

‘Self-awareness and the Unity of Consciousness in Aristotle’

Abstract: Every special sense has its own perceptual objects (color, sound, flavor etc), but *we* are aware of all of them. Does that commit Aristotle to many centres of consciousness? Even if there is a central centre of consciousness, are there also several further special centres? If so, how can they share the same objects of awareness? Does one centre perceive the perceptions of the others? Or, does it have the same perceptual objects as they have, but independently of them – e.g. by double vision? I argue that although Aristotle is exercised by the problem of the unity of consciousness he finally resolves it by introducing a many-in-one metaphysical model to explain our perceptual awareness. I examine the structure of the perceptual system he offers by applying the many-in-one model to it, and show how he solves the problems of the unity of consciousness through the model. I further argue that on Aristotle’s analysis we perceive objects directly, rather than their sensible properties, and I show how on his model this is achieved.