

Interest in Aristotle's theory of perception has seen a small recent resurgence, but few scholars have asked how Aristotle understands *misperception*. This is in part because Aristotle does not devote much attention to it, as perception, for him, is a sort of knowledge (*gnōsis*). Yet, he also recognizes that not all perceptions are true. According to the *De Anima* and *On Dreams*, *phantasia* ('appearance' or 'imagination') somehow explains false perceptions. This paper attempts to understand how *phantasia* plays this role.

My aim will be to reconcile two claims. First, that all types of perception contain *phantasia* and are possibly false; and, second, that *phantasia* explains falsehood. To try to understand Aristotle's position, I will concentrate on a passage from *De Anima* 3.3, 428b17-30, which sets up a parallel between three types of perception (proper, common, and incidental) and three types of *phantasia*. It then explains how falsehood occurs in each of these three cases, and how likely it is.

I conclude that although *phantasia* does explain misperception, it does so in a different way than is usually thought. The *phantasia* involved in perception is not *phantasia* transformed into memory or concepts or anything of this sort. *Phantasia* here is just appearance, and what explains the possibility of misperception is simply that even while we are perceiving (and not, say, dreaming), sometimes false appearances come into view and, as a result, the object of perception is misperceived. Perception and *phantasia* are, for Aristotle, already imbued with a good deal of content.