

‘Aristotle on Singular Thought’

Mika Perälä

Aristotle states in the *De Memoria et Reminiscentia* that we have memories of individuals such as Koriscus. In line with this, he assumes in many contexts (e.g. logical and ethical) that we can make singular propositions on the basis of such perceptual states. However, commentators have been puzzled about whether singular propositions (and thoughts) can be given an adequate account in Aristotle’s psychological theory. The purpose of this paper is to argue that Aristotle’s account of thought admits of two kinds of singular thought: thought about an individual as an instance of a kind (‘This *F* is *G*’) and thought simply about an individual ‘*a*’, without the sortal concept *F* (‘*a* is *G*’). The difference between the two is that whereas the former requires knowledge of the kind (i.e. *F*) into which the singular item falls, or at least some sortal grasp of the individual in question such as through experience or the testimony of a knowledgeable person, the latter is simply based on, but cannot be identified with, sense perception, memory, phantasy or some other way of gaining non-sortal information about the individual. The view opposed is the Thomistic line of interpretation that, in Aristotle’s view, singular thought is to be understood as some sort of general thought, indirect or reflexive: general thought applied to a singular item given by a phantasm. The Thomistic view makes singular thought merely accidental and fails to give an adequate account of singular truth-claims.