

# Rory Ryan Hanlon

Department of Philosophy  
University of Chicago  
1115 E. 58<sup>th</sup> St, Chicago, IL, 60637

[rhanlon11@uchicago.edu](mailto:rhanlon11@uchicago.edu)  
<https://roryhanlon.com/>  
415-845-0721

## EMPLOYMENT

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2021- Present	Humanities Teaching Fellow Department of Philosophy and the College, University of Chicago
2017-2020	Teaching Assistant and Instructor Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago

## EDUCATION

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2021	PhD, Department of Philosophy, University of Chicago <i>Joint Program in Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy</i>
2014	BA, St. John's College, Santa Fe <i>Majors in Philosophy and the History of Math and Science; Minors in Classics and Comparative Literature</i>

## RESEARCH AREAS

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AOS	Ancient Greek Philosophy (esp. Aristotle and Plato); Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy
AOC	Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Film; Moral Psychology; Early Modern; Wittgenstein

## DISSERTATION

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Title	<i>Aristotle's Divided Soul</i>
Committee	Philosophy Department nominee for the Humanities Dean's Distinguished Dissertation Award Martha Nussbaum (Chair), Gabriel Lear, Agnes Callard, Christopher Shields (Notre Dame)
Abstract	My dissertation provides a novel systematic account of Aristotle's conception of 'parts of soul' in his <i>De Anima</i> . Interpreters have failed to explain how Aristotle maintains two philosophically attractive and textually grounded claims: that there are multiple discrete parts of soul, and that soul is the unified and unifying form of the living organism. In contrast, I argue that both claims are genuinely endorsed by Aristotle and, when correctly understood, compatible and crucial to the project of <i>De Anima</i> as a whole. First, psychic parts are not spatial parts, but are instead the definitionally basic capacities or powers of an organism (nutrition, perception, intellect); these basic capacities, in turn, provide the explanatory foundation for understanding all other vital capacities. Second, Aristotle formulates a sophisticated account of psychic unity, according to which psychic parts are 'present potentially' within the soul: the soul is no mere aggregate of parts, but is actually and essentially a whole, even while having parts.

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

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"Aristotle's Unified Soul: The Figure-Soul Analogy and its Context" (Forthcoming). *Journal of the History of Philosophy*.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

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"Aristotle on Discrimination: Perception as Substance and as Point" (Revise and Resubmit at *Apeiron*)  
"Aristotle's Worms and the Psychology of the *Timaeus*" (under review)  
"Why Aristotle's Soul Needs Parts" (under review)  
"Aristotle's Critique of Platonic Bipartition and Tripartition" (under review)  
"Aristotle's Non-Moral Psychology: Soul Division as Classification" (In Progress)

## INVITED PRESENTATIONS

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Apr. 2022	"Art and Attention", University of Chicago Comments, "Hazards of Watching Them Be: Attending to <i>Balthazar &amp; N�nette</i> "
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Sept., 2021	Aristotle on Knowledge as a Virtue, Loyola University Chicago “Aristotle’s Divisions of the Soul”
Feb. 2021	Workshop on 20th & 21st Century Cultures Comments on “Joyce’s Signs of the Soul: Towards a Theory of Mediation.”
Oct. 2020	Department Colloquium, Marquette University “Aristotle’s Unified Soul: The Figure-Soul Analogy and its Context”
Sept. 2020	Cornell Workshop on Aristotle’s <i>Generation and Corruption</i> “ <i>Generation and Corruption</i> II.6”

## REFEREED PRESENTATIONS

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Feb. 2022	American Philosophical Association Central Division Meeting “Why Aristotle’s Soul Needs Parts”
Jan. 2019	American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting “Perceptual Discrimination: Perception as Substance and Perception as Limit”
June 2019	The Significance of Self-Consciousness, Leipzig University “Aristotle’s Critique of Additive Theories of Soul”
June 2018	Marquette Summer Seminar on Aristotle and the Aristotelian Tradition “Aristotle’s Criticisms of Platonic Soul-Partition”
Oct. 2018	Fourth Canadian Colloquium of Ancient Philosophy “Perceptual Discrimination: Perception as Substance and Perception as Limit”
May 2018	Canadian Aristotle Society (“Aristotle: A Critic of Plato”) “Limits, Opposites, and Divided Souls: Aristotle <i>Contra</i> Plato”
July 2016	Workshop on the Work of Aryeh Kosman, Leipzig University “Aristotle on the Unity of Thought: Noetic Simplicity in <i>Metaphysics</i> Γ.4”

## PRESENTATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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May 2020	University of Chicago Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy Workshop “Aristotle’s Unified Soul: The Figure-Soul Analogy and its Context”
Feb. 2020	University of Chicago Theoretical Philosophy Workshop “Aristotle’s Critique of Platonic Bipartition and Tripartition”
May 2019	University of Chicago Graduate Student Conference in Ancient Philosophy Comments, Soham Shiva “Aristotle’s Conception of Negation”
May 2018	University of Chicago Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy Workshop “Moving Parts: Aristotle on Desire, Locomotion, and Parts of Soul”
April 2018	University of Chicago Graduate Student Conference in Ancient Philosophy Comments, Anna Wray “Aristotle on the Subject’s Contribution to Thinking”
May 2017	University of Chicago Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy Workshop “Aristotle on Perceptual Judgment and the Unity of the Perceptual Soul”
April 2017	University of Chicago Graduate Student Conference in Ancient Philosophy Comments, Stephen Mendelsohn, “A Sense of Self in <i>De Anima</i> ”

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### As Lecturer (at the University of Chicago)

2023	Dividing the Mind: A History Ancient Philosophies as Ways of Life
2022	Philosophy of Film Humanities Core: Philosophical Perspectives* An Introduction to Philosophy Through Film Ancient Greek and Roman Conceptions of Soul Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind

2021	Humanities Core: Human Being and Citizen Philosophy Goes to the Movies: Film and the Meaning of Life
2020	Aristotle's <i>On the Soul</i>

**As Course Assistant (at the University of Chicago)**

2018	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> (with Gabriel Lear and Jonathan Lear) History of Philosophy 1: Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy (with Gabriel Lear)
2017	Ancient Greek Aesthetics (with Gabriel Lear)

**Other Teaching**

2013-14	Writing Assistant and Tutor (St. John's College)
2011-13	Ancient Greek Tutor (St. John's College)

**LANGUAGES**

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Ancient Greek (advanced reading; high pass on departmental and university Ancient Greek Exam); Latin (advanced reading); French (basic reading); Spanish (basic reading and speaking)

**SELECTED AWARDS**

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2020-21	Mellon Foundation—University of Chicago Dissertation Completion Fellowship
2020-21	Affiliated Doctoral Fellowship, Franke Institute for the Humanities
2020	Department of Philosophy Conference Travel Grant, University of Chicago (x2)
2020	APA Graduate Student Travel Stipend, APA Central
2019	Visiting Doctoral Researcher, Universität Leipzig (Analytic German Idealism)
2016	Tuition Grant, Summer Latin Workshop, University of California, Berkeley
2016	Visiting Doctoral Researcher, Universität Leipzig (Analytic German Idealism)
2014	Faculty Award for Sustained Academic Excellence, St. John's College
2014	Weigle Prize, Best Senior Essay "The Principle of Non-Contradiction in Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i> "
2014	Best Essay Other than Annual, "Hegel on the Propositional Form"
2013	Best Essay Other than Annual, "Faraday on Matter and Mediums"
2012	Best Sophomore Annual Essay, "Aquinas' Middle Path: The Names of God"
2011	Best Freshman Annual Essay, "An Apology for Speech in Plato's <i>Sophist</i> "

**ACADEMIC SERVICE**

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2018-19	Coordinator, PRISM (Planning Resources for Students in the Majors), University of Chicago
2018-19	Search Committee for Junior Faculty in Ancient Greek Philosophy, University of Chicago
2017-18	Coordinator for Ancient Greek and Roman Philosophy Workshop
2016-2019	Reviewer for University of Chicago Graduate Student Conference in Ancient Philosophy
April 2018	Organizer, University of Chicago Graduate Student Conference in Ancient Philosophy
May 2017	Organizer, "De Motu Animalium: A Workshop on Textual Criticism with Oliver Primavesi"
April 2017	Organizer, University of Chicago Graduate Student Conference in Ancient Philosophy

