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An Analysis of Jesuit Missionary Aleni's Interpretation of Aristotelian Theory of Perception: Based on *Xingxue Cushu* in Late Ming China

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Abstract: In *Xingxue cushu*, Aleni devotes himself to elucidating Aristotle's theory of perception as presented in *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*. The challenge in this endeavor lies in understanding the essence of Aristotle's perception, with physicalism and spiritualism holding opposite positions. To reconcile this contradiction, some scholars approach it from the perspective of dualism and the impurity principle. Nevertheless, these interpretations fail to resolve the inherent dilemma of perception. This article employs the pattern of combination and separation to propose that Aleni's interpretation of this dilemma is effective and clarifies the controversy. Perception encompasses both psychological and physical dimensions, and the two are based on each other in the process of actualization. Nonetheless, psychological and physical activities are separated in the definition. Influenced by Confucianism, Aleni associates human perception with morality, further emphasizing the necessity of definitional separation.

Keywords: Aleni; Aristotle; God; perception; soul



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1. Introduction

With the development of the "Introduction of the Western Learning" during the late Ming Dynasty, Western knowledge was introduced to China. The term "Western learning" does not simply refer to Western scientific knowledge, but instead refers to learning formed by focusing on traditional Chinese thought; it thus reflects a distinct characteristic of the intersection between different cultures. The scope of Western learning in the late Ming Dynasty was very extensive, encompassing education, logic, psychology, physiology, ethics, cosmology, and physics. It should be emphasized that the dissemination of Western learning in late Ming China reflects distinct religious characteristics. Because the fundamental aim of Jesuit missionaries in late Ming China was to preach, they paid special attention to the introduction and translation of Western classical psychology, as the essential relationship between the soul and God could not be ignored. Jesuit missionaries in late Ming China focused on Aristotelian psychology, particularly on works such as *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*¹. Two notable works relevant to the introduction and translation of Aristotle's psychology are Giulio Aleni 艾儒略 (1582–1649)'s *Xingxue cushu* 性學述² (1646, *Tianzhutang inscription* 天主堂刻本) and *Lingyan lishao* 靈言蠡勺 (1624, *Shenxiutang inscription* 慎脩堂刻本), the latter orally narrated by Francesco Sambiassi 畢方濟 and recorded by Xu Guangqi 徐光啟.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the effectiveness of Aleni's solution to Aristotle's difficulty of perception, and this purpose reflects the research value of this article in the current literature. In Aristotle's *De Anima*, perception should be considered as a momentous capacity of the general soul (Aristotle 2016, pp. 27–28)³. The relationship between the *Coimbra commentary of the De Anima* and Aleni's *Xingxue cushu* is the focus of Hubert Verhaeren's research (Verhaeren 1935, pp. 417–29). Meynard and Pan (2020, pp. 1–59)

are dedicated to researching the background of Aleni's interpretation of Aristotelian perception. Although Shufeng Tian (2023, pp. 397–414) focuses on Sambiasi's *Lingyan Lishao* (Sambiasi 2013, pp. 319–53), he also analyzes Aleni's interpretation of perception and acknowledges that the core concepts in the paraphrasing translation are influenced by Confucianism. Zhipeng Huang (2018, pp. 218–32) has conducted a comparative analysis of Aleni's *Xingxue cushu* and Sambiasi's *Lingyan lishao*, analyzing some important issues in the two Chinese translations. Daniel Canaris (2024, pp. 1–15) discusses the translation of Aristotelian psychology during the late Ming Dynasty, providing the essential background information for *Xingxue cushu*. Due to Aleni's focus on analyzing human perception, Vincent Shen (2005, pp. 575–96) presents the idea that Xia Dachang 夏大常's *Xingshuo* 性說 and Aleni's *Xingxue cushu* have a close correlation. This is because for humans, intelligence has a significant influence on perception, which distinguishes touch from intellectual sensibility (*lingjue* 靈覺) (Aleni 2020, p. 245).

In previous research, scholars have conducted in-depth analyses of perception in *Xingxue cushu*; however, it remains necessary to address a challenging question that is crucial to the current research in academia: how to understand the effectiveness of Aleni's interpretation in solving the difficulty of Aristotle's perception. This is a pivotal dimension that cannot be ignored in the literature, and the interpretation of perception is a key challenge that is mainly reflected in the debate between physicalism and spiritualism. Physicalism asserts that only physical changes occur in the process of perception and that no psychological changes occur in this process. Spiritualism opposes the physicalist interpretation, for, in this schema, only psychological changes occur in perception, and there are no physical changes associated with perceptual behaviors. In order to alleviate the inherent contradiction, some scholars insist upon dualism or state that even though perception involves both psychological and physical changes, both are defined as impure behaviors and then contain each other in the process of actualization and definition. These interpretations fail to resolve the dilemma of Aristotle's perception, while Aleni provides an effective solution to the difficulty of Aristotle's perception.

As far as its purpose is concerned, this article focuses on demonstrating that Aleni's interpretation of Aristotelian dilemma of perception is effective and can address the controversy in academia. This article first discusses the background and theoretical foundation of Aleni's interpretation in *Xingxue cushu*. Secondly, we explore the difficulty of perception in Aristotle's psychological works. Again, this article examines how Aleni addresses the debate between physicalism and spiritualism and analyzes how Aleni resolves the inherent contradiction of dualism. Finally, based on the perspective of separability in the definition or *dunamis*, we start from the rational soul to avoid the error of the impurity principle. It can be concluded that Aleni's interpretation in *Xingxue Cushu* provides an effective solution by which to resolve the difficulty of Aristotle's perception.

2. The Background and Theoretical Foundation: Preparation for Analyzing the Effectiveness of Aleni's Solution

Xingxue cushu, published in 1646, provides an in-depth analysis of Aristotle's theory of perception. An important source that Aleni relies on is *Coimbra commentary of the De Anima*. Accordingly, Albert Chan maintains that it is indispensable to acknowledge that *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia* are the ultimate sources, rather than the direct sources, of *Xingxue cushu* (Chan 2002, p. 296). Additionally, In *Lingxing Pian* 靈性篇, Aleni has conducted the research on the concept of soul, and *Xingxue Pian* 性學篇's discourse of four humors (*siye*, 四液) is exceedingly comprehensive. This issue has been analyzed in detail in the "On the four humors 論四液" section of *Xingxue cushu*, so *Lingxing Pian* and *Xingxue Pian* can be considered to some extent to be preparatory works for *Xingxue cushu*. The holistic arrangement of *Xixue fan* 西學凡 (1623) published by Aleni has significance for the textual structure of *Xingxue cushu*, as the two texts are aligned in multiple aspects. Moreover, Aleni's work *Kouduo richao* 口鐸日抄 has a wide range of similarities with *Xingxue cushu*, which can be considered to be the source of *Xingxue cushu*. Based on Aleni's own

preparational work, he completed the writing of *Xingxue cushu* in the 1620s, and this text was revised and published by Pierre Ribeiro 黎寧石 (1572–1640), Manuel Dias the Younger (Emmanuel Diaz Junior) 陽馬諾 (1574–1659), and Jean Froes 伏若望 (1591–1638) in 1646.

