

Phenomenological perception as a mark of human intelligence

Natalia Golovanova

In view of the lively debate on the scope of the introduction of artificial intelligence into education, it is vital that we continue to address the fundamental difference with our embodied, individualized human intelligence. In particular, this will enable us to understand how the absence of the teacher in the classroom and the presence of the computer alters the student's perception and affects his or her sensitivity.

The educational philosophy of Waldorf education proposes a conceptualization of consciousness based on the idea that perceptual processes involve the joint work of multiple faculties, besides the deciphering of data provided by our senses. Although it is about the detection of perceptions at the emotional and affective level, as well as about perceptions at the bodily level insofar as our bodies help us to situate ourselves and become aware of spatial data, among other things, it's not with Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences that Steiner's philosophy has most in common on this issue, but with philosophical phenomenology. We'll look at a few key moments that explain how perception and thinking work, including the detection of non-verbal data – and, by definition, non-conceptual, but nonetheless perceptible to the individual – according to Steiner's concept of consciousness and to twentieth- and twenty-first-century phenomenologists, in particular in the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

Stemming from a PhD work recently defended at the University of de Haute-Alsace on the topic of faculties of the mind according to R. Steiner's philosophy of education, in my lecture, I will address one of the points developed in this work, namely the notion of consciousness that perceives and feels. In my view, this conceptualization of human intelligence is conducive to understanding the limits of comparison between living intelligence and that which has been extracted from the former, commonly referred to as artificial.

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