**GRADUATE COURSEWORK** (\* denotes audit)

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Plato	Plato and Aristotle on Craft and Wisdom (G. Lear)* Plato's <i>Philebus</i> (G. Lear) Plato's <i>Statesman</i> (G. Lear)* Plato's <i>Euthyphro</i> (J. Redfield)* Plato's <i>Phaedrus</i> (E. Asmis)* Plato's <i>Timaeus</i> (E. Fletcher)* Socratic Elenchus (A. Callard)*
Aristotle	Aristotle's <i>De Anima</i> (S. Kelsey) Aristotle's <i>De Anima</i> (M. Boyle)*

	Actuality and Potentiality: Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i> (C. Shields)
	Aristotle's <i>Metaphysics</i> Book M and N (E. Katz)*
	Virtues of the Intellect: <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> VI (J. Lear & I. Kimhi)*
	Aquinas's <i>Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima</i> (S. Brock)*
Hellenistic	Epicureanism (E. Asmis)
	Roman Philosophers on the Fear of Death (M. Nussbaum)
	Hellenistic Ethics (M. Nussbaum)*
Language	Ancient Greek Prose Survey (H. Dik)
	Berkeley Summer Latin Workshop
	Latin: Cicero (M. Allen)*
Early Modern and Modern	Descartes' <i>Meditationes de prima Philosophia</i> (J.L. Marion)
	Revolutions in the Concept of Form (R. Pippin & J. Conant)
	Transitions Into, Within, and From Hegel's <i>Science of Logic</i> (A. Koch)*
	Marx's <i>Kapital</i> , Volume I (A. Ford)
Contemporary	Naturalism in the Philosophy of Mind (J. Bridges)
	Late Wittgenstein (D. Finkelstein)*
	Introduction to Wittgenstein's <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> (J. Conant & I. Kimhi)
	Elementary Logic (K. Davy)
	Analytic/Synthetic Distinction (J. Stern)
	Carnegie Mellon Summer School in Logic and Formal Epistemology*

**REFERENCES**

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**Martha Nussbaum**, Distinguished Service Professor in Law and Philosophy, University of Chicago, ([martha\\_nussbaum@law.uchicago.edu](mailto:martha_nussbaum@law.uchicago.edu))

**Gabriel Lear**, Professor of Philosophy and in the Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago ([grlear@uchicago.edu](mailto:grlear@uchicago.edu))

**Agnes Callard**, Associate Professor in Philosophy, University of Chicago, ([agcallard@uchicago.edu](mailto:agcallard@uchicago.edu))

**Christopher Shields**, Shuster Professor in Philosophy and Classics, Notre Dame University, ([cshield3@nd.edu](mailto:cshield3@nd.edu))

**DISSERTATION OVERVIEW:** *Aristotle's Divided Soul*

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Both in ordinary contexts and throughout the history of philosophy, it is often readily accepted that a single person or their mind can be divided. The ancient Greek philosophical tradition displayed a widespread interest in this thought, which in Plato became crystalized under the heading of ‘part of soul’ (*morion psuchēs*). *De Anima* (*DA*) is Aristotle’s treatise on the soul (*psuchē*), in which he gives a theoretical account of the soul as the principle and cause of life (*zōē*). Because of the intuitiveness of the notion of psychic parthood, and its centrality within Greek thought, it is not surprising that this notion plays a prominent role in *DA*. Yet Aristotle’s employment of psychic parthood is more complicated than might be initially apparent, and has given rise to a surprising amount of confusion and disagreement about its status in *DA*. In my dissertation, I offer a novel and comprehensive account of Aristotle’s conception of psychic parthood in *DA*, arguing that a successful interpretation of his conception of psychic parthood illuminates both his ontology of life and the scientific aims of *DA* as a whole.

In **Chapter 1**, I contend that psychic parthood first and foremost constitutes a *problem* for Aristotle: he endorses commitments that imply that the soul is both a complex multiplicity and a simple unity. First, Aristotle affirms the irreducible diversity of the principles of an organism’s activities. Human and animal souls are comprised of multiple distinct capacities (*dunameis*): nutrition, perception, and (with humans) intellect. This compels him to admit the existence of psychic parts. Second, as part of his ‘hylomorphic’ theory of soul, Aristotle defines soul as the form (*eidos*) of the organism. Because form in general unifies its corresponding matter, the soul, too, must unify the organism’s body. A form appears to perform this unifying

function by itself constituting a simple, part-less unity. The soul, then, should also lack parts. Hence, the first commitment suggests that the soul *must* have parts, while the second suggests that the soul *cannot* have parts. Given their foundational place in his approach to soul, Aristotle is unable to give up either commitment easily. In the subsequent chapters, I articulate a conception of psychic parthood that does justice to both commitments and shows their ultimate compatibility.

