The Eye’s Mind: Visual Imagination, Neuroscience, and the Humanities

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Imagery from Ancient to Modern, and back

Dr Matthew MacKisack
University of Exeter Medical School
- Affirmative attitude to imagery

- Anticipates a scientific approach
Object → Sensory Stimulation → Phantasma → Experience

Peripheral Organ → Experience (αἴσθησις)

Central Organ
Aristotle
"The soul never thinks without a *phantasma*"
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Aquinas
"the power of the imagination has its action impeded by damage to the organ"
Perceptions

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Impressions  >  Ideas

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Aristotle
"The soul never thinks without a *phantasma*"

Aquinas
“the power of the imagination has its action impeded by damage to the organ”

Hume
“That idea of red which we form in the dark and that impression which strikes our eye in sunshine differ only in degree, not in nature”
Aristotle
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Hume
"That idea of red which we form in the dark and that impression which strikes our eye in sunshine differ only in degree, not in nature"

Galton
"[C]consider carefully the picture that rises before your mind's eye."
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Aquinas
“the power of the imagination has its action impeded by damage to the organ”

Aristotle
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Hume
“That idea of red which we form in the dark and that impression which strikes our eye in sunshine differ only in degree, not in nature”

Paivio, Shephard, Kosslyn
“[I]magery relies on representations that depict information ... mental imagery relies on actual images”