

## **Kant's anthropological study of memory**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this article is to shed light on Kant's anthropological theory of memory. I shall contrast physiological studies of memory against Kant's own study. I suggest some ideas about the relation between memory and time, as long as memory has the power to store and reproduce the temporal configuration of our representations. Moreover, I deal with the problem of personal identity and I suggest that memory contributes to the possibility of this identity from a *pragmatic* point of view. Finally, I hold that Kant's pragmatic anthropology does not only provide a description of memory for the human being's *self-knowledge* but also for the human being's *self-perfection*. Thus, such description discloses not only what the human being *is* but also what this can *become*, insofar as it is capable of *perfecting* itself.

### **Key words**

Kant, anthropology, memory, personal identity, obscure representations

Memory is at the center of the revolutionary redistribution of the powers of the mind, as it is undertaken in Kant's lectures on anthropology, although unfortunately it has not yet received due attention among Kant's commentators.<sup>1</sup> James Russell (2014) and Robert

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<sup>1</sup> References to Kant's works are by volume and page of Deutschen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ed.) (so-called Akademie edition), 1902–, *Kants gesammelte Schriften*, 29 vols., Berlin: Georg Reimer (later Walter De Gruyter) (AA). References to the *Critique of pure Reason* use the standard notation (CPR) followed by

Hanna (2012) were interested in the problem of memory, as they trace back the roots of episodic memory to Kant's theory of spatio-temporal conditions of experience. I, by contrast, maintain that the essential characteristics of episodic memory can be found in Kant's anthropological study of memory. It is noteworthy that Kant's analysis of memory has its own place in the majority of his lectures on anthropology between 1772 and 1796 (*Collins*, AA 25:87; *Friedlander* AA 25:521; *Pillau*, AA 25:757; *Menschenkunde*, AA 25:974; *Mrongovius*, AA 25:1272-3). Although, such analysis is quite scattered in the *Parow* anthropology lectures (1772-3). Even, he attaches a distinctive place to memory in the book I 'On the cognitive faculty' in the *Anthropology*<sup>2</sup> (see AA 7:182). However, Kant's lectures on anthropology do not exhibit a monolithic description of memory but such description changes over the years, encompassing similar and different ideas. I shall peruse Kant's official view of memory in the *Anthropology*, contrasting it with the role played by memory in his lectures on anthropology.

### 1. Physiological vs pragmatic views on memory

Kant's anthropological analysis of memory is meant to be regarded as *pragmatic* rather than *physiological*, for his lectures on anthropology aim to reach a very useful knowledge for common human beings (see AA 15:801). However, Kant was acquainted with prominent authors associated with a physiological or medical approach, such as Johann Theodor Eller (1689–1760), Albrecht von Haller (1708-1777), Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707-1788), Johann Gottlob Krüger (1715–1759), Charles Bonnet (1720-1793), Ernst Platner (1744 - 1818), among others (see AA 25:85-6; Kant, 2012, p. 2; Brandt, 1999, p. 65; Sturm, 2008, p. 496). J. G. Krüger, for instance, makes some physiological remarks on memory by stating that certain movements in the brain are at the basis of the power of imagination. It means that memory and remembrance are conditioned by the occurrence of such movements, insofar as the former relies on imagination (see Krüger, 1756, §69, p. 213). Accordingly, an excessive numbness in the fibers of the brain may cause not only the lack of memory but also paralysis in arms and feet. This numbness also accounts for the fact that memory is weaker in old age than in youth (see §69-70, pp. 213-4, §74, pp. 220-1). Afterwards, Bonnet holds that memory, through which we retain ideas of things, is connected with the body (see Bonnet, 1770, §57, p. 42).

Kant's interest on physiological investigations of human nature is mainly evident in his *Essay on the Maladies of the Head* (1764), *Review of Moscati's "On the Essential Corporeal Differences between the Structure of Animals and Human Beings"* (1771), *Note*

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the pages of its first (1781) and second (1787) edition (A/B). Translations are from the *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*; it should be noted, nonetheless, that I have occasionally modified these translations. Where there is no reference to an English translation, the translation is my own. Here and throughout the thesis the gender-unspecific reference (mind, subject, human being) is made with the pronoun 'it' and its cognates.

<sup>2</sup> All references to Kant's *Anthropology from a pragmatic point of view* (1798) will have this form (*Anthropology*).

to *Physicians* (1782), “From Soemmerring's *On the organ of the soul* (1796), and the third essay of “*Conflict of the Faculties*” (1797). For instance, in his *Essay on the maladies of the head*, he maintains that the ‘disturbed faculty of remembrances’ (*das gestörte Erinnerungsvermögen*) is a particular form of the reversedness of the head and that the appearances caused by such illness are chimerical representations of previous states that never existed (see AA 2:267). This suggests that the role of the brain is essentially stronger in the early years of Kant’s lectures on anthropology than in the years thereafter (see Brandt, 1999, p. 65).

However, Kant considers that physiological knowledge of human nature lies outside of the scope of pragmatic anthropology because the former describes a set of facts that cannot be changed by the subject, who would be then a mere observer of what takes place in its mind. In this vein, Kant holds:

He who ponders natural phenomena, for example, what the causes of the faculty of memory may rest on, can speculate back and forth (like Descartes) over the traces of impressions remaining in the brain, but in doing so he must admit that in this play of his representations he is a mere observer and must let nature run its course, for he does not know the cranial nerves and fibers, nor does he understand how to put them to use for his purposes. Therefore, all theoretical speculation about this is a pure waste of time. (AA 7:119)

Kant, as R. Brandt notices, is not committed to explaining how unavailable representations, although contained by the faculty of remembrance, are *physiologically* deposited in consciousness (see Brandt, 1999, p. 65). For the problem of the physiological process which are at the basis of memory was not relevant for his *Anthropology* (see also AA 15:749; 2:345; 29:908-9). Kant’s approach to Descartes’s view of (*corporeal*) memory<sup>3</sup> leans partly on what he stated in the *Passions of the soul*:

When the soul wants to remember something, this volition makes the gland lean first to one side and then to another, thus driving the spirits towards different regions of the brain until they come upon the one containing traces left by the object we want to remember. These traces consist simply in the fact that the pores of the brain through which the spirits previously made their way owing to the presence of this object have thereby become more

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<sup>3</sup> Descartes introduced the notion of *intellectual* memory (in opposition to *corporeal* memory) during the spring 1640 in his letter to Mersenne (see Descartes, 1991, pp. 146, 148, 233), but Kant, in his *Anthropology*, mainly focuses on Descartes’ *corporeal* memory. Accordingly, I deem correct Emanuela Scribano’s claim that “a theory of “intellectual” memory not only surfaced in the year 1640, but, and above all, it was given a central role in human memory—even if that role was not specified. In any case, in 1644 memory still seems to be “intellectual” because it concerns thoughts not produced via brain traces, thoughts representing immaterial things” (Scribano, 2016, p. 142). However, there is no reference in the *Passions of the soul* to intellectual memory and this has led John Morris to say that Descartes was not yet ready to defend the doctrine of intellectual memory in public (see Morris, 1969, p. 457; see Yates, 1966, pp. 370-4). Against the latter interpretations see: Kessler, 1988, pp. 509-518, Sutton, 1998, pp. 64-5, and others.