As is well known, *Coimbra commentary of the De Anima* (1598) is a crucial source for understanding *Xingxue cushu*. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that *Coimbra commentary* is not the only source; another epistemological source used on *Xingxue cushu* is *Ratio Studiorum* (1599), which deeply influences the writing of *Xingxue cushu*, and the content of *Ratio Studiorum* is diverse. Despite the fact that the foremost purpose of *Ratio Studiorum* is still to achieve the mission of preaching, the teaching curriculum contains a large number of natural-science courses, such as the theory of motion in *Physics* and psychology and physiology in *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*. These courses have a profound impact on the formation of Aleni's ideological system, leading Aleni to focus on the essential relationship between the theory of soul and natural science. Due to the influence of *Ratio Studiorum*, *Xingxue cushu* is different from both *Coimbra commentary of the De Anima* and *Lingyan lishao* and also different from Niccolò Longobardo 龍華民 (1559–1654)'s *Linghun daoti shuo* 靈覓道體說 (1636). Compared to these works, *Xingxue cushu* focuses more on elucidating perception, as it is exemplary of the capacities of the soul.

It cannot be ignored that Aleni's interpretation of perception in *Xingxue cushu* reflects the significant influence of the biblical element. Perception is one of the capacities of the soul, so analyzing the soul is a necessary step in elucidating the theory of perception. Aleni analyzes the immortality of the human soul in terms of eight aspects; thus, he proves the purity of the soul and body. Aleni explicitly asserts that his way of confirming the immortality of the soul originates from the *Bible* (Aleni 2020, pp. 135–47). Aleni focuses on exploring human perception; he asserts that the human soul does “not transmigrat[e] after death” (Aleni 2020, pp. 155–56). This can be demonstrated by the story of the origin of humans, as the ancestors of humans are Adam and Eve, which indicates that the number of souls is not constant during human history, fully indicating that souls do not transmigrate after death. It can be seen from this that Aleni's viewpoint on human ancestors is derived from the *Bible*. The influence of the *Bible* is not only reflected in Aleni's *Xingxue cushu*, but also in *Coimbra Commentary of the De Anima*. Meynard astutely points out that Aleni's analysis of perception reflects the characteristics of moral asceticism, which can be traced back to the *Bible* (Meynard 2020, p. 44). In *Xingxue cushu*, Aleni acknowledges the noble status of the soul, while the body is secondary. Accordingly, when the human soul conflicts with perception, the priority of the soul should be guaranteed. It can be seen from this that Aleni's exploration of perception has a distinct biblical element.

The biblical element is essential in Scholasticism's psychology, and its influence should be considered the finding of the present research. Thomas Aquinas analyzes Aristotle's theory of perception from the perspective of the relationship between individual senses and common sense, and this analysis had a profound influence on the commentaries of Aristotle's *De Anima* in medieval philosophy (Aquinas 1999, pp. 224–304). Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) is committed to elucidating Aristotelian perception with regard to intentional behavior and emphasizes the importance of intentional objects (*Commentaria una cum quaestionibus in libros Aristotelis De anima*, 10.q.1). His comments have had a profound impact on contemporary spiritualism, as in the work of Myles Burnyeat (1995). According to Nicholas of Amsterdam (1390–1437), all living beings in the universe possess souls, but among all kinds of souls, the human soul occupies a central position in the universe; that is, the human soul is superior among all kinds of souls. Furthermore, Nicholas does not hold that the human soul is an abstract concept, but rather insists upon the materialist position and is dedicated to interpreting the concept of the soul from the physical dimension (*Quaestiones in Aristotelis librum tertium De anima*, III.q.3).

Meynard cites Duceux's viewpoint to demonstrate in what ways Aleni reflects the Renaissance understanding of the soul (Meynard 2015, p. 5). Compared to *De Anima*, *Xingxue cushu* focuses more on human perception than on animal perception in a general sense. From the perspective of thinkers during the Renaissance, humans are not humble

living beings in the universe, but should be the most noble among all living beings, so humans should be placed at the center of the whole universe. Pietro Pomponazzi (1462–1525) affirms from a macro perspective the primacy of humans among all species of animals in the universe and defines the human soul as being in internal tension between mortality and immortality, as the soul is neither completely immortal nor completely mortal (*De immortalitate animae*, 41^{ra-rb}). Pomponazzi's position is of importance in linking *De Anima* with *Nicomachean Ethics*, although his viewpoint differs from that of Aristotle's *De Anima* in that Aristotle's analysis of the soul focuses on animals in general.

In the process of the introduction of Western learning, these ideas were also greatly affected by traditional Chinese learning. In interpreting Aristotelian perception, *Xingxue cushu* borrows words from traditional Chinese Confucianism. For example, the concept of "nature" (*xing* 性) is derived from Neo-Confucianism. Aleni maintains that the organ of internal senses is the "heart" (*xin* 心), and the word *xin* originates from Chinese Confucianism. The concepts of nature and emotion are closely related to the concept of the heart, which is a core concept in Neo-Confucianism. The influence of Confucianism on Aleni's perception in *Xingxue cushu* is not only exhibited in lexical concepts, but more importantly, it is present on the level of thought. This is reflected in the following aspects: firstly, when interpreting Aristotle's perception, Aleni highlights the physiological or physical dimension of perception, so he proposes the core concept of "perceptual *qi*" (*zhijue zhiqi* 知覺之氣) in *Xingxue cushu* (Aleni 2020, p. 165); the origin of "*qi*" is specifically Confucian. The crucial purpose of Mencius is to highlight the importance of cultivating *qi*: "I am skilled in developing my noble *qi* 吾善養吾浩然之氣" (*Mencius: gongsun chou* 孟子·公孫丑). The *qi* mentioned by Mencius contains the essence of "spirit", which is precisely what *qi* should indicate in *Xingxue cushu*. In the macro dimension, there is still a certain degree of difference between Aleni's philosophy and Confucianism. *Xingxue cushu* clearly asserts that the intellective nature is not *qi* (*lingxing feiqi* 靈性非氣) because nature should be understood to be its governing principle (*li* 理), which makes it different from *qi* (Aleni 2020, p. 96). Accordingly, it is essential to distinguish between perception and intelligence in *Xingxue cushu*.

Despite the fact that *Xingxue cushu* has different sources, especially the *Coimbra commentary*, *Ratio Studiorum*, and Confucianism, it is important to highlight that Aleni does not give the same status to all his sources; Western knowledge is Aleni's core focus. The relationship between *Xingxue cushu* and Neo-Confucianism is complicated, and it cannot be simply assumed that the former is directly influenced by the latter. To be precise, even though some terms in *Xingxue cushu* are borrowed from Neo-Confucianism, there are fundamental differences in their meanings. For instance, *Xingxue cushu* draws *xing* from Neo-Confucianism, but Meynard and Pan hold that Neo-Confucianism emphasizes the principle of "*shuaixing* 率性". Aleni's attitude towards nature is opposite that of Neo-Confucianism. In *Xingxue cushu*, he adopts the principle of "*kexing* 克性", which is the concept of overcoming the domination of nature over oneself. Aleni's viewpoint is not simply a negation of Confucianism, but, more importantly, an innovation with regard to "nature" (Meynard and Pan 2020, p. 4). Moreover, the reason *Xingxue cushu*'s use of terminology differs from that of Neo-Confucianism is that Aleni is deeply influenced by Western Christianity, while Neo-Confucianism lacks this key dimension. It can be concluded that the complexity of the relationship between Aleni and Neo-Confucianism cannot be ignored; otherwise, the essential meaning of perception in *Xingxue cushu* will be misunderstood.

Aleni follows the Aristotelian argument pattern in *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia*, starting from the relationship between the soul and the body and then delving into the elucidation of the theory of perception. For Aristotle, perception is not independent in living beings, but is rather one of the capacities of the soul. It is indispensable to distinguish between the "general definition" and the "scientific definition". The former specifies the universal soul at the macro level, while the latter specifies individual souls at the micro level. The general definition is different from the scientific definition in Aristotle's psychology in that there is no universal soul in actuality, only individual souls. Only by linking the

concept of the universal soul to the general definition can we understand the place of the perceptual soul in the scientific definition.

