

An Enactivist Interpretation of Aphantasia

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Abstract

Aphantasia is a phenomenon in which the aphantasic subject fails to voluntarily conduct sensory imagination. That is to say, the mental image aphantasic subjects generated during sensory imagination is much less vivid than what normal people would report that they can generate. This paper proposes an enactivist interpretation of aphantasia, which suggests that aphantasia is the phenomenon resulted from a disrupted balance between the top-down processing by brain activity and the bottom-up processing by body-environment interaction, which leads to: 1) the conceptual content emerging in body-environment interaction overwhelms the phenomenal characteristics of the mental image generated within the brain, and 2) the “phenomenon absence” of the generated mental image signified by the real-time body-environment interaction becomes so profound that the mental image generated in sensory imagination fails to be conceptualized as vivid from the first-person perspective.