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apt than the others to be opened in the same way when the spirits again flow towards them. (Descartes, 1985, article 42, pp. 343-4)

To remember something, it is necessary to find the traces left by the impressions of objects, so that the spirits easily can go through those traces and the more they go through them, the easier it will be the act of remembering. Images are stored in memory, akin to the lines left by a folded and unfolded piece of paper; this is pointed out by Descartes in a letter (1640) to Meysonnier: “for the impressions preserved in the memory, I imagine they are not unlike the folds which remain in this paper after it has once been folded; and so I think that they are received for the most part in the whole substance of the brain” (Descartes, 1991, p.143). These spirits are nothing but a very fine air, contained by little tubes (nerves) coming from the brain, which transmits information through the nervous system (see Descartes 1985, article 7, p. 330; 1985, p.100). As a consequence, these spirits can be regarded as purely physical items whose role is probably filled today by neuro-electrical impulses (see Descartes, 1985, article 10, pp. 331-2; Cottingham, 1993, p. 13).

The act of finding something in memory is connected with the *pineal gland*, which is “where the seat of the imagination and the ‘common’ sense is located” (Descartes, 1985, pp. 106; see also pp. 340-1). Namely, the soul and the body interact with each other in the *pineal gland*. Memories, nonetheless, are not exclusively received on the gland but are also retained in different areas of the brain (see Sutton, 1998, p. 63). Descartes’ “pneumatic” explanation of the nervous system invokes nothing more than mechanical micro-events that are explained in the same way as any other physical phenomenon (see also Cottingham, 1993, pp. 13-4; Joyce, 1997, p. 376). However, his psychophysiological ideas do not pretend to locate memory’s seat but rather to model the mechanism of retention and storage (see Sutton, 1998, pp. 52-3). Of course, some of Descartes’ ideas about memory had a big influence on his contemporaries and on subsequent philosophers; thus, correctly Joyce suggests that

One trend in the Renaissance was toward placing more weight on physiology and an organic conception of the soul, and many naturalistic works were published in the spirit of the Alexandrian revival of the fifteenth century, more in line with the materialistic account of memory favored in Descartes's published works. (Joyce, 1997, p. 381, footnote 17).

Similarly, John Locke holds that external objects produce ideas in us if any motion goes from the object to our sense-organs, which is continued by our nerves (named *animal spirits*), by some parts of our body to the brain (see ECHU 2.8.12. 171-2; 2.9.3. 183-4).<sup>4</sup> Locke believed that memory was grounded on processes occurred in the brain and that the constitution of the body could affect memory, just like diseases (even fever) can strip the mind of all its ideas (see ECHU 2.10.5. 196-7; Brandt, 1999, p. 64; Sutton, 1998, p. 170). Locke also explains why sleeping thoughts are forgotten, by claiming that “the memory of

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<sup>4</sup> All references to Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* will have this form (ECHU), followed by book, chapter, section numbers, and the pagination in Locke (1959).

thoughts, is retained by the impressions that are made on the brain, and the traces there left after such thinking” (ECHU 2.1.15. 134). Locke argues that when an ‘awaking man’ thinks, the materials of the body are employed, but when a man sleeps its soul thinks apart and makes no use of the organs of the body, it brings as a result that no impression is left on the brain, and, therefore no memory of these thoughts remains.

In contrast, Kant is not interested in a “scholastic” anthropology that produces science for the school, but which is of no utility to the human being (AA 25:856, 853). Therefore, he does not aim to explain which physiological brain processes are at the basis of the faculty of remembrances (see AA 7:176; 15:801; see also Svare, 2006, p. 87). He is rather concerned with the identification and application of what might hinder or stimulate people’s memory:

If he [someone] uses perceptions concerning what has been found to hinder or stimulate memory in order to enlarge it or make it agile, and if he requires knowledge of the human being for this, then this would be a part of anthropology with a *pragmatic* purpose, and this is precisely what concerns us here. (AA 7:119)

In Kant’s view, memory is not a subject-matter of natural sciences and he does not want to provide a purely speculative analysis of memory. Instead, he champions the sort of knowledge that turns out to be *useful* for human beings in common life; thus, special tricks, like rhymes, or maxims in verse (*versus memoriales*), become a great advantage to the mechanism of memory (see AA 25:1282, 762). It follows that all pragmatic knowledge, or skills derived from cultural progress should have no other goal than its use for the citizens of the world, that is to say, these are pursued by us in as much as we benefit from them (see AA 7:119).

In a section of the *Metaphysics of Morals*, amazingly titled “A human being’s duty to himself to develop and increase *his natural perfection*, that is, for a pragmatic purpose”, Kant maintains that the human being looks after its own perfection: “a human being has a duty to himself to cultivate (*cultura*) his natural powers (powers of spirit, mind, and body), as means to all sorts of possible ends” (AA 6:444). It means that the human being should work on its natural predispositions and capacities, if it is to be regarded as an *animal rationale*. Of course, the human being uses its powers according to the freedom by which this determines its scope. However, the human being should not develop its capacities *for* the advantages involved in their cultivation but rather *for* a command of a *morally* practical reason (see AA 6:445; 7:277). The improvement of memory should be a subject of study for education, because the latter seeks to promote the *general* and *particular culture of the powers of the mind*. Kant suggests that the improvement or “culture” of memory belongs to the *particular culture*, as long as memory is a cognitive faculty that belongs to the *lower powers* of the understanding (see AA 9:475; 6:445).