Aleni's analysis of the soul is crucial role, as it is prerequisite for demonstrating perceptual capacities. By following the fundamental principles laid out in *Physics* (Aristotle 1970, pp. 28–29), Aleni divides the concept of cause into material cause (*zhi* 質), formal cause (*mo* 模), efficient cause (*zao* 造), and final cause (*wei* 為). Among these four types of cause, the material cause and formal cause are within the composite substance, while the efficient cause and final cause are outside the composite substance (Aleni 2020, pp. 86–90). Aleni classifies the efficient cause into two kinds: one is the “great” cause, namely God, as God is the ultimate *aitios* for the generation of all things in the universe; Michele Ruggieri 羅明堅 (1543–1607) specifically defines the characteristics of God in *Tianzhu Shilu* 天主實錄 (Ruggieri 2013, p. 6). The second is the “small” cause, which is that individuals are generated through reproduction, and this “direct” cause is different from the ultimate cause. As for internal causes, the composite substance is composed of matter and form (Aleni 2020, pp. 84–91). The soul and body are given different statuses. Compared to the noble soul, the body is humble and can serve only as a tool for the soul. Matter can be classified as into two kinds: one is *yuanzi* 元質, which is primordial matter, and the other is *cizhi* 次質, secondary matter. The form can also be divided into two types: the internal form (*neimo* 內模), which is the *paradigmata* of composite substance; and the external form (*waimo* 外模), which is the appearance of composite substance. The internal form determines the essence of composite substance, and the internal form of the living organism should be regarded as the soul (Aleni 2020, pp. 86–89).

Following the perspective of *De Anima* II.2-3, Aleni divides the general soul into the nutritive soul (*shenghun* 生魂), the perceptual soul (*juehun* 覺魂), and the rational soul (*linghun* 靈魂). It should be emphasized that there are not three separable souls, as “a person is an entity, how could he have three souls 夫一人僅一物耳，豈有三魂?” (Aleni 2020, p. 100). The levels of the three souls are different: the level of the nutritive soul is the lowest, and this level of soul is possessed by all living beings. The rational soul is at the highest level, and this level of soul is possessed only by human beings. The relationship between the three levels is unidirectional that is, “the superior subsumes the inferior, but the inferior cannot subsume the superior 上者能兼下，下者不能兼上” (Aleni 2020, p. 100). Aleni is not dedicated to exploring macro perception but focuses on human perception; this focus is an important difference from Aristotle's *De Anima*. The discourse on the rational soul in *Xingxue cushu* is pivotal for Aleni's interpretation of Aristotelian perception. Despite the fact that humans and other animals have perception, human perception is attributed to the rational soul, while animal perception lacks this connection. Due to the fact that the rational soul is possessed only by humans, humans also possess a unique intellectual sensibility that is detached from the body and cannot be possessed by other animals.

Despite the fact that *Xingxue cushu* is a “translation” of *De Anima*, Aristotle mainly discusses perception without too much discussion of other capacities. Aleni's discourse on the perceptual soul is not only closely related to the “general” soul at the macro level, but also to the rational soul at the micro level. Among the discussions of the capacities of the soul, Aristotle's analysis of perception in *De Anima* is the most detailed (Johansen and Zhao 2022, pp. 161–71). Aleni's interpretations of Aristotelian perception are as follows: (1) Origin (*jueyuan* 覺原); (2) Object (*juejie* 覺界); (3) Device (*jueju* 覺具); and (4) Cause (*jueyou* 覺由). Aleni argues that human perception can be divided into two categories: external senses and internal senses. The external senses are the five individual senses. Aleni also expands on the sense organs that correspond to these five individual senses, and they all possess exclusive objects. The internal senses can be divided into four types, namely summarizing (*zongzhi* 總知), imagination (*shouxiang* 受相), discerning (*fenbie* 分別), and memorizing (*sheji* 涉記). Additionally, Aleni creatively proposes the concept of intellectual sensibility (*lingjue* 靈覺), which is not explicitly mentioned in Aristotle's *De Anima* or *Parva Naturalia*. According to Aleni, the task of the intellectual sensibility is to understand morality and principles. This capacity is a combination of perception and intelligence and

thus has both perceptual and rational characteristics. Aleni makes a distinction between appetite (*shiyu* 嗜欲) and will (*aiyu* 愛欲): the former “follows sensitive perception”, while the latter “follows non-sensitive perception” (Aleni 2020, p. 257). Thus, the separation between intellectual sensibility and the body is indispensable.

For Aleni’s interpretation of Aristotelian perception in *Xingxue cushu*, we should concentrate on the academic value of this translation. Aleni’s *Xingxue cushu* not only plays a pivotal role in the translation of Aristotle’s psychology in China, but also provides unique insights that offer an effective solution to the inherent difficulty of Aristotle’s perception. On the one hand, when it comes to the capacity of perception, the psychological dimension cannot be separated from the physical dimension. This analysis not only effectively criticizes physicalism and spiritualism, but also successfully addresses the dilemma of dualism. On the other hand, because that the noble soul is created by God and the humble body does not possess this noble characteristic, both the soul and the body are pure concepts. Additionally, they are defined as separable, which resolves the inherent difficulty about the perception’s “impurity principle”. This article aims to demonstrate the essential meaning of Aristotelian theory of perception, as well as to discuss the controversies in academia concerning the dilemma of perception.

3. The Difficulty of Aristotle’s Perception: On the Origin of Aleni’s Solution Effectiveness

In *De Anima* II.5–III.2, Aristotle not only analyzes the fundamental principles of perception from a macro perspective, but also explores the mechanism of five individual senses and common sense from a micro perspective. As far as Aristotle’s perception is concerned, due to the ambiguity of psychological works such as *De Anima*, it is important to deal with a key difficulty. Concerning the capacity of perception, is it a physical activity or a spiritual activity? Aristotle’s definition of perception in *De Anima* is not clear, which leads to the difficulty regarding the theory of perception. The topic of “anger” in *De Anima* I.1 suggests the ambiguity of Aristotle’s definition of perception. More importantly, as Aristotle says in *Nicomachean Ethics*, emotion and perception can be considered to be the same, so the discussion of anger is also the discussion of perception.

From a natural philosopher’s perspective, anger should be considered “the boiling of blood”, while dialecticians define anger as “the desire for revenge” (*De Anima*, 402a1–403b19). Essentially, the positions of natural philosophers and dialecticians can be respectively attributed to physicalism and spiritualism. It is worth mentioning that Aristotle only proposes these two opposing explanations; he does not explicitly express his own position. This ambiguity is also directly revealed in the discussion of the regulation of perceptual activities, and Aristotle does not explicitly define whether perception is a physical activity or a spiritual activity. In the holistic context of *De Anima*, Aristotle’s discussion of individual senses tends to focus on the physical dimension (*De Anima*, 418a26–424a16), while his discussion of common sense in *De Anima* III.1–2 tends to focus on the psychological dimension (*De Anima*, 424b22–427a16); this seems to result in a split between external senses and internal senses. Supposing that this difficulty cannot be addressed, it is impossible to interpret either the fundamental principles of perception or the actualization of external senses and internal senses. If Aristotle describes perception only from the perspective of physical activity, then his viewpoint is no different from Democritus’ atomic theory. Consequently, the primary purpose of this analysis is to elucidate the essential correlation between psychological behavior and the physical behavior in perception.

