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The Riddle of Images Revisited

According to a widely accepted conception, “an image cannot be seen *as such* without the paradoxical trick of consciousness, an ability to see something as ‘there’ and ‘not there’ at the same time” (Mitchell 1987); or as Belting formulated the same idea in a rather enigmatic way, “what an image is: the *presence of an absence*” (Belting 2005). In my talk, I will examine the roots of this apparent riddle, but I will also suggest it can be eliminated if we take into account the relation between visual perception and the motor component.

Bergson, one of the proponents of the importance of motor activity uses the term *image* in a puzzling way. This puzzle (as it appears in Bergson’s considerations) revolves around bridging the “explanatory gap” between conscious and physical phenomena; and, in particular, it illuminates the enigmatic relation between mental and external (accessible to others) representations.

In conclusion, I will relate the Bergsonian *image* to the riddle of images against the background of similarity. That is, I will suggest, *similarity* is not an adequate aspect from which pictorial representations are examinable.

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