The Cognitive Basis of Material Engagement: Where Brain, Body and Culture Conflate

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Abstract

In this paper I attempt to sketch a preliminary framework for understanding the cognitive basis of the engagement of the mind with the material world. I advance the hypothesis that contrary to some of our most deeply-entrenched assumptions the relationship between the world and human cognition is not one of abstract representation or some other form of action at a distance but one of ontological inseparability. That is, what we have traditionally construed as an active or passive but always clearly separated external stimulus for setting an internal cognitive mechanism into motion, may be after all a continuous part of the machinery itself; at least, ex hypothesi.

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