as may be said in the case of the definition "the soul is that which moves itself"). The basis for deriving this account is Aristotle's description of the creation of the

World-Soul as “having been constituted from elements and divided according to the harmonic numbers”, then formed into a circle and divided into two circles, one of which was divided into seven, “as if the motions of the heavens were the motions of the soul” (406b28–407a2; cf. *Ti.* 36b6–37d7). The claim that soul is magnitude is implied, not stated, in Aristotle’s understanding of this theory. His criticism of the implied definition begins with its scope. The proper referent of “soul” is, in Aristotle’s understanding of the theory, not all of what is properly or literally understood by this term, but a specific psychic faculty, “mind” (*νοῦς*) (407a3–6). A failure of proper scope is one of the ways in which a definition is not said well, and is thus the very first point of this critique. As Aristotle goes on to argue, mind or its exercise—thinking—have their identity in a different way than magnitude does; and in this way, even if we correct the scope of the definition, it fails (i.e., is false). Aristotle is quite exhaustive in listing the ways in which thinking and thought cannot share the properties of magnitudes or circular motions. We may recall a “methodological” remark from early on in *De anima* I.1, where Aristotle stated that “properties contribute a great part to knowing what [the soul] is” (402b21–22). We find in his criticism of the theory of the *Timaeus* an inquiry at the level of properties, and in particular concerning whether the soul can have the properties that the theory ascribes to it. There is a certain irony in the fact that the negative answer to this question results in Aristotle’s recourse to the notion of form.

6 Conclusion

We may now summarize our findings and draw some final conclusions from them. In the reading of *De anima* I.1 that I have presented here, this chapter definitely excludes dialectic as the relevant sort of procedure for defining the soul, while at the same time using conceptual tools from the theory of dialectical argumentation to identify and articulate controversies regarding the study of the soul. This reflects Aristotle’s caution with regard to the non-domain-specific procedures of dialectic in an area of expertise. As the inquiry concerning the soul is scientific, the procedure of studying it must be departmental, i.e., domain-specific.⁵⁴ Aristotle’s determination of the object of his inquiry as hylomorphic is motivated, in part, by a move to block a purely formal (i.e., non-specific) approach to the study of the soul such as that on offer from such a *mathesis universalis* as dialectic. In this negative way, at least, dialectic as a research program plays a significant informative role in shaping the outlook of Aristotle’s own program in the *De anima*.

The main result of our interpretation of *De anima* I.2 was that the collection of views there is motivated primarily by a search for the prevailing presumptions shared by those views deemed relevant. The procedure can be likened to the kind of logical research Aristotle performs in

the *Topics*, where the consideration of a certain proposition leads to the consideration of the more general thesis that would provide support for it. Put briefly: Aristotle is engaged in a search for the reasons why certain views are held, and it is these reasons that he seeks to criticize through his criticism of the views that rely on them. The non-personal approach to δόξαι could be seen as expressing what has been described as Aristotle’s “de-personalized” approach to dialectic. In any case it speaks against one prominent interpretation of Aristotle’s use of the resources of dialectic for science: the one that states that peirastic dialectic is particularly suited to scientific inquiry.⁵⁵ Since Aristotle understands peirastic as a personalized approach in which the answerer “says what seems true to him”, it is hard to see how it can be instantiated here, in what is likely the best candidate for a dialectical procedure in the context of Aristotle’s science.

In our interpretation of *De anima* I.3, we came to the conclusion that the procedure there is very unlike any kind of dialectic, but that it is also not best understood as a demonstrative heuristic. It is rather, straightforwardly, a test of the truth of the most important presuppositions of the relevant views when put up against what Aristotle takes to be the most basic relevant facts about the world. It is probably this type of procedure that has most earned Aristotle the reputation of being an indelicate interpreter of others’ thoughts. And yet, as Aristotle famously states in the first book of the *Topics*, we may expect to be able to make such use of the *theory* of dialectical argumentation. There, in laying out the three things for which his treatise (*πραγματεία*) is useful, Aristotle mentions as third and last (after “practice” and “encounters with the many”) “the sciences of philosophy” (*τὰς κατὰ φιλοσοφίαν ἐπιστήμας*) (101a25–28). The use of the treatise, and, thus, his theory, for the sciences is according to this passage in fact two-fold:

[The treatise is useful] for the sciences of philosophy, because if we are able to raise difficulties on both sides of a question, we shall more easily see in each matter what is true and what is false. Further, it is useful for the first things of each science. For it is impossible to say anything about the appropriate first principles of a given science upon their basis, since they are the starting-points of all the rest. It is thus necessary to go through them upon the basis of ἐνδοξα about them. This is the particular trait of, or at least what is most appropriate to, dialectical competence, for, since it is probative, it provides a path to the starting-points of all procedures together (*Top.* I.2, 101a34–101b4).