Concerning the difficulty of Aristotelian theory of perception, the literature contains two completely opposing interpretations, one of which is a physicalist interpretation. According to Richard Sorabji (1974, pp. 63–89), Stephen Everson (1997, pp. 261–70), and Thomas Slakey (1961, pp. 470–84), the process of perception is a purely physical behavior. Even though a psychological activity occurs during the actualization of perception, this psychological activity can ultimately be reduced to the physical activity. The example proposed by Sorabji can be regarded as a paradigmatic example of physicalism. According

to his position, when we look at a red thing with our eyes, it is not that we are aware of red, but that our eyes are dyed red by the red color, so only this physical change occurs in perception. This position has deeply influenced Putnam and Nussbaum (1995, pp. 27–56) and Christopher Shields (1991, pp. 19–33). Compared to Sorabji, scholars such as Collin McGinn (1990, pp. 11–15) tend to insist upon a more moderate stance. Despite the fact that McGinn holds a physicalist stance, it is based on the principle of non-reductionism. McGinn argues that in perceptual behaviors, psychological activities cannot be reduced to physical activities, although psychological activities are not associated with the essence of perception. Only physical activities can determine the essence of perception, so psychological activities are associated with physical activities in an “accidental” way. Benjamin Koons (2019, pp. 415–43) focusses on demonstrating the rationality of the physicalism from “individual infallibilism”. In his perspective, when we see a color, we are not aware of the color itself in a universal sense, but rather of the color of certain individual objects, that is, of the individual color associated with specific matter. Accordingly, Koons deepens the interpretation of physicalism from an epistemological perspective. Starting from the distinction between individual senses and common sense, Tim Maudlin (1986, pp. 51–67) holds that the five individual senses are all composed of a combination of four elements, so the number of individual senses is limited. As a result, Maudlin insists that perception is a physical behavior, which is a further deepening of the interpretation of physicalism.

In contrast to the physicalist interpretation, some scholars hold the spiritualist interpretation, which is also known as the “Cambridge interpretation”. In Burnyeat’s conception, sense organs do not undergo physical changes in the process of perception; for example, the eyes do not turn red when seeing red. Instead, in perceptual behaviors, the sense organs produce only psychological or spiritual changes, that is, the eyes only become “aware” of red in the visual behavior. This perception is actually an intentional behavior, which situates Aristotle’s understanding within the understanding of current psychology. It is precisely because of the criticism of the effectiveness of Aristotle’s perception that Burnyeat asserts that Aristotle’s perception is no longer incredible (Burnyeat 1995, pp. 15–26). Scholars such as Friedrich Solmson (1961, p. 170) hold a Cartesian interpretation of Aristotle’s perception, which is in fact also a spiritualist stance. Theodor Scaltsas (1996, pp. 25–37), starting from *De Anima* II.12, argues that in perceptual behaviors, even if perceptual objects include both matter and form, only form is received by the sense organs, whereas matter is excluded from the behavior of perception. Because we receive only form through perceptual behavior, this perception must be purely psychological. David Bradshaw (1997, pp. 143–61) proposes the “dual-logos” theory to resolve the difficulty of Aristotle’s perception. In his perspective, the actualization of perceptual activities requires not only a “fixed logos”, but also a “fluctuate logos”. The former guarantees that the sense organs have this kind of capacity, while the latter ensures that the sense organs can perceive objects to varying degrees. It can be concluded that Bradshaw maintains that perception should be understood as a rational activity, an understanding that denies the possibility of physical changes occurring in perception. In conclusion, spiritualism acknowledges only psychological changes in perception; even if physical changes occur during this perceptual process, these changes are not relevant to the essence of perception.

In order to ease the tension between physicalism and spiritualism, some scholars hold a compromise stance to address this dilemma. Even though Robert Heinaman (1990, pp. 83–102) and Ronald Polansky (2007, p. 330) acknowledge that perceptual behavior combines psychological and physical changes, they regard the psychological and physical activities involved in the perceptual process as two independent behaviors. As a matter of fact, this is only a simple combination of physicalism and spiritualism, so it can alleviate the contradiction between the two positions only in a very limited sense and cannot address the contradiction absolutely. David Charles (2021, p. 9) resolves this dilemma from the impurity principle. According to Charles, psychological behaviors cannot be separated from physical behaviors, regardless of the actuality or definition. Consequently, Charles

holds the impurity principle in interpreting Aristotelian perception. In other words, even though perception includes both psychological and physical activities, the psychological activity is defined as an impurely matter-involving activity, while the physical activity is defined as an impurely form-involving activity. Regardless of physicalism or spiritualism, and regardless of dualism or the impurity interpretation, they can not address the dilemma of Aristotle's perception successfully. Based on this current situation, this article analyzes Aleni's interpretation in *Xingxue cushu* and demonstrates how Aleni provides an effective solution to the dilemma of Aristotle's perception.

4. The Argument for Effectiveness: Aleni's Solution to the "Psycho-Physical" Intertwined Mechanism of Perception

The purpose of this article is to illuminate that Aleni's interpretation of Aristotelian perception is effective, and can answer the controversy concerning the issue of perception. There is a great controversy in the literature regarding Aristotelian theory of perception between physicalism and spiritualism, but neither interpretation can address the inherent difficulty of Aristotle's theory of perception. Physicalism cannot expound the efficient cause and the final cause of physical behaviors. As an example, physicalists explain the visual behavior as eyes being dyed red. Even if we argue that this coloration is possible, there are various ways in which the eyes are dyed red, which may not be caused by the visual behavior. It can be seen that any physical change in material dimension should possess a certain motivation and purpose, otherwise the essence of perception cannot be determined. The emotion is triggered by perception, and the mechanism of emotion is the negation of the rationality of physicalism. According to Aristotle's definition of the emotion "anger" (*De Anima*, 402a1–403b19), it should not be considered as a purely physiological "boiling of blood", for the boiling of blood can be caused by multiple ways, and the physical change alone cannot determine the emotion of "anger". Although some physicalists acknowledge the possibility of the psychological activity occurs, they not only severs the connection between psychological and physical activities, but also denies the necessary role of the psychological activity in perception. Perception is not a purely physical change, as it inevitably involves psychological activities, indicating that perception is a "psycho-physical" intertwined process. To be precise, provided that the physical activity is not based on the psychological activity, then it lacks the efficient cause. As far as the spiritualism is concerned, despite the fact that this position can elucidate the final cause of perceptual activities, granted that there is no physical change in this perceptual activity, the psychological behavior will lose the efficient cause and the material cause, and then becomes a pure consciousness in the dimension of philosophy of mind, which cannot exist in actuality. Moreover, physical activities also determine the uniqueness of the perceptual behaviors; otherwise, pure psychological activities will be mistaken for universal perception, which is clearly a misunderstanding of Aristotle's perception. It can be concluded that physical behaviors provide the material cause and the efficient cause for psychological behaviors, otherwise the pure psychological behaviors cannot be actualized in actuality.

Aleni's interpretation is an effective solution to the dilemma of Aristotelian perception. In Aleni's perspective, perceptual behavior contains both psychological and physical dimensions. Taking vision as an example⁴, light plays a pivotal role in visual activities (Zhao 2023, pp. 1–8). Light is a special transparent substance that serves not only as an object of vision, but also as a medium for vision (*De Anima*, 418a26–419b3). Aleni distinguishes two kinds of light in *Xingxue cushu*, one being "light illuminating from inside" (*neifa zhiguang* 內發之光) and the other being "light illuminating from outside" (*waizhao zhiguang* 外照之光). The former is situated inside the eyes, and it could be regarded as a component of the visual organ. The latter is outside the eyes and should be considered as the visual object and medium (Aleni 2020, pp. 172–82). The "light illuminating from inside" is the physical light that produces a physical effect on human vision. It can be inferred from this that when light is involved in visual activities, psychological and physical

changes take place. The dual dimension is not only applicable to the five external senses, but also to the four internal senses. On the one hand, the internal senses, summarizing, imagination, discerning, and memorizing, belong to psychological activities. In addition, the inanimate body does not possess four internal senses, so these internal senses are not purely physical capacities. Despite the fact that we have denied the reductionist stance on perception, physical activity still plays a crucial role in the capacities of the inner senses. Although the inner senses do not possess exclusive sense organs, they still rely on necessary physical dimensions as their ontological premise. Aleni also discusses internal senses from the neuroscience perspective, indicating that internal senses encompass both psychological and physiological dimensions. It can be inferred that Aleni develops Aristotle's theory of perception; Aristotle in *De Anima* emphasizes only the importance of the physical dimension, without recognizing the crucial role of neuroscience.

