



Past, Space, and Self (Representation and Mind)

John Campbell

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Humans were thought to be unique among the species in having minds, but recent results showing the richness and diversity in animal psychology makes this view untenable. Yet there remains the question of whether we can map the features of a particularly human psychology that are responsible for its overall structure. In this book John Campbell shows that the general structural features of human thought can be seen as having their source in the distinctive ways in which we think about space and time. He describes the contrasts between animal representations of space and time and distinctively human ways of thinking about them. In particular, he shows what is special about the human ability of to think about the past.

Campbell looks at how self-consciousness exploits these particular abilities in thinking about space and the past. He discusses at length the relation between self-consciousness and the first person and how fundamental the first person is in ordinary thought. Campbell shows that the structured character of ordinary thinking can be explained by reference to the demands of first-person thinking and the way in which first-person thinking exploits distinctively human respresentations of space and time. Finally, he considers the metaphysical implications of this approach, in particular, how ordinary self-consciousness relies on a realist view of the past.



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