

**ROSEMARY TWOMEY  
CURRICULUM VITAE**

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**EDUCATION:**

Philosophy Program, CUNY Graduate Center (August 2003-present), MA, Spring 2009;  
thesis defended December 14, 2012, Ph.D. to be awarded May 2013

Dissertation *Aristotle on the Common Sense and the Unity of Perception*

Supervisor: Iakovos Vasiliou; Committee: Nickolas Pappas, David Rosenthal; Readers: Wolfgang Mann, Christopher Shields

Certificate, Latin & Greek Institute, CUNY, August 2009

B.A., Philosophy, magna cum laude, The American University, May 2002 (University Honors in Philosophy)

Senior Thesis: *Kant on Civil Disobedience*

**AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION**

Ancient Philosophy

**AREAS OF COMPETENCE**

Epistemology

Philosophy of Mind

**EMPLOYMENT**

Adjunct Lecturer, CUNY Lehman College (Fall 2005 to present)

Adjunct Lecturer, CUNY Baruch College (Summer 2006 to present)

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

Ancient Greek Philosophy, Business Ethics; Epistemological Skepticism; Introduction to Logic; Introduction to Philosophy; Introduction to Ethics; Justice and Society; Philosophy of Science

**WORK IN PROGRESS**

- “Are the Objects of Sense Proprietary? Plato and Aristotle on the Diversity of the Sense Organs”
- “Complexity and Unity in Aristotle’s Theory of Perception”
- “The Breadth of Common Sensing in Aristotle”
- “Burnyeat on Spiritual Change”
- “Does *Theaetetus* 184-186 Assume a ‘Heraclitean’ Theory of Perception?”

## PRESENTATIONS

- Commentator on John Fritz and Ronald Polansky's "Aristotle on Accidental Perception," *De Anima* workshop, University of Pittsburgh, to be delivered on 13 April 2013.
- "Are the Objects of Sense Proprietary? Plato and Aristotle on the Diversity of the Sense Organs," Ancient Philosophy Workshop, University of Texas at Austin, 22 March 2013.
- Commentator on Ana Laura Edelhoff's "The Structure of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* M and N," Princeton University Ancient Philosophy Graduate Student Conference, Princeton, NJ, 10 March 2012.
- "Does *Theaetetus* 184-186 Assume the 'Heraclitean' Theory of Perception?" Ancient Philosophy Workshop, CUNY Graduate Center, 18 November 2011.
- Commentator on Brian Prince's "Rotation without Change in the *Statesman*," APA Pacific Division Meeting, 23 April 2011.
- "Aristotle on Consciousness," Humboldt-Universität Berlin, 11 November 2010.
- "DA 425a14-b3: What the Common Sense Can Tell Us About In-Itself Perception," Society of Ancient Greek Philosophy, Fordham University Lincoln Center Campus, 16 October 2010.
- Commentator on Alain Ducharme's, "Mean Sensibles and Hearing Loss: Change and Perception in Aristotle," CUNY Graduate Center Graduate Student Conference in Philosophy, New York, NY, 17 April 2009.
- "Is De Anima III.2 Really Concerned with Awareness?," Colloquium Paper, 2008 APA Eastern Division Meeting, Philadelphia PA, 30 December 2008.
- Commentator on Montgomery Link's "Russell and Physics," History of Early Analytic Philosophy and Bertrand Russell Society, 2008 American Philosophical Association Eastern Division Meeting, Philadelphia, PA, 29 December 2008.
- "Is De Anima III.2 Really Concerned with Awareness?," Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium Aristotle Conference, Philadelphia PA, 5 October 2008.
- Commentator on Christian Beenfeld's "Turing's Philosophy of Mind," History of Early Analytic Philosophy and Bertrand Russell Society, 2007 APA Eastern Division Meeting, Baltimore MD, 28 December 2007.
- "A Defense of the Phenomenological Approach to the Self," CUNY Graduate Center Graduate Colloquium Series, New York, NY, 20 April 2006.

## WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS

- Assistant to Conference Organizer, Conference on Saul Kripke's *Philosophical Problems*, CUNY Graduate Center, 15 and 16 September 2011.
- Summer Scholar, 'Aristotle on Truth and Meaning,' directed by Deborah Modrak and Mark Wheeler, National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminar, Summer 2010.
- Invited Participant, 'Perceiving ourselves (and one another) perceiving, in the Platonic-Aristotelian Tradition,' workshop organized by Jennifer Whiting, Collaborative Programme in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, University of Toronto, 26-28 March 2010.

## REFERENCES

Professor Deborah Modrak  
University of Rochester  
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Professor Nickolas Pappas  
CUNY Graduate Center and City College  
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Professor Christopher Shields  
Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford  
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Professor Galen Strawson  
University of Reading and University of Texas at Austin  
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Professor Iakovos Vasiliou  
CUNY Graduate Center and Brooklyn College  
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Professor Rosalind Carey (teaching letter)  
CUNY Lehman College  
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### **UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

CUNY Lehman College: Faculty Senate (Fall 2009 to Fall 2010)  
CUNY Graduate Center: Admissions Committee (Spring 2006 to Spring 2008)  
CUNY Graduate Center: Faculty Membership Committee (Fall 2009 to present)  
CUNY Graduate Center: Curriculum Committee (Fall 2008 to Spring 2009)  
CUNY Graduate Center: Executive Committee (Spring 2007 to Spring 2009)  
CUNY Graduate Center: Steering Committee (Spring 2007 to Spring 2009);  
Steering Committee Student Chair (Spring 2008 to Spring 2009)

### **AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS**

- Graduate Teaching Fellowship, CUNY Baruch College, 2011-2013
- Sponsored Dissertation Fellowship (\$18,000), CUNY Graduate Center, 2010-2011
- Summer Scholar Stipend, National Endowment for the Humanities, Summer 2010
- CUNY Doctoral Student Research Grant, 2010-2011
- Floyd L. Moreland Scholarship, Latin & Greek Institute, Summer 2009
- Graduate Student Travel Stipend, American Philosophical Association, December 2008
- Ladies Christian Housing Union Fellowship, Fall 2003-Spring 2007
- American University's Pearson Prize for excellence in philosophy, 2002
- Phi Beta Kappa

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

American Philosophical Association  
Phi Beta Kappa

**COURSE WORK** (those marked with '\*' were audited)  
The Philosophy of F.P. Ramsey (Koslow)

Deflationism (Blackburn and Horwich)  
 Philosophy of Mind (Rosenthal)  
 Logic (Orenstein)  
 \*Identity over Time (Kripke and Horwich)  
 Philosophy of Language (Horwich)  
 Philosophy of Donald Davidson (Verheggen)  
 Sensation/Thought/Consciousness (Rosenthal)  
 Social and Political Philosophy (Cahn)  
 \*History of Logic and Set Theory (Kripke)  
 Hume (Strawson)  
 Scientific Realism (Devitt)  
 Ethics (Baumrin)  
 \*Natural Kinds (Kripke)  
 Psychology in Plato & Aristotle (Vasiliou)  
 Meaning (Devitt)  
 Consciousness/Thought/Language (Rosenthal)  
 Metaphysics (Montero)  
 Self: Metaphysics and Phenomenology (Strawson)  
 British Moral Philosophy (Baumrin)  
 Epistemology (Levin)  
 Medical Ethics (Baumrin)  
 \*Quine and Sellars on Thought and Language (Rosenthal)  
 \*Plato's *Republic* (Vasiliou)  
 The Subject (Strawson)  
 \*Frege's Philosophy of Language (Kripke)  
 \*Epistemology (Adler)  
 \*Quine and Contemporary Philosophy (Orenstein)  
 \*Reason and Self-Control (Adler)  
 \*Aristotle's *De Anima* (Vasiliou)  
 \*Aristotle and Contemporary Virtue Ethics (Vasiliou)  
 \*The Stoics and Gandhi (Sorabji)  
 \*Descriptions (Ostertag)  
 \*Knowing How (Ostertag)  
 \*Non-Classical Logic (Priest)  
 \*Later Wittgenstein (Kripke)