The supposition that perception has a dual dimension in the process of actualization is of no use in criticizing either physicalism or spiritualism, as it is only a simple synthesis of the two positions and does not resolve the dilemma of Aristotelian perception. If we focus only on the "dual dimension", how does Aleni's interpretation differ from Heinaman and Polansky's dualist interpretation? According to Heinaman and Polansky, perception encompasses psychological and physical dimensions, but the two activities are independent; they are not included in each other. It should be emphasized that Polansky's position is not clear, he only supports dualism more. If we agree with the dualism, there would be independent "psychological" and "physical" activities, which would lead to the disjunction of the perceptual subject and then to the impossibility of constructing a unified subject. Furthermore, the separation of psychological activities from physical activities will result in the separation of sense organs and perception. We should acknowledge the fundamental difference between Aleni's interpretation and dualism, as he not only asserts that perception encompasses both psychological and physical dimensions, but also asserts that the two are intertwined processes in the actualization of perception. As for perception, not only is the physical foundation of psychological activities necessary, but the psychological premise of physical activities cannot be ignored. Based on this "psycho-physical" intertwined relationship, Aleni not only successfully resolves the dilemma of physicalism and spiritualism, but also draws a clear line between his philosophical approach and that of dualism.

The current issue is to examine why psychological activities require a basis in physical activities in the process of actualization, that is, how psychological activities arise from physical activities. It is necessary to supply a specific interpretation, taking vision as an example: Aristotle in *De Anima* II.7 asserts that vision is an activity that involves seeing colors via the eyes. This is a psychological behavior, as it is necessary for human beings to distinguish different colors and summarize the experiences we have had regarding colors. Then, the visual organs can exhibit the emotion. According to this understanding, the actualizing perceptual behavior is a spiritual behavior. The psychological dimension of vision, nevertheless, requires the possession of a physical foundation, that is, psychological activities can be manifested only through physical activities. Concerning the physical foundation of the psychological activity, Aristotle only proposes this fact but does not conduct analysis of this crucial issue. From an anatomical perspective, Aleni innovates based on Aristotle's visual theory as follows: (1) Aristotle asserts only that the psychological mechanism of vision requires actualization through the eyes (*Parva Naturalia*, 438a10–20) but does not specify the requirement for a thin membrane (*bomo* 薄膜) above the eyes. Aleni holds that the reason the actualization of visual behaviors needs the thin membrane is that the membrane protects the eyes and ensures that eyes have normal vision. It should be acknowledged that the visual activity can occur based on physiological changes in the membrane. Changes in the membrane are not purely physiological behaviors, but rather play a crucial role in the teleological dimension. (2) Aleni explores Aristotelian vision from a neuroscience perspective. Essentially, visual activity cannot be achieved solely through the eyes, but requires the optic nerve. In other words, the optic nerve is the indispensable medium connecting

the brain and the eyes; without it, the eyes would become purely physical components. Accordingly, through two thin nerves, the brain endows the eyes with perceptual *qi*. It can be seen that Aleni denies the spiritualist interpretation of vision, arguing that psychological activities have to be based on physical activities; thus, human vision has corresponding perceptual *qi* (Aleni 2020, p. 175). (3) Aleni inherits Aristotle's theory of transparency (*Parva Naturalia*, 438a10–15), maintaining that transparent substance has no color and thus can receive all colors (Aleni 2020, p. 174). In the Aristotelian theory of vision, the transparency is present in the visual object, the visual medium, and the visual organ, while light is a prerequisite for transparency (*De Anima*, 418a25–b5). According to Aleni's interpretation of transparent substances, although such a substance has no color, it still needs to be a physical substance because otherwise it would not be a physical foundation for vision.

Not only does vision's psychological mechanism need to be based in the physical dimension, but the other four external senses and common sense also require this foundation for actualization. It is obvious that hearing is a psychological activity, as the hearing medium regulates the external sound; after that, we are able to distinguish and summarize corresponding experiences, a process that cannot be actualized by the purely physical activity⁵. The psychological mechanism of hearing should be understood to occur through the physical activity, without which hearing would be an empty perception. Aleni agrees with Aristotle's opinion in *De Anima* II.8, which suggests that sound is engendered by two hard and hollow objects colliding with each other (*De Anima*, 419b15–20). This activity must be mediated by air or water, which actually indicates that Aleni acknowledges the physical characteristics of the psychological mechanism and that perception needs physical activities as the prerequisite for psychological activities (Aleni 2020, p. 174). It should be noted that only the sound heard by the ears is the essential sound, indicating the consistency between the auditory organ and the object⁶. According to Aleni's perspective, the speed at which sound propagates into the ear can vary according to distance. It is clear that the physical speed causes physical changes in the auditory organ, so the psychological mechanism of hearing must be actualized through physical changes (Aleni 2020, p. 184). The auditory organ⁷ cannot lack physical dimensions; otherwise, the auditory activity would lack efficient cause and material cause, as matter is indispensable in auditory activity. Consequently, auditory activity should be defined as a body-involving activity, involving for example the interaction between nerves, ossicles, hammers, and pinnae (Aleni 2020, p. 198). Aleni's interpretation of smell also adopts the same argumentation model. The nose cannot be considered as an olfactory organ. In neuroscience, the olfactory organ is the olfactory nerve and the papillae. Therefore, in the olfactory behaviors, the actualization of psychological activities should be based on physical activities (Aleni 2020, p. 199).

Vision, hearing, and smell, as discussed above, are distance senses, while taste⁸ and touch⁹ are contact senses. Taste and touch are both psychological activities that can distinguish corresponding objects such as different flavors. Nonetheless, such mental activities require physical changes as the premise (*De Anima*, 422a8–424b16). It can be seen that although taste and touch are psychological activities, they rely on physical changes as the premise. Aleni's explanation of internal senses in *Xingxue cushu* is also evidence of this assertion. Internal senses can be divided into summarizing, imagination, discerning, and memorizing (Aleni 2020, p. 39). Even though these four internal senses are not associated with exclusive sense organs, this does not show that these senses are purely psychological behaviors; they are all based on physical changes. Despite the fact that memorizing comes from discerning, it must be mentioned that discerning comes from common sense and imagination. According to Aleni's opinion, despite the fact that the internal senses initially appear to be merely psychological activities, these four internal senses also rely on corresponding physical activities. As far as common sense is concerned, it should not be considered as a purely psychological capacity, but it has to be based on the physical dimension. Speaking concretely, common sense is situated in the human brain, near the forehead, which indicates that it can cause corresponding physical changes. It is necessary to acknowledge that the function of common sense is to integrate individual senses

and to enable human beings to perceive that they see or hear. It should be emphasized that the common sense is an essential function because the perceptual *qi* in the brain is transmitted to the five external senses through thin nerves, forming a unified whole of the five individual senses and thereby avoiding the division of these senses (Aleni 2020, pp. 216–20).

