

# How to discover special features of human intelligence? An approach to the „leib“-philosophy

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When one considers the actions of human beings in general, it becomes clear that they are individual and cultural activities that enable us to successfully handle different situations. The capability to speak and the ability to think on an abstract and logical level are quite central for a valid concept of human intelligence. But more important are practical skills. Our culture, including technology and science, is not only a theoretical but also a practical achievement.

The approach of a “Leib”-philosophy (e.g. philosophy of embodiment) tries to meet this perspective by focusing on the “knowing-how” of human beings. “Knowing-how” in this context is understood as a disposition that enables successful operating and it should not be reduced to propositional knowledge or knowing-that. (Ryle 1949, Schubert 2012)

In consequence, the approach provided by the concept of “Leiblichkeit” (e.g. embodiment), focuses on the individual actions and operations on one side, while focusing on the other side on cultural environments and social milieus which serve as a fertile soil for practical and cognitive actions. (Polanyi 1967, Fleck 2015, Kuhn 1962) Seen from this perspective, the intelligent actions of human beings consist of theoretical as well as practical achievements. Consequently, intelligent achievements of humanity can not be reduced to theoretical or mental processes or to the biological organization of the body, which is described by empirical approaches. Intelligent behavior is more than logic or matter.

The assumption of this “leib”-philosophy consists in a way, that connects mental and physical aspects of human intelligent actions in order to describe adequately the aspects of successful handling, that are enabled through human intelligence. The “Leiblichkeit” of human beings is characterized by a specific connection of mental and biological processes which are embedded in a cultural development. This is what designates the singular skills and the features of human intelligence. (Irrgang 2009)

Subsequently it is important to conduct an interdisciplinary research that integrates natural sciences like biology, psychology or neuroscience, while also giving credit to and absorbing insights from humanities and philosophy. Such a wider scope is useful to understand the special abilities of the human mind in a philosophical manner.

Furthermore the approach draws attention to the fact, that knowing-how is based on a process of internalization which requires experiences and training to learn how to handle different situations. (Dreyfuß 1972, Dreyfuß/ Dreyfuß 1986, Tomasello 1999) In reference to that, the “Leib” must be seen as a necessary and apriori phenomenon that enables intelligent actions. “Apriori”claims in this context that it is impossible to describe an action, as it was experienced from the first person perspective including phenomena titled as Qualia, sufficiently in a logical dimension . The ability of acting successful can not be linguistically mediated in its original way. It is necessary to experience it on a subjective level. (Irrgang 2015)

The advantage of a philosophical approach that accepts the “Leib” as a necessity for intelligent actions are threefold. First it includes knowledge from biological research, especially aspects concerning the individual and some evolutionary developments. Second, this approach does not try to reduce intelligent actions to a rational mental process, but tries to integrate such processes into its concept. Third, this approach shows that the “Leib” in general has to be acknowledged as a principle of human intelligent achievements. A human being – or better said being a human – is always a part of cultural and social environments. They constitute the structural framework that must be taken into account for the perspective of the “Leib”-philosophy.

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