

The Editor
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Your report of tool-making and mental development (April 2016) trails behind the 1936 insights from the founder of the discipline of Pre-History, the Australian-born Marxist, V. Gordon Childe, in his *Man Makes Himself*:

The constructive character of the potter's craft reacted on human thought. Building up a pot was a supreme instance of creation by man. The lump of clay was perfectly plastic; man could mould it as he would. In making a tool of stone or bone he was always limited by the shape and size of the original material; he could only take bits away from it. No such limitations restrict the activity of the potter. She can form her lump as she wishes; she can go on adding to it without any doubts as to solidity of the joins. In thinking of 'creation', the free activity of the potter in 'making form where there was no form' constantly recurs to man's mind; the similes in the Bible taken from the potter's craft illustrate the point.

Childe further proposed that the firing of clay had given our ancestors inklings of the malleability of the natural world.

Childe, in turn, was building on 'The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man' by Frederick Engels who had chastised his generation of materialists for still ascribing to the mind 'all merit for the swift advance of civilisation'.

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