Memory is a *power of soul* crucial for the self-improvement, since it is a disposal of the understanding i.e. of the rule which is used by human beings in order to fulfill their purposes. The analysis of the forms of memorizing is one of the most evident signs of Kantian interest for the human being's self-development. Certainly, he seeks to identify what can *enlarge* or make memory *agile*, in order to reach a more effective use of memory in the daily experience (see AA 7:119, 183; Svare, 2006, p. 56). As a result, a more effective use of memory can contribute to the human being's fulfillment of its duties with itself and with the others, for "quite apart from the need to maintain himself, which in itself cannot establish a duty, a human being has a duty to himself to be a useful member of the world" (AA 6:445-6). Kant is concerned with the cognitive role of memory in his *pragmatic* study of the functioning of memory and of the way in which certain social practices enhance the human being's memory. As Helge Svare notices, pragmatic anthropology seeks to identify what promotes or impedes memory, and that is why the study of human behavior in context becomes central. That study focuses on:

Exploring what either promotes or impedes memory, we have to look at the practices entertained by people trying to learn, for instance, a certain method or technique. Or we may look at the pedagogical institutions where the art of making students remember what is being taught is cultivated in the form of didactic practices. (Svare, 2006, p. 87)

The contribution of memory to human self-perfection is also linked to the field of education as the human being must look after the cultivation of memory as well as of the understanding, even from a very early age. For instance, memory can be cultivated by remembering the names in stories, or reading and writing texts that should be understood by the child in languages that the children should be taught, first by hearing while they are in social intercourse, even before they can even read (see AA 9:474-5).

## 2. Memory and time

In this section I suggest that, according to Kant, memory is a storing-reproducing faculty that preserves the formal and material conditions of experience, so that memory *stores* and *reproduces* experienced events, as well as *tensed* and *tenseless* temporal relations contained in these events (see Pacheco, 2018). This description of memory agrees with recent characterizations of *episodic* memory, according to which it stores "spatial and temporal landmarks that identify the particular time and place when an event occurred" (Squire & Shrager, 2009, p. 19; see on this point also Tulving, 1972, p. 385). J. Russell and R. Hanna argue for Kantian roots of a current account of episodic memory, particularly with regard to Kant's account of space, time, and the synthetic unity of experience (see Russell & Hanna, 2012, pp. 32-4). Unfortunately, they do not deal particularly with Kant's account of memory. Furthermore, Russell argues that "Kant's analysis of the spatiotemporal nature of experience should constrain and positively influence theories of episodic memory development" (Russell, 2014, p. 391). However, I shall not argue that

Kant's theory of space and time evidences the existence of episodic memory, but rather that his theory of memory involves essential elements associated to this kind of memory.

Kant suggests, in different places, that memory involves *tensed* temporal series, for it constitutes a mental power directed at the *past* (see AA 25:1277, 1289, 1471; 15:816). For instance, he admits in the *Anthropology* that the 'faculty of remembrance' (*Erinnerungsvermögen*) is a sensible faculty by which human beings are capable of bearing in mind the past through imagination:

The faculty of deliberately visualizing the past is the *faculty of memory*, and the faculty of visualizing something as taking place in the future is *the faculty of foresight*. Provided that they belong to sensibility, both of them are based on the *association* of representations of the past and future consciousness of the subject with the present; and although they are not themselves perceptions, as a connecting of perceptions *in time*, they serve to connect in a coherent experience what *no longer exists* with what *does not yet exist* through what *presently exists*. (AA 7:182)

Nevertheless, the quoted passage is ambiguous because it is not clear whether the faculty of remembrance, or rather the past, present or future state of the subject cannot be regarded as a kind of perception. In my view, this impossibility should be admitted with regard to the faculty of remembrance, for a particular kind of *perception*, i.e. an empirical representation accompanied by consciousness (see AA 7:144; 9:65; CPR B160, B207), cannot reach the status of a mental power. In Kant's view, the faculty of remembrance has the power to associate the representation of a past 'state' (*Zustand*) of the subject with that of its present state. Since this faculty has the power to unite perceptions in time, the following interrogation arises: What perceptions is Kant referring to? The passage apparently suggests that perception is constituted by a set of items that differ by their temporal condition, namely 'what no longer exists' (the past), 'what does not yet exist' (the future) and 'what presently exists' (the present):

Although they [the faculty of memory and that of foresight] are not themselves perceptions, as a connecting of perceptions *in time*, they serve to connect in a coherent experience what *no longer exists* with what *does not yet exist* through what *presently exists*. (AA 7:182)

Memory is a necessary faculty for the connection of perceptions in a 'coherent' (*zusammenhängende*) or *connected* experience. To my knowledge, 'what *no longer exists*' expresses the *form* of a representation evoked by memory, namely the tensed temporal determination of a representation by which the latter exists in the *past*. This representation also expresses the *matter* of a representation, that is, that which no longer exists and can only be previously derived from sensibility, such as color, figures, flavors, sounds, etc. Therefore, the power of memory includes the reproduction of both the *form* of perceptions

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and their *matter*, so that perceptions or similar kinds of representations (“intuitive-remembrances”) also can be reproduced by memory.

The relation between tensed aspects of time and memory is also indicated by Kant's claim that “they are called the faculties of *memory* and *divination*, of respicience and prospicience (if we may use these expressions), where one is conscious of one's ideas as those which would be encountered in one's past or future state” (AA 7:182; see also 25:974; Krüger, 1756, §68, p. 212). Accordingly, memory is a *reproductive* power of imagination through which we can be conscious of ideas that, according to their temporal features, are posited in the past and, according to its material content, are derived from sensibility (see AA 29:881). Thus, it seems reasonable to assert that “a memory is an inner appearance that has temporal content (i.e., what the memory represents is temporally ordered)” (Bader, 2017, p. 133).

As noted earlier, Kant holds that memory has the power to **reproduce** voluntarily former representations, and this prevents the mind from being a mere plaything that has no control of its functions. This reproduction involves three different acts that constitute the *formal perfections* of memory<sup>5</sup>: ‘to grasp’ (*fassen*) something rapidly in memory, ‘to recollect’ (*besinnen*) it easily and ‘to retain’ (*behalten*) it for a long time (see AA 7:182). The first act means that memory representations must be processed in order to identify the pursued one, among several representations, and once this representation is identified, it is certainly caught up. The second one refers to the *effort* or the act by which the representation is brought to consciousness (see AA 25:521). Finally, the third one consists in the act of retaining the yearned representation for a sufficient time, so as not to lose it. Kant, nonetheless, confesses that these acts do not appear always together, for sometimes one believes that one has something in memory but one cannot bring it to consciousness, namely one cannot ‘remind’ (*entsinnen*) it (see AA 7:182).

The functioning of memory is described as follows: to remember something we need to catch it from memory, then we must recollect it by means of imagination and finally we have to retain it in consciousness. Moreover, memory stores many representations by using the reproductive imagination to evoke them. Indeed, Kant says that “*this reproductive power of imagination is that which lies as ground of memory and is differentiated from the latter only by the fact that consciousness must come in addition and then, it is memory [for] does not produces anything but only repeats it*”<sup>6</sup> (AA 25:1464; my translation; see also AA 25:511; 7:182; Bruder, 2005, p. 10). Accordingly, the act of remembering

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<sup>5</sup> Ernst Platner suggests a very similar description of memory, according to which memory is composed by three effects: i) ‘receptivity’ (*Empfänglichkeit*), that is, the capacity to catch something; ii) ‘to retain’ (*Behalten*) something and iii) ‘remembrance’ (*Erinnerung*), understood as the activity through which the retained ideas can be brought back and represented to the soul with the consciousness that we had them previously (see Platner, 1772, §336-7, p.104).

