ROBERT HOWTON

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EMPLOYMENT

Koç University, Istanbul
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy   *September 2018–Present*

University of Pittsburgh
Visiting Lecturer, Department of Philosophy   *Aug. 2016–Aug. 2018*
Part-Time Lecturer, Department of Philosophy   *Spring 2016*

EDUCATION

University of Toronto   *2017*
PhD in Philosophy
Certificate in Collaborative Programme in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy

DISSERTATION: "Aristotle's Case for Perceptual Knowledge"
COMMITTEE: Jennifer Whiting (supervisor), Brad Inwood, Lloyd Gerson

University of Pittsburgh   *Fall 2015–Spring 2016*
Visiting Scholar, Department of Philosophy

Yale University   *Spring 2015*
Visiting Assistant in Research, Department of Philosophy

University of Oxford   *Trinity Term 2013*
Visiting Graduate, Corpus Christi College Centre for the Study of Greek and Roman Antiquity

Texas A&M University   *2010*
MA in Philosophy

THESIS: "Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Method of Division"
COMMITTEE: Robin Smith (supervisor), Scott Austin, Craig Kallendorf

Louisiana State University   *2008*
BA Cum Laude in Philosophy
Minors in Greek, Classics

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION AND COMPETENCE

SPECIALIZATION: Ancient Philosophy, Philosophy of Perception

COMPETENCE: Philosophy of Mind, Epistemology, Logic, Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy

PAPERS

Forthcoming and in Print

Why *De Anima* Needs III.12–13   *Forthcoming*
To appear in a collection on *De Anima* III forthcoming from Peeters (Leuven)

Review of Thomas Johansen, *The Powers of Aristotle's Soul*, OUP 2012   *2016*
Philosophical Review 125 (1): 135–138

Under Revision

Paper on and Hypothetical Necessity in *Posterior Analytics* II.19   *August 2017*

PRESENTATIONS

<u>Invited</u>

Translation of and Commentary on *De Sensu* 7, 448b16–449a20
Workshop on Aristotle's *Parva Naturalia*   *11–15 June 2018*
Yale University

"Mixture and Motion": Aristotle on Sensible Qualities
2018 Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Congress   *4–7 June 2018*
Université du Québec à Montréal

Aristotle on Soul as a Complex Activity
Workshop on "For the Sake Of" Relations in Aristotle   *21–22 April 2018*
Virginia Tech University

Comments on Rosemary Twomey, "Aristotle on Discriminating the Common Sensibles"
2018 Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association   *3–6 January 2018*

Aristotle on Why Animals are Perceivers
De Anima III: International Workshop in Honor of Michel Crubellier   *11 March 2016*
Université de Lille 3

Perception and Hypothetical Necessity in *Posterior Analytics* 2.19
Workshop on Aristotle's Epistemology   *17 April 2015*
University of Pittsburgh

Aristotle on Why Animals Need *Phantasia*
Yale Working Group in Ancient Philosophy   *15 April 2015*

**Comments on Klaus Corcilius, "Hylomorphism, Aristotle's Science of Life,
and the Explanation of Mental Episodes"**
2014 Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association   *18 April 2014*

Comments on Marc Gasser, "Aristotle on Perceiving Universals"
37th Annual Ancient Philosophy Workshop   *5 April 2014*

Aristotle on the Epistemic Role of Perception: *Posterior Analytics* 1.31
Fifth Annual Toronto Workshop in Ancient Philosophy   *15 March 2013*
University of Toronto

Comments on David Charles, "Aristotle on Perception"
Hylomorphism in Aristotle and Kant   *11 November 2012*
University of Toronto

Virtue as *Dunamis* in Plato's *Hippias Minor*
Second Graduate Conference of the Ancient Philosophy & Science Network   *1 July 2012*
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Comments on David Charles, "Aristotle: Actions as Processes"
Fourth Annual Toronto Workshop in Ancient Philosophy   *16 March 2012*
University of Toronto

<u>Submitted</u>

Comments on Klaus Corcilius, "*Generation of Animals* V.1–8"
Aristotle on Living Beings: The *Generation of Animals* International Symposium   *5 May 2017*
Universität Tübingen

Aristotle's Doctrine of the Discriminative Mean
2017 Pennsylvania Circle of Ancient Philosophy   *4 March 2017*
Duquesne University

2016 BPPA Masterclass   *21 May 2016*
University of Cambridge

Perception and Hypothetical Necessity in *Posterior Analytics* 2.19
38th Annual Ancient Philosophy Workshop   *21 February 2015*

Natural Teleology in Aristotle's Account of Incidental Perception
2014 Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association   *29 December 2014*

2014 Western Canadian Philosophical Association Annual Meeting   *4 October 2014*
University of British Columbia

Virtue as *Dunamis* in Plato's *Hippias Minor*
North American Meeting of the International Plato Society   *6 October 2012*
University of Michigan