The key issue is that the psychological dimension of physical behaviors cannot be ignored, as they interact with each other and are inseparable in the process of actualization. In terms of distance senses, the impurely “psycho-physical” relationship is crucial. According to Aristotle’s *De Anima* II.7–9, all distance senses have corresponding mediums (*De Anima*, 418a26–422a7). We should deny the physicalist and spiritualist interpretations of the term “medium” in this regard. Aleni’s distinction between different types of air (*qi*) is very profound, and there is a fundamental difference between “ordinary *qi*” and “perceptual *qi*” (Aleni 2020, p. 200). Ordinary *qi* is absolutely pure and does not involve psychological activities. Perceptual *qi* can convey the psychological purpose of perceptual activities, namely *jueqi* 覺氣. This is crucial in Aleni’s interpretation of perception. It should be emphasized that the perceptual *qi* can cause only physical changes based on the psychological dimension. The perceptual medium is not a purely material component between the perceptual subject and the object, nor does it generate physical changes in the perceptual subject. As an exemplification, through the visual medium, the brightness and darkness of the color will be transformed into dazzling and non-dazzling perceptions. In visual activities, light is a special transparent substance and clearly has a physical behavior, that is, “illuminating”, but this physical activity can be unveiled only through psychological activity. Despite the fact that external light and internal light can maintain continuity, they cannot be limited to the physical dimension; otherwise, Aristotle’s perception would be no different from that of Democritus. Aleni creatively refers to “light illumination from inside” as the spiritual light (*shengguang* 神光), suggesting that the process of actualization is a spiritual activity (Aleni 2020, p. 176). It can be concluded that the actualization of light is indeed a physical activity but that this activity requires a basis in the psychological dimension.

The same applies to hearing. According to Aleni, hearing cannot be simply reduced to a physical activity in the process of actualization but should be defined by the “purpose”. This indicates that the purpose of hearing should be understood in terms of the psychological dimension, so the physical mechanism of hearing can be manifested only through the psychological mechanism. The example of the deaf given by Aleni in *Xingxue cushu* can support this assertion (Aleni 2020, p. 188). If hearing were a purely physical activity, then deaf people would not be mute, as vocal organs are not affected. Nevertheless, deaf people are mute in actuality because they lack corresponding psychological experience. The same applies to contact senses: if these senses were simply limited to physical contact, taste and touch would not occur. Contact senses require psychological activity as their primary purpose; the purpose of taste is to distinguish between different flavors, and that touch is to distinguish between heat and cold, dry and wet. For internal senses, the physical mechanism also requires a basis in the psychological mechanism. Aleni, based on Aristotle’s argument in *De Anima*, considers that summarizing, imagination, discerning, and memorizing are four internal senses, none of which are purely conscious behaviors, as they are situated in the first, second, third, and fourth cavities of the brain (Aleni 2020, pp. 216–39). The internal senses contain the physical mechanism, a relationship that is particularly reflected in the capacity of common sense because the function of the common sense is to transmit the perceptual *qi* through thin nerves to the five external senses. This understanding is thus based on neuroscience or physiology. For the four internal senses, psychological behavior and physical behavior are interdependent and inseparable. Aleni focuses on analyzing imagination. As far as imagination is concerned, its function is to restore images. Since images are not material entities, but shadows of entities, imagination, in the second cavity of the brain, undergoes psychological changes (Aleni 2020, p. 241). In other words, although the four internal senses are physically situated in the first, second,

third, and fourth cavities of the brain, these capacities can only be elucidated from a dynamic perspective, not from a static perspective. Considering common sense, even if it includes physical changes, it requires a basis in psychological changes.

Aleni's interpretation of Aristotle's perception in *Xingxue cushu* provides us with an effective solution to the controversy concerning this issue. In the process of actualization, the perceptual behavior is neither a purely psychological activity nor a purely physical activity, nor a simple synthesis of psychological and physical activities. Physicalism, spiritualism, and dualism are all misunderstandings of Aristotle's perception and cannot address the inherent difficulty of perception. Perceptual behavior does not simply combine psychological and physical activities; the two activities are based on each other. In the next section, we will argue for the separability between psychological and physical behaviors based on the concept of the rational soul.

5. The Separability of Human Perception: Further Clarification of the Effectiveness of Aleni's Solution

According to *Xingxue cushu's* basic stance, perception contains both psychological and physical activities, and these activities are interrelated and inseparable in the process of actualization. Indeed, Charles also holds that psychological activities and physical activities are essentially inseparable. This assertion is fundamentally different from the position of this article, as we hold that these two activities are separable in the definition. According to Charles' perspective, in Aristotelian perception as presented in *De Anima*, there is neither pure psychological activity nor pure physical activity, and perception is not simply the synthesis of psychological and physical activities. Charles asserts that psychological and physical activities are inseparable in this understanding and argues for the impurity principle. In other words, the psychological activity is defined as an impurely matter-involving behavior, while the physical activity is defined as an impurely form-involving behavior. Charles' interpretation of the relationship between psychological and physical activities originates from the macro dimension of the relationship between the soul and the body and can ultimately be attributed tohylomorphism in *Metaphysics*. Nonetheless, Charles' perspective is a misreading of Aristotle's perception. Despite the fact that psychological and physical activities are based on each reciprocally, this is true only in the actualization process, rather than in the definition or *dunamis*. When we define the psychological dimension of perception, it is unnecessary for us to refer to the physical dimension; when we define the physical dimension of perception, it is unnecessary for us to refer to the psychological dimension. According to the parameters of the definition, psychological activities serve as "formal" changes in perception, while physical activities serve as "material" changes. According to Charles' opinion, psychological and physical activities are inseparable by the definition, and this assertion denies the primacy of the form or soul.

In Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, form takes precedence over matter in terms of substance, definition, and time (*Metaphysics*, 1049b5–1050a15), so a psychological behavior should also take precedence over a physical behavior. Moreover, provided that the psychological activity of perception cannot be separated from the physical activity according to the definition, it cannot exhibit the noble status of the soul and thus fails to connect to the ethical dimension of human perception. Speaking precisely, if perceptual activities are inseparable by the definition, they cannot lead to the generation of human morality. Aleni considers the human soul as being generated by God, so it must be defined in a pure sense. Aleni's approach appropriately resolves the difficulty of Charles' principle. As far as perception is concerned, psychological and physical activities are inseparable in the process of actualization, and they both rely on each other to manifest themselves. Nonetheless, psychological and physical activities are defined as separable in order to guarantee the primacy of psychological activities, that is, to ensure the primacy of the form and the soul and thus to associate perception with human morality.

In *Xingxue cushu*, even if Aleni maintains that psychological and physical activities are based on each other in actuality, he effectively alleviates the internal tension of Aristotle's

perception by asserting the separability of psychological and physical activities in the definition. Aristotle analyzes the theory of perception in *De Anima* and *Parva Naturalia* from the perspective of animals, while Aleni suggests a solution that starts from the dimension of the human rational soul, situating perception within the realm of the rational soul in order to shed light on the separability between psychological and physical activities. It is certain that humans only possess one soul (Aleni 2020, p. 100); now that the rational soul is separable, the holistic soul is also separable, which is consistent with Aristotle's perspective (*De Anima*, 414a29–415a13). Due to the fact that psychological activity is an extension of hylomorphism, the inseparability of form and matter in the definition determines the intertwined relationship between the soul and the body in the definition. Aleni believes that there are two different senses, one of which is touch, which is the most fundamental individual sense and the prerequisite for all other individual senses and internal senses. Accordingly, we should recognize that touch encompasses a very broad range of individual senses. The second is intellectual sensibility, and only humans possess this unique capacity. Intellectual sensibility is unique because humans use it to understand morality and principles, so intellectual sensibility is not a purely psychological or a purely physiological capacity. Based on the difference between touch and intellectual sensibility, two types of desires should be distinguished: one is appetite, which perceives tangible things, and the second is will, which perceives intangible things. Intellectual sensibility is fundamentally related to human will, but not to appetite (Aleni 2020, p. 151).