## **DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

*Aristotle on the Common Sense and the Unity of Perception*

Rosemary Twomey

This dissertation presents an analysis of the common sense, which is the name commentators give to the perceptual capacity in Aristotle's psychology through which we are able to engage in sophisticated perceptual activity. By "sophisticated perceptual activity," I refer to all activities of the perceptual faculty that go beyond the reception of the special objects by the special senses (e.g. color by sight, sound by

hearing, etc.). These activities include the perception of “common objects” (such as number, shape, and size), joint perception, perceptual discrimination, memory, sleep, and self-consciousness. I argue that, for Aristotle, all of these functions implicate a higher-order perception of the activity of the special senses, i.e. a metaperception. My account explains our ability to engage in these activities, which otherwise appear rather disparate, since each requires nothing other than a numerically single perceptual state with a complex content—something that, given Aristotle’s underlying metaphysical commitments, metaperceptions can provide.

Chapter One addresses Plato’s account of the reception of the common objects in *Theaetetus*. Socrates there argues that the senses are unable to grasp features such as existence, number, similarity and difference. Rather, it is claimed, we “consider” these, and we do so by means of the soul by itself, i.e., not by means of the sense organs (185e). Plato is driven to a form of rationalism, then, according to which our awareness of these commonplace features derives ultimately from reason. Aristotle, by contrast, develops an account of the perceptual faculty that allows for perceptual awareness of the common objects. It is in this context that he posits the common sense; common sensing unifies the special senses and underpins the coherence of Aristotle’s empiricism. But given Aristotle’s views about the specialness of special sensing, how exactly is the perceptual faculty unified? This is not a benign question, for if common sensing alone cannot account for higher-level perceptual activity, then Aristotle’s empiricism will be shown to be untenable.

None of the existing commentaries on common sensing provide an account of how a single activity can actualize multiple perceptual potentialities. In contrast, I contend that the metaperceptual apparatus introduced in *De Anima* III.2 (“Since we perceive that we see and hear”) is introduced precisely to provide just such an explanation. Traditional readings interpret this passage as narrowly tailored to the question of how conscious awareness is possible: I call these “Awareness Readings,” and contrast them with my alternative interpretation, the “Common Sensing Reading.” I argue that the Common Sensing Reading is preferable because it better explains the flow of the text and is able to motivate the *aporiai* (puzzles) that follow. Moreover, I demonstrate that the Common Sensing Reading’s treatment of joint perception in *De Anima* is substantiated by Aristotle’s discussion of the topic in *De Sensu* 7.

Chapter Three turns to Aristotle’s solution to the common objects element of the *Theaetetus* challenge. First, Aristotle’s remarks on the role common sensing plays in memory show that he thinks of the mechanism by which we perceive the common objects as the same as that by which we engage in other sophisticated perceptual activities. Next, I consider *De Anima* III.1 425a30-b3, where Aristotle argues that the perceptual faculty as a unity is able to account for in-itself perception of the common objects. My discussion here draws out the consequences Aristotle’s view has on the epistemology and psychology of perception more generally. Specifically, I present a deflationary interpretation of Aristotle’s technical notion of in-itself perception. This account is able to explain how common sensing can be understood as responsible for perception of the common objects, *inter alia*, without requiring that the common sense be a separate, sixth sense.

The final chapter considers further functions of common sensing. I here expand the Common Sensing Reading by demonstrating that all higher-level perceptual functions can be accounted for by the metaperceptual apparatus. First, I show that Aristotle’s remarks about perceptual discrimination should be understood as invoking that apparatus. I next argue that Aristotle’s discussion of common sensing in *De Somno* 2 turns on the same considerations as those presented in the resolution of the *aporiai* that open *De Anima* III.2. Finally I consider Aristotle’s discussion of self-consciousness at *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9. I conclude that the metaperceptual apparatus explicitly invoked there suggests itself to Aristotle because he generally accounts for unities (like that required by self-consciousness) by invoking metaperceptions. Since Aristotle’s underlying metaphysics allows activities like higher-order metaperceptions to actualize myriad potentialities in a numerically single state, his empiricism is thus shown to be fully developed and internally consistent, therefore making it a viable alternative to the rationalism we find in *Theaetetus*.