<sup>6</sup> “*Diese reproductive Einbildungskraft ist die, welche dem Gedächtniße zu Grunde liegt und ist von derselben in weiter nichts unterscheiden als daß das Bewustseyn hinzu kommen muß, und dann wird sie Gedächtniß Sie bringt nichts hervor sondern wiederholt nur*” (AA 25:1464).

demands consciousness of the stored representations, and an agreement between the initial experiential input received from experience and its faithful reproduction through memory (see AA 15:805).

Furthermore, Kant suggests that our experience of the world often involves a reference to the past (and to the future). For instance, in our daily experience, we can observe that if we stare at a particular street, this empirical intuition somehow triggers our memory, reproducing a past representation associated with the intuition. As a result, our mind “draws forth the representations of the senses from previous times, and connects them with the representations of the present” (AA 28:236). The aforementioned example entails a form of consciousness, for “in the intuiting of the present we always look at the past and the future. We put it into connection in this way and we become conscious of it”<sup>7</sup> (AA 25:87; my translation). It follows that, we can be conscious of what has been *stored*, of what is recently *apprehended*, and of the *connection* between them (see AA 28:236). This connection is determined by the law of association inasmuch as the empirical intuition should be similar with the reproduced past representation; these recalled representations can be images, sounds, concepts, etc., which express a past episode of our life associated with what we are experiencing.

The association between memory and time is clear in the description of *autobiographical* memory as the set of memory that human beings have about their past experiences (see Robinson, 1986, p. 19; Kasabova, 2009, pp. xi, xiv). This idea was present in Kant’s own philosophy. Like H. J. Paton, Anita Kasabova maintains that memory is a consciousness of the past, which comes in two steps, that is, *retention* and *recollection*. Concerning the latter, she claims:

Recollection (...) is the reflective level of recalling not only the past object, but recalling it as past. In order to do that, we have to recall the elapsed act as well as the elapsed object so that what is not now present once more appears before us. (Kasabova, 2009, p. 92)

Accordingly, both Paton and Kasabova stress the difference between to recall a past object and to recall the *tensed* temporal cues that posit the object in the past and not in the present. This distinction can be supported by Kant’s *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* where he claims that “there is a distinction [~~crossed out~~: itself the] between to have the learned in memory and to remember the time in which we receive these representations”<sup>8</sup> (AA 15:148; my translation). It means that, for instance, when we remember the first time we rode bicycle, we do not remember only the representations associated with the event but also their “position” in time as past (see Paton, 1939, pp. 171-2). As a result, the

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<sup>7</sup> “Beym Anschauen des gegenwärtigen sehen wir stets aufs vergangene und aufs künftige. Dadurch bringen wir es in Verbindung, und werden es uns bewußt” (AA 25:87).

<sup>8</sup> “Es ist ein Unterschied, ~~sich der~~ das Gelernte im Gedachtnis zu haben und sich der Zeit zu erinnern, da wir diese Vorstellungen empfangen” (AA 15:148).

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remembrance of the tensed temporal position prevents us from regarding the past representation as a new one in the mind but rather as a remembrance.

It is tempting to assume that, according to Kant, the representations of our inner states are ordered according to *tenseless* temporal relations of succession or simultaneity, so that our autobiographical recollection involves the temporal relations, according to which our past representations can be 'earlier', 'later', or 'simultaneous' to others (see Pacheco, 2018). However, since the dimension of time is *succession* and all representations of ourselves are related in time, then our autobiographical memory involves a successive time-span of discrete episodes of our own life. This interpretation, to certain extent, agrees with Kasabova's view of autobiographical recollection, as she claims that "recollection presentifies the past and constructs a temporal continuity of discrete episodes as 'earlier' and 'later': its sequences are arranged as the part in a literary work. If we read it, events unfold in a successive time-span" (Kasabova, 2009, p. 92). Kasabova surely is not concerned with our memory of time alone but also, like Kant, with the way the human being experiences time (see Kasabova, 2009, p. 94). Accordingly, in the *Anthropology*, Kant admits the possibility of experiencing time and this depends upon the experience of one's life:

How are we to explain the phenomenon that a human being who has tortured himself with boredom for the greatest part of his life, so that every day seemed long to him, nevertheless complains at the end of his life about the *brevity* of life? (AA 7:234)

Kant answers that the thought of such brevity is motivated by the fact that the various and different tasks of the last part of an old person's life produce in its memory the deceptive conclusion that this part has been a *longer*-travelled lifetime than what it actually was. In contrast, the emptiness of the major part of its early lifetime generates 'little remembrance' (*wenig Erinnerung*) of what has happened in its life, producing the illusion that this (early) part of its lifetime has been *shorter* than what it really was (see AA 7:234). In other words, the illusion of such *brevity* is produced by both the "memory scarcity" of events occurred in the *early* part of an old person's life and the "rich memory" of events occurred in the *late* part of it. In this example, an old person experiences the brevity of its life as the brevity of time, and in terms of the present, past and future, for "to feel one's life, to enjoy oneself, is thus nothing more than to feel oneself continuously driven to leave the present state (which must therefore be a pain that recurs just as often as the present)" (AA 7:233). It means that the abolishment of a person's life brings as a consequence the abolishment of time and vice versa.

Furthermore, Kant indirectly points out the relation between self-consciousness and tensed series of time in the "Leningrad *Reflexion* on Inner Sense", where he states that time contains the way in which we appear to ourselves. Therefore, the cognition of ourselves is

determined by the way in which we appear to ourselves in time. Kant here refers to the typical distinction between *pure* (transcendental) and *empirical* apperception: “the first merely asserts **I am**. The second that I was, I am, and I will be, i.e., I am a thing of past, present, and future time” (AA 18:623). The idea is that pure apperception refers to intellectual consciousness that, in strict sense, provides no cognition of ourselves, because the proposition “I am” is not an experiential proposition but, rather, a formal one.

