

What can Aristotelianism contribute to the philosophy of mind?

By Howard Robinson

There are two features of Aristotelian philosophy of mind that I wish to discuss. First there is Aristotelian dualism; that is Aristotle's immaterialist account of the intellect. Second is his hylomorphism – the theory that the soul is the form of the body. Little attention is paid to the former, at least as far as its relevance to how we should now think of the mind. By contrast, many philosophers think that the hylomorphism represents a living option, and one that preserves a non-reductive, non-scientistic naturalism. I think that the current views are wrong on both parts. Aristotle – and Plato – were right about the essential immateriality of the intellect, but hylomorphism, if it is to have any real bite, cannot be separated from an Aristotelian science that we can no longer believe.