The assertion that perception and body are still inseparable actually overlooks the possibility and necessity of intellectual sensibility. It can be inferred that the perception of humans and that of animals are different because human perception lies within the realm of intelligence. For humans, whether in the process of the actualization or in the definition, psychological activity is separable from physical activity; otherwise, it violates the purity of intellectual sensibility. Aleni interprets perception from the perspective of the human rational soul because he is deeply influenced by the Renaissance and thus asserts the central position of humans in the universe. Due to the essential relationship between the rational soul and the perceptual soul, the analysis of the uniqueness of human senses can further confirm the separability of perception in the definition or *dunamis*. Aleni divides all things in the universe into four categories in *Xingxue cushu* (Aleni 2020, p. 74): (1) natural entities with shapes but no growth capacity, such as stones; (2) natural entities with shapes and growth capacity, but no perception, such as plants; (3) natural entities such as animals that possess perception; (4) something that has only pure soul, and whose does not require embodiment, such as angels. From the biological perspective, humans are animals, but they are the most beloved by God of all living bodies. Aleni places humans at the center of the universe because they are the only mortals that possess a rational soul. Despite the fact that humans' status is inferior to that of angels, they are superior to other mortals. As a matter of fact, Aleni's emphasis on human status presents a key opportunity to address the dilemma of Aristotle's perception. Among all the mortals in the universe, only humans have a rational soul. Humans not only have intellectual sensibility, but also have external and internal senses. These senses should be placed under the dimension of the rational soul. Aleni begins from the dimension of the rational soul and acknowledges the necessity of separating psychological and physical activities, thus resolving the difficulty of Charles' impurity principle.

Given the assertion that God is the direct source of human beings, the purity of the human soul can be ensured by the most good God so it cannot be defiled or destroyed by the body. Once the soul and body are defined as separable, this relationship can also be analogized to human perceptual activities, so the analysis of human perception is the fundamental method by which to address the difficulty of the impurity argument. Nevertheless, it should be noted that we have made a clear assertion that in perception, psychological and physical activities are based on each other reciprocally. Does this show that the analysis in the present research is contradictory? Not so. We should approach the separability of perception according to the context: for external senses and common sense,

psychological and physical activities are based on each other in the process of actualization so that the two dimensions can be combined, whereas in the definition and *dunamis*, these two dimensions are separable. The definition belongs to the state of potentiality, so psychological and physical behaviors can be separated in the definition or *dunamis*, but they cannot be separated in the process of actualization. It can be concluded that there is an inherent tension between psychological and physical activities and that the relationship between the two should be understood dialectically from different perspectives. Addressing intellectual sensibility, Aleni explicitly argues that this capacity should be pure in any situation (Aleni 2020, p. 151). Whether in the state of potentiality or actuality, whether in the process of actualization or the definition, the intellectual sensibility is unrelated to physical activities, and this spiritual capacity is thus separated from the human body. As far as external senses and common sense are concerned, these senses' psychological dimensions and physical dimensions can be separated in the definition or *dunamis* but cannot be separated in the process of actualization.

As Aleni focuses on human perception, this must be associated with the moral dimension of perception. Aleni's discourse on the moral dimension of perception enables Aristotle's *De Anima* to achieve coherence with his ethical work *Nicomachean ethics*. Aleni's emphasis on the moral dimension of perception further confirms the necessity of separating psychological and physical activities in the definition and *dunamis*. It is important to remember that the moral dimension of perception originated from traditional Chinese Confucianism. Meynard emphasizes that both the moral and cognitive dimensions of perception are closely related to Confucianism (Meynard 2020, p. 42). Confucianism aims to establish the essential correlation between perception and morality. Aleni focuses on perceptual *qi* in *Xingxue cushu*; perceptual *qi* is transmitted from the brain to the five individual senses and four internal senses. It should be pointed out that the relationship between Aleni and Confucianism is complicated, as is particularly reflected in Mencius' "noble *qi* 浩然之氣". We have to acknowledge that Mencius' "*qi*" cannot be regarded as the matter, but rather as a spirit that is cultivated as a component of morality, a distinction that reflects the fundamental difference from Aleni. It can be inferred that due to the moral dimension of *qi*, even if Mencius' noble *qi* is related to perception, this *qi* should rise to the level of intelligence; otherwise, there will be no true perception. Mencius argues for the moral dimension of vision, holding that the human eyes can reflect a person's goodness and badness: "There is no better sense-organ in a person than the eyes. The eyes cannot conceal a person's badness. If a person has justice, then the eyes are bright. If a person does not have justice, then the eyes are turbid 存乎人者，莫良於眸子。眸子不能掩其惡。胸中正，則眸子瞭焉；胸中不正，則眸子眊焉。" (Mencius: *lilou shang* 孟子·離婁上).

Mencius also maintains that in order for the visual and auditory organs to be associated with the moral level, these sense organs must essentially be related to intelligence; otherwise, they cannot be considered to be the true sense organs. The same applies to other four individual senses, as illustrated in the essential relationship between taste and morality established in *Liji* 禮記 (*Dadai liji* 大戴禮記). Through the discourse on perception in traditional Chinese Confucianism, it can be concluded that human perception requires an association with intelligence and morality and that human intelligence and morality also must be manifested through perception. Accordingly, School of Mind (*xinxue* 心學), represented by Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529), is committed to establishing a relationship between perception and moral feeling (Meynard 2020, p. 41).

It is important to emphasize that Aleni does not give the same status to all his sources. This differential weighting is due to the complicated influence of Confucianism and to Aleni's devoting himself to the relationship between perception and moral psychology; to some extent, this is different from Neo-Confucianism. As morality is exclusive to the rational soul of humans, the elucidation of the correlation between human morality and perception can lead logically to the separability of the soul and the body, as well as to the separability of psychological and physical activities, thus addressing the difficulty of impurity argumentation. This association is also a momentous step for Aristotle's philosophy,

actualizing a shift from *De Anima* to *Nicomachean Ethics*, as *De Anima* focuses on psychological issues, while *Nicomachean Ethics* rises to the ethical dimension. According to Aristotle's perspective, we should divide the soul into three states: *pathos*, *dunamis*, and *hexis*. The so-called *pathos* is a perceptual capacity, but it is not limited to the psychological level. This capacity is accompanied by happiness and pain, so it is necessary to situate it in the dimension of virtue ethics (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1105b19–1106a13). Accordingly, the difficulty of perception in Aristotle's *De Anima* can be addressed and the difficulty of Charles' impurity argument can be avoided. Through Aleni's discourse on Aristotle's theory of perception, it can be concluded that his interpretation is affected by traditional Chinese Confucianism in a complicated way because Aleni borrows Confucianism in a limited sense. Here, we take three distance senses as examples: of vision, Aleni says: "As soon as the heart-mind harbors a sense, the eyes disclose it 心有一情，目即露之 (Aleni 2020, pp. 180–81)". Aleni's opinion on the visual organ is in line with Mencius' perspective, as they both maintain that the ethical dimension of emotion is revealed by the eyes. Human emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, and attachment should be understood as psychological activities. These emotions are not simply psychological or physical activities but should be defined based on ethical or moral dimensions. These emotional activities can be unveiled through only the visual organs, so the purpose of the eyes is to convey different emotions, and these emotions also need to be conveyed by the eyes. The reason human vision can rise to the ethical dimension is that a human has a rational soul, which triggers the separation of psychological and physical activities in perception. The psychological activities mentioned here are not limited to the meanings they hold in physiological psychology but extend to the scope of "moral psychology". The same goes for hearing, Aleni believes:

