

Aristotle on the problem of common sensibles

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Aristotle draws a distinction between qualities that are perceptible via a single sense only, the *special* sensibles, and qualities that are perceptible by more than one sense at once, the *common* sensibles. What are the ontology and the epistemology of the common sensibles, in light of Aristotle's assumption that each sense organ is sensitive to only its own special sensibles? Does the problem of common sensibles give us reasons for giving up a 'separatist' view of sense experiences? Or rather can it be solved by postulating extra perceptual powers for the senses? Are more 'parsimonious' options viable? In this paper I engage with these and related questions, which have attracted the interest of Aristotelian scholars (Gregoric 2007, Johansen 2012) and philosophers of the mind (Tye 2007) alike. I offer my own reading of Aristotle's account and examine its philosophical viability.