Some interpreters attribute ‘psychic simplicity’ to Aristotle: a total rejection of the existence of psychic parts altogether. I argue, in contrast, that Aristotle has a principled use of psychic parthood that is crucial to his project in *DA*. First, I detail how this positive use emerges out of rejections of Platonic conceptions of psychic parthood. In **Chapter 2**, I describe Aristotle’s rejection of a ‘literal’ or ‘spatial’ conception of psychic parts (as in Plato’s *Timaeus*) according to which psychic parts are differentiated by their location in the body. Aristotle argues that such a conception faces insurmountable empirical and theoretical counter-evidence. In **Chapter 3**, I detail Aristotle’s rejection of an ethical approach to psychic parts (a division of soul that arises in responding to ethical problems), exemplified by the *Republic*’s division of the soul into rational, spirited and appetitive parts. Such a partition lacks the principled methodology required for a psychic partition to be at home within a proper science of soul.

In **Chapter 4**, I offer a positive account of Aristotle’s conception of psychic parthood. Psychic parts are the definitionally and conceptually basic capacities of an organism—nutrition, perception, and intellect. These are capacities, I argue, that can be understood and defined independently of any other of an organism’s capacities, unlike other capacities (e.g., memory, imagination) whose definitions refer to these basic psychic parts. These psychic parts, in turn, are crucial to Aristotle’s project within *DA*: he can explain an organism’s countless other capacities by relating them back to the three basic psychic parts. He explains a capacity like memory by showing its definitional dependence on perception—that memory is to be understood as a particular ‘state or affection’ of the perceptual part of the soul.

In **Chapter 5**, I turn to the unity of the soul—how psychic parts constitute a single soul. The thought that parts are logically independent might lead one to assume that these parts are separate and independent, leading some interpreters to attribute to Aristotle ‘mereological actualism’: that parts are actually distinct entities and prior to the whole. Mereological actualism suggests that the soul is a mere sum of parts, which would prevent Aristotle from providing a satisfactory account of psychic unity. If we reject this actualism, worries about psychic unity ultimately dissolve. Aristotle, I argue, formulates an alternative conception of parthood within an analogy between souls and geometric figures. As simpler figures are present potentially within more complex ones, so lower souls are present potentially within higher souls. Lower parts of the soul (e.g., an animal’s nutritive part) are not distinct and actual, but are ‘potential parts’ of higher souls (animal souls). This picture undermines mereological actualism, treating soul not as a mere aggregate of psychic parts, but as essentially unified and prior to its potential parts.

In **Chapter 6**, I resolve a tension between the conceptions of psychic parts in Chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 4 presents an ‘additive’ conception of psychic parts, treating the soul as a sum of and posterior to logically independent psychic parts. Chapter 5 presents a ‘transformative’ conception of psychic parts, treating the soul as essentially unified and prior to its potential parts. I argue that these two conceptions achieve distinct, but complementary, aims, which parallel Aristotle’s distinction in *DA* II.3 between ‘common’ and ‘proper’ accounts of soul. Common accounts describe abstract features shared by all souls (e.g., ‘soul is the form of the organism’); proper accounts describe the essential features of particular kinds of souls (animal souls, human souls, etc.). A common account is useful in describing general features of soul, but is empty if not supplemented with detailed proper accounts. A parallel distinction applies to additive and transformative conceptions of psychic parts. On an additive conception, we give one common definition of each psychic part, which abstracts from whether it is present in a plant, animal, or human soul; this allows Aristotle to describe the general features shared by all instances of nutrition, perception, or intellect. On the transformative conception, we supply distinct, proper accounts of a psychic part depending on whether it is present in a plant, animal, or human soul; this allows him to provide a robust and sophisticated metaphysics of the soul and its unity.

In sum, Aristotle can then have his cake and eat it too: he can recognize the existence of and also systematically use psychic parts (*contra* psychic simplicity), while maintaining the essential unity of the soul (*contra* mereological actualism). Aristotle thereby articulates a picture of the soul that does justice to both its unity and complexity.