Radivojević Mihajlo: Unity of the Self in Kant

The MA dissertation of Radivojević Mihajlo is correct and good analysis of Kant’s philosophy. The first part (3-43.) presents Kant’s theoretical and practical philosophy from the point of view of the unity of the self. The structure of this part is clear, the reasoning is compact. The chapter on the two main interpretations of the problem (the substance interpretation and the personal identity interpretation) is probably the best part of the text. I think that the first part is really an excellent Kant interpretation.

I had more problems with the second and third parts. My remarks and questions concern mainly these parts.

1. I had the impression that the title of the dissertation concerns only the first part. The second and the third parts deal *in general* with the problem of personal identity (not in particular with that of Kant), therefore they could be related to any other theory of personal identity (Locke, Hume, Nietzsche, Freud, Ricoeur, etc.)
2. The Dissociative Identity Disorder plays a central role in the reasoning, but the author never explains this central role. Why not neurosis? Why not schizophrenia? Almost all pathological mental states present serious problem for a supposed personal identity.
3. The central figure of the third part is no more Kant, but Dennett. I agree in general that the theory of narrative identity is a better solution to the problem of the unity of the self than the substance theory or the no-self theory. But Dennett is not the only one, and mainly not the first to elaborate a kind of narrative identity (McIntyre, Ricoeur). The author does not explain why he preferred Dennett’s account of personal identity? And if Dennett plays such an important role in the dissertation, why does not he changes the title, f.ex.: “The Unity of the Self in Kant and in Dennett”?
4. In what sense can we say that “Dennett’s approach to the problem of the unity of the self […] is Kantian in several very important ways”(5)? Dennett’s theory answers the same questions, that’s true, but, as I see, in a considerably different way. Kant’s theory is a transcendental approach, while Dennett’s theory is a more or less empirical approach (“Dennett’s theory is more down-to-earth than Kant’s [?], using linguistic concepts and ideas, and it has no transcendental burden [?]” (61)). The question marks indicate that I do not understand the expression “more down-to earth” and “transcendental burden”. The specificity of Kant’s theory is nothing else than its transcendentalism (that is why it is different for example from that of Locke): how could it be without transcendental burden?

Smaller questions and remarks:

1. There are more faculties of the mind, not only three (“senses, understanding and reason” (8)): the author himself speaks later about reproductive and productive imagination (15), about judgment, etc.
2. What does Kant say exactly about association and affinity? The dissertation mentions this problem (15-16), but do not explain it further.
3. “Schemas are rules of our minds exhibited *in time*” (32). What does it mean exactly in Kantian terms?

General evaluation:

The dissertation is an interesting Kant interpretation. I particularly appreciated the analysis of paralogisms, the chapters on substance interpretation and personal identity interpretation. The second and the third parts are also interesting supplements to the Kantian theory of the self. The dissertation is a good work: I have seen theoretical deficiencies only in the absence of explanation why the Kantian theory has to be completed exactly by the example of Dissociative Identity Disorder and by Dennett’s theory?

Mark: excellent (5)

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