In contrast, empirical apperception emphasizes a *temporality* in the self, insofar as this is capable of obtaining an empirical cognition of its past mental states. This has led J. Bennet to claim that “when Kant speaks of ‘the determination in time’ of my existence he means the establishment of the empirical facts about me-of what my states have been-at the various stages in my history” (Bennet, 1966, p. 205). Of course, the subject has access to a knowledge of its own mental history and to its past states, resorting to its memory. The empirical apperception, termed also “cosmological apperception”, allows the self to consider its existence as a magnitude in time and in relation to other external things: “I am immediately and originally conscious of myself as a being in the world and only thereby is my own existence determinable as a magnitude in time” (AA 18:623). In this vein, Kant does not deal with the self in “isolation”, but as a being posited in temporal relations of the present, past and future. Thus, these relations rule both its self-experience and its experience of other things. Indeed, Kant’s pragmatic account of memory includes not only an *observational* knowledge, but also a *practical* one that is meant to help our memory:

The effort to remember the idea, if one is anxious about it, is mentally exhausting, and the best thing to do is to distract oneself for a while with other thoughts and from time to time look back at the object quickly. Then one usually catches one of the associated representations, which calls it back to mind. (AA 7:182-3)

It follows that when too much attention is focused on what we try to remember, the act of “remembering” turns out more difficult; we should focus on other representations associated with that which is to be remembered, in order to bring it to our consciousness more easily (see also AA 25:975).

### **3. Obscure representations in our memory**

The analysis of the emergence of unconscious mental content is not a discovery of Kant but is already present in Alexander Baumgarten<sup>9</sup> and has its sources in the Leibnizian theory of the *petites perceptions*, which was probably known by Kant himself (see Kitcher, 2012, pp 10-11; Sánchez, 2012, p. 193). As Leibniz claims, “an *obscure* notion is one that is not sufficient for recognizing the thing that it represents” and adds an example: “I once saw a certain flower but whenever I remember it I cannot bring it to mind well enough to

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<sup>9</sup> Baumgarten accepted the existence of dark perceptions in the soul; the collection of these perceptions was named *fundus animae* (see Baumgarten, 2013, §§ 10-11).

recognize it, distinguishing it from other nearby flowers, when I see it again” (Leibniz, 1989, pp. 23-4). Thus, *clear ideas* are those which, even as memories, represent the objects themselves with accuracy, while *obscure ideas (notions)* lack the original exactness, or have lost any of their freshness, and are faded by time (see *New Essays*, II. 29. 254. §2).<sup>10</sup> Kant's view of an obscure representation is slightly different from Leibniz's own, albeit both take into consideration the existence of obscure notions and memory. As P. Kitcher notices (see 2012, p. 9), Leibniz grounds self-identity on the train of *petites perceptions* of which we are not conscious. These, nonetheless, are guarantee of the connection among the perceptions of our past existence (see *New Essays*, II. 27. 239. §14; see also *Monadology*, §§20, 23).

Kant states in the CPR that the faculty of being conscious of oneself, like the faculty of memory, varies in *degrees* (see CPR B415 footnote; see also A175/B217). In this vein, Kant does not think that clarity is the consciousness of a representation, namely the less consciousness of a representation we have, the more obscure the representation is. He, by contrast, holds that “a representation is clear if the consciousness in it is sufficient for a **consciousness of the difference** between it and others” (CPR B415 footnote). We have representations in memory of which we have a certain degree of consciousness, which nonetheless is not sufficient for the remembrance, that is, sufficient to be remembered (see Svare, 2006, pp. 202-3).

However, even though we are not conscious of these representations, we can still make a distinction in the connection of obscure representations, just like we do it with the marks of some concepts. It means that neither the *consciousness*, nor the *distinction* of the presentation (from others) prevents a representation from being **obscure** (as Leibniz believed). For this can only be “clear”, if we are *conscious of its difference* from other representations (on this compare Wolff, 1983, §729-30). For instance, we usually make a distinction between the concepts of right and equity, albeit we have no consciousness of their distinction. Likewise, a musician who hits many notes simultaneously when improvising is not necessarily conscious of the distinction among the different hit notes (see CPR B414-15 footnote).

These obscure representations, nonetheless, should not be taken as an innate stock that reflects the world in its entirety in a metaphysical context (see Oberhausen, 2002, pp. 133-4). Instead, these should be regarded, in general, as representations derived from experience, which are stored in memory and have an influence on our thoughts and actions. Kant even remarks that there are representations which we cannot be fully conscious of, so that we cannot, even by the most strenuous self-examination, “get entirely behind our covert incentives, since, when moral worth is at issue, what counts is not actions, which

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<sup>10</sup> All references to Leibniz's *New Essays on Human Understanding* will have this form (*New Essays*), followed by book, chapter, the pagination and section numbers in Leibniz (1996).

one sees, but those inner principles of actions that one does not see” (AA 4:407; see also 6:43, 51; Rockmore, 2012, p. 309).

Kant’s anthropology lectures (including the *Anthropology*) have always stated the existence of unconscious representations, although his reflection on them changes over time (see Kitcher, 2012, p. 13). I am concerned with an aspect of this problem, namely the relation between obscure representations and memory.<sup>11</sup> One of the most evident signs of the Kantian anchoring of obscure representations in memory can be found in the *Busolt* anthropology lectures from 1788- 1789, where he states that memory is “the field of obscure representations” (AA 25:1439-40). In other words, the mind is not totally transparent to itself but our memory encloses representations of our own mental states, which are not always “visible” to us. Instead, he remarks that

One can represent the human soul as a map, whose illuminated parts are the clear ones, especially bright, the distinct ones, and the unilluminated parts signify the obscure representations. Obscure [ones] occupy the biggest place, and are the ground of the clear ones. Human beings are often become a play of obscure representations. (AA 25:1440)

Kant’s example reveals that the human being is not only conscious of all its mental processes but is also capable of noticing these in a particular way (see also AA 25:867-8). Like Leibniz, Kant argues (against Locke) that there are effectively obscure representations, whose existence we are not directly conscious of, but only through their *effects*. Concerning to the existence of *obscure* representations in the mind, Kant illustrates: “the field of sensuous intuitions and sensations of which we are not conscious, even though we can undoubtedly conclude that we have them; that is, *obscure* representations in the human being (and thus also in animals), is immense” (AA 7:135; see also 2:266). In this regard, mental processes demand that some of our representations should happen in our consciousness, while others should be kept in our memory in order to avoid an “overcrowding” of representations that could not be associated properly: “if I wanted to become conscious in an instant of all obscure representations all at once, then I would necessarily be very astonished at myself. Thus what lies in my memory is also obscure and I am not conscious of it” (AA 25:480). This has lead me to consider controversial Nuria Sánchez’s claim that

The discovery of the predominance of obscure regions of the mind does not supply an instrument to reveal the most concealed human thoughts either, since it cannot break the resistance which human beings can oppose, in order to keep their thoughts hidden”. (Sánchez, 2012, p. 178)

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<sup>11</sup> For a thoughtful study of the role of unconscious representation in Kantian theory of cognition, see Kitcher (2012).