Two details of this much discussed passage are often overlooked. First, it concerns the use of the study of dialectical argumentation as presented in the treatise, not in dialectic itself as any sort of discipline. Secondly,

the use will consist in the transfer of certain skills to the student of the treatise. It is thus dialectical competence (διαλεκτική), or competence in the art of dialectic, which “provides a path” to the starting-points of other disciplines, and not (as some have read) “the dialectical art” itself. This, strictly speaking, has by itself nothing relevant on offer for any science because it is not a domain of expertise and, thus, cannot be relied upon to yield principles or anything else. But for those who have competence in dialectic, it provides (by such competence) a way to discuss the principles of science upon the basis of relevant acceptable (ἔνδοξα) notions and views.

This is the second use of διαλεκτική for the sciences. If we appreciate that this use is skill-based, we will not be misled to think that dialectic holds out the promise of being a super-science of the sort imagined by certain members of the early Academy.⁵⁶ The first use is “to be able to raise difficulties on both sides of a question”, so that we “shall more easily see what is true and what is false” (101a34–36). Here Aristotle is positing that argumentative ability to “raise problems” (διαπορήσαι) will facilitate an epistemic ability, namely: to identify what is true and what is false. This feature is clearly related to the skill of the accomplished dialectician; we are told here of the promise of mastering competence trained through the dialectical “method”, and not of its secrets. In any case, the author of the *De anima* did not require a dialectical method for approaching, and indeed founding, a science of the soul. For the purpose of that method is to impart dialectical skill, and he had not only written the first training manual for its acquisition, but had acquired the skill itself.⁵⁷

Notes

- 1 Owen 1986/1961, 84–85.
- 2 Owen 1986/1961, 86.
- 3 To name just a few representative publications with this tendency: Barnes 1980, Nussbaum 1986, Irwin 1988, and Bolton 1990.
- 4 With regard to the *Nicomachean Ethics*: e.g., Salmieri 2009, Karbowski 2019; with regard to *De anima*: Carter 2019.
- 5 As noted above, the archexegete for a dialectical Aristotle was G. E. L. Owen. Owen’s dialectical Aristotle seems to have been motivated by a particular theory of Aristotle’s development and contemporary ideas in epistemology and the philosophy of language, both of which resonated well beyond Owen 1961. On the background of Aristotle’s linguistic turn in figures such as J. L. Austin and Gilbert Ryle, see King 2014.
- 6 Polansky 2007, 22–24, prefaces his commentary on *De anima* with the claim that “experience and *endoxa*” are the material from which Aristotle determines that there is a subject matter corresponding to the science of the soul, and in “pointing to just what it is”. See also Polansky 2007, 83ff., for an interpretation of *De anima* I.3 in terms of a dialectical procedure. The dialectical interpretation of *De anima* I was also defended by Witt 1992. For a recent and critical response to this reading of *De anima* I, see now Carter

2019, 23–28. Though my reading of what Carter calls the “methodological challenge” in *De anima* I differs from his, I generally concur with Carter’s criticism of those interpreters who infer from the use of a dialectical tool to the presence of the dialectical method. In this paper I wish to show in particular why “the use of a dialectical tool or argument during the course of an inquiry is not sufficient for an inquiry to be ‘dialectical’” (Carter 2019, 44, original emphasis).

