

Herbert McCabe recollected a long-lasting theory about how humans produce non-material meanings from material entities: bodily organs; external objects; sounds and graphic signs.

'Meaning' means: the role played by a part towards the whole. Senses are bodily organs and sensations allow an animal to get fragments of the external world which become 'meaningful' for the behaviour of the whole animal.

Besides sensations, humans are 'linguistic animals.' Through words they are able to 'communicate', that is, to share peculiar kinds of meaning: concepts. Whereas, sense-images are stored physically in our brain and cannot be shared, even though we can relate to sense-images by words (speech coincides with thought). However, concepts do not belong to the individual human being qua individual, but to an interpersonal entity: the language system, which is the real 'extended mind' described by Alexander of Aphrodisias and Averroes.

Therefore, on the one hand, to store images is a sense-power and an operation of the brain, whereas the brain (quite paradoxically!) is not in itself the organ of thought.

On the other hand, concepts do not exist on their own: "there are no ideas, whether in a Platonic heaven, nor in the human mind, there are just people, things and the ways people present to each other".