I think that this interpretation causes some problems because, first, it suggests that there is no way to know these obscure representations, but such idea is contrary to Kant's known suggestion that these representations can be cognized by means of *inferences*. Second, if the human being were capable of choosing, among many thoughts, those which need to be hidden, then these would not be contained in obscure regions, namely the human being would be conscious of them. It is a fact that the external observation of human beings makes them behave in a different way (hiding or changing behavior) as they feel observed. However, Kant does not regard this difficulty as a phenomenon brought about by obscure representations, but rather by a desire of disguising (see AA 7:120-1).

Kant suggests at times that most of the human soul's acts are carried out in obscurity and despite of the fact that we are not immediately conscious of obscure representations through *senses*, we could be conscious of their existence through *inferences*: "obscure representations are those of which we are conscious not immediately, but rather through their effects. Everything contained in our memory lies in the field of obscure representations" (AA 25:1439-40). He also sets out two similar examples of the existence of obscure representations:

If an individual reads, then the soul attends to the letters, for if it spells [the words] out, then it reads, [and] then it attends to what it reads. The individual is not conscious of all this. The musician who is improvising must direct his reflection upon every finger he places, on playing, on what he wants to play, and on the new he wants to produce. If he did not do so, then he also could not play, but he is not conscious of this. (AA 25:479)

Accordingly, the musician man's reflection on the performed and pretended movements of his fingers is, on a certain level, obscure. For he is not conscious of every single movement of his fingers, which is involved in the more general act of improvising (see Svare, 2012, p. 203). Even more, Kant maintains that "the greatest store of cognitions exists in obscurity", so that the cognitions of the soul depend upon philosophical reflections along with judgements that arise from obscure representations already prepared beforehand in obscurity (see AA 25:479). In this vein, human beings judge universally and such judgements are based on reason, although at times one is not aware of them because their ground lies in obscurity:

For example, a drunken man is more tolerable than a drunken woman. Everyone judges this way. What is the basis? Women are subjected to impugment. Why does one shake hands with a stranger with one's right hand? The right hand is [our] active one, thus we leave it free for him. Why do we put the most distinguished among three [persons] in the middle? Because he can then converse on both sides. (AA 25:480)

Indeed, the existence of *obscure* representations relies on the fact that the human being does not lose everything that has come to its mind, but some of those contents remain obscure in memory. These representations lie in the mind, although one cannot be

conscious of all of them *in an instant*. We are conscious of some of them only, if something, in the community with others, occasions them (see AA 25:868). Kant underlines that it is difficult to draw such representations out of obscurity in as much as one cannot inspect them *directly*. For when one is supposed to narrate something obscure, one can think of nothing, whereas if one simply were to narrate everything one knows, abundant representations would come to light indirectly. It is reasonable to suggest that “if we do not enter *into the world*, the obscure representations will have serious difficulties to be conveniently identified” (Sánchez, 2012, p. 200). However, these obscure representations, stored in memory, have a great influence on the human being to the extent that these can make understanding fall into error. It seems astonishing the fact that, according to Kant, human beings are *a play of obscurity* (see AA 25:481-2, 869).

The study of secret processes in the soul is very important and still today controversial, since obscure representations like feelings, superstitious ideas, prejudices, etc., determine human being’s judgements (see AA 25:869). For it is common to observe that at times human actions or decisions are not determined by a judgement formed with consciousness, through a careful weighing of the pros and cons, but rather these are guided by a preliminary unconscious judgement (see AA 25:481). Despite of the fact that these obscure representations have an influence on our actions, they cannot be simply withdrawn thereby from our will (see Brandt, 1999, p. 150).

In my view, Kant’s analysis of obscure representations could not only *draw* attention to their existence but also may *help* us to get rid of them in certain circumstances, since “obscure representations are that which produces, in one human being more, in the other fewer, *follies*. The human being is rational as long as this can consider itself superior to the influence of obscure representations”<sup>12</sup> (AA 25:870; my translation). Kant is here suggesting that the human being is aware of the existence of obscure representations in its mind, and that it has the power to overcome these, replacing them with representations guided by the free use of its own reason.

#### **4. Personal identity and memory**

In this section I show how personal identity and memory are related in Kantian anthropology. I focus on the following questions: What would be the effects of the removal of memory from human self-consciousness? Does personal identity rely on memory? I shall not prove, or even attempt to prove, that memory can indeed provide an adequate criterion of personal identity. However, I shall assemble some indications about the contribution of memory to personal identity from a pragmatic perspective. As to the first question, I answer that there is a positive and negative effect.

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<sup>12</sup> “Dunkle Vorstellungen sind, das was bei dem einen Menschen mehr, bei dem andern weniger *Thorheiten* hervorbringt. Der Mensch ist vernünftig, so lange er sich des Einflusses der dunklen Vorstellungen überheben kann” (AA 25:870).

On the one hand, Kant argues that the existence of many gaps in memory upon awakening, derived from inattention to neglected interconnected ideas, is a necessary condition for dreaming. That is to say, without these gaps we would dream, every night, again just where we were the night before, so that there would be a continuity not only in our waking life but also in our states of sleep and we would live in two different worlds. Certainly, these gaps of memory prevent us from being in a *diseased* condition in which we take the stories we sleep as revelations from an invisible world (see AA 7:175-6).

On the other hand, Kant holds that 'forgetfulness' (*Vergeßlichkeit*), contrary to memory, is a misfortune in which "the head, no matter how often it is filled, still remains empty like a barrel full of holes" (AA 7:185). Of course, being oblivious of remote or near past events can be caused by old age or by habits that humans have. This second case, for Kant, takes place in persons who read fiction books and have the freedom to create things according to the drift of their imagination. For instance, human beings' occupation in fantasy and in all the ways of killing time undermines memory, making a human being useless for the world. Memory is weakened by fantasies that distract the human being, turning the absent-mindedness (i.e. a lack of attention to the present) into something habitual (see AA 7:185).

Kant warns against the potential risks of reading novels, suggesting that we should not read something in general with the aim of forgetting it in the future. Unfortunately, most of the people do not read novels with the aim of retaining them but simply to amuse themselves (see AA 25:1275, 979, 523), so that the more people neglect retaining things, the weaker the memory will be (see AA 25:1462). However, Kant's observation of problems related to memory is not merely descriptive but it is also intended to help the human being to overcome them. For example, he suggests that to suspend our judgement may be helpful, if the human being wants to avoid a mistake derived from eventual memory faults (see AA 25:1273). Kant does not regard memory as an inalterable faculty but its capacity fluctuates over time; thus, in old age it is harder to grasp something in memory, although it is easier to extend it. Perhaps this happens because, so to speak, ideas have no more place for new information (see AA 25:1462, 522; 29:912). For instance, old people often can remember what they did as they were young but cannot remember what they did last night (see AA 7:185; 15:147, 149). Young people, by contrast, have a 'capable' (*capax*) memory rather than 'tenacious' (*tenax*) one, as far as they grasp quickly but they forget very soon (see AA 25:1462).