- 7 See Frede 2012, 200–208, who raises this objection in criticizing exponents of the “dialectical method” interpretation; see also Carter 2019, 27–28. Compare Baltussen 1996, who argues for a qualified interpretation of *De anima* I.2–5 as “dialectical” (as opposed to historical or doxographical), or as “critical endoxography”, 335 n.10. In support for this he points out passages in *De anima* I.4 (such as 408a34–b20), which cite what Baltussen calls “endoxic views”: Baltussen 1996, 334 n.8.
- 8 Thus, when Aristotle states in *De anima* I.2 that “all define the soul by means of these three things primarily: motion, perception, and being non-bodily”, the “all” refers back to the group of previous theorists he has elected to consider in that chapter. The criteria employed for determining this subset of the views of the wise are considered in Section 2.
- 9 Frede 2012, 213, concludes: “But if that is to be called ‘dialectic’, then it is a ubiquitously applicable and therefore quite vacuous epithet.”
- 10 Thus Cherniss 1935, 310, in summing up Aristotle’s discussion from *De anima* I.3:

Such are Aristotle’s arguments against the earlier conceptions of soul which made it motive by reason of its own mobility and derived its cognitive and sensitive faculties from the nature of its material constituents; and in his refutation of these conceptions the foundation of his own theory is clearly discernible, the soul is the cause of the living body in three senses, as source of motion (that is an original efficient cause), as final cause, and as essence or formal cause.

This is imprecise—Aristotle does not invoke the doctrine of the four causes at any point in *De anima* I.3.

- 11 This thesis is argued rigorously in Primavesi 1996, and more recently (with some amendments) in Primavesi 2010, 50–58.
- 12 I take it that antiquarian historical interest is marked as interest in things past because they are past, and by the attempt to preserve them in their past form. In the long-running literature on Aristotle as a “historian of philosophy”, there is a certain lack of clarity regarding this particular point. But the point is important, as it helps one make the distinction between the (alleged) historical intention of a written source and its value as testimony for history in the antiquarian sense. Clearly it can be true that an author with an intention to report on views as they were can be less trustworthy than an author without such an intention; see the case of Diogenes Laertius, a notoriously unreliable but self-avowed “reporter” on ancient philosophy. I will largely take it for granted that Aristotle’s motivation in his discussion of the views of others is *not* historical, at least not in the antiquarian sense (perhaps the only extant work of Aristotle that shows antiquarian interests is the fragmentary *On the Constitution of the Athenians*). Contributions to the debate on the historiographical value of Aristotle’s retrospective discussion of δόξαι have sometimes failed to keep this distinction in view.
- 13 This analogy for the practice of ancient doxography is developed in Taub 2017.

- 14 Thus, Carter 2019 persuasively argues for an interpretation of Aristotle's discussion of the δόξαι as issuing in constraints for his own theory, both positive and negative.
- 15 As Fait 1998 has pointed out, the interest in agreement should not lead us to conflate the notion of ἔνδοξα with the notion of consensus.
- 16 It would of course be a separate task to argue that Aristotle's reading of the predecessors is (basically) accurate. For a recent study with implications to the contrary, see Laks 2018, who argues that the concept of soul as applied by post-Platonic interpreters of archaic philosophers tends to obfuscate their meaning, which he finds better expressed in "breath" and "life". Criticizing Aristotle as a post-Platonic source for Presocratic philosophy will not be our object here. I shall assume, in agreement with Carter 2019, that Aristotle's retrospective evaluation of theories of the soul presumes the relevance of such theories for his account of what the soul is, and that it does so legitimately.
- 17 Taking the conjunctive phrases θεωρῆσαι καὶ γνῶναι and τὴν τε φύσιν αὐτῆς καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν as involving exegetical uses of καί, as in Hicks 1907, 176.
- 18 Aristotle's determination of a dialectical problem (πρόβλημα) is more circumspect than my summary formulation. See *Top.* I.11, 104b1–5:
- A dialectical problem is an object of investigation pertaining to choice or avoidance or to truth and knowledge, either on its own or as a contribution to something of this sort, and about which people have no view either way, or the majority have views opposed to those of experts, or the experts have views opposed to those of the majority, or there is disagreement amongst popular views and views of experts.
- Aristotle goes on to expand the definition of dialectical problems to include those questions concerning which there are "opposing deductions" (ἐναντίοι συλλογισμοί), so that one is in a quandry (ἀπορία) as to the truth of the matter, on account of there being trustworthy arguments on both sides (104b12–14). See also *Top.* VI.6, 145b16–20 for a similar account of ἀπορία. On the relationship between the notion of a dialectical problem and that of ἀπορία in the *Topics*, see Rapp 2015.
- 19 It should be noted that the problem, as posed in *Metaph.* III.1, concerns the specific project of a general science of substance, whereas in *De anima* I we have the more local question of whether the substance of the soul or also its *per se* attributes should be studied. Still, the global problem of the *Metaphysics* is reflected in the local version we find in *De anima* I.1.
- 20 I prefer Smith's 1997 translation of ἔνδοξα as "acceptable premisses" over the prevailing conceptions of ἔνδοξα as "reputable opinions" (Barnes 1984) or "accepted premisses" (as in Wagner/Rapp 2004: "anerkannte Meinungen" and Brunschwig 1967: "idées admises"), since acceptability is the stronger, more normative notion. Something can be acceptable because it is accepted by one of the sources of authority identified in the determination of ἔνδοξα as things that seem true to all, the majority, or the wise, but this is not the only way in which a proposition may be deemed acceptable as a premise: "Dialectical propositions also include what seems similar to what it ἔνδοξα" (*Top.* I.10, 104a12–13). On the issue of premise acceptance from the standpoint of modern argumentation theory, see Freeman 2005.
- 21 *Topics* II–III concern attributes, *Topics* IV–V concern the genus and the specific difference, and *Topics* VI–VII feature τόποι for the establishment and refutation of definitions.

