



BOOK REVIEW

The dialogical mind: Common sense and ethics (2016) by Ivana Marková. University of Stirling, United Kingdom.

Reviewed by Jacques Souriau

In this book, Ivana Markova presents the historical roots of dialogism in relation to social life, communication, thinking and ethics. In her introduction, she refers to the moment when, arriving in the United Kingdom after leaving Czechoslovakia, she had to face the contradiction between her culturally built vision of thinking as social and the prevalent “western” approach of thinking as an individual, monological process. This moment in her life made clear what would be her line of research for all her life. This is another example of how individual and personal circumstances can be a starting point for developing knowledge leading to discoveries that can serve the whole society. The first practical encounter with people with deafblindness is one of these events that push individuals or groups to define domains and methods of research aiming at meeting the challenges of sharing their lives. In other words, at the source of knowledge building, there is an ethical move. Separating the individual from the social or ethics from knowledge does not reflect real life. To support this point, Markova refers to Levinas (1996) who emphasized that the first move in science or philosophy is not to study the relation Ego-Object (and inform others about it), but to answer the call of the Other’s face. The Other (whose main embodiment is the face which automatically calls for your attention and responsibility) is always there; therefore, especially when it comes to social sciences, knowledge cannot be based on a pure individual rationality. Science and philosophy cannot stand alone; they are influenced by (and influence) a network of social engagements where cognition and ethics are first and foremost based on universal popular processes like narration or metaphors, an idea promoted a long time ago by Giambattista Vico (thus a precursor of Paul Ricoeur, Mark Johnson and many others) and many other authors belonging to the philosophy trend of Common-Sense.

In addition to her presentation of the historical sources of dialogism, Markova reviews several fields of practice where dialogism is actually used and sometimes claimed. According to her, congenital deafblindness is the field where the epistemology of dialogism underpins the most practice and research. She quotes books, articles and theses where concepts connected to dialogism are used: Anne Nafstad’s (2015) vision of the ethics of communication where the partner is first and foremost responsible for supporting the agency and worthiness of the person with deafblindness; Gunnar Vege’s (2009) description of the concept of co-presence; Jacques Souriau’s (2009) idea of *hyperdialogue* or Franck Berteau’s (2010) use of

the concept of *reframing*. She also comments the use of single case studies that are common in this field.

Obviously, Markova's trend of research is very close to the vision which is developed in the Master on Communication and Deafblindness, although the connection between the two domains is quite recent. On one side, scholars were focusing on dialogism as an epistemology, and on the other side, practitioners were trying to design, an approach of communication, for people with congenital deafblindness, that would take into account the potential richness and the necessary ethics they deserve. Markova's book demonstrates that the junction is now done.

References

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