It may be pointed out that, in Baumgarten's view, memory may be *good* with regard to extension or intensity. According to the first one, memory is vast and according to the second one, it is firm, tenacious, capable, vigorous or ready. Kant suggests that *melancholic* people have a vast and faithful memory, while *choleric* people have a faithful but not a vast memory (see AA 25:1276); *sanguine* people easily grasp something (*capax memoria*) but they cannot retain it for a long time, and *phlegmatic* people grasp something

with difficulty but they retain it for a long time (*tenax memoria*) (see AA 25:975, 1273). It seems, however, that only some elements of this taxonomy lingered in Kant's lectures on anthropology and most of them are left out (see AA 25:975, 1462; 21:443).

Moreover, unlike Kant, philosophers like Thomas Aquinas, Thomas Hobbes and even Leibniz believed that self-observation was only possible in the form of a remembrance. Descartes, by contrast, thought that this self-observation could take place 'at once' (see Kulstad, 1994, pp. 32-4; Brandt, 1999, p. 82; Bobro, 2004, p. 26). In my view, Kant occupies an intermediate position because all the representations, which are reached through a "synchronic" (simultaneous) empirical self-consciousness concerning one's inner states, must be stored by memory as soon as they appear in consciousness. Even though a "synchronic" empirical self-consciousness is admitted, it does not entail that the representations of oneself are static or permanent, but they flow successively in time and cannot be stopped (see Pacheco, 2018). Thus, we can only be conscious of past representations, if memory stores and reproduces these representations; thus, memory grounds the connection of the present representations of our inner states with the past ones.

Kant nowhere explicitly states that memory is a necessary condition of self-consciousness, so that human beings could be conscious of their representations while being conscious of, say, inner states. However, all these representations are neither static nor fixed but rather they *flow* successively in time, so that they can only have continuity, if memory's functions of storing and reproducing are presupposed. In other words, if memory were torn from the self-consciousness, the human being would be conscious of a set of totally new representations. As a result, memory is not a necessary condition of empirical self-consciousness, but rather a condition of the *continuity* of the representations derived from an empirical self-consciousness.

With regard to the second question, I argue that the unity and sameness of the self are grounded on memory from a pragmatic point of view. As A. Brook notices, this idea may be problematic, for it is difficult to find even "a *prima facie* argument for personal identity in the role of memory or other kinds of retention of representations and/or their objects in synthesis" (Brook, 1994, p. 187). Other commentators argue that personal identity cannot be justified *via* memory but, on the contrary, memory is grounded on both synthesis and the unity of consciousness (see Brook, 1994, pp. 179, 186; Paton, 1929, p. 324; Kitcher, 1990, pp. 124-6; Powell, 1990, pp. 158-9; Kemp Smith, 2003, p. 251). In other words, memory *presupposes* the notion of personal identity, so that the former should not be used to *define* personal identity. I believe, nonetheless, that these two claims are compatible, namely *personal identity* depends upon memory's power to reproduce earlier experiences of our mental states (*e.g.* belief, desire, etc.) whose synthetic unity has been previously submitted to the unity of consciousness.

Of course, the problem of the reliance of personal identity on memory was not only attractive for D. Hume (1978, pp. 262, 259) but also for J. J. Rousseau (1979, p. 283), D. Diderot, D' Alembert (1769/1964, pp. 155-6), among others. For instance, Locke suggested that memory was a necessary condition for personal identity of the personal self:

As far as any intelligent being *can* repeat the idea of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action; so far it is the same personal self. For it is by the consciousness it has of its present thoughts and actions, that it is *self to itself* now, and so will be the same self, as far as the same consciousness can extend to actions past or to come. (ECHU 2.27.10, 451)

Personal identity is not exclusively integrated by memory but also by consciousness, time, and action (see Powell, 1990, p. 155). Locke's view of memory, albeit not unproblematic<sup>13</sup>, provides elements that are compatible with Kant's own view. For, in Kantian anthropology, personal identity, to an extent, relies on our consciousness of *past* thoughts and actions.

In Leibniz's view, personal identity is secured by continuity of consciousness or memory (see Kitcher, 2012, pp. 8-9). Indeed, he held in *New Essays on Human Understanding* that "the existence of real personal identity is proved (...) by present and immediate reflection; it is proved conclusively enough for ordinary purposes by memories across intervals and by the concurring testimony of other people" (*New Essays*, II. 27. 219-220. §§9-10). Leibniz believed that consciousness was a necessary condition for personal identity and that memory is involved in the consciousness of our mental states, in as much as *consciousness* is nothing but a form of memory. It visibly means that if a human being were stripped of all sense of its past existence, beyond the power of ever retrieving it again, this could not be the *same person* anymore (see *New Essays*, II. 27. 238-9 § 13-14).

Similarly, Baumgarten grounds *personality* on intellectual memory: "reason (§640) is the faculty for perspicuously perceiving the correspondences and differences of things distinctly (§572, 579), and hence it is intellectual wit and acumen (§575), intellectual memory or PERSONALITY" (Baumgarten, 2013, §641). He also grounds *personality* on the spirituality of the human soul: "the human soul is a spirit (§754). Therefore, it has freedom (§755). And since spirituality, intellectuality, personality" (Baumgarten, 2013, §756); thus, a human soul that cannot conceive of something distinctly nor determine itself

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<sup>13</sup> On the reception of Locke's account of personal identity, see Sutton, 1998, p. 160f; Powell, 1990, pp. 152-157; Ameriks, 1982, pp. 149-151; Kitcher, 1990, pp. 123- 127. The *circularity objection* to the memory criterion of personal identity can be traced back to E. Joseph Butler (1692-1752), who claimed that personal identity is not *constituted by*, but *presupposed in* our consciousness of the past, i.e. recollection. In his view, if our consciousness of the past were a condition of personal identity, it would imply erroneously that "a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action, but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon" (Butler, 1896, p. 388). Accordingly, the "remembering our experience of X" does not prove our personal identity, which arises rather from the fact that "we are the same while we are experiencing X", so that our "remembering of X" presupposes the idea of personal identity (see Butler, 1896, p. 389; see also Bernecker, 2009, pp. 47-8).

(according to its preferences), and which loses all of its personality and freedom, is merely a chimera.