- 22 See Plato's *Sph.*, 253d1–4:

Shall we not say that it is the characteristic of knowledge of dialectic to be able to divide genera so that we do not hold the same species to be a different one, and that we not hold different species to be the same?— Yes, we shall say so.

- 23 For the most recent editions of this text, see Dorandi 2016. The *Divisiones* are also given in a more condensed form as an addendum to his treatment of Plato by Diogenes Laertius III.80–109.
- 24 The connections between the *Divisiones Aristoteleae* and the *Topics* are established and examined in Hambruch 1904.
- 25 For this reading of the *Categories* and a discussion of its alternative title among ancient commentators, see Menn 1995, 314 n.5. For his interpretation of the place of the *Categories* in the context of the theory of dialectic, see *ibid.* 320ff.
- 26 On the 'Sitz im Leben' of *placita* literature in dialectic as conceived by Aristotle and its relation to problem-questions, see the important contribution by Mansfeld 1990, 3193–3208.
- 27 Ross 1961, 166 *ad loc.*
- 28 We are well advised, with Shields 2016, 80, to take the claims of the φυσικός to the study of the soul as preliminary, especially given that *DA* I.1 ends (403b11–16) with a question regarding which type of expert is responsible for said study.
- 29 The domain of the dialectician (as well as the pseudo-dialectician) is to refute upon the basis of common things (*SE* 9, 170b8–11). There are myriad false deductions in particular fields of expertise; but they are not the proper object of dialectical refutation, which operates upon the basis of τόποι (*SE* 9, 170a30–36).
- 30 See *Metaph.* XIII.3, 1077b17–22:
- Since the universals in mathematics are not about objects which have already been separated and exist alongside magnitudes and numbers, but are about magnitudes and numbers (though not insofar as they have magnitude or are divisible), it is clear that there are definitions and demonstrations also of these, though not of them *qua* sensible, but *qua* things of such a sort.
- 31 E.g., *Sens.* 1, 436a17–22:
- It belongs to the task of the natural scientist to make known first principles of health and sickness, for neither of these things can occur for entities which are non-living. That is why most of those who engage in the study of nature are also among the more philosophical of the doctors, some of them ending up at the study of medicine, and others beginning with the study of nature.
- 32 See *Top.* I.14, 105b12–18, in the context of discussing how to prepare premise-questions (προτάσεις) for dialectical debate:
- One should also make selections from written arguments (λόγων), and make tables about each genus in laying each one down separately, for example about the good or about animal, and about each particular good, beginning with an account of what it is. One should also note the views (δόξαι) of particular individuals, for example that Empedocles said that the elements of bodies are four. For someone might accept something said by someone who is reputable.