The Object of Thought Argument
Society for Ancient Greek Philosophy   *23 October 2011*
Fordham University

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Robinson Fellowship in Ancient Philosophy   *2014–2015, 2015–2016*
Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto

Ontario Graduate Scholarship   *2013–2014, 2014–2015*
University of Toronto

Graduate Student Travel Stipend   *2014*
American Philosophical Association

Michael J. Herman Fellowship   *2011*
Department of Philosophy, University of Toronto

Association of Former Students Graduate Merit Fellowship   *2008–2010*
Texas A&M University

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

<u>As Instructor</u>

PHIL 403: Aristotle's Psychology (Koç)   *Fall 2018*
HUMS 132: Illusion: When Appearances Deceive (Koç)   *Fall 2018*
PHIL 0210: Introduction to Modern Philosophy (Pittsburgh)   *Spring 2018*
PHIL 0080: Introduction to Philosophical Problems (Pittsburgh)   *Fall 2017*
PHIL 1040: Aristotle (Pittsburgh)   *Spring 2017*
PHIL 0450: Theories of Knowledge and Reality (Pittsburgh)   *Spring 2017*
PHIL 0460: Philosophy of Mind (Pittsburgh)   *Fall 2016*
PHIL 1440: Philosophy of Mind (Pittsburgh)   *Spring 2016*
PHL340: Issues in Philosophy of Mind: Perception and Singular Thought (Toronto)   *Winter 2014*

<u>As Tutorial Leader</u>

PHL205: Early Medieval Philosophy. Instructor: Deborah Black (Toronto)   *Fall 2013*
PHL200: Ancient Philosophy. Instructor: Lloyd Gerson (Toronto)   *AY2011–2012*
PHL210 17th & 18th Century Philosophy. Instructor: Adam Harmer (Toronto) *Summer 2011*
PHIL240: Symbolic Logic. Instructor: Robin Smith (TAMU)   *Spring 2010*
PHIL240: Symbolic Logic. Instructor: Christopher Menzel (TAMU)   *Fall 2009*

<u>As Grader</u>

PHLB81: Theories of Mind. Instructor: William Seager (Toronto)   *Fall 2014*
PHL245: Introduction to Logic. Instructor: Nico Scharer (Toronto)   *Winter 2013*
PHL304: Aristotle. Instructor: Jennifer Whiting (Toronto)   *Fall 2012*
PHL246: Probability and Inductive Logic. Instructor: Colin Howson (Toronto) *Winter 2011*
PHL202: Ancient Philosophy. Instructor: Thomas Mathien (Toronto)   *Fall 2010*

GRADUATE COURSEWORK (a = audited)

Courses in Ancient Philosophy

Aristotle's *De Anima*.^{a} Instructor: David Charles (Yale)	*Spring 2015*
Aristotle on Definition and Essence.^{a} Instructor: David Charles (Yale)	*Spring 2015*
Plato's *Philebus* and its Aristotelian Legacy.^{a} Instructor: Jennifer Whiting (Toronto)	*Fall 2013*
Aristotle on *Phantasia*, Cognition and Action.^{a} Instructor: Jennifer Whiting (Toronto)	*Winter 2013*
Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. Instructor: Lloyd Gerson (Toronto)	*Winter 2012*
Presocratic Philosophy. Instructor: Brad Inwood (Toronto)	*Winter 2012*
Plato's Ethical Dialogues. Instructor: Rachel Barney (Toronto)	*Fall 2011*
Aristotle's Criticism of Plato's Theory of Forms. Instructor: Lloyd Gerson (Toronto)	*Winter 2011*
Plato's *Gorgias*. Instructor: Rachel Barney (Toronto)	*Fall 2010*
Ancient Determinism. Instructor: Robin Smith (TAMU)	*Fall 2009*
Presocratic Philosophy. Instructor: Scott Austin (TAMU)	*Fall 2009*

Courses in the Philosophy of Mind and Language

Perception, Singular Thought, Ontology.^{a} Instructor: Imogen Dickie (Toronto)	*Winter 2014*
Rationality, Consciousness, Action. Instructors: Benj Hellie, Andrew Sepielli (Toronto)	*Winter 2012*
Reference and Communication. Instructor: Imogen Dickie (Toronto)	*AY2010–2011*

Courses in Logic

Formal Tools in Philosophy. Instructor: Jonathan Weisberg (Toronto)	*Fall 2011*
Modal Logic. Instructor: Christopher Menzel (TAMU)	*Spring 2010*
Mathematical Logic. Instructor: Robert Burch (TAMU)	*Fall 2008*

Courses in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy

Peter Abelard. Instructor: Peter King (Toronto)	*Fall 2011*
Modern Philosophy. Instructor: Stephen Daniel (TAMU)	*Spring 2009*

