

Navigability: a common orientation for the cognitive in cognitive science

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Abstract

What are we saying when we say a body is cognitive? In various turns, we might be saying (or taken to be saying) that it is conscious, that it has mind, or that it is intelligent. But consciousness does not imply mind, and cognition may not imply consciousness. Still, this ambiguity is an unnecessary confusion that pervades scientific, philosophical, and everyday language. This paper proposes that we clarify this as follows: An embodied act can be assessed as cognitive if its activity can be modelled as a trajectory towards a goal, if this trajectory takes place in some state space (i.e., geographical, linguistic) that can also be modelled, and if, within this modelling, an affordance vector can be established from the agent to goal that does not depend upon another body for its relevance (i.e. a hammer would not have this vector because it acquires its directedness from another body).