

## Co-incidental Sense-perception and Intellect in *De Anima* III.4

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In *De Anima* III.4 Aristotle argues that human intellect (*nous*), or the thinking and understanding part of our soul, is separate from our body; he suggests two possibilities of interpreting it in the course of this argument (429b16-18), one of which renders it as separate, while the other compares it to a 'straightened line' in contrast to its original 'bent' state. In this paper, I follow one influential modern line of interpretation and take the simile as construing the intellect as nothing more than co-incidental sense-perception which embodies the results of whole human learning.

After this part, Aristotle himself never adopts this option within *De Anima*. Instead, he adheres to his main line of argument in support of the separateness of intellect. The partial significance of this neglected option is shown in his another work, *De Sensu* 1, 437a1-27, where he claims that the sense of hearing is *co-incidentally* more important than sight, in that in usual cases it is the relevant sense modality mainly involved in our language acquisition and, through it, in our intellectual development as human beings.

This argument tells us first why, within the context of *De Anima* which is the treatise concentrated on the *formal* character of the soul and psychic faculties, he had to neglect the possibility described through the simile of line in *De Anima* III.4: since the process in which we learn our language, with its semantic power through conventional symbols, is the one that enables us to *jump* into the world of human intellect, insofar as the relevant cognition is seen from its status as sense-perception, it will remain something inessential, so that intellect is 'separate' from the body in an important sense of the word and that the *merely resulting* sense-perception *must be* 'co-incidental'.

But, secondly, Aristotle does not forget to add the importance of such co-incidental sense-perceptions in his treatises which assume mind-body relationships and include *De Sensu* and other minor works in *Parva Naturalia* concerning phenomena *common to mind and body*, such as sense-perception and memory. In this respect, his realistic attitude as an intellectualist of his day is consistent with the viable version of understanding the importance of language acquisition, human learning in general and humanly normative habits, which should be based on the overall causality of this one world that is the ground level foundation of our whole intellectual and moral flourishing.