Courses in Metaphysics and Epistemology

Actions, Events and Processes.^{a} Instructors: David Charles, Ursula Coope (Oxford)	*Trinity 2013*
Epistemology.^{a} Instructors: Timothy Williamson, John Hawthorne (Oxford)	*Trinity 2013*
Teleology. Instructors: Denis Walsh, Jennifer Whiting (Toronto)	*Fall 2010*
Trope Theory. Instructor: Robert Garcia (TAMU)	*Sprint 2010*
Epistemology. Instructor: Benjamin McMyler (TAMU)	*Spring 2009*

Other Courses

Wittgenstein. Instructor: Sonia Sedivy (Toronto)	*Winter 2011*
William James. Instructor: John McDermott (TAMU)	*Fall 2008*
Ethical Theory: Feminist Ethics. Instructor: Linda Radzik (TAMU)	*Fall 2008*

LANGUAGES

Research facility in Ancient Greek, Latin, French, German. Speaking facility in French and basic German.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Steward for the Department of Philosophy, CUPE 3902 Unit 1   *2012–2015*
Duties included: liaising with CUPE 3902 Unit 1 on behalf of the Department of Philosophy Teaching Assistants, organizing information sessions about benefits and bargaining issues, assisting in member grievances.

Orientation Chair, Graduate Philosophy Student Union   *2012, 2013*
Duties included: organizing all activities for the Department of Philosophy Orientation Week for incoming graduate students.

REFERENCES

Dr. Jennifer Whiting
Distinguished Professor of Philosophy,
University of Pittsburgh
✉ whitingj@pitt.edu

Dr. David Charles
Professor of Philosophy and Classics,
Yale University
✉ david.charles@yale.edu

Dr. Justin Broackes
Professor of Philosophy,
Brown University
✉ justin_broackes@brown.edu

Dr. Brad Inwood
Professor of Classics and Philosophy,
Yale University
✉ brad.inwood@yale.edu

Dr. Imogen Dickie (Teaching Reference)
Professor of Philosophy,
University of Toronto
✉ imogen.dickie@utoronto.ca

Dr. Thomas Berry (Teaching Reference)
Senior Lecturer in Philosophy,
University of Pittsburgh
✉ tberry@pitt.edu

Aristotle's Case for Perceptual Knowledge

My dissertation addresses one of the most controversial but least well understood claims of Aristotle's psychology: that sense perception is a "discriminative" (*kritikê*) capacity of soul. I argue that commentators misunderstand the nature and significance of this claim because they fail to appreciate the extent to which Aristotle is responding to his predecessors, above all Plato, who *denied* that the senses discriminate. Properly situated in this dialectical context, Aristotle's claim can be seen for what it is: a defense of the naïve view that *experience* of a quality like color or flavor can be a way of *knowing* that quality.

Aristotle's primary target is an argument he finds in Plato's *Theaetetus*. According to this argument, perception can be a kind of knowledge only if we accept the naïve view that sensory experience of colors, flavors, and other perceptual qualities reveals the *essence* of those qualities. For Plato, however, the naïve view is wrong: though it may be via the senses that the soul perceives *qualities* like a hard thing's hardness or a soft thing's softness, it cannot be via the senses that the soul discriminates the *being* of these qualities. To do that, Plato argued, the soul must act *on its own*.

Against this, Aristotle argues in *De Anima* II.11 (424a5–7) that the senses *themselves* discriminate the qualities they perceive. His argument depends on a view of perceptual qualities as objective, perceiver-independent properties of perceptible bodies. As I argue in Chapters 1 and 2, Aristotle thinks of colors, flavors, and the like as essentially *causal* properties, the physical features of perceptible bodies that enable them to produce experiences of those qualities in us. But Aristotle, unlike modern physicalists, denies that there is a necessary contrast between the way a perceptual quality appears in experience and the way it essentially is. Since a perceptual quality is "mixture *and* motion", it can appear in experience as the perceiver-independent property it essentially is.

The argument of *De Anima* II.11 aims to spell out the psychological conditions under which perceptual qualities appear in experience as they essentially are. The argument is terse, and it relies on the obscure notion that the senses are "mean states" of the qualities they perceive. In Chapters 3 and 4, I clarify this notion by developing an analogy with Aristotle's celebrated doctrine of the ethical mean. Because virtue is a mean state, vicious actions and emotions appear to the virtuous person as what they essentially are, namely excessive or deficient. Similarly, because each sense is a mean state, the qualities it perceives appear to it as what they essentially are, namely light or dark, sweet or bitter, or more generally as occupying the objective position on the quality scale that defines each as the quality it is. For a sense to "discriminate" a perceptual quality, then, is for that quality to appear to the *sensory* mean state as what it essentially is.

Aristotle's claim that the senses discriminate thus represents a decisive rejection of Plato's view that the soul by itself discriminates the essence of perceptual qualities. It moreover provides unequivocal support for the naïve view of sense experience—a view that for him, as for Plato, expresses a condition on perceptual knowledge.