"Voices are produced by human beings who have the sense of morality; thus, human voice can be good or bad. Color, smell, and taste do not derive from human beings, but the reason for them to watch, smell, or taste is either good or bad. Thus, color, smell, taste in themselves have nothing to do with morality 聲音由人而調，人有善惡之心以出之，故聲有善惡也。色香與味，不從人出，其所以視、所以嗅、所以味，則亦有善惡焉。而但曰色耳、香耳、味耳，則何善惡之有." (Aleni 2020, p. 197)

Aleni understands sound as the exclusive object of hearing, but the impact of sound on hearing is not limited to the purely physical dimension. It should be emphasized that there is a distinction between good and bad sound, which elevates physical sound to the moral dimension. Nonetheless, even if all animals can make sounds, only human voices contain the necessary moral dimension. The clarification of this issue lies in exploring the uniqueness of human beings. The rational soul belongs only to humans, and other animals do not possess the rational soul, which is the fundamental reason for the emergence of morality. Consequently, the goodness or badness of sound does not refer to the purely physical dimension, but rather to the moral dimension. From a moral perspective, due to the distinction between good and bad, people's voices are able to distinguish between different emotions. In Aristotle's *De Anima* II.7–8, he focuses on exploring perception from the field of physiological psychology, while Aleni elevates the issue of perception to the moral dimension, thus resolving the inherent difficulty of the Aristotelian theory of perception. Only by maintaining the purity of psychological activities in the definition or *dunamis* and understanding them within the framework of moral psychology can perception truly rise to the level of morality and rationality. If humans possess moral judgment about goodness and badness, they can to seek benefits and avoid harm. Aleni proposes four internal senses in *Xingxue cushu*, among which is the capacity of discerning, which resides in the third cavity of the brain is (Aleni 2020, p. 223). Aleni revises Aristotle's discourse through situating "discerning" after imagination and before memorizing and maintaining that discerning is not a partial capacity of common sense, but an independent internal sense. Common sense can coordinate the five individual senses, whereas the function of discerning is to judge whether perceptual images are beneficial or harmful to us (Aleni 2020, pp. 223–27).

Not only are external and internal senses essentially associated with human morality, but intellective sensibility should also be understood in the context of moral psychology. Aleni distinguishes two types of nature in *Xingxue cushu*, one of which is the sensitive nature, which is generated by the body and follows Aristotle's general definition as given in *De Anima* II.1. The second is the rational nature, which is endowed by the Lord of Heaven and should be explained as the infinity, as the rational nature is associated with the requirements of the human soul (Aleni 2020, p. 243). Compared to external and internal senses, the intellective sensibility is a pure capacity exclusive to the rational soul, which is not only separated from the body in perceptual actualization but also in the definition or *dunamis*. Although humans have different senses, these senses are graded, so intellective sensibility is better able to distinguish between good and bad. Intellective sensibility should be placed within the realm of moral psychology, and this sense is not related to appetite but is closely related to will. More precisely, the will refers to human morality and principles. In short, for the reason that the rational soul is unique to humans, their perceptual capacities are more diverse. Specifically, human perception can be analyzed from the moral perspective, which is precisely the capacity that other animals lack. Due to the moral dimension, perception originates from the human soul, and the rational soul of humans is inevitably separated from the body, indicating that in the definition of perception, psychological behavior and physical behavior can be separated. Consequently, for the five external senses and four internal senses, psychological and physical activities are inseparable in the process of actualization, whereas they are defined as separable. The intellective sensibility is separable in both the actualization and definition; otherwise the dignity and purity of morality is jeopardized.

6. Conclusions

Due to the essential relationship between perception and natural science, Aleni places special emphasis on analyzing the Aristotelian theory of perception. Due to the conciseness and polysemy of texts, there is a key difficulty concerning how to interpret Aristotle's perception. Two opposing positions on this dilemma are present in the literature: physicalism and spiritualism. Some scholars insist upon the dualism or the impurity principle, which is dedicated to addressing the internal tension between physicalism and spiritualism. Nevertheless, these interpretations cannot clarify the dilemma of Aristotelian perception, and Aleni's interpretation in *Xingxue cushu* can supply an effective solution. In Aleni's perspective, perception contains both psychological and physical activities, and these two activities are inseparable. In the actualization of perceptual behavior, the two activities are based on each other reciprocally; in the definition, the two activities are separable. Aleni's *Xingxue cushu* fundamentally associates human perception with moral psychology, further proving the separation of psychological and physical activities in terms of the definition or *dunamis*. Through analyzing Aleni's analysis of Aristotelian perception in *Xingxue cushu*, we can demonstrate the significance of the paraphrased translation in resolving the difficulty of Aristotelian perception in *De Anima*.

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Notes

- ¹ In *De Anima* I.2–5, Aristotle criticizes the theories of his predecessors, including Pre-Socratic philosophers and Plato. Beginning from Volume 2 of *De Anima*, Aristotle argues for the relationship between the soul and the body from three definitions and then argues for the different capacities of the soul, such as the nutritive soul, the perceptual soul, and the rational soul. Aristotle focuses on the fundamental theory of psychology in *De Anima*, while *Parva Naturalia* discusses the specific application of psychology.
- ² Meynard has conducted an in-depth analysis of Aleni's perception in *Xingxue cushu* and holds that Aleni's discourse on the soul and perception is characterized by "Christian asceticism". Cf. Thierry Meynard, *Introducing the Sensitive Soul in Late Ming China: Aleni's Xingxue Cushu* 性學述, in *Rivista Degli Studi Orientali*, 2020, pp. 37–46.
- ³ The Soul is not only the core concept of Aristotle's psychology, but also occupies a crucial position in Aristotle's entire philosophical system. His psychology is not completely separated from other theories, but rather exists in close relationship with them.
- ⁴ Colors are present in visual organs and objects. They not only make transparent substances possible, but also limit their transparency. Colors are related to vision; only the colors that are seen are the actual colors because colors otherwise could exist only in a state of potentiality. A transparent substance is not only the *hypokeimenon* of visual objects, but the visual organ is also transparent and the visual medium is also a transparent substance (*De Anima*, 418a26–419b3, *Parva Naturalia*, 439a25–30).
- ⁵ Hearing is composed of three elements, namely the auditory organ, the auditory medium, and the auditory object. Since perception is regulated through perceptual objects, hearing is regulated through corresponding objects, as hearing is one of the five individual senses. Specifically, the sound acts on the auditory organs, which then generate the sense of hearing (*De Anima*, 419b4–10).
- ⁶ Unlike other auditory objects, whether in the definition, actuality, or literal sense, voice lies within the perceptual subject because voice can be produced only by the subject. In the case of voice, hearing is defined through the internal auditory object. All other auditory objects are soulless, with the voice being the only soul-involving sound (*De Anima*, 420b5–10).
- ⁷ Smell is a special sense among the five individual senses, as it occupies a "middle position" among the five senses (*Parva Naturalia*, 445a6). Here, "middle" refers not only to being in the middle of the order of argument, but to the essence being in the middle of the five individual senses. Smell and taste/touch are very similar, even closer than vision and hearing (*De Anima*, 421a7–422a7).
- ⁸ The objects of taste can be classified as material body and flavor; the material body is the substrate of the flavor, and the flavor is the form of the material body. The taste organ's nature should be regarded as dry in the dimension of matter but as having a capacity between dryness and moistness in the dimension of function (*De Anima*, 422a8–b16).
- ⁹ Due to the important position of touch, it determines the survival of animals. Animals can lack the other four senses, but they cannot lack touch. The flesh plays a dual role as both the organ and the medium and is defined as the "general touch organ" and the "primary touch organ". As the flesh is the primary touch organ, the sense of touch can maintain singularity (*De Anima*, 422b17–424a16).

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