- Note that the specification of recording views by individuals comes at the end of this passage, as an addendum. This is further evidence for Mansfield's thesis that the guiding criterion for the selection of views in Aristotle is impersonal.
- 33 This is why it is misleading to speak or write of "earlier Greek psychology", since the use of such a term implies there was something like a unified discipline of the mind or soul before Aristotle. The conception of a departmental and non-hierarchical organization of knowledge into disciplines with their own proper principles seems to have been, in fact, an Aristotelian achievement, on which see Kullmann 1974, 163–203.
- 34 As Cebes later notes (*Phd.*, 77e3–7), the concern is not just a popular one, but is motivated by an intuition as firmly ingrained as the fear of death. For a comparison between the criticism of the harmony theory of the soul in Plato's *Phaedo* and Aristotle's *Eudemus*, see Jaeger 1923, 39–45. Aristotle's *Eudemus* does deal with popular conceptions of the soul's fate after death; see e.g., Fragment 6 of the *Eudemus* in Ross 1955, 18–19, derived from Plutarch, *Consolatio ad Apollonium*, 115b1–e9.
- 35 Thus, for *De anima* I something holds that Mansfeld 1990, 3058, claims for pseudo-Plutarch's *Placita* and the sources from which it was likely derived: "The physical tenets are the main issue, not the persons who held them, although names may of course be used to identify tenets, or to provide links between tenets with different contents."
- 36 Baltussen 1996, 341 n.39, cites instances of both.
- 37 Frede 2012, 193 n.17, astutely poses this question in rightly pointing out several dissimilarities between the procedure of 'laying down the *φανόμενα*' in *Nicomachean Ethics* VII.2 and the reviews of principles employed by predecessors in *Metaph.* I.2, *Ph.* I.2–6 and *DA* I.2–5. She cites our passage as a case illustrating the point that, in these contexts, Aristotle is not at all engaged in "proving *ἔνδοξα*", but rather his very own views in critical opposition to what has been thought before.
- 38 Thus also outside the *Topics* we are well served to observe the distinction between *ἔνδοξα* and presuppositions similar to them on the one hand, and consensus on the other, as advocated by Fait 1998.
- 39 See e.g., *DA* I.3, 406b20ff., where Aristotle criticizes the assumption that the soul should share properties appropriate to bodies, such as having place.
- 40 Cf. Carter 2019, 39–40. For a further discussion of Carter's position, see King 2020.
- 41 In my analysis of the argument in the text I have arrived at a division similar to that of Hicks 1907, with a few exceptions.
- 42 This interpretation was put forward by Bonitz 1873 and adopted by Hicks 1907, 239 *ad loc.*
- 43 Polansky 2007, 83 *ad loc.* Polansky poses the question: How can an argument based on *endoxa* truly refute other *endoxa*? By "refute" Polansky likely means "disqualify" or "override" (it is clear that certain propositions can be used to refute others in a deduction regardless of their epistemic standing). This problem arises under the assumption that the main epistemic feature of *endoxa* is their de facto endorsement by some party. For criticism of this assumption, see Fait 1998 and Reinhardt 2015.
- 44 This is the interpretation of Viano 1996, who holds that *DA* I.2–5 constitutes a "doxographie" with a "function dialectique", namely, to refute a given hypothesis and thereby establish its contradictory opposite (see in particular her conclusions, 79).
- 45 Carter 2019, 39–40 *et passim*.