Kant also accepts a relation between memory and personal identity. For he admitted Jean-Jacques Rousseau's claim that "what I know surely is that the identity of the I is prolonged only by memory, and that in order to be actually the same I must remember having been" (Rousseau, 1979, p. 283); Kant integrated this claim into the *Collins* anthropology lectures (see AA 25:12). The identity of the person cannot be demonstrated as the human being does not have access to an empirical intuition of such identity, but rather to a stream of many representations: "with the human soul we cognize nothing perduring, not even the concept of the I, since consciousness occasionally disappears. A principle of perdurability is in bodily substances, but in the soul everything is in flux" (AA 28:764; see also 29:1038; CPR B415). Kant identifies the notions "the identity of the person" with "intellectual memory" and emphasizes that even though we cannot demonstrate this identity, we are allowed to assume its existence: "with respect to the identity of the person, intellectual memory <*memoria intellectualis*>, no one comprehends its necessity, and also cannot demonstrate it, although its possibility can be assumed" (AA 28:764). This identification can also be found in *Reflexionen zur Anthropologie* where he states that "memoria intellectualis [is] the identity of the person in its consciousness"<sup>14</sup> (AA 15:148; my translation). Indeed, Kant maintains that *intellectual* memory consists in the consciousness of oneself in a psychological sense and that it is concerned with personal identity (see AA 29:1036-1038). Certainly, it does not seem right to ascribe personal identity to a human being who lacks intellectual memory and suffers from amnesia that prevents it from reproducing memories of its personal life, past experiences, and so on ("autobiographical" memory). The importance of this identity is evident from a pragmatic point of view, as long as we *use it* all the time in our daily life. That is, we think of ourselves and others as creatures tied to the past, that is, as agents as having a personal identity constituted by a set of past social characteristics (see Wollheim, 1979, p. 224).

I believe that according to Kant, *personality* is what makes the human being rational. This idea can be inferred from a passage in which he comments that the best proof of the immortality of the human being (particularly of its soul) demands for the "future" life. The immortality entails the perdurability of the soul as substance, as a living being with representations and the survival of its *personality*. Kant underlines that without personality "one cannot say that human beings will exist in the future as rational beings. — Perduring memory <*memoria perdurabilis*>, connection of both states with the consciousness of the identity of the subject, without this the person is dead" (AA 28:688). Despite of the fact that the latter passage is extracted from an ontological rather than anthropological or scientific context, it still serves to show that *personality*, the *status of rational being* and *memory* are tightly connected in Kant.

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<sup>14</sup> "Memoria intellectualis — Identität der Person in ihrem Bewustseyn" (AA 15:148).

Again, memory cannot guarantee a psychological continuity of intentions, beliefs, character traits, values, etc. It is plain that the human being is not conscious of all events of its life, but, as notices Brook, “we have countless representations of self of which we are not aware — memories of oneself, for example” (Brook, 1994, p. 151). Memory, hence, cannot provide the human being with an *absolute* continuity of all events relating to its existence but only with a *relative* one that involves memories of some number of events. This relative and partial identity, which could be called a “pragmatic identity” (see CPR A365-6), has been interpreted by A. Brook in terms of an *illusion*. He declares that

Kant was able to do something no one else has done. He was able to diagnose why memories of a certain kind, namely, of having had experiences and having done actions, as well as some other representations represented as past, generate an illusion that the earlier subject whose experiences and actions one represents as having been had or done is guaranteed to be oneself. (Brook, 1994, p. 179)

Accordingly, the relation between identity of the subject and memory is explained by means of a relation between “looseness in persistence” and “tightness in the unity of one's consciousness across time” (see Brook, 1994, p. 180). If my reading is correct, personal identity is possible, only if this relation is “displayed in memories of having had experiences and having done actions” (Brook, 1994, p. 180). Thus, Brook seems to suggest that personal identity, which is usually regarded as grounded on memory, is actually grounded on the unity of consciousness (see Brook, 1994, pp. 183-4, 193). In a sense, this is correct. For the empirical representations of *myself* can only be *my* representations, if transcendental apperception is presupposed. Kant even seems to leave open the possibility of an organization of memory content via *apperception*, insofar as memory is grounded on the reproductive power of imagination (see AA 29:884).

Indeed, memory is a source of representations of mental states, external objects, events, etc., which provides the human being with past materials *in which* this unity of consciousness is displayed. Kant notices the relevance of empirical material for the judgement “I think”. As he puts it: “only without any empirical representation, which provides the material for thinking, the act I think would not take place, and the empirical is only the condition of the application, or use, of the pure intellectual faculty” (CPR B423). Kant does not refer here to memory, although it is reasonable to consider that memory is concerned with the storing and retrieval of empirical material on which this pure faculty is applied. In brief, if memory is impossible without unity of consciousness, unity of consciousness is also impossible without a memory that provides a potential unified material (see on this point Strawson, 1966, p. 99 and Kitcher, 1990, p. 124).

On top of that, human consciousness of personal memories constitutes a *conditio sine qua* the human being could not represent itself as being the same. Since humans cannot reach an empirical intuition of their personal identity, it seems that any form of personal identity could only arise from the set of changes that constitutes the human being. This

identity, which should be explained from a *pragmatic* perspective, is not only recognized by the subject, but also by other human beings in social intercourse. The relation between the human being's self-consciousness of the representations of its lifetime and memory, as the faculty that has the power to preserve these representations, constitutes a basic condition for personal identity. Nuria Sánchez correctly points out that "the inner sense alone cannot yield any fruitful observation, because it is an uninterrupted flow of representations" (Sánchez, 2012, p. 184). It follows that without the "autobiographical" memory, the human being would not have access to the very stream of the past representations of its own existence.

However, this stream of representations must be somehow subject to a form of *apperception*, by which these are connected by consciousness as *my* memories (see AA 29:884). P. Kitcher points out a similar practical use of the term *apperception*, as she holds: "identical *apperception* is both necessary and sufficient for the practical use of the concept of personality. And, given human epistemic limitations, that is all that can be used" (Kitcher, 2011, pp. 186-7). Thus, without such unity of consciousness, these memories would not belong to one and the same human being but to various consciousness or "selves". Evidently, Kant's concern for a knowledge of the human being as embedded in the world is more obvious in the *Anthropology* than in the CPR.

## Conclusion

Memory is a crucial power of the mind because it has the power to preserve the temporal framework of those representational contents that have been previously stored and later reproduced. The operations of memory are accompanied by our will, so that we voluntarily evoke contents that are to be remembered. Memory is also relevant for the problem of the brevity of life, in the sense that the duration of life seems to be longer if we have *many* memories of present events, but *few* of earlier ones. However, Kant's analysis of memory is not only descriptive but also prescriptive, as he seeks a knowledge that may help us to improve our memory with regard to the *number* of things that can be remembered and the *duration* of those remembrances. Certainly, memory is not guarantee of personal identity, since the former cannot provide the human being with an *absolute* continuity of all events relating to its existence but only with a *relative* one that only involves some events. Finally, personal identity should be regarded as the composite of memory and the unity of consciousness because the former, integrated by memories of one's past experience, presupposes the synthetic power of pure understanding as a necessary condition for experience in general.

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