

the vibrations to the nerves. The organs of the exterior senses, the brain, the spinal marrow, and the nerves, which are diffused over every part of the body, ought to be considered as one continued substance, as an organic machine, in which the senses are the parts acted upon by the external objects. But what renders this machine so different from all others is its fulcrum not only being capable of resistance and re-action, but is itself active, because it long retains impressions it has received; and the brain and its membranes being of great capacity and sensibility, it may receive a number of successive agitations, and retain them in the order in which they were received, because each impression agitates one part of the brain only, and the successive impressions agitate the same or contiguous parts, in a different manner.

Should we suppose an animal which had no brain, but possessing an exterior of great sensibility and extension; an eye, for example, of which the retina was as extensive as that of the brain, and had the property of retaining, for a long space, the impressions it might receive: it is certain, that the animal so endowed would see at the same time not only the present objects, but also those it had seen before; and  
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