



The Poetics of the Mind's Eye: Literature and the Psychology of Imagination

Christopher Collins

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Because every literary image is also a mental image, and because every mental image is a representation of an absent entity, Christopher Collins argues, imagination is a *poiesis*, a making-up, an act of play for both author and reader. In a book that stands at the intersection of poetic theory and cognitive psychology, Collins considers the processes by which language mediates mental images to make this play possible. *The Poetics of the Mind's Eye* examines the relation of mind to eye, or of mental imagination to visual perception.

This work offers an analysis of the reading act that is at once elegant and profound. It covers an enormous body of material—from contemporary hermeneutics to studies in memory and perception—and applies the resulting observations with brilliance to a range of poetry, ancient and modern.

The heart of the study consists of Collins's original delineation and application of six "cognitive modes" of reading: perception, retrospection, assertion, introspection, expectation, and judgment. In addition, Collins considers the impact of the movement from oral to print-literate culture, examines the work of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century empirical philosophers on the nature and power of the imagination, and explores the ways in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary theorists, linguists, and psychologists are heirs to this empirical tradition.

The Poetics of the Mind's Eye will be of interest to students and scholars of literary theory and criticism.

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