- 46 See e.g., *Top.* I.1, 100a27–b26; I.14, 105b31–32; VIII.1, 155b7–16; *ApO.* I.19, 81b18–23.
- 47 On this passage, see Carter 2019, 26.
- 48 To be fair, Carter 2019 does not draw this inference, but the semblance of such an alternative does seem to have led him to the "demonstrative heuristic" interpretation from his well-reasoned rejection of various dialectic-based proposals to what he calls the "methodological challenge". It is helpful to appreciate in this context that there is a large variety of ways in which Aristotle "proves" or "makes a point"; on this topic, and in particular on proving *λογικῶς* and *φυσικῶς*, see Zingano 2017.
- 49 Bonitz 1873, 421–422:
- Gemeinsamer Charakter der einzelnen zur Widerlegung dieser Definition angewendeten Beweise ist, dass Aristoteles seine eignen Lehren über das Wesen, insbesondere über die Arten der Bewegung als sichere Grundlage voraussetzt und durch Anwendung derselben auf die fragliche Definition zu Consequenzen führt, welche entweder an sich unhaltbar sind oder doch der Absicht derer selbst widerstreiten, welche jene Definition aufgestellt haben [my emphasis].
- 50 See the emphasized words to this effect in the quotation from Bonitz 1873, directly above.
- 51 This is a feature of rhetorical argumentation as Aristotle conceives it, and his theory of rational persuasion in the *Rhetoric* is based on an addressee-centered model of argumentation. On this model, see Rapp 2002, vol. 1, 338–340.
- 52 Cf. Carter 2017, 52 n.4, who adduces this interpretation of the words *οὐ καλῶς* as a ground in support of the ancient interpretive thesis that Aristotle is here criticizing a particular interpretation of the *Timaeus* rather than "the text itself" (though without, I take it, endorsing that ancient interpretation). It seems more likely that if Aristotle were to attack an *interpretation* of the *Timaeus*, he would do so using the text itself. But the primary object of criticisms he exercises is this text, or rather: the views he takes it to express.
- 53 See e.g., Aristotle's remark on the definition "law is the measure or image of those things which are by nature just" in *Top.* VI.2, 140a13–17:
- If he says that the law is, literally (*κυρίως*), a measure or image, he is wrong (for an image is of a thing by way of the creation of an imitation, and this is not the case for law), or if he is not being literal, it is clear that he has spoken obscurely and said something which is even worse than an utterance which relies on metaphor.
- 54 This converges with the interpretation of Kullmann 1974 of *De partibus animalium* I, which also shows evidence of a departmental conception of scientific inquiry and a critique of procedures which are "transdisciplinary" in scope.
- 55 This view is developed in Bolton 1990, 212–219, and particularly 232–235. It would be difficult to summarize all the insights in this rich article, but for the purposes of the present discussion we may highlight Bolton's contention that peirastic, on Aristotle's conception, operates upon an evidential basis consisting of "the most empirically well-justified information that *as a group we have up to now*" (235). This raises questions concerning epistemic joint-agency and the status of perceptual knowledge in Aristotle that well exceed the scope of my discussion here. It must suffice to say that this characterization of Aristotle's conception of peirastic is contestable, and based on textual grounds that range widely away from the *Topics* (including *SE*).

- 56 On the practical purpose of the *Topics* for cultivating skill, see Aristotle's explicit remarks to this effect in *Top.* I.3, 101b5–10, and Kakkuri-Knuuttila 2005.
- 57 Thanks are due to an anonymous reviewer, Carlo DaVia, Jakob Fink, and, in particular, to Pavel Gregoric for many helpful suggestions and corrections to earlier drafts of this article.

2 In Search of the Essence of the Soul

Aristotle's Scientific Method and Practice in *De Anima* II.1–2

Giulia Mingucci

1 Introduction

It is widely recognised that Aristotle's scientific practice, as witnessed by his biological and psychological treatises, is closely connected to the scientific theory and methodology in the *Posterior Analytics*.¹ This recognition is the outcome of a vigorous debate that took place in the 1980s among scholars such as David Balme, Robert Bolton, Alan Gotthelf, James Lennox, and Geoffrey Lloyd, on the relationship between Aristotle's theory of science and his scientific practice, particularly in the biological works.²

Over the last 30 years, scholars have made significant advances by using Aristotle's methodology in the *Posterior Analytics* to shed light on his natural science, including his psychological inquiries. For instance, Martin Achard has published a monograph on the demonstrative model of the *Posterior Analytics* as the framework for identifying the essence of the soul in Aristotle's *De anima*.³ In the present discussion I will limit myself to addressing some methodological issues concerning Aristotle's definitions of the soul in *De anima* II.1–2. Robert Bolton has shown persuasively that these chapters can be illuminated by the theory of types of definition in *Posterior Analytics* II.8–10.⁴ I will follow Bolton in reading Aristotle's successive definitions of the soul in the light of the theory exposed in the *Analytics*, but I will rely on a different interpretation of *Posterior Analytics* II.8–10.⁵ This will result in assigning a different role to the definition of the soul in *De anima* II.1, which will enable me to determine the method that Aristotle applies in *De anima* II.2 to arrive at his second definition of the soul, along with the significance of the latter. From late antiquity onward, the methodology applied by Aristotle in these chapters has been a matter of debate among the interpreters; this paper will attempt to take stock of this open controversy and make a sensible proposal for its resolution.

But before turning to the relationship between Aristotle's definitions of the soul, and in general to their role and significance in his psychological